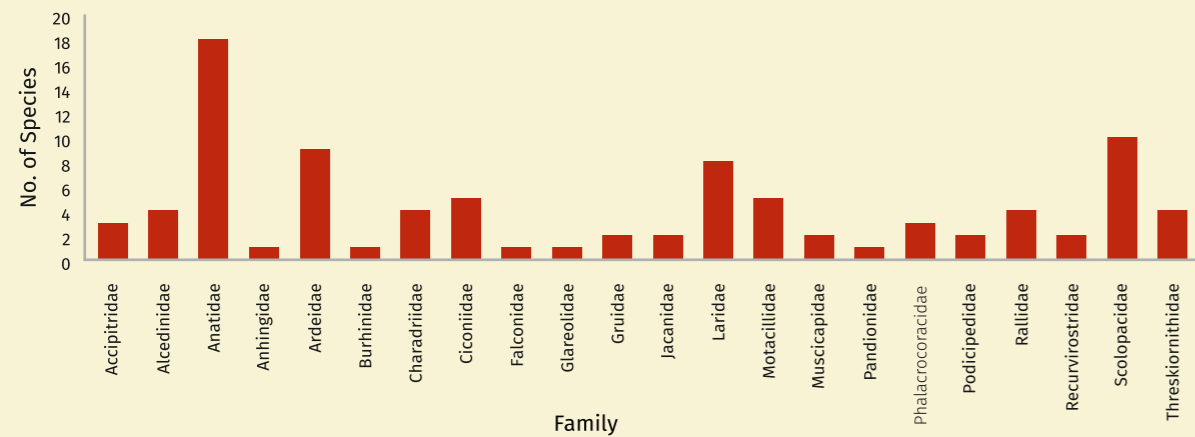
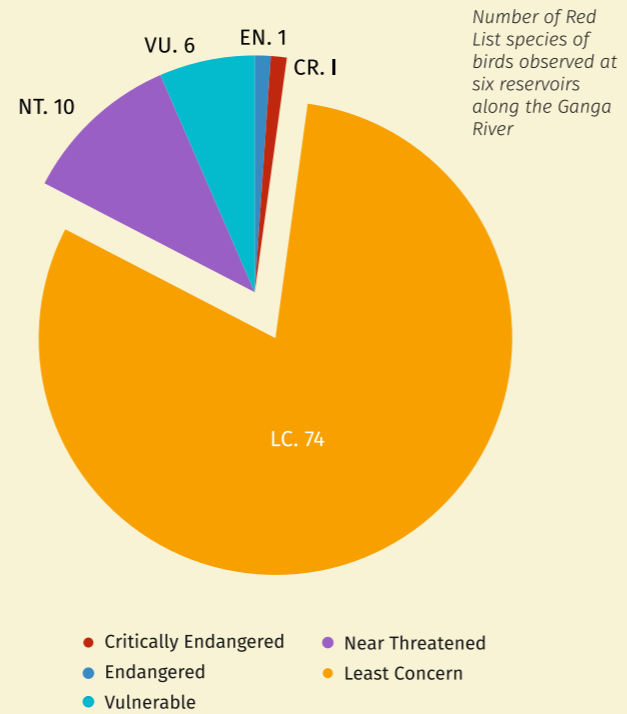




Northern shoveler © Rathika Ramasamy



Number of species belonging to different Families of birds observed at six reservoirs along the Ganga River

Reduced water flow of the Ganga River, water pollution, extensive agricultural practices in the sandy islands and poaching of waterbirds affect their occurrence as well as abundance. These need to be addressed by taking site-specific measures and policy level decisions to maintain adequate flow and the extent of natural resource extraction from rivers.

The mainstem Ganga River has several protected areas such as Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary, Varanasi Turtle Sanctuary, Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary that

