

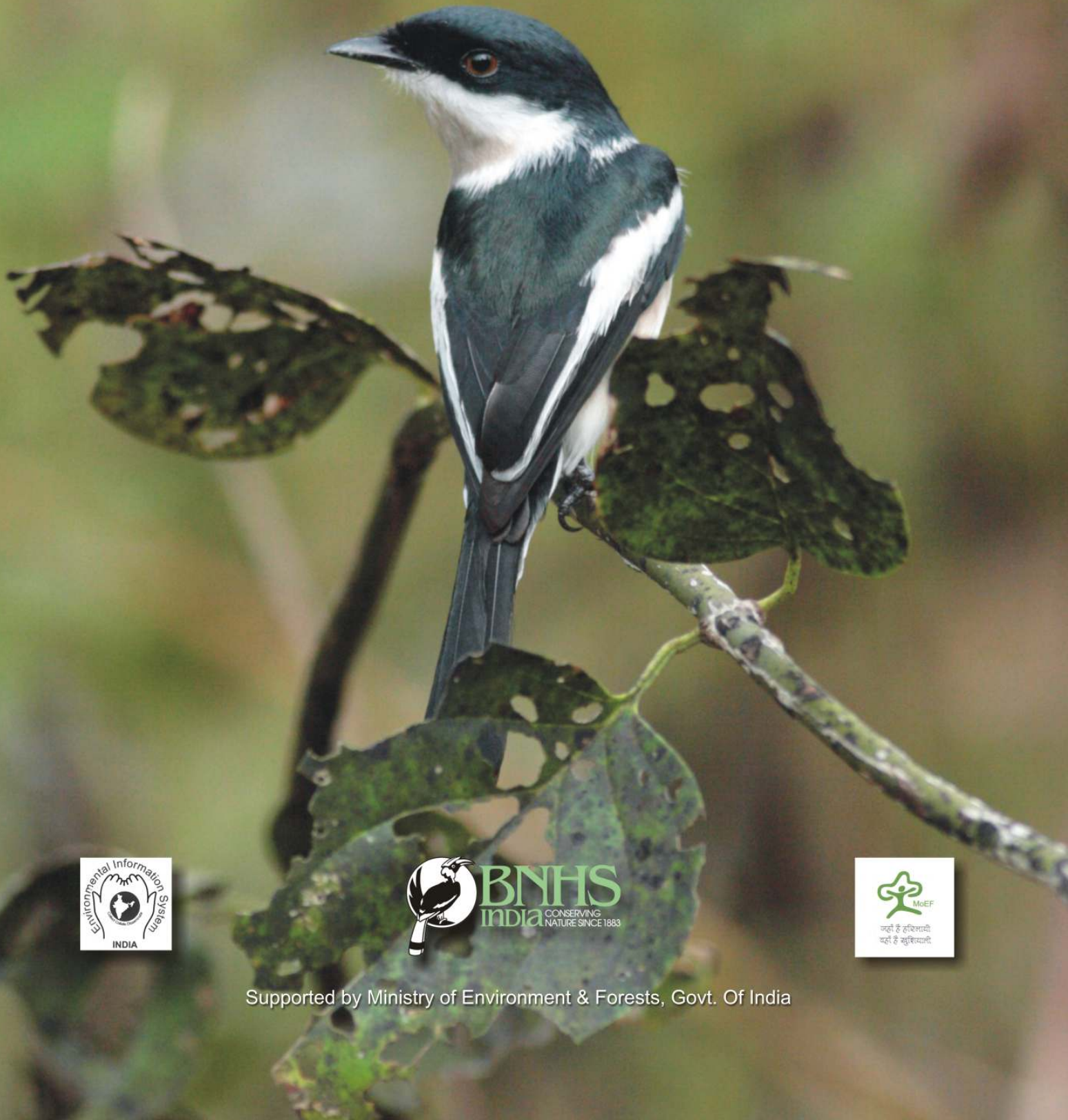
ENVIS Centre
AVIAN ECOLOGY

ENVIS Newsletter

BUCEROS

Special Issue

Vol. 15, No. 2 & 3, 2010



Supported by Ministry of Environment & Forests, Govt. Of India



BUCEROS

ENVIS Newsletter
Avian Ecology
Vol. 15, No. 2 & 3, 2010

ENVIS

ENVIS (Environmental Information System) is a network of subject specific centers located in various institutions throughout India. The focal point of the present 76 ENVIS centres in India is at the Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi, which further serves as the Regional Service Centre (RCS) 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 and Inland Wetlands.

ENVIS TEAM AT THE BNHS

Centre-in-Charge : Mr. J.C. Daniel
Project Coordinator : Dr. Asad R. Rahmani
Scientist-in-Charge : Mr. Sujit S. Narwade
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Cover: Pied Flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus* by Prasanna V. Parab.

Photo credits: Threatened birds by Dr. Asad Rahmani, Dr. Tarique Sani, Nikhil Bhopale, Clement Francis & Saleel Tambe








Paintings: Carl D'Silva, Ms. Rashmi Patil

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ENVIS Centre on Avian Ecology 15 years of establishment (Special Issue)

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Himalayan Quail

Critically Endangered

Pink-Headed Duck



I) INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to inform all the readers that ENVIS Centre on Avian Ecology completed 15 years of its establishment in 2010. Therefore, we decided to bring out a special *BUCEROS* issue on review of the activities carried out by the ENVIS Centre in last 15 years. This issue will also be used as a ready reference document of our ENVIS Centre.

About ENVIS

Realising the importance of Environmental Information, the Government of India, in December, 1982, established an Environmental Information System (ENVIS) as a plan programme. The focus of ENVIS since its inception has been on providing environmental information to decision makers, policy planners, scientists and engineers, research workers, etc. all over the country. Since environment is a broad-ranging, multi-disciplinary subject, a comprehensive information system on environment would necessarily involve effective participation of concerned institutions/ organizations in the country that are actively engaged in work relating to different subject areas of environment. ENVIS has, therefore, developed itself with a network of such participating institutions/organizations for the programme to be meaningful.

