

# NEWSLETTER

## FOR BIRDWATCHERS

Volume 3-1963 December

12



Indexed  
94  
84



NEWSLETTER  
FOR  
BIRDWATCHERS

Vol. 3, No. 12

December 1963

CONTENTS

Recovery of Ringed Birds. By Salim Ali .. .. .	1
Tickell's Flowerpecker and Red Tree-ant. By K.K. Neelakantan ..	2
More uncommon birds in and around Delhi. By Mrs. Usha Ganguli ..	2
Gliders and Birds. By Joseph George .. .. .	4
Birdwatching during 1963. By Zafar Futehally .. .. .	4
Reviews:	
1. PRELIMINARY FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN. (J.G.)	6
2. NATURAL HISTORY DRAWINGS IN THE INDIA OFFICE LIBRARY. (L.F.)..	7
Notes and Comments .. .. .	8
Correspondence .. .. .	8

RECOVERY OF RINGED BIRDS

Reports of four more migrants ringed in India under the BNHS/WHO Bird Migration Field Study Project, and recovered in the USSR have been received since publishing the last in Newsletter for September 1963. The particulars of these four birds are:

Date Ringed	Ring No. and species	Place ringed	Manner & date of recovery	Place of recovery and remarks
26.9.1959	A-992 <u>Emberiza melanocephala</u> (Blackheaded Bunting)	Changalra, Bhuj, Kutch (c. 23° 18' N., 69° 43' E.)	Found dead, 26.5.1961	Temizkhebskaia, Kavkazskaia Dist., Krasnodar (c. 45° 30' N., 40° 45' E.) (c. 3730 km. NW. of Kutch.)
16.3.1961	A-4777 <u>Motacilla alba</u> (White Wagtail)	Asambia, Kutch, (c. 22° 51' N., 69° 32' E.)	Found sick or wounded and perished, 11.7.1961	Zimnyatsky Dist., Volgograd Region (=Stalingrad) c. 38 km. SSW. of Mikhailovka, c. 49° 35' N., 43° 07' E. (c. 3660 km. NW. of Kutch)
19.12.1962	A-19082 <u>Motacilla flava thunbergi</u> (Greyheaded Yellow Wagtail)	Edanad, Chengannur, Kerala, c. 9° 20' N., 76° 38' E.	Shot by man, 8.9.1963	14 km. south of Kara-Balty, Kirghiz SSR (c. 42° 50' N., 73° 50' E.) c. 3700 km. north of Edanad
4.4.1962	C-382 <u>Anas querquedula</u> (Garganey or Bluewinged Teal)	Bharatpur, Rajasthan, c. 27° 13' N., 77° 32' E.	Shot by man, 15/18.8.1962	Chernobyl Dist., Kiev Region (c. 51° 19' N., 30° 14' E.) c. 4760 km. NW. of Bharatpur

Salim Ali

TICKELL'S FLOWERPECKER AND RED TREE-ANT

The reference to Flowerpecker nests in the November issue of the Newsletter reminded me of a curious feature of the half-a-dozen Flowerpecker nests seen by me in the course of two decades of birdwatching. All these nests belonged to the Tickell's Flowerpecker (Dicaeum erythrorhynchos).

Every one of these nests was very close to an occupied nest of the vicious red tree-ant (which makes a conspicuous rough globe of leaves with some material very like spider-web). Four of the six nests were in mango trees and the others in a citrus. As my diaries are not with me now, I am unable to give precise details; but the fact of the proximity of the ants' nests and those of the bird is indelibly recorded in my memory by the few attempts I made to examine the nests and their contents in situ!

Two of the nests in mango trees were at a height of 20-25 feet. Two were found, one at a time, in the same citrus tree which stood very near a kitchen. In every case the ants' nest was just a foot or so away from the bird's.

