

**Summary Report**  
**On**  
**Baya Weaver Count**  
**(5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> June 2016)**

**Under the Common Bird Monitoring Programme of the Bombay Natural History Society**



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Cover Picture: Photos by Dr. Raju Kasambe

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## Introduction

Common Bird Monitoring is a Citizen Science Programme. Objectives of the programme are to involve more and more people to observe birds which are in their backyard or where they visit regularly. There are several existing good initiatives where people are recording birds. We need to be able to accurately monitor trends in common birds. Consequently, we have starting a Common Bird Monitoring Programme in India.

Weavers are highly gregarious, sparrow sized and popularly known for excellent nest-weaving skills, weaver birds have been residents of India since long. Among the four species of weaver birds or Baya's, the 'Indian' Baya Weaver (*Ploceus philippinus*) is one of the most familiar and common birds in the country. These birds seem to be facing population decline due to the growing human population and development. In an attempt to understand their status, Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) was announced a pan-India Baya Weaver Count on 5th and 12th, of June 2016. The participants responded very well with the count of 19624 birds across India.

India is home to four species of weaver birds or bayas which includes Baya Weaver (Common Baya or Indian Weaver); Streaked Weaver; Black-breasted Weaver (Black-throated Weaver) and Finn's Weaver (Finn's Baya or Yellow Weaver) belonging to family Ploceidae. This is the only species which has suspended pendulous nests built in colonies, usually above water. It feeds on crops, seeds and insects and has a high-pitched voice. Breeding colonies are very noisy with lot of activity, some males bringing nesting material, while some males weaving thin threads into retort-shaped structures. The Baya has a polygamous breeding system i.e. one male has many females as mates (not necessarily at the same time). During breeding season between April-August, the Baya males acquire a distinctive yellow breeding plumage. All Indian weaver bird species are protected and listed in Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Once a common species across India, it seems that most weaver birds are slowly undergoing a population decline with the increasing loss and modification of the grasslands into human-dominated landscape like agriculture farms, orchards, factories, canals, roads, and rapid increase in human population. This requires an urge to monitor this common species so as to collect its population data across India to further reduce rates of habitat loss and degradation, along with promoting conservation, awareness initiatives focusing on sustainable management of grasslands to maximize available grass habitat for grassland birds such as weaver birds.

