

BIRDS OF PUDUCHERRY

A Field Guide

VOLUME - 1



Puducherry ENVIS Hub Centre

Department of Science, Technology & Environment
Puducherry Pollution Control Committee, Puducherry



BIRDS OF PUDUCHERRY



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Birds

Ecological importance of birds

Birds are feathered, winged, two-legged, warm blooded, egg-laying vertebrates. There are 9,026 identified species of birds in the world, of which 1,232 (13.66%) are found in India. Most bird species have the unique ability to fly. Many birds take advantage of this ability to migrate great distances in search of warmth and food. In winter, wetlands across our state suddenly seem to fill with water birds - most of these are indeed migrants that come from far off cold regions in Western and Northern parts of Asia. Domesticated birds are important sources of food in the form of eggs and meat. Recreational bird-watching is an important part of ecotourism. When it comes to agriculture, birds are both a boon and bane. While birds help control pest populations and even eliminate weeds, many species are destructive to farmlands, often raiding crops before they are ripened or harvested. Birds can also serve as vectors to some major diseases like psittacosis, avian tuberculosis and, most famously, avian influenza (bird flu) that are harmful for humans.

Birds have a good system for spreading seeds. They eat berries and then when they dispose of their waste, the berry seeds are disposed along with it. Bird feces provide good fertilization for the seeds with which they are dropped, giving seeds very good conditions with which to grow. In addition, a lot of bird species may have been significant browsers of forest vegetation. There are about 10000 bird species in the world. From the poles to the equatorial forests, from the deserts to the centres of the oceans, from the highest mountains to the hearts of our cities, everywhere birds are amongst the most conspicuous forms of animal life. Of all the animals, birds have been the most well-known classis because human beings have used them for feeding, communication, pollinating plants, and decorate the home, etc. Birds are important to continue ecologic circle, especially in food chain. For the last three centuries, industrial developments and anthropological effects have degraded habitats and caused the natural balance to deteriorate.



About Puducherry:

"The Union Territory of Puducherry comprises the former French establishments of Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam, which lie scattered in South India. Puducherry, the capital of the Territory was once the original headquarters of the French in India is situated on the Coromandel Coast of the Bay of Bengal and is about 135 kms from Chennai Airport. It is bounded on the east by the Bay of Bengal and on the three sides by Tamil Nadu. About 130 kms south of Puducherry on the East Coast placed in Karaikal. Mahe is situated on the Malabar Coast on the Western Ghats surrounded by Kerala and is about 70 kms from Calicut Airport. Yanam is situated adjoining the East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh and is about 200 kms from Visakhapatnam Airport. The Union Territory with legislature extends over an area of 479 Sq. kms. Total population of the Union Territory is 1244464, with a literacy rate of 86.55, as per 2011 Census (Provisional)".

About ENVIS:

ENVIS scheme is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) by Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India, with a objective to create awareness on both local, regional, national and international issues. This scheme is being operated by Puducherry Pollution Control Committee since 2000. Subsequently based on the request of MoEF, a separate account has been created by ENVIS and is being operated by the Member Secretary and Chairman of PPCC. The salient features of the scheme is as follows :

- (i)The state node will have an information base that includes both descriptive information as in the form of publication reports. Reports and abstracts on environmental related subjects are to be stored for dissemination, with special reference to Status of Environment and its related issues.
- (ii)The Node will have linkage with information sources in the country and abroad for increasing the information contents.
- (iii) The Node will establish a data bank containing data on selected parameters and its assigned subject area.
- (iv)The Node will develop website and linkage with the existing ENVIS centres, and ENVIS –Capacity Enhancement Programme.
- (v)The Node will work under overall supervision and control of ENVIS –Capacity Enhancement Programme Secretariat of Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change.
- (vi) In order to continue the programme activities after the end of the period of the agreement the node shall give an undertaking that suitable man power would be deployed for this purpose for atleast further period of five years of cessation of assistance and the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change shall have the right to monitor its activities during this period.



About Puducherry Envis centre

The Environmental Information System (ENVIS) is a project funded by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoE&F), Government of India to facilitate collection, analysis and dissemination of information on various facets of environment. Around 90 ENVIS centers have been established over India and each centre has been allotted specific subject area.

