
Whispering Wings®

Newsletter of the Chandigarh Bird Club®



Volume 4 - 4th Edition

April - June 2019

From the Editor's Desk

Summers are when some of the most colorful birds arrive in this part of the world to nest and breed. Indian Pitta (*Nauranga*, the nine colored one) is here in unprecedented numbers (at least as far as the sightings go!). Blue Tailed Bee-eaters are here in their cohorts. Indian Orioles dart around, flashing their yellow robes and lashing down their nests to protect them from the monsoon gales. Rosy Starlings attired in pink, in company of the duller cousins, the White Tailed Starlings gorge on ripe mulberry.

The magic has just begun. Knob-billed Ducks and Lesser Whistling Ducks are here looking for nesting sites near ponds and lakes. Soon their eggs will hatch and we can see the ducks swimming with their ducklings in fluffy cream down, riding piggy back.

Migratory and resident Cuckoos like the Jacobin, Grey Bellied and Common Hawk Cuckoo along with Asian Koel call day and night.

Guru Arjan Devji, in Sri Guru Granth Sahib writes:

ਬਾਬੀਹਾ ਪ੍ਰਿਊ ਪ੍ਰਿਊ ਕਰੇ,

ਜਲਨਿਧ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪਿਆਰ॥

Babiha prio prio karey,

Jalnidh prem piyaar.

The Jacobin Cuckoo, besotted by the rain clouds,

Cries prio-prio (beloved-beloved) day and night.

Well, the summers and rains have their own charm of bird-watching.

May you always hear the bird song...

Mitinderpal Singh Sekhon

Secretary's Report

We welcome four new members to the birding family of Chandigarh Bird Club.

The monthly field-trips of Chandigarh Bird Club are very popular and there are always at least 10 participants for these trips

April is the month when the breeders return northward for the nesting season. Golden Orioles and Spot-winged Starling are the first to arrive followed by Indian Pitta in late May.

This year it seemed to be 'raining' Indian Pitta as there were reports of sightings by members from all around Chandigarh. The birds were heard and spotted at Siswan Dam area, Saketri, Panchkula, Zirakpur and in several gardens within Chandigarh.

All the regular activities of the club continued with enthusiastic participation by the members. The monthly field-trip to Chakkimodh was planned in order to see which breeders had arrived and which wintering birds had moved on. Spot-winged Starlings had arrived and the various warblers and Tits had moved on to cooler climes.

In May the members participated in Global Big Day and uploaded their checklists on ebird. The monthly field-trip was conducted in Morni Hills. The highlight of the day was the spotting of White-rumped Shama which was an addition to the checklist of the Inter-state Chandigarh Region. With the temperatures shooting in to the high 40's birders were busy putting out water bowls for the birds.

The annual Baya Weaver Count will be conducted around Chandigarh and in Panjab, by CBC members from 16th June to 21st July to facilitate ebird in their project.

Five members of the club made an overseas birding trip to Sabah on the island of Borneo while within the country visits were made to Narkanda in Himachal and Chopta in Uttarakhand.

The enthusiastic participation of members in club activities is heartwarming.
Till next time-Happy Birding!

Rima Dhillon

Birdwatching with the Bird Man of Coorg

Kodagu/Coorg is an administrative district in Karnataka. It occupies an area of 4102 km² in the Western Ghats of south-western Karnataka. Situated at an elevation of 900 m above the mean sea level, it has a total population of 554,519. It touches the state of Kerala on its three sides. Agriculture is the mainstay of economy of



Black-headed Ibis

Kodagu and the main crops are rice coffee and spices. Kodagu is known for its coffee and people.



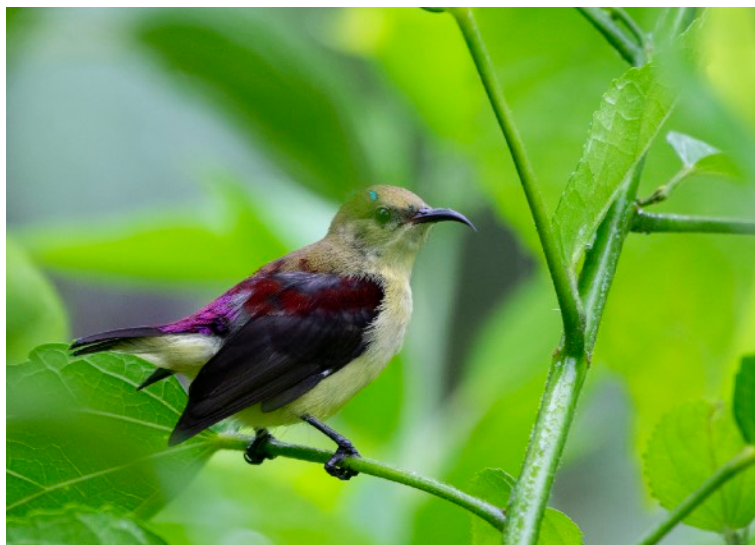
Black-throated Munia

The highest peak is Tadiandanol (1750 m) and Pushpgiri the second highest (1715 m). The main river in Kodagu is Kaveri which originates from the Talakaveri. The Kodavas were the earliest inhabitants and agriculturalists in Kodagu having lived for centuries at the place. They were a warrior community who revere



Loten's Sunbird

ancestors, arms and worship several deities, besides river Kaveri.



Black-headed Ibis

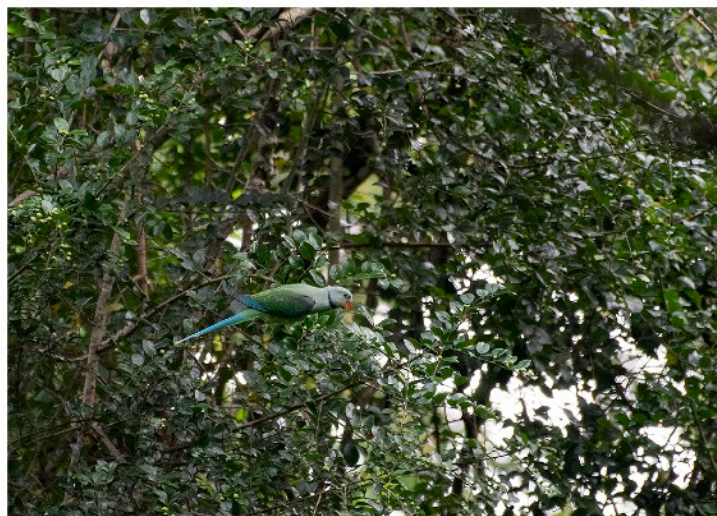
In recent years, tourism has also begun to play an important role in the economy. Eco-tourism is being promoted in the form of walks and trekking tours arranged by most of the resorts.

The coffee plantations may be looked upon as semi forests that together with



Common Flameback

the protected forests support a large and varied population of bird species. During the past few decades, silver oak has been introduced as the primary shade tree. But it is imperative that in addition to silver oak, a good density of local varieties of trees should be maintained and dense shade must be resorted to.



