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Bird Diversity on Traditional Mata Vaishno Devi Route, Jammu (J&K)

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Abstract: ***Study on diversity of birds on traditional Mata Vaishno Devi route, Jammu was done in one month. A total of 38 bird species belonging to different families were recorded during the visits. The total length of study area is 20 Kms starting from Jagti town to village Bamyal under Nagrota block of Jammu district. The study area is comprising of number of villages such as village Pangali, Chibba, Thandapani, Marh, Gundla and Bamyal. This whole area is having number of natural water bodies and it is used as traditional route to Mata Vaishno Devi, Katra. The common bird species which were found in the study area is Blue Whistling thrush, Common Babbler, Common Myna, Rock Pigeon, Rock Chat, etc. This whole study area is also rich in various tree species, which might be the contributing factor for diversity of bird species in the area.***

Keywords: Birds, Diversity, Species, Traditional, Jammu, etc.

1. Introduction

There are number of bird species found in different habitats all around the world. Diversity of birds is one of the important ecological indicators to evaluate the ecosystem integrity. Avian diversity is one of the prominent species of the earth's biodiversity and is highly sensitive to environmental changes. Birds are helpful in maintaining the ecological balance. They are also helpful in the process of pollination and dispersal of seeds. Now a days, we have seen disappearance of avifaunal diversity due to destruction of their habitats and various other anthropogenic disturbances such as environmental pollution, developmental activities, etc. Thus, many bird species may be forced to inhabit in the urban areas and breed there. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to study and conserve the avian diversity locally as well as globally.

Many studies have been carried out to study the avifaunal diversity in the country such as Kumar and Gupta, 2009 reported 54 bird species in Kurukshetra, India; Harney, 2014 recorded 55 avian species in Chandrapur, Maharashtra; Pawar and Wanjari, 2015 recorded 34 bird species in Yavatmal; Devaraju *et.* al., 2016 recorded 34 species of bird in Cubbon Park, Bengaluru; Singh *et.* al., 2018 recorded 45 bird species in Gorakhpur University campus; Pawar *et.* al., 2019 recorded 84 avian species in Marathwada, Maharashtra; etc.

2. Study Area

The present study (Fig 1) was conducted on the Traditional Mata Vaishno Devi Route, which is 25 Kms away from Jammu city. The study area is 20

Kms starting from NH 44 near Food craft Institute in Block Nagrota, District Jammu to Village Bamyal (J&K). The Traditional Vaishno Devi route has various villages namely Pangali, Chibba, Thandapani, Marh, Gundla and Bamyal where number of heritage sites and natural water bodies are present. There is also rich diversity of tree species are present there. The study area was used by many pilgrims to visit Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, Katra on foot.

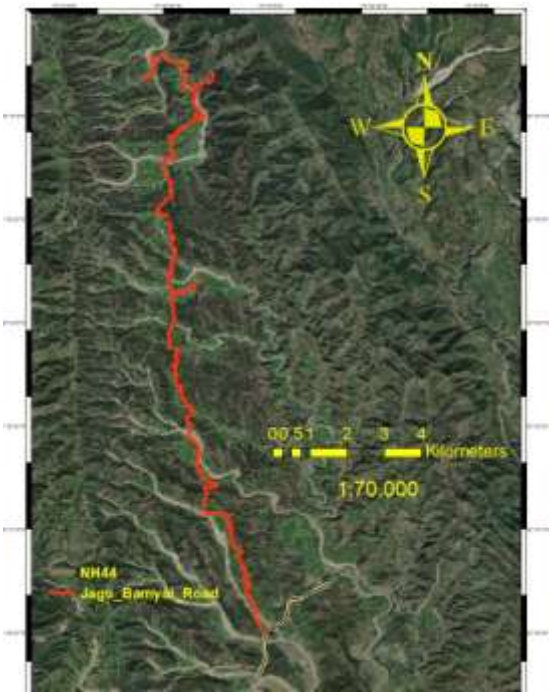

Figure 1: Location map of study area

3. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted for a period of one month by using binocular, Nikon DSLR camera, etc. which was later verified with the available literature on avian diversity such as Grimmet *et.* al., 1999; Salim Ali, 2002 and Grewal *et.* al., 2016.

