

Newsletter for Birdwatchers

VOL. XXIX

No. 1 & 2

Jan. -- Feb. 1989.



Front Cover : Spoon bill – *Platalea leucorodia*

Photo – S. Sridhar

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Conference in New Zealand - 20th International Ornithological Congress 1990.

EDITORIAL

Change of Address

The Editor and his wife have decided to migrate to Kodaikanal. From 1st March onwards, their address will be - 'Moitaka', Bear Shola Road, Kodaikanal - 624 101. All matter for publication should come to the Editor, but subscriptions, etc. should go to S. Sridhar, Navbharath Enterprises, No. 10, Sirur Park, 'B' Street, Seshadripuram, Bangalore - 560 020.

Editing the Newsletter in Kodaikanal and having it printed and despatched in Bangalore, will create some problems, but I am relying on Miss Beryl D'Rosario, The Shelter, 191 Promenade Road, 1st Cross, Bangalore - 560 005, to act as a good liaison centre in Bangalore. In case there is any problem about non-receipt of Newsletters, change of addresses, and so on, please write to Beryl for necessary action.

Printer's Devil

In the last issue of the Newsletter, in the Editorial on State Birds, there were some incomprehensible lines. After all, the printer's devil does interfere very often, though attempts will be made to keep him at bay in future.

Winter Waterfowl Count

The second Waterfowl Count is on at the time that this is being written, and it is good to see the enthusiasm with which it is being conducted. Groups of birdwatchers have been going by foot, bus and train, to our wetland areas. S. Subramanya has promised an article on the activities in Bangalore, and this will be printed in the March - April Issue.

Wetlands and Waterfowl Newsletter Vol. 1, Aug. 1988 (Bombay Natural History Society) gives useful guidelines about a step-by-step procedure for counting waterfowl. This consists of *Countall*, *Countwhich*, *Whichofwhich*, and *Whatofwhich*. *Countall* obviously consists in counting all the birds present in the wetland whether you can identify them or not. Note the number down on a blank sheet of paper. In the next step *Countwhich*, distinguish these birds by their general appearance into ducks, geese, herons, etc., beginning with the largest. Note down the numbers of each category. Next in *Whichofwhich*, try to distinguish between similar type of birds. Eg., large, medium, little egret, etc., and go on to other types. Count the individual types and note down. In the final *Whatofwhich* step, try to distinguish males and females where dissimilar, "Off colour" males can cause problems. However, the attempt to identify accurately the species sharpens our observation.

Recently I received an interesting article from Thomas Martin on 'A Digest of Waterfowl familiar to our Indian Scene', and a part of it is included in this Newsletter - the rest will follow in the next. In the letter which he wrote to me, Martin says :

"My approach to waterfowl and their way of life, is more in the garb of a 'waterfowl hunter-cum-birdwatcher' than the pleasure-seeking birdwatcher in his inoffensive quest. I took to waterfowl hunting at the tender age of 12 years, under the tutelage of elderly relatives who taught me how to shoot and kill these birds, and yet love and study their way of life. During my forty odd years of active participation in the sport, I was privileged to visit many places in the outbacks of Old Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam ; and it was during my late teens that I found myself on vacation at a hamlet situated a few miles from Mussorie, and experienced the honking of barheaded geese during their migrating flights, and that peculiar a swish given out by the rapid displacement of air caused by their cutting through space. As for the ducks and teals, their flights would comprise of a few thousand birds ; and what a rush of air would these flights emit ! This particular experience has left a lasting impression, and one which I am not likely to forget."

Reprinting of Old Articles

By a mere accident, I found an old file in which my wife had carefully reorganized some of the better articles in the Newsletters of previous years according to location, i.e. North India, South India, East India, and so on. I find that they contain some splendid articles and I am sure that readers will not resent having them printed again. In this issue we have one by Salim Ali, and other will follow in the coming issues.

BIRDS OF KIHIM ZAFAR FUTEHALLY

We were in Kihim between 20th and 30th December 1988, and were delighted to find that the pair of whitebellied sea eagles which have been resident in Kihim for decades, were nesting on the same casuarina tree in the compound of a house known as Dikusha. Both birds were frequently seen on the nest together, and a dozen crows trying to harass them did not seem to have much effect on the large birds of prey. On the sea coast, there was a blackcapped kingfisher (*Halcyon pileata*). This is one of our loveliest birds as those who have seen it will confirm. Its coral red bill, whitenecked collar and the glistening black crest, make it unusually handsome. In one of his articles, Lavkumar Khachers mentions that there is a strong connection between

this species of kingfisher and mangrove swamps. Apparently, in areas where mangroves have been cut down these kingfishers still survive, and is a good example of an indicator species of the former habitat. With the new interest in regenerating mangroves, one can hope that these kingfishers will be able to exist in its chosen habitat.

I am just listing some of the other birds seen in Kihim. There were Brahminy, jungle and common mynahs, white-breasted kingfishers, jungle and common crows, pariah kites, Brahminy kites, common green bee-eaters. There were very few magpie robins, and I do not recall seeing the redvented bulbul, though there were many redwhiskered ones. There were house swifts, palm swifts, common swallows, and tree pippits on telegraph wires. I was hoping to see ashy swallow shrikes in the fields on the toddy palms behind the beach, but failed to see any. There was also a little brown shrike and some rufousbacked shrikes.

Along the seashore and in the estuary, there were green-shanks, redshanks, gulbilled terns, blackheaded gulls, curlews, grey plovers, common sandpipers cormorants, and ofcourse egrets and pond herons.

The bird which pleased me most was the sight of a yellow throated sparrow. This was a bird which set Salim Ali on his birdwatching career.

BIRD LIFE OF INDIA : IN HOMAGE TO SALIM ALI

MADHAV GADGIL and R.J. RANJIT DANIELS

9. Spatial Strategies

Apart from differential use of different habitat types, bird species show very notable differences in how they use the different habitats in space and time. Thus some species like the blackheaded babbler (*Rhynchocichla atriceps*), a denizen of the evergreen forests of Western Ghats is a highly sedentary species. Babblers are social animals and their flock territories perhaps persist over generations. Thus any individual of this species would tend to spend its whole life time in a small area of a few hectares, feeding in the undergrowth generally within two metres or less off the ground. Such a resource use strategy is obviously possible only in a habitat that remains highly productive round the year. Birds of highly seasonal habitats, on the other hand, tend to move extensively to take the best advantage of the situation. Aquatic habitats are particularly liable for substantial seasonal changes for precipitation on our subcontinent is concentrated in a very short period. Birds of such habitats therefore tend to move around extensively, either within the country or even migrate to summer breeding grounds far to the north. Amongst those which migrate locally are birds like darter (*Anhinga rufa*), the egrets, storks, herons and cormorants. In the wet season they breed at heronries such as Ranganthittu and Bharatpur, and spread elsewhere in the dry season to feed.

As one would expect from this a majority of our migratory birds too are birds of wetlands. These breed in northern

Europe and Siberia and come down to us every October. That is when the waterfowl fill up the jheels like Bharatpur in their tens of thousands.

Another notably seasonal habitat is the man-made crop-lands that now cover half of the country's surface. There is a tremendous flush of food in the form of cereal grains twice a year — in October, November and again in March - April on these lands. And a number of bird species, especially of munias, finches, starlings and parakeets take advantage of this resource flush. It is undoubtedly one of these, and the best candidate may be the baya weaver bird, which must be the most abundant single bird species of our country. Baya weaver-bird is also remarkable for its colonial nesting and polygyny. One of Salim Ali's earliest scientific achievements was the elucidation of the breeding biology of the Bayas. One of his later triumphs was the rediscovery of Finn's baya in the Terais.

The munias, finches and parakeets must cover great distances following the crops as they ripen. Unfortunately we know little about their movements. However we do know that another fascinating bird species, the rosy pastor or starling (*Sturnus roseus*) keeps moving all around the countryside in its flocks of tens of thousands following the ripening fields, hence its nickname Jowar Bird. This is a migratory species, breeding outside India but migrating as early as August and leaving as late as May. Its strategy

therefore is to be on its summer breeding grounds, not for a six month stint as most other species do, but just enough to complete nesting to proceed to the granary of India.

