



THE RUPA LAKE RESTORATION AND FISHERIES COOPERATIVE

THE COOPERATIVE

The Rupa Cooperative was established on 1st Chaitra 2058 BS (14 March 2002), to:

- Rehabilitate the Rupa lake to its prior state
- Generate income for its members through sustainable fishing
- Conserve local biodiversity

The cooperative has an annual revenue exceeding Rs. 60,00,000, employs 19 people and has more than 45 share members. A quarter of the cooperative's profit is reinvested in conservation and educational and social activities in the upstream communities.

The Lake

Rupa lake is the third largest lake in the Pokhara valley. It is 135 hectares, with a maximum depth of 6 metres. The surface of the lake is 600 metres above sea level, and the water has an

average annual temperature of 20.9°C. The lake is fed by the rivers Dobhan khola and Taalbesi khola from the east. The water flows out via the Sistenighat river and eventually to the Seti river.

Rupa lake and its surrounding wetlands harbor 24 species of fish, including the prized sahar (tor spp.), 30 species of birds and 11 species of mammals. Paddy fields, home gardens and forests mainly of Saal, Chilaune and Kattus cover the 30 km² of the lake's watershed. Different types of aquatic plants like water lotus, water chestnut, gorgon nut, water lily, water hyacinth, azolla, lemna, etc. are found in this area. It is also an important area for the local population of wild rice.

Easily accessible from the Prithvi highway, the Rupa lake watershed provides great opportunities for bird-watching, hiking, agricultural eco-tourism and conservation education.



Photo: Krishna Lamsal/LI-BIRD

Key Activities of The Rupa Lake Restoration and Fisheries cooperative

Income generation

The cooperative has been running profitable fisheries for over a decade. It is currently investing in breeding ponds for increasing the population of indigenous fish like sahar, as well as to produce its own fish fry for other breeds.

Conservation

The cooperative works towards conservation and sustainable development of the Rupa lake watershed. By supporting goat rearing, the cooperative helps resource poor farmers improve their income. At the same time, that creates a demand for fodder, which encourages plantation in the watershed areas and contributes to soil conservation.

The wetland biodiversity of the area is documented in the community biodiversity register and the areas around the lake have been conserved as habitat areas for white lotus, water chestnut, migratory birds, indigenous fish and wild rice. The cooperative provides grants to 17 community forest user group and 19 schools in the watershed, under its Payment for Environmental Services project.

Promoting eco-tourism

In cooperation with LI-BIRD, IUCN and World Vision, the



Photo: Keshab Thapa/LI-BIRD

cooperative has established the Rupa Lake Wetland Information and Resource Centre. The centre helps tourists make arrangements for enjoyable tours around the lake.

Social service

The cooperative provides scholarships to more than 50 hard working students from disadvantaged backgrounds in local schools. The cooperative collaborates with the local mothers' groups (Aama Samuha) and clubs in restoring temples, roads, bridges, etc. and helps with relief during natural disasters.



Photos: LI-BIRD Photo Bank

Planned future activities of the cooperative

- To construct a dam at the edge of the lake
- To develop tourism by making ringroads and conducting cycle journeys and horse riding programs
- Tree plantation at the watershed area and helping in community forests
- To give continuity to CBR program
- To plant fruit plants around the lake
- To give continuity to wetland management
- To conduct saving and loan provision work activities in the organisation
- To conduct primary health and public awareness programs
- To build a hanging bridge at the narrow parts of the lake
- To establish a fry production centre and essential nursery pond
- To conduct improved fishery and other income generating programs
- To construct boat house and bird watching centre at the middle of the lake
- To establish a guest house and a wetland research centre

For more information:



The Rupa Lake Restoration and Fisheries Cooperative

Rupakot-6, Rupatal, Kaski

Tel (977-61) 622265

Email info@rupalake.com

Web www.rupalake.com

Cover Photo: Mahesh Shrestha

Designed by: Mahesh Shrestha and Lise Bjerke/LI-BIRD