



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025





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Antonia M. K.  
moods! moments! melange!

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the annual stock taking exercise of the Birdwatchers' Society for 2024-25.

Over the past year, the Birdwatchers' Society has taken meaningful strides in creating a broader, more inclusive conservation movement. Our endeavours reflect a thriving organisation—strategic in partnerships, ambitious in ideas, and crystal-clear in our mission to cultivate a profound public connection with birds and biodiversity, thus creating an environment of like-minded birding enthusiasts.

The launch of our Pocket Guides, the expansion of citizen science participation, and the evolving West Bengal Checklist are gleaming testaments to this society's growing

relevance and community outreach. As President, I remain steadfast and committed to steering BWS towards a sustainable tomorrow in a manner that not only inspires the next generation but also honours the legacy of those who laid the foundation for what we have today.

Thank you all for your unwavering trust, dynamic energy, and ardent faith which empowers us to soar even higher with every passing year."

*Biswapriya*



Biswapriya Rahut



# PENTAX

BINOCULAR

Since 1938

## NEW A-SERIES AND S-SERIES BINOCULARS

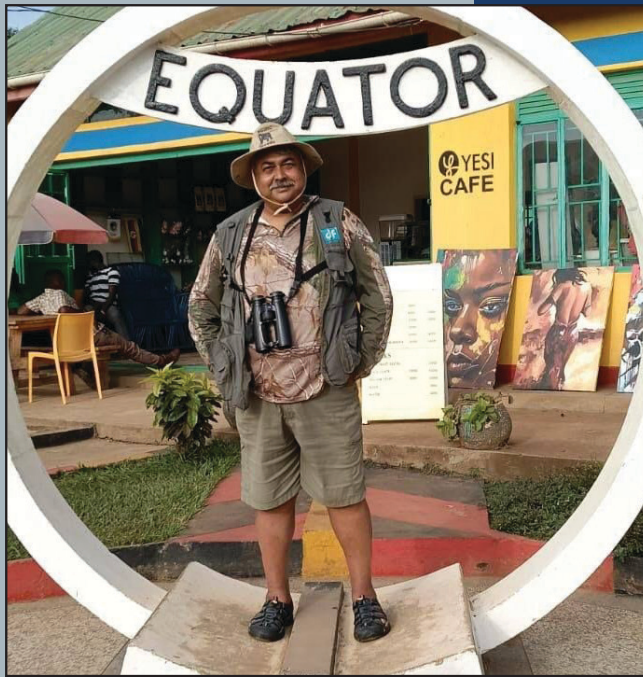
ED (Extra-low Dispersion)  
optical elements deliver a sharp,  
high-contrast, blur-free view.



\* T&C APPLIED



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## SECRETARY'S

### MESSAGE

Sujan Chatterjee

The Birdwatchers' Society has had another successful year. The Year 2024-25 was dedicated to observation, conservation, citizen science and appreciation of avian species.

We have been able to reach a wider audience thanks to the help of our volunteers. Our member strength has increased over the past year, thanks to our senior members, who have created enough enthusiasm that has led to the growth of BWS. “

The society is eternally grateful to all our donors, who have decided to open their purses, which has made many of our endeavours possible.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to all the volunteer members who have tirelessly worked to produce the fantastic quarterly Fantail eNewsletter and keep the website up to date.

I am also indebted to the team that has taken our School of Birds to higher heights.

Lastly, thank you to all members who have remained with the society and shown solidarity, providing support in all our efforts.



# TREASURER'S REPORT

**B.S Parihar**

This year, BWS proudly completes seven years of existence. As we reflect on our journey so far, we also look forward with optimism to greater heights of observation, achievements, and accomplishments in this decade and beyond. What began as a modest gathering of passionate birdwatchers has now transformed into a vibrant movement—thanks to the unwavering enthusiasm, dedication, and active participation of each one of you.

As we continue to expand our horizons—both in reach and impact—it becomes increasingly important to focus on sustainability, ensuring that our organization thrives well beyond our lifetimes and continues to inspire future generations.

The Financial Year 2024–25 has been a truly remarkable one for us—marked by steady growth, strategic initiatives, and responsible governance.

Allow me to begin by presenting a brief overview of the Statements for the Financial Year 2024–25, followed by a few insights into our fiscal plan and vision for the years ahead:

1. During the year, our income from various sources were as under:

a. Subscription received from Members	-	3,13,947.00
b. CSR funds received	-	8,00,000.00
c. Donations received U/S 80G	-	7,00,000.00
d. Interest from Bank	-	42,037.00
e. Funds received for Odisha Annual Camp	-	5,64,192.00
f. Funds received for Bakkhali Coastal Camp	-	61,000.00
g. Funds received from Bengal Birders' Meet	-	1,05,421.00
h. Funds received for Ads. In Newsletter	-	3,00,000.00
		-----
Total		- <b>28,86,597.00</b>
		=====



2. During the same period, the expenditure was as under:

a. CSR Fund Expenses for School of Birds	-	8,04,140.00
b. Bengal Birders' Meet Expenses	-	3,95,978.00
c. Bakkhali Birdwatching Camp Expenses	-	51,000.00
d. Odisha Annual Camp Expenses	-	5,64,510.00
e. Web Portal Maintenance	-	2,66,970.00
f. Printing of Pocket Guides	-	1,07,970.00
g. Fantail Publication	-	55,881.00
h. Hostinger Services (Web Hosting)	-	9,189.00
i. Zoom Subscription	-	16,237.00
j. Office Rent	-	1,80,000.00
k. Office Maintenance	-	3,095.00
l. Annual General Meeting Expenses	-	10,000.00
m. Accounting Charges	-	30,000.00
n. Audit Fees	-	35,000.00
o. Bank Charges	-	166.00
p. Depreciation	-	55,820.00
q. To Excess of Income Over Expenditure	-	3,00,641.00

-----  
Total **28,86,597.00**  
=====

3. An excess of Income over Expenditure of Rs. 3,07,597.00 has been recorded in the books of accounts for the Financial Year 2024-25.

4. In the Balance Sheet for the year ending 31 Mar 2025, we have:

**Assets:**

a. Fixed Assets (Telescopes)	-	6,28,946.00
b. Current Assets (Bank Balance + FD + Cash)	-	6,00,980.00
c. Tax Deducted at Source	-	12,000.00
		-----
		<b>12,41,926.00</b>
		=====

**Liabilities:**

a. Reserves and Surplus	-	8,74,495.00
b. Current Liabilities	-	60,000.00
c. Excess of Income over Expenditure	-	3,07,431.00
		-----
		<b>12,41,926.00</b>
		=====

5. The Provisional Financial Statements for the Financial Year 2024–25 are hereby placed before the AGM for a Vote on Account. The Audited Financial Statements will be incorporated and shared with the members upon receipt of the Auditor's Report.

6. Our popular newsletter, *Fantail*, has now evolved into a fully independent and self-sustaining publication. We are pleased to inform you that dedicated funding for Fantail has been secured through the generous sponsorship of our partner, Ricoh Pentax India Limited.

7. Two recent developments have significantly strengthened our resource base for the current financial year:

a. First, we have entered into a strategic collaboration with the '*School of Birds*', aimed at conducting bird education programmes across schools in West Bengal. The initiative has received overwhelming support from the corporate sector, enabling us to secure sufficient CSR funding to run the programme

successfully throughout this financial year.

b. Second, we have conceptualized the *West Bengal Bird Atlas*—a visionary, long-term initiative expected to span five years. This project will serve as a landmark documentation of bird diversity and distribution across the state.

8. Several other exciting projects are currently in the pipeline. The Executive Committee assures you that members will be kept informed and updated as these initiatives develop and take shape.

*“Like birds that migrate with purpose and unity, we too find success in our shared journeys, guided by vision and lifted by community.”*

*“The natural world is the great equalizer.  
It doesn’t care who you are — only how you behave.”*

— Carl Safina

Ecologist and author of *Beyond Words: What Animals Think and Feel*





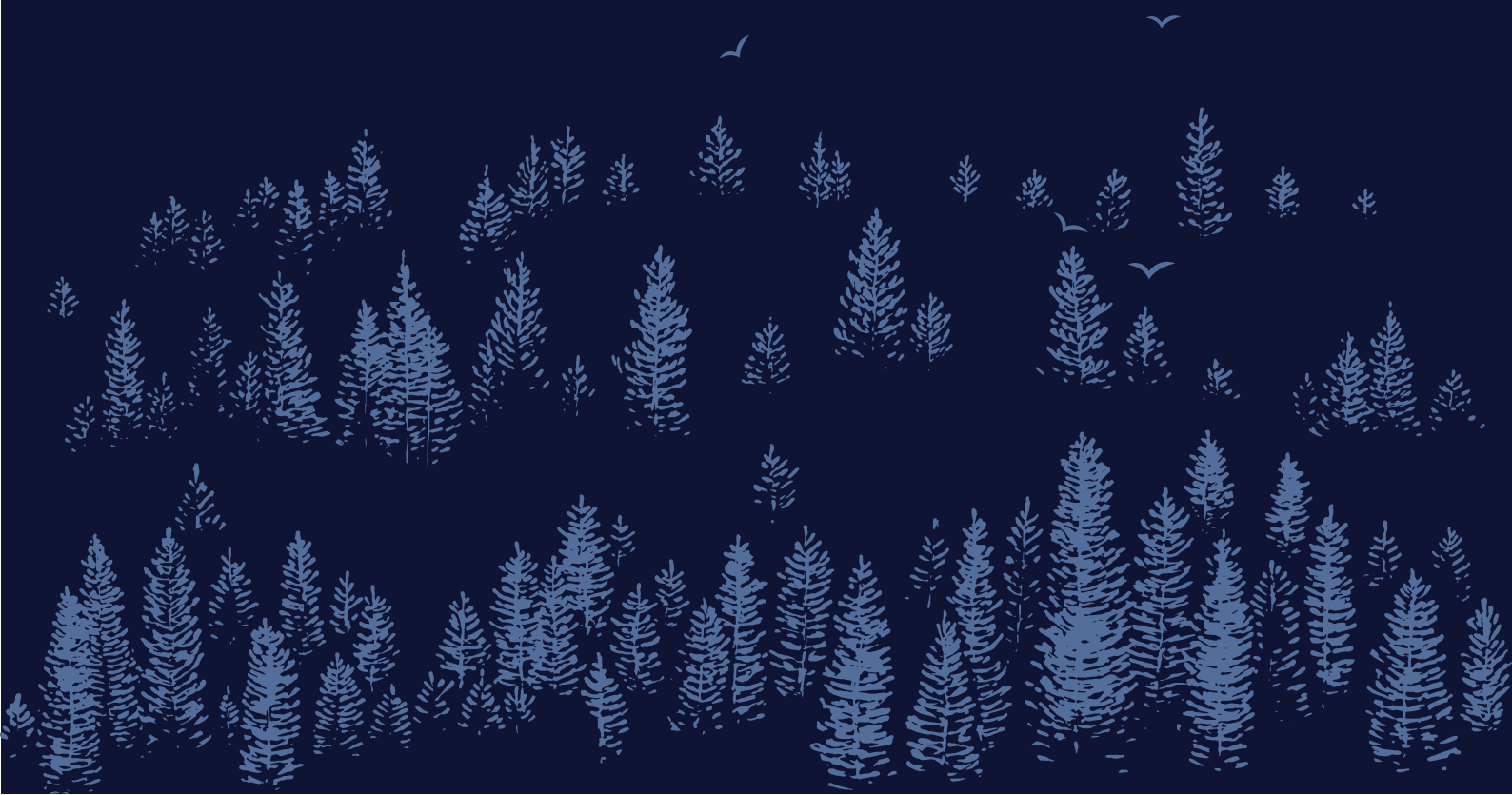
# INTRODUCTION

We are delighted to present the Annual Report of the Birdwatchers' Society for the year 2024–25 - a year that witnessed renewed energy, deeper collaborations, and meaningful strides in our mission to celebrate and conserve birdlife. From vibrant field initiatives to impactful outreach and education, this report captures the spirit and substance of our collective journey.

Over the past year, our members have shown exemplary commitment - championing bird conservation, nurturing curiosity among young learners, and fostering a growing community of mindful nature-watchers. Their passion has helped strengthen citizen science efforts and protect fragile habitats across regions.

We gratefully acknowledge the efforts of all who volunteered their time, shared knowledge, and lent support to our cause. As we celebrate these milestones, we remain equally focused on the path ahead - expanding our reach, deepening partnerships, and inspiring the next generation of birders.

The current Governing Body that was elected during the Annual General Meeting held on September 01, 2024, and has since guided the Society through this dynamic and fulfilling year.



# THE GOVERNING BODY 2024-2025

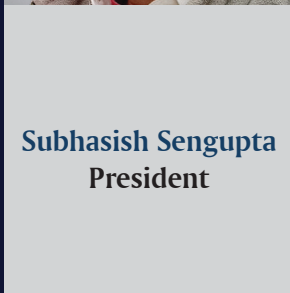
## BIRDWATCHERS' SOCIETY



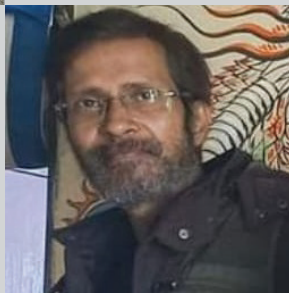
**Biswapriya Raut**  
President



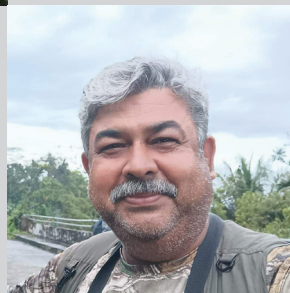
**Santanu Manna**  
Vice President



**Subhasish Sengupta**  
President



**Sujan Chatterjee**  
Secretary



**Dr Kanad Baidya**  
Asst Secretary



**B.S Parihar**  
Treasurer



**Samiran Jha**



**Swarup Sarkar**



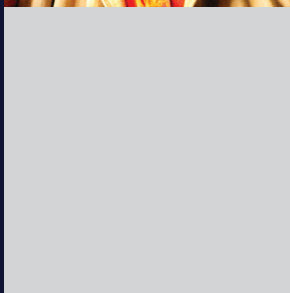
**Mousumi Dutta**



**Pampa Mistri**



**Saptarshi Mukherjee**



# Birdwatchers' Society Annual Report 2024–25

## Summary of Key Highlights and Impact

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### A Year of Firsts, Foundations, and Forward Momentum

The 2024–25 reporting year has been a transformative one for the Birdwatchers' Society (BWS), marked by a renewed commitment to community, science, and outreach. Our efforts this year reflected a clear vision—to build a more inclusive, informed, and interconnected birding community across Bengal and the Northeast.

