

# MISTNET

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Bombay Natural History Society

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Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*

Pic by: Saleel Tambe

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## Preparing boundary maps of Important Bird Areas

The directory of India's IBAs was published in November 2004. At that time, we did not have the data and the human resource to produce boundary maps of the 466 IBAs which were described in the book. That was perhaps the biggest lacunae of this monumental work. We all agree that without proper and recognizable boundaries, IBAs cannot be protected, and more importantly cannot be officially declared under the four categories of the protected areas (national park, sanctuary, community reserve and conservation reserve).

About 200 IBAs are not officially protected so preparing boundaries of such IBAs is extremely important for their long-term conservation, management and community involvement. The Wildlife Institute of India has been able to produce boundary maps of all the 610 protected areas of India, many of them are IBAs, so, this is a great help. However, our IBA boundaries do not necessarily fully match with the PA boundaries as in many cases, we have included (or excluded in some cases) surrounding areas, particularly reserve forests, community forests and/or wetland/grassland. Therefore, even in the case of many protected areas, we cannot just import WII-produced boundaries to the IBA boundaries - we have to redraw the boundaries of the IBAs.

During the last few years, we have been able to draw the boundaries of 80 IBAs, that is only 18 percent of total 466 IBAs. With the appointment of Mr. Mohit Kalra, GIS specialist we are planning to prepare boundaries of all the IBAs and produce a book as an addendum to our main IBA book. We need the help of state coordinators and other IBCN members who are site experts. We have been able to complete the IBA boundary maps of Kerala and the north-eastern states, but there is a huge task in front of us. We need the help of the Network.

Another important document on which we are working is the book "Threatened Birds of India: Their Conservation Requirements". This book will describe all the 147 species of threatened and near threatened birds as listed by BirdLife International and IUCN in 2008. Like all our earlier books, this book will also be a collaborative effort of IBCN-BNHS, RSPB and BirdLife International. We plan to include up-to-date status of all threatened species of birds of India, distribution maps, behaviour, food, habitat, threats, and conservation requirements. There will be an interactive CD which will show the status maps of the species.

The IBA team has already collated thousands of site and sight records of the threatened species from published literature up to 2009 (the work is going on). However we are looking for unpublished records of your birding trips, tours and opportunistic visits. Anyone sending us more than 20 unpublished but confirmed records of threatened Indian birds will get a free copy of the book, and a proper acknowledgement. We are using BirdLife WorldBird Data base for gathering these records so if you are interested to share data for this book, please write to me. I will send you the data sheet and also the list of threatened Indian birds for which we need records.

For this book, we also require pictures. If you have good pictures of threatened Indian bird, please let me know ([rahmani.asad@gmail.com](mailto:rahmani.asad@gmail.com)). Contributors of selected pictures will also get a free copy of the book.



Asad R. Rahmani



## New Amarambalam valley an IBA of Kerala

by C. S. Saneesh

**N**ilambur taluk lies within the Malappuram district of Kerala, and comprises of two forest divisions, namely Nilambur North and South. The taluk borders the Gudalur and Wynaad South forest divisions in the north, plain regions in the south and the Mukurthi National Park in the east. The region is considered a biodiversity hotspot and accorded a great degree of protection by the Forest Department. The New Amarambalam Reserve forests lying within Nilambur South division forms a part of the core zone of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.

Nilambur is intimately linked to the forest as it is said to mean a place of *Nilimba* which means bamboo in Sanskrit. It is also home to the oldest teak plantations in the country. New Amarambalam Valley is ranked second to the Silent Valley in its high biodiversity index. The region is also home to unique hunter-gatherer communities.



P.A. Vinayan

Malabar Grey Hornbill, a resident bird, endemic to Western Ghats

Located at the edge of the massive Nilgiri mountains with altitudinal variations ranging from 50 meters to more than 2500 metres above sea level, the forest forms a contiguous belt with the Silent Valley National Park. This, coupled with very high rainfall, has contributed to making Nilambur a botanist's paradise.

The Nilambur forests provide the western part of the district as well as Kerala state with a large number of rivers and streams. The most important river is the Chaliyar with a length of more than 169 kms. The rivulets flowing in Nilambur region that drain into the Chaliyar include Karimpuzha and Cherupuzha which flow from the Amarambalam valley.

