

# WATER BIRDS

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## OF LOKTAK LAKE



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Centre for Conservation of  
Nature & Cultivation of Science (CCNCS)

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### Water Birds of Loktak Lake



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# Imprint

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Copies of this book will be available from the office of  
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Manipur, India







## Preface

This book is the result of passionate and tireless efforts of bird enthusiasts, CCNCS and LDA for conservation of waterbirds in Loktak Lake and forms a tool to create awareness about this miracle of nature. It presents photographs of water birds in the natural environment of Loktak Lake and interesting information on scientific, ecological, and cultural significance attempting to remind that they are as much a part of our life and well being. It also attempts to showcase the heritage and the status of waterbirds in Loktak Lake and the pressing need for conservation efforts.

We take enormous pleasure in inviting you to go through the book and hope that it will evoke love and instil you the yearning to act for conservation of this wealth of nature for future generations.

R.K. Birjat  
Ngangom Sanaoba





## Message

The global movement for conservation of wetlands, in the form of Ramsar Convention, is closely linked with the conservation of waterfowl. The conservation efforts of Loktak Lake in the past lacked this vital link in the initial stages though there has been efforts in small measures on and off. This book, primarily designed as a awareness material, attempts to make a humble beginning to meet the greater challenges ahead. I hope that the book will be able to create awareness about this precious natural asset and elevate the desire of the reader for conservation actions.

Thounaojam Ibobi Singh  
Project Director  
Loktak Development Authority



## Loktak Lake and Water birds

Loktak Lake is famed world over for its unique and rich biodiversity. Regarded as the cradle of the ancient Moirang civilization, its eminence in the folklores depicts the romance and inspirational power generations after generations.

"Bowl of Gold, Fountain of Eternity", as it is referred to with reverence, the lake has been the source of life and livelihoods of the people of Manipur, a tiny State in the northeastern fringe of India. Its global importance was acknowledged by designating it as a Ramsar site in 1990. Geographically. The lake falls under the Irrawaddy River Basin, marvelled for its unparalleled biodiversity. At 768.5 meters above mean sea level, the lake forms the major part of a flood plain wetland regime that dominates the landscape of the southern part of Imphal valley amid the unending maze of mountains where the Himalayas meet the Arakan mountain ranges.

The inseparable union of the lake and the water birds finds space in the romance of local folklores. Ironically, regretful accounts of shooting water birds as game in large numbers by British officers during the colonial days tell us about the level of abundance when the lake was much closer to its pristine state. The proximity of Loktak Lake to the Central Asian Flyway and East Asian Flyway make it all the more important in the life cycle of a large array of wintering birds.

As records have it, the lake supported 57 water fowl species which have dwindled to 21 in recent times. Such disastrous state may be attributed to relentless human actions in pursuit of development. In fact the ecosystem integrity is at risk and may continue to be so if we remain indifferent.

Conservation will be successful only when people from all walks of life start putting efforts in whatever ways they can. After all we owe it to our children to return the natural capital that we have borrowed from them.



## Bird Watching Tour

Let us take a water bird watching tour through a series of photographs earnestly taken in the natural environment of Loktak Lake for a lasting imprint in our memories. We will find only those species which have visited the lake in recent times. The gifts of nature include the following groups,

Ducks and Geese

Darters and Cormorants

Gulls and Terns

Grebes

Storks and Ibises

Coots and Rails

Jacanas

Heros , Egrets, and Bitterns

Plovers, Lapwings, Snipes & Sandpipers





## Ducks and Geese

Most conspicuous water birds which can be easily recognized than any other species. Long distance flyers by nature, they provide the most tangible example of the phenomenon of bird migration. Males of most species display distinct features different from females. They forage by dabbling, diving and grazing.

## Lesser Whistling Duck

Scientific Name: *Dendrocygna javanica* (Horsfield, 1821)

Local Name: *Tinge Macha*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



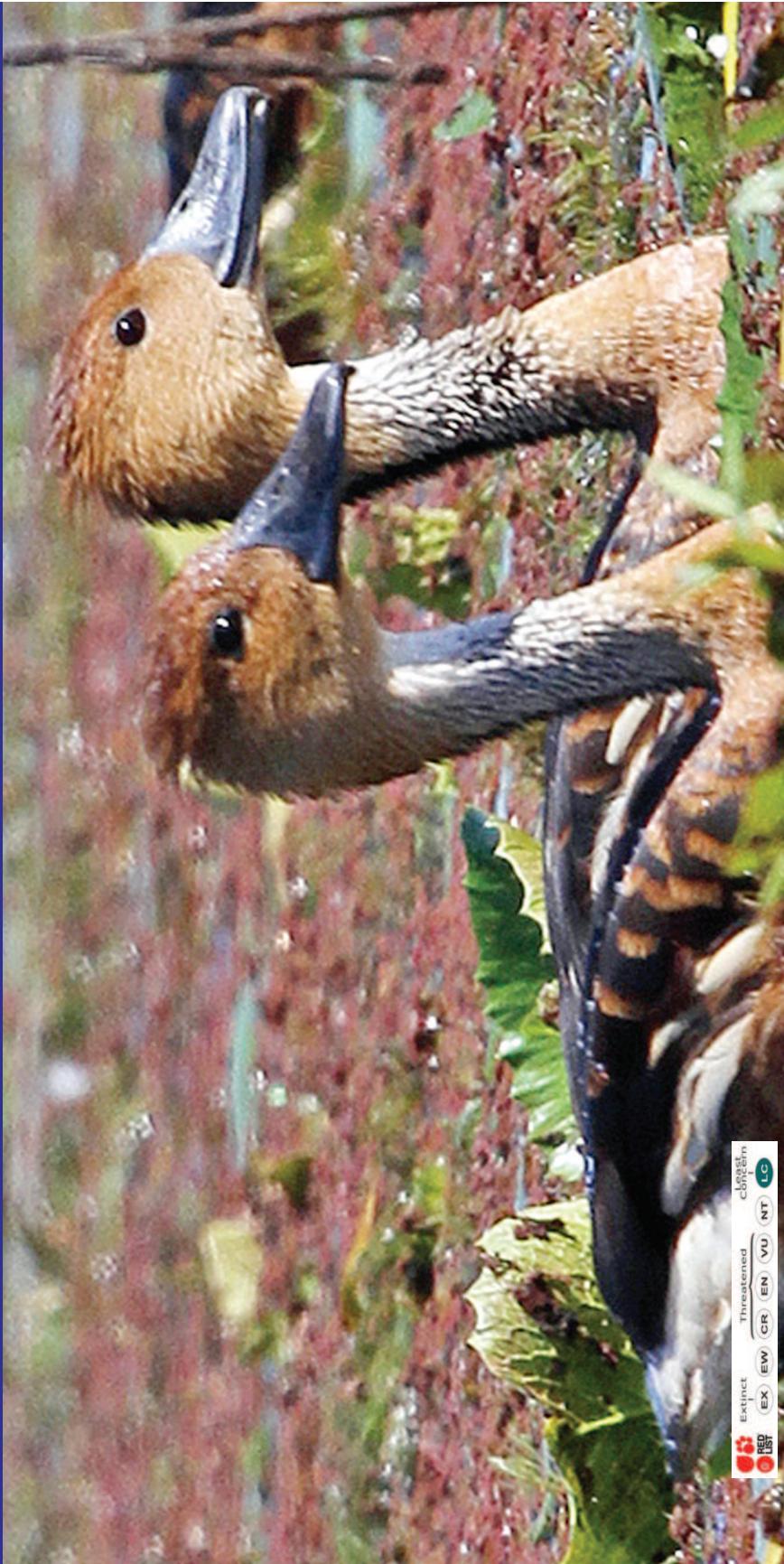
Loktak Lake comes alive when a flock of lesser whistling ducks takes off from the water whistling in unison. They are the most abundant duck species in Loktak lake and easily sighted in most part of the lake. Resident and locally breeding. Reported as human friendly as they can be domesticated. Qualifies the lake as a Ramsar Site as their population in the Lake exceeds 1% of the global population.

## Large Whistling Duck

Scientific Name: *Dendrocygna bicolor* (Vieillot, 1816)

Local Name: *Tingee Achouba*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critical
EX	CR	CR
EW	EN	EN
EN	VU	VU

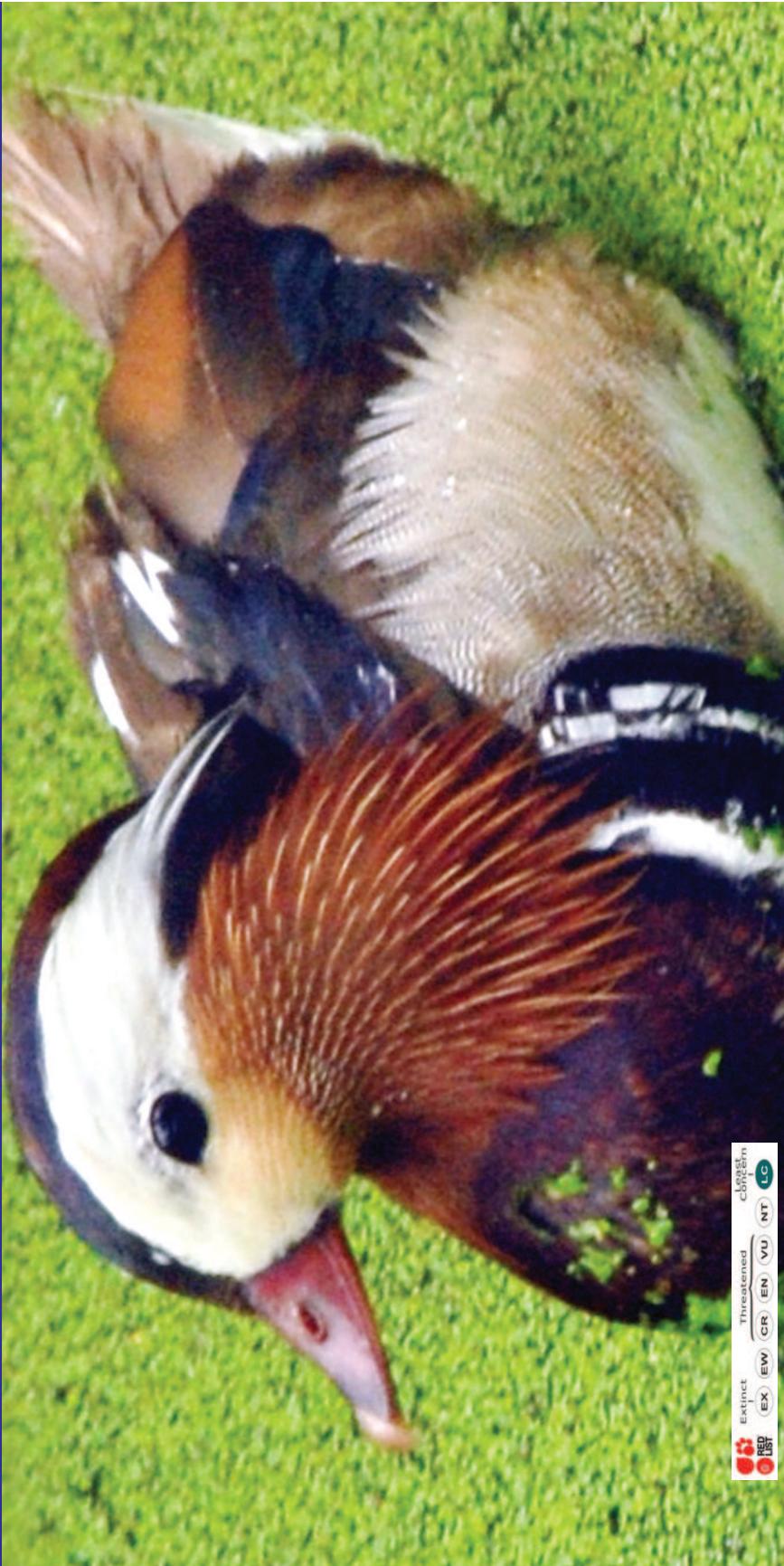
It is extremely difficult to distinguish them from lesser whistling ducks and can be included among the rarest water bird species in Loktak Lake. Nearest breeding site has been reported in the Daula-Khal Punji area of Jiribam, Manipur.

