

# NEWSLETTER

FOR BIRDWATCHERS

Volume 8—No. 12—1968 December

12



NEWSLETTER

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Vol. 8, No. 12

December 1968

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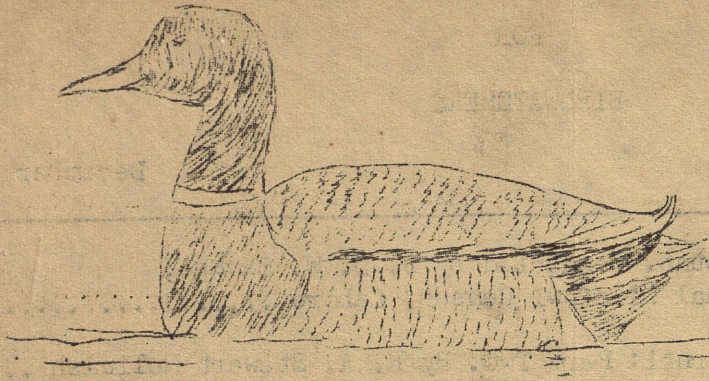
The Annual Waterfowl Count

Conducted by C. D. W. Savage, Chairman  
International Wildfowl Census, Lahore

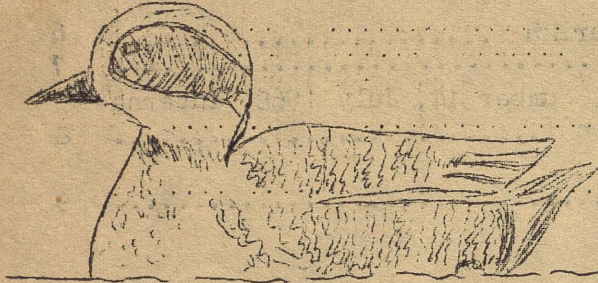
From all accounts the returns of waterfowl counts submitted from various  
areas last year provided valuable data about numbers of different species.  
Those in a position to help must send in their returns this year also,  
and the count must be undertaken this season on Sunday, 15th January  
1969.

The form is enclosed in this Newsletter, and Mr S. V. Nilakanta has drawn  
some sketches of the commoner duck to help identification. It is not  
necessary to send in impressive totals of birds to make any returns  
valuable. What is of the highest importance is that the identifications  
should be correct, and if there is any doubt about what has been seen it  
is best to say so. Volume 1 of the Handbook of the Birds of India and  
Pakistan, by Salim Ali and Dillon Ripley, contains the section on Anatidae  
and the coloured plates and descriptions will be useful for identification.

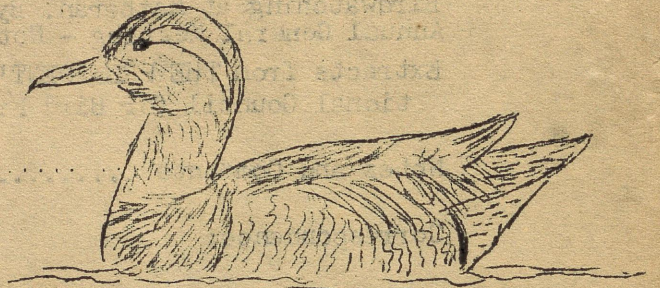
Please send your returns to the Editor of the Newsletter, who will pass  
them on to Mr Christopher Savage in Pakistan.



