



birdwatchers'
Society

ANNUAL REPORT
2023-2024



TABLE OF CONTENT

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT	3
GOVERNING BODY 2023-2024	7
THE KEY MILESTONES	8
TREASURER'S REPORT 23-24	10
MEMBERSHIP	12
BIRDWATCHERS' SOCIETY ACTIVITIES	14
SCHOOL OF BIRDS	16
BIRD CONSERVATION	20
BIRD WALKS	22
BIRD TALKS - WORKSHOPS - OUTREACH	24
BIRD COUNT	26
AWC - WATERFOWL CENSUS 2024	29
GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT 2023	31
DAWN CHORUS	33
POILA-BOISHAK BIRD COUNT 2023	35
HIMALAYAN BIRD COUNT 2023	36
NEWSLETTER	37
BIRDING CAMP	38
PUBLICATIONS IN INDIAN JOURNALS	41
BWS IN MEDIA	42
SCHOOL OF BIRDS PHOTO GALLERY	46



BISWAPRIYA RAHUT

A
Message
FROM
THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members, Supporters, and Friends,

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with pride and gratitude for the sterling achievements and milestones we've reached together at the Birdwatchers' Society (BWS). It's your unwavering support and dedication that have been instrumental in our journey, and I am thrilled to share our highlights from 2023-2024.

Strengthening Partnerships: Our collaboration with Ricoh Imaging Company, through their Pentax Binoculars has significantly enhanced our fieldwork capabilities. Their support has provided our members with top-tier optics and reaffirmed the value of robust partnerships in achieving our mission. Leveraging our association with *PENTAX*, we have provided optics equipment to our associates and will continue to do so wherever needed.

Technological Advancements: The launch of Member's Module 1.0 was a significant step in streamlining our membership management. Overcoming some initial hiccups, we have made great strides, and we are excited about the upcoming Member

Module 2.0, which promises to further enhance our digital experience.

Growing Our Membership: We have seen a steady increase in our membership, *reaching 318 members as of March 03, 2024*. This growth is a testament to the expanding interest in birdwatching and their vital role in our community, a symbiotic by-play of nature and its elements.

Statewide Representation: We are on the path to having representations from all the districts of our state.

School of Birds - Educational Outreach: The School of Birds continues to be a cornerstone of our educational efforts, introducing young minds to the wonders of nature and the importance of conservation. Our ongoing commitment to this initiative is crucial as we strive to instil a lifelong appreciation for the environment, hopefully translating into constructive environmental causes as maturity dawns.

Train the Trainer: In collaboration with *Early Birds*, we conducted a unique workshop on “*How to be a Birding Buddy*”. This was a ground breaking initiative that equipped educators with the tools to inspire and engage students. The positive feedback from participants underscores the value of this educational endeavour.

Popularising eBird: The impressive 1,400 eBird Checklists submitted by our

members reflect a vibrant and engaged community. This contribution enriches our collective data and advances our conservation and research efforts.

Pocket Guide Booklets: The publication of our bilingual pocket guides for ‘*Birds of West Bengal*’ and ‘*Birds of Sikkim & North Bengal*’ represents a significant achievement. These practical guides are valuable tools for novice and experienced birdwatchers alike, fostering greater appreciation and understanding of our avian biodiversity.

Donors & Patrons: I salute our Donors & Patrons. The generous support received from our Donors & Patrons has been the lifeblood of the Birdwatchers’ Society, making every milestone and achievement possible. Without your unwavering commitment and financial contributions, our progress this year would have remained a distant dream. Your belief in our mission has enabled us to advance critical initiatives, from enhancing our fieldwork capabilities with state-of-the-art optics to expanding our educational programs and outreach. Each success we celebrate is a testament to your vital role in our journey. We are profoundly grateful for your partnership, and it is with deep appreciation that we acknowledge your significant impact on our efforts to protect and celebrate our avian friends. Thank you for standing with us and helping us soar to new heights.

These are just some of the key achievements of last year, in addition

to regular Bird Walks, Outreach Programmes, and Awareness drives.

The future holds exciting opportunities for further growth and impact, and together, we can continue advancing our bird conservation and education mission.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to each of our stakeholders — our *members, partners, donors, and*

volunteers. Your commitment, passion, and support are the driving force behind everything we do. Let us carry this momentum into the coming year, united in our shared love for birds and our dedication to their preservation.

Thank you for your ongoing support and for being an integral part of the Birdwatchers' Society. Here's to another year of discovery, collaboration, and shared passion for birdwatching.

BISWAPRIYA RAHUT
PRESIDENT
BIRDWATCHERS' SOCIETY

BIRD COUNT INDIA (BCI) is an informal collective of national and regional partners who are interested in bird monitoring in India. The partnership consists of a large number of organizations and groups, all of whom share BCI's common goals. Partners, by definition, is either a formal organization, governmental or non-governmental, or even an informal group like a social media group. Hence, the BCI collective does not directly include individuals. Partners support the goals of Bird Count India in a variety of ways but by mostly encouraging their members/subscribers to take part in events and projects that lead to a better understanding of bird distribution and abundance. Some partners run their own events and projects, with support from the collective.

BIRDWATCHERS' SOCIETY IS A COLLABORATOR TO BCI.

- Here we use products & outputs (e.g. Migration or coverage maps) from BCI in your public displays & products with appropriate acknowledgements or credits.
- We promote the products & outputs from BCI in your networks.
- We Ensure public outputs/products are easily accessible with details of acknowledgements & credits.
- We Obtain response to queries on any aspect of BCI activities.
- We promote BCI or BCI partner events/projects (e.g. HBC) in our own network (members, community, Whatsapp group).
- We get our network to participate in these events/projects.
- We get listed as a coordinator (partner or partner's representative person) in the relevant event pages for your region of focus (e.g. GBBC Coordinator for XYZ).
- We get to carry BCI logo in any relevant promotion material related to the events after obtaining explicit permission.
- We run an annual event or a multi-year project with technical support from BCI (e.g. atlas).
- We take complete ownership of some major activities (e.g. onboarding participants, analyzing results, arranging logistics) of the project/event.
- We co-brand the project/event with BCI.
- Our activities gets listed in event/project page in BCI website.
- We get support for parts of the project (e.g. data analysis)
- We get support for creating and publishing media releases.
- We get to manage eBird data quality in our region.

The Regional Coordinators (RC) will serve as the main link between the regional birding community and Bird Count India collective. If you have any inquiries regarding birding or bird-related information, you can reach out to Bird Count India in the following ways:

Email: skimmer@birdcount.in; WhatsApp: 9008196098

Two of our members act as Regional Coordinator for BCI

Sandip Das, who has always been captivated by birds, delving into the nuances of their vocalisations and breeding behaviours and meticulously documenting their calls. His focus lies in documenting the behaviour and sound patterns of warblers, with a particular emphasis on the Locustellidae family. He loves exploring new habitats. He participates in various bird surveys and collaborates with birdwatchers from diverse locations. He is one of the founding members of the Birdwatchers' Society (BWS), based in West Bengal, and has co-authored "Banglar Pakhpakhali," a widely acclaimed photographic guide book showcasing the diverse bird species of the region.

Sujan Chatterjee has been birding since 1986! He is a tour operator & leader by profession and leads wildlife tours across the globe. He is involved with various bird surveys and projects in West Bengal. He is also one of the founders of the Birdwatchers' Society (BWS).

We are pleased to present the Birdwatchers' Society's Annual Report 2023 -24, reflecting a year of remarkable achievements and growth. This report encapsulates our collective efforts to promote birdwatching, conserve avian habitats, and build awareness among the next generation. We are deeply grateful to our dedicated members who have contributed to various projects, educational initiatives, and community outreach programs throughout the year. Your efforts have fostered a deeper appreciation for birdlife. As we reflect on our accomplishments, we also set our sights on future goals and continued collaboration.

During the last AGM held on August 27, 2023, eleven members were elected to serve the Society throughout the year.

THE GOVERNING BODY 2023-24



Biswapriya Rahut
President



Santanu Manna
Vice President



Pampa Mistri



Manoj Dutta



Sujan Chatterjee
Secretary



Subhasish Semgupta
Vice President



Sandip Das



B S Parihar
Treasurer



Dr. Kanad Baidya
Asst. Secretary



Samiran Jha



Mousumi Dutta

Governing the flock with an eagle eye

Under the dedicated stewardship of the committee members, the Birdwatchers' Society has experienced significant growth and achieved numerous milestones. These accomplishments are a testament to our collective dedication and hard work, and we are proud to share them with you in this report.

THE KEY MILESTONES 2023 -2024

a) **Surging ahead with Partners** - The Birdwatchers' Society's remarkable success this year is thanks to the unwavering support of our partners and associates. A standout partner has been Ricoh Imaging Company (Pentax Binocular). Their generous support has empowered our associates with top-tier optics equipment, enhancing our effectiveness in the field and taking our birdwatching endeavours to new heights.

b) **Automation of the Member's Module 1.0** - BWS launched its online membership management module in the last quarter of 2023-24. The system had a rough start, but over the months, it has stabilised. Based on the learnings, Member Module 2.0 is in the works and should go into production mid-next year.

c) **Membership** - Members are BWS's lifeblood. As of March 03, 2024, the membership count was close to 318, a steady growth from last year's count of 232.

d) **School of Birds** - The School of Birds is BWS's flagship initiative. It is an educational project designed to introduce children to the enchanting world of nature, emphasising the interconnectedness of all life, including humans. At a critical time for the environment, the project aims to instil conservation as a way of life, with birds

serving as the messengers of this vital message.

e) **Statewide National Bird Day 2024** - National Bird Day, celebrated on January 05 in India, originated in the United States. The 2024 theme, "Right to Flight," emphasised the importance of keeping birds free in their natural habitats, particularly by educating children. The Birdwatchers' Society conducted numerous events to engage children across the state of West Bengal on this occasion. More than 300 school children participated in awareness programs, bird walks, and rallies from over 8 locations in the state.

f) **Educators workshop** - The Birdwatchers' Society in Kolkata organised a first-of-its-kind seminar on "How to be a Birding Buddy" over two and a half days in collaboration with Early Birds (www.early-bird.in). This Educator's workshop focused on how to engage with children of all ages and backgrounds, aligning with BWS' School of Bird program. Based on the participant and faculty feedback, the workshop was undoubtedly a huge success.

g) **Dawn Chorus 2023** - The Birdwatchers' Society organised the first state-level Dawn Chorus. Birders from different parts of West Bengal took the initiative to document the calls and songs of birds in the wee hours of dawn in varied habitats of Bengal.

h) **eBird adaptation** - eBird has gained remarkable popularity in our community. During the year under review, we witnessed an unprecedented increase in the number of eBird Checklists submitted by members of the Birdwatchers' Society. Our dedicated members contributed an impressive 1,400 Checklists to Team BWS during 2023-24, showcasing their active participation and commitment to avian conservation and research. This surge in submissions highlights the growing enthusiasm for birdwatching and significantly enriches our collective data, aiding in more effective conservation efforts.

i) **Pocket Guide Booklets** - One of the year's most significant milestones was the publication of two 'pocket

guide booklets. In collaboration with *Early Birds* (www.early-bird.in), BWS developed bi-lingual, handy pocket guides featuring common species of 'Birds of West Bengal' and 'Birds of Sikkim & North Bengal.' These guides are thoughtfully categorised by habitat and behaviour, with symbols indicating additional information for quick reference. Designed for practicality in the field and laminated for extra durability, these bilingual pocketbooks are invaluable tools in spreading the message of conservation. Their easy-to-use format ensures that novice and experienced birdwatchers can engage more deeply with their environment, promoting greater awareness and appreciation of our avian biodiversity.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR FY 2023-24

Mr. Chairman Sir, Members of the Executive Committee and my dear Members,
This year, BWS completes six years of existence. We look forward to greater heights of observation, achievements and accomplishments in the present decade and beyond. What started with a small group of keen birdwatchers, has now grown into a revolution, thanks to the active participation of all the members.

