

# MISTNET

Volume 9 No. 1

January-March, 2008



Indian Bird Conservation Network



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**Mission Statement**

‘Conservation of nature, primarily biological diversity through action, based on research, education and public awareness.’

*BNHS is BirdLife International partner designate*



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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This Newsletter is supported by the RSPB and Darwin Initiative

Cover:

Oriental White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*  
by Raja Purohit

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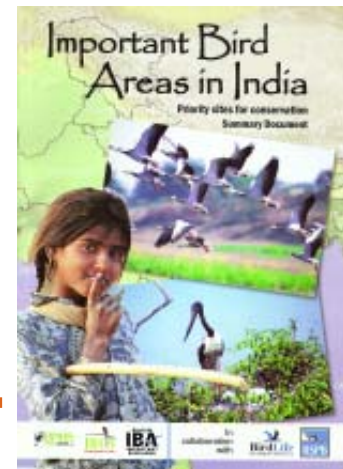
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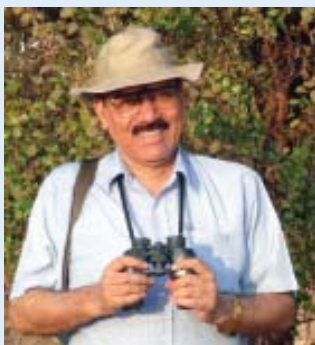
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## The role of State Coordinators

I am proud to write that we have 29 State Coordinators (SCs) in place, in as many states. They are some of the best ornithologists and conservationists of India, and particularly famous in their state. They have an extremely important role to play as 'guardians' of the IBAs in their state, as well as to network with the IBCN partners of their state/region. I want SCs to be the 'eyes' and 'ears' of the Secretariat. As soon as they see any threat to an IBA they should take appropriate action by meeting the concerned officials, and alert the other SCs. Instead of acting alone it would be good if the SCs, whenever possible, take along IBCN partners of the area when meeting officials. It is always more effective to meet an official in a group to discuss the issue of concern. The role of media is important for conservation, but do not give statements without understanding the entire issue. If you feel that BNHS/IBCN should take up the issue, please let us know. It is important that our concern is addressed to the right person who can take action on the ground. It is also important to write/talk with the state Chief Wildlife Warden, but sometimes appropriate conservation action can be taken by the Conservator of Forests, the District Forest Officer, the Manager of a protected area or the community leaders. The Forest Department has its own hierarchy and they like to follow that. Please note that we have to work *with* the Forest Department and the local community, not against them. However, if something terrible is happening to an IBA or a threatened bird species, and no appropriate action is being taken by the (local) authorities, we should go to the higher authorities or to the media or to the State Wildlife Board as appropriate.

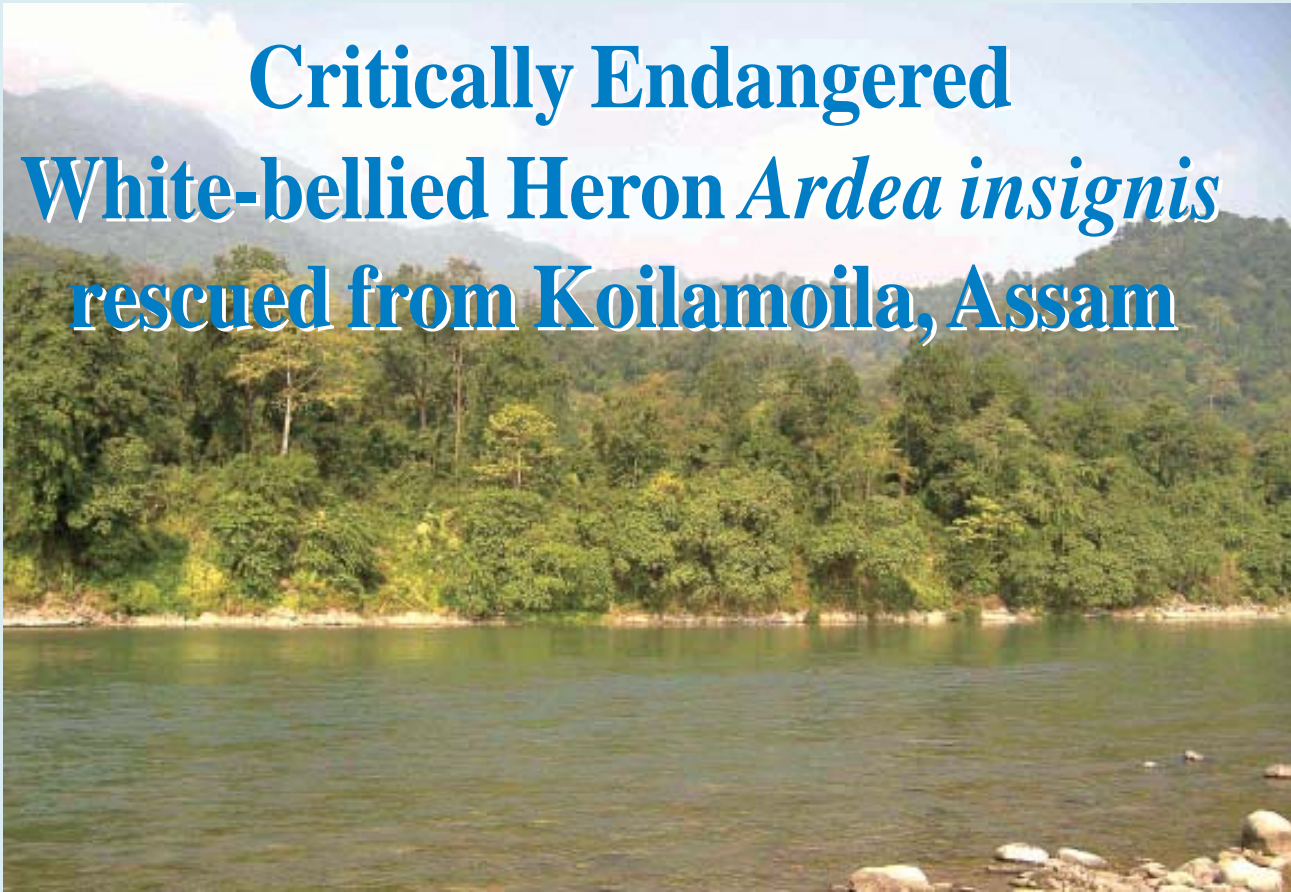
Many of our SCs are members of the State Wildlife Board. If you are not, try to get yourself inducted in the board of your state. Establishment of new protected areas, expansion of existing ones, allocation of funds, and state level policy changes are discussed in the board meetings. You can influence the State Wildlife Board by being a Board member. Generally, board meetings are chaired by the Chief Minister or the Forest Minister. By convincing them, a number of conservation activities can be taken up.