Our ENVIS centre located at the Puducherry Pollution Control Committee (PPCC), Puducherry focuses on special reference to "Status of Environment Related Issues". Activities of our centre include collection, analysis, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information in the subject area allotted. The information is being disseminated through the quarterly newsletter and website.

The long-term objectives of the Scheme are as follows: To build up a repository and dissemination Centre in environmental science and engineering.

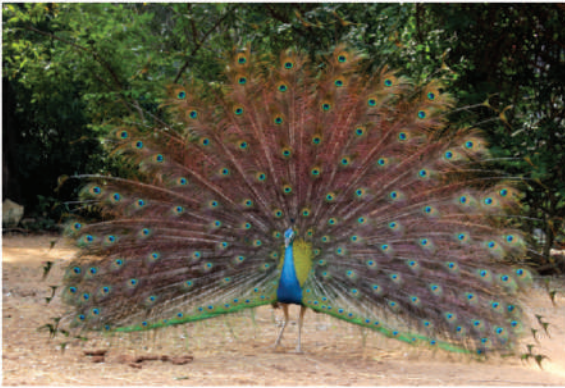
- To gear up state-of-art technologies of information acquisition, processing, storage, retrieval and dissemination of environmental nature.
- To support and promote research, development and innovation in environmental information technology.
- Its short-term objectives are as follows:
- To provide national environmental information service relevant to present needs and capable of meeting the future needs of the users, originators, processors and disseminators of information.
- To build up storage, retrieval and dissemination capabilities, with the ultimate objective of disseminating information speedily to the users.
- To promote national and international cooperation and liaison for exchange of environment-related information.
- To promote, support and assist education and personnel training programmes designed to enhance environmental information processing and utilizing capabilities.
- To promote and exchange of environment-related information amongst developing countries.



INDIAN PEA FOWL *Pavo cristatus*

Family: Phasianidae

M.B. Guptha



Identification Key

Male has blue neck and breast, and spectacular glossy green train of elongated uppertail-covert feathers with numerous ocelli. Female lacks elongated uppertail-coverts; has whitish face and throat and white belly.

Size :110 cm

Voice : Loud wailing may yow. Also cackles

Habits

Inhabits forest undergrowth and, where feral, villages, cultivation and some towns. Feeds methodically on ground on vegetable matter, invertebrates and reptiles in small parties. Often confining. Roots high in trees. Nests on ground

INDIAN PITTA *Pitta brachyura*

Family: Pittidae

Clement Francis



Identification Key

Bold black stripe through eye, white throat and supercilium, buff lateral crown-stripes, and buff breast and flanks.

Size :19 cm

Voice: Noisy. Penetrating whistle wheet peu and weee.

Habits

Inhabits all types of forest and thick scrub, favouring shady, dump areas. Eats invertebrates on ground, making long hops and searching leaf litter. Files quietly to tree branch if disturbed, but prefers hopping away or freezing if seen. Calls from low tree perch. Solitary or in pairs. Small flocks on migration. Domed nest low down in thick cover.

WHITE-BROWED BULBUL *Pycnonotus luteolus* Family: Pycnonotidae

M.R. Gupta



Identification Key

Brownish crest, white throat, yellow breast and belly, and rufous cast to wings and tail. Juvenile duller, with browner underparts.

Size: 19 cm

Voice: Noisy. Short explosive bubbling song. A harsh churr.

Habits

Inhabits thick scrub, gardens and forest edge. Shy, keeping to cover in pairs or sometimes sings from higher exposed perch. Feeds on invertebrates, nectar and fruit. Nests in bush

ASIAN KOEL *Eudynamys scolopacea* Family: Cuculidae



Identification Key

Male is greenish-black, with green bill. Female is spotted and barred with white.

Size: 43 cm

Voice: Familiar Pre-monsoon sound starting before dawn. Loud, rising and sometimes manic ko-el ko-el ko-el. Also steady bubbling note and various gurgles and shrieks. Young caw like crows

Habits

Inhabits all types of wooded country, city parks and gardens. Adults eat mainly fruit but robs birds nests. Brood-parasitises House and Large-billed crows. Young accompany foster parents for several weeks, noisily demanding food..

RED-VENTED BULBUL *Pycnonotus cafer*

Family: Pycnonotidae

M.B. Gupta



Identification Key

Red vent. Black head with slight crest, and white rump. Mantle and breast vary from pale brown, and heavily scaled to blackish.