While we expand our horizons, we must also look at sustainability, to ensure our existence beyond our lifetimes. Financial Year 2023-24 has been a remarkable year for us. Let me first present the Statements for the Financial Year 2023-24, in brief, followed by some insights into our fiscal plan:

1.	During the year, our income from various sources were as under:	
a.	Subscription received from Members	- 2,77,876.00
b.	CSR funds received	- 4,50,000.00
c.	Donations received U/S 80G	- 2,50,000.00
d.	Interest from Bank	- 19,818.00
e.	Interest from Fixed Deposits	- 8,425.00
f.	Funds received for Maredumilli Camp	- 4,31,000.00
g.	Funds received for Bakkhali Camp	- 1,11,000.00
h.	Funds received from Children's Programme	- 10,050.00
i.	Funds received for Ads. In Newsletter	- 3,00,000.00

	Total	- 18,58,169.00
		=====
2.	During the same period, the expenditure was as under:	
a.	Accounting Charges	- 12,000.00
b.	Audit Fees	- 15,000.00
c.	Bank Charges	- 59.00
d.	Depreciation	- 30,719.00
e.	Birdwatching Workshop Expenses	- 12,069.00
f.	Asansol Outreach Programme	- 16,461.00
g.	Bakkhali Camp Expenses	- 1,55,893.00
h.	CSR Expenses for eBird Reviewers Meet	- 4,50,000.00
i.	Donation to HEAL	- 24,625.00
j.	Home School & MCKV Programme	- 9,150.00
k.	Honorarium paid to School of Birds	- 5,200.00
l.	Maredumilli Camp Expenses	- 4,00,000.00
m.	Meeting expenses for AGM	- 61,295.00
n.	Murshidabad Outreach Programme	- 9,557.00
o.	Office Rent	- 30,000.00
p.	Printing & Publication	- 1,73,735.00
q.	Student Home Programme	- 9,444.00
r.	Travelling and Conveyance	- 9,012.00
s.	Fee for Certification of Utilization of CSR Fund	- 5,000.00
t.	Web Portal Maintenance	- 1,60,160.00
u.	Excess of Income over Expenditure	- 2,68,790.00

	Total	18,58,169.00
		=====

3. An excess of Income over Expenditure of Rs. 2,68,790.00 has been recorded in the books of accounts for the Financial Year 2023-24.

4. In the Balance Sheet for the year ending 31 Mar 2023, we have:

Assets:

a.	Fixed Assets (Telescopes)	-	2,26,091.00
b.	Current Assets (Bank Balance + FD + Cash)	-	6,74,404.00
c.	Tax Deducted at Source	-	6,000.00

			9,06,495.00
			=====

Liabilities :

a.	Reserves and Surplus	-	6,05,705.00
b.	Current Liabilities	-	32,000.00
c.	Excess of Income over Expenditure	-	2,68,790.00

		-	9,06,495.00
			=====

5. The Audited Financial Statements for the Year 2023-24 are placed before the AGM for a Vote on Account.

6. Our popular newsletter, Fantail, is now a fully independent, self-sustaining, publication. We have dedicated funds for Fantail, sponsored by our partner, Ricoh Pentax India Limited.

7. Two recent developments have helped us to cement our resources further in the current Financial Year. One is a strategic tie-up with Ricoh Pentax India Limited, who have pledged their support to BWS with a grant of Rs. 3,00,000.00 and full scale optical support. BWS members can now purchase Pentax range of binoculars and scopes at a very attractive price. We have also made a strategic tie-up with 'School of Birds' to conduct various educational programmes at schools all over West Bengal. This programme has received tremendous support from the corporate world and we have been able to generate sufficient CSR funds to run the programme for this financial year.

8. Several other project are in the pipeline and the committee will keep the members informed as and when these projects materialize.

“Success is doing what you want, when you want, with whom you want, as much as you want.”
 We hope, each one of you, as a Birdwatcher, and BWS, as a Society, grow by leaps and bounds, in the years to come.
 Long live BWS.

NEW A-SERIES AND S-SERIES BINOCULARS

ED (Extra-low Dispersion) optical elements deliver a sharp, high-contrast, blur-free view.



*T&C APPLIED



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MEMBERSHIP

Our members' unwavering dedication fuels our Society's heartbeat, infusing life and purpose into everything we do. From seasoned ornithologists to enthusiastic newcomers, passionate birders to die-hard naturalists, and tender teens to enduring elders, their collective passion propels us forward, breaking barriers and exploring new frontiers in birdwatching.

As of March 31, 2024, our membership count stood at 325, a rise of 100 members since last year, which is certainly encouraging. However, member churn is natural in any organisation. We will identify and remove inactive members once our online membership module is fully operational. This effort complements our ongoing membership drive, ensuring our community remains vibrant and engaged.

This year, we proudly introduced a new member category: Junior Members, consisting of schoolchildren up to the age of 18. These young enthusiasts are our future ambassadors, and by nurturing their passion from a young age, we are investing in a win-win future for both them and Society. Their enthusiasm and fresh perspectives promise to invigorate our community and drive our mission forward with renewed energy.

The current memberwise statistics are as follows :

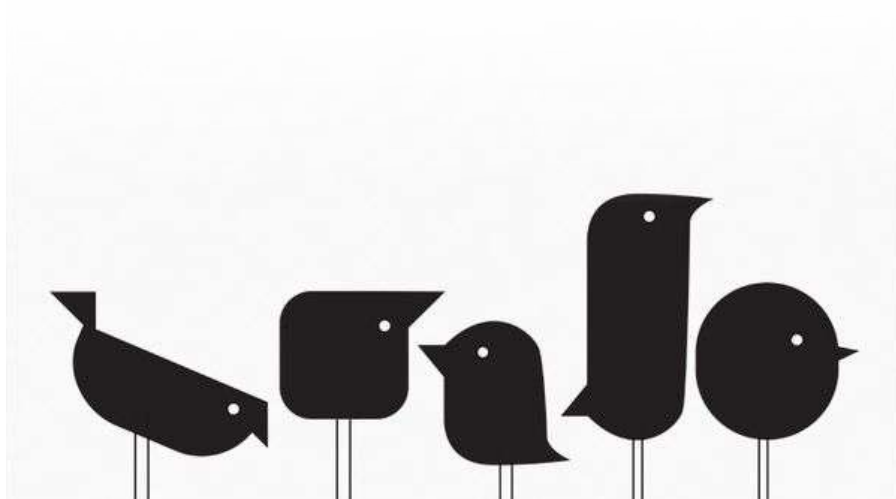
Life Members - 9

General Members - 277

Student Members - 31

Junior Member - 1

As we advance, our mission is to ensure representation from every district of the state.



BIRDWATCHERS' SOCIETY ACTIVITIES



A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song

– Maya Angelou



SCHOOL OF BIRDS

A brand new initiative got underway this year. Conceptualised by BWS member Titash Chakrabarti, the School of Birds was implemented with limited resources in various parts of West Bengal and other states, such as Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, from March 2016 to August 2023.

In 2023, BWS collaborated with Titash to reinvigorate the initiative under the BWS umbrella. As per Titash, “The School of Birds initiative is not just about observing nature; it’s a crucial step towards empowering future stewards of the Earth. By immersing young minds in the beauty and importance of birdlife, we sow the seeds of environmental responsibility, fostering a generation poised to act as guardians of our fragile planet”.

During 2023-24, 160 children undertook basic awareness programs in Kolkata through field trips and classroom sessions. Overall, in the inaugural year, under the School of Birds initiative, 326 children contact-hours were conducted.

Apart from the engagements in Kolkata, Sri Saikat Das (BWS Member) conducted

two sessions (indoor and outdoor) as part of an awareness program at Viswa-Bharati, Shantiniketan.

- 60 students attended;
- Indoor was four hours, and outdoor was two and a half hours.

In another event, Debarnab Sen from Bishnupur took over 62 schoolchildren for an awareness program that covered - Knowing the birds, listening to their vocalisations, associating each local name of the birds with their formal name, identifying which is migratory and which is endemic, and finally, what to do if they see someone disturbing or breaking a bird nest.

We have also broken ground in North Bengal. BWS, Airavat, Optopic, and SPA conducted numerous awareness campaigns with schoolchildren.

The project’s future looks bright. The eagerness of institutions and organisations to participate in the School of Birds is a positive indication of our cooperative goal towards a sustainable future.









BIRD CONSERVATION

At BWS, we are working on a multi-pronged conservation strategy.

1. Harnessing the Expertise of Our Partners & Associates

Of significant value is our commitment to conservation through the collaborative efforts of our esteemed partners and associates. By working closely with our dedicated teams, we provide essential tools such as scopes and binoculars to enhance their monitoring capabilities.

A shining example of this collaborative effort is the exemplary work carried out by our associate, the Human & Environment Alliance League (HEAL). HEAL is at the forefront of combating bird poaching in the south-central districts of West Bengal, specifically Murshidabad, Malda, Birbhum, and Purba Bardhaman. These areas, particularly Murshidabad, which has extensive wetlands, are hotspots for this illegal activity.

These areas, particularly Murshidabad, which has extensive wetlands, are hotspots for this illegal activity. On December 02, 2023, in a joint effort, BWS and HEAL organised a workshop on Birding & Anti-poaching at Pallishree Village in Murshidabad. To support their vital work, BWS donated a Pentax 65mm EDA Sighting Scope to HEAL volunteers,

enhancing their ability to effectively monitor and protect migratory birds.

This partnership highlights our dedication to wildlife conservation and underscores the impact of collective action in preserving our natural heritage.

2. Forging Powerful Alliances with Academic Institutes

BWS proactively engages with leading universities and institutes to spearhead groundbreaking research projects. We anticipate the launch of several transformative initiatives in the 2024-25 academic year. Through this collaboration, educational institutions will provide state-of-the-art infrastructure and appoint dedicated research scholars to drive conservation efforts forward.

While this activity is still a work in progress, BWS will play a pivotal role by securing vital CSR funds and leveraging our extensive network for comprehensive field activities. Moreover, we will share our profound expertise in eBIRD data, ensuring these projects have the highest impact.

Together, we are poised to make significant strides in conservation, combining academic rigour with practical action to protect and preserve our natural world.





BIRD WALKS

Bird walks have been the cornerstone of BWS's activities. BWS bird walks are free of cost and open to the public to encourage bird learning and appreciation. During 2022-23, BWS conducted 16 bird walks, averaging more than one monthly bird walk.

The bird walks aim to engage diverse participants, foster a community of bird enthusiasts, and promote environmental stewardship. The consistent schedule and accessibility have significantly contributed to the growing interest and awareness about the local bird species and migrant visitors.

BWS remains committed to providing educational and enjoyable experiences, ensuring that bird watching remains an inclusive and enriching activity for everyone. District BWS representatives usually organise these bird walks in various birding hot spots across West Bengal. Spotting Scopes and Binoculars have been gifted to the representatives for regular bird monitoring activities.

'Walk by Sound' was a unique bird walk held on May 07, 2023, at the Indian Botanical Gardens. Here is an excerpt from the report filed by Sri Ajit Ghatak, who became a member of the Birdwatchers' Society after attending the walk.

"Uditans Arunava Dutta, Ajay Bhowal, Dr Satyajit Ash, Subho Samanta & myself joined a WALK BY SOUND programme at the historic Botanical Gardens today early morning...

A day to cherish & remember for a long time, thanks to the BIRDWATCHER'S SOCIETY! The theme was to listen to the calls and sounds of the birds and then spot them by name and origin. As we moved well inside the gardens, tweets and chirps replaced the noise and cacophony of the city. We were in a different world, led by Mr Sujan Chatterjee, Major Parihar, and others in the BWS team. With the high-powered scope on tripods, we were very cordially shown the umpteen species of birds, as close a view as sitting across the table. Mr Chatterjee, an inborn avid naturalist, weaved amazing stories of the birds sighted, one after another, which left us in awe... also depicting its relationship with the flora & fauna. Major Parihar, an ex-sniper of the Indian Army, was shooting one bird after another with his super-zoom scope & related the details, equally with the professionals & few amateurs within us, with amazing clarity. This walk of 5kms around the Botanical Garden imparted knowledge, aroused passion, & helped make friends with like-minded."

These bird walks are over and above those conducted under the 'School of Birds' initiative.

Date	Bird Walk	Place	Led By
07-May-23	Walk by Sound - Bird Walk	Botanical Garden	BWS
18-Jun-23	Bird Walk	Rajarhat, New Town	BWS
25-Jun-23	Bird Walk - BWS	Naxalbari	Airavat, Optopic, Spa
23-Jul-23	Bird Walk	Baruipur	BWS
08-Oct-23	Birdwalk	RS	BWS
26-Nov-23	Birdwalk	Baruipur	BWS
05-Jan-24	Bishnupur Birdwalk	Bishnupur	BWS
05-Jan-24	Walk for Raptors	Panighata WLS	Airavat
05-Jan-24	National Bird Day Bird walk	Bibhutibhushan WLS	BAN
06-Jan-24	National Bird Day Bird walk	Asansol	Wild Tuskers
07-Jan-24	Teesta - Karala Bird Walk	Jalpaiguri	BWS
14-Jan-24	Birdwalk	Santragachi Jheel	BWS
05-Feb-24	Wetland Day Bird Walk -BWS	Fulbari Barrage	Airavat, Optopic, Spa
16-Feb-24	GBBC Bird Walk	Central Park, Salt Lake	BWS
17-Feb-24	GBBC Bird Walk	RS	BWS
18-Feb-24	GBBC Bird Walk	Baruipur	BWS
10-Mar-24	Bird Walk	Baruipur	BWS





BIRD TALKS - WORKSHOPS - OUTREACH

The Birdwatchers' Society (BWS) actively involves citizens and its associates through a variety of outreach programs designed to raise

awareness or engage in focussed initiatives. Find below a list of events conducted through the year.

