

Dear participant(s),

2 January 2017

Greetings!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all who participated on the last count and sent report to us. It is time again for all of us to get ready for the nationwide midwinter water bird count. Let us celebrate the waterbird count period as a festival. Our volunteers will go out, count birds and make a picnic without disturbing wildlife. I believe all of you are already very excited to go for the waterbird count!

Some institutions have made excellent coordination with us in providing data which has greatly helped us in our understanding of water bird population and their distribution within Nepal. I encourage you to cover all the important sites with proper record keeping system within your area every year. Please make sure that you give the population count of the species not just the list of the species!

It is likely that when you are counting birds in the field you may be able to spot birds with rings on legs or tags on wings. Please observe the species carefully and note all the details about the tag or ring. Colour of the rings/tags, size and shape, which part of the body, species, sex and condition of the bird etc and communicate with us so that we can promptly pass information to our fellow researchers.

There have been repeated cases of avian flu from Nepal. If sick or dead birds are found especially in larger numbers –stay away from these sites and report to nearest veterinary organization or District Veterinary Services or Directorate of Animal Health (Tel 01-4261165). Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (01-4220912/4220850) is the government authority that needs to be immediately informed. Bird Conservation Nepal (01-4417805/01-4420213), Bird Education Society (c/o Thagu Gurung, Tika Giri and Basu Bidari, 056-580113), Nepalese Ornithological Union (c/o Hathan Chaudhary 98510 84484) and Himalayan Nature (01-4423225) are leading research and conservation organisations on wild birds so you can also contact these in order to take immediate action. We urge participants to take extra safety measures to avoid going to places that may be potentially dangerous. As this is entirely voluntary exercise we urge all participants to avoid risks—and adopt all possible measures of safety. Counts are conducted on volunteer's personal will and risks.

The recommended dates for the AWC 2017 counts are Saturday 7 to Sunday 22, January 2017, covering two weeks and three weekends, when we should encourage our volunteers to count waterbirds. I am attaching guidelines and form for your record which remains the same as last year. I would appreciate if you can send these forms filled systematically and send me as soon as you can. Also we will be keeping a group photo of waterbird count in Himalayan Nature website--so please send a copy of photo as a bidding to be in the web! Those who have access to internet can get guidelines, forms and further information can be downloaded from the Himalayan Nature website at <http://www.himalayannature.org/>

Through the kind support of Himalayan Nature and ZSL – I was able to share some bird bags with you and also the certificates for regular counters. If I have missed any names/people – I am always ready to provide the token of gift to our volunteer counters. Please let me know.

Finally, I wish you all a very enjoyable AWC season in 2017 and HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Happy counting,



Dr Hem Sagar Baral

National Coordinator for Midwinter Waterbird Count Programme in Nepal, Wetlands International



Himalayan Nature