# **ENVIS Centre on AVIAN ECOLOGY**



ENVIS Newsletter Vol. 20, No. 1, 2015







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# **ABOUT ENVIS**

ENVIS (Environmental Information System) is a network of subject-specific centres located in various institutions throughout India. The focal point of the present 66 ENVIS centres in India is at the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, New Delhi, which further serves as the Regional Service Centre (RSC) for INFOTERRA, the global information network of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to cater to environment information needs in the South Asian sub-region. The primary objective of all ENVIS centres is to collect, collate, store and disseminate environment related information to various user groups, including researchers, policy planners, and decision makers.

The ENVIS Centre at the Bombay Natural History Society was set up in June 1996 to serve as a source of information on Avian Ecology.

# **Objectives of the ENVIS Centre at BNHS**

To create a bibliographic database of published literature related to avian ecology study
To publish and distribute *BUCEROS* newsletter on avian ecology to its members
To create and upload databases on avian ecology on ENVIS website <u>www.bnhsenvis.nic.in</u>
To reply to queries related to birds



Avian Ecology Vol. 20, No. 1, 2015

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# **EDITORIAL**

A person takes up a hobby out of passion. One may move a step ahead and turn this hobby into one's chosen field of work. One such hobby is birdwatching. Birdwatching is a delight for people around the world; it has its own way of rejuvenating the birdwatcher. It gives one the joy of walking through the most beautiful landscapes and the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of nature. Yet it is not necessary to visit a forest or field to fulfill this hobby, it can also be done in one's backyard, even in urban settlements. In this issue, we have covered two beautifully written articles in which the authors have shared their birding experiences. One article is on birding in northwest India and other is on birding in Pawalgarh Conservation Reserve in Uttarakhand. While reading these articles, one can surely imagine the beauty of the terrain and experience the fun of birdwatching. Another important feature of the articles is that the authors have given annotated checklists of the birds sighted. Such checklists add value to the avian database of that area. Amateur birdwatchers can look at these articles as a guide to pen their birding experiences.

The most important component of birdwatching is identifying the species observed. Many of us rely on field guides, but technology has a role to play even in this field. Nowadays there are mobile applications developed to do this job. Several web based android applications are being developed to identify commonly seen birds. Though there are many pros and cons to this, it is surely good news for today's tech savvy generation. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is the one which always come up with such innovations. We have covered news which will shed light on this initiative.

Ecosystem services provided by birds are known to all, but it is important to quantify the economic value of these services. To achieve this, one needs thorough information on the avifauna of a geographic location and the services provided by them. Indian Bird Conservation Network is all set to compile a bird atlas for the state of Kerala. The bird atlas attempts to provide information on distribution, abundance, and seasonal as well as long-term changes in bird population. This cumbersome task will ultimately help to accumulate baseline data which can be used to quantify the ecosystem services provided by birds. We have covered news on this subject for our readers.

For the first time, we are publishing an article in hindi for our readers. It gives the reader a glimpse of the European Roller's stay in central India during migration. The author has put forth the observations and findings of his team over two years in a very informative way. It will certainly generate interest amongst birdwatchers and encourage them to observe bird behaviour.

In the Abstracts section, we have included abstracts on research conducted to highlight the importance of birdbaths in urban areas, and population trends of common birds observed over a period of five years in a residential area of Thiruvananthapuram city in Kerala.

I hope our readers will find this issue informative and interesting to read.

Pratik P. Tambe Scientist-in-Charge

# 4th Advisory committee meeting of BNHS-ENVIS Centre

As per the recommendations of the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, Government of India, at the National Evaluation Workshop held in August 2012, the BNHS has constituted an Advisory Committee for monitoring and guiding the activities of the BNHS-ENVIS Centre on Avian Ecology.

The 4th meeting of this Advisory Committee for ENVIS Centre was held on July13, 2015 at 2.00 pm at Hornbill House. Dr. Asad R. Rahmani, Director



4th Advisory commitee meeting

BNHS and Coordinator, ENVIS Centre on Avian Ecology, chaired the meeting. Dr. Ashok M. Bhagwat, Honorary Secretary, Dr. Deepak Apte, Chief Operating Officer, and other members of BNHS along with ENVIS staff attended the meeting. Dr. Goldin Quadros, Coordinator, ENVIS Centre on Wetland Ecosystems including Inland Wetlands, SACON, attended the meeting and shared his views and comments about the Centre. All the activities of ENVIS Centre held since the last Advisory Committee meeting in November 2014 were reviewed by the Committee. Members of the Committee gave their comments on the database of the website and overall functioning of the Centre. The ENVIS team is implementing the suggestions of the members to provide thorough information to users.

# National News

### IBCN to compile Kerala Bird Atlas

The Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN) will soon compile a bird atlas of Kerala, which will be the first bird atlas of an Indian state. A decision in this regard was taken at a workshop of the IBCN held at the College of Forestry (CoF), Kerala Agricultural University.

A bird atlas gives the precise distribution pattern of birds in a region, and when put together over a period of time, it provides accurate trends of bird presence. Kerala has to its credit six bird monitoring schemes, which include recording common birds, heronries, water birds, pelagic (sea) birds, and forest birds.

The workshop discussed several bird conservation related issues. It was attended by experts from the Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB) - UK, Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) - India, and 55 Kerala birdwatchers.

#### **Impressive schemes**

"The impressive range of bird monitoring schemes being undertaken by Kerala birders makes it one of the leading states for birdwatching in India. It was exciting to see the enthusiasm and dedication of Kerala birders at the IBCN workshop," said Bruce Liggitt of the RSPB.

The workshop proposed that the ecosystem services approach should be used to evaluate Kerala's wetlands and the state should also consider setting up a 'conservation toll' for highways that pass through wildlife areas.

"Kerala currently has 24 Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs). Eleven more have been identified. These biodiversity jewels in Kerala's crown are of high value not just for birds, but for fish and butterflies as well and should be protected. The wetlands of the state distinguish Kerala from many other states. These amazing places deserve protection," said Neha Sinha of BNHS-India.

Source: http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/ibcn-to-compile-kerala-bird-atlas/article7327975.ece





# Bird Identification App Developed By Cornell Research Team

A research project, collaborated on by Cornell Lab of Ornithology, USA and Visipedia, has led to the development of a sophisticated bird identification application. The software's advanced algorithm is capable of recognizing hundreds of different bird species from photos. The app, known as Merlin Bird Photo ID, can work out the identities of some 400 birds common to Canada and the United States.



According to Merlin Project Leader Jessie Barry, Merlin Bird Photo ID manages to find the identity of a given bird and place it within its "top three" results section around 90 percent of the time. "It's designed to keep improving the more people use it," added Barry, referring to Merlin's machine-learning technology.

Merlin users simply upload a photo of an unidentified bird and tell the application where and when the image was snapped. Users then draw a box around the bird, thereby ensuring the algorithm doesn't get confused by some of the surrounding foliage or landscape. They are then tasked with selecting the creature's bill, eye and tail. Once these steps have been successfully executed, the app gets to work and presents a result within seconds. The software not only recognizes the bird species but presents users with additional photos and sounds of the bird in question.