The West Coast Tropical Evergreen Forests are seen in and around the Kundah Hills of New Amarambalam reserve at an elevation of 800-1250 metres with a rainfall regime of over 2500 mm. The West Coast Semi-Evergreen Forests are found on an altitudinal range of 500 to 800 metres and occupy a niche between wet evergreen and moist deciduous forests. The region has a high diversity of fauna. Elephants, Bonnet macaque, Barking deer, Mouse deer, Civets, Sambar deer, Spotted deer, Tiger, Leopard, Sloth bear, Lion-tailed macaque, Malabar



P.A. Vinayan

Asian Paradise Flycatcher, a common winter visitor to the lower areas



Keystone Foundation

Karimpuzha Stream originates from the woods of New Amarambalam Reserve



P.A. Vinayan

Brown Shrike, a common winter visitor

Giant squirrel, Great Pied hornbill, Porcupine, Monitor lizard, Pangolin, Wild dogs, are commonly seen in the plantations and forests of this division. Tall trees in the valley provides place for nests to near threatened birds such as Malabar Pied Hornbill *Anthracoseros coronatus* and Great Pied Hornbill *Buceros bicornis*. Large variety of *Ficus* spp. supply fruit to hornbills and Nilgiri Wood Pigeon (Vulnerable). River Chaliyar is a fishing ground for Darters (Near-Threatened) and cormorants.

Keystone Foundation (IBCN Partner) is an NGO ([www.keystone-foundation.org](http://www.keystone-foundation.org)) working in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve for the past 15 years. One of its resource centers is located in Nilambur at the entrance to the New Amarambalam valley. As part of the Bees, Biodiversity and Livelihoods project which was supported by the Darwin Initiative, UK, studies on indigenous bees were undertaken in the area. While on these surveys bird sightings were also recorded and a checklist prepared between August 2006 and November 2008. A total number of 111 species have been recorded so far.

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# GUMTI – Tripura's remote IBA

Anwaruddin Choudhury, IBCN State Coordinator, Assam

When ornithologists like Allan Octavian Hume and E.C.S Staurt Baker were covering parts of Assam, Meghalaya and Manipur in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the state of Tripura remained an area of mystery. The reason being that it was not covered by British workers and the subsequent Indian workers also overlooked the area, which was a princely state. In Tripura, the Gumti Wildlife Sanctuary is located in a remote corner covering parts of Dholai and South Tripura districts. In view of continued extremist activities, it is rather a difficult area to visit as one has to cross forested hill ranges. In 1990s and early years of this century, it was impossible to visit the area without police escort but with improvement of the situation, one can drive during the daytime, sometimes in a convoy with police escort. There is relative peace now.

Gumti's main attraction is the large reservoir, also known as Dumbur lake, which is 42 km<sup>2</sup> in area and so far is the largest artificial lake in the entire north-east India. The lake has been created when a dam was constructed in 1974 across the Gumti River near the confluence of two of its head streams : Sarma and Raima. Although the installed capacity of power generation is a tiny 10 MW if compared with the size of submerged area, a large number of people, mostly Chakma and other tribes as well as Bengali settlers were affected.

I arrived at Gondachara, a sub-divisional Headquarters before noon on (16 January 2008) and were looking out for a motor boat. But in Gumti lake, one has to take police escort to avoid any potential risk from the extremists. Unfortunately due to rallies by different political parties for the ensuing general elections, the local police station could not provide escort but the Officer-in-Charge was generous enough to assure us a police boat. The police kept their words and so we started our journey to explore the mystic lake amidst thick fog. Commoner waterbirds were seen along the creek through which we moved to the main lake. The significant sighting was that of a Peregrine Falcon of *calidus* race, perched in a tree on the bank. Slowly we moved amidst smaller flocks of Lesser Whistling-ducks *Dendrocygna javanica*. As we moved further, some pochard-like ducks were noticed. With the aid of a pair of binoculars, I could identify them to be Tufted Ducks. Then some distance away, there were gulls, mostly Black-headed *Larus ridibundus* and a few Brown-headed *Larus brunnicephalus*. We went to an island called 'Narkel bagan' with coconut palm and had some rest. I wondered what has happened to the islands with 5-6 species of primates! I was told that in almost all the islands, the forest has been cut and there is no scope of any threatened primates to survive. While returning I took some reasonably



Gumti is an Important Bird Area of Tripura

Anwaruddin Choudhury



Anwaruddin Choudhury

Gumti Lake has great potential for bird tourism

good pictures of ducks for future identification of any rarer species. I was right, there were some Baer's Pochard *Aythya baeri*, at last a globally threatened species (listed as vulnerable)! At least 13 were there.

Other ducks seen were small numbers of Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* and Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*. Very few other ducks were visible except for some Cotton Pygmy-goose *Nettapus coromandelianus*.

Few Asian Openbills *Anastomus oscitans* and Little Cormorants *Phalacrocorax niger*, egrets, Indian Pond-heron *Ardeola grayii*, jacanas, a few unidentified smaller waders and two Ospreys were other highlights of the day.

