FISH BIODIVERSITY IN THE WATER BODIES OF SAMASPUR BIRD SANCTUARY, UTTAR PRADESH: TOWARDS DEVELOPING A FRESHWATER AQUATIC SANCTUARY[1]

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Extensive surveys were conducted in Samaspur Bird Sanctuary (799.37 ha), Uttar Pradesh during June 2000 to December 2004, to explore the status of fish germplasm resources in the water bodies. A total of 3,444 fish were collected and classified into 7 orders, 19 families, 33 genera and 46 species. One exotic species (n=2) *Aristichthys nobilis* was collected. This is the first ichthyofaunal report of this Sanctuary. The dominant species was *Gudusia chapra* (relative abundance, 7.25%) and the subdominant species were *Labeo bata* (RA, 6.67%), *Salmostoma bacaila* (RA, 5.51%), *Amblypharyngodon mola* (RA, 5.08%), *Notopterus notopterus* (RA, 4.50%) and *Eutropiichthys vacha* (RA, 3.91%). The analysis showed that 28.26% of fish species, which are reported to be threatened as per IUCN, had a stable population in the Sanctuary. Apart from the major Indian carps and the above-mentioned species, the important species recorded were *Chitala chitala*, *Clupisoma garua*, *Ailia coila*, *Aorichthys aor*, *Wallago attu*, *Labeo gonius, Labeo pangusia,Puntius sarana*, *Rhinomugil corsula*, *Channa marulius*, *Channa striatus*, *Ompok pabda* and *Ombok pabo*. The study confirms that protected freshwater areas are important for conservation of regional fish biodiversity, especially for local and endangered fish species.

Key words: Samaspur Bird Sanctuary, fish biodiversity, threatened fish, aquatic Sanctuary