

To  
The Editor  
Deccan Chronicle  
36 S D Road  
Secunderabad 500 003

From  
S N Roy  
B S 6 Brindavan Apt  
Chikoti Gardens  
Hyderabad 500 016  
(Phone 84 4648)

8 April 1994

Sir,

In Begumpet there is a five acre marshland bordered on the east by Prakashanagar, on the north by S P Road, on the west by Chikoti Gardens and on the south by Hussain Sagar. For the last two years we have lived in a fourth floor flat overlooking this marsh and have observed in the wild not only the common mongoose and the rat snake but as many as 108 different types of resident and migratory birds there. With the help of many texts including Dr. Salim Ali's 10-volume "Handbook" and with a couple of telescopes, we took pains to identify the different species as accurately as possible. We have enjoyed looking at them in their simple natural surroundings and we do not expect to see anything remotely similar in the middle of even a much smaller city elsewhere.

The marsh is now being totally devastated by upcoming residential buildings and the "necklace road". We are sure that this beautiful place is about to vanish. For the sake of future knowledge and record we request you to publish in a relevant supplement our attached list of the birds which have been around. All but a couple have been definitely identified by us and we assure you that other types seen within Hyderabad but outside this marsh have been excluded from our list.

OSB

S N Roy



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S.N. ROY  
MANAGER - MANAGEMENT SERVICES

17 October 1994

29/X  
94

Mr Aasheesh Pittie  
14-7-370 Begum Bazar  
Hyderabad 500 012

Dear Mr Pittie,

Recently I bought your A P checklist. I must confess that I have thoroughly enjoyed going through it. I even tallied it with my "Chikoti Garden Checklist of 108 Birds" which I had prepared from summer 1992 to winter 1993-94 while I lived there.

I am enclosing a copy of my tiny checklist. Also, there is a copy of my rather graphic letter to Deccan Chronicle on the subject (they wanted to interview me and rang me up just an hour before we were permanently leaving Hyderabad for Vizag!). I felt that it was my responsibility to do whatever little could be done. Please note that on the checklist Mallard (100) was probably a cross which had strayed from a nearby poultry farm; and Pied Chat (1712) was a doubtful error.

My wife Mrs Swati Roy and I would love to be kept informed of related developments. Our home address is

1 B COROMANDEL PARK  
VISA KHAPATNAM 530 011

As we are planning to take up similar recording in our current area (suburbs of Vizag), we would also welcome suggestions regarding further reading or activity in the subject.

