

Indian wildlife. 2005 (September): Unknown.

Vana Premi

Joseph, A.V. 2005. A brief note on breeding of Red Jungle Fowl and Grey Jungle Fowl in the (3) zoos of A. P. 6 (10): 29-32 (With ten b&w., photos, one line-drawing and three tables).

Wader Study Group Bulletin

Zöckler, C., S. Balachandran, G.C. Bunting, M. Fanck, M. Kashiwagi, E.G. Lappo, G. Maheswaran, A. Sharma, E.E. Syroechkovski & K. Webb. 2005. The Indian Sunderbans: an important wintering site for Siberian waders. 108: 42-46 (With one map, one table and six col. pics.).

World Birdwatch

Anonymous. 2005. Rediscovered wren-babbler easy to find but hard to see. 27 (2): 2 (With one col. photo.).

Anonymous. 2005. India to ban diclofenac. 27 (2): 4 (With one col. photo.).

Anonymous. 2005. Wintering Spoon-billed Sandpiper survey in India draws a blank. 27 (2): 4 (With one col. photo.).

Eberhardt, K. 2005. Chasing the Pink-headed Duck. 27 (3): 22-24 (With eight photos).

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Nameer, P.O. 2005. Summary of Ph.D. Thesis: Bird community structure in selected forest types of Kerala. XX (11): 20-22.

Zoos' Print Journal

Jayson, E.A.C. Sivaperuman. 2005. Avifauna of Thrissur district, Kerala, India. 20 (2): 1774-1783.

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Singh, H. 2005. Sighting of Sirkeer Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii* in the Thar Desert. 20 (6): 1903.

Srinivasulu, C., B. Srinivasulu & V. Nagulu. 2005. Catalogue of birds collected by Salim Ali present in the Natural History Museum, Osmania University, Hyderabad, India. 20 (1): 1741-1748 (2004).

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Recoveries from the Newsletter for Birdwatchers (1965) - 10

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By 1965, its fifth year, the *Newsletter* had become fairly well known in the then small birding community of India, and a few articles from Pakistan relating to birds common to our two continents reassured us—as we are essentially a part of one subcontinent.

Rev. A. Navarro, to whom you have been introduced before, took a group of students from St. Xavier's High School, Bombay, to Kendal in Ahmedabad district for bird watching, "instead of sitting at home for the Diwali holidays, firing crackers and feasting on sweetmeats"... (1) Our first impression of the situation was one of dejection and disappointment...the countryside seemed devoid of any interest for bird watching...But first impressions are not always the best...At the end of six days, footing it out for miles, we found to our great surprise and joy a list of hundred varieties of different birds." I quote one paragraph from this long four page article.

"Along the bullock cart ruts and *nullahs*, along side which there grew an abundance

of green grass with bushes and small trees to break the monotony, we saw seven varieties of warblers. This was a pleasant and refreshing sight. Here we saw the Indian Great Reed Warbler, Blyth's Reed Warblers, the Orphean Warbler, the Booted Tree Warbler, the Ashy Wren Warbler, and the Indian Wren Warbler. What a splendid company they made on the wing, bristling with the enjoyment of their environment. But of all this glorious company two of them—Blyth's and the Booted Tree Warbler—we were destined to watch more often on trees, while the others preferred to rest on bushes, reeds and grass. Blyth's Warbler, which was the most common everywhere, gave us the joy of hearing its rather monotonous 'chat-chat-chat' chant. But what was our surprised delight when we suddenly discovered him warbling at noon, trimming his throat to a sweet, melodious and soul-lifting song akin, we thought, to that of the Oriole: only his was a much softer and less high-pitched melody."

Brother Navarro had the distinction of discovering a new species for India during his visit to Fennel Hill (Karnala Bird Sanctuary) near Mumbai on 31.i.1965. "It must have been around 11 o'clock when I was almost at the top of the hill, on the right side of the road, when suddenly a noisy party, made up mostly of Warblers, Flycatchers and some birds of another variety, were enjoying themselves in a delightful cacophony in a very thick patch of the forest. My attention was caught by a pair of birds calling to each other incessantly. Their calls were altogether unfamiliar to me as much as their colour was. I sat down on the ground flora most ten minutes observing. Finally I was convinced that the birds that I was observing were something I had never seen before. So I decided there and then to secure at least one specimen of them."

"Luckily I did secure one of them. After examining it with some care I placed it, not without some misgivings, in the group of the Pied Shrike of the Genus *Hemipus*. Later

in the evening at the foot of Fennel Hill two more pairs came my way as they flew through the thickest part of the forest. Once I got home I examined the specimen more carefully and saw that it was the Ashy Minivet."