Serge Belongie, a computer science professor at Cornell Tech, explained that computers are far superior to humans when it comes to processing images. "They can organize, index and match vast constellations of visual information such as the colours of the feathers and shapes of the bill," he explained.

However, while Merlin offers a powerful indexing and identification service, it relies heavily on the work of human beings. Merlin accesses a vast catalogue of thousands of bird images, all of which have been pre-identified by ornithologists and bird enthusiasts. The algorithm also takes advantage of a bird sighting database, eBird.org, to narrow down its search and more accurately hone in on a particular bird's identity.

Source: http://www.viralglobalnews.com/science/bird-identification-app-developed-by-cornell-research-team/30888/



## The European Robin is selected as the national bird of UK

A campaign to select the UK's most popular bird has been concluded and the winner, unsurprisingly to many, is the European Robin. The European male variety is distinguished by a distinctive red breast.

The UK, unlike many other nations, does not have a national bird. As part of a campaign to resolve this, ornithologist David Lindo ran a poll whereby people could vote from a shortlist to determine which feathered friend most typified Britain. The outcome was the robin. Given the ubiquity of the red breasted bird adorning many Christmas cards, the selection was perhaps unsurprising.

Talking with the BBC ahead of the close of the poll, and predicting victory for the robin, Lindo reminded voters that the robin, although found in many British



European Robin Erithacus rubecula

im Sandle

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gardens during the winter, is arguably not a "true" British bird: "People consider the robin as a British bird – but [like] a lot of our native birds, some of the population move south to Siberia for the winter and are replaced by immigrants from the continent."

With the poll outcome, some 240,000 people voted. Of these, some 34 percent selected the robin as the best candidate for the national bird. Coming a distant second was the barn owl, with 12 percent; and close behind, at number three and with 11 percent, was the blackbird, known for its beautiful song.

At number four was the wren and taking fifth spot was the red kite. At sixth was the kingfisher; whereas seventh and eighth spots were taken by mute swan and the blue tit. Finishing off the top 10 came the hen harrier and the puffin.

With the selection of the robin, an opinion piece in *The Independent* points out that the bird is not quite as 'cute' as it is often portrayed; noting that robins compete very extensively both for territory and females often fight very aggressively.

Discussing the outcome, Lindo told *The Guardian*: "If the truth be known it would be great if something else had won, like a blackbird, but I'm very happy still that a European Robin has been confirmed as Britain's national bird. I think it's good and I think it's a bird that we can be proud of and hoist up on our shoulders now."

As a comparator to the diminutive robin, the U.S. has the American bald eagle as its national bird; India has the vibrant peacock; Australia has the flightless emu; and France has Gallic rooster, the cockerel.

The next stage of Lindo's campaign is to have the British government formally adopt the robin as the national bird.

Source: <u>http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/environment/the-robin-is-selected-as-the-u-k-s-national-bird/article/435651#ixzz3fkHd7BPd</u>





Pawalgarh Conservation Reserve is the third conservation reserve in the state of Uttarakhand. It is located in Nainital district between the Ramnagar-Haldwani Highway and the rivers Dabka and Kosi. The reserve includes beautiful and biodiversity-rich *terai-bhabhar* forests in Nainital district and in Ramnagar Forest Division in Uttarakhand (29.36 N and 79.24 E). The altitude of the area varies from 300 to 700 msl. This conservation reserve, which was notified in December 2012, encompasses an area of nearly 49 sq. km, and is part of the Terai Arc Landscape. Pawalgarh Conservation Reserve has some beautiful patches of forests which attract many birdwatchers. These patches are Pawalgarh, Sitabani, Kyari, Sandanigaja, Kaladhungi, and Kotabagh. Pawalgarh was once the hunting ground of Jim Corbett and many of his stories are set in this area, including the hunt for the famed tiger, 'The Bachelor of Pawalgarh'. It has patches of Sino-Himalayan Subtropical as well as Sino-Himalayan Temperate Forest, besides cropfields and many villages.

We attended the 2nd Uttarakhand Spring Bird Festival which was held in Pawalgarh Conservation Reserve. The festival was organized during February 4–8, 2015. The main objectives behind this festival are to involve more people in birdwatching and promote bird tourism, to create employment for the local people. More than 3,000 people attended this four-day festival, including more than 1,000 school children and members of the local community.

We participated in the various trails and also birdwatched opportunistically in and around Pawalgarh and Chunakhan (near Bailparao) areas, the Hathigaliyar trail on February 5, the waterfall in Chunakhan Range on February 6, and did the Karda Srot trail on February 7, 2015, as well as Buck Scent Resort and around Chunakhan Forest Rest House (FRH). We sighted 94 species of birds during five days.



#### **Annotations:**

#### February 5, 2015:

The following species were sighted at Pawalgarh FRH -Hathigaliyar (Sitabani) trail:

Peregrine Falcon Falco peregrinus seen perched and hunting in a crop field near Chunakhan FRH. A Himalayan Pied Kingfisher Cervle lugubris was seen hunting in the river bed. It kept a safe distance from us. Four River Lapwing Vanellus duvaucelii were seen in the river basin. Two Cinereous Vulture Aegypius monachus (Near Threatened) were seen perched atop trees. A flock of four Great Slaty Woodpecker Mulleripicus pulverulentus (Vulnerable) flew across the river over our heads, calling loudly. A few Hair-crested Drongo Dicrurus hottentotus, and a Red-billed Blue-Magpie Urocissa ervthrorhyncha were seen moving in tree canopies. Other important sightings of the day were Bar-tailed Treecreeper Certhia himalayana, Grey-crowned Warbler Seicercus burkii, Plumbeous Water-redstart Phoenicurus fuliginosus, Chestnut-headed Tesia Oligura castaneocoronata, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker Hypopicus hyperythrus, and a Steppe Eagle Aquila nipalensis. A Pied Flycatcher-shrike Hemipus picatus, and a flock of Little Pied Flycatcher Ficedula westermanni were seen.

#### February 6, 2015:

A Black Stork Ciconia nigra was seen in the river bed. It flew and landed after flying some distance. Other important sightings of the day were Lineated Barbet Megalaima lineata, Himalayan Bulbul Pycnonotus leucogenys, Black-crested Bulbul Pycnonotus flaviventris, Red-breasted Flycatcher Ficedula parva, and Greybreasted Prinia Prinia hodgsonii.

Tawny Fish-owl Ketupa flavipes: A single bird was seen in dense forest, roosting in a tree near Barati Rau waterfall in Chunakhan area. It was identified later from the photographs.

#### February 7, 2015:

Pawalgarh to Karda Srot Trails:

The trail from the Pawalgarh FRH towards Karda Srot yielded good sightings. These included a flock of 8-10 Green-crowned Warbler Seicercus burkii which was seen in bushes. They kept calling in a very low tone and kept to the inside of the bush. A lone Slaty-blue Flycatcher Ficedula tricolor was seen on the fringe of forest and crop field.

