



MISTNET

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White-bellied Shortwing *Brachypteryx major* (Jerdon) in Nilgiri Upper Plateau

by Ashfaq Ahmed Zarri

White-bellied Shortwing (*Brachypteryx major*) is one of the 79 endangered species recorded from the Indian sub-continent. This is the only shortwing species found in the Western Ghats. It has two sub-species: *Brachypteryx major major* found north of Palghat gap, while *B. m. albiventris* south of it. Information on the ecology and biology of any species is key to the scientific management. However, considering the present information on this species it is still in the survey and distribution level. Status is unknown for most parts of its distribution range.

Although the White-bellied Shortwing is distributed in a large area of the Western Ghats, from Goa in the north to Palni and Ashambu hills in Southern Kerala, the western end of the Nilgiri Upper Plateau, where we have a well-protected Mukurthi National Park, forms a promising home to this interesting species. In this area the well-wooded and protected shola (Montane Wet Temperate forest) undergrowth confined to the folds of hills is a favorite haunt of this species.

In the Upper Plateau of the Nilgiris, we have been studying bird communities for more than a year; special emphasis is being given to endangered birds and habitat specialists. This part of the Western Ghats was given protection mainly for the conservation of the Nilgiri Tahr (*Hemitragus hylocrius*) but a variety of endangered avifauna including White-bellied Shortwing also enjoy the protection.

The White-bellied Shortwing is crepuscular and feeds more actively just after sunset. An interesting area where the bird can be sighted more frequently is shola bordered roads. Immediately after sunset, as it gets dark, it concentrates on the roads and starts feeding actively in the roadsides litter, catching nocturnal insects hopping around (presumably because of less competition and more food availability). It is during such active moments, one can sight the bird frequently in this area. As you drive through shola bordered roads, the bird appears just like a white egg kept on the road.

Apart from the elevation, gradient and habitat factors determining the encounter rate of this species in our study area, one major factor is the selection of time. On a road length of 200-300 m we have seen up to 8 birds, after sunset. Sightings along the roads bordered by wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*) plantations are less frequent. During the day hours, in our general transect monitorings, sighting rate is considerably less. So time of search should be taken into consideration during designing the survey strategy for this species.

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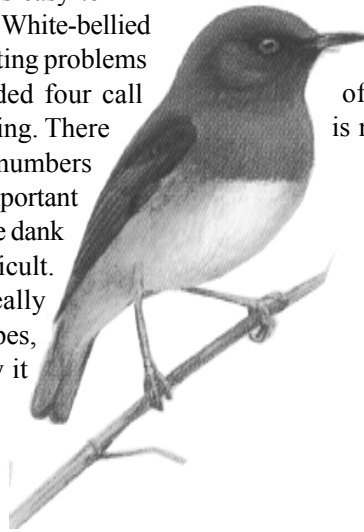
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Notice

“The Threatened Birds of Asia” is one book that we recommend to all Indian ornithologists. In order to reach a wider audience, the BirdLife International has brought out a CD of this two-volume book. They have kindly authorized BNHS, Birdlife partner-designate, to distribute this CD in India. We have been sending copies of CD to IBCN partners at a nominal cost of Rs. 100/-. However, we found that the total cost of CD, copying charges and postage is more than hundred rupees. Therefore, we are forced to increase the CD cost to Rs 175/-. Please note that we are distributing this CD to IBCN partners only.

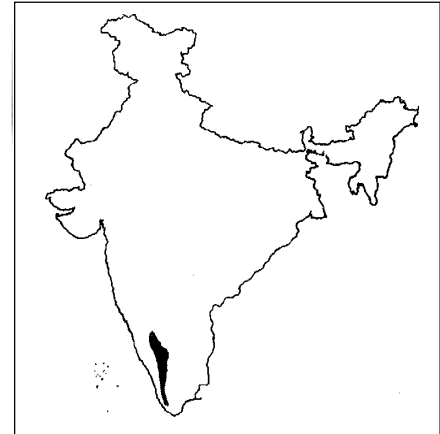
Calling behavior is interesting and it is easy to confuse the variety of calls uttered by the White-bellied Shortwing with other birds, further creating problems in making correct estimation. I recorded four call types by direct observations during calling. There is slight variation in the call types and numbers of notes. Calls remain one of the most important tools for recording such inhabitants of the dank sholas, where sighting otherwise is difficult. It is for such reason one has to be really thorough in recognizing all the call types, uttered by the species, so as to identify it in the field with confidence.