Date	Event	Location	Partnered with
05-Jun-23	Bird Talk	Students Health Home - Kolkata	BWS
28-Jun-23	Bird Talk on Bird Migration	Open to All	BWS
18-Jul-23	Bird Talk	Students Health Home, Jalpaiguri	BWS & SHH
15-Oct-23	Bird Workshop - Birding & Bird Activities	Asansol	WildTuskers
16-Dec-23	Bird Talk	Central Festival of Students Health Home at Habra	BWS & SHH
02-Dec-23	Panel Discussion on 'Birding & Anti-Poaching activities'	Pallishree Village, Murshidabad	HEAL
05-Jan-24	Bird Talk	Modela Caretaker School, Fulbari	Optics
06-Jan-24	Bird Talk	Hirapur Man-ik Chand Thakur Institute, Burnpur, Asansol	Wild Tuskers
21-Jan-24	Birdwatching Workshop	IISER Kolkata	
02-Feb-24	Sit & Draw Competition - Wetland day Celebration	Fulbari Wetland -	BWS, Airavat, Optopic, SPA
28-Jan-24	Sit & Draw Competition -on birds - Jibananda Das Birth-day Centenary celebration	Shanpukur Shakti Sangha, Habra	BAN

16-Mar-24	How to be a Birding Buddy - a 2 day workshop for Educators	Salt Lake, Kolkata	Early Birds
05-Feb-24	Wetland Day Bird Walk -BWS	Fulbari Barrage	Airavat, Optopic, Spa
16-Feb-24	GBBC Bird Walk	Central Park, Salt Lake	BWS
17-Feb-24	GBBC Bird Walk	RS	BWS
18-Feb-24	GBBC Bird Walk	Baruipur	BWS
10-Mar-24	Bird Walk	Baruipur	BWS

28 June 2023,
Wednesday
5:30pm – 8pm

Birdwatchers' Society
Bird Talk
on
BIRD MIGRATION
in the Indian subcontinent
in collaboration with
PENTAX
BINOCULAR

ALO Eye Care Seminar Hall,
DG -20/1, I(D), 07/0327
Street Number 0327,
Action Area 1D,
Newtown, New Town



পাখিদের কথা

পাখি চেনা এবং পরিবেশ রক্ষায় পাখিদের গুরুত্ব সম্পর্কে সচেতন করতে সুডেউস হেলথ হোমের জলপাইগুড়ি আঞ্চলিক কেন্দ্র এবং বার্ডওয়চার্স সোসাইটির যৌথ উদ্যোগে 'পাখিদের কথা' শীর্ষক আলোচনা সভার আয়োজন করা হয়েছিল। বার্ডওয়চার্স সোসাইটির তরফে দৃশ্য-শ্রাব্য মাধ্যমে পাখিদের ডাক, পাখি চেনার কৌশল, তথ্য সংগ্রহ প্রভৃতি দিক তুলে ধরা হয়। অনুষ্ঠানে নানা ধরনের পাখির কথা বলেন কথাম বৈদ্যা। পাখিদের বাসস্থান, প্রকৃতি, উপকারিতা নিয়ে বক্তব্য রাখেন সোসাইটির সভাপতি বিশ্বপ্রিয় রাউত। অনুষ্ঠানে অংশ নেন জলপাইগুড়ির বিভিন্ন বিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্রছাত্রী, শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকারা।

উত্তরবঙ্গ

ছোটদের পাখি চেনাতে আড্ডা

জলপাইগুড়ি, ১৬ জুলাই- ছোটদের যথেষ্ট আগ্রহের পাখি- চেনতে, ফিড, ডাক, মজার, পাখি চেনতে, গীত, মনে মনে ধরবে শুষা চেনতে হতে শিখতে। সিন্দ মনে পাখিদের কান্নাকাটি করে সিন্দে কর্তব্যের মতো মনে হতে পারে। সিন্দে মনে মনে 'আড্ডা' নামে ছোটদের মনে হতে পারে। সিন্দে মনে মনে হতে পারে। সিন্দে মনে মনে হতে পারে।

জলপাইগুড়ির স্ট্রেট সেন্টে হোমের উদ্যোগে সভার আয়োজন।





BIRD COUNT

Birds and their population numbers are essential for indicating the overall health of ecosystems. Birds are heavily affected by changes in weather conditions and habitat loss. The changing climate has affected bird migration due to alterations in bird habitats. Counting or monitoring is central to ecological studies and conservation research in ornithology. Monitoring helps to establish a baseline for natural variability in species abundance and distribution. This eventually becomes an essential tool for identifying

changes that indicate a population abnormality trend.

The Birdwatchers' Society (BWS) has been actively engaged in several bird counts throughout the year, contributing valuable data to avian conservation efforts both in West Bengal and nationwide. These counts help monitor bird populations, assess habitat health, and raise public awareness about bird conservation.

IMPACT

Bird counts exercise enable BWS to significantly contribute to the understanding of bird populations in West Bengal and beyond. The society's efforts not only aid in conservation but also foster a growing community of birdwatchers who are actively engaged in protecting avian life.

These bird counts align with BWS's mission to study, monitor, birdwatching, educate the public, and support bird conservation through citizen science initiatives.

HIMALAYAN BIRD COUNT:

Timing: May 2023

Focus: This count focuses on the unique avian species found in the Himalayan region. BWS's involvement included coordinating with birdwatchers in the Himalayan foothills and higher altitudes to document bird species, many of which are endemic to the region. The data helps monitor the impacts of climate change and habitat loss on these sensitive ecosystems.

DAWN CHORUS:

Timing: May 2023

Focus: The Dawn Chorus is a global initiative that invites bird enthusiasts to record the sounds of birds at dawn, capturing the richness of the morning chorus. BWS participants recorded bird songs from various locations, contributing to a worldwide archive of bird sounds that can be used for research and conservation.

ANNUAL WATERBIRD CENSUS (AWC):

Timing: January 2024

Focus: The AWC is part of an international effort to monitor the status of waterbirds and wetlands. BWS participated in this count, focusing on important wetlands in West Bengal, such as the Farakka Important Bird Area (IBA). The data collected contributes to understanding trends in waterbird populations and the health of wetland ecosystems.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT (GBBC):

Timing: February 2024

Focus: The GBBC is a global event where birdwatchers of all levels observe and record birds in their local areas. BWS played a key role in coordinating the count across West Bengal, encouraging widespread participation and contributing a substantial number of observations to the global database. This effort helps track changes in bird populations over time.

POILA-BOISAKH BIRD COUNT (PBBC):

Timing: April 2023

Focus: The PBBC, held during the Bengali New Year, is a unique bird count organized by BWS. It aims to document bird species across different habitats in West Bengal, celebrating the region's avian diversity. The event also serves as an educational platform, promoting birdwatching and conservation among the public.



A Streak-throated Woodpecker clicked on Saturday.

Picture Courtesy: Shalini Iyengar

Summer bird count starts for Bengal

SUBHAJOY ROY

Calcutta: A summer bird count to create a record of birds sighted across the state during this time of the year is underway.

The Poila Boishakh Bird Count — the name given to the exercise — started on Saturday and will conclude on Sunday. The organisers chose the first day of the Bengali New Year to start the bird count since the holidays allowed more participation.

"Bird counts are done in winter and then there is the Great Backyard Bird Count done in spring, but no such exercise took place in summer. The birdwatchers felt the need to hold a bird count during summer. This will be held every year henceforth," said Sujan Chatterjee, one of the coordinators of the bird count in Bengal. Chatterjee and around 150 others split themselves into 27 teams spread out across the state for the count.

One-month long census of migratory bird arrivals in West Burdwan wetlands begins

DEBAJYOTI CHAKRABORTY
DURGAPUR, 11 DECEMBER

The one-month long census week of migratory bird arrivals begins in West Burdwan district from Saturday, even as the winged visitors face a lot of challenges like climate change, loss of habitat and dwindling green patches.

Every year approximately two to three lakh migratory birds arrive in the wetlands of West Burdwan district in October and go back in the first week of April.

There are four categories of winter migratory birds - Waders (smaller birds which reside in the banks near the wetlands), ducks, raptors, flycatchers etc.

Arrival of each category varies: the waders come first, while the ducks arrive last.



Every year winter migratory birds arrive in flocks in West Burdwan district's Damodar riverbed, the wetlands in ISP, Burdwan, Damodar Barrage in Durgapur, Gunjan Ecological Park, Colonel Singh Park and Boat Club in Chitranjan Railway township, Durgapur Barrage in Durgapur etc.

The winter migratory bird count in these water bodies

will be conducted from 15 December to 15 January. The state forest department will be working in collaboration with the experts of two voluntary organisations - Wild Tuskers in Asansol and Wings in Durgapur.

Volunteers of Wild Tuskers have started work from Damodar River Bed in Burdwan from Saturday.

Besides, another volun-

tary organisation based in Kolkata, Bird Watcher Society will conduct a census of water fowl which includes ducks and water fowls.

Talking to The Statesman, Saptarshi Mukherjee, secretary of Wild Tuskers of Asansol said that avian species start arriving from October middle instead of late September due to climate changes, the winter is getting delayed every



year that is why the number of feathered guests are dwindling every year.

"There has been several challenges before the forest department officials and bird lovers as the migratory birds are getting disturbed due to the winter picnic season on the Damodar River beds using loudspeakers, rampant sand mining in the river banks, felling of trees due to rapid



industrialisation and urbanisation etc. Awareness drives are regularly undertaken both by the forest department and the bird lovers," he added.

In the water body inside grounds of the seed plant of ISP in Burdwan, roughly two hundred and fifty numbers of crested pochard (Netta Rutilina) and Little Cormorant (Microcarbo nigres) are seen these days, according to an ISP

official. In previous years the number was more than 500. These birds arrive from far-away places like Iran.

Last winter, the winter migrants were abundant. About 40 species of Ruddy Shelduck (coming from Tibet) were spotted. The numbers of Wagtails, saiga flycatcher, sandpipers, little ringed plovers, and gulls were satisfactory.

"We also found gadwall and red crested pochards (a ducks species) as well. This year, there has been a slight decline in ducks. However the migration is still going on. Ruddy Shelducks have arrived but in fewer numbers. The reasons are probably the sharp decline in habitat and encroachment," he said.

Some of the bird species already spotted this year are

Pallas's Gull in Damodar Barrage in Durgapur, Ruddy Shelduck, Great Cormorant, Bar-headed Goose and Lesser Whistling Ducks, Tufted Duck, Pacific Golden Plover, Red Crested Pochard, Citrine Wagtail, Osprey, Pied Bunting, Eastern Marsh Harrier, Sulphur-Bellied Warbler etc.

Change of crop pattern, use of pesticides and loss of habitat have led to fall by as much as 80 per cent of the migratory bird arrivals to the wetlands of the county, experts opine.

Scarcity of food and extreme cold are the reasons behind the annual 'Great Escape' of the millions and millions of migratory birds from the chilly northern winter to a warmer country like India.

With 529 species, Bengal tops India list in global bird count for 2nd year in a row

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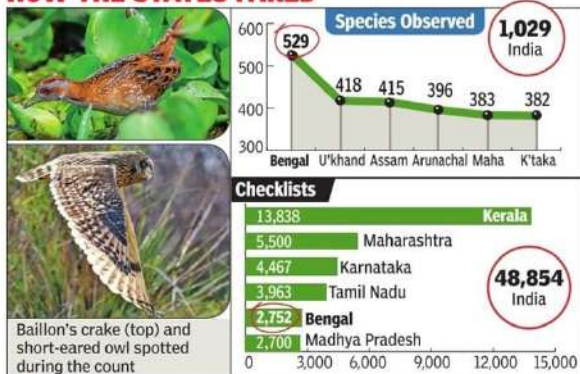
Kolkata: For the second year running, Bengal has recorded the highest number of species during the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) across 37 states and union territories in the country.