The Focal Point of the present 76 ENVIS centres in India is at the Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi. This ENVIS Focal Point is acting as a regional service centre to INFOTERRA (International Information System on Environment) set up by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), to cater to environmental information needs in the South Asian Region, since 1985. As mentioned earlier, the Centre at the BNHS has been assigned the responsibility of being the focal point for information on 'Avian Ecology'.

Inauguration of the ENVIS Centre on Avian Ecology and Inland Wetlands, BNHS

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) was selected as an Environmental Information System (ENVIS) Centre for avian ecology and inland wetlands by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Government of India during the year of Sàlim Ali centenary year celebration. Inauguration of the ENVIS Centre was done at BNHS by Mr. N.R. Krishnan, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests on June 18, 1996. The choice of BNHS for such a centre is understandable, as it has been related in one way or another with studies on ornithology, natural history and conservation and Dr. Sàlim Ali, India's father of ornithology.

Objectives of the ENVIS Centre on Avian Ecology:

- 1) To create a bibliographic database of published literature related to avian ecology study. This calls for accessing information from scientific papers, notes, project reports, theses, books, bulletins and popular publications, internet & other authenticated sources.
- 2) Publish and distribute *BUCEROS* newsletter on avian ecology to its members (details on page 6).
- 3) To create and upload databases on avian ecology on ENVIS website.
- 4) To reply to queries on the subject area.



Resources of the ENVIS Centre, BNHS



ENVIS Library



White-bellied Heron

Critically Endangered

Christmas Island Frigatebird



II) PUBLICATIONS (*BUCEROS* NEWSLETTER)

The ENVIS newsletter of BNHS was named *BUCEROS*. To those unfamiliar, *BUCEROS* is the genus under which the Great Hornbill *Buceros bicornis* (Great Pied Hornbill) is classified. The Great Hornbill is the logo of the BNHS and also adopted as a mascot.

The *BUCEROS* newsletter is being distributed among institutes, organizations, researchers and interested individuals on the basis of the request. Right from the inaugural issue, *BUCEROS* gained popularity among the scientific community. On basis of requirements of scientists and birdwatchers, monographs covering various themes were published as follows through the *BUCEROS* newsletter.

- Volume 1, No. 1, 1996** Inaugural issue.
- Volume 2, No. 1, 1997** It was decided that *BUCEROS* newsletter will be published thrice in a year and this is the first issue after the inaugural issue, brought out in September 1996.
- Volume 2, No. 2, 1997** In this issue, information was provided on Allan Octavian Hume, one of the founders of the Indian National Congress (INC) who, as probably very few laymen know, was also an ornithologist of repute, with a journal “Stray Feathers”, to his credit.
- Volume 2, No. 3, 1997** Data on Ramsar Sites with information on one of the most well-known bird sanctuaries in the world, the Keoladeo National Park at Bharatpur (formerly known as the Bharatpur Ghana Bird Sanctuary), was published.
- Volume 2, No. 4, 1997** Common name changes of the birds of the Indian Subcontinent
- Volume 3, No.1, 1998** Vernacular names of the birds of the Indian Subcontinent.
- Volume 3, No.2, 1998** Standardized English names of the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent - A Proposal.
- Volume 3, No.3, 1998** Bibliography of papers on wetlands from the *Journal of Bombay Natural History Society (JBNHS)*, Volumes 1-40.
- Volume 4, No.1, 1999** Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary.
- Volume 4, No.2, 1999** The History of Indian Ornithology - This is a compilation of papers that pertain to the history of Indian ornithology.
- Volume 4, No.3, 1999** Wetlands of Tamil Nadu - Chengalpattu, Ramanathapuram and Kanniyakumari districts.
- Volume 5, No.1, 2000** Bibliography of papers on wetlands from the *JBNHS*: Volumes 41-70.
- Volume 5, No.2, 2000** Bibliography of papers on wetlands from the *JBNHS*, Volumes 71-95.
- Volume 5, No.3, 2000** Information on projects of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services - BNHS partnership for wildlife research and conservations in India.
- Volume 6, No. 1, 2001** Standardized common and scientific names of the birds of the Indian subcontinent. The dire need for a standardized list of the birds of the Indian region was felt during past many years due to the extensive changes in the common and scientific names of birds. The ENVIS Centre, after some deliberation on the subject (see *BUCEROS* Vol. 2, No. 4 and Vol. 3, No. 2), on the recommendation of Dr. Asad Rahmani, Project Coordinator, ENVIS Centre & Director, BNHS, brought out this standardized non-annotated checklist of the birds of the Indian subcontinent. All Indian governmental departments and non-governmental organizations concerned with avian research and conservation were requested to follow this list and help standardize the common and scientific names of Indian birds.
- Volume 6, No. 2, 2001** This issue includes the Important Bird Areas (IBA) programme in India, tracing its history, developments and future plans.
- Volume 6, No. 3, 2001** Summaries and a review of the Ph.D. theses on birds.
- Volume 7, No. 1&2, 2002** Threatened birds of India. Information of all the important threatened bird species of India listed in the Red Data Book of *International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)/BirdLife International* was compiled with the help of IBA, BirdLife & Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB).
- Volume 7, No. 3, 2002** A BNHS review of the avifaunal list of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.



White-rumped Vulture

Critically Endangered

Indian Vulture





BUCEROS newsletter publications at a glance

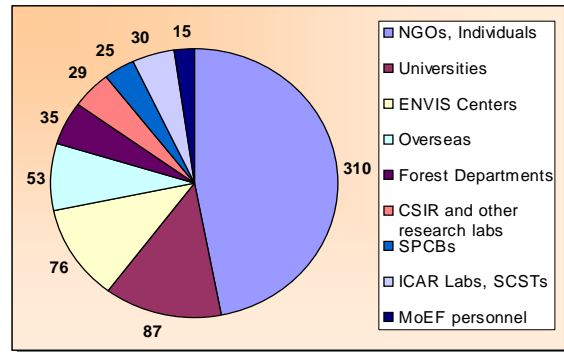


Fig 1: BUCEROS newsletter distribution coverage (Abbr used: CSIR: Council of Science and Industrial Research, ICAR: Indian Council of Agricultural Research, SCST: State Council for Science & Technology, SPCB: State Pollution Control Board)

PDF copies of the *BUCEROS* newsletter can be downloaded from the ENVIS website and hard copies are being distributed freely on the basis of the request.