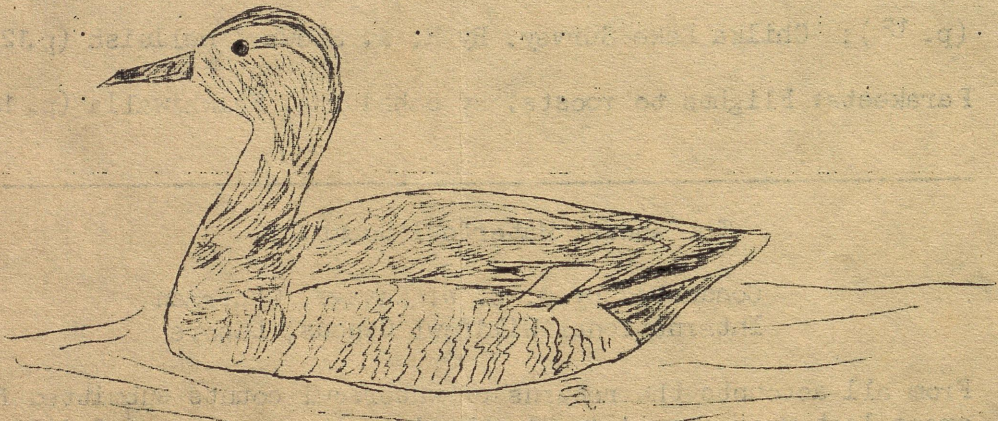
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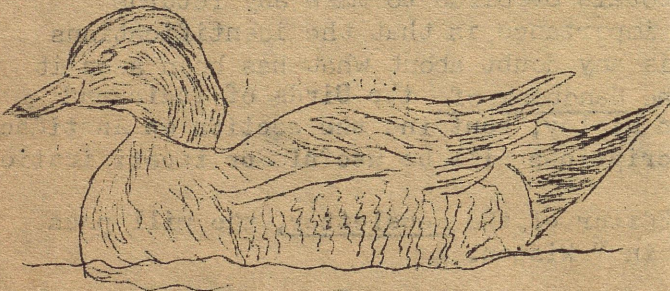
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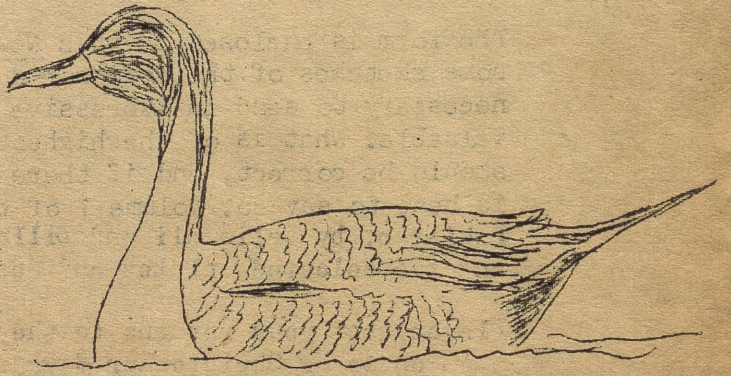
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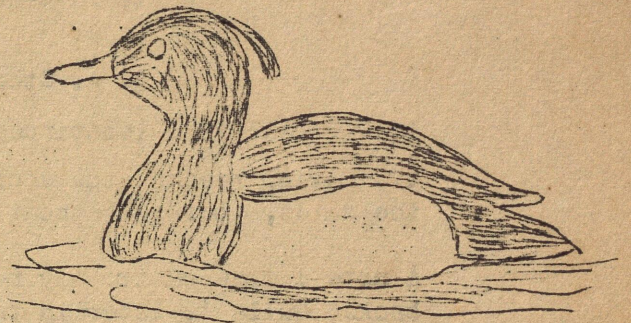
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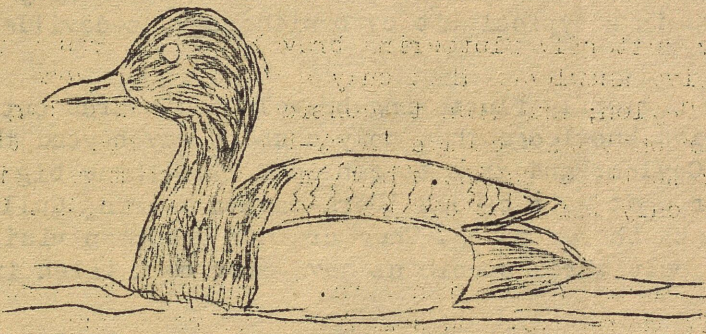
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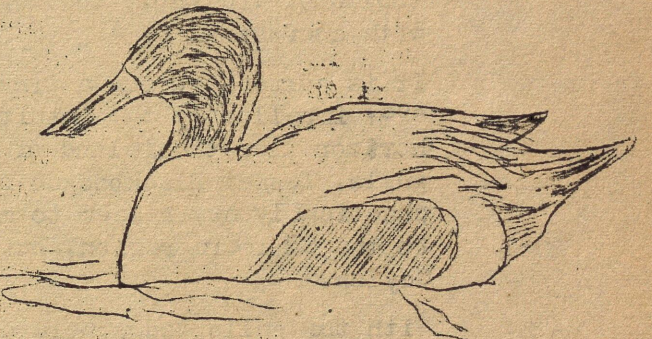
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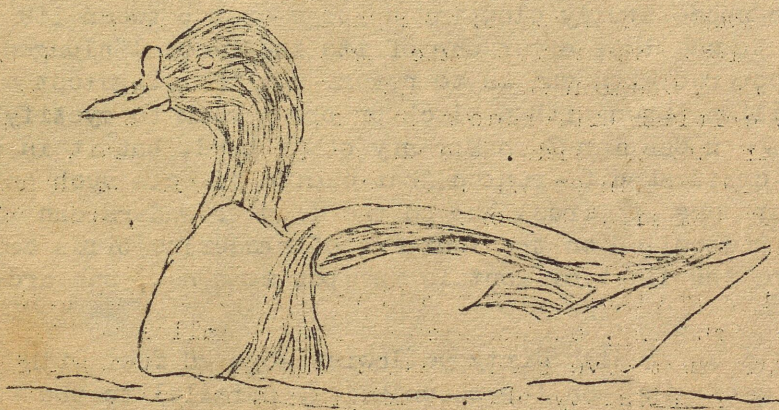
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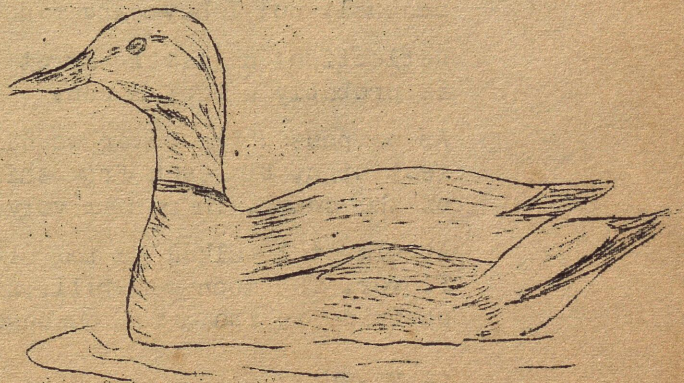
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A Flamingo-hunter's Journal: Part Two

