

AASHEESH PITTIE

14-7-370 Begum Bazaar, Hyderabad - 500 012. India. Phone : R:35683 / O:43264.

REF: Your: nil.

July 6, 1993

Mr. Abdul Jamil Urfi
A-270 Jamia Nagar
Okhla
NEW DELHI - 110 025

Dear Mr. Urfi,

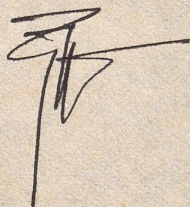
Your paper in the OBC Bulletin No. 17 (May 1993), HERONRIES IN THE DELHI REGION OF INDIA, has a reference which I would like to keep in my library for reference. This reference is

Urfi, A.J. (1992) The significance of Delhi Zoo for waterbird conservation. INTERNATIONAL ZOO NEWS. 39:13-16.

Kindly send me a Xerox of this paper. I will be extremely grateful.

Thanking You

Sincerely,



27th Feb, 95

From, Abdul Jamil Vafi
A-270, Jamia Nagar,
Okhla, N. Delhi 110025

2/3
/95

Dear Arneke Pitte,

It was very nice meeting you at SACon, Coimbatore during the Red Data Book workshop.

I am responding to your request for my reprints — after almost one year. Please find enclosed copies of a few things I have written on the wild waterbirds of Delhi Zoo.

I am working as a Res Associate at Delhi Univ and am collecting information on 1.) Food of Migratory Waders & Waterfowl in India and 2.) Raptor predation reports on Migratory birds. I shall feel grateful if you could guide me to some relevant literature, beyond the standard Ali & Ripley book. Thank you.

Hoping to hear sometime. With my best regards and good luck.

Sincerely

Jamil Vafi

P.T.O

P. 2:

I read in the latest Newsletter about your
birding in the Hyderabad Zoo. Do ^{wild} painted Stork
and other heronry birds nest there, as in Belli,
Hylore etc.? If not too much of a trouble, can you
please send some information about 'Heronries
inside or near Zoos', from your birding
experiences in the South. Thank you.

3 March, 1995

Mr. Abdul Jamil Urfi
A-270 Jamia Nagar
Okhla
NEW DELHI - 110 025

Dear Abdul,

Your letter of 27.2.95 was a pleasant surprise indeed. Thank you very much indeed for the photocopies of your papers! Meeting you in Coimbatore was great, though we did not get around to exchanging notes, in the true sense. Birders should meet on a birding trip, I think, rather than in conferences!!

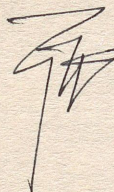
Enclosed is a list of references I could print out at a pinch, on feeding habits of water-birds in India. I am not sure if they relate to migrants or residents. But perhaps you would have heard of these references anyway. There are a couple of notes in the Journal of the BNHS on the forced drowning of water-birds by a Marsh Harrier or other raptor. I will send you details if you require them.

The only heronry birds which nest in the Nehru Zoological Park (Hyderabad zoo), or used to nest, are the Night Herons and perhaps some egrets. But no storks!

If there is anything else you require, please do not hesitate to write.

Wishing you all the best in your work,

Yours sincerely,



encl: as above.

245
1985

27-4-95

Dear Ashish Datta,

Thank you for your letter. I apologise for not being able to reply earlier than this. Thank you also for sending the list of references on food of Indian waterbirds. I found it useful.

I am sending you a copy of a general article I wrote on the birdwatching scene in India. I thought you might want to read it and offer some comments.

If you come to Delhi
pl do get in touch.

With best regards

Jamil Wfi

with compliments
Jamil Urfi

India takes the birds under its wing

Abdul Jamil Urfi watches the twitchers in action

I ONCE asked a bird-watcher what made him "twitch" and he replied philosophically: "Love of birds is the only love which does not deceive." How true. But I hope a rising incidence of broken hearts is not the only reason that more and more people in India are taking to the pursuit of the feathered bipeds.

One indicator of the growing popularity of bird-watching is the increasing number of people volunteering to take part in bird counting events. For instance, more than 400 participated in the Asian Midwinter Waterfowl Census last year. This programme was launched by the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau in 1987 as an exercise to assess and monitor the ornithological status of wetlands in the Indian subcontinent and other Asian countries.