Size :20 cm

Voice: Noisy. Commonest call is loud, insistent we we wool. Also peep peep and jit jew.

Habits

Inhabits open wooded country including urban gardens and parks. The most familiar bulbul. Bold and inquisitive. Usually in pairs or small parties. Pairs indulge in chattering and wiring raising. Feeds on insects, nectar and fruit.

RED-WHISKERED BULBUL *Pycnonotus jacosus*

Family: Pycnonotidae

M.B. Gupta



Identification Key

Black crest, red 'whiskers', and white underparts with complete or broken breast band. Red vent.

Size :19 cm

Voice:Noisy. A loud, liquid peter who? Often preceded by tik, whichever tee and pik ter welu.

Habits

Inhabits open forest, scrub, groves, gardens and parks including in urban areas. Feeds on fruit, nectar and insects at all levels including the ground. Usually in small groups or pairs. Often indulges in slow wing raising display when meeting, accompanied by much calling. Confiding and inquisitive, perching openly. Nests in low cover.

PURPLE SWAMPHEN *Porphyrio porphyrio*

Family: Rallidae

M. B. Guptha



Identification Key

Large in size, purplish-blue coloration, and huge red bill and red frontal shield.

Size :45 cm

Voice : Quite noisy with various deep hoots and cackles. Most frequent is a sudden, thick quark

Habits

Inhabits reedbeds, marshes and well-vegetated jheels, particularly favouring water hyacinth which it eats. Also eats other plant food, invertebrates and amphibians. Holds plant food with toes like a parrot. Often in large flocks. Files reluctantly but strongly. Nests on ground.

COMMON COOT *Fulica atra*

Family: Rallidae

Clement Francis



Identification Key

Blackish, with white bill and shield. Immature duller with whitish throat.

Size
40 cm

Voice: Quite noisy. An abrupt towk, a sharper pseek and various conversational chucklings.

Habits

Large swimming flocks on open water of jheels and rivers, often mixing with duck. Walks on floating vegetation. Feeds on vegetable matter. Flocks may panic and splatter clumsily across the water. Files low but strongly, with lobed toes projecting. Builds anchored, floating reed nest.

BLACK - WINGED STILT *Himantopus himantopus* Family: Scolopacidae

Clement Francis



Identification Key

Slender appearance, long pinkish legs, and fine straight bill. Upperwing black and legs extend a long way behind tail in flight.

Size : 35 cm

Voice : Noisy. A high keep keep

Habits

Inhabits jheels, sewage seepage, rivers, village ponds, saltpans and mudflats. Graceful high-stepping gait. Gregarious. Wades and swims, picking or probing for insects and small fish. Nests, often colonially, on islands and floating vegetation.

COMMON REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Family: Scolopacidae



Identification Key

Orange-red at base of bill, orange-red legs, and broad white trailing edge to wing. Non-breeding plumage is grey-brown above, with grey breast. Neck and underparts heavily streaked in breeding plumage; upperparts with variable dark brown and cinnamon markings.

Size: 28 cm

Voice:

Noisy. A three note frenetic tew lee uu and a hard kip kip.

Habits

Inhabits marshes, jheels, rivers, muddy coasts and estuaries. Feeds on aquatic invertebrates on and in mud and shallow water. Sociable, mixing with other waders. Wary, often the first to warn of intrusion Bobs when alarmed.

COMMON MYNA *Acridotheres tristis*

Family: Sturnidae

Clement Francis



Identification Key

Brownish myna with yellow orbital skin, white wing patch and white-tail- tip.

Size: 23 cm

Voice : Noisy. A harsh chake chake and various chattering, whistling and gurgling notes, often made by pairs together.

Habits

Inhabits towns and villages and associated cultivation, parks and gardens. Bold, aggressive and inquisitive, even entering houses. Feeds on invertebrates, fruit, nectar, grain and human garbage, strutting haughtily on ground. Usually in pairs. Roots communally in reedbeds or groves. Very territorial, pairs often fighting each other. Nests in hole

COMMON HOOPOE *Upupa epops*

Family: Upupidae

Clement Francis



Identification Key

Rufous-orange or orange-buff, with black-and-white wings and tail and black-tipped fan-like crest.

Size: 31 cm

Voice: Far-carrying, low poo, poo, poo.

