

IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS OF NEPAL (IBAs)

Educational Kit Series by Wetland Friends of Nepal 2006

What is an Important Bird Area (IBA)?

Important Bird Areas are places of international significance for the conservation of birds at the global level. They are identified using standardised, internationally agreed criteria. Sites must, wherever possible, be amenable to being conserved and to being delimited from surrounding areas. Sites should be large enough to support viable populations of the species for which they are important. When selecting IBAs, the existing Protected Area Network is considered first for practical purposes. Additional sites are also identified besides protected areas and often brought onto the conservation agenda for the first time.

Characteristics of an IBA

An IBA should, as far as possible:

1. Be different in character or habitat or ornithological importance from the surrounding areas;
2. Exist as an actual or potential protected area, with or without buffer zones, or be an area which can be managed in some way for nature conservation;
3. Alone or with other sites, be a self sufficient area which provides all the requirements of the birds (that it is important for) which use it during the time they are present.

Why IBA concept emerges!

Some sites are exceptionally important for birds. Vigorous protection of the most critical sites is one important approach to conservation. These sites are carefully identified on the basis of the bird numbers and species complements they hold. They are termed as IBAs. Two or more than two IBAs form a network throughout the species' biogeographic distributions. This network is a minimum essential to ensure the survival of these species across their ranges. These sites include the best examples of the species' natural habitats. Although bird fauna defines the IBA network, its conservation would ensure the survival of a correspondingly large number of other taxa.

The IBA Directory

Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) – BirdLife International's Affiliate in Nepal has prepared the IBA Directory for Nepal. It identifies 27 sites as current IBAs and 5 potential IBAs in Nepal. They are as follows:

IBAs	Status	Altitude and zone	Area and Location
Annapurna Conservation Area	Protected	790-8091m; tropical to nival	762,900ha, 28°32'N/84°00'E; Kaski, Lamjung and Manang districts of Gandaki zone; Myagdi and Mustang districts of Dhawalagiri Zone
Barandabhar Forests and Wetlands	Partially protected, includes a Ramsar Site	150-400m; tropical	12300ha, 27° 40'N/84° 10'E; Chitwan district of Narayani Zone
Royal Bardia National Park	Protected	152-1441m; tropical and subtropical	96,800ha, 28° 28'N/81° 28'E; Bardia district of Bheri Zone
Royal Chitwan National Park	Protected	100-815m; tropical	93,200ha, 27° 28'N/84° 20'E; Chitwan and Makwanpur districts of Narayani
Dang Deukhuri Foothill Forests and West Rapti Wetlands	Unprotected	200-900m; tropical	150,000ha, 28° 00'N/82° 25'E; Dang Deukhuri of Rapti Zone; Banke of Bheri Zone and Kapilvastu district of Lumbini Zone
Dharan Forests	Unprotected	100-1300m; tropical and subtropical	50,000ha, 26° 49'N/87° 17'E; Sunsari and Morang districts of Koshi Zone
Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve	Protected	2000-7246m; Temperate to nival	132,500ha; 28° 36'N/83° 00'E; Myagdi and Baglung districts of Dhawalagiri Zone and Rukum district of Rapti Zone
Ghodaghodi Lake Complex	Ramsar Site, not protected	200-250m; tropical	5000ha; 28° 41'N/80° 56'E; Kailali district of Seti Zone
Jagdishpur Reservoir	Ramsar Site, not protected	197m; tropical	225ha; 27° 35'N/83° 05'E; Kapilvastu district of Lumbini Zone
Kanchenjunga Conservation Area	Protected	1200-8567m; subtropical to nival	203,500ha; 27° 42'N/88° 08'E; Taplejung district of Mechi Zone
Khaptad National Park	Protected	1250-3300m; subtropical to sub-alpine	22,500ha; 29° 22'N/81° 07'E; Bajhang, Bajura, Achham and Doti districts of Seti Zone
Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve and Koshi Barrage	Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve: protected; Koshi Barrage: unprotected; First Ramsar Site of Nepal.	75-81m; tropical	Koshi Tappu 17,500ha; 26° 35'N/87° 05'E; Koshi Barrage 3,500ha; 26° 36'N/87° 03'E; Sunsari of Koshi Zone and Saptari and Udaypur districts of Sagarmatha Zone
Langtang National Park	Protected	1300-7245m; subtropical to nival	171,000ha; 28° 10'N/85° 38'E; Rasuwa, Nuwakot and Sindhupalchok districts of Bagmati Zone
Farmlands in Lumbini Area	100ha protected; the remainder unprotected	95-1219m; tropical and subtropical	141,367ha; 27° 29'N/83° 17'E; Rupandehi and Kapilvastu districts of Lumbini Zone
Mai Valley Forests	Unprotected	70-3050m; tropical to sub-alpine	30,000ha; 26° 40'N-27° 05'N/87° 41'E-88° 10'E; Ilam and Jhapa districts of Mechi Zone
Makalu Barun National Park	Protected	435-8463m; tropical to nival	150,000ha; 27° 45'N/87° 00'E; Shangkhuwasabha and Bhojpur districts of Koshi Zone
Nawalparasi Forests	Unprotected	350m; tropical	4,000ha; 27° 33'N/83° 00'E; Nawalparasi District of Lumbini Zone
Parsa Wildlife Reserve	Protected	200-950m; tropical	49,900ha; 27° 28'N/84° 20'E; Makawanpur, Chitwan, Bara and Parsa districts of Narayani Zone
Phulchoki Mountain Forests	Unprotected	1400-2800m; subtropical to temperate	5,000ha; 27° 37'N/85° 16'E; Lalitpur and Kabhrepalandhok districts of Bagmati Zone
Rampur Valley	Unprotected	400m; tropical	3,000ha; 27° 51'N/83° 54'E; Palpa and Syangja Districts of Lumbini and Gandaki Zones
Rara National Park	Protected	2800-4048m; temperate to alpine	10,600ha; 29° 34'N/82° 05'E; Mugu and Jumla districts of Kamali Zone

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The IBA directory contd...

Sagarmatha (Everest) National Park	Protected	2845-8848m; temperate to nival	114800ha; 27° 56'N/86° 48'E; Solukhumbu district of Sagarmatha Zone
Shey-Phoksundo National Park	Protected	2200-6883m; temperate to nival	355,500ha; 29° 26'N/82° 56'E; Dolpa and Mugu districts of Karnali Zone
Shivapuri National Park	Protected	1400-2700m; subtropical to temperate	11200ha; 27° 48'N/85° 20'E; Kathmandu district of Bagmati Zone
Royal Sukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve	Protected	150-600m; tropical	30,500ha; 28° 53'N/80° 11'E; Kanchanpur district of Mahakali Zone
Tamur Valley and Watershed	Unprotected	100-3800m; tropical to sub-alpine	20,000ha; 26° 55'N/87° 10'E; Dhankuta district of Koshi Zone and Taplejung district of Mechi Zone
Urlabari Forest Groves	Unprotected	75m; tropical	100ha; 26° 39'N/87° 36'E; Morang District of Koshi Zone

Source: Modified from Baral and Inskipp 2001

Note: The classification of bio-climatic zones (in the third column of table) is based on altitudinal variation described by Dobremez 1976: Tropical (below 1,000m altitude), Subtropical (1,000 to 2,000m altitude), Temperate (2,000 to 3,000m altitude), Sub-alpine (3,000 to 4,000m altitude), Alpine (4,000 to 5,000m altitude) and Nival (above 5,000m altitude).

Further readings

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