

2022 February 2



CONSERVATION THE BAER'S POCHARD AT TWO KEY WINTERING SITES IN CENTRAL MYANMAR

DATE OF SUBMISSION (24/03/2021)

BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION (BANCA)
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Section 1. Project Overview – This report will be shared on EAAFP website

1.1 BACKGROUND

Please give a brief and background of your project:

Baer's Pochard (*Aythya baeri*) has declined drastically in recent years. The global population is now estimated at less than 1,000 individuals and the current IUCN Red List status is Critically Endangered. In the 1990s Thailand and Bangladesh had hundreds of wintering birds, but in recent years the number has dropped to only a few birds wintering annually.

Myanmar is another country with a good wintering population of Baer's Pochard in the past but limited information available between 2004 and 2016. During past censuses of water birds in Myanmar, Baer's Pochard was recorded at Kyee ne Inn, Taung Kan – Se daw gyi and Myitthar Lake (Myanmar Wetland Inventory 2004).

In early 2016, Biodiversity And Nature Conservation Association (BANCA, BirdLife in Myanmar) conducted an extensive survey at 25 inland lakes in central Myanmar (the Ayeyarwaddy River Basin) including eight KBAs - Yemyet, Inle Lake, Taung Kan Sedawgyi, Paleik Inn, Myittha Lake, Nyaung Yan Min Hla Kam, Kyee Ni Inn and Taung ta man Inn. It was found there are still sites with good potential as important wintering grounds for Baer's Pochard, particularly at the lake Pyu Kan, where at least 12 Baer's Pochards were observed, and Paleik Inn near Mandalay City where two Baer's Pochard were observed with over 5,000 other water birds in late January 2016. Apart from the number and species of bird present, human activities, threats and impacts, and environmental parameters were also noted. Human activities at Pyu Lake are very low due to belief of spirit in the lake. The lake is also good for other globally threatened and rare bird species of conservation concern such as Ferruginous Pochard (*Aythya nyroca*) and Falcated Duck (*Mareca falcata*).

Pyu Lake and Paleik Inn have rich diversity and are important for wildlife; particularly for migratory and resident water birds. Over 30 species of water bird have been observed, with large congregations of migrants present during the northern winter. This includes especially high numbers of Northern Shoveler, Eurasian Wigeon and Falcated Duck and globally threatened and near threatened species; Baer's Pochard, Ferruginous Pochard, Common Pochard and Oriental Darter.

In Wetland Inventory 2004, Pyu Lake does not include as important wetland site. However, internationally important numbers, *i.e.*, exceeding 1% of the flyway population estimate (Wetlands International 2016), were recorded for Baer's Pochard (12,1% = 5). Pyu meet the 1% criterion for sites of international importance (Ramsar criterion 6 and IBA criterion A4 (i) and recording a small community of globally threatened species (Ramsar Criterion 2 and IBA criterion A1).

Central Myanmar is a dry region and consequently small ponds sometimes become totally dry as water is drained for agriculture and other uses. In 2019, the Mandalay government formed the Mandalay Wetlands Conservation Committee, chaired by the Minister (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental



Conservation), and secretaries by Director of Forest Department and relative government departments and NGOs/INGOs (BANCA, MBNS, IUCN and WCS) as members. This committee will focus on the sustainable management and long-term conservation and wise use of wetlands in central Myanmar.

Water bird surveys by BANCA from 2016 to 2019 have confirmed that central Myanmar is still an important wintering ground for Baer’s Pochard, but there are lots more things to be done, including law enforcement to stop illegal hunting, involving local communities in conservation, livelihood projects to support people living by wetlands important to Baer’s Pochard, and establishing some protection system.

