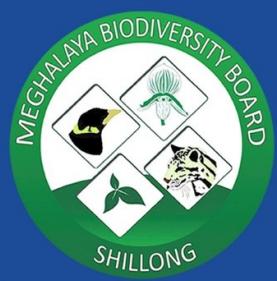


MEGHALAYA BIODIVERSITY BOARD



A BRIEF REPORT ON ASIAN WATER BIRD CENSUS (AWC) 2025



A BRIEF REPORT ON THE ASIAN WATER BIRD CENSUS2025

Date: 11.02.2025

**Venue: wetland areas of umiam lake
RI-BHOI DISTRICT, MEGHALAYA**



**Submitted to
NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY AUTHORITY, GOVT. OF INDIA**



**Submitted by
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ASIAN WATERBIRD CENSUS (AWC)

The Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) is an annual, region-wide waterbird monitoring program that takes place in January and February. As a crucial component of the International Waterbird Census, the AWC contributes significantly to the conservation and management of wetlands and waterbirds globally.

The AWC initiated in 1987, has been instrumental in tracking waterbird populations, monitoring wetland health, and engaging local communities in wetland conservation efforts. The program's findings provide valuable insights into the ecological status of wetlands and the populations of waterbirds that depend on these habitats. The AWC contributes to the conservation of wetlands and waterbirds by identifying important sites, monitoring populations, and raising awareness about conservation issues.

The main objectives of the AWC are:

1. To gather annual data on waterbird populations at wetlands during the non-breeding season.
2. To monitor the status and condition of wetlands across Asia.
3. To promote awareness and encourage citizen participation in waterbird and wetland conservation.

The Census is done yearly between the months of January and February, wherein, volunteers across Asia visit wetlands in their country and count waterbirds. The AWC is implemented through a network of national coordinators and volunteers who conduct waterbird counts at selected wetland sites. In India, the AWC is coordinated by Wetlands International South Asia and the Bombay Natural History Society.

AWC IN MEGHALAYA

The first-ever Asian Waterbird Census in Meghalaya was successfully conducted in the year 2022. This program was organized by the Meghalaya Biodiversity Board in collaboration with the Office of the Divisional Forest Officer-Khasi Hills Wildlife Division, Shillong.

The Fourth Asian Waterbird Census in Meghalaya was conducted on the 11th of February 2025 in collaboration with the Office of the Divisional Forest Officer-Khasi Hills Wildlife Division, Shillong covering the wetland areas of Umiam Lake, Ri-Bhoi District. The waterbird census was carried out across five key sites; namely Mawlyndep, Umbir, Lad Umsaw, Dew Saw and Lum Pongdeng.

The Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) 2025 event held at Lum Nehru Park was participated by a distinguished group of individuals including Shri Julius R.B. Blah, RFO of Lum Nehru Park, Khasi Hills Wildlife Division, Shillong. Other participants were scientists and the technical team from Meghalaya Biodiversity Board, Forest Department and Meghalaya State Wetland Authority, and Biodiversity Management Committee members from Umniuh, Mawlyndep and Umsawkhwan.

Dr. Dipankar Lahkar from Aaranyak, Guwahati and Shri Nibir Medhi, Senior Biologist in the office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and Head of Forest Forces are the experts during the program. They played a crucial role in the identification of waterbird species during the Census, thereby ensuring an accuracy and depth of the Census.

Volunteers from nearby BMCs namely Umniuh Khwan, Mawlyndep and Umsaw Khwan took part in the program in their respective areas. Their active participation and enthusiasm contribute in making the program a success.

The Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) 2025 commenced with a concise meeting at Lum Nehru Park, Umiam, Ri-Bhoi District. The experts emphasized the primary objectives of the AWC as well as the procedure to be followed while carrying out the waterbird count. By bringing together experts and stakeholders, the event helped raise awareness about the importance of waterbird conservation and the role that citizens play in monitoring and protecting these species.

