



Government of Nepal  
Ministry of Forest & Soil Conservation  
Department of National Parks & Wildlife Conservation



September 5, 2008

Dear Mr. Anada Tiaga

Secretary General, Ramsar Secretariat, Gland, Switzerland

The Nepal's first Ramsar site, Koshi Tappu has been flooded on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2008. The Sapatakoshi, Seven rivers which joins together to form Koshi river, flood was a result of the breach of the left embankment about 12 km north from the Koshi Barrage. This breach of the embankment on the eastern side led to the inundation and severe flooding in Sunsari District affecting 8 village development committees (VDCs) in Nepal. Four of these 8 village development committees are under the buffer zone of the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (KTWR). A significant portion of the Koshi River is now reported to be flowing through the embankment with about 20% in the main river course. Comparison of the satellite images received from NASA Earth Observatory with other images which documents the historical change in course of the Koshi River shows that the river after the embankment breach is now following the old course of that of 1920' as stated by International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

It is reported that more than 60,000 people in Nepal are affected by this devastating flood. The army, armed police force and Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve staffs and buffer zone institutions along with other state bodies with the help from different organizations have been engaged in evacuating the marooned people to safety.

A visit by the Director General, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), head of the Administrative Authority for Ramsar Convention in Nepal) and one senior officer have recently made a visit along with the representatives of the conservation partners to provide the first hand support, nominal cash raised from the departments staffs and conservation partners (WWF Nepal, IUCN Nepal, BCN Nepal, Wetlands Project Nepal ) and logistic supports (clothes and materials).

A discussion meeting was held on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2008 in the presence of Mr. Lew Young, Senior Advisor, Ramsar Asia and Dr. Denny Landenberg, WWF International in the meeting hall of DNPWC to inform them the situation of this Ramsar site. During this follow up discussion, Conservation organizations such as WWF Nepal, IUCN Nepal, GEF/UNDP funded Wetlands Project, Bird Conservation Nepal have shown the commitment for Joint actions to address the issue.

The impact on birds especially the globally threatened swamp francolin *Francolinus gularis* as there is severe damage to its grassland habitat. Koshi Tappus grassland is one of the best habitat in Nepal. The onset of migration may find a different pattern as the main river course is devoid of deep water but with increased sediments and low water level whereas new course in the rice fields has been created. The endangered Wild Water Buffalo *Bubalus arnee* is said to be safe as they inhabit the northwestern part of the river. Local and reserve officials reported that they have seen wild boar taken away by the flood.

In this regard, Nepal as a party to the convention would like to request you to support us by providing a technical advisory mission to work with the Administrative Authority of Nepal to assist us in monitoring the Ramsar site and suggest the best way for its future conservation and wise use.

Thanking You for Your Kind Support

Sincerely,

Dr Annapurna Nand Das

To view the maps and satellite images of the Koshi River and the extent of the devastation, please visit:

<http://menris.icimod.net/KoshiRiverFlood/> (Source:

<http://menris.icimod.net/menris/NAE/NewsDetail.aspx?mTab=home&NLnk=news&NewsID=149>)