

IMPORTANT BIRD AND BIODIVERSITY AREAS IN INDIA

Priority sites for Conservation

Revised and updated 2nd Edition Vol. I



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**Second Edition: Revised and Updated
Volume I**

Asad R. Rahmani, M. Zafar-ul Islam and Raju M. Kasambe

Maps prepared by

Mohit Kalra and Noor I. Khan

Team Members

Noor I. Khan, Siddesh Surve, Abhijit Malekar and Nandkishor Dudhe

Significant Contribution to this edition

Anwaruddin Choudhury, Arvind Mishra, Ajai Saxena, Dhananjai Mohan, Himmat Singh Pawar, Intesar Suhail, Khursheed Ahmad, Neeraj Srivastava, P.O. Nameer, Manoj Nair, Mrutyumjaya Rao, Praveen, J., Sanjeeva Pandey, S. Subramanya, Satya Prakash

Editors

Gayatri Ugra and Maithreyi, M.R.

Layout and Design

V. Gopi Naidu

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Bombay Natural History Society,

Hornbill House, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Mumbai-400001, INDIA.

Telephone: 0091-22-28429477 and 0091-22-22821811. Fax: 0091-22-22837615.

Email: info@bnhs.org; websites: www.bnhs.org and www.ibcn.in

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UDHUWA LAKE BIRD SANCTUARY

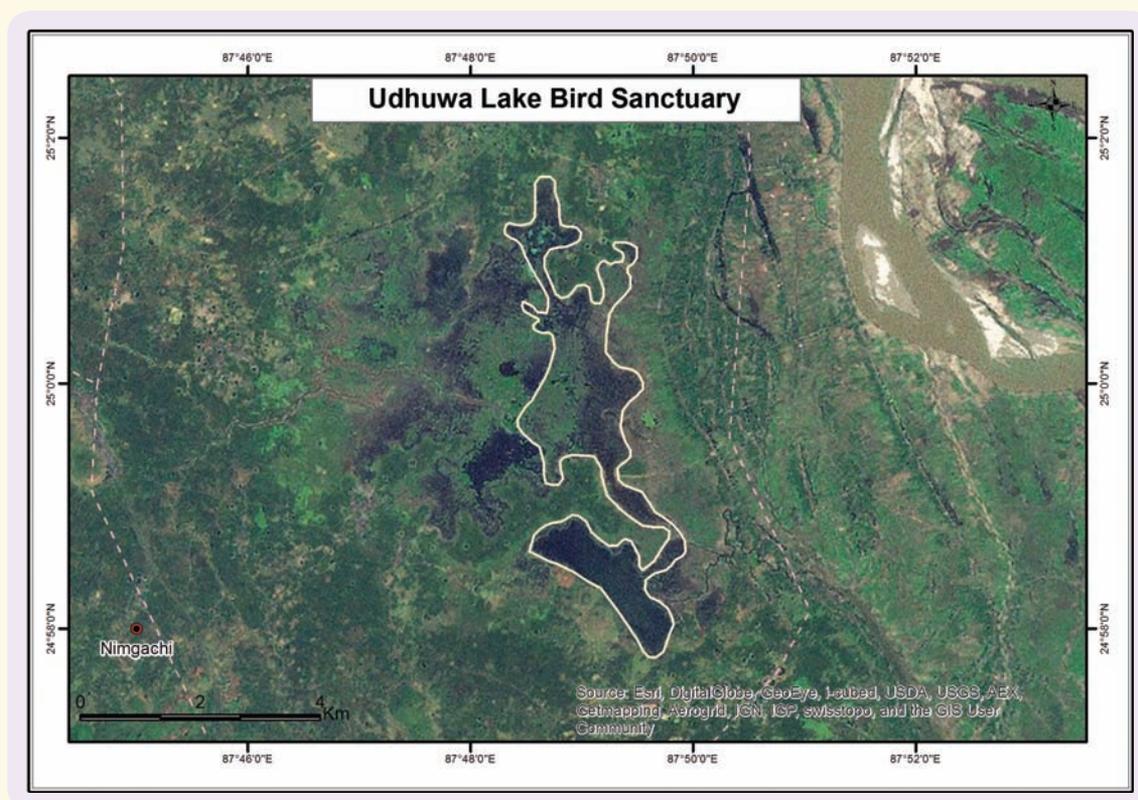
IN-JH-03

IBA Site Code	: IN-JH-03
State	: Jharkhand
District	: Sahibganj
Coordinates	: 24° 59' 37" N, 87° 49' 21" E
Ownership	: State

Area	: 565 ha
Altitude	: 24 msl
Rainfall	: 1,363 mm
Temperature	: 10 °C to 40 °C
Biogeographic Zone	: Gangetic Plain
Habitats	: Freshwater Swamp (Reservoir)

IBA CRITERIA : A1 (Threatened species), A3 (Biome 11: Indo-Malayan Tropical Dry Zone)

PROTECTION STATUS : Wildlife Sanctuary, established in 1991.