Habits

Inhabits cultivation, open woodland, villages, parks and gardens. Feeds mainly on short grass, including lawns, probing ground with long beak. Often in pairs or loose groups. Feeds on large insects, worms, small reptiles and rodents. Confiding although can be inconspicuous.

SHIKRA *Accipiter badius*

Family: Accipitridae



Clement Francis

Identification Key

Adults paler than Besra and Eurasian Sparrowhawk. Underwing pale, with fine barring on remiges, and slightly darker wing-tips. Male has pale blue-grey upperparts, indistinct grey gular stripe, fine brownish-orange barring on underparts, unbarred white thighs, and unbarred or only lightly barred central tail feathers. Female has upperparts more brownish-grey.

Size : 35 cm

Voice : Noisy. Mostly a loud, piercing Black Drongo-like kitou kitou.

Habits: Inhabits trees, including urban parks and gardens. Not shy. Very aggressive hunter, often following a daily beat. Eats reptiles and birds. Dashes after prey through branches or close to ground. Frequently soars in breeding display. Hurried flight with fast wingbeats and long glides. Usually singly or in pairs. Nests high in tree.

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE *Elanus caeruleus* **Family:** Accipitridae



Clement Francis

Identification Key

Small size. Grey and white with black 'shoulders'. Flight buoyant, with much hovering. Juvenile has brownish-grey upperparts with pale fringes, with less distinct shoulder patch.

Size: 35 cm

Voice: A high peeya.

Habits

Inhabits cultivation, open grassland with scrub and open woodland. Usually solitary or in pairs. Often sits on wires, poles or dead branches. Quite confiding. Graceful tern-like flight. Often hovers before floating down to pounce on reptiles and large insects. Also pounces from high perch. Nests in small, usually isolated, trees.

CRESTED SERPENT- EAGLE *Spilornis cheela* Family: Accipitridae

M.B. Gupta



Identification Key

Broad, rounded wings. Soars with wings held forward and in pronounced V. Adult has broad white bands across wings and tail; hooded appearance at rest, with yellow cere and lores, and white spotting on brown underparts.

Size : 75 cm

Voice : Calls frequently in flight, kee kee ke.

Habits

Inhabits well-wooded lowlands, including forest and often near water. Soars high, often in calling pairs, but also patrols low over canopy looking for arboreal reptiles and mammals.

CHANGEABLE HAWK-EAGLE *Nisaetus linnaeetus* Family: Accipitridae

M.B. Gupta



Identification Key

Narrower more parallel-edged wings than Mountain Hawk Eagle. Soars with wings flat. Lacks prominent crest, and has boldly streaked underparts.

Size: 70 cm.

Voice: A drawn out whistling ke ke ke kee.

Habits

Inhabits well-wooded country. Sometimes in more open country. Usually seen singly or in pairs. Soars infrequently. Hides in well-foliaged tree, often on clearing edge, to locate mammal, bird and reptile prey. Nests high in forest tree.

SMALL BLUE KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Family: Alcedinidae

Clement Francis



Identification Key

Orange ear-coverts. Greenish blue on head, scapulars and wings, and turquoise line down back.

Size : 18 cm

Voice :

A short piercing chee, mainly in flight.

Habits

Inhabits fresh and coastal waters. Feeds on small fish by diving from overhanging perch or after hovering. Favours small cannals, streams and fish ponds, avoiding larger water bodies and forests. Flies low and fast over water. Nests in self-made burrow in sand bank.

INDIAN POND- HERON *Ardeola grayii*

Family: Ardeidae

Clement Francis



Identification Key

Whitish wings contrast with dark saddle. Adult breeding has yellowish-buff head and neck and maroon-brown mantle/scapulars.

Size: 45 cm

Voice:

A deep croak

Habits

Occurs wherever there is water, including temporary puddles. Solitary but several birds may feed close together. Roosts communally. Inconspicuous until flies. Sits hunched waiting for aquatic and insect prey. Nests in tree colonies.

GREAT EGRET *Casmerodius albus*

Family: Ardeidae

M. B. Guptha



Identification Key

Large size, very long neck and large bill. Black line of gape extends behind eye. Bill is black, lores blue and tibia reddish in breeding plumage.

Size :90 cm

Voice :
A very deep krank.