Alexandrine Parakeet Psittacula eupatria (Near Threatened): A single bird was seen on February 7, 2015 flying over a cropfield.



Fulvous-breasted Pied Woodpecker Dendrocopos macei





Lineated Barbet Megalaima lineata



Parus cinereus

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Plumbeous Water-redstart Phoenicurus fuliginosus



Himalayan Bulbul Pycnonotus leucogenys



White-throated Fantail Rhipibura albicollis

#### Other birds observed:

Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri* (Near Threatened): At least six birds were seen on February 5, a flock of 24 birds was seen on February 6, and at least 25 of them were seen on February 7,2015.

Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris*: A few birds were seen around the Chunakhan Forest Rest House area every day. On February 5, 2015, we saw six of them feeding on ripe figs. Next day, we saw nine of these hornbills. They regularly visited an ancient Peepal *Ficus religiosa* tree nearby, which was laden with figs. They were highly vocal and announced their arrival loudly.

Jungle Owlet *Glaucidium radiatum*: An owlet near Pawalgarh village was seen active in a cropfield, even at 12:30 am in full sunlight. Another was seen in Chunakhan FRH active throughout the day.

#### **Other Fauna:**

As Pawalgarh is near Corbett Tiger Reserve, most of the larger mammals and other fauna is expected to be similar. During our stay, we saw Cheetal *Axis axis*, troops of Nepal Grey Langur *Semnopithecus schistaceus*, and Rhesus Macaque *Macaca mulatta* in the croplands. Among reptiles, we saw an Indian Rock Python *Python molurus*.

#### **Discussion:**

Pawalgarh is home to at least 350 species of birds. A checklist of Pawalgarh published by the Uttarakhand Forest Department (Anon. 2015) contains 352 species of birds. There are no other published papers about this site. E-bird website (www.ebird.org, accessed on July 17, 2015) has a checklist of 119 species of birds reported from Pawalgarh. A checklist of 687 species of birds of Uttarakhand compiled by Mohan & Sondhi (2014) has recently been published by the Uttarakhand Forest Department.

#### Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Mr. Sanjay Sondhi (of Titli Trust) and Mr. Rajiv Bhartari, Chief Conservator of Forests and Ecotourism, and the organizers of the festival for excellent arrangements during the entire programme.

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Anon. (2015) A Checklist of the Birds of Pawalgarh Conservation Reserve. Published by Uttarakhand Forest Department. Pp.18. Mohan, D. & Sondhi, S. (2014) An updated checklist of the birds of

Uttarakhand. Uttarakhand Forest Department. Pp. 54. eBird website:

http://ebird.org/ebird/hotspot/L3295186?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec

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- \*\* Nandkishor Dudhe, Research Assistant IBA-IBCN



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Sr.	Species	Scientific Name	Sr.	Species	Scientific Name	Sr.	Species	Scientific Name
1	Great Egret	Egretta alba	34	Coppersmith Barbet	Xantholaema haemacephala	64	Slaty-blue Flycatcher	Ficedula tricolor
2	Eastern Cattle Egret	Bubulcus coromandus	35	Brown-headed Barbet	Megalaima zeylanica	65	Jungle Babbler	Turdoides striata
3	Indian Pond-heron	Ardeola grayii	36	Lineated Barbet	Megalaima lineata	99	Rufous Sibia	Malacias capistratus
4	Striated Heron	Butorides striata	72	Fulvous-breasted Pied	Doudwoorso massi	67	Ashy Prinia	Prinia socialis
5	Black Stork	Ciconia nigra	'n	Woodpecker	Denarocopos macer	68	Grey-breasted Prinia	Prinia hodgsonii
9	Black-winged Kite	Elanus caeruleus	38	Rufous-bellied	Hypopicus hyperythrus	69	Common Tailorbird	Orthotomus sutorius
7	Black Kite	Milvus migrans	5	Woodpecker	an un la dla anna da dla	70	Chestnut-headed Tesia	Oligura castaneocoronata
8	Shikra	Accipiter badius	39	Himalayan Pied	Dendrocopos himalayensis	71	Green-crowned Warbler	Seicercus burkii
6	Crested Serpent-eagle	Spilornis cheela		wouldervei	Diane obleveloubue	72	Grey-crowned Warbler	Seicercus tephrocephalus
10	Changeable Hawk-eagle	Nisaetus limnaeetus	40	Lesser Yellownape	r icus critor otopitus chlorolophus	73	Grey-headed Canary-	Culicicapa ceylonensis
11	Steppe Eagle	Aquila nipalensis	41	Himalavan Flameback	Dinopium shorii	i	flycatcher	· · ·
12	Cinereous Vulture	Aegypius monachus	47	Black-mmed Flamehack	Dinonium henohalense	74	Cinereous Tit	Parus cinereus
13	Peregrine Falcon	Falco peregrinus	43	Great Slaty Woodnerker	Mullevinicus milverulentus	75	Bar-tailed Treecreeper	Certhia himalayana
14	Red Junglefowl	Gallus gallus	44	White Wantail	Motacilla alba	76	Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch	Sitta cinnamoventris
15	Indian Peafowl	Pavo cristatus	45	White-browed Waotail	Motacilla maderasnatensis	Ľ	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	Sitta frontalis
16	Red-wattled Lapwing	Vanellus indicus	46	Common Woodshrike	Tenbrodornis nondicerisus	78	Oriental White-eye	Zosterops palpebrosus
17	River Lanwing	Vanellus duvaucelii		Diod Elvorthos chaile	Upinouorius pointeer tutus	79	Crimson Sunbird	Aethopyga siparaja
18	Rock Pigeon	Columba livia	4/	FIEU FIYCAICHEF-SHITKE	Devision of the local of the lo	80	House Sparrow	Passer domesticus
19	Laughing Dove	Snilonelia seneoalensis	0 1 1 0		r ericrocous emologus	81	Indian Baya Weaver	Ploceus philippinus philippinus
20	Spotted Dove	Spilopelia chinensis	4 4	Dod wootod Dulkul	Ferterocotus spectosus	82	Indian Golden Oriole	Oriolus kundoo
21	Emerald Dove	Chalconhans indica	00	Keu-veilleu Dullul	r ycnonotus cajer	83	Black-hooded Oriole	Oriolus xanthornus
17	Plum-headed Parakeet	Poittacula evanocenhala	10	Ked-whiskered Bulbul	Pycnonotus jocosus	84	Black Drongo	Edolius macrocercus
23	Rose-ringed Parakeet	Psittacula krameri	70	Himalayan Bulbul	Pycnonotus leucogenys	85	Ashy Drongo	Edolius leucophaeus
24	Alexandrine Parakeet	Psittacula eunatria	CC 4	Black-crested Bulbul	Pychonotus flaviventris	86	Hair-crested Drongo	Dicrurus hottentotus
25	Red-hreasted Parakeet	Psittacula alexandri	н 1 1 1	Volland 1013	Aegunna upna	87	Bronzed Drongo	Chaptia aenea
26	Greater Coucal	Centropus sinensis	20	White throated Fantail	Chenaornyna nypoxanna Dhinidura alhicollis	88	Greater Racket-tailed	Dicentrus naradiseus
27	Tawny Fish-owl	Ketuna flavines		Dive Whietling thunch	Mupulous company		Drongo	
30	lunala Ourlat	Ganoidium vadiatum	10	Blue wnisung-unrusn	Myopnonus caeruteus	89	Asian Pied Starling	Gracupica contra
20	White threated Vinaficher	Utututum tututum Udanan summandis	28	Oriental Magpie-robin	Copsychus saularis	90	Common Myna	Acridotheres tristis
67		nucyon smyrnensis	59	Plumbeous Water-redstart	Phoenicurus fuliginosus	91	House Crow	Corvus splendens
30	Common Kingtisher	Alcedo atthis	60	Siberian Stonechat	Saxicola maurus	Ş		Corvus [macrorhynchos]
31	Himalayan Pied Kingfisher	Ceryle lugubris	61	Grey Bushchat	Rhodophila ferrea	92	Large-billed Crow	japonensis
32	Indian Grey Hornbill	Ocyceros birostris	62	Little Pied Flycatcher	Ficedula westermanni	93	Red-billed Blue Magpie	Urocissa erythrorhyncha
33	Oriental Pied Hornbill	Anthracoceros albirostris	63	Red-breasted Flycatcher	Ficedula parva	94	Rufous Treepie	Dendrocitta vagabunda