Towards west, some of the creeks of the lake are in well forested areas where wild elephants often come to the water. There is possibility of occurrence of endangered White-winged Duck *Cairina scutulata* in those areas. A part of the lake as well as the adjacent western areas are part of Gumti Wildlife Sanctuary. Covering 389.5 km<sup>2</sup> of area, the sanctuary extends well towards north covering the hill ranges of Atharamura. There were Tiger *Panthera tigris*, Leopard *P. pardus*, Clouded leopard *Neofelis nebulosa*, Dhole *Cuon alpinus*, Sloth bear *Ursus ursinus*, Black bear *U. thibetanus*, Sun bear *U. malayanus*, Gaur *Bos gaurus*, Serow *Capricornis sumatrensis* among many other species. The area had Sumatran rhinoceros *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis* and the subdivisional headquarters from where we started our journey is also named after rhino (Gondachara, means 'rhino stream' or the 'stream of the rhino').

Gumti or Dumbur Lake (23° 30 'N, 91°50') is 40 km from Amarpur (47 km to Gondachara) and 110 km Agartala.

**Recommendations**

Some part of the lake and its adjacent forests should be adequately protected so that whatever wildlife is left could survive. Similarly, the Sanctuary also needs better protection and enforcement. To avoid conflict with the villagers, community participation in conservation could be a viable

**Noteworthy Species Count at Gumti on 16 and 17 January 2008**

	16 Jan.	17 Jan.
GREAT CRESTED GREBE <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		3
LARGE CORMORANT <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	38	10
LITTLE CORMORANT <i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	9	50
GREAT EGRET <i>Casmerodius albus</i>	7	10
ASIAN OPENBILL <i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	3	8
LESSER WHISTLING TEAL <i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>		40
NORTHERN PINTAIL <i>Anas acuta</i>		6
COMMON POCHARD <i>Aythya ferina</i>		2
BAER'S POCHARD <i>Aythya baeri</i>		13
TUFTED DUCK <i>Aythya fuligula</i>		340
COTTON TEAL <i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>	8	12
BLACK-WINGED KITE <i>Elanus caeruleus</i>		1
OSPREY <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>		2
PEREGRINE FALCON <i>Falco peregrinus calidus</i>		1
GREY-HEADED LAPWING <i>Vanellus cinereus</i>		4
COMMON COOT <i>Fulica atra</i>		17

Approximate percentage of coverage of the wetland was 10% on 16<sup>th</sup> January and 35% on 17<sup>th</sup> January

alternative. There is a need for massive awareness campaign. Eco-tourism has tremendous potentiality in the area and that could keep many villagers engaged. The mid-winter waterfowl count should be carried out on a regular basis.

**Acknowledgements**

Kamal Banik, IBCN State Coordinator, Tripura, Debabrata Lodh of Dishari NGO, Sanjib Debnath (OC of Gondachara police station), Raju Biswas (driver), Kala Chakma (boatman) and local forest staff of Gondachara.

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The name 'Punjab' conjures up images of endless green fields, yellow mustard swaying in the breeze as far as the eye can see and sugarcane, tall and hefty with the promise of sweetness. But these symbols of the twin ideas of prosperity and an exhaustive utilization of all available land hide a Punjab that can be a naturalist's paradise. The reputation of the people of bringing land under the plough is such that it would be impossible to imagine anything but a checkerboard of fields laid out upon the landscape. So where in this sea of green crop-land is there a possibility of the occurrence of wildlife?

It is often overlooked that along with the rivers that adorn the region, Punjab is studded with wetlands; 0.46% (23,000 ha) of its area still being under wetlands (Ladhar, 2002). These include natural and manmade wetlands created because of construction of barrages and dams on the river courses. There are three wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites): Harike Lake Bird Sanctuary, Kanjli Lake and Ropar, and five wetlands of state importance: Keshopur, Mand Barthala, Jastarwal Jheel, Dolbaha Reservoir and Kahnuwan, amongst many others. Most of these areas are not well known and certainly not for the great diversity they harbour.

One wetland that stands out amongst the smaller, natural ones is Keshopur *chhamb* (*chhamb* means wetland in Punjabi). Considering its ecological importance, the wetland was notified as 'Keshopur Chhamb Community Reserve' in June, 2007. It has the distinction of being the first community reserve in Punjab to be declared under the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2002. It is located in Gurdaspur district (32°05'16.3"N; 75°24'24.2"E) and has, at present, an area of 850 acres (Rajasekar & Jerath, 2008). It is approachable from Dinanagar (12 km)

## Keshopur Chhamb Community Reserve: A potential IBA

by Sartaj S. Ghuman, Msc, Wildlife Institute of India



Sartaj Ghuman

Keshopur Chhamb is a potential IBA

and also from Gurdaspur town (6 km), as it lies just off the main road between Pathankot and Amritsar (NH 15).

