

MISTNET

Newsletter of the Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN)

Vol. 1 No. 1 Sep. 1999

BNHS-BIRDLIFE PARTNERSHIP



In 1998, BNHS became the BirdLife International partner in India, and began a collaborative project with the BirdLife partner in the UK, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). The RSPB is the charity that takes action for wild birds and the environment. It works with bird and habitat conservation organisations in a global partnership called BirdLife International. The BNHS-BirdLife partnership is an outcome of a strategic planning workshop held in September 1998, organised by the BNHS with participation of more than 20 NGOs and governmental organisation including WWF, Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON), Department of Wildlife Science, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) and RSPB.

The outcome of this workshop was an agreement to start an Important Bird Areas (IBA) programme and to form a sustainable network, linking ornithologists, birdwatchers and organisations working for bird conservation in India, called the Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN).

The IBA programme involves identification of important sites of global importance for birds and gathering more information on the least studied sites in order to promote action for their conservation. The IBA and IBCN are two different projects, but closely integrated.

The IBA programme will identify important sites by extensive research in the existing literature, consulting birdwatchers and professional ornithologist for conducting surveys at lesser-known sites.

The IBA programme will continue for 5 years and it will be a unique opportunity for bird people to contribute their expertise and knowledge about their areas.

Without public support, the IBA Programme has little hope of achieving long-term success. It is therefore essential to disseminate information about IBAs and the IBA Programme as widely as possible. Newsletters, leaflets and technical reports will be distributed to local decision-makers, politicians, land users, scientific institutions and interested individuals.

The first stage of the Indian IBA programme will be the organising of six regional workshops to gather local knowledge and views on potential sites. These workshops will be organised with the help of the Indian Bird Conservation Network's state co-ordinators.



Strategic Planning Workshop in September 1998 at Mumbai

Note from the Editor

The MISTNET is a quarterly newsletter of IBCN started with its first issue in September 1999. This newsletter is an active means of information to the members of IBCN about the activities of and developments in network and the IBA programme with time. Your comments and suggestions are very welcome on the format and content. Contribution in the form of news about network member activities, interesting bird conservation news, reviews of articles and reports published elsewhere are encouraged (see back cover).

IBCN News

INDIAN BIRD CONSERVATION NETWORK (IBCN)

The Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN) is a network of ornithologists, bird watchers and organisations working for the conservation of wild birds in India.

The mission of the network is to promote conservation of birds and their habitats through development of a national network of individuals, organisations and the Government.

The IBCN is co-ordinated by IBCN secretariat at BNHS. The IBCN is a non-political open network to help in exchange of information and ideas between the network partners.

There are **state co-ordinators** selected by the BNHS/IBCN for each state who will promote participation of the people working in their states for bird conservation. Each state co-ordinator will have a term of two years.

Besides the state co-ordinator, the IBCN has a **monitoring committee** to help in recruitment of other partners in the network and dealing with issues raised within the network. To be a member of the monitoring committee, a person has to be a partner of the IBCN for a year.

How to get involved?

Any person or organisation who is working for the conservation of birds and wants to get information about the IBCN activities, can be a part of the IBCN. To be a member of the IBCN, there will be an entrance fee of Rs. 100.

What to expect?

- IBCN will encourage exchange of information and ideas between the network partners
- IBCN will help raising issues of different regions within the network for help in conservation of neglected sites and important bird species
- IBCN members will have an opportunity to participate in projects (e.g. Important Bird Areas Programme) which contribute to conservation of Indian birds
- IBCN will work to establish good working relationships with the managers of protected areas and other important sites for birds.
- IBCN will publish quarterly newsletter 'MISTNET'

PROMOTE CONSERVATION OF BIRDS AND THEIR HABITATS THROUGH DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL NETWORK OF INDIVIDUALS, ORGANISATIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT



Forest spotted owl *Athene blewitti* : Globally Threatened Species



**Indian
Bird
Conservation
Network**

Kindly send your comments and suggestions for this logo.

IBA News

INDIAN - IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS (IBA) PROGRAMME

The aim of the IBA programme is to identify and protect a network of sites, which are important for long term conservation of bird population.