**Checklist of Birds Sighted in Pawalgarh** 

# **Birding in North-West India**

**Text and Photographs: Asif N. Khan** 

Birdwatching, or birding as it popularly known, is picking up in our country. While birding in places like the Himalaya or wetlands of Bharatpur and Gujarat or the Northeast hills is fascinating, birding in the desert and semi-arid regions of Rajasthan is an acquired taste. Unlike the majestic storks and cranes of Bharatpur, or colourful passerines of the Northeast and the rest of Himalaya, the birds here are shades of brown and yellow. And being non-attractive to most people, nature has done its job well. But be patient and take second look at the dry and drab monotone habitat, a rustle in the grass, a sharp call in the distance, a twitch in the ground, and the habitat slowly comes alive.

Many a times classified as barren land or wasteland, the desert and semi-arid habitat attracts least support when it is under threat. The mindset of the general public of identifying wildlife habitats with lush forest and wildlife with iconic animals and birds, like the Tiger, Asian Elephant, or the Great Pied Hornbill, has resulted in the ignorance of habitats like scrubland, grassland, and desert. With the motive to show our members the beauty of north-western India and the landscape's potential as a good birding destination, we chalked out a route to explore the "Land of the Kings", Rajasthan.

Naliasar Wetlands & Sambhar Lake:



Birds flocking along the Sambhar railway line

We started our journey from the pink city, Jaipur (26° 54' 0" N, 75° 48' 0" E). To the amazement of our driver, we asked him to head out of the city to the small, offbeat town of Sujangarh (27° 42' 0" N, 74° 28' 12" E). Enroute we halted at the Naliasar wetland (26° 52' 8" N, 75° 10' 50" E), which is a small wetland in the middle of a vast arid landscape, and attracts a whole array of wetland species. During the winter months, it plays host to migratory and non-migratory birds alike. One can see Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*, Greylag Goose *Anser anser*, Northern



Shoveller Spatula clypeata, Northern Pintail Anas acuta, Spotted Redshank Tringa erythropus, Western Osprey Pandion haliaetus, and Western Marsh Harrier Circus aeruginosus.

Great Salt Lake of Sambhar (26° 58′ 0″ N, 75° 5′ 0″ E), which is close to the Naliasar wetlands, is the largest inland salt lake in India. It has been designated as a Ramsar Site on the basis of Ramsar Criteria 2 (wetland supports threatened ecological communities), 5 (wetland regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds), 6 (wetland regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies). Ramsar wetland type Q (Permanent saline lake). It is home to an array of waterfowl and flocks of Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* that winter here. The lake also has a railway line that passes right through it, with noisy trains hooting right next to flocks of Greater Flamingo and ducks, which just shows how adaptable these birds can be.

#### Tal Chhapar Wildlife Sanctuary:

About 14 km from the small town of Sujangarh is the Tal Chhapar Sanctuary (27° 47' 53.31" N, 74° 26' 5.77" E), a small but well-managed grassland sanctuary situated in Churu district (28° 17' 24" N, 74° 57' 36" E) in Rajasthan. Though renowned for

the Blackbuck, it is a treat for raptor watchers too. The sanctuary has been famous for rarities like Indian Spotted Creeper Salpornis spilonotus, Eastern Imperial Eagle Aquila heliaca, Sociable Plover Vanellus gregarius, and Pale Sparrow Petronia brachydactyla. Even in a day's drive in the sanctuary, one can hope to see a good number of birds like Spanish Sparrow Passer hispaniolensis, Redheaded Falcon Falco chicquera, Tawny Pipit Anthus campestris, Long-billed Pipit Anthus similis, and Black Francolin Francolinus francolinus.



Sunset at Tal Chhapar Wildlife Sanctuary



#### **Bikaner & Kheechan:**

A few hours' drive from Tal Chhapar Sanctuary is the city of Bikaner (28° 1'0" N, 73° 18'43" E). This is where, on a daily basis, truckloads of cattle carcasses are dumped. The dump is a small place but attracts large flocks of Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*, Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*, and Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*, due to the availability of carcasses. It is also famous as the best place to see the elusive migrating Yellow-eyed Pigeon *Columba eversmanni*. One can see the Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*, Indian Spotted Eagle *Clanga hastata*, Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla longipennis*, Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*, and Wheatears like the Isabelline *Oenanthe isabellina*, Desert *Oenanthe deserti deserti*, and Variable Wheatear *Oenanthe picata picata*. Our group was lucky enough to stumble upon a single White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*.

Taking leave from Bikaner, we travelled south towards the small town of Phalodi ( $27^{\circ} 7' 51.6'' \text{ N}, 72^{\circ} 21' 50.4'' \text{ E}$ ). A few kilometres outside the town there is a small but very special village called Kheechan ( $27^{\circ} 8' 6'' \text{ N}, 72^{\circ} 24' 54'' \text{ E}$ ). Each year the village plays host to 5,000–7,000 Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo*. The cranes are fed and protected by the local Bishnoi community. The villagers offer the terraces of their homes as viewpoints of the *Chugga Ghar* where each day over 100 kg of grain is fed to these magnificent birds.