The entire 'wetland' is actually two distinct marshes, the major one being a contiguous wetland in Miani, Dalla, Keshopur and Matwa villages with

Magar Mudian as another portion. The fact that it is a 'Community Reserve' has immense implications: though the wetland has 'Protected Area' status, the land is still owned by the *panchayats* of the five villages. The wetland supports fisheries and cultivation of

MONITORING FOR CONSERVATION



Saleel Tambe

Tufted Duck is a fairly common and widespread diving duck in northern India

water chestnut and lotus, thus providing livelihood to the people directly involved with the activities and a source of income to the *panchayats* that lease the land. The Forest Department has been quite active in creating awareness amongst the people about the importance of the area and convincing all the stakeholders about the potential benefits of the notification. One has to remember that for an area to be declared a Community Reserve the initiative has to come from the owners of the land. The Forest Department has done a commendable job by convincing the community to get this Community Reserve.

I have been to Keshopur *chhamb* twice during winters. On 11 February, 2008, in a span of three hours and going around only a part of the wetland, I encountered a large number (thousands) of Gadwalls *Anas strepera*, Common Pochards *Aythya ferina*, Northern Pintails *Anas aya* and Northern Shovellers *Anas clypeata* and quite a few Eurasian Wigeons *Anas penelope*, Common Teals *Anas crecca* and Garganey *Anas querquedula*. There were also a small number of Ferruginous Pochards *Aythya nyroca* and Tufted Ducks *Aythya fuligula*. On the second occasion, on 27 October, 2008, I went around most of the area. It



Sartaj Ghuman

With active community participation, Keshopur Chhamb can benefit birds and people

was too early for the winter migrants, but I came across a large number of waders, including snipes. There were also quite a few Lesser Whistling-ducks *Dendrocygna javanica* and a few Cotton Pygmy-goose *Nettapus coromandelianus*.

**Threats**

There have been attempts in the past to drain the wetland and reclaim the land for agriculture and the wetland in its present form exists due to timely action by the Government of Punjab. With the *chhamb* surrounded by agricultural land, there is the perpetual and ubiquitous threat of encroachment. Demarcation of the Community Reserve is extremely important in this context and should be amongst the top priorities of the forest department. A related problem is the pollution from agro-chemicals used in the fields which eventually find their way into the *chhamb*. Other major threats are those of most wetlands in Punjab: water hyacinth *Eichhornia crassipes* and the fall in the ground-water table.

**Potential**

Keshopur *chhamb* is visited by about 40,000 birds of nearly 45 species in the winters (Rajasekar & Jerath, 2008). Preliminary studies conducted by Punjab State Council for Science and Technology indicate a rich floral and faunal diversity (Rajasekar & Jerath, 2008). Another salient feature of the *chhamb* is that for commercial use, almost the entire area is divided up into plots -some of which are huge- and these are used for the cultivation of fish, water chestnut or lotus. These are interspersed with marshes, fallow land with reeds or shallow pools in vacant plots creating a beautifully heterogeneous mosaic of habitats. There exists a whole gradient of water depths and cover types; and to top it all, the habitat is actively maintained by the people for their own needs! The place has the potential to become a



Santaj Chuman

Water Hyacinth is a major problem of Keshopur Chhamb

model of co-existence of people and wildlife.

Keshopur is around 50 km, as the 'duck' flies, from Pong dam which has amongst the largest bird congregations in the region; about the same distance from Kanjli and around 100 km from Harike, all Important Bird Areas; and there are also other smaller wetlands within 10-20 kms of Keshopur. It can, therefore, become an integral part of a large wetland network lying along the migratory route and contribute immensely to waterfowl conservation. But apart from the preliminary biodiversity surveys, there has been no thorough study in the area; not even a

formal mid-winter census. In the absence of such scientific data, we can only advance its case as an Important Bird Area through criteria A4iii (site known or thought to hold, on a regular basis, >20,000 waterbirds of one or more species) (Islam & Rahmani, 2004). This also points to the pressing need for the area to be included in the Asian Waterfowl Census.

The area also has good eco-tourism potential. Lying just off National Highway 15, it is easily approachable and can be readily incorporated into the existing tourism network operating between Amritsar and Jammu. The place as such is unique in having extensive *bunds*

cutting across the wetland and these can be used to create bird-watching posts and hides. Eco-tourism can create a substantial, though seasonal, source of income for the people of the neighbouring villages and will go a long way in gaining their confidence and support which is indispensable in the present conservation scenario.

