

Spotted owlet: A 3/4 grown bird fed voraciously on frogs, wall-lizards (geckos) and large grasshoppers. It fed only in darkness so I had to darken the room in the evenings before feeding it each time.

Pond heron: Two very young chicks, hardly able to raise their necks, were taken from a nest on a coconut palm after one of the parents was shot down. They fed hastily on fresh-water fish and also non-spiny marine fish. They grew very fast and could even stand on their knees and stretch their necks. But both died the same day after a meal of sardine gills etc.

White-breasted kingfisher: A chick grew very well on aquarium fishes, grasshoppers and dragon flies.

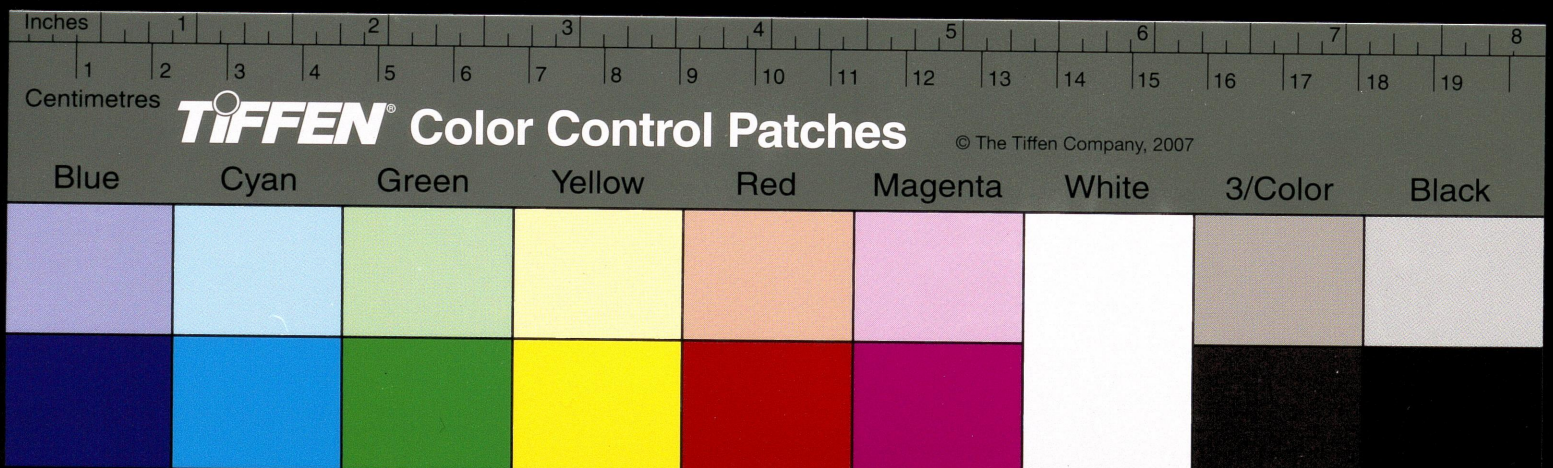
Tree pie: A chick just big enough to fly was brought home since it had fallen out of its nest. It fed on grasshoppers, dragon flies, winged white-ants, beetle grubs, centipedes, a scorpion, mole-crickets, crickets skinks, wall-lizards (geckos) and young garden lizards. Apart from these, it loved eating raw beef. It also used to hoard the excess meat in crevices and eat later - a behaviour I have seen in jungle crow too. Whenever older garden lizards were eaten, the bones were thrown out through the mouth in the form of pellets. It also ate a variety of fruits like mango, jack, banana, and lantana berries. However it never liked to eat green katydids (long-horned grasshoppers).

Another adult bird brought with an injured thigh thrived on grasshoppers and dragonflies till it was strong enough and let out again.

Indian pitta: Twice I have kept Indian pittas. Both were caught hopping about our garden unable to fly. They readily took live earthworms. They survived for a few days only and died. Obviously both were sick birds.

Red-vented bulbuls: The most numerous of all birds we (the family as such) have raised. Feed on grasshoppers and dragonflies. They do take beef but never showed any desire for lizards except very small ones (geckos) on rare occasions. Fruits like banana, lantana berries, and neem are much eaten. They take sputum both from the lips and floor. They even 'suck up' pus from the wounds of our dog. However they do not eat, unless forced to, the grasshoppers of the genus Chrotogonus.

Red-whiskered bulbul: Like the former, fed more on grasshoppers and dragonflies.



There was a somewhat flat grassy strip of land little up above level, adjacent to our then field camp, the Youth hostel. Suvendu Sekhar suggested to throw all our waste, garbage, particularly and specifically, flesh, intestines, etc of our collected specimens after taxidermy, to attract the black eagles. We had observed a few Ictinaetus malayensis on their wings, in the sky, of that region.

On the fourth day, we noticed a Himalayan beared vulture on his wings, scanning the region for food. On the seventh day we were confirmed about the daily routine, timing, and probable route of flight of that Lammergeir. It used to reach round about eleven O'clock in the early noon.