A. Describe about your organization by filling out the table below:

Type of the organization - Government/NGO/Private Sector/Other	NGO
Name(s) of the division and/or position	Yangon, Myanmar
<p>List any contributions that your organizations or yourself might have been involved for the preservation of the migratory water birds, their habitats and East – Asian Australasian Flyway below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of migratory water bird species, shore bird species at the Ramsar site, EAAF sites Indawgyi Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary, Moeyungyi Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary, Nanthar Island, Gulf of Mottama and other wetlands area in Myanmar; • Organizing the regular Asian Water Bird Census (AWC) in Ramsar sites, EAAFP survey in Gulf of Mottama regularly and throughout Myanmar; • Community outreach in the villages who are depending on the wetland areas; • Assessment on ecosystem services and vulnerability assessment in freshwater and coastal wetlands area in Myanmar; • Participation in process of designation of Ramsar sites in Myanmar; • Community involving conservation of wetland and migratory water bird species through forming Local Conservation Groups (LCGs) in Gulf of Mottama, Nanthar Island, Pyu Lake and Paleik Inn. And then initiating the community guards by doing the patrolling with local villagers, ToT training of Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) to local villagers and LCGs/VCGs (Village Conservation Groups). • Assessing the current protection and management at all sites supporting of Baer’s Pochard and enhance where necessary. • Promoting status and conservation needs of Baer’s Pochard and Spoon-billed Sandpiper among relevant governments and other decision makers. 	

B. Provide a brief abstract summary of your project. In the summary, please include its objective and its location (Name of Place, City and Country), and explain the significance and relations of the species and its location (in link with [EAAF Key Species](#) and [Flyway Network Site](#)) for your project.



The project was conducted for conservation of Baer’s Pochard, critically endangered bird species in two key sites Pyu Lake and Paleik Inn in central Myanmar from December 2020 to January 2022. The project aimed to develop conservation activities and EAAFP Flyway Network Site status at Paleik Lake and Pyu Lake, central Myanmar. The period when the project was being implemented were under the covid-19 transmission in Myanmar. The travel restriction were challenges in Baer’s Pochard and other migratory bird species in Myanmar. Meanwhile, the Forest Department, Mandalay Region agreed to support and lead in community outreaches and patrolling in these wetland areas and jointly conducted patrolling with local conservation organization “Shwe Kanthayar Nature Conservation Association” in Pyu Lake and Paleik Bird Lover Association in Paleik Lake in January 2021. Meantime, the villagers were facing the economic crises due to the covid-19 and increasing the illegal bird killing in Pyu lake, Paleik Inn and Banaw Inn. The supporting and leading by Forest Department was significantly controlled for reduction the bird hunting and poisoning in wetlands area not only two wetlands sites: Pyu Lake and Paleik Lake but also other important wetlands in central Myanmar 2021. In November 2021, BANCA evaluated the migration status for species and collected an information on site and threats to prepare the FNS site information sheets for Pyu Lake and Paleik Lake. In January, we collaborated with the Shwe Kanthayar Nature Conservation Association to conduct the education awareness activities on wetland biodiversity and its conservation value to designate the Pyu Lake and Paleik Lake as a EAA Flyway Network Site in Mandalay region.

1.2 DETAILS

Please provide a project description of the following:

- A. **Detailed Project Progress:** Describe about process of your project, including methodologies, field work, interview, conference, etc. Please include analysis of your process, if applicable. (Any visual data, including maps, graphs, tables, photos, etc. are strongly preferred)

Project Progress:

Biodiversity And Nature Conservation Association was going to implement the Baer’s Pochard and other migratory water bird species at priorities wintering sites are Pyu Lake, Paleik Lake and Banaw Inn in central Myanmar in January 2021. When we travelled in Mandalay, we had been kept in Hotel quarantine for seven days since we have abided by the rule of Ministry of Health and Sport in Myanmar. After we finished the quarantine, we have collaborated with the communities based organization is namely the Shwe Kanthayar Nature Conservation Association in Pyu Lake. The survey members made the social distancing or so three persons for counting the migratory water bird population in February. We conducted the population of migratory water bird species by using with the core count method and Birds of South East Asia Field Guide and Field Guide to the Water birds of ASEAN books.

