

Newsletter for Birdwatchers

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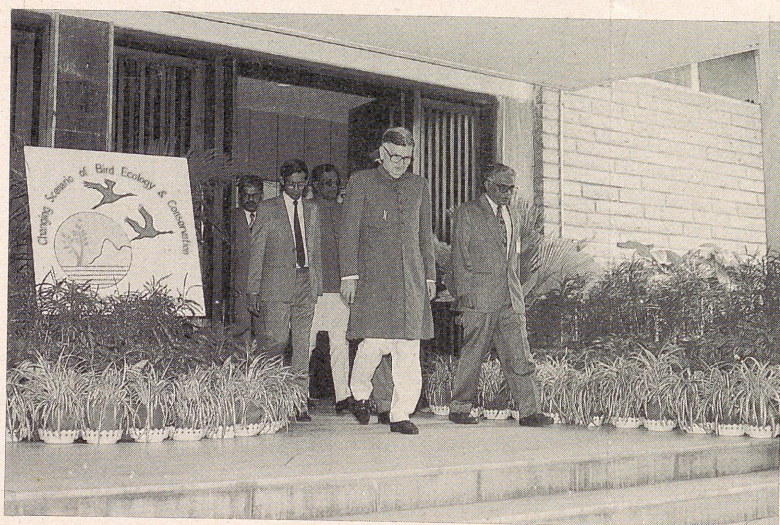
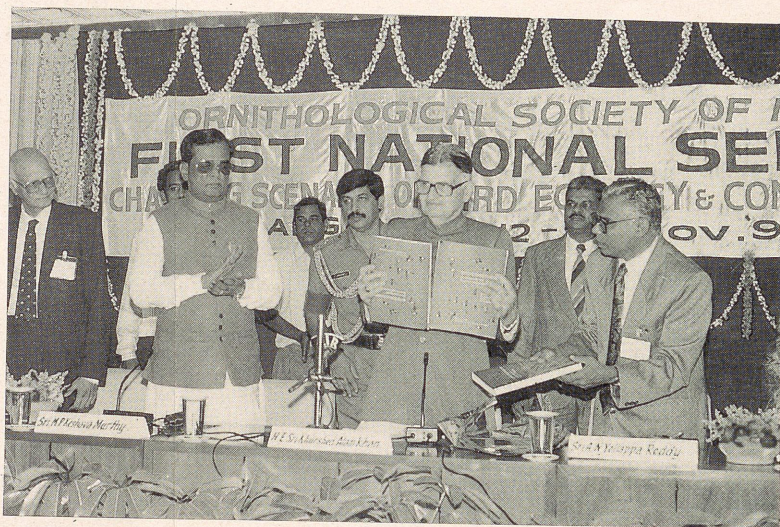
First National Seminar on "CHANGING SCENARIO OF BIRD
ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION"

12-14 November 1993



*His Excellency Shri Khurshed Alam Khan,
Governor of Karnataka inaugurated the
Seminar by unveiling the portrait of the
late Dr. Salim Ali on his 97th Birthday.*

*The Governor released the book,
"Bird Conservation Strategies
for the Nineties & Beyond"*



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EDITORIAL

Ornithological Society of India Seminar

The great event of 1993 was the Seminar on Changing Scenario of Bird Ecology and Conservation, between 12th and 14th November, in Bangalore. The number of participants exceeded our expectations and Mr. A.N. Yellappa Reddy, Special Secretary to Government, Department of Forest, Environment and Ecology, gave us all the support that was required — venue, accommodation, food and transport. This is how it should be. The NGO's provide the stimulus and Government provides the infrastructure. S. Sridhar and his associates (too many to be named) were on their toes for many months, and Abraham Verghese and A.K. Chakravarthy managed the impossible in producing a volume of the papers presented for the seminar ready at the Registration Desk on the inaugural day. Considerable amounts were raised by our supporters including members of our Newsletter, but these may still fall short of the total expenditure. We must thank Col. R.T. Chacko for having arranged for the shoulder bags and other souvenirs which we hope will be useful to the participants even after the seminar. The members of the Organising and Reception Committees, headed by Mr. A.K. Bhoja Shetty, spent many hours planning this meeting and all that I can say in return is that their effort was greatly appreciated by everybody. It was good of H.E. The Governor of Karnataka, Shri Khursheed Alam Khan to inaugurate the meeting and in his speech he stressed the importance of Government supporting voluntary agencies as they had done in the case of this Seminar. We all hope that this trend will continue.

I produce here a note which I have sent to the Regional Secretaries of the Ornithological Society of India, to keep our readers informed about the future of the OSI :-

Z. Futehally gave an account of the formation of the Ornithological Society of India during a Seminar on Ornithology organised by Dr. Asha Chandola Sakhlani, in November 1991. At that time certain ad-hoc decisions were taken about the Registration of the Society and appointment of Office bearers. Z. Futehally was nominated President and Dr. Asha Sakhlani as Secretary General.

In August 1992, a meeting was held at the Bangalore Club in which the future of the OSI was discussed and it was decided that Regional Secretaries be appointed for each region of the country and accordingly the following Regional Secretaries were appointed :-

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Hyderabad | Aasheesh Pittie 14-7-370 Begum Bazar, Hyderabad 500 012 |
| Pune | Prakash Gole Ecological Society, 1B Abhimanshree Housing Society, Off Pashan Road Pune 411 001 |

- Bombay Rishad Naoroji
Godrej Bhavan, 4A Home Street, Fort,
Bombay - 400 001
- Bangalore Abraham Verghese
139, 2nd Main, Domlur 2nd Stage
Bangalore - 560 071
- New Delhi Abdul Jamil Urfi
A/270, Jamia Nagar, Okhla
New Delhi - 110 025

It was decided that further Regional Secretaries would be appointed as and when suitable persons were identified who could fill the post.

After further discussions by the President with the Secretary General and with some of the Regional Secretaries and other supporters of the OSI, it was agreed that the following Office Bearers would be nominated for the next two years, i.e. from 1.1.1994 till 31.12.1996 :

- President* Zafar Futehally
Flat 2205 Oakwood II, Jakkasandra,
Koramangala 8th Main, Bangalore 560 034

(Mr. Futehally wished to resign to make way for a younger and more competent person and would do so as soon as the Executive Committee requested him to step down).

- Secretary General* Asha Chandola Sakhlani
P.Box 45, Gharwal University,
Srinagar 246 174, UP
- Treasurer* M.G. Muthanna
16, Cubbon Road, Bangalore 560 001
- Regional Secretaries*
- Andhra Pradesh* Aasheesh Pittie
14-7-370 Begum Bazar, Hyderabad 500 012
- Maharashtra* Rishad Naoroji
Godrej Bhavan, 4A Home Street, Fort,
Bombay 400 001
- Prakash Gole
Ecological Society,
1B Abhimanshree Housing Society,
Off Pashan Road, Pune 411 001
- Uttar Pradesh* Asad Rahmani
Centre of Wildlife & Ornithology,
Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh 202 002
- Gujarat* Lavkumar Khacher
646, Vastunirman, Gandhinagar,
Gujarat 382 022
- Karnataka* Abraham Verghese
139, 3rd Main, Domlur 2nd Stage,
Bangalore 560 071
- Delhi* Abdul Jamil Urfi
A/270, Jamia Nagar, Okhla,
New Delhi 110 025
- Assam* Prasanta Kumar Saikia
Lecturer, Department of Zoology,
Gauhati University, Guwahati,
Assam 781 014
- Kerala* Shashi Kumar C
9, Subhash Nagar, Cannanore,
Kerala 670 002

It was agreed that the Secretary General would suggest names of others in the Northern Region. It was decided that the Regional Secretaries would appoint their own Committee to assist them in their work. The President emphasised that it was the firm policy of the OSI that the regions should operate in an independent and autonomous manner, but that the Secretary General was to be kept informed about major activities in the region.

Close cooperation between the regions for the promotion of ornithology and conservation was the main guiding principle of the OSI. The President concluded with the hope that the OSI would set an example in effective networking with all interested groups in the country, without interfering, but fully supporting the activities of well established institutions like the Bombay Natural History Society, the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Conservation, and other institutions. It was cheering to find that the selection of Office Bearers and Regional Secretaries was carried out in a spirit of complete cooperation without the usual problems associated with electioneering for positions. As stated above, the present tenure for office bearers and Regional Secretaries would be for the next two years.

It was decided that the Newsletter for Birdwatchers would, in future, be the mouthpiece of the OSI, and that its general policy and format would remain unchanged. The Regional Secretaries, however, would constitute the Advisory Board of the Newsletter. It was hoped that the full list of Regional Secretaries would be published in the January/February issue of the Newsletter. The Newsletter will continue to highlight the activities of the OSI. The Regional Secretaries are requested to periodically send notes about the activities in their region.

Preserving our Ficus Trees for the Birds

The Peepul and the Banyan are our most valuable trees from the ornithological point of view. I wonder whether our Regional Secretaries can start a campaign for listing the trees in their regions and having them numbered for record as well as for proper protection. The Regional Secretaries can do this in cooperation with the local authority, Municipality or Local Board and design an OSI plaque for fixing on the trees. It is instructive to note that the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society in the UK recognising that their country was the largest single importer of Brazilian mahogany, has asked for a moratorium "on the felling or purchase of mahogany until verifiably sustainable management was in place". At last the world seems to be recognising that trees should flourish in situ and not be converted into furniture.

Birds of India

As far as birds go, India fortunately includes Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and Bikram Grewal has done a service to Indian birdwatchers by producing this useful book containing photos and terse descriptions meant to aid identification. Five hundred species have been described and there is a pleasant introduction which contains information not generally available. For example: "Teeth would weigh down the head of any bird wanting to fly efficiently, and so over the past million years birds have lost them and instead developed gizzards."

