



# ENVIS NEWSLETTER



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## STATE BIRD OF PUDUCHERRY (ASIAN KOEL)

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### ENVIS HUB CENTER

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### State bird of Pondicherry (Asian koel)

The Asian koel (*Eudynamys scolopaceus*) is commonly known குமில் (Koel) in Tamil and Asian Koel in English which belongs to Cuculidae is the State Bird of Puducherry has announced by the Government of Puducherry on 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2007.

The word koel is echoic in origin and the bird is a widely used symbol in Indian poetry. It has been compared with the "nightingale" due to its melodious call. The National Poet Subramania Bharathi has written a poem on Koel in a Koel Grove in Puducherry which is no more in existence.



### Distribution

They found in Australia, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, from south-eastern Asia to New Guinea, and Solomon Islands. During the winter they migrate to warmer areas. Most of the population are resident in that range.

### Distinctive Identification

Asian koel is a beautiful bird and classified as Least Concern (LC) by the IUCN. Size of adult Asian koel is between 38 to 46 cm including the tail. The weight of adult is between 180 to 240 g.

Adult male has glossy bluish-black or greenish-black plumage. Wings are relatively short, but tail is rather long.



Adult male



Adult female

Female has smooth brown upperparts, heavily speckled with creamy white. Under parts are cream to whitish, finely barred with dark brown bars. Tail is barred dark grey and white. Crown is darker brown. Bill is pale greenish. Eyes are red. Juvenile resembles female but it has dark eyes.

### **Voice:**

Asian Koel is very vocal. Often heard before seen, it gives its typical insistent call “ko-eul”, two syllables uttered at intervals or repeated in rapid series, increasing in pitch. Male utters other calls such as “kuhu, kuhu, kuhu”, and loud, harsh whistles. Female has a rhythmic “wook-wook”, and short, shrill whistles.

### **Habit and habitat**

The Asian koel is a bird of light woodland and cultivation. They prefers staying in a dense thick forest with thick trees and bamboos, light woodland and cultivation areas. Also, found in shrubby areas which have tall trees, woods, villages, towns and gardens and mangrove forest. Asian Koel is a shy bird, they can be seen alone or in pair. They have straight and swift flight with rapid wing beats .

### **Diet and feeding behavior**

The diet of the adult Asian western koel consists mainly of fruits. Wild fruits, orchard fruits, figs and berries are their primary food. The nestlings of these western Asian koel species are fed by the foster parents with insects and plant matter. The juveniles feed on a variety of insects, caterpillars, eggs and small vertebrates. The adults are observed to defend the fruiting trees from other frugivorous birds.

### **Behaviour:**

The Asian koel is omnivorous, consuming a variety of insects, caterpillars, eggs and small vertebrates. Adults feed mainly on fruit. They will sometimes defend fruiting trees that they forage in and chase away other frugivores. They have been noted to be especially important in the dispersal of the sandalwood tree (*Santalum album*) in India.

Large seeded fruits are sometimes quickly regurgitated near the parent tree while small seeded fruits are ingested and are likely to be deposited at greater distances from the parent tree. They have a large gape and are capable of swallowing large fruits including the hard fruit of palms such as *Arenga* and *Livistona*. They have been known to occasionally take eggs of small birds. Breeding season is between April to August.

### **Reproduction:**

The Asian Koel is a brood parasite and lays its egg in the nests of a variety of birds, including both the Jungle Crow and the House Crow, but the House Crow is the usual victim and eggs are rather smaller, but very like the crows in appearance, pale greyish-green or stone color speckled and blotched with reddish-brown. Sometimes two Koels' eggs may be found in one Crow's nest, and at times the big black Jungle-Crow has to do parental duty for the Koel.



The most curious thing about the whole business is that the Crows, although they bring up the young Koel and feed it even after it has left the nest, yet evidently know there is something wrong, for they cherish a lively prejudice against the old Koels and hunt any Koel to death if they get the chance. Males may distract the hosts so that the female gets a chance to lay an egg in the nest. More often however, the female visits the nest of the host alone.

