

## COMMON BIRD MONITORING

Common Bird Monitoring is a citizen science programme. The objective is to involve more and more people in observing birds in their own backyard or a location they visit regularly. There are several existing good initiatives where people can record their bird sightings. However, there is a need to accurately monitor trends in common birds. Hence, we have started a unique activity in India called the Common Bird Monitoring Programme (CBMP).



Participants learn about line transect method at Bhavnagar, Gujarat.

### Objectives of CBMP

- 1) To provide information on year-to-year and longer-term changes in population levels for a wide range of birds across a variety of habitats throughout India.
- 2) To understand the extent to which bird populations are increasing or decreasing. Monitoring birds is crucial as they act as indicators of a region's/habitat's health.
- 3) To promote a greater understanding of the population biology of birds and, in particular, to focus on factors responsible for the declines.
- 4) To function as a key component of BirdLife's monitoring strategy.
- 5) To promote bird conservation through the involvement of a large number of volunteer observers in survey work.
- 6) To observe and report the birds using a scientific methodology so as to get more authentic data.
- 7) To collect the data, ideally three times a year, so that in the long run, we can get information about the changes in common bird populations.

### Why we count Common Birds?

Common birds are in trouble owing to urbanisation and industrialisation. For example, the population of House Sparrow is considered to be declining in the cities. Anthropogenic pressures in the form of concretisation and other developmental activities disturb many bird species living in an area. To know their current status, it is necessary to monitor these common species.

### Grid selection

We have plotted grids on the map of India with the help of GIS software. We need your location details (Google earth coordinates) and, based on this, we shall send you a grid (which is in close proximity to your location). If performing the transect in the selected grid is not possible due to geographical limitations/obstructions, please write to us and we will send you a new grid. Each grid is 2 sq. km, and each participant will be sent a grid in which they must perform the survey.

### How to send us your location details (Google earth place mark)

Step1:- Download Google Earth (use the link <http://www.google.com/earth/download/ge/agree.html> )

Step2:- Open Google Earth

Step3:- Find your location on Google Earth and add the **place mark** which will be available in the toolbar.

Step4:- Send your place mark through **email** to us at [nandkishordudhe@gmail.com](mailto:nandkishordudhe@gmail.com).

**Note:** It is very important not to reject sites that may appear uninteresting. Grids containing a few species are just as valuable as the ones with many species.

### Methodology

#### Line Transect Method:-

This method is practical and efficient. Line transect method is based on the theory of walking along a predetermined route at a fixed pace (speed) to record the birds on or near the line. With the help of these methods, you can observe the birds and note down the observations in the provided data sheet format.

### When to visit

Each site should be surveyed **thrice a year**; it must cover three seasons, **monsoon (September)**, **winter (January)** and **summer (April)**. Counts should ideally start around 7 a.m., and not later than 9 a.m. The start time should be the same throughout the years. Also the same date schedule should be maintained across the years. Counts will be more productive early during the day; birds generally grow quiet and inactive during the middle of the day.

### Weather

Surveys must not be carried out in conditions of heavy rain, poor visibility or strong wind. Birds generally become inactive in windy and wet conditions.

### Recording birds

Birds should be recorded only while walking along the transect. Once you commence the survey, do not record birds behind you or beyond the transect line.

### Data sheet

Each participant will be provided with a simple data sheet (soft copy) to be printed and filled up on the field. A demo data sheet (already filled) will also be sent so that the participants can see how to record their bird sightings.

### Count Summary Sheet

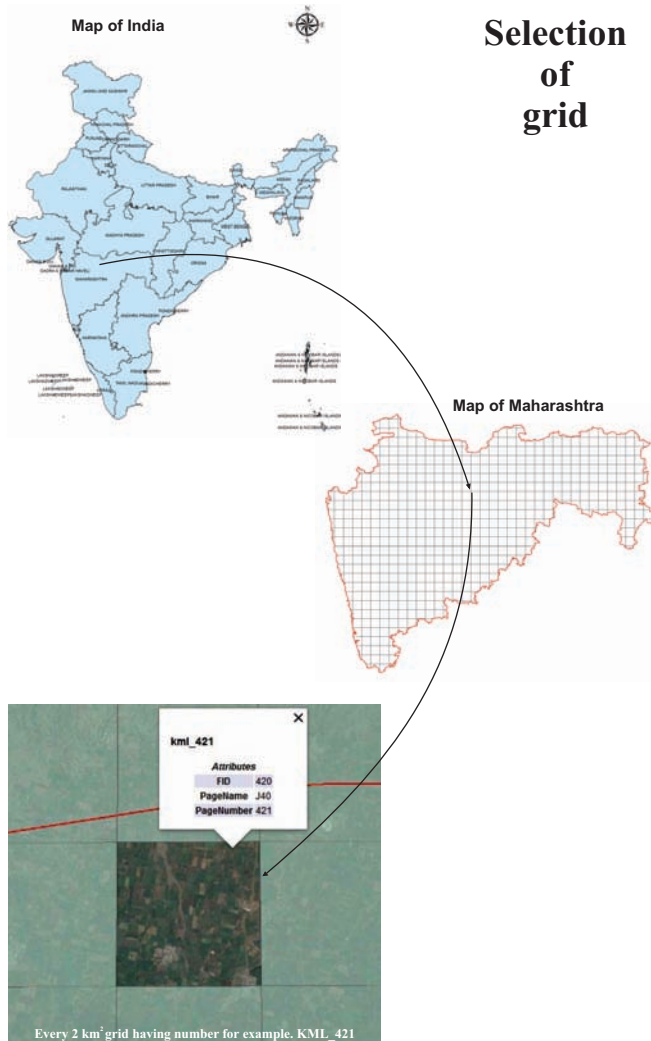
It is a pre-prepared excel sheet containing a comprehensive list of bird species commonly encountered in and around your location. The data collected in the field and noted in the data sheet must be entered in the count summary excel sheet and sent to us.

At the end of the count summary sheet is a section where you could use your broader knowledge of the site and/or area to provide information on the potential threats (both current or future) to the habitat and/or birds around your transect.

### Submission of data

Participants can either submit their field data sheets to their project officer after every count or enter the data in the count summary excel sheet and email it to the address on the last page. Once you send in your completed data sheets for all the three seasons (monsoon, winter and summer), you will receive an acknowledgement letter from the **Bombay Natural History Society**.

## Common Birds found in India



## Common Bird Monitoring Programme citizen science initiatives in India



If you have any queries about CBMP, please contact the following address:-

Indian Bird Conservation Network, Bombay Natural History Society, Hornbill House, Opp. Lion Gate, S.B. Singh Road, Mumbai 400 001, India, Contact No:- 91-22-22818957

Nandkishor Dudhe:- 8087738422

Email: [n.dudhe@bnhs.org](mailto:n.dudhe@bnhs.org), [nandkishordudhe@gmail.com](mailto:nandkishordudhe@gmail.com)

Website: [www.ibcn.in](http://www.ibcn.in)

*Many thanks for helping with this important project and enjoy your counting!*



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