

Thank you for volunteering to take part in the Common Bird Monitoring (CBM) scheme, which has been designed to keep track of bird populations in India. The scheme surveys are quick, simple and, most importantly, enjoyable bird watching exercises. Survey plots are based on the [2x2-kilometre \(km\)](#) squares of the national grid. Observers make just [three](#) visits each year to specifically selected squares to record birds that are seen or heard while walking along a specific route.

The main aims of CBM

1. To provide information on year-to-year and longer-term changes in population levels for a wide range of birds across a variety of habitats throughout India. Knowing to what extent bird populations are increasing or decreasing is fundamental to bird conservation. Monitoring birds has the added advantage that they act as indicators to the health of the countryside.
2. To promote a greater understanding of the population biology of birds and in particular to focus on factors responsible for declines. CBM is a key component of BirdLife's monitoring strategy.
3. To promote bird conservation through the involvement of large numbers of volunteer observers in survey work in India.

Forms to receive

Once you have expressed a wish to be involved in the scheme, the **CBM** Project Officer of IBA department, BNHS will allocate a [randomly selected grid square](#). You should receive the following forms either electronically or by post (one set of forms for each square you have agreed to monitor):

1 x Instructions Sheet

1 x Count Summary Sheet

1 x Additional Information sheet

1 x Field Recording and Threats recording sheet

We recommend that observers take their Field Recording Sheets out in the field to record their sightings on. Bird counts should later be transferred from the Field Recording Sheets to the Count Summary Sheet.

Which square should you survey?

The Project Officer will have provided you with a map of the area we would like you to survey. Sites have been chosen according to a formal sampling strategy to [cover all habitats and regions](#). Please make every effort to cover the site that is allocated to you.

In cases where survey work proves impossible in a large part of the site you have been allocated, e.g. because it is physically impossible to visit, or access permissions are not granted, please report this to the Project Officer so that a replacement site can be provided. It is **very important** not to reject sites on the grounds that they appear uninteresting – squares containing few species are just as valuable as squares with many species.

Finding and marking a route

If the site has been surveyed before, the Project Officer should provide you with a sketch map of the counting route (the transect line) taken by the previous CBM observer, together with the name and grid square reference of the transect. This route must be followed to ensure consistency of recording at that site (i.e. if a different route is taken, different birds will probably be recorded). If the route has to be changed because you can no longer get access to it, please consult the Project Officer, and return the

map with a sketch of the new route on it. If the site has never been covered before (the Project Officer will tell you this), you will need to create your own transect route and a unique identifying name.

The bird survey will take the form of a line transect covering a distance of approximately 2km. A photocopied map will be provided to the observer of the grid squares in which the survey is to take place. The start point for the line transect must be located within these squares, although the transect itself may, in some circumstances, run beyond the boundaries of the squares. The start point and route of the line transect should be clearly marked by the observer on the map provided, along with any additional information that would assist another observer in locating exactly the same route on a subsequent count. **Please ensure that the route followed is the same as in previous years.**

It is important to mark the starting points of each transect section by using permanent landmarks (trees, boulders, buildings etc) and annotating the sketch map accordingly. An **Additional Information Sheet** is provided for you to record any other information that you may wish to provide about your transect, for instance **GPS waypoint references or information on broad habitat types**. This is **particularly important on your first visit to a site**.

A line transect may take any shape (straight line or circular route), but to minimise the risk of double counting, observers should ensure that if a circular route is chosen that no point of the route passes within 500m of any other part of the route. In practice, routes will most likely be based on easily identifiable and navigable tracks or paths.

When to visit

Each site should be surveyed **thrice a year**; it will cover three seasons **Monsoon, Winter and Summer**. Counts should ideally start around 7am, and no later than 9am. Please try to keep the starting times similar within and across years. Please also try to keep visit dates similar across the years. Counts will be more productive earlier in the day, with birds generally becoming quiet and inactive during the middle of the day.

