



# STATE ACTION PLAN FOR CONSERVATION OF AVIAN DIVERSITY, THEIR ECOSYSTEMS, HABITATS & LANDSCAPES IN UTTARKHAND

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IN UTTARAKHAND





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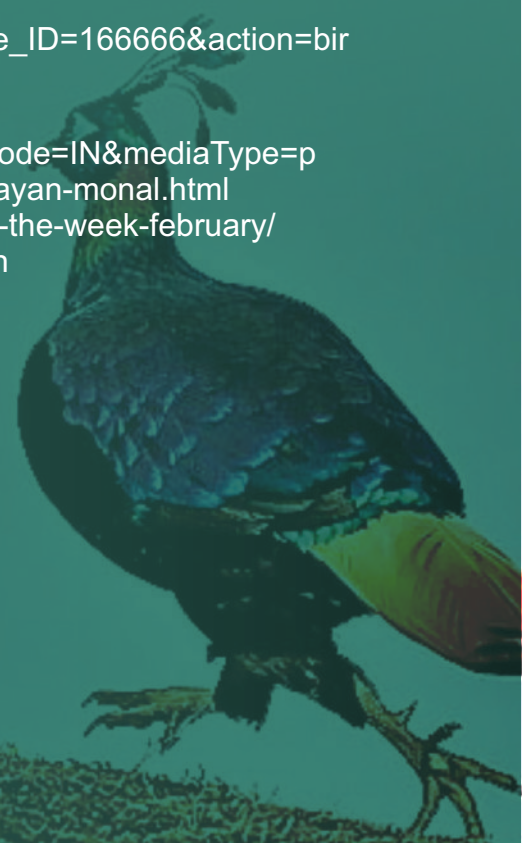
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**Uttarakhand Forest  
Department**

## FOREWORD



It is with great pleasure that I introduce the State Action Plan for Bird Conservation in Uttarakhand. Uttarakhand, also known as Devbhoomi or the Abode of Gods, is known for its rich biodiversity and various rare, threatened and endangered species which inhabit the state. Uttarakhand is also home to over 700 bird species, including several migratory birds.

To protect these avian treasures, various conservation efforts have been implemented by the State Forest Department. Conservation is also an important part of the social and cultural ethos of the people of this state. The State Action Plan for Bird Conservation in Uttarakhand is an important initiative by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and Sálím Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON). It reflects the dedication and commitment of numerous stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, researchers, and local communities. Identifying and prioritizing endangered and migratory bird species and their habitats will allow us to channel our efforts effectively, ensuring that no species is left behind. By tracking bird populations and understanding their behavior, we gain invaluable insights that will lead to better targeted conservation measures.

Mitigating threats to bird populations is of utmost significance. Climate change, habitat loss, invasive species, and illegal activities pose significant challenges that require immediate and concerted action. Through innovative strategies and community centric approaches, we can protect birds from these threats and secure their future for generations to come. This comprehensive plan outlines a range of critical strategies that address the challenges faced by our feathered companions. From habitat preservation and restoration to the mitigation of threats, sustainable land use, and the promotion of responsible tourism, each aspect of the plan is carefully designed to create a harmonious coexistence between humans and birds. Education and awareness play a pivotal role in driving meaningful change. Through this plan, the authors have emphasized the importance of engaging with the public, raising awareness about bird conservation, and instilling a sense of responsibility for the protection of our avian heritage. Already, bird tourism is an important economic activity in several parts across the state, directly linking local livelihoods to conservation.

I commend the collective efforts of all those involved in crafting this action plan. I am confident that the implementation of this plan will yield tangible results in nurturing and preserving the avian diversity of Uttarakhand. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the authors, researchers, conservationists, and all those who contributed to the development of this vital plan. May your tireless efforts inspire us all to act with urgency and dedication to create a future where the skies of Uttarakhand remain forever adorned with the vibrancy and beauty of our winged companions.

**Dr. Samir Sinha**

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## FOREWORD



It is with immense pleasure and a sense of responsibility that I write this foreword for the remarkable work on bird conservation in the beautiful state of Uttarakhand. Nestled amidst the majestic peaks of the Himalayas, this region is a sanctuary for a breathtaking diversity of avian species, making it a haven for bird enthusiasts and nature lovers alike. Uttarakhand's avifauna is an integral part of its ecological fabric, weaving together a delicate balance that sustains life across the landscape. From the vibrant plumage of resident birds to the aweinspiring migrations of countless winged visitors, each feathered inhabitant holds a unique place in this intricate tapestry of life.