## Mandarin Duck

Scientific Name: *Aix galericulata* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Sana Nganu*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Perhaps the rarest waterbird species in Loktak Lake, they were sighted for the first time recently in Yawa Lamjao within Loktak Lake. Mandarin duck admired as an Asian symbol of eternal love and fidelity as the pairs are said to be lifelong. Most incredible of all the ducks in looks, the males display a large white crescent above the eyes, bills are red and they have whiskers against the reddish face. Two white bars against the purple breast adds to the glittery. The flanks are ruddy with two spectacular orange "sails" at the back.

## Gadwall

Scientific Name: *Anas strepera* ( Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Ngamu Thoidingnum*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critical
EX	EW	CR
●	●	●
EN	VU	NT

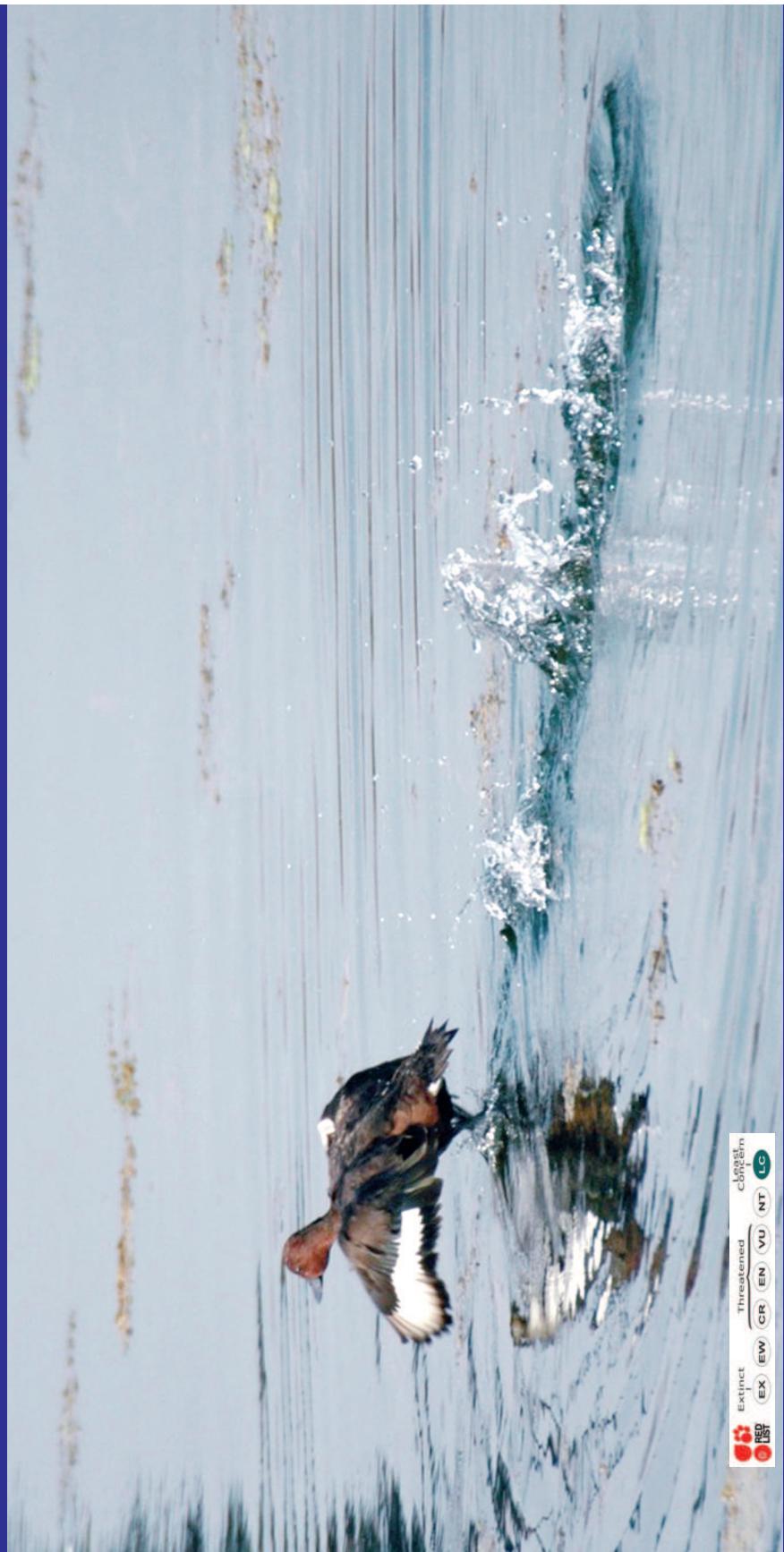
With the onset of winter, the mustard flowers in full bloom herald the arrival of this migratory bird in large numbers. As the local name implies it exudes the aroma of sesamum. They are found mostly in the north-western part of the lake.

## Common Pochard

Scientific Name: *Aythya ferina* ( Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Eruppi Chama*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Chogen
EX	CR	EN
	(VU)	NT
		LC

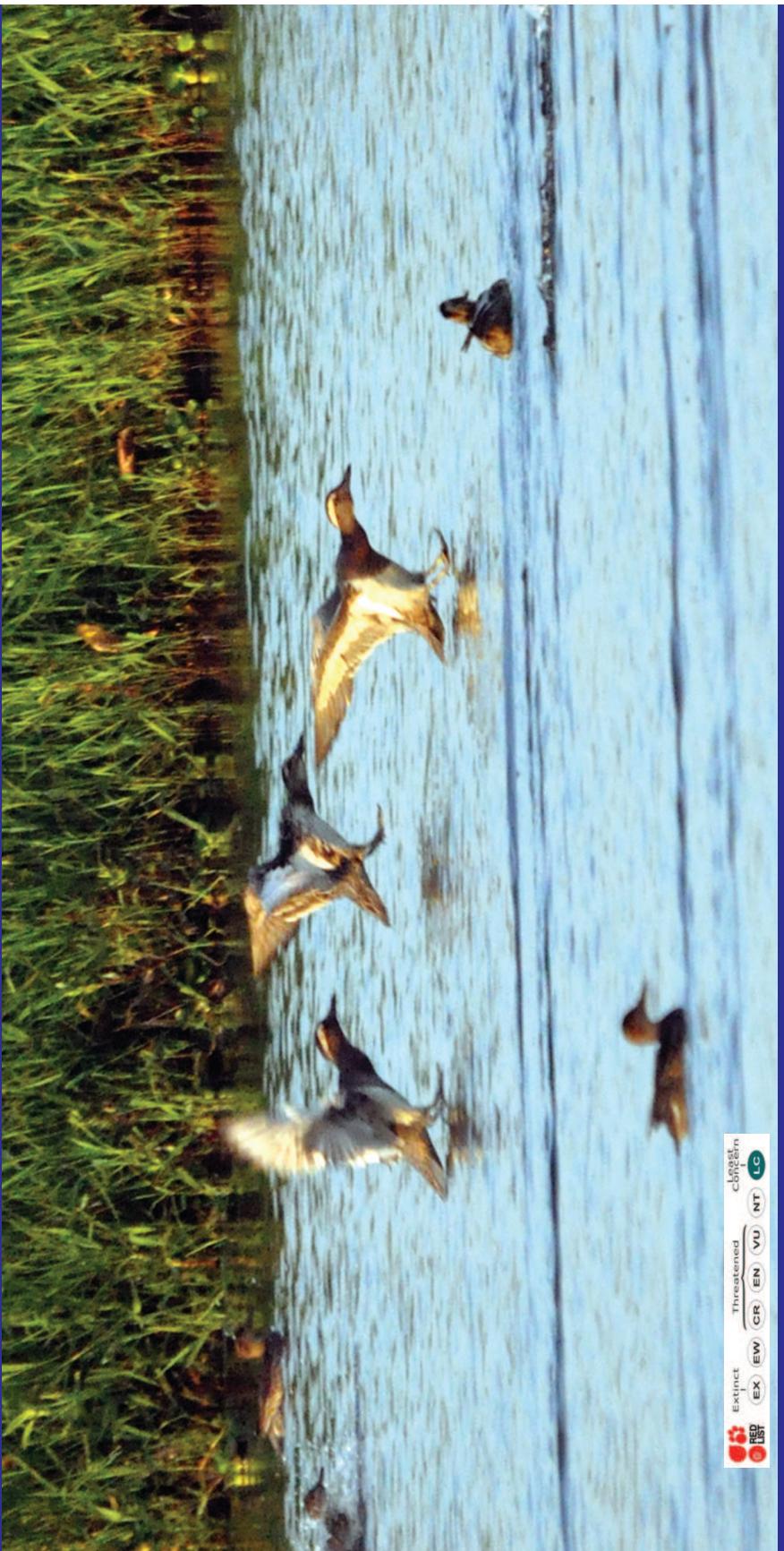
Reported to have become nocturnal in this lake under duress as they are severely hunted. These wintering birds are excellent divers.

## Garganey

Scientific Name: *Anas querquedula* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: Surit Angouba

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Extinct in the Wild	EW	CR	EN	VU	NT	LC	Careless
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Loktak Lake seems to offer a good habitat for them as they stay much longer than most other wintering birds. Uncommon and rare as they visit in small numbers.