D.A. Holmes and J.O. Wright continued with their series of annotated list of birds around Sukkur Barrage in Sind. Reading about the commonest birds from experts is never boring, and the authors produced a useful list of birds seen in different seasons. For example, this is what they say about the Koel *Eudynamys scolopacea*. "Only a few decades ago this bird was very rare in Sind. Now, however, it is a common visitor to Lower Sind from April to November. Its spread to the Sukkur region has not yet been so successful. It did not arrive here till May 21st and remained scarce." Then about the Hoopoe *Upupa epops*. "This Hoopoe is a winter visitor leaving about mid-April. The first autumn arrival was noted on July 20th. Although from its distribution the common bird here is presumably the typical sub-species (*U. e. epops*). Few birds seen in this area during the winter have had any visible white on the crest." The white on the crest presumably is a feature of the migrants, if I recall correctly my conversations with Yuvraj Shivraj Kumar in Kutch during the ringing season.

S.D. Jayakar and Hari Pulugurtha of the Genetic and Biometry Laboratory in Bhubaneswar, Orissa, (where J.B.S. Haldane worked), discovered an impressive roost of White Wagtails *Motacilla alba* and three sub-species on the roof of the secretariat in November 1964. Every day around 17:00 hrs over 200 birds descended there and then roosted in the neighbouring karanj trees *Pongamia pinnata*.

I wish I had more space for T.J. Roberts's lovely article 'Vultures in the desert', but I can only give you a taste of his writing by quoting a paragraph from his 2,250-word account. The detailed descriptions he gives of the several species of vultures would be useful for vulture experts, and if any of you are interested I will be glad to send you a Xerox copy of his article. In the June 1965 issue he wrote:

"I had to cross a stretch of some ten miles of pure desert and in one of the 'pats' my eye was attracted to the pathetic sight of a three-quarter grown sheep lying on its side. From its feeble attempts to rise and join the flock which we had ridden past half a mile previously, it was obviously 'in extremis'. It was not until about two hours later that I

was returning along more or less the same track when I realized that in all the empty waste, the lamb had attracted the ever watchful vultures. There were some fifteen birds wheeling high overhead and more coming into view. I stopped and watched the circling birds and was intrigued to realize that apart from two or three White-backed Vultures *Gyps bengalensis*, which is usually the only species seen in the cultivated areas of Bahawalpur, there were also eight or nine slightly larger birds with pale khaki bodies which were Griffon Vultures *Gyps fulvus*."

At the end of April 1965 K.K. Neelakantan was at Thekkady on a brief visit, "and was disheartened to see that a number of forest giants had been felled to provide room for a long line of buildings". He went again on 25th July wanting very much to add Rufous Woodpecker to his life listing. He failed to do that but there was some consolation in seeing three White-necked Storks on the traditional nesting tree near the boat jetty. He sent a list of 53 birds seen during his visit and was surprised that no Grey Wagtail or Grey-headed Mynah was seen during this visit.

D.A. Holmes wrote a major article on the water birds in Sind in the August issue after he migrated to Pakistan. "My title" he said, "may seem anomalous to some but the Sind Desert is a widely held misconception. Despite its indubitably hot desert climate, most of this region is not desert. The annual inundation of the Indus now contained a regulated...an abundance of *jheels* and water logging menaces the agriculture of the region. The result is a wealth of water birds which provided my most exciting bird watching.

In autumn the paddy fields ring with the lovely calls of green and wood sandpipers, the forerunners of the waders that abound in the area in winter. From November to February the sound of guns (far too many of them) keep the wings of thousands of duck whistling over every *jheel* and crakes and bitterns can be flushed from any reedbed." One of Holmes' weaknesses was fast driving and tragically he died while speeding around a bend in Geneva. It was the end of a very fine contributor to the *Newsletter*.

In the December issue K.S. Lavkumar wrote at some length about the birds around Rajkot: "October" he said, "is a very interesting month and our farm complex was no exception, and all the passage migrants one might hope to see in this part of the country are here. Spotted Flycatchers are

frequent, but their inconspicuous colourings make them 'rare'. Pale Brown Shrikes are commoner than at other times of the winter, while for a period, Kashmir Rollers are more numerous than the Indian Roller which is a beautiful and typical bird of cultivation. It is always good to see two species closely related side by side as then the comparisons are easy, and many of our novice members had a fine opportunity of getting to know the two Rollers. The same is true of the cock Pied Bush Chats and the Pied Wheatears, both of which are frequent and were also able to compare the hens of the Pied Bush Chat with the mate of the Collared Bush Chat, though the cock himself has yet evaded us. Common House Sparrows hang around in gossiping flocks around the farm houses and with them invariably are a couple of yellow-throated sparrows, the yellow throat never conspicuous at this time of the year, but when side by side the two sparrows are easily told apart.

The year ended with the Editor's report on a meeting in Delhi between representatives of IUCN and WWF with members of the IBWL and others. The meeting was significant for the progress of the conservation movement in India for it paved the way for the IUCN General Assembly meeting in New Delhi in November 1969, which resulted in the famous Project Tiger.