

BIRDS OF KERALA AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, THRISSUR

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Abstract

Observations on the birds of Kerala Agricultural University Campus, Vellanikkara, Thrissur, Kerala revealed the presence of 135 species of birds, which belong to 17 orders and 40 families. Fifteen species are migrants.

Introduction

The Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) main campus is located at Vellanikkara, Thrissur District, Kerala. The campus has a total area of 391.44 ha. having garden lands, botanical garden, plantations of coconut, rubber, arecanut, cocoa, plantain, and orchards of mango, jack, sapota and guava and fodder grasses. The area lies within the longitude of 76°13' E and latitude of 10°14'N, and is very near to the Peechi Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary, the aerial distance of which is not more than 4-5 km.

KAU campus enjoys a moderate climate. The main source of atmospheric precipitation is the South-West and North-East Monsoons. The greater portion of the rain is from South-West Monsoon between June and September. The mean annual rainfall is 3042.8 mm with 108 rainy days. The mean monthly maximum temperature varies from 28.6°C (July) to 35.7°C (March) and mean monthly minimum temperature varies from 21.8°C (July) to 24.5°C (April and May). The mean monthly maximum humidity varies from 95 per cent (July and August) to 77 per cent (February) and mean monthly minimum humidity varies from 84 per cent (July) to 37 per cent (March).

In this paper we present our observations of birds since 1986. The observations were carried out in all the seasons, covering the entire area. The birds sighted were categorised into the following abundance ratings,

A - abundant (found in all suitable habitats and seen on every visit, in suitable seasons for migratory species)

C - common (found in all suitable habitats and seen on most visits, in suitable seasons for migratory species)

U - uncommon (seen in specific habitats on a few visits, in suitable seasons for migratory species)

O - occasional (seen in suitable habitats only once or twice) (modified after Barua & Sharma, 1999).

The birds have also been categorised as different status as resident (R), migrant (M) and breeding visitors (BV). The resident category pertains to the birds that have been known to breed in Kerala, and not necessarily in the KAU campus. The bird species whose breeding has been positively recorded from the campus are indicated as Br+ (See checklist).

Results

A total of 135 species of birds belonging to 17 orders and 40 families have been reported from Kerala Agricultural University Campus (Table 1). The taxonomy used is as per Ali and Ripley (1983), while nomenclature is based on Inskipp *et al.* (1996). The common name suggested by Inskipp *et al.* (1996) is also included. Ali (1969) and Neelakantan *et al.* (1993) reported 475 species in 65 families and 19 orders from Kerala. Thus KAU campus accounts for 28.42 per cent species, 61.54 per cent families and 89.47 per cent orders of birds of Kerala.

Out of which 15 (11%) species are migratory birds. Most of the migrants belong to the family Muscicapidae. Fifty-five (40.7%) species of birds have been observed to be positively breeding in the KAU campus. The high species richness could be due to the presence of a mosaic of different type of habitats and also perhaps due to the nearness to the Peechi-Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary.

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Checklist of birds of Kerala Agricultural University Campus, Vellanikkara, Thrissur, Kerala.