Demoiselle Crane Grus virgo flocking at Kheechan village

#### **Desert National Park:**

Further south-east is Jaisalmer city (26° 55' 12" N, 70° 54' 0" E), and another 60 km beyond the city lies our final destination, the Desert National Park (27° 2' 22" N, 70° 53' 2" E). At over 3,000 sq. km, it is one of the largest national parks of the country. The major part of the landscape is dry scrubland and about 20% accounts for sand dunes. The Park consists of a few fenced-out areas, called posts, to avoid grazing. No vehicles are allowed within these posts and the only means of exploring them is on camel carts. One such Post is the Sudasari Post (26° 43' 13" N, 70° 35' 41" E), which we explored. It is 15 km from the main gate of the Park, and the information centre and a few huts begin to appear on the horizon. Coming a bit closer, we can see our mode of transportation, a 6x6 cart tied at the back of the camp, and standing alongside the camel, our driver cum guides. As soon as we boarded the carts and started, a wake of four Red-headed Vulture Aegypius calvus circling overhead got us down. A bird darting towards the grass got our attention, it turned out to be the Asian Houbara or Macqueen's Bustard Chlamydotis macqueenii. A flock of over 100 Greater Short-toed Lark took off from near the first camel cart as it rolled along on the dusty road, showing how well camouflage works here. Travelling further inside the park, we came across a flock of Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse Pterocles exustus, which can be easily mistaken for rocks on the ground, and Cream-coloured Courser Cursorius cursor, Blackcrowned Finch-lark Eremopterix nigriceps, Bimaculated Lark Melanocorypha bimaculata, Long-legged Buzzard, Short-toed Eagle Circaetus gallicus, Trumpeter Finch Bucanetes githagineus, Eastern Imperial Eagle, Desert Wheatear, and Isabelline Wheatear. All the birds made their appearance as though on roll call. We were informed by our guide that a camel had died a few days ago and had attracted many birds. We turned in that direction and on reaching the carcass saw a huge flock of raptors including White-rumped Vulture Gyps bengalensis, Cinereous Vulture, Egyptian Vulture, Punjab Raven Corvus corax subcorax, and a small flock of Steppe Eagles. Within the vicinity we even managed to see the Vulnerable White-browed Bushchat Saxicola macrorhynchus, doing its "pitch and roll" routine. We resumed our hunt for the king of the grassland, and finally got a chance to see one of the most endangered birds in India, the Great Indian Bustard Ardeotis nigriceps, of which less than 300 individuals remain in the wild. It has been categorized as Critically Endangered by IUCN. We saw a flock of seven birds, four male and three female, at a distance of 500-700 m. Seeing these graceful birds in their habitat strolling in the grassland with the Gajaimata Sand Dunes in the backdrop is a sight we would like to preserve for our future generations. With the sun setting over the dunes to announce our departure, the cold winter wind of the desert urged us to leave. We headed out of the park and back to our busy lives.



During my six day visit with BNHS members to the abovementioned places we saw a total of 143 species of birds from 41 families, including 17 threatened species, showing just how diverse a bird life this habitat can support. To many, the dry vast



Great Indian Bustard Ardeotis nigriceps



Egyptian Vulture Neophron percnopterus



Sterna aurantia

### Annotations:

White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* (CR) Single bird seen on a Camel carcass at Desert National Park. Red-headed Vulture Aegypius calvus (CR) Single bird seen on a Camel carcass at Desert National Park. Great Indian Bustard Ardeotis nigriceps (CR) Flock of 7 birds, 4 male and 3 female at Desert National Park. Sociable Plover Vanellus gregarius (CR) Flock of 4 birds seen at Tal Chhapar. Egyptian Vulture Neophron percnopterus (EN) More than 200 birds seen at Jor Beed, and 5 at Desert National Park. Indian Spotted Eagle Clanga hastata (VU) Single bird seen perched at Jor Beed. Eastern Imperial Eagle Aquila heliaca (VU) Single bird seen at Tal Chhapar and Jor Beed. Macqueen's Bustard Chlamydotis macqueenii (VU) Single bird seen at Desert National Park. Yellow-eyed Pigeon Columba eversmanni (VU) Flock of 30 individuals seen at Jor Beed. White-browed Bushchat Saxicola macrorhynchus (VU) Single bird seen doing "Pitch and roll" at Desert National Park. Ferruginous Duck Aythya nyroca (NT) Four birds seen in Naliasar Wetland. Cinereous Vulture Aegypius monachus (NT) Single bird seen on a Camel carcass at Desert National Park. Pallid Harrier Circus macrourus (NT) Five birds seen at Tal Chhapar. Red-headed Falcon Falco chicquera (NT) Single bird seen in Tal Chhapar, perched close to the main gate. Laggar Falcon Falco jugger (NT) Single bird seen perched in Tal Chhapar. 'Western' Black-tailed Godwit Limosa limosa (NT) Flock of 17 birds seen feeding at Naliasar wetland. River Tern Sterna aurantia (NT) Single bird seen over Salt Pan area of Tal Chhapar.

(CR: Critically Endangered, EN: Endangered, VU: Vulnerable, NT: Near Threatened)

#### **References:**

- BirdLife International (2015) Species factsheet: *Ardeotis nigriceps*. Downloaded from <u>http://www.birdlife.org</u> on 02/06/2015.
- Rasmussen, P.C. & J.C. Anderton (2012): *Birds of South Asia: The Ripley Guide* Vol. 1: Field guide. Vol. 2: Attributes and status. S mithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions, Washington, D.C. & Barcelona.

Asif N. Khan, Associate Programme Officer BNHS

## Checklist of Birds Sighted in Rajasthan

Sr. No.	Common Name	Scientific name	Tal Chhapar	Naliasar	Sambhar	Kheechan	Jor Beed	Desert National Park
1	Eastern Cattle Egret	Bubulcus coromandus		Y	Y			
2	Little Egret	Egretta garzetta		Y	Y			
3	Grev Heron	Ardea cinerea		Y				
4	Indian Pond-heron	Ardeola gravii		Y				
5	Greater Flamingo	Phoenicopterus roseus		_	Y			
6	Bar-headed Goose	Anser indicus		Y				
7	Grevlag Goose	Anser anser		Y				
8	Ruddy Shelduck	Tadorna ferruginea		Y				
9	Knob-billed Duck	Sarkidiornis melanotos		Y				
10	Common Teal	Anas crecca		Y				
11	Gadwall	Mareca strepera		Y	Y			
12	Eurasian Wigeon	Mareca penelope		Y				
13	Northern Shoveller	Spatula clypeata		Y				
14	Northern Pintail	Anas acuta		Y	Y			
15	Indian Spot-billed Duck	Anas poecilorhyncha		Y	Y			
16	Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos		Y				
17	Ferruginous Duck	Avthva nvroca		Y				
18	Common Pochard	Avthva ferina		Y				
19	Red-crested Pochard	Netta rufina		Y				
20	Black-winged Kite	Elanus caeruleus	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
21	Black Kite	Milvus migrans migrans		Y	Y			
22	White-eyed Buzzard	Butastur teesa	Y					
23	'Steppe' Buzzard	Buteo buteo vulpinus	Y					
24	Long-legged Buzzard	Buteo rufinus	Y					Y
25	Shikra	Accipiter badius		Y		Y		
26	Short-toed Eagle	Circaetus gallicus	Y					Y
27	Indian Spotted Eagle	Clanga hastata	Y					
28	Tawny Eagle	Aquila rapax						
29	Steppe Eagle	Aquila nipalensis	Y				Y	
30	Eastern Imperial Eagle	Aquila heliaca	Y				Y	
31	White-tailed Eagle	Haliaeetus albicilla					Y	
32	Western Osprey	Pandion haliaetus		Y				
33	Egyptian Vulture	Neophron percnopterus	Y				Y	
34	White-rumped Vulture	Gyps bengalensis						Y
35	Griffon Vulture	Gyps fulvus					Y	
36	Red-headed Vulture	Aegypius calvus						Y
37	Cinereous Vulture	Aegypius monachus					Y	Y
38	Pallid Harrier	Circus macrourus	Y					
39	Montagu's Harrier	Circus pygargus	Y					
40	Western Marsh Harrier	Circus aeruginosus		Y				
41	Common Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus	Y			Y	Y	Y
42	Lesser Kestrel	Falco naumanni	Y					
43	Red-headed Falcon	Falco chicquera	Y					
44	Peregrine Falcon	Falco peregrinus calidus	Y					
45	Laggar Falcon	Falco jugger	Y					
46	Black Francolin	Francolinus francolinus	Y					
47	Grey Francolin	Francolinus	Y	Y			Y	
L	-	pondicerianus						
48	Indian Peafowl	Pavo cristatus						
49	Demoiselle Crane	Grus virgo	Y			Y		
50	Great Indian Bustard	Ardeotis nigriceps						Y
51	Asian Houbara Bustard	Chlamydotis macqueenii						Y
52	Eurasian Coot	Fulica atra			Y			
53	Black-winged Stilt	Himantopus himantopus		Y	Y			