By

R. A. Stewart Melliush

14 FEBRUARY 1968 (continued)

... Having reached the shore again, and lunched, we walked back home along the sands, towing the boat through the little breakers.

A note I made on the way reads, '5 Great Blackheaded and 23 Lesser Black-backed Gulls'. Later in the day I seem to have dropped the name Blackbacked, and preferred Herring. I suppose I refer to the same species, Larus fuscus, normally called the Lesser Blackbacked Gull. The birds I see here in winter have dark slate-grey backs and pale lemon-yellow legs, whereas the Herring Gulls I was brought up on in Europe have flesh-coloured legs. But leg-colour is not a safe guide to the species. Some Herring Gulls have yellow legs (heuglini), and the Lesser Blackbacked Gull is not above changing the colour of its legs in winter occasionally to 'pinkish or whitish grey' (Hollom). The whole business is a typical bit of ornithology, bedevilled with confusion.

It is curious to see a tiny butterfly fluttering bravely southwards out to sea, impelled by the intuitive knowledge that only a short way beyond the horizon lies the island of Ceylon; and then to consider that these big gulls, Lesser Blackbacked or what Wait called 'Dark-backed Herring Gulls', practically never seem to make the crossing. They are not uncommon visitors to the Calimere region, but only three specimens have ever been taken in Ceylon.

With the gulls today were at least 70 Caspian Tern. With their big coarse beaks, broad wings, sawn-off rear-ends, and somewhat cumbersome appearance, they are not the most graceful of terns, but they are nonetheless birds of decided character, and the sight of one never bores me, as a gull often does. They have evidently bred in recent years at Adam's Bridge, so it might be worth coming down to Calimere in May to see if there are any signs of their breeding here too.

(On 17 November Mr Futchally and I had a fine view of a single Caspian Tern fishing in a salt pan near Than, Salsette. It fell abruptly into the water three or four times before successfully clamping a large crab between its mandibles. We were amused to see that after one of its ineffectual plunges it rose with its beak so covered with mud as to reveal not the slightest trace of its natural vermilion. Even with a black or brown beak to mystify you you could hardly mistake a Caspian Tern for any other bird, but it is as well to be reminded of the critical differences that chance effects such as this can make to the appearances of birds. Mud on the legs of waders can frustrate identification, and pollen on the feathers of passerine birds can lead you to imagine you are the first of mortals to spot some new, unheard-of species.)

Near the tower I saw a white egret with dirty yellowish legs and feet with two slate-grey streaks on each wing, on the secondaries, parallel to the shafts of the feathers. This must have been a Reef Heron in the intermediate plumage, neither all-white nor all slaty-blue, which is not supposed to be unusual; but I have never seen it myself before.

Reflection: a 'Little Egret' with a touch of yellow on the lower mandible is probably a Reef Heron.

As we passed the tower we climbed to the top of it. It is a good hundred feet high, but even from this height one cannot see the farthest limits of the swamp. There was very little water around, and no sign of flamingoes.

At sunset I walked to the shore south of the bungalow and saw a Kentish Plover. The moon was full, and I could at least see a change in Jupiter's position in its quiet passage through Leo.

15 FEBRUARY

Yesterday was so exhausting that today had to be taken gently. After a late breakfast we drove to the lighthouse at Point Calimere. This is reached

across a bumpy grass-covered plain dented here and there with boggy and sandy patches and, to the north, bosky with sholas. It is extensive, and its most conspicuous inhabitants are antelope.

The lighthouse is ugly and uninteresting. It is not on the shore, for one thing, which is unhappy for a lighthouse: it stands back from it a good way, deep in the bush. It is in a walled treeless enclosure, along with some huts, and the whole assemblage is the colour of bare cement.

We left the motor in amongst some sand dunes and inspected the desolate, rubbish-strewn beach. Its only landmark was a tilted brick ruin, evidently the remains of a long-abandoned tower. From the top of it hung a dead snake. I learnt afterwards that this was the old Calimere light. It was in use until as late as 1890, and was built in 1814 by the Rajah of Tanjore to commemorate the downfall of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Birdwise, however, this excursion was useless. The only life was a party of Blackheaded Munias. A prospective eagle turned into a Brahminy Kite (as most of my raptors do), and my attempts to make a recording of some subsong in a patch of scrub proved entirely wasteful of both time and energy.