I am tempted to add two more examples of birds which move around a lot in pursuit of a temporary resource. The first is the Pied crested cuckoo or chataka that relishes the flush of insects following the onset of monsoon. It therefore follows the cloud band of monsoon, a fact that has been much elaborated in the Indian literature. The second species is Alpine chough, a cousin of the crow, that haunts the upper reaches of Himalayas from 3000 to 5000 metres. True to its family tradition, it enjoys the garbage created by mountaineers on their expeditions reaching as high as 8600 meters, the highest living bird in the world.

Diversity is made up not only of species separating in their geographical ranges and segregating by habitat types, but also through a number of species coexisting in a single habitat. Such a coexistence is made possible in main part by the different species utilizing different resources. This is neatly brought out by looking at the size frequency distribution of a community of 106 birds in a 10 ha plot of degraded moist deciduous forest from Karnataka Western Ghats. The range stretches over the beak to tail length of 8 cm to 106 cm; from a flowerpecker to the whitenecked stork. The distribution is rather flat over the lower part of the range from 8 to 30 cms, with a long tail stretching to 106cm. This flat mode is what is expected, since species coexisting in a community should have diversified in their resource use pattern, and therefore should be evenly spread over the width of the size range.

At the lowest end of the size range are flowerpeckers and sunbirds, specialist nectar-feeders, warblers and flycatchers who feed on small insects and munias specializing on small grass seeds. Just above this, are birds like babblers and bee eaters that consume somewhat bigger insects, omnivores like bulbuls and cuckoo, and fruit eaters like barbets. Smaller of the predatory shrikes also fall in this range. In the right part of the mode are omnivores like mynas, grain eaters like doves and fruited eaters like pigeons. The long tail of the distribution has predatory birds like Goshawks at the lower end and vultures at the upper end. Egrets and storks, wetland birds that also pursue insects in the grasslands are amongst the largest of birds, as is that most versatile of pheasants, our national bird, the Peafowl, an omnivore *par excellence*.

The diversification of ecological niches may also be illustrated by considering just one of the food resources, the nectar. It is especially appropriate to look at them for two of Salim Ali's earliest and best papers dealt with bird flowers and flower birds. There are two categories of nectar feeders, the specialists and generalists. The specialists are all tiny birds, the flowerpeckers and sunbirds. Many plants produce flowers specifically designed to be pollinated by such birds, so that the birdflowers and flowerbirds have evolved together. The nicest example of such pair is that of sunbirds and parasitic mistletoes, *Loranthus*. These produce the magnificent bunches of white or red flowers one sees on the

parasites of so many mango or *Cassia* trees. It was Salim Ali who first showed that the flowers remain closed till visited by a sunbird. The petals spring open only when a visitor like the Maroonbreasted sunbird pinches them. The bird then inserts its long, slender, curved beak inside the equally long, slender, tubular corolla of the flower to suck nectar and carry pollen. Other nectar feeders are generalists who opportunistically take nectar, but feed on much else besides. Such are mynas, drongos, and even those great jacks-of-all trades, the crows. Some of these are partial to birdflowers, and then they have a tuft of special feathers above their beak, the pollen brush for instance in the jungle myna and the hair crested drongo. The flowers that attract these generalists are also quite different from those serviced by specialists; they are large, open bright flowers such as those of the red silk cotton tree.

How does the diversification of ecological niches relate to the susceptibility of a bird species to extinction? Does such diversification mean that population levels of certain species are very low, rendering them liable to being wiped out. One may look at this in terms of the relative abundance of bird species in different communities. Our data shows one such distribution for the community of 42 species of a 3 ha observation plot censused for a total of 5 hours on 3 consecutive mornings. Again we meet our familiar, lognormal distribution with a long right hand tail. There are some species far more abundant than what the distribution indicates, such for instance are babblers in their flocks. But most are at low levels of abundance, and some of these are obviously likely to be wiped out if such a low abundance holds over their whole range. An example of this is the small greenbilled malkoha, or the heartspotted woodpecker. Others at higher trophic levels like the crested goshawk are also likely to occur at low population densities everywhere.

Indeed Salim Ali several times remarked that it was birds of prey that seemed to be declining rapidly all over India, although none of them have gone extinct. Our own studies in Uttara Kannada suggest that while no species can be said to have gone locally extinct, one of those to have suffered may be the Rufousbellied hawk eagle.

10. The Scientific Challenge

Salim Ali devoted his life to the study of diversity of bird life on the Indian subcontinent. It was for him a marvellously enjoyable outdoor life, riding camels in the Rann of Kutch in pursuit of colonies of flamingos, riding ponies on an ornithological pilgrimage to the Man-Sarovar, collecting birds on Mishmi hills, running away from elephants in Kerala and watching bayas, and flowerpeckers in the orchards of his house at Kihim. But along with his manifold scientific contributions to the knowledge of bird ecology, systematics and biogeography, he steadfastly focussed on conservation of birds and their habitats.

The task to which he so ably devoted himself is becoming more and more urgent as the years roll by. On the Indian subcontinent the fragmentation of the natural habitats and poisoning of the biosphere is proceeding apace. And although

very few bird species have actually gone extinct, spasm of mass extinctions is very likely in the coming decades. To halt this requires a serious effort on part of all of us, and as Edward Wilson has put it "the magnitude and control of biological diversity is not just a central problem of evolutionary

biology, it is now one of the key problems of science as a whole". The greatest tribute we scientists can pay to the memory of Dr. Salim Ali is to dedicate ourselves to this challenging task.

(concluded.)

COURSERS NEAR BANGALORE

U.K. PARESH

One day during last week of December 1987, I was at Jakkur Aerodrome with two friends and a member of the staff, engaged in ascertaining the speed and direction of the wind. All of a sudden I chanced to see two lapwing-like birds spurting from somewhere and hopping along the runway. They had white legs and black and white bands above the eyes. They had a lovely attractive body. Even before casting a penetrated look at them they were off in the air and out of sight under the blue sky.

By referring to the Books it was concluded that the birds we saw were Indian Coursers which are rare in this part of the country. Attempts to see them on two other occasions proved a disappointment.

When the fact was mentioned to my friends Sriyuts Krishna, Karanth and papanna I was the subject of some rude jokes. They put a few searching questions on my observations. They asked me whether what we observed were Indian or Jerdon's Coursers, but they were duly silenced with suitable convincing explanations.

When another senior birdwatcher, S. Sridhar came to know about this, he was pleasantly surprised and offered his sensitive binoculars to have a clearer observation of the rare species with a request to note down the salient features. After completing the gliding course. I concentrated on watching the coursers in June 1988. In the company of Sridhar I went, on several Sundays, to the aerodrome, obtaining permission from the authorities to enter and make use of available facilities to watch the coursers. We were able to see the creatures closely, from a short distance, on quite a few occasions sitting in our van.

The number of birds we saw on different days varied from 2 to 19. To be specific, on 25.8.1988 we saw 19 birds in a

grand parade which was a feast for the eyes. Following the course of wind they came to the field from a south west direction with a particular pattern of flying. They would form a 'V' shape with geometrical perfection and fly with grace and land on the field more perfectly than the most sophisticated aircraft.

We were lucky to observe this on that day. Their stay was very short — 15 to 20 minutes, and soon all of them took to their wings and within a minute they were out of sight.

The result of the close watch of this rare species of birds revealed the following :—

- a) The coursers were seen only near the runway, fields, and along the roads. They avoided groves of trees.
- b) When disturbed or alarmed they spurt forward, hop a few yards, and if the disturbance continues, they take to their wings and land again after flying just a few metres.
- c) The coursers are of two kinds, with different colour patterns and markings on the back and wings. It has been confirmed that they are adults and sub-adults.
- d) They seem to be locally migratory.
- e) They can be seen and observed from a fairly close range. i.e. 50 to 60 ft.
- f) Their call was never heard.

On 11.12.1988 a batch of inquisitive and enthusiastic birdwatchers had a group outing to Jakkur to have a view of these birds. As if to satisfy them, a few coursers obliged and landed from the north east of the airfield, stayed for 20 minutes for their breakfast session and flew towards the south east and merged in the blue horizon. It was a sight to remember and cherish.

A DIGEST OF WATERFOWL FAMILIAR TO OUR INDIAN SCENE .

THOMAS F. MARTIN

The wild ducks, teals and geese familiar to our Indian scene are members of a large family known to the biologist as 'Anatidae'. Approximately 220 different members of the family are scattered throughout the world, of which only a half dozen or so are native to our country. In addition to these half dozen native birds, migrations to their wintering grounds bring approximately a dozen other of this family to our country annually. In the case of an exceptional few others, flight errors during migrations bring them to our domain on occasions.