Sl.#	HB#	Common Name	Scientific Name	Abundance	Status	Sl.#	HB#	Common Name	Scientific Name	Abundance	Status
Podicipediformes						Charadriiformes					
Podicipedidae						Burhinidae					
1.	5	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	O	R	23.	436	Stone-Curlew (Eurasian Thick-Knee)	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>	O	R
Pelecaniformes						Charadriidae					
Phalacrocoracidae						24.	366	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	C	R, Br+
2.	28	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	O	R	25.	370	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>	C	R, Br+
3.	29	Darter (Oriental Darter)	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	O	R	26.	398	Wood/Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	O	M
Ciconiiformes						27.	401	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	O	M
Ardeidae						Laridae					
4.	38	Green-backed Heron (Striated Heron)	<i>Butorides striatus</i>	O	R	28.	458	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	O	M
5.	42.	Pond Heron or Paddy Bird (Indian Pond Heron)	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	C	R	Columbiformes					
6.	44	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	U	R	Columbidae					
7.	49	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	U	R	29.	496	Grey-fronted Green Pigeon (Pompador Green-Pigeon)	<i>Treron pompadora</i>	U	R
8.	52	Night Heron (Black-crowned Night-Heron)	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	O	R	30.	517	Blue Rock Pigeon (Rock Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>	C	R, Br+
9.	56	Chestnut Bittern (Cinnamon Bittern)	<i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i>	U	R	31.	537	Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	C	R, Br+
10.	58	Black Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus flavicollis</i>	U	R	32.	542	Bronze-winged/Emerald Dove (Emerald Dove)	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	U	R
Anseriformes						Psittaciformes					
Anatidae						Psittacidae					
11.	88	Lesser Whistling-Teal	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	O	R	33.	550	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	A	R, Br+
Falconiformes						34.	558	Blossom-headed Parakeet (Plum-headed Parakeet)	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>	U	R
Accipitridae						35.	566	Indian Lorikeet (Vernal Hanging-Parrot)	<i>Loriculus vernalis</i>	U	R
12.	124	Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	U	R	Cuculiformes					
13.	133	Pariah/Black Kite (Black Kite)	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	U	R	Cuculidae					
14.	135	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>	O	R	36.	571	Pied Crested Cuckoo (Pied Cuckoo)	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>	U	R
15.	139	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	C	R, Br+	37.	573	Common Hawk-Cuckoo or Brainfever Bird	<i>Cuculus varius</i>	C	R, Br+
16.	161	Crested Hawk Eagle (Changeable Hawk-Eagle)	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatas</i>	C	R, Br+	38.	576	Indian Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus micropterus</i>	U	R, Br+
17.	197	Crested Serpent-Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>	C	R, Br+	39.	582	Indian Bay Banded Cuckoo (Banded Bay Cuckoo)	<i>Cacomantis sonneratii</i>	C	R, Br+
Galliformes						40.	584	Indian Plaintive Cuckoo (Grey-bellied Cuckoo)	<i>Cacomantis passerinus</i>	C	R, Br+
Phasianidae						41.	590	Koel (Asian Koel)	<i>Eudynamis scolopacea</i>	C	R, Br+
18.		Bush Quail	<i>Perdica</i> sp.	U	R?	42.	595	Small Green-billed Malkoha (Blue-faced Malkoha)	<i>Phaenicophaeus viridirostris</i>	U	R
19.	275	Travancore Red Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix spadicea</i>	U	R	43.	602	Crow-Pheasant or Coucal (Greater Coucal)	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	C	R, Br+
20.	311	Common Peafowl (Indian Peafowl)	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	O	R	Gruiformes					
Rallidae											
21.	340	Ruddy Crane (Ruddy-breasted Crane)	<i>Porzana fusca</i>	U	R						
22.	343	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amauornis phoenicurus</i>	C	R, Br+						

