Nepal has designated the Lake Cluster of Pokhara Valley as a Wetland of International Importance. The Site comprises nine lakes of noted beauty along the Pokhara Valley in the mid-hill region of Nepal. Each lake supports significant biodiversity, provides important ecosystem services and sustains local livelihoods.

The Site hosts a wide variety of globally threatened migratory birds such as the critically endangered Baer’s pochard (Aythya baeri) and Indian vulture (Gyps indicus), and mammals such as the vulnerable clouded leopard (Neofelis nebulosa) and the endangered Indian pangolin (Manis crassicaudata).

Pokhara is among the areas with the highest rainfall in Nepal, and the Valley and the lakes play an important role in the hydrological cycle of the region by recharging groundwater, controlling floods and trapping sediment.

Thousands of people depend on the lakes for income from tourism, fishing, irrigation, electricity generation and water supply: an economic valuation has shown that Phewa Lake provides goods and services worth more than USD 279,000 per year; and the Rupa Lake Restoration and Fishery Cooperative, organized by over 600 households, earns more than USD 56,000 per year from fishing. Meanwhile, religious temples in Pokhara Valley are important to local communities and are commonly visited during festivals.

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