Habits

Inhabits larger wetlands and coast. Feeds singly or in scattered groups in shallow water or short vegetation, waiting for fish or aquatic animal prey to approach. Breeds in tree colonies

PAINTED STORK *Mycteria leucocephala*

Family: Ciconiidae

Clement Francis



Identification Key

Adult has downcurved yellow bill, bare orange-yellow or red face, and red legs; white barring on mainly black upperwing-coverts, pinkish tertiaries, and black barring across breast.

Size: 95 cm

Voice: Voiceless. Clatters bill at nest

Habits

Inhabits larger wetlands, mudflats, salt pans and estuaries. Gregarious, nesting high in tree colonies with other water birds, Feeds on fish and other aquatic animals in shallow water. Stately, slowly walk. Often perches on bare trees. Frequently soars high on thermals.

SPOTTED DOVE *Spotted Dove*

Family: Columbidae

M.B. Guptha



Identification Key

Spotted upperparts, and black-and-white chequered patch on neck sides..

Size: 30 cm

Voice: A rather doleful cro cro cro or cruk cru croo

Habits

Inhabits open deciduous forest, cultivation with groves, villages, parks and gardens. Quite confiding, flying noisily a short distance when disturbed. Often found eating grit on roads and tracks. Drinks frequently. Feeds, usually in pairs or small groups, on seeds on ground. Nests low in tree or bush.

EMERALD DOVE *Chalcophaps indica*

Family: Columbidae

M.B. Guptha



Identification Key

Stout and broad winged, with very rapid flight. Green upperparts and black-and-white banding on back. Male has grey crown and white shoulder patch.

Size: 26 cm

Voice: A deep mournful and repetitive hoo oon

Habits

Secretive inhabitant of evergreen broadleaved and wet deciduous forest. Keeps to ground under forest trees, often in semi-darkness. Will feed on paths and in clearings. Usually singly or in pairs and rarely seen before flushed. Rapid, low, skilful flight through trees. Feeds on seeds and fruits on ground. Nests low in forest undergrowth.

COMMON DRONGO *Dicrurus macrocercus*

Family: Corvidae

M.B. Guptha



Identification Key

Adult has glossy blue-black underparts and white rectal spot. Tail-fork may be lost during moult. First winter has black underparts with bold whitish fringes.

Size : 31 cm

Voice :

Noisy. A ringing tiu tiu very like Shikra. Harsh cheee cheee. Squeaks and chatters

Habits

Inhabits open, wooded country, urban parks and cultivation, Perches on ground, wires and bare branches. Usually solitary, sometimes in small groups. Pounces on aerial and ground insects from perch; follows livesock and ploughs. Aggressive to larger birds. Nests in tree.

BLACK-HEADED ORIOLE *Oriolus xanthornus*

Family: Corvidae

M.B. Guptha



Identification Key

Adult has black head and breast. Immature has yellow forehead, black streaked white throat, and yellow breast..

Size: 25 cm

Voice: Fluty tu yow yow and we hoo. Also harsh kerwark

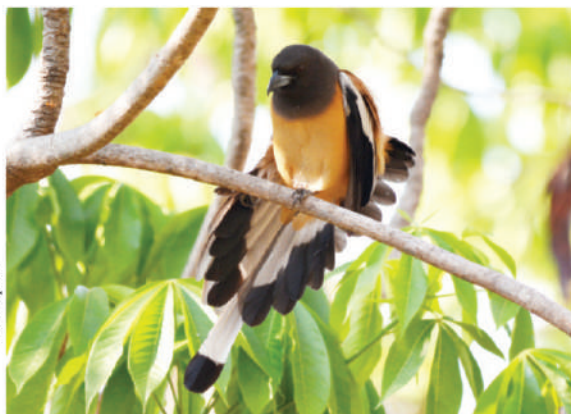
Habits

Inhabits well-wooded country including urban parks and gardens. Unusually confiding and obvious for an oriole. Active and lively, often seen chasing each other through trees. Perches on high bare branches, calling and sun-bathing. Food and nesting as Eurasian. Frequently joins mixed hunting groups.

SOUTHERN TREEPIE *Dendrocitta vagabunda*

Family: Corvidae

M.R. Guptha



Identification Key

Slate-grey hood, buffish underparts and rump, pale grey wing panel and whitish sub-terminal tail-band.

Size: 50 cm

Voice:

Noisy. Various loud, harsh and metallic notes, including tikituk tikituk and kreaah kreaah.