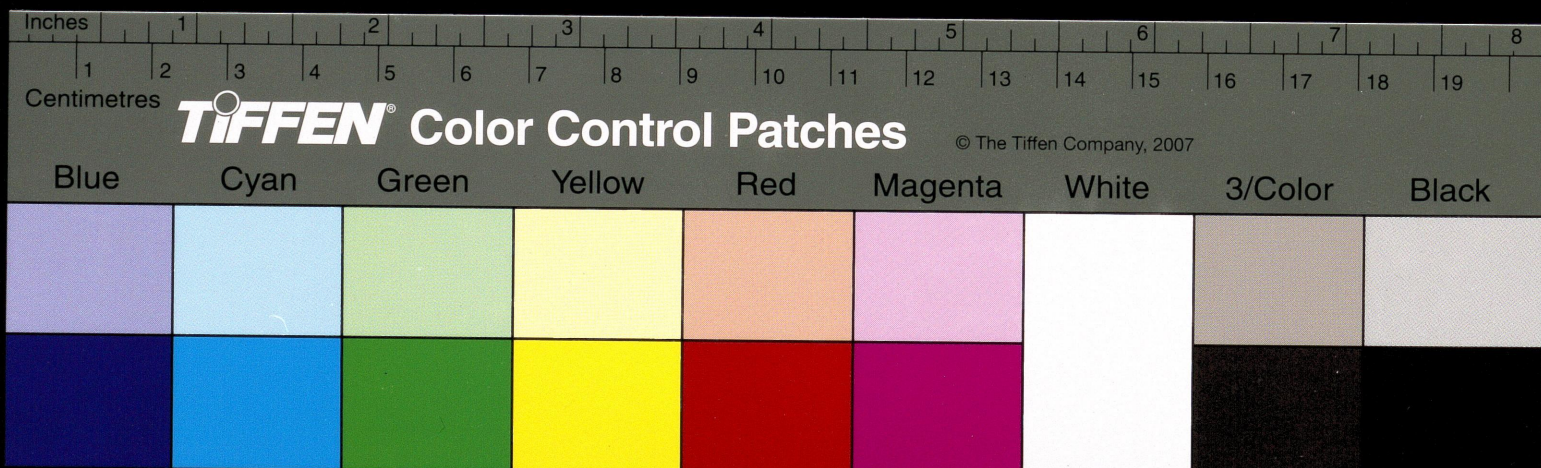
After much argument and counter arguments I could anyhow persuaded Suvendu Saha to collect that Gypaetus barbatus at least as exchange specimen for Ceylone Museum. But to our great surprise, consequently it never appeared on the horizon even for two days, making us wait excitedly, rather impatiently, for hours together, fully equipped together with sufficient bait for his attention as well as attraction. But when we packed up everything, the first party already having left the previous evening, and wound up the camp, ready to move, the Lammergeir once again appeared on the horizon, gracefully on his wings on his scheduled flight route. In whatever way it can be explained, fate, destiny, we are sure that somehow or other it smelled the danger.

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Flamingos at Bhigwan by Dr. Sattyasheel N. Naik, Naik Hospital, 78/782, Shukrawar Peth, Opp. Jain Mandir, Pune 411002:

The first flock of flamingoes this year was sighted at Bigwan on 11th March by the members of the Vihang Mitra Mandal. The members of the team were Dr. Sattyasheel Naik, Dr. Ramesh Bidwe, Dr. C.A. Nisman, Dr. R.M. Hirve, and Mr. Chandrakumar Baldota.

The flock of birds was seen on the opposite bank, opposite to the lift irrigation pumping station. Dr. Sattyasheel Naik requested Mr. Bhanudas Ganpat Dhumal a local fisherman to send his boat for which he readily agreed. It was hence possible for all the members to get close to the birds.



