

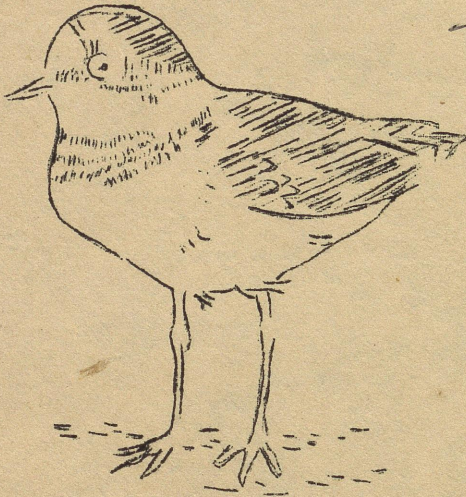


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Newsletter

FOR BIRDWATCHERS

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NEWSLETTER
FOR
BIRDWATCHERS

Vol. 8, No.4

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BIRD-WATCHING AT DALHOUSIE WITH COMMENTS

By

A. Navarro, S.J.

Following the school tradition of organising a bird-watching expedition during the October holidays we chose Dalhousie for this year.

Dalhousie is a small, picturesque and peaceful hill-station at 6,000 feet altitude with hotels and villas scattered at different heights all along the slopes of the mountains. On the day of our arrival our most important task was to find a guide with a knowledge of the roads and forest tracks, as also of the fauna of the locality, capable of understanding the purpose of our activities. Thanks to the efforts of the hotel-owners we found an ideal guide in the person of a certain Sitaram who had all the qualities we looked for. Most of the guides and Shikaris on the hill-stations know very few English names of birds, and as there is a lot of confusion in the regional names, we often find that the same bird has different names in the same locality. A quick solution to the problem lay in the use of visual aids. Hence we brought with us a few books with plenty of pictures, and made the guide go through them and point out which birds were to be found in the locality. Our guide was so taken by the books that on our return from our rounds he used to spend a good deal of time looking at the pictures; often he used to pass very informative remarks as to the season of the year when some birds could be seen or the spots where other birds were frequent visitors.

On the first day, early in the morning we heard the raucous calls of the Himalayan Jungle Crows, coming from their roosting resorts and gathering in small bands around buildings and markets, full of eagerness to begin their daily chores; next the Common Myna made its appearance, and at the same time we could hear the Blossom-headed Parakeets which were flying in small noisy

flocks from tree to tree in search of food. These two birds, the Common Myna and the Blossom-headed Parakeets, were found in the neighbourhood of buildings and gardens, and we seldom met them in heavily forested areas. Yet the Slated-headed Parakeets were often seen in forests, and occasionally in gardens on the outskirts of villages.

With them was one of the commonest birds, the Whistling Thrush. We observed that these Thrushes were so attached to buildings and isolated constructions, that the presence of Whistling Thrushes in the more remote parts of the forest was a guarantee of the presence of some kind of construction near at hand. Moreover, each pair was always seen in the same locality.

The Western Yellow-billed Magpie was seen everywhere, in any kind of forest or at any altitude, often in pairs; however, on several occasions we came across small flocks of four or six birds hunting together. The Himalayan Jays were found on the same terrain and under identical conditions as the Yellow-billed Magpies.

The Himalayan Tree-Pie was seen only on a few occasions. Several times at the same spots, late in the evenings, at sunset we observed large mixed parties of small birds moving rather fast in an uphill direction; most of them were Tits and Warblers. We all know how difficult it is on these occasions to classify the birds correctly. In spite of this I am certain that the Indian Grey Tit, the Crested Black Tit and the Yellow Cheek Tit were present. Three species of Warblers could be identified - the Yellow-Browed Warbler, the Palla's Leaf Warbler and the Simla Leaf Warbler, though there were other Warblers that escaped detection. The White-tailed Nuthatches and the Himalayan Tree-Creepers were seen mixed with the parties of Tits and Warblers, suggesting that the Nuthatches and Tree-Creepers were not actually following the trail of the others, but had been accidentally caught in the uphill direction of Tits and Warblers. The same flocks were seen in the morning on their way down-hill in small mixed parties, and slowly moving from tree to tree and bush to bush in search of seeds and insects. The Nuthatches were more often seen in small groups and the Tree-Creepers in pairs.

