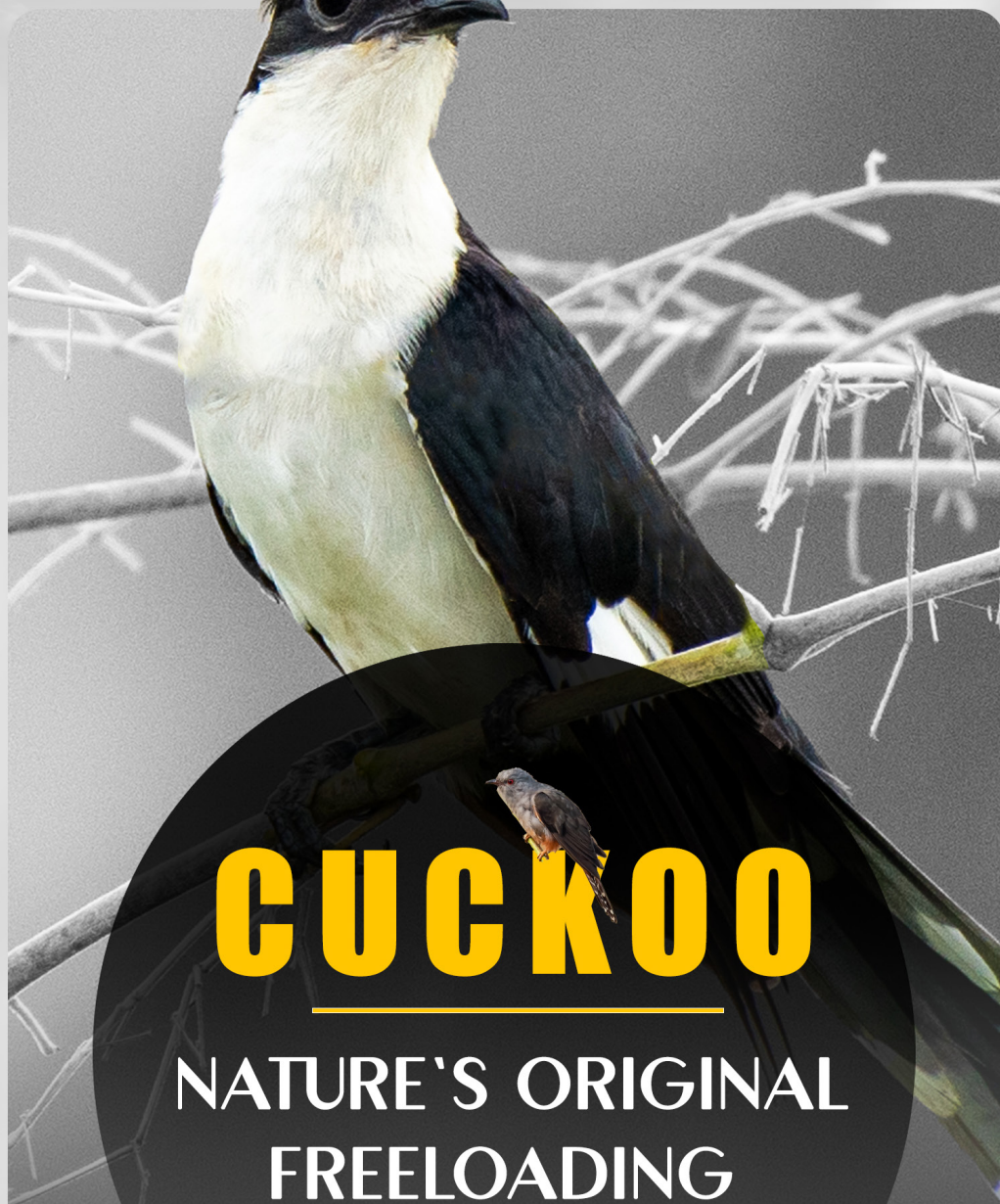


FANTAIL NEWSLETTER

Volume 4 | Issue No. 2 | October - December 2024



CUCKOO

NATURE'S ORIGINAL
FREELOADING
MUSICIAN

PENTAX

BINOCULAR

Since 1938

NEW A-SERIES AND S-SERIES BINOCULARS

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



* T&C APPLIED



PERSPECTIVES





Fantail is a newsletter published by Birdwatchers' Society. This newsletter's primary aim is collecting and disseminating learnings, experiences and anecdotes contributed by citizens through their observations from the field. While the emphasis is on the avian world, equally important are the observations of the habitat and environment of the avifauna including conservation, biodiversity and acknowledge citizen scientists of the region.

Front & Back Cover Design:
W3Webhelp

Front Cover Image:
Sourav Mondal - Pied Cuckoo
Arunava Dutta - Plaintive Cuckoo Male

Back Cover Image:
Biplab Banerjee - Chestnut Winged Cuckoo

Theme Page:
Common Cuckoo - Biplab Banerjee

Design, Layout & Graphics:
W3Webhelp
www.w3webhelp.com

Publisher:
Birdwatchers' Society
Address: DB 75, Salt Lake,
Kolkata 700064, INDIA

Email:
birdwatcherssocietywb@gmail.com

Website:
<https://birdwatcherssociety.org>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01 Editorial**
- 03 Pied Cuckoo -Really the Harbinger of Monsoon?**
SOUVIK ROYCHOUDHURY
- 07 Brood Parasitism in Cuckoos**
DR INDRANI GHOSH & AMITAVA DUTTA
- 12 Crossword**
HIYA CHATTERJEE
- 13 Exploring the Untouched: First Encounter with the Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo**
MANISH KUMAR CHATTOPADHYAY & DR SAGAR ADHURYA
- 17 The Enchanting Violet Cuckoo: Mysteries of a Tropical Marvel**
SHALINI IYENGAR
- 20 Cuckoos from the land of Red Soil and Palash**
PARTHA PRATIM CHAKRABORTY
- 23 A Brief Encounter with Eurasian Cuckoos**
RITWICK BHATTACHARYYA
- 25 Cuckoo Chronicles**
BWS MEMBERS' PHOTO-SHOWCASE
- 27 Bird sightings from Billawar, Jammu & Kashmir**
HEMANT KUMAR & DR GURPARTAP SINGH
- 33 জার্ডনস কোর্সারের চমকপ্রদ পুনঃআবিষ্কারের কাহিনি**
বিশ্ব রঞ্জন গোস্বামী
- 37 Soaring High : School of Birds Roundup**
TITASH CHAKRABARTI & ANANDARUP BHADRA
- 40 BWS Activities & Updates**
 - National Conference on Collaborative Bird Monitoring- Kolkata
 - Bengal Birders' Meet 2024
 - North Bengal Update
- 51 Fresh & Rare Sightings (Arrivals)**
PRIYAM CHATTOPADHYAY
- 53 Cuckoo Chronicles**
BWS MEMBERS' PHOTO-SHOWCASE (CONTD)
Perspectives (Birding Humour)
AINDRILA SARKAR DEB, TITASH CHAKRABARTI

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

GOING CUCKOO OVER THE CUCKOO !

Different birds lead to diverse associations and imageries in the human mind – the Eagle epitomises grandeur, the Hummingbird epitomises miniaturisation, the Vulture epitomises scavenging, the Weaver epitomises Engineering, the Albatross epitomises larger than life and so on. In this context, the Cuckoo conjures up multiple connotations and layered subtexts. Being a brood parasite and not building nests for breeding, it represents the bohemian life and the live-for-the-day spirit. The Asian Koel's song is associated strongly with the advent of spring season in Bengal – Bengali poets, since the birth of the language, have written volumes about ***Kokil and Basanta***. Other cuckoos like the Indian Cuckoo (***Bou Katha Kao***) and Common Hawk Cuckoo (***Chokh Gelo***) are named after their calls/songs. The year's first sighting of the Jacobin or the Pied Cuckoo heralds the advent of monsoons – so it is believed.

The knowledge of brood parasitism of the Koel prevailed in India much before the birth of modern ornithology. The earliest reference to it may be found in ***Yajur Veda*** c. 2000 BC where the Koel is called ***Anyā-Vapa*** (raised by others). The Mughals, Jahangir in particular, were keen naturalists and made valuable observations about nature around them. Jahangir in his memoirs, ***Tuzuk-e-Jahangiri***, talks about brood parasitism of Koels that he had observed in Allahabad.

In Western traditions, the most celebrated reference to the Cuckoo is found in the nursery rhyme below.

*“Vintery, mintery, cutery, corn,
Apple seed and apple thorn,
Wire, briar, limber lock,
Three geese in a flock,
One flew east, one flew west,
And one flew over the cuckoo’s nest.”*

This reference turned iconic when a book and a film named after the last line of the rhyme became runaway hits. The book and film critics found a lot of inner meanings for the “cuckoo’s nest” but we cannot help but note the similarity between the “cuckoo’s nest” and the Ghorar Dim in Bengali – both being non-existent.

Given the wide landscape of the theme and our excitement, we may be excused for going a bit cuckoo over the Cuckoo and dedicating a whole issue to the Cuckoo. Themed on the Cuckoo, this issue brings you the thoughts, encounters, and vivid imagery from the birding community.

We begin this issue with Souvik Roychoudhury's article, “Pied Cuckoo- Really the harbinger Of Monsoon?”. Souvik

presents a detailed scientific correlation using eBird Data, on this age old concept. Following that, Indrani Ghosh and Amitava Dutta delve into the fascinating world of “Brood Parasitism of Cuckoos”. They reveal which Cuckoo species target specific host bird nests and describe the cunning strategies these birds employ to achieve parasitism.

Further, we turn to the melodious vocalisation that led Manas Kr Chattopadhyay and Dr. Sagar Adhurya report their “First Encounter with the Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo (*Surniculus dicruroides*)” in the Garh jungles near Durgapur. Shalini Iyenger, a passionate birder and traveler, captivates us with “The Enchanting Violet Cuckoo - Mysteries of a Tropical Marvel”. Partha Pratim Chattopadhyay takes us to Purulia, the land of Red soil and Palash, where he recounts his experiences with Cuckoos in “Cuckoos from the land of Red Soil and Palash”. Meanwhile, Ritwick Bhattacharya narrates his experience in “Encounters with the Eurasian/Common Cuckoo”, a passage migrant in Malda.

Two standout articles add to this issue’s richness. Dr. Gurpartap Singh and Hemant Kumar provide insights into “Bird Sightings from Billawar - Jammu & Kashmir”. Biswa Ranjan Goswami, in his Bengali article, narrates the remarkable rediscovery of the Jordan’s Courser. Interspersed with a collection of photographs from BWS members, this issue includes Priyam Chattopadhyay’s meticulously curated list of “Fresh & Rare” bird arrivals in West Bengal.

We have put together in this publication “Soaring High: School of Birds Roundup”, a flagship initiative by BWS. The “Activities & Updates” section provides a compilation of recent news from various BWS units. Aindrila and Titash share their reflections on the plight

of the Cuckoos in “Perspectives”, while Hiya Chatterjee challenges us with her latest crossword.

We hope the readers and birders enjoy ‘going Cuckoo over the Cuckoo’!

**Happy Birding!
and Joyous Puja Celebrations!!**

Fantail Editorial Team



Pied Cuckoo by Souvik Roychoudhury

PIED CUCKOO - REALLY THE HARBINGER OF MONSOON?

SOUVIK ROYCHOUDHURY

OBJECTIVE

Pied Cuckoo (*Clamator jacobinus*), earlier known as Jacobin Cuckoo, is considered as the “Harbinger of Monsoon”. In Bengali, it is called “Chatak”. The folklore is that its arrival marks the start of the southwestern monsoon, and it waits for the monsoon rain to quench its thirst for water. In this article, I checked how closely this matches the reality.

SOURCE OF DATA

Pied Cuckoo Sighting Date:

I have used the eBird database for Pied Cuckoo sighting records in West Bengal. This analysis is based on the data downloaded on 13th August 2024 using the link <https://science.ebird.org/en/use-ebird-data>. Since eBird was adopted in India in 2013 (the eBird India portal was launched on 15th August 2015), I have used the data from 2013 onwards, though there were sighting records earlier. Note that both bird observations and application usage increased over time, and the data volume and accuracy also follow the same trend.

Monsoon Onset Date:

I have used the data maintained by IMD (India Meteorological Department), <https://mausam.imd.gov.in>, which is the official record referred to by different newspapers and media houses. While in this article, data from 2013 onwards is considered, it is relevant to note that earlier data, when analysed, was found to follow a similar range.

Figure-1 Table shows the total sightings (summation of all sightings in a given month) from January 2013 to August 2024. It shows very few sightings of Pied Cuckoo in West Bengal during Quarter 1 (January to March), which might be due to injured birds who stayed back during migration and, in practical terms, can be ignored from analysis. There are 4 total sightings in April, which are 19-Apr-2018, 07-Apr-2019, 04-Apr-2020 and 25-Apr-2024, in which the 2024 sighting is in the same location reported by three birders. It might be a bird that started the migration before the pack and arrived early or on its passage to another location. Hence, April's sighting data was ignored in the subsequent analysis. Major sightings start in May, establishing their mass arrival in West Bengal. Sightings remain consistent till October, with a slight dip in July, possibly due to fewer

birders on the field because of heavy rain. The bird migrates mainly in November and a few in the first half of December. There are only 2 sightings in the second half of December. Figure-2 chart shows that arrivals happen primarily at the same time in May, but departures are gradual as sightings drop slowly from October.

Month	Total Sighting
January	3
February	2
March	1
April	4
May	222
June	372
July	236
August	285
September	307
October	217
November	83
December	26

Figure 1: Sighting by Month

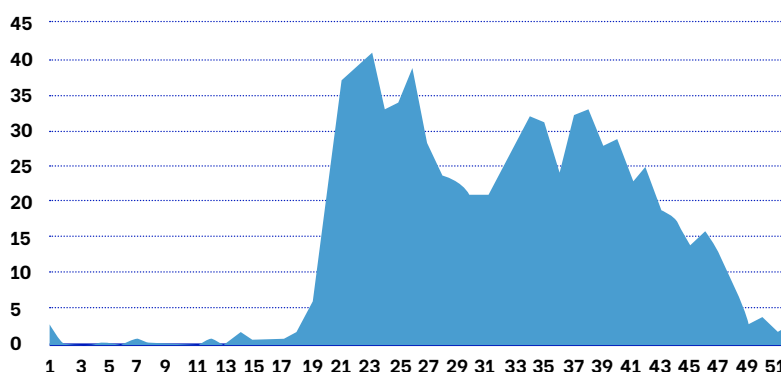


Figure 2: Sighting by Week (First week of January as 1 to last week of December as 51)

VARIABLES/UNCERTAINTIES IN DATA

- The Pied Cuckoo is a resident of South India, but a population migrates from Africa. The question arises whether the birds coming to West Bengal are from South India or Africa. While recent analyses based on tagged birds are helping us understand more about their migration path and pattern, we have yet to answer this conclusively.
- The analysis is done based on eBird sightings as reported in checklists. It is possible that the same bird was seen and reported by multiple birders or that there were multiple birds. Based on the checklist data, it is tough to separate this.
- Southwest Monsoon has two main branches - The Arabian Sea branch, which comes towards Kerala through the western ghats, and the Bay of Bengal branch, which comes towards the northeast through the Bay of Bengal. Their arrival dates are different. IMD uses the date the monsoon entered Kerala.

● The data was downloaded in August 2024, the total sighting table will not include data from Sep-Dec of 2024. Since the rest of the data is consistent, this might not influence the inference.