Laying hands on photographs of 500 birds in the wild is no easy task, and understandably some of the photos are sub-standard. But in the next addition the very bad ones of the common birds like the one of the Tailor bird on page 121, could easily be substituted by something better. It is true of course that even a bad picture of a bird is a great aid to identification, and the author had obviously this fact in mind when using the bad ones. What I find very worthwhile in this book are the indexes. There is the systematic Index of Families and species — 2060 in all, reproduced from the Handbook. An innovation is the list of alternate names now current in the Indian region. Changes in Nomenclature is going to pose a problem in future and we must check the innovators of the West from changing the established names of the East, at least as far as the common names are concerned. The index of scientific names and the one on common names makes this book an

excellent companion in the field and a valuable reference book at home. All books today are expensive, so the price of Rs.395/- for one with so many colour plates, is not unreasonable.

A Book of Kerala Birds

Prof. K.K. Neelakantan amazed everyone by his capacity to detect the smallest variation in the appearance or the behaviour of birds, and he was the right person to follow in the footsteps of Salim Ali and write about the changes which have taken place in the bird life of Kerala since Salim's book was published in 1969. In association with C. Sashikumar and R. Venugopalan, he worked on "A Book of Kerala Birds" which has just been published by the WWF State Committee. Many descriptions, fresh from the field (unlike collations from other sources) make this small book rather special.

The book is divided into two parts. Part I covers only the 'new' birds (those not recorded by Salim Ali) and Part II contains additional information on the birds dealt with in the Birds of Kerala by Salim Ali. The illustrations and colour plates by Carl D'Silva are excellent. The Glossary contains a list of many words which are clearly explained. There is a systematic index at the end, and one realises how rich Kerala is in its bird life by noting that 475 species and sub-species are listed out of the total of 2060 of the Indian Sub-Continent. The book is available from Thanal, P.B. No.815, Kawdiar, Trivandrum 695 003.

BIRDS OF PONMUDI HILLS AND KALLAR VALLEY

C. SUSANTH KUMAR, *Prakiriti, Peroorkada, P.O. Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala - 695 005*

Pomudi Hills in Thiruvananthapuram District of Kerala, is a hill resort, and forms a part of a range of hills in the Western Ghats. With the upgrading of its status as a hill resort, the development activities including a large scale Eucalyptus plantation (at Bireymore) seems to have changed the habitat once frequented by Salim Ali.

Kallar Valley is extremely rich in bird life and has many interesting forest species, like spider-hunters, trogons, piculets and blue-bearded bee-eaters. Yellow browed bulbuls are ubiquitous, hill mynas whistle and screech everywhere. When the trees are in fruit, the sad piping of grey-fronted green pigeons and the deep ominous 'wharp-vroo/vak-voor..' of green imperial pigeons can be heard near the fruit patches. Hunting parties of nuthatches, scimitar babblers, orange minivets, drongos and black headed babblers are always active, except in the midday heat. Brown wood owls, forest eagle owls, fish owls, hawk

owls, scops owls and barred jungle owlets fill the night with their calls.

Ponmudi is an ideal raptor country. Last year I had an unusual opportunity to observe 14 species of raptors at Ponmudi Breymore range. The black eagle is the common raptor of Ponmudi hills. Indian kestrel and blackwinged kite are seen here throughout the year. The red data bird, lesser kestrel, *Falco naumanni* was observed on two or three occasions near Ponmudi upper sanatorium. Crested serpent eagle, crested hawk eagle, and crested honey buzzard were observed at Kallar Valley.

One early morning at Ponmudi, my wife Bindu and I saw a sparrow-hawk killing a spotted dove. The same day a pair of kestrels were observed breaking off the dry slender branch of a tree and carrying it away for nesting.

On 20 March 1986, in the hill area I saw another bird of prey. It was slightly smaller than the pariah kite; upper parts deep brown with small buffy spots. Under parts brown with buff/whitish bars and streaks. Head grey and owl-like on frontal view. Unfeathered legs whitish to grey with black claws. Bill deep grey with black tip. Made harsh keea, kea, keea call, easily audible from a considerable distance. And this leaves no room for doubt — it was a short-toed eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*).

It was early in the afternoon but the rain forest in the Kallar Valley through which I was walking, was dark and gloomy. The forest was silent except for the distant clucking calls of Malabar grey hornbills in flight, and the sound of water dripping on to the forest floor. My footsteps on the rain-soaked leaf litter, were totally silent. Luck seemed to favour me that day. As I turned a corner, I noticed two orange headed ground thrushes feeding on the narrow path. Orange headed ground thrush is one of the rarest winter visitors of Kerala.

On 17.11.1983 I saw a pair of Pied ground thrushes fly out during the day from a small stream lined with dense reed thickets in front of 'Nerrippankuthu waterfall' (4 km from Kallar).

I was privileged to be a member of the trekking party who used to stay at the top of 'Ponmudi Varayadumudi' (325 metre elevation) for five years. The Ponmudi Varayadumudi forms the home of the endangered Nilgiri Tahr, a mountain goat endemic to the Western Ghats of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The trek to this Tahr habitat is a difficult one. Short-eared owls, Nightjars (5 species), Grasshopper warblers, broad tailed grass warblers, laughing thrushes and black bulbuls are seen on the grassy slopes and sholas of this region.

Many stray records of birds have been reported from this Valley now and then. However, the most remarkable sighting I wish to announce is that of a Rufous bellied bush robin that I saw at one tributary of Kallar river (Mangalakarrikal) on 3.1.1990. I have been observing this bird for 6 months. This being sighted for the first time in Kerala. Another important sighting was Blue-eared Kingfisher. The blue-eared kingfisher is one of the rarest Kingfishers of Kerala. On 18.11.1993, I observed a single bird near at Meenamutty waterfalls (2 km from Kallar). Another rare kingfisher the Blackcapped kingfisher was also observed near at Kallar bridge on 14.4.1992.

I have been visiting Ponmudi hills and Kallar Valley since 1979. I have been able to record 250 bird species so

far. Though this list presented below is by no means comprehensive, it intends to provide an impression of the avifauna of the Ponmudi Hills and Kallar Valley to those interested.

Acknowledgments

Several people have helped me in this work and I wish to thank them for their cooperation. They are: Bindu Meher for field assistance and general help; C. Susheel Kumar and K.S. Venugopal for commenting on an earlier draft; S. Rajeevan and Kallar Rajan for their cooperation and willingness to discuss this theme.

Checklist of the Birds of Ponmudi Hills & Kallar Valley

| No. | Name | Scientific Name |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Family: PHALACROCORACIDAE</i> | | |
| 001 | Little Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax niger</i> |
| <i>Family: ARDEIDAE</i> | | |
| 002 | Purple Heron | <i>Ardea purpurea</i> |
| 003 | Little Green Heron | <i>Ardeola striatus</i> |
| 004 | Pond Heron | <i>Ardeola grayii</i> |
| 005 | Cattle Egret | <i>Bubulcus ibis</i> |
| 006 | Smaller Egret | <i>Egretta intermedia</i> |
| 007 | Little Egret | <i>Egretta garzetta</i> |
| 008 | Night Heron | <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> |
| 009 | Tiger Bittern | <i>Gorsachius melanolophus</i> |
| 010 | Chestnut Bittern | <i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i> |
| 011 | Black Bittern | <i>Ixobrychus flavicollis</i> |
| <i>Family: ACCIPITRIDAE</i> | | |
| 012 | Blackwinged kite | <i>Elanus caeruleus</i> |
| 013 | Crested Honey Buzzard | <i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i> |
| 014 | Pariah kite | <i>Milvus migrans govinda</i> |
| 015 | Brahminy kite | <i>Haliastur indus</i> |
| 016 | Shikra | <i>Accipiter badius</i> |
| 017 | Crested Goshawk | <i>Accipiter trivirgatus</i> |
| 018 | Asiatic Sparrow Hawk | <i>Accipiter nisus nisosimilis</i> |
| 019 | Besra Sparrow Hawk | <i>Accipiter virgatus besra</i> |
| 020 | Booted Eagle | <i>Hieraetus pennatus</i> |
| 021 | Rufousbellied Hawk Eagle | <i>Lophotriorchis kienerii</i> |
| 022 | Black Eagle | <i>Ictinaetus malayensis</i> |
| 023 | Greyheaded Fishing Eagle | <i>Ictinaetus ichthyaetus</i> |
| 024 | Pale Harrier | <i>Circus macrourus</i> |
| 025 | Montagu's Harrier | <i>Circus pygargus</i> |
| 026 | Short-toed Eagle | <i>Circaetus gallicus</i> |
| 027 | Crested Serpent Eagle | <i>Spilornis cheela</i> |
| 028 | Indian Crested Hawk Eagle | <i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i> |
| 029 | Tawny Eagle (?) | <i>Aquila rapax vindhiana</i> |
| <i>Family: FALCONIDAE</i> | | |
| 030 | Shahin Falcon | <i>Falco peregrinus peregrinator</i> |
| 031 | Lesser Kestrel | <i>Falco naumanni</i> |
| 032 | Indian Kestrel | <i>Falco tinnunculus objurgatus</i> |
| 033 | European Kestrel | <i>Falco tinnunculus linnaeus</i> |

Family : PHASIANIDAE

- 034 Jungle Bush Quail
 035 Painted Bush Quail
 036 Red Spurfowl
 037 Grey Junglefowl

Perdica asiatica
Perdica erythroyncha
Gallus padana
Gallus sonneratii

Family : RALLIDAE

- 038 Whitebreasted Waterhen

Amaurornis phoenicurus

Family : CHARADRIIDAE

- 039 Redwattled Lapwing
 040 Yellowwattled Lapwing
 041 Common Sandpiper
 042 Green Sandpiper
 043 Snipe Sp.