From launching the first-ever Bengal Birders' Meet to releasing two field guides and updating the Checklist of Birds of West Bengal, our work has been grounded in collaboration, citizen science, and regional pride. These milestones not only showcase our team's resolve but also signal the growing importance of birds in conversations around biodiversity and conservation.

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### The Bengal Birders' Meet – 2024: A New Chapter Begins

The inaugural Bengal Birders' Meet (BBM) held in early 2024 stands as a historic moment in the birding landscape of the region. Conceptualized as a platform to celebrate birding, foster scientific exchange, and inspire collective conservation, BBM brought together seasoned birdwatchers, field biologists, educators, and nature enthusiasts from across Bengal and neighbouring states.

Workshops, panel discussions, poster sessions, and informal baithaks (conversations) created an environment of shared learning and mutual respect. Notably, young birders found a space to present their work, gain visibility, and connect with mentors.

*“BBM felt like coming home to a family of people who truly understand the joy of watching birds and the urgency of protecting their habitats.”*

— Anwesha Das, Student & BWS Young Birder

This meet laid the foundation for what we hope becomes an annual tradition—one that not only documents but shapes the evolving birding narrative in Bengal.

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### Outreach & Partnerships – Building Bridges that Matter

Outreach remained central to our mission in 2024–25. By strengthening alliances with forest departments, academic institutions, student networks, and regional teams (NGOs), we widened our reach and deepened our impact.



Highlights include:

- Collaborative field trips and waterbird counts with local conservation groups.
- Bird & nature awareness programs that included school-level engagements across Malda, Bolpur, Durgapur, Purulia, Bishnupur, Jalpaiguri and North & South 24 Parganas.
- Strategic use of social media and newsletters to amplify citizen voices and sightings.

Our partners have been instrumental in taking birding into new spaces—schools, health advocacy platforms, and tribal youth forums. These efforts demonstrate that birdwatching, when rooted in community, becomes a powerful tool for ecological awareness.

*“It’s amazing how BWS uses birdwatching as a doorway to environmental literacy. The ripple effects of their outreach are visible in classrooms, field stations, and living rooms.”*

— Ranjan Paul, Educator & Conservation Advocate

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### Checklist of Birds of West Bengal – A Scientific and Civic Tool

This year, BWS released the updated and peer-reviewed Checklist of Birds of West Bengal, a document that has both scientific rigour and community contribution at its core.

With verified data from seasoned birders, eBird contributors, and cross-checked records, this checklist now reflects a more accurate picture of avian diversity across the state. It serves as a vital tool for researchers, forest staff, and citizen scientists alike—helping monitor shifts in distribution, habitat preferences, and migratory trends.

*“Checklists aren’t just lists—they are mirrors of our natural world. This one helps us see what’s thriving, what’s missing, and where our efforts must go next.”*

— Dr. Indrani Ghosh, Avian Ecologist

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### Pocket Field Guides – Making Birds Accessible

Two new publications a collaborative effort of BWS and Early Birds hit the field this year:

- Pocket Guide to the Birds of West Bengal
- Pocket Guide to the Birds of Sikkim & North Bengal

Compact, image-rich, and bilingual, these guides are designed for students, first-time birders, and grassroots educators. They’ve already been distributed across schools, forest eco-development committees, and eco-tourism units—bridging the gap between books and the bush.

The field response has been overwhelming, with many reporting that these guides are being used not just during walks, but as teaching aids and local biodiversity references.

**“The joy on a child’s face when they match a bird to the image in the guide—that’s the beginning of something powerful.”**

— Chandan Deb, BWS Volunteer & School of Birds Facilitator

## Looking Ahead

As we close this eventful year, the road ahead is filled with promise—and responsibility. The climate crisis, habitat loss, and changing migration patterns all call for renewed action. With our growing community, strong network of partners, and deep-rooted love for birds, BWS is poised to meet these challenges with creativity, courage, and compassion.

**LET 2025–26 BE THE YEAR  
WE FLY HIGHER—TOGETHER.**





## ACTIONS & OUTCOMES 2024 -25

The year 2024 - 25 marked a significant phase of growth and consolidation for the Birdwatchers' Society (BWS). In the sections that follow, we have detailed a wide spectrum of initiatives, partnerships, and field actions that reflect our evolving journey. Compared to the previous year, we have not only taken major strides but have done so with greater clarity of purpose, sharper focus, and renewed intensity.

Our actions this year have been more structured, impact-driven, and inclusive - anchored in our vision to blend citizen science with conservation outreach. With a steadily growing and increasingly diverse membership, BWS has expanded its geographical footprint across districts and landscapes, embracing both urban habitats and remote natural ecosystems.

A defining feature of **this year has been our ability to harness the power of collaboration - be it with academic institutions, grassroots collectives, government bodies, or like-minded organisations.** At the same time, we've embraced technology as an enabler - whether for documenting bird data, conducting surveys, or automating our membership management system..

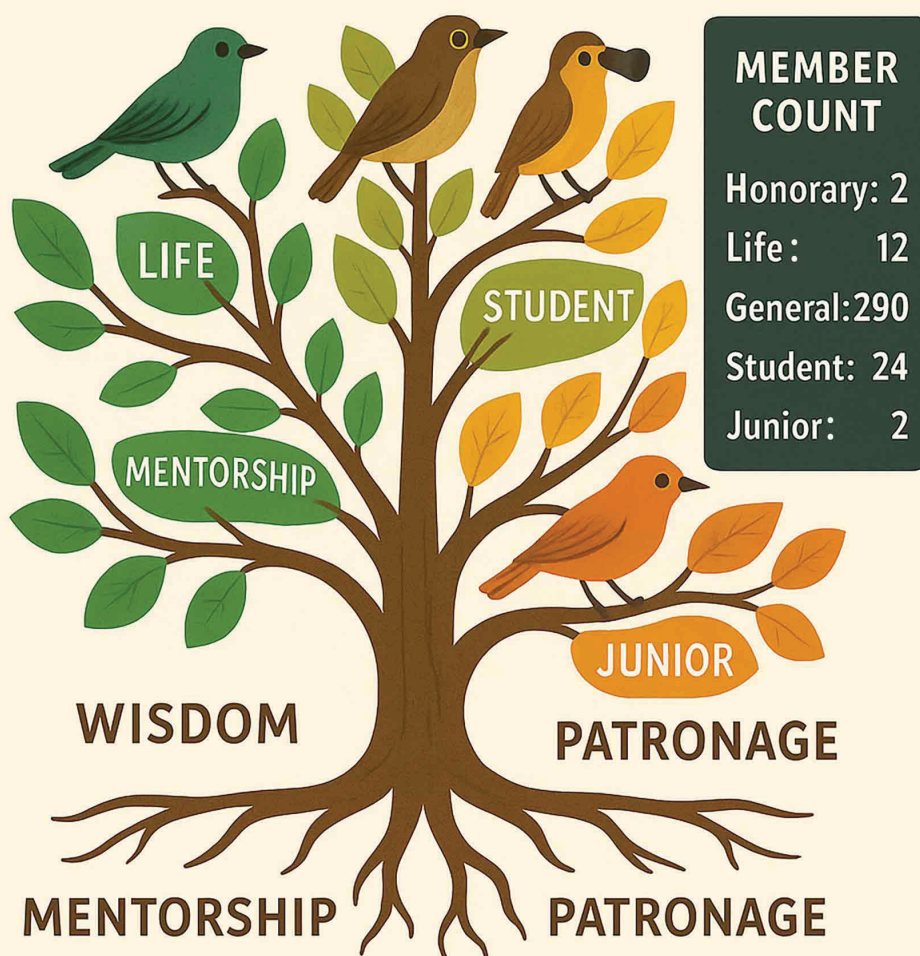
*"Sustained growth in conservation comes not from working alone, but by walking together. Our partnerships—grounded in mutual respect and shared purpose—are the bedrock of our progress."*

— Pampa Mistri, Member, Governing Body, Birdwatchers' Society

From field surveys and bird counts to educational camps and publication efforts, every initiative has been a step toward cultivating awareness, building capacity, and inspiring collective responsibility for bird and habitat conservation. The journey is ongoing, but the impact is beginning to show. The year has reaffirmed our belief that with the right mix of passion, partnerships, and purpose, even modest actions can lead to meaningful outcomes.



# BIRDWATCHERS' SOCIETY



**ROOTED IN SUPPORT,  
GROWING WITH PURPOSE**

## MEMBERSHIP GROWTH 2024 - 25

This year, after a careful review and pruning of inactive memberships, our active member count has remained steady—reflecting both resilience and renewal within our community. While natural churn is inevitable in any volunteer-driven organization, it is heartening to see continued interest from new birders and young naturalists who have stepped in with enthusiasm. The stability in numbers, despite the cleanup, signals a strong core and growing engagement. We view this as a healthy consolidation—one that strengthens our base and allows us to focus on deeper, more meaningful participation.

**As of March 31, 2025, our total membership count stood ~ 330.**

The Birdwatchers' Society is proud to unveil a new membership category - Honorary Members - to celebrate those whose vision, wisdom, and unwavering support have guided and strengthened our mission. This recognition is a tribute to the mentors, advisors, and patrons who have stood by us as pillars of inspiration and purpose in our journey for birds and biodiversity.

### Honorary Memberships

We are delighted to confer Honorary Membership upon Dr. Asad Rahmani, a distinguished ornithologist and steadfast supporter of our work. His encouragement and wisdom have enriched our journey, and this recognition is a small token of our deep gratitude.

We are equally pleased to welcome Mr. Jaswant Vaghela of Ricoh India (Pentax-Ricoh) as an Honorary Member. His unwavering support—often behind the scenes—has been instrumental in helping us overcome key challenges. We extend our heartfelt thanks and look forward to his continued presence in our growing circle.

**The current member-wise statistics are as follows:**

<b>Honorary members:</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Life members:</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>General Members:</b>	<b>290</b>
<b>Student members:</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Junior members:</b>	<b>2</b>

We remain steadfast to deepen our presence across West Bengal, with a renewed focus on welcoming members from every district into our growing community.



## ANNUAL CONFERENCE & MEET

### BENGAL BIRDERS' MEET 2024 (BBM 2024)

The first Bengal Birders' Meet (BBM) 2024, hosted on 22 July 2024 at the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre, Kolkata, was more than just a birding event - it was a declaration of collective intent. For the first time in the state and perhaps in India, such a state-level birding and conservation gathering was entirely conceived, curated, and hosted by a civil society organization. The Birdwatchers' Society (BWS) took the lead in creating this dynamic, inclusive platform - bridging enthusiasts, administrators, scientists, policy-makers, and students under one roof, with over 200 participants representing nearly every district of West Bengal.

BBM 2024 marked the beginning of a structured and inclusive platform for birders of Bengal - connecting field observations with policy, passion with purpose.

What made BBM 2024 truly distinctive on the national stage was not only its scale and inclusivity, but also its bottom-up vision for conservation, shaped by regional contexts and community insights. Unlike many birding conferences typically anchored by institutions, this meet was uniquely state-focused, grassroots-driven character led from the ground up - by birders, for birders. By prioritizing dialogue, collaboration, and citizen science, BWS has charted a new course for similar future initiatives across India. The presence of key institutional partners—including the West Bengal Forest Department, Zoological Survey of India, Bird Count India, and WWF India - further reflected the growing credibility and relevance of such citizen-driven forums.

The central objective of BBM 2024 was not merely to celebrate birding, but to catalyse long-term, decentralized, and data-driven conservation action. But beyond the sessions and speeches, BBM 2024 stood out for something deeper—it sparked a movement, weaving together passion, purpose, and people across diverse geographies and experiences.





## Objectives of the Bengal Birders' Meet

### 1. Fostering a Community of Birdwatching Enthusiasts

- Create a space for connection, collaboration, and long-term relationships among birders and ornithologists.

### 2. Promoting Awareness for Conservation of Birds

- Draw attention to the urgent need for habitat and species protection amidst threats like climate change, pollution, and urban expansion.

### 3. Sharing Knowledge and Building Capacity

- Enable hands-on learning about bird identification, behaviour, and citizen science tools through workshops and discussions.

### 4. Highlighting West Bengal's Avian Diversity

- Celebrate the state's remarkable bird diversity—from Himalayan foothills to the coast, floodplains to the plateau—encouraging deeper exploration.

### 5. Engaging Young Minds and Novice Birders

- Inspire the next generation through curated activities for students, early enthusiasts, and first-time participants.

### 6. Strengthening Collaborative Networks

- Promote cooperation between local birding clubs, conservation groups, academic institutions, and government agencies.

## 7. Celebrating Birding as a Hobby and Science

- Embrace birdwatching both as a source of personal joy and a scientific endeavour.
- Showcase creative expressions—art, photography, and literature—that reflect human connections with birds.

## 8. Recognizing Contributions in Bird Conservation

- Honour individuals and collectives whose dedication has made a difference in Bengal's conservation landscape.

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BBM 2024 has laid the foundation for what could become a defining annual tradition—one that places West Bengal's birds and birders at the centre of a growing conservation consciousness.

The Birdwatchers' Society is proud to lead this journey and hopes to inspire similar efforts across the country: rooted in place, powered by people, and guided by the science of birds where every birder has a voice in shaping Bengal's ecological future.





# NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COLLABORATIVE BIRD MONITORING – KOLKATA 2024 -eBIRD REVIEWERS MEET



The eBird platform, managed in India through the Bird Count India partnership, plays a pivotal role in building a real-time, citizen-driven understanding of bird distribution, abundance, and seasonal movement. Behind the strength of this data lies a dedicated group of volunteer reviewers who meticulously verify records, media, and locations submitted by thousands of birdwatchers across the country. Recognizing the need to connect, share experiences, and collectively strengthen this community, Bird Count India has been organizing reviewer meets in recent years - bringing together the minds and voices behind India's bird data. In a landmark move, the National Conference on Collaborative Bird Monitoring was hosted for the first time entirely by a non-profit—the Birdwatchers' Society (BWS) - at Newtown, Kolkata, on 20–21 July 2024.