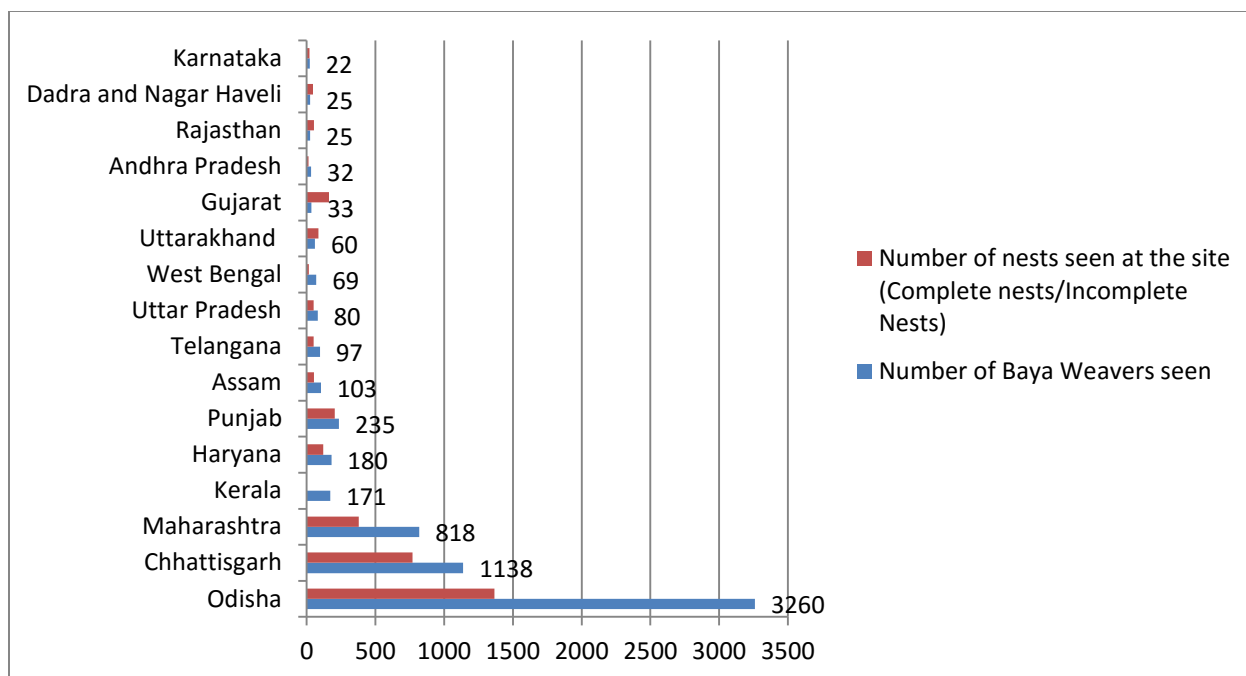
## Results

The count concluded with a record of **6354** Baya Weaver. Observations were recorded by birdwatchers in 18 State of India. These include Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Punjab, Assam, Dadra and Nagar Haveli ( Union Territory, Uttar Pradesh, Goa, Odisha, Kerala, Gujarat, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Tamilnadu, Chhattisgarh. A total of **6354** individual were recorded and **3401** nest was located across India (which was received).

Out of the total count Odisha was recorded the highest count among all other state with **3260** sightings followed by Chhattisgarh **1138** other state, which was showed in following table.

Table: - List of 19 State were Baya Weaver recorded

Sr. No	State	Number of Baya Weavers seen	Number of nests seen at the site (Complete nests/Incomplete Nests)
1.	Odisha	3260	1365
2.	Chhattisgarh	1138	769
3.	Maharashtra	818	378
4.	Kerala	171	1
5.	Haryana	180	120
6.	Punjab	235	205
7.	Assam	103	53
8.	Telangana	97	51
9.	Uttar Pradesh	80	50
10	West Bengal	69	16
11	Uttarakhand	60	85
12	Gujarat	33	161
13	Andhra Pradesh	32	12
14	Rajasthan	25	53
15	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	25	45
16	Karnataka	22	19
17	Goa	5	18
18	Tamilnadu	1	
	Total	6354	3401



Graph showing the total count of Baya weaver and their nest during count across India.

**Table:- List of Participants of Baya Weaver Count (5<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017):**

Sr. No.	Name of the Birdwatcher	State
1.	Mahua Bhattacharyya	Maharashtra
2.	Vijay Zolal	Maharashtra
3.	Atharva Bapat	Maharashtra
4.	Jayant P. Atrey	Maharashtra
5.	puneet basson	Maharashtra
6.	Swarangi Mohan Joshi	Maharashtra
7.	Rahul Wakare	Maharashtra
8.	Atul Joshi	Maharashtra
9.	Nishant N. Bhagwat	Maharashtra
10.	Sailee Mohan Joshi	Maharashtra
11.	Santosh Dattu Dhumal	Maharashtra
12.	Kunal Ghosh	Maharashtra

13.	Salimuddin Kazi	Maharashtra
14.	Vikash agarwal	Maharashtra
15.	Sanjay Rachelli	Maharashtra
16.	Leon Gomes	Maharashtra
17.	Avinash Bhagat	Maharashtra
18.	Dhirendra Holikar	Maharashtra
19.	Atul Joshi	Maharashtra
20.	Manisha Pinjarkar	Maharashtra
21.	Suman Saurabh	Maharashtra
22.	Himanshu Smart	Maharashtra
23.	Satpal Gangalmale	Maharashtra
24.	Deepshikha Smart	Maharashtra
25.	Rahul Wakare	Maharashtra
26.	Rachana H. Rao and Rohit H. Rao	Maharashtra
27.	Siddhesh Surve	Maharashtra
28.	Prajwal Ullal	Maharashtra
29.	Nagaraja Adiga	karnataka
30.	Rahul.D.M	Karnataka
31.	Lakshay Singh Rathore	Rajasthan
32.	Sanjiv Khanna	Punjab
33.	sanjiv khanna	Punjab
34.	Amir Sohail Choudhury	Assam
35.	Rofik Ahmed Barbhuiya	Assam
36.	Paloma Noronha	Dadra and Nagar Haveli
37.	Amit Mishra	Uttar Pradesh
38.	Mangirish G. Dharwadkar	Goa
39.	Pramod Dhal, Gloria Dhal, Jayanti Dhal, Mamta Deo, Sudeshna Shee	Odisha, Wild Orissa Organisation
40.	Pramod Dhal, Gloria Dhal, Sudeshna Shee, Jayanti Dhal, Mamta Deo	Odisha, Wild Orissa Organisation
41.	Sandhya Lenka & Prabhudatta Bal	Odisha, Wild Orissa Organisation
42.	Jayadev Menon	Kerala
43.	Jayan Thomas	Kerala
44.	Harivilas C Thakur	Gujarat
45.	Anil Sarsavan	Gujarat