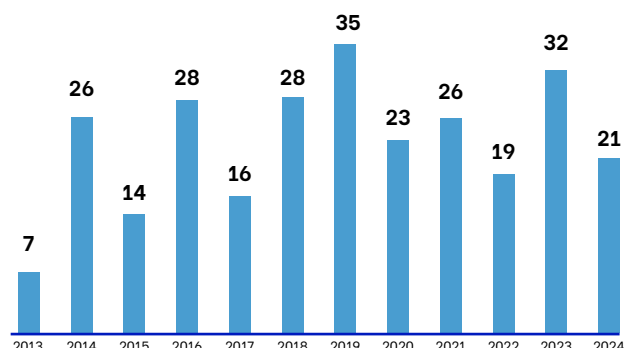


Figure 3: Gap between Monsoon & Pied Cuckoo Sighting

Monsoon Onset Date	Pied Cuckoo Sighting Date		Pied Cuckoo Sighting Monsoon Onset
	First Sighting	Second Sighting	
01 June 2013	25 May 2013	09 June 2013	7 days
06 June 2014	11 May 2014	18 May 2014	26 days
05 June 2015	22 May 2015	23 May 2015	14 days
08 June 2016	11 May 2016	20 May 2016	28 days
30 May 2017	14 May 2017	20 May 2017	16 days
29 May 2018	01 May 2018	20 May 2018	28 days
08 June 2019	04 May 2019	15 May 2019	35 days
01 June 2020	09 May 2020	15 May 2020	23 days
03 June 2021	08 May 2021	12 May 2021	26 days
29 May 2022	10 May 2022	13 May 2022	19 days
08 June 2023	07 May 2023	12 May 2023	32 days
30 May 2024	09 May 2024	12 May 2024	21 days

Figure 4: Monsoon Onset & Pied Cuckoo Sighting Dates

The above table shows that monsoons arrive in West Bengal around 2-5 weeks after the first Pied Cuckoo sighting. 2013 data can be ignored as the number of birders and eBird adoption was significantly less. In 2015 and 2017, the gap was just two weeks; in 2019 and 2023, the gap was around five weeks. In all other years, monsoon arrived within 3-4 weeks (19-28 days) after the first Pied Cuckoo sighting. If we refer to the second sighting, the gap is even smaller. The monsoon onset date is closely rangebound between 29th May and 8th June (11 days). Pied Cuckoo's first sighting happened in May, and it ranged widely from 1st May to 25th May. However, in recent times (last 7 years), when eBird usage and recording have gone up, the data shows that the first sighting has happened consistently in the first 10 days of the month. The second sighting is even more consistent (12-15 May).

CONCLUSION

Pied Cuckoo is indeed the messenger of monsoons. Monsoons arrive within a month of Pied Cuckoo sighting in Bengal, and the trend has remained consistent in recent years.



About Author

SOUVIK ROYCHOU DHURY

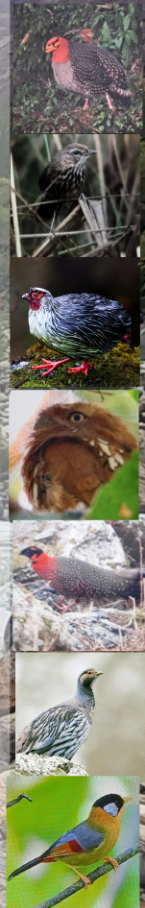
Souvik is a senior IT professional observing wildlife for over 2 decades. Started bird photography since 2017. Lives in Kolkata.

SIKKIM BIRDS TOURS & TRAVELS

A GOVT OF SIKKIM REGISTERED
TOUR OPERATOR



EXPERIENTIAL
BIRDING TOURS IN
NORTH-EAST INDIA



WWW.SIKKIMBIRDS.COM
INFO@SIKKIMBIRDS.COM
9382083201 7003389381





Long-tailed Shrike feeding Eurasian Cuckoo
by Vivek Upadhyay

BROOD PARASITISM IN CUCKOOS

DR INDRANI GHOSH & AMITAVA DUTTA

*The cuckoo is a merry bird,
He sings as he flies,
He brings us glad tidings
And tells us no lies
He sucks the birds' eggs
To make his voice clear,*

*And the more he cries
"Cuckoo"
The summer draws near.
The cuckoo is a lazy bird,
She never builds a nest,
She makes herself busy*

*By singing to the rest.
She never hatches her own young,
And that we all know,
But leaves it for some other bird
While she cries "Cuckoo." [1]*

INTRODUCTION

The display of brood parasitism in the animal world is a known fact since early Vedic ages. Cuckoos, undoubtedly is famously known to exhibit such behavior. Cuckoos belong to the Cuculidae family within the order Cuculiformes. Cuculidae family is sub-divided into two sub-families – Cuculinae (Cuckoos) and Phaenicophaeinae [2] (Malkhowas). There are seventeen known genus in the former and three in the latter sub-family that are either local or widespread resident. All members of the Cuculidae family do not show brood parasitism. Malkhowas nest and rear their young ones.

Approximately, only 40% [3] of the cuckoos use other species, known as hosts to rear their young ones. Brood parasitism is an uncommon behavior displayed by only 1% of bird species [4]. Few species of birds such as ducks, weavers and cowbirds are known to exhibit brood parasitism. In South Asia, several species of cuckoos and one species of honeyguide are obligate brood parasites.

1 <https://www.poetrynook.com/poem/cuckoo-27>

2 <https://www.birding.in/orders/cuculiformes.htm>

3 https://web.stanford.edu/group/stanfordbirds/text/essays/earlier%20versions/Brood_Parasitism.html#:~:text=Only%20about%2040%20percent%20of,ducks%2C%20weavers%2C%20and%20cowbirds.

4 Payne, Robert B. "The Ecology of Brood Parasitism in Birds." *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*, vol. 8, 1977, pp. 1–28. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2096719>. Accessed 24 Aug. 2024.

A bird that is popular for its calls, mythologically known to accompany Kama deva and heralds happy times (spring), is associated with love songs has a dark and insidious nature to themselves. The necessity for such evolution is a mystery that needs unravelling but let's understand what is already known, studied and available publicly.

Cuckoos are mid-sized birds slender bodied, either terrestrial or arboreal. They are shy, like to remain under covers and difficult to sight. Being omnivorous, they feed on fruits, seeds, and insects such as caterpillars, cicadas and wasps. They can consume hairy caterpillars because of their ability to shed their abdominal lining and regurgitate hairs in the form of pellets.



Srijan RoyChoudhury, Location: Boshsipota

Asian Koel -Male (*Eudynamys scolopaceus*)

HOST- PARASITE INTERACTION

All cuckoos are not obligate brood parasites. The brood parasitic birds have preferences for host species. There is an evolutionary arms race between the obligatory brood parasite cuckoos and host birds. Though there are reports that cuckoos could lay eggs in nests of any bird, however, unless it is specifically the host bird's nest, the eggs don't hatch or are thrown away by the victim birds. The cause for few species to act as hosts are explained through the evolutionary lag hypothesis. It puts forth a probable explanation for the inability of the host to identify the parasite eggs laid in their nests. It is said that adaptation has not yet appeared and/or spread in the host population due to lag in the early stages of arms race which persists longer when selection is weak (i.e low parasitism pressure). The host species being in the early stages in the race will easily accept the cuckoos eggs compared to those species that evolved more and recognition and rejection of foreign eggs are higher.

Another hypothesis proposed by Amotz Zahavi in 1979, states that cuckoos get other birds to accept their eggs not by stealth but by brute force, since in case, the host happens to remove a parasitic egg or chick, the adult cuckoos reportedly retaliate by destroying the nest[5]. The spatial habitat structure hypothesis explains that the cuckoos require a suitable vantage point from where it observes the host's activities. In corollary, hosts that nests near woodlands or its edges have a higher probability of being parasitized. Thus, knowledge regarding the different cuckoos in the sub-continent is incomplete without knowing their host species. It is a bit unfortunate that a definite information regarding the host species is low. Provided below is a list of different species of cuckoos and their probable hosts in the Indian sub-continent[6].

Sl No.	Cuckoo Name	Breeding habitat	Name of host species
01	Chestnut-winged Cuckoo (<i>Clamator coromandus</i>)	Himalayan and north-eastern Indian foothills	Laughingthrush
02	Pied Cuckoo (<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>)	Widespread resident	Argya Babbler, Bulbul and Shrike [7]
03	Asian Emerald Cuckoo (<i>Chrysococcyx maculatus</i>)	North-eastern Indian hills	Sunbird and Spiderhunter [8]
04	Violet Cuckoo (<i>Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus</i>)	North-eastern Indian hills and Andaman and Nicobar Islands	Sunbird and Spiderhunter
05	Banded Bay Cuckoo (<i>Cacomantis sonneratii</i>)	Widespread resident	Minivet, Bulbul, Iora
06	Plaintive Cuckoo (<i>Cacomantis merulinus</i>)	Widespread in the lowlands of eastern India	Prinia and Tailorbird
07	Grey-bellied Cuckoo (<i>Cacomantis passerines</i>)	Breeds in foothill and montane forests, but migratory individuals typically winter in lowlands	Prinia, Cisticola, Sunbird, House Sparrows and Tailorbird
08	Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo (<i>Surniculus dicruoides</i>)	Forests and scrubby plains from lowlands to foothills and mountainous areas	Babbler, Bulbul, Shrike [9]
09	Square-tailed Drongo Cuckoo (<i>Surniculus lugubris</i>)	Vegetation of scrubby and edge habitats in lowland and foothill forests	Indian White-eye
10	Large Hawk Cuckoo (<i>Hierococcyx sparveroides</i>)	Hills and montane forests	Spiderhunter, Lesser Shortwing, Laughingthrush
11	Common Hawk Cuckoo (<i>Hierococcyx varius</i>)	Widespread resident	Babbler
12	Whistling Hawk Cuckoo (<i>Hierococcyx nasicolor</i>)	North-eastern India	Insufficient data
13	Lesser Cuckoo (<i>Cuculus poliocephalus</i>)	Himalayan and north-eastern Indian foothills	Warbler
14	Indian Cuckoo (<i>Cuculus Micropterus</i>)	Widespread resident	Oriole, Black Drongo, Streaked Spiderhunter
15	Himalayan Cuckoo (<i>Cuculus saturates</i>)	Himalayas and north-eastern India	Warbler
16	Common Cuckoo (<i>Cuculus canorus</i>)	Himalayas and north-eastern India	Shrike, Leiothrix, Pipit, Rubythroat, Redstart, Bushchat
17	Asian Koel (<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>)	Widespread resident	Black Drongo, Long-tailed Shrike, House Crow, Large-billed Crow, Red-vented Bulbul, Common Myna

PLOYS FOR PARASITISM

It is needless to mention that the Cuckoos coincide (time) their breeding season with the breeding season of the host species.^[10] Most of the Cuckoo lay only one egg at an interval of 24-48 hours. They find a series of host nests owing to their surveillance over weeks either alone or with the male and lay their 15-20 eggs in a season ^[11]. Few hosts are social so that they can guard against invaders trying to lay eggs. The cuckoos are smarter though and they stealthily lay the eggs in the afternoon, when the host birds are away from their nests.

The brood parasite cuckoos have evolved to lay their eggs faster than most other species, sometimes within ten seconds. They tend to remove the host egg while laying their own eggs, reducing food competition for the chick and the eggs are mimetic, they resemble the host eggs. Hence, difficult for the host species to differentiate between her and cuckoo's eggs. The mimetic patterns of eggs are genetically determined. Strange enough, studies show that race or lineage specific properties are present in the W chromosome of the common cuckoos which are only present in the female species and are absent in the male species, thereby reducing the speciation potential of cuckoos. Thus, they are highly dependent on the host species to rear their eggs generation after generation. Also, the eggs are hard and cannot be easily broken by pecking by the hosts and require less incubation time before hatching.

The hatchlings with its eyes yet to mature throws over the unhatched host eggs from the edge of the nest to remove competition for nutrition. The ordeal is not restricted up to eggs, even if a chick appears before the cuckoo chick, the latter will try to get rid of the newborn chick too. Its sole intention is to be the only chick in the nest. The chick can mimic the sound of the host chicks and trick the bird into bringing enough food to raise it. There are several photographs of small sized host birds feeding big cuckoo hatchlings or chicks. It is ironical, that the host bird spends energy rearing a chick that it does not realize belongs to the cuckoo. What blinds the host parents where they are unable to differentiate between their own and cuckoo's chicks and show equal parental care despite the morphological differences is yet to be explained through scientific studies. In an altered perspective, the brood parasitism nature robs cuckoo the pleasure and satisfaction of incubation and rearing chicks.



Subhajit Chanda, Location: Kuldiha forest

Common Woodshrike is taking care of juvenile cuckoo



Photo by Abhishek Gupta

Jungle Babbler feeding a juvenile Common Cuckoo

Undoubtedly, the host birds stand to gain less due to this parasitic behavior however, there are reports that nests in which cuckoos lay eggs are saved from attacks from predators such as caterpillars, grasshoppers and ants. To make up for the loss, the host species lay more than one brood of chicks per year to replace for any loss that happens due to parasitism

The parasitism exhibited by the cuckoos emphasizes the importance of conserving the host species for their survival. There are studies [12] that indicate that the reduction/ deterioration of habitats of the host species due to several factors including climate change are leading to reduction of the cuckoo population.

Thus, conservation efforts of these cuckoos require an additional effort of identifying the specific host species along with their habitats with credible documentations. A step towards that direction would require long term, systematic, laborious effort

supplemented by modern technology, and hence warrants a sufficient budget.

5 <https://www.nwf.org/Magazines/National-Wildlife/1997/Bullies-of-the-Bird-World>

6 The list has been prepared based on a web-based study done and published by Praveen J and Peter Lowther and (https://indianbirds.in/pdfs/IB_16_4_Praveen_Lowther_AvianBroodParasitism_Video.pdf) and eBird online database.

7 <https://ebird.org/species/piecuc1>

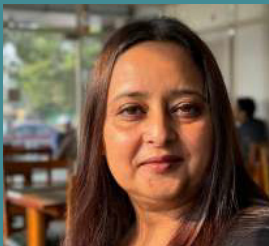
8 <https://ebird.org/species/asecuc1>

9 <https://ebird.org/species/asidrc2>

10 <https://petsd.org/ojs/index.php/lifesciencesleaflets/article/view/856>

11 <https://www.britannica.com/animal/cuculiform/Nesting>

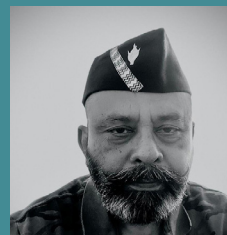
12 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339402591_Host-parasite_interaction_augments_climate_change_effect_in_an_avian_brood_parasite_the_lesser_cuckoo_Cuculus_polioccephalus



About Authors

INDRANI GHOSH

Dr. Indrani Ghosh, an avid nature lover is an environmental consultant. She has rekindled her interest in birding.



AMITAVA DUTTA

Amitava is a freelance technology consultant. His goal is to explore the wilderness of India and promote conservation efforts. He is part of Fantail editorial team at BWS.