Table -1: Trip itinerary for population survey on migratory water bird species in January 2021

No.	Date	Activities description
1	25-01-2021	Travelled from Yangon to Mandalay by flight
2	26 to 01-02-2021	Joined the Hotel Quarantine with 7 days
3	2 - 2 - 2021	Travelled from Hotel to Pyu village
4	3/ 4 - 2 - 2021	Surveyed the water bird population at Pyu Lake
5	5/6 - 2 - 2021	Surveyed the water bird population at Paleik Lake
8	7 - 2 - 2021	Surveyed the water bird population at Banaw Inn
9	8 - 2 - 2021	Discussed with the members of Shwe Kantharyar Nature Conservation Association at Pyu village
10	9 - 2 - 2021	Calculated the budget and collected the field photos



Fig - 1: Counting the migratory water bird species and its population

Furthermore, BANCA facilitated the members of Shwe Kantharyar Nature Conservation Association to update the members and review the responsibilities of each member and their association like SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities and threats) on 8th February 2021.



Fig - 2: Reviewing the CSO - SKNCA structure

In January 2022, BANCA collaborated with the Shwe Kanthayar Nature Conservation Association (SKNCA) and organized some bird photographers into conducting an Asian Water Bird Census at Pyu Lake, Paleik Lake and Banaw Inn which sites are priorities wintering sites of Baer's Pochard in central Myanmar.



Fig – 3: Conducting the migratory water bird survey

BANCA gave a lecture to CBO members (SKNCA) on the wetland and biodiversity conservation, migratory water bird species and benefit the flyway network sites designation and introduced them to the process of administrative and financial.



Fig – 4: Training on wetland biodiversity and its ecosystem services



Fig – 5: Training on administrative and financial process



Fig – 6: Group discussion on wetland and biodiversity value



Fig – 7: Playing the game on wetland and migratory water bird species conservation

- B. **Problems Encountered/Adjustments:** If there were some changes made, please indicate them and explain (ex. Unexpected circumstances, sudden cancellation, etc.)

Challenges

Pandemic issue: the COVID-19 has seriously effective in Myanmar since 2020. It has caused the problems and delay to make the education awareness and survey with many people in field. Then, a quarter of the village population participated because some villagers has afraid the Covid transmission. Furthermore, we did not conduct the water bird population survey and Asian water bird census with many bird watchers in central Myanmar.

Political issue: Nationwide, most of the citizen have gone on strike in response to the coup for peacefully protesting against the military misconduct since in February 2021. In addition, most of the government staffs and village headers have also joined the civil disobedience movement, CDM and run away from their home. And, we did not conduct the field work to accept a local's recommendation for designation the Paleik Lake as a EAA Flyway Network Site in Singaing Township, Mandalay region. Because it township has seriously caused a conflict between the military coup and people defense force.

- C. **Details on any community education and public awareness activities associated with your project.**

Patrolling and awareness raising on conservation the migratory water bird species

The Mandalay Regional Wetland Conservation Committee made a video conference with all of the committee members to express the past conservation activities on wetland environment and water

bird species and do the reduction on poisoning and hunting of migratory water bird species in wintering time in November 2020. BANCA discussed to implement the Baer's Pochard and other migratory water bird species conservation activities in Covid – 19 pandemics.

As results of discussion, Forest Department from Singaing Township and Tada Oo Township in Kyaukse District Mandalay region, conducted the patrolling survey on hunting and poisoning the migratory water bird species and education awareness talk program as well as the standing signboards at Pyu Lake, Paleik Lake and important freshwater wetlands in Mandalay region in January 2021. When the staffs from Forest Department made the education awareness talks with the local people, they had abided by the rule of Health and Sport, Myanmar in Covid – 19. Therefore, they made the social distancing or so 20 persons and handed out the surgical mask and hand sanitizing to participants. Furthermore, they handed out the pamphlets on conservation the inland wetland ecosystem services and migratory water bird species lists at Pyu Lake and Paleik Lake to participants and recorded the activities photos.



