



Ramsar Sites Information Service

Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

Kyrgyzstan

3 Ramsar Site(s) covering 679,408 ha

Chatyr Kul

Site number: 1,588 | Country: Kyrgyzstan | Administrative region: Naryn Oblast
Area: 16,100 ha | Coordinates: 40°37'N 75°18'E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005
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Chatyr Kul. 08/11/05; Naryn Oblast; 16,100 ha; 40°37'N 75°18'E. State Reserve. A saline high altitude lake (3,530m asl.) in the Tien Shan Mountains with pristine ecosystem. The main inflow runs from the Ak-say river and the lake plateau is bound between the edges of At-Bashi (4,700m) and Kakshalto ridges (5,500m) with permanent snowfields and glaciers, forming the border between Kyrgyzstan and China. It is one of the few habitats for Pamir Brown-headed Gulls, a breeding area for Bar-headed geese, and crucial for nine species of moulting ducks, especially *Tadorna ferruginea*, representing about 40% of the global population. A significant population of IUCN Redlisted Argali Sheep (*Ovis ammon*) is also found grazing at the plateau. The absence of ichthyofauna, high transparency and shallowness of the lake support luxuriant growth of submerged macrophytes like *Potamogeton* and high population of rare invertebrates like *Gammarus krevetki*. Located near the Torugart Pass, the lake basin was once a part of the Silk Route, and remnants of a 10th century caravanserai can still be seen. Over hundreds of years, local nomads have been using the lake area for grazing horses in summer. Ramsar site no. 1588. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

Son-Kol Lake

Site number: 1,943 | Country: Kyrgyzstan | Administrative region: Naryn Township
Area: 36,869 ha | Coordinates: 41°49'59"N 75°07'E | Designation dates: 23-01-2011
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Son-Kol Lake. 23/01/2011; Naryn Oblast; 36869ha; 41°50'N 75°07'E. The Ramsar site includes the Karatal-Japyryk State Nature Reserve. Son-Kol Lake is the largest high altitude freshwater lake in central Kyrgyzstan. It is valuable both as a stopover point for a high diversity of migratory birds, such as the Black Stock (*Ciconia nigra*), as well as supporting breeding populations of gulls (e.g. *Larus* spp), terns (e.g. *Sterna hirundo*), geese (e.g. *Anser indicus*), and grebes (e.g. *Podiceps nigricollis*). The site also offers refuge for threatened species like the critically endangered Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) and the vulnerable Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*). The lake is important for maintaining the livelihood of pastoralists and is also a popular camping site for tourists. Historically, the lake was used as a meeting place for many tribes. The site is archaeologically significant for its burial mounds, stone monuments and stone hearths. Local people consider the lake and its basin as sacred, and often visit this area to pray. Prior to 1957 the lake was fishless but since then, introduced fish (e.g. *Coregonus peled*) have provided alternative sources of food. However, such introductions have altered the zooplankton composition in the lake which in turn, has affected the number of bird species occurring in the area. Particularly, the decrease in population of the Bar-headed Goose (*Anser indicus*) has been attributed to the shortage of food for their juveniles. The site is jointly managed by the Karatal-Japyryk State Nature Reserve and the State oblast administration. Ramsar site no. 1943. Most recent RIS information: 2010.

The Issyk-kul State Nature Reserve with the Issyk-kul Lake

Site number: 1,231 | Country: Kyrgyzstan | Administrative region: Issyk-kul region

Area: 626,439 ha | Coordinates: 42°25'N 77°15'E | Designation dates: 12-11-2002

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Issyk-Kul State Nature Reserve with the Issyk-Kul Lake. 12/11/02; Issyk Kul Province; 626,439 ha; 42°25'00"N 077°15'00"E. (First designated for the Ramsar List by the Soviet Union in 1976, added to the Montreux Record, 4 July 1990.) UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The second largest saline lake in the world, Issyk-Kul is fed by over 80 streams and minor channels, but has no outflow. The name means "hot lake" because, despite its high altitude (1609m), the lake itself never freezes over – the average water temperature is 22° C. The site is of primary importance as a wintering site for migratory waterbirds (up to 70,000 birds recorded annually). Notable waterbird species include the endangered White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*). The lake is home to 28 fish species of which 7 are found nowhere else in the world. The silt from the lake and the hot springs at Aksu are thought to have medicinal properties, which has led to the development and expansion of health resorts along its shore. Ramsar site no. 1231 (formerly Ramsar site no. 109). Most recent RIS information: 2013.