



विद्यारत्नम् महस्वनम्

Flora & Fauna of RGIP, Jais



Butterflies



Flowers



Dragonfly

Birds

Birds at RGIPT Campus, Jais-Amethi

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An academic campus is an ecosphere in itself. Learning is not just confined to classrooms but takes place outside of classrooms also. Looking around gives us the understanding of the flora and fauna of the place. The RGIPT Jais campus became operational in Oct-2016 and along with the students and faculty staff members a lot of birds also came to inhabit this place. A lot of efforts have been made by horticulture department of this campus to make it beautiful with good green patches and colourful flowers. During my morning ramblings I caught sight of many beautiful birds sitting on the electric poles, chirping in shrubs or perched on building tops. It was then the idea of capturing my avian companions in my camera struck me and the idea resulted in the present article. This article gives an overview of birds observed in this campus and photographed using Nikon Coolpix P600. The article does not account all the birds but quite a sizable number has been covered.



Indian Roller (*Coracias benghalensis*)
(*Neelkanth in Hindi*)

The Indian roller is one of the most common and familiar of our resident rollers in RGIPT campus. Indian rollers are found roaming all over the campus displaying aerobatic with the twists and turns. They are often seen perched on prominent bare trees or wires. The call of the Indian roller is a harsh crow-like chack sound. They descend to the ground to capture their prey which may include insects, arachnids, small reptiles, small snakes and amphibians. The Indian roller is considered to be a sacred bird in Hindu mythology and is associated with the deity Lord Shiva.



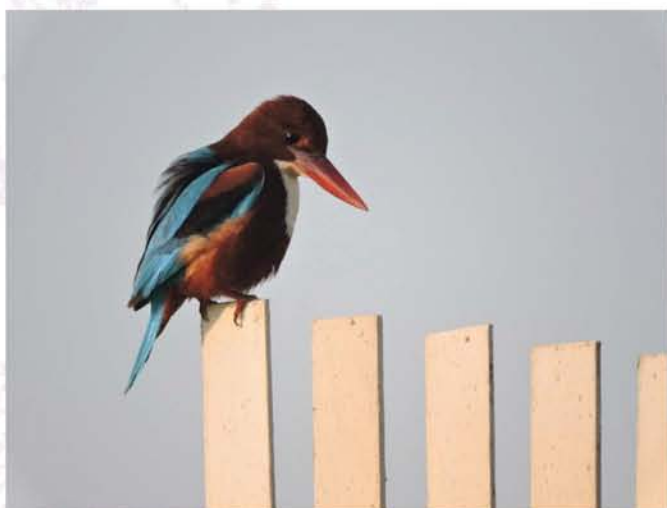
The Crow - Pheasant (*Centropus Sinensis*)
(*Mahoka in Hindi*)

This clumsy, glossy black bird with conspicuous chestnut wings and long, broad black tail stalking along the ground in undergrowth is mostly found in residential area of RGIPT campus. The call is a, deep, resonant onk repeated at slow but regular intervals, especially during the hot weather, and can be heard a long way off. Its food consists of grasshoppers, beetles, caterpillars, field mice, lizards and snakes. It is highly destructive to the eggs and young of other birds. Its flesh is much esteemed by quacks as a cure for bronchial ailments.



Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)
(*Surkhia Bugla* or *Gai bugla* in Hindi)

It is a white bird with buff plumes in breeding season. It has short thick neck, a sturdy bill and a hunched posture. They often accompany cattle catching insect and other small vertebrate prey disturbed by the animals. This bird arrived in groups during monsoon in RGIPT campus especially seen in open grounds on both the sides of Academic blocks. Its food generally consists of insects. It is said that the positioning of egret's eyes allows for binocular vision during feeding.



White-Throated Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*)
(*Kilkila* in Hindi)

This beautiful bird is about the size of myna, brilliantly turquoise blue above, with deep chocolate brown head, neck and underparts with white front and the long pointed red bill. This bird is a regular visitor to RGIPT. It eats mainly fish and in case away from water it consumes insects and small rodents. The bird possesses excellent eyesight and reportedly it can compensate for the refraction of water to see underneath fish.



