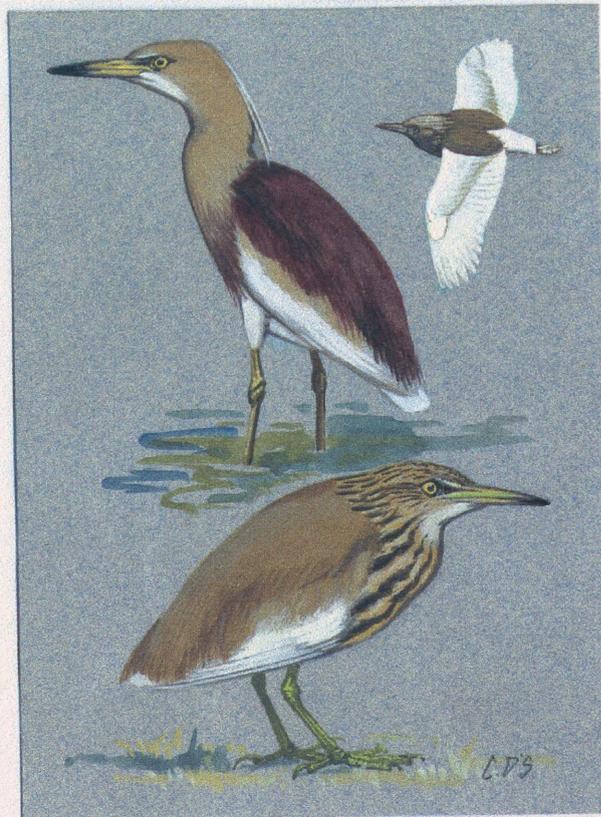


THE POND HERON or PADDY-BIRD

The Pond Heron (46cms) is a chameleon. When he flies he is white, when he lands he is brown, or rather brownish because even on the ground he can assume several hues depending on whether the sun is on him (definitely brown), or behind him (dark grey), or if you see him side-on (all one colour) and head-on or tail first (bits of white). He can also adopt several poses – alert like a heron when at work, horizontal like a seagull or squashed flat when he can often disappear completely into the herbage. You will see him most often in wet paddies and also near rivers and *jheels* and sometimes he will perch rather ridiculously on the very top of small trees and even on telegraph poles, but never on the wires. When he flies you can distinguish him from an egret by the flopping rhythm of his wings, a stumpy tail and absence of trailing black legs. He never seems to do so much work as the egrets, often standing immobile for hours on end while they forage all around him. Rather than go after them, he waits for a frog or small fish to come to him. He seldom utters a sound except for a feeble croak if he is startled.



Adult in breeding plumage - above
Non-breeding and immature - below and in flight

THE POOD HERON OR PADDY-BIRD

The pood heron ^(46cm) is a ~~chameleon~~ chameleon. When he flies he is white, when he lands he is brown, or ^{with} brownish because even on the ground he can assume several hues depending on whether the sun is on his ^(definitely brown) _{head} or behind him ^(dark grey) or whether he is on side or (all on side) head on or tail first (bits of white). He can also adopt several ~~postures~~ poses, almost like a heron when at work, horizontal like a seagull or squarish flat when he can often ^{completely} disappear into the ^{HERBIVORE} ~~herbage~~ ^{herbage}. He will sometimes you will see him nest after in wet puddles but ^{also} on trees & geels & sometimes he will perch ^{with} ~~in~~ ^{on} the very top of small trees but never & even on ~~on~~ a telegraph pole, but never on the wires. When he flies you can distinguish him from an eagle by the flapping rhythm of his wing - beat -

by the absence of a tail or ^{any} trailing blind legs.
He is ~~very common in wet places~~ but never seems to
do so much work as the aquatic, after standing
immobile for hours on end. whilst they dig & deluge
all around him. Rather than going after them he is
waiting for a frog or small fish to come to him.
Again he seldom utters a sound.

THE BULBULS

There are two species of bulbul you will see in Goa, the ^(20 cm) red-vented & the ^(same size) red-whiskered. The red-vented is a dusky bird with a minimal black comb, scale-like markings on his back, a white patch on his rump (which you see best when he is flying) and a scaled streak under the root of his tail which again is not always easy to see owing to its ^{discrete} position. This is a dumpy bird, he does not seem to care how he looks & his feathers are often in some disarray & although the same size as the red-whiskered he looks sounder & fatter & something of a tramp. In contrast the red-whiskered bulbul is an extremely dapper individual, slim, elegant & beautifully marked with a feet ^{black} pointed comb, white cheeks, red whiskers, brown.

beak + a white underbelly. He too has a red vent.
You will see larks in gardens, woods +
light scrub. They tend to go in pairs, pecking,
flying + then perching again. They seldom sit still
for more than a few minutes. Neither lark sings
much of a melody but both are cheerful and
chirpy, ~~is there~~ + quite noisy with it.

CROW

Everybody knows the crow. He is the commonest commonest bird in Goa & the most disliked. This is because he is noisy when roosting in palm trees, often in great numbers, starting a row down before dawn & at sunset & after breaking out into a noisy outburst in the small hours. He is also a thief, tending to steal any unguarded food left on a verandah or near to a window & generally he has a despicable image as a universal scavenger. Apart from picking at carrion on the roads he never seems to do anything, always flying about aimlessly from here to there & from there to here. He seems to have no pattern or purpose to his life. The crow you see in Goa is the house crow ^(40 cm) but has a more respectable reputation in the jungle crow ^(48 cm) /

who is ~~get~~ ^{bleed} all over when the horse
crow has a nasty ^{mouth} grey ^{over his} head & shoulders. His
crowing is usually quite relaxed but can become
excited - even hysterical - in times of crow crisis.

Sometimes you will see three or four crows
^{happily} ~~making~~ a hit. Goodness knows why they do this because
the chase never results in any real action & if there
was to be a showdown the crows would surely
come off worst.

see he is ^{the} taller ~~than the other~~ of the two

The Cattle egret is an industrious bird constantly
on the ^{SEARCH} ground for food in pastures + dry fields. He
is also patient, being prepared to patrol a
cow for hours, waiting ~~for a~~ ^{CHANCE} chance
moment. When an egret flies he has a steady wing-beat,
his neck is doubled back and his long blue legs ~~stick~~
trail out behind him like two steel rods. I have never
heard an egret utter a sound ~~although~~ ~~although~~.

BABBLERS

The babblers as their name implies are a noisy crew. They seldom travel alone, almost always in a group of anything from four or five birds up to twenty or more. They are often called the Seven Sisters, but ^{the figure number} seven must be taken as an approximate average for the groups vary ~~enormously~~ in greatly in size.

For the size of the groups vary greatly. The babbler you are most likely to see is the Teufou (25 cm). He is uniformly brown on top & has a reddish-brown underbelly: like all ~~birds~~ babblers he has a wicked eye, yellow, penetrating & sinister. A squad of babblers ~~is~~ ^{is} constantly on the move, leafhopping ahead of each other on low branches ^{where they find dead leaves & dry rubbish.} & on the ground. This is their preferred level of activity although sometimes they will venture

on to a high tree or on to telegraph wires.
But they are used still for long & their progress
is marked by a clatter of whistles & squeals.

They have a skeleton in the Common Babbler ^(23 cm) whose
back is somewhat stunted & whose chest is a
whitish turning down to faintly ^{SICUL KEYS} under belly.

* Both hands are skulchers, scavengers & somehow
be the equivalent in bird life of
see to ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~behave~~ ^{these} poor souls who scavenge
through death for a living. Not a bird you
can admire or respect.