Why is it that one seldom comes across a Flowerpecker's nest? Though the nest is small and more or less camouflaged, the feverish activity of the owners and their habit of advertising their presence always with the chit-chit-chit notes make it easy to discover the nest. The bird which brings food to the nest calls for a time both before and after delivering it. Moreover, if my memory serves rightly, the brooding bird keeps up a distinct and extremely monotonous sort of call, so that, in one or two days at least, the birdwatcher is forced to take note of it.

The last nest I saw could not even be approached to a distance of ten feet because of the ants; yet the nestlings fell a prey to a Tree Pie. So the presence of the ants, in one instance at least, failed to protect the bird's nest.

May I request readers who have come across nests of the Tickell's Flowerpecker to refer to their notes and let me know -- through the Newsletter -- whether they have clear evidence of the presence or absence of red ant nests near the Flowerpecker nests seen by them?

K.K. Neelakantan

---

MORE UNCOMMON BIRDS IN AND AROUND DELHI

Last year, I wrote about some uncommon bird visitors in my garden. Since then I have seen some more uncommon birds in and around Delhi. All of them are listed as 'very uncommon' in the Delhi Check-list, and two are new records for Delhi.

In December 1962, I saw a solitary female Large Cuckoo-Shrike in a babool tree near the dumping grounds in North Delhi. I was attracted by its harsh shrike-like call. A close look was enough to identify the bird, as it looks much like the Blackheaded Shrike which I had seen before. The Large Cuckoo-Shrike, about 11 inches in length, is a darkish grey bird, with a dark line through the eyes, dark wings edged with grey, and the underside is narrowly barred grey and white in the female. Its hooked bill and general form reminded me of a Tree Pie without the long tail.

On April 21, 1963, I saw two great Blackheaded Gulls on the Jumna in North Delhi. Both were immature birds. Although I had seen these birds twice before this was my first close view of these magnificent gulls. They were bigger than a kite. The wings were soft grey-brown, with the primaries black, and some black patches just behind the primaries. The underside of the wings was whitish except for the black primaries. The tail was white with a broad, black terminal band. The head was white except the crown which was mottled and streaked with brown. The massive yellow bill had a black-banded orange tip. The legs were yellow with a greenish tinge. One was quartering the river with slow, heavy wing beats, while the other was resting in shallow water in company with 5 Brownheaded Gulls in full breeding plumage. These latter birds were dwarfed by the former's enormous size. A little later I saw this bird pick up a fish about 5 in. x 1½ in. from the river and carry it to still

shallower water. It started picking the fish with its heavy hooked bill. By this time 5-6 crows landed in the water nearby. Some of them started flying over the gull's head but no attempt was made to steal the fish. Annoyed by the crows, the gull, now and then stopped picking the fish, threw back its head, opened its bill wide and snapped occasionally. The crows were not intimidated and edged nearer; one seemed to stand right in front of the gull which flew away leaving the fish in the water. The crows did not try to retrieve the fish, but soon left the scene. When I looked back at the spot some twenty minutes later, the gull was back to its fish, this time without attention from the crows.

From the riverside that day I went to Okhla and saw two Greyheaded Mynas feeding near a drain. There were both Common and Bank Mynas feeding nearby, which afforded good comparison. The Greyheaded Myna is slightly smaller and slimmer than the two former birds. It is sandy grey above, with large pointed feathers on the head and neck. The underside is rufous and the dark tail has deep chestnut on much of the outer tail feathers. This myna has been seen only once before on the ridge in Old Delhi in September. The two birds at Okhla count not have been far from their breeding grounds in late April. Could anyone enlighten me as to where these Greyheaded mynas breed nearest to Delhi?

On April 28, on my second visit to the Jumna in North Delhi 10 Curlew Sandpipers were seen on a tiny mud island. Most of them were in their chestnut breeding plumage. These birds were recorded for the first time in Delhi five years ago at Najafgarh. The Curlew Sandpiper breeds in the extreme northern part of Asia about 80° E. longitude. In non-breeding plumage this bird can be easily confused with the Dunlin, from which it can be distinguished by the white rump. I saw one in eclipse plumage, which was caught in a mist net during the BNHS/WHO camp held at Bharatpur in September 1963.