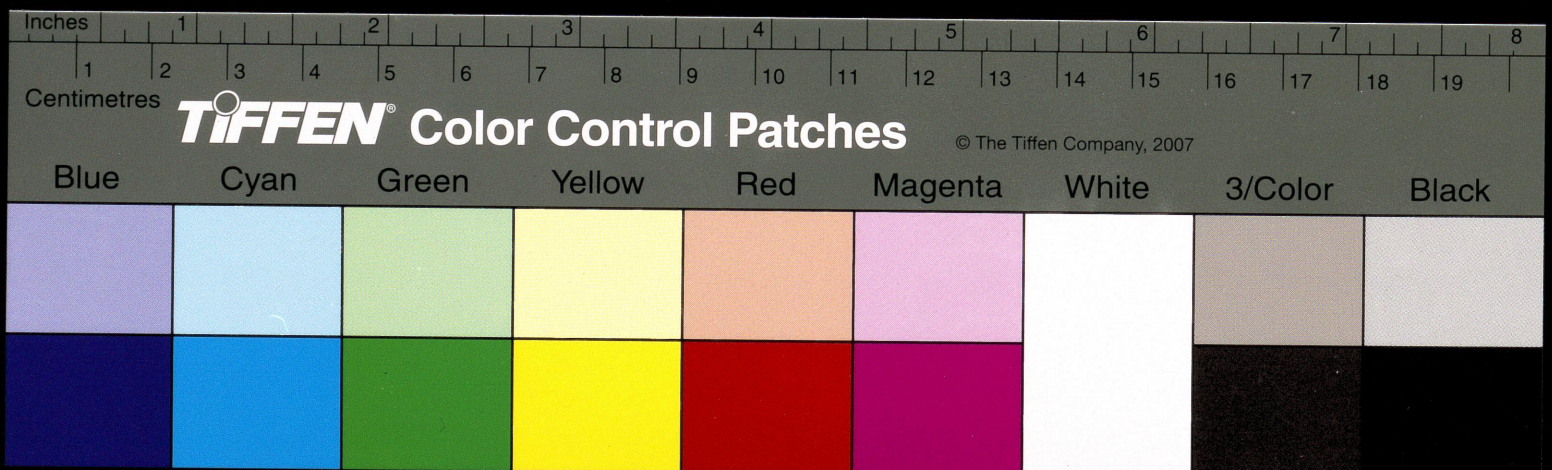
Review: 'Travel Diaries of a Naturalist' by Peter Scott-ZF:
 Richard and Maisie Fitter, on their recent visit, presented us with 'Travel Diaries of a Naturalist' by Peter Scott. It is published by Collins and is priced at 12.95 pounds. Almost all of its 287 pages have sketches, or paintings, or photographs, by Peter Scott, or by his wife Phillipa who is a professional photographer. It is, as far as the craft of book making and editing is concerned, one of the most elegant books I have seen.

Let me, first of all, quote from the author's introduction, to give you an idea of what the book contains: 'Although, I have not been a life-long diarist, I have compiled a number of notebooks which record the animals and the people we meet on our various expeditions. Each is a log-book, a sketch-book, an address book, an engagement book and a scrap-book all rolled into one..... Travel Diaries of a Naturalist consists of extracts from fifteen of the fifty notebooks covering our travels since 1956'.

Unfortunately, there is no reference to his visits to India, and one hopes that India will be included in a second volume. In December 1969, after the IUCN General Assembly in New Delhi, Peter Scott visited Kihim, the sea-side resort near Bombay, about which there have been several reports in our Newsletter. When asked to sign the Visitors Book, he painted the picture of a Redwhiskered Bulbul, and since Peter Scott's paintings fetch anything up to \$ 15,000, we like to think that our Guest Book is now worth a fortune.

In reviewing a book of this quality, it is difficult to pick out anything for special comment. Every page has something special for an ornithologist, a botanist, a herpetologist, a landscapist, an oncologist, and many others. But its real worth consists in scientific facts, presented in such an assimilable form for the ordinary reader.

I was trying to locate a reference to any birds which are of interest to us in India. In the chapter on Zambia and Malawi, (P.230), there are sketches of 4 species of doves, the bottom one of *Streptopelia senegalensis*. The caption referring to its call, reads: 'A quiet, gentle, descending, 'Coarocoo coo coo coo'. This rendering seems to approximate, closely, to the call of our spotted dove, *Streptopelia chinensis*, while in India, *Senegalensis*, our little brown dove, as rendered by



Early one morning, I woke up to the familiar call notes of the tailors, calling from just outside the window on an oleander tree. As I listened, I detected some strange but pleasant warbling notes. Puzzled, I went out and discovered that it was the tailorbird that produced the song, I caught sight of the bird, moving amongst the branches, singing softly. These warbles contained about five notes at a time.

I was able to hear this song from October 22nd till about the middle of November, 1982.

I regret for not having taken more details of this observation and record the song. I hope Prof. K.K. Neelakantan who also was lucky enough to listen to these vocalisations at Trivandrum in last November, would be able to throw more light on this subject.

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Tick Baiting by Taji Mundkur, 124/9 Erandavana, Poona 411004:
 A visit to the Ahmedabad zoo on January 6, 1984, revealed yet another possible example of the cleverness of the common house crow (Corvus splendens).

One enclosure housed a number of fat and squat long haired goats, the exact species I wouldn't know as there was no identification board. A number of crows sat on the ground while a few were perched on the backs of the goats - quite a normal behaviour. But looking closely we saw that these crows weren't just hitching a ride but were carefully placing a ball of fresh goat dropping, that they picked up from the ground into the mane of the goat. The latter which continued enthusiastically to court the females or duel with the other males. These duels often dislodged the rider only to be quickly replaced by another crow that quickly pulled out the stashed treasure and of all things swallowed it.

If unfortunately the ball fell out of the bill of the crow, a nearby crow made a quick grab for it. The average time period that a ball lay hidden in the tangle of hair seemed to be a minute or so. While this performance continued some crows pecked viciously at the hair on the lower back of some goats, almost as if to remove some. I am certain they weren't de-ticking the goats.

Being hard pressed for time we couldn't watch them for any more time. Perhaps one of the Ahmedabad bird

