

soul as it were. Generally speaking, the Newsletter is meant to collect and distribute information about Indian birds so that the network of birdwatchers in this country are stimulated to increase their knowledge and contribute to this fascinating subject. But specifically speaking, I think the Newsletter's central theme should be the enjoyment of birds. Admittedly there are not many people who can present scientific facts in the sort of setting which make their reading enjoyable, but there are a few who do so, and I do hope that we will receive more and more contributions which are really good fun to

read. In the old days when everyone was not so rushed, people could sit back after a morning's walk and expand on the delightful scenes which they experienced during their outings. Not many have the time to do so, but those of you who can take the trouble to do so must remember that enjoyment of a subject is a very important aspect which stimulates its notaries to learn more and more about it.



Birds of Goa University Campus

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The Goa University Campus is located at a latitude 15° 12'N and longitude 73° 49'E covering an area of about 170 hectares. It lies about 5 km south of Panaji, the capital city of Goa, on the east-west trending Taleigao Plateau of Tiswadi taluka of South Goa district in Goa State.

The altitude varies from 50 to 60 metres above sea level. The area falls under the West Coast with its southern side bordered by Zuari Creek, and the northern side with flat valleys. The average annual rainfall is around 2616 mm and much of the precipitation is due to the South-West Monsoon between June to October. The campus enjoys a warm and humid coastal climate. The humidity during monsoon period is high, varying from 90-95%, and for the rest of the year it ranges between 80-85%. The average minimum temperature is about 21 degrees Celsius in winter, while it reaches an average maximum of 36 degrees Celsius in summer.

The campus was a barren land with grasslands and open scrub with plenty of herbs and shrubs and just a few trees, except for a small proportion of which was a farmland, before the establishment of the Goa University in the year 1985. Since then the area has undergone a drastic change in its landscape because of the planned construction of roads and buildings for Goa University. The present sylvan landscape of the campus is due to the massive plantation programme undertaken/encouraged by the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. P.R. Dubhashi. The greenery of the campus consists of diverse groups of plants which include around 67 species of trees, 186 species of herbs, 66 species of shrubs, 6 species of creepers, 5 species of climbers and 4 species of twiners (Mehtab & Rodrigues, 1994, unpublished). The vegetation/sprouting greenery of the Campus attracts a diverse group of birds.

The following is the checklist of the birds of the campus as per a recent study which includes 43 species representing 21 families.

Checklist of the Birds of Goa University Campus

Family : Ardeidae

1. Pond heron / Paddy bird (C) *Ardeola grayii*

Family : Accipitridae

2. Brahminy kite (VC) *Haliaeetus indus*
3. Whitebellied sea eagle (C) *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

Family : Phasianidae

4. Red spurfowl (R) *Galloperdix spadicea*
5. Common peafowl (R) *Pavo cristatus*

Family : Charadriidae

6. Red-wattled lapwing (VC) *Vanellus indicus*
7. Yellow-wattled lapwing (VC) *Vanellus malabaricus*

Family : Columbidae

8. Blue rock pigeon (VC) *Columba livia*
9. Spotted dove (VC) *Streptopelia chinensis*

Family : Cuculidae

10. Pied crested cuckoo (C) *Clamator jacobinus*
11. Indian plaintive cuckoo (C) *Cacomantis passerinus*
12. Koel (C) *Eudynamis scolopacea*
13. Crow-pheasant or coucal (R) *Centropus sinensis*

Family : Strigidae

14. Spotted owl (VC) *Athene brama*

Family : Apodidae

15. House swift (VC) *Apus affinis*

Family : Alcedinidae

16. Whitebreasted kingfisher (VC) *Halcyon smyrnensis*

Family : Meropidae

17. Bluetailed bee-eater (R) *Merops philippinus*
18. Small green bee-eater (C) *Merops orientalis*

Family : Capitonidae

19. Small green barbet (C) *Megalaima viridis*

Family : Alaudidae

20. Malabar crested lark (C) *Galerida malabarica*

Family : Hirundinidae

21. Striated or redrumped swallow (C)

Hirundo daurica**Family : Oriolidae**

22. Blackheaded oriole (C)

*Oriolus xanthornus***Family : Dicruridae**

23. Black drongo / king crow (VC)

*Dicrurus adsimilis***Family : Sturnidae**

24. Jungle myna (VC)

*Acridotheres fuscus***Family : Corvidae**

25. Indian tree pie (R)

Dendrocitta vagabunda

26. House crow (VC)

Corvus splendens

27. Jungle crow (C)

*Corvus macrorhynchos***Family : Pycnonotidae**

28. Redwhiskered bulbul (C)

Pycnonotus jocosus

29. Whitecheeked bulbul (R)

Pycnonotus leucogenys

30. Redvented bulbul (C)

Pycnonotus cafer

31. Whitebrowed bulbul (C)

*Pycnonotus luteolus***Family : Muscicapidae**

32. Wren-babbler (R)

Spelaeornis sp.

33. Yelloweyed babbler (R)

Chrysomma sinense

34. Jungle babbler (VC)

Turdoides striatus

35. Tickell's blue flycatcher (R)

Muscicapa tickelliae

36. Tailor bird (C)

Orthotomus sutorius

37. Magpie-robin (VC)

Copsychus saularis

38. Indian robin (VC)

*Saxicoloides fulicata***Family : Motacillidae**

39. Large pied wagtail (R)

*Motacilla maderaspatensis***Family : Ploceidae**

40. House sparrow (VC)

Passer domesticus

41. Baya (VC)

Ploceus philippinus

42. Whitebacked munia (VC)

Lonchura striata

43. Blackheaded munia (C)

Lonchura malacca

Note :

VC = Very Common

C = Common

R = Rare

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The Kole Wetlands – An Avian Paradise in Kerala

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The Kole wetlands are one of the richest places both for paddy cultivation as well as for water birds in Kerala. The wetlands lie between 10° 20' and 10° 40' north latitude and 75° 58' and 76° 11' east longitude. These lands, spread across Thrissur and Malappuram districts are estimated to be 13,632 hectares.

These lands were formerly lagoons which gradually got silted up. The major portion of the kole lands lie below MSL by 1.0 m to 2.5 m and are covered with water for 4 to 5 months a year. The area is richly covered with various monsoon plants and weeds.

In ancient times rice was grown in the areas once in a year during summer. The land was very fertile due to the silt deposited by monsoon floods from the thickly vegetated spur hills of the Western Ghats. 'Kole' meaning abundance in Malayalam, was associated with the good harvest gifted by nature.

The practice of separating 'Kayal' (lagoons) water from paddy fields is done by construction of 'mattoms' (bunds) with bamboo and mud annually. Afterwards the flood water pumped out from the fields is stored in a network of canals



Enamavu regulator with a temporary 'mattom'.

interspersed throughout the area. The excess water is drained into the sea.

Every year many migratory birds visit this wetland. Several thousand ducks, teals and terns arrive at the swamp every year in winter. Among them are garganey teal, lesser whistling teal, northern pintail duck, cotton pigmy goose and whiskered tern.