CROSSWORD

HIYA CHATTERJEE

FIND THE CUCKOOS

1														
2														
3														
4														
5														
6														
7														

Across

- 1 Favourite diet of the cuckoo
- 2 This type of cuckoo, unlike most others is frugivorous
- 3 How many types of cuckoos are in India?
- 4 Name for those cuckoo species who don't look after their own eggs
- 5 In Greek mythology, this God transformed himself into a cuckoo to seduce Goddess Hera.
- 6 Name of the cuckoo bird family
- 7 The author of 'One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest'

Down

- 1 Largest cuckoo species in the world



Fork-tailed Drongo- Cuckoo
by Manish Kumar Chattopadhyay

EXPLORING THE UNTOUCHED: FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE FORK-TAILED DRONGO-CUCKOO

**MANISH KUMAR CHATTOPADHYAY &
DR. SAGAR ADHURYA**

In the depths of the Garh jungle, amidst the lush wilderness of Durgapur, lies a world waiting to be discovered. We (Dr Sagar Adhurya and Manish Kumar Chattopadhyay) embarked on several birdwatching trips to this part of Durgapur and were often rewarded with rarities like Small Niltava, Yellow-breasted Bunting, Himalayan Bluetail, Crested Bunting, and Black Francolin.

Though we were regular visitors to this natural haven, in the recent past, circumstances had hindered us from exploring the wilderness together. However, we finally reunited for an unforgettable birdwatching experience.

On 13 May 2024, early in the morning, as we entered the boundary of Garh Jungle, the lush greenery and diverse wildlife welcomed us with open arms. The soothing melodies of Indian Pitta, Indian Cuckoo and other resident birds filled the air, creating a symphony of natural beauty. With keen eyes and unwavering determination, we delved deep into the

heart of the jungle, eagerly anticipating the chance to find something new.

Our enthusiasm and patience led us to encounter numerous bird species throughout the day, yet none seemed to be an addition to our life-list. As the hours passed, we reluctantly decided to conclude for the day and began preparing to depart. At the very last moment, we were stunned by a Drongo calling from the tree branch over our head. The cuckoo-like repeated uprising *pe-pe-pe-pe-pe-pe-pe-pe* call first left us confused. Although Drongos are masters of mimicry, this call seemed quite unusual. When we put our binoculars to our eyes, we notice its distinct tail with white barring and a cuckoo-like round head with a slim, downcurved bill. Undoubtedly, it was not any ordinary Drongo, a Drongo-Cuckoo and possibly a Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo considering its more forked tail (Figure 1).

Our combined presence has often resulted in discovering exclusive species of birds, and this occasion was no exception. It was a great joy



Figure 1: Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo taken at Garh Jungle on 13 May 2024.

for us to capture the first-ever photographs of the Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo in the Garh Jungle. This extraordinary encounter enriched our personal collection of avian observations and holds significant scientific value. Our first documented record of the Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo contributes to the broader understanding of bird biodiversity and distribution in Paschim Bardhaman district.

One of the most remarkable features of the Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo is its melodious vocalisations, which have earned it a reputation as a talented songster. Its unique melody, a loud sequence of five or six whistles, each higher pitch than the last, makes it unique. During the breeding season, the male Drongo-Cuckoo exhibits its vocal prowess. Its melodious and far-carrying whistles echo through the forest, establishing its territory and attracting potential mates. Both of us have been captivated by the intricacy and beauty of these vocalisations, which play a crucial role in the bird's courtship and communication.



Figure 2: Courtship display observed during our field visit.

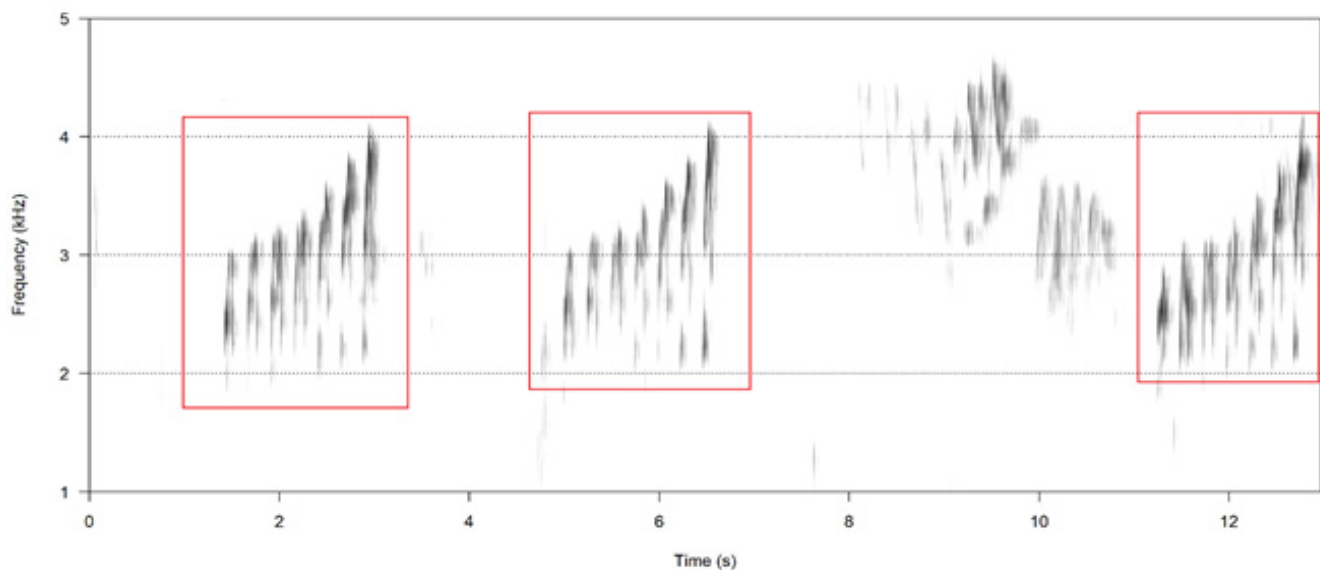
In addition to its enchanting songs, we were amazed by the exclusive mating display of the Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo. The bird showcased an elaborate performance, fluttering its wings and swaying in an intricate dance to woo the female. This mesmerising display not only demonstrates the male's fitness and vitality but also serves as a visual spectacle for onlookers, and we were fortunate enough to witness this exclusiveness of nature (Figure 2).

The Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo (*Surniculus dicruroides*) is both a resident and migratory species in India, with resident populations currently limited to parts of Kerala and Goa. It migrates to southern India (Kerala and Karnataka) during the winter and moves northward (to Maharashtra, central India, and the Eastern Ghats) during the summer monsoon. In Sri Lanka, the species is mainly resident, with the possibility of local migrations (Gala et al., 2023).

The bird genus *Surniculus* is recognised as the Drongo-Cuckoos and is known for their brood-parasitic behaviour, primarily parasitising small babblers from the families Sylviidae and Timaliidae (Gala et al., 2023). There are currently four species within *Surniculus*, of which Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo (*S. dichlorides*) and Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo (*S. lugubrious*) are found in India (Praveen et al., 2016; Rasmussen & Anderton, 2012). Despite most field guides still categorising them as a single species (Grimmett et al., 2011; Kazmierczak, 2000), Rasmussen and Anderton (2012) tentatively acknowledge this division.

The Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo is often confused with the Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo because they show remarkable similarities in appearance and behaviour, as both of them are members of the same family (Cuculidae) and genus (*Surniculus*). Their physical resemblances and overlapping ranges make them an intriguing subject for comparison. The tail of the Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo is deeply forked, while the tail of the

Square-tailed form is less forked. The reliability of this character is not consistent because individual birds may be moulting their tail feathers, or the appearance of the tail can seem squarish from specific perspectives (Gala & Ongole, 2018). Identifying Drongo-Cuckoos based solely on their songs in the field is quite difficult; however, they can be differentiated by analysing a spectrogram of the recordings. The frequency of the songs of the Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo is lower than that of the Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo, and inter note duration is more in the case of Fork-tailed (150 ms) than the Square-tailed (100 ms) (Gala et al., 2023). However, our recorded call has seven notes, with an inter-note duration between 100 and 120. The frequency seems higher than the documented frequencies for the Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo (Figure 3).



The population trends of the Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo are unknown, and there is not enough information available to assess long-term trends, according to the State of India's Birds report (SolB, 2023). More research is needed to determine its status, taxonomy, migrations, and breeding ecology to improve our understanding of this poorly described species.

- Gala, M., & Ongole, S. (2018). Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo *Surniculus dicruroides* in Rajasthan, with notes on its identification. *Indian BIRDS*, 14(5), 144–147.
- Gala, M., Ongole, S., & Pyle, P. (2023). Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo (*Surniculus dicruroides*). In G. M. Kirwan & B. K. Keeney (Eds.), *Birds of the World*. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.asidrc2.02>
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T. (2011). *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent* (2nd ed.). Princeton University Press.
- Kazmierczak, K. (2000). *A Field Guide to the Birds of India*. Om Books.
- Praveen, J., Jayapal, R., & Pittie, A. (2016). A checklist of the birds of India. *Indian BIRDS*, 11, 113–170.
- Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C. (2012). *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide: attributes and status* (2nd ed.). Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions.
- SolB. (2023). *State of India's Birds, 2023: Range, trends, and conservation status*. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11124590>



About Author

MANISH KUMAR CHATTOPADHYAY

As an engineer by profession, I have a deep-rooted passion for the wildlife of South Bengal, with a particular focus on the Indian grey wolves. As an amateur photographer I love capturing the essence majestic creatures in their natural habitat. My journey blends the precision of engineering with the unpredictability of nature, resulting in a unique perspective that I bring to my photography and wildlife exploration.

DR. SAGAR ADHURYA

I am an ecologist with deep interest in biodiversity, ecological interaction ecological modelling & informatics. Besides, I am an occasional birder.



Violet Cuckoo Male - Partha Pratim Chakraborty

THE ENCHANTING VIOLET CUCKOO: MYSTERIES OF A TROPICAL MARVEL

SHALINI IYENGAR

Nestled within the dense, vibrant forests of Southeast Asia, a bird of extraordinary beauty and captivating behavior has long intrigued ornithologists and bird enthusiasts. The Violet Cuckoo, scientifically named *Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus*, showcases a dazzling array of colors, enchanting many with its shimmering plumage and melodious call.

I am writing this article to give some facts about the charming Violet Cuckoo, a bird that has long fascinated me with its striking plumage and melodious calls. From my very first sighting of this elusive species, I've been captivated by its beauty and compelled to learn more about its life history. Join me on a journey into the world of the Violet Cuckoo as I share insights gleaned from personal observations and scientific literature about this remarkable avian gem.

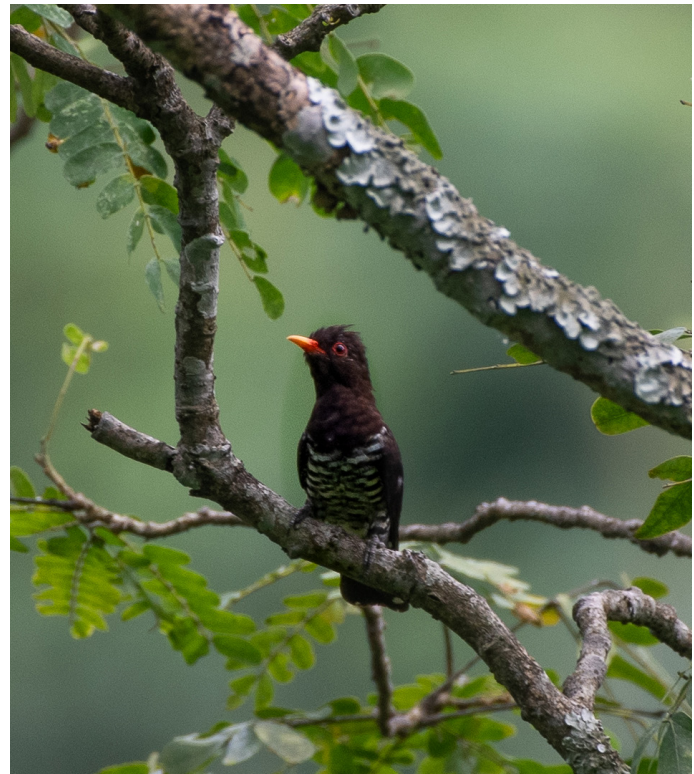


Photo by Shalini Iyengar

A Violet Cuckoo in Rongtong, Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary, West Bengal

My tryst with this beauty started in Nurbong Valley, thanks to the expertise of renowned birder and guide Mr. Peter Beck, who made it possible with his tireless efforts to show this bird amidst the lush greenery. As we drove through the hilly forest, the cuckoo's distinctive call caught our attention, and we were able to catch a glimpse of its striking purple plumage. It was a thrilling experience, and I was grateful to have Peter's guidance to help me spot this elusive bird.

A FEW FACTS ABOUT THE BIRD

Kaleidoscope of Colours:

Male Violet Cuckoos are adorned with lustrous violet feathers on their heads and upper bodies, accentuated by a dark tail with a white tip and barred outer feathers. The most notable feature is their iridescent violet chin and upper breast, which gleams in sunlight, creating a nearly ethereal visual effect. Their bellies are white, marked with broad black, green, or violet bars, and mature males display a red eye-ring, adding to their already striking appearance.

In contrast, female Violet Cuckoos possess mottled greenish-bronze upper parts and a dark brown crown. White markings around the eyes and occasionally on the forehead give them a subtle yet distinctive look. The central tail feathers are greenish, while the outer feathers are rufous with greenish bars. Their breasts are whitish with bronze-green bars and variably washed with rufous markings, making each female a unique masterpiece of nature.

Juveniles, with their barred rufous and greenish bronze feathers on the upper parts of their bodies, bright rufous crowns, and mottled green or brown wings, present a different yet equally fascinating appearance. Their brown-barred white underparts and barred brown and rufous tail feathers depict a bird in transition, gradually developing the characteristics that will define them as adults.

Survival Art:

The Violet Cuckoo primarily feeds on insects and their larvae. They have been observed shaking hairy caterpillars to remove the stomach contents before consumption, demonstrating their resourcefulness. They forage by creeping along branches and can also catch prey on the wing, showcasing their agility and adaptability.

Brood Parasitism:

One of the most intriguing behaviors of the Violet Cuckoo is its practice of brood parasitism. Like many cuckoo species, they lay their eggs in the nests of other birds, allowing them to reproduce without the responsibility of raising their young. The host species for the Violet Cuckoo include sunbirds and spiderhunters. Small birds are often unaware of the cuckoo eggs in their nests. This unique breeding strategy has fascinated ornithologists for centuries, with studies highlighting various host species, such as the Crimson Sunbird in the Garbhanga reserve forest in Assam (Praveen & Lowther, 2020).

Conservation Status:

Despite its wide range, the Violet Cuckoo is considered uncommon throughout its distribution. Although listed as Least Concern on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, habitat loss and fragmentation poses a significant threat to local populations.. Conservation initiatives are in place to protect its habitats, including establishing protected areas and reforestation programs. The BirdLife International partnership works to conserve the Violet Cuckoo and its habitats, promoting sustainable forest management and community engagement.

Folklore:

In Manipur folk tale, the Violet Cuckoo is said to have been created by the god of the forest, who was pleased with this bird's beautiful song. As we delve into the mythology and folklore surrounding the Violet Cuckoo, we are reminded of the importance of preserving our natural heritage and the cultural significance of these birds.

The Violet Cuckoo, with its unique plumage and melodious call, continues to captivate many. Through conservation efforts and sustainable forest management, we can ensure the survival of this magnificent species.