From time to time, through email, I send interesting papers/reports to the State Coordinators. I expect them to forward such material to the partners of their state. If you want to receive interesting literature, please write to your State Coordinator. If you see anything interesting, share it with your SC and us.

Some Indian states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Jammu and Kashmir and Maharashtra are too big, with distinct sub-regions. We find that one State Coordinator is not sufficient in large states. Therefore, we are considering the option of having two or even three State Coordinators in such states. Uttar Pradesh already has two State Coordinators. In Jammu and Kashmir, due to three distinct sub-regions, we are planning to have three State Coordinators. Our main aim is that the IBCN expands and actively works for the conservation of IBAs and threatened bird species. For this to happen, we should be ready to take all appropriate actions.

Asad R. Rahmani

# Critically Endangered White-bellied Heron *Ardea insignis* rescued from Koilamoila, Assam



Pic: Arnab Bose

Koilamoila is near the foothills of Bhutan in Manas Reserve Forest, which falls under the Manas Biosphere Reserve, an IBA

**Arnab Bose, Sadashib Nath Sen and  
Raju Das**

It was during the wet summer morning of 15 August, 2007, when India was celebrating its 60th Independence Day, that we received information of an unknown bird rescued at Koilamoila (26° 41.286' N; 90° 33.755' E; Elevation 62 m), in Chirang district of Bodoland Territorial Autonomous District (BTAD), Assam. Koilamoila is near the foothills of Bhutan in Manas Reserve Forest, which falls under the Manas Biosphere Reserve an IBA. When we visited the area we learnt that a local farmer Mr. Nathanel Basumatray, and his daughter had noticed that a big bird was following their flock of domestic ducks, which was coming towards their home from a nearby stream. Mr. Basumatary and his family members

captured the unknown bird. As the bird was not frequently seen in the area, the people were curious about its identity and initially thought it to be a stork, familiar to them. People of the area started crowding the residence of Mr. Basumatray for a glimpse of the unknown bird. The matter was intimated to the volunteers of 'New Horizons', a conservation group and our partner organization working at Koilamoila. After reaching the area, they requested the villager to not harm the bird and took all possible measures for its care and safety. The rescue of the unidentified bird was conveyed to *Nature's Foster*- IBCN partner by the New Horizons and immediately a team from *Nature's Foster* visited Koilamoila and identified the bird as the White-

bellied Heron *Ardea insignis*, a Critically Endangered species.

The bird was 90 cm long (beak to tail), 115 cm in height and had a wing span of 190 cm. It was a long legged greyish slender bird having a long head and neck with a huge thick black bill. The crown was slaty black, having crest feathers with a grey tip. Tail and primaries were also slaty black. The wings were marked with black, brown and grey. The median and lesser secondary coverts were slaty with a brown tinge. Lesser under primary coverts, median under primary coverts and greater under primary coverts were white. Rump was white with a slaty tail. The under part was also white and the neck was slaty black with white streaks. We did not see any black band across

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the breast, indicating a female bird. As the sexes of the White-bellied Heron are similar in appearance, although males have a larger black crown, long hind crown feathers and a black band across the breast.

The bird prefers forest, wetland, grassland, small or large rivers, usually with sand or gravel bars, often within or adjacent to subtropical broad-leaved forest, from the lowlands up to at least 1,500 m as their habitat (BirdLife International 2001). It is usually seen solitary or in small parties of four or five.

Since ornithological records began in the Indian subcontinent, this heron appears to have been uncommon. Being large and solitary, its populations have presumably always been thinly distributed. The global estimation of the White-bellied Heron is 250-1000 individuals with an estimated distributional range of 58,000 sq. km (BirdLife International 2001). It is sporadically sighted in different parts of lowland areas on the north bank of Assam. It is known from the eastern Himalayan foothills in Bhutan and north-east India to the hills of Bangladesh and Myanmar. These birds occasionally visit the Brahmaputra lowlands of Assam in winter. On 8 January, 2002, during a survey for IBAs at the Urapad *beel* (26° 06' 54" N & 90° 35' 36" E), in the Goalpara district of Assam, we recorded two individuals wading in a shallow area. Most of the few recent records come from five or six sites in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in India and a few regular nesting sites in Bhutan. Bhutan has an estimated population of only 24 individuals with more concentration along the Puntshgangchhu river basin in western Bhutan. The recent breeding records of the White-bellied heron are only limited to Bhutan. The present sighting area of Koilamoila is only about 12 km (aerial distance) south from

Pic: Arunab Bose



The Critically Endangered White-bellied Heron

the Bhutan border under Aie Valley Division which is enriched with several rivers and rivulets feeding the river Aie, a tributary of Brahmaputra. The rescue of the bird from Koilamoila is remarkable for the conservation world as there was no recent (after 1990) reporting of occurrence of the species from the Himalayan foothills of western Assam.

It was apparently "not very rare" in Assam (Baker 1922-1930), with small numbers appearing in wetlands of the Brahmaputra valley during winter (Stevens 1914-1915). This bird was on the endangered red list of IUCN due to its small and declining population (BirdLife International 2001) but the IUCN Red List Category 2007 has up-listed the status of the White-bellied Heron from Endangered to Critically Endangered species on the basis of new information, which indicates extremely small and rapidly declining population. In the near future, this decline is expected to increase due to the loss and degradation of lowland forest and wetlands, and through direct exploitation and disturbance.

In Bhutan, a two-year study (April

2003- April 2005) on the White-bellied Heron, initiated by the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSPN), has revealed useful information regarding their habitat and distribution. They are still carrying out systematic studies of the species. But till 2005, no such systematic studies have been conducted in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh where some scattered sightings are observed. Mr. Sadashib Nath Sen of Nature's Foster, an IBCN partner organization working in the Western Assam for last two decades on the conservation of avifauna, has been fortunate to have small support for the "study on the occurrence White-bellied Heron in the wetlands of lower Assam Districts" from the BirdFair/ Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Research Fund for Endangered Birds. Besides this, Nature's Foster has also been organising regular avian censuses (coordinated count programme) in the area since 1992.

