Avifaunal Diversity of Tamkarada Forest, Near Malegaon Tehsil of Washim district

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Abstract: Human dependence on biodiversity is absolute. It is very important to document the bio-diversity in order to conserve it. Present study was conducted as a part to monitor bio-diversity of Washim district. In present study avifaunal diversity is documented from Tamkarada, forest of Washim district.

Keywords: Avifauna, Biodiversity, Washim District, Conservation.

1. Introduction

Birds are often common residents of the ecosystems and they have been considered as an indicator species of inhabited areas (Blair, 1999). Monitoring birds diversity of given area gives considerable idea of forest type. West Vidarbha region comprised by the five districts namely Akola, Amravati, Buldhana, Washim and Yeotmal. In this region forest is dry deciduous types. Majorities of these forests are heavily degraded due to low fertility coupled with low rainfall. The soil is mostly classified as black cotton soil, brown soil, and loamy soil (State of Forest Report, 2009). Washim district has diverse range of habitats like wetland of artificially created dams, grass land of Karanja Sohol, and forest land Katepurna wild life sanctuary. Tamkarada is located in Malegaon tehsil of Washim district (Coordinates: 20°14'28"N 76°52'16"E). This place is famous for Rushi baba temple. Every Monday many peoples gather here to worship lord Shiva. This is unprotected area of Patrur forests surrounded by agriculture farms. When authors first visited this place, they were amazed by the biodiversity here. As part of documenting bio-diversity authors conducted filed surveys to monitor avian diversity of this region from August 2011 to April 2015, at least once in month. Pawar et al. (2005) reported 74 species of birds in and around Yedshi lake, Mangrulpir, Washim district (MS), Kedar et al. (2008) recorded 74 species of birds in Rishi and Zedshi lake of Washim district (MS). Some 21 species of snakes are reported from this forest (Ingle 2014). In May 2013 Indian rock python was rescued from different area of same forest from fishing nets (Ingle 2014). Kedar & Patil (2005) recorded 60 birds species from Rishi lake, Karnja(lad) of Washim district. D. G. Bhadange studied 30 species of medicinal plants from Washim and Akola districts (Bhadange 2011). Though various workers have documented biodiversity of Washim district in various area many parts of districts are untouched as far as documenting biodiversity is concerned.

2. Methods

Extensive survey of Tamkarada hills were conducted during August 2012 to April 2015 by the author either singly or in group, opportunistically. The site was visited every month around the year. Many times surveys were carried more than once in some month by one author or in group. The surveys were started early in the morning and lasted till late in the afternoon sometimesup to 4-5pm. When the sight was visited late in afternoon, surveys lasted for late in the evening, especially in summer. The birds were observed with Nikon 10×50 binoculars and identified with the help of field guides (Ali 2009 and Grimmett et al. 2010). The check list was prepared according to standardized system followed by Bombay Natural History Society elaborated in Buceros Vol. 6, No. 1 (2001) by RanjitMankandan and AasheeshPittie.

3. Results and discussion

Total 92 species of birds were identified by the authors during August 2012 to April 2015. 91 species of identified species represented 40 families from 14 orders. Order Passeriformes is highest represented order comprising 43 birds from 18 families. Checklist of birds is given in chart 1; chart 2 explains orderwise distribution of families and number of bird’s species.
The Passeriformes is the largest and most diverse order of birds. The Passeriformes (or 'passerine' birds) are synonymous with what are commonly known as "perching birds". This is the order which has largest share of birds in our study too comprising of 18 families in total 40 families i.e. 45% of total families and 43 of 92 birds species around 47.25%. Raptor birds are placed in two families i.e. Falconiformes and Strigiformes, both are found in this study in good numbers. Falconiformes, order of diurnal birds of prey comprise 7 species belonging to 2 families. Strigiformes the order of nocturnal birds mainly owls and owlets is represented by 6 species of 2 families. The birds of prey represented 10% of total families and 14.28% of total species, of our study result. This is important for the fact the presence of raptors birds in good numbers indicate better availability of food, implying that the given area is indeed very rich in biodiversity. In May 2012 we sighted Indian pitta, it was encouraging as these birds are thought to inhabit in coastal areas only and is summer migrant in central India. Black capped kingfisher, which is mainly inhabitant of coastal area, was also sighted once during study in March 2013. The beautiful Asian paradise flycatcher and Crested bunting were also sighted many times during study period, these are too summer migratory birds.

Though, there seems no immediate threat to this forest habitat, over grazing is emerging as problem. Our study has shown that this forest land is very rich in biodiversity and should be conserved. Increased pilgrims spreading waste everywhere in forest and increased level of plastics can cause permanent damage to soil. Apart from focusing on threats to biodiversity, it is very important to document it. One should know what really exist and then planning for conservation can be made. Birds are friends of farmers as they eat insect pests and keep check on population of reptiles and small mammals. For sustainable agriculture, it is very important to conserve biodiversity of birds.

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