Blue-winged Parakeet

In the Kodava community, we saw a unique way of protecting small areas of forests to preserve flora and fauna. This unique concept is known as “Devarakaadu” wherein an estimated number of 1214 of pockets of forests have been earmarked as bio-buffers on the pretext of worshipping various deities. These devaarkaadus stand



Puff-throated Babbler

as proof to the sense of concern for the preservation of wildlife among people of Kodagu. However, deforestation, indiscriminate tree felling, submergence and encroachment on forest land gravely threaten all the rich flora and fauna.

While we travelled to Coorg, our stay was in a heritage resort. It was deep in the forests away from the chaos of the town of Madikeri. It is quite a known fact that Coorg and its surrounding areas are rich in bird species. I had already contacted a bird watcher, Ganesh who is a famous name in the south. He is gifted with a unique



Brahminy Kite

ability to mimic calls of most of the birds. Pre-monsoon showers had already splashed Coorg, which in a way meant little opportunity for birding. Yet I decided to go ahead with the bird guide who had convinced me that he would show around 30 bird species endemic to South India. The place where I had to meet Mr Ganesh was around one hour away from my resort somewhere close to the Dubare Elephant Camp. It was raining, and he was doubting the birding zeal of a north Indian birder. I



Black-headed Ibis

reached before he came and we decided to move ahead. He greeted me with a hot cup of coffee which he had got from his home. This birding zone lay along the Chiklihole Reservoir, which indeed is surrounded by a lush green forest cover. It had stopped raining, and I was happy that the weather favoured me to locate some 16 endemic species and 23 common bird species. It was a fantastic experience. Before



Greater Flameback

parting our ways, I presented him a copy of Birds of Chandigarh and a lapel pin of CBC. He reciprocated with a bird book and stickers of Coorg Birds. This gesture was quite warm as compared to the handshakes made generally while saying goodbyes.



Crimson-throated Barbet

He personally thanked all the members of Chandigarh Bird Club and has requested all to visit Coorg. The video clip had already been shared by me on the group.

Birds seen:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Babbler, Jungle | 4. Barbet, Crimson-throated |
| 2. Babbler, Large Grey | 5. Barbet, White-cheeked |



Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker

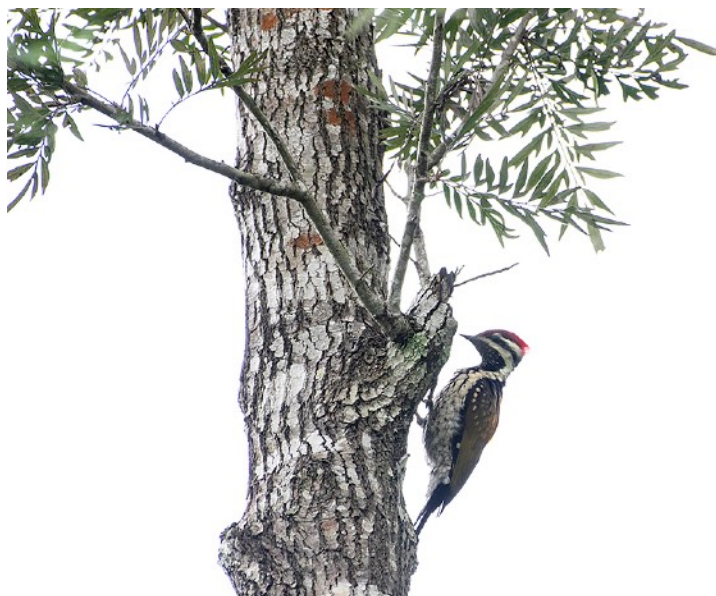
- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 3. Babbler, Puff-throated | 6. Bee-eater, Green |
|---------------------------|---------------------|

7. Bulbul, Red-whiskered

14. Flameback, Black-rumped

8. Bulbul, Ruby-throated

15. Flameback, Common



Black-rumped Flameback

9. Bulbul, Yellow-browed

16. Flowerpecker, Thick-billed

10. Coucal, Greater

17. Ibis, Black-headed

11. Drongo, Ashy

18. Iora, Common



White-cheeked Barbet

12. Drongo, Greater Racket-tailed

19. Kingfisher, Common

13. Egret, Cattle

20. Kite, Brahminy

21. Malkoha, Green-billed
22. Munia, Black-throated
23. Myna, Common
24. Parakeet, Blue-winged
25. Parrot, Vernal Hanging
26. Piculet, Speckled
27. Robin, Oriental Magpie
28. Shama, White-rumped
29. Shikra
30. Shrike, Long-tailed

31. Starling, Grey-headed
32. Sunbird, Loten's
33. Tailorbird, Common
34. Tit, Indian Black-lored
35. Treepie, Rufous
36. White-eye, Oriental
37. Woodpecker, Brown-capped Pygmy
38. Woodshrike, Malabar
39. Yellownape, Lesser

Vikas Sharma & Ganesh

Area Covered: 5Km

10th June 2019

Vikas Sharma



**Black Francolin, at Sarangpur
By Amandeep Singh Channa**

Scientific Names of Birds

It has been a long time that I have written anything in the recent past. The reason has been due to a double whammy, the great Indian Circus, the elections were on - and the entire nation was out on the streets for three full months trying to pick up - who will rule the nation for the next five years, second was that in between this schedule, I along with some members of Chandigarh Bird Club were on a trip to Borneo for birdwatching. The preparation, trip and the aftermath has been very tiring. Though I had intended to pen down the experience of the visit too, seeing my routine and engagements I relegated it to sometime in the near future.

I have no formal training in any ornithological studies but I was always intrigued by the scientific names of the birds I used to come across during birdwatching. So I have been on to this task of learning more about how the birds are named and what is the logic behind it all. I am sharing the studies that I have done for past almost six months and tried to lay them down for everyone to understand in as easy a language and explanation as possible.

Firstly, the moot question - do we address these names as scientific? or Latin names? Calling them the Latin names is how we address them fairly commonly, though that may not be any longer true. Many languages have contributed to names of the birds, Latin is/was very common, but many names of birds are now Greek, from Old English, Russian, Malay, South American native languages, etc. That being said, regardless of the origin, generic names are required to have a form of a Latin noun, with defined gender and specific names are required to decline according to rules of Latin adjectives. This is a fact as the system was at that time when Latin was the language of International Communication. However, in today's sense calling them as Scientific Names may be correct as some names are not Latin at all.

There are in all four parts of the full scientific name. The ***first part of the name describes the genus*** that distinguishes a group of isolated, distinctive species. This must be a form of a noun or a substantivised adjective treated as a noun. This has to begin with an Upper-case letter. The ***second part of the name begins with a lower-case letter and describes the species within the genus*** and may take many forms though it is commonly an adjective or a noun in the genitive case. The ***third and the fourth part reveal the name and the year in which that name was first validly published*** as a Binomen. We will tackle the first two parts of the names in this article.