## Common Teal

Scientific Name: *Anas crecca crecca* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Surit*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critical
EX	CR	VU
EW	EN	NT
		LC

Recorded as the most hunted species during colonial times. They arrive in batches peaking during November and leave again in batches with the onset of summer.

## Cotton Teal

Scientific Name: *Nettapus coromantianus* (Gmelin, 1789)

Local Name: Nganu Pedakot

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Extinct in the Wild	EW	CR	EN	VU	NT	LC	Critical
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Cotton Teal, also known as pygmy goose, is the smallest duck species. Though sighted in very small numbers, they breed locally adding to the ecological significance of this wetland.

## Northern Pintail

Scientific Name: *Anas acuta* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Meitungnga*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critical
EX	CR	EN
EW	VU	NT
EW	EN	LC

Big and beautiful, they have a unique pin like tail as the name indicates. Juveniles of this wintering bird stay longer till mid summer. In recent times very few have been sighted specifically in the north western part of the lake.

## Northern Shoveller

Scientific Name: *Anas clypeata* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Ngnau Khara*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critically Endangered
EX	CR	CR
EW	EN	EN
EN	VU	VU
NT	LC	LC

Got their name from the shovel like beaks. Only a few of these lazy looking birds have been recorded in Loktak Lake. Said to be slow flyers at 40-50 km/hr.

## Eurasian Wigeon

Scientific Name: *Anas penelope* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Thangongmaan*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	EW	CR	EN	VU	NT	LC
Common						

Common and widespread in Loktak Lake, these wintering birds arrive by mid October and leave by mid March. Can be easily identified with the white stripe on the head.

## Red Crested Pochard

Scientific Name: *Netta rufina* (Pallas, 1773)

Local Name: *Thoidingnum Kokangangbi*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake.



Extinct	Extinct in the Wild	EW	CR	EN	VU	NT	LC
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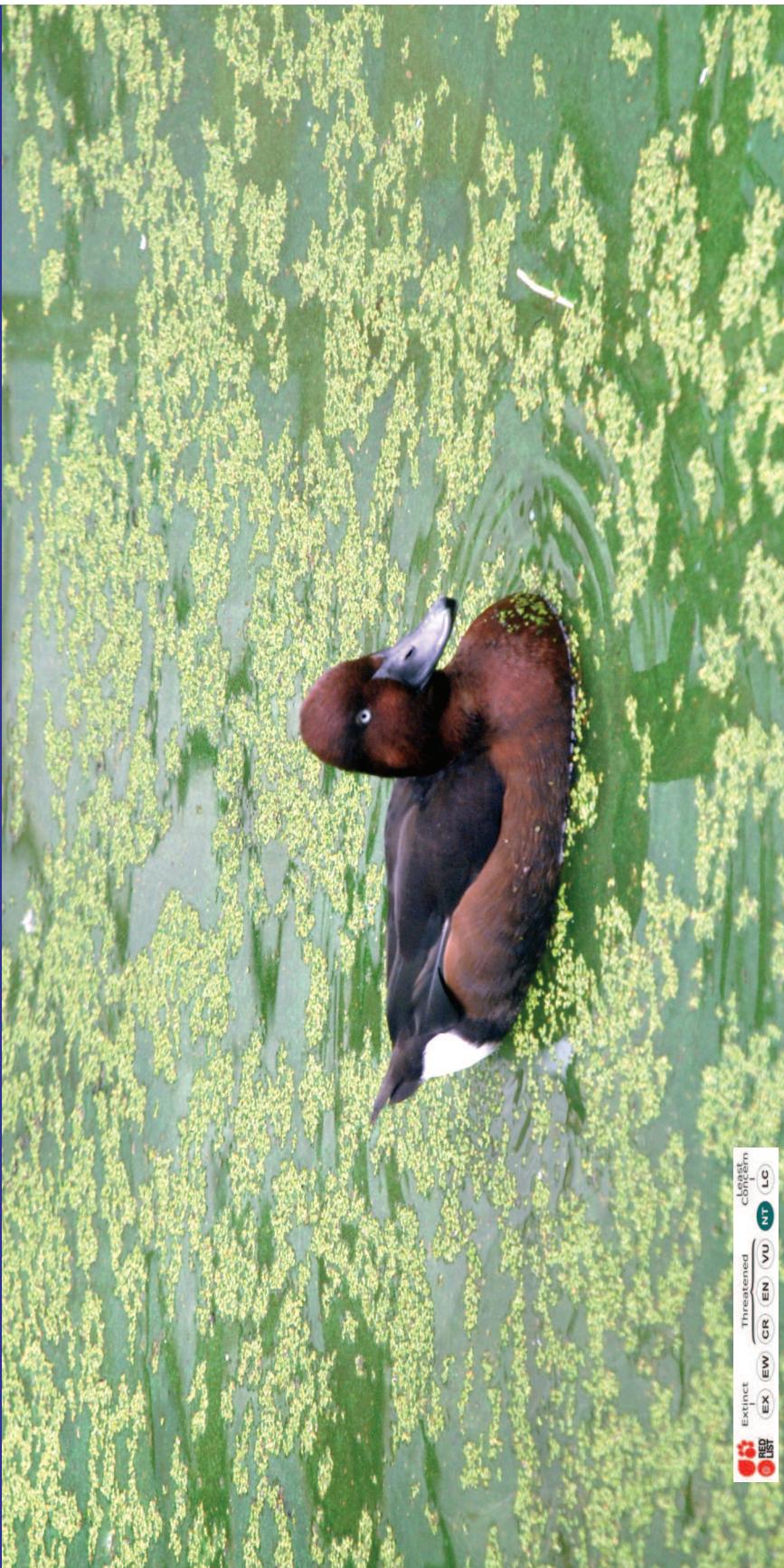
Quite rare in Loktak Lake. Only a few have been sighted in recent times in the south-eastern part of the lake. The red coloured head make them distinctively beautiful.

## White Eyed Pochard

Scientific Name: *Aythya nyroca* (Guldenstadt, 1770)

Local Name: *Nganu Mitngoubi*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



This species is near threatened (NT) as per IUCN Red list though a good number has been sighted in Loktak lake. Said to be one of the duck species hardest hit by climate change impacts as per reports of Birdlife International.

## Tufted Pochard

Scientific Name: *Aythya fuligula* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Nganu Sa-daang*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critical
EX	CR	CR
EW	EN	EN
EN	VU	VU
NT	NT	NT
LC	LC	LC

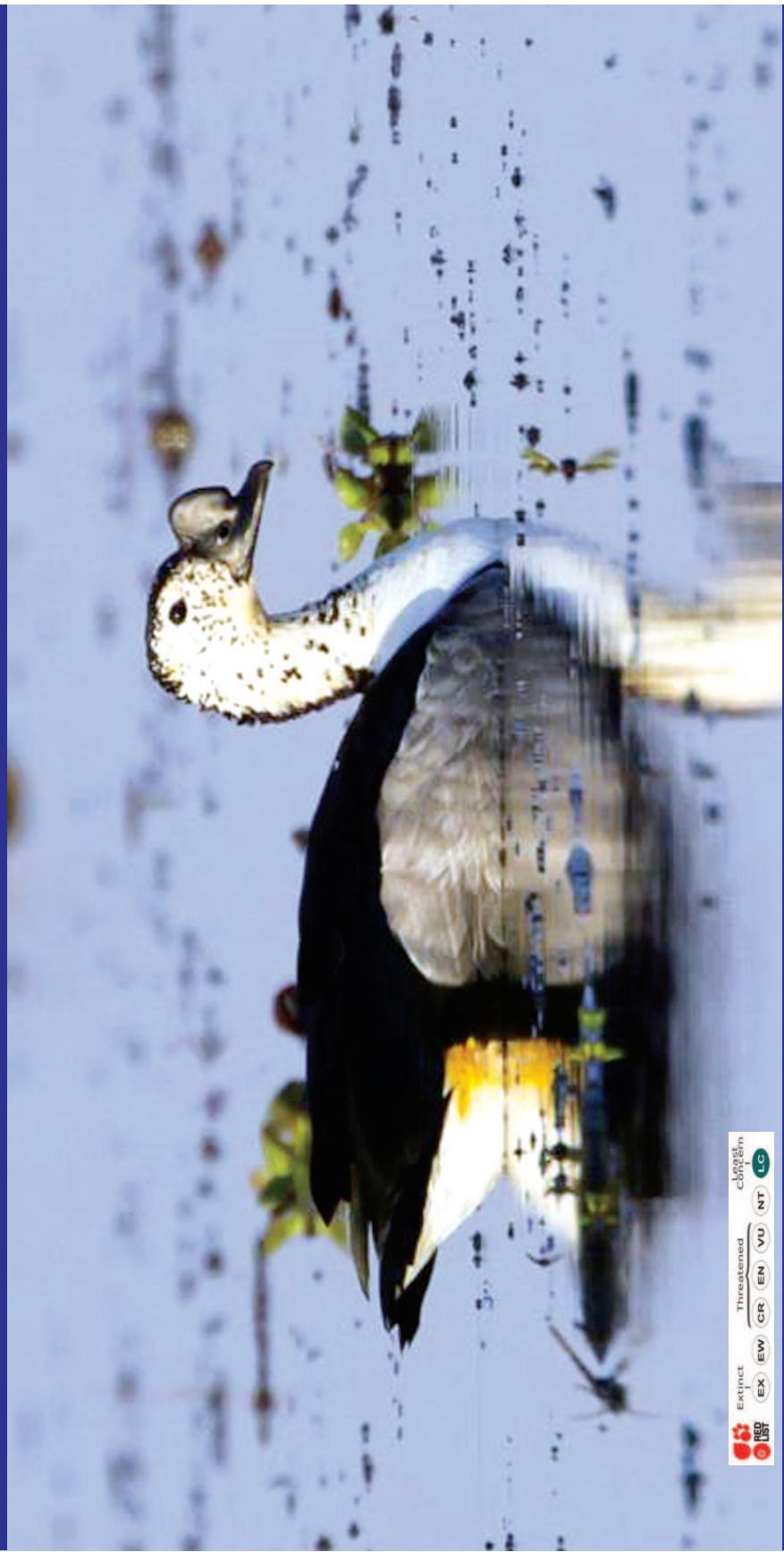
A hunted lot during colonial times, as many as 8670 Tufted Pochards were killed during 1910-32. Now visits Loktak Lake in very small numbers. Presence of a tuft on the head sets them apart from the rest of the duck species.