The Black-throated Jay was very abundant, moving in small noisy parties, for some reason often associated with Yellow-bellied Magpies and Himalayan Jays, but by preference in mixed vegetation, keeping aloof from the Rhododendron and Fir Forest. At the tops of large trees on a few occasions we saw small noisy flocks of Black Bulbuls; on a single occasion we sighted a group of Orange-bellied Chloropsis, and occasionally we observed the presence of Racket-tailed Drongos

From the first day of our rounds we met large flocks of cheerful Short-billed Minivets moving gracefully from tree to tree. Since the birds had finished moulting, they were looking their best in colourful red and yellow; in the same forest we noticed the presence of small flocks of little Minivets.

On the fourth day of our stay at Dalhousie there was a sudden and abrupt change of weather. At noon the sky became cloudy and windy; but in spite of the stormy weather, we decided to go for our evening rounds as usual. We observed neither sound nor movement anywhere; on the same day late in the evening a hail storm fell over Dalhousie, followed by heavy rain that lasted for more than twenty-four hours, with a heavy snowfall around Dalhousie hills.

The morning of the sixth day brought some relief; the weather returned to normal and by noon the rains had ceased. That evening we went out again on our rounds, and found that not only was the sky clear, but the forest was full of life, sound and movement. We came to the conclusion that birds are sensitive to weather changes, and the weather factor may have a great influence on the erratic movements of the bird population of an area. Two days later we discovered that the large flocks of Short-billed Minivets had completely disappeared from the forest. Nevertheless the Little Minivets apparently were not affected greatly by the storm as they could be seen moving about in small parties as if nothing had happened.

In large patches of deciduous forest with abundant undergrowth we found

the Eastern and Western Variegated Laughing Thrushes. The Eastern race has the outerwebs of the primaries and tail feathers of slate blue; in the Western race, the colour of the outerwebs and tail feathers is yellow. It may be rare that the two races meet together on the same grounds. I have therefore given the characteristic description of the two races, based on the colour pattern of the outerwebs of the primaries and tail feathers. The fact of finding the two races in the same locality may prove that one of the races is a migrant to the locality. They were seen associated with other Thrushes, Jays and Warblers. In the same locality on more than one occasion we found small flocks of Blackthroated Thrushes; they were seen on low trees and bushes searching for food, apparently feeding on seeds and berries. With these Thrushes we noticed a few White-Cheeked Bulbuls. On the canopy of large trees we noticed the Fire-Breasted Flower Pecker and the Bluethroated Barbet.

Amongst the boulders and large stones along the streams running through the forest we often saw pairs of White-capped Redstarts, Plumbeous Redstarts and Western Spotted Forktails. Owing to the gradient of the hills it was extremely difficult to move up and down the streams; yet I consider it well worth the trouble we took to watch at short range the gaiety and elegant movements of the Spotted Forktails moving along the edges of the streams in search of aquatic insects and larvae. Along the same streams we found often the Common Indian Kingfisher; but the Whitebreasted Kingfisher was seen only below 6,000 feet. In spite of the Great Himalayan Barbet being one of the most common birds, during the day it was difficult to locate it, as most of the time it was sitting motionless among heavy foliage; but late in the evening as the light was fading away, these birds used to gather in large numbers flying in an upward direction to where they would roost for the night in a well secluded corner of the forest among heavy foliage. In the day time they were very silent, but late in the evening they became noisy; as they retired to the roosting place it appeared as if each individual was welcomed with a riot of me-hu-me-hu from the birds already there; this was audible from afar. Most of the birds were still in heavy moult.

The Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush was seen sometimes at the topmost branches of the Rhododendron trees perched upright, at times quite silent, at other times uttering loud calls which could be heard from afar. Once we saw a single Sooty Flycatcher. We watched for some time how he used suddenly to dart to the ground for insects and fly back to the spot where he had perched before, like a sentinel on his observation post. The Striated Laughing Thrush is found throughout the Himalayan ranges; we could see them everywhere, amongst heavy foliage moving in small restless parties rather close to the ground. In their modus vivendi they resemble the Seven Sisters.

On two occasions we saw the Indian Black-Naped Woodpecker - a rather difficult bird to locate in spite of its large size because its dark-green colour pattern makes it almost invisible amongst dense forest where the dark green shades predominate. Quite often we came across the Himalayan Pied Woodpecker, and once we sighted the Himalayan Yellow-Naped Woodpecker.

Flocks of Rock Pigeons were seen flying from hill to hill; on the out-skirts of the forest near cultivated terraces we found the Northern Turtle Dove. In the deeper interior, we saw the Rufous Turtle Dove. The Common Kite was confined to the neighbourhood of villages. Only once did we see a Sparrow Hawk; on some occasions we noticed a small group of Indian Long-billed Vultures.