Now that we know that the scientific names are to be addressed as 'Scientific Names', the names were and are coined using different criteria. These categories/criteria are as given below: -

1. **Morphonym**: (Gr. *morphē* form: *onuma* name) Based on plumage, colours and physical characteristics of the birds and is the largest category accounting for over half of all specific names and nearly half of all generic names.



White-bellied Blue Flycatcher
(*Cyornis pallidipes*)

As an example, this endemic bird of India, the White-bellied Blue Flycatcher, whose scientific name is *Cyornis pallidipes*. Here *Cyornis* is derived from the Greek *kuanos* meaning Dark Blue and *ornis* for bird. *pallidus* in Latin stands for pale and *pes* for the foot. So the name describes the plumage and physical characteristics as a Dark blue bird with the pale foot.

2. **Eponym**: (Gr. *epōnumos* named after) eponym commemorates a person real, mythical or fictional. These mostly honour the name of the collector or the discoverer of species, but at other times just to honour to a person.



Grey-breasted Prinia
(*Prinia hodgsonii*)

The example of this bird is Grey-breasted Prinia, whose scientific name is *Prinia hodgsonii*. Here *Prinia* is a Javanese name Prinya and *hodgsonii* is name given in honour of Brian Houghton Hodgson (1800-1894), an English diplomat, resident of Nepal from 1833 to 1844 who was an ethnologist and a collector. His name figures in a

number of species scientific name as *hodgsoni* / *hodgsoniae* / *hodgsonii* / *Hodgsonius* etc.

3. **Autochthonym**: (Gr. *autokhthōn* indigenous, native; *onuma* name) Based on indigenous or the native name. They are used generically than specifically mostly.



Chukar partridge
(*Alectoris chukar*)

An example of this bird is the beautiful Chukar Partridge whose scientific name is *Alectoris chukar*, with *Alectoris* is a derivation of Greek word *alektoris* meaning farmyard fowl/chicken and *chukar* a derivative of Hindi name *Chukor*.

4. **Toponym**: (Gr. *topos* place; *onuma* name) These have been proved more popular as specific names than generic names. There are over 1,100 specific toponyms or geographical epithets.



Black-rumped Flameback
(*Dinopium benghalense*)

As an example of this category I have picked out Black-rumped Flameback (*Dinopium benghalense*) where *Dinopium* is derivative of Greek *deinos* meaning might, *ōpos* is appearance. The Toponym part is *benghalense* depicts Bengal, as in the geographical state of Bengal - historically large part of India and Bangladesh.

5. **Taxonym**: (Gr. *taxis* arrangement; *onuma* name) This is based upon suggestive relationship or resemblance.



Golden Babbler
(*Stachyridopsis chrysaea*)

Here the *Stachyridopsis* is derivative from genus *Stachyris* that roughly translates *stakhus* as ear of wheat and *rhis* refers to nostrils; reference to the shape of opercula or scales almost closing the nostrils. *opsis* means appearance. *chrysaea* meaning Golden.

6. **Bionym**: (Gr. *bios* life; *onuma* name) The popularity of habitat names reflects this diversity.



Black-tailed Godwit
(*Limosa limosa*)

The birds are very mobile and occur in a large variety of habitat. As an example of this category, I have picked out this bird, Black-tailed Godwit, the scientific name of which is *Limosa limosa*, *limosa* is Latin derivative of *limosus* that means muddy. This bird, true to its name is found on the muddy ocean or lake shores.

7. **Ergonym**: (Gr. *ergon* work, occupation; *onuma* name) This category refers to display, typical habits, temperament, mode of flight, parasitism or breeding behaviour.



Streaked Weaver
(*Ploceus manyar*)

Like explained above the name is a derivation of the work or occupation. As an example here, Streaked Weaver's Scientific name is *Ploceus manyar*, with *ploceus* being a Greek derivative of a word *plokeus* that means weaver, braider or a plaiter (*plekō* being to plait, or to entwine). *manyar*, on the other hand, is the Tamil name *Manja* for various weavers (*Ploceus*)

8. **Phagonym**: (Gr. *phagein* to eat: *onuma* name) The names in this category reveal the variety of food items or prey of birds, including spiders, bananas, carrion, crabs, lizards etc.



Little Spiderhunter
(*Arachnothera longirostra*)

The scientific name of Little Spiderhunter is *Arachnothera* that literal translation of Greek word, *arakhnēs* meaning spider and *-thēras* meaning hunter. *longirostra* is a derivation of Latin *longus* long; *-rostris* means billed. So all in all - the scientific name means - spiderhunter that has a long bill.

9. **Phononym**: (Gr. *phōnē* voice, sound: *onuma* name) This category uses the names based upon the sounds/songs of the birds. Surprisingly, this category has yielded relatively few names in spite of the fact that the birds are so many a times associated with the songs, calls and has been admired throughout the ages.



Common Chiffchaff
(*Phylloscopus collybita*)

Like described above, inspite of the birds being so closely related to their songs - it is not common to come across bird's scientific name based on this aspect. As an example here is Common Chiffchaff whose scientific name is *Phylloscopus collybita*. The first part *pholloscopus* is derived from two Greek words, *phullon* meaning leaf; *skopos* meaning seeker. It is the second word, *collybita* that

is based on Latin name *collybista* money-changer. In Normandy, Common Chiffchaff is called 'Compteur d'argent' from its song that resembles the clinking of coins.

This article just about scratches the convention of Scientific naming of birds and there is an interesting study that we can do. There may have been inconsistencies, like I mentioned before, this is part of my interest and self study – so if you find any, please call me or point out.

You are welcome to look up my blog: <http://cheemablog.blogspot.com>

Simerpreet Singh Cheema



Asian Pied Starling, at Mirzapur
By Amandeep Singh Channa

KoKo - The Baby Hornbill

I had no idea how my immediate life would be affected when I agreed to take into my home a fledgeling Indian Grey Hornbill. For the next two weeks would be waking up with the birds to feed the hornbill and be housebound. No birding, no golfing, no social activity!

A frantic call on the 5th of June had me rushing to the market in Sector-37 in Chandigarh where a huge tree was uprooted when the storm had struck the previous night. The next morning when workers from the Municipal Corporation arrived to chop it up and cart it away, they discovered that the tree had been hosting a pair of hornbills and their brood of two! Though the parents had fled, leaving the youngsters to fend for themselves, the gardeners were able to extract the mites from the tree cavity. On arrival at the designated pickup point, I was handed a little crumpled and squashed piece of old t-shirt which I gingerly unravelled to reveal two tiny birds, huddling together in moral support of each other.

To be honest, my immediate reaction was a reluctance to take in the tiny babies. I am a birder, but that doesn't qualify me to be a perfect nurturer for little baby birds! I took them back home in a carton and wondered how I would manage.