Sr. No.	Common Name	Scientific name	Tal Chhapar	Naliasar	Sambhar	Kheechan	Jor Beed	Desert National Park
5/	Cream-coloured Courser	Cursorius cursor						V
55	Indian Courser	Cursorius	V					V
55	Indian Coursei	coromandelicus	1					1
56	Red-wattled Lanwing	Vanellus indicus		Y				
57	Sociable Ployer	Vanellus oregarius	Y	1				
58	Little Ringed Ployer	Charadrius dubius	1	Y				
59	'Western' Black-tailed	Limosa limosa		Y				
	Godwit			_				
60	Ruff	Philomachus pugnax		Y				
61	Common Redshank	Tringa totanus		Y				
62	Spotted Redshank	Tringa erythropus		Y				
63	Common Greenshank	Tringa nebularia		Y				
64	Wood Sandpiper	Tringa glareola		Y				
65	Green Sandpiper	Tringa ochropus		Y				
66	Temminck's Stint	Ereunetes temminckii	Y	Y				
67	Little Stint	Ereunetes minutus	Y	Y				
68	River Tern	Sterna aurantia	Y					
69	Chestnut-bellied	Pterocles exustus	Y					
	Sandgrouse							
70	Black-bellied Sandgrouse	Pterocles orientalis	Y					Y
71	Rock Pigeon	Columba livia		Y	Y	Y		
72	Yellow-eyed Pigeon	Columba eversmanni					Y	
73	Eurasian Collared-dove	Streptopelia decaocto	Y	Y	Y	Y		
74	Red Collared-dove	Streptopelia				Y	Y	
		tranquebarica						
75	Yellow-footed Green-	Treron phoenicopterus		Y				
	pigeon	chlorigaster						
76	Rose-ringed Parakeet	Psittacula krameri		Y		Y		
77	Spotted Owlet	Athene brama	Y					
78	Short-eared Owl	Asio flammeus	Y					
79	Indian Roller	Coracias benghalensis		Y	Y	Y		
	<u> </u>	benghalensis		* 7				
80	Common Hoopoe	Upupa epops epops		Y	¥ 7	<b>X</b> 7		
81	White-throated Kingfisher	Halcyon smyrnensis		Y	Y	Y	Y	
82	Lesser Pied Kingfisher	Ceryle rudis		Y				
83	Little Creen Dec. ester	Alcedo atthis		Y V				
84	Composite Dark et	Merops orientalis		I V				
85	Coppersmith Barbet	Aantnoiaema haomaoonhala		ĭ				
86	Furssian Wrynack	huemacephala	V					
87	Bimaculated Lark	Melanocorvnha	1					V
07	Dimaculated Lark	himaculata						1
88	Rufous-tailed Lark	Ammomanes phoenicura	Y					
89	Desert Lark	Ammomanes deserti	1					Y
90	Greater Short-toed Lark	Calandrella	Y					Y
		brachydactyla						_
		longipennis						
91	Crested Lark	Galerida cristata	Y		Y			
92	Oriental Skylark	Alauda gulgula	Y					
93	Black-crowned Finch-lark	Eremopterix nigriceps						Y
94	Ashy-crowned Finch-lark	Eremopterix griseus	Y					
95	Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica		Y				
96	Red-rumped Swallow	Cecropis daurica		Y				
97	Western Yellow Wagtail	Motacilla flava		Y				
98	White Wagtail	Motacilla alba		Y				
99	Paddyfield Pipit	Anthus rufulus	Y					
100	Tawny Pipit	Anthus campestris	Y					

Sr. No.	Common Name	Scientific name	Tal Chhapar	Naliasar	Sambhar	Kheechan	Jor Beed	Desert National Park
101	Long-billed Pipit	Anthus similis	V					
101	Small Minivet	Pericrocotus	V					
102	Sinan Winnvet	cinnamomeus	1					
103	White-eared Bulbul	Pycnonotus leucotis	V			V		V
103	Red-vented Bulbul	Pychonotus cafer	1	V	V	Y I		1
104	Red-backed Shrike	I gnius collurio	V	1	1	1		
105	Isabelline Shrike	Lanius conurlo Lanius isahellinus	V					V
107	Rufous-backed Long-	Lanius isdociinus Lanius schach	V	V	V	V		1
107	tailed Shrike	ervthronotus	1	1	1	1		
108	Great Grev Shrike	Lanius excubitor lahtora						Y
109	Oriental Magnie-robin	Consychus saularis		Y	Y	Y		1
110	Indian Black Robin	Copsychus suitaris	Y	Y	-	-		Y
111	Brown Rock-chat	Oenanthe fusca	-	-		Y		-
112	Black Redstart	Phoenicurus ochruros	Y			-		
112	Diuck Redsturt	phoenicuroides	-					
113	Isabelline Wheatear	Oenanthe isabellina	Y					Y
113	Red-tailed Wheatear	Oenanthe chrysonygia	Y					1
115	Pied Wheatear	Oenanthe pleschanka	1					Y
116	Desert Wheatear	Oenanthe deserti deserti	Y	Y				Y
117	Variable Wheatear	Oenanthe nicata nicata	Y	-				Y
118	Siberian Stonechat	Saxicola maurus maurus	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y
110	White-browed Bushchat	Saxicola macrorhynchus	1		1	1	1	Y
120	Pied Bushchat	Saxicola caprata						-
120	Red-breasted Flycatcher	Ficedula parva				Y		
122	Yellow-eved Babbler	Chrvsomma sinense	Y		Y	-		
122	Common Babbler	Turdoides caudata	Y		-	Y		
124	Zitting Cisticola	Cisticola juncidis	Y			-		
125	Rufous-fronted Prinia	Prinia huchanani				Y		
126	Graceful Prinia	Prinia gracilis				Y		
127	Lesser Whitethroat	Svlvia curruca	Y					Y
		halimodendri						_
128	Asian Desert Warbler	Svlvia nana	Y					Y
129	Indian Spotted Creeper	Salpornis spilonotus	Y					
130	Purple Sunbird	Cinnyris asiaticus		Y	Y	Y		
131	Trumpeter Finch	Bucanetes githagineus						Y
132	Indian Silverbill	Euodice malabarica	Y		Y			
133	House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
134	Spanish Sparrow	Passer hispaniolensis	Y					
135	Yellow-throated Sparrow	Gymnoris xanthocollis			Y			
136	Black Drongo	Edolius macrocercus	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
137	Brahminy Starling	Sturnia pagodarum		Y				
138	Rosy Starling	Pastor roseus	Y					
139	Common Starling	Sturnus vulgaris	Y				Y	
140	Common Myna	Acridotheres tristis		Y	Y	Y		
141	House Crow	Corvus splendens		Y	Y	Y		
142	Indian Jungle Crow	Corvus [macrorhynchos]		Y	Y			
	Č Č	culminatus						
143	Punjab Raven	Corvus corax subcorax						Y