Deep in the forest, we observed several flocks of Black and Yellow Grossbeaks, most of the time feeding on the ground. We noticed that the male birds were more numerous than the females. It appeared as if they did not easily associate with other birds. We never met them on the Rhododendron or on any of the Fir trees. They were still in heavy moult.

On several occasions we noticed large flocks of birds of different sizes in group formation passing through; but owing to poor visibility on account of the cloudy sky which persisted for some days after the storm, it was not possible to identify them; when sometimes the flocks flew lower, we detected

them to be Starlings.

We came across three varieties of Pheasants, the Kalij, the Koklas and the Trogopan, the Kalij being the most common. In the Chandrightat area late in the evening we saw them in large numbers flying to their roosting grounds. On two occasions in the same spot we noticed about eight birds roosting together; owing to insufficient light we could not distinguish the sexes but apparently there were more females than males. The Koklas were seen always above 6,000 feet; on two occasions we were fortunate to have a glimpse of the Trogopan. Below 6,500 feet we noticed the Kukar in small parties near the edge of the forest.

We visited Chamba, the old capital of Chamba State, where there is a museum with a collection of birds from that locality. There we checked our notes and observations, and found that they tallied with the museum collection.

The stormy weather was certainly most unfavourable for accurate bird-watching; besides, owing to the lack of proper conveyance, our activities were confined to Dalhousie only - that is from 5,600 to 8,000 feet, to the top of Kalatop Sanctuary and Daina Kund. Following the ideas of leading ornithologists that the study of the ecology of a locality will reveal the variety of bird life that it can support, let us say a word about the ecology of Dalhousie. Most of the higher forest was made up of Rhododendrons, the lower forest of large patches of Fir, with now and then a Rhododendron and a Fir for variety, an exception was the hillside facing the Himalayan ranges down to Dalhousie valley known as Chandrightat. This latter area is well forested, with a great variety of large and middle-sized trees, including Rhododendrons and Firs, but in scanty numbers, with a heavy undergrowth of ferns, grasses and creepers - a real type of biome for passerine birds; this was the best area for bird-watching, where the bird life was the busiest, the most varied and colourful.

The three main factors of the ecology of Dalhousie are the vegetation, the altitude and the streams. The last factor is responsible for the presence of Redstarts, Forktails and Kingfishers. The altitude factor seems to be of least importance, as most of the birds mentioned could be found at any of the altitudes within this area. The fact that bird life was diminishing as we climbed higher is evident that the vegetation factor is more important. It is well-known that forested areas with few varieties of trees and scanty undergrowth are not favourable for a large and varied bird population, for the reason that the time and season for food production is limited to a fixed part of the year. This is known as the limiting factor.

An aerial view of the topography of Dalhousie and its surroundings from the Kalatop Sanctuary revealed another factor, doubtless the most important and responsible for the present fauna of Dalhousie. I shall call it the isolating factor. From the Kalatop side facing the highest Himalayan ranges down to the valley of Chandrightat there are a series of escalated mountains devoid of any kind of forest except for patches of scanty vegetation. The Dalhousie forest is therefore like an island. Keeping in mind that the large colourful bird population along the Himalayan ranges consists mostly of forest birds, when large or small areas are isolated from the well-forested areas, they will have a fauna that is adapted itself to the ecological conditions of an isolated area.

SOME COMMON BIRDS

By

Jamal Ara

If you are asked to name the commonest bird of the country you will probably select the crow, but there are several places where the crow does not

occur. There are two kinds of crows - one the house crow with a grey neck, and the other the jungle crow, which is bigger and black all over. In forested areas or in villages adjoining forests the house crow is rare, and the jungle crow also is not common.

Of the same family as the crows is the tree-pie, which is rusty brown in colour, has a very long tail with black and silver bands, and altogether looks very pretty. Its call can be rendered "Motri-motri", and that has given it its Hindi name. Even though its numbers are less than those of the crow, from another point of view it is more common, in that it is found almost everywhere: in gardens, groves, forests, villages. It has no special affinity for water and does not live on streams, swamps, etc., but if there is any tree cover about the tree-pie is sure to be found hunting insects. It is not of much use to the farmer, but it is of great value to the fruit grower, since it mainly consumes insects from trees and only infrequently from food crops.