The koel is not known to lay eggs in an empty host nest and a study in Pakistan found that the first koel eggs were laid, on average, within one and half days of the laying of the host's first egg. The chicks of the koel hatched about 3 days ahead of the host chicks. Koels usually lay only an egg or two in a single nest but as many as seven to eleven eggs have been reported from some host nests.

A female may remove a host egg before laying. Eggs hatch in 12 to 14 days. The young koel does not always push out eggs or evict the host chicks, and initially calls like a crow. The young fledge in 20 to 28 days.

Unlike as in some other cuckoos, the young do not attempt to kill the host chicks, a trait that is shared with the channel-billed cuckoos which are also largely frugivorous as adults. It has been suggested that koels, like some other brood parasites do not evict the host chicks due presumably due to the higher cost of evicting nestmates.

A small parasite may not be able to evict large host eggs or chicks from a deep Corvid nest without risking starvation and possibly accidental self-eviction. An alternate hypothesis that retaining host chicks might benefit the koel chicks did not gain much support. Adult female parents have been known to feed young koels in the nests of the hosts, a behaviour seen in some other brood parasitic species as well. Adult males have however not been noted to feed fledglings. The average lifespan of Koel is between 12 to 15 years.





## In Culture

### India

The word "Koel" is derived from the Hindi word which is onomatopoeic in origin. The Sanskrit root is "Kokila" and the words in various Indian languages are similar. It is traditionally held in high regard for its song and held in reverence with the Manusmriti, an ancient decree protecting them from harm. The Vedas, Sanskrit literature dated to about 2000 BC referred to it as *Anya-Vapa* which meant "that was raised by others".

This has been interpreted as the earliest knowledge of brood parasitism. Being familiar birds with loud calls, references to them are common in folklore, myth and poetry. These birds were once very popular in India as cagebirds. Feeding even on boiled rice, these hardy birds lived in captivity for as long as 14 years .

### References:

1. <http://arunachalabirds.blogspot.in/2013/06/asian-koel.html>
2. <https://www.beautyofbirds.com/asiankoels.html>
3. Vijay Choudhary, 2017. Asian koel (*Eudynamys scolopaceus*) complete detail.

## குயில் பாட்டு

கானப் பாட்டு முடிவுபெறப் பாரெங்கும்  
ஏக மவுன மியன்றதுகாண்: மற்றதிலோர்  
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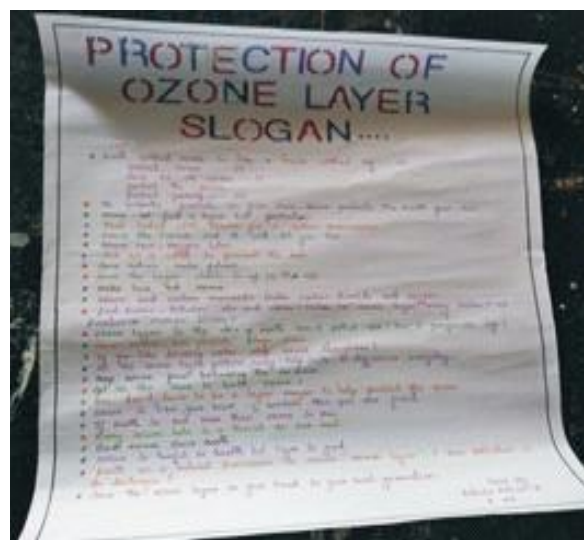
–மகாகவி பாரதியார்.

## ENVIRONMENT EVENTS

### WORLD OZONE DAY CELEBRATION 2017

The international day for the preservation of ozone layer was observed globally on 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 with the theme of “Caring for all life under the sun”. This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Montreal Protocol. As a part of the “Ozone day Celebration” the following activities were organized by the Department of Science, Technology and Environment, Puducherry Pollution Control Committee and Puducherry Council for Science & Technology.