Though the biologist considers the finer points of identification more important than casual observation, the bird watcher and casual observer are mainly concerned with the obvious features which identify them as members of the family, and are usually content to identify and know them by their common names.

The scientific nomenclature applicable to waterfowl, as in other forms of life, follow a definite pattern which indicates the connection between the genus, the species and the sub-

species. The first term denotes the genus, the second the species and the third the sub-species. Bird watchers generally prefer to group the wild ducks into two separate classifications. Thus, the river and pond ducks are grouped under the heading 'Puddle Ducks', and those which fall under the category of bay sea or diving ducks, are listed under heading 'Diving Ducks'. The biologist on the other hand, has given a scientific term to these two groups by listing the puddle ducks under the appendage 'Anatinae', and those of the diving ducks as 'Nyrocinae'.

The puddle or pond ducks have been listed as a separate group because of their partiality for feeding in shallow water, in which they wade and scoop up food from the mud and weeds, or tip tail end up to pluck bits of weed and such-like vegetation from a foot or so of water. A common trait exhibited by all members of this group is that, when taking to wing, they spring straight up from land or water with one or two flaps of their wings to gain altitude before setting their course of flight — a vertical jump or leap of about seven feet or more is the usual order.

The diving or deep water ducks are, as their group name suggests, birds of the open and deep water. Though they do visit marshes, jheels and lakes, their feeding is done almost entirely by diving beneath the surface in deep water and feeding on the underwater vegetation, small fish and crustaceans. Many of this group are disposed to gather in large flocks on those larger lakes or along the sea coast. A striking difference in habits between this group and the puddle ducks is that, instead of springing straight up into flight, the divers take a sort of half-running, half-flying start, and splatter along the surface of the water with great rapidity, using both wings and feet for propulsion.

It is important that the bird watcher learn to recognise his game. In addition to the importance of casual identification, is that every fascinating satisfaction the enthusiast gets from knowing the various traits exhibited by the game he is after. The habits of many of the species differ quite remarkably and, as such, a fair knowledge about their ways and habits lend much to the bird watcher on his expectations in the scheme of things.

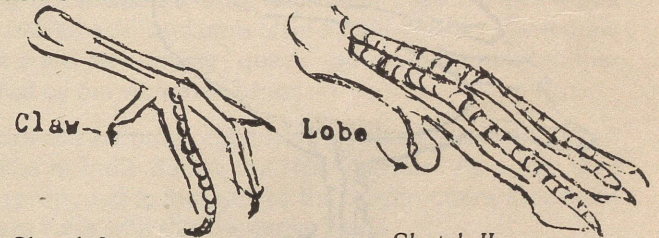
A few ardent bird watchers have been involved in trapping, banding, and thereafter releasing their quarry with a view to making a study of their migrations and longevity. Many years of field study by way of banding of birds has yielded some very remarkable information. It has enabled experts to determine how many birds fly thousands of kilometres back and forth from their breeding grounds to wintering areas, but the tracing of the actual routes or flyways followed by these migratory visitors are questions which have not so far been satisfactorily solved. On the subject of longevity the data collected by way of banding are very convincing, and indicate that the following ages may be considered to be the life-span of waterfowl :—

Geese : Average age 30 years.
Ducks and teals : Average age 22 years.

A few general characteristics are touched on below in order to help the less informed individual in his efforts at identifying the species :—

a) *How to confirm the difference between the puddle duck and the diving duck.*

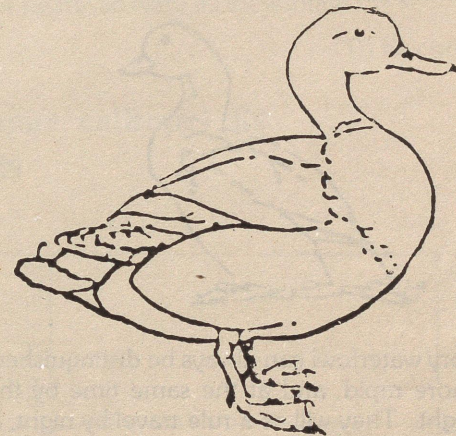
Examination of the webbed feet will give a true indication of the group to which a particular duck belongs. The puddle duck has a claw on each of the four toes as shown in Sketch I. The diving duck has a lobe or flap for a small toe which is without the claw as shown in Sketch II.



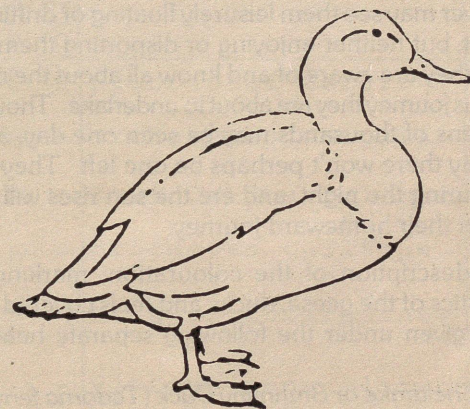
Sketch I
Foot of the Puddle Duck.

Sketch II.
Foot of the Diving Duck.

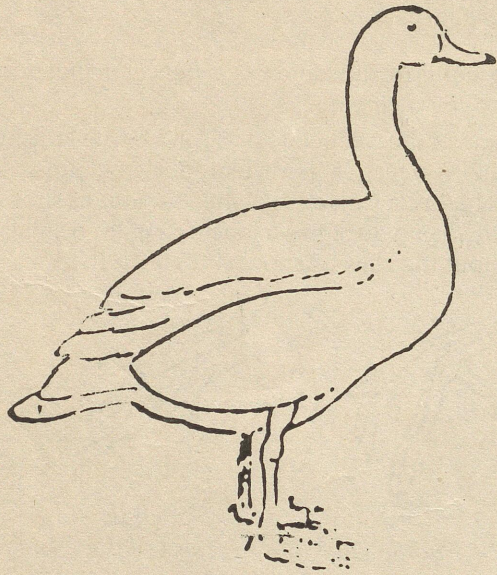
b) *Sketch III below portrays a typical Puddle Duck :*



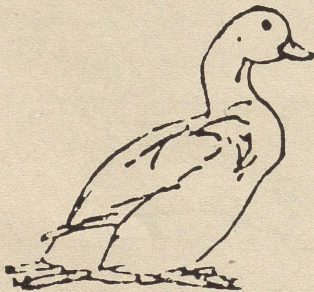
c) *Sketch IV below portrays a typical Diving Duck :*



d) Sketch V below portrays a typical Whistling Teal :



e) Sketch VI below portrays the Ruddy Sheldrake or Brahminy Duck :



Migratory waterfowl can always be distinguished by their higher, more rapid, and at the same time by their more regular flight. They will as a rule travel by night, and their passage over the hills of Mussoori in Uttar Pradesh has often been likened to the rush of a hurricane. When their time for the outward journey home is fast approaching, they will be seen to assemble in huge flocks. Large rivers or expanses of open water are where they mostly congregate. The observer may see them leisurely floating or drifting with the current, but neither enjoying or disporting themselves, as though they are aware of and know all about the difficult and arduous journey they are about to undertake. Thousands, probably tens of thousands may be seen one day, and yet the next day there won't perhaps be one left. They will all have left during the night, and ere the sun rises will be far, far away on their homeward journey.

A brief description of the colouration, markings and characteristics of the geese, ducks and teals covered by this article are given under the following separate headings :

a) *Ruddy Sheldrake or Brahminy Duck (Tadorna ferruginea)*

The drake has a narrow black band around the neck, a white crown, blackish bill and legs, white and black upper

tail coverts, iridescent green and blue wing patches. The rest of the body including the neck and head are mainly ruddy, a rich brown colour.

The female has a white crown, blackish bill and legs, dusky white breast, black upper tail coverts. The rest of the body, head and neck are mainly ruddy.

Both sexes are stiff tailed, and weigh 1.5 kilograms on average.

When flying, Ruddy Sheldrakes rarely assume the V-shape formation so common among the geese, but prefer to follow each other in a line, the head of the line always inclined to one side.

Their usual warning call is "kwanko, kwanko", repeated at intervals. In places where they have been disturbed, they will be found to be always on the alert and suspicious of any unusual activity in the area. No sooner they sense approaching danger, they put up their heads, give out a warning "kouk, kwank" and then take to wing, and always take care to fly clear of the place from where the suspected danger lies. They travel about principally by night, and rest and sleep during the day.