46.	Kishore and Sujata Talegaonkar	Gujarat
47.	Geeta Goswami	Punjab
48.	Chetna Sharma	Haryana
49.	Geeta	Haryana
50.	Giridhar Malla	Andhra Pradesh
51.	Col S S Cheema (Retd)	Telangana
52.	Abhishek Pratap Singh	Telangana
53.	Prakash Y.	Telangana
54.	Augustin Joseph	Telangana
55.	Pradeep Kakkar, Bonanai Kakkar, Meghna Banerjee, Suvrajyoti Chatterjee	West Bengal
56.	Mou Jana	West Bengal
57.	Shivani Mishra & Himani Mishra	Uttarakhand
58.	Mande Amol Balu	Tamilnadu
59.	Hari Singh	Chhattisgarh
60.	A M K Bharos & team	Chhattisgarh
61.	Amit Mandavia	Chhattisgarh
62.	A M K Bharos, Arvind Bharos, Faiz Bux	Chhattisgarh
63.	Dichson Masih	Chhattisgarh
64.	Amit Mandavia	Chhattisgarh
65.	Aslam Baba Nawaz	Chhattisgarh
66.	Nikhilesh Trivedi	Chhattisgarh
67.	Ajeet Bharos, Anand nagar	Chhattisgarh
68.	Javed Khan	Chhattisgarh
69.	Deep Harishchandra	Chhattisgarh
70.	Rishi Sen	Chhattisgarh
71.	Akhilesh Bharos & Rakesh Manikpuri	Chhattisgarh
72.	A M K Bharos & Sushil Mutha	Chhattisgarh
73.	Amar Mulwani	Chhattisgarh
74.	Renu vig	Chandigarh
75.	Pradeep Chaudhary	Chhattisgarh
76.	Hardeep Singh Arora	Chhattisgarh
77.	Prakash Y.	Chhattisgarh

**Media coverage:**

The Count received good response and coverage from the media. Following are the links of newspapers and snap shots of the articles published in various newspapers.

**Times of India** – Mumbai – Baya Weaver Count – Baya weavers declining in the city (Clipping attached)  
[http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/NasData//PUBLICATIONS/THETIMESOFINDIA/MUMBAI/2016/12/11/PagePrint/11\\_12\\_2016\\_032\\_87cb5e47ad3ff070916a0b8987279f66.pdf](http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/NasData//PUBLICATIONS/THETIMESOFINDIA/MUMBAI/2016/12/11/PagePrint/11_12_2016_032_87cb5e47ad3ff070916a0b8987279f66.pdf)

**Times of India** – Mumbai – Baya Weaver Count – Baya weavers declining in the city (Clipping attached)  
[http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/NasData//PUBLICATIONS/THETIMESOFINDIA/PUNE/2016/12/11/PagePrint/11\\_12\\_2016\\_028\\_3badded1f360104f3abe643d6949c6e7.pdf](http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/NasData//PUBLICATIONS/THETIMESOFINDIA/PUNE/2016/12/11/PagePrint/11_12_2016_028_3badded1f360104f3abe643d6949c6e7.pdf)

**The Indian Express**

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/wild-side-this-birds-mating-is-one-knotty-affair-2859585/>

**The Telegraph**

[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1160619/jsp/odisha/story\\_92034.jsp#.V2e2-tJ97IU](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1160619/jsp/odisha/story_92034.jsp#.V2e2-tJ97IU)

**Maharashtra Times** (Clipping attached)

<http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31829&articlexml=19062016013010>

**The Statesman**

<http://www.thestatesman.com/news/odisha/head-count-of-endangered-baya-weaver-bird-underway/148541.html>