## Comb Duck

Scientific Name:*Sarkidiornis melanotos melanotos* (Pennant, 1769)

Local Name: *Samchet Nganu/Bilati Nganu*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Extinct in the Wild	EW	CR	EN	VU	NT	LC	Caregiver
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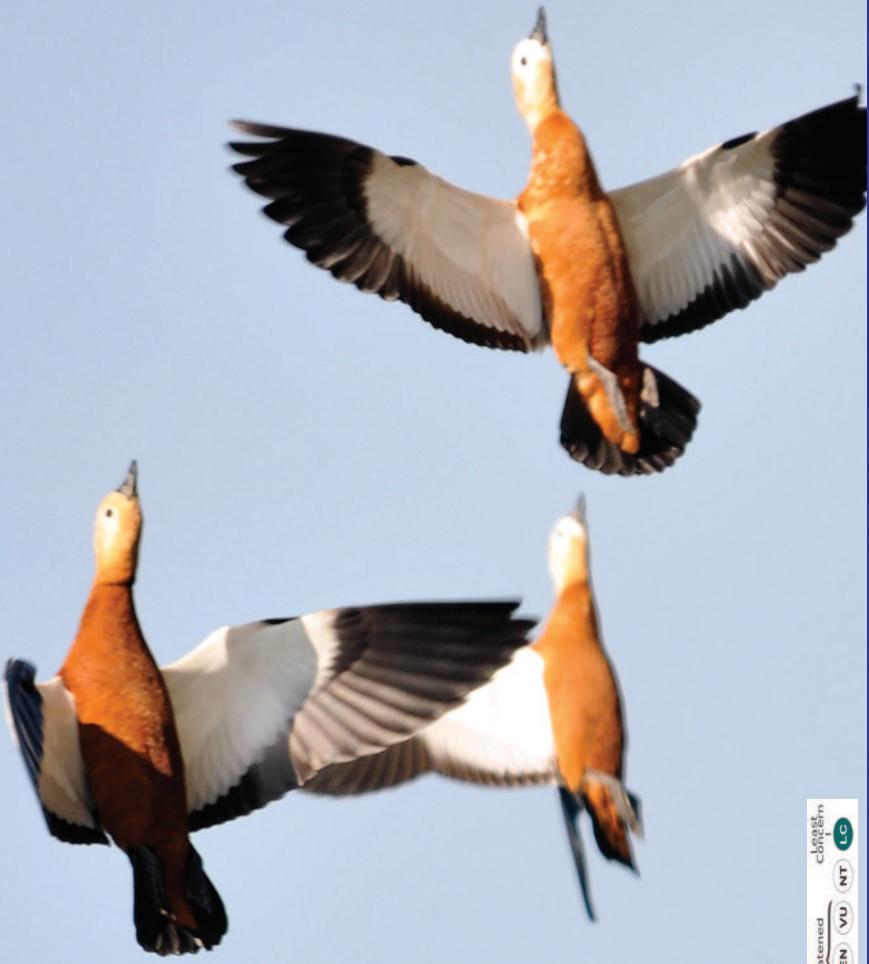
One of the rarest duck species in Loktak Lake. Sighted a single pair in 2011. Their plumage resemble a type of domesticated duck locally known as *Bilati Nganu*.

## Brahminy Shelduck

Scientific Name:*Tadorna ferruginea* (Pallas, 1764)

Local Name: Nganu Thangong

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Found in small numbers, mostly in the southern part of the lake, they are known to be long distance and high speed flyers. Radio telemetry revealed that their breeding haunt is in Mongolia. Seen mostly in pairs, they symbolise love as their inseparable bond is sung in Meitei folklores. To this day the Tangjeng villagers protect them with reverence believing them as the incarnation of a legendary couple in love.

## Spot-bill Duck

Scientific Name: *Anas poecilorhyncha poecilorhyncha* (J.R. Forster, 1781)

Local Name: Ngamu Pirel

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



LDA



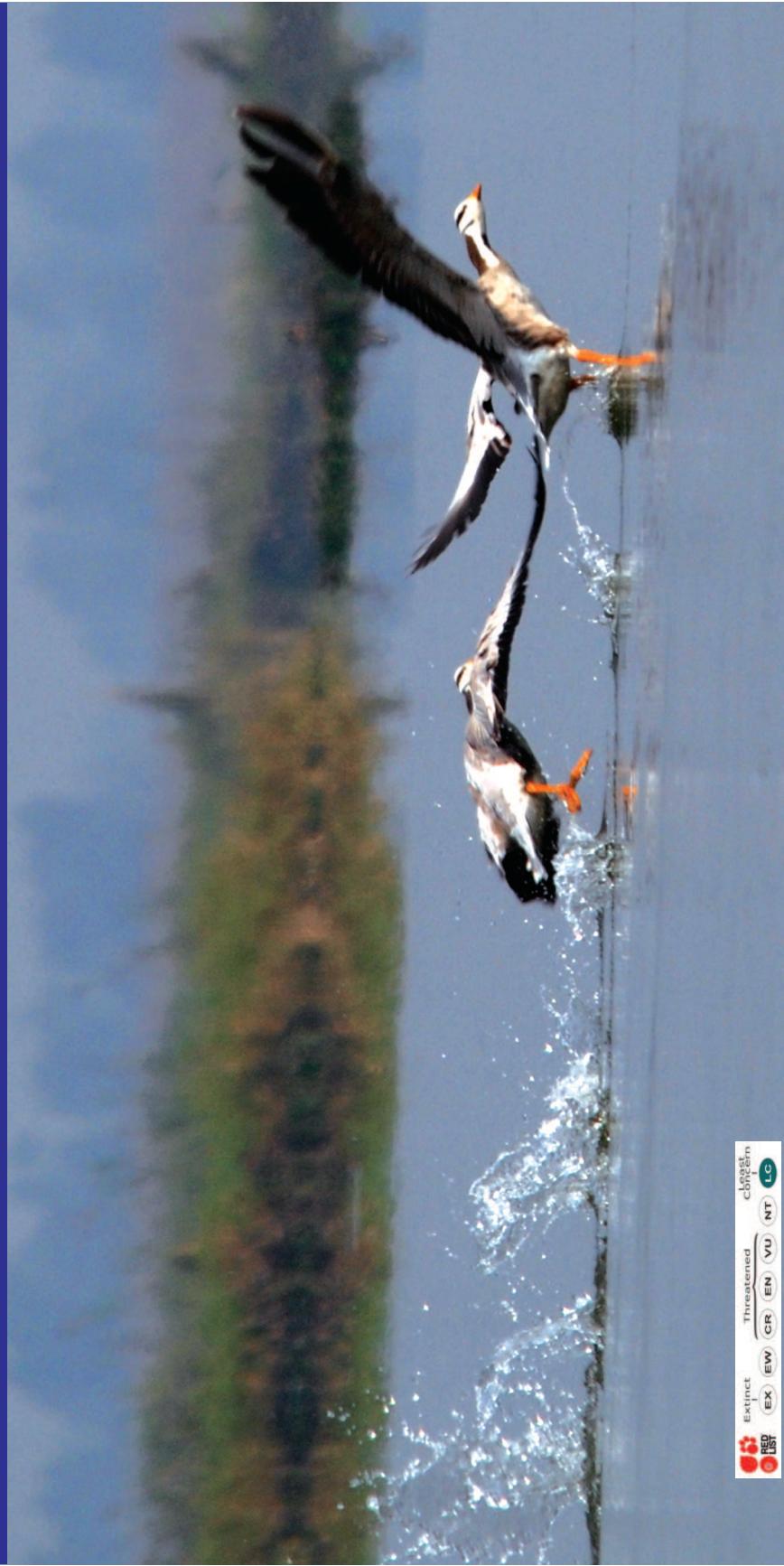
Looks elegant with long and sharp eyeshades, spotted beak and well patterned plumage. Despite being a resident bird, they are sighted in very small numbers.

## Bar-headed Goose

Scientific Name: *Anser indicus* (Latham, 1790)

Local Name: Kangsel

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



They are the largest of all the migratory birds. Though known for its high speed and long distance flights, they are slow swimmers. Earned infamy as the carrier of avian flu in recent times. Visits Loktak Lake in small numbers.

## Greylag Goose

Scientific Name: *Anser anser* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Lam kangaa*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critical
EX	CR	CR
VU	EN	EN
NT	VU	VU
LC	LC	LC

Said to be common in Loktak Lake earlier, only a few have been sighted in recent times. In J.C.Higgins's report as many as 1534 were shot down during 1910-18 by the British Officers as game. They fly in high speed and migrate considerable distances. Their stay in Loktak lake is rather short spanning from mid November to January end. They are purely herbivorous.



## Darter and Cormorants

Darter and cormorants are notorious for their prodigious appetite and depredations on fish population. They are gregarious birds, which depend solely on fish for their food. Their plumage are black and bills are compressed, slender and pointed with hooked tips in case of Cormorants and stiletto-like in darters. They have long neck and body with gular pouch while legs are short with large clawed feet united while swimming.

## Darter or Snake Bird

Scientific Name: *Anhinga melanogaster* (Pennant, 1769)

Local Name: *Ura Limman*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



LWMS



Extinct	Extinct in the Wild	Threatened	Critically Endangered
(EX)	(EW)	(EN) (VU)	(CR) (NT) (LC)

It is near threatened (NT) water bird species as per IUCN red list. As the local name indicates, they have a snake like slender neck and bill capable of swallowing fish seemingly much too large. They are resident.

## Great Cormorants

Scientific Name: *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Ura-pongai*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



A resident bird species in conflict with local fish farmers, they are probably the best fish hunters with a peculiar action chasing fish under water swaying neck back and forth. Interestingly, cormorants are often deployed by fishers in Malaysia, China, Indonesia and even in Indian States of Assam and Bengal for catching fish. Unfortunately, local fish farmers hunted them to near extinction as they forage exploitatively in fish farms and the issue lingers.

## Little Cormorants

Scientific Name: *Phalacrocorax niger* (Vieillot, 1817)

Local Name: *Ura Khondon*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critical
EX	CR	CR
EW	EN	EN
EN	VU	VU
NT	LC	LC

They are sensitive to water level fluctuations as local migration and movements have been observed with changing water levels in the lake. In the feverish jostling during the communal hunts, in which densely packed rabbles participate, these resident birds often leap-frog over one other in their eagerness to plunge after a shoal of fish.



## Gulls and Terns

Gulls are fairly heavy bodied birds with longish stout bills hooked at tip while terns are lighter and have streamlined body with thinner and pointed bills. Gulls float on water to pick up prey while terns dive into water to grab fish. Terns have long pointed wings while gulls have broad wings.

## **Black headed Gull**

Scientific Name: *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* (Linnaeus, 1766)

Local Name: *Touthra Kokmubi*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Extinct in the Wild	EW	CR	EN	VU	NT	LC	Carefully Monitored
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Once a regular visitor, this wintering bird was re-sighted again in 2011 after a gap of few years.  
When seen from a distance a flock of Black Headed Gull appears as an iceberg.