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44.	605	Lesser Coucal	<i>Centropus bengalensis</i>	C	R, Br+						
		Strigiformes									
		Strigidae									
45.	606	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	U	R, Br+	69.	785	Small Green Barbet (Whit-e-cheeked Barbet)	<i>Megalaima viridis</i>	C	R, Br+
46.	623	Collared Scops Owl (Indian Scops Owl)	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>	U	R	70.	792	Crimson-breasted Barbet (Coppersmith Barbet)	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>	C	R, Br+
47.	631	Brown Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>	O	R			Picidae			
48.	637	Jungle Owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>	C	R	71.	804	Rufous Woodpecker	<i>Micropternus brachyurus</i>	U	R
49.	644	Brown Hawk Owl	<i>Ninox scutulata</i>	O	R	72.	808	Little Scaly-bellied Green Woodpecker (Streak-throated Woodpecker)	<i>Picus xanthopygaeus</i>	U	R
50.	652	Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama</i>	C	R, Br+	73.	816	Small Yellow-naped Woodpecker (Lesser Yellow-naped Woodpecker)	<i>Picus chlorolophus</i>	U	R, Br+
51.	657	Mottled Wood Owl	<i>Strix ocellata</i>	C	R, Br+	74.	821	Lesser Golden-backed Woodpecker (Black-rumped Flame-backed Woodpecker)	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>	C	R, Br+
		Caprimulgiformes				75.	847	Yellow-fronted Pied Woodpecker (Yellow-crowned Woodpecker)	<i>Dendrocopos mahrattensis</i>	C	R, Br+
		Caprimulgidae				76.	853	Pigmy Woodpecker (Brown-capped Pigmy Woodpecker)	<i>Dendrocopos nanus</i>	C	R, Br+
52.	671	Jungle Nightjar (Grey Nightjar)	<i>Caprimulgus indicus</i>	O	R	77.	862	Larger Golden-backed Woodpecker (Great Flame-backed Woodpecker)	<i>Chrysocolaptes lucidus</i>	U	R, Br+
53.	680	Common Indian Nightjar (Indian Nightjar)	<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>	U	R			Passeriformes			
54.	682	Franklin's Nightjar (Savanna Nightjar)	<i>Caprimulgus affinis</i>	C	R, Br+			Pittidae			
		Apodiformes				78.	867	Indian Pitta	<i>Pitta brachyura</i>	C	M
		Apodidae						Alaudidae			
55.	703	House Swift (Little Swift)	<i>Apus affinis</i>	A	R, Br+	79.	874	Bush Lark (Rufous-winged Bush Lark)	<i>Mirafra assamica</i>	U	R
56.	707	Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>	C	R	80.	878	Ashy-crowned Finch-Lark (Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark)	<i>Eremopterix grisea</i>	U	R
57.	709	Crested Swift (Crested Tree Swift)	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>	C	R			Hirundinidae			
		Coraciiformes				81.	927	Red-rumped/Striated Swallow (Red-rumped Swallow)	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	C	R, Br+
		Alcedinidae						Laniidae			
58.	720	Travancore Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	U	R	82.	949	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	C	M
59.	724	Common/Small Blue Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	C	R			Oriolidae			
60.	730	Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon capensis</i>	U	R	83.	953	Golden Oriole (Eurasian Golden Oriole)	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	U	M
61.	736	White-throated Kingfisher (White-breasted Kingfisher)	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	C	R, Br+	84.	958	Black-headed Oriole (Black-hooded Oriole)	<i>Oriolus xanthomus</i>	C	R, Br+
		Meropidae						Dicruridae			
62.	744	Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>	O	R	85.	963	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	C	R, Br+
63.	748	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>	O	R	86.	965	Grey/Ashy Drongo (Ashy Drongo)	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>	C	M
64.	750	Small Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	C	R, Br+						
65.	753	Blue-bearded Bee-eater	<i>Nyctinomis athertoni</i>	O	R						
		Coraciidae									
66.	756	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	C	R, Br+						
67.	765	Hoopoe (Eurasian Hoopoe)	<i>Upupa epops</i>	O	R						
		Bucerotidae									
68.	767	Indian Grey Hornbill (Common Grey Hornbill)	<i>Ocyrceros birostris</i>	U	R						