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# AWC 2003-06: Highlights

The Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) programme has been coordinated by the Indian Bird Conservation Network of the BNHS in India for the last nine years. Producing copies of the annual results require funds which are lacking, So we have decided to provide the AWC analysis and results through MISTNET. We have analyzed data for 2003 to 2006 and give below the highlights of the AWC in various states.

## List of globally threatened species covered under the AWC

### Endangered

01. Greater Adjutant *Leptoptilos dubius*

### Vulnerable

01. Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus*

02. Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus*

03. Sarus Crane *Grus antigone*

04. Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*

### Near Threatened

01. Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis*

02. Baer's Pochard *Aythya baeri*

03. Ferruginous Pochard *Aythya nyroca*

04. Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor*

05. Oriental White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*

06. Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala*

07. Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

08. Black-bellied Tern *Sterna acuticauda*

09. Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*

Compiled by: Noor Khan  
Associate Officer IBA/IBCN



Pic.: Asad R. Rehmani

Greater Adjutant, one of the rarest of storks in the world is listed as Endangered by the BirdLife International



Pic: Sumit Dookia

Haigam Rakh, an IBA and Ramsar site is important for migratory and marshland breeding species

### Andhra Pradesh

Approximately 40 Spot-billed Pelicans were recorded in the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary (IBA) in 2003 by the Coringa Section Officer, Andhra Pradesh Forest Department, and about 1,658 Spot-billed Pelicans were recorded in 2003 by the Forest Range Officer, Pulicat, in Pulicat Lake Bird Sanctuary, an IBA. However, only 64 were recorded in 2004 in Pulicat by Dr. Ranjit Manakadan and S. Sivakumar. There was no count carried out in 2005 and 2006 at this site.

Pulicat Lake Bird Sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh recorded 27 species totaling 34,536 birds in 2003, count carried out by Forest Range Officer; whereas in 2004, 34 species were recorded totaling only 2,451 birds. No counts were conducted in 2005 and 2006. The possible reason for the lower total number of bird counted in 2004 could be the small area of coverage. About 20,000 Little Stint *Calidris minuta* were recorded at this site in 2003, by the Forest Range Officer.

### Assam

In Assam, Misamari beel, a riverine tract in Jhanjimukh–Kokilamukh, an IBA, recorded 22,056 birds in 2003 by a team led by Ananta Dutta. About 1,000 Bar-

headed Goose *Anser indicus*, 1,300 Brahminy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*, 980 Greylag Goose *Anser anser* were recorded which considerably exceeded the 1% threshold of 560, 500 and 150, respectively. This IBA is particularly noteworthy for the records of the Vulnerable Baer's Pochard *Aythya baeri*, where 28 individuals were recorded in 2003 (No count was done in 2004 and 2005).

In 2006, 11 Greater Adjutant *Leptoptilos dubius* were reported from Jangdia, and 13 Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus* were reported from Dheer Beel in Dhubri, and Jangdia and Khamranga in Kamrup District. Sixteen Ferruginous Pochard *Aythya nyroca* were reported from Jangdia and 70 were recorded from Khamranga Beel in Kamrup District by Moloy Baruah and Mr. Manash Bhuyan.

### Goa

Batim Tank in Goa recorded 7,656, 6,010 and 28,829 birds in 2003, 2004 and 2005 respectively. Of the 25 species recorded in 2005, two species, Garganey *Anas querquedula* and Lesser Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna javanica*, accounted for 15,000 and 12,000 birds respectively, whereas the

remaining 23 species accounted for only about 1,800 birds. In 2006, about 41,000 birds of 22 species were counted from the Batim tank.

The total count from Carambolim Tank (IBA) was 1,462 of 27 species in 2006, by Mr. Heinz Lainer and Mr. Gordon Frost.

The Mandovi Estuary in Goa recorded 45,844 birds in 2003 of which about 45,000 were Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*. The successive count for 2004 and 2005 were 13,857 and 28,188 individuals respectively. In 2006, 5,207 birds were recorded of 27 species from this site by Mr. Heinz Lainer.

About 21,693 birds were recorded at the mouth of River Chapora, which included 15,000 Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* and 6,000 Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*. For 2004 and 2005, the birds recorded were 2,448 and 22,883, which included 1,000 and 18,000 Brown-headed Gulls respectively. In 2006, 20,632 individuals of 35 species were counted by Mr. Heinz Lainer.

### Gujarat

In Amipur Dam about 54,000 birds were recorded by Mr. S. M. Dave and his team in 2004, however no count was

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held in the earlier or later years. 500 Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus*, 1,450 Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*, 2,700 Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*, 3,150 Common Crane *Grus grus*, 33,000 Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo* were the noteworthy records. In 2006, 708 Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus*, were recorded from 17 sites in Gujarat. The highest count was at Bhaskarpara Talao in Surendranagar district, with a total count of 20.

In 2005 at Bhashkarpara, a total of 38,435 birds were counted including 800 Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha* by Mr. Gulam Ahmed A. Vora and his team. In 2006 the total count from this site was 6,269 of 68 species, in which 500 Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor*, 30 Oriental White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*, and 50 Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* were note worthy.

Deo Dam in the Panchmahal district in Gujarat, had 32,157 birds in 2004, including 918 Comb Ducks *Sarkidiornis melanotos* and 183 Greylag Geese *Anser anser*. The team was lead by Dr. B. M. Parasharya. No count was carried out in 2005 and 2006 at this site.

At Kanewal in Anand district in Gujarat, a total 41,127 birds in 2004 was counted, including 11 Sarus Crane *Grus antigone*, 4,700 Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*, and 22,917 Common Coot *Fulica atra*, by Dr. B. M. Parasharya and his team. No counts were carried out in 2005 and 2006.

In Nani Kakrad in the Nausari district 11,936 birds were counted in 2003, and 23,271 in 2004, by Mr. Rajendra M. Desai and his team. The birds recorded in 2004 include 2 Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*, 88 Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*, 177 Oriental White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*, 350 Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala*, 350 Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*, 350 Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*, 1300 Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*. The identity of Goliath Heron is questionable. Similarly, the presence of 350 Grey Heron, mainly a solitary species, is also doubtful. There were no counts carried out in 2005 and 2006 at this site.

