

## COMMENTS ON "AVIFAUNA OF THRISSUR DISTRICT, KERALA, INDIA" BY JAYSON ET AL.

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I am writing this letter with regard to the paper published in the *Zoos' Print Journal*, February 2005 titled "Avifauna of Thrissur District, Kerala, India" by Jayson E.A. and C.I. Sivaperuman and would like to point out certain inaccuracies in the paper concerning certain species of birds listed.

1. Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*: This is a pelagic bird, which reaches our coast and occasionally inlands during monsoon gales. This has been classified as a migrant in this paper

2. Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis*: As far as I know, there was only a single record of this species from the Kole (Ravindran, 1995). Obviously this species is a straggler and not a resident of the area.

3. Ferruginous Pochard *Aythya nyroca*: Details of the sightings of this species is not given; as far as Kerala is concerned, this species is extremely rare, with no recent sightings, though it is included in *Birds of Kerala* (Ali, 1969).

4. Jungle Bush-Quail *Perdica asiatica*: Shown as present at KFRI Campus, KAU Campus and Peechi-Vazhani Sanctuary. The habitat of this bird is dry scrub (e.g. Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary) and this species is unlikely to be seen at the above-mentioned places. More details desirable.

5. Wood Snipe *Gallinago nemoricola* and Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*: Shown as seen at the Kole wetlands. Both are birds of damp areas in the forest with very few recent sightings; unlikely to be seen in Kole wetlands.

6. Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Calidris pygmaea*: Area seen not specified. This is one of the most endangered waders and the whole of the west coast has only one record (Uthaman & Namassivayam, 1991). More details wanted.

7. Indian Courser *Cursorius coromandelicus*: No records from Kerala for the last several years and its habitat 'bare wasteland with scattered scrub' hardly exists here.

8. Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*: This species has been deleted from the Indian list (Grimmett *et al.*, 1998; Kazmierczak, 2000; Manakkadan & Pittie, 2001).

9. Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*: Shown as seen in the Kole wetlands. This species is found in 'well shaded plantations of tea, coffee and cardamom' above 900m (Ali, 1969).

10. Common Babbler *Turdus caudatus*: Shown as occurring in the Kole wetlands!!! This is the most 'uncommon babbler' of Kerala and has to be deleted from the state list, as there is no suitable habitat for it.

11. Bengal Bushlark *Mirafra assamica*: The Bushlark occurs in the Gangetic plain to Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Burma. The species we have here in southern India is Jerdon's Bushlark *Mirafra affinis*.

12. Plain Martin *Riparia paludicola*: Reported first in Kerala from the Kole wetlands by V. Santharam (Neelakantan *et al.*, 1993). Here, it is shown as occurring in Peechi-Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary.

Some other species, which according to this paper, said to occur in the Kole wetlands also need to be explained with more details. They are: Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*, Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*, Grey Francolin *Francolinus pondiceranus*, Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocta*, Small Sunbird *Nectarinia minima*, White-bellied Drongo *Dicrurus caerulescens* etc. Interestingly, the authors have omitted some of the most significant sightings at the Kole, e.g. White-tailed Lapwing *Vanellus leucurus*, Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus* (Ravindran, 2001; Ravindran & Nameer, 2001).

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### RESPONSE

ZOOS' PRINT JOURNAL 20(5): 1879-1880

## REPLY TO THE COMMENTS BY SASHIKUMAR ON "AVIFAUNA OF THRISSUR DISTRICT, KERALA, INDIA"

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This is with reference to the comments made by Sashikumar on the Avifauna of Thrissur District, Kerala, India. The paper is a checklist compiled from our fieldwork and from published information collected from reports and research papers. We would like to point out that the bird species included in the Kole wetlands list include the sightings from different microhabitats like mud flats, shallow water, open water, bunds, floating vegetation, grasslands, canals and adjacent coconut and rubber plantations which is found in the Kole wetlands and adjacent areas.

1. *Sula dactylatra*: This species marked as Migrant (M) based on Ali and Ripley (1983).

**2. *Pelecanus philippensis*:** Recorded on 15.vi.1999 and 5.vii.1999 at Kanjany and status adopted from Ali and Ripley (1983). This species was also reported by Sreekumar (2004) from the Vembanad wetlands, which lies in the coast of Kerala.