The older bird, who came to be known as KoKo seemed at least 15 days old as it had already fledged. I got no time to name the younger one as it was already

lethargic. It was just a nestling and hadn't even opened its eyes to the world yet. Sadly, it died during the night.

I was terrified I would lose both and sat by the cardboard carton all day trying to figure out what to feed it and how.

Well, babies are babies, they will open their mouths and yell when they are hungry. How different could these be from the two of my own that I had raised? Mothering is an instinct. It doesn't need to be learned. I set about thinking back to my sons' babyhood and what I fed them. It was easy after that! My 96-year-old mother-in-law has pureed papaya for breakfast, so I filched some, and with a plastic dropper waved it in front of KoKo. It didn't wait to be invited and almost swallowed the dropper with the food! We were on our way, and I fed KoKo every half an hour. I didn't leave the house for the next 5 days as I was afraid KoKo might feel neglected.



Everything was going fine for two days, but on the third morning, I found KoKo to be a bit lazy and reluctant to eat. My heart sank. Surely, I wasn't going to lose this one too! An urgent call to Sanjiv Khanna in Ludhiana and he advised me to give it some glucose water and egg. Thankfully, we were back on track.

KoKo was still in the carton and cowering into a corner which made it difficult to aim the dropper accurately into its mouth. Many a time, the puree ended up drooling down the side of its neck. KoKo thought maybe it was insecure in such an open environment when its natural home at this age would be a cavity in a tree.

Necessity is the mother of invention. I put KoKo in a wooden nest box used for house sparrows and lined it with bedding of some dried leaves and fine twigs to give it a feeling of home. It looked around excitedly at the new yet familiar surrounding and chased its tail for a while, circling around and getting comfortable. Then suddenly, with high confidence, it struck its little bottom out of the nest opening and squirted with great force, giving me a scant notice to jump out of the way! With the lodgings finally sorted out, KoKo snuggled down for the night.

Five days later, I converted a shoebox into a nest for KoKo to give it more space to move around. Once again, I lined it with crushed leaves and thin twigs to make it as natural as possible.



KoKo seemed to be bored with the diet of pureed papaya, banana, and mango, so on the 10th day, I introduced ripe berries from the peepul tree. Subsequently, I have been adding fruit from other trees like neem and pilkhan. I haven't been able to fathom why it eats some berries and rejects others. I tried feeding it berries which were rejected but time and again it spat them out of the nest hole!

On the 11th day, I noticed KoKo pulping the fruit fallen inside the nest and using it to cement the edges of its nest hole. It was regurgitating some food and tapping it against the nest hole with its beak to make it all stick together—could it be a female juvenile learning from instinct?



Interestingly, it tries to feed itself from the bits which fall into its nest-box. I have even seen it peck off the hardened stuff it has used for cementing the nest hole and swallow it. After being fed, it develops hiccups and starts to shiver a bit. It is a signal that I must put a gap in the feeds, just like a parent bird! Sometimes food may get stuck to the inside of its beak then it chews on the leaves or twigs to dislodge it! As their tongues are very short, all food has to be placed towards the back of the throat. Hornbills often break fruit with the tip of their beak and then toss it to the back and swallow it.

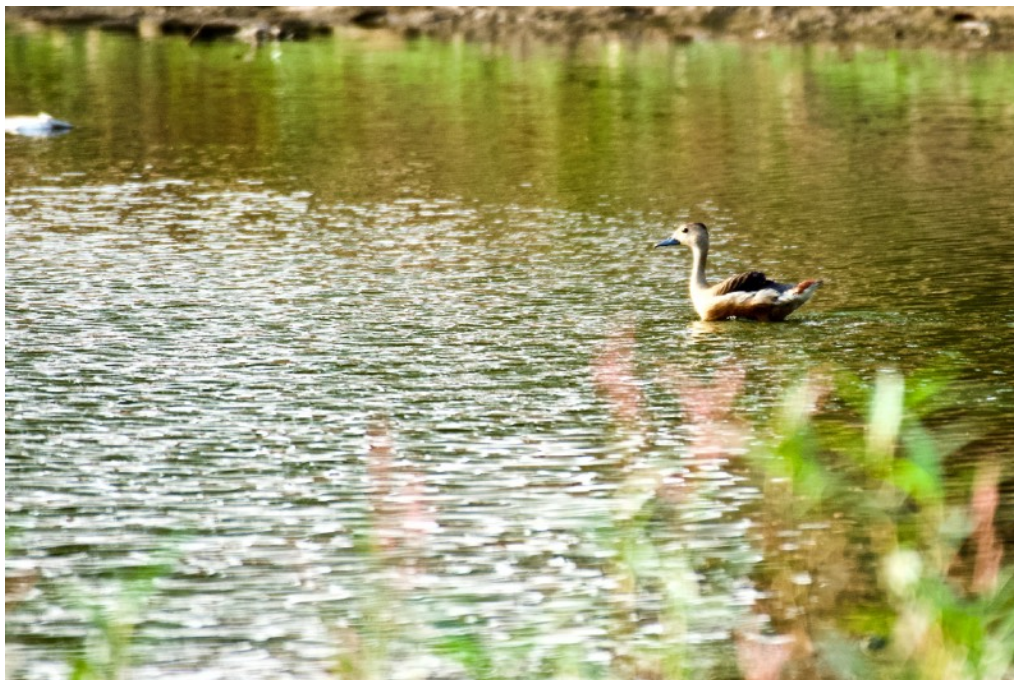


KoKo has been with me for 15 days, and from its fledged appearance on day one, it was perhaps 15 days old. Today, it will be at least 30 days with 15 days more for it to gain juvenile status.

I am trying to keep myself detached, but it is impossible when KoKo looks towards me with hope for food. I intend to train it to fend for itself in the wild and hopefully be able to let go when the time comes for it to leave the nest. While living in the Dhillon household, it is developing some good tastes!



Rima Dhillon



**Lesser Whistling Duck, at Mirzapur
By Amandeep Singh Channa**

Tragopan Country

Tragopans are large and colourful birds, larger in size than a rooster, that inhabit dense forests with oaks and rhododendrons and thick undergrowth in remote areas of the Indian Subcontinent. There are four species of tragopans seen here, Satyr tragopan being the most likely sighted species. Blyth's is more challenging to see, Temminck's is almost impossible, and you need to have Divine blessings and Divine strength to trek many days in the Greater Himalayan National Park to sight the Western tragopan.



Being large birds that feed on the ground, they are not good fliers. Mostly they would just walk about the forest or come on to the hilly roads for their daily meal. Also, how elegantly they walk! It looks like they have received grooming at some top Air Hostess academy! They don't like to flirt with danger. They would hurry/scurry back to the undergrowth of their habitat for cover the moment they sense any danger. If only the threat is right upon their head that they may take a quick short flight to safety. Very unusual, however.