1. On 12.09.2017, Painting and Slogan writing competition were conducted for the schools in the U.T. of Puducherry on the theme “Protection of Ozone layer” and the best entries were posted in the ozone portal [www.ozone30mp.nic.in](http://www.ozone30mp.nic.in)



2. Drawing Competitions were conducted on the theme “Protection of Ozone Layer” for the school students (Private and Government Schools) in the age group of 13-17 years on 16.09.2017 and 19.09.2017 at Dr. Abdul Kalam Science Centre and Planetarium, Lawspet, Puducherry. Nearly 80 Students participated in the event.





## Selected drawing on Ozone Day Celebration





3. Ozone layer protection awareness Road rally was conducted by Pondicherry Air Conditioners and Refrigeration Association at Beach Road on 16.09.2017 towards celebration of Ozone day which was funded



4. Half-a-day awareness technical Workshop was conducted on 19.09.2017 by Puducherry Council for Science and Technology in association with M/s. Whirlpool on the subject “Handling and Management of Ozone Depleting Substances in Air Conditioner and Refrigeration Sector” for the AC technicians and ITI Students of Puducherry and Karaikal region at Dr. Abdul Kalam Science Centre and Planetarium, Puducherry. The skill development training program would help the technicians and ITI Students to handle the refrigerant and air-conditioner gases effectively which otherwise leads to environment issues.

Thiru R. Kamala Kannan, M/s Sakthi Refrigeration & Air-conditioning Enterprises, Chennai, Thiru. Sabapathi Kanaga, Siva Refrigeration, Chennai and Dr. M. Srinivasan, Professor, CAS in Marine Biology, Parangipettai were invited as experts. The stakeholders were approximately around 50 Technicians from the Pondicherry Refrigeration and Air-conditioners Technicians and Trainees Welfare Association and 60 ITI students from Air Conditioning and Refrigeration in Puducherry and Karaikal regions along with officials of DSTE, PPCC, PCS&T, ENVIS staff and public participated in the function.



**Workshop organised on 19.09.2017 for Pondicherry refrigeration & Air Conditioner Technicians and training welfare association, ITI Students of Puducherry and Karaikal).**



THE TIMES OF INDIA, FEBRUARY 7, 2017

## Govt eases rules for clearance of non-polluting industrial projects

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New Delhi: Industrial projects in the "non-polluting" category will not have to obtain the "consent" certificate under the air and water pollution control laws, a move intended to reduce clearances and quicken rollout of projects. The decision, likely to attract criticism for diluting green norms, looks to simplify procedures to fast-track real estate projects as well. In building, construction, area development and township projects, proponents will not be required to obtain mandatory 'consent' if they have 'environment clearance'.

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has asked state pollution watch-dogs to spare such proposed units or establishments from 'consent' under existing Air and Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Acts.

Though the move will cut

### DEVELOPMENT IN FAST TRACK

CPCB modifies mechanism for the grant of consent to various categories of industries and construction projects under Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act and Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

**1** No need to obtain consent for 'white' category of industries (White category of industries pertains to those industries which are practically non-polluting)

**2** Consent can automatically be issued to 'green' category of industries if they submit an undertaking on expected date of start of production (Green category of industries are less polluting)

**3** No need to obtain 'consent' to establish 'consent' for building/ construction, area development and township projects if they get 'environment clearance'

**4** All other projects, requiring 'environment clearance' either from state authority or from ministry of environment, will be exempted from obtaining 'consent to establish'

procedural delays as part of the Centre's attempt to spur growth through improved 'ease of doing business', the order covering real estate projects may well be challenged in court. Similar cases are pending in the Na-

tional Green Tribunal (NGT) since early last month.

According to the CPCB order, issued on February 2, non-polluting industries (white category) will not be required to obtain 'consent to establish' certificate from re-

spective state pollution control boards (SPCBs) whereas the less polluting ones (green category) will automatically be issued 'consent' if they inform the Board in advance the expected date of start-up of their commercial production.

