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# Amur Falcons and the Doyang Lake Turnaround

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# Amur Falcons and the Doyang Lake Turnaround

In 2012, hunters killed over 100,000 falcons at one lake in Nagaland in a single season. **A decade later, that same lake calls itself the falcon capital of the world. What turned it around?**



An Amur Falcon in flight, Doyang reservoir region, Nagaland. Photo: P Jeganathan, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

At a Glance

Four facts to hold on to.

01
Doyang, Nagaland

A stopover near Pangti village, Wokha district.

02
100,000+ killed

Hunted in the 2012 season. Then the hunting stopped.

03
About 3,000 km or more

Non-stop open-sea crossing of the Arabian Sea, over several days.

04
Tags monitor

Satellite tags watch the birds. They do not guide them.

**Raptor** A bird of prey, such as a falcon, hawk, or eagle.
**Stopover** A resting site on a migration route. It is not a permanent home.
**Roost** A place where birds gather to rest and sleep.
**Satellite tag** A small device that records a bird's location.

## From Mass Hunting to Global Recognition

Must Know

### The problem

- Amur Falcons stop at Doyang, a reservoir near Pangti village in Nagaland's Wokha district.
- They once faced mass hunting there. In the 2012 season alone, **hunters killed over 100,000 birds**.

### The turnaround

- A sustained campaign ended the hunting. It united the Nagaland Forest Department, local communities, and NGOs such as the Bombay Natural History Society.
- Villagers now actively protect the roosting falcons.
- The site is celebrated globally as the "Amur Falcon capital of the world". It is a real community-led conservation success.

> **Quick check 1.** In the 2012 season, hunters killed over 100,000 Amur Falcons at Doyang. A sustained campaign later ended the hunting. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

## A Stopover, Not a Home

Good to Know

### Breeding grounds and timing

- Amur Falcons breed far to the north, across Siberia, Mongolia, and northern China.
- Doyang is only a stopover, not a permanent home.
- They roost there for a few weeks each October and November. They rest and feed before moving on.

## Destination and the Arabian Sea crossing

- Their journey ends in southern Africa. One way, the trip is about 14,500 km. The full annual round trip is close to 22,000 km.
- The most striking leg is the Arabian Sea. It is a non-stop open-sea flight of **about 3,000 km or more**, over several days.
- The whole non-stop flight can be longer, because it may include land. Timing varies by route, season and bird.
- This is the longest known non-stop oceanic crossing by any raptor species.

> **Quick check 2.** The Amur Falcon's non-stop Arabian Sea crossing is the longest known non-stop oceanic crossing by any raptor. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Exam Edge

## Previous Year Question

One recent UPSC question tested this story.

> **Quick check 3.** Satellite tracking is what causes Amur Falcons to return to Doyang every year. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

## What Tracking Actually Does

Great to Know

### Monitor, not guide

- Satellite tags let researchers study the migration route in detail. The tags monitor the birds. They do not guide them.
- Falcons find their way using their own innate biological cues, not human technology.
- Nagaland's satellite tagging programme began in 2013. It was a regional first, not a world first. Amur Falcons had already been satellite-tagged in Mongolia in 2009, as a 2011 paper in the Forktail reported.

> **Think it through: how do the birds find their way if tags don't guide them?**
>
> The falcons rely on their own innate cues, not on any human technology. Scientists don't fully understand every mechanism. But migratory birds are known to use several cues. These include the Earth's magnetic field and the position of the sun and stars. Inherited route memory likely plays a role too. A tag only records where a bird goes. Removing it would not change the route at all.

**Quick check 4.** Nagaland's 2013 project was widely reported as the first satellite tracking of Amur Falcons. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

# Current Affairs

Current Affairs

## Three tagged falcons reach Africa (2025)

- On 8 November 2025, three Amur Falcons named Apapang, Alang, and Ahu were satellite-tagged at the Chiuluan roosting site in Manipur's Tamenglong district.
- The Manipur State Forest Department and the Wildlife Institute of India ran the tagging, with local volunteers from Chiuluan village.
- All three reached Africa in a record 9 to 10 days. Ahu reached Somalia, Apapang reached Zimbabwe, and Alang reached Botswana.
- Source: Nagaland Post.

**Quick check 5.** In 2025, three satellite-tagged Amur Falcons from Manipur reached Africa in a record 9 to 10 days. *(True or False?)*

See answer ↓

## Quick Q&A

Where do Amur Falcons stop in Nagaland?

Doyang reservoir, near Pangti village in Wokha district.

How many were killed in the 2012 season?

Over 100,000.

How long is the open-sea Arabian Sea crossing?