Calls are heard mainly in the evening and morning hours, but can be heard during other hours of the day as well.



White-bellied Shortwing

Soft whistling calls can be heard even after most other species in the sholas have already settled. Seemingly, the species is not much afraid of humans in our area. A very close sighting is not uncommon in the shola.



WHITE-BELLIED SHORTWING *Brachypteryx major*

Small, chat-like bird with uniform, dark slaty-blue head, breast and upperside of 15 cm size. Whitish center of abdomen. Nominat subspecies has rufous flanks and undertail-coverts. Subspecies *albiventris* has dark slaty-blue flanks and undertail-covert markings. The species has 17,200 km² global range. It is found from 900-2,150m of altitude in the forested area. Song is high pitched *tsee-du tse-tsee-du-du-du*. Call a scolding rattle and thin, whistled *hweep*.

This species has a small, severely fragmented, declining range owing to destruction and fragmentation of its evergreen and semi-evergreen forest habitat. It therefore qualifies as Vulnerable.

This species is endemic to the southern portion of the Western Ghats, inhabiting the Nilgiri hills, Brahmagiri hills, Coonoor and other ranges. The nominate race *major* occurs in southern Karnataka (Baba Budan, Brahmagiris) and the Nilgiri hills, while the subspecies *albiventris* is found in western Tamil Nadu and southern Kerala from the Palni to the Ashambu hills.

Whilst it appears to be tolerant of some habitat degradation and alteration, forest loss and fragmentation still pose a threat. Between 1961-1988, 47% of evergreen/semi-evergreen forest was lost in Kerala, as a result of clearance for plantations, cash-crops (e.g. tea), reservoirs and human settlements.

Many areas within the range of this species are protected as sanctuaries and national parks, but the only ones known to harbour populations are Periyar Sanctuary, Thattakkad Bird Sanctuary and Eravikulam National Park, the last of which apparently supports "substantial areas" of forest. It presumably also occurs in the Indira Gandhi (Anaimalai) Wildlife Sanctuary.

Reference: BirdLife International (2001) *Threatened Birds of Asia: the BirdLife International Red Data Book*. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International.

This bird has been noted in the following IBAs: Tamil Nadu (1) Avalanche (Nilgiris); (2) Grass Hills; (3) Kalakkad WLS; (4) Kodaikanal, Balni hills + Kukal; Kerala (1) Eravikulam NP; (2) Nelliampathy Reserve Forest; (3) Parambikulam NP; (4) Periyar Tiger Reserve and (5) Silent Valley NP.

— Editors

IBA NEWS

IBA STATUS REPORTS

Status Report of the project entitled “Survey of some non-protected sites of Darjeeling Hills”

By Dr. Sarala Khaling

Five sites covering the three subdivisions of Darjeeling district namely Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong and belonging to different Development Blocks were proposed to be surveyed. All these sites are not part of any wildlife sanctuary or national park. These are:

Ramam (Rongbong) Valley-Rimbick Area: Preliminary surveys have been conducted on this site but there has been no record of the RDB species-Woodsnipe (*Gallinago nemoricola*). This area lies in the fringe area of the Singhalila National Park and therefore already qualifies as an Important Bird Area.

Lepchajagat-Maribong Area: Detailed surveys of the Lepchajagat-Maribong area were completed. Lepchajagat-Maribong is a small forest village right on the state highway while Lepchajagat-Maribong is a tea garden below Lepchajagat. There is no natural patch of forest in the Lepchajagat-Maribong area but very old plantations of *Cryptomaria japonica* exist. The RDB species Rusty-bellied Shortwing (*Brachyteryx hyperythra*), which was reported from this site, was not recorded during the survey. Therefore, it is doubtful if this site qualifies as an Important Bird Area any more.

Gopaldhara-Mirik Area: Preliminary surveys of these sites revealed that this site does not have any patch of forests to be surveyed. Gopaldhara is now a tea garden with no forest patch and Mirik is a small town with an artificial lake, which is used as a tourist spot. Both these areas have considerable population density and the important species of birds reported from these areas are not found here any more due to habitat destruction and rampant urbanisation. From Gopaldhara reports of bird deaths were obtained but it is yet to be confirmed whether these incidents were natural or caused by the use of pesticides by the tea garden.

Surveys of the remaining sites- Kafer-Nimbong Area and Bagora-Mungpoo Area will be conducted during May 2002. Two more sites are being considered for incorporation into the surveys.