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Santaj Chuman

More than 40,000 waterbirds are seen in Keshopur Chhamb

# Sheikha Jheel, an IBA

by Sanjay Kumar, IAS

Sheikha Jheel is around 15 km away from Aligarh town and a diversion from the NH -2 towards Kanpur. As we near one destination, we see an open field near a cane field full of diverse birds like Sarus Crane *Grus antigone*, Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* and some spoonbills amongst egrets foraging as sun is breaking through and dispersing the morning mist. The lake is surrounded by canal on one side, other district road on the other side and open agriculture fields on the rest. The lake is surrounded by natural vegetation especially, Jamun trees, on three sides. As we approached the gate, the cormorants, night heron and Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* basking in the sun, runs for the cover. The Purple Moorhen *Porphyrio porphyrio*, White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* are too busy foraging, even as a lone Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* fetches a fish and gobbles it up. It was a pleasant surprise to see an incredible sight of more than 15,000 birds before me in a small area of approx 225 ha. There was a large congregation of Greylag Goose *Anser anser*, a winter guest, Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*, shovellers, gadwalls, Cotton Pygmy-goose *Nettapus coromandelianus*, Red-crested pochards *Rhodonessa rufina*, coots, Oriental White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*, Spoonbill and, Darter. A group of around 25 Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* were spotted along with Sarus Crane. We took a complete round of the lake and also spotted many resident and migratory birds such as

Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus*, Purple Moorhen, egrets, Waterhen, Red and Spotted Munias, kingfisher (Common and White-breasted), Shikra *Accipiter badius*, Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*, Black Kite *Milvus migrans*, lapwing, drongo, Asian Pied Starling *Gracupica contra*, Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*, Eurasian Collared-dove *Streptopella decaocto*, and Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica*.

Every time Western Marsh Harrier or the kite took to air, the waders took to flight to escape. The site of take off and subsequent landing of birds was extremely soothing to eyes. On a round we spotted a family of Nilgai resting under the shade of an acacia tree. They ran across the wetland, as we approached them setting the birds to take flight.

## Issues drawing Attention

- Demarcation and fencing of the Jheel boundary to prevent encroachment and illegal poaching. It is also less disturbing to the birds.
- Ensure that no fertilizers rich and other chemical rich water enter the lake from nearby fields.
- Domestic animals shouldn't stray into the lake area. More forest officials / guards be deployed to protect the lake from any sort of trespassing.

If protected and groomed it could very well become a **bird watcher paradise**. It is hard to believe such a tremendous congregation of birds, despite so many odds.



# Status of Critically Endangered *Gyps* Vulture in Hazaribag (IBA)

by Satya Prakash, President, Neo Human Foundation

## Introduction

Hazaribag is located at 23.98° N 85.35° E. It is around 102 km. from Ranchi on the Patna-Ranchi national highway. Hazaribag, in Chota Nagpur plateau is the second important city of Jharkhand state. It has an average elevation of 604 metres. There are several hills near the town. All the roads leading into Hazaribag town traverse through thickly forested areas. River Konar, a tributary of Damodar River flows past the town.

## Weather/Climate

There is a typical monsoon climate with three distinct seasons – summer, rainy and winter. Altitudinal height of Hazaribag Plateau softens the temperature extremes during summer. Mid June coincides with monsoon break. Pre-monsoon rains during late May or early June are a

common feature. The winter is mostly moderate with brief period of chilling cold. Hazaribag is considered as the hill station of Jharkhand.

## Soil and Topography

The general formation is Archeans but in the valleys of Damodar and its tributaries extensive areas are of the Gondwanas formation, which is one of the oldest sedimentary rocks are found.

The soil derived from the archean rocks are generally sandy loam. The general name given to it is “Red soil”.

## Forest type

According to revised classification of forest types of India by Sir H.G Champion and S.K Seth, the forest of the Hazaribag Sanctuary falls into type Northern dry Sal bearing forest (5B/C-1

type.) and Northern Dry mixed deciduous forest (5B/C-2.)

## STATUS OF VULTURE IN HAZARIBAG

A survey for enumerating the species of vulture found in Hazaribag was initiated in September 2007 by forest department officials and Neo-Human Foundation (NHF). Three species of vulture have been identified in Hazaribag: White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*, Indian Vulture *Gyps indicus* and Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*. The same was also confirmed by Dr. Vibhu Prakash, Senior Scientist, Vulture Conservation & Breeding Centre, BNHS, Pinjore during his visit to Hazaribag, in October 2008. Among these are two species of Critically Endangered *Gyps* vultures in Hazaribag: White-rumped Vulture and



Neo Human Foundation



President of Neo Human Foundation, Mr Satya Prakash, giving an awareness talk on conservation of vultures

Common Name	Number (In the month of July 2009)
White-rumped Vulture	175 ± 5
Indian Vulture	50 ± 3
Egyptian vulture	35
The Maximum number were seen recently at carass disposal site Kadma in the month of July 2009. This confirm our intial survey that their must be around 200 vultures	

Indian Vulture. (Satya Prakash, MISTNET Volume 9, No.4 Oct-Dec, 2008, p-24-25).

