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'B 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 Sambhar 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 1,400 m and 1,900 m. Twice I conducted surveys at a lower altitude (575 m). 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.
List of birds sighted in Majhatal Harso Wildlife Sanctuary, Himachal Pradesh, India.

**Chiruca Augur colulus**
**Grey Francolinus Pectoralis perdix**
**Black Francolinus Plocamopus francolinus**
**Jungle Crow Quale, Pycnonotus sinensis**
**Korean Pheasant Phasianus coreensis**
**Red Junglefowl Gifsus gallus**
**Rufous Treepie Lophura nasutissima**
**Great Indian Hornbill Aceros buccinator**
**Indian Peacock Pavo cristatus**
**Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker Dinopium capense**
**Brown-headed Woodpecker Dendrocopos nigriceps**
**Lesser Yellow Nape Picus chlorolophus**
**Scalp-backed Woodpecker Picus sphenurus**
**Great Barred Woodpecker Picus major**
**Blue-headed Barbet Megalaima asiatica**
**Common Hooper Upupa epops**
**White-throated Kingfisher Halcyon smyrni**
**Crested Serpent Eater Naja naja**
**Common Hawk Cuckoo Hierococcyx varius**
**Indian Cuckoo Cuculus microcarbo**
**Common Cuckoo Cuculus canorus**
**Domino Cuckoo Cuculus aeneus**
**Slaty-backed Parrotet Passerina himalayana**

**Puff-backed Parrotet Passerina cyanochlora**
**Alpine Swift Tachymarptis melba**
**Bush Crow Corvus buphagus**
**Collared Owl Glaucidium cristatum**
**Asian Barred Owlet Glaucidium marmoratum**
**Dusky Broadbill Eurylaimus frenatus**
**Himalayan Trush Turdus philomelos**
**Black Naped Crow Acrocephalus melanocephalus**
**White-browed Tawny Owl Nyctea bengalensis**
**Slaty-backed Parrotet Passerina himalayana**

(see only near village pond)

(see only near village pond)

(see mainly in the forest feeding on fruits of Coriaria obovata and Prunus padus)

(see only during monsoon on a subsequent short visit in 1994)

(see mainly in the forest feeding on fruits of Coriaria obovata and Prunus padus)

(see mainly in the forest feeding on fruits of Coriaria obovata and Prunus padus)
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 Ph. 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 Baitaran 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).