IBAs:

- are places of international significance for the conservation of birds;
- are practical means for conservation;
- are chosen using standardised criteria;
- should support self-sustaining populations;
- should be delimitable from surrounding areas;
- should form part of a wider, integrated approach to biodiversity conservation

IBA RATIONALE

Site protection is one of the most important and effective ways to ensure the survival of species. Many bird species can be conserved in this way. However the number of sites that can be managed for conservation is limited by resources, available habitat, and pressures from other land uses. It is therefore essential to select sites which support as many species as possible. The IBA process provides a practical and easily used way to select a group of sites that cover the widest possible range of species.

IBAs form a network throughout the species' range. This network is essential to make sure that species survive across their ranges, particularly if they suffer from habitat loss. These sites may include the best examples of the species' natural habitat as well as marginal areas. Ideally, each site should be large enough to support self-sustaining populations of as many of the species as possible for which it was identified.

IBAs are selected using objective, standard criteria but it is also a very practical approach. The existing protected area network is the basis and will form the backbone of the network with new sites proposed to fill the gaps.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTING IBAs

CATEGORY 1

GLOBALY THREATENED SPECIES

This site qualifies if it is known, or thought to hold a population of species which are globally threatened with extinction and are included in the Red Data Book. India has 76 globally threatened species in the list.

CATEGORY 2

RESTRICTED-RANGE SPECIES

BirdLife International has identified a set of birds with very small distribution. These are known as restricted range species, and 74 are found in India. The region where two or more species are found is known as an endemic bird area (EBA). There are 12 EBAs in India. A site which has a high proportion of the restricted range species used to define an EBA can be chosen as an IBA.

CATEGORY 3

BIOME-RESTRICTED ASSEMBLAGES

BirdLife has identified groups of birds which are only found in one biome. The whole of India is covered by 9 biomes. A biome may cover a very large area (for example right across south Asia), but for the species restricted to it, that biome type is the only place they can survive. Therefore for each biome IBAs can be identified which are representative of the biome, or which have biome restricted species which have not been adequately covered in other IBAs already.

CATEGORY 4

CONGREGATIONS

This category includes waterbirds, non-waterbirds, seabirds or storks and cranes that may be at risk because they congregate at particular sites when breeding or wintering or while on passage.

For further information on the IBA programme, please contact:

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DIARY DATES

BirdLife World Conference

10-17 October 1999: BirdLife Global Partnership Meeting and the BirdLife World Conference in Malaysia.

For further details contact:
gilly.banks@birdlife.org.uk

World Bird Count

This October, World Birdwatch '99 and the 5th NTT-ME World Bird Count are coming to a neighbourhood near you!

For further details contact:
communications@birdlife.org.uk

Asia Regional Co-ordinator at BirdLife Secretariat in Bogor, Indonesia.
birdlife@indo.net.id

MONITORING COMMITTEE

The IBCN monitoring committee consists of nine members selected after strategic planning workshop in September 1998 and a meeting in March 1999. Following are the names of the members:

- Dr. S. Subramanya-Bangalore
- Dr. Salim Javed-Aligarh (AMU)
- Dr. V. S. Vijayan-SACON, Coimbatore
- Dr. P.C. Bhattacharjee-Assam
- Dr. B. C. Choudhury-WII, Dehradun
- Mr. S. A. Hussain, Mangalore
- Mr. Lavkumar Khacher-Gujarat
- Mr. Aasheesh Pittie-Hyderabad
- Dr. Asad R. Rahmani-BNHS

**The deadline for the next issue is
5th November 1999.**

Contributions to this newsletter should be sent to
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BirdLife International is a global partnership of conservation organisations, represented in over 100 countries, working for the diversity of all life through the conservation of birds and their habitats.

BirdLife activities are driven by international priorities set in the global strategy and the regional programmes have three main themes as its focus: habitats; sites (IBAs); and species. The Programme is structured in the following major working areas: research; conservation action; policy/legislation; and network development.

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BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY (BNHS)

The BNHS was founded in 1883 for the purpose of exchanging notes and observations on natural history and exhibiting interesting specimens. Today, it is largest non-governmental organisation (NGO) in the subcontinent engaged in the conservation of nature and natural resources, education and research in natural history with members in over 30 countries. Registered office: Bombay Natural History Society, Hornbill House, SB Singh Road, Mumbai- 400023, India.
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THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

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