In the afternoon PJ went off to Vedaranniyam to buy provisions and left me sauntering round the lake at Kodikkadu laboriously trying to record a few very ordinary bird noises. It was extremely dull. Things improved briefly when I fought my way through the thorny underbrush to a hidden and rather beautiful pool and thence to the shady side of the lake, where I sat down in the mud and ate an orange. But I then discovered that my tape-machine had bust, and so recorded nothing all day.

There were 180 Pinted Storks on the lake and a fine array of Pintail, Garganey, Showler, Common and Lesser Whistling Teal. How put out the duck were by a Brahminy Kite swooping down on them, playfully, it seemed, as they bobbed about in the water! This caused a great commotion, every bird rising excitedly and flying round and round fidgetily for a long time before daring to settle again. What were they afraid of? A kite might take ducklings off the water, I suppose, as it will a fish, but this large-scale panic seemed unwarranted. Do other birds instinctively either flee from or mob raptors, regardless of their identity? I saw two crows badgering a White-eyed Buzzard-Eagle recently; wherever it tried to settle they would land there too, and chivvy it until it moved on. But there is no evidence that this hawk preys on healthy birds, or their eggs.

The Brahminy Kite is, I notice, by far the commonest raptor at Calimere. I haven't seen a single Pariah Kite these last few days. A few Neophrons and a single Kestrel, but no harriers and no Shikras. Only Brahminy Kites, and these all over the place.

These dull hours were, I now recall, dominated by the reptitious monotone call of the Ring Dove. What a sorry thing this bird's cry is! In contrast with the tender, warm and comforting notes of the Spotted Dove, which is the epitome of drowsy contentment, and the rapid frivolous bubbling of the Little Brown Dove, the noise of decaocto is dismal and ugly.

No day is without some compensations, though, and today's took the form of a superb Blackcapped Purple Kingfisher, and glimpses of both a Black and a Yellow Bittern in the crepuscule. I saw an enormous owl, too, and after nightfall heard peculiar sounds. One was a strange mechanical whirr, ritardando, as of a clockwork toy running down, and another was the nightjarish call I am so familiar with but which is like nothing the books describe. It is a short sharp 'wuck', followed sotto voce by a rapid double 'aroo' at a lower pitch, 'WUCK-aroo.... WUCK-aroo ... WUCK-aroo ...' I heard it all night long on Dhimbam Ghaut last spring.

16 FEBRUARY

Set out early for the swamp in search of the pinker flamingoes, but again they were evanescent smudges on a liquid horizon, and could not have been reached in a day. Spend the morning examining one or two of the smaller waders 'nimbling in the water-pudge' in-shore. Among the many Curlew-Sandpipers and stints are other birds which I at first think may be Broad-billed Sandpipers, but eventually set down as Dunlin, though the record

must remain doubtful. This is a pity, because I have not seen either of these birds in Madras before, and conclude that they must both be extremely rare stragglers to the region. I always examine flocks of small waders with what I smugly regard as the utmost care, especially Curlew-Sandpipers, and feel sure that Dunlin would have emerged to view before now if they were regular visitors.

In size these birds appeared intermediate between the Little Stints and Curlew-Sandpipers with them, though compared to the latter it may only have been a slightly shorter tarsus that made them look smaller. In contrast with the general rusty brown of the Curlew-Sandpipers they were generally lighter greyish brown and by this tone could easily be picked out in a big flock of small waders when temporarily lost to view. The distinctive features of the plumage when examined closely were the scaly Ruff-like effect on the back and scapulars, the feathers being dark sepia edged with buff, and the very streaky head. Above the eye was a clear buff-white stripe, then above that a dark brown stripe, surmounted by another white stripe forming an edge to the dark crown. It was this streakiness about the head which suggested Broadbilled Sandpiper. The underparts were generally white, but my note on the throat and breast colouring is ambiguous and may be misleading. The legs and bill were muddy black, the bill being long and straight to a point near the tip where it distinctly turned downwards, though this character was not pronounced in every individual. When flushed the wings and tail showed a pattern similar to the Little Stints' — the pale wing bar not very pronounced, and on the tail a clear dark brown centre edged with white. The birds had all the characteristic hunched chubby look of Dunlin, but I should like to see indisputably proven Dunlin again before I can be satisfied with this record.

Bread and butter and jam for tea at Thambooswamy Cottage, then to Kodikkadu Lake again. The Purple Kingfisher displayed itself to perfection once more; but the bitterns sulked, so that I caught no more than a glimpse of the black one. There was a dead civet at the side of the road; and a jungle cat ambled across the grass in front of us.