Volume 8, No. 1, 2003

Checklist of Indian water birds. The issue deals with the status, population and conservation of Indian water birds in form of a checklist.

Volume 8, No. 2&3, 2003

Annotated checklist of the Birds of Western Maharashtra - compiled by Anand Prasad.

Volume 9, No. 1, 2004

Report of the “International South Asian Vulture Recovery Plan Workshop”. This issue dealt with the workshop on recovery plan for the declining number of vultures held during 12-14 February 2004 in Parwanoo, Haryana, India to bring national and international attention to the conservation of vultures.

Volume 9, No. 2, 2004

‘A dictionary of scientific bird names originating from the Indian region’.

Volume 9, No. 3, 2004

Bibliography of the Anatidae of South Asia. Anatidae family includes bird groups such as ducks, geese and swans.

Volume 10, No. 1, 2005

Annotated avifauna of the upper Nilgiris, Western Ghats, Tamil Nadu, India.

Volume 10, No. 2&3, 2005

Bibliography of the birds of South India.

Volume 11, No. 1, 2006

Bibliography of the birds of North India

Volume 11, No. 2&3, 2006

Endemic birds of India.

During ENVIS evaluation workshop in 2007, the MoEF suggested to redesign the format of *BUCEROS* (and other publications of ENVIS) and make it more popular.

The new format (since *BUCEROS* Vol. 12) includes subject area news (national, international, organisational and ENVIS Centre), articles and abstracts. The scientific content of the articles as well as the language has been maintained such that it would keep the interest of the layman as well as update the readers with current developments in avian ecology studies. Readers are requested to send articles and news for the newsletter accordingly.



A glimpse of contents of BUCEROS newsletter after redesigning the earlier format

III) DATABASES

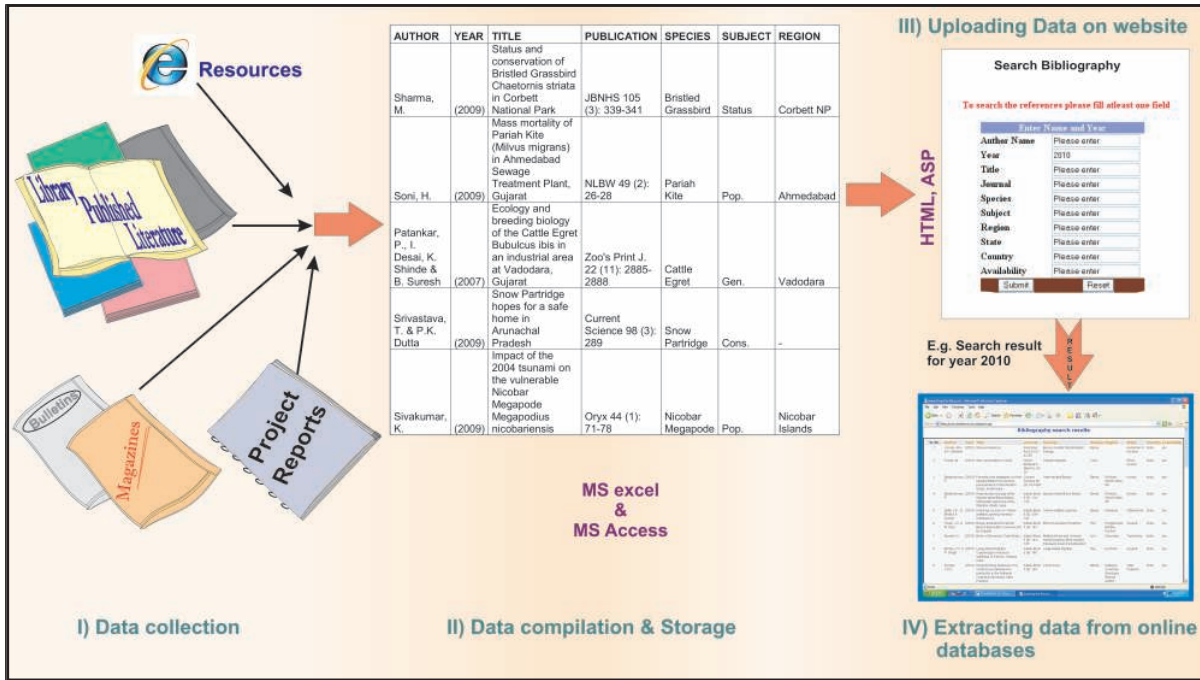


Fig 2: Flowchart showing transition of data into database form at ENVIS Centre on Avian Ecology

Sr. No.	Subject	Nature of the Database	Entries
1.	Avian ecology	References	15,000+
2.	Abstracts	Author, Year, Title, Publication, Keywords, Abstracts	400+
3.	List of birds of Indian subcontinent	List	1200+
4.	Threatened birds of India	Level of threat (IUCN Red Data category), Criteria, General information of the bird.	156
5.	Endemic birds of India	Name of bird, Area, General information	79
6.	Important bird Areas (IBAs)	IBA code, Site name, Province, Districts, Area, Status, Criteria, Habitat criteria, Location, IBA Code, IBA criteria, Habitat	466
7.	State/UT-wise bird list	List	30+
8.	Vernacular names of birds of Indian Subcontinent	Name list	1200+
9.	Indian water bird checklist	List, Status, Abundance, Schedule as per Wildlife Protection act (1972), South Asia Population Estimates	302
10.	News section	Title, Date, Content, Source	100+
11.	Species occurrence database	Sighting record, Individual bird details, Observer, Publications	2400+
12.	Migratory birds of India	Type of migration, Distribution	350+
13.	Power Point Presentations	Presentations on birds	10+

Table 1: Databases on Avian Ecology developed at the Centre

Links to other important bird databases

A link to www.birdlife.org/datazone/species/index.html is available on the ENVIS website for getting updated and detail information about all bird species. For bird checklist data, link to the <http://www.worldbirds.org> has been provided. Feedback from readers will help us in strengthening database information on our website.



Bengal Florican

Siberian Crane



IV) WEBSITE

The MoEF has provided monetary assistance under its Environment Management Capacity Building Technical Assistance Project (EMCBTAP) scheme to create website and collect, collate & disseminate information through internet. In this regard, we developed our own website in 2003.