THE TIMES OF INDIA, FEBRUARY 1, 2017

## Low pollution led to warmer January?

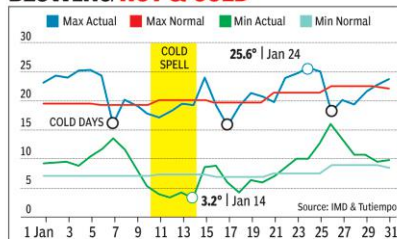
### Sunny Days Because Of Cleaner Airy

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New Delhi: For the second consecutive year, Delhi missed its characteristic January chill. While the month had more cold days than December, temperatures stayed above normal on a majority of days — one of the reasons for which, ironically, could be the relatively clean winter air this season.

The month ended with the

### BLOWING HOT & COLD



average minimum temperature 1.1 degree Celsius higher than normal and the average maximum 0.7 degrees above

par. As monthly averages go, these deviations are significant although lower than what was seen in January last year,

which was an exceptional warm month.

Night temperatures dropped below 5 degrees C on just

### Avg Jan Temperatures (in deg C)

	Max	Min
Normal	20.5	7.6
2017	21.2	8.7
2016	22.6	9
2015	18.9	8.3
2014	20.2	8.5
2013	19.7	6.2
2012	20.3	7.5
2011	20	6.5
2010	19.2	8.3

four days during the month while maximum temperatures were significantly lower than normal on three days. Compare this to 10 'cold days' in January 2015 (significantly lower maximum temperatures) and 11 days when the mercury dropped below 5 degrees in January 2013.

So why did Delhi witness a mild winter even though the western Himalayas saw good snowfall this January? Meteorologists said this could be due to several local and large-scale factors. "This season, the cold did not get transmitted significantly from the hills to the plains of north and central India. That's because the position of 'western disturbances' (cold, moist winds from southern

Europe) was mostly a little more to the north, which affected only J&K and Himachal Pradesh," said D Sivananda Pal, head of IMD's long term forecasts, which had predicted a mild winter in India this year. Interestingly, the relatively low pollution levels this month could also have contributed to the higher-than-normal daytime temperatures, a Met official said.

"The month had 58 hours of fog across 13 days. That's not unusual. However, unlike in the past, the fog occurred mostly at night or in the mornings. Afternoons were relatively clear. This may be a result of lower air pollution because pollutants increase fog," the official said.

## Budget should allocate funds for de-silting water bodies: Bedi

Calls for community involvement in strengthening bunds by planting trees

STAFF REPORTER

Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi has stressed the need for budgetary allocation to de-silt 84 tanks so as to recharge groundwater level in rural areas.

As part of her weekend morning visit, Ms. Bedi on Sunday visited Kuruvantham and Krummakkam tanks.

Kaj Nivas, in a release said, the Lt. Governor reviewed progress of tank restoration work with officials from the Public Works Department and also interacted with Tank Users Associations.

Funds will help recharge groundwater and improve quality

KIRAN BEDI, Lieutenant Governor

"Budget should be specifically earmarked for desilting and maintenance of 84 tanks to recharge the ground water level and to improve water quality," she release said.

People also complained to the Lt. Governor about the contamination of water



Reality check: Lt. Governor Kiran Bedi inspecting a water bodies in a rural as part of her weekend visit, 'virtuous degradation'

bodies due to discharge of sewage water. She assured that the government departments would work in co-ordination to prevent pollution of water bodies.

Ms. Bedi also stressed the need to strengthen bunds around water bodies by

planting trees. The local community should be involved in the process so that they get engaged in conservation of tanks.

Stress on training

She also stressed on the need to provide training

programme for all stakeholders, to promote good practices in conservation of water bodies. Additional Secretary to Lt. Governor G. Srinivas and Officer on Special Duty to the Lt. Governor Amritha Bahl also accompanied Ms. Bedi.



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