# युरोपियन रोलर

किरण मोरे



European Roller Coracias garrulus

नीलकंठ (इंडियन रोलर Coracias benghalensis) यह पक्षी हमे प्रायः खेतों के परिसर में स्थित बिजली के खंबों, तारों पर उड़ते हुए दिखता है। वह अपने पंखों से नीली आभा बिखेरते हुए सभी को हमेशा से ही विस्मृत कर जाता है। नीलकंठ स्थानिक निवासी होने के कारण इसका हमेशा दिखाई देना स्वाभाविक है। जहाँ एक ओर नीलकंठ भारत में ग्रीष्मकाल में प्रजनन कर अपने बच्चों का पालन पोषण करता है वही दूसरी ओर इसी प्रजाति से संबंधित युरोपियन रोलर युरोप ओर अरबी प्रदेशों में प्रजनन करता है। युरोपियन रोलर ठण्ड के मौसम मे आफ्रिका खंड मे प्रवास करता है, इसी दौरान वह भारत के कुछ प्रदेशों में समय व्यतीत करता है।

सितंबर से अक्तूबर के दौरान शहरों से थोड़ा दूर लेकिन छोटे गॉवों के पास रास्तों पर स्थित बिजली के खंबों, तारों या खेतों के आस पास इंडियन रोलर की तरह दिखने वाला लेकिन थोड़ी दुबली बनावट, नीली गरदन वाला पंछी दिखाई दे तो उसे निश्चित तौर पर युरोपियन रोलर Coracias garrulus समझ लेना चाहिए। थोड़ा नज़दीक से निरीक्षण करने पर उसकी आंखों के पास पतली सी काली रेखा और इंडियन रोलर से थोड़ी मोटी चोंच स्पष्टतः दिखाई देती है।

हमारे अब तक के अध्ययन से पता चला है कि, युरोपियन रोलर हर एक स्थान पर लगभग ८ से १५ दिन बिताता है। वापसी की यात्रा में महाराष्ट्र में मुख्यतः विदर्भ में होने वाले कुछ दिन के निवास का अवलोकन और निरीक्षण करने का निर्णय मैंने ओर वाईल्ड लाईफ ॲन्ड एनवायरमेंट कॉन्ज़र्वेशन सोसायटी (वेक्स) के अन्य पक्षी अभ्यासक, निनाद अभंग, शिषीर शेंडोकार, गौरव कडू, अलकेश ठाकरे, प्रा. गजानन वाघ और डॉ. जयंत वडतकर आदि ने दो वर्ष पूर्व किया था। प्रारंभ मे सिंतबर २०१३ के दौरान ४ युरोपियन रोलर की जानकारी मिली और यहीं से वास्तविक अध्ययन का प्रारंभ हुआ। सितंबर २०१४ को अमरावती के पास नांदगांव



पेठ मे २ युरोपियन रोलर हवा मे झगड़ते हुए दिखाई दिये। शायद ज़मीन पर अपना अधिकार जताने के लिए उनकी जद्दोजहद चल रही थी। इसके कुछ दिनों बाद उसमे से एक ने अमरावती से १० किलोमीटर अंतर पर स्थित नांदगांव पेठ के चुंगी नाके के पास तो दूसरे ने वहाँ से ४ किलोमीटर आगे नागपुर रोड पर अपना अधिकार जमा लिया और भोजन के लिए लगने वाली अपनी अपनी जगह ढूंढ ली थी। चुंगी नाके के पास स्थित स्थान पर इल्लियों की दावत का आनंद युरोपियन रोलर ले रहा था। नागपुर रोड पर स्थित रोलर का सोयाबीन के फसल मे रहने वाली इल्लियों का लगातार ग्रहण करना जारी था। वैसे युरोपियन रोलर के खाद्यपदार्थ में मुख्यतः इल्लियॉ, छोटे मोटे कीड़े, मकड़ियॉ इसके साथ ही मेंढक, सॉप और गिरगिट इनका भी समावेश होता है। निरीक्षण के दौरान पाया गया कि, रोलर का बिजली के खंबो पर बैठ नीचे ज़मीन पर छलांग मारना और अपने शिकार को पकड़कर उूपर लाकर खाना यह दैनिक किया सुबह ८ से शाम ५ बजे तक चलती रहती है। यह दोनो युरोपियन रोलर किशोरावस्था में थे (पूरे अध्ययन के दौरान एक मात्र पूर्णतः विकसित युरोपियन रोलर चिखलदरा के मोठा गाव में दिखाई दिया)।

इसी दौरान अकोला के पंजाबराव देशमुख कृषि विद्यापीठ परिसर से बड़ी जानकारी मिली, वेक्स के पक्षी अभ्यासक शिषीर शेंडोकार को विद्यापीठ के परिसर मे 9३ युरोपियन रोलर दिखाई दिए।यह 9३ युरोपियन रोलर भी किशोरावस्था में थे, और हमारे निरीक्षण के अनुसार वे 9 अक्तूबर से 99 नवंबर तक वहा मौजूद थे। विद्यापीठ के परिसर में खेती होने के कारण इस क्षेत्र में एक स्थान पर ३०० मीटर के परिसर में ६ युरोपियन रोलर स्वच्छंद रूप से भोजन के लिए विचरण करते दिखाई दिए। हमारे आजतक के निरीक्षण से यह स्पष्ट होता है की युरोपियन रोलर एक स्थान पर ८ से २० दिन ही निवास करता है, जो कि अकोला मे सर्वाधिक ४२ दिन तक दिखाई दिया।

