



The Wetlands of Menar beckon¹

Background:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/udaipurs-bird-village-set-to-be-declared-wetland/article65563912.ece>

<https://jda.urban.rajasthan.gov.in/content/dam/environment/env-swa/FinalWetlandGazetteNotification/Brahm%20Talab%20and%20Dhand%20Talab%20Menar%20Wetland%20Udaipur.pdf>

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/rajasthan-proposes-to-develop-5-wetlands-as-ramsar-sites/articleshow/106338889.cms>

Recognised as the “bird village” following community-driven conservation efforts, Menar in Udaipur district is set to be notified as Rajasthan's new wetland. This will pave the way for getting the Ramsar site status for this rural heartland of the Mewar region. The two lakes in the village – the Brahma and Dhandh – play host to a large number of migratory birds in the winter season every year. Here as in Ghana National Park (a Ramsar Wetland Heritage Site) issues related to deforestation, pollution from fertilizers and pesticide in agriculture and issues related to invasive species if unaddressed will seriously threaten the long term stability and development of the region.

<https://jda.urban.rajasthan.gov.in/content/dam/environment/env-swa/FinalWetlandGazetteNotification/Brahm%20Talab%20and%20Dhand%20Talab%20Menar%20Wetland%20Udaipur.pdf>

The gazette notification dated 31st August 2023, declares Menar as a wetland site. Schedule I describes area coming under wetlands, the related catchment area and the detailed map of Brahm Talab and Dhand Talab. Schedule II describes the activities prohibited in the wetland and its catchment area and Schedule III the regulated activities in Menar.

Discussions with Umesh Menaria a resident of Menar and wildlife conservationist, indicate that one of the first documented stories of the people of Menar conserving the wetlands was when they protested a permission given by the king for shooting of birds in the region after seeing the

¹ This report is not meant to be comprehensive and is mostly to catch the flavour for more visits to come. You will appreciate better if you learn directly from Menar and engage with the depth of knowledge gathered by Umesh Menaria over 10 years of close engagement with the bird and human visitors to the region. We are grateful for the valuable time he spent with us. Viren Lobo: ManaginG trustee IELA; M: 9828270661; email: vlobo62@gmail.com

impact the firing was doing to the birds. The habitat of Menar is such that there is plenty of fish and other feed for the migratory birds coming to the region. However it was only as late as 2014 when Menar got attention when the first Udaipur Bird Fair birders reached Menar. They have been coming regularly since then. The fact that Brahm Lake is deep and Dhand Lake shallow allows for a variety of habitats for the birds. While 50 bird species have been documented by Umesh Menaria himself, there are more than 100 birds to be found in the region around the two lakes.

<https://rajasthanbiodiversity.org/menar-iba/>

<https://www.facebook.com/umeshmenariyamemar/posts>

<https://umeshmenaria.wordpress.com/2017/04/05/%E2%80%8Bi-have-never-ever-seen-a-place-like-menar-where-birds-and-humans-live-in-such-proximity-poll/>

<https://www.instagram.com/umeshmenariya/reel/C1CftmHP358/>

<https://www.sanctuarynaturefoundation.org/article/the-bird-villages-of-udaipur%3Amemar%2C-krishna-kareri-and-badwai>

In addition to the number of stories narrated by Umesh Menaria was the one where the Egyptian Vulture was able to survive and breed due to the specific efforts taken by the people of Menar

<https://vagabondimages.in/menar-again-for-owls-and-vultures-this-time/>

Reconnaissance visit to Menar

A team from St. Mary's Senior Higher School Fatehpura and Institute for Ecology and Livelihood Action visited Menar to get a first hand feel of the place. As pointed out earlier Umesh Menaria a bird conservationist and resident of Menar provided a first hand account of his experiences, understanding, photographs and observations over the ten years that he has studied the region closely. Among the things he shared was the unique cohesion among the local population that made this conservation effort possible. Some images from the visit below.