In 2008, the Ministry joined hands with the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and all the existing ENVIS centres were provided domain name, email ID and adequate web space on the NIC server.

In 2009, we translated our website into regional languages, Hindi and Marathi, with the intention to broaden the Centre's reach among non English-speaking masses.

All the *BUCEROS* issues (See pages 4&5) and databases except Species Occurrence database (See Table 1) developed by ENVIS Centre are available on ENVIS website in easily accessible format.

Information available on ENVIS website (other than databases)

- 1) Links to the other ENVIS Centers
- 2) History of Indian ornithology
- 3) Basic information of birds
- 4) Kids corner - designed for the children

Home page of the regional website

Link to Hindi website: [http://www.bhnsenvis.nic.in/Hindi%20Websiteindex\(Hindi\).html](http://www.bhnsenvis.nic.in/Hindi%20Websiteindex(Hindi).html)

Link to Marathi website: [http://www.bhnsenvis.nic.in/Hindi%20Websiteindex\(Marathi\).html](http://www.bhnsenvis.nic.in/Hindi%20Websiteindex(Marathi).html)

Link to list of Endemic birds of India: <http://www.bhnsenvis.nic.in/Endemic%20Birds/Endemic%20Birds%201.htm>

ENVIS website homepage
(Link: <http://www.bhnsenvis.nic.in>)

- 5) List of journals related to bird studies.
- 6) List of websites related to bird studies.
- 7) Important bird projects in India
- 8) Gallery - includes bird as well as event photographs

Sr. No.	Name of the Bird	Status
1.	Andaman Teal <i>Anas albogularis</i>	SE, RV
2.	Nicobar Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter butleri</i>	SR, VU
3.	Great Nicobar Serpent-Eagle <i>Spilornis klossi</i>	NT
4.	Andaman Serpent-eagle <i>Spilornis elgini</i>	NT
5.	Himalayan Quail <i>Ophrysia superciliosa</i>	CR
6.	Nicobar Megapode <i>Megapodius nicobariensis</i>	SE, VU
7.	Painted Bush-quail <i>Perdica erythrorhynchos</i>	LC
8.	Manipur Bush-quail <i>Perdica manipurensis</i>	VU
9.	Rock Bush-quail <i>Perdica argoondah</i>	LC
10.	Red Spur-fowl <i>Galloperdix spadicea</i>	LC
11.	Painted Spur-fowl <i>Galloperdix lunulata</i>	LC
12.	Grey Junglefowl <i>Gallus sonnerati</i>	LC
13.	Andaman Crake <i>Rallina canningi</i>	DD
14.	Jerdon's Courser <i>Rhinoptilus bitorquatus</i>	CR
15.	Nilgiri Woodpigeon <i>Columba elphinstonii</i>	VU
16.	Andaman Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumboides</i>	NT
17.	Andaman Cuckoo-dove <i>Macropygia rufipennis</i>	NT
18.	Grey-fronted Green Pigeon <i>Treron affinis</i>	SR, LC
19.	Andaman Green-pigeon <i>Treron chloropterus</i>	SR, RV
20.	Nicobar Imperial-pigeon <i>Ducula nicobarica</i>	SR, RV
21.	Malabar Parakeet <i>Psittacula columboides</i>	LC
22.	Malabar Parakeet <i>Psittacula caniceps</i>	NT

Data view - Endemic birds of India



Sociable Lapwing

Critically Endangered

Spoon-billed Sandpiper



New initiative - Bustard Forum (Launched in July 2010)

Using internet as a perfect platform, ENVIS Centre, BNHS has launched a web-based “Bustard Forum” on www.bnhsenvis.nic.in under the supervision of Dr. Asad Rahmani, Project Coordinator, ENVIS Centre and Director, BNHS. ENVIS team has collected all the available references on bustards from BNHS library, internet & through personal communication. News and sighting records of the bustards provided by observers have been posted in chronological order. It is open to all. In future we are planning to launch more interactive forum for threatened birds of India.

Link: <http://www.bnhsenvis.nic.in/bustardforum.html>

Lesser Florican *Syphoetides indicus*
(Miller, 1782)

(Photo credit: Dr. Asad R. Rahmani)

Classification	
Kingdom :	Animalia
Phylum :	Chordata
Class:	Aves
Order :	Gruiformes
Family :	Otididae
Genus :	<i>Syphoetides</i>
Species :	<i>S. indicus</i>
Zoological name :	<i>Syphoetides indicus</i>

Bustard Forum – Home page

Sr. No.	Date and time of Observation	Place	Observer/s	Observation/Comments	Images
1	Oct 2010	Nannaj Bustard area, Solapur, Maharashtra	Nature Conservation Circle, Solapur (NCCS)	2 Great Indian Bustards	
2	Sep 2010	Warora, Maharashtra	Dr. Sudhanshu Kolhe	Great Indian Bustard	
3	Aug 2010	Bhathi area, Bhadravati dt. Chandrapur, Maharashtra	Gopal Thosar	Three Great Indian Bustards	
4	April 2010	Akola, Maharashtra	Prashant Gahale	Lesser Florican (female)	
5	Dec 2009	At Suzlon Windfarm near Naliya, Gujarat	Dr. Gish Jathar (CEE, Gujarat) & Mr. Gopal (Forest Guard), Naliya Forest	Two Houbaras	
6	Sep 2007	Nannaj Bustard area, Solapur, Maharashtra	Sujit Narwade	Great Indian Bustard male - in display	

Recent posts on the forum

It was observed that the newly uploaded pages such as Bustard Forum and translated websites got maximum number of visits in the last couple of months.