# SCHOOL OF BIRDS

**A YEAR IN FLIGHT: 2024-2025**

*An Initiative Of:*



*"The world is our classroom  
and each day is a lesson"*



**M. C. Kejriwal Vidyapeeth**  
1 December 2024 · 🌐

M.C. Kejriwal Vidyapeeth, in collaboration with the Birdwatchers' Society, organized a birdwatching session at the Botanical Gardens on 1 December 2024. Students learn... See more



**WINGS**  
1 March · 🌐

On 23rd February 2025, we hosted the "School of Birds" event at Ramkrishna Mission Vidyapith, Purulia, one of the finest institutions known for its excellence in educat... See more



**WINGS**  
23 February · 🌐

On 20th February 2025, we had the privilege of hosting the "School of Birds" event at Labnapara Avaitanik Prathamik Vidyalaya, Paschim Bardhaman, with [Dibyendu Kumar Mondal](#) as the Bird Educator. The enthusiastic students delved into the fascinating world of birds, learning about their behaviors, habitats, and the importance of preserving these incredible creatures.

A big thank you to Rishi Das for beautifully documenting the event and capturing its essence. We also appreciate the unwavering support of the Birdwatchers' Society, whose resources made the session both educational and memorable.

It's heartening to see the growing interest in wildlife conservation among the younger generation!



**Rakesh Singha Dev** is with [Manish Kumar Chattopadhyay](#) and 10 others.  
20 February · 🌐

🌐 School Of Birds 🌐

presented by "Bird Watchers' Society"  
collaborating partner "WINGS (Wildlife Information & Nature Guide Society)"

School Name - Mahasole Primary School

Location - Salboni, Paschim Medinipur

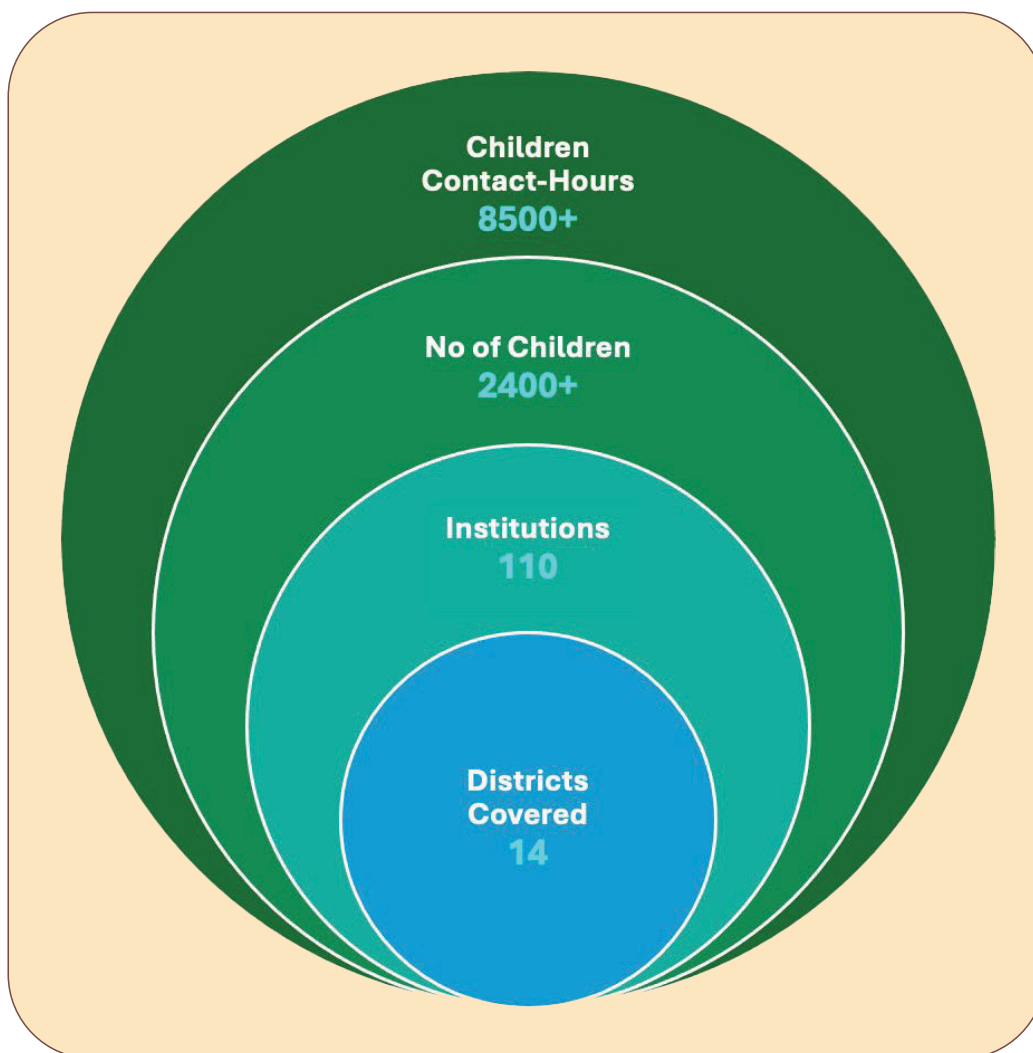
Educator - [Rakesh Singha Dev](#)

Date 18/02/2025

### Summary

[School of Birds](#) is a flagship initiative of [Birdwatchers' Society](#) for spreading nature awareness at the school level. We introduce children to the magical world of Nature through the bird's eye. This idea conceived over many years of field experience has finally become fully fledged in the year 2024-25 and is ready to soar ahead.

Here is the summary of the previous year at a glance.





## Flight Plan



Our programs are designed for children at school-level with the primary focus being **Empathy towards wildlife, Conservation as a way of life, Cultivation of science, Contribution to citizen science and Climate crisis sensitization.**

Our teaching method now stands on three pillars:

**Nature Observation** - Seasonal Bird & Nature walks with a focus on nature stories unfolding around us through the life and interactions of species all along the branches of the tree of life. We use intuitive and creative activities to serve our purpose.

**Creative Expression** - The creative process involves an immersive understanding of the subject. By engaging the children in a journey of illustrations, storytelling using DIY puppets, song writing, exhibitions etc. we inculcate empathy towards Birds and Nature.

**Scientific Approach** - Our curriculum encourages critically engaging with problems and finding rational solutions to foster the development of environmental stewards in the future.

## Programs

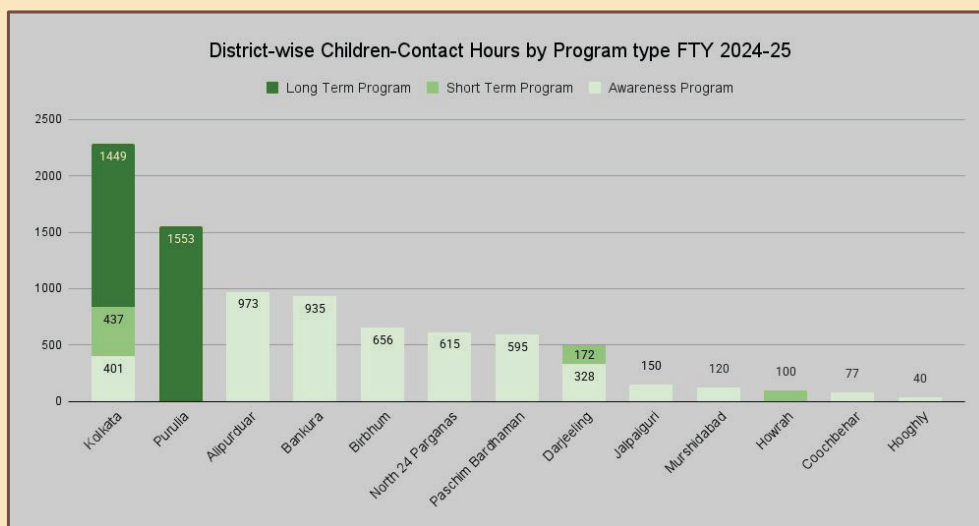
We have executed 3 different types of programs across 14 districts of West Bengal with the support of various partner organizations and Institutions.

**Long term programs:** Our long term programs are focussed towards providing consistent and curated educational experience for children. It allows for the exploration of their inherent curiosity for the natural world. Those who truly shine in terms of their knowledge of natural history and through assignments and assessments are selected for formation of Bird Clubs.

**Short-term programs:** In multiple organizations, our curriculum has been introduced in a modular approach over days. The success of these short-term programs have led to prolonged partnerships with accommodating organizations.

**Awareness programs:** One-day Capacity building sessions setting up the pathway for full-fledged programs in future.

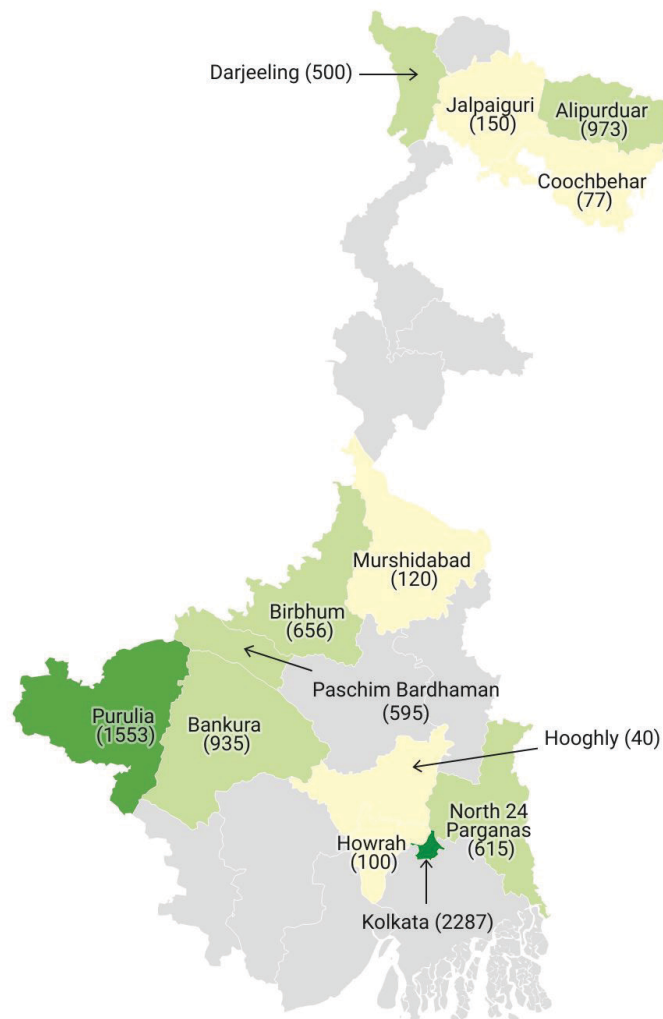
*Children-contact hours* is our preferred metric to gauge the amount of engagement. We calculate this by multiplying the total number of children present in a session with the duration of the session.



## Footprint

### District-wise Execution of School of Birds FTY 2024-25

Children-Contact Hours

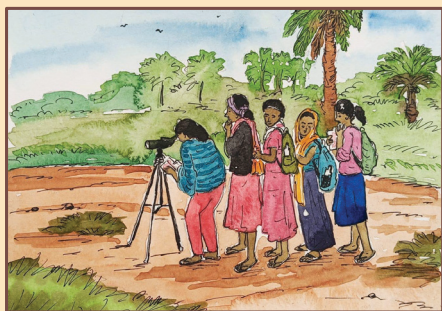


Map data: © OSM • Created with Datawrapper



## Classroom Without Walls

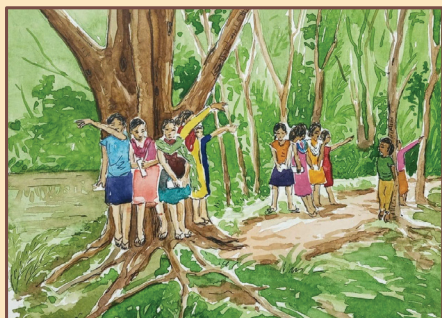
The essence of the work we do, in all its dimensions, has been captured eloquently through the brush strokes of our team member Santanu Kar.



FIELD ACTIVITY  
- Birdwatching with scope



FIELD ACTIVITY  
- Smell the Leaf, Guess the Fruit



FIELD ACTIVITY  
- Active Listening



CREATIVE EXPRESSION  
- Bird Illustrations



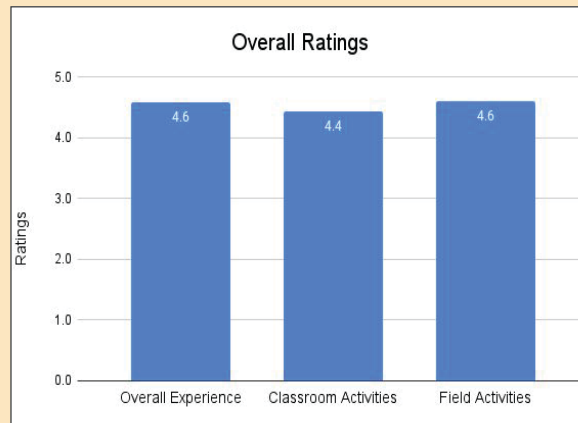
CREATIVE EXPRESSION  
- Bird songwriting & recording



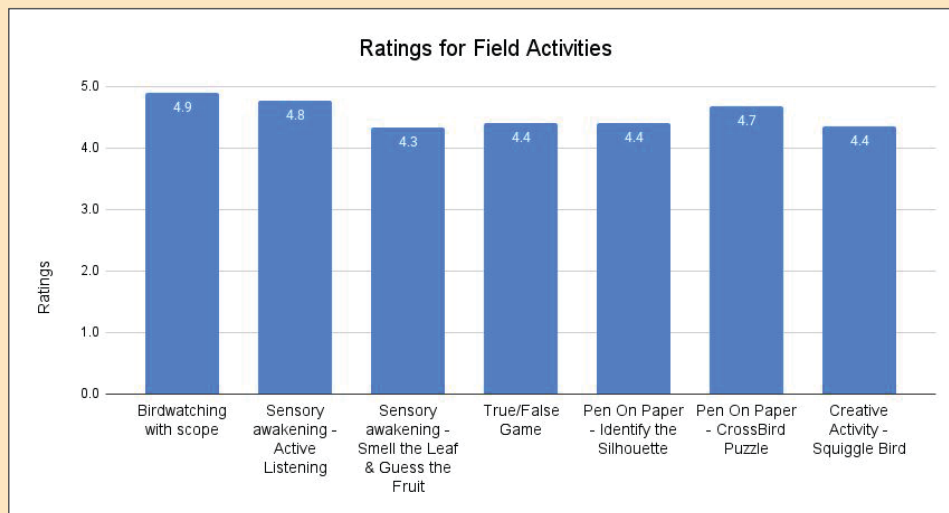
EXHIBITION

## Numerical Insights

Over the course of the year, we asked 123 children to fill a survey on the program. The response was overwhelmingly positive. On a scale of 1 to 5, the children rated their overall experience as well as the various activities they participated in. To our pleasant surprise, the classroom activities such as DIY projects, Flash Card Games, Mind Mapping etc. were almost as well received as the outdoor activities.