However, the serenity of these bird-filled landscapes faces numerous challenges in the modern world. As human activities expand and natural habitats diminish, the very existence of our feathered friends is put at risk. Climate change, pollution, habitat degradation, and human encroachment threaten to silence the melodic symphonies that grace the forests, wetlands, and meadows of Uttarakhand.

This comprehensive work on bird conservation in Uttarakhand comes as a beacon of hope, illuminating a path towards safeguarding our avian treasures. Through meticulous research, insightful observations, and passionate dedication, the contributors to this volume have shed light on the urgent need for conservation action. From the snowy reaches of Nanda Devi to the lush valleys of the Terai, the efforts undertaken to protect bird habitats and foster coexistence between humans and wildlife are commendable. The conservation initiatives undertaken by governmental organizations, nongovernmental bodies, and local communities exemplify the power of collective action.

This work not only enlightens us about the threats faced by our avian companions but also instills in us a profound appreciation for their role in maintaining the ecological equilibrium. It underscores the importance of preserving their habitats, creating corridors for migration, and promoting sustainable practices that harmonize with nature's rhythms. The Visionary Perspective Plan (VPP) for the period 2020 - 2030 was initiated by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and drafted by Sálím Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON) with the aim to create a future where our avian friends thrive, their habitats are protected, and their well-being is prioritized. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the contributors who have meticulously documented their recommendations and insights in this State Action Plan. This plan is a call to action, urging governments, organizations, communities, and individuals to unite in their commitment to bird conservation.

As we immerse ourselves in the pages of this work, may we be inspired to take action and ensure that the wonderful habitats of Uttarakhand continue to resound with the joyful calls and melodious songs of its precious avian inhabitants. Let us embark on this journey of conservation together, bound by our shared love for nature and the collective desire to preserve the wonders of the avian world for generations to come.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Conservation of avifauna is an important element of India's wildlife conservation goal. There are 1364 species of birds in the country of which 81 are endemic and 212 are threatened. Conservation measures for birds have already been executed in the form of Protected Areas (PA) and Important Bird Areas (IBA). However, we still lack comprehensive conservation strategy in the country especially for areas outside PAs and IBAs. In this regard, the Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) had assigned Sálím Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON) the task of developing a Visionary Perspective Plan (VPP) from the period 2020 - 2030, covering every aspect of conservation of birds and their habitats, the actions required to execute them and the thrust areas for prioritization at the country level. This plan entails 15 programs or various thematic areas focusing different aspects of bird ecology and their habitats. Based on this VPP, SACON is now executing State Level Action plans (SAP) for a robust state specific scheme. For the first phase of these SAPs, 17 states belonging to 5 zones have been selected. The current document pertains to the conservation action plan of avifauna of the Uttarakhand state. The aim of the document is to collate all available information on current avifaunal status, conservation issues and strategic approaches for conserving their diversity and habitats. Uttarakhand has a mosaic of various habitat types due to its location in the western Himalaya and thus harbors an extremely rich bird diversity (708 species) at various gradients of biogeographical elements of which three are endemic to India, eight endemics to western Himalaya and 35 are threatened as per IUCN. The other important aspect of this plan is to foster a collaborative consultation between SACON and major key stakeholders of the Uttarakhand state. These include the State Forest Department, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations and individuals interested towards bird conservation. The consultations would be regarding the prioritization of actions required and thrust areas to manage avian conservation issues specific to the state. This would lead to a wholesome and detailed action plan for avifauna to be followed and updated for a long duration for the state of Uttarakhand. We identified 18 major Rare, Endangered and Threatened (RET) species for Uttarakhand. A simple score-based methodology was used to identify and prioritize the RET species using different conservation and ecological indicators mentioned in State of India's Bird (2020) such as, IUCN status, WPA schedule, CMS Appendix, CITES Appendix, endemism, habitat specialization and the conservation value of species. Finally, a joint collaborative effort with 43 stakeholders of the state has resulted in identifying some of the major bird conservation issues. These are, developmental projects such as dams, Highways (Chardham Pari yojana), deforestation, forest fires and human habitation. Under each 15 VPP programs, top three high priority issues emerged that requires an immediate conservation action whereas medium and low priority issues require slightly delayed conservation action.



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