Bibliography:

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violet_cuckoo
2. <https://worldbirds.com/cuckoo-symbolism/>
3. <https://indianbirds.thedynamicnature.com/2017/05/violet-cuckoo-chrysococcyx-xanthorhynchus.html>
4. <https://study.com/academy/lesson/cuckoo-bird-history-song-facts.html>
5. <https://www.caravanclub.co.uk/blog/hobbies-and-activities/nature/the-history-of-cuckoos-in-british-folklore/>
6. <https://sfipodcast.com/manipur-folk-tale-the-cuckoo-ep-162/>



About Author

SHALINI IYENGAR:

An aviphile by heart and a wildlife photographer by passion who transforms her aviphile passion into breathtaking visual stories of the wild.



Indian Cuckoo by Partha Pratim Chakraborty

CUCKOOS FROM THE LAND OF RED SOIL AND PALASH

PARTHA PRATIM CHAKRABORTY

It was the last weekend of May 2024. Kolkata and parts of southern Bengal were put on high alert anticipating the landfall of REMAL, the first pre-monsoon tropical cyclone of the year. I had to deliver a lecture in a conference in Purulia, which I had earlier committed to. Luckily according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast, Purulia was unlikely to be affected by the cyclone. I am a “rookie” in the Birdwatchers’ Society (BWS) and have been following the WhatsApp group closely since I joined this elite group of “keen birdwatchers”. The pros in the group started discussing their plans to visit certain spots along the banks of the river Ganges to catch glimpses of the pelagic birds during the landfall. Inspired by their discussions, I instantly planned for a two-day birding trip in Purulia, not for the pelagic birds, but for the nature’s messengers of the monsoon. I packed my gear and boarded the Rupasi Bangla express on the morning of 26th May. I requested the organizers to prepone my lecture, a thing which I have never done before in my eighteen-

year long professional career. The idea was to make the most of the time for birding. It was late May, and Purulia had shed the red color of the Palash. After an hour-long drive from the Purulia town me and my guide, Subhra Pakhira, arrived at Tenyasi, a small village located in the foothills of a rocky mountain in quest of the majestic Rock Eagle-Owl. It was an overcast afternoon, with a threat of drizzle in the air; so, we had to cancel the evening trip.



Figure 1-Banded Bay Cuckoo by Partha Pratim Chakraborty

The next morning started off well with some habitat shots of Rock Eagle-Owl and Savanna Nightjar beneath a clear sky. While shooting a flock of Indian Silverbills, a “smoke-yer-pep-per!” call drew our attention to a nearby nimtree (*Azadirachta indica*) and we spotted a Banded Bay Cuckoo (*Cacomantis sonneratii*) singing in tune (Figure 1). Soon the bird landed on an open perch allowing me to take some nice shots. The striped whitish underparts and the wings with a mixture of orange and dark-brown colors (Figure 2) made a perfect contrast and was a treat for my eyes.



Figure 2-Banded Bay Cuckoo by Partha Pratim Chakraborty

Enroute to my next destination Matha Forest, I got to see Indian Bushlark, Ashy Prinia, Wire-tailed Swallow, Bay-backed Shrike, Greater Paintedsnipe, Lesser Adjutant Stork, Red-naped Ibis, Indian Paradise-Flycatcher, Whiskered Tern and few other species. The day-long exertion and the scorching heat and high humidity, Purulia is known for, started taking their tolls on my body. While walking back to our stay with weary legs, my guide picked up a “ki-keeeeer...” call of a Greybellied Cuckoo (*Cacomantis passerines*) perched right in front of us (Figure 3). It was a “point-andshoot” situation to catch that very moment, and I did the same without wasting any time. We had an excellent day of birding but failed to get a glimpse of the Jacobin Cuckoo (*Clamator jacobinus*) a.k.a Pied Cuckoo, my childhood curiosity. My guide woke me up at 5:30 AM next morning saying



Figure 3-Grey-bellied Cuckoo by Partha Pratim Chakraborty

that he could hear the much-awaited call of the Jacobin Cuckoo. We inched towards the site and found the avian beauty perched quietly on a nearby tree soaking in the early morning sun (Figure 4). This was my first sighting of this very bird. Soon thereafter, the bird started flying in circles and landed on a branch of a nearby tree. I observed the bird closely for quite some time. The white breast, black wings with areas of white stripe and the



Figure 4-Jacobin Cuckoo by Partha Pratim Chakraborty

brown tinge at the tip of the wings makes it so gorgeous (Figure 5). According to the Indian myth, “Chatak pakshi” (Jacobin Cuckoo/Pied Cuckoo) is the messenger of the onset of the monsoon. When the monsoon arrives in with all its majesty, its sighting also spreads widely. The Purulia birding tour fulfilled my long desire of encountering with the ancient bird “Chatak”. While returning home, I came to know about the sighting of Shearwaters, Wilson’s Storm Petrel, Arctic Skua, names I was unfamiliar with. Too tired after the trip, I closed my eyes and imagined clicking these birds sometime in the future.



Figure 5 - Jacobin Cuckoo by Partha Pratim Chakraborty



About Author

PARTHA PRATIM CHAKRABORTY

Partha Pratim Chakraborty is an endocrinologist by profession and holds the faculty position in the Department of Endocrinology, Medical College, Kolkata. He is a wildlife enthusiast with a keen interest on birds. His love for birding and bird photography has now grown into a full-blown passion.



Eurasian Cuckoo by Rittwick Bhattacharyya

A BRIEF ENCOUNTER WITH EURASIAN CUCKOOS

RITWICK BHATTACHARYYA

Thanks to my job, I have been residing in Malda for approximately 4 years. My favorite pastime outside of work is watching and photographing birds. And the hobby has only gotten stronger when I met Samiran – da (Mr Samiran Jha) and others from Malda.

Back in 2022, Samiran Da introduced me to a wetland, situated just outside Malda Town. I have always enjoyed exploring local places, and this hidden gem of a wetland—known as Aamjamtala to the locals—quickly became my go-to location for weekend and early-morning excursions. From Grey-headed Fish Eagles to Barn Swallows, Bitterns, Jacanas, and more, Aamjamtala has never allowed me to leave without a huge smile on my face.

This tale tells the story of the Eurasian/Common Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), a passage migrant that we accidentally found in Aamjamtala. The Common Cuckoo migrates as a passage migrant from Central and East Asia to Africa to spend the winter. They make brief stops along their

migration route to feed and rest before making the long journey to Africa. Common Cuckoo, similar to other cuckoos, is a brood parasite by nature i.e. they lay eggs in other birds' nests. The eggs, although varying in size, resemble the eggs of the host birds to avoid suspicion.



Eurasian Cuckoo by Rittwick Bhattacharyya



Common Cuckoo by Rittwick Bhattacharyya

I recall the day clearly as if it were yesterday. It was a beautiful October morning in 2022-15th of October. As a group of 3-4 people, we were searching the marsh for birds when Samiran da spotted a bird from over a hundred meters away and identified the bird as a Common Cuckoo. Since it was a lifer for me, I joked that I was going to snap some portraits of this bird. I went back to Amjamtala for the bird the following day. After a few days of the routine, I was confident that there were at least three or four Common Cuckoos in the vicinity. Samiran da confirmed my assessment as well. The birds were acclimated to our presence by then and were frequently flying and perching all around us. And it was exactly what we wished. In that brief period of probably less than couple of weeks, we successfully closed the distance from over 100 meters to less than 10 meters.. As I've mentioned previously, I even managed to take a picture of the bird exactly where I wanted it to be—on a tree branch. Nature surely works in a mysterious way, doesn't it!

Please enjoy the photographs of different Eurasian Cuckoos taken at Aamjamtala, Malda.
A big thanks to Samiran Da (Samiran Jha) for actively encouraging me all the time.



About Author

RITWICK BHATTACHARYYA

A government official by occupation, a passionate birdwatcher, with a keen eye for photography. I love taking close photographs of birds. I'm based at Malda, West Bengal.

CUCKOO CHRONICLES

BWS MEMBERS' PHOTO-SHOWCASE



Plaintive Cuckoo by Biplab Banerjee



Plaintive Cuckoo Female by Arunava Dutta



Lesser Cuckoo by Ranadeep Sengupta



Large Hawk Cuckoo by Arindam Bakshi



Common Hawk Cuckoo by Malay Ghosh



Grey-bellied Cuckoo by Brian Lobo



Indian Cuckoo by Biplab Banerjee

SOME INTERESTING BIRD SIGHTINGS FROM BILLAWAR, JAMMU & KASHMIR, INDIA

DR. GURPARTAP SINGH & HEMANT KUMAR

Billawar is a Tehsil (an administrative division) located between 32.50°N and 32.75°N and 75.45°E and 75.75°E in Kathua district of Jammu & Kashmir (Fig. 1). Most of the area of Tehsil Billawar is hilly, having elevations roughly between 500 and 3000m msl. About ninety percent of the area has significant forest cover. Due to varied altitude and topography, this area possesses a diverse flora and fauna.

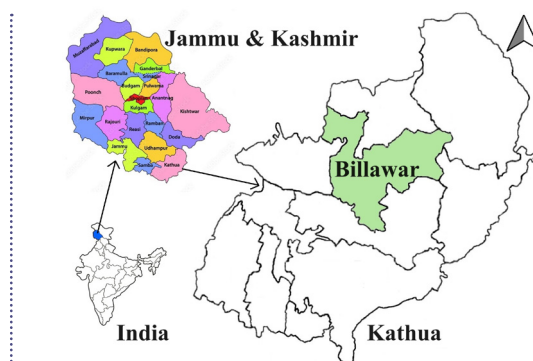


Fig. 1. Location of Tehsil Billawar in District Kathua, Jammu & Kashmir, India

Hemant Kumar(HK) is posted as a science teacher at a school at Baggan in Billawar Tehsil for which he commutes on his motorbike. Being an avid birdwatcher, he usually carries his camera with him. Over the last few years, he has observed several birds. During a discussion with Gurpartap Singh (GS), it was discussed about documenting some interesting sightings from the area. The same are presented below.

INDIAN CUCKOO (*CUCULUS MICROPTERUS*)

An Indian Cuckoo (*Cuculus micropterus*) was observed on 21 July 2018, at Dewal (32.59°N, 75.56°E), Billawar. HK was sitting in the balcony in his house when a Black Drongo (*Dicrurus macrocercus*) was seen feeding another bird in the nearby trees [1]. A few photos were clicked quickly and posted in J&K Birdlife group on Facebook. It was very surprising when several comments identified the bird as an Indian Cuckoo juvenile [2]. Indian Cuckoo is a migratory bird and not commonly seen in Billawar and nearby.



1. Indian Cuckoo juvenile being fed by a Black Drongo



2. Indian Cuckoo juvenile

There is one published record from Udhampur (Barman 1993) but no photo is there. A Checklist of bird species recorded in Dachigam National Park (Hussain 2020) mentions the Indian Cuckoo but there is no reference to a primary record. A couple of records on eBird are there but all are after July 2018. There is no photo except one but that seems to be a misidentified Lesser Cuckoo (*Cuculus poliocephalus*).

WHITE-THROATED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*PTERORHINUS ALBOGULARIS*)

A White-throated Laughingthrush (*Pterorhinus albogularis*) was observed at Sachar (32.62°N, 75.64°E), Billawar, on 5 August 2018. Sachar is a place dominated by beautiful oak trees. The dense foliage in this area is the perfect habitat for birds. On 5 August 2018, while walking through the forest, a distant call of a bird was heard. The foggy weather added an element of mystery to the bird's call. To confirm the identity, a photo [3] was posted in the J&K Birdlife group on Facebook. Experienced birders from J&K confirmed the identity.

This was the first photographic record of this species from Jammu & Kashmir. There are a few more sightings on citizen science platforms like eBird and social media like Facebook, but all are from later dates. However, we found one old record of a skin obtained by E. M. Langworthy from Kashmir (location not known) in the collection of Natural History Museum, United Kingdom (formerly, a part of the

British Museum) (Sharpe, 1883). In response to our query, Mark Adams, Senior Curator, Bird Group, Dept. of Life Sciences, NHMUK replied (in litt. email dated 01 July 2024) that “there is no further information for this specimen (1876.10.17.23) other than what is written on its label “Cashmere. E. M. Langworthy”. There is no date, but it was registered in the NHM in 1876; so, must predate this.” One record from Domeli (Ward 1906), was not considered as this location near Muzaffarabad is now in Pakistan administered part of J&K. Sharma et al. (2018) mention it for Kishtwar (J&K) but there is no photograph.



3. White-throated Laughingthrush on 05 August 2018

RED-BILLED BLUE-MAGPIE (*UROCISSA ERYTHRORYNCHA*)

A Red-billed Blue-Magpie (*Urocissa erythroryncha*) was observed at Kishanpur village (32.60°N, 75.62°E), Billawar, on 01 December 2018. It was found in the company of a Yellow-billed Blue-Magpie [4]. On 01 February 2019, Red-billed Blue-Magpie was again seen near Kafla Road, Lohrnoo to the north of Kishanpur village [5]. The only previous, and the westernmost, record is a preserved skin lying in Yale Peabody Museum, USA (YPM ORN 042898). This specimen was collected by H. J. Walton from Jammu in 1904.



4. Red-billed Blue-Magpie (top) with Yellow-billed Blue-Magpie on 01 December 2018 Jammu & Kashmir, India



5. Red-billed Blue-Magpie on 01 February 2019

Thus, the observation on 1 December 2018 was the first recent record and the first photographic record of Red-billed Blue-Magpie from J&K.

MOUNTAIN SCOPS-OWL (*OTUS SPILOCEPHALUS*)

A Mountain Scops-Owl (*Otus spilocephalus*) was observed near Bajohi (32.68°N, 75.62°E), Billawar, on 15 January 2019. The location had beautiful scenery of dense oak and rhododendron trees. As HK walked through the area, he heard the calls of many different birds, which seemed to be alert and worried about something. Upon closer examination, he spotted a magnificent owl perched on a branch [6], causing the other birds to be on high alert. He managed to capture some close shots of the owl and later confirmed with experts that it was a Mountain Scops-Owl. This was also the first photographic record from J&K.



6. Mountain Scops Owl

LONG-TAILED THRUSH (*ZOOTHERA DIXONI*)

A Long-tailed Thrush (*Zoothera dixonii*) was observed at Chew Marhoon (32.68°N, 75.70°E), Billowar on 24 January 2019. HK had gone for birding at Chew, a stunning area surrounded by dense Deodar trees. The entire landscape was covered in a thick blanket of snow, creating a breathtakingly beautiful sight. As he was walking along the trail, he noticed a small bird hopping around on the ground. At first, he couldn't identify it. But upon closer observation, he realized that it was a Long-tailed Thrush [7], a species known for its beautiful singing voice. It was a rare sighting as these birds are not commonly found in this area. HK still thought that it could perhaps be an Alpine Thrush as both look very similar. Therefore, a post was made on Ask IDs of Indian Birds group on Facebook. All experienced birders were able to identify it as a Long-tailed Thrush as well. This record turned out to be the first for J&K. There are no other records of Long-tailed Thrush from Jammu & Kashmir. That also makes it the westernmost record of this species.



7. Long-tailed Thrush

FIRE-BREASTED FLOWERPECKER (*DICAEUM IGNIPECTUS*)

A Fire-breasted Flowerpecker (*Dicaeum ignipectus*) was observed at Kishanpur (32.68°N, 75.70°E), Billowar on 31 January 2019. As HK was returning from school in Baggan to his home, he heard a beautiful and distinct sound of a bird coming from a distance, near a bridge. Intrigued, he followed the sound and managed to capture some photos of the bird [8]. Upon closer inspection, he noticed that the bird was dark blue above and pale creamy white below, with a black stripe running down its belly. But what caught his attention the most was the brilliantly coloured red patch on its breast, resembling a bloodstain. Curious to know more about this unique bird, he consulted the experts who confirmed that it was a Fire-breasted Flowerpecker.