## Brown-headed Gull

Scientific Name: *Larus brunnicephalus* (Jerdon, 1850)

Local Name: *Touthra Kokngangbi*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



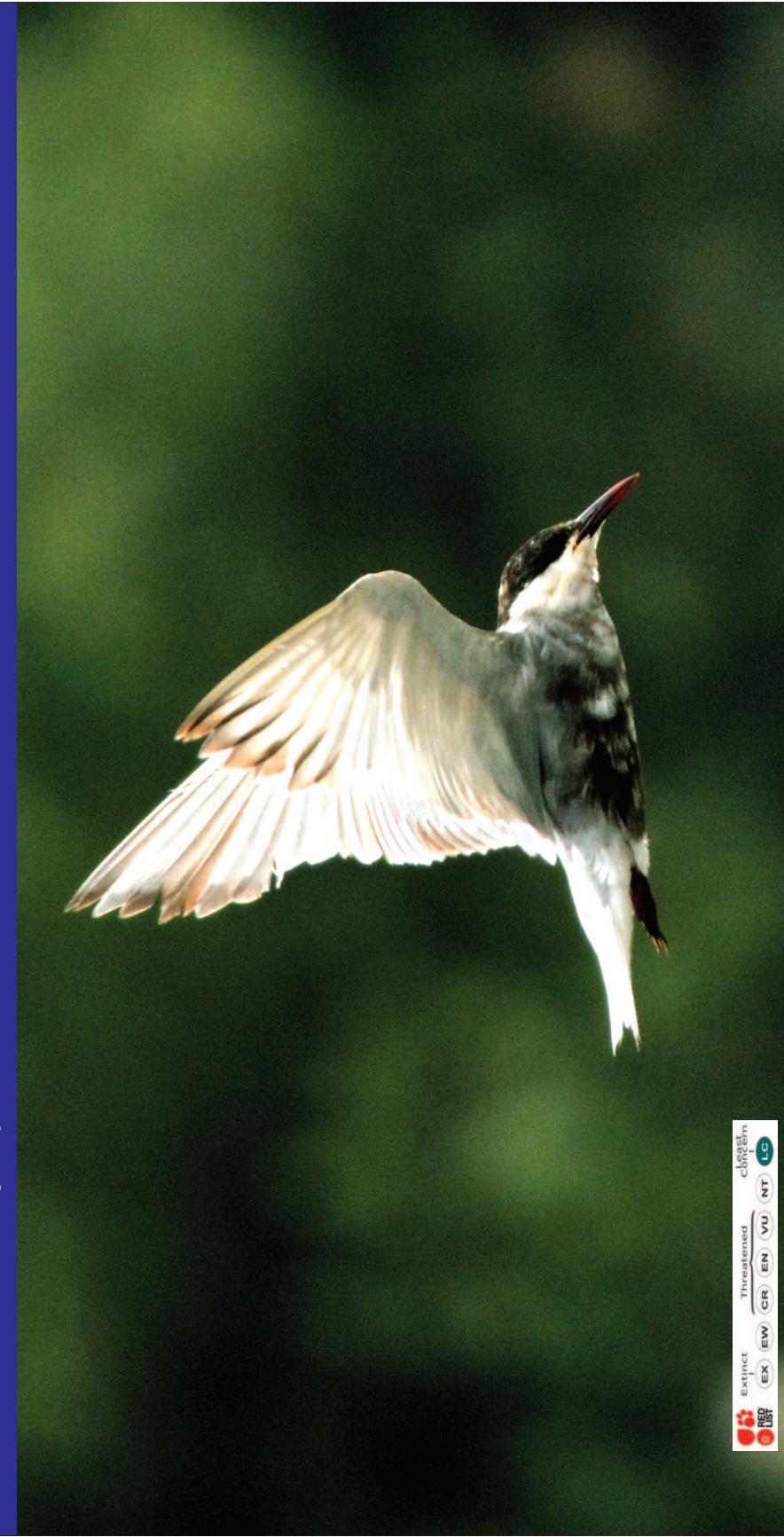
Difficult to distinguish between Black Headed Gull. This regular winter visitor also could not be seen for some seasons before getting re sighted again in 2011. They love to forage in open water spaces.

## Indian Whiskered Terns

Scientific Name: *Chlidonias hybridus* (Pallas, 1811)

Local Name: *Pat Sekpi Kojombi*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



This bat like bird species, previously believed to be a winter visitor in Loktak Lake, has been now confirmed as resident. Can be seen mostly during rainy seasons.



## Grebes

With sleek plumage, we find different species in varying sizes. They are excellent swimmers and divers. Though they can run for a short distance, they often trip as their legs are positioned at the far end of the body. They feed on small fish, crustaceans and insects.

## Little Grebe

Scientific Name: *Tachybaptus ruficollis* (Pallas, 1764)

Local Name: *Uthit/Urum*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Extinct in the Wild	Vulnerable	Threatened	Critically Endangered

The smallest waterbird species in Loktak, also called Dabchick, this resident bird is rare and migrates locally depending on the water regime of the lake. With extraordinary diving skills, they disappear smoothly into water without leaving a ripple.

## Great Crested Grebe

Scientific Name: *Podiceps cristatus* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Kumphengbi/Kumjengbi*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



LWMS



A rare wintering bird sighted in Loktak lake after about 3 decades. A tail less conspicuous waterbird well known for their elaborate courtship displays where pairs raise and shake their heads and approach each other with weeds in their bills. When alarmed, it disappears with a little leap and diving under water, resurfacing and diving again until they gain safe distance.



## Storks and Ibises

Storks are large wading birds with long and strong legs, wings, neck, and bills. They feed on snails, frogs and other small animals. The Ibises are medium-sized wading birds often seen in shoreline and marsh areas. Their bills are down-curved. They usually feed in groups, probing mud for food. Most species nest in trees.

## Asian Open-Bill Stork

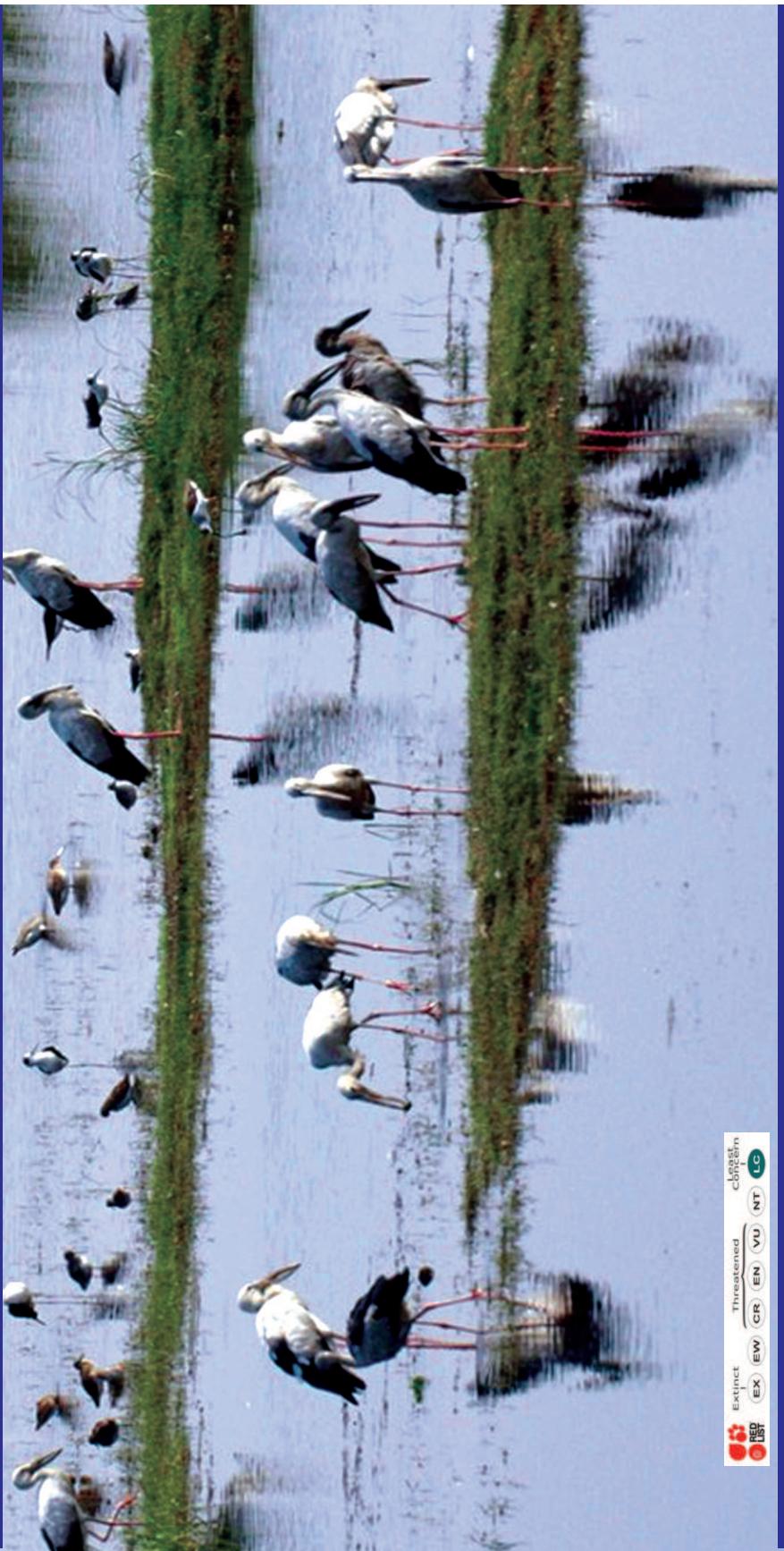
Scientific Name: *Anastomus oscitans* (Boddaert, 1783)

