

Pheasants and other birds of Majhatal Harsang Wildlife Sanctuary, Himachal Pradesh, India

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The birds seen between November 1992 and May 1993 in Majhatal Harsang Wildlife Sanctuary, Indian Himalaya, are documented. A total of 106 species was identified, which included nine Phasianidae.

Majhatal Harsang Wildlife Sanctuary (MHWS) (76°55' to 77°5'E and 31°15' to 31°18'N) is located in the middle Himalaya in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. The area has a subtropical monsoonal climate, with altitude ranging from about 575 m to 1,985 m. Chir Pine *Pinus roxburghii* and Ban Oak *Quercus leucotrichophora* forests, and subtropical *Euphorbia* scrub are the major vegetation types (Champion and Seth 1968).

The fauna of MHWS includes Leopard *Panthera pardus*, which is the top mammalian predator. Other predators are Jungle Cat *Felis chaus*, Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus*, and Yellow-throated Marten *Martes flavigula*. Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus* is a potential avian predator.

The area has four species of wild ungulates; Indian Muntjac *Muntiacus muntjac*, Common Goral *Naemorhedus goral*, Wild Pig *Sus scrofa* and Sambar *Cervus unicolor*.

Seventeen villages populated by about 750 inhabitants are located inside MHWS. Cultivation and livestock rearing are the main occupation of these people.

Information on the avifauna of the area was collected during a six-month study on Goral, between November 1992 and May 1993 (Mishra 1993). The study period encompassed winter, followed by spring and the early part of summer. The presence of nine species of the family Phasianidae was confirmed, and a total of 106 species of birds was identified.

Most observations of birds were confined to altitudes between 1,400m and 1,900m. Twice I conducted surveys at a lower altitude (575m). Since I did not record each sighting individually, only a subjective abundance index (common or uncommon) was assigned to each species. However, in the case of Phasianidae, I recorded the group size and the habitat type for each sighting. The habitat types were categorized largely based on the vegetation structure. These were :

1. Terraced Fields (TF) - These were confined to the vicinity of villages. Villagers largely cultivate maize, wheat, and mustard, and some paddy in the low-lying areas.

ISSN 0950-1746

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Published for the Oriental Bird Club by



Rubythroat Publications

Parr House,
63 Hatch Lane
Old Basing,
Basingstoke,
Hampshire RG23 7EB

Printed on recycled paper by GL Print, Aldermaston, U.K.

Sanctuary, Himachal Pradesh, India. M.S. thesis submitted to Saurashtra University, Rajkot, India.

List of birds sighted in Majhatal Harsang Wildlife Sanctuary, Himachal Pradesh, India.

CHUKAR <i>Alectoris chukar</i>	C	
GREY FRANCOLIN <i>Francoelinus pondicerianus</i>	U	
BLACK FRANCOLIN <i>Francoelinus francoelinus</i>	C	
JUNGLE BUSH QUAIL <i>Pardicula asiatica</i>	U, S	
KORLASS PHEASANT <i>Pucrasia macrolopha</i>	U	
RED JUNGLEFOWL <i>Gallus gallus</i>	U	
KALIJ PHEASANT <i>Lophura leucomelanos</i>	C	
CHEER PHEASANT <i>Catreus wallichii</i>	C	
INDIAN PEAFOWL <i>Pavo cristatus</i>	U	
GREY-CAPPED PYGMY WOODPECKER <i>Dendrocopos canicapillus</i>	U	
BROWN-FRONTED WOODPECKER <i>Dendrocopos auriceps</i>	C	
LESSER YELLOWNAPE <i>Picus chlorolophus</i>	U	
SCALY-BELLIED WOODPECKER <i>Picus squamatus</i>	U	
GREY-HEADED WOODPECKER <i>Picus canus</i>	U	
GREAT BARBET <i>Agalaima virens</i>	C	(largely seen at lower altitudes)
BLUE-THROATED BARBET <i>Megalaima asiatica</i>	C	
COMMON HOOPOE <i>Upupa epops</i>	C, S	(seen only near village ponds)
WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER <i>Haleyon smymensis</i>	U	(a flock seen only once in spring, over terraced fields)
GREEN BEB-EATER <i>Merops orientalis</i>	U, S	
COMMON HAWK CUCKOO <i>Hierococcyx varius</i>	C, S	
INDIAN CUCKOO <i>Cuculus micropterus</i>	C, S	
COMMON CUCKOO <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	C, S	
DRONGO CUCKOO <i>Surniculus lugubris</i>	C, S	
SLATY-HEADED PARAKEET <i>Psittacula himalayana</i>	C	(commonly seen in the forest feeding on fruits of <i>Cornus oblonga</i> and <i>Prunus piddum</i> . Seen during the monsoon of 1994)
PLUM-HEADED PARAKEET <i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>	C	
ALPINE SWIFT <i>Tachymarptis melba</i>	U, S	
EURASIAN EAGLE OWL <i>Bubo bubo</i>	C	(commonly heard almost throughout the day in pine forest)
COLLARED OWLET <i>Glaucidium brodiei</i>	C	
ASIAN BARRED OWLET <i>Glaucidium cuculoides</i>	C	(commonly seen in the villages, but rarely in the forest)
ROCK PIGEON <i>Columba livia</i>	C	
ORIENTAL TURTLE DOVE <i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	C, S	
SPOTTED DOVE <i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	C	
EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	C, S	
YELLOW-FOOTED GREEN PIGEON <i>Tyreron phoenicoptera</i>	U	(seen during monsoon on a subsequent short visit in 1994)
RED-WATTLED LAPWING <i>Vanellus indicus</i>	U	(seen in paddy fields at lower altitudes)
BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE <i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	C	
BLACK KITE <i>Milvus migrans</i>	C, S	
LAMMERGEIER <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	C	
EGYPTIAN VULTURE <i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	C, S	
WHITE-RUMPED VULTURE <i>Gyps bengalensis</i>	C	
HIMALAYAN GRIFFON <i>Gyps himalayensis</i>	C	
RED-HEADED VULTURE <i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>	U	
SHORT-TOED SNAKE EAGLE <i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	U	

CRESTED SERPENT EAGLE <i>Spilornis cheela</i>	C	
CHANGEABLE HAWK EAGLE <i>Spizaetus cirrhatu</i>	U	
COMMON KESTREL <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	C	(a Kestrel was once seen attacking and pinning down a Black Francolin in a terraced field)
LONG-TAILED SHRIKE <i>Lanius schach</i>	C, S	
BLACK-HEADED JAY <i>Garrulus lanceolatus</i>	C	(commonly seen in oak forest)
RED-BILLED BLUE MAGPIE <i>Urocissa erythrorhyncha</i>	C	(commonly seen in villages, causes damage to maize crops)
RUFIOUS TREEPIE <i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>	C	(commonly seen in villages, causes crop damage)
GREY TREEPIE <i>Dendrocitta formosae</i>	C	(commonly seen in villages, causes crop damage)
HOUSE CROW <i>Corvus splendens</i>	C	
LARGE-BILLED CROW <i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	C	
SCARLET MINIVET <i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	C	
YELLOW-BELLIED FANTAIL <i>Rhipidura hypoxantha</i>	U	
WHITE-THROATED FANTAIL <i>Rhipidura albicollis</i>	C	
BLACK DRONGO <i>Dicurus macrocercus</i>	C, S	
ASIAN PARADISE-FLYCATCHER <i>Terpsiphona paradisi</i>	U, S	
BLUE WHISTLING THRUSH <i>Myophonus caeruleus</i>	C	(commonly seen inside villages, especially near cattle-sheds)
SCALY THRUSH <i>Zoothera dauma</i>	U	
DARK-THROATED THRUSH <i>Turdus ruficollis</i>	U	
RUFIOUS-GORGED FLYCATCHER <i>Ficedula strophitata</i>	U	
VERDITER FLYCATCHER <i>Eumyias thalassina</i>	U, S	
GREY-HEADED CANARY FLYCATCHER <i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>	C	
ORANGE-FLANKED BUSH ROBIN <i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>	U	(seen on the ground and lower branches inside oak forest)
ORIENTAL MAGPIE ROBIN <i>Coppychus saularis</i>	C	
INDIAN ROBIN <i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i>	C	
BLUE-CAPPED REDSTART <i>Phoenicurus caeruleocephalus</i>	U	
WHITE-CAPPED WATER REDSTART <i>Chaimarrornis leucocephalus</i>	U	(seen near perennial streams at lower altitudes)
PLUMBEOUS WATER REDSTART <i>Rhyacornis fuliginosus</i>	U	(seen on rocky outcrops of the River Sutlej which forms the northern boundary of MHWS at 575 m)
SPOTTED FORKTAIL <i>Enicurus maculatus</i>	U	(seen at lower altitudes over perennial streams and water channels of paddy fields)
COMMON STONECHAT <i>Saxicola torquata</i>	U, S	
PIED BUSHCHAT <i>Saxicola caprata</i>	C	
GREY BUSHCHAT <i>Saxicola ferrea</i>	C	
BRAHMINY STARLING <i>Sturnus pagodarum</i>	C	
COMMON MYNA <i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	C	
WHITE-TAILED NUTHATCH <i>Sitta himalayensis</i>	U	
WALLCREEPER <i>Tichodroma muraria</i>	U	
GREAT TIT <i>Parus major</i>	C	
BLACK-LORED TIT <i>Parus xanthogenys</i>	C	
BLACK-THROATED TIT <i>Aegithales concinnus</i>	C	
WIRE-TAILED SWALLOW <i>Hirundo smithii</i>	C, S	
RED-RUMPED SWALLOW <i>Hirundo daurica</i>	C, S	
HIMALAYAN BULBUL <i>Pycnonotus leucogenys</i>	C	
RED-VENTED BULBUL <i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	C	

