



UTTARAKHAND BIODIVERSITY BOARD

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Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) 2026

The 2026 Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) in Uttarakhand successfully concluded on Sunday, January 18, 2026. The census recorded a robust population of 5,806 birds across 126 species at the Asan Conservation Reserve (ACR), which holds the distinction of being the state's first Ramsar site. This year's citizen-science initiative was particularly significant, marking the 40th anniversary of the AWC and the 60th anniversary of the International Waterbird Census (IWC). Orchestrated by the Uttarakhand Forest Department and the Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board in collaboration with scientific organizations like the Titli Trust and the Wildlife Preservation Society, the survey spanned critical ecosystems across the Garhwal and Kumaon zones, including the Ramganga River, Jhilmil Jheel, and the Kosi River.

The census highlighted Asan's role as a vital ecological sanctuary, hosting several high-priority conservation species. Notable sightings included the endangered Steppe Eagle, Egyptian Vulture, and Pallas's Fish Eagle, alongside the vulnerable Common Pochard and near-threatened species such as the Asian Woolly-necked Stork. Experts noted that bird abundance remained steady regardless of local snowfall levels, as these migratory species utilize Uttarakhand's wetlands primarily as a thermal refuge and foraging ground to escape the extreme climates of their northern breeding territories.



"Biodiversity Conservation.... An art of living with nature."



A significant takeaway from the 2026 data was the resilience of the Ruddy

Shelduck, the reserve's most abundant species with 983 individuals recorded. Observers noted that the species' arrival via the Central Asian Flyway—which traverses Kazakhstan and Siberia—remains unaffected by current geopolitical conflicts. Longitudinal data presented by the Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board indicates a positive trend in conservation efforts: while monitoring was limited to

just two sites in 2023, it has expanded to a comprehensive statewide exercise by 2026, showing stable to slightly improving bird counts. However, experts cautioned that while current wetland health is stable, rising threats from pollution, habitat encroachment, and human disturbance necessitate a renewed commitment to sustained monitoring and long-term conservation strategies.



Capacity Building Workshop for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods in the Garhwal Region, Uttarakhand

The capacity building workshop and Awareness Program, held from February 2nd to 8th, 2026, focused on strengthening local governance and sustainability in the Tehri Garhwal, Rudrapur, and Pauri Garhwal districts of Uttarakhand. Organized by the Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board, the program trained 266 participants, primarily members of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) and Forest Department.

The initiative aimed to enhance understanding of the Biological Diversity Act 2002 and Biological Diversity Amendment Act (2023), People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs), and Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS). Strategically, this workshop addressed the region's high environmental sensitivity and the need for climate-resilient livelihoods to curtail rural outmigration. Key modules included conservation planning, climate adaptation, and green livelihoods with a specific focus on women's empowerment. By facilitating coordination among stakeholders like Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and the Forest Department, the workshop

sought to protect the fragile Himalayan ecosystem while boosting local economic opportunities.

Workshop Implementation and Reach

The 7-day program trained a total of 266 participants across various Forest Rest House (FRH) venues, including Agrakhal, New Tehri, Paukhal, Kirtinagar, Agustmuni, Khirsu, and Devprayag. The curriculum was delivered through four modules covering:

- ◆ Biological Diversity, Act 2002 and Biological Diversity Amendment Act (2023) BMC Formation & PBRs and the ABS (Access and Benefit Sharing) mechanism.
- ◆ Biological Diversity Rules 2024 and Uttarakhand Biological Diversity Rules 2015.
- ◆ Sustainable Green Livelihoods with an emphasis on women's roles.
- ◆ Conservation Planning & Climate Adaptation strategies.





Key Discussion Points

Agrakhal: Participants raised concerns about agricultural land being sold to outsiders, which poses a long-term threat to community resource rights. There was also interest in setting up a Pine brick machine as a potential livelihood opportunity.

New Tehri: Discussions centered on whether local heritage trees and sacred stones could be formally designated as Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS). Participants noted that while BMCs were constituted in 2019 following an NGT order, they have largely remained inactive since. A primary environmental concern raised was the high flammability of Pirul (dry pine needles). To mitigate forest fire risks, the state government has implemented the "Pirul Lao, Paise Pao" scheme. Under this initiative, local residents are encouraged to collect pine needles from the forest and sell them to the Forest Department, promoting both ecological safety and community livelihood.