Brief Status Report on the “Mangalajodi-Conservation of Waterfowl Breeding Habitat”

by Wild Orissa

1. The first instalment of Rs. 10,000 (ten thousands) was received by Wild Orissa during the last week of March 2002. The expenditure from this amount is being carried out through the sub-committee on Chilika Bird Protection of Wild Orissa, which is being headed by Mr. Nanda Kishore Bhujabal (also the Vice-Chairman and the Honorary Wildlife Warden of Khurda district).
2. As the first step as part of the programme the Society has procured 2 wooden boats (new) for the purpose of mobility in the Mangalajodi area. These boats are proving to be extremely helpful in monitoring the waterfowl breeding habitat at Mangalajodi. The boats are being regularly used for moving about for patrolling purposes also.
3. The involvement of the members Sri Ma Mangala Pakshi Surakhshya Samiti of Mangalajodi village (the bird protection committee constituted by Wild Orissa) in the monitoring and patrolling exercise is being done. Shri Kishore Behera (a member of Wild Orissa) and Shri Madhava Behera (a member of Wild Orissa), both poachers turned conservationists and others poachers turned conservationists are being associated in great detail due to their experience.
4. Regular meetings of the above bird protection committee is being carried out to monitor the progress of the project. These meetings are being carried out both at Mangalajodi and Tangi.
5. The list of waterfowl species which lay eggs during April and May are being noted and also the pictures of their nesting sites, eggs, chicks, etc, are being taken for documentation purpose.
6. A total of 20 trips have been made to the waterfowl breeding area of Mangalajodi during April and May. These trips have been done, both by foot as well as boat. Prior to the project funded boats being ready for use, the members of Wild Orissa as well as the members of the Sri Ma Mangala Pakshi Surakhshya Samiti have made use of the local boats.

7. The importance of the breeding areas was impressed upon on the local villages, so that eggs and nesting sites were not trampled. Discussions are under way whereby a sort of a core area would be carved out where in the summers cattle would be avoided, as well as during the rains when fishing boats would not ply, so that the extremely fragile areas could be saved.
8. During these summer months, species like the Oriental Pratincole, *Glareola maldivarum*, nest on the dry lake beds, and the Mangalajodi Ghera assumes importance, as it is cordoned off by a river embankment. This piece of land is not tilled during the post winter months.
9. Oriental Pratincole: Members of 'Wild Orissa' on their numerous visits alongwith the members of the Sri Ma Mangala Pakshi Surakhshya Samiti have come across the Oriental Pratincole, *Glareola maldivarum*, in good numbers. A population of around 400-500 in and around the Mangalajodi village has been quite common to find. This species is different from its more well known cousin, the Collared Pratincole, *Glareola pratincola*, by having a shorter tail reaching halfway along the exposed primaries, warmer breast and flanks, darker upperparts. In flight they have no white trailing edge to secondaries, and have a shallower tail fork. This species inhabit the dry margins of waterbodies, mudflats, marshes, and fields. They are gregarious and are most active feeding on swarms of insects, at dawn and dusk. Though some birding organisations report them to be resident in Chilika Lake (out of a 2 possible sites in Orissa), yet many ornithologists report the presence of the Collared Pratincole (perhaps erroneously) only in the state of Orissa. The book Checklist of Birds of Chilika by Dr. U.N. Dev does not mention the Oriental Pratincole as one of the species found. The Collared Pratincole differs from the Oriental in having a long tail reaching to the wing tip. The colourations of these two types would appear to be exactly the same to most people (even with a binoculars). The Oriental Pratincole has been reported to breed in the Chilika lake, and in this regard our members have photographed the eggs, chicks, nesting sites etc, of these birds in great detail. Discussions with the Mangalajodi villagers are being held regularly about the safety of these nesting sites. The Sri Ma Mangala Pakshi Surkhshya Samiti is also being involved in this exercise.

10. During April-May, other species such as Coot, Purple Moorhen, Moorhen, Bronze-winged Jacana, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, have been seen nesting, but in far lesser numbers, than what they would do immediately subsequent to the monsoons. 'Wild Orissa' is listing the species which have nested during these months.

'Wild Orissa' plans to initiate other programmes in May and June as per our project proposal. The results achieved so far have been very encouraging for us as well as for the birds, due to the involvement of the local people. These breeding habitats are extremely sensitive to all forms of external forces such as cattle, excess fishing, predation, tourists, excessive human movement for research and other purposes. Monitoring of this waterfowl habitat needs to be continued for at least one more year after June 2002. We feel that during this period, the sense of involvement of the locals would become stronger.

CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN OF GREATER ADJUTANT STORK A BRIEF PROGRESS REPORT

Dr. Hilloljyoti Singha

The Greater Adjutant Stork *Leptoptilos dubius*, one of the rarest storks in the world, is found in the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam and parts of West Bengal and Bihar. The major breeding population in India has been surviving in Assam only.

There are 11 nesting colonies in five districts in the Brahmaputra Valley (Singha 1999). These colonies are traditional and have been used for many years (Singha 1998). Almost all the nesting colonies are in villages and semi-urban areas within private mixed plantations (Singha 1999). The existence of these colonies depends on the cooperation of the land owners.

As only 11 colonies exist, all outside protected areas, there is an urgent need to conserve them. As the government has not taken any step to urge the land owners to refrain from destroying the nesting trees, it appears that public awareness is one of the measures to conserve Greater Adjutant from extinction. Therefore, AARANYAK has launched a massive public awareness programme for the conservation of the Greater Adjutant Stork, supported by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) under the Important Bird Area (IBA) Programme.

We have organized public meetings near the nesting colonies involving local people including the nest tree owners. In such meetings, we took help of the local NGOs. The following meetings were organized:

MANAH-KACHARI GAON: A team of AARANYAK organized a public meeting with the help of the district administration of Morigaon district. The nesting colony comprising of three nest trees, has been existing here, 26 km. from the district head quarter town Morigaon. It was held at Manaha Kachari L.P. School where District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) took active part. Ms. L. S. Sangson, IAS, District Collector, Morigaon presided over the meeting attended by a good gathering of villagers and government officials. I, as the publicity secretary, AARANYAK delivered the main lecture with the aids of slides. I illustrated the biology of the Adjutant in simple language emphasizing threat for its existence and practicable conservation measure. Chandra Deka, a nest tree owner was felicitated.

Leaflets were distributed in a large gathering of All Assam College Teachers' annual meeting at Morigaon College, where delegates from different parts of Assam had assembled. It was thought to be a great medium, as the message would be spread through the teachers.

DADARA: A nesting colony has been in existence at Dadara for many years, consisting of nearly 32 nests on 13 trees. The meeting, which was held at Gopal Than L. P. School, was presided over by Jyotish Deka, president of East Bansargaon Gram panchayat. Eighteen persons who have been conserving nest trees in their land were felicitated through the chief guest Dr. Prashanta K. Saikia, lecturer, Gauhati University. In his address, Dr. Saikia vividly explained the importance of the Adjutants as well as wildlife. The main lecture was delivered by me.

NAGAON: Two nesting colonies – Khutikatia and Haibargaon have been existing in Nagaon. A public meeting was jointly organized by AARANYAK, Green Guard Nature Organisation and Pragati Sangha which was presided over by Mr. Pratik Hajela, the DC, Nagaon. Twenty-three people, who have been protecting the nest trees, were felicitated, and certificates were given to them.

In each meeting, leaflets in Assamese and English were distributed. The content of the leaflet was about the status, distribution and conservation needs of the Greater Adjutant Storks.

The project will be continued in the next year also during the breeding season of the Greater Adjutant Stork.

REFERENCES

Singha, H. 1998. Ecology, biology and ethology of Greater Adjutant Stork *Leptoptilos dubius* (Gmelin) in Assam, India. Unpublished Ph. D. thesis. Aligarh Muslim University.

Singha, H. 1999. Status, distribution, eco-biology and ethology of storks with special reference to the Greater Adjutant Stork. In (A. R. Rahmani and S. Javed eds.) ecology and Distribution of Indian storks with special reference to endangered species. Final Report. Aligarh Muslim University.

IBA DATABASE BUILD-UP AND CONFIRMATION OF IBAS

By Prakriti Samsad

Under this project, initially 30 tentative IBAs of West Bengal were proposed to be surveyed. These included 12 sites in protected areas, rest in non-protected areas. Majority of these areas lie in the northern part of the state. So the fieldwork for the project was divided into three zones: northern, central and southern Bengal. Fieldwork for most of the sites has been completed.

Prakriti Samsad, an organizational partner of IBCN studied all the 30 tentative IBAs, out of which 20 were in North Bengal, three in Central Bengal and rest in South Bengal. Eighteen sites were surveyed. Secondary data has been collected from 12 sites. Some more visits are to be made. Prakriti Samsad have started collating the data and looking forward to produce the report within a short period.

Note

It is requested that, those who have not submitted their final report funded by IBA/ IBCN, kindly submit it. Thank you.