**The Hindu**

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/head-count-of-endangered-baya-begins/article8734298.ece>

**India Today**

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/head-count-of-endangered-baya-weaver-bird-underway/1/692464.html>

**The Hindu**

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-in-school/bird/article8733731.ece>

**The Telegraph** – Baya weaver count

[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1160615/jsp/odisha/story\\_91189.jsp#.V2DIVdJ97IU](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1160615/jsp/odisha/story_91189.jsp#.V2DIVdJ97IU)

**The Pioneer** – Baya weaver count – 9000 birds in Odisha

<http://www.dailypioneer.com/state-editions/bhubaneswar/ibcn-count-odisha-houses-9k-weaver-birds.html>

**Times Of India** – Bhubaneshwar – Baya weaver count

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhubaneswar/Over-2000-weaver-birds-counted-in-Odisha/articleshow/52739006.cms>

**Latest News 360**

<https://www.latestnews360.com/read/1193593/latest-news/Monitor-the-Indian-Baya-Weavers-around-you:-BNHS.html>

**World News**

[http://article.wn.com/view/2016/06/07/Monitor\\_the\\_Indian\\_Baya\\_Weavers\\_around\\_you\\_BNHS/](http://article.wn.com/view/2016/06/07/Monitor_the_Indian_Baya_Weavers_around_you_BNHS/)

**Times Of India** – Kolkata



<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/Monitor-the-Indian-Baya-Weavers-around-you-BNHS/articleshow/52638374.cms>

**Forever News**

<http://www.forevernews.in/mumbai/bnhs-baya-weaver-count-once-again-on-june-12-52634>

**Times Of India – Mumbai**

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/For-2-Sundays-bird-lovers-can-go-counting-weavers/articleshow/52578337.cms>

**The Hindu**

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/weaver-bird-count/article8688322.ece>

**Press Reader**

<http://www.pressreader.com/>

**Hindustan Times – Chandigarh**

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/punjab/wild-buzz-living-in-a-glass-menagerie/story-j9S7sYsRmgY3ANQzqbpUpO.html>

**India Today**

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/baya-weaver-count-india-bombay-natural-history-society/1/683255.html>

**Scoopnest**

<http://www.scoopnest.com/user/IndiaToday/738319233549996032>

**Airtel Live**

<http://one.airtel.in/news/57500e38e4b0d8b074dfda55.html>

**Nyooz – Nagpur**

<http://www.nyooz.com/nagpur/490527/declining-number-of-baya-weavers-prompts-bnhs-count>

**Pune Mirror**

<http://www.punemirror.in/pune/others/Common-Indian-Bayas-fly-the-nest/articleshow/52560537.cms>

**Times Of India – Nagpur**

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/nagpur/Declining-number-of-Baya-Weavers-prompts-BNHS-count/articleshow/52561878.cms>

**DNA (Clipping attached)**

<http://www.dnaindia.com/mumbai/report-bnhs-to-hold-pan-india-baya-weaver-count-2219270>

**World News**

[http://article.wn.com/view/2016/06/02/Declining\\_number\\_of\\_Baya\\_Weavers\\_prompts\\_BNHS\\_count/](http://article.wn.com/view/2016/06/02/Declining_number_of_Baya_Weavers_prompts_BNHS_count/)

**Free Press Journal (Clipping attached)**

<http://epaper.freepressjournal.in/c/10737073>

**Foster Gem**

<https://fostergem.com/post.php?id=103680586&title=BNHS%20to%20hold%20pan-India%20Baya%20Weaver%20count>

**Latest News 360**

<https://www.latestnews360.com/read/1181870/latest-news/BNHS-to-hold-pan-India-Baya-Weaver-count.html>

**View Outline**



## PROFILE OF THE BAYA WEAVER

**SIZE:** 15 cm, as big as a sparrow

**PREFERRED HABITAT:** Grassland and scrubland

**USUAL DIET:** Grains, seeds and insects

### Behaviour and ecology

> The bird is a resident and local migrant

> Social and gregarious; flocks fly in close formations

> Both the sexes are polygamous in nature

> During the breeding season, males acquire a distinctive yellow plumage. In their non-breeding plumage, both sexes resemble female house sparrows

# AVIAN ARCHITECT STRUGGLES FOR APARTMENT SPACE IN THIS CONCRETE JUNGLE

Rizwan.Mithawala@timesgroup.com

**I**ts craftsmanship is envious; its ways polygamous. The male of the Baya weaver bird is known for building sturdy pendulous nests. Wonder is it doesn't rest after making one. After a female inspects and approves of his nest-building skills, it flies off to build a new love-abode to woo another ladylove. Once commonly sighted around the city in flocks, the Baya weaver bird's population in Mumbai has been witnessing a decline since the early 1990s. Areas where Baya nest numbers have declined include Bhandup, Aarey, Madh-Erangel, Manori-Gorai and Vikhroli, among others.