Tadorna ferruginea are known to breed in limited numbers among some of the higher Tibetan lakes, but the bulk of them have their nesting grounds in the wildernesses of Siberia. They are also common enough on Lake Baikal and the lagoons or backwaters of the rivers Lena and Tenissey. Some reports claim that they nest plentifully among the rocks and boulders at the base of the Tien Shan mountains.

b) *Sheldrake (Tadorna cornuta)*.

The drake and duck look alike in colouration and marking. What strikes one most is the showy appearance of the bird, the almost ivory white and jet black plumage contrasting singularly with the scarlet of its beak and legs.

Tadorna cornuta are purely Siberian ducks and breed in the remote wastes of Siberia. Their migrations to India are very uncertain, and as such not much is known about their more outstanding characteristics.

c) *Pintail (Anas acuta)*.

Of all the migratory ducks visiting India for their wintering, the Pintail is certainly the handsomest and the neatest. The majesty of the streamlined drake, with his slender body and pointed tail, is enhanced by his jet black head, snow white chest and underparts, grey striated sides and his graceful neck. For symmetry of shape no other of the species can come up to the Pintails.

Females and young males are of the same colouring, a sober greyish mottled brown.

The bill and legs of both sexes are of a bluish-grey colour.

The drake weighs about 1 kilogram, and the duck about 800 grams.

The Pintail is rated among the speediest and sturdiest fliers, with flocks reported making over 100 kilometres an hour; with occasional bursts of speed upto 140 kilometres per hour. The sleek bodylines of the Pintail give these ducks an illusion of even faster flight.

The call of the drake when in flight is a deep-throated "qua qua". When feeding the Pintails utter an occasional "paenk, paenk", and the clatter of their bills as they dabble in the mud can be heard from some distance.

When travelling, the Pintails assume the wellknown V-formation and can always be made out by their shape, their long neck and sharp pointed tails being conspicuous.

Pintails are among the wariest and shyest of the species and will never settle near any cover which may hide danger, but will invariably choose the most open and exposed places. They are very conservative in their habits and rarely mix with the other ducks. The only ones they seem to fraternise with are the Garganey and Common Teals. All others are kept at arms length.

d) Gadwall (*Anas strepera*).

The general appearance of the drake in respect of colouring is not so markedly different from the female as in some

species. The drake is grayish with a reddish-brown or chestnut coloured patch on the wings, while the duck is a mottled brown and somewhat duller in colouring. Both sport the white in speculum (the secondary wing feathers) and have light orange coloured legs, though those of the duck are duller. The upper and under tail coverts of the drake are of a blackish colour, whilst those of the female are mottled brown. The breast and underparts of the drake and duck are whitish, but more widespread in the case of the female.

Gadwalls are medium sized ducks and weigh about 1 kilogram on average.

The drake utters a loud "kack-kack", which varies with a guttural "whack" and trails off in a shrill whistle. The female gives out a far-carrying "quack", somewhat similar to that uttered by our domestic brood.

Gadwalls are purely Siberian ducks and spend about four months in India during the cold weather. As a rule they keep pretty well to themselves, the only company they seem to care for is with the Garganey Teals.

Gadwalls are never met with in such vast numbers as the Pintails, flocks of about a dozen or so is what one generally sees, and very often also smaller companies. Their flight when not travelling all-out is slow and rather heavy, and they are not nearly so wary as the Pintails.

(To be continued)

PRESENCE OF RUBY THROAT (*Erithacus calliope*) IN EASTERN RAJASTHAN

SATISH KUMAR SHARMA

On 17.11.1988 while I was studying the food and feeding behaviour of a weaver bird flock near Mohammadpur in Alwar Distt. I came across a solitary male Rubythroat (*Erithacus calliope*), which was feeding along with weaver birds.

On the same day at about 1700 hrs. I was watching a flock of weaver birds feeding on the feathery inflorescence of *Saccharum bengalense*. A few individuals (sub group) of the flock were feeding on the left out bajra grains, in a heap of bajra husks beside a *Saccharum* thicket. While I was focussing my attention on weaver birds, I noticed one bird which was new to this area. It was a male *Erithacus calliope* which was feeding on bajra grains with *Ploceus philippinus*, *Ploceus benghalensis* and other birds (See table-1). I had never seen this bird in the locality before.

The next day morning on 18.11.1988 at about 0830 hrs. I again observed a solitary male Rubythroat (perhaps the very one seen the day before) at the same place feeding with weaver birds and other associates. The composition of the feeding group was as follows.

The rubythroat is a migratory bird, generally not seen in Eastern Rajasthan. One isolated individual is reported from Bharatpur in Eastern Rajasthan, two decades ago. (Newsletter for birdwatchers 8(8) : 7, 1967).

| Total | 17.11.88 | | Date | Time of Observation | No. of individuals of Flock |
|-------|----------|----|------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| | 18.11.88 | | | | |
| 7 | 1 | 6 | | | <i>Pycnonotus cafer</i> |
| 4 | 1 | 3 | | | <i>Orthotomus sutoris</i> |
| 2 | 2 | 1 | | | <i>Saxicoides fulvicata</i> |
| 2 | 1 | 1 | | | <i>Erithacus calliope</i> |
| 71 | 32 | 39 | | | <i>Ploceus philippinus</i> |
| 2 | 1 | 1 | | | <i>Ploceus benghalensis</i> |
| 2 | 2 | 1 | | | <i>Passer domestica</i> |

CROWS FEEDING ON SPARROWS AND TERMITE

I would like to furnish some interesting observations on the behaviour of crows which I have come across in a few years of birdwatching.

On the 12th June '85, in South Kanara, my native place, I saw a Jungle Crow (*Corvus macrorhynchos*) preying upon a House Sparrow in midair and making a hearty meal of it. I think, the crows take to this kind of preying act only when the food is scarce for them. I would like to know from the readers of this Newsletter whether such a behaviour by crows has been recorded.

On another day in 1986, Summer, (I have not recorded the month and the date) at a friend's place here in Bangalore, where my friend always keeps a waterfilled trough on the verandah, specially for the crows to quench their thirst, I saw a House Crow (*Corvus splendens*) with a dry piece of "roti" in its beak. It came down near the vessel and dropped the 'roti' into the water. Then, it drank some water and waited for sometime. I thought, it had forgotten the 'roti'. But, no, it dipped its beak into the water and got a wet and soft 'roti' piece which was easier to eat!

On the 8th of July '88 — Friday (10.30 a.m.), I was watching a House Crow in front of my house digging into the wet mud with its beak in search of earthworms. I saw it gobbling up 4 worms in 10 minutes. Bangalore experienced a good rainfall of 10 cms. a couple of days before.

Finally, on the 9th November '88 — Wednesday (at around 6.30 p.m.) in Shakambrinagar, near Banashankari, Bangalore, I noticed some Jungle Crows "pecking" at something on the ground. I thought, as I approached them, it would perhaps be a dead mouse or bandicoot, but instead, saw a swarm of winged termites, emerging one after another through a hole in the ground and taking to wing. It was upon this horde that the 8-10 Jungle Crows were feasting!

U. HARISH KUMAR.

RANDOM NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

More on the Local Movements of Cattle Egrets and Pond Herons.

Last May, we had the opportunity to observe nocturnal flights of Cattle Egrets and Pond Herons in a northerly direction. I have earlier reported movements of these birds (Newsletter Vol. XXVII No. 9 & 10 and Vol. XXVIII No. 1 & 2). These observations pertain to the movements of the birds in a southerly direction, taking place in September — November.

The first observation was made on 9th May (around 9.00 p.m.) from the terrace of our flats. The birds were flying in a flock in a north-north-westerly direction. The light reflected from the street lights and other sources in the town made it possible to identify the birds as egrets (presumably Cattle Egrets). I noticed three such flocks with an average of about 8 - 10 birds. The next day, between 7.45 and 8.30 p.m. we counted 8 flocks of 5 - 15 birds, flying in

the same direction. On 16th May, between 7.30 and 7.45 p.m., I counted 13 flocks again heading in the N - NW direction. Flock size ranged from 8 to 40 birds. The formations were orderly (roughly 'V' in shape).