Vanellus indica
Vanellus malabaricus
Tringa hypoleucos
Tringa ochropus
Gallinago sp.

Family : COLUMBIDAE

- 044 Orange breasted Green Pigeon
 045 Green Imperial Pigeon
 046 Jerdon's Imperial Pigeon
 047 Blue Rock Pigeon
 048 Yellowlegged Green Pigeon
 049 Greyfronted Green Pigeon
 050 Spotted Dove
 051 Emerald Dove

Treron bicincta
Ducula aenea
Ducula badia
Columba livia
Treron phoenicoptera
Treron pompadara
Streptopelia chinensis
Chalcophaps indica

Family : PSITTACIDAE

- 052 Roseringed Parakeet
 053 Blossomheaded Parakeet
 054 Bluewinged Parakeet
 055 Indian Lorikeet

Psittacula krameri
Psittacula cyanocephala
Psittacula columboides
Loriculus vernalis

Family : CUCULIDAE

- 056 Pied Crested Cuckoo
 057 Common Hawk Cuckoo
 058 Indian Cuckoo
 059 The Cuckoo
 060 Small Cuckoo
 061 Banded Bay Cuckoo
 062 Indian Plaintive Cuckoo
 063 Indian Drongo Cuckoo
 064 Indian Koel
 065 Small Greenbilled Malkoha
 066 Sirkeer Cuckoo
 067 Southern Crow-pheasant
 068 Lesser Coucal

Clamator jacobinus
Cululus varius
Cuculus micropterus
Cuculus canorus
Cuculus poliocephalus
Cacomantis sonneratii
Cacomantis passerinus
Surniculus lugubris
Eudynamis scolopacea
Rhopodytes viridirostris
Taccocua leschenaultii
Centropus sinensis
Centropus toulou benghalensis

Family : STRIGIDAE

- 069 Shorteared Owl
 070 Collared Scops Owl
 071 Indian Scops Owl
 072 Forest Eagle Owl
 073 Brown Fish Owl
 074 Jungle Owlet
 075 Brown Hawk Owl
 076 Spotted Owlet
 077 Brown Wood Owl

Asio flammeus
Otus bakkamoena
Otus scops rufipennis
Bubo nipalensis
Bubo zeylonensis
Glaucidium radiatum
Ninox scutulata
Athene brama
Strix leptogrammica

Family : CAPRIMULGIDAE

- 078 Great Eared Nightjar
 079 Indian Jungle Nightjar
 080 Jerdon's Longtailed Nightjar
 081 Common Indian Nightjar
 082 Franklin's Nightjar

Eurostopodus macrotis
Caprimulgus indicus
Caprimulgus macrurus
Caprimulgus asiaticus
Caprimulgus affinis

Family : APODIDAE

- 083 Indian Edible Nest Swiftlet
 084 Large Brownthroated Spinetail Swift
 085 Whiterumped Spinetail Swift
 086 Alpine Swift
 087 House Swift
 088 Palm Swift
 089 Indian Crested Tree Swift

Collocalia unicolor
Chaetura gigantea
Chaetura sylvatica
Micropus melba
Apus affinis
Cypsiurus parvus
Hemiprocne longipennis

Family : TROGONIDAE

- 090 Malabar Trogon
 Family : ALCEDINIDAE
 091 Lesser Pied Kingfisher
 092 Common Kingfisher
 093 Blue-eared Kingfisher
 094 Storkbilled Kingfisher
 095 Whitebreasted kingfisher
 096 Blackcapped Kingfisher

Harpactes fasciatus

Family : MEROPIDAE

- 097 Chestnut-headed Bee-eater
 098 Bluetailed Bee-eater
 099 Small Green Bee-eater

Merops leschenaulti
Merops philippinus
Merops orientalis

Family : CORACIIDAE

- 100 Indian Roller
 101 Broadbilled Roller

Caracias benghalensis
Eurystomus orientalis

Family : UPUPIDAE

- 102 Hoopoe

Upupa epops

Family : BUCEROTIDAE

- 103 Malabar Grey Hornbill
 104 Great Indian Hornbill

Tockus griseus
Buceros bicornis

Family : CAPITONIDAE

- 105 Small Green Barbet
 106 Crimson-throated Barbet
 107 Crimson Breasted Barbet

Megalaima viridis
Megalaima rubricapilla malabarica
Megalaima haemacephala indica

Family : PICIDAE

- 108 Speckled Piculet
 109 Rufous Woodpecker
 110 Little Scalybellied Woodpecker
 111 Small Yellownaped Woodpecker
 112 Lesser Goldenbacked Woodpecker
 113 Goldenbacked Threetoed Woodpecker
 114 Large Goldenbacked Woodpecker
 115 Great Blackwoodpecker
 116 Yellowfronted Pied Woodpecker
 117 Pigmy Woodpecker
 118 Heartspotted Woodpecker
 119 Blackbacked Woodpecker

Picumnus innominatus
Micropternus brachyurus
Picus myrmecophoneus
Picus chlorolophus
Dinopium bengalensis
Dinopium javanense
Chrysocolaptes lucidus
Dryocopus javanensis
Dendrocopos mahrattensis
Dendrocopos nanus
Hemicircus canente
Chrysocolaptes festivus

Family : PITTIDAE

- 120 Indian Pitta

Pitta brachyura

Family : ALAUDIDAE

- 121 Ceylon Bush Lark
 122 Short-toed Lark
 123 Small Nilgiri Skylark

Mirafra assamica
Calandrella cinerea
Alauda gulgula australis

Family : HIRUNDINIDAE

| | | |
|-----|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 124 | Dusky Crag Martin | <i>Hirundo concolor</i> |
| 125 | House Swallow | <i>Hirundo tahitica</i> |
| 126 | Indian Cliff Swallow | <i>Hirundo fluviicola</i> |
| 127 | Redrumped Swallow | <i>Hirundo daurica</i> |
| 128 | Eastern Swallow | <i>Hirundo rustica</i> |

Family : LANIIDAE

| | | |
|-----|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| 129 | Brown Shrike | <i>Lanius ciristatus</i> |
| 130 | Greybacked Shrike | <i>Lanius schach caniceps</i> |

Family : ORIOLIDAE

| | | |
|-----|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 131 | Golden Oriole | <i>Oriolus oriolus</i> |
| 132 | Blacknaped Oriole | <i>Oriolus chinensis</i> |
| 133 | Blackheaded Oriole | <i>Oriolus xanthornus</i> |

Family : DICRURIDAE

| | | |
|-----|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 134 | Black Drongo | <i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i> |
| 135 | Ashy Drongo | <i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i> |
| 136 | Whitebellied Drongo | <i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i> |
| 137 | Bronze Drongo | <i>Dicrurus aeneus</i> |
| 138 | Racket-tailed Drongo | <i>Dicrurus remifer</i> |
| 139 | Hair Crested Drongo | <i>Dicrurus hottentottus</i> |

Family : ARTAMIDAE

| | | |
|-----|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 140 | Ashy Swallow Shrike | <i>Artamus fuscus</i> |
|-----|---------------------|-----------------------|

Family : STURNIDAE

| | | |
|-----|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 141 | Greyheaded Myna | <i>Sturnus malabaricus</i> |
| 142 | Blyth's Myna | <i>Sturnus malabaricus blythii</i> |
| 143 | Brahminy Myna | <i>Sturnus pagodarum</i> |
| 144 | Rosy Pastor | <i>Sturnus roseus</i> |
| 145 | Common Myna | <i>Acridotheres tristis</i> |
| 146 | Jungle Myna | <i>Acridotheres fuscus</i> |
| 147 | Hill Myna | <i>Gracula religiosa</i> |

Family : CORVIDAE

| | | |
|-----|----------------|------------------------------|
| 148 | Indian Treepie | <i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i> |
| 149 | House Crow | <i>Corvus splendens</i> |
| 150 | Jungle Crow | <i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i> |

Family : CAMPEPHAGIDAE

| | | |
|-----|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 151 | Pied Flycatcher Shrike | <i>Hemipus picatus</i> |
| 152 | Large Woodshrike | <i>Tephrodornis virgatus</i> |
| 153 | Common Woodshrike | <i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i> |
| 154 | Large Cuckoo Shrike | <i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i> |
| 155 | Blackheaded Cuckoo Shrike | <i>Coracina melanoptera</i> |
| 156 | Pied Cuckoo Shrike (?) | <i>Coracina niger</i> |
| 157 | Orange Minivet | <i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i> |
| 158 | Small Minivet | <i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i> |

Family : IRENIDAE

| | | |
|-----|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 159 | Common Iora | <i>Aegithina tiphia</i> |
| 160 | Gold Fronted Chloropsis | <i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i> |
| 161 | Jerdon's Chloropsis | <i>Chloropsis cochinchinensis</i> |
| 162 | Fairy Bluebird | <i>Irena puella</i> |

Family : PYCNONOTIDAE

| | | |
|-----|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| 163 | Greyheaded Bulbul | <i>Pycnonotus priocephalus</i> |
| 164 | Rubythroated Bulbul | <i>Pycnonotus melanicterus</i> |
| 165 | Redwhiskered Bulbul | <i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i> |
| 166 | Redvented Bulbul | <i>Pycnonotus cafer</i> |
| 167 | Whitebrowed Bulbul | <i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i> |
| 168 | Yellowbrowed Bulbul | <i>Hypsipetes indicus</i> |
| 169 | Black Bulbul | <i>Hypsipetes madagascariensis</i> |