Over the past few years, naturalist-writer Sunjoy Monga had noted about half a dozen nests at the Bhandup Pumping Station. The number came down to four this year. Monga tries to shine light on the reason for this decline: the loss and modification of grass-

lands. "This is one of the typical species of open habitats, of grass-agricultural areas and scrublands, which are all habitats that have showed the maximum decline in the Mumbai region. After all, much of the development in the region has expanded on this habitat and to a somewhat lesser extent on wetlands and forest-edge settings," he says.

Concerned about the decline in numbers, the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) conducted a pan-India Baya weaver count in June this year. "The declining population of a once common bird like Baya is a reflection of the insidious damage we are doing to our immediate surroundings. Continuous monitoring of such species is imperative to understand and monitor changing environment," says Dr Deepak Apte, director, BNHS.



**Under threat**  
Habitat loss due to urban development on grasslands

Pics: Rizwan Mithawala

# BNHS to hold pan-India Baya Weaver count

Virat A Singh  
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The tiny and chirpy Indian Baya Weaver birds, known for their excellent skills of weaving pendulous nests, which are usually found hanging in colonies, seem to be facing a population decline not only in Mumbai but also in other parts of the state as well as the country where they could be spotted commonly earlier.

Worried about their declining numbers, due to several reasons, including habitat loss, the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) has decided to hold a pan-India Baya Weaver Count on two consecutive Sundays — June 5 and June 12 — urging bird watchers, ornithologists, NGOs, forest officials and nature lovers to record and report the sightings of Baya Weavers in their areas.

"In rural Maharashtra,



Pic: Kandikhor Dushik D. Rajulhasambe



The tiny and chirpy Indian Baya Weaver birds are known for their excellent skills of weaving pendulous nests

Bayas were integral part of our backyard, but sadly, when I visit my village now, I hardly see them. Declining population of a common bird is a reflection of inhumane damage we are doing to our surroundings," shared Dr Deepak Apte, director, BNHS.

The Bayas are facing population decline because of increasing loss and modification of grasslands into human-dominated landscape, like farms, factories, canals and roads.

According to BNHS, all these factors have made it an urgent need to monitor this

common species and to collect its population data across India in order to reduce habitat loss and degradation and to promote awareness initiatives.

Explaining the Baya Weaver Count Initiative, a BNHS official said: "This is a citizen science initiative, the participants can select any location of their choice and record the sightings of Baya Weavers. The collected data can be reported to BNHS in a simple format which is available on [www.bnhs.org](http://www.bnhs.org) or can be sent on [bnhs@gmail.com](mailto:bnhs@gmail.com)."

Saurabh Sawant, an avid birder, said that though he will be travelling during these days he would still keep an eye if he can spot these birds. "It's even known that people remove their nests and take it away for decoration and it's even sold, which definitely has an impact on the birds using the same nesting sites," he said.

## About the bird

Highly gregarious, sparrow-sized, feed on grains, seeds and insects and have a high-pitched voice. Some males bring the nesting material, while some males weave thin threads into retort-shaped structures.

## Polygamous breeding

During breeding season — April and August — the Baya males sport a distinctive yellow breeding plumage. All Indian weaver bird species are protected and listed in Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

## Pan-India Initiative

Two consecutive Sundays — June 05 and 12, 2016. Go for bird watching and record their sightings in your chosen location. Submit your records on [www.bnhs.org](http://www.bnhs.org) or send it on [bnhs@gmail.com](mailto:bnhs@gmail.com).