In Pariej in the Kheda district, 36,658 birds were counted in 2003, and 29,390 in 2004. In 2003, 608 Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* and 30,800 Common Coot

*Fulica atra* were recorded. Coot number was 22,480 in 2004. About 300 Comb Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* were recorded in 2004 by Dr. B. M. Parasharya and his team. No counts were carried out in 2005 and 2006 at this site.

At Patangdi (Munva Hadaf Dam) in the Dahod district in Gujarat, 28,102 birds were recorded in 2004, which included 300 Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*, 1,000 Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* and 2,000 Gadwall *Anas strepera*, by a team led by Mr. Sunil Puwar. There were no counts in 2005 and 2006.

At Pipalava Bandharo (Kaj) in the Junagarh district in Gujarat, a total of 76,927 birds were counted in 2003. The list included 500 Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*, 300 Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*, 7,000 Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*, 27,120 Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo*, 1,000 Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*, 4,000 Gadwall *Anas strepera*, 5,500 Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*, and 7,000 Common Teal *Anas crecca*. This count was led by Dr. I. R. Gadhvi; there were no counts in 2005 and 2006.

At Sarod 'J' Point in the Vadodara



Pic: Sumit Dookia

The Bar-headed Goose migrates over the Himalayas to spend the winter in India, Northern Burma and the wetlands of Pakistan



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district in Gujarat, the total count was 20,280 in 2004, the majority of the birds consisted of 20,000 Lesser Flamingos *Phoenicopterus minor*. The count was done by Dr. R. V. Denkar and Mr. Pratyush Patankar.

At Victor Coastal Belt, Pipavav and Bherai in the Bhavnagar district in Gujarat 43,320 birds were recorded in 2003, by Mr. Pravinkumar H. Gohil. This included 305 Black-bellied Tern *Sterna acuticauda*, 2,850 Common Crane *Grus grus*, 1,000 Common Redshank *Tringa tetanus*, 32,000 Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo*. There were no counts carried out in 2005 and 2006 at this site.

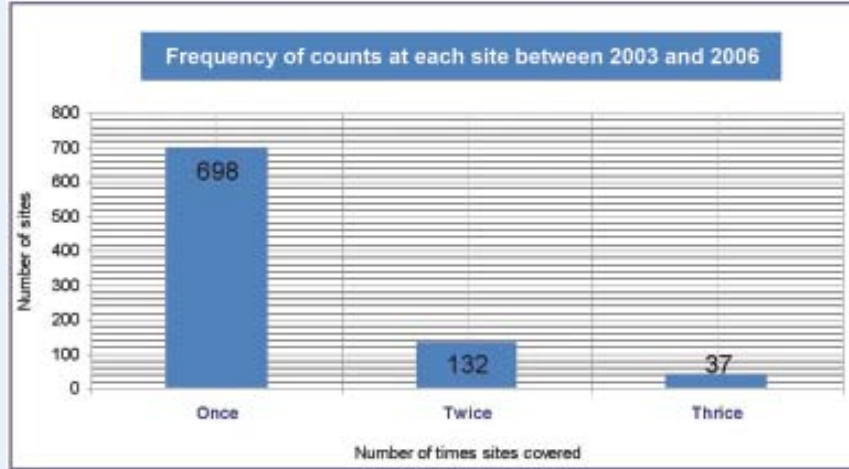
Wadhavana Irrigation Tank in the Vadodara district in Gujarat, resulted into 25,868 birds in 2003. This included 81 Comb Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*, 1,270 Greylag Goose *Anser anser*, 295 Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*, 575 Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha*, and 1080 Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*. No counts were conducted in 2005 and 2006.

**Himachal Pradesh**

Pong Dam is an important wintering ground and an IBA. A team lead by Mr. Jan Williemin den Besten recorded 72,300 and 71,805 individuals in 2003 and 2004, respectively. However, no count was done in 2005. In 2003 and 2004, 25,575 and 24,481 Northern Pintails *Anas acuta* were counted. Other species included the Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus* 9,500 (2003), 16,311 (2004); Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* 5,441 (2003), 4,850 (2004) and the Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* 2,940 (2003) 6,233 (2004); for which the 1% thresholds are 560, 2500 and 1000 respectively.

**Jharkhand**

In Jharkhand, Kanke Reservoir in which the count was held by Ms. Monalisa Bhujabal and her team in 2003, 20,491 birds were recorded of which nearly 18,000 belonged to unidentified category. Similarly, in Roka Lake, 22,300 were recorded in 2003 by Ms. Monalisa



Bhujabal and her team, of which 20,000 were unidentified ducks.

**Karnataka**

In Karnataka, Krishnarajasagar Dam in Mandya and Mysore districts recorded 21,644 birds in 2004 by Mr. A. Sivaprakash and T. Grija. Seventy-six individuals of the Near Threatened Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis* and 210 individuals of the Near Threatened Oriental White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* were recorded along with other species including 4,300 individuals of the common and widespread winter visitor, the Garganey *Anas querquedula*.

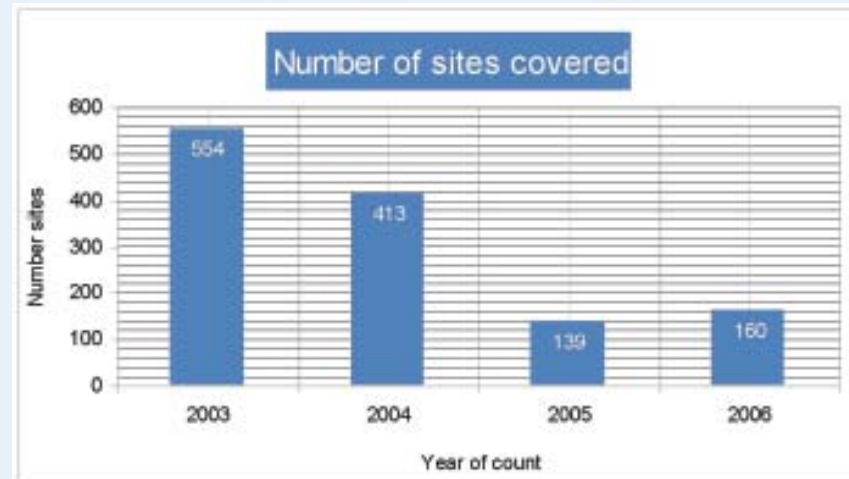
**Kerala**

Two IBAs were covered in Kerala, the Kole Wetlands and Kattampally. In Kole wetlands only 5,169 waterfowl were recorded in 2003 by Mr. Paul, P. M., whereas the count for 2004 was

1,01,869 and that for 2005 was 23,453.

