

First-ever Wildlife Census conducted in Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary, Chandigarh

The two day 'Wildlife Census 2010' exercise was concluded on 11th Dec.2010. The census was carried out by Department of Forest & Wildlife, UT Administration in overall supervision of experts from Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun. In all, 8 groups were formed for transect in 8 different beats of Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary. Each group consists of one forest guard (beat incharge), two representatives from Members of Avian Habitat & Wetland Society (bird watcher), and members from Research scholar/students of Zoology dept of Punjab University, members from NGO like Yuvsatta & People for Animal Group and students from St.Kabir School.

Direct counting from Transect walk, collection of indirect evidences like pellets count, others evidence etc were taken and all such raw data shall be process by Wildlife Institute of India at Dehradun and the final estimate of population & species richness shall be declared by Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun. It is expected within one month time.

The scientists of WII, Dehradun were excited about the results obtained in the form of raw data and it showed healthy population of Deer specially Sambhar and other species. The presence of pug marks of Leopard at various parts of Sanctuary confirmed that Leopard population is not floating population (as believed earlier by Forest dept); rather it is resident to this area. For confirmation of its numbers, they suggested installation of Camera Trap at various strategic locations. To start with, Forest Dept installed one such camera at one location and planning to buy 25-30 such cameras in near future.

The final report/ estimation of Wildlife Census is awaited from Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.

Birds found in Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary, Chandigarh during Census

1.	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
2.	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>
3.	Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
4.	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
5.	Himalayan Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus illeucogen</i>
6.	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
7.	Blue Throated flycatcher	<i>Cryonis rubeculoides</i>
8.	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
9.	Tailor Bird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
10.	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>
11.	Humes Lesser white throat	<i>Sylvia althaea</i>
12.	Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
13.	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
14.	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>
15.	Red Billed blue magpie	<i>Urocissa erythrorhyncha</i>
16.	Dark sided flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa sibirica</i>
17.	White browed fantail flycatcher	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>
18.	Greenish warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>
19.	Plum headed parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>
20.	Rose ringed parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
21.	Red junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>
22.	Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
23.	Common Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>
24.	Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>
25.	Lemon Rumped warbler	<i>Phylloscopus chloronotus</i>
26.	Red throated flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>
27.	Dark throated thrush	<i>Turdus ruficollis</i>
28.	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
29.	Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>
30.	Long tailed minivet	<i>Pericrocotus ethologus</i>
31.	Greater coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
32.	Humes Lesser white throat	<i>Sylvia althaea</i>
33.	Jungle babbler	<i>Turdoides striatus</i>
34.	Purple sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>

35.	Plain prinia	Prinia inornata
36.	Tickll's blue flycatcher	Cyornis tickelliae
37.	Brown-headed barbet	Megalaima zeylanica
38.	Tree pipit	Anthus trivialis
39.	Shikra	Accipiter badius
40.	Verideter flycatcher	Eumyias thalassina
41.	White throated fantail flycatcher	Rhipidura albicollis
42.	Brown capped Pygmy wpecker	Dendrocopos nanus
43.	White breasted waterhen	Amaurornis phoenicurus
44.	Grey Wagtail	Motacilla cinerea
45.	Common Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus
46.	White throated Kingfisher	Halcyon smyrnensis
47.	Grey Bushchat	Saxicola ferrea
48.	Ashy Prinia	Prinia socialis
49.	House sparrow	Paser domesticus
50.	Black rumped flameback	Dinopium benghalense
51.	Large billed Crow	Corvus macrorhynchos
52.	Common Rose pinch	Carpodacus erythrinus
53.	Spanyled trongo	Dicrurus hottentottus
54.	White Browed wagtail	Motacilla Maderaspatensis
55.	Grey Breasted prunia	Prunia hodgsonii
56.	Spotted Owlet	Athene brama
57.	Pond heron	Ardeola Grayii
58.	Grey holed wambler	Seliercus xanthoschistos
59.	Grey Hornbill	
60.	Yellow bellied fantail flycatcher	Rhipidura hypoxantha
61.	Wallcreeper	Tichodroma muraria
62.	Redheaded Vulture	Sarcogyps calvus
63.	Blue Whistling Thrush	Myophonus caeruleus

Photo gallery



Winged visitors flock to their winter abode Binoculars provided to public at Regulator End of Sukhna to view birds

Chandigarh, December 26, 2010

Much to the delight of the morning walkers, the serene environs of Sukhna lake these days are resounding with the chirping of winter guests from the cold lands of Himalayas, Central Asia and even Siberia.