Tragopans are facing a massive threat to their existence from two counts — first, since they are beautiful and colourful, they are unscrupulously hunted, either for their plumage or just for fun, and two, from too much deforestation to make space for growing human population and greed, they are suffering habitat loss. In such a scenario of double jeopardy to their lives, one place that ensures safer survival for them in the North-Eastern region of the Indian Subcontinent is Bhutan! People don't even kill a fly in Bhutan, so well ingrained is the 'ahimsa' principle of Buddhism in their psyche, so the tragopans feel perfectly safe there. Moreover, the forests are conserved in Bhutan as a matter of national pride, so these birds find sufficient safe and suitable habitat. It is not surprising then that Bhutan is called the "Tragopan Country!"



During our recent two-week trip to Bhutan, we had multiple sightings in many places. We saw one near Chele la, three on the road to Tharpaling Monastery in northern Bhutan, five males near Yongkola as we were going down to Trogon Villa in a span of about an hour and two males together (apparently a rare amongst pheasants!) on our way back. You can also see them at Pele la and probably many other places that I may not be aware of. In India, Satyrs can be seen in Uttarakhand (Munsyari is one sure place), Sikkim (Near Zuluk as well as Yuksom) and in Arunachal Pradesh.

The male Satyr has brilliant red underparts with black-bordered white spots. The facial skin is glistening blue with a lot of black around it. During the mating season, the male develops blue horns and a gular wattle. When ready to display, they will inflate their horns and hide behind a rock. When the female passed by, they

make an elaborate display to impress the female and then stretch full length to showcase their height and strength! I hope to see this live one day!

Their call is unique! So when you share their call with non-birders, they genuinely get intrigued and often can't believe that a bird could call like that! It's like the wailing cry of a small baby!

Bhupesh K Goyal



**Green Bee-eater, at Mirzapur
By Amandeep Singh Channa**

Pitta

Pittas are one of the most colourful birds in the world. The behaviour, the colour and the ecology are very elusive and attractive. It is a delight to all birders and ornithologists.



Malayan Banded Pitta I saw in Thailand

Pittas are colourful, long-legged passerine birds as big as a myna but plumper and short-tailed. They generally hop around the forest floors over fallen logs and dense undergrowth, usually roaming in loose pairs. They feed on insects, grubs, snails, worms, etc. They are quite shy and are best located by their characteristic whistling calls. Most likely seen at dawn or dusk, roosting on trees with their melodious call.

One of my favourite Pittas is the infamous Indian Pitta, which is a bird of nine colours. I have seen it several times now and observing it and listening to its call is always a delight no matter how many times I see it. The Indian Pitta resides in the South in winters and comes up to north India in summers for breeding. It generally nests and breeds in the Shivalik Foothills and Western Himalayas, and while its conquest to reach there, it can be seen through various states of India. This year I saw six of them at a farm in Ropar, Punjab. The Indian Pitta starts calling at 6:00 am in the morning and at 6:00 pm during the evening. Thus it is also called

the six o'clock bird. It mostly prefers scrub jungles or dense deciduous forests. Pittas also have a very keen sense of smell. Indian Pittas were found to have the largest olfactory bulb out of all passerine birds. Pittas are also quite clever birds and have been seen several times, using stones to crack open snail shells and eat them.



The Blue Pitta I saw in Thailand

There are 42 species of Pittas found in Asia, Australia and Africa and are divided into three different genera: *Hydrornis*, *Erythropitta* and *Pitta*. Pittas are a very popular bird group amongst birders due to their dazzling plumages and the relative difficulty of seeing these birds hiding in the dark, dense forests. The desire of birders to watch this bird is incredibly described in the book: "The Jewel Hunter" in which the writer Chris Goodie attempts to see every species of this bird.

Due to the amazing appearance of this bird, many bird and wildlife photographers go beyond the limit of ethical bird photography. They use huge flashes to get good photos of this bird as it is usually seen in darker forest areas and the flash causes temporary blindness to the bird and stuns it. To see it, people typically play their recorded call, which in return makes the Pitta respond, but can also confuse it. However, I stand guilty of attempting to call the pitta by using a fake call, I do not use it now and don't recommend it to anyone else as it confuses the bird in thinking that the fake call is its partner.

Pittas are continuously facing a threat to endangerment due to forest and habitat loss. The Gurneys Pitta in Burma and the Blue-Headed Pitta from Borneo are threatened by rapid forest loss. Pittas are targeted by poachers for the illegal wild bird trade. I saw several Banded Pittas caged in a local bazaar in Bangkok, Thailand. They are not targeted because of their song, as many songbirds are, and may simply be captured as by-catch from collecting other species, and because of their attractive plumage.

The attempts to breed these birds in captivity is not a total success as they are strongly territorial and can cover territories from 3000 m² to 10000 m². In captivity they also get highly aggressive, attacking other bird species and even their own while this behaviour is not observed in the wild.



Indian Pitta Calling

Being the most colourful birds on our planet one can never see enough of pittas, and their beauty never ceases to surprise me, and we must conserve our forests so that the home of these beautiful bird remains preserved and let them bewilder us by their beauty.

Karmannye Chaudhary

Field-trip for the month of April

Chakkimorh to Bhojnagar

Date - 14th April 2019

Time - 5 a.m. to 12 noon

Weather - Partly cloudy with intermittent bright sunshine.

Participants - Rima Dhillon, Jasbir Randhawa, Sarbjeet Kaur, Saumya, Vikas Sharma, Tarun Kakkar, Sarthak.

The field-trip to Chakkimorh is usually conducted in April to list the breeders returning for the nesting season in spring. With the winter having been prolonged this year into late March some of the winter altitudinal migrants like Black Redstart were still seen in this area. As seen every year the Spot-winged Starlings and Chestnut-tailed Starlings have arrived on time as have the Asian Paradise Flycatchers.

The 14 km from Chakkimorh to Bhojnagar have some birding hotspots frequented by the birders.

Chakkimorh—the area behind the shops has a lot of low trees, bushes, and a garbage dump. A lot of waste from the residents and shops is thrown here daily. While it is an eyesore for the public, it is a boon for the birds. During earlier trips, some exciting species like Siberian Rubythroat, Rufous-chinned Laughinthrush and large flocks of Red-billed Leiothrix have been seen here.

Red-billed Leiothrix were seen carrying nesting material into the bamboo bushes. A flock of six Spot-winged Starling, both male and female, were seen flying around and feeding on the red berries of the trees. Other species seen were Red Jungle Fowl, Oriental White-eye, Humes Warbler, Black-chinned Babbler, Common Rosefinch and Gray-breasted Prinia.

First Bridge over the ghaggar rivulet has a small waterfall where Spotted Forktail, A pair of Crested Kingfishers, Common Kingfisher and White-capped Waterstart were seen. A large rock at the bend in the river a favourite perch for the Crested Kingfisher is now a cottage under construction which has forced the bird to move away to another area downstream, It was heartening to see the pair still willing

to breed in the vicinity in spite of so much disturbance due to rampant construction and plying of large volume of heavy traffic.