वन्य पशुपक्ष्यांना निसर्गचक्र अवगत असतं. परंतु गेल्या काही वर्षांत बदललेल्या निसर्गचक्राची त्यांनाही जाणीव झाली आहे. त्यातूनच पशु-पक्षी, निसर्ग मानवाला इशारे देतो आहे. ते आपण समजून घेण्याची वेळ आलेली आहे...

■ डॉ. राजू कसंबे

‘पेते व्हाऽऽऽपेते व्हा...ऽऽऽ’ अशी मंजुळ आवाजातील ‘पावसा’च्या (कॉमन हॉक कुक्कुड) आवाजातील हाळी ऐकू आली की समजून जायचं मूग नक्षत्र सुरू होतंय. हा पक्षी सगळीं दुष्टीस पडत नसला तरी त्याचा आवाज प्रत्येक शेतकऱ्याचा परिचयाचा असतो. काही जण तर त्याच्या आवाजाचे वर्णन ‘पाऊस आला... पाऊस आला’ असे करतात. तसेच ‘पाऊस’ (पाइंड कुक्कुड) पक्ष्याचे आगमन. त्याच्या मागून येणाऱ्या पावसाची वर्दी घेऊन येणारे. केवळ पावसाचे पाणी पिऊन हा पक्षी जगतो, असा समज लोकांमध्ये आहे. पातोपाट मुगाचा किडा अंगणत घेऊन पडतो. कातलकारीन माऊली हळदी कुंकू लहानू त्या किडाचाच पूजा करते. देवा मुगाचा पाऊस चांगला बरसू दे रं बाब!

संपूर्ण हिवाळाभर शांत असणाऱ्या कोकिल्या, खरे तर कोकीलाय, अचानक भल्या पाहतेपासून कुहू १ १ १ कुहूचे कुंजन करावला लागतात. त्या कुहूकुहूची वाहत जाणारी पट्टी आणि शेवट तर अगदी आत का केकाटतोय असा. कावळे प्रत्येक वाळवी काटकी, दोरी किंवा लोखंडी तारा खेचायला लागले की त्यांन भरटे बांधायची धडई झाली आहे, असे लक्षात येते.

उन्हाळ्याचे शेवटचे दिवस मोठ्या वन्यजीवांसाठी कठीण असतात. हळूहळू पाण्याचे स्रोत आटत जातात. घनदाट जंगलातील संपूर्ण वन्यजीवन पाणवट्यावर केंद्रित होतं! वाघ-बिबटोना पाणवट्यावर टिप्या मांडून छान हुंकायला आवडतं. पण इतर वननिवासी जीवांना पाणी पिऊन तहान भागवायची असते. म्हणून ही स्वापदं राजेंमंडळी खोटे दूर जाऊन छान सावलीत आराम फर्मावतात.

भर उन्हाळ्यात पळम, पांभारा, काटेसावर (शाल्मली), खाद्या आदी वृक्ष फुलांनी बहरलेले असतात. मधुरस प्रशस्त करणाऱ्या पक्ष्यांची अशा झाडांवर शूंचड उडालेले असते. झाच संघीच फायदा घेऊन शिंजीर (सनबर्ड) तसेच फुलटोचा पक्ष्यांची बाण आटोपली जाते. जमिनीवर धरटे करणारे टिडकी सारखे पक्षी पावसाच्या आगमनापूर्वी पिल्लं धरटे सोडून

# सावध ऐका पुढल्या हाका...

चालायला लागतील, अशा प्रकारे विणोचे नियोजन करतात. नदीकाठी कोरड्या पडलेल्या पात्रात धरटे करणारे नदी सुरव (रिव्हर टर्न), शेकाटे (ब्लॅक-बिंड स्टॉल्ट), अल्लो (ट्रॅटोनकोल) तसेच रंगीत पाणलावा (पेटेड स्मॉथ) पक्षीसुद्धा पावसाच्या आगमनापूर्वीच विण आटोपून घेतात. कारण थोडा जरी टशीर झाला तर नदीच्या फुगलेल्या पात्रात त्यांची अंडी-पिल्लं वाहून जातात.