8. Fire-breasted Flowerpecker

This was the first photographic record of Fire-breasted Flowerpecker from J&K. On eBird, some records are there but all of them are after 31 January 2019. There is one published record from Udhampur (Barman 1993) but no photo is there.

MRS. GOULD'S SUNBIRD (*AETHOPYGA GOULDIAE*)

On 10 January 2020, HK was returning on his motorbike from his school (where he teaches) in Baggan, a village situated in the Shivalik hills of the Himalayas in Billawar tehsil, district Kathua, Jammu & Kashmir, India. Near village Riari (32.60 °N, 75.60 °E), the motorbike seemed to have developed some problem at around 1600 h. While he stopped to check the bike, he heard the sweet chirping of some birds nearby. Being a regular bird watcher, he was carrying his camera with him. Without wasting any time, he grabbed the camera and started taking shots of the birds feeding on the flowers of Himalayan wild cherry (*Prunus cerasoides*). After reaching home, the photos showed a different-looking sunbird [9]. A post was made on the J&K Birdlife group on Facebook. It came as a pleasant surprise when Tim Inskipp identified the bird as Mrs. Gould's Sunbird (*Aethopyga gouldiae*). "Red on the side of the head and on the wing, would make it Mrs. Gould's Sunbird; not recorded earlier from J&K," he commented. On 12 January 2020, a special visit was made to the location along with two other birdwatchers. Mrs. Gould's Sunbird was again observed near the earlier location [10].



9. Mrs. Gould's Sunbird on 10 January 2020



10. Mrs. Gould's Sunbird on 12 January 2020

There is no other previous record of Mrs. Gould's Sunbird from Jammu & Kashmir on any source. This is also the westernmost record of this species till date.

To conclude, we are reporting some very interesting records from Billawar Tehsil, District Kathua, J&K, India. These include either the first ever records from J&K or the first

photographic records from J&K. These records have also contributed towards the checklist of the birds of Jammu & Kashmir, India (Kichloo et al. 2023).

We thank Tim Inskipp for his help in looking for some of the old records from Jammu & Kashmir. We also used 'Bibliography of South Asian Ornithology' (Pittie 2024).

References

- Barman, S. 1993. Avifauna of Udhampur (Jammu and Kashmir) District (pp. 92–97). In Bird conservation, strategies for the nineties and beyond. Verghese, A., Sridhar, S., & Chakravarthy, A.K. (eds.) Bangalore: Ornithological Society of India.
- Hussain, A. 2020. Management Plan: Dachigam National Park (2020–2030). Website URL: <https://jkwildlife.com/wild/wild/orders/MANAGEMENT%20PLAM%20DACHIGAM%20NP%202020%20-%202030.pdf>
- Kichloo, M.A., Sharma, N., Suhail, I., Shagoo, P., & Kumar, P. 2024. A checklist of the birds of Jammu & Kashmir, India. *Indian BIRDS*. 19(6) 163–180.
- Pittie, A., 2024. Bibliography of South Asian Ornithology. Webpage URL: <http://www.southasiaornith.in>.
- Sharma, N., Rana, S.K., Raina, P., Amir, R., & Kichloo, M.A. 2018. An annotated checklist of the birds of Upper Chenab catchment, Jammu & Kashmir, India. *Journal of Threatened Taxa*. 10(7) 11869–11894.
- Sharpe, R.B. 1883. Catalogue of the Passeriformes or Perching Birds in the Collection of the British Museum. Cichlomorphae: Part IV. Containing the concluding portion of the Family Timeliidae (Babbling Thrushes). London: British Museum.
- Ward, A.E. 1906. Birds of the provinces of Kashmir and Jammu and adjacent districts. Part I. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*. 17(1) 108–113.
- Ward, A.E. 1907. Birds of the provinces of Kashmir and Jammu and adjacent districts. Part III. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*. 17(3) 723–729.



About Author

DR. GURPARTAP SINGH

Dr. Gurpartap Singh, a retired college Principal, though from business management and academic background, is an active bird watcher, eBirder, nature lover and photographer. His interest in all things natural began during the college days when he studied Biology. He is presently on the editorial board of ‘Sanrakshan’, a monthly eMagazine. He is Administrator and/or moderator of Facebook groups like Punjab Bird Club, Natural Biodiversity, Butterflies of Punjab and a few others. He volunteers in diverse activities like bird photography exhibitions, bird surveys, wildlife rescue, nature conservation, cleanliness drives, tree plantation, nature walks, online educative sessions, etc. He has published several research articles and helps, encourages and collaborates with fellow birders to get their observations published.



HEMANT KUMAR

Hemant Kumar is a teacher by profession. For the past seven years, he has been actively involved in birdwatching and has developed a deep understanding and appreciation for the winged creatures. Through this hobby, he has also become a dedicated wildlife conservator, working towards protecting and preserving our natural world. Combining his passion for teaching and wildlife conservation, he has made it his mission to educate the masses about the importance of preserving the environment and the role each of us plays in it. From organizing awareness campaigns to conducting interactive workshops, he strives to instil love for nature in his students and the community at large. His bird photographs have also been published in international newspapers.



Image Source :Internet*

জার্ডনস কোর্সারের চমকপ্রদ পুনঃআবিষ্কারের কাহিনি

বিশ্ব রঞ্জন গোস্বামী

সা

ল ১৮৪৪ সালের দিকে ব্রিটিশ প্রাণীবিদ টমাস সি জার্ডন প্রথম এই পাখি সংগ্রহ করেছিলেন। আমরা এর অস্তিত্ব সম্পর্কে মাত্র কয়েকটি নমুনা থেকে জানতে পারি। টমাস সি জার্ডনের নামে তা নামকরণ করা হয়েছে। বিংশ শতকের বেশিরভাগ সময় ধরে এটি বিলুপ্ত বলে ধরে নেওয়া হয়েছিল। এর স্থানীয় নাম ‘আদাভি উথা-টিট্রি’ তবে স্থানীয়ভাবে এটি ‘কালি কোডি’ নামে বেশি পরিচিত। পক্ষীবিদ টমাস সি জার্ডন তার ‘দ্য বার্ডস অফ ইন্ডিয়া’ (১৮৪৪-১৮৬২) নামক বইতে ১০০৮টি প্রজাতির পাখির উল্লেখ করেছেন, তারমধ্যে এটিও ছিল।

এর বৈজ্ঞানিক নাম *Rhinoptilus bitorquatus*.

টমাস জার্ডন কোর্সার পাখির পরিচিত পরিসরের মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য বসবাসের প্রধান সময়কাল ছিল ১৮৪২ থেকে ১৮৪৭ সালের প্রথম দিক পর্যন্ত। ১৮৪২ সালের শুরুর দিকে মাদ্রাজ ও মাঝখানে নেলোরে তিনি সিভিল সার্জেন হিসাবে কর্মরত ছিলেন। ১৮৪৩ সালের অক্টোবর পর্যন্ত সেসব আশেপাশের এলাকা থেকে তিনি অনেক তথ্য সংগ্রহ করেন। তাই আমরা অনুমান করতে পারি তার প্রথম কোর্সার দেখা ছিল সম্ভবত ১৮৪২ সালে। কিছু সময় পর বিলুপ্তির আগে কোর্সারের খুব কম রেকর্ড ছিল। এটি কেবলমাত্র দক্ষিণ ভারতের পূর্বঘাটের অভ্যন্তরীণ সীমাবদ্ধ এলাকায় দেখা যেত। টমাস জার্ডন রিপোর্ট করেছেন প্রথম কোর্সারগুলি ‘আমার দ্বারা সংগ্রহ করা হয়েছিল পূর্বঘাটের উপরে পাহাড়ী অঞ্চলে, নেল্লোরের কাছে এবং কুড্ডল্লায়’ (জার্ডন, ১৮৬২-১৮৬৪)। তাই মনে করা হয় জার্ডন সাহেব ১৮৪৪ সালের আগে বা তার মধ্যে প্রথম কোর্সার প্রজাতি আবিষ্কার করেছিলেন।

১৯৮৬ সালের ১৩ই জানুয়ারী মাসে পাখি পর্যবেক্ষকরা এই নিয়ে একটি আশার আলো দেখতে পান। আসলে তখন ইটোনা নামে পরিচিত একজন রাখাল দক্ষিণ অন্ধ্রপ্রদেশের কন্ডুর আভার কাছে পেনার নদী উপত্যকায় শ্রীলঙ্কামালেশ্বরী অভয়ারণ্যে এদের দেখতে পেয়েছিল। সে সেখানে পাখি ধরার ফাঁদ পেতে রেখেছিল। সেদিন ভোর বেলায় টর্চলাইটের আলোয় দুটি

কোর্সার দেখতে পেয়েছিল। তার মধ্যে একটি পালিয়ে যায়। আরেকটিকে সে দৌড়ে গিয়ে ধরে ফেলে। সে জ্যান্ত পাখিটিকে বাড়ী নিয়ে যায়। তখন সে বোম্বে ন্যাচারাল সোসাইটির একজন পক্ষীবিদ ভরত ভূষনকে জরুরি বার্তা পাঠায় পাখিটিকে সনাক্ত করতে। সেদিন ছিল প্রবল বৃষ্টি। তাই ভরত ভূষনের ঘটনা স্থলে পৌঁছতে ১৫ই জানুয়ারী হয়ে যায়। সে জায়গায় পৌঁছে পাখিটিকে দেখার পর ভূষন দারুণ উত্তেজিত হয়ে পড়েছিলেন। ভারতীয় পাখি বিজ্ঞানের নেতৃস্থানীয় ব্যক্তিত্ব ডঃ সেলিম আলি পাখিটিকে দেখার জন্য খুব তাড়াতাড়ি করে ছুটে আসেন। কিন্তু উনি সেখানে ১৯শে জানুয়ারী পৌঁছানোর কয়েক ঘন্টা আগে পাখিটি মারা যায়। তার নমুনা এখন বোম্বে ন্যাচারাল সোসাইটির সংগ্রহে সংরক্ষিত। (ভূষন, ১৯৮৬)। ২০০৮ সালে আবারডিন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের প্রাণীবিদ্যা বিভাগের জাদুঘরের বাক্সে বিজ্ঞানী নক্স একটি ডিম দেখেছিলেন। তখন তিনি দ্রুত কিছু তাৎক্ষণিক পর্যবেক্ষণ করেছিলেন। তার মনে হয়েছিল এটি জার্ডনস কোর্সারের ডিম, যদিও তার কাছে এই বিষয়ে কোন আনুষ্ঠানিক প্রমাণ বা অন্য আর নমুনা ছিলনা।

কিন্তু তার মনে প্রশ্ন জাগে যে ব্যক্তি লেবেলটি লাগিয়েছে সে যদি ভুল করে থাকে? জার্ডনস কোর্সারের না হয়ে যদি অন্য কোনো পাখির হয়? আবারডিন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের জার্নালে নক্স লিখেছিলেন ‘আপনি কিভাবে

এমন কিছু সনাক্ত করবেন যা আগে কেউ দেখেন নি’। তার উত্তর লুকিয়ে ছিল ডিএনএ সিকোয়েন্সিং পরীক্ষার মধ্যে। জার্ডনস কোর্সারের মাত্র পাঁচটি সংরক্ষিত নমুনা টিকে আছে এবং তাদের মধ্যে দুটি প্রাকৃতিক ইতিহাস জাদুঘরে ট্রিং এর পক্ষীতাত্ত্বিক সংগ্রহে রাখা আছে। স্টুয়ার্ট পিয়ার্টনি কোর্সারের ডিমের ভিতরের আবরণের বিচ্ছিন্ন থেকে স্ক্র্যাপিং করে নমুনা নেওয়া হয় এবং বোম্বে ন্যাচারাল হিস্ট্রি সোসাইটির প্রকাশিত জার্নালে নক্স ও স্টুয়ার্ট পিয়ার্টনি লিখেছিলেন ‘ডিমের থেকে প্রাপ্ত ক্রমগুলি অভিন্ন ছিল, যা নির্দেশ করে তারা অভিন্ন ও একই প্রজাতি থেকে এসেছে।’

তাহলে এত বিরল একটি প্রজাতির ডিম কিভাবে আবারডিন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের জাদুঘরের এলো? নক্স তার উত্তর খোঁজার জন্য চেষ্টা শুরু করেন। তিনি কয়েক বছর আগে প্রাকৃতিক ইতিহাসের আর্কাইভে এই বিষয়ে লিখেছিলেন। বেঙ্গালুরুর পূর্বে কোলার সোনার খনিতে কর্মরত আর্নেস্ট গিলবার্ট মিটন নামে একজন পশুচিকিৎসক ১৯১৭ সালের দিকে ডিমটি সংগ্রহ করেছিলেন বলে মনে হয়। মিটন তার সংগ্রহটি কোলকাতার একজন ইঞ্জিনিয়ার ও ব্যবসায়ী জর্জ ফ্যালকনারের কাছে বিক্রি হয়। পরে আবার জর্জ আলমা মাদার আবারডিন গ্রামার স্কুলে ডিমগুলি উপহার হিসাবে দিয়েছিলেন। সেখান থেকে ১৯৭৮ সালে আবারডিন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের প্রাণীবিদ্যা বিভাগের জাদুঘরে স্থানান্তরিত হয়। ডিমটি কিছু সময়ের জন্য আবারডিন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের জাদুঘরে প্রদর্শন করা হয়েছিল, তবে পরে সংরক্ষণের সুরক্ষার জন্য ফিরিয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছে। নক্স ও স্টুয়ার্ট পিয়ার্টনি আরও লিখেছেন ‘কে জানে আমাদের স্থানীয় জাদুঘরে আর কোন দুস্প্রাপ্য সম্পদ আবিষ্কারের অপেক্ষায় আছে কিনা?’