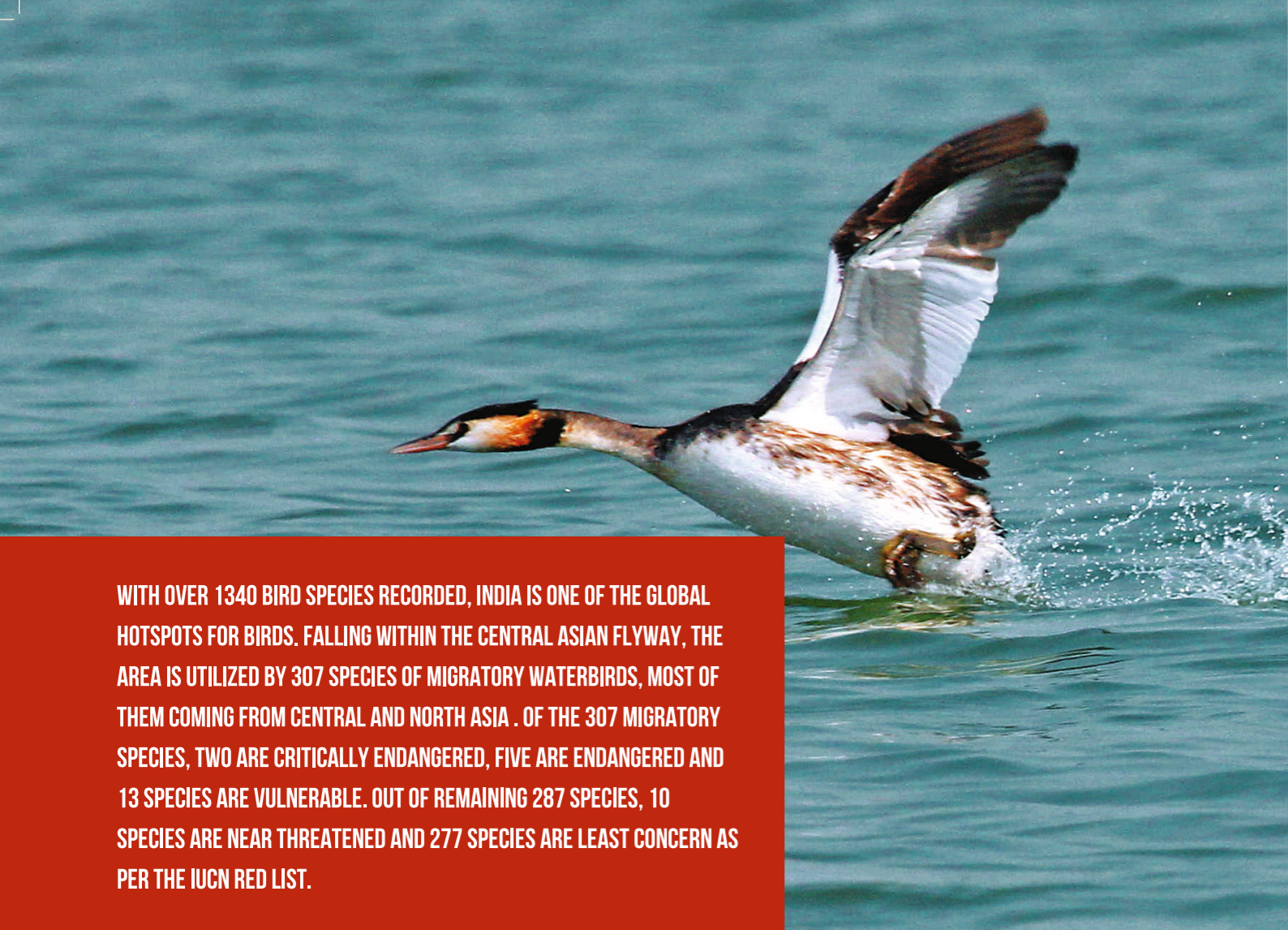
provide protection to both migratory and resident waterbirds. Besides, the Ganga River encompasses a stretch of the Rajaji Tiger Reserve and Sundarban Tiger Reserve which are also important waterbird habitats.

The NMCg-WII Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation project has initiated biodiversity conservation action by involving river side communities through a participatory approach.



MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS

GANGA OF THE RIVER



WITH OVER 1340 BIRD SPECIES RECORDED, INDIA IS ONE OF THE GLOBAL HOTSPOTS FOR BIRDS. FALLING WITHIN THE CENTRAL ASIAN FLYWAY, THE AREA IS UTILIZED BY 307 SPECIES OF MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS, MOST OF THEM COMING FROM CENTRAL AND NORTH ASIA. OF THE 307 MIGRATORY SPECIES, TWO ARE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED, FIVE ARE ENDANGERED AND 13 SPECIES ARE VULNERABLE. OUT OF REMAINING 287 SPECIES, 10 SPECIES ARE NEAR THREATENED AND 277 SPECIES ARE LEAST CONCERN AS PER THE IUCN RED LIST.