PARTNER FACT FILE

Nature Club Surat

Date founded: 1985
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Contact address: 81, Sarjan Society
 Athwa Lanes, Surat -395 007
 Gujarat

Email discussion group:
 natureclubsurat@yahoo.com
Website: www.natureclubsurat.org and
 www.greenlution.org
Members: 1000



MISSION

To Conserve nature's heritage by education and direct conservation efforts.

AIM

Nature Club Surat aims to plant seed of love and respect for the very elements that support our fragile existence on this beautiful blue globe floating in the void space.

OBJECTIVES

- ✦ To get more people concerned and interested in avifauna.
- ✦ To create awareness among the people regarding conservation.
- ✦ To publish bird guides in local languages
- ✦ To make audio cassette 'Call of Indian Birds I-II'.
- ✦ To publish monthly newsletter 'Jungle Book' to keep the members informed about the club's activities.
- ✦ To get more people concerned and interested in avifauna and wildlife

MAJOR ACTIVITIES

- ✦ Regular outing in wild life sanctuaries and national parks;
- ✦ Trips for bird watching and stargazing;
- ✦ Holding film-shows and slide shows on nature and wildlife every month
- ✦ Organise nature education camps each year in Dang forest during vacation, where students come and stay in tents, learn about birds, reptiles, insects, plants rocks and stars;

- ✦ Oppose destruction of wildlife and wetland habitat by creating public awareness and if necessary with the help of legislation;
- ✦ Oppose unnecessary tree felling on public land;
- ✦ Tree Plantation;
- ✦ Taking care of injured birds and animals;
- ✦ Participate in trekking, painting, nature crafts, rock climbing, quiz and debates;

To take care of the innocent and mute friends in distress, Nature Club Surat has launched special efforts by starting SPCA (Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) in Surat. Four members of the Club are Animal Welfare Officers appointed by the AWBI (Animal Welfare Board of India, Central Ministry of Environment and Forests). They have specially been trained to rescue and treat animals and birds in distress

ACHIEVEMENTS

Nature Club Surat regularly counts migratory water birds at ten lakes, out of which two lakes have become Water-bird sanctuaries due to the Club's lobbying.

The lake at Gaviar near Dumas was saved for the birds due to Club's protest.

For the first time in Surat full-grown trees were rescued by shifting them from one place to another. It was successful with the help of Surat Municipal Corporation. Nineteen trees were saved.

Two wetlands have been declared sanctuaries due to diligent effort by the Club.

IBCN NEWS

BNHS Bird Room named after Humayun Abdulali



L - R: Dr. Rachel Rueben, Mr. Akbar Abdulali, Mrs. Sumaira Akbar Abdulali, Mrs. Rafia Abdulali and Mr. Salman Abdulali

The Bombay Natural History Society dedicated the BNHS Bird Room in memory of Mr. Humayun Abdulali, a doyen of the Indian ornithology in a function held on Monday, 20th May, 2002 at Hornbill House. Dr. Rachel Rueben, former Director, Centre for Research in Medical Entomology was the chief guest. Dr. Rueben, who is writing Mr. Abdulali's biography, spoke on the occasion highlighting Mr. Abdulali's contribution to Indian ornithology. A splendid portrait of Mr. Abdulali painted by Mr. J. P. Irani was also unveiled.

The BNHS Bird Room, which houses 28,000 bird specimens representing bird fauna of the Indian region has been late Mr. Humayun Abdulali's second home when he worked on cataloguing the birds.

It was mainly through Mr. Abdulali's efforts and negotiations with the Central Government that the Society's Hornbill House was built to house its offices, library and the invaluable zoological collections. Mr. Abdulali continued his association with the BNHS as member of the Executive Committee. He was also the Emeritus Naturalist at the BNHS.

Mr. Abdulali was Honorary Secretary of the BNHS from 1950-62, when he represented BNHS on the Bombay State Wildlife Advisory Board. In collaboration with the Forest Department, he drafted the Bombay Wild Birds and Wild Animals Protection of 1951, which later served as the model for the present Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Mr. Abdulali was known for his keen observation and an original, inquiring mind, which made him very knowledgeable all-round naturalist, especially interested in birds. On Indian natural history his 265 scientific papers and 60 book reviews have been published. His monumental work is the Catalogue of the Birds in the Collection of the Bombay Natural History Society, which has been published in 38 parts. In his honour, a new species of frog *Nyctibatrachus humayuni* and a new species of Nicobar Scops Owl *Otus alius* were named. He himself has described the Andaman subspecies of Black Baza, found in Andaman Island.