With the season's greetings,

LIST OF BIRDS SEEN NEAR CHIKOTI GARDENS FROM MAY 1992 TO APRIL 1994

(SHOWING STANDARD SERIAL NUMBERS PER SALIM ALI)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 5 LITTLE GREBE OR DABCHICK                | 724 SMALL BLUE KINGFISHER                 |
| 27 INDIAN SHAG                            | 737 WHITEBREASTED KINGFISHER              |
| 28 LITTLE CORMORANT                       | 748 BLUETAILED BEE-EATER                  |
| 37 EASTERN PURPLE HERON                   | 750 SMALL GREEN BEE-EATER                 |
| 42 INDIAN POND HERON OR PADDYBIRD         | 756 INDIAN ROLLER                         |
| 44 CATTLE EGRET                           | 765 HOOPOE                                |
| 46 EASTERN LARGE EGRET                    | 767 GREY HORNBILL                         |
| 47 SMALLER EGRET                          | 792 CRIMSONBREASTED BARBET OR COPPERSMITH |
| 49 LITTLE EGRET                           | 820 LESSER GOLDENBACKED WOODPECKER        |
| 52 NIGHT HERON                            | 921 INDIAN WIRETAILED SWALLOW             |
| 56 CHESTNUT BITTERN                       | 947 SOUTH INDIAN GREYBACKED SHRIKE        |
| • 59 BITTERN                              | 953 INDIAN GOLDEN ORIOLE                  |
| 88 LESSER WHISTLING TEAL                  | • 954 EASTERN BLACKNAPED ORIOLE           |
| 97 SPOTBILL DUCK                          | 963 SOUTH INDIAN BLACK DRONGO             |
| • 100 MALLARD DUCK                        | 965 INDIAN GREY DRONGO                    |
| 101 GADWALL DUCK                          | • 971 BRONZED DRONGO                      |
| 109 FERRUGINOUS DUCK                      | 994 BRAHMINY MYNA                         |
| 124 BLACKWINGED KITE                      | 996 ROSY PASTOR                           |
| 130 CRESTED HONEY BUZZARD                 | 1002 INDIAN PIED MYNA                     |
| 133 PARIAH KITE                           | 1006 INDIAN COMMON MYNA                   |
| 135 BRAHMINY KITE                         | 1032 NORTHEASTERN TREE-PIE                |
| 168 TAWNY EAGLE                           | 1034 SOUTHEASTERN TREE-PIE                |
| 190 PALE HARRIER                          | 1049 INDIAN HOUSE CROW                    |
| 191 MONTAGU'S HARRIER                     | 1057 INDIAN JUNGLE CROW                   |
| 193 MARSH HARRIER                         | 1079 PENINSULAR BLACKHEADED CUCKOO-SHRIKE |
| 343 INDIAN WHITEBREASTED WATERHEN         | 1100 PENINSULAR INDIAN IDRA               |
| 347 INDIAN MOORHEN                        | 1120 SOUTHERN REDWHISKERED BULBUL         |
| 349 INDIAN PURPLE MOORHEN                 | 1128 REDVENTED BULBUL                     |
| 350 COOT                                  | 1222 RUFOUSBELLIED BABBLER                |
| 358 PHEASANT-TAILED JACANA                | 1254 COMMON BABBLER                       |
| 359 BRONZEWINGED JACANA                   | 1267 WHITEHEADED BABBLER                  |
| 366 REDWATTLED LAPWING                    | 1511 CENTRAL INDIA PLAIN WREN-WARBLER     |
| 370 YELLOW-WATTLED LAPWING                | 1517 SOUTHERN ASHY WREN-WARBLER           |
| 380 LITTLE RINGED PLOVER                  | 1535 INDIAN TAILOR BIRD                   |
| 397 GREEN SANDPIPER                       | 1661 INDIAN MAGPIE-ROBIN                  |
| 398 WOOD OR SPOTTED SANDPIPER             | 1672 EASTERN BLACK REDSTART               |
| 401 COMMON SANDPIPER                      | 1700 NORTHERN PIED BUSH CHAT              |
| 409 FANTAIL OR COMMON SNIPE               | 1712 PIED CHAT                            |
| 416 LITTLE STINT                          | 1720 BLACKBACKED INDIAN ROBIN             |
| 429 PAINTED SNIPE                         | • 1852 INDIAN TREE PIPIT                  |
| 430 INDIAN BLACKWINGED STILT              | 1875 GREYHEADED YELLOW WAGTAIL            |
| 517 INDIAN BLUE ROCK PIGEON               | 1884 GREY WAGTAIL                         |
| 537 INDIAN SPOTTED DOVE                   | 1885 INDIAN PIED WAGTAIL                  |
| 550 ROSERINGED PARAKEET                   | 1891 LARGE PIED WAGTAIL                   |
| 558 SOUTHERN BLOSSOMHEADED PARAKEET       | 1899 TICKELL'S FLOWERPECKER               |
| 571 CEYLON PIED CRESTED CUCKOO            | 1907 INDIAN PURPLERUMPED SUNBIRD          |
| 573 COMMON HAWK-CUCKOO OR BRAINFEVER BIRD | 1917 INDIAN PURPLE SUNBIRD                |
| 584 INDIAN PLAINTIVE CUCKOO               | • 1934 ANDHRA WHITE-EYE                   |
| 590 INDIAN KOEL                           | 1938 INDIAN HOUSE SPARROW                 |
| 602 SOUTHERN CROW-PHEASANT OR COUCAL      | 1957 INDIAN BAYA OR WEAVER BIRD           |
| • 608 GRASS OWL                           | • 1961 BLACKTHROATED BAYA OR WEAVER BIRD  |
| 652 SOUTHERN SPOTTED OWLET                | 1968 SOUTHERN WHITEBACKED MUNIA           |
| 703 HOUSE SWIFT                           | 1974 INDIAN SPOTTED MUNIA                 |
| 719 LESSER PIED KINGFISHER                | 1978 SOUTHERN BLACKHEADED MUNIA           |