Habits

Inhabits evergreen hill forest, thick scrub and plantations. Sociable, often with Greater Racket-tailed Drongos, which they imitate freely as well as other forest species. Feeds mainly on invertebrates at lower and middle levels. Nests in shrub.

SMALL MINIVET *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*

Family: Corvidae

Clement Francis



Identification Key

Male has dark grey to pale grey upperparts, black to dark grey throat, and deep orange to mainly white underparts. Female's underparts vary from mainly orange-yellow to mainly white.

Size: 15 cm

Voice: A high, thin sweet sweet.

Habits

The commonest minivet inhabiting open wooded country including groves and gardens. Flits rapidly through canopies in small parties feeding on insects in foliage. Nests in tree.

WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER *Halcyon smyrnensis* Family: Dacelonidae

M.B. Guppha



Identification Key

White throat and center of breast, brown head and most of underparts, and turquoise upperparts. White wing patch.

Size :31 cm

Voice

Noisy. A very loud, laughing kila kila kila, often in flight. Adapted as song when breeding.

Habits

Commonest and most catholic kingfisher. Found in cultivation, parks, gardens, open forest and fresh and coastal wetland. Frequently perches on wires, posts and in trees. Feeds by pouncing on insects, reptiles, amphibians and rodents on ground. Occasionally dives for fish. Nests in banks.

RED- RUMPED SWALLOW *Hirundo daurica* Family: Hirundinidae

Clement Francis



Identification Key

Rufous-orange neck sides, rufous-orange rump, finely streaked buffish-white underparts, and black undertail coverts.

Size: 18 cm

Voice: A distinct treep call and a rather harsh twittering song

Habits

Inhabits open cultivation, pastures, clearings and rocky areas, often far from water. Feeds on aerial insects high in sky. Gregarious mixing with other swallows. Roots communally.

COMMON IORA *Aegithinia tiphia*

Family: Irenidae



Identification Key

Lacks white on tail. Very variable. Crown and mantle of breeding males vary from uniformly black, to black mixed with much yellow on mantle, to mainly yellowish-green. Females very similar to non-breeding males.

Size :14cm

Voice : Loud musical whistles; weeeeeee chu and peee ou

Habits

Inhabits forest edges, grooves and wooded country. Usually singly or in pairs actively hunting the canopy for flower nectar, insects and caterpillars, and calling frequently. Joins mixed hunting groups. Nests in tree.

RUFIOUS- BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius schach*

Family: Laniidae



Identification Key

Adult has grey mantle, rufous scapulars and upper back, narrow black forehead, rufous sides to black tail, and small white patch on primaries..

Size: 25 cm

Voice: Noisy. A grating shriek. Song is quiet, pleasing warbling including mimicry.

Habits

The commonest shrike. Inhabits open country with bushes and trees. Frequently perches on road-side wires to locate small bird, mammal and insect prey. Territorial and often confiding.

BROWN-HEADED BARBET *Megalaima zeylanica* Family: Megalaimidae

M.B. Guptha



Identification Key

Fine streaking on brown head and breast, brown throat, orange circum-orbital skin and bill, and white-spotted wing-coverts. Streaking almost absent on belly and flanks.

Size : 28 cm

Voice: Loud, persistent prutruk, prutruk sometimes without terminal hard consonant. Usually beginning with long guttural.

Habits: Inhabits lowland forests, grooves, city parks and gardens. Feeds high in treetops on fruit especially Ficus. Often in groups in favoured trees. Has powerful, undulating flight. Very well camouflaged and rather secretive. Nests in tree hole.

COPPERSMITH BARBET *Megalaima haemacephala* Family: Megalaimidae

M.B. Guptha



Identification Key

Small size, crimson forehead and breast patch, yellow patches above and below eye, yellow throat, and streaked underparts..

Size: 17 cm

Voice: Oft repeated tuk, tuk, tuk, like a small hammer on metal, hence its English name. One of India's most familiar sounds in the hot season

Habits

Commonest barbet wherever there are trees. Avoids thick forests. Feeds on fruits and nectar. Perches on bare branches. Often confiding. Sociable and inquisitive. Nests in tree hole.

GREEN BEE-EATER *Merops orientalis*

Family: Meropidae



Identification Key

Small size. Blue cheeks, with black gorget, and golden to rufous coloration to crown. Green tail with elongated central feathers.