These notes will be concluded  
in the Newsletter for  
January 1969

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The Black Eagle (Ichthyophaga malayensis perniger)  
within Bombay Limits

By

V. Udaya Shankar Rao

The field outing of the Birdwatchers' Club on 20th October to the environs of Vihar Lake in North Bombay was very rewarding one. After a strenuous climb of about a thousand feet up a wooded hill, we suddenly glimpsed through the gaps between the tree-tops, a Black Eagle (Ichthyophaga malayensis perniger). The identification did not present much of a difficulty because of its overall black plumage, very long and broad wings with rounded tips and a white patch under the eye clearly seen when the bird was overhead and at close range. It was sailing gracefully on outstretched wings just above the forest canopy, as is its wont.

This is probably the first sight record of this bird within Bombay limits although it seems to have been reported earlier, from within a 50 km. radius of Bombay City' (Salim Ali and S. Dillon Ripley in Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan, Vol. 1, p. 284). Since its breeding season is known to be from November to March, it would be of great interest to see if it breeds in the Bombay area.

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Birdwatching at Matheran

By

Vipin Parikh

On the first two days of our stay at Matheran, October 1968, we were a bit disappointed for we could hardly come across bird life except for a flock

of 20-30 birds which came in the evening and settled on a leafless tree in the compound of our hotel. They seemed to be Eastern Grey Wagtails but seeing them in the shadows of the evening and a little far from water gave us some doubt about their identity. The next day however the same flock returned and we could confirm our observation in sunny light with its wagging tail and yellow underparts. Actually this particular flock passed by every evening throughout our stay. It was also on the same leafless tree that we spotted a Shikra sitting still on a branch.

On the second day, we could see a Malabar Whistling Thrush with its glistening cobalt blue on the wings. We wished we could have heard its whistling song.

All these days, we had been listening to the kutroo ... kutroo ... of the Green Barbets. On the third and rest of the days we could spot and see both the Large and the Small Green Barbet. It would have been difficult to differentiate between the two purely on the basis of their note, but the peculiar orange skin round the eyes of the larger one made it easy to identify. The smaller one was however more abundant and easy to spot.

It was while going to the Porcupine Point that we came across that beautiful bird: the Paradise Flycatcher. For a while it sat still but then flew around with agility.

It was near the Artist Point that we saw the Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch running like a mouse and the Blueheaded Rock Thrush with chestnut underparts and a white bar on its wing showing prominently. It was also here, accidentally, that we heard and saw at leisure the beautiful shama with its melodious song.

The commoner birds were the Redvented Bulbul and the Rufousbacked Shrike. The drongo we could see but once.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
NOTICE

The Annual General Meeting of the Birdwatchers' Club of India will be held at the residence of Mr Zafar Futehally, at Juhu Lane, Andheri, at 5 p. m., on Saturday, 4th January 1969. (In the last Newsletter it was stated that the meeting would be held on 21st December 1968. Kindly note the change to 4th January 1969.)

A g e n d a

1. To elect a Chairman of the meeting.
2. To get a report from the Honorary Secretary about the working of the Club during 1968.
3. To elect office bearers for 1969.
4. Any other business brought forward with the permission of the Chairman.

Those members who are unable to attend may kindly send in their written suggestions to the Honorary Secretary in good time for consideration at the meeting.

It will be appreciated if those who intend to come inform the Honorary Secretary in advance so that we do not fall short of refreshments and seating accommodation.

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Extracts from THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER, Number 14, July 1968.  
International Council for Bird Preservation

The Monkey-eating Eagle  
A controversy which led to good results

An announcement in December 1967 that three immature Monkey-eating Eagles had been brought from the Philippines and sent to be trained to catch rabbits at the Earl of Bradford's estate, Weston Park, Shropshire, was given wide publicity both through a B. B. C. broadcast interview and in the press. The news that three specimens of the rarest Eagle in the world, which is protected by law in the Philippines, had been exported caused much surprise and concern not only in Britain but in other countries. Full details and copies of the press statements were sent to Professor Rabor, Research Professor of the Mindanao State University and representative of the International Council for Bird Preservation in the Philippines. He immediately took up the matter with the authorities in the Philippines, particularly with regard to how a permit for the export of these birds had been granted. There were conflicting statements as to the identification of the birds concerned. The Philippine press gave great publicity to the affair and considerable controversy and public feeling arose.

In the meantime, following on further publicity and photographs of the birds in the British Press, doubts were felt as to the correctness of their identification and in a television interview the custodian of the birds at Weston Park stated that although they had been received as true Monkey-eating Eagles, and although they were believed so to be, there was now doubt about their identity.

Professor Rabor requested the British Section ICBP for an accurate identification and stated that whether the controversial birds in England were Monkey-eating Eagles or not, a very important development for conservation, not only of this species in particular but also for Philippine wildlife as a whole, had resulted in the awakening of the Filipinos to the cause of conservation and this might be the beginning of real conservation measures in that country.

With the kind consent and full co-operation of the Earl of Bradford Mr D. M. Reid-Henry, an expert on asiatic birds of prey, and Mr J. J. Yealland, Curator of Birds of the Zoological Society of London, visited Weston Park and were shown the birds. They were able to state at once that these birds were not Monkey-eating Eagles Pithecopaga jefferyi, but juvenile Fish-eagles Haliaeetus leucogaster, male and female, and the third bird a Brahminy Kite Haliastur indus. This information was sent to Professor Rabor.

One of the upshots of the controversy regarding the export of three specimens of the Monkey-eating Eagle to Great Britain was a bill sponsored by the Parks and Wildlife Office to be presented to the Congress of the Philippine Republic to give greater protection to these birds including a measure to assign areas as reserves, and declaring the Monkey-eating Eagle as the National Bird of the Philippines, and even specifying penal provisions for violators of this law.

In addition to the proposed legislation for better preservation of the Monkey-eating Eagles Professor Rabor, for twelve months from June 1968, will carry out further studies on the life of this bird with a view to its conservation (a continuation of the research project conducted 1963-64). Further studies of its biology and ecology will yield important data which can be used immediately for more effective conservation of this species, including the selection of reserve areas where it can be assured of continued existence.

A total of 3000 dollars is required for this project and thanks to a generous grant from the National Audubon Society to the central funds of the ICBP was able at once to send 720 dollars to pay the salary of a

field assistant for twelve months. The U. S. Section of the ICBP has contributed 500 dollars and the balance has been raised by the President, Professor Dillon Ripley. It is most gratifying that by this quick cooperation the important work essential for the future of the Monkey-eating Eagle has been able to go forward without delay.

#### Transport and Trade in Wild Birds

At the meeting of the Pan-American Section ICBP in Venezuela in March 1968 the Chairman of the Colombian National Section, Dr C. Lehmann, drew attention to the great traffic in wild birds from Columbia. He mentioned that in one shipment of birds to New York there were 28,000 birds and that more shipments were to come. He added that ten times that number die before shipment, also they are badly packed sometimes thirty birds to a small cage — they are not fed and die rapidly. He estimated that fifty died for every bird that reached its destination. Great Britain, the Netherlands and Belgium were other sources of demand. This report was received with great concern and a resolution calling for strict control of this traffic was adopted. Dr. Lehmann's report was again considered at the Conference of the European Continental Section held in Hungary in May 1968 and the following recommendation was unanimously agreed:

'Having noted the increase of commercial traffic in live wild birds —  
'Recommends that ICBP should convene an international meeting on a world scale to discuss the question of excessive commercial traffic in live wild birds and to press for measures to reduce, strictly regulate and control the import of live wild birds.'

The Air Line Companies have for many years shown great concern regarding the conditions of transport of wild birds and the International Air Transport Association set up a special Study Group on this subject. As reported in the President's Letter No. 11, in January 1967 the British Section ICBP organized an informal conference on conditions of transport and importation of live birds. The papers presented at this meeting together with the discussion have been published as a Report which can be obtained from the Secretariat of the ICBP price 6s.

#### Asian Continental Section

The Asian Section of the ICBP is to be congratulated for being the first Continental Section to issue a News Letter. The first number of the Asian Section News (which is printed in the same format as the President's Letter) contains reports from India on the case of the Indian Grey Jungle-fowl; Japan, on the development of bird protection in the past two years; Korea on the Status of wild life Conservation, and Malaya on National problems in bird protection. Copies of the Asian News (for which no charge is made) may be obtained from the Asian Section, ICBP, c/o Yamashina Institute for Ornithology, 49 Nampaidai-machi, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, Japan.  
S. Dillon Ripley

#### NOTES AND COMMENTS

##### E. P. GEE

The death of Mr E. P. Gee on the 21st October is a great loss to Conservationists in India. He had after his retirement devoted himself entirely to preserving India's Wild Life, and though he was principally interested in mammals he had taken some excellent photographs of Indian birds. He had very generously willed that all his books, manuscripts, and photographs should be given over to the Bombay Natural History Society after his death.

Readers will recall that at the Annual General Meeting of the Birdwatchers' Field Club which was held on 17th December 1966, Mr E. P. Gee was present and showed his excellent films on elephants, orchids, and the Manas and Kaziranga sanctuaries.

May his soul rest in peace.

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TULSI NATIONAL PARK

The Maharashtra Government is proceeding with its plans for turning Tulsi into a National Park. During the Wild Life Week in October it was proposed to introduce a few chital into the forest. Unfortunately this could not be done but some deer and peafowl were kept in an enclosure which has been put up recently. Apparently a panther has got into the enclosure and has killed the deer. This is encouraging in so far as it shows that carnivores still exist in this forest. The enclosure has now been strengthened and is going to be used as a breeding centre for deer which will then be let loose in the forest.

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12TH MEETING OF THE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

At the 12th meeting of the Tourist Development Council in New Delhi towards the end of October it was encouraging to see that several resolutions were passed in connection with Wild Life Tourism. It was emphasized that Shikar Tourism should be played down and more importance given to just viewing birds and animals in our sanctuaries.

Incidentally in a background paper presented on the occasion it was pointed out that at Tiger Tops in Nepal half a million dollars per year are earned from visitors who came there mainly for wild life photography, India could better that figure if the business was properly organised.

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YOUNG BIRDPWATCHERS

Santosh (9 years) and Anand (10 years) (students of Mrs Jamal Ara) are to be congratulated on sending in a list of birds. 'We are always on the lookout for birds while going and coming from our schools ....' Last winter Anand brought a Redbreasted Flycatcher with injured wing. The bird was bleeding badly. Mrs Ara at once gave it first aid. The bleeding stopped and the bird recovered fully after 3 hours. It started flying and hopping a bit. By noon the bird flew away.'

CORRESPONDENCE

Blue Rock Thrush visiting Indian Museum gardens

The Blue Rock Thrush that visited regularly in the quadrangle enclosed within the main building of the Indian Museum (reported before in the Newsletter) was no more seen in the winter of 1967-68. Its visits in different years are tabulated below:

<u>Years</u>	<u>Arrival</u>	<u>Departure</u>
1960-61	..	April 1961
1961-62	Oct. 1961	April 1962
1962-63	Sept. 1962	30 March 1963
1963-64	30 Octo. 1963	April 1964
1964-65	Sept. 1964	April 1965
1965-66	Sept. 1965	April 1966
1966-67	3 Nov. 1966	April 1967

In this connexion I would like to mention that my colleagues have noticed the very bird in the winter of 1959. It may therefore be concluded that this particular Blue Rock Thrush paid a regular visit to its winter quarters in Calcutta, in the quadrangle of the Indian Museum during a period of seven years from 1959 to 1967.

S. S. Saha  
Indian Museum, Calcutta  
October 1968

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House Sparrows (Passer domesticus) nesting in trees

In J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc. 52: 601 Mr Humayun Abdulali recorded having seen a colony of five House Sparrows nesting in the dry leaves of a palm not cut for some time, and drooping against its stem forming a large pad, c. 20 ft up under the growing leaves, in Gandhi Gardens, Karachi, in May 1949. In the same note he referred to Ticehurst and other (J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc. 28: 230) recording the race biblicus as nesting in bushes, and trees especially poplar in Mesopotamia. An editorial note to Mr Abdulali's observations referred to Breeding Birds of Kashmir: 169 wherein Bates and Lowther state that in Kashmir many House Sparrows found in well-wooded country and on forest fringes breed more or less in colonies in natural hollows in trees.

In the second half of October, current year, my attention was attracted to the commotion that was being kicked up one morning by a pair of House Sparrows in the compound of a church in Bandra, against a batch of five House Crows. The crows were continuously flying to an Ashok Tree (Polyalthea longifolia) and unsuccessfully attempting to land on it about 15 ft from the ground. Walking up to the tree to investigate the crows' target of attack, I found that the sparrows had a nest in the tree with cheeping young in it. The crows were trying in vain to rifle the nest. The nest was a large mass of dry grass and straw, stuck among the drooping, matted twigs of the tree, with an oval-shaped entrance to it.

It is difficult to understand as to what prompted this pair of House Sparrows to select a tree in a locality where its usual favourite nesting sites are aplenty.

J. S. Serrao

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Divali Greetings

Divali is a festival of lights and many disgruntled and insomniac people complain a festival of noise. Be what it may, to us birdwatchers it is the festival which is brought on the wings of many migrants, returning to us once again from their northerly ranges. October, the month in which Divali generally falls is a golden month, the gold of ripening grasses on the hills, of fields of millets and groundnuts ready for the harvest, the month of blue lakes, sparkling streams, limitless blue skies and brilliant sunshine. The heat is subdued, a chill touches the air at dawn and dusk. It is a month of sprouting fields of wheat; a month of moderation when the sun is hot, but the shade is cool, languid breezes stir the dark green foliage of large trees and sweep of the drying leaves of the acacias and mimosas preparing for the long dormancy till the next June storms. It is the month when the last rains are still a memory and signs of the cool weather are perceptible. It is a fine month indeed, a month of contentment and of expectancy.

Most of the winter migrants are here, I have seen Black Redstarts, Common Swallows, Rosy Pastors, Pale Harriers, Tawny Pipits, Tree Pipits, Grey Wagtails, White Wagtails, Yellow Wagtails, immense flocks of Short-toed Larks, Lesser White-throats, Common and Green Sandpipers, Kestrels and the like. Passage migrants which are abundant during September have all passed, though there still may be seen a few Spotted Flycatchers and Kashmir Rollers. For the winter have come Redbreasted Flycatchers, Brown Shrikes, Large Green Bee-eaters, Pied Bush Chats, Collared Bush Chats, Pied and Desert Wheatears and the unobstrusive Wrynecks. Hoopoes are plentiful and on almost every babool along the roads is stationed a Bay-backed Shrike which in this part of the country is a winter migrant. The same is true of the Indian Roller, though a few pairs stay on and breed in the larger groves of gnarled and ageing trees.

So, may I wish a happy birdwatching season to all the friends of our Club?