Year	2008	2009	2010
1) Visitor summary			
Visitors	3,858	17,260	30,707
2) Visit summary			
Visits	6,413	30,589	52,670
Average per day	29	83	149
3) Visit duration (in mins)			
Average visit duration	16:49	37:55	26:42
Median visit duration	06:41	16:10	11:12
4) Page view summary			
Page views	7,274	83,579	1,33,738
Average per day	33	228	374
Avg page views/visit	1.13	2.73	2.5

Table 2: Response to ENVIS website

Source: www.webstats.nic.in

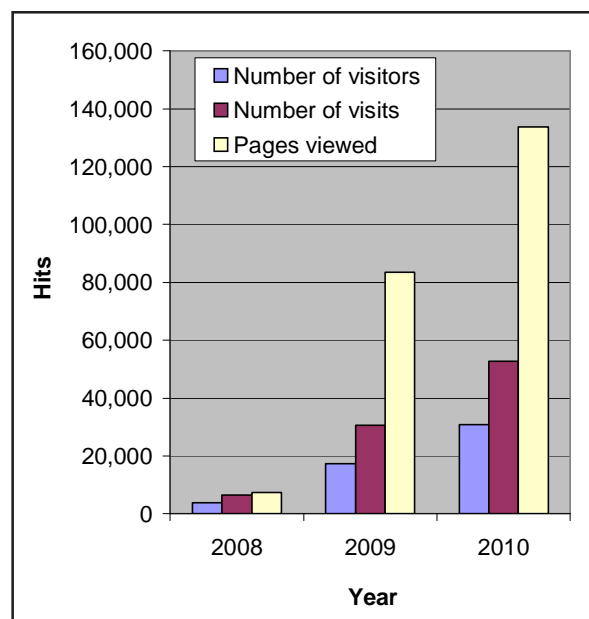


Fig. 3: Website hit statistics



Jerdon's Courser

Critically Endangered

Forest Owlet



V) QUERY RESPONSE SERVICE

The Centre usually replies to hundreds of queries on Avian Ecology such as literature availability on particular aspect of bird species, from students regarding biodiversity projects and bird identification. These are received from all over the world including various Government as well as non Governmental organizations, media and research institutes, etc. Increasing trend in query response graph with slight decrease after uploading all the data and publications on the website can be observed in Fig. 4.

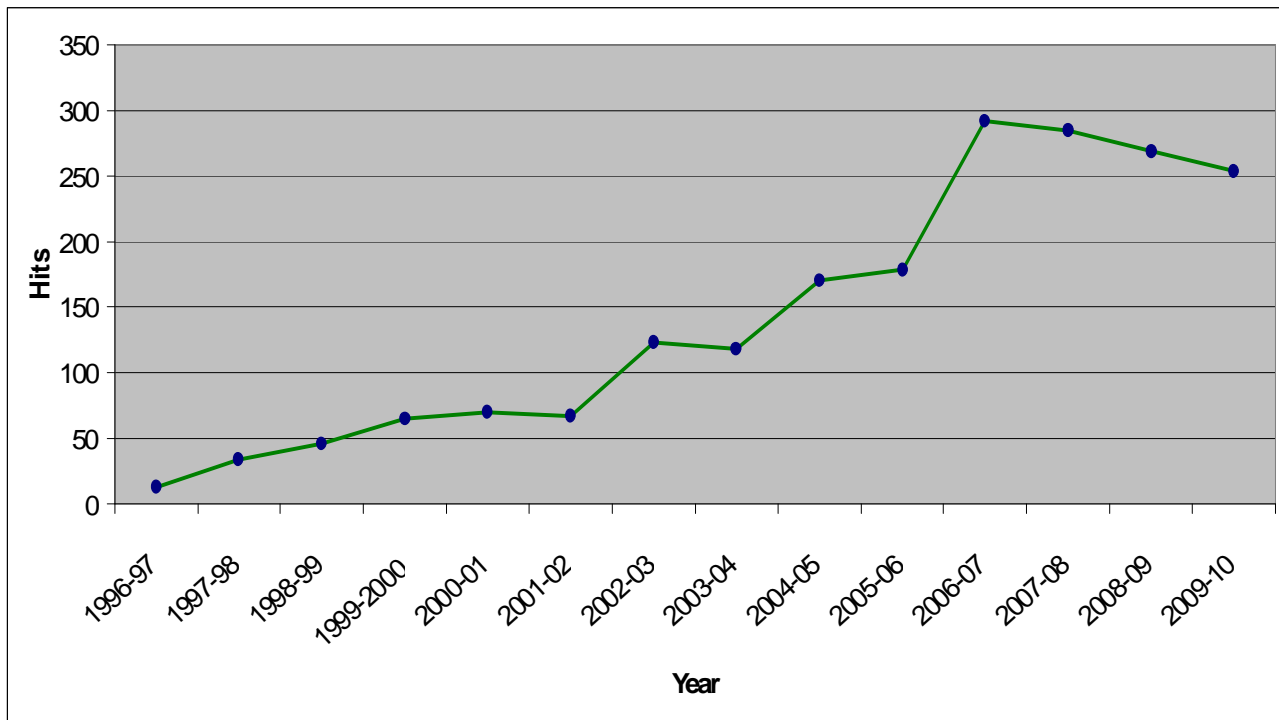


Fig. 4: Year-wise query statistics

VI) WORK IN COLLABORATION

Climate change impacts on the conservation of birds in Asia (2009-2010)

The MacArthur Foundation is supported project, which is coordinated by BirdLife International. BNHS is a collaborative partner in this project, working for the Eastern Himalayan region of India. Detailed databases are being compiled by the project on the distributions of 299 species for Eastern Himalayas that are of conservation concern. These databases are being used to predict changes in species distributions under a variety of climate change scenarios, and to examine how effectively Important Bird Areas networks (including protected areas) in this region will safeguard species of conservation concern and their habitats in the future. The ENVIS Centre is an active participant of this project.

Vulture advocacy programme – South Maharashtra (2005-2007)

The vulture advocacy programme is one of the leading projects of BNHS and RSPB. There is urgent need to make people aware about the decline of vultures in India. Therefore ENVIS Centre undertook initiative to assist the Vulture Advocacy Programme for south Maharashtra. A network of NGOs was established in south Maharashtra for vulture monitoring and advocacy purpose. These NGOs collected vital information about the status of the vultures in four districts of south Maharashtra. They also carried out various awareness programmes through newspapers and local cable TV network. We were able to document good information about the status of the vultures in this area.