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Uduwa Lake Bird Sanctuary (ULBS) is situated 11 km southeast of Rajmahal in the Sahibganj district of Jharkhand state. This sanctuary is constituted by two waterbodies, namely Pataura (155 ha) and Berhale (410 ha). Pataura is a comparatively clean waterbody and the average depth is c. 2 m whereas Berhale is very shallow, with average depth c. 70 cm. Berhale is largely choked with aquatic vegetation, mainly *Eichhornia crassipes*, *Salvinia cuculata*, *Marsilea minuta*, *Ipomoea aquatica*, and *Hydrilla verticillata*, with small pockets of clear water.

Both these waterbodies are interconnected by a water channel and the whole sanctuary is connected with River Ganga near Taltala Ghat at Farraka by Uduwa Nullah, which is a 25 km stretch. Pataura is surrounded by hillocks

on one side, while on the other side, the Forest Department has done some plantation (on the hillocks).

These two lakes support a large number of aquatic and semi-aquatic fauna and provide sufficient food for both resident and migratory birds. Since ULBS is surrounded on all sides by agricultural fields and more than two dozen villages, there is high anthropogenic pressure on it (Prakash *et al.* 2012). Uduwa Lake Bird Sanctuary is rich in fish diversity. These support a number of piscivorous bird species.

AVIFAUNA

Two decades ago, Choudhary *et al.* (1992) identified 83 species of birds, including many forest species. The list includes such rarities as Nordmann's Greenshank or Spotted Greenshank *Tringa guttifer* that still remains unconfirmed.

Recently, Prakash *et al.* (2012) studied the avian diversity of this sanctuary and reported the occurrence of 107 species of birds. This includes five globally Threatened species. Another survey conducted in 2013 reports four more species, including the Near Threatened Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*. Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* (Schedule I species under WPA 1972) and Greylag Goose *Anser anser* have also been reported (Satya Prakash, *pers. comm.* 2014). Prakash (2014) reported four more wetland species including the Near Threatened Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*, besides Fulvous Whistling-duck *Dendrocygna bicolor* which was seen in large numbers.

OTHER KEY FAUNA

There are not many large mammals of conservation concern. Previous work shows the presence of about 22 fish species, most of them of commercial value (Choudhary *et al.* 1992). Recent surveys conducted during 2009–2014 revealed the presence of 42 species of fishes, including *Oreochromis mossambicus*, *Ompok pabda*, *Wallago attu*, and *Ailia coila*, which are listed as Near Threatened in the IUCN Red List (Satya Prakash, *pers. comm.*).

LAND USE

- Agriculture
- Fishing
- Irrigation
- Bridge (over the canal between Pataura and Berhale Lake)

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*

VULNERABLE

Asian Woollyneck *Ciconia episcopus*
 Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus*
 Pallas’s Fish-eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*
 Green Munia (Avadavat) *Amandava formosa*

NEAR THREATENED

Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*
 Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*
 Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*
 Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*
 Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*
 Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*

BIOME 11: INDO-MALAYAN TROPICAL DRY ZONE

Red-naped Ibis *Pseudibis papillosa*
 Brown-headed Barbet *Megalaima zeylanica*
 Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense*
 White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola*
 Jungle Babbler *Turdoides striata*
 Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus*

THREATS AND CONSERVATION ISSUES

- Land dispute among farmers
- Intensive agriculture
- Disrupted water regulation
- Encroachment (illegal settlements and agriculture)
- Illegal fishing and poaching
- Indiscriminate use of agricultural equipment (use of water pump leading to oil spill)
- Trespassing
- Tree felling in surrounding areas
- Use of fertilizers and pesticides
- Eutrophication
- Siltation
- Overall anthropogenic pressure

The non-settlement of the compensation disputes of *Rayati* lands acquired from farmers for the sanctuary is one of the main reasons for illegal agricultural practices, fishing, and poaching of native and migratory birds. Poaching of birds and illegal fishing are the biggest challenges for the Forest Department ever since the declaration of the bird sanctuary under the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act.

Another major problem is the vast encroachment along the margin of the perennial lake by the heavy influx of suspected illegal Bangladeshi immigrants who have settled beside the lake. Some groups have vested interests in providing security to these immigrants (Mishra *et al.* 2009). These have added anthropogenic pressure on the surrounding natural resources. Also, the area surrounding both the lakes is used for agriculture, and in summer when the water level of Berhale recedes, the exposed land is also used for agriculture. A clear demarcation of both the waterbodies should be done in order to conserve the habitat and discourage encroachers.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS

Satya Prakash, Arvind Mishra, Anil Kumar Mishra, M.D. Dwivedi, Murari Singh, M. Raziuddin, Mridula Sapru.

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