On October 14, 1963 I saw a Kashmir Roller on an electric pole on the road to Najafgarh. Ever since Dr. Salim Ali had shown me one at Bharatpur two years ago, I felt that this bird perhaps occasionally passed through Delhi on its autumn migration. In June, while in Kashmir I had watched this Roller carefully. This bird, with its pale blue head and underside, could be easily distinguished from the Indian Roller which happened to be sitting on a near-by post. In flight too I saw the different wing and tail pattern --- black-tipped, blue wings and brown-centred, blue tail without the dark band. This bird's occurrence is a new record for Delhi.

On October 18, my daughter-in-law drew my attention in a male Orangeheaded Ground Thrush which was sitting on a low wall under a bush next to a small pool in my garden. As I turned round it flew off to my neighbour's compound. We had a very good look at it over the wall, but it soon left the area. This brilliantly coloured Ground Thrush breeds in the foothills. When Mr. Horace Alexander (who is here these days) saw the spot where I had seen this bird, he remarked that the only other Orangeheaded Ground Thrush which was seen in a New Delhi garden a decade ago also came to a tap to drink (my small shallow pool serves as a drinking place for many birds).

On November 7, 1963, while I was out birdwatching with Mr. Horace Alexander opposite Humayun's Tomb, he noticed a very dark bird in company with three Little Egrets in a very shallow pool. On closer inspection he identified it as the Indian Reef Heron. It was dark ashy grey all over, with the wings slightly darker. It was almost of the same size as the Little Egret, but with a slightly broader bill. It had a white chin. It seemed to be much more active in looking for food in the shallow water than the Little Egrets. This was presumably a young bird as it lacked the two crest feathers. Four days later, when I took three students out for birdwatching to the same place the bird rose from the same pool and flew in a westerly direction. As it flew overhead, it suddenly straightened its bent neck to the full and then the white chin and neck showed up distinctly against the dark neck. It resumed the bent position of the neck again. The Indian Reef Heron is exclusively a bird of the western sea-coasts of India. How on earth did it get so far inland? I should be most interested to know if it has been reported from any other inland area in India.

Mrs. Usha Ganguli

### GLIDERS AND BIRDS

It is well known that in hot countries glider pilots often find themselves in the company of soaring eagles and vultures. In the opinion of a pilot with whom I discussed this subject recently, birds and pilots watch each other while trying to locate upcurrents. This is what he said: 'Glider pilots often locate upcurrents by observing birds circling in them. A large number circling at one place is a sure sign of an upcurrent. When the glider circles in the same current: the birds trail the glider.'

'Birds also locate upcurrents by observing others circling, so much so, if a glider circles at one place, even if there is no upcurrent, the birds often follow in the wake. They leave the vicinity only when they realize that they have been misled.'

Joseph George

Central Building Research Institute,  
Roorkee, U.P.

---

### BIRDWATCHING DURING 1963

As this year draws to a close I would like to make an assessment of what I saw and learnt during 1963. Unfortunately, in spite of my resolution to keep careful notes, a glance at my diary reveals that the records are very inadequate. Also I have not followed them up by looking up references. The follow through process is absolutely necessary if ones stock of knowledge has to increase commensurate with the effort involved in watching. The following notes are based on the factual records in my diary, and I have added to them to the extent I thought necessary for making them intelligible.