Towards midnight, (the same day), I noticed several Pond Herons, also moving in the same direction. They were flying at a lower height than the Cattle Egrets. They did not form any orderly flocks and were seen in loose flocks or even individually. There was a steady trickle and the birds were seen flying in the same direction till about 3.00 a.m. after which I went off to sleep. No Cattle Egrets were seen during this period. Unlike the Egrets, the Pond Herons were noisy and their calls could be heard, as they flew past.

The same week I moved down to Madras and on a visit to the Adyar Estuary, I was able to see Cattle Egrets and Pond Herons in fair numbers. Mr. Swaminathan, a bird watcher — friend also observed nocturnal flights of egrets from his house in Madras. On 27th May, he was able to see several flocks, some 80 — 100 strong, flying in a northerly direction and he estimated that 1500 birds were seen in about 3 hours. Although I did not see any movements in the evenings, I came across occasional flocks of egrets early in the mornings. In the meanwhile, the number of Cattle Egrets and Pond Herons declined at their favoured habitats in Madras and by June first week, there were very few of them left. After this, I could not see any more birds.

Bluebreasted Banded Rail in Madras

While watching birds at the Theosophical Society estates on 13th June 1988 (around 8.00 a.m.), my attention was drawn to the loud calls of Jungle Crows. There was a lot of activity in the locality, close to the road and I could see a small bird frantically trying to escape. As I ran towards the mob, the Crows took off with their victim. They landed in the adjacent nursery where some workers again disturbed them; but this time the bird was left behind. I recovered the bird which was still alive. It showed no external injuries but its neck was rather limp. My companion, Mr. Subbaraj, a keen birdwatcher from Singapore took a few pictures of the rail, which he identified as the slaty-breasted rail. As I was not familiar with the bird, I carried the bird home. It was, however, dead by the time I got home.

At home, with the handbook, I identified the bird as the Bluebreasted Banded Rail (*Rallius striatus*) — (The Indian name for the slaty-breasted rail). I measured it (rather roughly) and found that it was 22cm (9 in) in length and the bill was 3½cm (1¼in) long. The tarsus was also 3½cm in length. The specimen was later handed over to the Zoological Survey of India for studies of ecto-parasites and preservation of the skin.

Mr. S. Thiagarajan, a keen birdwatcher and friend, had reported seeing this species at a marsh in the city a couple of days prior to my observation.

Since this bird was not regularly seen by us and was on this occasion, seen in an unusual habitat (wooded area) in the Theosophical Society, I presume the bird was on passage,

responding to the local conditions. I have seen White-breasted Waterhens regularly for the last 8 - 9 years, between the month of April and June, in gardens and backyards, sometimes attacked and killed by crows. I wonder if any readers can supplement this with their own observations.

Some Additions to the Pondicherry Bird - List.

The Ousteri Tank, 8 km from Pondicherry, was almost dried up when we visited it on 21st August '88. It had a few shallow puddles of water here and there. On an earlier visit, a month ago, the villagers were seen scooping out water from small bunded areas and catch fish. But today, there were no people and the tank was left entirely to the birds. As we were watching birds, we came across a tern flying not far from us. It had a black cap, some remnants of a blackish belly, an orange bill and a deeply forked tail. It was about the size of a Whiskered Tern but with a longer tail. The flight was more graceful. We could readily identify it as the Blackbellied Tern (*Sterna acuticauda*) in non-breeding plumage. There were 4 - 5 terns at another puddle at a distance which were also possibly of the same species. This was my first sighting of this species. Although this freshwater tern is reported to be distributed all over India (and less common in Southern parts), I feel this species is quite rare around Madras and Pondicherry. The only other sighting of this species (atleast to my knowledge) has been by Mr. C. Peremnon at Madurantakam Lake, 80km from Pondicherry.

The Kaliveli Tank, 20km. North of Pondicherry was also dry when I visited it on 28th August. There was some water at one end and I was walking up to that part. As I approached a patch of scrub and some *Prosopis* bushes en route, I noticed a bird fly out of a shrub and alight on another shrub a little distance away. Its flight was typically shrike-like. The bird was very wary and did not allow a close approach, flying off even when I was 100m. away. After about 15 - 20 mts. of tracking, I was able to confirm the bird as a Grey Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*). It was slightly larger than a Black Drongo and was overall grey and white in colouration with a black mask, flight feathers and central tail feathers. There was also a white mirror patch on the wings, seen more clearly in flight. Recently, on 29th October, I visited the same location and came across a pair of the Grey Shrike. This species is considered rare South of Mysore and Northern parts of Andhra Pradesh. I have never seen this species earlier and I don't think it has been reported earlier from this far South.

The Pondicherry University Campus at Kalapet, some 10km. North of the town is a good spot for watching birds. It has an undulating terrain with a fairly good amount of scrub forests and cashew plantations and a deep ravine which runs through the entire length of the campus. This ravine is the haunt of the Great Horned Owl and in last February we came across a nest on the bare ledge of the ravine. The campus supports a good birdlife and we have been, since September, making weekly counts of the birds here.

On our visit on 24.9.88, I came across a bird which I first

saw in flight and mistook for a hawk. Closer observations revealed that the bird was a European Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*). The bird was seen perched on telegraph wires and on small shrubs. I also noticed it fly down to the ground and pick up caterpillars. There were three birds in all and although they were wary, I could manage to get good views to identify them as this species. No birds were seen on subsequent visits which gives rise to the speculation whether these birds are passage migrants.

V. SHANTHARAM

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE BIRDS OF PIN VALLEY NATIONAL PARK.

Dear Editor,

In the remote areas of Himachal Pradesh, lies the cold desert district of Lahaul and Spiti at an average altitude of 3500 meters above MSL. The Pin Valley National Park has recently been created in Spiti by HP Govt. The bird observations during summer months may not be as impressive as they are in the plains of our country. During my three visits in summer months of 1987 I could see these birds in the Pin Valley National Park : Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*), Goldfronted finch, House Sparrow, Brahminy Myna, Grey Wagtail, Yellowheaded Wagtail, Rufousbacked Shrike, Black Redstart, Yellowbilled Chough, Horned Lark, Hoopoe, Jungle Crow, Snow Pigeon, Himalayan Snowcock, Chukar Pheasant, Himalayan Griffon, Lammergeier, Common Teal, Great Rosefinch. A friend of mine narrated his observations about the birds in this area during winter. The Brahminy Ducks (*Tadorna ferruginea*) and Guldenstadt's Redstart (*Phoenicurus erythrogaster*) are specifically mentioned in his list during winter when the temperature is well below subzero.

Black Stork

This refers to 'The Importance of One Day Mid-Winter Count in Waterfowl Research' published in Sept. - Oct. 1988 issue of Newsletter for Birdwatchers. The authors of this article mention that the two rare storks (i) *Ciconia ciconia* and (ii) *Ciconia nigra* called the White stork and Black stork respectively are combined to Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. This observation is regarding 1987 year.

In this regard, I would like to refer to my own observations which I made during 1986 winter months of February and March at the Pong Dam Lake Bird Sanctuary in Kangra District of H.P. The first Black Stork was seen on 23rd Feb.'86; Three Black Storks were seen on 2nd March; one bird was seen on 8th March and six birds were seen on 26th march. All these observations were made near Dehra Gopipur which is on the edge of the Pong Dam Lake Bird Sanctuary. The last observation of Black stork during this season was made on 4th April '86 near about the same place. This report along the check list of this Bird Sanctuary has already been sent to the Asian Wetlands Inventory being prepared by IWRB, Shimbridge, England.

I hope that these observations will be shared by other interested individuals, also. Thanks.

SANJEEVA PANDEY

COMMENT ON BROWN FISH OWLS

Dear Sir,

This has reference to the list published in (No. 9 & 10 '88) prescribing the quota to export certain in species of birds. The Munias and rose ringed parakeets are permitted to be exported in large numbers; I wonder whether this is advisable as some munias are not abundant, and if trapped in large numbers for export, they may become extinct one day! My point is, the name of the particular species is to be noted for giving such permission; for example, in case of munias, white backed, munias may be mentioned in the list prescribing the quota for export.