Over the course of the year, we have executed several engaging field activities - most of which were developed by us, while some were adapted from our partner organizations. Since we focus our programs on Nature exposure, bird watching with scope was expected to be a favourite among children, yet, all other activities were also received equally well.



### Word of Mouth

This experience took me in the fascinating world of birds.



I got much knowledge about the sounds of birds.



The games we played were very fun and helpful for our educational purposes.



It was enjoyable than a zoo because we don't get a chance to see birds free.

Overall, it was an incredible experience and I would be always willing to take part in such an program.



I felt happy to see the birds fly around freely.





### Voices of Wisdom

*My son loved today's session and me too. He is still engrossed in bird puppets and planning to create a few more, soon. It was a great learning opportunity for him.*

*- A Parent*

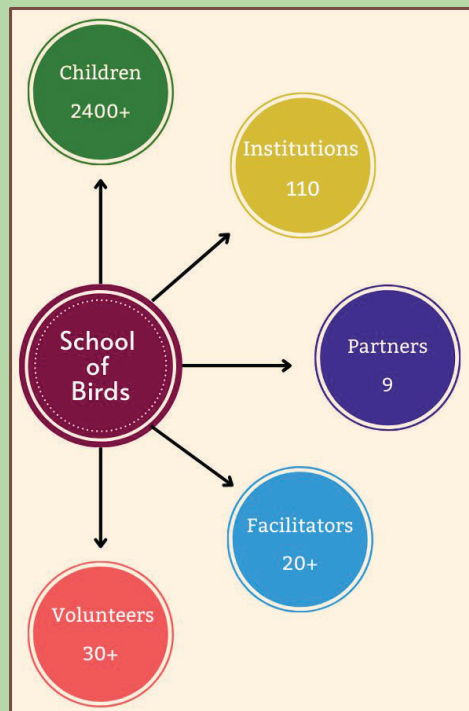
*The walk showcased and fostered a deep connection with the environment, love for nature and its conservation, paving a pathway for our future generation to value Mother Nature.*

*A Teacher -*

*The facilitation team demonstrated great dedication and adaptability, making the sessions interactive, inclusive, and impactful. Their efforts in creating a positive learning environment and addressing the diverse needs of the participants were highly appreciated.*

*- A Partner*

### The Flock



Over the year, we worked with institutions like Government schools, Government-aided schools, NGOs and private schools. The locations have varied from urban to suburban and rural. As a result we have encountered a diverse group of children from a variety of backgrounds. Our work with them would not have been possible without our dedicated team of facilitators and volunteers. We are especially thankful to our partner organizations for all the support we have received throughout the year. Without their valuable effort, we would not have been able to leave our mark on so many districts of West Bengal over a relatively short duration. We hope our collaborations will continue into the future and that we look forward to building new ones.

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has”*

**- MARGARET MEAD**

# BIRD WALKS - TALKS - WORKSHOP

## NATIONAL BIRD DAY 2025 – JANUARY 5, 2025 : A STATEWIDE CAMPAIGN FOR AWARENESS AND ACTION

The Birdwatchers' Society (BWS) spearheaded the National Bird Day celebration with a dynamic and inclusive campaign across West Bengal on 5th January 2025, transforming the day into a living tapestry of awareness, education, observation, and action. BWS mobilised its constellation of partners who engaged with schools, colleges, forest departments, eco-clubs, birding groups, and local citizen collectives - bringing together over 1,000 participants in more than 45 locations across urban, rural, and forest-edge communities.

Program Highlights

### BIRDWALKS

Over 30 district-level bird walks were held, with enthusiastic turnouts from school children, teachers, nature lovers, and forest staff. From the wetlands of Gajoldoba and Malda to the forests of Jhargram and the urban parks of Kolkata, participants observed and documented common birds with renewed curiosity and care.

•**School-Based Campaigns:** BWS, through its School of Birds outreach, helped reach out to over 150 children. At Barasat, children showcased handmade placards of common backyard birds and performed skits and songs linking bird conservation with cultural narratives.

•**Community Dialogues:** In villages and schools near key wetland sites - such as Gajoldoba, Farakka, and East Kolkata Wetlands - BWS teams held sessions on birds as ecological indicators, blending storytelling with practical messages on wetland pollution, and cohabitation with wildlife.





•**Art & Nature Exhibitions:** Events across Birbhum, Howrah, and Nadia included local exhibitions of bird-themed art and photography, along with public readings of nature essays by young birders and conservation volunteers.

Activity	Numbers Achieved
Birdwalks conducted	32
Total participants	1,600
Schools engaged	150+
Bird species reported	247
Community sessions held	24
Bird checklists uploaded	860+ (on eBird)



*On the occasion of National Bird Day (5th January), the Birdwatchers' Society and WINGS, in collaboration with Ajoypur High School, organized a special "School of Birds" program. Led by teacher Dinabandhu Biswas and our volunteer Priyanka Mondal, the program aimed to educate students about the importance of bird conservation and introduce them to the diverse avian life in their region.*



**BAN:** *On the occasion of National Bird Day on the 5th, we organized a Bird Conservation Fair, which included the **School of Birds** program. Alongside birdwatching, various other activities were conducted, including screenings on birds and conservation. There were also a few stalls where handmade souvenirs created by the participants were displayed for sale, with a major percentage of the proceeds going to individuals who were previously poachers but have now become protectors of birds.*

*“Children are central to this effort. Their bird drawings and questions tell us one thing: if we build awareness today, we secure tomorrow’s guardians of nature.”*  
— Titash Chakrabarti, BWS - School of Birds Convener

Looking Forward: National Bird Day 2025, as led by BWS, was not just a day of birdwatching - it was a day of awakening, reminding us all that the fate of birds and humans is a shared song yet to be sung in full.



## BIRD COUNTS: BUILDING CONSERVATION – THE BWS MONITORING MANDALA (2024–25)

Bird counts is one of the most critical activity undertaken by BWS - they are acts of watchfulness, windows into ecosystem health, and catalysts for community-based conservation. From the high Himalayas to southern floodplains, from seasonal migratory arrivals to dawn-time songs, the Birdwatchers' Society (BWS) has continued to anchor and amplify citizen science in West Bengal and beyond. The year 2024–25 witnessed an integrated suite of bird monitoring initiatives led or supported by BWS, yielding rich data, inspiring participation, and reaffirming the centrality of people in bird conservation

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*“Each count is a thread—weaving people, place, and purpose. Our greatest strength lies in making science participatory, democratic, and deeply rooted in Bengal’s landscape and ethos.”*

— Biswapriya Rahut, President, Birdwatchers' Society

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### Key Infographic:

#### Bird Counts at a Glance (2024–25)

Count Event	Dates	Sites Covered	Species Counted	Participants Engaged
Asian Waterbird Census (AWC)	Jan 2025	80+	100+	125+
Great Backyard Bird Count	14–17 Feb 2025	Statewide	563 (WB)	200+
Dawn Chorus	Mar 2025	30+ stations	Vocal surveys	100+
Poila Baisakh Count	12–15 Apr 2024	60+	230+	150+
Himalayan Bird Count	Mar 2024	Darjeeling	120+	40+
Farakka IBA Survey	Mar 2025	1 IBA Zone	160+	30+
Heronry Count	Jul–Aug 2024	25+ colonies	8 species	75+
Fulbari Wetland Count	Dec 2024	4 sites	90+	25+



## 1. Poila Baisakh Bird Count – April 2024

Marking the Bengali New Year, this BWS-BCI collaboration fostered a deep cultural connection with local birds:

- Held between 12–15 April 2024
- Covered over 60 locations across West Bengal
- Emphasized rural youth engagement through eco-clubs
- The celebratory tone led to strong local participation and emotional ownership of birdlife

## 2. Himalayan Bird Count – March 2024

BWS contributed significantly to this trans-Himalayan initiative, particularly from the **Darjeeling Hills**:

- Snowline surveys and sub-montane forest trails yielded sightings of White-browed Fulvetta, Golden Bush Robin, and Scaly Laughingthrush
- Highlighted climate-induced changes in altitudinal bird distribution
- Strengthened linkages between BWS and other Himalayan states for collaborative monitoring

## 3. Heronry Count – Monsoon 2024

### Monitoring the Heronries of Darjeeling Terai

Assessment during 2024 heronry count, jointly conducted by Airavat Trust and the Birdwatchers' Society:

- Active breeding colonies of **Black-crowned Night Heron**, **Cattle Egret**, and **Indian Pond Heron** were monitored.
- Reports from local birders and citizen scientists led to the discovery of **five new heronry sites**, many of them centered around community ponds.
- The study underscored the **critical importance of preserving breeding trees**, particularly during the pruning season—a finding that has since been shared with local civic and forest authorities for timely action.

For the past five years, Airavat Trust has been actively monitoring heronries and tracking the seasonal movement patterns of key colonial waterbirds across the Darjeeling Terai landscape. Since 2023, this initiative has been strengthened through support from the Birdwatchers' Society, fostering a collaborative scientific effort to better understand the ecology and conservation needs of these last remaining strongholds of heronry colonies in the region.

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*“From schoolchildren to seasoned naturalists, our field teams are redefining conservation leadership. These counts are building a resilient, informed, and nature-connected generation.”*

— Dr Kanad Baidya, Assistant Secretary, BWS

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## 4. Fulbari Wetland Bird Count – Winter 2024

This site-specific winter count, led by BWS in collaboration with regional partners, focused on Fulbari Barrage and associated wetlands near Siliguri:

- Documented over 90 species, including large numbers of Common Pochard, Eurasian Wigeon, and Northern Pintail
- Highlighted encroachment risks and changes in water level management
- Informed a subsequent dialogue with local civic bodies and school outreach

## 5. Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) – January 2025

BWS coordinated systematic waterfowl counts at over 80 wetland sites across West Bengal, engaging more than 125 volunteers including students, teachers, and local youth. Key highlights included:

- Return of Bar-headed Geese and Ferruginous Ducks to key wetlands
- Over 27,000 waterbirds recorded and uploaded to the IWC database
- Signage and community outreach strengthened around poaching hotspots in Murshidabad
- Data contributed to identifying vulnerable wetlands for conservation focus

## 6. Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) – February 2025

### GBBC 2025 WRAPS UP WITH A RECORD-BREAKING PERFORMANCE

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) 2025, held from **14th to 17th February**, marked yet another exhilarating chapter in India's citizen science journey. Hosted annually as a global event to encourage people to observe and record birds in their surroundings, GBBC 2025 saw enthusiastic participation from schools, nature clubs, birding groups, and individuals across the country. The scale, intensity, and joy with which birders responded this year were nothing short of phenomenal.

For India, GBBC 2025 was a landmark event - not only in terms of numbers but also in terms of deepening engagement and awareness. **Over 1.4 million bird observations** were uploaded to the eBird platform during the 4-day count. India stood tall globally with the second-highest number of species recorded, just behind Colombia, reaffirming the richness and diversity of its avifauna.

## Top 10 States by Species – Bengal Leads the Flock

Once again, **West Bengal** soared to the top, recording an unprecedented **563 species**, breaking its own 2024 record of 543 species. The collective energy, coordination, and passion of the Bengal birding community made this feat possible. From the Himalayan foothills of Darjeeling to the mangroves of Sundarbans, the state's unique eco-regions were thoroughly covered, showcasing both effort and ecological range.

Rank	State	No. of Species
1	West Bengal	563
2	Tamil Nadu	514
3	Maharashtra	488
4	Uttarakhand	472
5	Karnataka	469
6	Kerala	457

## Top 10 Districts by Species Count – Darjeeling Tops the Charts

At the district level, Darjeeling emerged as a biodiversity hotspot, with 259 species recorded—ranging from high-altitude specialists to migratory songbirds. South 24 Parganas was a shining star on a different front: the highest number of complete checklists submitted (755), showing how deeply embedded birding has become in local communities.

Rank	District	No. of Species
1	Darjeeling (WB)	259
2	Wayanad (KL)	241
3	Coimbatore (TN)	236
4	Pune (MH)	228
5	Mysuru (KA)	223
6	Dehradun (UK)	220
7	Alappuzha (KL)	218
8	Bengaluru (KA)	217
9	Kolkata (WB)	214
10	Kozhikode (KL)	211

## Birdwatchers' Society – A Driving Force Behind the Movement

The Birdwatchers' Society (BWS) once again played a pivotal role in mobilising birders, students, and citizen scientists across West Bengal. Through a month-long pre-count awareness campaign, capacity-building workshops, and daily updates during the count, BWS helped democratise birdwatching and data submission. Schools, colleges, and eco-clubs were engaged actively, especially in underrepresented districts, making the participation more inclusive.



In several areas, bird-walks were led by birders trained by BWS mentors. For many participants, GBBC 2025 was not just about spotting birds - it was about finding their voice in conservation.

### **A Legacy to build upon**

GBBC 2025 was not just about numbers - it was about deepening the connection between people and nature. It brought together farmers, teachers, students, scientists, and hobbyists in one shared pursuit: watching and caring for birds. The success of this count signals a growing conservation consciousness rooted in community science.

## **7. Dawn Chorus – March 2025**

BWS hosted this dawn-time soundscape monitoring event with warmth and purpose:

- Over 30 listening stations across the state recorded pre-sunrise bird vocalizations
- Special focus was placed on urban green spaces, showing the presence of species like Oriental Magpie-Robin and Asian Koel even in built-up zones
- It served as both a scientific tool and a public celebration of nature's music

## **8. Farakka IBA Bird Survey – March 2025**

As custodians of the Farakka IBA, BWS organized a focused bird survey to assess habitat health and species trends:

- Recorded over 160 species in a day, including Osprey, River Tern, and Lesser Adjutant
- Involved local youth and fishermen in observation and dialogue
- Reinforced the IBA's significance for migratory and resident bird populations





Sandip Das  
11 March -  
History comes alive !!