वन्यपशुपक्ष्यांना निसर्गचक्र चांगलंच अवगत असतं. जून महिन्यात पाऊस पडणार आणि सगळीकडे हिरवळ पसरणार... हिरवळ पसरताच त्यांवर अंडीपिल्ली जन्माला घालणारे कीटक फुलपाखेरे आनंदाने बागडू लागतात. अचानक सर्वत्र रंगीबेरंगी फुलपाखरांची रेलचेल जाणू लागते. कितीतरी प्रजातीचे कीटक हजारांच्या संख्येत जन्माला येतात. कृषी कुलातील मधुरस शोषण्यात गुंग होतील तर कुणी पाने कुतडून जमवीत असतो. बळीराजा शेतात पेरणी करून संपूर्ण शेत कसं हिरवीगार करून टाकतो.

पक्ष्यांना ह्या सुगीच्या दिवसांची दौड-दौन महिने आधीच चाहूल लागलेली असते. कोतवाल पक्षी (टुंगी) एप्रिल मध्येच भर उन्हात झाडावर धरटे बांधतो. तर वेडा राघू (ग्रीन वॉ-ईटर) आणि धोवर (किंगफिशर) एप्रिलमध्येच नदीकाठी भूखपुशीत कडा शोषून भुयारी बोट खोदवला सुरुवात करतात. उन्हाचा तडाखा सहन करित विळाच्या शेवटी छोटी

वेडेरूम खोदतात. मादी त्या अंगाच्या विळात अंडी घालते. कोतवाल, राघू आणि धोवर हे पक्षी स्वतःच विणोचे झतुमानाप्रमाणे नियोजन करीत असतात. अंठ्यातून जन्माला आलेली पिल्लं उडण्यायोग्य झाली की जून महिन्यात पावसाच्या आगमनानंतर त्यांनी पहिले उड्डाण भरणे, अशा दुष्टीने सर्वकाही नियोजित केले जाते.

शिंक्रा, सखाणे, गरूड असे शिकारी व मांसाहारी पक्षी उंच झाडावर अथवा पहाडाच्या कडेकपारीत भर उन्हाळ्यात धरटे बांधून अंडी घालतात. पिल्लांचा जन्म पावसाळ्याच्या सुरुवातीला व्हावा अशीच त्यांची योजना असते. पावसाळ्याच्या आगमनासोबत जन्माला येणारी इतर पक्ष्यांची पिल्लं, मुल्लक संख्येतील वेदूक, सरडे, पावसांमुळे बाहेर पडणारे

पावसाची चाहूल मुंग्यांना सर्वप्रथम लागते. पावसाच्या सरी बरसण्याच्या काही तास आधी कामकरी मुंग्या त्यांचा चारुळ्यातील अंडी सुरक्षित उंच टिकाणी हलकायला सुरुवात करतात, अशी अंडी घेऊन निघालेली मुंग्यांची रंग बघून कुठलाही खेडूत, शेतकरी पावसाचे भाकीत करतो. मुंग्यांच्या ह्या हवामानाच्या अंदाजवर त्यांचा संपूर्ण विश्वास असतो.

पहिले पाऊस बरसतो तेव्हा वन्यप्राणी रानावनात कुठल्याही आडोशात घाऊन जात नाही. प्रत्येक प्राणी थिंब धिजून घेते. अंगाची होणारी लाही शांत होते. तहानलेली जमीनही शक्य तेवढे पाणी शोषून घेते. तिची तहान भागली की मग जमिनीवर पाण्याचा लोट खडायला लागतो. जमिनीच्या सवोणावर उन्हाच्या तडाख्याने पडलेल्या भेगा पहिल्या पावसाने भरून जातात. जमिनीच्या आत आणि चारुळात अतिशय सुसंधित अशा वाकळात राहणाऱ्या वाळवीला पंख फुटतात. जमिनीतून बाहेर पडून अशा वाळवी उंच उड्डाण करतात. हे त्यांचे शेवटचे उड्डाण असते. मोलन झाले की ह्या सर्व वाळवी मरून पडलेल्या दिसतात. पण चारुळातून बाहेर पडणाऱ्या हजारा वाळवी म्हणजे कीटकपक्षी पक्ष्यांसाठी तसेच सरडांसाठी मोठी मेजवानी असते. अशा टिकाणी राघू, दयाळ, कोतवाल, शिंक्रा, चिचक, घार, असे अनेक प्रकारचे पक्षी वाळवीचा फळा उडवायला जमतात.



सर्प असे विकिधरुचे खाद्य सहज उपलब्ध होते.