Second Bridge, Cremation Ground, and the Shiva Temple form a triangle of water, foliage wild fig and Peepal trees beside a feeding station in the temple which attracts a lot of species comfortable around human habitation. A flock of 9 Red-billed Blue Magpies, Grey Treepie, Plum-headed Parakeet, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Grey-hooded Warbler, Black Bulbul, Himalayan Bulbul, Red-vented Bulbul and Asian Paradise Flycatcher both male and female were seen.

Tea stall has been a hotspot from a time before the building came up. There is a little gully running across the road and down the hill. Palms, wild cherry, figs, amla type of trees and several other species of broad-leaved trees with thick undergrowth bordered by agriculture fields make up the habitat Woodpeckers—Fulvous-breasted, Lesser Yellownape, Grey-capped Pygmy and Grey-headed are a sure sight on any given day. Pied Bushchat, Kalij Pheasant, Chestnut –shouldered Petronia, Common and Brahminy Myna, Ashy Drongo along with its cousins Black Drongo and Hair crested Drongo, Black, Himalayan and Red-vented Bulbuls, Blue Whistlingthrush, Asian Paradise Flycatcher all made their appearance over our cup of tea!

The owner of the tea stall has become accustomed to the vagaries of the birders and opens the teashop to coincide with the arrival of the birders and the birds-early bird gets good business! He even gives an instant weather report over the phone before we start from Chandigarh.

Village Thadyar has a few houses and agriculture fields. Blue-throated Barbet, Great Barbet, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar babbler, Yellow-footed Green Pigeons, Common Rosefinch, Rufous-bellied Niltava, Rufous Treepie, Verditer Flycatcher, Large-billed Crows, Common Hawk-cuckoo and Asian Koel kept everyone busy in trying to photograph them.

Eight km short of Bhojnagar another enterprising local farmer has set up a teashop. By the time birders reach this spot, it is usually time for breakfast, Mr Ishwar Dutt and his smiling wife are always there to feed the hungry birders with omelettes and aloo paranthas accompanied by tea and sometimes even lassi. The added attraction is, of course, the perch and feeding station set up by him where you photograph all the birds appearing to feed and drink water while sitting in armchairs breakfasting with Streaked Laughingthrush, White-capped Laughingthrush, Grey-winged Blackbird, Blue-throated Barbet, Indian Robin, Oriental Magpie Robin and

Spotted Doves. Other birds seen around this area are White-browed Scimitar Babbler, Shikra, Black-chinned Babbler, Jungle Owlet and Jungle Babblers. Far overhead Himalayan Vultures are seen soaring. 3 km short of Bhojnagar In the pine forest we ran into a mixed party of Black Bulbul.Himalayan Bulbul and Red-vented Bulbuls along with Black-lored Tit, Oriental White-eye,Purple Sunbird, Crimson Sunbird, Rufous Sibia, Cinereous Tit, Grey-hooded Warbler and Humes Warbler all in a frenzy of feeding among the profusely flowering orange Hemaelia bushes for nectar and insects. All the species sported orange foreheads and throats from the orange pollen of the flowers!

At Bhojnagar the village garbage dump supported the sole Black Redstart spotted today, It was probably late In starting on its journey to its breeding grounds in Ladakh, White-capped Bunting, Indian Robin, Oriental Magpie Robin, Common Myna, House Sparrows and Barn Swallows were seen in plenty.

Bird Seen

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Red-vented Bulbul | 16. Crested Kingfisher |
| 2. Himalayan Bulbul | 17. Green Beeeater |
| 3. Black Bulbul | 18. Indian Grey Hornbill |
| 4. Red-billed Leiothrix | 19. Great Barbet |
| 5. Large-billed Crow | 20. Blue-throated Barbet |
| 6. Black Kite | 21. Grey Teepie |
| 7. Kaleej Pheasant | 22. Rufous Treeoie |
| 8. Common Kestrel | 23. Red-billed Blue Magpie |
| 9. Shikra | 24. Brown-fronted Woodpecker |
| 10. Himalayan Griffon | 25. Grey Crowned Pygmy Woodpecker |
| 11. Plum-headed Parkeet | 26. Lesser Yellownape Woodpecker |
| 12. Rose-ringed Parakeet | 27. Grey-headed Woodpecker |
| 13. Common Hawk cuckoo-heard | 28. Long-tailed Minivet |
| 14. Asian Koel | 29. Ashy Drongo |
| 15. Common Hoopoe | 30. Black Drongo |

31. Indian Golden Oriole
32. White-throated Fantail
33. Indian Paradise Flycatcher
34. House Crow
35. Great Tit
36. Green-backed Tit
37. Red-rumped Swallow
38. Grey-breasted Prinia
39. Jungle Babbler
40. Streaked Laughingthrush
41. Black-chinned Babbler

42. Rusty-cheeked Scimitarbabbler
43. White-browed Scimitarbabbler
44. Blue Whistlingthrush
45. Blue-capped Redstart
46. Pied Bushchat
47. Grey Bushchat
48. Verditer Flycatcher
49. Purple Sunbird
50. Russet Sparrow
51. White-crested Laughingthrush
52. Rufous-breasted Accentor

Rima Dhillon



**Purple Sunbird, at Sec-70, Mohali
By Amandeep Singh Channa**

Field-trip for the month of May

Morni Hills

Berwala-Mandana-Thapli

Weather - Bright sunny day, soft breeze

Time - 5:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Birders - Rima Dhillon, Aprajita Lobana, Saumya, Geetika Kalha, Simmi Waraich, Kavitha, Jasbir Randhawa, and Bonnie Hundal

The monthly field-trip was postponed to the fourth Sunday of the month due to various reasons including the national elections. However, the turnout was, and we set out in three vehicles.

First stop was Berwala bridge. A walk along the dry riverbed gave sighting of Pied Bushchats in feeding mode. The parents were seen carrying mouthful to feed the young in the nests. Red-wattled Lapwings nesting along the edges of the stream dive-bombed us as we approached to shoo us away from their nests. Blue-tailed Bee-eaters could be seen hanging on precariously high up the mud cliffside.

A few Peacocks in full breeding plumage with the peahens in tow while a single male Red Junglefowl strutted about pecking on the ground. Grey Francolin, Greater Coucal and Coppersmith Barbets could be heard in the distance. Indian Grey Hornbill, Himalayan Bulbuls and Red-vented Bulbuls busied themselves in the peepal tree feeding on the fruit. A lone Egyptian Vulture glided about hopefully looking for some breakfast. viciously chirping female of a Pied Bushchat drew attention to the Spotted Owlet in the eucalyptus tree.

My search for the Blue-beared Bee-eater, for the umpteenth time, was one again in vain. However, on retracing our steps towards the parked cars, we came upon a Crested Bunting in full breeding plumage with its glorious crest waving in the light breeze.