Local Name: *Tharoichabi*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



LWMS



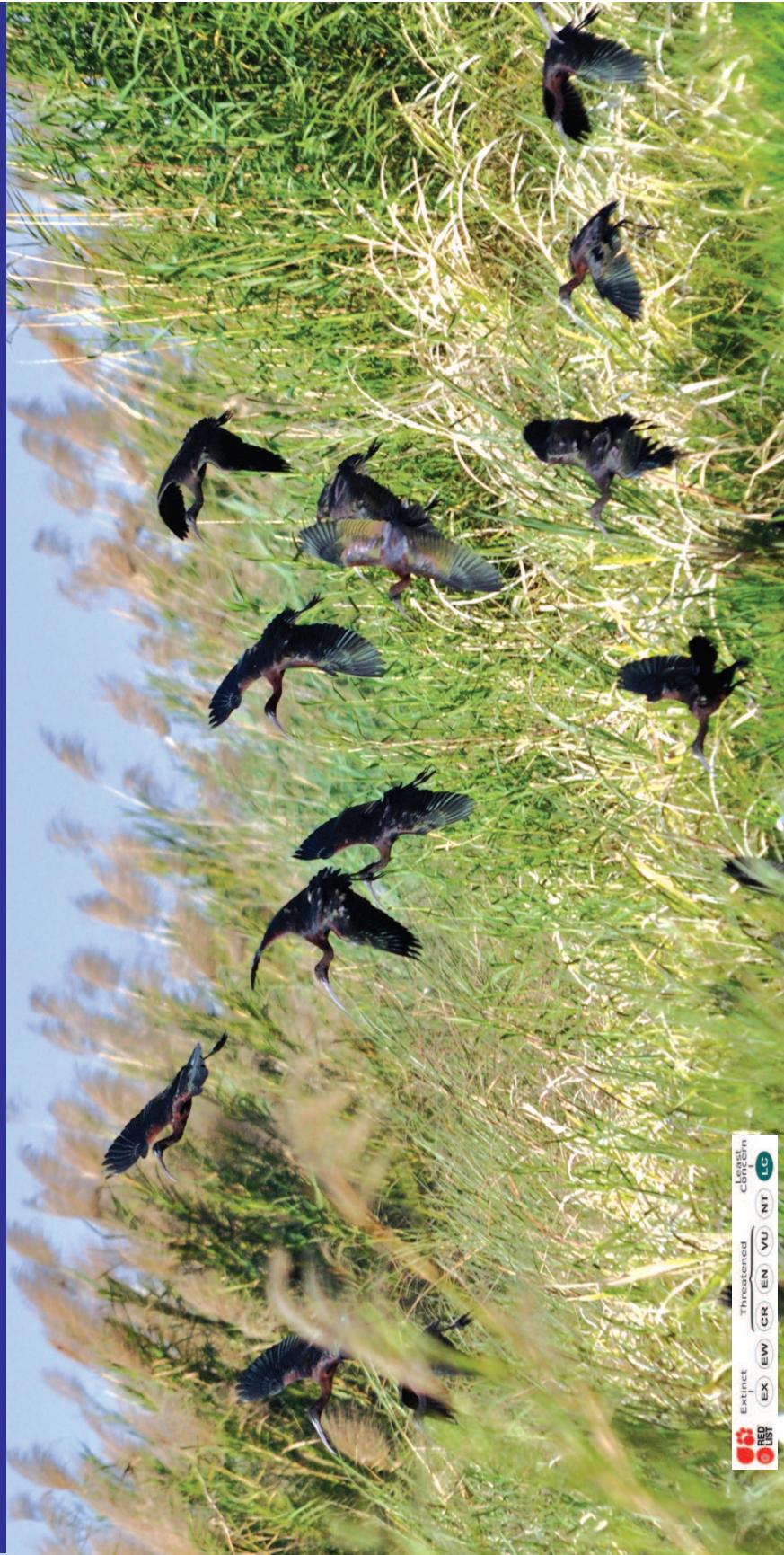
This is the smallest and the only species of the stork family presently found in Loktak Lake. They remain air borne soaring up and down playfully for long hours deriving energy from sunlight like kites. The species has been recorded from most part of the lake but their numbers have reduced drastically.

## Glossy Ibis

Scientific Name: *Plegadis falcinellus* (Linnaeus, 1766)

Local Name: Kaksu

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critical
EX	CR	CR
EW	EN	EN
NP	VU	VU
NT	LC	LC

Glossy ibis was once again sighted in Loktak lake 95 years later J.C. Higgins reported the species in the Game book of Manipur Club(1910-1916).



## Coots and Rails

These medium sized birds are often seen running, wading or swimming playfully. They display a magnificent sight splashing water with their feet and wings to gain or loose momentum as they take off or land on the surface of water. Many species eat invertebrates, as well as fruit or seedlings of aquatic plants.

## Common Coots

Scientific Name: *Fulica atra atra* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Uchek Porom*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	EW	Threatened	CR	EN	VU	NT	LC
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

The white bill and shield on their forehead make them distinct and easy to identify. Interestingly, they forage in water like ducks though they are without webbed feet.

## Purple Moorhen

Scientific Name: *Porphyrio porphyrio* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Umu*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Extinct in the Wild	Threatened	Critically Endangered
EX	EW	CR	EN

(VU) NT LC

They are resident and widespread in Loktak Lake. Often found clambering about in the reeds, they are noisy, cackling loudly with hoarse rippling notes but where they are not disturbed, they remain very tame and tolerant of observation. They pick up foods from claws very unlikely of a bird.

## Common Moorhen

Scientific Name: *Gallinula chloropus* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Uren*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Conservation
EX	CR	EN
EW	EN	VU
EX	CR	NT
EW	EN	LC

Perhaps the most hunted waterbird in Loktak Lake, they are common, resident and breeding locally. Their population is fast dwindling.

## Water Cock

Scientific Name: *Gallicrex cinera cinera* (Gmelin, 1789)

Local Name: *Uthum*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Though found widespread in Loktak Lake, they are of very guarded kind. Often get noisy especially during dawn and dusk. As they love to nest in paddy fields, they get easily hunted.

## White Breasted Waterhen

Scientific Name: *Amaurornis phoenicurus* (Pennant, 1769)

Local Name: *Urenkothong*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



These water birds are often seen foraging in low bushes along the shores. They are found in most part of the lake and surrounding areas with bamboo bushes and ponds.

## Water Rail

Scientific Name: *Rallus aquaticus indicus* (Linnaeus, 1758)  
Local Name: *Esing-themb*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critically Endangered
EX	CR	CR
EW	VU	VU
EN	NT	NT
LC	LC	LC

One needs luck to sight a water rail in Loktak Lake. It is uncertain whether they are migratory or resident. The species is smaller and distinctly slimmer than the moorhen.

## Slaty-Breasted or Blue Breasted Rail

Scientific Name: *Gallirallus striatus* (Linnaeus, 1766)

Local Name: *Thembi Marikpi*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extremely shy and observed to be active only during early mornings and evenings. It inhabits well-vegetated freshwater marshes and adjacent scrubs. Nests are well-hidden on ground. Their population is on decline due to habitat degradation.

## Ruddy Breasted Crake

Scientific Name: *Porzana fusca* (Linnaeus, 1766)

Local Name: *Uhal-Mitingang*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Extinct in the Wild	EW	CR	EN	VU	NT	LC
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With a short tail, even the mature ones look like chicks. They can be spotted when they chirp with ascending trill. They are resident and love marshy areas of the lake.



## Jacanas

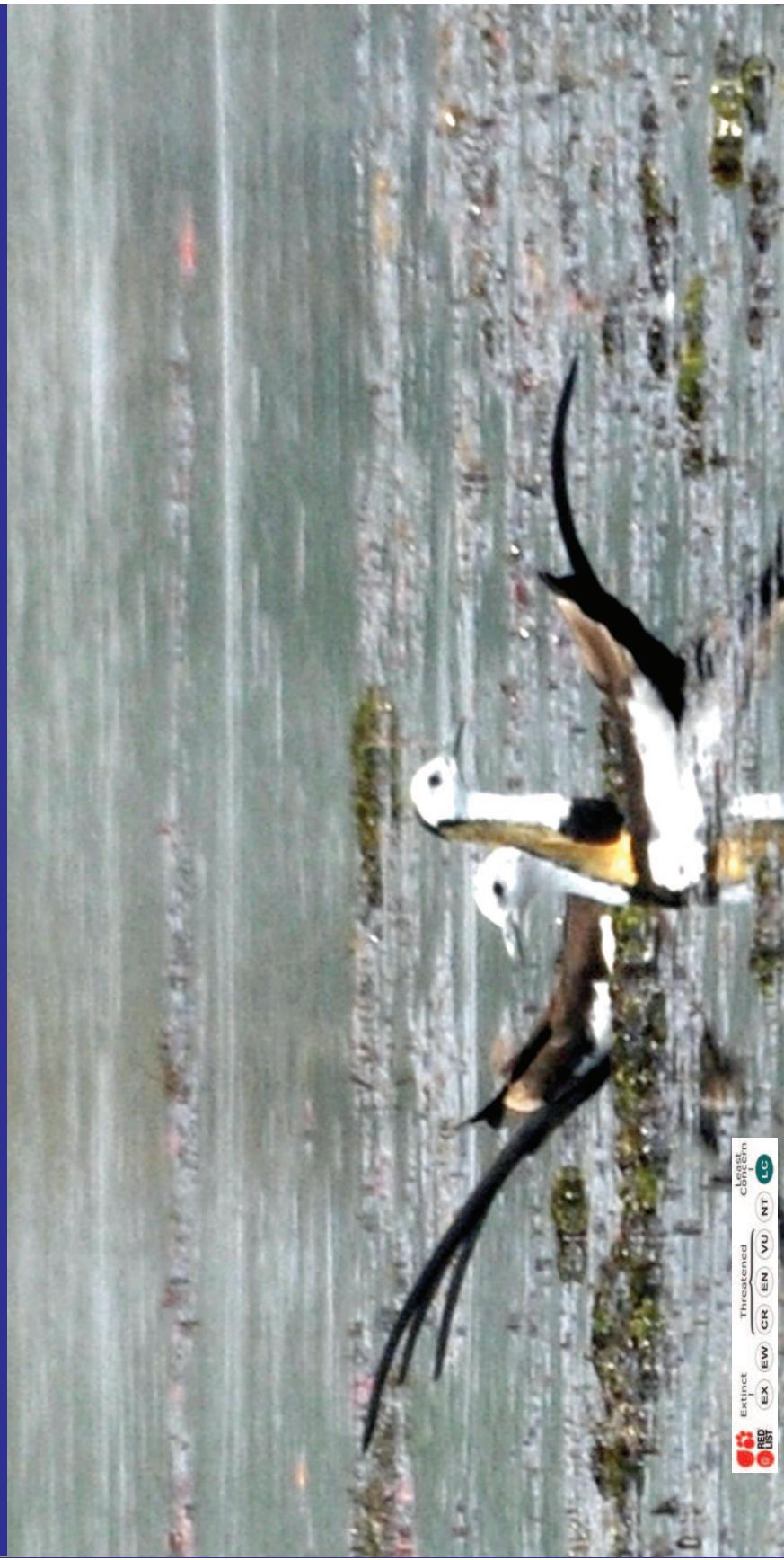
They are wading birds having long legs and large feet. Often seen walking on broad floating leaves of aquatic plants with the help of four long toes. They have sharp bills and rounded wings, and many species also have wattles on their foreheads. Jacanas eat small fish, insects, invertebrates and seeds of aquatic plants. Shallow parts of the lake form are their preferred habitat.

## Pheasant-tailed jacana

Scientific Name: *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* (Scopoli, 1786)

Local Name: *Yen Paoraba*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critical
EX	CR	EN
EW	VU	NT

Even though good at swimming, find them walking on the thin leaves of floating plants. Decline of native plants like lotus, fox nuts and trapa in Loktak lake have seriously affected the habitat of this species. They are resident and breeds locally.

