

# ANIMAL OF THE MONTH

## White-breasted waterhen

### Distribution and Habitat

- Found in various parts of South and Southeast Asia.
- These birds prefer wetland habitats including marshes, reedbeds, swamps and rice paddies. They are known for their distinctive calls and are often seen near water bodies where they forage for invertebrates and small vertebrates.

### Description

- Its medium-sized birds with a length ranging from 28 to 34 centimeters from beak to tail. They have a black head with a red eye patch and a white chin and throat. The combination of black, white, and red on the head is a key distinguishing feature. They have long, sturdy yellow bills and bright yellow legs. Their plumage is well-suited for their wetland habitat. The white underparts help them blend in with the water's reflection, while the dark upperparts provide camouflage in the dense vegetation.

### Threats:

- Major threats are urbanization, agriculture, and infrastructure development.
- Changes in temperature and precipitation patterns can affect wetland ecosystems, potentially reducing food availability or altering habitat conditions.
- In some regions these birds are hunted or collected for the pet trade, traditional medicine, or bushmeat.
- Introduced predators such as feral cats and rats can pose a threat to White-breasted Waterhen nests and young chicks.



### Feeding

- It is an omnivorous bird species that feeds on a diverse diet of both plant and animal matter. They feed on insects, crustaceans, amphibians, small fish, aquatic plants, seeds and small mammals.

### Conservation strategies

- Identify and designate critical wetland habitats, including marshes, swamps and rice paddies as protected areas.
- Monitor water quality in wetlands and take action to reduce pollution from agricultural runoff, industrial discharges and other sources.
- Promote sustainable agricultural practices that reduce chemical and pesticide use near wetlands.
- Raise awareness among local communities, policymakers, and the public about the importance of White-breasted Waterhens and their wetland habitats.

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