City and industrial Developmental Corporation of Maharashtra (CIDCO) and BNHS biodiversity project (2007-2008)

The CIDCO and BNHS jointly worked on CIDCO Biodiversity Park Project. Aim of the project was to conserve wildlife in 1200 hectares of forest in Navi Mumbai. The ENVIS centre provided complete technical support such as bird monitoring and census techniques, project implementation and conservation measures. Considerable information on the birds of Navi Mumbai was documented during the project.



Oriental Stork

Endangered

Spotted Greenshank

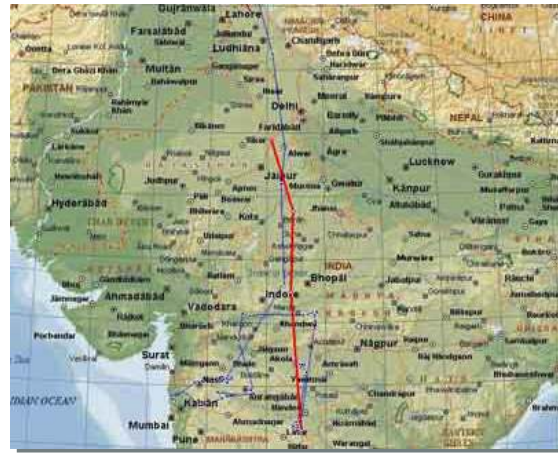


The New Odyssey Project (2007-2008)

ENVIS Centre actively participated in “The New Odyssey Project”, an international collaboration with Czech Radio and BNHS. The ENVIS Centre at BNHS provided vital information about the Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* which led the Czech scientists to locate the storks in Maharashtra. The team of scientists successfully trapped two Black Storks in 2007 and one in 2008 and released them unharmed after fitting a satellite transmitter. These storks were monitored via satellite since December 2007. During the above mentioned survey, a series of talks were held at the local educational institutes and copies of *BUCEROS* were distributed to the local academicians. Information on the migratory route of the birds and possible effect of climatic factors can be collected through this project.



Team of Czech scientists along with an ENVIS staff (Mr. Sujit Narwade, Scientist-In-Charge, first from right) and local people with a Black Stork fitted with satellite transmitter (Photo: ENVIS)



Journey of the Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* in India through satellite telemetry during wintering period of year 2008-2009 (Map credit: Dr. Lubomir Peske)

VII) WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS/CONFERENCES ATTENDED

- **2002:** Strategies and implementation mechanisms for ENVIS wide area network programme, jointly organized by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Government of India and National Ship Design & Research Centre (NSDRC) in Visakhapatnam.
- **2006:** National Workshop for the ENVIS Centers organised at State Council for Science, Technology & Environment, Himachal Pradesh at Shimla.
- **2007:** Nuclear Power Corporation India, Ltd. (NPCIL) and Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN) Workshop in June 2007. Talks on threatened birds of India and on avian ecology study were given.
- **2007:** National Chemical Laboratory (NCL) and Indo-US initiative on Eco-forecasting workshop. The workshop covered subjects such as database handling, linking database with Global Biodiversity Informatics, various mathematical models for Eco-forecasting. These techniques were found to be useful in enhancing the functioning of the ENVIS Centre.
- **2007:** Regional evaluation workshop of ENVIS Centres of Western region, held at IIPSC ENVIS Centre, Deonar, Mumbai in October 2007.
- **2008:** Seminar on Indian State-level Basic Information Database (ISBEID) for ENVIS Centres, held at Population ENVIS Centre, Deonar, Mumbai in October 2008.
- **2009:** International Conference ‘Conserving Nature in a Globalizing India’ held in February 2009, by BNHS in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore.
- **2009:** ENVIS project evaluation workshop conducted by the MoEF in March 2009 at Almora, Uttarakhand. It was decided that importance of the climatic change and its effect on avian ecology needs to be assessed.
- **2009:** Strategic Planning Workshop of the BNHS at Kashid, held in September 2009.
- **2009:** Annual research seminar (ARS) of the BNHS, held in September 2009.



Nilgiri Blue Robin

Endangered

White-bellied Blue Robin





ENVIS team got an opportunity to interact with the scientists at annual research seminar of the BNHS (Photo: Dr. Asad Rahmani)

- **2009:** Statistical Workshop conducted by Dr. Qamar Qureshi, Wildlife Institute of India (WII) at Hornbill House, Mumbai in September 2009. Training on basic statistics was provided to the participants.
- **2010:** ENVIS Project Evaluation Workshop conducted by the MoEF in April 2010, at Gangtok, Sikkim.



Participants at the Marine IBAs workshop (Dr. Asad Rahmani and Mr. Sujit Narwade, standing in last row, second and third from right) (Photo: Noor Khan)

- **2010:** Marine Important Bird Areas (IBAs) Workshop held in September 2010. India will be the first to start identifying marine IBAs with this workshop in South Asia. Through this brainstorming workshop a plan was developed for identification of marine IBAs in India. ENVIS Centre will provide relevant information from the published literature.
- **2010:** Species Recovery Plan (SRP) workshops organised at the Hornbill House, BNHS for critically endangered Forest Owlet *Heteroglaux blewitti* (October 2010), endangered Great Indian Bustard *Ardeotis nigriceps* and Lesser Florican *Sypheotides indicus* (December 2010).

- **2010:** Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), Predictive Analytics Statistics Software (PASW), Faculty Development Programme (FDP) on Research and Data Analysis Using SPSS 18.0, organized by Department of Physical Education, University of Pune, Pune in collaboration with SPSS on 22nd and 23rd October, 2010. Workshop covered the basics of the statistics and use of SPSS tool for data analysis.



Dr. Asad Rahmani, Project Coordinator, ENVIS Centre, and the Director, BNHS (in blue T-shirt, at left) providing training to statistical workshop participants (Photo: Noor Khan)



Mr. Sujit Narwade, Scientist-In-Charge (top row fourth from left) at GBIF workshop (Photo: WII)

- **2010:** Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) Workshop on Biodiversity Data Discovery and Publishing, WII, Dehradun in May 2010. GBIF was established in March 2001, as an open ended international coordinating body to promote compilation, linking, standardization, digitization and dissemination of world's biodiversity data in the form of distributed open access system, within an appropriate framework for property rights and due attribution. ENVIS Centre will share species occurrence data with GBIF.