On 29th December 1962 I was at Kihim. Some of you will remember my note on the birds of Kihim in Newsletter for December 1961, pp. 3-5, and recall what a variety of bird sights and sounds this place has to offer. Salim Ali and Lavkumar were also present so that identification of any species was no problem. Lavkumar pointed to a bird which I would not have noticed among all the sandpipers and plovers on the beach. It was a Terek Sandpiper (Tringa terek), also called the Avocet Sandpiper because of its upturned bill. The bird has orange-red legs and once your attention is drawn to this fact you cannot overlook it. A little later while walking along the beach we saw a Reef Heron (Egretta gularis) in its blue phase sitting on a casuarina. It had grass-green legs. Almost at the same time we saw one bird on the rocks which was the same species in its white phase. This bird had grass-green feet. Late in the evening we heard the Brown Wood Owl. It has a powerful hoot, and one of its calls is a far carrying choo oo oo ha ha a. I questioned Dr. Salim Ali about the food of the bird. He said that since it had feathers on its legs it probably did not catch fish, but lived only on mice, frogs, and insects -- apparently birds with feathered stockings do not relish wetting them. This bird is common in Gujarat and the breeding season is from February to March. The next morning we saw a female Rosefinch in the stubble fields behind the beach. It had a horn coloured conical bill and the body colour was olive-brown above. There was hardly any trace of red in the plumage, and the bird looked more or less like a female house sparrow. In my diary I had remarked: 'Kihim has been uncomfortably cool this time. The breeze gets into ones bones, and birds get up very late.'

Salim Ali saw an Isabeline Shrike (Lanius collurio isabellinus). According to Ripley it is a winter visitor coming as far south as Greater Bombay, so it was quite in order for the bird to be in Kihim at this time. Salim Ali remarked on the paucity of birds in Kihim at the time. His explanation was that the late rains resulted in the grain lying on the ground sprouting into green plants, and thus depriving the birds of their normal food in the form of seeds. The situation in the village pond however was quite en-

couraging, and I liked to believe that this was due to a notice I had hammered on a post in the tank reading: BOMBAY WILD ANIMALS AND WILD BIRDS PROTECTION ACT 1951 - KILLING OF BIRDS PROHIBITED - PENALTY: Fine R500/- Jail Six Months. There were Dabchicks (Podiceps ruficollis), Common Indian Moorhens (Porphyrio porphyrio), Pheasant-tailed Jacanas (Hydrophasianus chirurgus), Bronzewing Jacanas (Metopidius indicus), Common Pochard (chocolate head and neck), Cotton Teal (Nettapus coromandelianus) /the smallest of our wild duck, white predominating in the plumage/, Common Teal (Anas crecca) (pencilled greyish), and Whistling Teal (Dendrocygna javanica).

On 21 January 1963, I recorded having seen the Rosy Pastors for the first time this season on a bombax tree outside my garden at Andheri, Bombay. The next day we saw quite a few of these birds on the Bombay-Poona road under a banyan tree feeding on the ground with mynas. At the same place on a karvanda-clad hill-side I saw a bird scuttling through the bushes, and I am practically certain that it was the Pied Crested Cuckoo. It had no business however to be at this place at this time of the year, when all its other companions had left for their wintering grounds.

On 29th January 1963, I was at Ranchi. A trip to the Hundru Falls did not produce anything exciting, and I did not have enough time to sit quietly and watch the birds go past you. The environs of Ranchi contain delightful stretches of forest but they are fast disappearing and being replaced by 'heavy engineering complexes' one of which was opened by the Prime Minister on the 16th of last month. The long line of sagwan trees are a refreshing sight for a visitor from Bombay where the trees are not as stately and shapely. I hope some of these forest tracts will be able to resist the advance of industrialization. The only birds which made an impact on my mind at Ranchi were the Pied Mynas. They are easily the most voluble of the myna tribe.

On 3rd February 1963, we were at Kharakvasla as the guests of Col. Baljit Singh. Under his firm and imaginative supervision the NDA estate has become a fine bird sanctuary, and I will refer to this a little later.

On 17 February 1963 a young kite from the palmyra tree next to our garden was being looked after carefully by both parents -- I watched this nest for many days. The picture which has remained fresh in my mind is the way the young bird walked backwards in the nest until it was dangerously over the edge before defecating to ensure that the nest was not fouled.