Five groups were formed by the participants and each group was assigned a key site. During the exercise, the birds were observed with the help of binoculars and photographs were taken

while in flight, diving, feeding, and resting. The birds were identified with the help of the scientists and experts in the groups.

Across the five sites, a total of 173 waterbirds, representing 14 species, were identified and recorded; with the Great Crested Grebe having the highest count of 73.

DETAILS OF THE SITES AND COUNTS

Name of the Wetland: Umiam Lake, Ri-Bhoi District, Meghalaya.

Area: 801.89 hectares (ha)

Sites with the Geo-coordinates: Five sites were selected and the list is given below in Table 1

TABLE 1:

Sl. No.	Counting Site Names (Sites surrounding Umiam Lake)	Latitude	Longitude
1	Site 1- Mawlyndep	25.646456 N	91.86084 E
2	Site 2- Umbir (UCC Umiam)	25.651485 N	91.864222 E
3	Site 3- Lad Umsaw	25.672824 N	91.891135 E
4	Site 4- Dew Saw	25.658173 N	91.893848 E
5	Site 5- Lum Pongdeng	1. 25.658316 N 2. 25.658404 N	1. 91.897207 E 2. 91.897297 E

Number of waterbird species and their count at site level: The list of waterbird species is given in the table below (Table 2)

TABLE 2:

Sl. No.	English Name	Scientific Name	Sites					
			Site 1	Site 2 UMB	Site 3 UMN	Site 4	Site 5	Species wise total
1.	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	02	13	04	-	25	44
2.	Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>	09	-	-	-	-	09
3.	Oriental darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	-	-	-	-	02	02
4.	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	02	-	56	15	-	73
5.	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	06	-	-	-	-	06
6.	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	-	-	-	-	01	01
7.	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	-	-	01	-	-	01
8.	Intermediate Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>	-	02	02	-	01	05
9.	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	04	-	-	-	-	04
10.	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	05	-	-	-	-	05
11.	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	12	02	02	-	02	18
12.	Red-wattled lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	02	-	-	-	-	02
13.	Pipit spp.	-	-	01	-	-	-	01
14.	Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	01	-	01	-	-	02
TOTAL								173