Dr. Asad Rahmani, Project Coordinator, ENVIS Centre, and the Director, BNHS (first from left), supervising the SRP workshop (Photo: Noor Khan)



Barau's Petrel

Endangered

Narcondam Hornbill



VIII) OTHER ACTIVITIES

Wetland survey (1997-98)

In an effort to document the lesser known wetlands of our country, the ENVIS Centre at the BNHS commissioned a survey to collect baseline data on some of these wetlands. As a beginning, we conducted a pilot survey of the wetlands of Chengalpattu, Ramanathapuram and Kanniyakumari districts of Tamil Nadu during 1997-1998.

Visit by MoEF team (February 2005)

In February 2005 an expert team from the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) had visited ENVIS Centre at BNHS regarding the Environmental Management Capacity Training Assistance Project (EMCTAP), financially supported by the World Bank. ENVIS staff provided all the relevant information on functioning of the Centre to this team.

Avian Influenza survey (2006)

A preliminary survey of Avian Influenza was carried out in Nashik, Aurangabad and adjoining areas of Maharashtra from where the Avian Influenza was reported. Simultaneously, bird monitoring was carried out in Sewri and Uran areas near Mumbai for the MoEF funded "Avian Influenza Surveillance Project".

Great Indian Bustard (GIB) Census (2007-08)

Staff of ENVIS Centre participated in GIB Census carried out by the Forest Department of Bustard Sanctuary, Maharashtra.

Visit to ENVIS Centre, Department of Environment, Government of Maharashtra (October 2008)

ENVIS-BNHS staff visited the ENVIS Centre of the Department of Environment, Government of Maharashtra to discuss improvements in website and functioning of the Centre.

Visit to selected IBAs of the Maharashtra (September 2009)

Selected IBAs of the Maharashtra from Nashik, Ahmednagar and Solapur districts were visited for assessment of the current status of the areas.

BNHS Flamingo Festival (March 2010)

Active participation in organizing "BNHS Flamingo Festival 2010", when ENVIS staff provided all the scientific information on flamingos for the preparation of brochures, banners, panels. Also, we answered queries posed by members, media during the flamingo watch.



Enthusiastic birdwatchers at the Flamingo Festival held at Sewri, Mumbai (Photo: Noor Khan)



During Avian Influenza survey 2006, it was observed that Uran area has undergone drastic changes in the past few years due to landfilling activities (Photo: Suvrashish Sarkar)

Visit to Important Bird Areas (IBAs) of Sikkim (April 2010)

Staff of ENVIS Centre visited IBAs of Sikkim with the help of Mrs. Usha Lachungpa, Sr. Research Officer, (WL), Sikkim Forest Department and Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN) state coordinator of Sikkim.

Visit to Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC), Raja Bhatkhawa (April 2010)

ENVIS staff visited VCBC and Buxa Tiger Reserve, West Bengal on 12-13th April 2010. Mr. Sachin Ranade, Centre Manager, VCBC provided all technical and scientific information about the functioning of VCBC.



Red-breasted Goose

Endangered

Greater Adjutant



Visit to Rajaji National Park (May 2010)

ENVIS staff visited Rajaji National Park along with Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) workshop participants on 8th May 2010. The trip was arranged by WII staff.

Great Indian Bustard (GIB) Survey in Solapur & Osmanabad districts (2010)

Conservation issues and threat to the Great Indian Bustard *Ardeotis nigriceps* (an endangered and endemic species to India and Pakistan) were discussed with staff of the Forest Department as well as local people during the surveys. Concern was shown over the development versus wildlife conservation issue.

Preparation of GIB conservation management plan (November 2010)

Great Indian Bustard conservation management plan was prepared for the proposed Solapur Super Thermal Power Project (STPP), National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd.

IX) ENVIS PROJECT AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

Wildlife week (October 2007) The ENVIS centre carried out a special programme during wildlife week in October 2007. We developed posters of Globally Threatened Bird Species. This poster exhibition was viewed by more than 2000 individuals of various age groups. The main focus of this exhibition was awareness about wildlife among people and children.



Students reading the wildlife week exhibits (Photo: Dr. Girish Jathar)

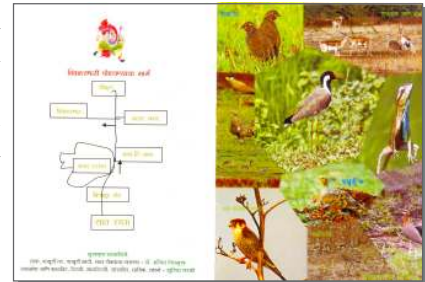
Basic Ornithology Workshop for promotion of Thematic Area (March 2008)

The ENVIS centre, Pugmark Art Gallery, Maharashtra State Forest Department (Wildlife) and Green Guards jointly organized a “Basic Ornithology Workshop” at Kolhapur. Along with students, guards and range forest officers of Maharashtra Forest Department also attended this workshop. Subjects such as bird taxonomy, bird behaviour, migration, bird-human interaction and bird conservation in India were covered.

Global Bird Watcher’s Conference (GBWC) at Jamnagar, Gujarat (November 2010)

ENVIS staff attended a three-day Global Bird Watcher’s Conference, organised by the Gujarat Tourism Board, from 25-27 November 2010, at Khijadiya, Jamnagar, Gujarat. This opportunity was used by the ENVIS staff for promoting ENVIS publications among birdwatchers.

