

**Subject: Re: [BIRDCHAT] Talking birds**  
**Date:** Fri, 02 Jul 1999 18:38:17 +0530  
**From:** Aasheesh Pittie <AASHEESH@HD1.VSNL.NET.IN>  
**To:** Richard Guthrie <gaeltic@capital.net>

Dear Richard, (If I may),

Before anything else, Aasheesh is what it is, please! So you've been to India long enough to pick up Hindustani! Surprises never cease on the Net!

There is no riverbank or beach close to Hyderabad, where I live. But I wouldn't mind doing what you want, the next time I am near one, if I can remember. With pleasure. What's it for anyway?

The 'talking bird' thing was a question I had to answer (from a kid), in a fortnightly newspaper column that I write. I give my answer below.

"Some birds acquire the ability to mimic other birds in the wild. They are not born with it. They may do this either to scare other species of birds (by imitating aggressive birds' calls) or to create confusion (for aggressive species) by imitating various smaller birds, thus creating an illusion of the presence of more than one species in an area!

"Parakeets and Hill Mynas (the so-called Talking Myna) do not imitate birds in the wild. But in captivity, they have the capacity to learn and mimic repetitive human sounds, whistled tunes, etc. Birds that are captured as chicks may mimic better than adults may, as they get better 'imprinted' by human sounds at an early age. Their vocal apparatus, however, does not differ from that of other birds. Unfortunately, 80 per cent of these birds which are captured in order to be raised as pets, die during captivity."

Richard Guthrie wrote:

> Shreeman Pittie;  
> Namaste  
>  
> Thanks for your reply. I would like to see the article after it has been  
> published, if possible.  
>  
> Also, If you are of the mind and have the time, I wonder if you could  
> gather a  
> film canister or two of sand from a nearby beach or riverbank or two. This  
> harkens back to a geology project from years ago. Now that I'm retired, I  
> am  
> reconnecting with this sort of unfinished fun.. If you don't. OK, no  
> problem.  
>  
> Bahut, bahut danuvad  
>  
> Richard Guthrie  
> New Baltimore,  
> The Greene County,  
> New York  
> gaeltic@capital.net

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Best wishes and regards!

Aasheesh Pittie