## Bronze Winged

Scientific Name: *Jacana Metopodius indicus* (Latham, 1790)

Local Name: *Thamnachenbi*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



A rare, resident and locally breeding waterbird, which can be readily identified by their huge feet and claws that have adapted well to walk on broad leaves of floating plants.



## Heron, Egrets and Bitterns

Birds of this group have decorative courtship plumes. Most of them have long necks and pointed bills, short tails but long legs. Some of the species are nocturnal. They feed on fish, frogs, crustaceans, amphibians and other aquatic animals.

## Grey Heron

Scientific Name: *Ardea cinerea restirostris* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Ushai-Ngou*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critical
EX	CR	EN
EW	VU	NT
		LC

Seen in solitary or occasionally in small parties, this species is a rare winter visitor in Loktak Lake.

## Pond Heron

Scientific Name: *Ardeola grayii grayii* (Sykes, 1832)

Local Name: *Urok Lamprai*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Extinct in the Wild	Vulnerable	Threatened	Critical
EX	EW	EN	CR	Critically Endangered

Appears like a saint in meditation and camouflage well against earth when at rest. Often referred to as 'wolf in sheep's coat', this species is agile and aggressive while hunting. Widespread, common and resident.

## Chinese Pond Heron

Scientific Name: *Ardeola bacchus* (Bonaparte, 1855)

Local Name: *Lamprai-Amubi*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



It is a rare and resident waterbird closely related to the other typical pond herons. It can be identified in breeding season by its dark back and red chestnut head and neck. It flies with a rapid wing beats, its head well tucked back. Despite its overall darkness, at a distance the bird appears white in flight due to its white wings and a closer look, appears black and white.

## Purple Heron

Scientific Name: *Ardea purpurea* (Linnaeus, 1766)

Local Name: *Ushai-Ngang*

Water Birds of Laktrak Lake



Extinct	Extinct in the Wild	Vulnerable	Threatened	Critical

An intensely curious bird often seen with its snake-like long neck stretched up above the reeds watching passers by. It's cry is loud and harsh croak. It flies with its head tucked into its shoulders like alphabet 'S' and their long legs sticking out straight behind. It is a resident species that breeds locally.

## Night Heron

Scientific Name: *Nycticorax nycticorax* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Chongkhu*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



The species is common and resident, largely crepuscular and nocturnal except in breeding season.

# Great Egret

Scientific Name: *Ardea alba modesta* (J.E. Gray, 1831)

Local Name: *Loklenba*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



The elegant Great Egret is a dazzling sight in parts of Loktak Lake though few in numbers. They are large birds with impressive wingspans. They hunt in classic heron fashion, standing immobile or wading through shallow waters and catching fish with a deadly jab with their yellow bill. Great Egrets were hunted to near extinction for their plumes in the late nineteenth century, sparking conservation movements and some of the first laws to protect birds.

## Little Egret

Scientific Name: *Egretta garzetta garzetta* (Linnaeus, 1766)

Local Name: Nao-Kang

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct		Threatened				Conservation	
EX	IUCN	CR	EN	VU	NT	LC	
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

The species is rare and resident in Loktak. They are also seen in ponds and paddy fields. Most of the time, little egrets remain silent but make croaking and bubbling calls at their breeding colonies and produce a harsh alarm call when disturbed.

## Median Egret

Scientific Name: *Mesophoyx intermedia* (Wagler, 1829)

Local Name: *Langkhongsang*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



LWMS



Common and a resident bird of Loktak Lake, they are hard to distinguish from large egrets except the breeding plumage.

## Cattle Egret

Scientific Name: *Bubulcus ibis* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: Sandungin

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critical
EX	EN	CR
EW	VU	NT
NP	NR	LC

One of the most common species in Loktak and its surrounding areas, they have undergone one of the most rapid and wide reaching natural expansions from any bird species. Poets have referred them as flowers blooming amid herds of cows, they are said to be cosmopolitan in nature.

## Yellow Bittern

Scientific Name: *Ixobrychus sinensis* (Gmelin, 1789)

Local Name: *Hongai Arangbi*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



LBRS



The Yellow Bittern is a small bird and unmistakably the cousin of pond heron. It is a common and resident species breeding in Loktak.

# Chestnut Bittern

Scientific Name: *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* (Gmelin, 1789)

Local Name: *Hongai Angangbi*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Chick
EX	CR	EN
EW	VU	NT
EN	N	T
LC		

Smaller and lankier than pond heron, the species is resident and breeds in Loktak Lake. The population of this bittern species is depleting fast.



## Plovers, Lapwings, Snipes and Sandpipers

One of the largest groups within the 'waders' or shorebirds. They have straight and stout bills swollen at the tip. Have long tarsi and short tails. Feed largely on terrestrial invertebrates with characteristic run-stop-tilt forward action in open areas of sand, mud, shingle, bare earth or short turf. They are gregarious.

## Little Ringed-Plover

Scientific Name: *Charadrius dubius* (Scopoli, 1786)

Local Name: Nongang-Urik

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critical
EX	CR	CR
EW	EN	EN
EN	VU	VU
NT	LC	LC

A small bird which looks like one in a fancy dress with well patterned plumage. Changes in the ecological character of the shorelines have become a threat to these resident plovers.

## Grey headed Lapwing

Scientific Name: *Vanellus cinerus* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: Salangkak-Kokwaobi

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct		Threatened		Conservation	
EX	EW	CR	EN	VU	NT
●	●	●	●	●	●

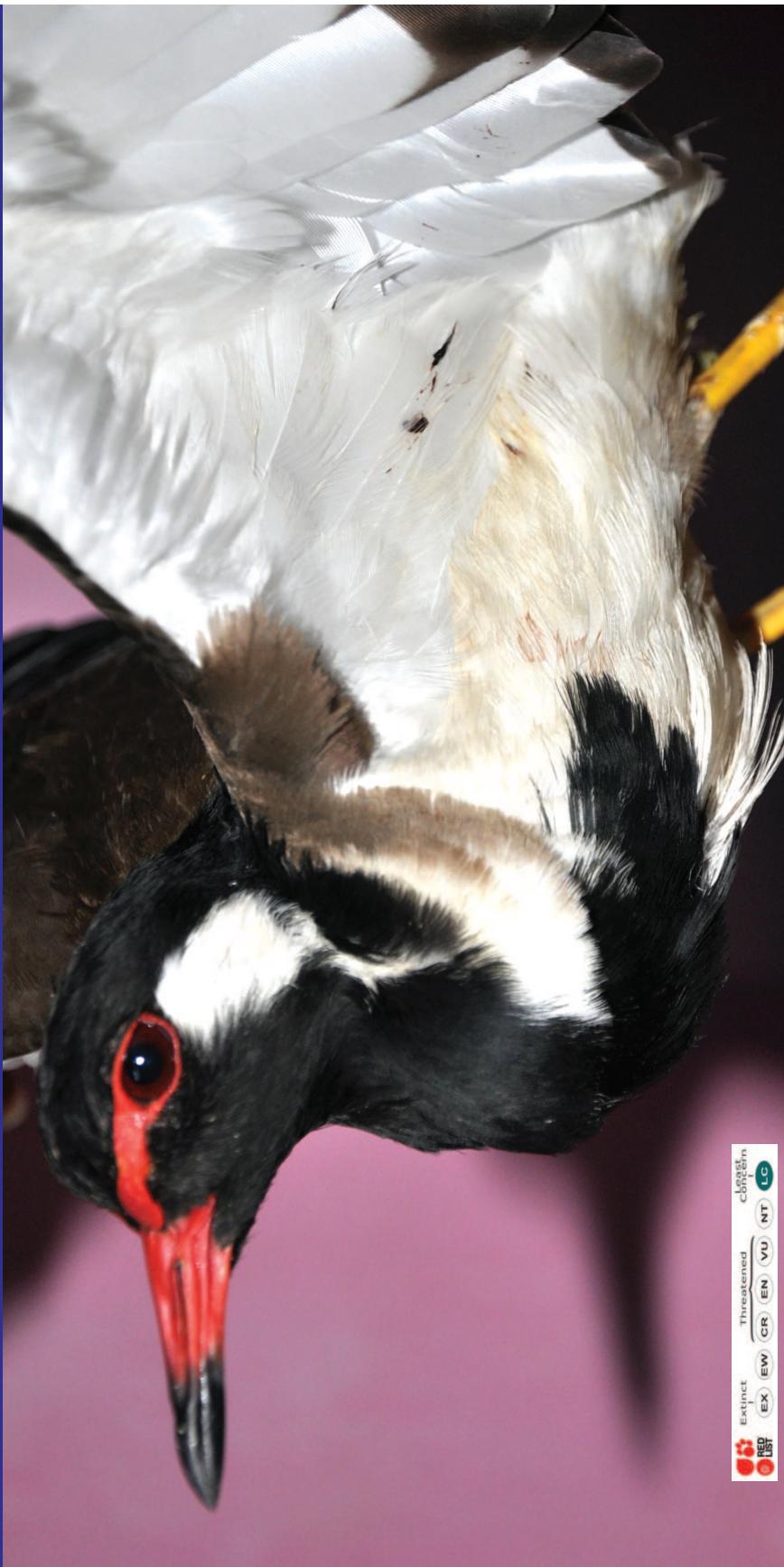
A beautiful wintering bird which looks fully grey when in rest but presents a striking sight when airborne with white underbelly and black outer wings edges.

## Red-wattled Lapwing

Scientific Name: *Vanellus indicus* (Boddaert, 1783)

Local Name: *Salangkak-Maingang*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



This resident bird is often seen in wet paddy fields near the lake, they make loud alarm calls, locally famous as *te-te-hoot*, possibly made in annoyance to end the disturbance by the farmers in the field.

## Northern Lapwing

Scientific Name: *Vanellus vanellus* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Salangkak-Kokumbi*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



The flapping sound made by the large wings during the irregular progress of flight leaves one curious.  
The wintering period in Loktak Lake spans from December to February.

## **Painted Snipe**

Scientific Name: *Rostratula benghalensis* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: Koudruk

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critical
EX	CR	CR
EW	EN	EN
EX	VU	VU
EW	NT	NT
EX	LC	LC

Usually found in solitary or in pairs close to the fringes of reed beds. They are resident and breeds in Loktak Lake. Prefer recently flooded areas along the fringes of the lake.

## Jack Snipe

Scientific Name: *Lymnocryptes minimus* (Brunnich, 1764)

Local Name: Cheklaobi Kangdrum

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



LWMS  
Locating  
Monitoring  
Survey



Extinct	Threatened	Critically Endangered
EX	EN	CR
EW	VU	EN
EN	NT	CR
LC	LC	LC

Visits Loktak Lake during winters in very few numbers. Smaller than common snipe with a shorter bill. It is a secretive bird and when approached it tends to crouch down, relying on its camouflaged plumage, flying away only at the last minute. It flies low dropping down rapidly in quick successions. Feeds in bouncing motion, as if on a spring.