Fig 8: Wetland conservation awareness activities

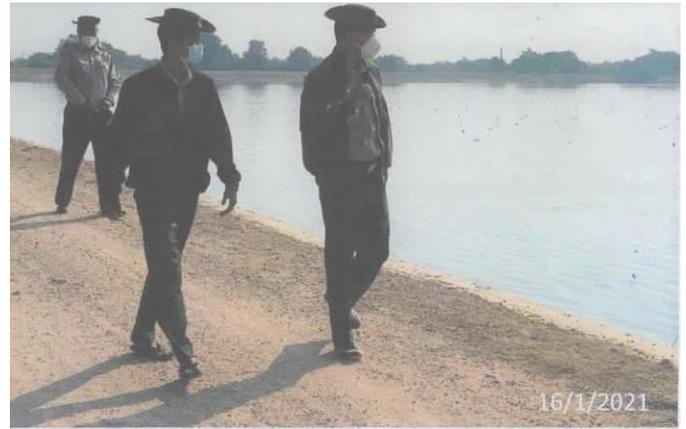


Fig 9: Patrolling activities for hunting and poisoning to water bird species in winter.

In January 2022, we conducted the field work to accept a local’s recommendation for designation the Pyu Lake and Paleik Lake as the East Asian Australian Flyway Network Site and Ramsar Site in central Myanmar. Before approving an agreement, we performed an education awareness activity on wetland biodiversity, its ecosystem services, conservation site designation is importance and benefit to local livelihood at six villages are rely on Pyu Lake for agriculture irrigation in Mandalay region. Because Pyu Lake meet the three criteria of the EAAF Site Network: it supports the critically endangered species Baer’s Pochard and vulnerable species Woolly – necked Stork and Common Pochard, over 20,000 population of migratory water bird annually and 1% of the Baer’s Pochard individuals.



Fig – 10: Planning the project implementation in Pyu Lake and Paleik Lake

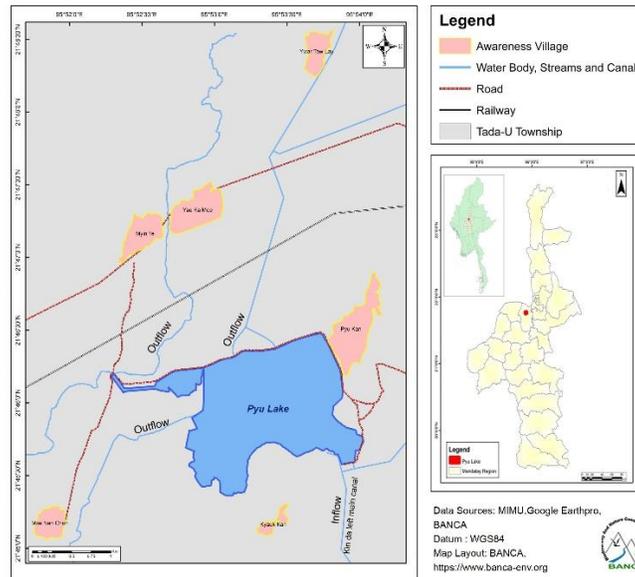


Fig – 11: Making an awareness activity



Fig – 12: Awareness activities at Kyauk Kan village & Moe Nan Chon village near the Pyu Lake



Fig – 13: Awareness activities at Myin Te village & Pyu Kan village near the Pyu Lake



Fig – 14: Awareness activities at Ywar Taw Lay village & Yae Ka Moe village near the Pyu Lake

Furthermore, we trained the several members about the basic patrolling training to understand why patrolling activities is importance for wildlife conservation. And, we conducted the patrolling survey with CBO members on at 4 days in Pyu Lake and Paleik Lake.



