

Biodiversity and climate change



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Climate change and biodiversity are intricately intertwined. Looking a hundred years into the future, climate change alone will threaten the existence of the major terrestrial and aquatic species of our country. During the thirteenth Conference of the Parties (COP 13) at Mexico in 2016, the UN Biodiversity Conference resulted in a number of significant commitments on biodiversity. Biodiversity was associated with global agendas like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the landmark, Paris Agreement. However, the mention of the word biodiversity only once in the 32-page Paris Agreement, gives rise to scrutiny among conservationists worldwide. While Bangladesh is moving ahead with its Vision 2021 and the Seventh Five Year Plan (FYP7), it has become an imperative that climate change and biodiversity are integrated as a twinned challenge to design sustainable development strategies.

Sustainable development and biodiversity

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development puts forth targets for Bangladesh to tackle its major challenges. Goal 14 dedicated to "life below water" and 15 to "life on land" highlight the imperative to protect the aquatic marine and terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems. However,

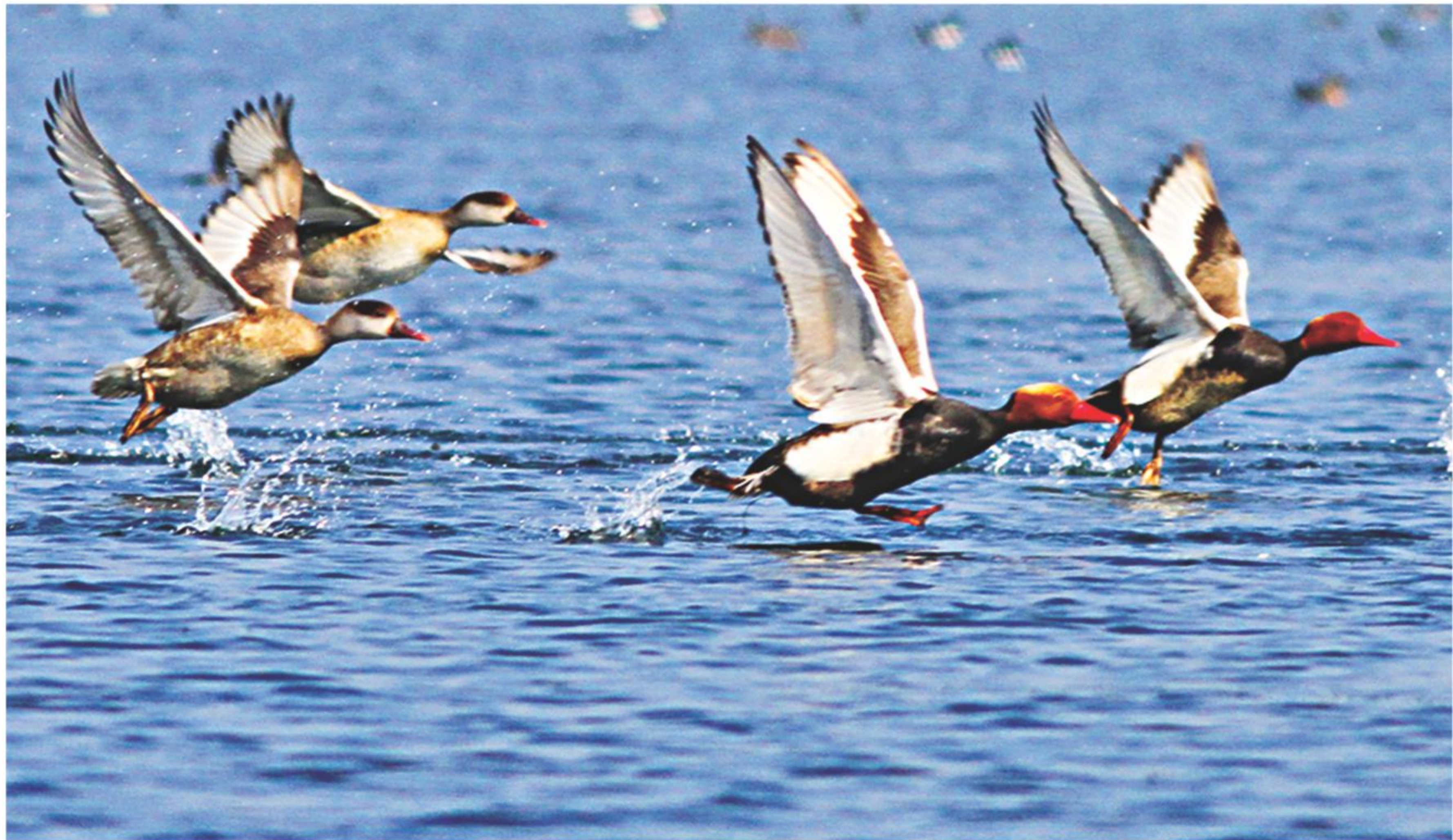


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there is a complex connectedness of these two goals with other significant targets outlined in the SDGs, especially in the context of Bangladesh. The resolution of the marine boundary issues opens new opportunities for the country. But we must ensure the biodiversity therein for it to be a useful component of our future economy.

Biodiversity, an important driver of food security, can be linked with the number one goal of the 2030 agenda, which is aimed towards eradicating poverty. Similarly, ecosystem and biodiversity can also be integrated with the following SDGs: Goal 2, which is aimed towards a world with zero hunger and sustainable agriculture; Goal 6 on sustainable water management; Goal 8 on promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth; Goal 9 on building resilient infrastructure; Goal 11 on making cities inclusive, safe and resilient for human settlements; Goal 12 on sustainable production and consumption; and most importantly Goal 13, which is targeted towards combating climate change.

Close scrutiny of this interconnectedness is important in Bangladesh, where a large portion of its population is directly dependent on natural resources. Therefore, it is essential that ecosystem values and biodiversity are integrated into Bangladesh's national and regional

planning, policies, development strategies and implementation process. This integration will help the country to achieve the Biodiversity Strategy Planning (2011-2020) targets, along with its Biodiversity Targets.

Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD) is trying to undertake the Forestry Master Plan. As such, BFD is trying to provide a framework to optimise the contribution of the forestry department in balancing socio-economic.

State of biodiversity and climate change

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world. The country is also a rich pool of a diverse range of ecosystem, species and genetic diversity. However, the

existence of many species is at stake due to various climatic and non-climatic factors.

IUCN's Red List of Bangladesh
Recently, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has updated the Red List of Bangladesh which has unveiled 390 threatened animal species in Bangladesh. Among them 56 are critically endangered, 181 are endangered, 153 being vulnerable and 31 are found to be regionally extinct. The Red List of Bangladesh also classified 278 species with a "Data Deficient" label due to lack of enough information necessary to make a direct or indirect assessment. This opens opportunity for more extensive research together with effective conservation efforts.

There has been a decrease in the number of tigers in the famed Sundarbans within the last decade. *The Guardian* (2015) presented alarming news of only around 100 tigers remaining in the Sundarbans, dropping from a count of 440 in the 2004 census. However, at a global scale the World Wildlife Fund and the Global Tiger Forum confirmed an overall increase in tiger count for the first time after a century of decline. In the aquatic ecosystem, a striking 32 species of fishes have disappeared in the last 50 years,

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