GLIMPSE OF ASIAN WATERBIRD CENSUS 2025



Group photo of the participants



Observation of water birds at Umiam Lake



Great Crested Grebe
Podiceps cristatus



Great Cormorant
Phalacrocorax carbo



Red-wattled Lapwing
Vanellus indicus



Little Egret
Egretta garzetta



Grey Heron
Ardea cinerea



Little Grebe
Tachybaptus ruficollis





White Wagtail
Motacilla alba



Indian Pond Heron
Ardeola grayii



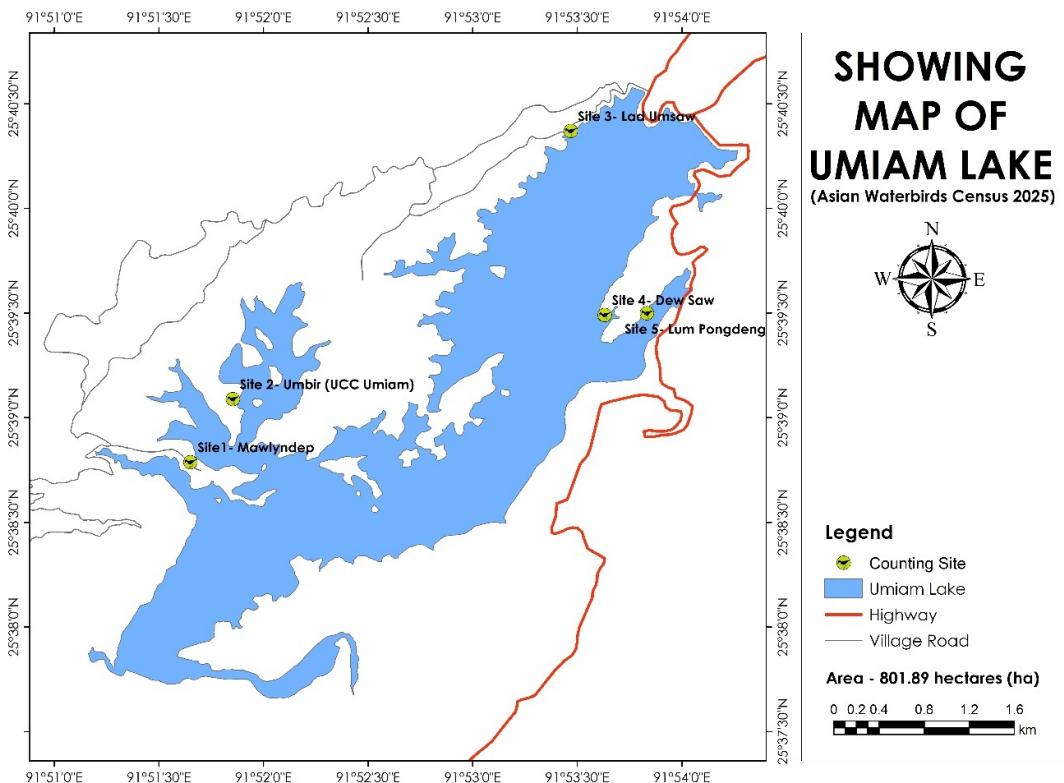
Participants with the BMCs members



Participants with the BMCs members

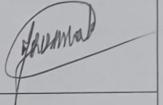


Umiam Lake



Map of Umiam Lake

ATTENDANCE FOR THE FOURTH ASIAN WATER BIRD CENSUS
(AWC) 2025 HELD ON THE 11th FEBRUARY, 2025
Venue: UMIAM LAKE, SHILLONG

Sl. No.	Name & Designation	Department/Institution /Organization/BMCs	Phone Number	Signature
1.				
2.	Julius R. B. BHATH	RFO, Lum Neku Park, Umiam	9862883506	
3.	Ms. Tawari Bakondor Kharasnah (Biologist MSWA)	Meghalaya State Wetland Authority (MSWA)	6009967920	
4.	Kitbalong Nongrum (Biologist/FA) MSWA	"	87298041829	
5.	Aldrinius Kharkongor (Biologist, Wildlife)	MFD	8729930965	
6.	Antoiaugnati S. Langthiang (Biologist/FA) MSWA	MSWA	8974402495	
7.	ABORLANG SANJAN (BIOLOGIST)	MFD	8794257690	
8.	Dr. Dipankar Lohkan Wildlife Biologist	Aaranyak	8638014685	
9.	Nibin Mehi	MFD	8638275375	
10.	MININGSTAR RANEE	MARDYNEP BMC	9628067299	
11.	Nialson Dohdoh	"	6009963224	
12.	Pretty Nongsap	Umiam - Shroan	9366305625	

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Sl. No.	Name & Designation	Department/Institution /Organization/BMCs	Phone Number	Signature
13.	Coordinator (Shillong)	Umiam Khanan	8837326299	
14.	Chhoddson Majan	Umian Khanan	9362308338	
15.	Melanjof Tyngkan	Umian Khanan	9863085543	M. Tyngkan
16.	Dr. D. Evansen Klongas	NBB	9485450057	
17.	Dr. S. Dey	MBB	9779104418	
18.	Shyria Thokchom	MBB	7005572215	
19.	Rindaplior Syndh	MBB	9436913176	
20.	Dr. Auphelia & Syiem	"	9615566899	
21.	Benlumlany Powern	"	8259946327	
22.	Andamiki Kso	"	6033098968	
23.	Baungtamen A. Syiem	"	7005725310	
24.	George-I. Kuskalang	MBB	7640878845	

ATTENDANCE FOR THE FOURTH ASIAN WATER BIRD CENSUS
(AWC) 2025 HELD ON THE 11th FEBRUARY, 2025
Venue: UMIAM LAKE, SHILLONG

Sl. No.	Name & Designation	Department/Institution /Organization/BMCs	Phone Number	Signature
25.	Remedy kharsati	MBB	6009834322	
26.	E. W. Lakhiol.	MT-D	9366902050	
27.	Wanshwa Shobny	M.F.D	9615013168	
28.	Raju Sunoz	M.F.D	9863072736	
29.	Aldrinisws kharkongor	M.F.D	8729930965	
30.				
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The Shillong Times

ESTABLISHED 1945

MEGHALAYA

State records 173 Waterbirds

Asian waterbird census records 173 birds in Meghalaya

The Fourth Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) 2025 has recorded 173 birds belonging to 14 different species in the wetlands of Meghalaya.

