

About Beeshazaar Lakes

Beeshazaar and Associated Lakes lie in the bufferzone of Chitwan National Park, a World Heritage Site, Central, Nepal. This wetlands area is part of Bharandabhar biological corridor, is of international importance. This is a typical oxbow lake system of the sub-tropical inner terai Nepal, serves as a linkage between Chitwan National Park in the South and Mahabharat hills up to Annapurna mountain range in the North. This lake has been listed in Ramsar site since 2003.

The lake is 7.2 km south of East-West highway, provides excellent habitat conditions as water hole and corridor for endangered and rare wild animals. The forested wetland area is a biodiversity rich area, an Important Bird Area (IBA) because of its rich avifaunal diversity which include 273 species of birds, 26 mammal species, 25 species of fishes, 18 species of herpetofauna, 37 species of insects and 131 species of plants. The globally threatened and endangered fauna include critically endangered White-rumped Vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*), endangered royal Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris*), greater one-horned rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), vulnerable smooth coated otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*), marsh crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*), sloth bear (*Melalurus ursinus*), Lesser Adjutant Stork (*Leptotilos javanicus*) ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*).

The terrestrial vegetation is dominated by Sal (*Shorea robusta*) forest in association with Saaj (*Terminalia tomentosa*), Bot Dhainyaro (*Lagerstroemia parviflora*), Simal (*Bombax ceiba*), Satisal (*Dalbergia latifolia*). The wetland vegetation consists of Common Reed (*Phragmites karka*), Sedge (*Cyperus* sp.), water hyacinth (*Echornia crassipes*), water cabbage (*Pistia* spp.) water chestnut (*Trapa bispinosa*) are main free floating aquatic vegetations.

The surrounding forest fringe area is populated by nearly 100,000 people, who manage the part of Bharandabhar corridor as community forests and harvest fuel wood, fodder and timber for local use in an annual ascribed harvesting scheme. They actively take part in managing the wetlands by removing sediments and invasive species from the lakes and restoring forest for the sustained use. For overall protection and stringent law enforcement Beeshazaar and Associated Lakes, Nepal Army Posts have been established at multiple sites i.e. in Beeshazaar Lake, Bharadabhar post and Dudhaura Post. For the conservation and management of Beeshazaar and Associated Lakes, a site management plan has been approved by Government of Nepal.

Community based Beeshazaar and Associated Lakes Conservation

Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Chitwan National Park and National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), with a view to strengthen community involvement in the conservation of wetlands have initiated endeavors to empower communities in wetland based livelihood options and their institutional capacity building. We believe that welfare of our communities is intricately linked to our pristine wetlands.

Wetland Inventory

To update the biodiversity status of Beeshazaar and Associated Lakes Areas, inventory of animals and plants have been initiated. This ongoing survey is expected to upgrade the earlier records to ensure the integrated management of wetland resources, ecosystem processes, functions and services.

Marsh Crocodile release program

On the occasion of National Wildlife Week- 2072, three marsh crocodiles (*Crocodylus palustris*) were released at Beeshazaar Lake on august presence of officers from Chitwan National Park, ex-warden and expert member of Beeshazaar Lake Management Board (BLMB), Mr. Rampreet Yadav, community members, teachers and students from various schools. Mr. Yadav spoke about the importance and role of wetlands in maintaining the ecological functions and services. This event provided hands on experience to students on the biology and behavior of marsh crocodile in the field.