# Udaipur Jheel Site Information

Udaipur Jheel is located inside the Udaipur Wildlife sanctuary, located at 26.812952o N, 84.431371o E. The wetland is an oxbow lake formed in the floodplain of the Gandak river. The wetland is a freshwater lake situated 14.5 km west of the Bettiah town in the West Champaran district. Gandak river has shifted its course 5-6 km south-west leaving this horse shoe shaped oxbow segment on its eastern side locally known as Saraiya Man. The wetland covers an area of 319.7 hectare. The wetland has got tremendous value from ecological and tourism point of view. The wetland is uniquely surrounded by the Jamun trees. It is home to a variety of water birds, both resident and migratory. The wetland is the main attraction of the Udaipur Wildlife Sanctuary where migratory birds visit during the winter season. The area is one of the recognized Important Bird Area (IBA) and a centre for conservation, education and recreation in the State. The dense forest of Udaipur Wildlife Sanctuary surrounds the wetland from north and the west. The wetland encircles the land of Majharia village more or less in the form of an island. A small patch of forest exists on the other side of the lake in the village Majharia and along its border. The Udaipur Jheel is connected with a river called Haraha, which forms a part of the western boundary of Udaipur Forest.

# Global Significance of the Wetland

The Udaipur Jheel is an important wintering site for around 26 migratory bird species of the Central Asian flyway notably, Anas acuta (Northern Pintail), *Podiceps cristatus* (Great Crested Grebe), *Mareca penelope* (Eurasian Wigeon), *Aythya ferina* (Common Pochard), *Mareca strepera* (Gadwall) and *Aythya nyroca* (Ferruginous Duck), *Circus aeruginosus* (Eurasean Marsh Harrier), *Fulica atra* (Eurasian Coot), *Turdus unicolor* (Tickell’s Thrush), *Anser indicus* (Bar-headed Goose), *Anas platyrhynchos* (Mallard). As per the inventory made by the team of Patna University, Zoological Survey of India and mandar Hill Nature Club, Munger, 26 species of birds, 29 species of fish belonging to 12 families, 13 benthic, 43 zooplanktons, 9 macrophytes and more than 35 tree species were present in the Udaipur Wildlife Sanctuary.

Habitat wise analysis of data revealed that the majority of the species were wetland dependent (n=32, 24.61%). Due to the high avian diversity and other biological richness, the wetland is recognised as one of the most important bird area. The area supports several turtle species of which 10 are of conservation concern (Das, 1998). The wetland is also a source of *Caldesia parnassiifolia*, *Ceratophyllum demersum*, *Nelumbo nucifera* (Kamal), *Najas indica*, *Typha latifolia*, *Paratelphusa spinigera* (Crab) and edible mollusc (*Pila globosa*).

# National and Regional Significance of Wetland

The fisheries, agriculture and allied activities are the main source of livelihoods of 3,000 households of nine villages in and around the wetland who are engaged in farming, animal husbandry, harvesting fish etc. The wetland stores water and regulate overall hydrological regimes that is important for ensuring water availability in the region. The wetland plays a critical role in flood control, erosion control and groundwater recharge. The wetland is uniquely surrounded by the Jamun trees and fruits fall in the lake adding the ethno-medicinal value to the lake water. The wetland has significant conservation value as it supports a vast array of flora and fauna. More than 26 species of birds including 6 migrant species, 29 species of fish belonging to 12 families, 13 benthic, 41 zoo-planktons, 9 macrophytes and more than 35 tree species are present in this small area.

**This wetland fulfils the following desirable Ramsar site criteria for designation of Ramsar site under Ramsar Convention**

Criterion 2: Rare species and threatened ecological communities

Criterion 3: Biological diversity