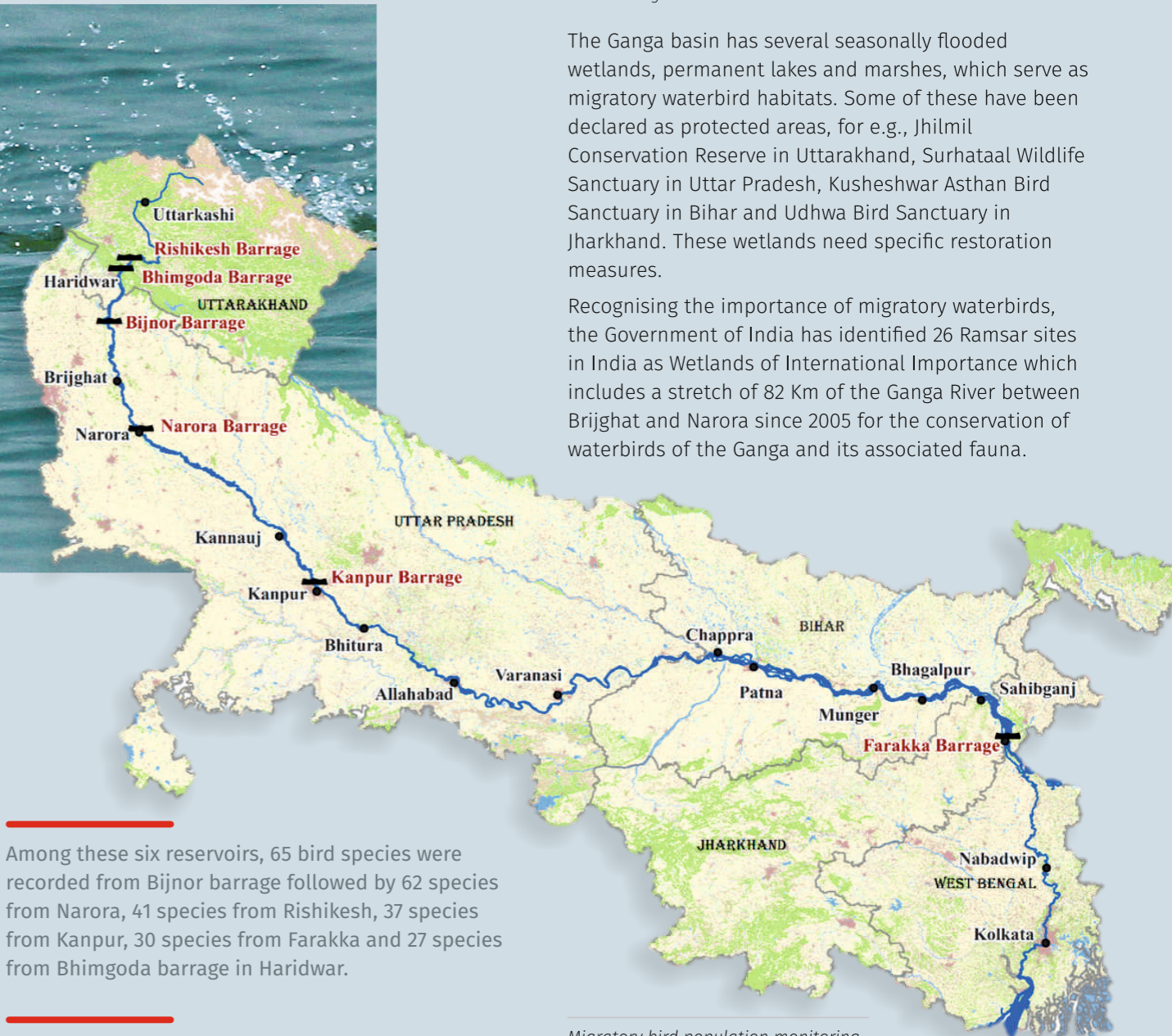
The migratory waterbirds use sandy islands and sand banks along the Ganga River for roosting and the resident waterbirds such as the Indian skimmer, Little pratincole and River terns use these habitats for breeding.



Bar-headed geese © Shuchismita Das

The Ganga basin has several seasonally flooded wetlands, permanent lakes and marshes, which serve as migratory waterbird habitats. Some of these have been declared as protected areas, for e.g., Jhilmil Conservation Reserve in Uttarakhand, Surhataa Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh, Kusheshwar Asthan Bird Sanctuary in Bihar and Udhwa Bird Sanctuary in Jharkhand. These wetlands need specific restoration measures.