**birdwatchers' Society**  
**Optopic**

**FULBARI WETLAND AWC**  
**12th JANUARY, 2025. TIME- 6:00 A.M.**



**Campus Bird Count at IIM Calcutta -- GBBC 2025**

While we are recording species to the maximum that we can during this GBBC, we often miss how some backyards remain unattended just due to lack of awareness or initiatives. Thanks to Dev Baul's initiative to touch up with Luminati - the Photography Club of IIM Calcutta to conduct a Campus Bird Count on 16/02/2025 and register a hotspot for the otherwise restricted campus to the avian diversity of which the students can contribute ... See more

**BIRDWATCHING SESSION**  
Join the campus birders for a bird walk.

**16 FEB 6:00 AM**  
Auditorium

POWERED BY **eBird India**

Ashanta +91 9748576959  
Stanley +91 9822497442

**birdwatchers' Society**  
presents

A collective effort to celebrate and document bird species residing in the historic tamarind tree, currently under threat from urban development projects, at Vidyasagar Colony, South Kolkata

**Event Details**

**FEBRUARY 16th (SUNDAY)**  
Morning session: 7 AM to 9 AM  
Evening session: 5.30 PM to 5.30 PM

Registration is free, but mandatory.  
Age no bar. Max seats: 15 per slot.

**Great Backyard Bird Count**  
Contact No. - 8335094161  
An annual global initiative by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

**Ongoing discourses under the tree**

**Cornell Lab of Ornithology** **Audubon** **BIRDS CANADA** **PENTAX**

**Heronry Species of Darjeeling Terai**  
*threskiornis melanocephalus*  
(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 tree occupied foraging zone, pollution, climate change etc.

**Colonies in Darjeeling Terai -**  
Maniram (Indo-Nepal Border) - 220-250 (Approx)  
Bagdogra Surrounding - 25-35 (Approx)  
Phansidewa Block - 20-30 (Approx)  
Mantadhari - 15-25 (Approx)

**THE TELEGRAPH SILIGURI THURSDAY 13 MARCH 2025**

**Australasian grass owl seen in Bengal after four decades**  
**Rare, reclusive bird sighted**

**Soumya De Sarkar**  
Malda: The rare and reclusive Australasian grass owl was sighted by birdwatchers on March 9 at the Paraka Important Bird Area (IBA) in the Ganga after a gap of over 40 years in Bengal, foresters here said.

The exercise is being conducted by the Malda division of the state forest department along with two organisations: the Green Phoenix India, Malda, and the Birdwatchers Society, Calcutta.

"On March 9, we had a groundbreaking discovery as birdwatchers Sandip Das, Soumya Sarkar and Sakshi Das sighted the bird and documented it in the photographic records of the Australasian grass owl (Tyto longimembris), first recorded in distribution in Bengal," said Ajay Jha, a forest officer of Malda.

"The sighting is of immense ornithological significance as the species has rarely been recorded in Bengal before," he added.

The forester said the last record of the bird in Bengal is from 1980 in Ajay Jha's by C.M. Inglis in 1980. In A First-aid List of the Vertebrates of the Jalpaiguri District, Bengal (Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, Vol. 26), said the forest officer.

Again, in colonial India, J.C. Stuart Baker, a British police officer and ornithologist, also mentions sighting the bird in "Malda (now Malda)" in The Fauna of British India, including Ceylon and Burma (third edition, Taylor & Francis, London, Vol. IV).

"The bird is known for its nocturnal habits and preference for grassland habitats. It is also reclusive in nature. It has now been seen in Bengal after over four decades," said the forester.

On Tuesday, a team of foresters and the Malda District administration visited the site to reconfirm the location and presence of the bird.

We are also putting efforts for the conservation of the site and are also in consultation with bird survey teams to understand the criticality of the site and steps which can be taken in future for its better conservation," he added.

**Sandip Das, 12 March 2025**

**৪০ বছর পর ঘাস পেঁচার সন্ধান মিলল মালদহের গঙ্গা তীরে**

গঙ্গা তীরে ৯ই মার্চ তারিখে মালদহের গঙ্গা তীরে একটি অত্যন্ত বিরল পাখি দেখা গেল। এই পাখি হল গুল্ম-পাখি। পাখিটির নাম হল - অস্ট্রেলিয়ান গ্রাস ওয়েল। এটি মালদহের গঙ্গা তীরে ৪০ বছর পরে দেখা গেল।

১৯৮০ সালে, এই পাখি মালদহের গঙ্গা তীরে দেখা গেল। এটি মালদহের গঙ্গা তীরে ৪০ বছর পরে দেখা গেল।

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*“The rise in both participation and precision of our bird counts reflects a quiet revolution. What began as checklisting is now becoming a cultural movement for nature stewardship.”*  
— Sujan Chatterjee, Secretary, Birdwatchers' Society



## POWERED BY PARTNERS

To achieve the ambitious goals set by the Birdwatchers' Society, forging a network of collaborators and partners is not just beneficial but essential. While the Society brings together a dedicated group of enthusiasts, its collective knowledge and expertise have natural limits. In today's interconnected world, growth and success depend on forming structured partnerships that are carefully designed, time-bound, and mutually advantageous. These partnerships allow the Society to access specialized knowledge, technical expertise, and innovative tools, enabling it to deepen the quality of its work and broaden its impact. By leveraging the strengths of like-minded organizations and individuals, the Birdwatchers' Society can amplify its efforts, reach wider audiences, and foster meaningful change in the realm of conservation and education. Together, such collaborations pave the way for transformative progress, ensuring the Society evolves into a formidable force for both scientific advancement and community engagement.

## PARTNER CATEGORIES

### **CATEGORY 1: PARTNERS WHO POWER OUR GROWTH : KNOWLEDGE & INNOVATION PARTNERS**

These are collaborators who provide knowledge, tools, training, scientific input, and technical guidance. They help build our internal capacity and sharpen the quality of our work.

Examples: Bird Count India (technical collaboration), Early Bird (education tools & training), academic, research institutions equipment partner such as PENTAX.

This category of Partners provide us the power to grow

- Capacity & Content Partners
- Knowledge & Tools Collaborators
- Innovation & Capability Partners

### **CATEGORY 2: PARTNERS WHO FUEL OUR OUTREACH: ENGAGEMENT PARTNERS**

These set of partners help us reach new audiences, implement programs on the ground, and expand our footprint in schools, colleges, communities, and natural landscapes.

Examples: student groups, local NGOs, eco clubs, civic institutions, community educators.

This category of Partners helps us to expand the reach

- Community Engagement Partners
- Field Implementation Partners
- Outreach & Impact Partners
- Delivery & Network Partners



## CATEGORY 1: PARTNERS WHO POWER OUR GROWTH: KNOWLEDGE & INNOVATION PARTNERS

### PARTNERSHIP WITH BIRD COUNT INDIA (BCI)

The Birdwatchers' Society (BWS) takes pride in its active and evolving partnership with Bird Count India (BCI) - an informal collective of national and regional collaborators dedicated to promoting bird monitoring across India. Comprising both formal organizations and informal groups such as community forums and social media-based collectives, BCI plays a crucial role in deepening the understanding of bird distribution, migration, and abundance across the country.

As a committed collaborator to BCI, BWS has contributed to this nationwide effort through sustained outreach, on-ground participation, and technical collaborations. Throughout the year 2024–25, we have actively promoted flagship BCI events like the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) and Himalaya Bird Count (HBC) within our networks, engaging schools, colleges, and community groups across West Bengal. Our members have taken lead roles in organizing bird walks, managing eBird data quality, and ensuring smooth data flow during these national events. The migration maps, coverage visuals, and other analytical outputs generated by BCI have been featured in BWS's public displays and educational materials, with due acknowledgement.

Our collaboration with BCI goes beyond participation—it is strategic and impactful. BWS now takes complete ownership of major activities like onboarding participants, arranging logistics, and analyzing data for regional events, while also co-branding projects with BCI. This integration has not only strengthened data-driven bird monitoring but has also enhanced citizen science literacy across our member base.

Two of our core members also serve as Regional Coordinators for Bird Count India, further cementing our operational link with the collective:

- Sandip Das, a founding member of BWS, is a passionate field birder with a special interest in bird vocalisations and breeding behaviour. Known for his meticulous documentation of warblers, particularly of the Locustellidae family, he brings deep ecological insight to our monitoring efforts. Sandip is also the co-author of “*Banglar Pakhpakhali*”, a popular photographic guide to the birds of Bengal.

*“Monitoring birds systematically helps decode the subtle changes in our ecosystems. Through BCI, we are not just collecting data—we are creating a long-term knowledge base that will shape conservation priorities in years to come.”*

— Sandip Das, Regional Coordinator, Bird Count India & Founder Member, BWS

•Sujan Chatterjee, a veteran birder since 1986 and a professional wildlife tour leader, is one of the pillars of the BWS community. With vast experience in organizing and participating in bird surveys and atlas projects across West Bengal, Sujan contributes significantly to both planning and capacity-building initiatives linked to BCI events.

*“The strength of our partnership with BCI lies in the way it connects people to science. Every checklist, every birding event, becomes part of a larger conservation narrative—and that’s where real impact begins.”*

— Sujan Chatterjee, Regional Coordinator, Bird Count India & Founder Member, BWS

By embracing the shared goals of the BCI network, BWS continues to promote structured bird documentation as a public good. This partnership exemplifies how regional organisations can contribute meaningfully to national biodiversity knowledge systems through coordination, shared resources, and grassroots mobilisation.

## COLLABORATION WITH EARLY BIRD

The Birdwatchers’ Society (BWS) continues to benefit from its meaningful collaboration with Early Bird, a pioneering initiative dedicated to nurturing curiosity and connection with birds among children and educators across India. Early Bird’s visually engaging resources, inclusive approach, and deep educational insight align seamlessly with BWS’s commitment to building awareness and empathy for birdlife, especially among young learners.

A key highlight of this collaboration was a training workshop conducted by Early Bird in 2023 exclusively for BWS educators. The workshop introduced our team to a range of creative pedagogical tools - illustrated guides, storytelling techniques, participatory games, and structured lesson plans - all designed to bring the world of birds alive in classrooms and nature camps. The session greatly enriched our educator pool, many of whom work in schools, outreach programs, and weekend camps.

BWS regularly integrates Early Bird’s learning materials—from colourful bird cards to educational games - into our citizen science programs, school visits, and field activities. These resources have significantly strengthened the way we communicate bird conservation, especially with children and first-time birders.



We were also delighted when Titash Bhattacharya, one of our most committed educators and youth facilitators, was featured by Early Bird in their educator series. His work exemplifies the spirit of this collaboration—creative, grounded, and deeply impactful. Titash's recognition is not just an individual honour, but a reflection of the growing network of capable, passionate bird educators that BWS is helping nurture.

This partnership with Early Bird continues to inspire and shape how we engage young minds - fostering a culture where observation leads to wonder, and wonder grows into responsibility.

## PENTAX - A PARTNERSHIP FOR SHARPER VISION

### Sharper Vision, Stronger Purpose

The partnership between Birdwatchers' Society (BWS) and Pentax marks a unique confluence of passion and precision - where community-driven conservation meets world-class optics. This collaboration isn't just about equipment; it's about empowerment.

By placing high-quality Pentax binoculars and scopes in the hands of birders, researchers, and young nature enthusiasts, BWS is helping its members and partners see more, learn more, and do more.





Together, BWS and Pentax are enabling individuals across the region to deliver on their conservation promises - whether it's in documenting rare species, mentoring young birders, or advocating for habitats under threat. This synergy reflects how the right tools, paired with the right intent, can sharpen not just vision - but purpose.

As part of this alliance, BWS and Pentax have also crafted a cost-effective proposition tailored for users within the BWS ecosystem - making top-tier optics more accessible to those who need them most. By reducing financial barriers, the partnership ensures that passion for nature is matched with the tools to pursue it, sustainably and inclusively.

*“This is more than a commercial tie-up - it’s a shared mission to build a more observant, informed, and engaged conservation community,”* says Major B.S. Parihar, veteran birder and long-time BWS member and currently the Treasurer of BWS. *“Pentax brings clarity to the field, and BWS brings clarity of purpose. Together, we’re setting the stage for a new generation of birdwatchers.”*



*“At PENTAX, a legacy brand under Ricoh Imaging, we have always believed that great optics deserve great purpose. Our partnership with the Birdwatchers’ Society is not just a collaboration, it’s a shared vision. Together, we celebrate the beauty of birds, empower citizen science, and inspire the next generation of nature lovers. This bond with BWS is a true win win where technology meets passion, and conservation takes flight.”*

- Jasawant V, Country Manager ,Ricoch Imaging,Co,Ltd.

## **CATEGORY 2: PARTNERS WHO FUEL OUR OUTREACH: ENGAGEMENT PARTNERS**

### **GRASSROOTS ALLIES OF BWS**

In 2024–25, the Birdwatchers' Society (BWS) made a strategic move to deepen its impact by actively fostering collaborations with like-minded organizations across West Bengal. The main objective has been to extend the reach to every district of West Bengal by leveraging local & like-minded leaders willing to walk the extra mile. In days to come we intend to spread across to every panchayat to the grass root level to sensitize and inspire the young minds in nature & conservation.

As a beginning significant focus was placed on expanding the reach of 'School of Birds' – the flagship educational initiative designed to foster empathy towards wildlife, promote conservation as a way of life, cultivate scientific thinking, and sensitize children to the climate crisis. Recognizing that effective outreach requires both scale and contextual grounding, BWS reached out to grassroots partners who share a common vision of environmental education and bird conservation. These collaborations allowed BWS to amplify its message and localize its approach in a manner that resonated with communities across diverse districts. Each of our partners brought to the table a distinct cultural context, deep community ties, and unwavering commitment to nature education. Together, they represent the living fabric of a people-powered movement for birds and biodiversity and exemplified the power of collaboration in building a broad-based conservation consciousness.

BWS empowered the partners with tools and training while providing them with sighting scopes, binoculars and pocket guides ensuring the partners were equipped to inspire and educate with precision and enthusiasm.

Building on these partnerships, BWS envisions leveraging these relationships not only to enhance its educational mission but also to expand into other critical areas of conservation, biodiversity monitoring, and sustainable development. By tapping into the unique strengths and local expertise of each collaborator, BWS can initiate projects that address broader environmental challenges, such as habitat restoration, species population tracking, and climate resilience education. This integrative approach will ensure that the collective efforts not only drive awareness but also foster actionable solutions within communities across the state and beyond.