The event, one of the largest across the globe, was conducted between Feb 16 and 19 and of the 1,029 species recorded in India, Bengal topped the list with 529 species, according to the data compiled till Wednesday afternoon. Last year, the state had recorded 492 species.

Bengal is followed by Uttarakhand (418), Assam (415), Arunachal (396), Maharashtra (383) and Karnataka (382) in terms of recording species during the exercise.

Across India, 48,854 checklists — a list of birds that one can hear, see or identify — have been uploaded and Kerala has topped this chart with 13,838 entries. In terms of checklist, Bengal stands at sixth position with 2,752 entries. The number of species recorded in Kerala is 334.

HOW THE STATES FARED



Baillon's crane (top) and short-eared owl spotted during the count

Also, this is the first time a new species — a spur-winged lapwing — has reportedly been sighted for India during the exercise in Telangana.

Just a day before the start of GBBC, Bengal recorded a Japanese thrush —

a first in the state — at Buxa on Feb 15.

“Under the four-day exercise that was started in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, birdwatchers go out, count birds and upload the data on e-bird

— an online database of bird observations. This is the second consecutive year when India has featured with 1000-plus species and 40,000-plus checklists,” said Kanad Baidya of Birdwatchers' Society, who has uploaded 92 checklists.

Bengal coordinator of the event Santanu Manna, who has uploaded 67 checklists, said Darjeeling has topped the list with the most number of species — 305. Last year, the district had thrown up a figure of 203. “Darjeeling is followed by S 24 Parganas (189), Purulia (162), East Burdwan (155) and Bankura (153),” added Manna.

In terms of species observed, India stood third (1,029) after Colombia and Ecuador and in terms of checklists, it stood second to the US. The US uploaded 1,62,130 checklists.

Members of Birdwatchers' Society this year alone recorded 451 species and uploaded 670 checklists. While Subhra Pakhira observed the maximum number of species in Bengal — 215 — Soumyadip Mondal submitted the maximum number of checklists — 160.



Binod Thami, Rozan Dhungel, Dibyendu Ash

Himalayan Bird Count - SIKKIM

“Data from the International Waterfowl Census have been a cornerstone of BirdLife International’s Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) programme since its inception over thirty years ago. The extensive, long-term, quantitative data-sets generated by the IWC have made a unique contribution to the means by which IBAs are identified: they underpin one of the four main criteria by which IBAs are recognised and inform a second. Moreover, the availability of regular count data from IBAs provides vital information on population trends and also helps guide conservation actions at sites.”

Lincoln Fishpool, BirdLife International

AWC - WATERFOWL CENSUS 2024

Wetlands are among the world's most vital habitats, and water birds are important health indicators. The Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) was first initiated in the Indian subcontinent in 1987. During 2024, like in previous years, BWS, its members, and partner organisations undertook the AWC survey in West Bengal.

AWC BISHUPUR 2024 was held from January 12 to 20th, organised under the supervision of the Bishnupur Forest Department. Participating entities included the Bishnupur Nature Club (BNC) and the Birdwatcher's Society. Shri Debnab Sen, our member from Bishnupur, has been a pioneer in conservation education, citizen science, and research activities and has consistently led such efforts in the region.



AWC GAJOLDOBA 2024 - Birdwatchers' Society, Optopic, Siliguri Photographers' Association, and Airavat jointly participated in the Asian Waterbird Census 2024 at Gajoldoba on January 14.



AWC FULBARI WETLAND 2024 - One of North Bengal's most important wetlands, the Fulbari Wetland saw members of Birdwatchers' Society, Optopic Siliguri, Airavat and SPA conduct the Asian Waterbird Count on February 04. Fulbari Wetland has always been a gem of a place as far as a bird's winter migration habitat is concerned.



AWC FARAKKA IBA 2024 - Asian Waterbird Count 2024 was undertaken by Green People Malda in collaboration with the Birdwatchers' Society team at the Important Bird Area (IBA) of Farakka. The participation was quite encouraging. The event focused on monitoring and recording the population of waterbirds, contributing valuable data for conservation efforts.



GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT 2023

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) 2024 in India was a highly successful event, reflecting the growing interest in birdwatching and citizen science across the country. Conducted from February 16th to 19th, the event saw widespread participation from both seasoned birdwatchers and enthusiastic beginners. The GBBC, a global event organized by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, encourages participants to observe and record birds in their local areas, contributing valuable data for bird conservation efforts.

প্রায় পরিযায়ী পাখিশূন্য তিস্তা ও করলা, পর্যবেক্ষণের পর হতাশ পক্ষী বিশেষজ্ঞরা

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, জলপাইগুড়ি : অশায়েই সত্তা হল শেষ পর্যন্ত। হতাশার সুর বাজে পড়ল পক্ষী বিশেষজ্ঞদের গলায়। রূপনারী সন্ধ্যায় জলপাইগুড়ি শহরের বুক চিরে বসে চলা করলা নদী ও সলংগ তিস্তায় পাখি দেখতে বেরিয়ে ছিলেন বার্ড ওয়াচার সোসাইটির সদস্যরা। ছাত্রছাত্রীদের পাখি চেনানোর পাশাপাশি তিস্তা করলায় কত প্রজাতির পাখি রয়েছে তার উপর সমীক্ষা চালান তারা। কিন্তু পর্যবেক্ষণের প্রথম দিনেই হতাশ পাখি পক্ষীশ্রেণীরা।



চলছে পর্যবেক্ষণ।

—সুবীর এস

বার্ড ওয়াচার সোসাইটির আহ্বায়ক বিশ্বপ্রিয় রায়চন্দ্র জানান, গত ৪ অক্টোবর দিকিম পাহাড়ে বিপর্যয়ে কন্যা পরিহিত তৈরি হয়েছিল তিস্তায়। তিস্তা নদীর বহু জায়গায় জমা হয়েছে পলির আস্তরণ। তিস্তার গজলভোবা ব্যারাজ সংলগ্ন জলাশয়ে পলি জমা হয়েছে যাদ্য সড়ক তৈরি হওয়ায় মুখ ফিরিয়ে নিয়েছে

পরিযায়ী পাখির দল। ফলস্বরূপ তিস্তায় এবার পরিযায়ী পাখির সংখ্যা অনেকটাই কম। অন্যান্য নদীগুলোর অবস্থা কী? সেখানে অভিব্যক্তি পাখিরা এসেছে কিনা জানতে ফেব্রুয়ারি মাসের মাঝামাঝি পর্যন্ত সমীক্ষা চালানো বিভিন্ন পরিবেশ সংগঠন।

বিশ্বপ্রিয় রায়চন্দ্র জানান, করলায় স্থানীয় কিছু পাখির দেখা মিলেছে। তিস্তার জলপাইগুড়ি শহর সলংগ অংশে সেই অর্ধে কোনও পরিযায়ী দেখা পাননি তারা। তিস্তার এক নম্বর স্পার্ট সংলগ্ন এলাকায় ২০২০ সালে সাইবেরিয়ান সারস এর দেখা পেয়ে

ছিলেন পরিবেশ কর্মীরা। স্থানীয়দের দাবি পরবর্তী বছরগুলোতে সাইবেরিয়ান সারসের আর দেখা পাননি তারা। তিস্তার গজলভোবা পাখি বিতানে পাখি এনেও সংখ্যাটা বিগত বছরের তুলনায় অনেকটাই কম তাহলে প্রতি বছর নিয়ম করে শীতের দেশ থেকে আসা পরিযায়ী পাখির বাক এই বছর গেলো কোথায় সেই প্রশ্নই এখন তাজ করছে পাখি এবং পরিবেশ শ্রেণী সংগঠনের সদস্যদের। বার্ড ওয়াচার সোসাইটির আহ্বায়ক বিশ্বপ্রিয় রায়চন্দ্র জানান, টানা একমাস ধরে তিস্তা সহ বিভিন্ন নদী এবং জলাশয়ে সমীক্ষা চালানো তারা। পাখিদের সংখ্যার পাশাপাশি প্রজাতিও গণনা করা হবে। এর থেকেই একটা স্পষ্ট চিত্র উঠতে আসবে। পরিবেশের কোথায় কী সমস্যা এবং সেই সমস্যা পাখিদের উপর কতটা প্রভাব ফেলেছে তা বুঝতেও অনেকটাই সুবিধা হবে বলে মনে করছেন তারা।

Sangbad Pratidin : 08-01-2024, 2/02/2024

৫৩৩ রকমের প্রজাতি চিনে পাখি গণনায় প্রথম রাজ্য

সাতী মল্লিক

ঘরের বাইরে কি গান শোনার 'বলপলি' পাখি, মনো-চিনে? সামনের দিলপাড়ার গাছের কী গাছের এসেছে পরিযায়ী অভিমুখিত? অংশে পাখি থাকে পাখিদের হঠাৎ জানতে এ বছরও মারা বিখ্যাতী 'এট ব্যাকওয়ার্ড বার্ড সার্ভিস'-এ (জিবিবিসি) যোগ দিয়েছিলেন এ রাজ্যের পক্ষীশ্রেণীরা। আর তাতেই ৫৩৩টি পাখি প্রজাতির চিত্রিত করে দ্বিতীয় বারের জন্য দেশের মধ্যে প্রথম স্থান অধিকার করল পশ্চিমবঙ্গ।

সারা নিজে পাখি প্রজাতিদের চিত্রিত করতে আমেরিকার কর্নেল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ও ১৯৯৯ সাল থেকে প্রতি ফেব্রুয়ারিতে শুরু হয় পানিগণনা। ২০১০ সাল থেকে এই গণনায় অংশ নিচ্ছে ভারতের এ বছর ১৬-১৯ ফেব্রুয়ারি বিখ্যাতী এই গণনা করা হয়। তার শেষে দেখা যাবে,

পক্ষীকুলের খতিয়ান

■ তারিখ: ১০২৯টি প্রজাতি (পশ্চিমবঙ্গ: ৫৩৩, অসম: ৪২০, উত্তরাখণ্ড: ৪১৯, অরুণাচল: ৩৯৫)

পশ্চিমবঙ্গে

■ দার্জিলিং: ৩০৫, দক্ষিণ ২৪ পরগণা: ১৮৯, পুরুলিয়া: ১৭১, পূর্ব বর্ধমান: ১৬০



■ জার্ডনস বার্ড। মাদানদের আদিম পার্কে। ছবি: স্ত্রীশাসি সেনগুপ্ত

দেশের ৩৭টি রাজ্য ও কেন্দ্রশাসিত এলাকায় প্রজাতিতেই পাখি দেখতে নেমেছিলেন পক্ষীশ্রেণীরা। তাতে সার শেষে মোট ১০২৯টি প্রজাতির পাখির দেখা মিলেছে। তার মধ্যে ৫৩৩টি প্রজাতির দেখা মিলেছে এ রাজ্যেই (প্রথম স্থান)। আর এ রাজ্যের মধ্যে সবচেয়ে বেশি প্রজাতির

পাখি দেখা গিয়েছে দার্জিলিং জেলায়। গত বছরও ৪৯৩টি প্রজাতি চিত্রিত করে দেশের মধ্যে প্রথম হয়েছিল পশ্চিমবঙ্গ।

'বার্ড ওয়ার্ল্ড সোসাইটি' নামে রাজ্যের একটি পরিবেশী সংস্থার সদস্য এবং চিত্রকর্ম কলাদৈ নিয়ম করেন, "এই চার দিন ছাদ, বারান্দা,

উদ্যান, জানলা, পুকুর-বিল বা যে কোনও জায়গা থেকে আনুমানিক ১৫ মিনিট অংশপূর্ণ নজর রাখা হয়। তাতে ফেরি পাখি চোখে পড়ল, সেটাই যখনই অংশ। এর পরে কোন প্রজাতির ক'টি পাখি দেখেছেন, সেইই ই-বার্ড পেটোলে নথিভুক্ত করতে হয়।"

সামান্যকমে থেকে এ বার পানিগণনায় অংশ নিয়েছিলেন কল্যাণ জনাচ্ছেন, হিমালয় থেকে বঙ্গোপসাগর, সেই সফে গঙ্গা, সুন্দরবন— রাজ্যে বিভিন্ন ধরনের বাসস্থান (হাবিটাট) ও জীববৈচিত্র্য ব্যাপার করবেই বিভিন্ন প্রজাতির পাখির সহায়ন দেখা যায়। এ বছরের চার দিনে হাওড়া হাবলি, মাদান, উত্তর ২৪ পরগণায় ১০৩টি প্রজাতির পাখিকে নথিভুক্ত করেছেন ই-বার্ডের বিভিন্নমোদল কোয়ার্টারের এবং 'বার্ড ওয়ার্ল্ড সোসাইটির' সদস্য সন্দীপ দাস। তখনই মাদান থেকে পেয়েছেন জার্ডনের বার্ডপাখির (জার্ডনস বার্ড), যা বিশেষত উত্তর বাংলায় দেখা

যায়। সন্দীপ বলছেন, "ক্রমশঃ পাখি নিজে মানুহের উৎসাহে বাড়েছে। তাই এ বার রাজ্যের প্রতিটি জেলা থেকে পরিবেশনা করা হয়েছে। শুধু পাখি দেখা বা চেনাও নয়, পাখির তরল চিনে থাকে চিত্রিত করাও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। এ ভাবেও বহু প্রজাতি চিত্রিত করা হয়েছে।"

এ বছরের জিবিবিসি-তে এ দেশের পাখীশ্রেণীদের চোখে ধরা দিয়েছে নতুন প্রজাতি? তেলঙ্গানার গুরুরাঙ্গলে দেখা গিয়েছে আফ্রিকার বাদিন্দা, হাট্টিটি প্রজাতির স্পোর উইল্ড ল্যাংগউইং পাখিকে। তবে কল্যাণ বলছেন, "এটা নিয়ে বিতর্ক বলবে। কারণ, এই পাখি পরিচালনা নয়। অথচ সুমুখ থেকে অনেকটাই দুর্বে মূল ভূখণ্ডে ভিতরে এটিকে দেখা গিয়েছে। এখানেই প্রশ্ন উঠবে, যেখানেই পাখি বাসযোগ্যতা খ্যা থেকে 'পাখি' কোনও জায়গা মুক্তি পেয়ে বেরিয়ে আসেনি তো?"