Of the 1,01,869 birds counted in 2004, 43,000 were unidentified ducks, 10,412 herons, 3,107 shorebirds and 5,334 terns. 50 Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* and 15,000 Garganey *Anas querquedula* were recorded in 2004, and 75 and 5,000 respectively in 2005. Other species that exceeded their 1% threshold were 3,000 Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger*, 3,000 Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*, 1,000 Pacific Golden-Plover *Pluvialis fulva*, 400 Oriental White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*, 1,500 Small Pratincole *Glareola lacteal*, 15,000 Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*. In 2005, 3,000 Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger* and 1,000 Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* were recorded.

Kattampally, recorded 20,116 birds in 2003 with the count of 12 Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* and 7,000 Garganey *Anas querquedula*.



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**Manipur**

In Manipur, three sites, Parambu paddy fields and marshes, Punnyoorkulam Wetland and S. Vechoor Lake were counted only in 2003 and were not visited between 2004 and 2006. The respective bird counts for these three sites in 2003 were 53,222, 73,370 and 31,904.

**Maharashtra**

In Maharashtra, 30,903 birds were recorded by a team led by Mr. Ninad Shah and Mr. Manoj Kulkarni at Hipparga Tank in 2003, which included 315 Black Ibis *Pseudibis papillosa*, 203 Oriental White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*, 362 Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* and 255 Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*.

At Sewree Jetty, an IBA, 28,623 individuals were recorded by a team led by Ms. Ashvini Vaidya and Dr. S. Balachandaran in 2003 which included 1,500 Common Redshank *Tringa tetanus*, 2,500 Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*, 7,000 Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus* and 15,000 Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor*.

Thane Creek, an IBA, was counted only in 2005 by Mr. Sunjoy Monga and his team with 157,478 individuals including 500 Median Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia*, 1,000 Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*, 50,000 Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*, 20,000 Dunlin *Calidris alpina*, 50,000 Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultia*, 2,000 Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*, 7,000 Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*, and 25,000 Little Stint *Calidris minuta*. There was no count carried out in 2006 at this site.

**Orissa**

In Orissa, counts at four sites were conducted of which two were IBAs, the Bhitarkanika Mangrove with 2,81,029 birds in 2003 and Chilika with 4,87,430 birds also in 2003. Other two sites were Hirakud Reservoir 24,627 (2003) and Pompalo Bada Sadia 22,035 (2003). However, no counts were done subsequently in 2004 and 2005 for all

the four sites. About 640 Black-necked Grebes *Podiceps nigricollis* were recorded at Mandira Dam in 2004 out of the 1,442 individual birds of 20 species. This is a doubtful record.

In 2003 Bhitarkanika Mangrove, 2,81,029 birds consisting of 95 species were recorded by Mr. Anup Kumar Nayak and his team. Another IBA, the Chilika Lake, included one Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*, (doubtful record) 108 Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*, 173 Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis*, 1,173 Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*, 142 Oriental White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*, 333 Spotted Red-shank *Tringa erythropus*, 2,992 Brahminy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*, 1,226 Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha*, 980 Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*, 720 Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*, 9,279 Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*, 1,861 Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*, 1,126 Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*, 1,123 Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, 2,100 Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*, 28,936 Red-crested Pochard *Rhodonessa rufina*, 1,182 Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*, 2,995 Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*, 4,230 Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*, 80,667 Gadwall *Anas strepera*, 5,215 Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger*, 5,368 Little Stint *Calidris minuta*, 67,268 Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*, 5,438 Garganey *Anas querquedula*, 6,093 Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*, 8,800 Cotton Teal *Nettapus coromandelianus*, 21,311 Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*, 30,964 Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*, 64,994 Northern Shoveller *Anas clypeata*, 29,667 Tufted Pochard *Aythya fuligula*, and 39,364 Common Coot *Fulica atra*. No counts were carried out in 2005 and 2006 at this site.

**Tamil Nadu**

In Tamil Nadu, Karaiyveti Bird Sanctuary, an IBA in Tiruchirapalli district, recorded 26,398 (2003) 1,715 (2004) and

23,417 (2005) birds. In 2003, 375 Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis*, 230 Oriental White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*, 310 Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala*, 315 Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*, 2,020 Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*, 1,200 Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*, 15,000 Garganey *Anas querquedula* were recorded by Prof. H. Daniel Wesley and Mr. Chinnaraj Sundara Raman. In 2005 180 Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala*, 1,550 Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha*, 1,400 Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans*, 5,000 Garganey *Anas querquedula* were recorded by Dr. A. Relton, and Students of Bishop Heber College. There was no count carried out in 2006 at this site.

In 2006, the total bird count from Tamil Nadu was 13,218 of 78 species from 15 sites. Of which 110 were Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis* were counted from Singanallur Lake in Coimbatore. 160 Lesser Flamingos *Phoenicopterus minor* were counted from Cheyur Tank in Pondicherry, and 2,028 Oriental White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* were counted from Cheyur Tank in Pondicherry.

**West Bengal**

In West Bengal, Farakka Barrage IBA, recorded 1,25,449 individuals in 2003 including 3,500 Large Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*, 2,100 Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*, 3,200 Gadwall *Anas strepera*, 26,400 Tufted Pochard *Aythya fuligula*. There has been no count on this site in 2004 to 2006.

The Ganges River (excluding Farakka Barrage) recorded 30,287 individuals in 2003 including 3,000 Garganey *Anas querquedula* and 4,500 Common Teal *Anas crecca*. In 2006 only 1,725 birds were counted from this state because of very few participants.

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# Nesting of Asian Openbill near Navegaon National Park (IBA-Maharashtra)

\*Aditya Joshi, \*\* Sushant Bhusari, \*\*\* Kaustubh Thomare



Pic: Aditya Joshi

The Asian Openbill Stork, is a large wading bird in the stork family

**T**he Asian Openbill, *Anastomus oscitans*, also referred to as Openbill Stork, breeds near inland wetlands and build stick nest in trees, typically laying 2-4 eggs. Breeding adults are all white except for the black wing flight feathers, red legs and dull yellow-grey bill. The mandibles do not meet except at the tip, and hence the name-openbill. Non-breeding adults have the white of the plumage replaced by off-white. Young birds have a brown tinge on the plumage. Recently, the RSR

(Rescue, Study and Research) team of *Nisarg Vidnyan Mandal (NiViM)* observed a nesting site of these birds. Locally called, *dhok*, they nest in colonies on the top of the thick canopies of trees.