Paukhal: Participants were keen to understand how they could connect

with companies or buyers for locally available biological resources. A forest official stressed the importance of regular trainings and asked for printed knowledge materials. Questions were raised about BMC reconstitution and election procedures for committees formed in 2019. There was interest in whether multiple BMCs could collaborate on constituting a BHS or undertaking joint activities. Two BMCs — Thapla and Dwari — disclosed that they had received funds but were awaiting guidance from

UBB on how to utilise them. Ecotourism was also discussed as a potential tool for protecting temple sites.

Kirfinagar: Participants highlighted the importance of active involvement of Gram Pradhans in such trainings. They emphasized that stronger engagement and local leadership can greatly enhance transparency, coordination, and the overall effectiveness of community initiatives, ensuring they are well-organized and inclusive.





Agstumuni: Several pressing local challenges were discussed, including disturbance caused by railway lines, barren farmlands where wheat is no longer growing due to erratic rainfall, and the recurring problem of wild pigs destroying crops. The UBB team advised participants to explore aromatic plant cultivation and connect with the Centre for Aromatic Plants (CAP). Women entrepreneurs from Gram Panchayat Khankra shared that they produce items such as papad, pickles, rot, and arsa, but are unable to reach markets — highlighting the need for training on market linkages and online selling platforms.

Khirsu: Participants suggested that the Block Development Officer (BDO) be looped into future training communications to ensure wider reach and better grassroots mobilisation across the block.

Devprayag: This session surfaced the widest range of issues. Invasive species — particularly Lantana and Kala Baasa — were flagged as serious threats to local biodiversity. Human-wildlife conflict, including bear attacks and leopard sightings in settlements, was a major concern, with participants noting a general lack of knowledge on how to handle such situations safely. On the livelihood side, Chir Pine briquettes and Pirul-based products (decorations, hats, chair seats) were actively discussed; the current forest department rate for Pirul is ₹ 10/kg. Irrigation failures were raised by the Mahar BMC, where plants are not surviving beyond the first year due to lack of water. Participants called for combined support — irrigation infrastructure along with plantation drives — as well as monthly labour arrangements to sustain agriculture on government lands. There were also calls for a formal review and

reconstitution of inactive BMCs, clarity on who deposits funds into BMC accounts, and the introduction of incentives or awards after six to twelve months of active work to sustain community motivation.

Overall, the workshop successfully strengthened awareness and capacity of local stakeholders on biodiversity governance and sustainable livelihoods. It encouraged active participation, improved coordination among institutions, and promoted community-driven conservation efforts. The discussions reflected strong local interest in innovative livelihood options and ecosystem protection. Moving forward, the initiative has laid a positive foundation for resilient, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable development across the region.



उत्तराखण्ड जैव विविधता बोर्ड की 25वीं बोर्ड बैठक का आयोजन

उत्तराखण्ड जैव विविधता बोर्ड की 25वीं बोर्ड बैठक दिनांक 09 फरवरी, 2026 को बोर्ड कार्यालय, देहरादून में डॉ० एस०पी० सुबुद्धि, अध्यक्ष, उत्तराखण्ड जैव विविधता बोर्ड की अध्यक्षता में सम्पन्न हुई। बैठक में

बोर्ड के सम्मानित सदस्यगण व्यक्तिगत एवं वर्चुअल माध्यम से उपस्थित रहे, जिनमें पशुपालन विभाग, कृषि विभाग, जनजाति कल्याण विभाग, भारतीय वनस्पति सर्वेक्षण, भारतीय वन्य जीव संस्थान, जड़ी-बूटी शोध संस्थान,

मत्स्य पालन विभाग तथा गोविन्द बल्लभ पंत राष्ट्रीय हिमालयी पर्यावरण संस्थान के प्रतिनिधि सम्मिलित थे। बैठक में सदस्य-सचिव श्री टी.आर. बीजूलाल भी व्यक्तिगत रूप से उपस्थित रहे। बैठक में निर्धारित एजेण्डा के अनुसार