Fig – 15: Smart patrolling training to CSO members at Pyu Lake

We set up two standing signboards on information the protected water bird species with the national status (completely, seasonal and normally protected by the wildlife Law in Myanmar) and IUCN status at the Pyu Lake. Unfortunately, we did not it at the Paleik Lake because it has seriously caused the protests against the Military coup.





Fig – 16: Standing the signboard on protected water bird species at Pyu Lake

D. Please include any additional supporters of this project

The project, Darwin Initiative and IUCN – IBRRI supported for the wise use of wetland conservation and climate change vulnerability assessment in Pyu Lake and Paleik Lake to collect the biodiversity data, wetland ecosystem services, threats and organize an awareness raising of wetland conservation in villages. It provided travel costs, accommodation cost, communities consultation meeting costs and shared staff and local cost in this project.

1.3 RESULT

Explain and evaluate the outcomes and findings of your project (Any visual data, including maps, graphs, tables, photos, etc. are highly preferred).

Observations of Baer’s Pochard:

In consequence of mass protests against the coup, the migratory water bird survey was conducted at three study sites by limiting the survey members at Pyu Lake, Paleik Lake and Banaw Inn. However, we observed four individuals of Baer’s Pochard in Pyu Lake in February 2021.

In January 2022, we recorded two individuals of Baer’s Pochard in Pyu Lake at Asian Water Bird Census Activities.

Collecting information of Baer's Pochard:

We have collated the information on other observations of Baer's Pochard in Myanmar during 2021/22 from bird photographers, bird watchers, other community – based organization and social media with pictures. At least seven individuals of Baer's Pochard were observed at Indawgyi Lake from water bird survey by Friend of Wildlife and Inn Chit Thu on 24th January 2021.



Fig - 17: Recorded photo of Baer's Pochard at Indaygyi Lake

In January 2022, we got the information that two individuals of Baer's Pochard was recorded in Paleik Lake from bird photographers in Mandalay.





Fig - 18: Recorded photo of Baer's Pochard at Paleik Lake

Recorded of water bird species

Analyzing the data, a total of 17 families and 47 species of water bird species were recorded at the three surveyed wetlands: Pyu Lake, Paleik Lake and Banaw Inn. As a survey result, the highest number of diving duck and water bird species were recorded at Pyu Lake, with 5068 individuals of 38 species. Recorded 4426 individuals of 37 species at Paleik Lake and 1311 individuals of 33 species at Banaw (Lattaung) Inn. (Figure 6). In survey, only two globally threatened of water bird species such as one critically endangered species: Baer's Pochard and one vulnerable species: Common Pochard with 50 individuals in Pyu Lake and two individuals in Banaw Inn were recorded in 2021. (see the appendix - 1).