Pied Bushchat Female (*Saxicola Caprata*)
(*Kala Pidda* in Hindi)

This bird found in groups of 3-4 nos throughout RGIPT campus has upper plumage greyish-brown, with a rufous patch at the base of the tail, wings and tail dark brown, the feathers with pale edges, the lower plumage brownish-grey, gradually darkening on the breast and becoming more fulvous towards the tail. The Pied Bush-Chat occurs practically throughout India. It takes practically all its food from the ground, flying down to it from some favourite vantage point which commands a view of bare ground in the vicinity, and to which it returns after the capture of each morsel with the self-satisfied spread and jerk of the tail that is common to most of the family.



Black Drongo (*Dicrurus macrocercus*)

(*Bujanga or Kotwal in Hindi*)

It is slim and agile, glossy jet black bird with a long deeply forked tail. These birds arrived in RGIPT in monsoon season and are now residents. These are found all over the RGIPT perching on trees, on electric poles and bushes. They are aggressive and will attack any bird. Drongos eat a variety of insects. They make very harsh calls.



Red Whiskered Bulbul (*Otocornis jocosus*)

(*Kanera Bulbul in Hindi*)

Distinguishable at a glance from the foregoing by the presence of an upstanding, pointed black crest which sometimes curves forward almost over the beak. The crimson whiskers and undertail patch, and white underparts are other diagnostic features. This beautiful bird is a recent resident of RGIPT since Sept-2017. The birds go about in pairs, but numbers will collect at some tree or shrub in fruit. Their diet consists principally of berries but they also devour a considerable number of spiders, insects and caterpillars.



White - Throated Munia (*Euodice malabarica*)

(*Pidda in Hindi*)

It is smaller than sparrow plain earthy-brown, thick-billed little bird with pointed black tail, whitish underparts and white rump. The White-throated Munia inhabits dry, open, cultivated as well as sparse scrub-and-bush country, and avoids humid forest. The birds arrived during last monsoon and are now residents roaming in shrubs throughout the RGIPT campus. It is usually met with in flocks gleaning grass seeds on the ground. The feeble chirruping notes differ little from those of other munias. They camouflage with leaves of bushes.



Tree Pie (*Dendrocitta vagabunda*) (*Mahalati in Hindi*)

A long-tailed chestnut-brown bird about the size of myna with sooty head and neck is also a permanent resident especially in residential area of RGIPT campus. The broad black tips of the longest tail feathers and the greyish-white wing-coverts are particularly conspicuous on the wing. The flight is undulating—a swift noisy flapping, followed by a short glide on outspread wings and tail. It is a very beautiful bird and has wide repertoire of quite melodious calls. It is of a social disposition going about in pairs or family parties which keep up a loud grating conversation. The birds are omnivorous. Their staple diet is insects, caterpillars, lizards, baby rats besides fruits and berries.



Laughing Dove (*Spilopelia senegalensis*)

(*Chhota Faqta in Hindi*)

The Little Dove is a small pigeon of common forest, scrub and dry farmland and a resident breeder to the Indian Subcontinent. It feeds on grass, seeds, grains, other vegetation and small insects. It is found in pairs though out the RGIPT campus spending much of their time on the ground walking with their heads bent downwards in a crouched attitude while taking short shuffling steps with it's call, which is a reflection of it's name; sounding much ike a gentle, bubbly laugh, 'Coorocoo-coo-coocoo'.



Red-wattled Lapwing (*Vanellus indicus*)

(*Titeeri in Hindi*)

It is most common and familiar of our resident plovers in RGIPT. They are found roaming especially during monsoon on grounds lying on both sides of academic blocks. But their incessant loud calls Did-ye- do-it or Pity –do –it with agitated behaviour are most typical near the place where they build their nests. These birds are active and as wide-awake at night as during the day.



White-browed Wagtail (*Motacilla maderaspatensis*) (*khanjan in Hindi*)

The white-browed wagtail or large pied wagtail is a medium-sized bird and is the largest member of the wagtail family. They are conspicuously patterned with black above and white below, a prominent white brow, shoulder stripe and outer tail feathers. This most familiar bird is found throughout the RGIPT campus, walking swiftly on the ground. In older times in India, the species was sometimes kept as a cage-bird and was acclaimed for its singing ability. The native name of khanjan is used in the phrase “khanjan-eyed” to describe someone with beautiful eyes. Like other wagtails, this species is insectivorous.