The partner network during this phase of outreach included:

### **WINGS – Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society (Durgapur)**

WINGS is a Durgapur-based organization with a strong foundation in youth-led birding and environmental awareness. With a dynamic team of volunteer naturalists and educators, WINGS has been instrumental in hosting School of Birds sessions in rural & industrial belts, helping children rediscover the beauty of urban biodiversity. Their focus on practical learning - such as bird walks, and local wetland visits — ensures lasting curiosity and care for the natural world.

### **BAN – Bonding with Animals & Nature (Kolkata)**

BAN is a Kolkata-rooted group that bridges empathy for animals with ecological education. Through storytelling, urban animal rescue, and creative communication, BAN connects young people with the often-invisible lives of birds and street fauna. Their support in BWS's outreach initiatives has added a gentle but powerful touch - turning passive observation into active compassion.

### **AIRAVAT (North Bengal)**

Based in the rich biodiversity corridor of North Bengal, AIRAVAT focuses on the intersection of wildlife education, human-wildlife coexistence, and nature research. As BWS's partner in the northern reaches of West Bengal, AIRAVAT has enabled bird education to reach schoolchildren near elephant corridors and forest fringes, making birdwatching not just an activity but a tool for coexistence and awareness in sensitive habitats.

### **BISHNUPUR NATURE CLUB (Bankura)**

Nestled in the red-earth landscapes of Bankura, Bishnupur Nature Club is a grassroots organization known for its passion-driven conservation efforts. Their strength lies in blending traditional ecological knowledge with modern birding practices. As a School of Birds partner, they have introduced students in semi-rural zones to the local avifauna while reviving interest in community forest care and native tree plantation.



### **GREEN PEOPLES INDIA (Malda)**

Operating from Malda, Green People India is a collective that works at the confluence of citizen science, sustainability, and rural ecological literacy. Their active leadership in regional bird



counts, wetland documentation, and youth mentorship has made them a key BWS collaborator. Through their tireless field engagement, they bring birdwatching into classrooms, farms, and village paths — making conservation a lived experience.

## **DISAPPEARING DIALOGUES (Kolkata)**

A unique partner that brings the lens of arts, culture, and heritage to the world of ecology, Disappearing Dialogues and BWS reach urban youth through creative expressions.

In 2024, Disappearing Dialogues Foundation (dD) collaborated with the Birdwatchers' Society (BWS), School of Birds to start a year-long fellowship program called the Young Wetland Conservation Fellowship (YWCF), designed to develop young resources in the East Kolkata Wetlands through four distinct segments. The first two segments will provide a comprehensive overview of Wetland Biodiversity and Nature Education with key areas of interest-Birds, Butterflies and Dragonflies, Fish, and Trees and Plants. In the final two segments, students will choose a specialization based on their experience and surroundings and work under the guidance of a mentor for the remainder of time. The fellows receive a monthly stipend and a certificate will be provided at the end of this programme. Outcome of this fellowship include trained nature educators or eco-guides, assistants in research labs, or community based practitioners.

## **HEAL – Human & Environment Alliance League (Kolkata)**

HEAL is a science-backed advocacy group that addresses urban ecology, environmental justice, and climate change. BWS gifted a sighting scope to HEAL in its efforts to combat poaching and trapping of migratory birds in Murshidabad - a region frequented by various species of migratory larks. In 2023–24, 10 warning signboards were installed at strategic locations, carrying messages against illegal bird trapping and providing contact information for locals to report incidents. This initiative has already shown measurable success: field teams have been receiving regular tip-offs from residents, a clear indication of rising awareness and community engagement.

## **NATURE MATES**

Nature Mates aspires to develop an understanding of nature from all aspects and plan issue-based activities to develop a safe and healthy haven for humans and non-humans to co-exist with mutual respect.

## BUILDING FORWARD, TOGETHER

As a vital cornerstone of its mission, BWS empowered the partners with an arsenal of tools to drive impactful engagements - ranging from specialized educator's workshop, pocket guides, binoculars, advanced sighting scopes apart from specialised support wherever needed. This initiative will not only empower collaborators but it lays the foundation for a transformative outreach model poised to reach every corner of the state and beyond.

**Together, these partnerships are not just amplifiers of BWS's mission — they are co-creators of a future where conservation is both local and collective, informed and intuitive, scientific and soulful.**

**Our Partners**

*"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much"*  
- Helen Keller

We have been enriched by our partner's valuable inputs while designing our curriculum. Subsequently we shared this curriculum with other partner organizations. They used their connections to spread School of Birds in the various districts where they are well-established.




***"Birds have wings; they're free. They can fly where they want, when they want. They have the kind of mobility many people envy."***

— Dr. Salim Ali

## ACADEMIC INITIATIVES : FORGING ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS



### MOU WITH DURGAPUR GOVERNMENT COLLEGE

A significant milestone during the year 2024-25 was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Birdwatchers' Society and Durgapur Government College - a day of pride and promise for all involved. This collaboration marks a meaningful step towards bridging academic learning and field-based conservation practice. The partnership aims to jointly undertake research projects, assist students in the scientific study of birds and their habitats, and foster a culture of ecological awareness. In an era where the role of civil society is crucial in environmental action, such associations between academic institutions and grassroots organisation like BWS create fertile ground for applied learning, citizen science, and conservation leadership. This MOU reflects our shared belief that shaping a sustainable future requires the convergence of knowledge, curiosity, and community engagement.



## MOU WITH APC ROY GOVERNMENT COLLEGE, SILIGURI

As part of the Birdwatchers' Society's ongoing mission to build meaningful collaborations with academic institutions, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy Government College, Siliguri, on August 22, 2024. Nestled at the foothills of the Darjeeling district, the college is uniquely positioned in a bio-diverse and serene landscape - an ideal setting for ecological learning, field studies, and scientific exploration.

This partnership opens new avenues for students and faculty to actively participate in bird surveys, habitat monitoring, and field-based research. BWS envisages a dynamic engagement that goes beyond classrooms - where students of APC Roy College will have opportunities to hone their observational skills, contribute to citizen science databases, and work on real-time conservation projects in the surrounding landscapes of North Bengal.

This MoU marks not just a formal collaboration but a shared commitment to nurturing the next generation of conservationists and strengthening the bridge between academic inquiry and grassroots biodiversity efforts.



# PUBLICATIONS

## FANTAIL

FANTAIL, the quarterly eNewsletter of the Birdwatchers' Society, continued its upward trajectory in 2024 - 25, strengthening its position as a platform for celebrating birds, birding, and birders.

Over the course of the year, four vibrant issues were released, each exploring a compelling theme - from seasonal migration tales to the intricate world of bird songs. The newsletter saw significant growth in both reach and reader engagement: total downloads crossed the 5,000 mark for the first time, with a steady upward trend each quarter. Notably, the special issue on Cuckoos (Volume 4; Issue #2, Oct – December 2024) recorded the highest number of downloads and shares, reflecting the growing resonance of curated, theme-based content.

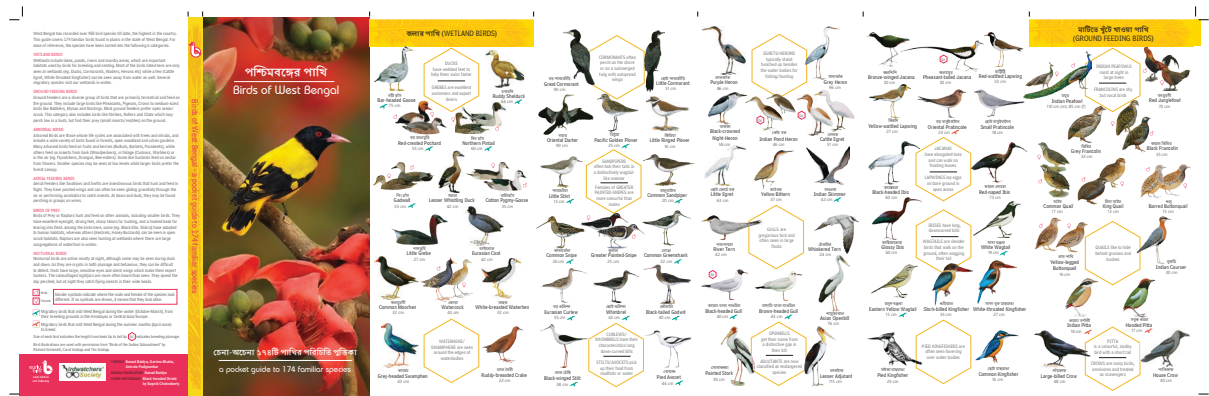
FANTAIL's readership also expanded geographically, with new subscribers joining from across India and overseas, and contributions pouring in from students, scientists, artists, and citizen birders alike.

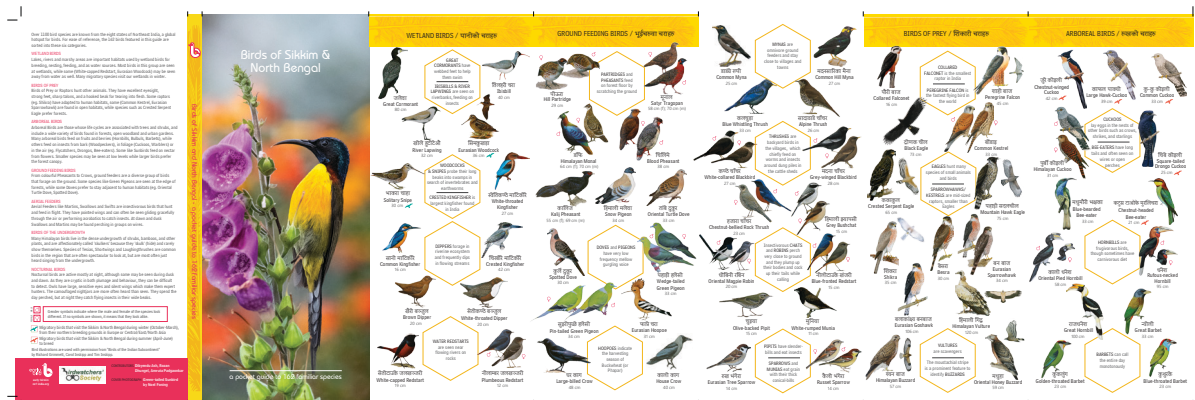


## BIRDS OF WEST BENGAL; BIRDS OF SIKKIM & NORTH BENGAL – POCKET GUIDES

During 2024–25, the Birdwatchers' Society proudly released two Pocket Guides:

- Birds of West Bengal
- Birds of Sikkim & North Bengal





These handy booklets were developed in collaboration with Early Birds and are tailored to meet the needs of birders and nature enthusiasts in the region. Each guide features vivid illustrations of commonly seen birds, along with their names in English and Bengali for the West Bengal edition, and English and Nepali for the Sikkim & North Bengal edition.

Designed to be compact, laminated, and durable, these guides are built for field use—whether in forests, wetlands, or urban parks. They serve as quick-reference tools, enhancing learning and awareness during bird walks, nature education sessions, and outreach events.

The Pocket Guides have already become an indispensable companion for both beginners and seasoned birders, furthering our mission to foster appreciation, knowledge, and conservation of avifauna across the region.

## CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF WEST BENGAL PUBLISHED

2024 marked a watershed moment for avian research and conservation in the state of West Bengal with the publication of the Annotated Checklist of the Birds of West Bengal in the esteemed journal *Indian Birds*. For the Birdwatchers' Society (BWS), this wasn't just a publication—it was the realization of a long-standing vision and a proud contribution to ornithology in India.

The checklist is the result of years of rigorous work, collaboration, and data verification, and is now a definitive reference for the region's avifauna. With over 68% of India's bird species recorded in a state that comprises less than 3% of the country's landmass, West Bengal now rightfully claims its place as the most bird-diverse state in India.

What began as a modest idea - compiling a basic list of the state's birdlife - quickly evolved into an ambitious, peer-reviewed scientific document. BWS Secretary Sujan Chatterjee provided critical past records that laid the historical foundation. While Santanu Manna spearheaded the team, the entire exercise was mentored and guided by Mr Praveen J the widely respected scientist.

Meanwhile, the rise of platforms like eBird contributed to a surge in data from dedicated birders across the state. The research work was painstaking. The team combed through historical literature, museum specimens, handwritten field notes, and thousands of digital records. Some sightings were revisited, re-evaluated, and even excluded upon rigorous scrutiny. In several cases, long-lost species were confirmed again during field verification.

Peer-reviewed by ten national specialists, the checklist underwent an intense review process that lasted nearly three years. Every entry had to withstand scientific interrogation. And finally,



in early 2024, it was published - marking a significant milestone not just for BWS, but for the broader conservation community of India.

## Why This Checklist Matters

The checklist records over 929 species, including some that haven't been reported in decades, such as the Pink-headed Duck and Manipur Bush Quail. With 11 Critically Endangered, 11 Endangered, 25 Vulnerable, and 53 Near Threatened species featured, this document serves as a timely tool for conservation planning and biodiversity assessment in the state.

More than a list, it is a call to action—a reminder that the rich avian heritage of West Bengal must be safeguarded through sustained effort, awareness, and scientific inquiry.

## The Work Behind the Scenes

The development of the checklist involved:

- Meticulous collation of specimen records, photographs, and credible sight reports.
- Reconciliation with historical and museum data, including records of species no longer observed.
- Assessment of conservation status aligned with the State of India's Birds (SoIB) 2023 report.
- Iterative peer reviews to ensure accuracy, transparency, and completeness.

## The People Who Made It Happen

This milestone would not have been possible without the relentless dedication and collaborative spirit of several contributors:

*Santanu Manna*

*Sujan Chatterjee*

*Samiran Jha*

*Biswapriya Rahut*

*Kanad Baidya*

*Sandip Das*

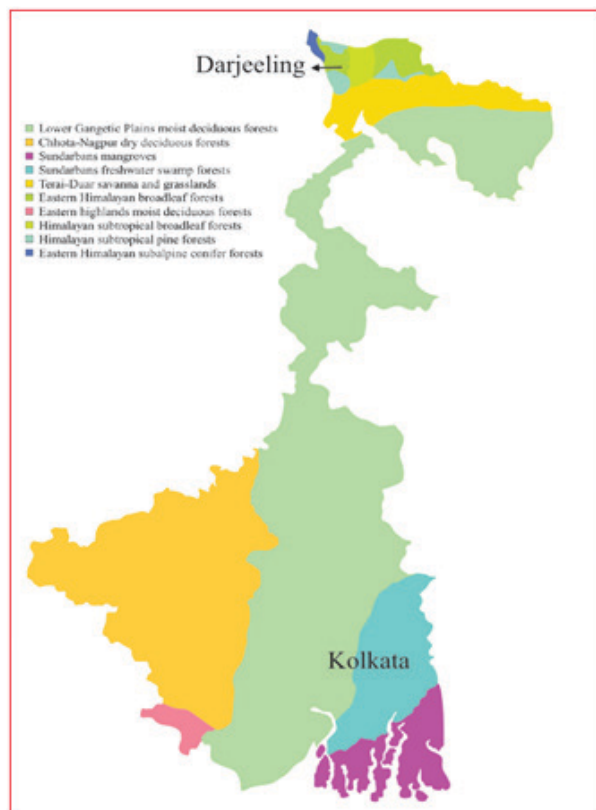
*Mousumi Dutta*

*Arup Kumar Banerjee*

*Subhasish Sengupta*

Their work is a testament to what focused citizen science and collaborative leadership can achieve. This checklist will now serve as a benchmark for researchers, policymakers, students, and every individual with a stake in preserving the biodiversity of West Bengal.