It has one bad habit - it belongs to the same family as the crows - it sucks the eggs of other birds and thus prevents them from multiplying. Even this, however, may be useful from another angle: it may help to maintain the delicate balance of nature. Nature provides a safe-guard against the uncontrolled multiplication of any species. Raptores, hawks, crows and the tree-pie control the multiplication of both beneficial and non-beneficial birds.

As far as the harmful birds are concerned, the beneficial role of these destroyers is evident. But it might be thought that the destruction of useful species is a loss to man. Nature has arranged things in such a way, however, that if man does not destroy useful birds, no special damage is caused by the birds of prey. Matters are so managed by nature that the very birds which help crops by destroying insect pests do not become so numerous as to be a pest themselves.

The intricacies of this balance of nature are not evident to a casual glance. A deep study is necessary, where it will be seen that nature has adopted many means to serve its ends. Birds play an important role in these. It is, therefore, instructive to study those arrangements and avifauna simultaneously.

The type of terrain dictates the means adopted. Depending on the topography the flora alters, and along with the flora the insect fauna, and all three affect the type of birds occurring. The study of birds is best done at their places of residence. This becomes more evident if a walk is taken on the sand-banks or riverine tracts of the Ganga or any other big river.

After the crows, the mynas come next in numbers. The common myna - with which you are doubtless acquainted - is found almost everywhere, be it forest, cultivation, hill or dale, village or waste; but it is not found on sandbanks or riverine tracts. In such places the bank myna occurs, which is slightly different. The bank myna is bluish-grey, but its wings are ashy, as if like a mendicant it had sprinkled its body over with ash; and the naked skin round the eyes is red. There is also another myna with a pied appearance, known as the pied myna. It should not be confused with the hill myna, which is almost entirely black and is found in forested tracts. It is often captured from the hills and brought to the plains for sale. It does not belong to the same family as the other mynas. With training it becomes an excellent mimic. Amongst the true mynas none is a good mimic, but the pied myna has a good, long whistle.

The difference between the common and bank mynas is due to their different environments. The common myna nests and roosts mostly in trees, though it feeds mostly on the ground; but because there are no trees on sand banks, the bank myna excavates a tunnel up to five feet deep and breeds inside it. Often a number of these tunnels are interconnected. Just as ants have under-ground colonies, so do bank mynas. Each nest can be

visualised as a house, and the intercommunicating tunnels as roads.

During the last war large numbers of people used to take shelter in London in the tunnels of the underground railways. Similarly the bank myna breeds in tunnels to avoid the attacks of birds of prey, particularly of kestrels and shikras, who can be seen performing acrobatics above any sandbank. They generally fly low over the ground in search of prey, just like any intruder aircraft. They balance themselves against the wind in such a way as to be able to hover over a spot for sometime.

The shikra and the kestrel are so coloured that viewed from below they merge into the sky. Ignorant birds thus cannot perceive them hovering and become easy victims. But Nature has provided a safeguard against this as well. The bank myna, owing to the absence of trees, has to sit mostly on the ground, and when so seated is rendered almost invisible by the similarity of its colouration with its environment. If it remains motionless it is invisible to its enemies. Such colouring is known as "protective colouring"; it ensures the safety of the bird, and is governed by the habitat which the bird frequents.

The schemes of protective colouring are very interesting. On riverine and other cultivation are found partridges and quails, which fly very little. Their plumage is very similar to the ground pattern, being brown with splashes of black. They depend on their protective colouring for safety. Unless flushed they are almost impossible to see even when closely approached in the fields in which they are taking cover. The partridge and the quail are bigish birds, but small birds use the same device. The larks and the pipits are small birds, found in fallow land and riverine tracts, and owing to their small size are helpless against birds of prey; but they look like clods of earth and so escape detection. The skylark is a good songster, and has been lauded for this by poets. It is true that it is very easy to hear this bird, but it is exceedingly difficult to see it.

Protective colouring is not confined to birds dwelling on the ground but also occurs in arboreal ones. A small bird, the Chloropsis, found in forested tracts, is completely arboreal, and has emerald green plumage. It is very difficult to distinguish from the foliage of the trees amongst which it flits. Like the leaf of a tree its plumage is darker above and lighter below.

Protective colouring is useful not only for protection. The green colour of Chloropsis helps it in getting its food also, because insects, which are its main food, mistake it for a leaf. The chloropsis to heighten the illusion produces a whistle, and when insects move on hearing this whistle, it captures them.