During a survey, it was estimated that population of both the *Gyps* species was between 150-200. In the last breeding season of 2008, we had observed 20 nesting sites having 32 nests. However, only five nestling of vulture were seen out of 32 nest. Out of five young, four were seen taking their first flight but one was missing.

Till March 2008 we have reported three

vulture carcasses to forest department. Two were Indian Vulture in decomposed condition, so postmortem could not be performed. Other was White-rumped Vulture, postmortem was done but the cause of death was uncertain.

**Observation in this breeding season 2009**

1. Total number of nesting sites 22
2. Maximum number of vultures seen 136
3. Total number of nests 36
4. Total number of fledgling alive 10

Neo Human Foundation



RCCF, B.R.Rallan at the awareness programme- Khaparyawa vulture nesting site

Till March 2009 one vulture nestling carcass was reported to the forest department by NHF, which was then sent to Dr. Vibhu Prakash, for investigation to ascertain the cause of death.

**ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKENTO CONSERVE THE VULTURES IN HAZARIBAG**

1. Conducted awareness campaigns on the importance of vulture and its cause of extinction (diclofenac) through print media, poster and pamphlet etc.
2. Distribution of Meloxicam at subsidized rate to untrained veterenarians.
3. The survey, monitoring and surveillance report is being submitted to RCCF (Hazaribag), DFO (Wildlife division, Hazaribag) since September 2007 till date by Neo Human Foundation.
4. The Foundation has participated in Vulture Conservation & Co-ordination Committee Meeting presided over by the Chairman RCCF, Forest Department, Hazaribag on 29.01.2008. RCCF appreciated our survey, monitoring and surveillance work.
5. NHF Conducted initial survey for the presence of Diclofenac around Vulture nesting site (supported by Dr. Vibhu Prakash, Principal scientist, VCBC, BNHS, Pinjore). There was no report of presence and use of Veterinary Diclofenac in Hazaribag. The possibilities and use of human diclofenac infiltration is not ruled out. Though reports of human diclofenac infiltration by quacks in and around Hazaribag district has been reported.
6. On the basis of the findings of the initial survey with RCCF (Hazaribag), DFO (Wildlife) Hazaribag division, the Forest & Environment Department, Jharkhand has decided to establish a Vulture Conservation and Breeding Centre in Ranchi, Jharkhand.
7. Presently we are working with the support of BNHS to phase out the drug Diclofenac, the main cause of decline of vulture.



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*Gyps* species of vultures can be safe only when diclofenac is totally removed

**The Project include**

- i. Organizing meeting with untrained veterinary practitioner
- ii. Meeting with *Panjarapole* staff and their veterinarians.
- iii. Organizing meetings with veterinarians
- iv. Monitoring and surveillance of identified nesting colonies.

**CONSERVATION THREATS**

- 1. **Use of Diclofenac:** The NSAID anti-inflammatory, diclofenac is still in use in Jharkhand by cattle farmers. In initial survey, it was found that it is still use in remote areas by quack (untrained veterinarians).
- 2. **Carcasses Disposal :** There is lack of proper disposal of cattle carcasses, due to this there is irregular movement in search of food.
- 3. Misbelieve regarding vulture, that they are bad omen and curse for the society, either they are killed or chased away from the nesting site.
- 4. Children throw stones towards the tree, for fruits disturbing the nesting, nestling and the vulture habitat.
- 5. Use of rocket, bomb and crackers during *Dipawali*, marriage procession and other festival causes disturbance to these birds.

**CONCLUSION**

Since, Hazaribag is the only area left in Jharkhand, where substantial vulture population exists, there is an urgent need to take action for conservation of the species *in-situ* on large scale. The step taken is not enough and we need more support from the society. The successful breeding of 10 vultures out of 11 shows a strong evidence that with more support we can see a ray of hope for the vulture to see them back in wild. We have to see the diclofenac is completely prohibited in the whole of Jarkhand.

**Acknowledgement**

The Foundation extend sincere thanks to all the local people, members,

volunteers, Shri B.R.Rallan, RCCF (Hazaribag), Dr. Anil Kumar Mishra, DFO (wildlife Division, Hazaribag), Forest Department Officials (Jharkhand Govt.), Dr. M. Raziuddin, University Professor & Head (Zoology Department, Vinoba Bhave University, Hazaribag), Dr.Vibhu Prakash (BNHS), IBCN, Wildlife Trust of India & Print Media Personals for their valuable suggestion and co-operation in a mission to save the endangered species of *Gyps* vulture in Hazaribag.

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Indian Vulture at Hurhuru carcass disposal site

**Vidharbha Nature and Human Science Centre (VNHS Centre)**

Registration number : Mah/248/98, Founded in: 1998  
 President : Mr. C.S. Kirpekar, IFS  
 Secretary : Mr. P. B. Sahasrabhojani, B. Arch., Master in Urban Design.