On 19 February 1963, I heard Magpie Robins singing at length, but the song was not too pleasant.

On 3 March 1963, a young male Paradise Flycatcher and a Large Cuckoo-Shrike were seen in our garden. This is the first time that I saw a Cuckoo-Shrike in our garden. My attention was drawn to it by its loud call, a double note -- ti-tee. It is a bird with a playful temperament and was chased by drongos quite frequently. There did not seem to be any point to this exercise except to find out who could accelerate faster while weaving in and out of the branches of the gulmohr tree.

23 March 1963: 3 pairs of Purplerumped Sunbirds on the Peltoforum tree calling excitedly fluttering their wings, with tails fanned out. They were obviously courting. It was not possible to make out if the mates had already been selected, and this communal courtship was only meant to stimulate them more than an individual affair, or whether there was general competition for the selection of mates.

28 April 1963: Drongos have started to build on the Shivan tree, Gmelina arborea. For the last two years birds have built on practically the same spot of the tree. The nest site is in a crotch completely exposed to the sky. At the far end of the tree in the leafiest portion Redvented Bulbuls have started to build. Last year too they built in the same place and throughout the

season they got protection from the attack of crows by the drongos. Whenever a crow came within 10 feet of the bulbul's nest, a drongo shot out from the blue and chased the attacker away. Last year the drongos as well as the bulbuls bred successfully. This year for some reason the drongos abandoned the nest, and the bulbuls also went elsewhere, for without the 'air umbrella' provided by the drongos there was no chance of their being able to protect their nest or the young.

15 May 1963: Great excitement as Dyal's nest with four chicks discovered under Mangalore tile of roof (see Newsletter 3(6):7-8, June 1963).

22 May 1963: Two Pied Crested Cuckoos arrived in our garden, looking very tired and listless, and not calling at all.

11 June 1963: Whitebreasted Waterhens making a lot of noise. Subsequently they nested in our garden and were seen wandering around with their chicks.

First week July 1963: Went to Kharakvasla. Col. Baljit Singh had put up hides for photography at various places of the N.D.A. estate. Several nests were kept under close observation by his men. A Yellow-wattled Lapwing had entered into the spirit of the game very well. As our jeep came near the nest the bird quietly walked away and stood at a distance of 50 yards quite unperturbed, knowing fully well from past experience that no harm could come to the nest. As we got into the jeep the bird started to walk back and while we were only a hundred yards away it had returned to the nest.

19 September 1963: Left for Jasdan, and stayed at Hingolghadh with Y.S. Shiv-raj Kumar. Saw many delightful birds. Participated in the ringing of the BNHS/WHO scheme. Was quite thrilling to recapture birds ringed a year or two ago. Among the recaptures was one Sylvia hortensis ringed in the same place in 1960, and two S. hortensis and Upupa epops ringed in 1962. A Phylloscopus occipitalis netted and ringed this time is a new record for Saurashtra. Had the great good fortune to see three Great Indian Bustards about 12 miles from Hingolghadh.

23 September 1963: Returned from Jasdan to find that the flock of Common Green Bee-eaters (Merops orientalis) which had left the neighbourhood in May, as they do every year, were back in station.

8 October 1963: A young male Paradise Flycatcher (Tchitrea paradisea) seen in our garden.

In middle October I went to Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Jamshepur. It was cheering to see the notice in the Hazaribagh National Park reading: A BIRD IN THE BUSH IS WORTH TWO IN THE HAND.

Zafar Futehally

---

#### REVIEWS

1. PRELIMINARY FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN. By George E. Watson, Richard L. Zusi, and Robert W. Storer. Washington 1963. Smithsonian Institution.

This field guide has been prepared to stimulate interest in the birds of the northern half of the Indian Ocean and to facilitate gathering further data during the International Indian Ocean Expedition.