BIRDS AND US

By

K. S. Iyankumar.

By birds, I mean the birds of India and quite understandably the US are the people of India. It is a significant feature of the long relationship between the human race and the birds in this subcontinent that we have a long history of mutual understanding and that certain forms of birdlife have of late started becoming scarce is due not so much to our direct onslaught onto our feathered neighbours but more so as a result of the very factors which by their destruction are making our own lives difficult. The careless exploitation of India's Flora has been the main reason in the retreat of many bird forms all over the country. Birds and Man have in India lived very closely through the ages and nowhere except possibly in Tibet has there developed so much mutual trust. Indian birds are remarkably confiding and even hunted Frankolins, and Bustards are not so much pressurised by direct destruction as has been by careless and ignorant exploitation of our vegetation. I feel that this basic fact must be understood and before it is too late for the birds

and for us, steps must be taken to educate a rational attitude towards plants. Except then for active preservation of a few larger and numerically few birds and animals, we in this country should turn our attention towards the proper utilisation of land.

Flying last December from Rajkot to Bombay, I was dismayed to note the extensive areas of Saurashtra which are no better than waste lands. As much as a quarter, if not more of the countryside was barren earth, the topsoil washed away and at most places gaunt rocks emerged. Not a blade of good grass could grow on this sort of strata even if it rained well yearly. The few brave plants which are still struggling are efficiently and quite understandably cropped up by hungry sheep, goats and cattle. Man is busy with the sickle and the axe to demolish the few poor trees or shrubs still existing. Even the reed beds are cut as soon as they sprout. Where can the birds and mammals hide, breed and on what can they feed?

The rapid erosion during heavy monsoon showers makes rivers torrents of chocolate coloured water. A single hour of flooding brings inches of sediment from adjoining fields and from what little covers the wastelands styled in Government parlance as grazinglands!

This silt chokes the river pools which in earlier years remained filled even in worse droughts and so now the rain water rushes with unimpeded speed to the sea, little staying to nourish the roots of trees or seeping down to replenish the lowering subsoil water. Each subsequent year the summer droughts become a bit more severe for even these trees protected on private lands. These veterans are ultimately succumbing and dying.

With the drying of water pools, aquatic life is imperilled and birds like Kingfishers, Terns, etc. are all getting very much scarcer than they were a few years ago.

With depletion of shelter and feeding areas, quite obviously, animals are not going to flourish and even if not whot or killed their numbers will gradually decline.

Now, then, is the time to start building up actively an enlightened programme in soil management, and plans on a State level need to be drawn up to stop the devastation. Unpopular steps must be taken to preserve the soil and the vegetation. This will save the animals and in turn will save mankind.

Why cannot we think of making our country a show place where human beings are in happy harmony with nature? Birds will enter our gardens, mammals will be our neighbours, Once again India will bloom into a big, scented garden a "Nandan Van" and "Eden".

VEDANTHANGAL BIRD SANCTUARY - NESTING CORMORANTS AND COMMON MYNAS

(Author unknown)

Karunguli hillock, the tank, the tank's shady bank, homeward peasants and cattle, the green of the patterned fields, and the blue of the sky form a typical rural landscape; and the four hundred and odd Barringtonia acutangula trees standing neck deep in water with "winged leaves" are but a part of the landscape!

By 3.30 p.m. the mantle of shadows spreads over the water though some tree tops are still bright; feathers and down fruits and flowers float along the rippled edge of water. Little Cormorants (Phalacrocorax niger) were collecting nesting materials; one bird flew straight to a dead branch of an Accacia arabica, held it between its beak, flapped the wings to break the branch and flew back. Another dived into the water, emerged out after two minutes, with a dripping branch (or moss?), flapped awkwardly at the surface

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of the water and gracefully flew toward the colony of nests. The Little Cormorants seemed to outnumber other species and some trees are almost exclusively occupied by them; it was not possible to locate nests of birds that were collecting building materials. I was watching that evening (3.11.66) and the next morning and Little Cormorants gathered the nesting materials either by fishing out from the water or from the trees on the bank, where as some white Ibises were bringing sticks from far off.

Some Common Mynas were flying into the colony by 6.40 p.m. They were about ten in number and they did not return. By 5.20 a.m. some were flying out of the colony. Probably they stayed the night in the colony. It would be interesting to know whether these Mynas nest there and how they get along with the water birds.