Ananda Bazar Patrika : 23/02/2024

Impact:

The Birdwatchers' Society's involvement in GBBC 2024 underscores its role as a leader in bird conservation efforts in India. Their contributions have not only enriched the event's outcomes but also fostered a stronger culture of birdwatching and conservation among the public, particularly in West Bengal.

This active participation aligns with BWS's broader mission of promoting birdwatching and protecting avian habitats through education, community engagement, and scientific research.

PARTICIPATION AND COVERAGE:

India saw a record number of participants in 2024, with thousands of bird enthusiasts from diverse regions contributing their observations. Schools, colleges, bird clubs, and individual birdwatchers engaged in the count, covering various habitats, from urban parks to rural fields. The Birdwatchers' Society, along with other organisations like the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and Early Bird, played crucial roles in organising and promoting the event across different states.

The Birdwatchers' Society (BWS) made significant contributions to the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) 2024 in India, reflecting its ongoing commitment to avian conservation and public engagement.

Key Contributions:

1.Regional Coordination:

BWS played a pivotal role in coordinating GBBC activities in West Bengal, mobilising participants across the state. The society worked closely with local bird clubs, schools, and environmental organisations to ensure broad participation. Their efforts resulted in comprehensive coverage of diverse habitats, from urban parks to rural wetlands, providing a rich dataset for the event.

2.Training and Workshops:

Leading up to the GBBC, BWS conducted several workshops aimed at training new birdwatchers in proper bird identification and data recording techniques. These sessions were crucial in ensuring the accuracy and quality of the data submitted during the count. The society also used these workshops to educate participants on the importance of citizen science in bird conservation.

3.High Participation:

Thanks to BWS's outreach, West Bengal recorded one of the highest levels of participation in the GBBC 2024. The society's efforts were particularly successful in engaging young birdwatchers and first-time participants, broadening the base of citizen scientists contributing to the event.

4.Data Contribution:

BWS members and affiliated groups contributed a significant volume of observations to the GBBC database. This data not only helped to map bird distribution and population trends in West Bengal but also added valuable information to the national and global datasets, aiding in broader conservation efforts.

5.Public Awareness and Media:

The society leveraged social media and local newspapers to raise awareness about the GBBC, sharing updates, photos, and stories from the field. This media presence helped to attract more participants and highlighted the importance of bird conservation to a wider audience.

DAWN CHORUS 2023

Mr Sudipto Roy led BWS's first Dawn Chorus on April 02 2023. 40 participants across West Bengal took part in covering –

DAWN CHORUS LOCATIONS

Lava, Darjeeling
 Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary
 Majua Basti, Darjeeling.
 Jubilee Park, Jalpaiguri
 Adina Deer Park, Malda
 Dahala Mango Orchard, Malda
 Hijol area, Kandi, Murshidabad
 Bardhaman University Campus,
 Damodar River Bed, Asansol
 Tentul Tala Math, West Medinipur
 Mandarmani coast, East Medinipur
 Serampore, Hooghly
 Dankuni, Hooghly



Congratulating the organisers, especially Sudipto Roy, Dr Kanad Baidya, and Major

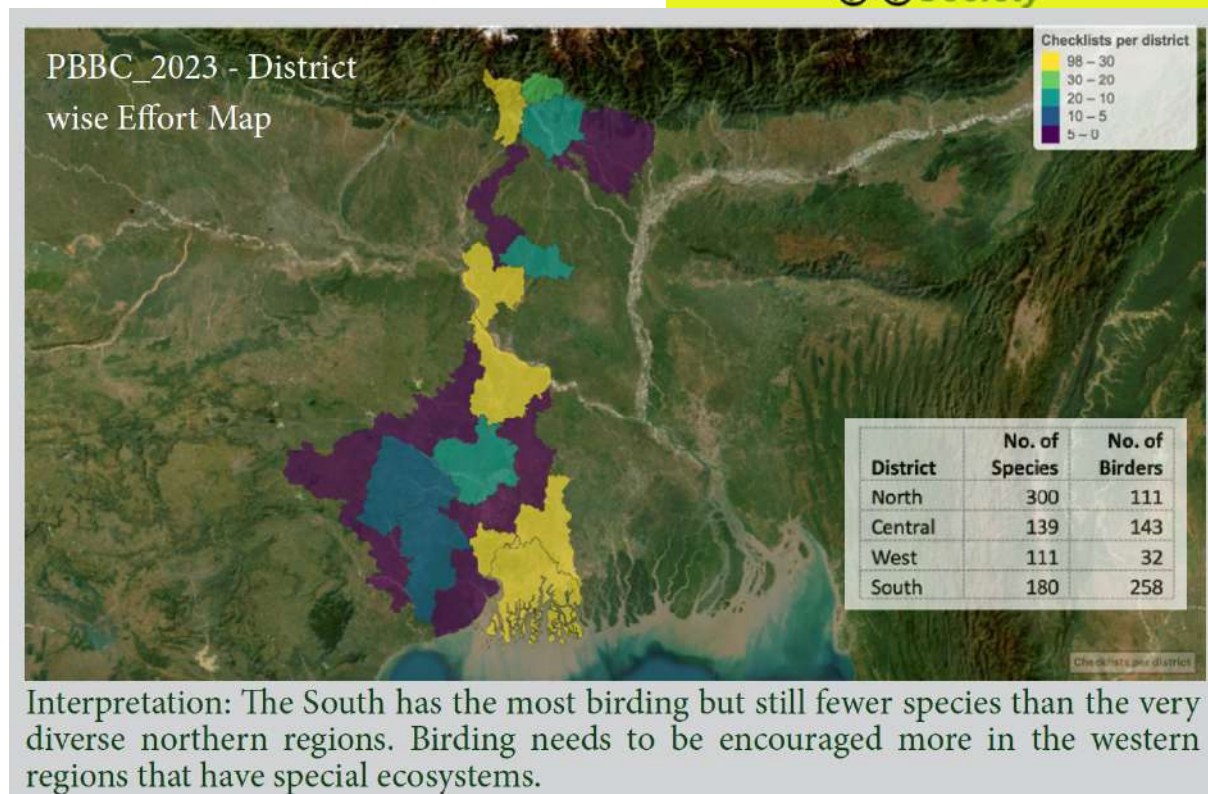
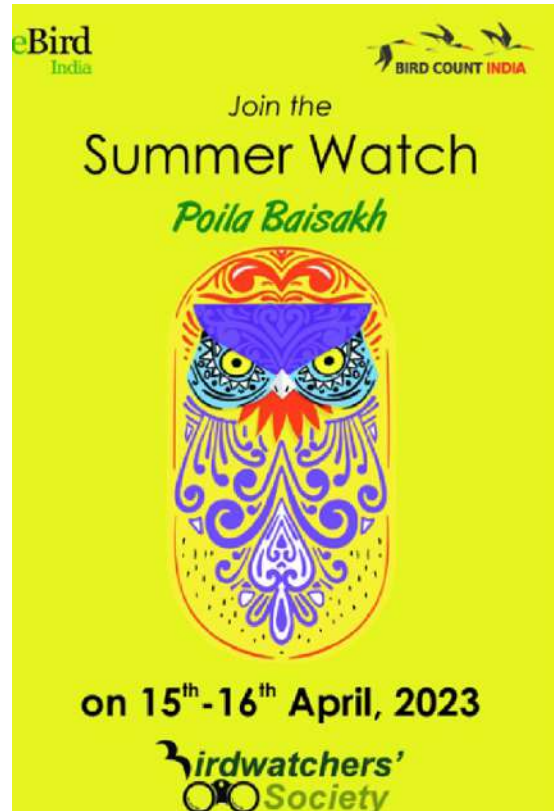
Bharatendra Parihar, Shri Biswapriya Rahut, the President of BWS, thanked all the members for the relentless effort to execute it at a statewide level. Senior member Sri Shuvendu Das said, *'It is a huge effort to cover almost all the districts of West Bengal; it is equally important to highlight the variety of habitats we covered. From the sub-tropical mixed broadleaf forest of Lava to lower temperate evergreen forest of Mahananda WLS & Darjeeling; to river beds or banks of Damodar, Ajay & Hooghly; to grasslands, lowlands, scrublands, wetlands of Jaguli, Joka, Rabindra Sarovar, Hijol, Dankuni, Baruipur, Katwa; to agricultural terrains and mango orchard in Malda, Habra; to agricultural-forest overlap zone of west Midnapore; to different park habitats like Jubilee & Adina deer park; to the protected area like Bethuadahari, Mahananda; to beach habitats of Kargil, Frazergunj, Mandarmani; to semi-urban, peri-urban & urban habitats like Thakdhari, Akra, Garia; to the hilly habitat of Ayodhya (Purulia) to the urban forest of CKBS(protected area).'*

Participating members recorded the brilliant cacophony of sounds on their respective recording devices. Afterwards, they joined a live online meeting from their respective locations, briefing everyone else about the field experience and sharing the compilations. It was enriching and exciting for most, especially the early morning songs of nature from varied terrains and habitats through the audio documentation of multiple birders across the state simultaneously. In the end, the members eventually uploaded their observations and the audio recording onto the eBird platform.

POILA-BOISHAK BIRD COUNT 2023

2023 April 15-16, BWS launched its first annual summer bird count program - PBBC (Poila-Boishakh Bird Count), in West Bengal in collaboration with eBird India and Birdcount India.

The Poila Boisakh or the Bengali New Year (Poila-Boisakh) and marked a significant event in the birdwatching calendar of West Bengal. Held over two days, the count was part of an annual effort to document bird species in various habitats across the state, aiming to raise awareness and contribute to conservation efforts. Boishakh, largely the month of April, marks the onset of spring. The signs of early summer are all across the state - leaves budding, flowers blooming, and birds singing! April in West Bengal is a crucial time in the avian calendar. In the Western & Northern Hills, this is the time for the early birds to claim territory and woo their partners for courtship through their songs while many of their kin are still in the thick of migrating to their northerly breeding grounds. The Poila-Boishak Bird Count (PBBC) across the state at this pivotal juncture would be an essential bio-indicator of breeding birds and migrants.



HIMALAYAN BIRD COUNT 2023

In the second edition of Himalayan Bird Count, around 380 eBirders from India, Nepal, and Bhutan uploaded 1,482 lists and recorded 654 species! This remarkable accomplishment highlights the success of this single-day birding event!

Himalayan Bird Count is an initiative started by Bird Count India, Bird Conservation Nepal, and the Royal Society for Protection of Nature, Bhutan. The primary objective of this event is to track bird populations across the Himalayan regions.