The birds which have so far been recorded in this region are listed, and brief notes which emphasize the lack of information on these birds are given. The 'fragmentary' data available on the birds of Laccadives are included, but coastal India, Burma, and Malaya, Ceylon, Sumatra and the Andaman and Nicobar islands are omitted. The Common Myna of India

appears as an introduced species in most of the tropical islands of the region. It would be interesting to know what the residents of these islands think of this bird.

Amsterdam Island, a volcanic rock 22 square miles in area, 3000 miles south of Ceylon and over 1000 miles from the nearest island to the north, has among its bird population, non-breeding migrants such as the Greenshank and the Common Sandpiper. These birds must have extraordinary powers of navigation to fly to this island which is but a speck in the vast ocean.

A very useful section of the book is devoted to the collection and preparation of specimens. Black and white drawings of the birds in different stages of plumage, drawing attention to easily recognizable features, should help in identifying them in the field or at sea.

(J.G.)

\*

\*

\*

\*

2. NATURAL HISTORY DRAWINGS IN THE INDIA OFFICE LIBRARY. By Mildred Archer. pp. ix+116 (25 x 19 cm.). With 26 plates. London 1962. Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Price 27s 6d net.

If you were a dinner guest of a British gentleman residing in India in the 18th or 19th Century you would of course be spared the customary show of your host's animal slides; you could easily find yourself committed to looking through an album of animal and plant paintings executed by your host's private artist. (An artist cost about 100 rupees a year -- much less than most people spend on photography.) Indeed in those unsettled times, when miniature painters could no longer rely on the patronage of local courts, many artists were glad to work for eccentric Englishmen who insisted on accurate biological details in their paintings but refused to allow them to illuminate them with a rich border ~~of~~ worked in gold leaf.

Indian artists were quite prepared to make adjustments and adapt their style and methods.... They looked carefully at the English illustrated books which were shown to them as models and did their utmost to imitate their general character..... At the same time it was difficult for Indian artists entirely to change old habits. Unless they were very carefully supervised some did not always pay close attention to detail and might alter form to suit their feeling for design..... Considering the great difference in the habits of the artist who was trained to produce something decorative, and the aim of the master who demanded a scientifically accurate reproduction, the degree of success achieved was quite remarkable. All the 26 plates in this book show a remarkable synthesis between beauty and accuracy. The Indian artist could be a very good camera.

This was the period when the passion for natural history was at its height in England, and the wonders which excited the Englishman in Asia were not the wonders of people, customs, and clothes, but of strange plants and animals. It was at this time that the great gardens of England were stocked with exotic plants -- azaleas, peonies, wistarias, rhododendrons. And the native artist was indispensable in recording and documenting all the newly discovered species.

Of the drawings and paintings which were commissioned in this way, many have found their way into the India Office Library.

(L.F.)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Toxic Chemicals and bird life

This unhappy subject is always on the agenda of international meetings of the International Council for Bird Preservation. Despite the efforts of international bodies the use of toxic chemicals has increase every year since 1954, when the first warnings against its use were issued. A resolution adopted by the British Section of ICBP at their meeting in 1963 urged the Government to require that the products which are poisonous to man or wild life be plainly labelled 'POISON'. There is increasing evidence of fatal effects of such-lethal doses of toxic chemicals on predatory birds, especially on fish eating birds.

\* \* \* \*

International Wildfowl Research Bureau

The Executive Board of the IWRB met in June 1963. A resolution drew attention to the danger to wildfowl from prolonged winters of the type which occurred in 1962/63. It noted that in those countries where hunting was closed wildfowl benefitted greatly and others were requested to follow suit. The Conference also recommended that the SHELDUCK be protected in all countries for a period of five years.

---

CORRESPONDENCE

Reproducing of papers already published

May I suggest that you print (or reprint, of course) the articles that were once published by Hugh Whistler, 'The Study of Indian Birds' (J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc. 23, etc.)? To many members of the Field Club these articles may be unfamiliar, interesting, and extremely useful.