About 3,000 km or more, taking several days.

What do satellite tags do?

They monitor the birds. They don’t guide them.

When did Nagaland pioneer satellite tagging?

2013.

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## Practice MCQs

**1. Which of the following statements with regard to the arrival of Amur Falcons at Doyang Lake in Nagaland each year from Mongolia is/are correct?1. It showcases how sustained local conservation efforts can contribute to the arrival and protection of international migratory birds.2. It reflects the global success of advanced tracking technologies that guide migratory birds back to their stopover sites.3. It confirms that Amur Falcons have adapted to permanent residency in India due to favourable habitat changes. [UPSC CSP 2026, GS Paper I]**

**A.** 1 only

**B.** 1 and 2

**C.** 2 and 3

**D.** 3 only

See answer ↓

**2. Doyang, the reservoir famous for its Amur Falcon stopover, lies close to which village in Nagaland's Wokha district?**

**A.** Kohima

**B.** Mokokchung

**C.** Pangti

**D.** Dimapur

See answer ↓

**3. About how many Amur Falcons did hunters kill at Doyang during the single 2012 hunting season?**

**A.** Over 100,000

**B.** About 5,000

**C.** About 20,000

**D.** About 50,000

See answer ↓

**4. What role do the satellite tags fitted on Amur Falcons actually play in their migration?**

**A.** They let researchers study and monitor the route the birds already navigate on their own

**B.** They actively guide the birds along the correct migratory path

**C.** They warn hunters to avoid tagged birds

**D.** They control when the birds depart from Doyang

See answer ↓

**5. On 8 November 2025, three Amur Falcons — Apapang, Alang, and Ahu — were satellite-tagged in Manipur's Tamenglong district. In which year did Nagaland pioneer the satellite tagging of Amur Falcons for the first time?**

**A.** 2013

**B.** 2016

**C.** 2019

**D.** 2010

See answer ↓

**6. The Amur Falcon's most striking migratory leg is a non-stop crossing of the Arabian Sea, the longest known non-stop oceanic crossing made by any raptor species. Roughly how far is the open-sea part of this crossing?**

**A.** About 3,000 km or more, taking several days

**B.** About 2,000 km, taking around 2 days

**C.** About 14,500 km, taking around 10 days

**D.** About 22,000 km, taking around 20 days

See answer ↓

# Answer Key

1. **A.**
   Answer: 1 only
   Statement 1 is correct. Doyang Lake, near Pangti village in Nagaland, is a genuine community-led conservation turnaround. Mass hunting once killed over 100,000 falcons in a single season; local action, the Nagaland Forest Department, and NGOs like BNHS ended it, and the site is now called the "Amur Falcon capital of the world."
   Statement 2 is the trap. Satellite tracking has been used to study a handful of tagged birds, but the technology only monitors their migration, it doesn't guide them. Falcons navigate back using their own innate biological cues.
   Statement 3 is also wrong. Amur Falcons are not permanent residents. Doyang is a temporary roosting stopover for a few weeks each October-November, on their roughly 22,000 km journey between Siberia/Mongolia and southern Africa.
   Related: EnvEco0055 — Amur Falcons and the Doyang Lake Turnaround
   From: UPSC CSP 2026 — General Studies Paper I (Full Question Paper)
   ↑ Q1
2. **C.** The correct answer is Pangti. Doyang reservoir sits near Pangti village, in Nagaland's Wokha district. Amur Falcons roost here each October and November. ↑ Q2
3. **A.** The correct answer is over 100,000. Hunters killed more than 100,000 Amur Falcons at Doyang in the 2012 season alone. A sustained campaign by the Nagaland Forest Department, local communities, and NGOs including BNHS later ended the hunting. ↑ Q3
4. **A.** The correct answer is the first option. Satellite tags let researchers study and monitor the falcons' migration route in detail. The tags do not guide the birds. Falcons navigate using their own innate biological cues. ↑ Q4
5. **A.** The correct answer is 2013. Nagaland pioneered satellite tagging of Amur Falcons that year. More recently, on 8 November 2025, three falcons named Apapang, Alang, and Ahu were tagged at Chiuluan and Guangram villages in Manipur's Tamenglong district. ↑ Q5

6. **A.** The correct answer is about 3,000 km or more. Tracked falcons crossed the open Arabian Sea over several days. It is the longest known non-stop oceanic crossing by any raptor. The full round trip is far longer, about 22,000 km a year. ↑ Q6

## Quick-check answers

1. **True.** ↑ 1
2. **True.** ↑ 2
3. **False.** ↑ 3
4. **True.** ↑ 4
5. **True.** ↑ 5

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