I have a comment in respect of brown fish owls; It is observed in the Book of Indian Birds' that the call is *boom-o-boom* implying the both male and female as well as juvenile utter the same sound. On hearing the call as well as a traditional comment by the villagers that the call is made by two birds. I followed the birds in a forest in South Kanara District. The first *boom* is uttered by one bird, and the second part, namely *o-boom* is uttered by the second bird which invariably will be present nearby during such times. With both parts, which are uttered spontaneously, the full *boom-o-boom* is heard. On certain occasions, the first *boom* only is heard, implying that the partner has not responded by the second part of the call. As such, the call of the owl is only *boom* or *o-boom* but becomes *boom-o-boom* by spontaneous utterings by two birds. This is what I understand. With these two brown fish owls, there appears a smaller owl either nearby or at a longer audible distance or even singly, which looks exactly like a brown fish owl with naked legs, which calls a shrill *keeh*, sometimes as in reply to *boom-o-boom*. This call is usually heard at dusk only and with its similarity in appearance to the brown fish owl, though smaller and the response like call of *keeh* to that of first one, I doubt that the juvenile of the brown fish owl calls as *keeh*. Am I correct?

— M. Shashidara

[Could the other bird be the mottled wood owl (*STRIX OCELLATA*). The size of both birds is similar and I believe both species are found in the same habitat] — Editor.

RAISING GAME BIRDS

Recently I received a copy of a very interesting book — 'Raising Game Birds' by L.B. Hayes & M.L. Hayes. Though the book is aimed at American public, it will be found to be very useful for anybody interested in the captive breeding of quails, partridges and pheasants. It contains 300 pages and is priced at US Dollars 18.95. If 28 copies at a time are ordered you get a 50% discount. The address L.B. Hayes is P.O. Box 1682, Valley Center, CA 92082. Perhaps a notice to this effect could be published in the next issue.

You probably have seen our first book on pheasants which was published in 1982 by the WWF-I. All the 5005 copies printed were quickly sold out and now it is out of

print. Perhaps the WWF-I will reprint it. I am glad to inform you (and through you your readers) that our second book — A Pocket Book of Indian Pheasants was published last year by the Wildlife Institute of India. It is a small book meant to serve as a guide. Persons desirous of obtaining a copy (perhaps free of charge) should write to the Director, Wildlife Institute of India, P.O. New Forest, Dehra Dun, UP 248 006. Or to the Dept. of Environment, Govt. of India, Paryavaran Bhawan, Lodi Road, New Delhi - 110 003. Since I have received only one copy of the book I am unable to send it to you. This book gives a very short description, distribution, status in the wild and in captivity, some notes on biology of all the Indian pheasants and is illustrated in colour. Please try to obtain a copy and let me know what you think of it, or better tell your readers.

The Dept. of Environment, Govt. of India have told me that they would be publishing my much larger book dealing with all aspects of aviculture of pheasants specially under Indian (tropical) conditions.

It is unfortunate that my proposal for a captive breeding project for endangered Indian Pheasants has been kept in abeyance by the DoEn for reasons not known to me. Incidentally this proposal was cleared by the Man and Biosphere Committee as far back as Nov. 1984. Maybe the feeling is that it is not needed.

Yours sincerely,

(KR SURESH SINGH)

SOME SUGGESTIONS

Respected Sir,

1. Although a lot is focussed on the different species of bird 'I feel it very essential that 'Information on how to Identify Birds from pellets is absolutely necessary'.
2. 'A diet on which a baby bird survives' since many times we are encountered by such injured small birds are in a fix about the course of action to be taken.
3. Information regarding 'Ringing of Birds' which could certainly be carried out under the auspices of a wildlife organisation since Ringing of Bird in India is done to a very small extent compared to Western Countries.

Sudhir Karnaval,
Sai Apartment, Flat No. 12,
Sridhanagar, Chinchwadi,
Pune - 411 033.

EXPORT OF CAGE BIRDS – WHEN AND WHY?

In an earlier issue of the Newsletter for Bird Watchers information about the number of each of some birds exported for the cages in the overseas countries had been given. It was a shock that the export is being done without actually knowing the exact population sizes and trends of those species. Since coming to know of the fact, I have started seriously following the birds, the munias and the parakeets. The picture as I understand, is not so bright for the birds here in Tiruchirapalli District of Tamil Nadu. Where I used to see them in hundreds they have dwindled to a few pairs. We, the members of the Wild Life and Environment Conservation Society, have taken it up as a project and are planning to pursue it for at least a couple of years before any statement is uttered. I wish that other societies in other parts of India would take this up for their regions with serious concern, for we blamed the dwindling and extraction or near extinction of our Wild Life on the colonial rule. How much are we better? And I would appeal to the powers-that-be in this respect to suspend the exports till such time as a complete picture of the trends of these bird population are available from all over the country. If we are exporting them for fear of their being pests, I must say we do not know yet if they are. Three simple indoor experiments carried out here on three species of *Lonchura* and a species of *Estrilda* have not suggested them to be very harmful to any particular crop, if wild grass seeds are available. Bird enthusiasts among the several universities and colleges could take up study on the pesthood of the munias so that monitoring is possible. May we wait till we know the reality of the situation?

H. DANIEL WESLEY

THE STATE BIRD OF TAMIL NADU

The editorial in the Newsletter for Bird Watchers Vol. XXVIII, No. 11 & 12 carries a suggestion for having state birds for all the states of India. A few criteria for consideration have been hinted. There are state birds for a few states already. If I am correct, that of Punjab is the Hoopoe and of Karnataka the Blue Jay.

What criteria are to be considered for the selection of the state bird must be left to the states concerned. There cannot be any consensus on the selection on the basis of a bird being the most beautiful, beneficial, the smallest and lightest or the largest and heaviest. Much less work has been done on the beneficial quality of birds. Which is the most threatened species in Tamil Nadu? is a moot-point. On the basis of the commonness of a bird, then, the Sparrow, the Crows, the Drongo and the White-breasted Kingfisher will contest equally strongly. The Common Myna, *Acridotheres tristis*, cannot be chosen because it is not common in the hills and the Southern most district where its cousin, *A. fuscus* takes the place. What about Brahminy Myna? Would it be construed as carrying a caste tag? Then, the most threatened species can be chosen. Such a seemingly simple thing as choosing a bird for the state puts us on guard and sentiment carries the day. Shall we have a useful bird of prey – vulture, kite, eagle, hawk – or a Wise Owl?

Tamil Nadu has declared the Emerald Dove (*Chalcophaps indica*(L) as the state bird, by G.O.Ms.No. 746 dated 28.8.'88, after a period of indecision; The Criterion? Perhaps it is 'Panjavarnam; its rarity, being confined to the hills and estates; or, its being a cousin of that which is the symbol of peace, notwithstanding the termite population in its diet.

Well, we have a state bird after all. But what do we do with it? What is the aim in having one? The fond wish is that it should not remain in the official files to be dug out for occasional quiz contests but would become known to the common man and would be studied for all its aspects, creating a general environmental awareness among the people. The great experts expire but the species should not.

H. DANIEL WESLEY

COOPERATIVE FIELD STUDIES OF BIRDS

SALIM ALI

It has been suggested that birdwatchers in India should try and conduct a cooperative study on some one particular bird species. The house sparrow was named, and I was asked to prepare a sort of questionnaire for the guidance of participants in the scheme. Below are a few simple topics on which collective observations over the entire year would prove worth while. Since there is so little exact data available, almost anything based on methodical observation would be of value. The data will naturally vary with season and conditions prevailing in the different parts of the country, but all this should add to the comprehensiveness of the investigation.

Apart from observations on the local sparrow population in general, two or three particular pairs of birds should be selected for detailed nesting and behaviour study. It will be essential to mark the birds either by daubing parts of the plumage with distinctive dyes — blue, red, green, etc., — or ringing them with coloured rings so that the individuals may be recognized with absolute certainty.

When do the birds commence nesting?

By which sex is the nest-site selected?

Is the selection made before or after pair formation?

How does pair formation take place?

Is there rivalry among different birds for the nest-sites and/or for mates?

Is the number of males and females (sex ratio) equal, or are there more birds of one sex?

Does each male have only one female, or several as in the closely related Baya Weaver Bird? In other words, is there any evidence of polygyny or polyandry?

How many broods does the House Sparrow raise in a year? Does it breed continuously, or is there a definite season?

Does the pair remain constant, or does the partnership change for each brood?

Is the same nest, or nest-site, used for successive broods and in successive years?

Is it used by the same occupants, or by any one of the pair, or by a totally different pair?

Does the House Sparrow ever nest in trees?

If so, under what conditions, and what sort of nest does it build in a tree?

How is the labour of nest building shared between the sexes?

Are there any particular spots in your neighbourhood where House Sparrows are more abundant than in other spots? What are the factors that bring about this patchiness in local distribution?

