

ASIAN WATERBIRD CENSUS

The annual Asian Waterbird Census ([AWC](#)) is part of the global International Waterbird Census ([IWC](#)). This citizen-science programme supports the conservation and management of wetlands and waterbirds worldwide.

The recommended dates for the AWC are 03 – 18 January 2026, covering two weeks and three weekends, when we should encourage you to count waterbirds. These dates are for guidance only and counts from any date between December 2025 and February 2026 are very welcome.

Participate in the AWC 2026 count programme!

Your information helps to promote the designation and management of internationally important sites such as nationally and locally protected areas, [Ramsar Sites](#), [Western/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes and Other Waterbirds](#), [East Asian – Australasian Flyway Network Sites](#), [ASEAN Heritage Parks](#), [World Heritage Sites and Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas \(IBAs\)](#). This helps in identifying and protecting new sites of importance for waterbirds. The results of the census and information are also used to promote national waterbird and wetland conservation and international cooperation along the Central Asian Flyway and East Asian– Australasian Flyway. You can find several outputs from the annual AWC on the [International Waterbird Census data portal](#), including [Species](#) and [Country/Region](#) count totals from the last 5 years and [maps of AWC sites](#).

Guidance and Reporting

If you have participated in a previous count for a particular site, kindly cover the same site this year and report on it using the latest count and wetland assessment submission forms. We encourage you to cover as many sites as possible and encourage more participation. Submission of forms to the appropriate coordinator should be done by the end of February 2026 at the latest.

Protocol for waterbird counting: A general introduction to counting waterbirds for the International Waterbird Census. You are engaged to follow these in conducting your counts.

Digitising Site Boundaries: Drawing the boundaries of a site or count area on a map is key to ensuring consistent coverage from year to year. This is a simple guide to the various options to make digital boundaries for sites and submit these with your counts to your coordinator. The available site boundaries are available [here](#) and can guide your counts.

Counting and reporting across countries/regions in Asia-Australasia (for India, please see next section)

- AWC submissions through national count forms/scheme and [Asian Waterbird Census Wetland Assessment Google Form](#)

AWC participants should contact their national/regional coordinators to seek information on other forms and protocols to be followed. Check for the contact details of your AWC National/regional coordinator [here](#).

Counts recorded on eBird from outside India can also be shared with the eBird handle Asian Waterbird Census. In addition to the waterbird count information, for AWC 2026, we continue to use the Wetland Assessment Form for participants to submit standardised information on the status and potential threats to wetlands and waterbirds observed on their visit. This complements the waterbird count forms you normally submit. We encourage you to submit an entry for each site you cover. National/regional coordinators will be able to summarise these in their reports, and we intend to prepare an annual regional summary.

❖ **AWC Count & Wetland Assessment Entry Form**

Click the link for the AWC [Count Wetland Assessment Form](#) for Asia-Australasia.

We have updated the **AWC Count Wetland Assessment Entry Form (Excel format)** with the latest list of sites uploaded to the IWC online database. Here the counter can use the dropdown menu option to enter the waterbird species. We also request for each new site you cover; you kindly submit a simple outline/boundary map of the actual count area. Check the [AWC Site Network map](#) to see if this site has been counted before and if a boundary exists; if so, use this as a guide for your count). Guidance to produce the map is here.

Counting and reporting in India

The AWC is jointly coordinated by the [Bombay Natural History Society](#) and [Wetlands International](#). To help prioritize sites to be covered, [a reference list of internationally important AWC sites and wetland IBAs in India](#) is available for your guidance.

Data submission in India can be done in one of three ways:

- **AWC India Count and Wetland Assessment Entry Form (Excel format)**
For this year, we are providing two options the AWC India Count and Wetland Assessment Entry Form. In the first, the counter can use the dropdown menu option to enter the waterbird species. In the latter, these are pre-entered as a flat form so only need for the number to be entered. Either form can be used.

AWC India 2026 Count and assessment form empty

[AWC-India-Count-and-wetland-assessment-Form-empty](#)

AWC India 2026 Count and assessment form (species filled)

[AWC-India-Count-and-wetland-assessment-Form-species entered](#)

We also request for each new site you cover, you kindly submit a simple outline/boundary map of the actual count area (check the [AWC Site Network map](#) to see if this site has been counted

before and if a boundary exists; if so, use this as a guide for your count). Guidance to produce the map is [here](#).

❖ **AWC India Wetland Assessment ([MS Word](#))**

This Word form is only for those unable to use the Excel format. This form remains unchanged from AWC 2019. We also request for each site you cover; you kindly submit a simple outline/boundary map of the actual count area. Guidance to produce the map is [here](#). Kindly provide completed forms through your [State Coordinators](#), with a copy to awc@wetlands.org and wetlands@bnhs.org. If there is no State Coordinator, kindly send them directly to awc@wetlands.org and wetlands@bnhs.org.

❖ **[Asian Waterbird Census India eBird 2026 Wetland Assessment Form](#) (Google Form)**

For those familiar with eBird (and its mobile application), since AWC 2016, we have introduced an online data submission through the eBird India platform developed in collaboration with [Bird Count India](#) and the Bombay Natural History Society. For each wetland covered, upload your counts to eBird and fill out the Google form [Asian Waterbird Census India eBird Wetland Assessment Form \(Google Form\)](#)

Do note that only eBird submissions accompanied by this form will be accepted and included in the national AWC overview. **So kindly complete the regular eBird count and this AWC India Wetland Assessment Form 2026 for each site separately. Please share your eBird checklists with our eBird handle ‘awcindia’.**

We also request that you kindly submit a simple outline/boundary map of the actual count area for each site you cover. Guidance to produce the map is [here](#).

Participants are requested to submit all information by the end of February 2026. If you have any questions, please contact birdcountindia@gmail.com and awc@wetlands.org.

Raising awareness for waterbird and wetland conservation

We encourage you to actively raise local awareness of waterbird and wetland conservation issues around the census by contributing to or publishing news items and articles in print and electronic media. Kindly share links to articles to awc@wetlands.org, so we can help to promote it. We also encourage you to use social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Linked In, etc.) to actively publicize the census and your findings. We encourage you to include the hashtags #WaterbirdsCount, #AWC, or #AsianWaterbirdCensus where possible and tag us on @WetlandsInt @EAAFP so we can help to share this widely too. For your posts in India, tag @BNHSIndia and @WetlandsInt_SA.

Generating support for monitoring

Through the global Waterbird Fund www.waterbird.fund, we can now receive dedicated funds to channel to our network to fill geographic gaps and strengthen local capacity to implement and monitor waterbirds as well as remote wetlands that are not being regularly counted. We

aim to target new funding sources to secure contributions to support our network, including conservation organizations, governments, birders, hunters, and their clubs and associations, foundations, as well as the public with an interest in waterbirds and the environment. Do consider promoting the fund and donating to help strengthen monitoring in the region.

We invite your active participation to make this special year count for waterbird and wetland conservation on the ground!

We trust your annual waterbird count and wetland assessment help you to raise local awareness about the importance of conserving wetlands and their waterbirds while contributing to the world's longest-running biodiversity monitoring programme.