**Address:**

498, Old Ramdaspath, Nagpur-440010, Maharashtra, India.  
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**Objectives:**

VNHS Centre was formed with the aim of building a new eco-balanced society through socio-cultural transformation. Action program of the centre for achieving such a change in favour of harmonious co-existence between nature and human race is based on true scientific methodology and is guided by the traditional Indian holistic philosophy about the cosmic balanced order among 1. *vyasthi* (individual), 2. *samasthi* (society), 3. *srushti* (nature) and 4. *parmeshthi* (divinity).

**Operational areas:**

Since its formation, the VNHS centre has undertaken several important projects in three focused areas: ornithology, urban environment and forest and wildlife studies.

**Major activities of VNHS:**

1. Notable ornithology related studies and projects include:

2. Coordination of the waterfowl census over a long period leading to formation of a well knit network of like minded environmental activists and researchers all over Vidarbha.
3. Study of Sarus Crane (*Grus antigone*) in Navegaon Bandh National Park, Maharashtra (1978-88). Study of Cranes of Vidarbha with special focus on the status and conservation of Sarus Crane (1990-91).
4. Study of endangered birds of Vidarbha leading to the re-discovery of the Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) in Vidarbha. Similar ongoing efforts for establishing the status of Jerdon's Courser and Lesser Florican (*Sypheotides indica*) in Vidarbha are in progress.
5. Similarly, identification and cataloguing of the important bird

areas (IBAs) in Vidarbha is underway in coordination with other partner NGOs.

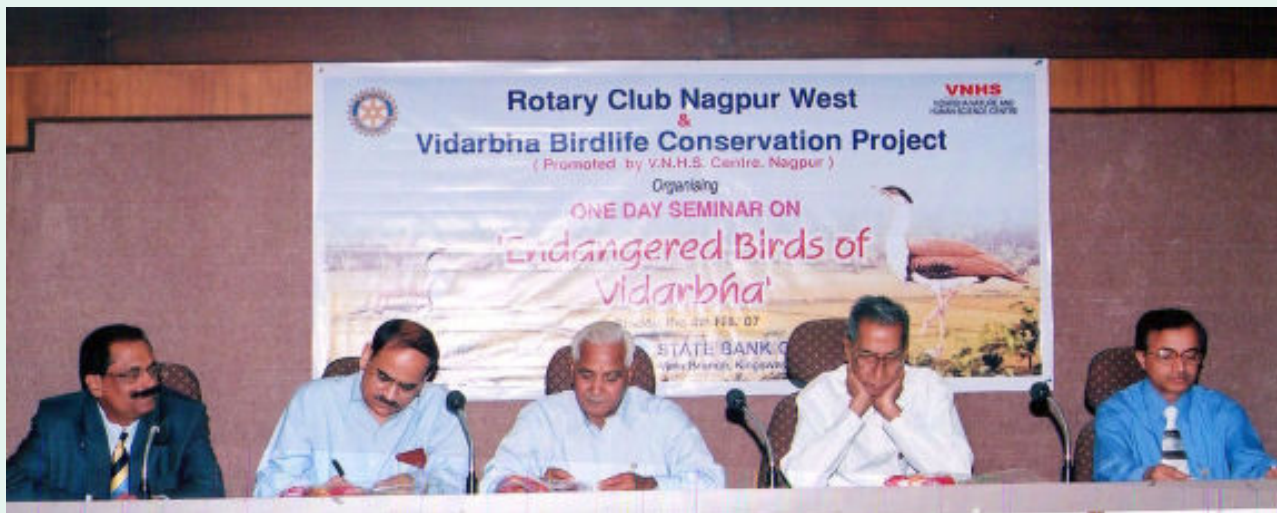
6. An eco-city cell formed in 1994 for the study of the urban environment and its effects on the surrounding region. The eco-city cell carried out two important projects, namely, Nag river basin eco-development project for formulating proposal under national river conservation plan for ecological revival of the Nag river basin. And the Nagpur bio-diversity, strategy and action plan (NBSAP) undertaken by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The lessons learned and project proposals made for converting Nagpur into an eco-city, as an outcome of these projects, are applicable to all the similarly placed towns and cities.
7. The notable forest and wildlife studies carried out by the VNHS centre include assessment report of the Melghat Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra after completion of 20 years of Tiger Projects and study of ecology and avifauna of Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra.
8. Organized gatherings of bird watchers at Vidarbha (Vidarbha *Pakshimitra Sammelan*) and Maharashtra (Maharashtra *Pakshimitra Sammelan*) level.
9. Initiated the census of the endangered Great Indian Bustard in Vidarbha region in collaboration with the Forest Department.