विस्तृत विचार-विमर्श किया गया तथा विभिन्न महत्वपूर्ण विषयों पर निर्णय लिये गये, जो राज्य में जैव विविधता संरक्षण, संस्थागत सुदृढ़ीकरण तथा सतत विकास की दिशा में महत्वपूर्ण माने जा सकते हैं। बैठक के प्रारम्भ में नवनियुक्त सदस्य-सचिव का बोर्ड के सदस्यों के साथ औपचारिक परिचय कराया गया।

इसके पश्चात दिनांक 20 मई, 2025 को सम्पन्न 24वीं बोर्ड बैठक के कार्यवृत्त की अनुपालन आख्या पर चर्चा की गई। इस क्रम में विभिन्न बिंदुओं पर गठित समितियों द्वारा निर्धारित समयावधि में रिपोर्ट प्रस्तुत किये जाने का निर्णय दोहराया गया। विशेष रूप से, वैज्ञानिक एवं तकनीकी विषयों पर विशेषज्ञ समितियों का गठन कर उन्हें एक माह के भीतर विस्तृत रिपोर्ट प्रस्तुत करने हेतु निर्देशित किया गया, जिससे निर्णय प्रक्रिया को और अधिक प्रभावी एवं वैज्ञानिक आधार प्रदान किया जा सके।

इसके अंतर्गत उत्तराखण्ड जैव विविधता नियमावली, 2025

(संशोधित) के प्रारूप पर विस्तार से विचार-विमर्श किया गया। बोर्ड के सदस्यों द्वारा दिये गये सुझावों को सम्यक रूप से सम्मिलित करते हुए नियमावली को अनुमोदित किया गया तथा सदस्य-सचिव को इसे राज्य सरकार को अंतिम स्वीकृति हेतु प्रेषित करने के लिए अधिकृत किया गया। यह निर्णय राज्य में जैव विविधता प्रबंधन के लिए एक सुदृढ़ विधिक ढांचा विकसित करने की दिशा में महत्वपूर्ण कदम है।

बोर्ड कार्यालय द्वारा विभिन्न संस्थानों एवं विश्वविद्यालयों के साथ किये गये समझौता ज्ञापनों (MoU) की जानकारी बोर्ड को दी गई। इस संदर्भ में यह निर्णय लिया गया कि ग्राफिक ऐरा विश्वविद्यालय, देहरादून द्वारा तैयार की गई जैव विविधता पंजिका (PBR) को प्राप्त कर आगामी बैठक में प्रस्तुत किया जाएगा तथा संबंधित दस्तावेज एवं फोटोग्राफ्स को बोर्ड की वेबसाइट पर अपलोड किया जाएगा, जिससे पारदर्शिता एवं जनसहभागिता को बढ़ावा मिल सके।



दिनांक 02 फरवरी से 08 फरवरी, 2026 तक टिहरी, रुद्रप्रयाग एवं पौड़ी गढ़वाल जनपदों में आयोजित क्षमता निर्माण कार्यशाला की जानकारी बोर्ड के समक्ष प्रस्तुत की गई। इस संबंध में निर्णय लिया गया कि कार्यशाला की विस्तृत रिपोर्ट अगली बैठक में प्रस्तुत की जाएगी। साथ ही, प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रमों में संकटग्रस्त प्रजातियों के संरक्षण एवं उनकी खेती से संबंधित विषयों को सम्मिलित करने के निर्देश दिये गये, ताकि जैव विविधता प्रबंधन समितियाँ (BMCs) व्यावहारिक परियोजना प्रस्ताव तैयार कर सकें और स्थानीय स्तर पर संरक्षण एवं आजीविका के अवसरों को बढ़ावा दिया जा सके।

24वीं बैठक के पश्चात बोर्ड द्वारा किये गये विभिन्न कार्यों से सदस्यों को अवगत कराया गया। इस दौरान जानकारी दी गई कि देहरादून जनपद के लगभग 120 राजकीय विद्यालयों में जैव विविधता संरक्षण एवं जन जागरूकता कार्यक्रम आयोजित किये गये, जिससे लगभग 5000 विद्यार्थी लाभान्वित हुए। इसके अतिरिक्त, वेबिनार एवं अन्य माध्यमों से आयोजित जागरूकता कार्यक्रमों में लगभग 2000 प्रतिभागियों की सहभागिता रही। वित्तीय पारदर्शिता



