

The information on Loktak Lake submitted to the Ramsar Convention by the Indian Government is typed below:

Loktak Lake (Manipur)

Area: 26,600 ha.

Location: 24°26'N - 93°49'E. Situated in the district of Bishanpur. The nearest village is Maorang.

Degree of protection: The wetland has been identified as one of the sites for conservation under Indian National Wetland Programme. The State Government has also constituted a Loktak Development Authority for development of the wetland area on sound ecological basis.

Site description: Loktak Lake, the biggest natural wetland in the North-eastern region of India, is a large expanse of water on the West of the river Imphal. The catchment area of the lake is about 980 sq. kms. Run-off from this catchment is drained into the lake mainly through seven streams which originate primarily in the northern and western flanks of the lake.

Thick floating mats of weeds covered with soil called 'phumids' are a characteristic feature of this lake. Invasion of lake area by water hyacinth has created severe problems resulting in deterioration of the lake ecosystem. The main fish fauna present in the lake is minnows and minor carps. In the South-eastern region of this lake, there is Keibul Lamjao National Park which is the habitat of the brown antlered deer (*Cervus eldi eldi*) locally called Sangai which is a threatened species.

Criteria for inclusion:

- International and National importance: Loktak Lake is an ancient lake and plays an important role in the economy of the Manipur State. Without the lake, the valley would be subjected to high floods during monsoon and drought during the dry season. It is a source of water for hydro-power generation, irrigation and drinking water supply. The livelihood of the rural population around the lake is dependent to a great extent upon the fish of the lake.

- Changes in ecological character: Due to deforestation in the catchment area and denudation of vegetation, soil erosion rate has increased considerably during recent years and this has resulted in siltation of the lake. Severe infestations of the lake by water hyacinth compounded with the problem of phumids present in the lake greatly interferes with the water circulation resulting in increasing rate of siltation and pollutants getting deposited in the lake ecosystem.

- Management practices: For the management of the wetland, a scheme has been prepared by the State Government which has been funded by the Central Government. Besides this, the North Eastern Council is also very keen to develop this wetland area.

- Principal reference material: Published and unpublished records in the Department of Zoology and Botany in the Manipur University and State Government. Identification report on Development of Loktak Lake, Manipur, 1988, Water and Power Consultancy Services (India) Ltd., 'Kailash' 26, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi-1.