Dr Sálím Ali's request for information on our birds has caught me on the wrong foot. On my transfer to Ernakulam I was forced to send 38 volumes of my bird-journal to my permanent home. The same circumstance may prevent me in future from helping you with matter for the Newsletter -- unless, of course, I see something interesting here.

I have on hand something like Mrs. Jamal Ara's observations on a male Baya -- a series of timed observations of nesting Goldenback Woodpeckers. But that sort of thing does not normally attract the reader.

Why not try to get a series of articles on the existing bird sanctuaries in India? The Wild Life Board should be able to provide the material. If you can get me the matter, I dont mind trying to put it into some sort of shape.

K.K. Neelakantan.

\* \* \* \*

A letter from Ceylon

Since I took over the secretaryship of the Ceylon Bird Club for a few months I have just begun to see your publication. May I congratulate you on it; it is easily the best magazine of its kind I have come across.

May I make one or two comments on the last two numbers.

1. Purplerumped Sunbirds: In Ceylon this bird breeds mainly in the first half of the year, but a few nests have been found right through the year. I give figures of the number of records of nests that I have -- they are culled from the notes of W.W.A. Phillips and the Ceylon Bird

Club as well as my own observations: Jan. 5; Feb. 15; Mar. 27; Apr. 28; May 24; June 11; July 8; Aug. 3; Sept. 2; Oct. 4; Nov. 1; Dec. 3. The monsoon begins here in May and from June until mid or late September high south-west winds prevail over the north-east, dry, part of the country, while the south-west is also wet. The pair of birds in my garden on the south-east coast built in June last year, and August this year; in both cases the nest was destroyed, this year before the eggs were laid, and in both cases the destruction was probably accomplished by wind and rain.

2. Pittas and Crows: For some years my father lived between the main road and the sea coast -- a distance of some 200 yards -- in Colombo. The main birds were Crows, Sparrows, Magpie Robins, and a pair of Tailor Birds. But each year during November a Pitta would appear on one or two mornings. Often it was harried by a company of crows and appeared exhausted. Once I picked up a dead bird, but though it had been killed by crows it showed no signs of having been eaten.

3. Glossy Ibises used to be present in moderate numbers in Ceylon, but the first record of one this century was at Kalametiya on the south-east coast in November 1952 where two were seen by Mr. C. E. Norris. I saw one in the same place on September 11th and again on September 16th this year. In both cases it was in the company of a large concourse of wading birds of all sizes from stints to Painted Storks and including upwards of 100 White Ibises. When the water in the lagoon rose most of the larger wading birds disappeared and the Glossy Ibis has not been seen again.

Rev. G.C. Jackson  
The Mission House, Tangalla, Ceylon  
November 14, 1963

\* \* \* \*

Pittas and Crows

November issue of the Newsletter is very interesting. The note about Pittas interested me most.

In my experience I have collected dead Pittas in Dadar, Bombay, three times in 1954 and 1956. In August 1954 and July 1955 dead Pittas were collected at the Veterinary College and Haffkine Institute at Parel Bombay by the respective staff.

From Shri K.K. Neelakantan's note I now feel that these Pittas also must be victims of crows.

P.W. Soman  
Bombay Natural History Society

\* \* \* \*

The 1st Annual General Meeting of the Birdwatchers' Field Club to be held on Saturday, 14 December 1963 at the rooms of the Bombay Natural History Society at 91 Walkeshwar Road, Bombay 6 - some suggestions received from readers.

As an item for the future activity of the Birdwatchers' Field Club of India, I submit the following suggestion for consideration at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting:

The Club should take suitable steps to install at least one nestbox (artificial nesting site) on each school campus in India

This should help in making school children aware of birds. The artificial nesting site will be a spot they can often look to. It can be a regular nestbox or an empty tin (in a shady place) or even an earthen pot. (There is an element of risk in using the last.)

I wish the meeting and the Club all success.