Family : MUSCICAPIDAE

| | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 170 | Spotted Babbler | <i>Pellorneum ruficeps</i> |
| 171 | Travancore Scimitar Babbler | <i>Pomatorhinus schisticeps</i> |
| 172 | Whitethroated Babbler | <i>Dumetia hyperythra</i> |
| 173 | Blackheaded Babbler | <i>Phopocichla atriceps</i> |
| 174 | Jungle Babbler | <i>Turdoides straitus</i> |
| 175 | White headed Babbler | <i>Turdoides affinis</i> |
| 176 | Wynad Laughing Thrush | <i>Garrulax delesserti</i> |
| 177 | Whitebreasted Laughing Thrush | <i>Garrulax jerdoni</i> |
| 178 | Quaker Babbler | <i>Alcippe poioicephala</i> |
| 179 | Rufous Babbler | <i>Turdoides subrufus</i> |
| 180 | Brown Flycatcher | <i>Muscicapa latirostris</i> |
| 181 | Layard's Flycatcher | <i>Muscicapa muttui</i> |
| 182 | Rufoustailed Flycatcher | <i>Muscicapa ruficauda</i> |
| 183 | Red-breasted Flycatcher | <i>Muscicapa parva</i> |
| 184 | Black and Orange Flycatcher | <i>Muscicapa nigrorufa</i> |
| 185 | Whitebellied Blue Flycatcher | <i>Muscicapa pallipes</i> |
| 186 | Bluethroated Flycatcher | <i>Muscicapa rubeculoides</i> |
| 187 | Tickells Blue Flycatcher | <i>Muscicapa tickelliae</i> |
| 188 | Verditer Flycatcher | <i>Muscicapa albicaudata</i> |
| 189 | Nilgiri Verditer Flycatcher | <i>Muscicapa thalassina</i> |
| 190 | Greyheaded Flycatcher | <i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i> |
| 191 | Whitebrowed Fantail Flycatcher | <i>Rhipidura aureola</i> |
| 192 | Paradise Flycatcher | <i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i> |
| 193 | Blacknaped Blue Flycatcher | <i>Monarcha azurea</i> |
| 194 | Streaked Fantail Warbler | <i>Cisticola juncidis</i> |
| 195 | Franklin's Wren Warbler | <i>Prinia hodgsoni</i> |
| 196 | Plain Wren Warbler | <i>Prinia subflava</i> |
| 197 | Ashy Wren Warbler | <i>Prinia socialis</i> |
| 198 | Jungle Wren Warbler | <i>Prinia sylvatica</i> |
| 199 | Tailorbird | <i>Orthotomus sutorius</i> |
| 200 | Eastern Grasshopper Warbler | <i>Locustella naevia</i> |

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 201 | Great Reed Warbler | <i>Acrocephalus bistrigiceps</i> | Family : DICAIDAE | | |
| 202 | Blyth's Reed Warbler | <i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i> | 232 | Tickell's Flowerpecker | <i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i> |
| 203 | Broadtailed Grass Warbler | <i>Schoenicola platyura</i> | 233 | Thickbilled Flowerpecker | <i>Dicaeum agile</i> |
| 204 | Booted Warbler | <i>Hippolais caligata</i> | 234 | Nilgiri Flowerpecker | <i>Dicaeum concolor</i> |
| 205 | Orphean Warbler | <i>Sylvia hortensis</i> | Family : NECTARINIIDAE | | |
| 206 | Tickell's Leaf Warbler | <i>Phylloscopus affinis</i> | 235 | Loten's Sunbird | <i>Nectarinia lotenia</i> |
| 207 | Greenish Leaf Warbler | <i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i> <i>viridanus</i> | 236 | Small Sunbird | <i>Nectarinia minima</i> |
| 208 | Large Crowned Leaf Warbler | <i>Phylloscopus occipitalis</i> | 237 | Purplerumped Sunbird | <i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i> |
| 209 | Indian Bluechat | <i>Erithacus brunneus</i> | 238 | Purple Sunbird | <i>Nectarinia asiatica</i> |
| 210 | Rufousbellied Bush Robin | <i>Erithacus hyperythrus</i> | 239 | Little Spider-hunter | <i>Arachnothera longirostris</i> |
| 211 | Maggie Robin | <i>Copsychus saularis</i> | Family : ZOSTEROPIDAE | | |
| 212 | Blueheaded Rock Thrush | <i>Monticola cinclorhynchus</i> | 240 | White Eye | <i>Zosterops palpebrosa</i> |
| 213 | Indian Blue Rock Thrush | <i>Monticola solitarius pandoo</i> | Family : PLOCEIDAE | | |
| 214 | Malabar Whistling Thrush | <i>Myiophonus horsfieldii</i> | 241 | House Sparrow | <i>Passer domesticus</i> |
| 215 | Pied Ground Thrush | <i>Zoothera wardii</i> | 242 | Yellowthroated Sparrow | <i>Petronia xanthocollis</i> |
| 216 | Orangeheaded Ground Thrush | <i>Zoothera citrina</i> | 243 | Baya | <i>Ploceus philippinus</i> |
| 217 | Whitethroated Ground Thrush | <i>Zoothera citrina cyanotus</i> | 244 | Whitebacked Munia | <i>Lonchura striata</i> |
| 218 | Black Bird | <i>Turdus merula</i> | 245 | Red Munia | <i>Estrilda amandava</i> |
| 219 | Blackcaped SSP | | 246 | Rufousbellied Munia | <i>Lanchura kelaarti</i> |
| 220 | Blackcapped SSP | <i>Turdus simillimus</i> | 247 | Spotted Munia | <i>Lonchura punctulata</i> |
| Family : PARIDAE | | | 248 | Blackheaded Munia | <i>Lonchura malacca</i> |
| 221 | Grey Tit | <i>Parus major</i> | 249 | Whitethroated Munia | <i>Lonchura malabarica</i> |
| 222 | Yellow Cheeked Tit | <i>Parus xanthogenys</i> | Family : CORVIDAE | | |
| Family : SITTIDAE | | | 250 | Southern Tree Pie | <i>Dendrocitta leucogastra</i> |
| 223 | Velvet Fronted Nuthatch | <i>Sitta frontalis</i> | | | |
| Family : MOTACILLIDAE | | | | | |
| 224 | Indian Tree Pipit | <i>Anthus hodgsoni</i> | | | |
| 225 | Richard's Pipit | <i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i> <i>richardi</i> | | | |
| 226 | Nilgiri Pipit | <i>Anthus nilghiriensis</i> | | | |
| 227 | Forest Wagtail | <i>Motacilla indica</i> | | | |
| 228 | Grey Wagtail | <i>Motacilla caspica</i> | | | |
| 229 | Blueheaded Yellow Wagtail (?) | <i>Motacilla flava beema</i> | | | |
| 230 | Indian White Wagtail | <i>Motacilla alba</i> | | | |
| 231 | Large Pied Wagtail | <i>Motacilla maderas</i> | | | |

FLOWER-BIRDS OF KOZHIKODE DISTRICT, KERALA

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We happened to come across Salim Ali's interesting article on 'Flower-birds and bird-flowers in India' (Ali, 1932) wherein birds visiting many of the common trees and plants for nectar, especially in Western India (Bombay region) have been listed. Salim Ali mentions that 'The importance of bees, butterflies and a host of other insects in the cross-fertilization of flowers is well known, but the significance of birds in the same capacity has been consistently underrated'. Recently we also came across an excellent review by Subramanya and Radhamani (1993) wherein the available literature on bird pollination in India has been reviewed. Surprisingly we found that little

information is available on flower-birds in Kerala though this region is rich in plant and bird life. Hence, we felt that it would be worthwhile to document the flowerbirds we have been observing at Kozhikode district, Kerala. The list we have provided the result of our observations during the two years in this region, especially in and around the campuses of the National Research Centre for Spices at Calicut and Peruvannamuzhi. Calicut is a coastal city and Peruvannamuzhi is situated 51 km away from Calicut at the foot hills of the Wynad range of Western ghats and is surrounded by moist deciduous forests. The variety of bird visitors was maximum on Indian silk cotton tree (*Bombax*

malabaricum) and Indian coral tree (*Erythrina indica*) and are being reported elsewhere. The flower-birds of other plants and trees in this region are mentioned here.

1. China rose/Shoe flower (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*) (Malvaceae)

An ornamental shrub with large scarlet flowers. Flowering throughout the year.

Visitors : Regularly visited by purplerumped sunbird (*Nectarinia zeylonica*) and purple sunbird (*N.asiatica*). The birds generally took a 'short cut' while feeding on the nectar by piercing the base of the corolla. Most of the new varieties of shoe flower were however not attractive to the sunbirds.

2. *Pterocymbium javanicum* (Streculiaceae)

A lofty tree with creamy green flowers appearing on leafless branches. Flowering during February – March.

Visitors : This tree was a great favourite for lorikeets (*Loriculus vernalis*) at Peruvannamuzhi; small flocks of 5 – 10 birds were invariably seen on the tree whenever it was in bloom. However the lorikeets did considerable damage to the flowers since most of the fallen flowers had a typical 'bite' mark of the bird at the base of the corolla. The goldfronted chloropsis (*Chloropsis aurifrons*) and redwhiskered bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) were also seen regularly visiting the flowers.

3. Drumstick (*Moringa oleifera*) (Moringaceae)

A medium sized tree with creamy white flowers in dense masses. Flowering during December – March.