*Aasheesh Pittie*  
8-2-545 "Prem Parvat", Road No. 7, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad - 500 034. India.  
Phone: Off: 040-591991 Res: 040-315683

4th November 1994

Mr S N Roy  
1 B Coromandel Park  
Visakhapatnam - 530 011

Dear Mr Roy,

Your letter of 17.10.94 was a pleasant surprise indeed! After having read about your birding activities around the Chikoti Gardens area in the Deccan Chronicle, I had wanted to meet you, but was told by Manjushree Kollegal that you had left Hyderabad.

Any way, thank you for writing!

There were a few things about the Chikoti Gardens list which I want to point out to you. I will list them below, in the order that they appear in your list.

1. BITTERN: This is quite a rare bird hereabouts, and the only record I know of is from Coringa Creek, on the coast of AP.
2. MALLARD: As you mention in your letter, this waterfowl is exceptionally rare and the birds you saw may well have been hybrids. But, recently, December 1993, a few wild birds were seen in the ICRISAT campus at Patancheru!
3. GRASS OWL: Not recorded from Hyderabad and surrounds.
4. EASTERN BLACKNAPED ORIOLE: Recorded only from the Eastern Ghats in A.P.
5. BRONZED DRONGO: Rare, but seen occassionally.

I think that if you have notes on the birds which you saw at Chikoti Gardens, you should consider preparing a small paper for our journal, MAYURA (see below). The records I have referred to above, are very interesting and notes on their sightings would be of great interest. Please give it a serious thought.

To make your present birding more informative and meaningful, the following points may be of interest.

*Aasheesh Pittie*

*8-2-545 "Prem Parvat", Road No. 7, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad - 500 034. India.*

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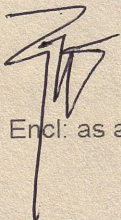
1. Bird lists of areas visited should be maintained with accurate notes of interesting observations. eg., feeding behaviour, habitat, nesting record, etc. All notes/drawings should be made on the spot, in the field, to maintain the integrity of your observations. Strange things happen when notes are 'written' on returning home!
2. Identification of birds should be accurate and field notes and/or diagrams of unidentified birds should be made for follow-up.
3. Good reference books are essential and I suggest that you familiarise yourselves with families of Indian birds and also as many species as you can. Visits to bookshops can then be made and all those books chosen, which in your opinion will help you identify birds in the field. Birding these days is all field ornithology and so correct identification in the field is of primary importance. For general reference, Salim Ali and S D Ripley's Handbook (Compact edition) is the best available. For field identification I suggest their Pictorial Guide and A Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia by Ben King. As your interest grows and need increases, you will purchase what catches your fancy.

I am enclosing some literature printed by the Birdwatcher's Society of Andhra Pradesh and also a membership form (no, two forms!) and invite you to become members of the Society. Your contributions will enrich the publications.

In due course I will mail to you forms for an annual census of waterfowl organised by the Asian Wetland Bureau, called the Asian Waterfowl Census, with notes, etc., and would request you to participate in the count this year. It is great fun and immensely satisfying for this census is a litmus of the condition of our waterbodies. Conservation agencies depend on such data for their corrective actions.

Hoping to hear from you soon, with best wishes to Mrs Roy,

Yours sincerely,



Encl: as above.