Joseph George  
Central Building Research Inst.,  
Roorkee, U.P.

\*

\*

\*

\*

I am a member of the Club (Membership No. 237), and am regularly getting your Newsletter from January 1963. I have also received the Constitution (Draft) of the Club in your October issue and intimation of the meeting in the November issue. I want to put some of the suggestions listed below for the consideration of the General body which please put on the Agenda items and oblige.

Item - 1. Whether it is possible for the Club to conduct the Bird Study Camps for a week or for a fortnight for the members of the Club. If so, the General body may consider to participate in this type of activity.

Item - 2. The Club will allow its members as a special case and may nominate to permit on behalf of the Club, to take part in the Bird Ringing Camps, i.e. Hingolghadh and Bombay.

Item - 3. The Club should issue a member badge or certificate to its members with or without fees.

Kindly do the needful and let me know accordingly as it is not possible for me to attend the meeting

Harshavadan G. Gor,  
Ahmedabad, Gujarat State

\*

\*

\*

\*

I have the following points to make regarding the Newsletter and the Club:

Club: Regarding the draft constitution, it seems to me to be asking too much of the Secretary to undertake the duties of Secretary, Editor of the Newsletter, and Treasurer. I am quite sure that as the activities of the Club grow this will prove far too much for one person. Each of these three responsibilities are distinct and separate and should be undertaken by three different individuals.

#### Newsletter

1. The Newsletter should be stapled on the centre line, i.e. in the fold instead of through the side as at present. This should improve page trimming and neatness.

2. The Club should now select a bird as its symbol, the name of which should be the name of the Newsletter. We should get an artist to produce a nice attractive drawing of the bird which should then always appear on our stationery, the cover of the Newsletter, etc. Examples are The Ibis, The Auk, Pavo, etc. The Hornbill adopted by our own Bombay Natural History Society, the Gannet by the British Trust for Ornithology, the Grouse by British Birds magazines etc. In this connection may I suggest the Sarus as a large, elegant bird which is so well known and is so characteristically Indian. Moreover, the name is short and snappy, yet uncommon, and the bird itself gives the artist plenty of scope and would make a really handsome emblem. The title of the Newsletter could then be: SARUS - Newsletter of the Birdwatchers' Field Club of India.

3. Some simple rules for the guidance of contributors should be issued such as those printed inside the cover of the BNHS Journal. This will lighten the task of the Editor. I certainly think we should insist that contributors give the scientific name of the bird of which they are writing in brackets after the first time that its English name is mentioned.

: 11 :

We should use the nomenclature of Ripley's SYNOPSIS.

4. I think we should work towards raising the status of the Newsletter to that of a journal.

In conclusion, may I take the opportunity of expressing the hope that you will have a very successful first A.G.M. of the Club. How I wish I could be there. However, you have my sincerest good wishes for the Club's prosperity.

S.K. Reeves  
Epsom, Surrey, England.

---

Zafar Futehally  
Editor, Newsletter for Birdwatchers  
32-A Juhu Lane, Andheri, Bombay 58

## editorial board

Dr. Salim Ali, F.N.I.,  
33 Pali Hill, Bandra, Bombay 50

K. S. Lavkumar,  
Rajkumar College, Rajkot

Dr. R. M. Naik,  
M. S. University, Baroda

Mrs. Usha Ganguli,  
10 Cavalry Lines, Delhi 6

Mrs. Jamal Ara,  
4 European Bachelors' Qrs.  
Doranda, Hinoo P.O., Ranchi, Bihar

Mr. E. D. Avari,  
Bengal Natural Hist. Soc., Darjeeling

Dr. Biswamoy Biswas,  
Indian Museum, Zoological Survey of India,

Prof. K. K. Neelakantan,  
XXI/12799 Karikkamuri Road,

Editor:  
Mr. Zafar Futehally,  
Juhu Lane, Andheri,  
Bombay 58

Cover design by S.