Size: 21 cm

Voice:

Noisy. Repeated trilling, usually in flight.

Habits

Inhabits open country, cultivation and light woodland. Feeds acrobatically on flying insects including bees. Robs beehives. Sociable, perching on wires and bare branches or on sandy ground. Frequently dust-bathes. Nests in self-excavated tunnels in banks or oblique into flat ground

ASIAN PARADISE FLYCATCHER *Terpsiphone paradisi* **Family:** Muscicapidae



Identification Key

Male has black head and crest, with white or rufous upperparts and long tail streamers. Female has reduced crest and lacks streamers..

Size: 30 cm

Voice: A hard, grating chwaee and wee por wee por wee. Melodious slow, warbling song.

Habits

Inhabits shady areas in woodland, gardens and plantations, often near water. Feeds by fly-catching at all levels. Usually singly or in pairs but joins mixed hunting groups. Upright stance and undulating flight. Shy. Nests high in tree fork..

INDIAN ROBIN *Saxicoloides fulicata*

Family: Muscicapidae

M.B. Gupta



Identification Key

Reddish vent and black tail in all plumages. Male has white shoulders and black underparts. Female has grayish underparts.

Size :16 cm

Voice :

An extended sweeney and a harsh churr call. Song a simple, rather quiet, melody

Habits

Inhabits dry, often rocky, wooded areas, scrub, cultivation and gardens. Feeds on invertebrates on ground. Hops with head and tail held high. Reasonably confiding but can be secretive. Solitary or in pairs. Nests low down.

ORANGE-HEADED THRUSH *Zoothera citina*

Family: Muscicapidae

M.B. Gupta



Identification Key

Adult has orange head and underparts; male with blue-grey mantle female with olive-brown wash to mantle.

Size :21 cm

Voice :

Shrill kree call and loud rich song, often with mimicry of other birds.

Habits Inhabits forests, plantations and wooded patches, often near water in shady spots. Feeds, usually in pairs or singly, unobtrusively on ground, usually under cover. Remains motionless if disturbed, either on ground or after flying into tree. Feeds on invertebrates in leaf litter. Crepuscular. Nests low in tree.

TICKELL'S BLUE FLYCATCHER *Cyornis tickelliae* Family: Muscicapidae

M.B. Gupta



Identification Key

Male has orange throat and breast with clear horizontal division from white flanks and belly. Female has grayish-blue upperparts.

Size: 14 cm

Voice: An undulating metallic trill usually of six, but sometimes up to ten, notes. Calls harsh chrr and hard tak tak.

Habits

Inhabits dry, open forest and woodland, groves and gardens, often near water. Feeds on aerial insects from low perches. Active and fairly confiding. Usually singly or in pairs but joins mixed hunting groups. Nests low down

JUNGLE BABBLER *Turdoides striatus* Family: Muscicapidae

M.B. Gupta



Identification Key

Uniform tail; variable dark mottling, and streaking on throat and breast.

Size: 25 cm

Voice: Very noisy. Harsh ke ke ke and chorused hysterical chattering and squeaking.

Habits: Inhabits open woodland, scrub, cultivation, gardens and villages. Feeds on insects mainly on ground in noisy, excited groups. Confiding and inquisitive. Groups mutually preen. Fluffs up rump and droops wings. Nests in bush.

ORIENTAL MAGPIE-ROBIN *Copsychus saularis* Family: Muscicapidae

M.B. Guptha



Identification Key

Black/slate-grey and white, with white on wing and at sides of tail. Juvenile scaled-with dark brown on throat and breast.

Size: 20 cm

Voice: Noisy. A slurred chrr in alarm. Contact call is a plaintive sweeee. Rich piping song.

Habits: One of the region's most familiar birds and the national bird of Bangladesh. Inhabits all types of wooded country including parks and gardens. Frequently perches high, particularly when singing, but feeds mainly on ground on invertebrates. Usually in pairs. Aggressively territorial and quite confinding. Nests in hole in tree, bank or building

WHITE HEADED BABBLER *Turdoides affinis* Family: Muscicapidae

M.B. Guptha



Identification Key

Creamy - white crown, dark mottling on throat and breast, and pale rump and tail-base.

Size: 23 cm

Voice: Noisy. More high-pitched and musical than jungle.