Tips to volunteers

- Do not record birds you see or hear before or after your transect line (i.e. behind your first 200m section or in front of your last 200m section).
- Record all birds to the sides of your transect line.
- Record all birds from your transect line that you can see or hear that are to the sides of your transect line, even if they are distant.
- Bird species names are recorded on the Field Recording Sheet in the order in which you observe them.
- Ensure that only the number of birds recorded is written in each box on the count summary forms. Additional information such as '+' or 'many' complicates the forms and should be avoided.

Weather

Please do not attempt to carry out surveys in conditions of heavy rain, poor visibility or strong wind. Birds generally become inactive in windy and wet conditions. However, activity often increases considerably after rain showers and therefore showery weather is generally okay for conducting surveys. Please record weather conditions in the boxes provided on the forms that describe cloud cover, rain, wind speed, and visibility. Choose one number (1-3) from each of the four headings below and enter

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INSTRUCTIONS

these in the box provided. If the weather conditions change during your survey visit, please select a single weather category that best represents the overall conditions.

Cloud cover	Rain	Wind	Visibility
0 – 1/3 rd = 1	None = 1	Calm = 1	Good = 1
1/3 – 2/3 ^{rds} = 2	Light = 2	Light = 2	Moderate = 2
2/3 ^{rds} – total = 3	Heavy = 3	Strong = 3	Poor = 3

Recording birds

Please record all the birds you encounter as you walk along the transect. Do not record birds behind you as you begin a transect or beyond the end of the transect.

From your chosen starting point walk the transect route at a slow and methodical pace, pausing briefly to listen for bird songs and scan for birds flying overhead. Please note the starting and finishing times of each transect (using a 24-hour clock, e.g. 0730 for 7:30am, 1300 for 1pm). As a guide, an average visit should last around 2 hours. Record all the birds you see and hear on the Field Recording Sheet in the appropriate transect sections 1-10. Space is provided on the recording form to allow you to tally different individuals of each species seen for each transect section. The transect is divided into 200m sections for convenience; please do not worry about birds at the boundary of two sections: record them in the one that seems more appropriate, **but not in both**. Try not to record the same individual bird twice, e.g. a bird that can be heard singing from several 200m sections should be recorded once, where it was first detected.

Count Summary Sheets

Please complete the summary sheets (one for each transects) as soon as possible after each field visit and preferably on the same day. The form summaries the information so that it can be analyzed. The Count Summary Sheet includes the names of species that are most commonly encountered in most habitats in India. If you record any species that are not on the list, please add the names of each additional species to the end of the list. If you require additional space for species that are not on the list, use the Additional Records Sheet. Simply transfer the total of the tallied number of individual birds recorded in each 200m transect section (1-10) from the Field Recording Sheet to the Count Summary Sheet and then sum them to give a total count for the whole transect in the end column. This sheet also has a column in which to record the order in which each species was observed – copy this across from the appropriate box adjacent to the species name you have written on the Field Recording Sheet.

At the end of the count summary sheet is a section where you may use your more general local knowledge of the site and/or area to provide information on any potential threats (both current or future) to the habitat and/or birds around your transect. This simple, but essential information will allow us to assess how the site is doing, what problems (if any) affect it and what is, or can be done to tackle the problems. If you are able and wish to provide additional information, please contact the IBA Project Officer at the address below, who can send you a more detailed form.



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Return of data

Please return all completed forms to the Project Officer after **every count**. Forms for each square should include one Field Recording Sheet and one Count Summary Sheet. If the transect has not been surveyed before you will also need to return the annotated printed copy of the map. Once we have received your completed forms, you will receive an acknowledgement letter from **Bombay Natural History Society**.

If you have any queries about CBM please contact the following address:-

Indian Bird Conservation Network, Bombay Natural History Society, Hornbill House, Opp. Lion Gate, S.B. Singh Road, Mumbai 400 001, India, Contact No:- 91-22-22818957

Nandkishor Dudhe:- 8087738422

Email: nandkishordudhe@gmail.com,

Website: www.ibcn.in

Many thanks for helping with this important project and enjoy your counting!