K. S. Lavkumar  
Rajkot, 21 Oct. 1968

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Chilka Lake Survey

I refer to the remark by Mr R. A. S. Melliush in volume 8(11), November 1968 of the Newsletter concerning the visit of the Society's party to Chilka Lake, and would draw Mr Melliush's attention to the article 'Chilka Lake: A Pilot Survey for banding possibilities' by K. S. Lavkumar published in volume 63(2), August 1966 of the Society's journal.

J. C. Daniel  
Curator  
Bombay Natural History Society

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Rain Quail

I enjoyed going through the account about the Rain Quail. I wonder whether this species is also known as the Calling Quail. In Jammu we had got a whole collection, and we used them for a fascinating pastime. Early in the morning we used to go to Ranbirsinghpura with our baskets of calling quails. The rice fields are the favourite haunt -- I don't blame them as Ranbirsinghpura produces the best variety of rice. A net was fixed in one corner of the field and the baskets of calling quails placed nearby. From the other end two people held the rope and instead of a tug-of-war they walked till they reached very near the net and lo behold one found invariably twenty or more quails. There had to be a special game license for this.

Mrs Raj Bedi  
New Delhi

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Chilka Lake Survey

I thank Mr Daniel for reminding me of this article, which I had read and forgotten, and apologize to the Society and to Mr Lavkumar for foolishly complaining that no report of this expedition had been published.

Mr Lavkumar invariably writes well, and this particular article of his is evocative, illuminating, and a pleasure to read. Excellent though it is, however, it makes no pretence of being a systematic, scientific report, and this is probably why I overlooked it. It would have been interesting to see a systematic, annotated list of species observed (perhaps as an appendix to the narrative?). Without such a thing any narrative account is likely to be an incomplete record. For instance, Mr Lavkumar makes no mention of the Snipebilled Godwit, Limnodromus semipalmatus, which I believe his party collected and which must have been one of its more important discoveries. Ringed Plovers are mentioned. Does the writer really mean the extremely rare Ringed Plover, hiaticula, or the common Little Ringed Plover, dubius? The only species of flamingo mentioned is Lesser, but no assessment of numbers is made and since this is possibly a new record for the area it would have been useful. And were the big Phoenicopterus roseus unobserved? Such information would probably not have been omitted from a systematic list.

R. A. Stewart Melliush

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Parakeets: Flights to roosts

Birdwatching has developed in me the habit of looking up at the trees and the open sky (though a bit dangerous at times) and I am often rewarded with the sight of a solitary bird or a flight of birds. Returning from office in the evening at Dadar, I see flights of roseringed and large parakeets returning to their roosting places. The flights are mostly from north to south. During the last few days, on my evening walks, I have had more opportunities of observing these flights, which follow one after another in rapid succession between 5.30 and 6 p.m. I have estimated about 50 birds in a big flight. Of course, some stray birds leisurely follow the main flight chattering and fighting. This evening I counted about 20 such flights within half an hour, though I may have missed quite a few. However I am anxious to know through any of our readers if these flights are also observed in the morning when these birds go to their feeding grounds, and their approximate time.

Bahadur A. Palkhiwalla  
26 October 1968

Zafar Futehally  
Editor, Newsletter for Birdwatchers  
32 Juhu Lane, Andheri, Bombay 58-AS

## INTERNATIONAL WILDFOWL CENSUS

Mid-January 1969

## The Wildfowl Survey

11-F Gulberg, Lahore, W. Pakistan

COUNTRY		District
Place	(1)	(2)
(3)	(4)	(5)

DATE	Species Code	Total No. (1)	Total No. (2)	Total No. (3)	Total No. (4)	Total No. (5)
MALLARD	0720					
TEAL	0750					
GARGANEY	0740					
GADWALL	0820					
WIGWON	0800					
PINTAIL	0780					
SHOVELLER	0830					
LABBLED TEAL	0790					
REDCRESTED POCHARD	0850					
SCAUP	0890					
TUFTED DUCK	0870					
COMMON POCARD	0860					
WHITE-EYED POCHARD	0880					
GOLDENPTE	0900					
LONGTAILED	0930					
V. SCOTER	0990					
C. SCOT R	0980					
MERGANSER	1060					
GOOSANDER	1050					
SMEN	1040					
COMMON SHELDUCK	0710					
BUDDY SHELDUCK	0700					
WHITE-HEADED DUCK	1020					

DATE	Species Code	Total No. (1)	Total No. (2)	Total No. (3)	Total No. (4)	Total No. (5)
MUTE SWAN	0570					
WHOOPLER SWAN	0550					
BLWICK SWAN	0560					
COOTS	--					
GREYLAG GOOSE	0590					
BARBEADED	--					
WHITEFRONTED	--					
LESSER WHITEFRONTED	--					
BEAN GOOSE	0621					
REDBREASTED	--					
FLAMINGOES						

REMARKS: e. g. visibility, local conditions, and comments on the probable accuracy of the count:

OBSERVER'S  
NAME and  
ADDRESS:

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORMS IMMEDIATELY --- THANK YOU

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The subscription is Rs. 5/- per year

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