## Pintail Snipe

Scientific Name: *Gallinago stenura* (Bonaparte, 1831)

Local Name: *Cheklaobi-Meitumbi*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Small and stocky, this wintering wader is mostly seen along shores and in marshy areas. Feeds by picking as well as by probing. Sometimes they are confused with common snipes.

## Solitary Snipe

Scientific Name: *Gallinago solitaria* (Hodgson, 1831)

Local Name: Cheklaobi Tomchat

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



LWMS  
Loktak Wetland Monitoring Society



Extinct	Threatened	Critically Endangered
EX	CR	CR
EW	EN	EN
EN	VU	VU
NT	NT	NT
LC	LC	LC

A resident wader species, which migrates locally and sometimes quite long distances. Bobs when feeding like a jack snipe and often crouches when disturbed.

## Common Snipe

Scientific Name: *Gallinago gallinago* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Chet-Phrang*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critical
EX	CR	CR
EW	EN	EN
EN	VU	VU
NT	LC	LC

A shy and small wader who conceals itself close to the ground well camouflaged and when approached too close they fly off in a zig-zag way to confuse the predators making a sharp note that sounds like escape ! escape !

## Common Sandpiper

Scientific Name: *Actitis hypoleucos* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Chegalbi-Naitoma*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Extinct in the Wild	EW	Threatened	EN	VU	NT	Care	LC
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A rare wintering bird. Camouflaged well with the surroundings.

## Wood Sandpiper

Scientific Name: *Tringa glareola* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Local Name: *Cheklaobi-Chingda*

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



Extinct	Threatened	Critically Endangered
EX	CR	CR
EW	EN	EN
EN	VU	VU

These rare wintering birds love foraging by probing in shallow water or in mud.

## Brief Account of Migratory Birds in Loktak Lake

Water Birds of Loktak Lake



From their breeding haunts in the cold northern regions of Asia, Europe and America, birds migrate to the warmer southern lands every year during autumn and early winter making their return journey during spring and early summer with great punctuality unless disturbed by bad weather. It is a phenomenon termed as the miracle of nature.

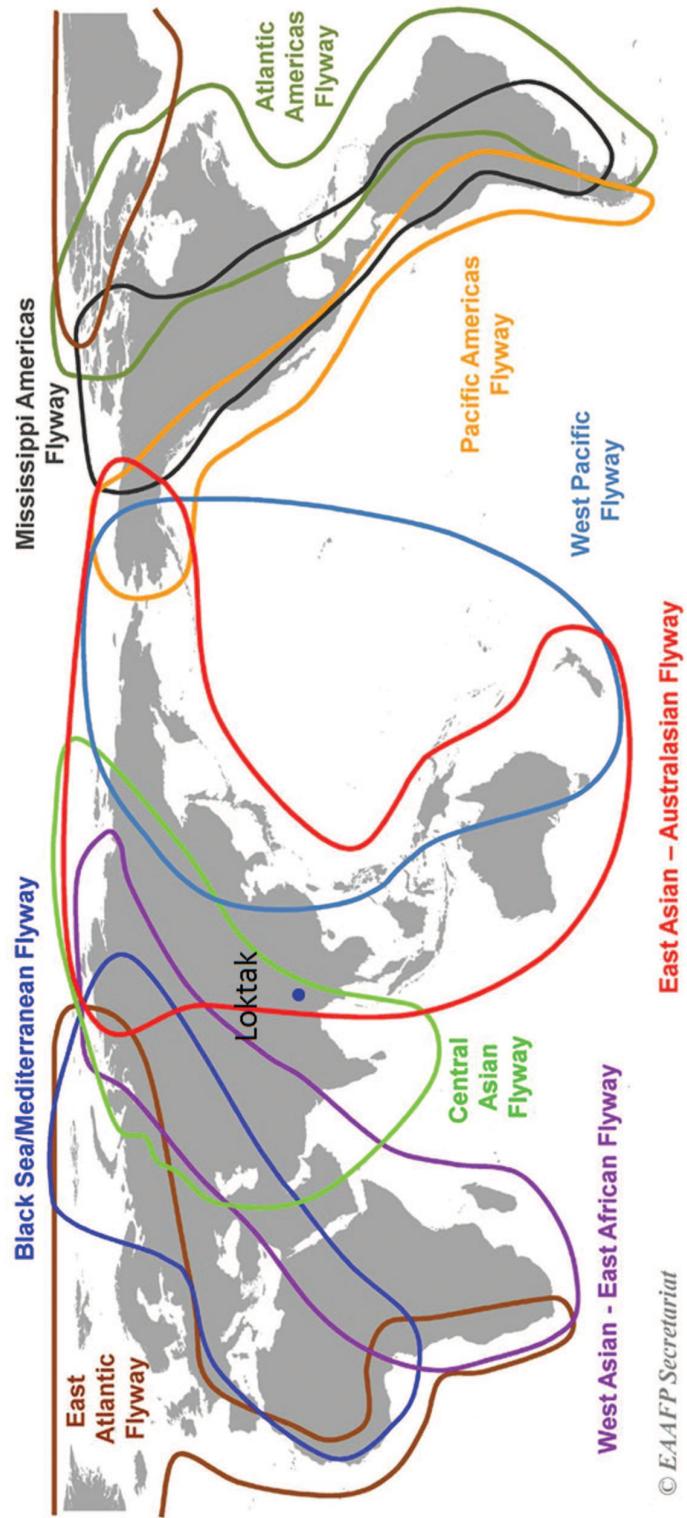
Loktak Lake has been the abode of a large congregation of such wintering waterbirds since time memorial. Eminence of such amazing gifts of nature in the folklores of this land, especially Moirang Kangleirol, remind us about their abundance and the profound cultural significance. The romance of swiftly flapping wings of startled coots in flight, the loud musical chirps of Shovellers spread across the sky, the elegant flight of goose, and the majestic sight of gulls emerging like small icebergs added to the beauty of this lake of nine water bodies and nine rivers as glorified in the folklores.

A.O.Hume, who recorded as many as 57 species of Ducks and Geese in his book, 'Birds of Manipur, Assam, Sylhet and Cachar' (1888), stated, "I have not seen any other place in India where such enormous swarms of ducks and geese could be observed on water as was at Loktak Lake and wading birds were almost as abundant in the surrounding swamps". Some of these wild ducks come to Loktak from Mongolia, Siberia and Yunan province, flying over four thousand kilometres over the Himalayan ranges. During the colonial period thousands of these waterbirds of Loktak were hunted for sport and meat by the British officers. In recent times the number of waterfowl species have dwindled to 21 species only and altogether 62 species of waterbirds have been recorded.

A ray of hope is emerging as some species of migratory waterbirds which regularly visited Loktak Lake in large numbers have started visiting once again. As ever sadly, hunting and killing of these beautiful gifts of nature continues unabated. Lets us live in harmony with nature to restore the lost glories of Loktak Lake.

## Flyways and Loktak Wetland Complex

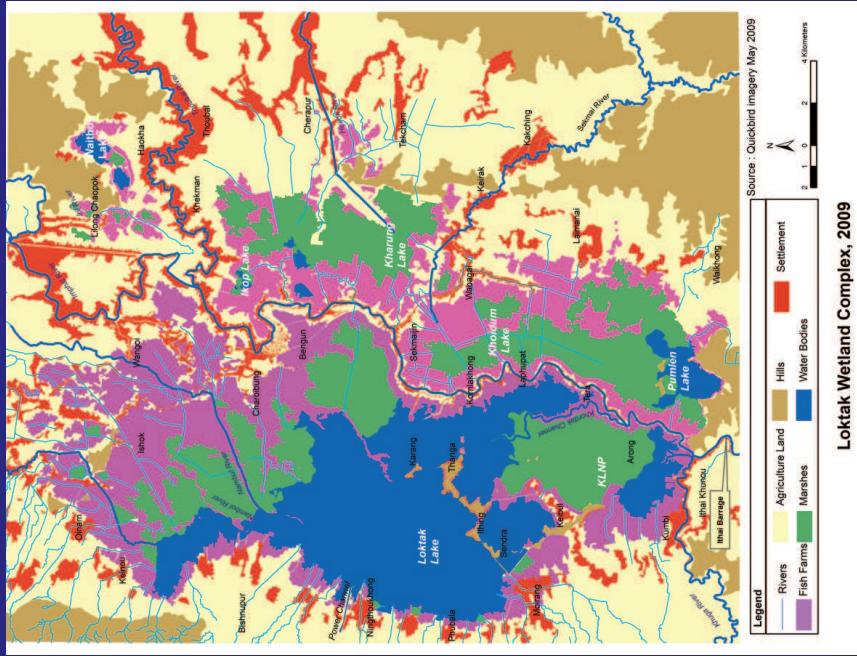
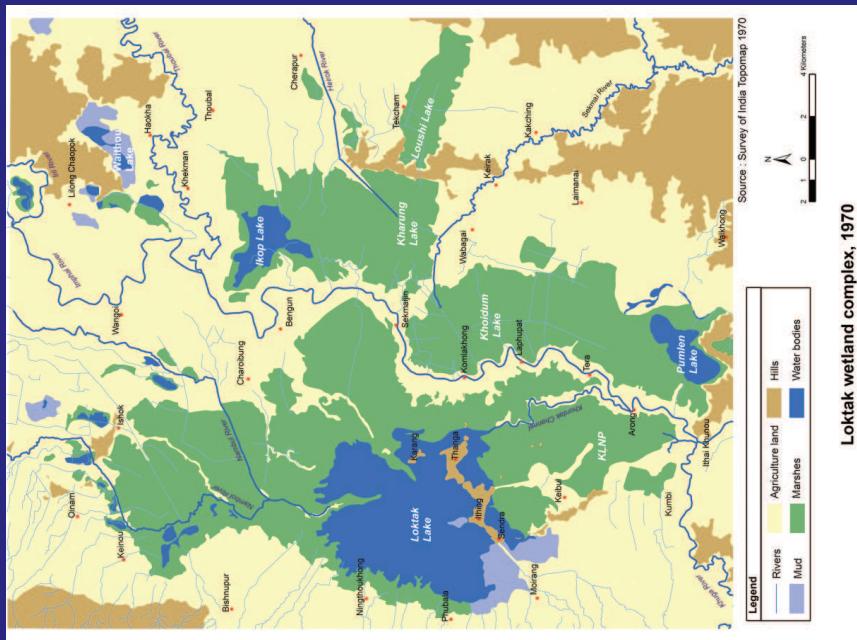
Water Birds of Loktak Lake



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# Changing Landscape of Loktak Lake

Water Birds of Loktak Lake





Centre for Conservation of  
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