Visitors : Occasionally visited by purplerumped sunbird.

4. Dividivi (*Caesalpinia coriaria*) (Caesalpinaceae)

A small ornamental tree with creamy yellow flowers in small clusters among the foliage. Flowering during August – October.

Visitors : The two trees at Peruvannamuzhi was a great favourite for Nilgiri flowerpecker (*Dicaeum concolor*) and sunbirds such as purplerumped sunbird, purple sunbird, small sunbird, (*N.minima*) and Loten's sunbird (*N.lotenia*). There was always a great commotion on the tree during the flowering period with various sunbirds darting about to the accompaniment of their typical cries. There was also much display of aggressiveness between them. Bird activity was seen throughout the day including mid afternoon hours. Once a lorikeet alighted on a tree and bit

a flower, but flew away immediately. The flowers were also visited by numerous insects especially lepidopterans.

5. Gul mohur (*Delonix regia*) (Caesalpinaceae)

An avenue tree with large scarlet flowers occurring in dense clusters on defoliated branches. Flowering during March – July.

Visitors : Occasionally visited by purple sunbird.

6. Copper pod (*Peltophorum pterocarpum*) (Caesalpinaceae)

A large avenue tree with clusters of bright yellow flowers. Flowering during February – April.

Visitors : Rarely visited by purple sunbird. However we are not sure whether the bird came in search of nectar or insects.

7. Red powderpuff (*Calliandra* sp.) (Mimosaceae)

A small ornamental shrub with crimson flowers in globose heads among the foliage. Flowering almost throughout the year.

Visitors : The goldfronted chloropsis was invariably found on the plant at Peruvannamuzhi. The purplerumped sunbird also regularly visited the flowers.

8. Papaw (*Carica papaya*) (Caricaceae)

A small generally unbranched tree with creamy yellow flowers. Flowering almost throughout the year.

Visitors : Occasionally visited by purple sunbird.

9. Bulletwood tree (*Mimusops elengi*) (Sapotaceae)

A medium sized evergreen tree with creamy white flowers among the foliage.

Visitors : The purplerumped sunbird, purple sunbird and small sunbird were commonly seen on the tree especially during the initial flowering period. The flowers were also visited by numerous insects.

10. African tulip tree (*Spathodea campanulata*) (Bignoniaceae)

A tall evergreen avenue tree with large orangish red flowers. Flowering during September – May.

Visitors : Occasionally visited by common myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) and purpus sunbird. Once we also observed a jungle crow (*Corvus macrohynchos*) perched near a flower, obviously in search of nectar.

11. Golden dewdrop (*Duranta plumieri*) (Verbenaceae)

A large ornamental shrub with bluish violet flowers in pendulous racemes. Flowering during April – June.

Visitors : Regularly visited by purple sunbird and purplerumped sunbird.

12. *Clerodendrum* sp. (Verbenaceae)

A medium sized shrub commonly growing wild with red flowers occurring terminally in clusters. Flowering during June – November.

Visitors : Regularly visited by purple sunbird and purplerumped sunbird.

13. Banana (*Musa paradisiaca*) (Musaceae)

A tall plant with an unbranched pseudostem. Flowers creamy yellow enclosed in a large purplish spadix. Flowering throughout the year.

Visitors : The spider-hunter (*Arachnothera longirostris*) was occasionally seen on the plant at Peruvannamuzhi. Once we observed a lorikeet biting a flower obviously in search of nectar.

14. Mistletoe (*Loranthus* sp.) (Loranthaceae)

Parasitic bushy shrubs occurring on many trees. Flowers with greenish yellow corolla. Flowering during December – January.

Visitors : Regularly visited by Tickell's flowerpecker (*Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*), purplerumped sunbird and spider-hunter. There was always a great flurry of activity on the plants probably because they were restricted to small areas within a tree and the flowering period was short. There was also much display of aggressiveness between the visitors to the accompaniment of their typical cries. The plants when in bloom were also visited by iora (*Aegithina tiphia*), tailor bird (*Orthotomus sutorius*) and leaf

warbler (*Phylloscopus* sp.), probably in search of insects among the flowers, which added to the commotion.

15. Mistletoe? (Loranthaceae)

Parasitic shrubs with weak stems that hang down. Flowers with pinkish corolla. Flowering during September – May.

Visitors : Regularly visited by Tickell's flowerpecker, purplerumped sunbird and spider-hunter. However bird activity was considerably less when compared to the previous species probably because of sparse flowering.

16. Coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) (Aracaceae)

A tall palm with creamy yellow flowers in large clusters. Flowering throughout the year.

Visitors : Regularly visited by purple sunbird and purplerumped sunbird especially during the rainy season. The flowers are also visited by a large number of insects.

Interestingly, peacock flower (*Caesalpinia pulcherrima*), camel-foot tree (*Bauhinia purpurea*) and *Bougainvillea spectabilis* which were visited by sunbirds in the Bombay region (Ali, 1932) were not attractive to these birds in this region. According to Subramanya and Radhamani (1993), 58 species of birds are reported to be involved in the pollination of 93 species of flowering plants in India. Our observations indicated that *P. javanicum*, *C. coriaria*, *Calliandra* sp., *M.elengi* and *Clerodendrum* sp. could be considered as additional records of bird-flowers in India.

References

- Ali, S.A., 1932. Flower-birds and bird-flowers in India. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*, 35 : 573-603.
Subramanya, S. and Radhamani, T.R., 1993. Pollination by birds and bats. *Current Science*, 65 : 201-209

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS OF ULANDI RANGE (TOP SLIP), INDIRA GANDHI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

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The study was carried out in Topslip area, Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary, which is a part of the Western Ghats. It is a sanctuary situated at an altitude of 740 m and occupies an area of 958 sq. km. The study was carried out

between December 1991–March 1992. This work formed a part of our Master's dissertation.

We had one sighting of Bay owl *Phodilus badius* and twice of the Ceylon Frogmouth *Batrachostomus moniliger*.

Accipitridae

- 1 Blackwinged Kite - *Elanus caeruleus*
 2 Shikra - *Accipiter badius*
 3 Crested hawk-eagle - *Spizaetus cirrhatius*
 4 Pale Harrier - *Circus macrourus*

Phasianidae

- 5 Red Junglefowl - *Gallus gallus*
 6 Grey Junglefowl - *Gallus sonneratii*

Chardiidae

- 7 Redwattled Lapwing - *Vanellus indicus*
 8 Wood Sandpiper - *Tringa glareola*

Columbidae

- 9 Spotted Dove - *Streptopelia chinensis*
 10 Emerald Dove - *Chalcophaps indica*

Psittacidae

- 11 Blossomheaded Parakeet - *Psittacula cyanocephala*
 12 Bluewinged Parakeet - *Psittacula columboides*
 13 Indian Lorikeet - *Loriculus vernalis*

Cuculidae

- 14 Small Greenbilled Malkoha - *Rhopodytes viridirostris*
 15 Coucal - *Centropus sinensis*

Strigidae

- 16 Bay Owl - *Phodilus badius*
 17 Jungle Owlet - *Glaucidium radiatum*

Podargidae

- 18 Ceylon Frogmouth - *Batrachostomus moniliger*

Caprimulgidae

- 19 Jungle Nightjar - *Caprimulgus indicus*

Trogonidae

- 20 Malabar Trogon - *Harpactes fasciatus*
 21 Whitebreasted Kingfisher - *Halcyon smynensis*

Coraciidae

- 24 Indian Roller - *Coracias benghalensis*
 25 Broad billed roller - *Eurystomus orientalis*

Bucerotidae

- 26 Malabar Grey Hornbill - *Tockus giseus*
 27 Great Indian Hornbill - *Buceros bicornis*

Capitonidae

- 28 Large Green Barbet - *Megalaima zeylanica*
 29 Smallgreen Barbet - *Megalaima viridis*
 30 Crimsonthroated Barbet - *Megalaima rubricapilla*
 31 Crimsonbreasted Barbet - *Megalaima haemacephala*

Picidae

- 32 Rufous Woodpecker - *Micropternus brachyurus*
 33 Lesser Goldenbacked Woodpecker - *Dinopium benghalense*

Reference

Ali, S. and S.D. Ripley, 1981. Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

- 34 Indian Great Black Woodpecker - *Dryocopus javenensis*
 35 Yellowfronted Pied Woodpecker - *Picoides mahrattensis*
 36 Heartspotted Woodpecker - *Hemicircus canente*
 37 Larger Goldenbacked Woodpecker - *Chrysocolaptes lucidus*
 38 Pigmy Woodpecker - *Picoides nanus*

Pitidae

- 39 Indian Pitta - *Pitta brachyura*

Laniidae

- 40 Grey Shrike - *Lanius excubitor*
 41 Brown Shrike - *Lanius cristatus*

Oriolidae

- 42 Golden Oriole - *Oriolus oriolus*
 43 Blackheaded Oriole - *Oriolus xanthornus*
 44 Black Drongo - *Dicrurus adsimilis*
 45 Bronzed Drongo - *Dicrurus aeneus*
 46 Greater Rackettailed Drongo - *Dicrurus paradiseus*

Sturnidae

- 47 Greyheaded Myna - *Sturnus malabaricus*
 48 Hill Myna - *Gracula heligiosa*

Corvidae

- 49 Indian Treepie - *Dendrocitta vagabunda*
 50 Whitebellied Treepie - *Dendrocitta leucogasta*
 51 Scarlet Minivet - *Pericrocotus flammeus*
 52 Small Minivet - *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*
 53 Common iora - *Aegithina tiphia*
 54 Goldenfronted Chloropsis - *Chloropsis aurifrons*
 55 Goldmantled Chloropsis - *Chloropsis cochinchinensis*
 56 Fairy bluebird - *Irena puella*
 57 Rubythroated Yellow Bulbul - *Pycnonotus melanicterus gularis*
 58 Redwhiskered Bulbul - *Pycnonotus jocosus*
 59 Yellowbrowed Bulbul - *Hypsipetes indicus*
 60 Slatyheaded Scimitar Babbler - *Pomatorhinus horsfieldii*
 61 Jungle Babbler - *Turdoides striatus*

Muscicapinae

- 62 Paradise Flycatcher - *Terpsiphone paradisi*

Paridae

- 63 Grey Tit - *Parus major*
 64 Yellowcheeked Tit - *Parus xanthogenys*

Sittidae

- 65 Velvetfronted Nuthatch - *Sitta frontalis*

Motacillidae

- 66 Nilgiri Pipit - *Anthus nilghiriensis*
 67 Forest Wagtail - *Motacilla indica*
 68 Grey Wagtail - *Motacilla caspica*

Nectariniidae

- 69 Purplerumped Sunbird - *Nectarinia zeylonica*
 70 Purple Sunbird - *Nectarinia asiatica*

HUMAN INTERFERENCE IN THE HABITAT OF CRANES IN BHUTAN AND LADAKH

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Introduction

The Black-necked Cranes (*Grus nigricollis*) breed and spend the summer months in China, Ladakh and Tibet.