Are there any favourite trees or thorn thickets in which House Sparrows roost at night?

Are these roosts used throughout the year, or only at certain seasons?

Do both sexes share a common roost, or do males and females occupy separate roosts?

Do the same occupants return to the same roost each night, or are the birds unattached to any roost?

Is the same branch or place occupied by the same individual night after night?

How far around the roost do the birds disperse to forage during daytime? (This can be studied by spraying huddled birds at the roost at night with indelible dyes — say red at one roost, blue at another and so on — and observing their daily rhythm.)

Do birds from the same roost show any tendency to communal segregation during daytime, or do they freely intermix with members of other roosts?

What is the House Sparrow's clutch size, i.e. total number of eggs laid in a nest, in your region? (Average of at least 10 clutches desirable.)

What is the interval between the laying of each egg?

What is the incubation period and role of the sexes in incubation? (This can be determined by marking the date on each egg as it is laid, to be quite certain when it hatches.)

What is the share of the sexes in nest feeding? (Number of visits by male and female with food for the nestlings per hour at different stages of rearing. Determine nature of food brought, if possible.)

What is the mortality of young in nest, and at the flying stage? Chief causes? (Growth rates of the nestlings can be studied by daubing them with different dyes and weighing them daily at a fixed time.)

What is the mortality among adults? Chief causes?

What are the House Sparrow's companions, competitors, and enemies?

What specific advantages does the bird derive in your region by living in association with man?

These are only a few of the innumerable points which birdwatchers could study, wherever they are. A cooperative investigation of this sort can furnish information of very great value and interest. However, instead of taking on too much all at once, it might be better to restrict the effort to just one or two topics for the start, say Nesting (which could include a number of sub-headings), and/or Roosting. This does not, of course, mean that observers should shut their eyes to everything else! Moreover, while the House Sparrow has been suggested for convenience, as a bird likely to be found wherever birdwatchers live in India, often no doubt even sharing their flat or bungalow, it may be that in some remote 'uncivilized' place, or in a settlement only recently established, the bird may as yet be absent. There is every chance that the Sparrow will arrive there before long, but in the meanwhile it is not recommended that people should sit with folded hands awaiting its advent. They should select and start off on the commonest and most convenient-to-study bird of their region. It may be possible to find other persons similarly placed elsewhere, to start a parallel cooperative study of their own.

ಮಾತಿಗಿಂತ, ಕೃತಿ ಮೇಲು : ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಸಾಧನೆ

ಕನ್ನಡ ರಾಜ್ಯೋತ್ಸವ ದಿನ; ಕನ್ನಡ ಮಾತನಾಡುವ ಜನರಲ್ಲ ಒಂದು ಗೂಡಿ, ಒಂದೇ ಆಡಳಿತಕ್ಕೆ ಒಳಪಟ್ಟ ಅಪೂರ್ವದಿನ. ಈ ಮಂಗಳ ದಿನದ ಮೂವತ್ತೊಂದನೆಯ ವಾರ್ಷಿಕೋತ್ಸವವನ್ನು ಆಚರಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದೇವೆ. ಈ ಮೂರು ದಶಕಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕನ್ನಡ ನಾಡು, ಕನ್ನಡ ನುಡಿ, ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿ, ಸಾಹಿತ್ಯ, ಕಲೆಗಳ ಸಂವರ್ಧನೆಗಾಗಿ ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಅವಿರತವಾಗಿ ಶ್ರಮಿಸಿದೆ. ಕನ್ನಡ ಜನತೆಯ ಕ್ಷೇಮಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಹಲವು ಹತ್ತು ಬಗೆಯ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳನ್ನು ಹಮ್ಮಿಕೊಂಡು ಕಾರ್ಯಗತಗೊಳಿಸುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಈ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಗಳ ಸಿಂಹಾವಲೋಕನಕ್ಕೆ ರಾಜ್ಯೋತ್ಸವ ದಿನ; ಪ್ರಶಸ್ತ ದಿನ.

ಈ ಎಲ್ಲ ಸಾಧನೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಜನತೆಯೇ ಕಾರಣ ಎಂಬುದು ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ದೃಢವಾದ ನಂಬಿಕೆ. ಜನತೆಯ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಕಳಕಳಿಯುಳ್ಳ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಈ ಅನ್ವಯದ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಎಲ್ಲ ಕನ್ನಡಿಗರಿಗೂ ತನ್ನ ಶುಭಾಶಯಗಳನ್ನು ಕೋರುತ್ತದೆ. ಒಟ್ಟು ಸಮಾಜದ ಅಗತ್ಯಗಳಿಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದಂತೆ ಧೋರಣೆಗಳನ್ನು ರೂಪಿಸಿ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳನ್ನು ಅನುಷ್ಠಾನಕ್ಕೆ ತರಲು ಬದ್ಧವಾಗಿದೆ ಎಂಬ ಅಂಶವನ್ನು ಮನರ್ದೃಢೀಕರಿಸುತ್ತದೆ.

ಜನತೆಗೆ ಅಧಿಕಾರ:—ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಪರಿಷತ್ತುಗಳನ್ನು ರಚಿಸುವುದರ ಮೂಲಕ ಮಹಾತ್ಮ ಗಾಂಧೀಜಿಯವರ ಕನಸು ನನಸಾಗಿದೆ. “ಜನತೆಯ ಕೈಗೆ ಅಧಿಕಾರ”—ಇದು ಈಗ ಕಾರ್ಯರೂಪಕ್ಕೆ ಬಂದಿದೆ. ಮತ ಚಲಾಯಿಸಲು ವಯೋಮಿತಿಯನ್ನು ಇಳಿಸುವುದು ಮಹಿಳೆ ಯರಿಗೆ ಮತ್ತು ಪರಿಶಿಷ್ಟ ಜಾತಿ—ಜನಾಂಗದವರಿಗೆ ಮೀಸಲಾತಿ ಮುಂತಾದ ಅನೇಕ ಚುನಾವಣಾ ಸುಧಾರಣೆಗಳು, ಆಡಳಿತ ವಿಕೇಂದ್ರೀಕರಣದ ಅಶಯವನ್ನು ನಿಜವಾಗಿ ಅರ್ಥಪೂರ್ಣವಾಗಿಸಿ ಪ್ರಜಾಪ್ರಭುತ್ವ ತತ್ವವನ್ನು ಸಾರ್ಥಕಗೊಳಿಸಿದೆ.

ಸ್ಥಳೀಯ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳ ಚುನಾವಣೆ, ಪ್ರಜಾಪ್ರಭುತ್ವ, ಪದ್ಧತಿಯನ್ನು ಪುನರ್ ಚೈತನ್ಯಗೊಳಿಸಿದೆ. 'ಲೋಕಾಯುಕ್ತ ರಚನೆ' ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಬದುಕಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಾಮಾಣಿಕತೆಯನ್ನು ತರುವ ದಿಶೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ವಿನೂತನ ಪ್ರಯತ್ನ. ಆಡಳಿತ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಹಂತಗಳಲ್ಲೂ ಕನ್ನಡ ಬಳಕೆಯಿಂದ ಆಡಳಿತವನ್ನು ಜನರ ಸಮೀಪಕ್ಕೆ ತರಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಕಲೆ, ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿ ಮತ್ತು ಕ್ರೀಡಾ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಆಗಿರುವ ಪ್ರಗತಿ ಕಣ್ಣಿಗೆ ಕಾಣುವಂಥದು.

ಭೀಕರ ಬರಗಾಲ:—ಕಳೆದ 5 ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಿಂದೆಂದೂ ಕಂಡಿರಿಯದ ಭೀಕರ ಬರಗಾಲ. ಬರಪೀಡಿತರಿಗೆ ಸಕಾಲಿಕ ನೆರವು ನೀಡಲು ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಲಭ್ಯವಿರುವ ಸಂವನ್ಮೂಲಗಳನ್ನು ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಿತವಾಗಿ ಬಳಸಿದೆ, ಬರಪರಿಹಾರ ಕಾರ್ಯಗಳು ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಯನ್ನು ಪರಿ ಪರಿಸುವುದರ ಜೊತೆಗೆ ಶಾಶ್ವತ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಆಸ್ತಿ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣಕ್ಕೂ ನೆರವಾಗಿದೆ. ಇಂಥ ವಿಷಯ ಪರಿಸ್ಥಿತಿಯಲ್ಲೂ ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಪ್ರಗತಿಪರ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳನ್ನು ಕಡೆಗಣಿಸಿಲ್ಲ.