Mr. Raju Kasambe, Mr. Sunjoy Monga, Mr. Majumdar (PCCF, Maharashtra), Mr. C.S. Kirpekar and Mr. Trevor at Bird Race function

Sunil Pimlapure





Sunil Pimlapure

Mr. Sanjeev Bhusari, Mr. S. W. H. Naqwi, CCF, Mr. C.S. Kirpekar and Dr. Anil Pimlapure at a seminar on Endangered Birds

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|--|--|---|
| <p>10. Imparting environmental education to the teachers to create resource persons for teaching the subject at school level.</p> <p>11. Compilation and publication of the checklist of birds of Nagpur region (1977-86).</p> <p>12. Compilation and publication of the checklist of birds of Vidarbha region (2008).</p> <p>13. Study of the flora of Navegaon</p> | <p>National Park and Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary, Maharashtra.</p> <p>14. Project on exploring participatory management options for Protected Areas.</p> <p>15. Project undertaken on Sacred Groves in Maharashtra and its role in conservation (1995-96).</p> <p>16. Project on the study of the bird communities in Mendha Lekha village, District Gadchiroli, Maharashtra.</p> | <p>17. Study of the “Nistar” rights.</p> <p>18. Study of the water scarcity issues nearby Wena river basin, Nagpur district, Maharashtra (1987).</p> <p>19. Organised HSBC India Bird Races in Nagpur for promotion of birdwatching as a hobby among the citizens.</p> <p>20. Organised a seminar on “Endangered Birds of Vidarbha” (4<sup>th</sup> February 2007).</p> |
|--|--|---|

## Community Conserved Areas in India – A Directory

Neema Pathak (ed), Kalpavriksh, Pune/Delhi, 2009

Turtles, forests, blackbuck, primates, wetlands, and beaches... conserved by rural communities across India. A myth? Not really. There are hundreds, possibly thousands of such initiatives, mostly unknown and unrecognised.

Kalpavriksh has published a Directory of Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) in India, which begins to set right this neglect. This Directory hopes to contribute towards a deeper understanding of biodiversity conservation by people, and issues of livelihoods, tenure, development, legal and policy environment, and ecological impacts.

The 800-page Directory has contributions from a number of community members, academics, scientists, government officials and NGO representatives, and contains:

- 140 case studies from 23 states, representing a diversity of ecosystems, communities, and kinds of efforts.
- State-level analyses, and a national overview, dealing with various issues: the definition of CCAs, kind of ecosystems covered by them, kind of species protected, ecological and social impacts, institutions established by them, kind of legal and other support available and kind of threats faced.
- National and state maps in colour.
- B&W photos from various sites, and illustrations.

For more information on the Directory, contact: Anuradha Arjunwadkar at [kvbooks@vsnl.net](mailto:kvbooks@vsnl.net)

For more information on CCAs, contact: Neema Pathak at [neema.pb@gmail.com](mailto:neema.pb@gmail.com)

Kalpavriksh

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To promote conservation of birds and their habitats through the development of a national network of individuals, organisations and the government

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Nallamalai Foundation, Andhra Pradesh



Andhra Pradesh



Asian Wildlife Foundation, Andhra Pradesh



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Assam



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Bastar Society for Conservation of Nature, Chhattisgarh



Chhattisgarh Wildlife Society, Chhattisgarh



Delhi



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Wildlife Protection Society of India, New Delhi



Bird Conservation Society of Surat, Gujarat



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Gujarat



Gujarat



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Jharkhand



Nature Conservation Society Jharkhand



Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology & the Environment, Karnataka



Karnataka



Karnataka



Kerala



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Wild Haven Madhya Pradesh



Madhya Pradesh



Samrat Vikramaditya Research Institute, Madhya Pradesh



People for Animals, Madhya Pradesh



Madhya Pradesh



Maharashtra



Nature Conservation Society Amravati, Maharashtra



Green Guards, Maharashtra



Maharashtra



Environmental Action Group Maharashtra



Nature Conservation Society, Maharashtra



Maharashtra



Nature Science (Club's) Society, Maharashtra



Sahyadri Nisrag Mitra, Ratnagiri, Maharashtra



Maharashtra



Manipur Association for Sciences and Society, Manipur



Orissa



Action for Protection of Wild Animals, Orissa



Green Friends, Orissa



Orissa

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Orissa



Wildlife Society of Orissa



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Sikkim



Arulagam, Tamil Nadu



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Tamil Nadu



Amrapali Institute, Uttaranchal



Aligarh Muslim University, Uttar Pradesh



Uttar Pradesh



Turquoise Wildlife Conservation Welfare Society, Uttar Pradesh



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West Bengal



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West Bengal



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Assam



Assam



Madhya Pradesh



Arunachal Pradesh



Kottayam Nature Society



Maharashtra



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Maharashtra



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