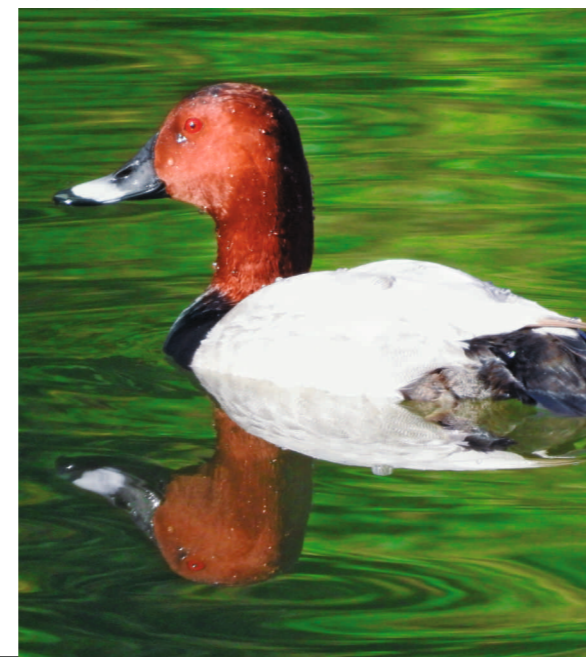
Recognising the importance of migratory waterbirds, the Government of India has identified 26 Ramsar sites in India as Wetlands of International Importance which includes a stretch of 82 Km of the Ganga River between Brijghat and Narora since 2005 for the conservation of waterbirds of the Ganga and its associated fauna.



Great crested grebe © Manoj Nair

During the rapid assessment of waterbird diversity by the NMCG-WII Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation project, 87 species of waterbirds and five obligate species belonging to 22 families were recorded from the six reservoirs along the Ganga River.

Common pochard © Shuchismita Das

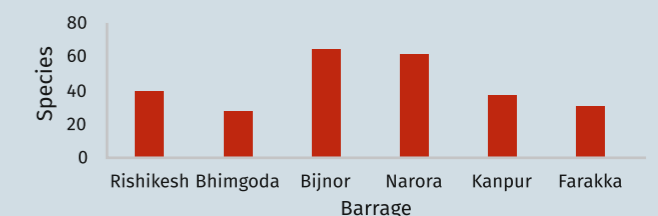


Among these six reservoirs, 65 bird species were recorded from Bijnor barrage followed by 62 species from Narora, 41 species from Rishikesh, 37 species from Kanpur, 30 species from Farakka and 27 species from Bhimgoda barrage in Haridwar.

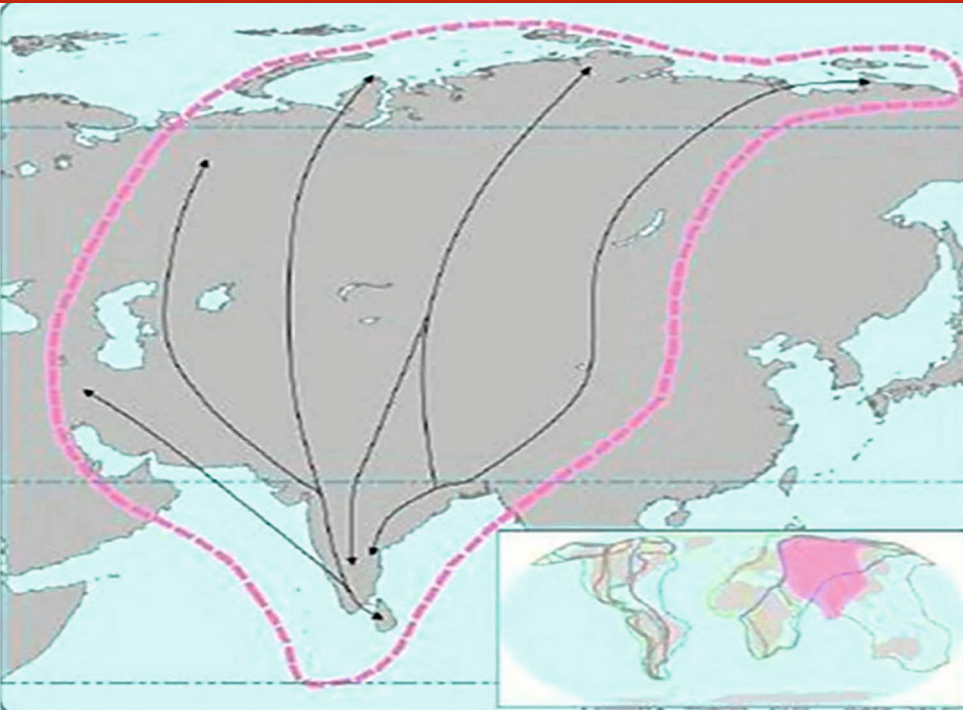
Of the total species observed, the members of the Family Anatidae (ducks and geese) dominated (18 species) followed by Scolopacidae (waders) and Ardeidae (egrets and herons).

Of the 92 species recorded during the assessment, 17 species belonged to Rare, Endangered and Threatened (RET) categories, of which one species each were Critically Endangered and Endangered, six were Vulnerable and 10 species were Near Threatened.

Migratory bird population monitoring sites along the Ganga River



Number of waterbird species observed at six reservoirs along the Ganga River



The coverage area of the Central Asian Flyway