They spend the winters in Bhutan and Southern parts of China and Tibet. They no longer come to the Apa Tani valley in Arunachal Pradesh due to human interference and destruction of their habitat.

A six month study during 1991-92 in Bhutan and a six week study during 1992 summer in Ladakh brought out the direct and indirect interferences in their habitat by humans and its adverse effects on the Crane population.

Interferences in Bhutan

Draining of Wetlands

The three main wintering areas for these Cranes in Bhutan are Phobjikha in the West, Bhumthang in the middle and Bumdiling in the East. Human population in these areas has been increasing steadily along with the cattle and sheep population. Naturally, to provide food and fodder, the areas under cultivation and pastureland have been increased. This is achieved by draining the wetland and marshy lands which are the roosting and feeding areas of these Cranes.

Tourism

All the roosting areas except Bumdiling are now directly and easily accessible by vehicles. With the publicity given to these Cranes and their roosting areas, the number of tourists visiting these areas are increasing rapidly. Many of them disturb the Cranes, intentionally or otherwise, when they persist in taking a closer look or try to take better photographs.

Barbed wire Fences

The other problem created by man are the Barbed wire fences close to their roosting and feeding areas. These have replaced the traditional Pinewood stakes and scantlings. The wooden fences were clearly visible from far but the barbed wire strung across angle iron pickets are not. This change has resulted in damaged wings in some Cranes during take off.

Mechanised Farming

In the old traditional farming system in Bhutan, fallen grains from the harvest in October were left undisturbed in the fields until April the following year which provided plenty of food for the wintering Cranes. Now, with the introduction of farm tractors and the practice of ploughing the fields during winter has reduced the feeding areas available to them.

Interferences in Ladakh

Vehicular Traffic

In Ladakh, the breeding areas of the few Black-necked Cranes are in high altitude areas; 3,900-4,100 m. In the olden days, an occasional traveller went past the nesting areas using the existing bridle path and this in no way disturbed the nesting or roosting Cranes. Now, with the

improved road communications and large number of noisy vehicles coming close to their roosting, nesting and feeding areas have increased. This disturbs them often.

'Ownerless' Dogs

During summer 92, out of a total of 17 Black-necked Cranes that came to Ladakh, 4 pairs nested and out of the 8 eggs laid, 2 were destroyed by predators. Out of the 6 chicks, 4 were eaten by dogs. Finally, only 2 juveniles accompanied their parents to their wintering areas. Thus, India's contribution to the world population of Black-necked Cranes was just 2 !!

'Ownerless' dogs are a new phenomenon in Ladakh. With the establishment of new military camps and out-posts along the border, the availability of food and shelter at these remote areas have improved and some local dogs have attached themselves to these camps. They are a menace now in Ladakh and there have been cases where small children have been badly bitten by such dogs. As they can swim, they get across wet gaps easily to reach the islands where these Cranes nest and eat their eggs and chicks.

Tourism

There was a recent report that Ladakh will be opened to tourism. This will have an adverse effect on the Cranes roosting and breeding in Ladakh. They will have to be protected from inquisitive and inconsiderate tourists as these birds are very shy and sensitive and they will abandon their nests if disturbed often.

Religion and Tradition

Black-necked Cranes have found a place in the folklore and the sentiments of the Bhutanese and Ladakhis. Being Buddhists, they do not harm the birds in any way but there are clear visible signs of encroachment and interference and destruction of their habitat in Bhutan and Ladakh.

Action Needed

In order to ensure that these Cranes and their habitat are not destroyed, Government departments concerned, Non-governmental organisations and the common man, whether a resident of those areas or a tourist, must work together to see that they are allowed to lead a normal life. Short and long term plans to protect these Cranes and their habitat must be prepared and implemented with regular monitoring. Protection must be provided to the birds, their feeding and roosting areas, particularly during the nesting periods. Army and para-military units and men deployed in those areas are willing to help in any way possible and

they should be involved in the plans to protect the Cranes and their habitat. Educating the people is the final solution. Once they become aware of the urgent need to protect the Cranes and their habitat, their active involvement in any conservation plan will be effective and easy. This must start right from the school level.

Conclusion

The disappearance of the Black-necked Cranes from the Jakhar Valley in Bhutan and the Apa Tani valley in

Arunachal Pradesh is entirely due to human interference in their habitat. Such interference continues and it is on the increase. The time to stop this is now. To save these Cranes from extinction, short and long term conservation plans must be implemented. Otherwise, our future generations will have to look for stuffed specimens in museums. A very sad and bleak outlook indeed.

MIXED SPECIES BIRD FLOCK IN FOREST TREES OF DHARWAD URBANS

J.C. UTTANGI, 36, Mission Compound, Dharwad

In front of the City Head Post Office, Dharwad and close to its main gate, near Ulavi-Basappana-Gudda, three tall forest trees are found. They belong to the species, *Holoptelia integrifolia* of the family, *Utricaceae*. I have always noticed birds visiting these trees regularly almost throughout the year. The trees shed their green leaves in mid January each year and put on minute flowers which later on develop into typical lemon coloured flat and rounded samaroid fruits. The soft seed protected in the center of the fruit with its thin ovary wall serving as mechanism for dispersal is eaten by children. They refer to it as 'Gubbi Rotti Gida'. The yellow bloom of samaroid fruits on the tree present an attractive look not only to the people but many times help birds like Golden Orioles to camouflage and escape predation while foraging in the trees. Other birds which favour these trees are, Iora, White-eye and Grey Tit. Once a pair of Grey Tits, having discovered a giant moth-larva, bigger than their own body size, by holding it at its opposite ends by their beaks were trying hard to tear the creature into sizable pieces but, succeeded only in separating the skin from the enormous green substance.

Within a furlong from the Head Post Office two more trees of the same description and species stand tall in the Basel Mission, Hebich Memorial Church Compound. They can be seen easily from the Head Post Office. It was observed that birds coming first to these two trees would go directly non-stop to Head Post Office and continue feeding in the *Holoptelia* trees without paying any attention to other trees planted in between by the Social Forestry Department. I was passing through the Church compound to post a letter on 4th October 1993, 8.30 a.m. and suddenly caught sight of two brilliantly coloured male members of (1) Small Minivet (*Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*) making sallies over the tree surface to catch winged insects. Two females following them came out later. As I stood there watching, a female and male of the (2) Common Iora (*Aegithina tiphia*)

made their appearance in one of the branches down below the Minivets. Perhaps the Ioras had helped the Minivets by flushing the hiding winged insects from the lower branches. Two large tree branches horizontally located in the tree had provided the single member of the (3) Magpie Robin (*Copsychus saularis*) a good platform in the middle on which the bird was seen hopping and disturbing surface prey of the bark and picking up occasionally one or two of them for its own sake. It would be an interesting study to attempt to make a comprehensive list of all the insects occupied in this species of plant as well as in others haunted by birds. On the opposite side of the tree branches in which I saw the two Ioras, three individuals of (4) White Eye (*Zosterops palpebrosa*) making the peculiar mingled noise were noticed searching for insects that hid under the leaves. Two (5) Purple Rumped Sunbirds (*Nectarina zeylonica*) a male and a female of which the male was seen hanging on its wings to suck the dew drop from the tip of a leaf. There was a *Loranthus* in which no flowers were present. A (6) Grey Tit (*Parus major*) and two individuals of (7) Red Whiskered Bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) had joined the group. A single (8) Red Vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*) suddenly dived down to the ground from one of the branches of the tree where an insect which the Bulbul found had dodged and come to the ground. Attracted by the hustling noise in the tree a (9) Wren Warbler (*Prinia socialis*) slowly joined the busy flock wagging its long tail. It breeds profusely at Dharwad in the *Cassia tora* bush which grows rather luxuriantly in the Church Compound. Last but not least, a permanent member of the locality (10) Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) was seen singing as it rested in the middle repeating its more familiar calls.

It is interesting to note that in the present encounter about 10 different species of birds which are mostly insectivorous in habit joined together to form a mixed species bird flock to ensure a more efficient exploitation of

food source available in a forest tree protected in an urban area. I hope bird watchers wherever they are would take notes on their observations of similar encounters which they may come across in different regions.