In the background of the rising sun on the shining waters, small groups of Common Pochard, Common Moorhen, Bar-headed Goose, Mallard, Northern Shoveller and Himalayan Kingfisher can be seen scattered over the huge expanse of the water body.

Birds which started pouring in the lake catchment area around mid-October are here to stay till mid-April. There are two binoculars and a Spotting Scope at the Regulator End for the public convenience in bird watching.

Saurabh Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, said, "It is very difficult to make any comparison of number of winged guests with the previous times. These are water birds and will like to come to peaceful water nests for their winter."

The most visible birds are the Large Cormorant and Brahmi Ducks or the Ruddy Shelducks. The Himalayan Kingfisher is seen, largely in pairs, at the far end of the lake.

The list of birds 21 birds at Sukhna lake includes Barhead Goose, Grey heron, Northern Pintail, Purple Moorhen, Tufted Pochard, Wood Sandpiper, Common Coot and Common Teal, besides certain others.

Narbir Singh, an environment enthusiast, said, "In the overall perspective, Sukhna is a very healthy paradise for the migratory birds. At the same time, it has lost out on certain birds because of a receded line of marshes. Birds in this category included the Red, Green and Spotted Red Shanks, Snice and Greylags. These birds have shifted their base to marshy lands in the adjoining states."

Col Jasbir Singh (retd), another avian enthusiast, said, "The rural scape in the city and adjoining states also have winged visitors which are not water birds. These are not visible in groups so don't show any significant presence."

The Deputy Conservator said many birds are not visible during the day as they fly to the fields and other areas for their food during the day time. Birds including Shovellers, Mallard and Pintails are nocturnal.

These are visible very early morning or late in the evening. There is one category of birds which is not visible to casual watchers. Birds in this smaller category included Flycatchers, Warblers and Accentors. There are approximately 350 species in this category of small birds, Narbir Singh added.

Profile of winged visitors

Mallards: The Mallard or Wild Duck is a dabbling duck, breeds throughout the temperate and sub-tropical Americas, Europe, Asia, New Zealand and Australia. The bird is 56-65 centimetres long.



Common pochard: The adult male has a long dark bill with a grey band, a red head and neck, a black breast, red eyes and a grey back. The adult female has a brown head and body and a narrower grey bill band. They eat aquatic plants with some molluscs, aquatic insects and small fish.

Barhead Goose: With Barhead goose-stripes on their head, these are the highest flying bird in the world. These have the capability of flying 30,000 feet at 100 mph.



Purple Moorhens: There are 13 or more subspecies of the Purple Swamp-hen which differ largely in plumage colour. The subspecies groups are found in Madagascar in Africa tropical Asia, Australasia, Indonesia and Philippines. The species has a very loud explosive call described as a "raucous high-pitched screech, with a subdued musical tuk-tuk".

Common Coot: Coots are medium-sized water birds that are members of the rail family Rallidae. Coots have predominantly black plumage. These are found in South America, Europe and North America. They tend to have short, rounded wings and are weak fliers..



Wood Sandpiper: It resembles a longer-legged and delicate Green Solitary Sandpiper with a short fine bill, brown back and longer yellowish legs. The Wood Sandpiper breeds in sub-arctic wetlands from the Scottish Highlands across Europe and Asia.

Common Teal: The Common Teal or Eurasian Teal is a common and widespread duck which breeds in temperate Eurasia and migrates south in winter. The Common Teal is the smallest dabbling duck alive at 34-43 cm length.



Himalayan Kingfisher: A white crested cousin of the normal Kingfisher, is about the same size. The bird prefers staying in the bushes in the far end of the lake, near the Regulator End.

Tips on Bird watching

- The best time to watch the birds is between 7 and 10 in the morning and between 3.30 and 7 in the evening
- The Forest Department has put up two binoculars and one Spotting Scope at the Regulator End for the convenience of the bird watchers.
- Read field guides on bird watching for better understanding and greater delight.
- Those interested can join the e-group 'birdschandigarh' on the Google website.