ENVIS staff assisted those interested in designing wildlife publicity material such as posters and wedding cards



Participants at the Basic Ornithology workshop, Dr. Girish Jathar, former Scientist-In-Charge, ENVIS Centre seated on dias (Photo: ENVIS)



Mr. Sujit Narwade, Scientist-In-Charge (third from right), promoting BUCEROS newsletter at GBWC 2010



Egyptian Vulture

Endangered

Great Indian Bustard



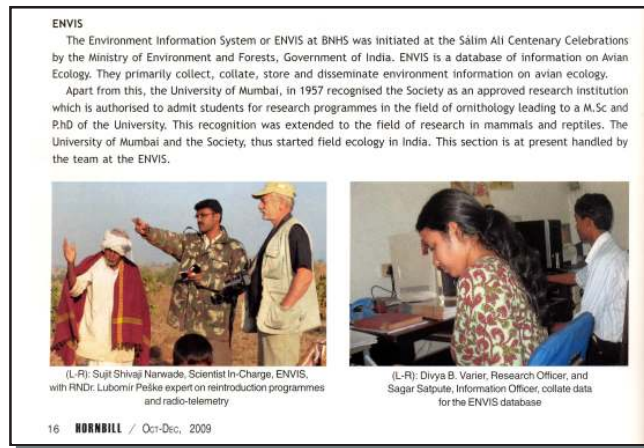
X) FUTURE PLANS

1) ENVIS Project Awareness



Mistnet Vol. 10 No. 1 (2009)

Awareness regarding ENVIS project in all possible ways such as articles in magazines, newspapers etc. as above will be carried out



Hornbill 'Events Special' Issue, Oct-Dec (2009)

2) Strengthening of the bird checklist data in India using WorldBirds portal through public participation

BirdLife International is a global partnership of conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources. This is the world's largest partnership of conservation organisations. BirdLife International, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB, UK) and Audubon (USA), have established a vast source of bird and environmental information generated by general birdwatchers and professionals alike.

Every year, millions of people around the world go out bird watching for fun. Many keep notes on what they have seen, and these data are extremely valuable for conservation at all levels - from local site protection to national and international policy-making. It is impossible for conservation organizations to visit all areas for all species, and members of the public can help fill in the gaps. An unimportant sighting of a common species can be used to build up a bigger picture - every observation has value! The WorldBirds project brings together a 'family' of systems to collect data on birds. WorldBirds vision is to create a network of Internet systems that provides a platform for the collection, storage and retrieval of bird observations worldwide. The www.worldbirds.org portal allows anybody to choose a country and submit their bird observations, thus making a valuable contribution to bird conservation on a local, national and international scale.

In India, a majority of people either do not know or have access to the internet and those who use the internet often do not know where to get proper information. Therefore uploading bird sightings on such portals is usually carried out only by a limited number of users. As an ENVIS Centre on Avian Ecology, we would like to publicize this programme of public participation in strengthening of the bird checklist data in India using WorldBirds portal. We are planning to extract, verify and compile the location-wise bird checklists using the WorldBirds portal and to publish it in the form of booklets. Such booklets shall be distributed among those who are not using internet regularly and in return, data about the regional birds will be collected for uploading on the WorldBirds portal. Through such information exchange, both the portal as well as local people will mutually benefit in terms of strengthening the bird knowledge. This project will serve the purpose of bird conservation awareness programme and preparation of the bird checklists through public participation.



www.worldbirds.org



Lesser Florican



White-winged Duck



Country	Visits	Observations	Locations	Active Users
Malaysia	9,660	97,231	790	597
Sri Lanka	3,437	69,471	666	543
South Asia (India)	2,134	41,308	1,712	427
Indian Ocean	485	6,222	128	28

Table 3: Summary of information from WorldBirds on November 1st 2010

It is important that as many people as possible engage in the WorldBirds project and enter any bird data they have. From Table 3 it can be seen that a good start has been made but India is still behind much smaller countries in Asia in terms of usage of the system.

- 3) Development of database of migratory birds of India.
- 4) Development and maintenance of database on climate change and effect on avian ecology.
- 5) Collaboration with partners like Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN) and BirdLife International to develop network and to strengthen the databases.
- 6) Upgradation of online databases for quick search facilities and to provide over all dynamicity of the website.
- 7) Conduction and participation in various workshops for promotion of thematic area. This activity is dependent on the availability of funds.
- 8) Work on Bustard Forum as an initiative of compilation of information on all threatened bustard species of India for their better conservation plan.
- 9) Highlighting success stories of the bird conservation through website and newsletter.

XI) ENVIS CENTRE STAFF

ENVIS Team

Center-in-Charge	Mr. J. C. Daniel (From 1996 to 2010)
Project Coordinator	Dr. Asad R. Rahmani (From 1998 till date)
Scientist-in-charge	Mr. Sujit Narwade (From 2008 till date)
Information Officer	Mr. Sagar Satpute (From 2008 till date)
Research Officer	Ms. Divya Varier (From 2008 till date)
Data Entry Operator	Ms. Tejashree Nakashe (From 2010 till date)

Staff who served for a year or more in the ENVIS Centre

Ms. Madhavi Inamdar (1997-2000), Dr. Ranjit Manakadan (1996-1997 & 1999-2002), Dr. V. Natarajan (1997-1998), Dr. S. Alagarrajan (1999-2000), Dr. Ashok Verma (2001-2003), Dr. G. Maheswaran (2001-2004), Mr. N. Sivkumaran (2000-2001), Dr. Girish Jathar (2004-2008), Mr. Sujit Narwade (2004-2006), Ms. Kavita Mallya (2007-2008).

XII) ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are most thankful to Shri Nilkanth Ghosh, Statistical Advisor, Mrs. Madhumita Biswas, Joint Director, Dr. P.S. Rawat, Deputy Director, Dr. S.P. Sharma, former Statistical Advisor, Dr. S. Annadurai, former National Programme Co-ordinator, ENVIS Secretariat, EI division, MoEF for providing continuous support to run the ENVIS Centre on Avian Ecology, BNHS. We wish to thank Mr. Naeem Ahmed, Technical Director, National Informatics Centre (NIC), EI division and his team as well as Mr. Amit Bhandari & Mr. Ravi Goswami from ENVIS Cell of MoEF for their generous support.

Without the support, patience and guidance of many people from MoEF and BNHS, our Centre would not have completed 15 years. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to Dr. Asad R. Rahmani for rendering constant encouragement to us. We owe a particular debt of gratitude to the entire staff of the BNHS, for providing infrastructure, resources and guidance thereby ensuring the smooth functioning of the Centre.

We thank Mr. Hemant Surekar for his contribution in redesigning our website and many photographers for providing photographs of birds for ENVIS website and publications.



Black-chinned Laughingthrush

Endangered

White-headed Duck



BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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.

Membership of the Society is open to individuals and institutions within India and abroad. For more details, please write to:

Membership Officer,
Bombay Natural History Society,
Hornbill House,
Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road,
Mumbai-400 001. INDIA.

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