BLACK BULBUL <i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>	C, S	
STRIATED PRINIA <i>Prinia criniger</i>	C	
ORIENTAL WHITE-EYE <i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>	U, S	
COMMON TAILORBIRD <i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	U	
GREY-HOODED WARBLER <i>Seiurus xanthoschistos</i>	U	
STREAKED LAUGHINGTHRUSH <i>Garrulax lineatus</i>	C	(commonly seen in terraced fields)
VARIEGATED LAUGHINGTHRUSH <i>Garrulax variegatus</i>	C	(commonly seen in dense nullahs)
RUSTY-CHEEKED SCIMITAR BABBLER <i>Pomatorhinus erythrogastrus</i>	U	
WHITE-BROWED SHRIKE BABBLER <i>Pteruthius flaviscapris</i>	U	(seen in oak forest)
RUFIOUS SUBIA <i>Heterophasia capistrata</i>	U	
FIRE-BREASTED FLOWERPECKER <i>Dicaeum ignipectus</i>	U	
PURPLE SUNBIRD <i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>	U, S	
EURASIAN TREE SPARROW <i>Passer montanus</i>	U, S	(seen in terraced fields)
GREY WAGTAIL <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	U	(seen only near village ponds)
RUFIOUS-BREASTED ACCENTOR <i>Prunella strophilata</i>	U	
FIRE-FRONTED SERIN <i>Serinus pusillus</i>	U, S	(a big flock (>30) seen only once in spring in terraced fields)
YELLOW-BREASTED GREENFINCH <i>Carduelis spinoides</i>	U	
ROSEFINCH <i>Carpodacus</i> sp.	U	
ROCK BUNTING <i>Emberiza cia</i>	C	
WHITE-CAPPED BUNTING <i>Emberiza stewarti</i>	U	

C = common

U = uncommon

S = seen only in spring and summer

Birds of Bhitarkanika mangroves, eastern India

BIVASH PANDAV

A survey of the birds of the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary was conducted from November 1992 to April 1993 and from July to October 1993. A total of 174 bird species was recorded, including three which had not previously been recorded in the state of Orissa. Three species recorded during the survey are restricted to mangrove forests in India. A total of 82 species showed some evidence of breeding, including the rare Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* and Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus*. A large colony of breeding herons, egrets and storks was located in the Sanctuary during the survey.

INTRODUCTION

The avifauna of mangrove forest is diverse. Many large resident birds of Asia such as storks, herons, egrets and raptors inhabit mangrove areas. The structural diversity of the habitat enables a variety of passerines and non-passerines, which are uncommon in other wetland areas, to use mangrove swamps (Samant 1985). Little information is available on the avifauna of Indian mangroves. Mukherjee (1969) studied the feeding habits of a few selected water birds in the mangrove forests of the Sunderbans. A recent study on the mangroves of Ratnagiri on the west coast of India listed 121 species (Samant 1985). Prasad (1992) identified the Krishna mangroves on the east coast as a suitable habitat for local and migrant waterfowl. The presence of Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber* and Lesser Flamingo *P. minor* during winter in its backwaters and the large, inaccessible heronry make the Krishna mangroves an excellent waterfowl habitat.

Bhitarkanika mangroves, located on the east coast of India (20°04'-20°08'N and 86°45'-87°50'E) represent one of the finest remaining patches of mangrove forests in India. The area was declared as a wildlife sanctuary in 1975 to protect the endangered Estuarine Crocodile *Crocodylus porosus*. The sanctuary encompasses an area of 175 km², with a coastline of 35 km on its eastern side (known as Gahirmatha coast), and is surrounded by the Brahmani and Baitarani rivers, and their tributaries, on the remaining three sides. The sanctuary now harbours the largest population of Estuarine Crocodiles in India, and is globally unique in that 10% of the adult crocodiles exceed 6 m in length (Scott 1989, Kar and Bustard 1990). Besides, the sanctuary also has the distinction of having the world's largest known Olive Ridley *Lepidochelys olivacea* rookery at Gahirmatha, located on its eastern boundary (Dash and Kar 1990).