এই গল্পটি আপাত এখানে শেষ হলেও এই বিষয়ে আরো বলার আছে যেমন এদের স্বভাব ও বসতি, দেখতে কেমন, তারা কেন হারিয়ে গেল? সংরক্ষণের প্রচেষ্টা পুনঃআবিষ্কারের ইতিহাস ইত্যাদি।

স্বভাব ও বসতি

বিশ্বের বিরল পাখিদের মধ্যে এটি পরিবেশগত বিচ্ছিন্নতার জন্য অত্যন্ত অধরা এবং নিশাচর পাখি হিসাবে পরিচিত। বর্তমানে শুধুমাত্র অন্ধ্রপ্রদেশের কুন্দাপাহ জেলায় শ্রীলঙ্কামালেশ্বরা বন্যপ্রাণী অভয়ারণ্যে ও আশেপাশের ঘামাছি জঙ্গলের একটি ছোট এলাকায় বাস করে। তবে এই রাজ্যের পার্শ্ববর্তী এলাকায় যেমন মহারাষ্ট্র এবং দক্ষিণ মধ্যপ্রদেশে এদের উপস্থিতি থাকতেও পারে। কোর্সারের সংখ্যা এখন আনুমানিক প্রায় ৩০টি, এখানে যা ঝুঁকির মধ্যে রয়েছে। ‘মাদ্রাজ ক্যুরিয়র’ ২০১৮ সালের এপ্রিল সংখ্যায় আরেকটি মজার বিষয় জানা যায় এদের নিকট আত্মীয় তিন ব্যান্ডের কোর্সার কেবলমাত্র সাভানা বনভূমির পূর্ব আফ্রিকাতেই পাওয়া যায়। ডঃ ভরত ভূষন এই নিয়ে কাজ করছেন।

সাধারণত বিক্ষিপ্তভাবে অল্প ঢালু পাথুরে জমিতে কাঁটায়ুক্ত ঝোপঝাড়ের মধ্যে থাকতে এরা পছন্দ করে। এরা সাধারণত পাথরের মধ্যে বাসা বাঁধে এবং নরম মাটি থাকলে তাতে, বা গোবরে অর্ধেক ডিম পুঁতে রাখে। ডিম হালকা হলুদ রঙের, তার উপর কালো ছিট। প্রজনন বিষয়ে তেমন কিছু জানা যায়নি।

দৈহিক বৈশিষ্ট্য

এটি একটি প্রাটিকোল বা বাটান সদৃশ পাখি। বাংলায় এর কোন নাম জানা যায় না। এরা আকারে প্রায় ২৭ সেন্টিমিটার, উপরের অংশ বাদামী ও গোলাপী, চাঁদী ও ঘাড়ের উপরের রঙ গাঢ় বাদামী, গলা ও বুকের নীচের দিক পাটকিলে, ডানা সুঁচালো ও ওড়ার সময় কালো রঙ সুস্পষ্ট, সাদা গলা ও বুকের নীচের উপরের দিকে দুটি সুস্পষ্ট কালো রঙের ব্যান্ড দিয়ে আলাদা করা যায়।

পুনঃআবিষ্কারের ইতিহাস-

প্রাণীবিদ টমাস জার্ডন প্রথম দেখার পর পরবর্তী বছরগুলিতে, প্রকৃতিবিদ ডব্লিউ টি ব্লানফোর্ড আরো তিনবার কোর্সারের দেখা পেয়েছিলেন। ১৯০০ সালের জুন মাসে, আইরিশ ধর্মপ্রচারক হাওয়ার্ড ক্যাম্পবেল অন্ধ্র প্রদেশের পেন্নার এবং গোদাবরী নদীর জলাধার এলাকাতে আরো দুবার এদেরকে দেখতে পেয়েছিলেন বলে জানা যায়।

প্রজাতিটি আর পাওয়া যায়নি এবং পাখিটি বিলুপ্ত হয়ে গেছে বলে ধারণা করা হয়েছিল। যার জন্য খুব কম লোকেই জানতো কোর্সার দেখতে কেমন বা তাদের ডাকের আওয়াজ কেমন। ১৮৮৮ সালের দিকে ডাচ চিত্রকর জেরার্ড কেউলম্যানসের তৈরি করা চিত্রগুলিতেই তার একমাত্র উল্লেখ ছিল। পাখিটিকে আর দেখা না গেলেও পক্ষীপ্রেমিকরা তা ভুলে যায়নি। এটি এতই বিরল এবং মূল্যবান বলে বিবেচিত হয়েছিল যে ব্রঙ্কস চিড়িয়াখানা কর্তৃপক্ষ কোর্সারের চিত্রসহ পাথরের সমাধি তৈরি করেছিলেন। তারপর ১৯৮৬ সালে আবার যে দেখা পাওয়া গেছিলো, সে গল্প তো আগেই বলা হয়েছে। এটি ছিল এক অসাধারণ আবিষ্কার, পক্ষীবিদ্যার ইতিহাসে এক যুগান্তকারী ঘটনা তো বটেই। যদিও পাখিটি তিন দশক আগে পুনরায় আবিষ্কার হয়েছিল, তবে এটি সম্পর্কে খুব বেশি জানা যায়নি। ১৯৮৬ সালে এই পাখিটি পুনঃআবিষ্কৃত না হওয়া অবধি তা বিলুপ্ত বলেই ধরা হয়ে ছিল। তারপর থেকে

অনেক গবেষণা সত্ত্বেও অধরাই রয়ে গেছে।

বছরের পর বছর ধরে বোম্বে ন্যাচারাল হিস্ট্রি সোসাইটির একজন বিজ্ঞানী এম. ভি. জগন্নাধাম এই পাখির খোঁজে নিরলস অনুসন্ধান করে চলেছেন। সালাম একজন পরিবেশ বিজ্ঞানী যিনি বিলুপ্ত পাখি খুঁজে পাওয়ার চেষ্টায় ছিলেন; ১৯৩২ সালে হায়দ্রাবাদের একটি পক্ষীবিদ্যা সংস্থাও একটি সমীক্ষা পরিচালনা করেছিলো, কিন্তু সেই প্রচেষ্টা বৃথা যায়।

পরবর্তীতে ১৯৭৫-৭৬ সালে বোম্বে ন্যাচারাল হিস্ট্রি সোসাইটি, ওয়ার্ল্ড ওয়াইল্ডলাইফ এবং ভারত সরকার মিলিতভাবে অনুসন্ধান শুরু করে, কিন্তু পাখিটিকে খুঁজে পাওয়া যায়নি। আবার ১৮৮১ সালে ভারত সরকার পাখিটিকে খুঁজে বের করার জন্য একটি অনুসন্ধান অভিযান শুরু করে ও ভারত ভূমণকে (যিনি গ্রেট ইন্ডিয়ান বাসটার্ডের গবেষণায় জড়িত ছিলেন) দায়িত্ব দেওয়া হয়, কিন্তু তিনিও ব্যর্থ হন।

কাদাপা বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা রবীন্দ্র দামু বলেছেন যে ভারতের কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার এই প্রজাতির গবেষণার জন্য ৫০ লাখ টাকা মঞ্জুর করেছে। এই অর্থ পরিবেশে পাখির গতিবিধি বোঝার জন্য আরও উন্নত সিসিটিভি ক্যামেরা এবং সাউন্ড রেকর্ডার বসানোর কাজে ব্যবহার করা হবে।

২০১৯ এর ২৯শে ডিসেম্বর বিজ্ঞানী এম. ভি. জগন্নাধাম এই পাখির ডাক রেকর্ড করার পর তা বিশ্লেষণ করে সিদ্ধান্তে পৌঁছাইলেন যে শব্দটি কোর্সারের ছিল।



Picture taken from Wikipedia.*

অত্যন্ত সংকটগ্রস্থ প্রজাতি

কোর্সার হল একটি পাখি যাকে IUCN লাল তালিকায় অত্যন্ত সংকটগ্রস্থ প্রজাতি হিসাবে শ্রেণীবদ্ধ করা হয়েছে (বার্ডলাইফ ইন্টারন্যাশনাল ২০১০) কারণ এটির সংখ্যা ক্রম হ্রাসমান বলে মনে করা হয়। এটি ভারতীয় বন্যপ্রাণী (সুরক্ষা) আইন ১৯৭২-এর তফসিলভুক্ত এবং ভারত সরকারের জাতীয় বন্যপ্রাণী অ্যাকশন প্ল্যান (২০০২-২০১৬) এর অধীনে অগ্রাধিকারমূলক প্রজাতি হিসাবে বিবেচিত হয়।

সংরক্ষণ প্রচেষ্টা

কোর্সার এখনও থাকতে পারে কারণ পূর্ব ঘাটের অনেক সম্ভাব্য উপযুক্ত এলাকা এখনও সমীক্ষা করা হয়নি। দীর্ঘমেয়াদি গবেষণার উপর ভিত্তি করে এবং অন্ধপ্রদেশের বন বিভাগকে যুক্ত করে ২০১০ সালে একটি প্রজাতি পুনরুদ্ধার পরিকল্পনা তৈরি করা হয়েছিল।

এই পুনরুদ্ধার পরিকল্পনার প্রধান উদ্দেশ্য হল এই প্রজাতির বাসস্থান ভালোভাবে সুরক্ষিত ও যথাযথভাবে পরিচালিত হয় তা নিশ্চিত করা। এর পরিচিত পরিসরের বাইরে সম্ভাব্য উপযুক্ত এলাকা সনাক্ত করা এবং সেখানে তা আছে কিনা দেখা। ভবিষ্যতে এদের সংখ্যা ও আবাসস্থলগুলির পরিবর্তন খুঁজে বের করা, সংরক্ষণ প্রচেষ্টা এবং পর্যবেক্ষণ সমর্থন করার জন্য গবেষণা করা। সংরক্ষণ বিষয়ক সচেতনতা বাড়াতে এবং স্থানীয় জনসাধারণের মধ্যে সংরক্ষণের ইতিবাচক প্রভাব রয়েছে কিনা নিশ্চিত করা। এই উদ্দেশ্যগুলি পূরণের জন্য অন্ধপ্রদেশ বনবিভাগ কিছু কার্যক্রম শুরু করেছে - যেমন এই পাখির উপস্থিতি জানার জন্য ক্যামেরা ট্র্যাপিংয়ের মাধ্যমে পর্যবেক্ষণ, সাধারণ জনগণের জন্য প্রকৃতি তথ্য ও প্রশিক্ষণ

কেন্দ্র স্থাপন, বন কর্মীদের সমীক্ষার কৌশল ও আবাসস্থলের উপযুক্ত ব্যবস্থাপনার বিষয়ে প্রশিক্ষণ, বাসস্থান পর্যবেক্ষণ এবং ম্যাপিং, কাঁটায়ুক্ত ঝোপ জঙ্গলের পুনরুদ্ধার করতে বিদেশি গাছের, যেমন ইউক্যালিপটাস ও অন্যান্য, অপসারণ ইত্যাদি। বিজ্ঞানীরা এদের বংশ বৃদ্ধির জন্য কৃত্রিম উপায়ে ডিম ফোটানোর সিদ্ধান্ত নেন, কিন্তু বন্য পরিবেশে এদের ডিম খুঁজে পাওয়া যাচ্ছে না।

যাহোক একটা জিনিষ পরিস্কার যে নিবিড়, সমন্বিত পরিকল্পনার মাধ্যমে সরকার যদি এদের আবাসস্থল পুনরুদ্ধার করে কোর্সার রক্ষার দ্রুত পদক্ষেপ না নেয়, তাহলে এই মূল্যবান প্রজাতিটি যা হারিয়ে যাওয়ার ঝুঁকিতে আছে, তা হয়তো এবার চিরতরে বিলুপ্ত হয়ে যাবে। এই প্রজাতিটির হারিয়ে যাওয়া ও খুঁজে পাওয়ার গল্পটির উপসংহারে এসে বলা যায় - এরা কি চিরতরে বিলুপ্ত হয়ে গেছে, নাকি একদিন আবার পরিবেশে ফিরে আসবে - এখনও তা এক চরম রহস্য।

***No good photo is available for this extremely rare bird.**

তথ্যসূত্র

1. Ali, Salim. Whistler, H. (1934) "The Hyderabad State Ornithological Survey" J. Bombay Natural History Society, 37(2) pp.425-454
2. Bird Life International (2017), [Amended version of 2016 assessment] "Rhinoptilus bitorquatus", IUCN Red List of threatened species, 2017.
3. Bhusan, B. (1986) "Rediscovery of the Jerdon's Coursers." Bombay Natural History Society, 83, pp.1-14.
4. Jaganathan, P., Wotton, S.R. (2004) "The first recording of calls of Jerdon's Coursers" 'Rhinoptilus bitorquatus', Bombay Natural History Society, 101, pp.26-28.
5. Jaganathan, P., AR., Rahaman, R.E. Green, K. Norris, IN. Vogiatzakis, C. Bowden & Debbie Pain (2008): "Qualification of threats and suggested ameliorative measure for the conservation of the critically endangered of Jerdon's Coursers and its habitat" Journal Bombay Natural History Society, 105(1), pp.73-83.
6. Jerdon, T.C. "The Birds of India," Vol.3, Calcutta, Printed for the Author by the Ministry of Orphan press pp 628-629.
7. Knox, Allen G. (2014) "The first egg of Jerdon's Coursers" 'Rhinoptilus bitorquatus and review of the early records of this specie', Archives of Natural History 41(1) pp.75-93
8. Ripley, AG, B.M. Beehler (1989) "Systematics of biogeography and conservation of Jerdon's Coursers" 'Rhinoptilus bitorquatus' Journal of the Yamashima Institute for Ornithology. 21 (2), pp.165-174.

About Author

বিশ্বরঞ্জন গোস্বামী,

বিজ্ঞান লেখক। সদস্য, জীব বৈচিত্র্য সংরক্ষণ একাডেমি, কলকাতা

যোগাযোগের ঠিকানাঃ বিশ্ব রঞ্জন গোস্বামী, পিয়ারলেস প্রান্তিক হাউসিং কমপ্লেক্স, ব্লক নম্বর -ই-০১, ফ্ল্যাট নম্বর-৩০৪, পোঃ সোনারপুর, জেলা - দক্ষিণ

২৪ পরগনা, পিন কোড-৭০০১৫০, মোবাইল নম্বর ৯৪৩২২৩১৫৬, ইমেল goswamibiswaranjan@gmail.com



SOARING HIGH : SCHOOL OF BIRDS ROUNDUP

TITASH CHAKRABARTI & ANANDARUP BHADRA

BWS - SCHOOL OF BIRDS

“School of birds” is our flagship initiative for spreading awareness at the school level through DIY workshops, games, quizzes & creative arts in the classroom as well as observation and study of birds in the field.

From the period of April to August 2024, we have had active participation in collaboration with various Institutions as encapsulated below;



FLASH QUIZ in progress with children of Kolkata Primary School Council, Circle II. We thank Early Bird for providing us with engaging educational material.

Sr No	Name of Institution	No. of children	Contact hours	Children-contact hours
1	Kalikapur Refugee Free Primary School	160	1	160
2	Children's Welfare Association High School For Girls', Sarsuna	49	7	343
3	Sushila Birla Girls' School	31	3	93
4	Kolkata Primary School Council, Circle II	58	2	116
Total		349	23	862

KALIKAPUR REFUGEE FREE PRIMARY SCHOOL

We have worked with batches of children at KRFPs over the years. This year we participated in a reading festival held at the school in January. The children put up the learning material during an exhibition for the school's Golden jubilee celebration on April 1st, 2024.



Bilingual infographic on backyard birds of Kolkata.

CHILDREN'S WELFARE ASSOCIATION, SARSUNA



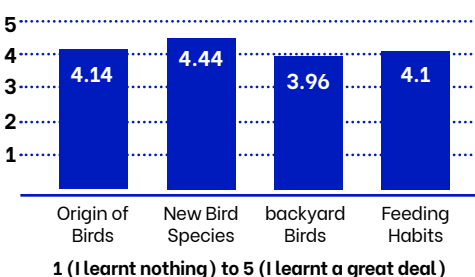
Artwork on feeding habits of birds by the children of CWA, Sarsuna.

We are currently working with the children of 8th standard on a year-long program starting from April 2024. We have focussed our work on indoor sessions during the peak summer and ongoing monsoon seasons. We are looking forward to take the children outdoors during the later part of the course.