Correspondence

OCCURRENCE OF THE GLOSSY IBIS IN KOLE WETLAND, THRISSUR DISTRICT, KERALA. P.K. RAVINDRAN, Vallissery, P.O. Avinissery, Thrissur District, Kerala 680 313

On 19 September 1993, at about 14.30 hours, I was watching Winter birds in Kole wetlands at Enamavu, about 22 km west from Thrissur town. The whole area is submerged from June and in September water is pumped out and a crop of paddy is raised in some parts of the swamp.

Along with Blackwinged stilts, curlew, whimbrel, red-shank and Temminck's stint, I found a group of 12 blackish coloured birds landing in a muddy field just 50 m away from me. When I looked through my binoculars, it became clear that these birds were Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*). It was a clear day.

They were slimmer than the White Ibis and their feathered head, long slender down curved bill, and darkish legs were quite distinct. The lack of a white patch on the wing coverts (near the shoulder), and the red patch on the hind crown, together with brick red legs and feet, confirmed their identity.

When a raptor appeared in the sky, these Ibises flew along with other waders and egrets. They were completely silent while I observed them for more than two hours on that day.

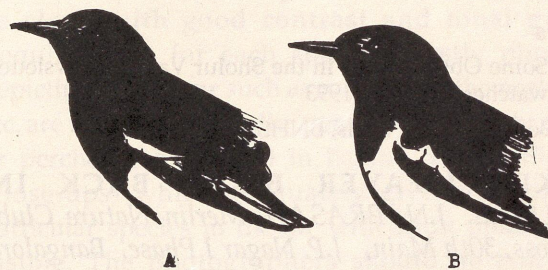
On 26 September 1993, and 10 October 1993, I went to look for them but they were absent.

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THE NILGIRIS MAGPIE ROBIN. DR. Arunachalam Kumar, Associate Professor of Anatomy, Kasturba Medical College, Mangalore 575 001

The Sholur Valley of the Nilgiris has figured in the pages of the Newsletter as a fecund and rewarding spot for the



The figure 'A' is the Mangalore Magpie Robin
'B' is it's fellow family member from the Nilgiris.

serious birdwatcher. Nestled within the confines of a crescentic range of lofty peaks, this plantation rich biozone hosts a wide representation from the avifaunal wealth of the subcontinent. On one of my recent forays into this paradise, I chanced upon a pugnacious tug-of-war between two families of birds, one a resident brood of aggrieved Bulbuls (*Pycnonotus cafer*) and another a rapacious threesome of Magpie Robins (*Copsychus saularis*). Both groups were zealously picking off an indolent moth or two that had got blinded by the dazzling mid October sun, staying pinned to the porch wall attracted the night before by the single naked lamp that had beckoned them all through the mist suffused darkness. Amid much purposeless remonstrance by the Bulbuls, the Magpies calmly went about their appointed repast. The drama, though common enough, needed some patient explanation for my nine year old daughter, who seemed as agitated as the Bulbuls at the injustice of it all. Be that as it may be, the reason for this write-up is something else.

Despite a fair amount of amateur birdwatching done in my home town, Mangalore, my untrained eye could not tick off the subtle nuances that demarcate subspecies from each other; this Sholur sojourn perhaps marks my graduation to the exalted school of birdwatchers called 'ornithologists'. I must mention that this realisation came about when I noted the colour permutations of the Magpie here. The Nilgiri one, had its black bib extend only a short way down the breast and throat, the edge of the dark colour forming a parabola that delineated it from the stark white. The rim of the black down extended above the wing coverlets on either side. The Mangalore magpie had its bib extend far down the breast, well beyond the coverlets, ending in a horizontal line. Ali mentions four species of the *Copsychus saularis* in India. Could the Nilgiri one be another? Is it one among the four? Could subspecies and

inter species differences be this pronounced within two areas of the subcontinent?

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STREAKED WEAVER BIRDS BACK IN BANGALORE. J.N. PRASAD, *Merlin Nature Club, 13, 8th Cross, 30th Main, J.P. Nagar I Phase, Bangalore 560 078*

Bangalore city with its rapid development has been a mute witness to annihilation of habitats of many species. Filling up of water bodies and introduction of boating etc. have taken away the ideal nesting sites of many birds. One such species, the streaked weaver, which used to nest amidst the bull-rush reeds *Typha* sp. was seriously affected. Last time they were seen breeding was about 5-6 years ago at the Sankey tank in Bangalore which now boasts of offering boating facility to the public. Another nesting site near Hoskote Tank also was destroyed as the land was acquired for agricultural purpose.

On 8 August 1993, while watching birds at Puttenahalli Tank in South Bangalore, I was able to see three nests of Streaked Weaver birds *Ploceus manyar* amidst short Cypress grass growing in the shallow waters. About seven birds were agitated by the presence of a Purple Heron *Ardeola purpurea* which was moving slowly with its neck stretched out.

Although it is good news that the Streaked Weavers are back, our joy may be short-lived as already the irrigated land on the other side of the bund has several houses where once paddy was cultivated.

S. RAJPAL SINGH SIDHU — BIRD PAINTER OF PUNJAB. R.K. BHATNAGAR, *Principal Scientist, Entomology Division, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi*

In one of his lectures, Dr Salim Ali said that there are very few artists who have been painting birds in a 'realistic and scientific' manner. Recently S. Rajpal Singh Sidhu exhibited 300 scientific and realistic paintings of birds of Punjab at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. These were indeed excellent paintings. Every feather is shown with clear 'soft lines'.

It is felt that a befitting encouragement and opportunity of interaction should be given to S. Rajpal Singh Sidhu to continue with his bird paintings.

Ways to Prevent Birds from Crashing into Window Glass Panes and Lights.

There is an interesting case of VVIP residential premises in Delhi where birds often crashed on glass panes facing the garden. The problem was solved by having curtains of dark pastel shade not matching with the colour of the outside wall. This was done to increase the opaqueness and visibility of the glass panes. Together with some minor architectural changes, and by having an electric bulb 2 ft away from the glass panes, this problem of bird strikes against window panes was solved.

PREVENTING BIRDS FROM CRASHING INTO THE WINDOWS. HARKIRAT SINGH SANGHA, *B-27, Gautam Marg, Khatipura, Jaipur 302 012*

In the last issue of Newsletter (Vol.33, No.4) F. Grohe has invited suggestions to prevent birds from crashing into the windows. Bird saver is claimed to stop birds from flying into windows. The black silhouette of a diving raptor is made of vinyl. It is placed on glass to produce an automatic response from birds. The manufacturer claims that it based on design developed by S. Dillon Ripley. More details can be obtained from DAZER U.K., Freepost, London SW 11 6 NR.

NOTES FROM RAJASTHAN. SATISH KUMAR SHARMA, *Range Forest Officer, Aravalli Afforestation Programme, Jhadol (F), Udaipur 313 702*

1 Bank Mynas in Southern Rajasthan

The Bank Myna (*Acridotheres gigninianus*) is found throughout the State of Rajasthan, but it is more common in the northern and western parts of the state. Apart from other reasons, two seem important for this unequal distribution. This is because there are more sandy open tracts in this region. Also the river and nullah banks in western and northern Rajasthan are more vertical than those of southern Rajasthan. These banks are preferred by the Bank Myna as tunnelling is easy in the soft sand. Curiously in Southern Rajasthan the banks are not vertical but due to slow erosion they are slanting, and slanting banks are not preferred for nesting.

2 Nesting of Indian Myna on *Phoneix sylvestris*

The Indian Myna (*Acridothera tristis*) is a bird which nests in holes in trees, rock scraps, vertical earth banks, walls of houses or between the ceiling and roof (Ali & Ripley, 1983).

In Udaipur district of Rajasthan *A. tristis* prefers the crown of the Date palm (*P. sylvestris*) for placing their nests. Generally one tree is patronised by one breeding pair. Perhaps this situation helps the bird to avoid predation, because congregation of large number of breeding birds on the tree may attract predators from the surrounding locality. Nests are so placed that they remain hidden in the basal parts of the lowermost leaves of the crown. Spinous pinnae of leaves present on basal part of leaf-rachides provide protection against enemies.

Generally mature leaves of date-palms are harvested in the month of February and march for making brooms, etc. But some long spinous stumps of the harvested leaves remain intact on the stems. Space available in these stumps is much liked by Mynas.

During the months of June and July 1993, I made a survey of nested wild date palms between village Kolyari and Som along the tar road in Udaipur district:

| | |
|--|------|
| Total wild date palms observed | 1388 |
| Nested trees having stumps of leaves i.e. harvested crowns | 18 |
| Nested trees having normal crowns i.e. without stump leave bases | 3 |
| Percentage of nested wild date palms | 1.51 |

3 Indian Magpie Robin Feeding on Dead Shrew

On 12 July 1993 I had been at Forest Check post Falasia in Udaipur district. At about 1.00 pm I observed a female Indian Magpie Robin (*Copsychus saularis*) (Linn.) feeding on a rotten carcass of a Grey Musk Shrew (*Suncus murinus*) (Linn.) on 1.0 m high compound wall under a shady tree of *Acacia nilotica*. I observed the bird for nearly five minutes. At last she stopped nibbling the carcass and pulled a beakful of hair from the body of the Shrew and flew away out of sight. Perhaps the consignment of hair was carried for lining her nest. According to Ali and Ripley (Handbook of Birds of India and Pakistan, 1983), Indian Magpie Robin feed on insects, caterpillars, snails, earthworms, centipedes, small lizards and some vegetable matters. We can add dead animals like the Grey Musk Shrew in its dietary.