**3. *Aythya nyroca*:** This species was recorded on 16.xi.1999 in Kanjany by the second author. Also reported by Kurup (1996) from the Purathur Estuary and Sreekumar (2004) from the Vembanad wetlands.

**4. *Perdicula asiatica*:** Species identity needs confirmation.

**5. *Gallinago nemoricola* & *Scolopax rusticola*:** Recorded from Kanjany on 3.iii.1999 and 9.iii.1999, Enamavu on 23.iii.1999 on grasslands and marshy areas by the second author.

**6. *Calidris pygmeus*:** The species was not recorded or marked in any of the locations in the paper but came to the list by typographical error.

**7. *Cursorius coromandelucus*:** The species was not recorded or marked in any of the locations in the paper but came to the list by typographical error.

**8. *Larus fuscus*:** Reported by Nameer (1993) from Kole wetlands. Reported by Kurup (1996) from the Purathur Estuary and Sreekumar (2004) from the Vembanad wetlands.

**9. *Anthus trivialis*:** Recorded from Kanjany on 4.x.2000 and Parappur on 12.x.2000 on bunds by the second author.

**10. *Turdoides caudatus*:** Recorded from Kanjany on 5.x.1999, Pullu on 6.x.1999, Kanjany on 6.x.1999 on bunds and trees by the second author.

**11. *Mirafra assamica*:** Reported in Nameer *et al.* (2000) from the KAU campus.

**12. *Riparia paludicola*:** This species marked due to over site in the Peechi-Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary, Recorded from the Kole wetland by Santharam (1995).

**13. *Accipiter nisus*:** Recorded from Enamavu on 17.xi.1998; 23.iii.1999; 26.iii.1999; 7.x.2001 by the second author.

**14. *Circus macrourus*:** Recorded from Parappur on 10.iii.1999; 22.ii.2001; Enamavu on 26.x.1999; Arimpur on 20.ii.2001 by the second author.

**15. *Francolinus pondicerianus*:** Recorded at Parappur on 3.viii.2001 in bushes in the coconut plantations adjacent to the Kole wetlands by the second author.

**16. *Streptopelia decaocta*:** Sighted from Kanjany on 28.iv.1999; 5.vii.2001; Punnayarkulam on 7.x.1999; Parappur on 9.xii.1999; on electric lines and on trees in the adjacent areas by the second author.

**17. *Nectarinia minima*:** Recorded from Parappur on 31.iii.2000 and 29.ix.2001 on trees adjacent to the Kole wetlands by the second author.

**18. *Dicrurus caerulescens*:** Recorded from Arimpur on 6.x.1999; 29.iii.2000; Alapatt on 6.xii.1999; Parappur on 17.xii.1999; 8.iii.2000; 31.iii.2000; Kanjany on 22.ii.2000; 27.iii.00; 27.iii.2000; 6.vii.2001 on electric lines by the second author.

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#### COMMENT

ZOOS' PRINT JOURNAL 20(5): 1880-1881

#### COMMENTS ON "AVIFAUNA OF THRISSUR DISTRICT, KERALA, INDIA" BY E.A. JAYSON ETAL. (2005)

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Though late, having had a chance to go through the article "Avifauna of Thirissur District, Kerala, India" by Jayson and Sivaperuman in *Zoos' Print Journal* 20(2): 1774-1783, I felt a need for a clarification note as an addendum to the checklist. The picture painted by the article is incomplete and mostly erroneous. Here I tabulate a list of species from their checklist that I felt had erroneous information.

Most of the species on which I have commented are common ones and even beginner bird watchers are aware of the status of these birds (eg. Ashy Drongo). I have refrained from commenting on several tall claims in the checklist like the Spoonbilled Sandpiper (*Calidris pygmeus*) or the Wood Snipe (*Gallinago nemoricola*). Considering the nature of basic mistakes interspersed over the length of the article (more than 10% of the species listed have wrong information), it is not unsafe to assume that the whole checklist has been prepared without sufficient groundwork. It is hoped that such publications don't get accepted in the future without sufficient reviews by people familiar with the avifauna of the region.

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