COMMON BIRD MONITORING FIELD RECORDING SHEET



Transact Line () ()

State: - , District: - , Tehsil: -

Please do not write in the shaded boxes

NAME OF COMPILERS/EMAIL ID/ ADDRESS									NUMBER OF OBSERVERS			
NAME OF TRANSECT LINE AND DISTANCE					GIS Grid Number (kml)			Distance				
HABITAT					PROTECTION STATUS							
NEAREST LARGE TOWN/ CITY				DISTRICT			STATE					
GEO. COORDINATES	N-			E-			Elevation-					
WEATHER (1 or 2 or 3)	Cloud			Rain			Wind			Visibility		
DATE OF VISIT				START TIME			AM	END TIME			AM	
Species Name	Number of birds recorded on each transect section										Total	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

PLEASE RETURN THE FILLED FORM TO INDIAN BIRD CONSERVATION NETWORK, BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY, HORNBILL HOUSE, OPP. LION GATE, S.B. SINGH ROAD, MUMBAI 400 001, INDIA, CONTACT NO:- 91-22-22818957, Email: nandkishordudhe@gmail.com, ibabhns@gmail.com, Website : www.ibcn.in



**COMMON BIRD MONITORING
FIELD RECORDING SHEET**



Transact Line (___) (_____)
 State: - _____, District: - _____, Tehsil: - _____

Species Name	Number of birds recorded on each transect section										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	



**COMMON BIRD MONITORING
THREATS RECORDING SHEET**



Transact Line () (_____ kml _____)

State:- _____, District:- _____, Tehsil:- _____

Please do not write in the shaded boxes

PLEASE USE BLOCKCAPITALS

NAME OF OBSERVER					NUMBER OF OBSERVERS	
NAME OF SITE						
HABITAT				DATE OF ASSESSMENT		
NEAREST LARGE TOWN/ CITY			DISTRICT		STATE	
Description of the extent/size of the area covered by this assessment						

Please use your more general local knowledge of the site in which your transect is located and/or the area around it to provide information on any potential threats (both current or future) to the habitat and/or birds around your transect. This simple, but essential information will allow us to assess how the site is doing, what problems (if any) affect it and what is, or can be done to tackle the problems. If you are able and wish to provide additional information, please contact the **BNHS**, IBA department at the address below who can send you a more detailed form.

In the table below, please list each potential threat in the first column, and use the following three columns to make an assessment of the likely timing of the threat, how much of the area it will affect and the possible severity, or impact it will have. When identifying threats, please consider those that may impact on either the habitat or bird populations or both.

What threats to or problems at the site are you aware of?			
Use your local knowledge of the site (i.e. not just that observed on the day of the count) to provide the following information on the state of the landscape around your transect. Please use codes as follows to describe this:			
Threat (please state the nature of and the habitat/population affected)	Timing	Scope (area of landscape affected)	Severity (how serious)
	Happening now 3	Whole area/population (>90%) 3	Rapid deterioration 3
	Likely in short term (4yrs) 2	Most area/population (50-90%) 2	Moderate deterioration 2
	Likely in long term (>4yrs) 1	Some of population (10-50%) 1	Slow deterioration 1
	Past/no longer limiting 0	Small area/few individuals (<10) 0	Imperceptible deterioration 0

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**COMMON BIRD MONITORING
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SHEET**



Transact Line () (_____ kml _____)

State:- _____, District:- _____, Tehsil:- _____

Please do not write in the shaded boxes PLEASE USE BLOCKCAPITALS

Observer names		Lead observer address	
Site name			
District (e.g. Mumbai)		Email:	
Visit date (DD:MM:YY)	__ __ : __ __ : __ __	Tel. No:	

Transect Section	GPS geo-reference at start of each section	Additional information (e.g. broad habitat type)
1	----- -	
2	----- -	
3	----- -	
4	----- -	
5	----- -	
6	----- -	
7	----- -	
8	----- -	
9	----- -	
10	----- -	

Please use this space to record any other additional information about your site or transect



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SHEET



Transact Line () (_____ kml _____)

State:- _____, District:- _____, Tehsil:- _____

Where possible, please provide a map of your site: