

BOOK REVIEW

Birds of the Campus

By Jagadish Gopal Paithankar, K. Vineeth Kumar & Gincy Joseph; Edited by D. Smitha Hegde

Published by Nitte (Deemed to be University); Price: Rs. 950.00 (Approximately 100 pages)

Reviewed by H. Byju, Independent Researcher, Ganapathy P.O., Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu 641006, India.

Email: byjuhi@gmail.com

Emily Dickson quotes “Hope is the thing with feathers,” this book in a nutshell as the editor visualizes this creation. The second edition book on the Birds of the Campus covers all species recorded in Paneer and KSHEMA campus of the NITTE (Deemed to be University), Mangalore.

The layout of the book is good and the authors have thoroughly compiled the details for any amateur or beginner to understand about common birds on the campus. Though the book is hardbound with amazing photographs, the cost seems to be on the higher side, probably due to the targeted audience and the quality of the print and paper, which is worth a buy for every campus lover. The black-and-white picture of the pair of Brahminy Kite in the front inside stands distinct among the colourful book. Each page in the book includes a colour photograph of each bird sighted in the campus with both common and scientific name, and size of the bird, symbolic behavioural illustrations, call patterns, breeding season, the IUCN Red List status, key identification features, and the place in the campus where you find the bird. This serves as a guide for the birders. Another interesting aspect of this book is the QR code embedded in the book that gives quick access to the well-known public domain Xeno-Canto with terrain pictorial representations, birdcalls, etc., keeping up with the latest trend of digital media influence in print media, which is a great improvement in bird identification for new bird watchers and amateurs. This could generate a lot of interest among beginners who find it difficult on the campus to identify birdcalls.



Interestingly even if the total species count is only 93, it has both diurnal and nocturnal birds, which is a positive way of highlighting the birdlife in the campus for bird watchers, representing 42 families. Among the 93 species seen on the campus, a few Near Threatened and Vulnerable species are also on the list. There are a few migratory species too in the book; well I leave it to the readers to go through the list to enjoy the findings on campus. The water bodies near the Paneer campus, the rainwater harvest pond, and the water treatment plant all are supporting birdlife on the campus. At the back end of the book, you can find the details of the authors and their contributions. A glossary, in the end, has the entire species list of the book with both common and scientific names on a single page.

This book helps in educating students, staff, and faculty members on the bird diversity in the campus and aids the next generation of students to conserve the campus green. This is a handy book for campus lovers, bird watchers, and amateurs inside the campus to learn and record more species in the future.