Altogether 29 nests were located at Pimpari village near Navegaon IBA (Maharashtra), out of these 27 nests were successful.

The nesting started in July 2007 and birds stayed up to November 2007. The nesting was close to human habitation.

RESEARCH AND MONITORING FOR CONSERVATION

Dates (2007)	Tree Species and nests	Total number of nests
July 28	Teak -6 / Tamarind-12	18
Aug 12	Teak -5 / Tamarind-20	25
Sep 9	Teak -7 / Tamarind-22	29
Sep 22	Teak -7 / Tamarind-22	29
Oct 13	Teak -5 / Tamarind-22	27
Oct 30	Teak -5 / Tamarind-22	27
Nov 7	Teak -5 / Tamarind-22	27

A total of 114 birds were sighted. According to the locals, the nesting site has been active for the last 10 years. These birds share the nesting place with Cattle Egrets and Little Egrets.

Nesting earlier occurred on three trees, but one of the tree was cut down, while the other two were saved with the help of local villagers.

The loss of one tree is creating nesting pressure. Some birds did start

nesting at a nearby new site, but human disturbances forced them to return to the original site of nesting. The consequences are increase in the number of damaged nests resulting in the death of chicks and eggs.

**Threats**

The use of insecticides is the major factor of concern in this IBA. The main food of the Asian Openbill is snail. The

snail feeds on the shoots and leaves of plants which have been sprayed with large amounts of insecticides. Possibly through the food chain, the insecticide enters the body of the bird.

**Need**

**Awareness:** – As all the nests are near human habitation, the people must be made aware of the importance of birds and a balanced ecosystem.

**Protection of habitat:** - Trees used for nesting must be protected with the cooperation of the villagers.

**Work of forest department:** - the nesting occurs outside the boundary of the National Park, hence there is need for the vigilance by the forest department during the breeding season.

The farmers need to be convinced about the need to avoid the use of chemical insecticides.



Pic: Aditya Joshi

The cut down tree is causing nesting pressure on other two remaining trees

The authors are Students of Biotechnology, wildlife co-coordinators as well as members of the RSR team of the NiViM. They are studying birds, mammals, and reptiles and are active in rescuing snakes from residential areas of Nagpur city. Presently they are working on the conservation of Blackbuck and Indian Rock Python through awareness, data collection and exhibitions.

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*Nisarg Vidnyan Mandal (NiViM), Nagpur, has taken the responsibility to monitor and study IBAs (Tadoba Tiger Reserve, Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary and Navegaon National Park). The RSR (Rescue, Study & Research) team monitors the above-mentioned IBAs every month.*

## Srushtidnyan

Founded in	:	June 15, 2001
Contact Person	:	Prashant Shinde (Executive Director) Srushtidnyan; Parel-Bhoiwada MBC School, 3rd Flr, Room no. 81, opp. Armed Police Headquarter, Bhoiwada, Parel, Mumbai- 400012, Maharashtra
Telephone Number	:	Tel: (022) 24162747/ 24106138
Email Address	:	Srushtidnyan@gmail.com



### Aim

To ensure a safe and healthy environment for mankind.

### Objectives

To organise educational programmes on environment conservation and protection in urban, rural and tribal areas of Maharashtra.

To research and document the information on environment conservation and protection.

To create, translate and disseminate educational literature in regional languages on environment conservation and protection.

### Introduction

Fast deteriorating environmental conditions in urban, rural and tribal areas is a matter of great concern to everyone. Depletion and pollution of scarce freshwater resources, soil erosion, air pollution, forest degradation, wildlife poaching, and habitat destruction are some of the major environmental issues. It is our constitutional responsibility to conserve and protect the core environmental elements like air, water, soil, forest and wildlife. Activities like slide shows, poster exhibitions, nature walks, environmental games, field visits and nature education camps can be effective tools for spreading awareness and raising environmental consciousness among people.

Srushtidnyan is working in the field of environment education through local languages like Marathi and Hindi for the last six years in Mumbai. It has reached children, youth, women, schools, colleges, voluntary organisations, governmental institutions, and slum dwellers.

### Major projects as follow

**Green Youth:** Around two thousand youth from ten different colleges of Mumbai and Thane were involved in various environmental activities including plantation in degraded areas of Sanjay Gandhi National Park, community cleanliness drives, beach cleaning, organising exhibitions on environment, waste-not workshops, snake awareness campaigns and nature education camps.

### Ambassadors of Nature

The programmes were designed in tune with the school curriculum. The children were involved in an interactive

process to understand the local environmental issues through slide shows, poster exhibitions, dramas, handmade paper making workshops, water conservation games, soil erosion experiments, bird watching, nature walks and field surveys.

### Environment Education Course for Teachers

With the introduction of Environment as a compulsory subject in school curriculum, Srushtidnyan started a six monthly Environment Education Course in Marathi medium schools. Monthly interactive sessions, field visits to environmentally important places and study material with information on environment, statistics, photographs, and methodologies for environment education are the main features of this course.

### Coastal Wetland Conservation Education areas

Mumbai city has considerable area of coastal wetlands in the form of creek, mudflats, mangroves, and salt pans, on the eastern and western coasts. These biodiversity rich areas attract thousands of local and migratory birds during winter. The Sewri-Mahul Coastal Wetland area alone holds around fifty thousand birds, including flamingos, egrets, herons, ibises, gulls, terns, pied avocet, godwits, sandpipers, curlew, redshank, greenshank, plovers, stint, and turnstone. Srushtidnyan is working to conserve and protect this site for the last three years. It is advocating for declaring the Sewri-Mahul Coast as a Protected Area under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. It is also playing a role of a Site Support Group (SSG) by being a member of IBCN for this area, which is declared as an Important Bird Area (IBA).