Habits: Inhabits open scrub, woodland, cultivation and gardens. Often with Jungle but commoner at lower altitudes. Behaviour, food and nest similar.

PURPLE-RUMPED SUNBIRD *Nectarinia zeylonica* Family: Nectariniidae

Clement Francis



Identification Key

Male has narrow maroon breast band, maroon head sides and mantle, and grayish-white flanks. Female has grayish-white throat, yellow breast, whitish flanks, and rufous-brown on wing.

Size :10 cm

Voice: Noisy. Calls tsiswee tsiswee and chip chip

Habits: Inhabits forests, secondary growth, parks and gardens. Actively feeds on nectar and invertebrates, usually in pairs and often on low flowers. Nest suspended from tree or bush.

PURPLE SUNBIRD *Nectarinia asiatica*

Family: Nectariniidae

Clement Francis



Identification Key

Male metallic purple. Female has uniform yellowish underparts, with faint supercilium and darker mask..

Size: 10 cm

Voice: Noisy. Loud buzzing chweet call extended in to hurried, excited song.

Habits

Inhabits all types of open, wooded country, including urban parks and gardens. Feeds singly in pairs or small groups at all levels, on nectar and invertebrates. Fly-catches. Sings from high perch, often jerking wings. Active and confiding.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Family: Passeridae

M.B. Guptha



Identification Key

Male breeding has olive-green upperparts and yellow underparts, with considerable variation in colouration of head depending on race.

Size :17 cm

Voice : A high tss reep or wee zie call, less harsh than Citrine

Habits : As Black-headed Yellow. Different races often seen together, especially on passage

SPOTTED MUNIA *Lonchura punctulata*

Family: Passeridae

M.B. Guptha



Identification Key

Adult has chestnut throat and upper breast, and whitish underparts with dark scaling..

Size: 10 cm

Voice: Calls ki tee ki tee Also tee tee and seu seu

Habits

Inhabits secondary forest growth with grass and scrub, cultivation and gardens. Feeds on seeds and invertebrates on ground and plants in active flocks, sometimes with other seed eaters. Nests low in tree or creeper.

INDIAN- SILVERBILL *Lonchura malabarica*

Family: Passeridae

M.B. Guptha



Identification Key

Adult has white rump and upper-tail coverts, black tail with elongated central feathers, and rufous-buff barring on flanks.

Size: 10 cm

Voice:

Excited but quiet chip chip and see sip calls.

Habits:

Inhabits dry scrub and grass, open woodland and the edges of dry cultivation. Feeds on seeds and invertebrates on ground and on plants, usually in small parties. Often near Baya Weaver colonies, where it may roost in their nests. Nests in low tree or bush.

LITTLE CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax niger*

Family: Phalacrocoracidae

M.B. Guptha



Identification Key

Shorter bill, rectangular shaped head and shorter neck. Lacks yellow gular pouch..

Size: 50 cm

Voice: Usually silent but croaks near nest.

Habits

Inhabits water bodies of all sizes, including village ponds and drains. Also the coast. Usually quite gregarious and confiding, often mixing with Indian Cormorant to fish. Dives with jump for fish and tadpoles. Swims low. Flies rapidly often close to water. Holds wings open to dry. Nests in tree colonies with other waterbirds.

சதுப்புநிலப் பறவைகள் WETLAND BIRDS

கீழ்க்கிணைவ
Lesser whistling duck

சாம்பல் நாரை
Gray Heron

வெள்ளைத் திமிவான்
மூக்கன்
ORIENTAL WHITE IBIS

சிவப்பு மூக்கு
Red-wattled
Lapwing

புள்ளி மூக்கன் வாத்து

செங்கால் நாரை (சி)
மஞ்சள் மூக்கு நாரை
Painted stork

R. JOHNSON
VEF



NOTES

About the Booklet

The booklet covers 46 species of birds found in and around Puducherry especially Ossudu Bird sanctuaries and Bahour Lake. With attractive photographs, the booklet provides its readers with an insight into the lives of these intriguing creatures. The booklet provides information about identification key, size, voice and habits. This book will be useful to those from the forest department, researchers, students, naturalists and the general public.

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Puducherry ENVIS Hub Centre
Department of Science, Technology & Environment
Puducherry Pollution Control Committee, Puducherry