REQUEST FOR PHOTOGRAPHS OF INDIAN RAPTORS. RISHAD NAOROJI, Godrej Bhavan, 4A Home Street, Bombay 400 001

I am working on a book of Indian raptors (to be published by O.U.P. India) and need photographs of the species mentioned below. The photographs should preferably be in colour, though black and white

photographs will be accepted if suitable transparencies are not available on certain species. The photographs should be clear, with good contrast and tonal gradation. Requirements for each species: Firstly photographs depicting behaviour such as mating, on the nest, hunting, etc. are required. Secondly, perched shots (tight close-ups) or perched (half frame) in habitat. Lastly, flight shots (close-ups) which adequately give the "giz" of the particular species in the air with adult plumage clearly visible. The photographers should be embossed or stamped on the slide mount. The transparencies should be sent by Regd. A/D to me at Godrej Bhavan, 4A Home Street, Fort, Bombay 400 001. Photographs which are not chosen will be returned by Regd. A/D to the photographer.

Photographs depicting behaviour, portraits and flight of the following species are required :-

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Black Shouldered Kite | <i>Elanus caeruleus</i> |
| 2 | Jerdon's Baza | <i>Aviceda jerdoni</i> |
| 3 | Black Baza | <i>Aviceda lenbhotres</i> |
| 4 | Black-eared Kite | <i>Milvus migrans lineatus</i> |
| 5 | Brahminy Kite | <i>Haliastur indus</i> |
| 6 | Northern Goshawk | <i>Accipiter gentilis</i> |
| 7 | Grey Frog Hawk, or as in Ali & Ripley | |
| | Chinese Goshawk | <i>Accipiter soloensis</i> |
| 8 | Crested Goshawk | <i>Accipiter trivirgatus</i> |
| 9 | Sparrow Hawk | <i>Accipiter nisus</i> |
| 10 | Besra Sparrow Hawk | <i>Accipiter virgatus</i> |
| 11 | Japanese Sparrow Hawk | <i>Accipiter gularis</i> |
| 12 | Longlegged Buzzard | <i>Buteo rufinus</i> |
| 13 | Upland Buzzard | <i>Buteo hemilasius</i> |
| 14 | Eurasian or Steppe Buzzards | <i>Buteo buteo vulpinus</i> |
| 15 | Rough-legged Buzzard | <i>Buteo lagopus</i> |
| 16 | White-eyed Buzzard | <i>Butastur teesa</i> |
| 17 | Booted Eagle | <i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i> |
| 18 | Rufous-bellied Eagle | <i>Hieraaetus kienerii</i> |
| 19 | Golden Eagle | <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> |
| 20 | Tawny Eagle | <i>Aquila rapax</i> |
| 21 | White-tailed Sea Eagle | <i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i> |
| 22 | White-bellied Sea Eagle | <i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i> |
| 23 | Gey-headed Fishing Eagle | <i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaeus</i> |
| 24 | Cinereous Vulture | <i>Aegypius monachus</i> |
| 25 | Lammergeier | <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i> |
| 26 | Marsh Harrier | <i>Circus aeruginosus</i> male in flight |
| 27 | Hen Harrier | <i>Circus cyaneus</i> male in flight and perched |
| 28 | Montagu's | <i>Circus pygargus</i> |

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 29 | Pallid | <i>Circus macrourus</i> male perched and in flight |
| 30 | Pied Herrier | <i>Circus melanoleucos</i> male and female |
| 31 | Eastern Marsh Harrier | <i>Circus spilonotus</i> |
| 32 | Nicobar Crested Serpent Eagle | <i>Spilornis minimus</i> |
| 33 | Andaman Serpent Eagle | <i>Spilornis elgini</i> |
| 34 | Osprey | <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> |
| 35 | Collared, or as in Ali & Ripley Red-breasted or Red-legged Falconet | <i>Microhierax casrulescens</i> |
| 36 | Pied, or as in Ali & Ripley White-legged Falconet | <i>Microhierax melanolenos</i> |
| 37 | Saker | <i>Falco cherrug</i> |
| 38 | Barbery Falcon | <i>Falco pelegrinoides</i> |
| 39 | Shahin | <i>F.p. peregrinator</i> |
| 40 | Hobby | <i>Falco subbuteo</i> |
| 41 | Sooty Falcon | <i>Falco concolor</i> |
| 42 | Indian or Oriental Hobby | <i>Falco severus</i> |
| 43 | Eastern Red-legged Falcon | <i>Falco amurensis</i> |
| 44 | Kestrel | <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> |
| 45 | Merlin | <i>Falco columbarius</i> |

COOTS ATTACKING A SNAKE. K. GUNATHILAGARAJ, *Department of Environmental Sciences, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore 641 003*

I was a witness to a thrilling spectacle of Coots (*Fulica atra*) attacking a water snake (?) at Madurai last November 1992. This happened in the Chittankulam tank inside the Agricultural College and Research Institute, Madura. The tank was full of *Typha australis* and other water plants. I was observing water birds in the evening. Suddenly I heard the loud, excited calls of coots and saw a group of coots chasing

a water snake (?). The snake was more than six feet long and was chased by nine coots, four on either side and one at the tail. The birds attacked the snake from the sides, and the head and tail regions were not attacked. The snake made frantic efforts to escape from the birds. The coots returned to the water only after driving the snake into the grass. It was a spectacular event and lasted more than 15 minutes.

PLEA FOR CONVERTING DURGAPUR BARRAGE INTO A SANCTUARY. SASTI BRATA KABIRAJ, *Teacher, M.G. Vidyalaya Japamali, Bankura 722 143, West Bengal*

The river Damodar known for a long time as the sorrow river of Bengal, originates from the Chhota Nagpur plateau in Bihar and courses down 500 km through Bihar and West Bengal and joins the river Hooghly. The Durgapur Barrage was set up in 1955 under the auspices of Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC).

This barrage is a highly productive ecosystem and every year it attracts an appreciable number of many species of birds, both true migrants and local migrants, and it also harbours many species of resident birds. We can see pond herons, little egrets, night herons, lesser whistling teal, greater whistling teal, garganey teal, mallard, pintail duck, comb duck, scaup duck, painted storks and many more.

The barrage deserves protection and should be immediately declared a Bird Sanctuary. It could become a most important refuge for birds in West Bengal. The place could also become a valuable study area for ornithologists.

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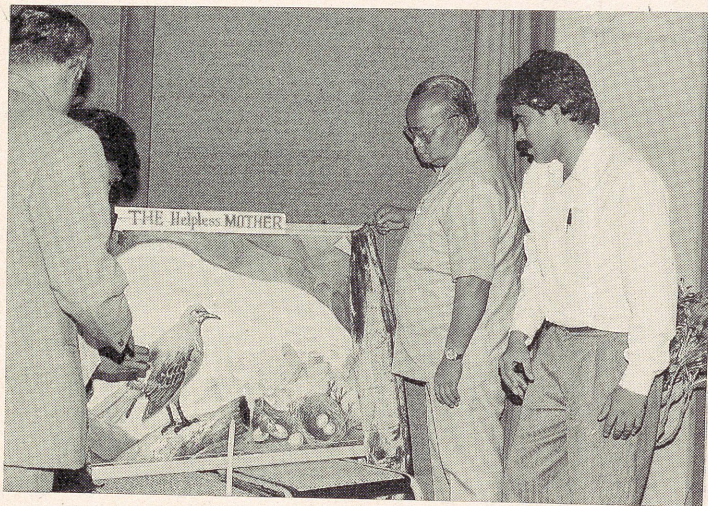
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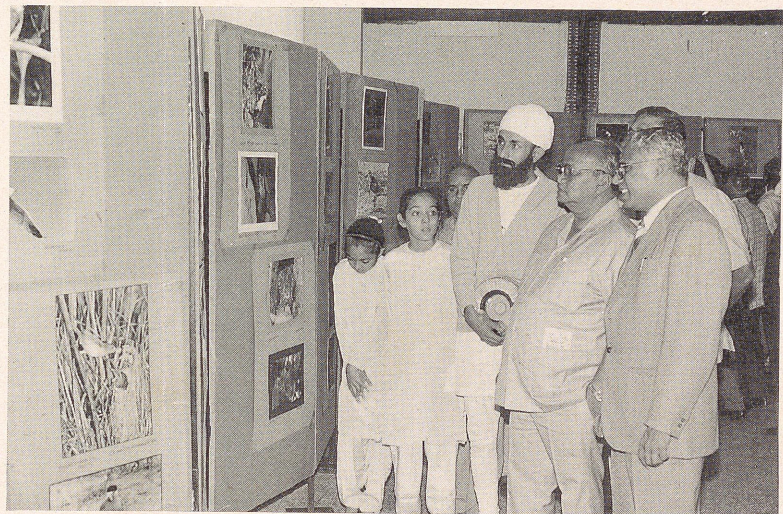
BIRDPEX - 93

An exhibition of Bird stamps, Photographs and Coins with special focus on Bird Conservation was organised at the Visvesvaraya Industrial and Technological Museum to coincide with the Seminar.

Shri B.C. Thaosen, I.A.S., Secretary to Government, Department of Forests, Ecology and Environment, inaugurating the exhibition.



Unveiling the painting
"The Helpless Mother"





Group Photograph of Participants in the
First National Seminar on "CHANGING SCENARIO OF
BIRD ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION", Bangalore
12 - 14 November 1993

photo by M. Venkataswamappa

Cover Photo : Male Tickell's Blue Flycatcher (*Muscicapa tickellae*) - a forest loving bird found in thick cover and shade, and on the wooded banks of streams. Flits about in shady woods and groves and continually sings a merry little song. Food includes flies, gnats and other dipterous insects.

Photo : S. Sridhar, ARPS

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