Pic: Courtesy Srushtidnyan

One of the conservation awareness programme conducted by Srushtidnyan at Sewri, an IBA site

**Strengthening the IBCN partnership Workshop Update - Funded by the Darwin Initiative**

**North East India Workshop**

As part of series of workshops conducted for IBCN partners to strengthen the capacity of the network to safeguard key sites in India, a workshop was held at Shillong during December 15 to 17, 2007. The workshop was attended by twenty one IBCN partners from Sikkim, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. The threats faced by IBAs in north east India due to developmental projects were discussed in detail besides other themes such as advocacy, monitoring of IBAs, resource generation for IBA conservation and mapping the boundaries of IBAs outside protected area network. The workshop was held in association with North East Hill University, Shillong.



Pic: Mohammed Dilawar

Sikkim members working on IBCN strategy



Pic: Mohammed Dilawar

Mizoram members working on SWOT analysis

**Kerala Workshop**

The IBCN capacity building workshop was held for IBCN partners from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka at Periyar Tiger Reserve (PTR), Kerala during January 3 to 6, 2008. The workshop was organised in association with Kerala Forest Department. The workshop was attended by 28 participants.



Pic: Mohammed Dilawar

Ms. Padma Mahanti, Deputy Field Director, PTR addressing the participants



Pic: Mohammed Dilawar

IBA Book being presented to the Eco-Development Committee Library, through the hands of Dr. Geetha Iyer

**Corbett Workshop**

The workshop was organised for IBCN partners from Delhi, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Orissa at Corbett Tiger reserve on March 13-16, 2008. Nineteen IBCN partners participated in the workshop. The workshop was organised in association with the Uttarakhand Forest Department.



Pic: Mohammed Dilawar

Mr. Dhananjai Mohan, Uttar Pradesh Forest Department giving inputs on Management Planning



Pic: Mohammed Dilawar

Himachal Pradesh group discussing the IBCN strategy

## IBA Advocacy Workshop, 1-2 March 2008

A workshop on the conservation and livelihoods issues faced by Important Bird Areas (IBAs) was held in Mumbai on 1-2 March 2008. The State Coordinators and members of Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN) from all over India participated in the workshop. The workshop was jointly organised by the Bombay Natural History Society, BirdLife International Asia Region, TILCEPA (the World Conservation Union's IUCN's Theme on Indigenous and Local Communities, Equity, and Protected Areas), and Kalpavriksh. The workshop was useful in developing strategy and actions to deal with issues linked with developmental threats, and livelihood dependency on IBAs.



Pic: BNHS Photo Library

47 members from 19 states participated in the advocacy workshop



Pic: Noor Khan

Mr. Ritwick Dutta presenting on conservation laws

## Regional IBA and Local Conservation Groups workshop, 3-4 March 2008

The BirdLife Partners from 9 countries from Southern Asia were in Mumbai for a workshop on the 'Local Conservation Groups (LCGs) and Important Bird Areas (IBAs)' held on 3-5 March 2008. The workshop was jointly organised by the Bombay Natural History Society, BirdLife International Asia Region, TILCEPA (the World Conservation Union's IUCN's Theme on Indigenous and Local Communities, Equity, and Protected Areas), and Kalpavriksh. The workshop helped gather the experiences from the region on LCGs and work on livelihood and equity issues. The actions for strengthening the role of LCGs in IBA conservation were identified



Pic: Noor Khan

Presentation on LCG work in Cambodia given by Mr. Vorsak, BirdLife Indo-China Programme



Pic: Abhijit Malekar

LCG workshop participants assessing legal spaces for LCG work

## Field Guide on birds released

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) has published regional language editions of the 'Birds of Southern India' in Marathi, Telugu, Tamil and Malyalam. The field guides are a first of its kind in India as such guides are available predominately in English. The 'Birds of Southern India' covers about 600 species of birds from Central and South India including Maharashtra, Pondichery, Maldives, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Lakshadweep. The book has 87 colour plates with high quality illustrations and compact enough to carry in the field for bird observation.

The Marathi edition of the field guide '*Dakshin Bharatatil Pakshi*' authored by Mr. Richard Grimmet, Mr. Tim Inskipp and Mr. Prashant Mahajan (of BNHS) will help equip the amateur bird watchers and front-line staff of the Forest Department with a good quality publication in their regional language. The main aim of the publication in regional languages is to develop a broad-based support from people of different sections of the society for the conservation of birds and their habitats.



Pic: Noor Khan

(From left to right) The author, Mr. Prashant Mahajan, Shri R.R. Patil, Dr. Asad Rahmani, Director BNHS on the occasion of the release of Marathi Field Guide '*Dakshin Bharatatil Pakshi*'.

The Marathi field guide was released on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2008 by Shri. R.R. Patil, Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister at Mumbai.

## "*Thekke Indiyile Pakshikal* (Birds of Southern India)"

The formal release of the "*Thekke Indiyile Pakshikal* (Birds of Southern India)" was held at the capital of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2008. The Malayalam edition of the field guide authored by Mr. Richard Grimmet, Mr. Tim Inskipp and Dr. P.O. Nameer (of Kerala Agricultural University) was released by Honorable Minister for Forests and Wildlife, Govt. of

Kerala, Mr. Binoy Viswom by handing over a book to Mr. T.M. Manoharan, IFS, Principle Chief Conservator of Forests, Kerala. Dr. V.S.Vijayan, the Chairman of Biodiveristy Board, Kerala and Padmasree Sugathakumari, leading environmentalist in Kerala also attended the function held at the Thiruvananthapuram Press Club.