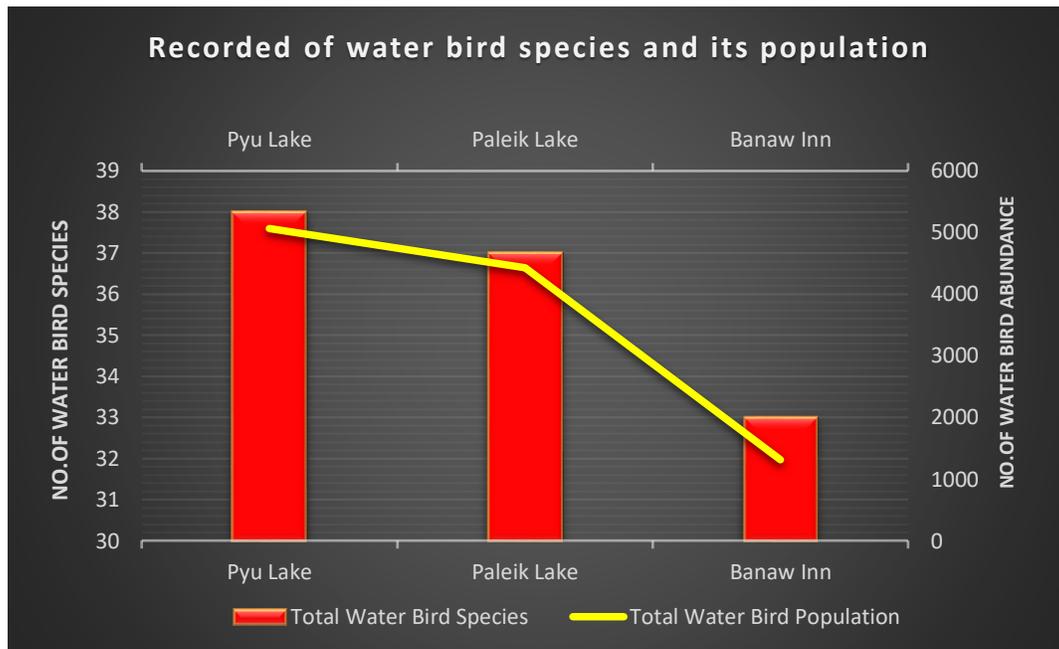


Fig 6: The observation of water bird species in three study sites

Result of local's recommendation

The Pyu Lake supports the six villages with 5698 of 1361 household are reply on agriculture irrigation. Totally 340 persons who are a local farmers and SKTY NCA members joined and participated at the meeting. (see the table – 2). About 100% of the participants highly approved an agreement to designate the Pyu Lake as an East Asian – Australasian Flyway Network Site in Tada – Oo township, Mandalay region. (see the attached file). After the activities, they have actively interested in wetland conservation and recommended to us for more lecturing an awareness activity on biodiversity and environmental conservation and sharing the opportunities to local livelihoods and village development.

Table – 2: Number of participant and agreement list with household in village

No.	Name of village	Household	Population		Agreement Person
			In village	Attendance	
1	Moe Nan Chon	150	920	48	48
2	Kyauk Kan	30	185	44	44
3	Myin Te	270	1173	70	70
4	Ywar Taw Lay	120	402	57	57
5	Yae Ka Moe	231	922	48	48
6	Pyu Kan	560	2096	41	41



No.	Name of village	Household	Population		Agreement Person
			In village	Attendance	
7	Shwe Kantharyar NCA	-	32	32	32
Total		1361	5698	340	340

1.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

How might the outcome of your project be applied in future research.

We should more research and plan the CEPA programs on wetland biodiversity and its ecosystem services, benefit the conservation sites affect to local development, support to local conservation group to be strengthen the capacity and its organization and create the harmony programs on bird species and human on wetland utilization with the relevant government, multiple stakeholders and local communities in central Myanmar.

Discuss how this project contributes to the implementation of the [EAAFP Strategic Plan 2019-2028](#).

This project contributes to the implementation of the EAAFP Strategic Plan 2019-2028 as the follows-

- Key Result Area 1.1: Support the data/information to establishing Paleik Inn and Pyu Lake as new Flyway Network Sites in central Myanmar.
- Key Result Area 1.2: Regular monitoring on population of Baer's Pochard and other migratory bird species and conservation with the participation of Mandalay Region Wetland Conservation Committee and community based organisation i.e. Paleik Lover Association and Shwe Kanthayar Nature Conservation Association)
- Key Result Area 1.3: Planning of management plan with stakeholder participation (Mandalay Wetland Conservation committee and community based organisation i.e. Paleik Lover Association and Shwe Kan Thayar Nature Lover Association)

Section 2. BUDGET REPORT

Please provide a table for the expenditure breakdown:

Financial report will send you by separately.

Note:

- It is compulsory that recipients of the 2020 EAAFP Small Grant Fund for WG/TFs submit a final report along with a web article within 3 months of the completion of the project.