Identification of birds is bit challenging process as they are very active/ energetic and quick eye spotting is required in order to get a detail of the particular bird species. Recognition of birds is done by observing their movement, feeding habits, habitats, specific voice calls, shape, size, etc. Observations of birds species was also confirmed by using Avibase bird count (2021).

4. Results and Discussion

After continuous visits for one month in the study area i.e. in the month of March' 2021, I have identified 38 birds species which are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1: List of Avifaunal diversity found in the study area

S. No.	Family	Scientific Name	Common Name	Status
1	Muscicapidae	*Myophonus caeruleus*	Blue Whistling Thrush	W
2	Leiothrichidae	*Turdoides caudata*	Common Babbler	W
3	Muscicapidae	*Saxicola caprata*	Pied Bushchat Male	W
4	Muscicapidae	*Saxicola ferreus*	Grey Bushchat Male & Female	W
5	Nectariniidae	*Cinnyris asiaticus*	Purple Sunbird	S
6	Strigidae	*Athene brama*	Spotted Owlet	R
7	Meropidae	*Merops orientallis*	Green Bee-eater	W
8	Coracidae	*Coracias bengalensis*	Indian Roller	R
9	Alcedinidae	*Halcyon smyrnensis*	White Throated Kingfisher	W
10	Ardeidae	*Egretta garzetta*	Little Egret	S
11	Charadriidae	*Vanellus indicus*	Red Wattled Lapwing	W
12	Passeridae	*Motacilla alba*	White Wagtail	R
13	Lanidae	*Lanius schach*	Long Tailed Shrike	R
14	Muscicapidae	*Saxicoloides fulicatus*	Indian Robin	W
15	Muscicapidae	*Copsychus saularis*	Oriental Magpie Robin	W
16	Megalaimidae	*Megalaima zeylanica*	Brown Headed Barbet	S
17	Sturnidae	*Sturnus pagodarum*	Brahminy Starling	R
18	Passeridae	*Passer rutilans*	Russet sparrow	R
19	Corvidae	*Corvus splendens*	Common Crow	W
20	Cuculidae	*Cuculus micropterus*	Crow Pheasent	R
21	Phasianidae	*Pavo cristatus*	Indian Peafowl	S
22	Paradoxornithidae	*Chrysomma sinense*	Yellow Eyed Babbler	R
23	Corvidae	*Dendrocitta vagabunda*	Rufous Treepie	W
24	Sturnidae	*Acridotheres tristis*	Common Myna	W
25	Columbidae	*Columba livia*	Rock Pigeon	W
26	Muscicapidae	*Cercomela fusca*	Rock Chat	W
27	Phasianidae	*Gallus*	Jungle Fowl	R
28	Cuculidae	*Cuculus canorus*	Common Cuckoo	R
29	Psittacidae	*Psittacula krameri*	Rose Ringed Parakeet	R
30	Zosteropidae	*Zosteropus palpebrosus*	Oriental White Eye	R
31	Columbidae	*Spilopelia chinensis*	Spotted Dove	W
32	Corvidae	*Dicrurus macrocercus*	Black Drongo	W
33	Phasianidae	*Lophura leucomelanos*	Kalij Pheasent Male & Female	R
34	Timaliidae	*Cyanoderma pyrrhops*	Black Chin Babbler	R
35	Gruidae	*Amauromis phoenicurus*	White Breasted Water hen	R
36	Pycnonotidae	*Pycnonotus leucogenys*	Himalayan Bulbul	W
37	Pycnonotidae	*Pycnonotus cafer*	Red Vented Bulbul	W
38	Accipitridae	*Milvus migrans*	Black Kite	W

R: Rare; W: Widespread and S: Seasonal

5. Conclusion

It is concluded from the present study that Traditional Mata Vaishno Devi route has rich diversity with respect to avian fauna. There is also wide variety of plant and tree species; natural water bodies which are present in the entire stretch of study area act as a suitable habitat for the avian diversity. Presently, this area is not much used by the pilgrims or visitors but due to increase in urbanization and increase in utilization of natural resources which leads to several environmental problems such as pollution, waste disposal by visitors and improper maintenance may severely affect the ecological balance and may change the avian diversity of this area.

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