An avid shikari in his early days, Mr. Abdulali took up conservation issues seriously. He played a critical role in the establishment of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park. He fought for it and when there were plans to build a road through the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, he got it stayed.

His investigations into the role of frogs in controlling agricultural pests finally convinced the Government of India to ban the export of frog legs.

Bird Census Training Workshops

Dudwa National Park 17-19th April 2002

The training workshop was held at Dudwa National Park, Lakhimpur Kheri, Uttar Pradesh from 17-19th April 2002. It was attended by 46 participants, including officials and staff of the Forest Department. Dr. V. P. Singh (IBCN partner) took initiative as local organizer of the workshop. The programme was inaugurated by Mr. G. C. Mishra, Director Dudwa Tiger Reserve.

On 17th morning, the programme started with, introduction by Dr. V. P. Singh. Dr. Asad R. Rahmani briefed the participants about the need for bird census. Mr. G. C. Mishra emphasized the need of training to forest officials for such workshops. Dr. Rahmani then gave a detailed account of the IBA programme and the IBCN followed by Bird Census Techniques. He took participants to the field in the next session to discuss how to initiate a scientific ornithological survey. He stressed that the participants should give more emphasis to collect systematic data during an ornithological survey. In the evening Mr. Abrar Ahmad delivered a lecture on 'Bird Trade in India'.

On 18th morning, the census techniques continued and in between a small field exercise was done. After lunch Dr. Rahmani gave presentations on 'How to write scientific papers' and 'How to write project proposals', 'Need for Bird Ringing' and 'Status of Bengal Florican in Uttar Pradesh'. One 19th morning, another field exercise was organized on census techniques.

Gangtok, Sikkim 13-14th May 2002

The training workshop was held at Gangtok, Sikkim on 13-14 May 2002 and participated by 40 people from different parts of the region including the Sikkim Forest Department. Ms. Usha Lachungpa (IBCN State Coordinator) took initiative as local organizer of the workshop. The programme was inaugurated by Mr. Poudyal, Addl. PCCF, Sikkim.

The workshop started with a brief introduction by Mrs Usha Lachungpa. Mr Poudyal emphasized the need of bird census training to forest officials. Dr. Rahmani dealt with the importance of scientific census and data gathering. After the inauguration, the first technical session was on IBA and IBCN, followed by bird census techniques. Field techniques were demonstrated in the premises of Gangtok zoo, which is like a mini-sanctuary. Dr. Rahmani stressed the need to collect, collate and disseminate good data so informed conservation decisions can be taken by the Forest Department. The need to collect long-term bird data was also emphasized.

Next day, lectures and field demonstrations on different census techniques were continued. In the afternoon, Dr. Rahmani delivered lectures on "How to write scientific papers", and "How to write project proposals". Usha spoke about the need for long-term bird ringing to generate solid data to know the changing status of birds in Sikkim.

The Impact Of Cormorants To Biodiversity

A Round Table Discussion in IOC, China

International Ornithological Congress (see <http://www.ioc.org.cn>) is planning to hold a Round Table Discussion on the impact of cormorants to biodiversity in Beijing in August 2002.

The populations of at least two species of cormorants, the Double-crested Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax auritus*, in North America, and the Great Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax carbo*, in Europe, have increased dramatically during the last 30 years. For example, on the Great Lakes of North America, it is estimated that

the population of *P. auritus* has increased from 125 pairs in 1972 to 115,000 pairs in 2000; in central Europe, *P. carbo* has increased from 5,000 pairs in the early 1970s to 130,000 pairs in 1995. These population increases have sparked great concern among fisheries biologists, conservation biologists and the general public about their possible negative impacts. At least three areas of concern have been identified: **impacts to fisheries, impacts on vegetation and impacts to other colonial waterbirds**. Potential impacts to fisheries are being well studied but other aspects of the issue have not received as much attention.

On the Canadian Great Lakes, there is a concern that *P. auritus* is destroying unique Carolinian vegetation on islands; also at risk are Black-crowned Night-Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) and Great Egrets (*Ardea alba*) which share nesting habitat with *P. auritus*. In Europe, similarly, there has been concern that native forests are being destroyed on Baltic Sea islands by *P. carbo* and there have been interactions with the Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) and Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*) at breeding grounds. Although *P. carbo* is in competition for nesting habitats with some colonially nesting bird species locally, it seems that *P. carbo* is only a minor threat to species of concern on a European scale.

