

ISSN 0972- 1800



BIONOTES

VOLUME 23, NOS. 2 & 3

QUARTERLY

APRIL--SEPTEMBER, 2021



Date of Publication: 4th October, 2021

BIONOTES

A Quarterly Newsletter for Research Notes and News
On Any Aspect Related with Life Forms

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From Volume 21

Published by the Entomological Society of India (ESI), New Delhi (Nodal Officer: V.V.
Ramamurthy, ESI, New Delhi)

And

Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal
Executive Editor: Peter Smetacek
Assistant Editor: Shristee Panthee
Butterfly Research Trust, Bhimtal

Cover Photo of founder of BIONOTES *Late* Dr. R.K. Varshney

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AVIAN DIVERSITY IN URBAN AREAS OF LAKE TOWN, KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL

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Reviewer: Peter Smetacek

In the present note, the diversity of birds has been recorded at three localities of Lake Town under South Dum Dum Municipality, Kolkata, West Bengal, viz. campus of East Calcutta Girls' College, campus of Lake Town Government sponsored Girls' School and Lake with park area (Third Lake) during the period of July 2017 to September 2019. The areas studied are urban, with one large and one small water body, very little grassland and some orchards along with roadside vegetation. The small water body supports various aquatic plants rooted, floating and marginal whereas the large water body has only marginal plant life and is mainly used for aquaculture. Observations were carried out in the morning between 6.00 am to 9.30 am and in the evening between 4.00 pm and 6.00 pm. A binocular (Nikon Action EX 10X50 CF) and Fieldscope (Nikon Prostaff SEP 25) were used to spot the birds. Identification of birds has been done with reference to Ali (2002) and Grimmett *et al.* (2011).

A total of 35 species of birds belonging to 22 families were recorded during the entire study period (Table 1). Based on the frequency of observation, birds are classified as abundant (observed more than 75%), regular (30% to <75%) and rare (< 30%).

In Table 1, it may be noted that raptors are rare (Black Kite and Barn Owl) while other groups

such as waders, insectivores and frugivores are still present in healthy numbers. The careless use of chemical pesticides or ill-conceived 'developmental' activities could rapidly change this happy state of affairs.

It was observed that the quantity and diversity of birds was reducing throughout the study period. It may be due to the constantly increasing anthropogenic activity, pollution or reduction in trees, or else a combination of these and other factors. From the present study, it can be concluded that diverse vegetation supports greater avian diversity. But rapid and constant urbanization in this area leads to habitat destruction which has an adverse impact on avian diversity.

This note is intended to serve as base line data for what was present during this period in a rapidly changing landscape.

References

- Ali, S. 2002. *The Book of Indian Birds* (13th Edition Revised). Bombay Natural History Society, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. lvii + 326 pp.
- Grimmett, R., C. Inskipp & T. Inskipp. 2011. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. (Helm Field Guides), Oxford University Press, New Delhi. 528 pp.

Table 1. Avian diversity at Lake Town, South Dum Dum Municipality, Kolkata.

S. N.	Common Name	Scientific Name	Family	Habitat	Remarks

1.	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	Corvidae	Human habitation, Grassland	Abundant
2.	Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	Corvidae	Human habitation, Orchard	Rare
3.	Indian Tree-pie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>	Corvidae	Orchard	Regular
4.	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	Sturnidae	Human habitation, Orchard, Grassland	Abundant
5.	Pied Myna	<i>Gracupica contra</i>	Sturnidae	Human habitation, Grassland	Abundant
6.	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	Ardeidae	Water body	Abundant
7.	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Ardeidae	Grassland	Abundant
8.	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Ardeidae	Water body	Regular
9.	Lesser Goldenbacked Woodpecker	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>	Picidae	Orchard	Abundant
10.	White-breasted kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	Alcedinidae	Water body	Abundant
11.	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	Pycnonotidae	Human habitation, Orchard	Abundant
12.	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopacea</i>	Cuculidae	Orchard	Regular
13.	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	Cuculidae	Orchard	Regular
14.	Small Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	Meropidae	Orchard	Abundant
15.	Rose- ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	Psittacidae	Orchard	Regular
16.	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Ploceidae	Human habitation, Orchard	Rare
17.	Baya, Weaver Bird	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>	Ploceidae	Orchard	Rare
18.	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	Dicruridae	Human habitation, Orchard	Regular
19.	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	Muscicapidae	Orchard	Regular
20.	Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	Muscicapidae	Human habitation, Orchard	Regular
21.	Jungle Babbler	<i>Turdoides striatus</i>	Muscicapidae	Orchard	Regular
22.	Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	Columbidae	Human habitation, Orchard, Grassland	Abundant
23.	Blue rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	Columbidae	Human habitation, Grassland	Abundant
24.	Bengal Green Pigeon	<i>Treron phoinoptera phoinoptera</i>	Columbidae	Orchard	Rare

25.	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>	Capitonidae	Orchard	Rare
26.	Blue Throated Barbet	<i>Megalaima asiatica</i>	Capitonidae	Orchard	Rare
27.	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	Laniidae	Orchard	Rare
28.	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	Rallidae	Water body	Regular
29.	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Accipitridae	Human habitation	Rare
30.	Purple Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>	Nectariniidae	Orchard	Rare
31.	Black-headed Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>	Oriolidae	Orchard	Regular
32.	White wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Motacillidae	Grassland	Rare
33.	Yellow wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Motacillidae	Grassland	Rare
34.	Little cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	Phalacrocoracidae	Water body	Regular
35.	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	Tytonidae	Human habitation	Rare