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87.	967	White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caeruleus</i>	O	R			(White-browed Fantail)			
88.	971	Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>	O	R	114.	1460	Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>	U	M
89.	971	Bronze Drongo	<i>Dicrurus aeneus</i>	O	R			(Asian Paradise-Flycatcher)			
Artamidae						115.	1504	Franklin's Wren-Warbler	<i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>	C	R, Br+
90.	982	Ashy Swallow-Shrike (Ashy Wood Swallow)	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>	C	R			(Grey-breasted Prinia)			
Sturnidae						116.	1535	Tailor Bird (Common Tailor Bird)	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	C	R, Br+
91.	987	Blyth's Myna (Chestnut-tailed Starling)	<i>Sturnus malabaricus</i>	C	R	117.	1556	Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>	U	M
92.	994	Black-headed/Brahminy Myna (Brahminy Starling)	<i>Sturnus pagodarum</i>	U	R	118.	1602	Greenish Leaf Warbler (Greenish Warbler)	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>	C	M
93.	996	Rosy Pastor (Rosy Starling)	<i>Sturnus roseus</i>	U	M	119.	1662	Magpie-Robin (Oriental Magpie-Robin)	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	C	R, Br+
94.	1006	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	A	R, Br+	120.	1720	Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i>	C	R, Br+
95.	1010	Jungle Myna	<i>Acridotheres fuscus</i>	U	R, Br+	121.	1734	White-throated Ground Thrush	<i>Zoothera citrina</i>	U	R
Corvidae						122.	1753	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	O	?
96.	1033	Indian/Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>	C	R, Br+	Motacillidae					
97.	1050	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	A	R, Br+	123.	1860	Paddy-field Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>	U	R
98.	1057	Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus macrohynchos</i>	A	R, Br+	124.	1874	Forest Wagtail	<i>Dendronanthus indica</i>	O	M
Campephagidae						125.	1884	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	O	M
99.	1070	Common Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>	C	R, Br+	126.	1891	Large Pied Wagtail (White-browed Wagtail)	<i>Motacilla maderaspatensis</i>	U	R
100.	1072	Large Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>	C	R	Dicaeidae					
101.	1079	Black-headed Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina melanoptera</i>	U	R	127.	1892	Tickell's Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>	C	R
102.	1081	Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	O	R	128.	1902	Nilgiri Flowerpecker (Plain Flowerpecker)	<i>Dicaeum concolor</i>	U	R
103.	1094	Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	C	R	Nectariniidae					
Irenidae						129.	1907	Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i>	C	R, Br+
104.	1101	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>	C	R, Br+	130.	1911	Loten's Sunbird (Long-billed Sunbird)	<i>Nectarinia lotenia</i>	C	R, Br+
105.	1104	Gold-fronted Chloropsis or Leaf Bird Gold-fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>	C	R	131.	1911	Purple Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>	C	R
106.	1107	Gold-mantled or Jerdon's Chloropsis or Leaf Bird (Blue-winged Leaf Bird)	<i>Chloropsis cochinchinensis</i>	C	R	Ploceidae					
Pycnonotidae						132.	1949	Yellow-throated Sparrow (Chestnut-shouldered Petronia)	<i>Petronia xanthocollis</i>	U	BV, Br+
107.	1120	Red-whiskered Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	A	R, Br+	133.	1958	Travancore Baya (Baya Weaver)	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>	U	R, Br+
108.	1128	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	A	R, Br+	134.	1968	White-backed Munia (White-rumped Munia)	<i>Lonchura striata</i>	C	R, Br+
109.	1138	White-browed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>	U	R	135.	1974	Spotted Munia (Scaly-breasted Munia)	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	C	R, Br+
Muscicapidae						A - Abundant; C - Common; O - Occasional; U - Uncommon; R - Resident; M - Migrant; Br+ - Breeds in KAU Campus; BV - Breeding visitor					
110.	1264	Jungle Babbler	<i>Turdoides striatus</i>	C	R, Br+						
111.	1267	White-headed Babbler (Yellow-billed Babbler)	<i>Turdoides affinis</i>	C	R, Br+						
112.	1407	Brown Flycatcher (Asian Brown Flycatcher)	<i>Muscicapa daurica</i>	U	R?						
113.	1452	White-browed Fantail Flycatcher	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>	C	R, Br+						