The census took place on February 11, 2025 and was carried out in Mawlyndep, Umbir, Lad Umsaw, Dew Saw and LumPongdeng, covering the wetland areas of Umiam Lake, Ri-Bhoi district.

Notable species identified during the census included the Great Cormorant, Great Crested Grebe and White Wagtail.

Other species observed included the Grey Heron, Indian Pond Heron, Little Cormorant, Pipit species, Oriental Darter, Little Grebe, Intermediate Egret, Little Egret, Common Kingfisher, Little Ringed Plover and Red-wattled Lapwing.

The Waterbird Census 2025 was organised by Meghalaya Biodiversity Board in collaboration with the Office of the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Khasi Hills Wildlife Division, Shillong.

The AWC is part of the global International Waterbird Census (IWC). It is a citizen-science programme supporting the conservation and management of wetlands and waterbirds worldwide done annually between the months of January and February.

Volunteers from across Asia and Australia participate in this effort, counting waterbirds in wetlands within their respective countries, in collaboration with National Waterbird Census programs.

The event saw the participation of a distinguished group of individuals, including Julius R.B. Blah, RFO of Lum Nehru Park, Khasi Hills Wildlife Division, Shillong. Scientists and Technical team from Meghalaya Biodiversity Board, Forest Department and Meghalaya State Wetland Authority also contributed to the success of the event.

Local Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) from nearby areas, including Umniuh Khwan, Mawlyndep and Umsaw Khwan were also involved in the census.

Dr. Dipankar Lahkar from Aaranyak and Nibir Medhi, Senior Biologist, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Forces, played a key role as experts, ensuring the accuracy and depth of the census.

The findings highlight the rich biodiversity of the region and underscore the critical role of wetland conservation in maintaining healthy ecosystems for waterbirds.

The data gathered through these annual censuses contribute to the management and protection of wetlands, supporting efforts to safeguard these vital habitats for migratory and resident waterbirds.

Highland Post

FOR A PROGRESSIVE MEGHALAYA

NORTH EAST NATIONAL HEALTH EDITORIAL SPORTS WRITERS COLUMN

Asian Waterbird Census

Shillong, Feb 15: Meghalaya successfully conducted the Fourth Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) 2025, recording 173 waterbirds from 14 different species. The survey covered key wetland sites in Umiam Lake, Ri-Bhoi district and highlighted the region's rich birdlife.

The census saw the active participation of forest officials, scientists, and conservationists, along with local Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) from villages like Umniuh Khwan, Mawlyndep, and Umsaw Khwan.

Among the experts present were Dr Dipankar Lahkar from Aaranyak and Nibir Medhi, Senior Biologist at the Office of PCCF & HOFF, who played a crucial role in data collection and analysis. Organised by the Meghalaya Biodiversity Board in collaboration with the Khasi Hills Wildlife Division, the census took place at Mawlyndep, Umbir, Lad Umsaw, Dew Saw, and Lum Pongdeng. The event kicked off at Lum Nehru Park, where experts discussed the significance of the AWC, which is part of the global International Waterbird Census (IWC). Conducted annually across Asia and Australasia between January and February, this citizen-driven initiative helps track waterbird populations and wetland health.

Among the 14 species recorded, notable birds included the Great Cormorant, Great Crested Grebe, and White Wagtail. Other species sighted were the Grey Heron, Indian Pond Heron, Little Cormorant, Pipit species, Oriental Darter, Little Grebe,