

# GOING BEYOND AMUR FALCONS: NAGALAND TO CELEBRATE AVIAN DIVERSITY, UNDERTAKE CENSUS

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

High spirits: The four-day exercise coincides with Tokhü Emong festival. RITU RAJ KONWARRITU RAJ KONWAR

Nagaland is undertaking the first avian documentation exercise going beyond the Amur falcons, the migratory raptor that put the State on the world birding map.

The four-day Tokhü Emong Bird Count (TEBC) from Friday has been timed with the post-harvest Tokhü Emong festival of the Lothas, the Naga community that dominates Wokha district, arguably the most preferred stopover of the Amur falcons while travelling from east Asia to southern Africa.

The event is a collaboration among the Wokha Forest Division, the Divisional Management Unit of the Nagaland Forest Management Project (NFMP) and Bird Count India.

“Amur falcons put Nagaland on the world birding map. However, the communities here can do more than just Amur falcon conservation. This event is organised to make each one of us feel proud of the birdlife and nature that we have,” Chenibemo Odyuo of NFMP’s Foundation for Ecological Security, based in Phek, said.

“Nagaland is a State with diverse festivals and diverse birdlife. The TEBC is the first of initiatives where the community is encouraged to celebrate the festival with birds,” Lansothung Lotha, Range Forest Officer of the Wokha Forest Division said.

“We expect more such festivals in the future where people connect with nature and also help in documenting the rich avifauna in a landscape that still remains to be explored and documented,” he added.

Pia Sethi of the Centre for Ecology, Development and Research said initiatives such as the TEBC are particularly important for the northeast, where rich bird diversity is threatened by habitat loss and hunting.

The exercise entails watching and counting birds on any or all days from November 4-7 from anywhere in Nagaland for at least 15 minutes and uploading the avian names on eBird ([www.ebird.org/india](http://www.ebird.org/india)), the bird recording platform.

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