Birdwatchers' Society, a partner of Bird Count India, had four of its members spearheading and coordinating the events - Dr Kanad Baidya in North Bengal, Mr Dibyendu Ash in Sikkim, Mr Peter Lobo in Arunachal Pradesh, and Ms Malaysri Bhattacharya in Uttarakhand.



The image shows a promotional poster for the Himalayan Bird Count 2023 event. The poster features the logos of eBird India, Birdwatchers' Society, and Bird Count India. It includes a photograph of two vibrant green birds. The text on the poster reads: "Himalayan Bird Count", "13 May 2023", and "India | Bhutan | Nepal". A checklist on the right side of the poster lists the following requirements: "Watch Birds for at least 15 mins", "Count all the birds you see and hear", and "Upload to eBird.org". Below the poster is a graphic titled "Himalayan Bird Count Preliminary Results" which displays the following statistics: "3 Himalayan Countries", "357 Birdwatchers", "625 Species", and "1,172 Lists". The graphic also features a small logo for Himalayan Bird Count, a drawing of a bird in flight, and a drawing of a heron standing next to a mountain range.

NEWSLETTER

FANTAIL: The Voice of Bird Enthusiasts

Entering its third year in publication during 2023-24, FANTAIL continues to evolve. It remains dedicated to fostering a love for birdwatching and nurturing a community of passionate bird enthusiasts. The newsletter informs, educates, and inspires readers to cherish and protect the avian wonders that grace our world.

The heart of FANTAIL lies in its personal anecdotes and field reports, which bring the thrill of birdwatching to life. Members of the Birdwatchers Society eagerly contribute their experiences from the field, recounting the challenges and triumphs of their birding adventures. These stories not only provide valuable insights into bird behaviour and habitats but also foster a sense of community among readers. From the excitement of spotting a rare species to the simple pleasure of observing common birds in new settings, these narratives celebrate the beauty and diversity of avian life.

With each issue, FANTAIL reaffirms its place as an indispensable archive for the Birdwatchers Society, celebrating the joy of birdwatching and the boundless beauty of birds.



“A great collection. Really appreciate your article on the East Kolkata wetlands. Alarming information though. Do u people also print this book or just a soft copy.”

DD SHARMA
Headliners Advertising

“Wonderfully done indeed.. glancing through the digital issues, provided a refreshing break from the chatter in all other groups”

RAJ CHATTERJEE
Technology Professional & Entrepreneur

BIRDING CAMP 2023 - 2024

During the year, breaking from tradition, two birding camps were conducted due to high demand. The first camp in Andhra Pradesh focused on observing various birds in inland habitats. The second camp in Bakkhali, near Kolkata, targeted coastal and migratory birds, highlighting species like Nordmann's Greenshank. These camps provided valuable learning experiences, allowing members to delve into species intricacies, behaviours, and migration patterns, enriching their birdwatching skills and knowledge.

ANNUAL BIRDING CAMP 2023

The Birdwatchers' Society (BWS) held its 2023 annual camp in Maredumilli, Andhra Pradesh, near the Eastern Ghats and Papikonda Wildlife Sanctuary. The camp base was Jungle Star Eco Camp in Valamuru, surrounded by the Pamuleru Vagu River. Sixteen BWS members participated in exploring the area from December 11-15.

Activities included birdwatching sessions, drives to Gudisa Hill, Mattam Bhimavaram, and Ramanavalasa Road, and visits to the Rampa waterfalls. The team observed various bird species and local flora, including a Marsh Crocodile and unique plants like Addatiga and Bixa Orellana. The camp allowed members to learn about birds, birdwatching technology, and conservation alongside experienced birdwatchers.

For further details about the Annual Birding Camp, please visit:

https://birdwatcherssociety.org/featured_item/fantail-vol3_issue3/#flipbook-df_4275/50/

COASTAL BIRDING CAMP 2024

The Birdwatchers' Society held its Coastal Birding Camp in Bakkhali, near Kolkata, from February 23-25, 2024. Bakkhali, part of the Gangetic Delta and the Sundarbans, is a critical stopover for migratory birds along the Central Asian Flyway. Twenty-one members, led by Soumya Kundu of Zigzag India Tours, explored sites like Jambudwip and Lothian Island, observing a wide variety of waders and other birds, including the rare Nordmann's Greenshank and Eurasian Oystercatcher. The camp provided valuable insights into bird behaviour and conservation, making it a memorable experience for all participants.

For further details about the Coastal Birding Camp, please visit:

https://birdwatcherssociety.org/featured_item/fantail-vol3_issue4/#flipbook-df_5146/57/



ANNUAL CAMP 2023 - Maredumilli



PUBLICATIONS IN INDIAN JOURNAL

MEMBER'S PUBLICATIONS

BWS encourages its members to contribute to citizen science initiatives and also unique sighting records are acknowledged and published in Indian journals. Here are some of the publications that happened during 2023-24.

Indian BIRDS Vol. 19 No. 6 (Publ. 18 March 2024)

A new wintering site in the Eastern India for the Endangered Nordmann's Greenshank *Tringa guttifer* – Evidence from telemetry-assisted field surveys

Piklu Das, Sandip Das, Soumya Aon, Arajush Payra, Milan Mandal, Carmen K. M. Or, Maggie S. M. Kwok, Fion K. W. Cheung & Sandeep Biswas

Das, P., Das, S., Aon, S., Payra, A., Mandal, M., Or, C. K. M., Kwok, M. S. M., Cheung, F. K. W., & Biswas, S. (2024). A new wintering site in the Eastern India for the Endangered Nordmann's Greenshank *Tringa guttifer* – Evidence from telemetry-assisted field surveys. *Indian BIRDS* 19 (6): 188-190.
 Piklu Das, Sandip Das, Soumya Aon, Arajush Payra, Milan Mandal, Carmen K. M. Or, Maggie S. M. Kwok, Fion K. W. Cheung, Sandeep Biswas, West Bengal, India. [DOI]
 Soumya Aon, Birdwatchers' Society, West Bengal, India. [DOI]
 Arajush Payra, Dr. Vishwanath Karal MIT World Peace University, Pune, Maharashtra, India. [AF]
 Milan Mandal, Directorate of Forests, Government of West Bengal, India. [JFM]
 Carmen K. M. Or, WWF-Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China. [CKM]
 Maggie S. M. Kwok, WWF-Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China. [MSM]
 Fion K. W. Cheung, WWF-Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China. [FKWC]
 Sandeep Biswas, 87 Dardam Road, Kolkata 700014, West Bengal, India. Email: sbiswas.go@gmail.com [SB] [Corresponding author]

Introduction

The Nordmann's Greenshank *Tringa guttifer* is one of the many shorebird species that have declined along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF); a flyway that supports the highest diversity of shorebirds in the world (Cao et al. 2023). With an estimated population of about 900–1200 individuals (Wetlands International 2023), it is categorized as 'Endangered' (BirdLife International 2023). It breeds during June–August in sparse larch forests near the coasts of western and northern Sea of Okhotsk, bays of Khabarovsk Krai, and northeastern Sakhalin Island of Russia. It migrates southwards along the coasts of China, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan to spend the non-breeding period mainly in the mudflats and sandflats of Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malay Peninsula, and Bangladesh (Brazil 2009; Hayman 2011; Zockler et al. 2018; Maleko et al. 2021; Singha 2021). Most historical records of Nordmann's Greenshank from the Indian subcontinent are disputed. Past records from Nepal and Sri Lanka were found to be doubtful (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012),

hopes among the local birdwatchers that more Nordmann's Greenshanks may be found along coastal West Bengal and it might be a potential wintering site.



2805. Nordmann's Greenshank at Luffen Island, West Bengal on 11 February 2022.

Indian BIRDS Vol. 19 No. 6 (Publ. 18 March 2024)

A new wintering site in the Eastern India for the **Endangered NORDMANN'S GREENSHANK** *Tringa guttifer* – Evidence from telemetry-assisted field surveys :

Piklu Das, *Sandip Das*, *Soumya Aon*, Arajush Payra, Milan Mandal, Carmen K. M. Or, Maggie S. M. Kwok, Fion K. W. Cheung & Sandeep Biswas.



95. Water Rail from Malda, West Bengal.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* from Malda, West Bengal

On the evening of 19 February 2023, we were birding close to the town of Malda, West Bengal, India anticipating the reappearance of a Ruddy-breasted Crake *Porzana fusca*, spotted earlier that day, when we witnessed a large rail species in pursuit of another similarly sized rail. However, the second rail quickly disappeared into the reeds before we could take photos. The first rail was identified as Brown-cheeked Rail *Rallus indicus* due to a prominent brown eye stripe, brown breast, and barred vent. We were also able to take a few good photos. We also noticed clearly that the second rail had slaty grey underparts, but we did not record enough features to identify it. The area, locally known as Aamjaam Tola, (24°57'N, 88°08'E) is located nearly six km south-east of Malda Town. The Brown-cheeked Rail was a first record for the district. We continued exploring the habitat from 20 February to 25 February. We found the rail that we could not identify earlier, along with Brown-cheeked Rail, Ruddy-breasted Crake, and Baillon's Crake *P. pusilla*, in a particular patch of the vast reed bed. Its upper parts were

Indian BIRDS Vol. 19 No. 4 (Publ. 20 December 2023)

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus* from Malda, West Bengal:

Samiran Jha, *Subhasish Sengupta*, *Sudipta Ray* & *Sayanta Basak*

BWS IN MEDIA

NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE

Between April 2023 and March 2024, the Birdwatchers' Society (BWS) was mentioned in various Indian newspapers and online publications, reflecting their active involvement in bird conservation and educational programs.

1. Educational Workshops and Bird Walks: The BWS organised multiple bird walks and workshops, especially aimed at children. These walks took place across various cities in India, including Kolkata, and focused on bird identification, understanding bird habitats, and fostering a connection with nature among young participants. These activities were frequently covered in regional publications, showcasing the Society's role in promoting environmental education through hands-on experiences.

2. Collaborations and Events: BWS collaborated with several organisations for nature education initiatives, such as the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) and other seasonal bird counts. These collaborations were often highlighted in the context of larger conservation efforts, bringing attention to BWS's commitment to documenting and conserving avian species, particularly in West Bengal.

3. Public Awareness Campaigns: The BWS also participated in awareness campaigns around key events like Earth Day, where they led bird walks in urban areas to educate the public about local birdlife and the importance of preserving natural habitats in city environments. These events received coverage in both local and national media, emphasizing the importance of community involvement in conservation efforts.

These activities underscore the Society's dedication to not only birdwatching but also to broader conservation efforts and public education across India. Samples of the news clippings are presented -

Time to click winged guests at Sunderbans

DEBRAJ MITRA

Calcutta: Flight distance: 13,500km. Refuel stop at: 7,000km.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of migratory birds embark on an inter-continental journey, driven by one basic mantra — when conditions at one place become unfavourable, it is time to move on to a better place.

Typically, the journey links northern breeding grounds in Arctic and polar regions — where winter is harsh — with warmer non-breeding (wintering) sites in temperate and tropical areas.

Starting January 17, birders can click pictures of some of the winged guests in the Sunderbans, an important pit stop for the migratory birds.

Two of the eight well-established migratory routes — flyways — on the planet overlap in the mangrove delta, said veteran birders and foresters.

The second edition of the Sunderban Bird Festival will be held from January 17

to 20, organisers said. The festival, organised by the forest department, is billed as an opportunity to “record the occurrence, distribution and habitat preferences” of the avians in the Sunderbans.

“We are inviting online applications. Any individual more than 18 years of age having good physical fitness and keen interest in nature can attend the festival. A maximum of 24 participants will be accommodated and selection will be subject to the decision of a screening committee. Willing participants can submit the registration form via the link provided,” said Justine Jones, deputy field director, Sunderban Tiger Reserve (STR).

The last date to file application is January 1. The participation fee is Rs 10,000.

The participants will be split into smaller teams and travel on boats along different islands in the STR and the South-24 Parganas forest division with a central camping site at Sajnakhali.



An Eurasian curlew, a migratory bird, in the Sunderbans. Picture courtesy: Sunderban Tiger Reserve

The previous edition recorded 145 species and more than 5,000 individual birds. Many of them were non-migratory.

The mangrove delta holds “a place of high significance as it lies along the junction of two major avian flyways (Central Asian and East Asian) and plays a crucial role in the foraging and breeding habits in the winter migration of birds using these flyways,” said a

note shared by the STR.

The East Asia/Australasia Flyway extends from Russian Arctic and North America to the southern limits of Australia and New Zealand. The entire journey is over 13,500km.

Swathes of East Asia, all of Southeast Asia, eastern India and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are part of the route.

