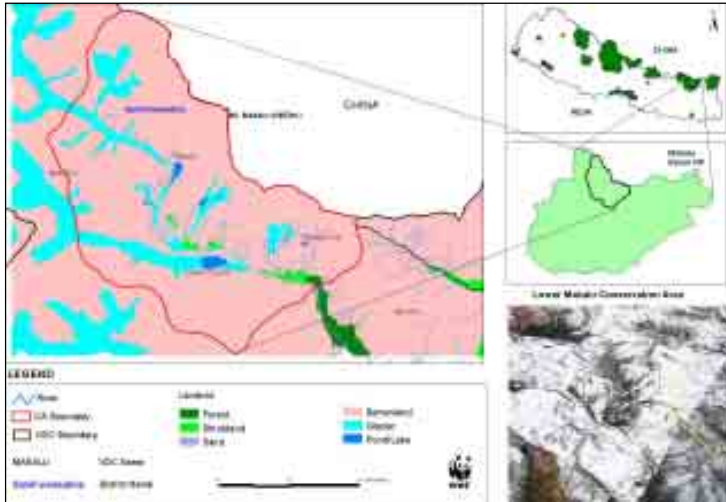




FACTSHEET

Thulo Pokhari & Associated Wetlands



The downstream area of the Thulo Pokhari lies inside the Makalu-Barun National Park and its buffer zone. Ishuwa khola, which mixes with Arun at Ishuwa Dovan is the discharge of Thulo Pokhari. The clean, unpolluted and regular supply of water downstream from Thulo Pokhari has high significance not only to the local communities of nearby villages but also to the downstream people.

■ HYDROLOGICAL VALUE:

The discharge in outlet is 0.355 m³ /second from Thulo Pokhari to Ishuwa Khola. The lakes are fed by glaciers during the winter and water from surrounding hills during the rainy season. Water from Keke and Sipton peaks constitute the main source. The average depth of the Thulo Pokhari is 50m. Hydrological function and values of wetland is high for ground water recharge, flood control, and sediment trapping.

■ BIODIVERSITY VALUE:

Flora: The endemic plants possibly found in Thulo Pokhari area are *Pedicularis pseudoregeliana*, *Carex himalaica*, *Kobresia fissigulumis*, *Ranunculus himalaicus* and *Ranunculus makaulensis*. Similarly, several species are considered as threatened species under different categories of CAMP and IUCN Red list.

Coordinates: 27° 41' 06"- 27° 42' 24" Latitude
87° 13' 15"- 87° 13' 05" Longitude

Area: 16.163 ha

Elevation: 3,900m to 4,210m

■ OVERVIEW:

Thulo Pokhari and other associated wetlands are glacial originated alpine fresh water lakes and are oligotrophic in nutrient content. Thulo Pokhari Lake system forms headwater of Ishuwa Khola, one of the tributaries to the Arun River.





About 56 species of rare and threatened plants have been recorded from the Makalu-Barun National park (MBNP) area by surveys done earlier by MBNP. Some of the potentially threatened plants around Thulo pokhari include *Aconitum gammiei*,

Aconitum spicatum, *Dactylorhiza hatagireia*, *Meconopsis paniculata*, *Rheum australe* and *Neopicrorhiza scrophulariiflora*.

Fauna: Previous studies have shown that among the 421 bird species recorded in Makalu-Barun National park, 3 species are entirely wetland birds and 26 species are wetland dependent. Himalayan Monal (*Lophophorus impejanus*), Olive-backed Pipit (*Anthus hodgsoni*) and Blyth's Pipit (*Anthus godlewskii*) are the bird species found during the direct observation. This site is habitat for migratory and residential birds and other wildlife species. Sheep and Chauri herders confirm the sighting of Snow Leopard and Ghoral etc.

Pika (*Ochotona sp.*) was common in the rocky areas of this valley and scat of Yellow Throated Martin (*Martes flavigula*) was seen in the area. The south section of the catchment is a habitat of Musk Deer (*Moschus chrysogaster*). The endangered Snow Leopard (*Uncia uncia*) is said to be found at the upper part of the catchment along with the Himalayan Thar (*Hemitragus jemlahicus*).

■ SOCIO-CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS VALUES:

The cultural and religious importance of the wetland is reflected mainly during the rainy season. People from all castes from different places visit this place while going to worship Shiva Dhara and Parbati Cave. Limited people also visit Thulo Pokhari alone for religious purposes except for Janaipurnima. The Thulo Pokhari itself does not produce

fish or fingerlings due to its high altitude climatic condition (4,030m). Due to no public land and buffer zone in the Thulo Pokhari area, the forestry use is limited to few locations for decoration, timber and fuel wood requirement for cattle shed and teashops.

The religious importance of the site is high. Hundreds of people from Hindu and Buddhist religions go to that place on rainy season during Janaipurnima. Nomads are dependent on the wetland in relation to drinking, grazing etc. Other people only visit this place during Janaipurnima and rest of the rainy season. People of downstream depend on water for the domestic use.

■ THREATS:

- Overuse of fuel wood and non-timber forest products (NTFPs)
- Poaching of endangered animal species like musk deer
- Pollution caused by visitors and trekking tourists
- Overgrazing leading to the disruption of the natural succession process and increase in the onset of the invasive, unpalatable species

■ CONSERVATION MEASURES:

Thulo pokhari falls under the ownership of Makalu Barun National Park. The Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Government of Nepal is the legal authority and the park is governed by the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 2029 BS (1973) and Himali Rastriya Nikunja Niyamawali 2036 BS (Mountain National Parks Regulation 1979). NTFPs use for domestic purpose and traditional use is permitted. National park authority conducts regular field visits and also takes care of conservation and management of the catchment area. As this area provides criteria listed by Ramsar Convention 2006, nominating this site by the government to declare a Ramsar site would provide further support in the conservation of this high altitude wetland.