को सुनिश्चित करने हेतु आगामी वित्तीय वर्षों के लिए लेखा परीक्षण हेतु चार्टर्ड अकाउंटेंट का चयन नियमानुसार किया गया। साथ ही, रुद्रप्रयाग जनपद की 25 ग्राम पंचायतों में पीबीआर के पुनर्मूल्यांकन हेतु धनराशि हस्तांतरित कर कार्य प्रारम्भ कर दिया गया है। इन सभी कार्यों पर बोर्ड द्वारा संतोष व्यक्त करते हुए सहमति प्रदान की गई।

बोर्ड कार्यालय में उपनल एवं आउटसोर्स माध्यम से प्राप्त सेवाओं के अनुमोदन पर चर्चा की गई। सदस्य-सचिव द्वारा अवगत कराया गया कि कार्यालय के सुचारु संचालन हेतु 27 सेवाओं की आवश्यकता है, जिनका परीक्षण किया जा चुका है। इस पर बोर्ड द्वारा आगामी

11 माह के लिए इन सेवाओं के अनुबन्ध विस्तार को स्वीकृति प्रदान की गई। साथ ही, अध्यक्ष द्वारा निर्देशित किया गया कि बोर्ड के संगठनात्मक ढांचे का अनुमोदन राज्य सरकार से प्राथमिकता के आधार पर प्राप्त किया जाए।

बोर्ड के समक्ष वित्तीय वर्ष 2025-26 के आय-व्यय का विवरण प्रस्तुत किया गया जिसमें विभिन्न मदों के अंतर्गत प्राप्त एवं व्यय की गई धनराशि का विस्तृत विवरण प्रस्तुत करने के पश्चात बोर्ड के सभी सदस्यों द्वारा सर्वसम्मति से बजट को अनुमोदित किया गया। इसमें बोर्ड फण्ड, राष्ट्रीय जैव विविधता प्राधिकरण (NBA) फण्ड एवं (ABS) फण्ड के अंतर्गत प्राप्तियों एवं

व्ययों का समुचित लेखा-जोखा प्रस्तुत किया गया, जो वित्तीय अनुशासन एवं पारदर्शिता को दर्शाता है।

25वीं बोर्ड बैठक में लिये गये निर्णय राज्य में जैव विविधता संरक्षण, संस्थागत सुदृढीकरण, सामुदायिक सहभागिता तथा वित्तीय प्रबंधन को सुदृढ करने की दिशा में महत्वपूर्ण सिद्ध होंगे। बैठक के माध्यम से यह स्पष्ट हुआ कि उत्तराखण्ड जैव विविधता बोर्ड न केवल विधिक एवं नीतिगत स्तर पर सक्रिय है, बल्कि जमीनी स्तर पर जागरूकता, प्रशिक्षण एवं सामुदायिक सहभागिता को भी समान महत्व दे रहा है। अंततः धन्यवाद ज्ञापन के साथ बैठक का समापन किया गया।



Strategic Framework for Biodiversity Finance, Conservation, and Community-Based Livelihoods under BIOFIN Phase III

The workshop commenced on 11 February, 2026 with an overview of the BIOFIN Programme, highlighting financial

solutions for biodiversity conservation in Uttarakhand under Phase III (2025-2030). Key focus areas include women-

led conservation models, strengthening tiger conservation through community engagement, implementation of SBSAP, operationalisation of Local Biodiversity Funds, and capacity building of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs). A significant funding gap of USD 9.8 billion for India's NBSAP was noted, emphasizing the need for blended finance and biodiversity-positive investments.

Sectoral Projects & Initiatives

Wool Development (Uttarkashi)

- ◆ Covers ~8 villages and 400 families; focuses on branding, market linkages, and artisan revival. Integration with tourism and government schemes is planned. A Snow Leopard



Interpretation Centre at Harsil will contribute to conservation funding.

Ecotourism & Homestays (Gangotri-Govind Landscape)

- Community-based tourism with shared ownership models, eco-friendly architecture, and diversified village products. Financing model includes 60% loan and 40% grant. Opportunities identified in gastronomy, astronomy tourism, and biodiversity-linked branding.

Policy & Planning

SBSAP:

- Deliverables under review; official release scheduled on 22 May 2026 (International Biodiversity Day) with emphasis on documentation and visibility.