It is not just a list - it's a scientific resource, a conservation tool, and a proud moment for the birding community of Bengal. This milestone reaffirms BWS's core mission: to deepen our understanding of nature and lead meaningful action for its protection.



Physical Map of West Bengal  
showing the eco-regions



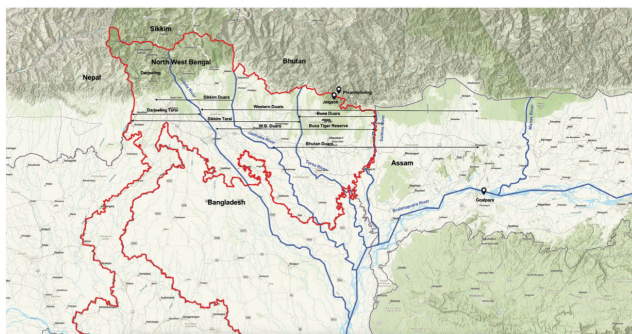


Fig. 2: Map of northern Bengal showing different Duars and Terai and their treatments

## A checklist of the birds of West Bengal, India

Santanu Manna, Sujan Chatterjee, Samiran Jha, Biswapriya Rahut, Kanad Baidya, Sandip Das, Mousumi Dutta, Arup Kumar Banerjee & Subhasish Sengupta

Manna, S., Chatterjee, S., Jha, S., Rahut, B., Baidya, K., Das, S., Dutta, M., Banerjee, A. K., Sengupta, S. 2024 A checklist of the birds of West Bengal, India. *Indian Birds* 20 (4): 97-128A  
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Manuscript received on 22 June 2023.

We would like to dedicate this paper to Biswamoy Biswas (1924-1994) for his contribution to the field of ornithology in West Bengal.

**Abstract:** The first detailed checklist of the birds of West Bengal, India, is presented on the basis of a collation of supporting information from specimens, photographs, and sight records with sufficient field notes. In summary, the state has 929 species of birds. Of these, 757 species have support of a museum specimen, 868 have support of photographs, and seven others are included solely on the basis of well-documented field descriptions. The state's avifauna includes 11 Critically Endangered, 11 Endangered, 25 Vulnerable, and 53 Near Threatened species, including the Pink-headed Duck *Rhodineros corymbifrons* and the Manjur Bush Quail *Perdix manjurensis*, which have not been reported from anywhere for nearly a century. There are 123 species that have been classified as High Priority in the State of India's Birds. Fifty-four species have been included solely on the basis of historical specimens with no recent records, which may indicate local extinctions.

***“This checklist is not just a record of species — it is a tribute to West Bengal’s rich avian diversity and a call to action for its protection. Through collaboration and scientific rigor, we hope this becomes a living document that inspires birdwatchers, researchers, and policymakers alike.”***

**- Santanu Manna, Team Leader, Checklist of the Birds of West Bengal**



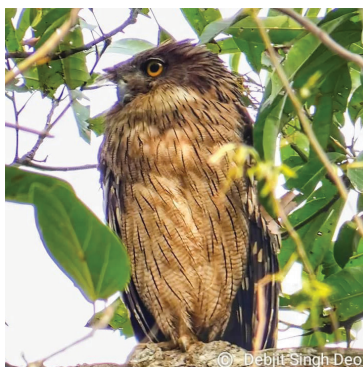


# BIRD CAMP

## BWS Odisha Camp 2024

The BWS Odisha Birding Camp 2024, held from December 25–29 at the heritage homestay Kila Dalijoda near Cuttack, was a memorable five-day immersion into the avian wonders of Odisha. With 23 participants, including both seasoned birders and enthusiastic newcomers, the camp explored diverse habitats—from forests and grasslands to wetlands and botanical reserves. Highlights included over 175 bird species recorded, with exciting lifers like the endangered Black-bellied Tern and Pale-capped Pigeon. Day trips to Mangalajodi, the Regional Plant Resource Centre, and forest night walks added thrilling dimensions to the experience, particularly the owling sessions under the stars.

Participants lauded not only the birdwatching but also the cultural richness of the setting—the regal architecture of the homestay, the warmth of the hosts, and the royal Odia cuisine. Many newcomers overcame initial nervousness and found a nurturing environment where knowledge was freely shared, friendships blossomed, and a love for birds deepened. Despite minor setbacks like a flat tyre, the camp left everyone fulfilled and eager for future adventures, solidifying BWS’s reputation for curating meaningful and unforgettable birding journeys.





## BWS Bakkhali Bird Camp 2025



The BWS Bakkhali Coastal Camp 2025, held from February 21–23, was an enriching experience for birders who gathered to explore the vital wintering habitats of the East Midnapore and South 24 Parganas coastal regions. The camp focused on tracking migratory shorebirds, especially the endangered Nordmann's Greenshank. Venturing to sites like Jambudwip and Lothian Island, participants were treated to a host of exciting sightings, including Great Knots, Red Knots, and various sandpipers and plovers. While changing tides challenged observations, careful photographic analysis confirmed the presence of multiple threatened species, reinforcing the importance of these coastal wetlands along the East Asian–Australasian Flyway.

The camp offered not just birding opportunities but a memorable immersion in camaraderie, nature, and citizen science. Led by BWS with essential support from the Forest Department and local authorities, the trip highlighted the power of collective passion in conservation. Personal anecdotes from participants reflected deep appreciation for the experience—be it lifers spotted, shared learnings, or evening jackal howls on the beach. For many, this was more than a trip; it was a transformative journey into the heart of coastal birdlife and the wonder of the wild.




# BWS MEMBER PUBLICATIONS


## MALAYSRI BHATTACHARYA

Forest Ecology and Management Vol. 573 Date of publication: 1 December 2024, 122335



<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foreco.2024.122335>







Forest Ecology and Management  
Volume 573, 1 December 2024, 122335





**Nest site selection and threats to nesting colonies of white-rumped Vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*) in Himachal Pradesh**

Malyasri Bhattacharya , Gautam Talukdar 

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**Author**

**Malyasri Bhattacharya**

[View in Scopus](#) 

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**Highlights**

- One of the highest nesting populations of White-rumped Vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*) from India.
- From 2020–2024, 17 vulture colonies with 617 nests were identified.
- Most nests were on old-growth Chir Pine (*Pinus roxburghii*) trees.
- 80 % of nests were found between 600 and 800 m elevation.
- Primary threats to nests include forest fires, resin tapping, and tree felling.

**More documents by Malyasri Bhattacharya**  
Provided by Scopus

**Identifying corridors for Asiatic black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*) in a part of Eastern Himalayas, India**  
Frontiers in Conservation Science, Volume 6, 2025  
Bhattacharya, M., ..., Talukdar, G.H.

**Corrigendum: Identifying corridors for Asiatic black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*) in a part of Eastern Himalayas,...**  
Frontiers in Conservation Science, Volume 6, 2025  
Bhattacharya, M., ..., Talukdar, G.H.

**DAMMING A CRANE HABITAT: HABITAT CONSERVATION OF BLACK-NECKED CRANES WINTERING IN ZEMITHAN...**  
Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, Volume 121, Issue 1, Jan...  
Bhattacharya, M., ..., Gopi, G.V.

*“The natural world is the great equalizer.  
It doesn’t care who you are — only how you behave.”*  
— Carl Safina  
*Ecologist and author of Beyond Words:  
What Animals Think and Feel*



## RAJDEEP MITRA

Indian Birds Vol. 20 No. 6 Date of publication: 21 December 2024

### Seabirds foraging alongside a Sperm Whale *Physeter macrocephalus*

The oceanic waters of the Arabian Sea around the Lakshadweep Archipelago are characterized by an abundance of nutrients, supporting a wide variety of marine life including fishes, cephalopods and planktonic organisms (Murty 2002; James 2011). As a result, these waters serve as vital foraging grounds for large marine fauna, including the Sperm Whale *Physeter macrocephalus* and various seabird species (Moazzam et al. 2020). I describe an observation of seabirds engaged in foraging alongside a Sperm Whale near Kavaratti Island (10.740°N, 72.520°E).

On 31 January 2024, during a research expedition, a Sperm Whale was sighted alongside a flock of seabirds in the Arabian Sea at 1635 h approximately 23 km off the coast of Kavaratti Island. The observation was made through binoculars (Nikon Prostaff P7 8x42) from a research vessel at a distance of at least 200 to 300 m. The whale appeared black in colour with an extremely large head and large body size that was visually estimated to be more than 15 m in length. During its surfacing, for a short time, small spatula-shaped flippers were seen along with typical blows projecting forward and to the left. However, no photographs of the whale could be obtained. Throughout the observation period of five to six minutes, three species of seabirds including 20 individuals of Great Crested Terns *Thalasseus bergii*, and eight individuals of Lesser Crested Terns *T. bengalensis* were observed diving into the sea, plunging beneath the surface to capture prey. Additionally, five Sooty Terns *Onychoprion fuscatus* were observed catching prey from the sea surface. Meanwhile, the whale was observed surfacing three times actively engaging in foraging activities alongside the seabirds.

1967). The observed foraging behaviour of the Sperm Whale aligns with established knowledge regarding the species' feeding habits. The presence of Sperm Whales in proximity to the Lakshadweep Islands underscores the importance of these waters as critical habitats providing essential resources for marine mammals and seabirds.

I want to thank Sh. Santosh Reddy V, IFS former Chief Wildlife Warden, Sh. C. N. Abdul Raheem, RFO Wildlife and other staffs of Department of Environment and Forest, Lakshadweep for their support.

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— Rajdeep Mitra

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Email: [rajdeep221240@gmail.com](mailto:rajdeep221240@gmail.com)



### BES Annual Meeting: 11-13 December 2024, Liverpool, UK

This certificate confirms that

**Rajdeep Mitra**

Attended BES2024 in Liverpool, UK, and delivered an in-person **ORAL** presentation in the session **Behavioural Ecology** titled:

**"Post-Nesting movements of seabirds in the Lakshadweep Islands: A Pioneering Satellite Tracking Study from the Indian region"**

Rachel Kudlick

Events Manager  
British Ecological Society

British Ecological Society  
42 Wharf Road, London, N1 7GS, UK  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 3994 8241



*"This study marks a first for India — using satellite telemetry to track the post-nesting movements of seabirds from the remote Lakshadweep Islands. The insights reveal not just their incredible navigational feats, but also the critical need to understand and protect their wide-ranging marine habitats beyond breeding colonies."*

— Rajdeep Mitra, Avian Ecologist, British Ecological Society Annual Meeting, Liverpool, UK (Dec 2024)"



# TISHA MUKHERJEE

Indian Birds Volume 20, No 2 : Tisa Mukherjee



44. Tiger Shrike showing grey crown and upper mantle, barred rufous-brown back, thick bill, pale lores, and pale supercilium.

## A Tiger Shrike *Lanius tigrinus* from Bakkhali, West Bengal – A new species for India

On a sunny morning on 14 May, 2024, at Kargil Beach (21.571°N, 88.201°E), Bakkhali, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal, I set out with hopes of capturing some striking photographs of waders in their breeding plumage, such as the Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*, Tibetan Sand-Plover *A. atrifrons*, and Greater Sand-Plover *A. leschenaulti*, among others. Amidst my observations, a particularly agile passerine caught my eyes. I took several photos, initially believing it to be a Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*. However, upon reviewing the photographs at home, I began to suspect my identification. For clarity, I sent the images to Ashwin Viswanathan and Kanad Baidya. Based on discussion with others, the bird was identified as a female Tiger Shrike *L. tigrinus*.

The findings in both West Bengal and Bhutan suggest that the species is likely to be discovered again in the eastern Indian subcontinent. This record in May perfectly matches the timing of the return migration of Tiger Shrike to its breeding ground, and an odd individual could have strayed to India. However, the July sighting from Bhutan at such a high altitude is intriguing, as the bird should have been breeding by then, much further north.

My acknowledgements to Ashwin Viswanathan, Kanad Baidya, Santanab Majumder, Santanu Manna, Kshounish Sankar Ray, Shubhankar Patra, and an anonymous referee for all the information and support.

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– Tisha Mukherjee

18A, Sahanagar Road, Pin: 700026, West Bengal, India. Email: [tishamukherjee@gmail.com](mailto:tishamukherjee@gmail.com)

## Indian Birds Vol. 20 No. 3 Date of publication: 28 September 2024 ... a collective effort by BWS Members (Highlighted)

Indian Birds Vol 20, No 3: 28September 2024 ... a collective effort by BWS Members (highlighted)

### Birdwatchers piecing together *Locustella* jigsaw: Insights into the wintering distribution of the cryptic West Himalayan Bush Warbler *Locustella kashmirensis*

Karthik Thrikkadeeri, Chintan Sheth, Himanshu C, Virag Sharma, Gunjan Arora, Kaushik Sarkar, Maxim Rodrigues, Gary Allport, Sandeep Biswas, Sandip Das, Rajdeep Mitra, Adesh Shivkar, Rajesh Panwar, Prashant Kumar, Prakash Chitragupta, Manash Pratim, Able Lawrence, Rofikul Islam, Kavi Nanda, Jugal Borah, Mark Menezes, Shyamal Saikia, Mittal Gala, Subhadra Devi, Anas Baig, Manas Gupta, Arun Hegde, Chaiti Banerjee, Swarup Sarkar, Sayanta Basak, Samarendra Chowdhury, Prasenjit Bhattacharjee, Anish Bera, Samim Akhter, Santanab Majumder, Niladri Kundu, Sayandeep Maity, Rakesh Singha Dev, Aritra Pal, Debasis Das, Sudipto Shome, Soumya Aon, Kallol Shome, Amitabha Majumder, Anindya Naskar, Jan-Erik Nilsen, Runap Gogoi, Rustom Basumatary, Anand Singh, C Abhinav & Ashwin Viswanathan

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*“In the end, we will conserve only what we love,  
we will love only what we understand,  
and we will understand only what we are taught.”*

— E.O. Wilson

Father of Sociobiology & Biodiversity Advocate







# Bengal gets bird checklist, tops India with 929 species

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**Kolkata:** After eight years of meticulous research by ornithologists, field biologists, conservationists and NGO members, Bengal has finally got its first comprehensive checklist of avian species.