SUSHILA BIRLA GIRLS' SCHOOL

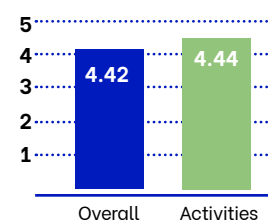
Our ongoing venture with the children of the Nature Club at SBGS, Kolkata has also been confined indoors because of inclement weather. However, this has not dampened the enthusiasm of the children whose feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Rate how much you learnt



1 (I learnt nothing) to 5 (I learnt a great deal)

Rate your engagement



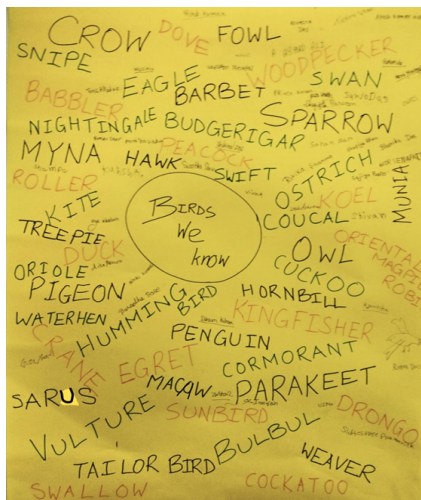
1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent)

Here are some words from the children which have particularly touched us.

my experience regarding the two sessions have been very informative and eye-opening. These two sessions have given me very profound knowledge regarding birds- their origin and habits etc. overall, I highly recommend any nature lover to attend these sessions and participate equally. No suggestions explanations were very clear and was engaging

I was not really interested in birds earlier. Honestly, this workshop has helped me know more about birds. From learning the different ^{type} of species to making the bird feeders, everything was very interesting. Thankyou for giving us this opportunity to learn.

KOLKATA PRIMARY SCHOOL COUNCIL, CIRCLE II



A knowledge sharing activity from the workshop where the children enumerated the birds they are familiar with. They particularly enjoyed signing their names on this sheet.

This has by far been the biggest event of our calendar for this term where we collaborated with the SI of schools, Circle II to host a workshop on backyard birds with representatives (1 teacher and 1 student) from 58 primary schools.

The teachers sent us video feedback with words of encouragement and appreciation. Despite this being a multilingual group, they were pleasantly surprised that language did not become a barrier during the workshop. They were also happy with the uninhibited participation from the children and many of them recognised that this is a crucial first step towards sensitizing children to the natural world. SI of schools, Swati Ghosh has invited us to continue the work with the children in the coming months and years.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COLLABORATIVE BIRD MONITORING - KOLKATA

PRIYAM CHATTOPADHYAY

INTRODUCTION

eBird is an online database of bird observation providing scientists, researchers and amateur naturalists with real-time data about bird distribution and abundance. The eBird India portal is managed by Bird Count India, a partnership of a large number of organizations and groups working to increase our collective understanding of the distribution, abundance, and population trends of Indian birds. The effectiveness of the data in eBird India Portal contributing to long-term trends on bird species and habitats is monitored by a large group of enthusiastic volunteers who pro-actively participate in the reviewing of the quality of these data, media and location information that finally make it to the curated data-set for scientific monitoring of bird species and their habitats in India. Bird Count India has been hosting several meets in the past few years to bring reviewers from across the country to a single place and discuss about future prospects of betterment and fine-tuning of gaps in the of the review process.

THE KOLKATA MEET

The National Conference on Collaborative Bird Monitoring-Kolkata is one of those in-person meeting initiatives fuelled by Bird Count India but for the very first time in the country, has been hosted completely by a non-profit organization: the Birdwatchers' Society (BWS) at Newtown, Kolkata for two days spanning over 20 to 21 July 2024.

52 eBird editors and Regional Coordinators from the Bird Count India collective attended the physical





conference, representing 17 states and 1 union territory. This turnout constituted 75% of all states that currently have eBird editors.

The purpose of the meet was to create a social connect between the reviewers of the country, bridge gaps and train reviewers effectively to review and collectively improve eBird data quality through peer experience sharing and practical scenarios, bring birding perspectives in different parts of the country into one picture and create plans for long-term monitoring and conservation efforts through different initiatives.

THE EVENT

The event was moderated by Bird Count India Collective and included an ice-breaking session between the newly introduced reviewers from different parts of the country, a session on the effective ways of reviewing data on eBird. Teams were formed to brainstorm on different challenges that come up in the bird-watching landscape in different parts of the country and prepare presentations on them. The second day of the conference involved the same teams brainstorming possible solutions for those listed challenges and were required to present them before the participants. The members from the Bird Count India Collective then synthesized the most relevant and talked about issues from these presentations and welcomed volunteers to be part of different initiatives that would be carried out year-long and country-wide for the betterment and enablement of bird-watching across the country which in turn would serve for a better way of long-term monitoring of birds in the country.



CONCLUSION

As the reviewers from across the country off-boarded this exciting two day conference, they all looked forward to another such meet up and thanked the Bird Count India Collective and the Birdwatchers' Society (BWS) for hosting such a warm celebration and interaction of bird-watchers, scientists, citizen-scientists and naturalists who are tirelessly volunteering to contribute to long-term conservation by ensuring quality of data and better engagement and participation from birdwatchers across the country.

For further details, please visit

<https://birdcount.in/bird-monitoring-workshop-kolkata-july2024/>



BWS ACTIVITIES



Guests are showing SolB Poster

BENGAL BIRDERS' MEET

22 July 2024

Birders and nature lovers of diverse feathers flocked to Kolkata to celebrate the first-ever Bengal Birders' Meet on 22nd July 2024. Although the cloudy Monday morning cast a gloomy shadow over the city, it could not deter the arrival of birders from various parts of the state. All flyways converged at the main auditorium of the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre (EZCC), and our esteemed guests graced the occasion with their august presence.

The programme started as scheduled, with a short introduction by the emcee, Ms Hiya Chatterjee. Wildlife and conservation is a vast subject with many variations. Accordingly, the Birdwatchers' Society felt it necessary to adorn the stage with luminaries holding eminent positions in various departments of the Ministry of Environment and other nature organizations. The honoured list of dignitaries for the occasion included:

- ✓ Mr. Niraj Singal, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and Head of Forest Force
- ✓ Dr. Debal Roy, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and Chief Wildlife Warden
- ✓ Dr. Dhriti Banerjee, Director, Zoological Survey of India
- ✓ Ms. Saswati Sen, WB State Director, World Wildlife Fund For Nature
- ✓ Mr. Subhankar Sengupta, Director, Kolkata Zoological Garden
- ✓ Mr. Praveen J, Bird Count India
- ✓ Dr. Ashwin Viswanathan, Bird Count India
- ✓ Mr. Biswapriya Rahut, President, Birdwatchers' Society

The emcee coordinated the felicitation of the guests by members of BWS.

The first session began with a State of India's Birds (SoIB) video screening. The short introduction provoked many thoughts in the audience's mind and paved the way for an interactive presentation on bird monitoring activities. Ms. Mittal Gala, project manager with Bird Count India, started the session with references to birds in folklore, stamps and paintings and connected them to citizen science. She emphasized on the democratization of science with a demonstration of eBird (<https://ebird.org/>). Ms Gala passed the baton to Dr Ashwin Vishwanathan, who explained how eBird works and how it aids in capturing the correct conservation data. A detailed Q&A with a discerning audience resolving their doubts about the eBird review, checklist and filters marked the end of the pre-lunch session.

The post-lunch session carried on the momentum with a presentation on the Birdwatchers' Society given by Dr Kanad Baidya, Assistant Secretary, BWS. It was a mélange of a journey down memory lane and anticipation of the road ahead as Dr Kanad showcased BWS's impact on conservation and nature education. The talk ended on a high, as the final slide spoke of a bird walk conducted by BWS for blind students!

The next topic was an eye-opener on vulture conservation in the country. Ms Malyasri Bhattacharya, a research fellow of the Wildlife Institute of India, is on a mission to conserve the critically endangered White-rumped vultures of Kangra, Himachal Pradesh. Her thought-provoking presentation created a feeling of impending doom about the existence of vultures, whose population had reduced by 99% in the wild since the mid-1990s due to the usage of the veterinary drug 'diclofenac'. Malyasri's talk highlighted the immense efforts initiated in identifying safe zones for vultures to

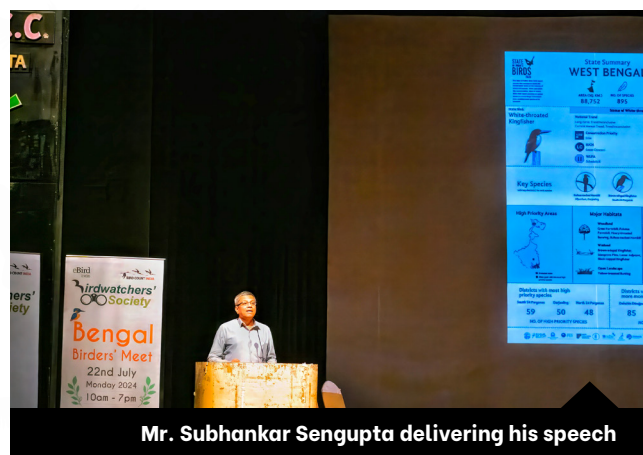


revive them from the brink of extinction.

"A journey of a thousand begins with a single step," so goes the Chinese proverb. With the myriad small steps towards conservation showcased in the Meet until then, it was time to announce a somewhat more significant step. Mr. Praveen J, a citizen scientist with the Nature Conservation Foundation, took the audience through the Bird Atlas of the Kerala. He also announced the launch of the forthcoming initiative by BWS to build the Bird Monitoring Atlas for West Bengal!

So, what would the Bird Atlas of West Bengal look like? Ms Tumpa Bhattacharya's presentation of the sample website of the Bengal Bird Atlas somewhat satisfied the audience's curiosity and inquisitiveness.

The following presentation justified why a Bird Atlas is the need of the hour for West Bengal. The SoIB report for West Bengal painted a gloomy picture of some high-priority birds like the Bristled Grassbird, Indian Spotted



Eagle, Rufous-necked Hornbill, and Indian Roller or Neelkantho, among others. As a famous historical character remarked, “One death is a tragedy; one million is a statistic.” Likewise, the vanishing of millions of birds would eventually become a mere statistic in our ever-progressing nation.

The final presentation was a journey of rescue and rehabilitation as if to put a silver lining to the cloud and convey that hope springs eternal. Mr. Chitrak Pramanik shared his story of fighting all odds to rescue birds from various accidents, rehabilitate them, and release them back into the wild.

The concluding speech by the Secretary of BWS drew the eventful day to a close. The first-ever Bengal Birders’ Meet was a resounding success! It gave us the much-needed energy to continue our journey to create a safer planet for our feathered friends.



Bird count drops, call to save habitats

SUBHARJO ROY

India: The Indian rufous (Shikhar) and the Cuckoo have the least at globally but their numbers are declining in Bengal. In contrast, representing a high priority bird species, the Indian rufous is a Bengal resident.

These were some of the findings of a bird count in the city on Monday. A set of bird count data was also released.

The birdwatchers also noted the key factors to save a bird atlas for the city. The atlas will have information on what is going wrong where and in, factoring in the seasonality.

The population of the Indian rufous, or Shikhar, is declining. There are sightings of these birds in the city. The report also noted the key factors to save a bird atlas for the city. The atlas will have information on what is going wrong where and in, factoring in the seasonality.

South 24 Parganas is a bird hotspot. It is considered as one of the best places for birdwatching in the country. The report also noted the key factors to save a bird atlas for the city. The atlas will have information on what is going wrong where and in, factoring in the seasonality.

High priority birds are those with a declining status or a small distribution range. The report also noted the key factors to save a bird atlas for the city. The atlas will have information on what is going wrong where and in, factoring in the seasonality.

Public notice: The report also noted the key factors to save a bird atlas for the city. The atlas will have information on what is going wrong where and in, factoring in the seasonality.

S and N 24 Pgns, Darj have most bird species with declining population trend

Krishnendu Mukherjee
@timesofindia.com

Kolkata: South 24 Parganas, Darjeeling and North 24 Parganas have the most number of high-priority bird species in Bengal. The state is home to 895 bird species, spread over 88,752 square kilometres, said the Bengal data of State of India's Bird (SOIB) Report, 2023, that was released during the Bengal Birders' Meet in the city on Monday. It was also announced that this winter, the state may kick off a project to map distribution and abundance of birds for the first time to prepare a bird atlas.

According to the SOIB report, baya weaver (baya tanti), pied cuckoo (chatak) and house sparrow numbers are declining in Bengal compared to the national trend over the last eight years.

"While South 24 Parganas

BENGAL HIGHLIGHTS

> 895 species in 88,752 sq-km habitat

> S 24 Pgns, N 24 Pgns, Darj have most high-priority species, like brown-winged kingfisher, rufous-necked hornbill & great parrotbill

> Baya weaver, pied cuckoo & house sparrow populations declining compared to national trend



Brown-winged kingfisher

has 59 high-priority species, Darjeeling has 50 and North 24 Parganas has 48," the report said. High-priority species are those whose population shows a trend of decline during the exercise.

However, Ashwin Vishwanathan of Nature Conservation Foundation's (NCF) bird monitoring team said the baya weaver, pied cuckoo and house sparrow are not on the priority list in Bengal as they still have a large and diverse

range across India.

The report also highlighted district-wise high-priority species, like brown-winged kingfisher in South 24 Parganas, rufous-necked hornbill in Alipurduar and Darjeeling and the great parrotbill in Darjeeling. According to the report, North and South Dinajpur and Cooch Behar need more birding as the lowest number of bird lists were uploaded from there.

Talking about the bird at-

las, Birdwatchers' Society (BWS) secretary Sujan Chatterjee said the initiative is likely to span three years and will focus on covering at least 50% of the habitat across the state by then.

The state will be divided into 6-km grids, each segmented into 36 sub-grids of 1 sq-km. These sub-cells will be monitored four times annually, in summer, monsoon, winter and spring, to map the nature of habitats and record bird species found in them, said Chatterjee on the sidelines of the meet, a collaborative effort by Birdwatchers' Society, eBird and Bird Count India.

According to Praveen J of NCF's bird monitoring team, each sub-grid will be surveyed with a focus on recording the species, their migratory or passage migratory status, and whether they are juvenile or breeding.

15:01 Bengal Birders' Meet 22nd Ju...
Partha, Pijush Hazra, Pramit, Priyam,...

~ Devil's Advo...

Sujan Chatterjee
Dear Birders, It gave us immense pleasure on our part (TEAM BWS) to host you at the...

Sujan da, the onus of thanks giving also lies upon us too.

it was brilliantly spread out, excellent speakers, informative sessions and a ever enriching experience.

Thank you and the entire BWS family members and the audience. a special thanks for delicious food and arrangements from PENTAX.

Proposal.
pls try to host it in and around central Kolkata in that case it would be little travel efficient.

5

15:01 Bengal Birders' Meet 22nd Ju...
Partha, Pijush Hazra, Pramit, Priyam,...

noted...

~ Bholnath M...

অত্যন্ত মনোগ্রাহী প্রোগ্রাম অনুদান করলাম, আমার খুবই ভালো লেগেছে। তবে এই ধরনের কোন অনুষ্ঠান হলে আমাকে একটু বলায় সুযোগ দিলে কৃতার্থ হব। পাখি কিভাবে চিনবেন এই সংক্রান্ত একটি ভিডিও আছে সেটি উপস্থাপনা করতে পারলে সবার কিছু হলেও উপকারে আসবে বলে মনে করি, ধন্যবাদ। আর একটি বিষয় এই গ্রুপে আমাকে সংযুক্ত করার জন্যে অসংখ্য ধন্যবাদ। এডমিন দের কাছে অনুমতি চাইছি এই গ্রুপে কি কোন পাখির ছবি পোস্ট করা যেতে পারে??? জানালে ধন্য হব।

07:11

Madhumita Bishnu BWS

It was an excellent programme and thank you BWS for conducting such a learning experience

08:34

~ Anindya

It was a great experience to share thoughts and gain some insights about the SOIB project and Bird Atlas. Thanks to BWS for organizing it, looking forward for more such initiatives.