Biodiversity Finance Plan (BFP)

- Submitted for validation; priorities include GI-tagged products (e.g., Rajma), spice sector investments, and classification of 35 state policies based on biodiversity impact.

Innovative Financing & Livelihoods

- Focus on Invasive Alien Species (IAS) management (e.g., Lantana

removal) as a livelihood opportunity through biochar, biofuel, MGNREGA convergence, and carbon credits.

- Exploration of biodiversity-linked branding: “*Rustic but Authentic*”..

Governance & Institutional Strengthening

- Need for legal recognition and clear guidelines for OECMs.
- Development of SOPs for ABS fund utilisation and an online ABS portal.
- Proposal for Biodiversity Smart Villages (10 pilot sites)

Events & Outreach

- IBD 2026: Target participation of 500 BMC representatives; SBSAP launch, documentation, media outreach, and knowledge material development planned.

Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC)

- Increasing conflict incidents; need for landscape-level interventions and integration with ongoing climate and livelihood projects.

Coordination & Certification

- Monthly review system and inter-agency communication (WhatsApp group) proposed.



- Exploration of green certification systems (BIS/QCI) for ecotourism.
- Suggestion for tourism operators to contribute to biodiversity funds in return for certification.

Key Decisions / Actions

- Finalisation of project deliverables (Wool & Ecotourism) by March 2026.
- SBSAP release on 22 May 2026.
- Review of 35 state policies for biodiversity alignment.
- Development of ABS SOPs and online portal.
- Exploration of IAS-based livelihood models.
- Celebration of IBD 2026 with large-scale participation.
- Institutionalization of monthly coordination and reporting mechanisms.



Consultative Meetings and Field Assessments for Proposed Declaration of Kandara Bugyal and Kheda Taal as Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS)

Between March 19 and March 20, 2026, the Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board organized a series of consultative meetings and field assessments in the

Uttarkashi district, focusing specifically on the Harsil Valley region. The primary objective of this mission was to evaluate the proposed declaration of Kandara

Bugyal and Kheda Taal as Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS). These high-altitude ecosystems are recognized for their unique ecological integrity and the vital



role they play in maintaining regional biological diversity.

To ensure a participatory approach, extensive awareness programs were conducted across the villages of Sukki, Bhukki, and Hurri. In Suki Village the meeting was attended by 19 participants, including the BMC Chairman, Secretary, and Van Sarpanch. Furthermore, 19 community members from Bhukki and Hurri villages participated collectively.” These sessions were designed to sensitize local residents regarding the legal and environmental frameworks of a BHS, the pivotal role of the Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC), and the importance of maintaining a People’s Biodiversity Register (PBR) to document traditional knowledge and local flora and



fauna. Further technical consultations and stakeholder dialogues were held at Sukki Top, Garm Kund, and Bhatwari to deliberate on the long-term conservation strategies required for these sensitive landscapes.

The initiative received overwhelming support from local communities, who recognized the potential for enhanced conservation and sustainable livelihood opportunities. Consequently, a formal No Objection Certificate (NOC) has been successfully obtained. This document bears the signatures of the BMC Chairman, Gram Pradhan, and Panchayat Secretary, representing a unified consent from the Gram Panchayat and Van Panchayat authorities. The signed NOCs, alongside the detailed field observation

reports, are hereby submitted for formal review and the initiation of further statutory proceedings. The active participation of local stakeholders, combined with informed discussions on conservation frameworks, reflects a growing awareness and commitment towards safeguarding these ecologically sensitive landscapes. The recognition of Kandara Bugyal and Kheda Taal as potential Biodiversity Heritage Sites underscores their significance not only in preserving unique alpine biodiversity but also in strengthening community-led environmental stewardship.

With formal community consent already established, the initiative is well-positioned for advancing statutory approvals and implementation. The designation of these sites as Biodiversity Heritage Sites is expected to enhance ecological resilience, promote responsible eco-tourism, and create avenues for livelihood generation, thereby contributing to long-term environmental sustainability and socio-economic well-being in the region.

Guidance

Shri R.K. Sudhanshu, IAS, Principal Secretary,
Forest, Environment Protection & Climate Change

Direction

Dr. S.P. Subudhi, IFS, Chairperson

Shri T.R. Bijulal, IFS, Member Secretary

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