वापसी के प्रवास के दौरान निवासी जगह पर उन्हे कई समस्याओं का सामना करना पड़ता है, उसमे बदले हुए वातावरण से अनुकूलन करना, भोजन के लिए जगह पर अधिकार प्रस्थापित करना, ऐसी कई बातें आती हैं। मुर्तीजापूर नामक गांव के पास देखे गए युरोपियन रोलर को हमने इंडियन रोलर से जगह के लिए लड़ते हुए देखा। उनका छलांग मारकर एक दूसरे पर प्रहार करना, चोंच मारना, यह सब झगड़ा लगभग ३ मिनट तक चला। अंततः युरोपियन रोलर वहाँ से पीछे हटकर दूसरी जगह पर जाकर बैठा। वहीं इसके विपरीत परिस्थिति अकोला विद्यापीठ परिसर की थी, युरोपियन रोलर जिस स्थान पर थे वहाँ आसपास के परिसर में एक भी इंडियन रोलर नही था, अतः स्पष्ट था कि अपनी बड़ी संख्या के कारण उन्होंने उस जगह को हथिया लिया था। भोजन की खोज में तार पर से नीचे आते समय या रास्तों से उड़ते समय बहुधा उनके साथ दुर्घटनाएँ भी होती है, क्यों कि हमे २ युरोपियन रोलर अलग अलग स्थानों पर वाहनों से कुचले हुए दिखाई दिये। अनेक संकट आने पर भी भोजन ढूंढने की उनकी दिनचर्या मे ज़्यादा बदलाव नही आया है। पर्याप्त भोजन खाकर शरीर में आवश्यक चरबी जमा कर उन्हे अगली यात्रा के लिए तैयार रहना ही पड़ता है।

वर्तमान मे युरोपियन रोलर का समावेश आय.यु.सी.एन. की संकटग्रस्त प्रजातियों में हो चुका है, और गुजरते समय के साथ उनकी तादाद भी निरंतर कम होती जा रही है। हमारा अनुमान है कि युरोपियन रोलर का मुख्य निवास खेतों के परिसर मे होने के कारण, कम होती जा रही खेती और फसलों पर छिड़काए जाने वाले कीटनाशक की वजह से उनकी संख्या कम होती जा रही है।



Indian Roller Coracias benghalensis

### Birdbaths: Attracting birds to an urban home garden

Bhat, S.

The present article describes how placing birdbaths, in an urban home garden, can provide a critical resource for the local avifauna. Between 2009 and 2014, two earthen and three cement birdbaths, of various sizes, were placed in an urban home garden. In addition, two sprinklers were set-up to drench the leaves of two bushes to encourage birds to bathe in the water-droplets collected on the leaves. A total of 47 species of birds comprising both residents, and migrants visited the birdbaths for drinking and bathing. The number of species visiting the birdbaths over the years, increased steadily from a mere eight species in the first year. Conservation implications of providing birdbaths in residential urban gardens, and the resulting opportunities for studying bird behavior, are discussed.

Indian Birds (2014) 10(2): 35–39

## **Population trend of the common birds in a residential area of Thiruvananthapuram city, Kerala** Raju, S.

The status and distribution of birds in Jawahar Nagar, a residential area in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala were studied from March 2005 to March 2010. Bird diversity, and abundance, were assessed through systematic, regular, and repeated surveys. Seventy-seven species of birds were identified during the study period, represented 34 families, of which one is categorised as Near Threatened, four are in Schedule I of the Wildlife Act, 14 are migrants, 62 residents, and two, habitat specialists. 213 field hours were spent in the field. House Sparrows *Passer domesticus*, which were abundant during the 1990s, were totally absent during the study period. An analysis of the data showed a gradual increase in the diversity, and abundance, of birds in the initial years, followed by a decrease in the last year. Incidentally, the study area was under a lot of disturbance during the study, caused by construction activity, habitat destruction, etc. An increase in the numbers of some species, especially Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*, was noticed, along with the increased number of large apartment blocks in the area. 40 species of birds were recorded breeding in the area, using 31 trees of different species; more than ten other nesting sites were observed. One large roost was also observed, with 10,000+ birds comprising nine species. The guild structure analysis of the birds showed an equal representation of insectivores and carnivores (20 species each). As birds are indicators of the health and quality of their environment, fixing priorities, and developing strategies, for their conservation is inevitable for a healthy urban agglomeration. *Indian Birds* (2014) 10(2): 40–45

# A pilot survey of the avifauna of Rangdum Valley, Kargil, Ladakh (Indian Trans-Himalaya)

Ahmed, T., A. Khan & P. Chandani

An avifaunal survey of Rangdum Valley in Kargil District, Jammu & Kashmir, India was carried out between June and July 2011. McKinnon's species richness and total count methods were used. A total of 69 species were recorded comprising six passage migrants, 25 residents, 36 summer visitors and three vagrants. The recorded species represents seven orders and 24 families, accounting for 23% of the species known from Ladakh. A majority of the bird species are insectivores.

 ${\it Key \, words: } {\it Avifauna, feeding \, guild, Ladakh, Rangdum \, Valley, status }$ 

JoTT (2015) 7(6): 7274-7281

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# **User Forum**

#### Different facilities for users on www.bnhsenvis.nic.in website are as follows:

- ∠ Users can search through more than 17,000 bibliographical references on Indian birds
- Users can search for information from the many databases developed by the Centre. Databases include Endemic birds of India, Threatened birds of India, Important Bird Areas (IBAs), Birds in CITES, Marine birds of India, and others.
- List of other ENVIS Centres on various subject areas for navigating through information on different subjects related to the environment.
- Link to the websites and journals pertaining to Avian Ecology are available.
- Kid's Centre aimed towards school-going children provides interesting facts on birds.
- All issues of BUCEROS, the Centre's newsletter, are available for download in PDF format.
- Informative Powerpoint presentations on birds are also available for download
- Glossary has more than 300 ornithological terms explained
- Online query facility for users to drop a query to us
- Contacts of eminent experts in ornithological studies have been given.

#### Request for Articles and Literature

Dear Readers,

- 1) You are welcome to contribute articles, photographs pertaining to avian ecology, to our newsletter.
- To strengthen our databases we would request you to send us literature which is not available on our website.

#### **Feedback and Queries**

You can send your feedback pertaining to our website and BUCEROS newsletter via email or through our website. Any queries related to avian ecology can also be sent to <u>bnhs@envis.nic.in.</u>



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Founded in 1883 for the study of natural history, the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is now one of the premier research and conservation organisations in the country. The Society publishes a journal, the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*, devoted to natural history and also has a popular publication, *Hornbill*, for the layman. It has also published a number of books on wildlife and nature. Its library has a large collection of books and scientific journals on wildlife and the environment. The Society's invaluable collection of bird, mammal, reptile, amphibian and insect specimens has been recognised as a National Heritage Collection.

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