Now in its eighth year, some worthwhile results are beginning to emerge. For the first time, ornithologists have a clear picture of the winter distribution patterns of the scores of migratory wader and waterfowl species across inland and coastal wetlands of the region. Besides highlighting the ornithological diversity of hitherto lesser known wetlands, a better perspective on the regional status of some threatened water birds, such as the black-necked stork, white-winged wood duck and pelicans, has also emerged.

Another indication that birding has gained in popularity in India is the mushrooming of numerous nature clubs and similar organisations. According to a directory compiled by World Wide Fund for Nature-India, no fewer than 990 organisations concerned with the environment exist in the country. Of these, at least a hundred claim to be especially interested in wildlife and conservation, with "birds" as a core interest. Their activities include participation in bird counts, publishing lists of all the birds that occur in their area and fighting a crusade for the protection of bird habitats. Some organisations, notably the Bombay Natural History Society, also organise bird ringing camps in different parts of the country and conduct research in field ornithology.

Field ornithology in India developed in the twilight years of her colonial history. During the Raj days, several British officers and civilians laid the foundation of a systematic study of the birds of the subcontinent. In latter-day India, the most outstanding contribution has been that of Salim Ali, who studied and compiled information on 1200 species of Indian birds. His

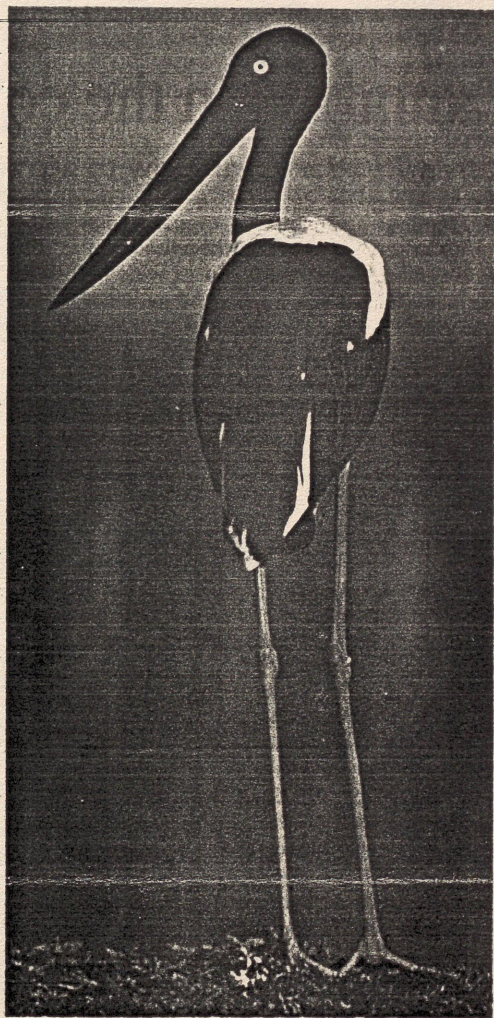
major work, *A Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan*, written with the American ornithologist S. Dillon Ripley, is considered a landmark. Almost a decade after his death, Ali is revered as a legend and a father figure—at least two environmental research institutes in India bear his name and some of his students continue to work on themes pioneered by their mentor.

Although Ali was pivotal in the development of field ornithology and nature conservation in India, at both amateur and professional levels, the popularity which bird-watching enjoys today is also a reflection of the growing number of middle class people in the cities. After all, interest in nature as manifested in bird-watching or nature photography is generally a prerogative of well-educated urbanites and India is a country where the disparity between the lifestyles of rural and city folk is enormous. Certainly, most of the organisations listed in the WWF directory are located in the main cities.

This concern with conservation is timely given that India is a hot spot of biodiversity and her natural habitats are gravely threatened. However, there have also been instances where conservationists, in their enthusiasm, have disregarded the needs of rural people leading traditional lifestyles. In this context, the catastrophe which occurred at the Keoladeo Ghana National Park at Bharatpur—India's most famous wetland—is worth reconsidering (Forum, 26 May 1990).