According to the checklist, the total number of bird species found in the state is 929, substantiated by 757 specimens and 868 photographs. This places Bengal at the top of the table in terms of number of bird species in India. The Zoological Survey of India's 'Birds of India' had previously estimated the number of species found in Bengal at 837.

The state's diverse avifauna comprises 11 critically endangered, 11 endangered, 25 vulnerable, 53 near threatened and 131 Schedule I species. The pink-headed grebe and the Manipur bush quail have not been reported in the past century, as per the checklist.

Santanu Manna, the main author, said 22 museums were contacted for this project — three in India and 19 abroad, primarily in the United Kingdom and the United States. "The foundation of this checklist is specimen data. I personally verified more than 40 specimens using photographs provided by museum curators. I gathered the specimen data from the Global Biodiversity Information Facility website, the largest repository of specimens," he said.

The co-authors are Sujan

## 757 SPECIMENS, 868 PHOTOS

- > 929 species in Bengal
- > Substantiated by 757 specimens, 868 photographs
- > 11 critically endangered, 11 endangered, 25 vulnerable, 53 near threatened and 131 Schedule I species
- > 22 museums contacted

### KEY SPECIES | Striped bunting, painted sparrow, Indian black-lored tit, Nordmann's greenshank and red-breasted merganser

Specimen of a female pink-headed duck collected from Calcutta Bazar. It has not been reported in the state in the past century



Chatterjee, Biswapriya Rahut, Kanad Baidya, Mousumi Dutta, Samiran Jha, Sandip Das, Arup Kumar Banerjee and Subhasish Sengupta. Recent discoveries, according to Manna, include sightings of several pelagic birds, mostly in the aftermath of cyclonic storms. "The western parts of the districts have been historically understudied and have yielded some recent discoveries of dryland species (e.g. striped bunting, painted sparrow, Indian spotted creeper) or species of the north-eastern ghats (e.g. Indian black-lored tit). Though many wetlands around Kolkata have been lost, those habitats are more or less preserved around the Sundarbans, and historical rarities such as the spoon-billed sandpiper, red phalarope, Nord-

mann's greenshank and red-breasted merganser have been rediscovered in the 21st century," he added. The report suggests that the wetlands of Kolkata serve as a staging ground for the large-billed reed warbler during its spring migration. The state was divided into 10 eco-regions, of which the lower Gangetic plains of moist deciduous forests, Chhotanagpur dry deciduous forests, Sundarbans mangroves and Terai-Dooars savanna and grasslands are the most significant. "The entire project was guided by Praveen J, a notable taxonomist of India. Several individuals, including Shubhankar Patra, Apurba Chakraborty, and the late Kushal Mookherjee, provided invaluable support," Manna concluded.

# Catching them young: Kids join bird walk at Sarobar

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**Kolkata:** Birders at Rabindra Sarobar organised a birding session for kids during the weekend that attracted over 30 children from different schools. NGO New Light that runs a shelter for children of sex workers in Kalighat, coordinated the event.

Intended to draw the kids away from the humdrum of daily life and phone screens to experience nature, the initiative proved a major hit with children enthusiastically embracing the activity and displaying curiosity to know more about the birds and the habitat.

## 30 CHILDREN

"This was our first experience and we loved every bit of it," said class IV student Rokeya. Guided by veteran bird enthusiasts, Rokeya and others, including class VIII student Coco, Zara of class V and Moumi of class IV, sighted several birds and mammals in the natural surroundings. "We saw birds like owls, kingfishers, woodpeckers and even spotted a snake!" said class VI student Aaniya. "Like the birds, we feel so free," said class V student Payal. "It is so nice to see the birds move about freely here," she added. The initiative was helmed by IT professionals-cum-bird enthusiasts Sudip Ghosh, Debjit Mukherjee and Tirthankar Roy Chowdhury. The trio have been conducting nature walks at Lake for the last three years.

"We have been conducting nature walks, tree walks and

ing this through our Facebook page Rabindra Sarobar Nature Walks. We were supported by Birdwatchers' Society in Saturday's event," said Ghosh. "Our maiden attempt was an extremely satisfying one," said Sujan Chatterjee of Birdwatchers' Society. "The innocence of the kids touched us all," said birder Pampa Mishra.

## EARLY START FOR EARLY BIRDS



- > Black-naped monarch
- > Orange-headed thrush
- > Hill myna
- > Purple sunbird
- > Alexandrine parakeet
- > Indian paradise flycatcher
- > Indian golden oriole
- > Black-hooded oriole
- > Yellow-browed warbler
- > Greenish warbler
- > Blyth's reed warbler
- > Spotted owl
- > Great cormorant

### Birds Spotted in Lake in winter

- > Lesser cuckoo
- > Common cuckoo
- > Chestnut-winged cuckoo
- > Blue-throated flycatcher
- > Brown-breasted flycatcher
- > Taiga flycatcher
- > Verditer flycatcher
- > Rusty-tailed flycatcher
- > Tickell's thrush

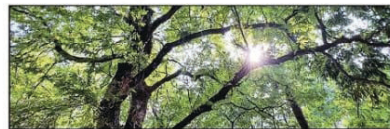
### Orange-headed thrush

Lineated barbet (above); (R) Verditer flycatcher

Kids during the birding session at Lake

# পাড়ার পাখি গণনার কাজ এ বার ঐতিহাসিক তেঁতুলতলাতেও

শ্যামী মল্লিক



■ বিদ্যাসাগর কলোনির সেই ঐতিহাসিক তেঁতুল গাছ। ছবি: সংগৃহীত

স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রামীর পোতা প্রায় ৮০ বছরের পুরনো বিশালাকার তেঁতুলগাছ। বাঘা বতীনের বিদ্যাসাগর কলোনির মিষ্টি এলাকায় গভিয়ে ওঠা একাধিক বছরের মাথায় আজও মাথা উচিয়ে থাকা এই বৃক্ষ বহু পাখি, পোকামাকড়ের আশ্রয়স্থল। তবে তার ভবিষ্যৎ এখন নির্ভর করছে প্রয়োজনের মজির উপরে। তাই সেই গাছ বাঁচাতে সেখানে প্রায়ই বাসে গানের অসর, আলোচনাসভা। এ বার সেই তেঁতুলগাছকে কেন্দ্র করেই ১৬ ফেব্রুয়ারি বিশ্বব্যাপী 'গ্রেট ব্যাকইয়ার্ড বার্ড কাউন্ট-এ' (জিবিসিসি) যোগ দেবেন পক্ষিপ্রেমীরা।

বিদ্যাসাগর কলোনির বাড়ির উঠানে নিচের হাতে তেঁতুলগাছটি একলা লাগিয়েছিলেন স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রামী পারুল মুখোপাধ্যায়। অনুশীলন সমিতির সঙ্গে যুক্ত এই অগ্নিকাণ্ড ১৯৩৫ সালে টিটাগড় বোমা মর্দনস্থল মামলায় ফ্রেডরার হন আরও দুই বিপ্লবীর সঙ্গে। কয়েক বছর জেল খেটে অবশেষে মুক্তি পান ১৯৩৯ সালে। স্বাধীনতার পরে থাকতে শুরু করেন এই বিদ্যাসাগর কলোনিতে। সেখানে একটি তুলসীর প্রাণ শিকিৎসাও ছিলেন তিনি। এলাকায় পরিচিত ছিলেন 'পারুলপিসি' হিসাবে। ১৯৯০ সালে তিনি মারা গেলেও রয়ে গিয়েছে তার স্মৃতিবিজড়িত তেঁতুলগাছখানি।

কিন্তু সেই গাছের ভবিষ্যৎ নিয়ে বর্তমানে চিন্তায় প্রকৃতিপ্রেমীরা। ওই এলাকার বাসিন্দা তথা চলচ্চিত্র পরিচালক দেবীনা জানাচ্ছেন, পারুলদেবীর বাসস্থানটি প্রোমোটরের কাছে বিক্রি করে দিয়েছেন তার পরিবার। তাই জমির এক প্রান্তে থাকা এই তেঁতুলগাছের ভবিষ্যৎ কী হতে চলেছে, তা নিয়ে সন্দেহের তাড়া। দেবীনার কথায়, "গাছ বাঁচাতে, ঐতিহাসিক বাড়ির রাখতেই তার নীচে 'তেঁতুলতলার গান', 'তেঁতুল-টক' শুরু করছি আমরা। গাছটিকে যিরে সংস্কৃতিমন্ডল মানুষের আনাগোনাও বেছেছে।" তাবু সময়ের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে, উন্নয়নের খাবার বলছে কলোনির মানচিত্র। তাই অদূর ভবিষ্যতে এই গাছটির পরিপন্থী কী হবে, তা নিয়ে আশঙ্কায় ভুগছেন অনেকে।

তাই অন্তিমসরগটে ভোগা তেঁতুলতলায় এ বার পাখি গণনা করবেন পক্ষীপ্রেমীরা। 'বার্ড ওয়ার্ল্ড সোসাইটি' নামে রাজ্যের একটি পাখিপ্রেমী সংস্থার সদস্য তিতাস

চক্রবর্তী বলছেন, "জিবিসিসি মূল কথাই হল, বাড়ির আশপাশে থাকা ও অভিন্ন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের উপায়ে পাখিদের গণনা। তাই ওই তেঁতুলগাছে আসা পাখিদের গণনা করতেই হয় এই জিবিসিসি। ২০১৩ সাল থেকে এই গণনায় অংশ নিচ্ছে ভারতও। এ বছর ১৪-১৭ ফেব্রুয়ারি, মোট চার দিন ধরে যে কোনও প্রান্ত প্রজাতির পাখিদের চেনা ও গণনা করা হবে। তবে আসন সংখ্যা সীমিত, কারণ বেশি ভিড় হলে পাখিরা আসবে না।" যদিও দেবীনা জানাচ্ছেন, কয়েক বছর আগেও ওই তেঁতুলগাছে আশ্রয় নিত নীলচুটকি, কমলা দামা, ধূসরাজ, হাড়িচাচা, জঙ্ঘক, নিশিবকের মতো অচেনা পাখিরা। সে সময়ে তাদের বহু ছবি তুলেছেন তিনি। কিন্তু এখন তেঁতুলতলায় সে সব পাখিও দেখা মেলা ভার। গত শীতে বনভ্রমীরের দেখা মিললেও এ বছর তারা তেমন আসেনি। অর্থাৎ উন্নয়নের খাবার তেঁতুলতলায় কমছে পাখিদের আনাগোনা—মত দেবীনার। মানুষ চিনতে শিখলে অন্যতম পাখিদের চিহ্নিত করতে

**সিএসআইআর-ইন্ডিয়ান ইন্সটিটিউট অফ কমিক্যাল বায়োলজি**  
৪, রাস্তা এস.সি.মল্লিক রোড, যাদবপুর, কলকাতা - 700032

**সংক্ষিপ্ত দৃষ্টান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

১. কাজের নাম: কলকাতার সিএসআইআর-ইন্ডিয়ান ইন্সটিটিউট অফ কমিক্যাল বায়োলজিতে যাদবপুর এবং সন্টসক ক্যান্সার বিভাগে বিভিন্ন মিডিল ওয়ার্কসে মেয়াদ ৩ বছর (২০২৩-২০২৬) ২) আনুমানিক বছর ৩৪.৪৭ শতাংশ; ৩) ই-টোকার ২০২৫-২০২৬ ১: ৪) C.P.P. পোর্টালে প্রকাশের তারিখ - ১৩.০২.২০২৫; ৫) আরও বিবরণের জন্য অনুগ্রহ করে <https://www.icb.res.intenders>, ৫ই <https://india.gov.in/procure/app> দেখুন।

**বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

একদ্বারা শ্রী সুজিত কুমার পাল, এইচ আর নং ১০০০১০১৬৬, অ্যাসিস্ট্যান্ট টেলিকম টেকনিশিয়ান, ক্যালকাতা টেলিকম, রিগ্রেশনএলএলকে জানানো হচ্ছে যে একটি চার্জ মোমেন্টাম নং VIG/015825/3600/Rule 36/00013256 তারিখ ০১.০৭.২০১৬, তার বিরুদ্ধে জারি করা হয়েছিল এবং সেটি তার সর্বশেষ রেকর্ড করা এবং স্থায়ী টিকনায় পৌঁছে দেওয়ার তত্ত্বা করা হয়েছিল। কিন্তু সেটি পোস্ট অফিস দ্বারা "Addressee cannot be located" মন্তব্যের মাধ্যমে ফেরত নেওয়া হয়েছে। অতএব শ্রী সুজিত কুমার পালকে এই নোটিশের ২০ দিনের মধ্যে ডিজিএমওএন/নং ৪ ও ৬ নম্বর সার্ভিস কোর্ট, কলকাতা ৭০০০০৫, অফিসে এজিএম/ডায়নিমিন/নং-কে বহিঃসিদ্ধতার বিচার করে উক্ত চার্জ মোমেন্টাম সংগ্রহ করতে নির্দেশ দেওয়া হচ্ছে, অন্যথায় তার বিরুদ্ধে পরবর্তী শাস্তিমূলক ব্যবস্থা একপাক্ষিক ভাবে নেওয়া হবে।

(স্বাক্ষর কুমার বিশ্বাস)  
ডিজিএমওএন/নং  
সিটিডি, বিএসএনএল

## RARE BIRD IN BAKKHALI



A rare bird — a tiger shrike — has been clicked in Bakkhali recently. It is reportedly the first record from India. City-based birder and a member of Birdwatchers' Society, Tisha Mukherjee, clicked the bird — a juvenile — at Kargil beach on May 14. According to Kanad Baidya of Birdwatchers' Society, they usually migrate from China. "We consulted our member and eminent birder Ashwin Vishwanathan, who identified it as a juvenile tiger shrike. It's the first record from India. In 2022, the bird was sighted in Bhutan, which was its first record from the Indian subcontinent," he added

BWS IN MEDIA







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