09:43

BWS – North Bengal Update

A Capacity Building Program was organized by the Airavat Trust in collaboration with the School of Birds (Birdwatchers' Society), across multiple dates and locations in July and August 2024.

Fulbari Tea Garden (31st July, 4th August, 21st August)

- Focused on students from Khoribari Upper Primary School and the Baghjhola line of Thanjhora Tea Garden.
- The program aimed to raise awareness about wildlife trafficking, particularly bird poaching, which has led to arrests in the region.
- Interactive sessions covered bird identification, wildlife trafficking, and local wildlife such as snakes.



- A total of 40+ participants, including children from class 4–6, attended over three days.
- Games like “Habitat Encroachment” and “Food Chain” were played, and an art competition was organized.
- Bird identification books were distributed to over 36 students, and local tea garden stakeholders were engaged.



Potong High School, Lohagarh, Mirik Block (23rd August)

- Attended by students from Lohagarh, Hilley Jhora, Potong, Katariya, and Chenga, focusing on wildlife education for class 8–12 students.
- Topics included bird identification, the impact of climate change, and environmental hazards like high-tension power lines affecting migratory birds.

- Specific bird species discussed included the Black-headed Ibis, Yellow-breasted Bunting, and Rufous-necked Hornbill, among others.
- Elephants were also a focus, with discussions on human-elephant conflict and the importance of elephants in forest ecosystems.
- The program concluded with a quiz and games, with 50 pocket guides distributed to students.

The initiative highlighted the interconnection between species and ecosystems, emphasizing education on wildlife conservation.

Volunteers – Akash Munda, C K Chhetri, Dr. Anjan Kumar Das, Avijan Saha

Heronry Count

Bird Count at the Mixed Heronry in Naxalbari, Darjeeling (9th July 2024)

Airavat Trust has been conducting Heronry count and monitoring their regular movement pattern in around Darjeeling terai landscape for the last five years. Birdwatchers Society has been supporting this initiative since last two years. This scientific endeavour is to unravel various unknown fact about these last strong hold population around North Western Himalayan foothills.



(Black-headed Ibis)

IUCN Status - **Near Threatened**

Congested colonies they are made for raise their generation. Occasionally with other herons, egrets, cormorants etc. Their number is decreasing due to several challenges. One of the biggest is encroachment, absence of nesting trees, occupied foraging zone, pollution, climate change etc.

Colonies in Darjeeling Terai -

Maniram (Indo-Nepal Border) - 220-250 (Apprx)
 Bagdogra Surrounding - 25-35 (Approx)
 Phansidewa Block - 20-30 (Approx)
 Mantadhari - 15-25 (Approx)



This report highlights the observations of 09 July 2024 between 3.30 PM to 5.30 PM.

There's a small isolated population around North Bengal landscape within Mechi to Sankosh river. However, we do not know how many, or their regular nesting side around the landscape. This project carries the science and technology to understand their population estimation and movement pattern around the landscape.

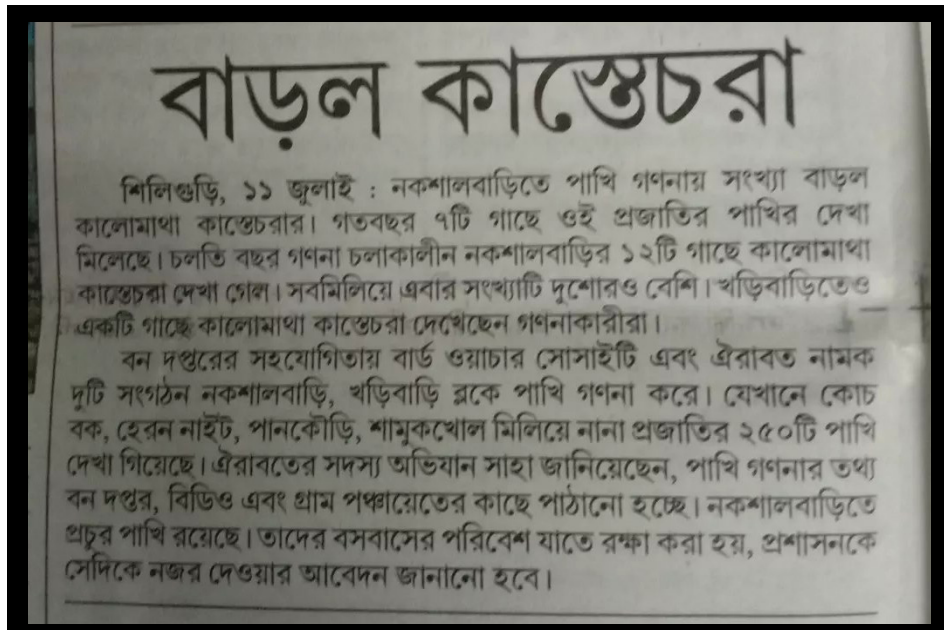
Prepared by: Airavat Trust, Siliguri

Observers: Avijan Saha, Dr. Anjan Kumar Das

Location: Two areas near Naxalbari Bazar (26° 40' 57.72" N, 88° 13' 12.04" E)

Location 1	Location 2
Little Cormorant: 26	Little Cormorant: 6
Black-crowned Night Heron: 19	Black-crowned Night Heron: 69
Little Egret: 9	Little Egret: 38
Eastern Cattle Egret: 11	Eastern Cattle Egret: 5
Intermediate Egret: 27	Intermediate Egret: 41
Black-headed Ibis: 119	Black-headed Ibis: 77
Red-naped Ibis: 4	
House Crow: 11	

The bird count was conducted at two mixed heronry locations near Naxalbari Bazar. Both areas featured a combination of banyan, peepal, and mango trees, which provided nesting sites for various bird species. The survey revealed a significant presence of Black-headed Ibises, with a total count of 196 individuals across both locations, as well as other common heronry species.



BWS ACTIVITIES

Student's Health Home Advocacy Network for Resource Generation from E-generation (SHHAN-REE)

Dr Kanad Baidya was invited as a resource person for SHHAN-REE camp at Kolkata on 11 August 2024 to deliver an awareness session on 'Bird & Biodiversity'.

The Students Health Home Advocacy Network for Bird and Biodiversity, a unique initiative combining health and environmental advocacy, organized a two-day camp for college and university students on 10th and 11th August, 2024. The camp was held at the Moulali hospital premises and focussed on raising awareness about birds and biodiversity while also promoting student health and well-being. Participants engaged in interactive sessions during the camp. The event aimed to foster a deeper understanding of environmental stewardship among the youth while addressing the importance of sustainable health practices. The program was attended by over 80 students from 25 colleges. The students were drawn from various locations across West Bengal.



FRESH & RARE ARRIVALS

PRIYAM CHATTOPADHYAY

During the period spanning from June to mid-August 2024, our community of birders remained active and enthusiastic. Their passion and dedication towards this beloved pastime was quite evident. Notably, the migration has already started and avian friends are reaching Indian sub-continent in numbers.

Here is the list of the stop-over guests that enthralled us.

2024 Arrivals - June-July-Aug (till 15th)

Sr No	BIRD SPECIES	LOCN - 1	LOCN - 2	SIGHTING DATES
01	Rufous-necked Hornbill	Latpanchar, Darjeeling	Latpanchar, Darjeeling	01 June, 13 August 2024
02	Bristled Grassbird	Baruipur, South 24 Parganas	Sadarghat, Purba Bardhaman	05 June, 13 August 2024
03	Great Parrotbill	Senchal Wildlife Sanctuary, Darjeeling	Senchal Wildlife Sanctuary, Darjeeling	16 June 2024
04	Rusty-bellied Shortwing	Lava, Kalimpong		9 April, 2024
05	Chestnut-capped Babbler	Nayachak, Howrah	Sundarban Tiger Reserve, South 24 Parganas	26 June , 19 July 2024
06	Malayan Night Heron	Buxa Tiger Reserve, Alipurduar		02 July 2024
07	Goliath Heron	Sundarban Tiger Reserve, South 24 Parganas		03 July 2024
08	Blue-naped Pitta	Mahananda WLS, Darjeeling		21 July 2024
09	Pin-tailed Snipe	Rajarhat, North 24 Parganas		21 July 2024
10	Green Sandpiper	Rajarhat, North 24 Parganas		21 July 2024
11	Sirkeer Malkoha	Biharinath Hill, Bankura		22 July 2024
12	Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo	Garh Jungle, Durgapur	Biharinath Hill, Bankura	13 May 2024 , 22 July 2024
13	Black-backed Dwarf Kingfisher	Sepoydhura Tea Garden, Darjeeling		23 July 2024
14	Brown-winged Kingfisher	Sundarban Tiger Reserve, South 24 Parganas	Sundarban Tiger Reserve, South 24 Parganas	25 July , 11 August 2024
15	Streaked Weaver	Nabadwip, Nadia		28 July 2024
16	Great Knot	Meidinagar, Purba Medinipur		04 August 2024
17	Ruddy Kingfisher	Sundarban Tiger Reserve, South 24 Parganas		09 August 2024

Sr No	BIRD SPECIES	LOCN - 1	LOCN - 2	SIGHTING DATES
18	Lesser Frigatebird	Tajpur, Purba Medinipur		10 August 2024
19	Spotted Elachura	Mulkharka, Kalimpong		10 August 2024
20	Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo	Nurbang, Darjeeling		11 August 2024
21	Black Francolin	Chharra, Purulia		11 August 2024
22	Jungle bush-Quail	Chharra, Purulia		11 August 2024
23	Mangrove Whistler	Sundarban Tiger Reserve, South 24 Parganas		11 August 2024

Species accorded ' Highest Priority ' for West Bengal as per State of India's Birds (SoiB) Report, 2023



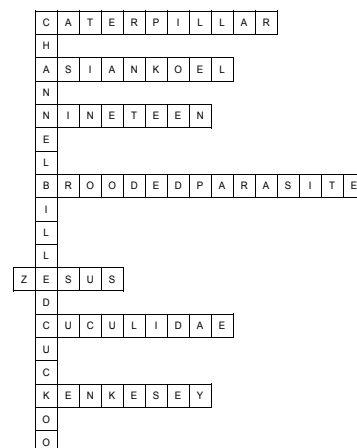
About Author

PRIYAM CHATTOPADHYAY

Priyam Chattopadhyay is an IT Professional based out of Kolkata with a passion for birdwatching & bird photography. Over the last 8 years he has been honing this skill. His special interest is in studying varied bird habitats and bird migration.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

FIND THE CUCKOOS



Across

- 1 Favourite diet of the cuckoo
- 2 This type of cuckoo, unlike most others is frugivorous
- 3 How many types of cuckoos are in India?
- 4 Name for those cuckoo species who don't look after their own eggs
- 5 In Greek mythology, this God transformed himself into a cuckoo to seduce Goddess Hera.
- 6 Name of the cuckoo bird family
- 7 The author of 'One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest'

Down

- 1 Largest cuckoo species in the world

CUCKOO CHRONICLES (Contd.)

BWS MEMBERS' PHOTO-SHOWCASE



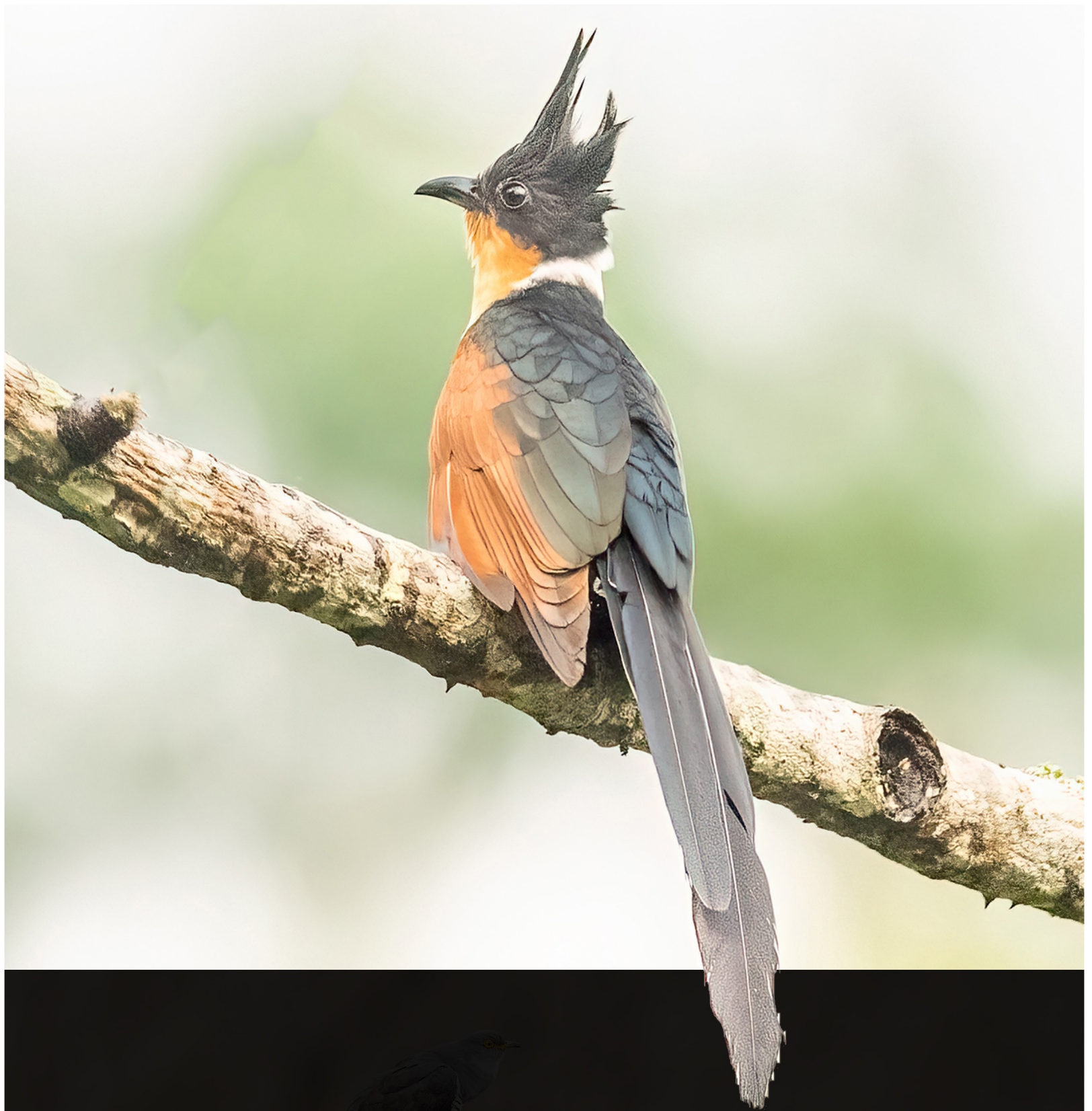
Eurasian Cuckoo by Srijan Roy Choudhury



Banded Bay Cuckoo by Tisha Mukherjee

PERSPECTIVES





Birdwatchers' Society

DB 75, Salt Lake, Kolkata-700064, INDIA

Email: birdwatcherssocietywb@gmail.com

Website: www.birdwatcherssociety.org