A group for the International Ornithological Congress in Beijing (11-17 August 2002) is organizing a Round Table Discussion (RTD) on the topic "**The Impacts of Cormorants (Phalacrocoracidae) on Biodiversity**" and is looking for participants from all geographical areas. The purposes of this Round-Table Discussion are to bring together researchers on this topic, to identify the impacts of cormorants on biodiversity, to identify further concerns and to explore common methods of assessing and treating these concerns.

If you are conducting research in this field and will be attending the IOC meeting, please contact one of them as soon as possible on the following address:

(1) D.V. Chip Weseloh, Canadian Wildlife Service, 4905 Dufferin St. Downsview, Ontario CANADA M3H 5T4, chip.weseloh@ec.gc.ca;

(2) Thomas Keller, Technische Universitaet Muenchen, Angewandte Zoologie, Alte Akademie 16, D-85350 Freising/Weihenstephan, GERMANY, t.keller@lrz.tum.de.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

Waterbird Population Estimates draft for consultation

Request for assistance in compilation of global waterbird population estimates

Wetlands International has, since 1994, maintained a database of global waterbird population estimates under contract to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Periodic publications list estimates of numbers and population trends of around 2000 populations of 840 species of waterbirds worldwide. The importance of this report is that it provides the basis for the 1% criterion under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, under which any site which regularly holds more than 1% of a waterbird population qualifies for inclusion on the Ramsar list of wetlands of international importance. The report *Waterfowl Population Estimates* (Rose & Scott 1994) was updated three years later as *Waterfowl Population Estimates - second edition* (Rose & Scott 1997). This edition is now out of print, but the full tables and text are available on the web at:

<http://www.wetlands.org/IWC/WPEnote.htm>

Work is now underway on a third edition, and Wetlands International is seeking the help of species and country experts from all over the world. An updated consultation draft of the tables was submitted for consultation on the Wetlands International Website on 25 April, and is also available through the hyperlink above. It is requested that kindly contribute to this consultation process as soon as possible.

For more information on the Waterbird Population Estimates project, please consult the relevant web pages using the hyperlink above. These pages also provide details of exactly what kind of amendments and additions are being sought.

A New Ornithological Journal from Japan

The Ornithological Society of Japan has started a new English journal named "Ornithological Science" from January 2002.

The journal appears twice a year (in January and July). "Ornithological Science" convey studies in any field of ornithology. The Journal intends to favor articles submitted

by ornithologists working in East and South-East Asia, but also welcomes submissions from elsewhere, irrespective of the membership of the corresponding author. Out of the thirteen Advisory Board members abroad including USA, Europe and Australia, six are from East and South-East Asia.

Manuscripts are critically appraised by two independent referees and the editor. The corresponding author receives thirty free of charge offprints even if the author is not a member of the **Ornithological Society of Japan (OSJ)**. Membership of the OJS is open to anyone interested in ornithology. The annual fee for an ordinary member is Japanese Yen 5,000 and that for a student member is Japanese Yen 3,000. The members are entitled to receive two journals, "Ornithological Science" and "Japanes Journal of Ornithology (with English abstract; two issues per year). To join the OSJ, please apply to: The OSJ Office, c/- Laboratory of Biodiversity Science, School of Agriculture and Life Sciences, The University of Tokyo, Yayoi 1-1-1, Tokyo 113-8657, Japan. Phone: +81-3-5841-7541, Fax: +81-3-5841-8192, E-mail: osj@lagopus.com

To visit the OSJ web page: http://wwwsoc.nii.ac.jp/osj/english/home_e.html, you will get more information on the OSJ.

The address to which articles may be submitted is: Dr. Teruaki Hino, Associate Editor, Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute, Kyoto 612-0855, Japan. Phone: +81-75-611-1201, Fax: +85-75-611-1207, E-mail: tkpk@affrc.go.jp

Contents of the first issue of "Ornithological Science" January 2002

Special Feature: Interspecific segregation and attraction in forest birds (Corresponding Editor: T. Hino)

B Hino, T.: Introduction

Loyn, R.H.: Patterns of ecological segregation among forest and woodland birds in south-eastern Australia.

Recher, H.F., Davis, W.E. Jr. & Calver, M.C.: Comparative foraging ecology of five species of ground-pouncing birds in western Australian woodlands with comments on species decline.

Building on Experience

Ornithologists from 16 countries flocked to Mumbai to participate in a 10 days workshop "Building on Experience", organized by the BirdLife International and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The Bombay Natural History Society, a BirdLife Partner designate represented India at the workshop, which concluded on May 29, 2002.