The park is a haven for 350 species of local and migratory species of bird, some rare. But for as long as anyone can remember, farmers had grazed their cattle in this park. Some conservationists and bird lovers, however, felt the presence of cattle was unwarranted in a protected area and urged the government to order a ban. Although this led to protests, during which the police fired on a crowd and caused several deaths, the ban was made to stick. Before long, however, the conservationists and bird lovers discovered that in the absence of grazing, the grass grew without check, choking the wetlands and rendering them a far less suitable habitat for the birds.

Not surprisingly, instances like this give city-based conservationists a reputation for being more concerned with the habitat than with the needs of the people living there.



Amateurs could save the black-necked stork

But perhaps Indian bird-watchers are in the process of developing a more balanced attitude towards conservation and will eventually reconcile their interests with the demands of rural communities.

A recent development is the decision to prepare a Red Data Book to identify Asian birds that are in need of protection. In India alone, three birds are believed to have become extinct during this century and at least 40 species are considered endangered. As a first step, India's top ornithologists met in Coimbatore to draw up a list of candidate species for inclusion in the book. The discussion did not stop here, however. India and other Asian countries have a fairly extensive network of protected areas. So what will be done if some of the threatened birds are found to exist outside the protected

areas, especially in populated ones? Will more bird sanctuaries be created? Although difficult to answer, it is heartening that this question came up at Coimbatore.

In the meantime, the growing popularity of bird-watching in India will be a boon for professional ornithologists. More than any other branch of natural science, ornithology owes a lot to the contribution of amateurs. Without the efforts of thousands of volunteers ringing and releasing

birds all over the world, working out the migration routes of birds would have been much more difficult. Records of nesting birds supplied by amateurs in many European countries proved to be a valuable database for ecologists attempting to understand the role of environmental factors in population regulation.

Serious ecological work aimed at elucidating the relationships of birds within their communities and with the natural

environment is now under way in India. Inevitably, the success of many projects, especially those involving ringing and close monitoring of bird populations, will owe a lot to the cooperation of the volunteers. In this, the Indian bird-watchers will be a great asset. □

Abdul Jamil Urfi studied wetland birds in the Delhi region and in Britain. He is currently a senior research associate at Delhi University.

29 February, 1996

Mr. Abdul Jamil Urfi
C/o Centre for Environmental Education
Thaltej Tekra
AHMEDABAD 380054

Dear Urfi,

It was indeed a great pleasure to meet you in Bombay during the BNHS Seminar. Mr. Zafar Futehally asked me to write a small piece on the Seminar for the Newsletter, but since I was not there most of the time, I opted out. Have requested him to ask you, as you were there throughout the sessions and have a better idea of what went on.

I am writing this to remind you of our conversations in Bombay.

1. You agreed to write an ID paper on Storks, Ibises and Spoonbills for our Newsletter, MAYURA.
2. Enclosed is a sample of what I have done for the pipits and larks found in our state.
3. You may employ any other method of presentation for ID purpose. Illustrations are welcome too!

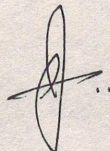
I hope you had a pleasant journey back to Ahmedabad and are now getting involved with your new job.

I might continue to trouble you with requests for photocopies of papers for the Bibliographic work in the future. Please bear with me.

If there is anything I can do from here, do not hesitate to write.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive script that is difficult to decipher. It appears to be a personal signature.

encl: as above.

Sundarvan

a nature discovery centre

6/3/96

Surendra Mangaldas Road, Jodhpur Tekra, Ahmedabad 380 015 Phone: 404148, 409838

Dear Achish,

1st Mar, 96

It was nice to mail off in Bombay. As I perhaps told you, I have shifted to A'bad where I am working with the Centre of Environ Education. I am in charge of a nature discovery centre - SUNDARVAN which houses snakes, other reptiles and mammals. It is a good place to observing woodland birds too.

I remember you asked me to prepare a key for ducks of A.P. If you can tell me which species to include and send in any other relevant information which will help me, I could get going.

I liked your bibliography. Looking forward to seeing Vol 2.