It was fruitless to stay there any longer as the hordes of monkeys made it impossible to park there for any length of time.

A couple of kilometres along we struck gold! A pair of White-rumped Shama. The excitement in the group was palpable as we all scurried around trying to get a good shot. This sighting was a first for the ISCR by the club members. Other birds in

the area were Common Woodshrike, Golden Oriole and Oriental Magpie Robin. As seen every year at this time, the hills are filled with the song of the Purple Sunbird. This is a favoured breeding area for them, and they can be seen in all stages of maturity-from juveniles to sub-adults to adults.

At Mandana, the shrubs were full of the resident House Sparrows busy with their morning routines while Barn Swallows hawked insects on the wing. Common Rock Pigeons and Spotted Doves were cooing in an amorous dance to woo a partner.

The sun was warming up, and the rumbling stomachs signalled a breakfast stop at the banyan tree Dhaba where the owner makes a mean omelette bread with runny ketchup and sugary tea.

The return journey via Thapli was uneventful with the addition of Scaly-breasted Munias and Long-tailed Shrike.

A beautiful day spent in the relatively cooler atmosphere than the surrounding plains.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. Indian Grey Hornbill | 14. Oriental Magpie Robin |
| 2. Crested Bunting-male | 15. Yellow-footed Green Pigeon |
| 3. Indian Robin-pairs | 16. Common Woodshrike |
| 4. Pied Bushchat-pairs feeding juveniles | 17. Streaked Laughingthrush |
| 5. Brown-headed Barbet | 18. House Sparrow-flocks |
| 6. Spotted Owlet | 19. Kaleej Pheasant-pair |
| 7. House Crow | 20. Purple Sunbird |
| 8. Large-billed Crow | 21. Crimson Sunbird |
| 9. Red-wattled Lapwing | 22. Scaly-breasted Munia |
| 10. Blue-tailed Bee-eaters-nesting | 23. Indian Rockchat |
| 11. Green Bee-eaters | 24. Common Myna |
| 12. Chestnut-headed Bee-eater | 25. Brahminy Myna |
| 13. White-rumped Shama-pair | 26. Pied Starling |

27. Oriental White eye
28. Jungle Babbler
29. Common Tailorbird
30. Grey-breasted Prinia
31. Red-vented Bulbul
32. Himalayan Bulbul
33. Barn Swallow
34. Rufous Treepie
35. Asian Paradise Flycatcher
36. Golden Oriole
37. Black Drongo
38. Hair-crested Drongo
39. Long-tailed Minivet
40. Brown-fronted Woodpecker

41. Blue-throated Barbet
42. White-throated Kingfisher
43. Greater Coucal
44. Asian Koel
45. Common Pigeon
46. Spotted Dove
47. Eurasian Collared Dove
48. Grey Francolin- pair with 4 juveniles

At Morni resort as reported by
Karmanye

1. White-rumped Vulture
2. Grey bellied Cuckoo
3. Changeable Hawk Eagle
4. Chestnut-headed Bee eater

Rima Dhillon



**Indian Grey Hornbills, at Nagar Van
By Amandeep Singh Channa**

Field-trip for the month of June



Blue-throated Barbet

Chakki Modh

Date-9th June 2019

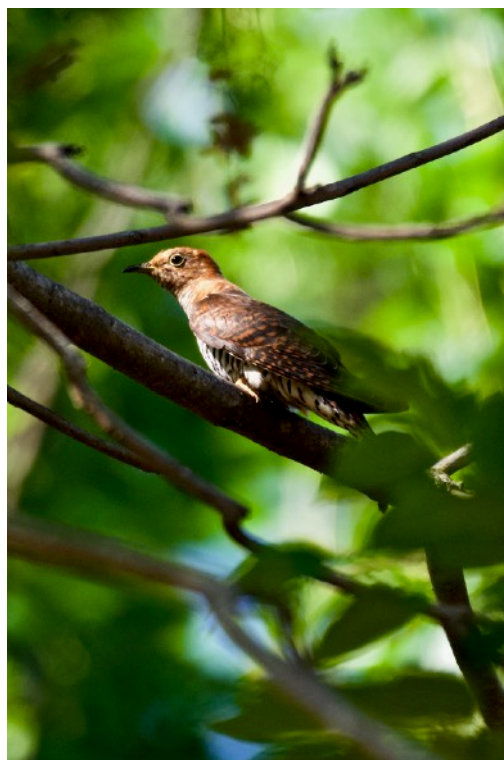
Time-5:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.



Black-chinned Babbler

Participants - Sarbjeet Kaur, Bindoo Nangia, Neeta Gode, Amandeep Singh Channa, Karandeep Singh, Karmannye Chaudhary

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Babbler, Black-chinned | 12. Drongo, Hair-crested |
| 2. Barbet, Blue-throated | 13. Fantail, White-throated |
| 3. Barbet, Brown-headed | 14. Flycatcher, Indian Paradise |
| 4. Barbet, Great | 15. Kingfisher, White-throated |
| 5. Bulbul, Black | 16. Leiothrix, Red-billed |



Eurasian Cuckoo

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 6. Bulbul, Himalayan | 17. Magpie, Red-billed Blue |
| 7. Coucal, Greater | 18. Oriole, Golden |
| 8. Crow, Large-billed | 19. Parakeet, Alexandrine |
| 9. Cuckoo, Eurasian | 20. Parakeet, Rose-ringed |
| 10. Dove, Spotted | 21. Piculet, Speckled |
| 11. Drongo, Black | 22. Pigeon, Common Rock |

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 23. Prinia, Ashy | 32. Thrush, Blue Whistling |
| 24. Redstart, White-capped Water | 33. Thrush, Rufous-chinned Laughing |
| 25. Robin, Indian | 34. Thrush, Streaked Laughing |
| 26. Robin, Oriental Magpie | 35. Thrush, White-crested Laughing |
| 27. Sparrow, House | 36. Tit, Cinereous |
| 28. Sunbird, Crimson | 37. Treepie, Grey |
| 29. Sunbird, Purple | 38. Treepie, Rufous |
| 30. Swallow, Barn | 39. Warbler, Hume's Leaf |
| 31. Swallow, Wire-tailed | 40. White-eye, Oriental |