The Building on Experience programme is developing the management capabilities of BirdLife Partner organisations through a series of four international workshops, to build their capacity to undertake sound conservation work through good organisational management. The programme covers a wide range of organisational development issues – business planning, project planning, human resource development and management, fundraising and marketing techniques and communications.

The Bombay Natural History Society was delighted to host this workshop in India. The BNHS has also participated actively in the Workshop and this programme enables the Society to pass on valuable knowledge gained through the programme to organisations across India through the Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN).

An increasing number of bird species are threatened with extinction throughout the world; it is essential for conservation organisations worldwide to unite to maximise global conservation efforts. The "Building on Experience" programme is an important initiative in this direction.

"Building on Experience is building the capacity of organisations through sharing the accumulated knowledge of BirdLife's 105 national Partners," said Ken Smith, Programme Co-ordinator.

Workshop participants came from countries as diverse as Thailand, India, Panama, Argentina, Spain, Bulgaria and Canada.

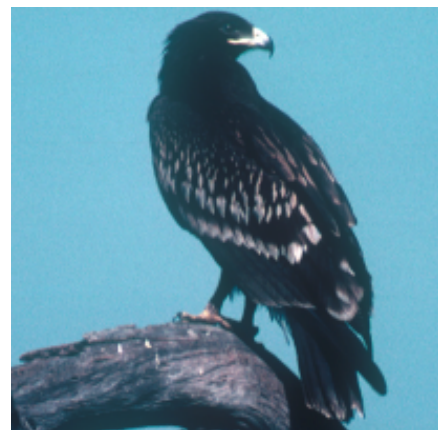
Over the next five years, each of the 105 BirdLife partner organisations will be invited to take part in this programme, thus raising the effectiveness of conservation organisations across the world.

LATEST SPECIES ACTION PLANS PUBLISHED

The European Commission has now published eight more Species Action Plans, which BirdLife International has developed.

The action plans for Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*, Steller's Eider *Polystica stelleri*, Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*, Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*, Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus* and Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax* are added to the previous 23 published by the Council of Europe in 1996. Copies of all the published plans can be found on:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/nature/directive/birdspriority.htm>



Rishad Naoroji

Greater Spotted Eagle

DIARY DATES

8-10 August 2002 *International Crane Workshop*, will be held in Beijing China. The workshop will be organised by the China Ornithological Society and the International Crane Foundation. The workshop will summarise research on the world's cranes and their habitats, promote scientific research and conservation of cranes and strengthen international information exchange. Topics to be covered include crane migration, cranes and people, captive breeding and the future direction of crane research.

November 18-26, 2002 *Ramsar CoP8, Valencia*

11-17 August 2002 *International Ornithology Congress*, Beijing China. Information can be obtained via email (infocenter@ioc.org.cn), via internet at (<http://www.ioc.org.cn>) or via home page of the 23rd Congress at (<http://www.ioc.org.za>).

September 15-28, 2002 *CMS CoP7, and AWEA MoP2*, Bonn, Germany

September 2002, Rio+10, *International Meetings* in South Africa.

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- | | |
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IBCN ORGANISATIONAL PARTNERSHIP



Manipur



Coorg, Kar.



Bhagalpur, Bihar



Calcutta, WB



Hyderabad, AP



New Delhi



Alipurduar, WB



Kokrajhar, Assam



Chhattisgarh



Cuttack, Orissa



Trivandrum, Ke.



Jaipur, Rajasthan



Dhakuakhana, Assam



Siliguri, WB



Dhubri, Assam



Gujarat



Guwahati, Assam



delhibird
The Northern India Bird Network



Nasik, MH



INTACH, Bihar



Guwahati, Assam



Mysore, Kar.



Surat, Gujarat

WILD ORISSA

Bhubaneswar



Malda, WB

33 organisations are partners of IBCN but all do not have logos



Indian Bird Conservation Network

The Indian Bird Conservation Network is set up by BNHS in collaboration with BirdLife International and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) (BirdLife partner in UK). The mission of the Network is to promote conservation of birds and their habitat through development of a national network of individuals, organisations and Government.

The Network invites two types of partnership-individual and organisational. To join the Network, write to your State Coordinator or the National Coordinator.

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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.

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The BNHS was founded in 1883 for the purpose of exchanging notes and observations on natural history and exhibiting interesting specimens. Today, it is the 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. BNHS is a BirdLife Partner Designate in India.

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