The Central Asian Flyway extends from Siberia and adjoining areas in the Russian Federation to the wintering grounds in West and South Asia, the Maldives and the Indian Ocean Islands.

Sujan Chatterjee, secretary of the Birdwatchers' Society, said the Sunderbans is a passage for the migratory birds on these two major routes.

“The inland birds follow the rivers. Many of them depend on coastal and wetland habitats for food. The great knot, red knot, godwit, sandlerling and common crane are some of the migratory birds that use the Sunderbans as a pit stop,” said Chatterjee.

Some rare migratory birds like the Eurasian Oystercatcher and Nordmann's greenshank, one of the most endangered shorebirds on earth, have also been sighted in the Sunderbans in recent years.

More than one birder said the rise in the number of tourists and boats in the mangrove delta is hurting migratory birds.

“Migratory birds are found in remote islands like Lothian and Bonnie Camp. The tourist boats sailing past islands put the birds off,” said one of them.

How migratory birds navigate the terrains is a subject of research. Satellite tracking has shown avians find their way under the sun and by the night stars.

In 2022, a bar-tailed godwit fitted with a satellite tag flew 13,560km from Alaska to Tasmania in Australia without stopping for food or rest, breaking the record for the longest non-stop migration by a bird.

Telegraph:01-12-2023

সান্দাকফুর কাছে ময়ূর, পাহাড়ের জন্য সুখবর নয়

রবিশঙ্কর দত্ত

গলার কাছ থেকে পশমিনার মতো জড়িয়ে ঘন নীল, একেবারে তলপেট পর্যন্ত। আর পিঠ থেকে লেজ পর্যন্ত সাদা মুলো গাঁথা ওড়নার মতো।

এপ্রিলের বকবাকে সকালে শরীর দুলায়ে এগিয়ে যাওয়া ময়ূর দেখে প্রায় লাক্ষ্মিয়ে উঠেছিলেন লিজা বিশ্বাস। বিদ্যুতের বালকের মতো চোখের সামনে নেচে বেজানো পূর্ণবয়স্ক পুরুষ ময়ূরটিকে সঙ্গে সঙ্গে নিজের ক্যামেরায় বন্দি করেছেন তাঁর স্বামী প্রবীর। সেই সময়ে আর কিছু মাথায় আসেনি তাঁদের। কিন্তু কিছু ক্ষণ পরেই স্থানীয় বাসিন্দাদের বিস্ময়ে রূপের ঘোর ভাঙে তাঁদের। শুষ্ক পরিবেশে থাকতে অভ্যস্ত ময়ূর কেন তার স্বাভাবিক বাস ছেড়ে প্রায় চার হাজার ফুট বেশি উপরে উঠে এসেছে? ওই উচ্চতায় তা হলে শুষ্ক পরিবেশই পেয়েছে সে!

ভারত-নেপাল সীমান্তে সান্দাকফুর কাছে কালোপাখির আর গেরীবাসের মাঝমাঝি কাইয়াকাটা গ্রামে এর আগে কখনও ময়ূর দেখেননি স্থানীয় মানুষ। কাছাকাছি ভূয়াসের জঙ্গলে ময়ূরের ঘোরাকেরা নজরে আসে। এমনকি, দার্জিলিংয়ের মানোভঞ্জেও ময়ূর দেখেছেন



■ কাইয়াকাটা। ছবি: প্রবীর বিশ্বাস

অনেকে। প্রায় ১০ হাজার ফুট উচ্চতায় ময়ূরের উপস্থিতি ভাবাচ্ছে 'বার্ড ওয়াচারস সোসাইটি'কে। বাংলা নববর্ষ উপলক্ষে রাজ্যে ছড়িয়ে থাকা অজানা অচেনা পাখির খোঁজ করতে নেমে প্রবীরদের চোখে এই অভিনব ঘটনা ধরা পড়েছে।

পরিবেশে বদলের যে প্রভাব

জলবায়ুর উপরে পড়ছে, তা নিয়ে ইতিমধ্যেই উদ্বেগজনক নানা তথ্য জানা গিয়েছে সংশ্লিষ্ট গবেষণাগুলিতে। পরিবেশ ধ্বংসের ফলে সারা দেশে যে সব রাজ্যে এই প্রভাব বেড়েছে, তার মধ্যে পশ্চিমবঙ্গ অন্যতম। বেশ কয়েকটি রাজ্য এ ব্যাপারে ইতিবাচক উন্নতি করলেও এখানে তা হয়নি। বরং সবুজ কমেছে। সেই সঙ্গে পাহাড় বৃষ্টির পরিমাণও কমে চলেছে ক্রমাগত। তার প্রভাবই কি পড়েছে ময়ূরের এই পথবদলে?

পাখি-নজরদার সংগঠনের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা সদস্য কণাদ বৈদ্যের কথায়, "বিশ্বয়টি অভিনব তো বটেই, কিছুটা অবিশ্বাস্যও। কারণ, ময়ূর সাধারণত শুষ্ক পরিবেশ পছন্দ করে। সান্দাকফুর কাছে এই গ্রামের পাহাড়ই সেই অবস্থা হলে তা জলবায়ু বদলের ঘটনায় অন্য

মাত্রা হিসেবে দেখা যেতে পারে।" শুধু তা-ই নয়, গত ১৩ এপ্রিল, যে দিন সোসাইটির সদস্যেরা ময়ূরের দেখা পেয়েছেন, সে দিন ওই অঞ্চলের তাপমাত্রা ছিল ২৫ থেকে ২৮ ডিগ্রি। তা-ও যথেষ্ট ভাবাচ্ছে তাঁদের।

বাংলায় পাখির বৈচিত্র্য কম নয়। সারা দেশে যে ১৩৫০ প্রজাতির পাখি রয়েছে, তাদের মধ্যে ৯৫০টির অস্তিত্ব এ রাজ্যেই রয়েছে। সেই পাখি-চর্চায় সান্দাকফুর রাস্তায় ময়ূর একটি উল্লেখযোগ্য ঘটনা হিসেবে যুক্ত হল। পাখিপ্রেমী সূদীপ্ত সোম ঘটনাটি অত্যন্ত ব্যতিক্রমী হিসেবেই দেখেছেন। তাঁর কথায়, "সান্দাকফুতে ময়ূরের দেখা পাওয়া নিঃসন্দেহে প্রাকৃতিক ভারসাম্য নিয়ে ভাবাচ্ছে। বরফের দেশে ময়ূর হিসেবে পরিচিত ছিল ময়ূরের মতো দেখতে 'হিমালয়ান মোনাল'।"

Ananda Bazar:20-04-2023

আনন্দবাজার পত্রিকা

ভারতে সর্বাধিক প্রচারিত প্রথম শ্রেণির বাংলা দৈনিক

আনন্দবাজার পত্রিকা

Rare sightings create a flutter among birders

Subhro.Niyogi
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Kolkata: The spotting of Indian pitta among other birds at Rabindra Sarobar during the Poila Baisakh Bird Count has fuelled new enthusiasm among birders in the city and prompted many to continue visiting the Lake with the hope of spotting a rare bird while they make a pit stop during the reverse migration.

On Thursday, birders were in for a surprise when they spotted a Siberian blue robin at the Lake. Though sighted in Rongtang near Siliguri in January, spotting the bird in Kolkata is an uncommon phenomenon. On Friday, a pied thrush was recorded at the Lake, again usually found in Sikkim and Rongtang but sighted in the plains of Murshidabad, Odisha and now Rabindra Sarobar this year.

"A female pied thrush was spotted at the Lake a couple of days ago. On Friday, a male pied thrush was sighted. Probably, these birds do stop over at the Lake this time every year. But because there were not many eyes on the ground in summer, the spotting did not happen. That has changed this year with the Poila Baisakh Bird Count significantly raising the bar. With more eyes, many more birds are being spotted and rare records are being set," said birder Priyam Chatterjee.

Birder Mittali Deb, who visits Rabindra Sarobar every

SPOTTED AT RABINDRA SAROBAR



(L) Chestnut winged cuckoo and Siberian blue robin spotted at Lake

BIRDS SIGHTED IN APRIL

Alexandrine parakeet, black-crowned night heron, blue-throated flycatcher, blue-capped rock thrush, Blyth's reed warbler, brown-breasted flycatcher, forest wagtail, green-crowned warbler, Indian blue robin, Indian paradise flycatcher,

Indian pitta, large-billed leaf warbler, orange-headed thrush, oriental honey buzzard, pied thrush, pin-tailed snipe, rufous woodpecker, Siberian blue robin, Siberian rubythroat, taiga flycatcher, thick-billed warbler

other day hoping to catch a new bird, said the Lake was teeming with birders this year, and hence, sightings have also increased. "What we are noticing is remarkable. So comfortable are birds at the Lake that it does not matter if the place is teeming with a few hundred morning walkers, or if there are members of a laughing club making loud guffaws, or 30 birders are training their lens on trees. Migratory birds continue to stop by at the Lake and offer us an opportunity to record them," she said, adding that while the Indian blue robin is being regularly spotted, she has sighted five varieties of robins this year.

Birder Sandip Das said a female Siberian rufous throat

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Kolkata: Organisers of a puja to inaugurate an astrological garden in Lions Safari Park at Rabindra Sarobar cancelled a havan that was a key part of the event on Sunday morning following intense scrutiny of morning walkers and environmentalists and instruction from the police and Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA).

"We were not allowed to do the havan because of some restrictions on lighting a fire in Rabindra Sarobar. It would have been a very small fire in an enclosed space that would

TIMES VIEW: It is good that better sense has prevailed. The danger with the proposed havan was less the damage it would have caused; the more important part was that this one incident could have been seen as condoning violation of green rules. Rabindra Sarobar is public property; it follows that all of us have a responsibility in protecting it and conserving its flora and fauna.

not have caused any pollution. But we decided not to do it and respect the sentiments of others," said Lions Safari Park chairman Pravin Chharia.

A section of morning walkers as well as environmentalists and birders who had expressed deep concern about the hour-long havan were glad the organisation finally did not light a fire that would have generated smoke in the Safari Park that has emerged as a hotspot for birds within Ra-

GREEN CONCERN



A puja underway for the inauguration of the astrological garden on Sunday

TOI APRIL 30, 2023 Green activists, birders concerned over fire and smoke from havan at Lake today

We are glad that the function did not disturb the birds
Sujan Chatterjee
SECRETARY, BIRD WATCHERS' SOCIETY

We were not allowed to do the havan because of some restrictions on lighting a fire in Rabindra Sarobar
Pravin Chharia
LIONS SAFARI PARK CHAIRMAN

binadra Sarobar. But some of them were still perturbed that KMDA and police allowed religious rituals when a National Green Tribunal order expressly prohibited any such activity at the Lake. "It is good that there was no fire or smoke at the event. But the organisers have violated the NGT order. We hope this does not set a precedent and result in further activities of this nature. There are many places to conduct religious activities. Rabindra Sarobar is a lake of national importance and should be spared of such events," said morning walker and local resident SM Ghosh.

Green activist Bonani Kakkar, who had written to KMDA chairman Firdaus Hakim on Saturday voicing concern over Sunday's event, felt KMDA should not have allowed Lions Club to conduct a religious ceremony at Rabindra Sarobar as it violates the NGT order and its own rules.

But there were several others who did not mind the

Basobdutta Sarkar

No havan at Sarobar as birders, cops keep watch

tioned down event minus the havan. "If the purpose of the event is to highlight the importance of trees and connect people with nature, we are all for it. We are glad that the function did not disturb the birds," said Bird Watchers' Society secretary Sujan Chatterjee.

Rabindra Sarovar's Friends Forum secretary and Lions Club member SS Rajput, who had conceived the project that was implemented with assistance of project chairman Mukesh Parvikh, said the scepticism over the event notwithstanding, the primary purpose is to offer people who believe in astrology to overcome the obstacles caused by the negative influence of planets by praying before trees rather than adorning precious stones. "We have divided the garden into nine segments to represent various planets. There are mantras that one can recite in each or simply meditate there. I am sure it will make a difference to people's lives," he said.

Times of India:23-04-2023

Times of India: 01-05-2023

Cyclone Fani brings rare seabird into Bengal for the first time

Krishnendu Mukherjee
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Kolkata: Amid all the gloom, cyclone Fani has brought some good news for birders in Bengal. A juvenile red-tailed tropicbird, a seabird native to tropical Indian and Pacific oceans, was rescued on May 4 from a village in Hooghly after it was possibly carried inland by the cyclone. This is the first record of the bird in Bengal and the second in India.