Amandeep Singh Channa



Crimson Sunbird

Photo Gallery of the Club



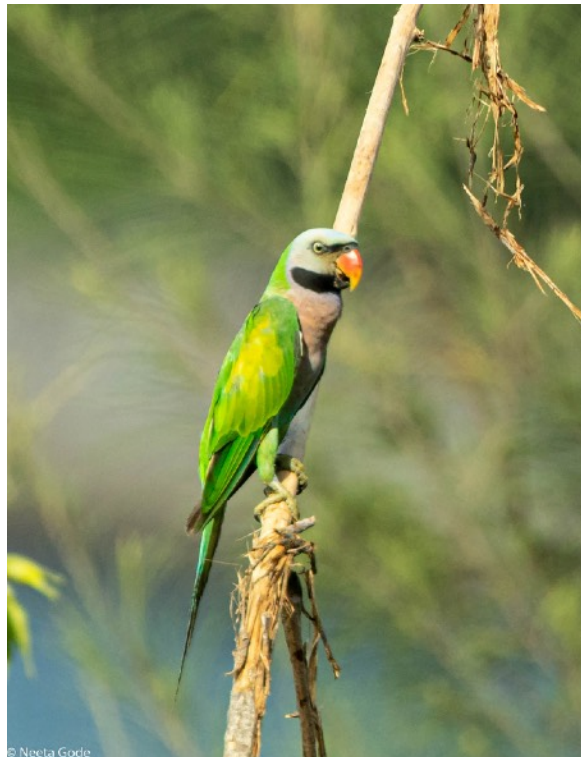
**White-crested Laughingthrush, at Chakki
Modh, By Bindoo Nangia**



**Pacific Reef Egret, in Andaman,
By Neeta Gode**



Andaman Serpent Eagle, in Andaman
By Neeta Gode



Red-breasted Parakeet, in Andaman
By Neeta Gode



White-collared Kingfisher, in Andaman
By Neeta Gode



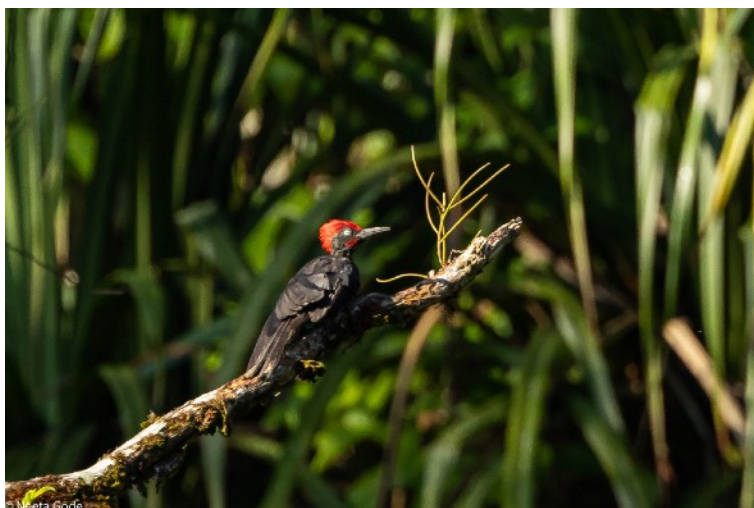
Mangrove Whistler, in Andaman
By Neeta Gode



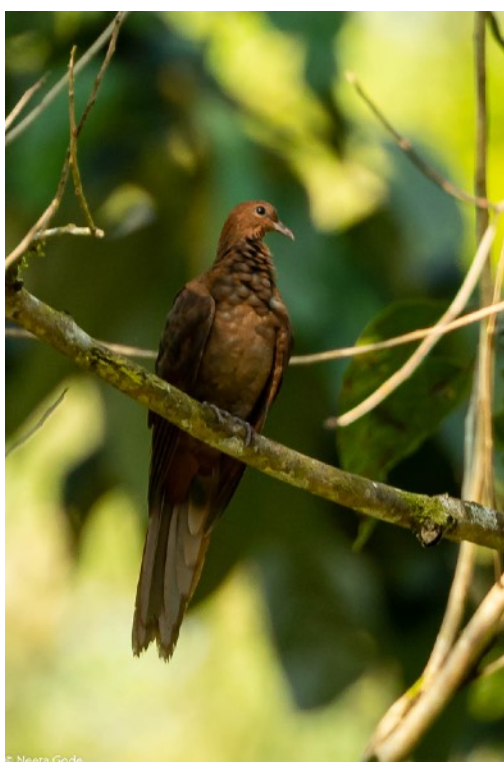
Andaman Shama, in Andaman
By Neeta Gode



Vernal Hanging Parrot, in Andaman
By Neeta Gode



Andaman Woodpecker, in Andaman
By Neeta Gode



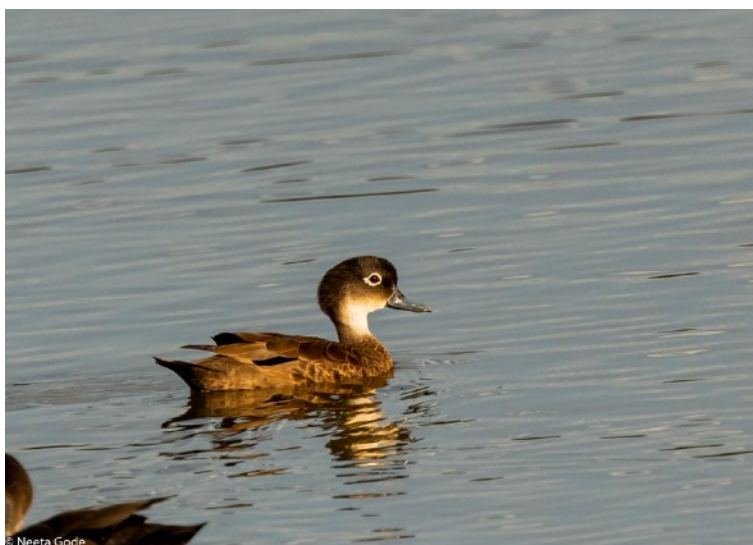
Andaman Wood Pigeon, in Andaman
By Neeta Gode



Bar-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, in Andaman
By Neeta Gode



Andaman Bulbul, in Andaman
By Neeta Gode



Andaman Teal, in Andaman
By Neeta Gode



Yellow Bittern, in Andaman
By Neeta Gode



Black-naped Tern, in Andaman
By Neeta Gode



Javan Pond Heron, in Andaman
By Neeta Gode

Whispering Wings®

Newsletter of the Chandigarh
Bird Club



Incepted in 2008, the Chandigarh Bird Club dedicated itself to its goal of protecting the environment.

The Club owes its existence to those few dedicated and expert members, who started this Club in the Chandigarh Boat Club, namely Navjit Singh, Narbir Kahlon, Vikramjit Singh, Mrs Rima Dhillon, Mrs Sarbjeet Kaur, and Mrs Geeta Goswami.

The fundamental objectives of Chandigarh Bird Club continue to be to:

1. Bring people, especially the younger generation closer to nature, through birding and help them to enjoy the outdoors while making out a fun activity.
2. To make individuals and government more sensitive towards the environment to create a dynamic database for analysis to focus on conservation efforts.
3. To create a forum for birders to share information and discuss issues related to this activity.

Editors:-

Mitinderpal Singh Sekhon

Amandeep Singh Channa

- **President - Mitinderpal Singh Sekhon**
- **Vice President - Narbir Singh Kahlon**
- **Secretary - Rima Dhillon**
- **Joint Secretary - Sarbjeet Kaur**
- **Treasurer - Mahesh Garg**