Pic: IBCN Photo Library



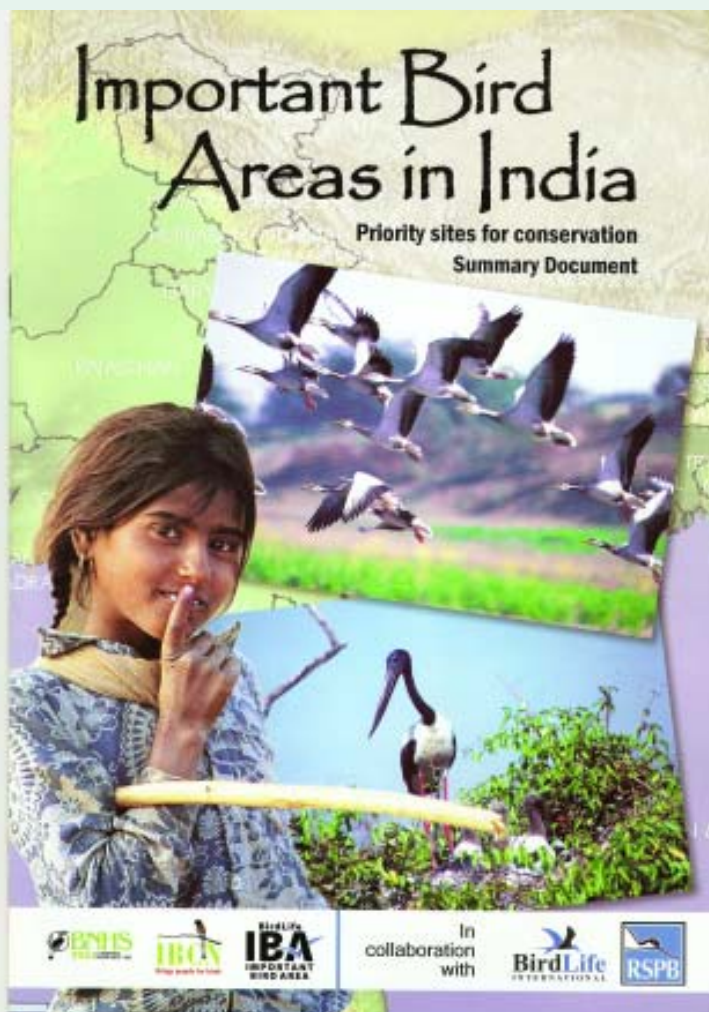
## Summary Document of Important Bird Area in India Released

During the IBA Advocacy workshop held in Mumbai on 1-2 March 2008 a new publication was released 'Important Bird Areas in India-Priority sites for conservation Summary Document'. This essential publication is an ideal advocacy tool summarising the huge IBA book published in 2004. It highlights the importance of IBA's not just for birds and wildlife but for communities and to combat climate change. The importance of the IBA Programme and the IBCN is illustrated and the protection status of IBA's in each state is summarised.

The many threats facing our IBAs and the actions needed at all levels to help protect our unique wildlife areas are highlighted.

This document will be invaluable in advocacy work to influence decision makers. All State Coordinators have been sent copies and further copies are available from the IBCN Secretariate at BNHS. Please make full use of this publication in your State.

We are grateful for the financial support provided by the RSPB in producing the summary document



Pic: Noor Khan

(From L to R) Dr. Asad Rahmani, (Director BNHS), Ms. Cristi Nozawa (Head of BirdLife Asia Division), Mr. Anand Sekhar (IBA Advocacy Officer BNHS), Mr. Ian Barber (International Officer Asia-RSPB) on the occasion of the release of the IBA summary brochure

## IBCN STATE COORDINATORS

### IBCN MISSION STATEMENT

To promote conservation of birds and their habitats through the development of a national network of individuals, organisations and the government

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Institute of Bird Studies & Natural History, Andhra Pradesh



Nallamalai Foundation, Andhra Pradesh



Sullurupet, Andhra Pradesh



Aaranyak, Assam



BIOMIX BIOMIX Assam



Green Heritage Assam



Green Guard, Assam



Early Birds, Assam



Assam



Assam



Assam



Pole Star Academy Assam



Mandar Nature Club, Bihar



Bastar Society for Conservation of Nature, Chhattisgarh



Chhattisgarh Wildlife Society, Chhattisgarh



Delhi



WWF Delhi, M.P. Chhattisgarh and Assam



Wildlife Protection Society of India, New Delhi



Delhi



Bird Conservation Society of Surat, Gujarat



GEER Foundation Gujarat



International Society of Naturalists, Gujarat



Nature Club Surat Conserve Nature's Heritage Gujarat



Gujarat



Haryana



Haryana



Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage, Jharkhand



Nature Conservation Society Jharkhand



Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology & the Environment, Karnataka



Karnataka



Karnataka



Kerala



Kerala



Wild Haven Madhya Pradesh



Madhya Pradesh



People for Animals, Madhya Pradesh



Madhya Pradesh



Maharashtra



Nature Conservation Society, Maharashtra



Envirosearch, Maharashtra



Green Guards, Maharashtra



Maharashtra



Environmental Action Group Maharashtra



Nature Conservation Society, Maharashtra



Maharashtra



Nature Science (Club's) Society, Maharashtra



Maharashtra



Maharashtra



Manipur Association for Sciences and Society, Manipur



Orissa



Action for Protection of Wild Animals, Orissa



Green Friends, Orissa



WILDLIFE SOCIETY OF ORISSA Orissa

IBCN ORGANISATIONAL PARTNERS



Wildlife Society of Orissa



Pahal, Punjab



Punjab



NEED, Rajasthan



Rajasthan



Sikkim



Arulagam, Tamil Nadu



Dhan Foundation, Tamil Nadu



Nature Club, Bishop Heber College, Tamil Nadu



Tamil Nadu



Amrapali Institute, Uttarakhand



Sikkim



Aligarh Muslim University, Uttar Pradesh



Uttar Pradesh



Turquoise Wildlife Conservation Welfare Society, Uttar Pradesh



Society for Conservation of Nature, Uttar Pradesh



Alipurduar Nature Club, West Bengal



act  
now or never  
Association for Conservation & Tourism, West Bengal



West Bengal



Himalayan Nature & Adventure Foundation, West Bengal



Institute for Cultural & Physical Development Trust, West Bengal



Nandadevi Foundation, West Bengal



West Bengal



Rovers' & Mountaineers Club, Alipurduar, West Bengal



Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited



Megamix, Nature Club, Assam



Rajasthan



Gramin Vikash Society of North East, Assam



Vattakanal Conservation Trust, Kerala



Madhya Pradesh



Karnataka



Centre for Environment Protection, Mizoram



Assam



Assam



Madhya Pradesh



Forest Environment and Wildlife Maharashtra



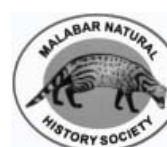
Generation de New Image Manipur



Green Hearts Nature Club, Assam



Gondia Nisrag Mandal, Maharashtra



Malabar Natural History Society Kerala



Maharashtra



Orissa



PRAYAS Team Environment, Gujarat



Samrakshan Trust, Meghalaya



Srushtidnyan, Maharashtra



Society for Wildlife and Nature SWAN, Karnataka



The Friends of the Doon Society, Uttarakhand