"It was rescued by Santana Acharya at Jagadishpur Balgachi village near Dankuni on May 4. Acharya handed it to the members of Human and Environment Alliance League (HEAL), who nurtured it. It was released into the wild at Jambu Dweep Island near Bakkhali on Sunday," said G R Santhosha, divisional forest officer of South 24 Parganas division.

"We sent its pictures to Praveen Jayadevan and Dipu K at Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), Bangalore, who la-

SURPRISE VISIT

- First record of red-tailed tropicbird from Bengal
- Second record from India
- Rescued in a village in Dankuni on May 4
- Possibly carried inland by cyclone Fani
- Released in Jambu Dweep near Bakkhali on May 12

Habitat

A seabird or deep-ocean bird, it is native to tropical Indian and Pacific oceans. It prefers islands. Christmas Island in Indian Ocean is considered to be a large breeding colony



The red-tailed tropicbird ahead of its release

ter involved a number of international seabird experts to identify the species. Several mails were exchanged and it was finally identified as a red-tailed tropicbird," said Arka Sarkar, bird expert and president of HEAL.

"The bird spends most of its time on wings. The day it was rescued, it was exhausted, probably after facing the cyclo-

ne, and was defending itself from some dogs near a pond," Sarkar added.

However, experts believe that this could well be the first record of the deep-ocean bird in India. "The earlier record obtained in 1947 was from a location 200km south of Nicobar, in the sea. Records say the specimen was collected between Nicobars and Sumatra. Territori-

al waters end 22km from the coastline into the sea. Beyond that lies International waters. So, this is definitely the first live handling of the pelagic bird in India," said Sujan Chatterjee of Bird Watchers' Society.

Bird watcher Santanu Manna said the earlier specimen was collected on March 20, 1947 by FGH Allen. "But there's no clarity about the location. The specimen has been kept at a museum in Singapore," Manna added. According to him, these pelagic birds are native to tropical Indian and Pacific oceans. "They prefer islands and breed mainly in Indian and Pacific oceans," he said.

According to Chatterjee, cyclones like Fani start in deep sea and mostly juveniles fail to escape them. On May 9, another pelagic bird, a juvenile lesser frigatebird, was photographed in Nadia's Fulia by Ranesh Karmakar. This is the second record of the bird from Bengal. It was clicked last year in Mousuni Island.

Times of India: 20-04-2023

Greens bat for alternatives to keep 'Nilkanth' ritual alive

Krishnendu Mukherjee & Subhojyoti Kanjilal | TNN

Kolkata: Indian roller, a bird protected under the country's wildlife act and population of which has declined by 30% across India in the last 12 years, is still being released as part of a ritual on Bijoya Dashami. While it's an age-old tradition, conservationists have voiced concern and raised awareness about adopting certain measures, like using symbolic birds made of clay and 'shola'.

While the practice was once common in the 'bonedi bari' pujas of Kolkata, these households have now shifted to using birds made mostly of 'shola'. However, at some pujas in areas around Kolkata, it's still in practice. The Roy Chowdhury family of Barui-pur, for instance, has reportedly been releasing Indian roller, also known as Nilkanth, for the past 300 years.

Releasing a Nilkanth bird — believed to be Lord Shiva's messenger — is considered auspicious on Dashami. Seeing the bird on Dussehra eve is thought to bring good fortune. According to another popular belief, if a person makes a wish in front of an Indian roller, Lord Shiva will supposedly grant it.

According to Shakti Roy



(Above) An Indian roller being released at a household puja in Barui-pur on Dashami; (right) a dummy Nilkanth being released by the members of Sovabazar Rajbari during immersion

Chowdhury of Barui-pur's Roy Chowdhury family, they have been following the tradition since 1660. "I don't know about legalities, but traditionally, I think there's nothing wrong about it. But, if there are rules that make use of these birds illegal, we will definitely stop the practice," said Roy Chowdhury, who's also the chairperson of Barui-pur Municipality.

He added that the family of the person who has given them the bird this year has traditionally been giving them Indian rollers for the ritual. "Barring the previous two years, we have been performing the ritual ever since the puja was con-

ceptualised," he added.

Kanad Baidya, founder member of Birdwatchers' Society, said the State of India's Birds 2023 report has recommended to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to include the bird — now considered 'least concern' — on the IUCN Red List after reassessment. According to the report, population of birds living in open ecosystems, rivers and shores was declining. Use of pesticides on crops and rapid urbanisation were posing serious threats to birds, like the Indian roller, Baidya said.

According to Debraj Mitra,



trustee of Sovabazar Rajbari, they don't release Indian rollers. Instead, they use birds made of 'shola'. "We fly them twice using gas balloons — once near the gate and again at the ghat just before immersion," he said. According to him, the ritual was stopped when the family learnt it was illegal. "There should be respect for both rituals and laws. By releasing birds made of clay or 'shola', we have been able to follow both," he said.

Telegraph :26-10-2023

Students walk to save wetlands

ANASUYA BASU

Dhapa: Schoolchildren walked through the East Calcutta Wetlands on Friday, dressed up as wetland species and mimicking their calls and actions to commemorate World Wetlands Day.

The Wetlands Day celebrations date back to 1971 when the Ramsar convention was signed in the Iranian city of Ramsar, on the shores of the Caspian Sea, on February 2, 1971.

Since then environmentalists have been gathering on this day to reaffirm the protection of wetlands, which are water ecosystems containing plant life and other organisms that bring ecological health in abundance not just to water bodies but the environment as a whole.

The theme of WWD 2024 was "Wetlands and Human Wellbeing", which underscored the critical role wetlands play in enhancing human lives. It highlights how wetlands contribute to flood prevention, provide clean water and help sustain biodiversity and recreational opportunities, all of which are essential for human health and prosperity.

At the East Calcutta Wetlands, 250 children from 11 schools participated in the Wetlands Day celebrations organised by an NGO working in the field, Disappearing Dialogues Collective.

Some of the participating schools were from the wetlands area such as Bamanghata High School, Kheyada High School and Chaitanya High School. Students also came from The Heritage School, Calcutta International School and Future Hope to join the walk.

Children are wetland ambassadors, said Nabina Gupta of Disappearing Dialogues Collective.

The walk started from the Bamanghata bridge and went



Students dressed up as various species found in the wetlands take part in a programme to mark World Wetlands Day



Former Hideo chief Dehashis Sen (extreme right) takes part in the wetlands walk on Friday

into the interiors of the wetlands. On the way, children from the Bamanghata and Kheyada schools, dressed as various species found in the wetlands, mimicked their calls and actions.

Children from The Heritage and Calcutta International schools walked with placards that had slogans on them raising awareness about the need to preserve the wetlands and the city.

Members of the Bird Watchers' Society put up standing scopes to spot kingfishers, egrets, cormorants and other bird species of the wetlands. There were biology

specialists to identify the different plants and trees that are found in the area.

Former Hideo chief Dehashis Sen participated in the walk along with headmasters of local schools, panchayat members and others. "A dialogue was held between different stakeholders to stress the urgency to preserve the wetlands," said Gupta.

At the end of the walk, schoolchildren performed skits and street plays to highlight the crucial role played by wetlands.

"Children from different schools filled the gap between the periphery and the city.

There is a symbiotic relation between the periphery and the city and each of them contributes to the preservation of this unique ecology," said Gupta.

However, despite rules and legislation, the degradation of the Ramsar-protected East Calcutta Wetlands continues. Water bodies get rampantly filled and plastics choke the water channels, threatening many species.

At the Indian Botanic Garden in Howrah's Shilpur, specially-abled children from Ananda Bhawan Deaf and Blind School from Howrah participated in the World Wetlands Day programme.

Telegraph Kolkata:03-02-2024

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Outlook TRAVELLER

Destinations Experiences Stay What's n

Oppapada Bird Sanctuary, Pradesh

This little-known bird sanctuary is only 5 km from Guntur town. In winter, the count multiplies as migratory birds, including pelicans, white ibis, and painted storks, fly in.

Information

Birding requires a lot of patience. If you are planning to take it up as a hobby, it is best to join a group or tag along with an expert. Dress in neutral colours while going birdwatching, wear a pair of sturdy walking shoes, and keep a notebook and pen handy for drawing up your own bird lists. Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), Birdwatchers' Society, Bangalore Birding are some of the groups that you can contact.

Popular bird guides --- *The Book of Indian Birds*, *A Photographic Guide to the Birds of India*, *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*.

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Spotted: 387 avian species

SUBHAJOY ROY

Calcutta: As many as 387 species were recorded in the summer bird count that was conducted on Saturday and Sunday across districts of Bengal.

The bird count was initiated to prepare a record of birds found in the state during this time of the year. One of the coordinators of the project said bird counts are done during winter and spring. Hardly had such an exercise been carried out in summer before.

Sujan Chatterjee, one of the coordinators of the weekend's bird count, said the appearance of birds varied between winter and summer. Birds look brighter and more colourful in the summer months.

Chatterjee, also a participant in the count, spotted Golden plovers at Kamduni in North 24-Parganas on Sunday morning. "These birds have buff and white plumage in winter. Now, they have golden and black plumage," he said.

Curlew sandpiper, sighted in Bakkhali in South 24-Parganas on Sunday, also has a different plumage in summer.



An Indian Blue Robin clicked on Sunday. Picture courtesy: Krishnendu Sar

Its deep chestnut breeding plumage now is different from the grey plumage in winter.

Chatterjee also spoke about Cattle egret, a common species sighted in the state, which changes plumage with the change in season. "Cattle egrets have all white plumage in winter. Now, they have orange on their head and neck," he said.

Sandip Das, a Calcuttan who rode a two-wheeler to Frasergunj in South 24-Parganas on Saturday morning to participate in the bird count, said most birds there were in their breeding plumage.

Bird Watchers Society, which has around 250 members in Bengal and a few from other states, organised the count in partnership with Bird Count India.

'20 bird species population on the decline in Bengal'

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Krishnendu Mukherjee & Abhishek Das

UNDER NATIONAL REPORT FOCUS



Brown-winged kingfisher which is among the 20 species from Bengal listed for high conservation priority

Northern shoveller, which is found in Bengal, will be recommended for IUCN Red List reassessment



Baillon's crane, which is found in Bengal, will be recommended for IUCN Red List reassessment

Greater spotted eagle, considered vulnerable on IUCN Red list, do not show any evidence of decline

Kolkata: The second edition of the State of India's Birds (SoIB 2023), which was released in New Delhi on Friday, has classified 178 species as high conservation priority, of which 20 have been listed for Bengal. All the 15 species, recommended by the report for IUCN Red List reassessment, are found in Bengal.

In the second edition, which returns after three years, the data has been collated after 30 million field observations by more than 30,000 bird-watchers across the country. This has resulted in evaluation of a larger number of species this time — from 867 in 2020 to 942.

The assessment is based over long-term trend (change over 30 years), current annual trend (change over past seven years) and distribution range size in India.

Among the species in Bengal categorised as high conservation priority are ruddy shelduck, common merganser, great crested grebe, pale-capped pigeon, lesser sand plover, great knot, lesser adjutant stork, rufous-necked hornbill, brown-winged kingfisher, black-capped kingfisher, mangrove pitta, bristled grassbill, great parrotbill, hoary-throated barwing, beautiful nuthatch, spot-winged starling, olive-backed pipit and yellow-breasted bunting.

Of these 20 species, the study has highlighted top four species — rufous-necked hornbill, brown-winged king-

fisher, great parrotbill and yellow-breasted bunting.

Species of highest conservation priority were determined for each state and union territory based on multiple factors, including the proportion of the Indian range of each high-priority species that lies within that state/UT, said Kanad Baidya, a Bengal-based birder, who's also the founder member of Birdwatchers' Society.

According to him, birds of grasslands and other open habitats, wetlands and woodlands are declining rapidly. "In terms of diet, insectivores and granivores are declining more rapidly than omnivores or fruit- and nectar-eaters. Also, migratory species appear to be under greater threat

than non-migrants. Equally worrying is that a considerable number of species lack the data for assessment," he added.

Raptors, as per the report, are declining globally. Pallid harrier and western marsh harrier have suffered considerable declines in their Eurasian breeding range. "But, booted eagle and the vulnerable greater spotted eagle do not show any evidence of decline, indicating that the populations visiting India may be in relatively good health," it said.

The 15 species recommended for IUCN Red List reassessment include northern shoveller, Baillon's crane, forest wagtail, blue rock thrush and common teal.

Telegraph Kolkata:17-04-2023

Times of India:26-08-2023





"Birds are the first and the greatest performers"

- Olivier Messiaen



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