ನೀರಿಗಾಗಿ ಶೋಧ:—1983 ಮತ್ತು 1987ರ ಅವಧಿಯಲ್ಲಿ 1104 ಹಳ್ಳಿಗಳಿಗೆ ನಲ್ಲಿಗಳ ಮೂಲಕ ನೀರನ್ನು ಒದಗಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಮತ್ತು 47391 ಕೊಳವೆ ಬಾವಿಗಳನ್ನು ತೋಡಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಹಸಿರು ಕಾರ್ಡು ಯೋಜನೆ:—ಬಡವರು ಆಹಾರ ಧಾನ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಬಟ್ಟೆಗಳನ್ನು ರಿಯಾಯಿತಿ ದರಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕೊಳ್ಳಲು, 'ಹಸಿರು ಕಾರ್ಡು' ಒಂದು ವರದಾನ, 30 ಲಕ್ಷಕ್ಕೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಕುಟುಂಬಗಳಿಗೆ ಇದರ ಪ್ರಯೋಜನ,

ಅಗತ್ಯವುಳ್ಳವರಿಗೆ ನೆರವು:—ಆಸರೆಯಿಲ್ಲದೆ ಅನಾಥ ವಿಧವೆಯರಿಗೆ 'ವಿಧವಾ ಮಾಸಾಶನ', 3,64,000, ಫಲಾನುಭವಿಗಳಿಗೆ ತಿಂಗಳಿಗೆ 50 ರೂ.ಗಳ ಮಾಸಿಕ ನೆರವು; ಕೃಷಿ ಕಾರ್ಮಿಕ ಗರ್ಭಿಣಿ ಸ್ತ್ರೀಯರಿಗೆ 3 ತಿಂಗಳ ಅವಧಿಗೆ, ಮಾಸಿಕ 100 ರೂ.ಗಳ ಹೆರಿಗೆ ಭತ್ಯೆ. ಬಡವರು ಕಡಿಮೆ ಖರ್ಚಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಮದುವೆ ಮಾಡಲು ಅನುಕೂಲವಾಗುವ 'ತಾಳೀಭಾಗ್' ಯೋಜನೆಯಿಂದ ಸಾವಿರಾರು ಬಡ ಕುಟುಂಬಗಳಿಗೆ ಸಾಲದ ಹೊರೆಯಿಂದ ಬಿಡುಗಡೆ.

ಉಚಿತ ಪಠ್ಯ ಪುಸ್ತಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮವಸ್ತ್ರ:—ಬಡವರ ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಸೌಲಭ್ಯ ವಿಸ್ತರಣೆಯ ದಿಶೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಉಚಿತ ಪಠ್ಯ ಪುಸ್ತಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮವಸ್ತ್ರ ವಿತರಣೆ ಕ್ರಾಂತಿಕಾರಿ ಹೆಜ್ಜೆ, ಇದರಿಂದ ರಾಜ್ಯದ 70 ಲಕ್ಷಕ್ಕೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಉಚಿತ ಸಮವಸ್ತ್ರ ಮತ್ತು 165 ಲಕ್ಷಕ್ಕೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಉಚಿತ ಪಠ್ಯ ಪುಸ್ತಕ ಲಭ್ಯ.

ಒಣ ಬೇಸಾಯಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ:—ಮಳೆಯನ್ನು ಆಧರಿಸಿದ ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಸುಮಾರು ಶೇಕಡಾ 80ರಷ್ಟು ರೈತರಿಗೆ ನೆರವಾಗುವುದು, ಈ ಯೋಜನೆಯ ಉದ್ದೇಶ. ನೀರಿನ ಸಮರ್ಪಕ ಬಳಕೆಯ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆ, ಕಡಿಮೆ ವೆಚ್ಚ, ಅಧಿಕ ಉತ್ಪಾದನೆ, ಕೃಷಿ ಮತ್ತು ಪಶುಸಂಗೋಪನೆಗಳ ಪೂರಕ ಬೆಳವಣಿಗೆ ಇವು ಈ ಯೋಜನೆಯ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಗೆ ಬರುವ ಪ್ರಮುಖ ಅಂಶಗಳು. ಈ ಯೋಜನೆಯಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ 1,11,549 ಹೆಕ್ಟೇರ್ ಕೃಷಿ ಭೂಮಿ ಮತ್ತು 11,396 ಹೆಕ್ಟೇರ್‌ಗಳಷ್ಟು ಕೃಷಿಗೆ ಯೋಗ್ಯವಲ್ಲದ ಭೂ ಪ್ರದೇಶವನ್ನು ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಗೊಳಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಅರಣ್ಯ:—1983ರಿಂದ ಕಾರ್ಯಗತವಾಗುತ್ತಿರುವ ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಯೋಜನೆಯಿಂದ 23,757 ಹೆಕ್ಟೇರ್‌ನಷ್ಟು ಭೂಪ್ರದೇಶ ಹಸಿರಾಗಿದೆ. ಗಿಡ ನೆಟ್ಟು ಬೆಳೆಸುವ ಆಸಕ್ತಿಯುಳ್ಳ ಜನರಿಗೆ ಸಸಿ ಮತ್ತು ಸಲಹೆಯನ್ನು ಉಚಿತವಾಗಿ ಒದಗಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಈ ವರೆಗೆ 3300 ಲಕ್ಷ ಸಸಿಗಳನ್ನು ನೆಡಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಕೈಗಾರಿಕಾ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದ ಒಂದು ಮಹತ್ತರ ಸಾಧನೆಯೆಂದರೆ ಕೈಗಾರಿಕೆಗಳ ವಿಕೇಂದ್ರೀಕರಣ — ಪರಿಣಾಮವಾಗಿ ರಾಜ್ಯದಾದ್ಯಂತ ಕೈಗಾರಿಕೆಗಳು ವಿಕಾಸವಾಗಲು ಮುಕ್ತ ವಾತಾವರಣ.

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದಲ್ಲಿ ಈಗ ಹೊಸ ಮತ್ತು ಕ್ರಾಂತಿಕಾರಿ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳು. ಜನತೆಯ ಬದುಕಿನ ಗುಣಮಟ್ಟವನ್ನು ಸುಧಾರಿಸುವುದೇ ಈ ಎಲ್ಲ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳ ಗುರಿ. ಈ ಐತಿಹಾಸಿಕ ದಿನದಂದು ಜನತೆಯ ಸೇವೆಗೆ ಸರಕಾರ ಸದಾ ಕಂಕಣಬದ್ಧ ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ಮತ್ತೊಮ್ಮೆ ದೃಢಪಡಿಸುತ್ತದೆ,



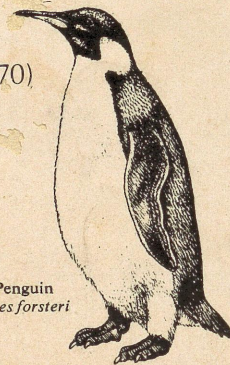
Brown Kiwi
Apteryx australis

20th INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS 1990.

The 20th International Ornithological Congress will take place in Christchurch, New Zealand, on 2 - 9 December 1990. The Congress programme will include 7 plenary lectures, 48 symposia, contributed papers (spoken and poster), workshops, round-table discussions and films. There will be a mid-Congress excursion day. Longer tours are planned to interesting ornithological sites in New Zealand before and after the Congress, including the post-Congress cruises to sub-antarctic islands.

The Second and Final Circular of the Congress will be available from 1 October 1989 and will include the registration papers and forms for submitting papers. In later 1990 New Zealand will also host the 20th World Conference of the International Council for Bird Preservation in Hamilton on 21 - 27 November 1990 and a Pacific Festival of Nature Films in Dunedin on 27 November - 1 December 1990. Requests for this Final Circular, which includes information on the above events, should be sent to :

Dr. Ben D. Bell, Secretary - General,
20th International Ornithological Congress,
School of Biological Sciences,
Victoria University of Wellington,
P.O. Box 600, Wellington, New Zealand,
(Telex NZ30882 VUWLIB ; Facsimile NZ 64-4-712070)



Emperor Penguin
Aptenodytes forsteri

Editor : ZAFAR FUTEHALLY

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