नवरंग (डॅडव्हेन फौटा), स्वर्गीय नरक (पॅराडाइज फ्लायकॅचर), माहिमार (फ्लायकॅचर) आणि नाचन (फॅनटेल) सारखे कीटकपक्षी पक्षी मात्र भर पावसात धरटी बांधतात. पावसाच्या आगमनानंतर कीटकांच्या संख्येत जी वाढ होते त्यांचा ते फायदा उचलतात. ज्या टिकाणी जास्तौत जास्त कीटक असतील असाच टिकाणी ते आपले धरटे बांधतात. अतिशय सुंदर आणि क्लिष्ट असे लांबोळके टांगलेले धरटे बांधणारे सुगरण पक्षीसुद्धा पावसाच्या आगमनाची चाहूल लागली की धरटी बांधायला सुरुवात करतात. पण सुगरणीच्या वसाहतीत खरा गोंधळ सुरू होतो तो पाऊस आल्यावरच!

पावसाच्या पहिल्या सरी बरसण्याची जणू संपूर्ण जीवसृष्टीच आतुरतेने काट बघत असते. पहिल्या

मात्र गेल्या काही वर्षांत निसर्गचक्र बदलले की काय अशी शंका घायला लागली आहे. वर्षावर्षिक पाऊस बेभरवशाचा होत चाललाय. पडला तर धो-धो नाही तर कोरडा टाणटणीत! कमी दिवसात जास्त पाऊस पडतोय. त्यामुळे शेती तसेच जंगलातील जमिनीची धूप वाढली आहे. हिमालयातील अगदी काळापासून वर्षाच्छादित असलेली शिखरं विलज्यायला लागली आहेत. निसर्गाचा प्रकोप पुनःपुन्हा व्हायला लागत आहे. बगफुटी, त्मुनामी, भूस्खलन, भूकंप, गारपीट, दुष्काळ आदी कोपांची वारंवारिता विचित्रच वाढली आहे. हे समजून-उमजून पशु-पक्षी, निसर्ग मानवाला इशारे देते आहे. ते आपण समजून घेण्याची वेळ आता आलेली आहे.

(लोकक कसंबे नवरात हेरदुती सोसायटीत सवितायत आहेत)





Nesting Crisis

**PROFILE OF THE BAYA WEAVER**

**SIZE:** 15 cm, as big as a sparrow  
**PREFERRED HABITAT:** Grassland and scrubland  
**USUAL DIET:** Grains, seeds and insects

**Behaviour and ecology**

- > The bird is a resident and local migrant
- > Social and gregarious; flocks fly in close formations
- > Both the sexes are polygamous in nature
- > During the breeding season, males acquire a distinctive yellow plumage. In their non-breeding plumage, both sexes resemble female house sparrows

# AVIAN ARCHITECT STRUGGLES FOR APARTMENT SPACE IN THIS CONCRETE JUNGLE

Rizwan.Mithawala@timesgroup.com

**I**t's craftsmanship is envious; its ways polygamous. The male of the Baya weaver bird is known for building sturdy pendulous nests. Wonder is it doesn't rest after making one. After a female inspects and approves of his nest-building skills, it flies off to build a new love-abode to woo another ladylove. Once commonly sighted around the city in flocks, the Baya weaver bird's population in Mumbai has been witnessing a decline since the early 1990s. Areas where Baya nest numbers have declined include Bhandup, Aarey, Madh-Erangel, Manori-Gorai and Vikhroli, among others.

Over the past few years, naturalist-writer Sunjoy Monga had noted about half a dozen nests at the Bhandup Pumping Station. The number came down to four this year. Monga tries to shine light on the reason for this decline: the loss and modification of grass-

lands. "This is one of the typical species of open habitats, of grass-agricultural areas and scrublands, which are all habitats that have showed the maximum decline in the Mumbai region. After all, much of the development in the region has expanded on this habitat and to a somewhat lesser extent on wetlands and forest-edge settings," he says.

Concerned about the decline in numbers, the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) conducted a pan-India Baya weaver count in June this year. "The declining population of a once-common bird like Baya is a reflection of the insidious damage we are doing to our immediate surroundings. Continuous monitoring of such species is imperative to understand and monitor changing environment," says Dr Deepak Apte, director, BNHS.



**Under threat**  
Habitat loss due to urban development on grasslands

Pics: Rizwan Mithawala