Shikra (*Accipiter badius*) (*Shikra in Hindi*)

This bird in size that of pigeon having ashy blue-grey above, white below cross-banded with rusty brown is generally seen on railway line side of RGIPT hostel block. The Shikra is a dweller of open wooded country and avoids heavy forest. The tactics it employs in capturing prey are mainly those of surprise. It is bold and fierce and will often tackle birds much larger than itself. The flight is swift consisting of several rapid wing strokes followed by a glide. It is rather a noisy Hawk, and the shrill call of two notes titu-titu is a familiar sound in the breeding season. The shikra was a favourite among falconers in India and Pakistan due to the ease with it could be trained.



Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*) (*Cheel in Hindi*)

This large brown raptore distinguishable from all similar birds by its forked tail, is seen in RGIPT campus perched on a rooftop, pole or tree, or sailing in circles overhead. Its call note is a shrill, almost musical, whistle ewe-wir-wir-wir uttered both from a perch and the wing. The ease, swiftness and grace with which a kite will swoop clown and carry off a dead rat or some similar tit-bit from a narrow, congested lane with all its din and traffic, twisting and turning masterfully to avoid the buildings and the tangle electric wires, is a lesson in aeronautics and exhilarating to watch.



Brahminy Kite (*Haliastur indus*)

(*Brahmini Cheel* in Hindi)

The Brahminy Kite is one of the medium-sized raptors (birds of prey), with a white head and breast. The rest of its body is a striking chestnut brown. The very tip of its tail is white. The wings are broad, with dark 'fingered' wing tips and the tail is short. The legs are short and not feathered, the eye is dark and the lemon yellow coloured bill is strongly hooked. This bird was frequently seen in monsoon months July-August especially atop on AB-2 building (railway line side) as shown in this picture also. The Brahminy Kite feeds on carrion (dead animals), insects and fish. It swoops low over water, the ground or tree tops and snatches live prey or carrion from the surface. The ordinary cry is a peculiar squealing note.



Common Myna (*Scridotherus tristis*)

(*Desi myna* in Hindi)

It's a familiar dark brown bird with black head, bright yellow legs and bill. Like sparrow, crow and pigeon, the birds is perfectly at home with human habitats. It is most familiar bird in RGIPT campus. One can see it in any area of RGIPT campus with their sharp calls and chatter. The bird is omnivorous.



The Indian Jungle - Crow (*Corvus macrorhynchos*)

(*Kagdo* in Hindi)

A uniformly glossy, jet black crow with a heavy bill is found in groups especially in residential area of RGIPT. Its voice differs from that of the common house-crow in the 'caws' being much deeper and hoarser in tone. Jungle-Crows are just as omnivorous as their grey-necked relatives and notoriously destructive to the eggs and young of other birds. Jungle-Crows are selected by the Koel as suitable foster parents for its offspring, and it is not unusual to see a clamouring young cuckoo being assiduously and carefully tended by this species.



Jungle Babbler (*Turdois striatus*)

(*Satbhai* in Hindi)

Dr. Salim Ali describes this bird as “an earthy brown, frowzled and untidy looking bird slightly smaller than myna with longish tail that gives the impression of being loosely stuck into the body”. The bird is known as “saatbhai” due to their habit of foraging in small groups of 6-10. The bird is commonly found in RGIPT campus in shrubs. They are very noisy birds. They feed on insects, seeds and grains.



Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*)

(*Kabutar* in Hindi and Gujarati)

The bird resides in all the towns of India. We all are used to its deep gootr-goo gootr-goo. In olden times this bird was used as messengers. It was also used for game fights and entertainment. In RGIPT campus these are found in very large numbers in every building. Seeing them feeding together on the ground or flying together is a common sight. This bird has a unique distinction that it can drink water continuously unlike other birds which take a sip of water and then tilt their heads backwards to swallow it.

References:

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