

Bolstering the Baer's Pochard's safely wintering in Myanmar

What is a Baer's Pochard?

Baer's Pochard (*Aythya baeri*) was once a common diving duck species but is now very rare. The species was abundantly occurred in China during both the breeding and wintering season, currently small numbers breed from the Amur and Ussuri basin in Russia and a few individuals winter within Myanmar, Bangladesh, Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Mongolia and Philippines. The global population is likely less than 150 – 700 mature individuals (R. Hearn in *litt.* 2016), has undergone a massive decline in recent year to push this duck at the edge of extinction in the wild.



Fig – 1: Wintering record the Baer's Pochard species at inland wetland in Mandalay region

Baer's Pochard status in Myanmar

This diving duck species has been classified as completely protected species in Myanmar and critically endangered by the IUCN.

In south and east Asia countries, Myanmar was the most important winter population of Baer's Pochard in over thirty years of age. The species was recorded between 60 - 90 individuals in both man - made and natural fresh water wetland where has at the Myitthar Lake and Kye Ni Inn in central Myanmar but there was no Baer's Pochard wintering information after 2005s. An extensive

survey, up to 12 individuals of Baer's Pochard at the Pyu Lake, Paleik Lake and Banaw Inn among the 21 fresh water wetland in Mandalay region (Aung *et al.* 2016, 2020), 6 individuals in Inlay Lake in southern Shan state and up to 3 individuals in Indawgyi Lake in Kachin state and Kaung Hein Inn near Htamati in Sagaing regionKaung Hein Inn in Sagaing region.



Fig – 2: Wintering record the Baer's Pochard, critically endangered species, at Paleik Lake in Mandalay region

Under the threats

Renovation: Mostly, the man – make lake are renovated for irrigated cultivation in central Myanmar. The renovation effects are degraded the natural wetland ecosystem and habitat loss of aquatic animals and water bird species.

Drought: Natural wetland are regularly inundated in the rainy season and connected with the four rivers namely the Ayeyarwaddy, Chindwin, Sittaung and Thanlwin in Myanmar. In rainy season, the rainfall is less, the water of rivers can't flow into the oxbow or inundated areas. There is a water drought in winter season that have effected to loss the habitat for not migratory water

bird species but aquatic animals and plants in wetland. And seriously impact to local communities because they have irrigated cultivation in summer season by being drainage the water from the oxbow or inundated areas and receiving the water from the river via water gate.

Habitat loss: The flooding wetlands used to be changed the agriculture land in wintering season and some man make Lake has been running a fish farming. Those are no enough food and shelter for migratory water bird species in wintering season.

Poisoning: The migration season on January to April, most of the people are making the poison which is mixing the Potassium Cyanide and seeds from the bud of water hyacinths (*Eichhornia crassipes*) to hunt or kill the migratory water bird species in central Myanmar.

Invasive species: Tilapia *Oreochromis niloticus* and Vermiculated Sailfin Catfish are both presumed to negatively effect on inland wetland ecosystems. These species, which are both abundant, compete for food and habitat with native fish species and can change the ecosystem of the lakes. The stress of invasive species, especially fish such as *Oreochromis niloticus*, *Pterygoplichthys disjunctivus*, *Gambusia affinis*, and *Trichopsis vittatus*, can degrade lake ecosystems and affect both habitats and species in both lakes (Fish diversity and Fisheries survey in the Pyu and Paleik Lake, 2021).

Our conservation response

BANCA is one member of Baer's Pochard Task Force in global and conserve the Baer's Pochard and its habitat wetlands within in Myanmar. Since 2016, BANCA have conducted an annually population survey and identifying the potential wintering sites of Baer's Pochard in central Myanmar. Among them, BANCA formed the Community – based Organization (CBO), empowerment the CBO members to be productive the Baer's Pochard and inland wetland conservation programs by themselves in central Myanmar since 2017. In addition, BANCA have collaborated with the national and international organization and relevant department to protect the Baer's Pochard and its wintering wetland sites within in Myanmar. Recently, the Pyu Lake which is 1% the global population of Baer's Pochard have designated the 7th Ramsar Site (site no. 2533) and 8th East Asian – Australasian Flyway Network Site (EAAF – 155) and the Paleik Lake have designated the 7th East Asian – Australasian Flyway Network Site (EAAF – 154) in international.

How can you help

Donate: Thank ever so much for your donation to sustain the healthy inland wetland ecosystem services to migratory water bird species and survive to local communities by saving the critical Baer's Pochard species in Myanmar.

Support: Sharing information to your colleagues to be a good vibe about the diving duck species and its incredible services to wetland biodiversity and communities.

Involve: Collaboration with us as much as you can in our Baer's Pochard and its wintering habitat (inland wetland) Conservation Program in Myanmar.

Remember that your contribution is one of signature to shape the safely wintering space for Baer's Pochard in Myanmar!!

References

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