A BUSH TRAGEDY

By

S. N. Sen Gupta.

In the fine winter morning of 12 December 1967, at about 0745 hours when I was bathing myself in the rising sun stepping on the balcony of my house facing a fallow land with scrubby outgrowth I was startled by a screeching call radiating from there. Soon I could spot the back portion of a female Koel (*Eudynamys scolopacea*) quivering her wings in great pain and agony. Hearing this alarm note a large number of House Crows soon appeared in the scene and went on screaming Kaw, Kaw looking at the ground some by perching on the boughs of a nearby mango tree and others by flying over the area in a circle. A minute later I found the Koel disappeared in the bush. Soon after a Mongoose came out of the bush agitatedly and ran a few feet away, then turned its direction to re-enter the place of its emergence. After a little while the Mongoose came out of the hiding and tugged the Koel which was still struggling for life as its faint dying squeel could still be heard. Bewildered by the constant Kawing of the crows the Mongoose left the prey unconcealed in the field and slunk away in the bush. After a brief pause it braved to approach the dying quarry but again turned away a few feet from the morsel. After that the Mongoose stood upright on its hind legs for a minute or so probably to make a critical survey of the area and after sensing no danger that might befall on it, quickly but nervously pounced on the victim, which had by then died, and tugged it away by its sharp teeth for quite a while.

NOTES AND NEWS

Editorial Problems:-

In the last issue of the Newsletter a slip was inserted stating that the article "Two Visits to Nepal" in Vol. 7, No. 11 of November 1967 ascribed to Luis Werner was not in fact written by him. The actual author has not yet revealed himself and we again appeal to him to acknowledge his contribution.

In the present issue the article "Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary - Nesting Cormorants and Common Mynas" is unsigned and in this case too the author is requested to write to the editor.

In future, will contributors kindly sign and give their address at the bottom of the articles.

When the Newsletter was first started J.S. Serrao, the Editorial Assistant of the Bombay Natural History Society, kindly undertook to strike the stencils and did his job very conscientiously. Subsequently, Serrao could not find time to assist us and a number of stenographers from Dynacraft and

elsewhere have assisted in the work. The steno who is used to write letters in connection with conveying equipment finds it difficult to follow the rules of ornithology and does not see the importance of spelling the generic name with a capital and the specific name with a small letter. The editor should, of course, check the stencils before being released for cyclostyling, but if he spent any more time on production of the Newsletter, then he actually does he would lose his job and the Newsletter a good patron. Readers will, therefore, forgive such mistakes in spelling etc. which continue to appear in this Newsletter. Also suggestions for replacement of the editor will always be most welcome.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Melluishian Cuckoo:

In the February ('63) issue of the Newsletter, a letter of Mr. Stewart Melluish (dated February '67) was reproduced with a diagram of an unidentified cuckoo. It closely resembles a bird which I have often seen here in Tambaram -- not far from Madras. The Indian Plaintive Cuckoo, in contrast to the Baybanded Cuckoo goes through two or three phases before it gets the adult plumage. The female which is dimorphic, is chestnut in one phase and becomes slaty grey in the other. These birds arrive in Tambaram in September and some of them stay on till April. Many just pass through on their way to Ceylon. Most of these birds are in the slaty grey phase but one or two chestnut birds are also regularly seen.

Some are found in the intermediate stage when they are getting transformed from chestnut to grey and one of these might have been seen by Mr. Melluish. In the last week of February I saw a Plaintive Cuckoo in this intermediate chestnut and slaty grey phase picking hairy caterpillars. These Cuckoos visit us regularly every year and they seem to like the scrub jungle and the open spaces of the Madras Christian College Campus.

Madras Christian College,
Tambaram.

Gift Siromoney

February 28, 1968.

Visit to Sambhar Lake Area for Flamingos in November:

During our visit for a fifteen days at Sambhar Lake, we used the trolley of Hindusthan Salt Co. The trolley trackis extended upto sluice gate of main canal of salt pans to the lake.

Small crustacean, artemias etc. are in bulk in the water all around, which are known as good for flamongos.

Moreover, I got a chance to examine a number of water samples of that lake and nearby areas. Algal filaments are observed which are identified as Myxophyceae but the species is not confirmed.

Most probably flamingos are coming to the Sambhar Lake area from Gujerat and the Rann of Kutch. Overcome at the sight of flamingos at Sambhar Lake my pen fails to express how moved I was on seeing numerous flamingos at a time at one place. So I cannot check myself from informing this to others who have not seen this yet.

R.N. Mukherjee

Zoological Survey of India,
Calcutta.

