

Diversity and conservation status of water birds at Upper lake, Bhopal - A Ramsar site in central India

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ABSTRACT:

Wetlands support considerable biodiversity including water birds. In central India, the Upper lake of Bhopal is designated as a Ramsar site and IBA status concerning to its diverse avifauna. At present, a detailed study regarding avian diversity of entire Upper lake is lacking. Considering the increasing population pressure leading to land use changes in immediate catchment of Upper lake and affecting the lake ecology, such monitoring is essential. The present work has been carried out from June 2010 to June 2012. Monthly observations of birds were made with the aim to identify and enlist various species of water birds of Upper lake. Total 68 species of water birds belonging to 14 families are reported with Anatidae as the most dominating family with 16 species. Of these, 43 species were migratory and 25 species were residents. Also, 11 important species in terms of their conservation status are reported. Of these, eight species of Near Threatened status, two species of Vulnerable status and one species of Endangered status are reported. The presence of internationally important birds, migratory, local migratory and resident species of birds in this area indicates the importance of Upper Lake as a year round habitat for water birds. The increasing human population in the area is placing strain on this valuable inland freshwater resource and the related avifauna and thus more conservation efforts are desperately needed.

Keywords:

Upper lake, Wetland, Water birds, Diversity, Conservation status.