Best Regards,

Sincerely
Jasmit Viji

J. S/W/99

Abdul Jamil Wafi
Sundarvan,
S. H. Rd, Fodhpur Tekra,
Ahmedabad 380015

1.4.99

Dear Aashish Pittie,

I enjoyed reading the special issue of Mayura (proceedings of the Decennial Seminar 1980-90). Thank you for sending me 'Mayura' and 'Pitta' over the years and congratulations for the excellent work which you and your organisation - 'Birdwatcher's Society of Andhra Pradesh' are doing for the popularization of Ornithology. I will be happy to help in your efforts and programmes.

As you probably know I am working on a 'Study Manual' for birdwatchers. This project is still in a preparatory stage and it will be a while before it sees the light of the day. In this manual I intend to make a reference to your work, especially in the following areas:

- 1.) Your contributions towards Bird Names in English
- 2.) Your contributions towards making bibliographies on bird literature (Indian birds).

I will be grateful if you could send me complete references (citations) of your publications. Regarding Bibliographies of literature on Indian birds could you also please send me information on Bird Data bases compiled by others. (I am aware of the Bibliographies made by Jackson from OBC England and another one made by an American — could you send me complete references of these two also).

Finally, could you send me a list of major regional works on birds in your area (checklists, important bird books, bird study organisations etc).

Thanking you. With best regards.

Abdul Jamil Wafi.

Aasheesh Pittie

8-2-545 "Prem Parvat", Road No. 7, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad 500034. India.

Phone: Off: 040-3352269 Res: 040-3350683 Fax: 040-3356064 E-mail: AASHEESH@HDI.VSNL.NET.IN

Ref: Yours of 1.iv.1999.

April 28, 1999

Dr Abdul Jamil Urfi
Sundarvan
S M Road
Jodhpur Tekra
AHMEDABAD 380015

Dear Urfi,

At the outset, sorry for this very late response. I have been out of station for almost 20 odd days. I also spent a wonderful 4 days at Kanha National Park. What a place!

Thank you, for your sentiments, about the work of the Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh.

I am honoured to be included in the book you are working on. I wish you all the best for the project. I would however suggest that of the two points you mention as my 'contribution' to the Indian bird-watching scene, you *should* restrict yourself to the bibliographic part. I don't think I've done anything for bird names in English. Ranjit Manakadan (as compiler for *Buceros*) of the BNHS, has done that work. He should get credit for it. My Nomenclature booklet was a window for Indian ornithologists to the changing world of international nomenclature. It may have opened our eyes. I am not sure. At least I have received a few accusatory letters for disrupting the serenity of bird nomenclature in India! But this booklet would not have been written at all without Andrew Robertson's help. In fact, as I have stated often, I was just a typist in the venture. He did most of the work.

The citations for my publications are as follows:

1. Taher, Siraj A. & Pittie, Aasheesh (1989): *A Checklist of Birds of Andhra Pradesh*. Pps ix+39. Maps 2. Published by authors. Hyderabad.
2. Pittie, Aasheesh & Robertson, Andrew (1993): *Nomenclature of Birds of the Indian Sub-continent: a Review of Some Changes Taking Place*. Pps vi+106. Ornithological Society of India. Bangalore.
3. Pittie, Aasheesh (1995): *A Bibliographic Index to the Ornithology of the Indian Region. Part 1*. Pps 175. Published by author. Hyderabad.

The other published bibliography on Indian Ornithology is as follows:

Burg, Charles G., Beehler, Bruce M. & Ripley, S Dillon (1994): *Ornithology of the Indian Subcontinent 1872-1992: An Annotated Bibliography*. Pps 330. Smithsonian Institution. Washington.

Other bibliographies have not been published, but have been prepared separately by Tim Inskipp and Asad R Rahmani. They are computer based and are perhaps not for distribution yet. You could try getting in touch with them.

A list of major ornithological work from Andhra Pradesh is listed at the back of our Checklist (No 1 above). If you do not have a copy or are not able to locate one, please write back. A copy costs Rs50.00 plus approximately Rs10.00 for postage.

If there is any further data or information you require, please do not hesitate to ask.

With best wishes and regards,

Yours truly,

