

## News on Wings

### New Zealand Hunters Cull and Shoot a Wrong Endangered Species : Takahe



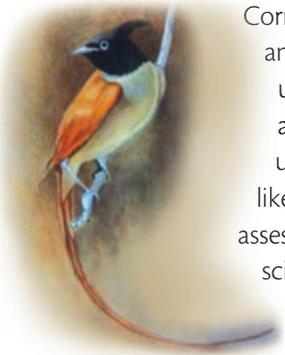
Local hunters in New Zealand were permitted to cull Pukeko birds on Motutapu Island by New Zealand's Department of Conservation which considers it as pest species. But four takahe birds were instead shot dead by hunter's shotgun pellets. The Takahe bird is critically endangered species. Even though the hunters were "carefully briefed" differentiation between the two species, they failed to cull and shoot the right species.

Takahe is twice the size of Pukeko, but they have similar colouring. The Takehe bird were presumed extinct in the early 20th century but were rediscovered in South Island in 1948. There are now only 300 Takehe birds left in New Zealand. The loss of the four birds amounts to a 5% decline in the wild population of this species.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34013537>

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/aug/26/conservationists-appalled-at-illegal-killing-of-25m-birds-a-year-in-the-mediterranean>

### Reclassification of Indian Bird Species



Cornell Lab of ornithology has taken the responsibility of maintaining bird's species list, the subspecies list and their respective English names which are changed by Taxonomists every year. Changes are brought under molecular taxonomic study, which defines different species or split in species through DNA analysis. The renaming of birds and associated changes are inevitable as new techniques and better understanding of taxonomy cause a rearrangement — even in a relatively well-studied group of creatures like birds," according to eBird India, an online platform of ornithologists and birders. New taxonomic assessment has assigned Asian Paradise Flycatcher a new name as Indian Paradise Flycatcher with same scientific name *Terpsiphone paradisi*, i.e parent species. The Nicobar Island species has been rechristened as Blyth's Paradise Flycatcher with scientific name *Terpsiphone affinis nicobarica*.

Purple Swamphen originally called as Purple Moorhen has been reclassified as Grey-headed Swamphen (*Porhyrio poliocephalus* - poliocephalus means grey-headed). The Himalayan species of Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) will now be known as Himalayan Buzzard (*Buteo buteo burmanicus*). Scaly Thrush has been split into four species : "Two of the new species are found in India, the Nilgiri Thrush (*Zoothera neilgherriensis*) of the Western Ghats and the Scaly Thrush (*Zoothera dauma*) of central, northern and north-eastern India. A close neighbour is the Sri Lanka Thrush (*Zoothera imbricata*), which is endemic to Sri Lanka,"

<http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/taxonomists-reclassify-indian-bird-species/article7569248.ece>

### Babbler use Primitive Language



Researchers from University of Exeter and Zurich discovered that Chestnut-crowned Babbler found in Australia is able to string together sounds and mix them in order to communicate different meanings.

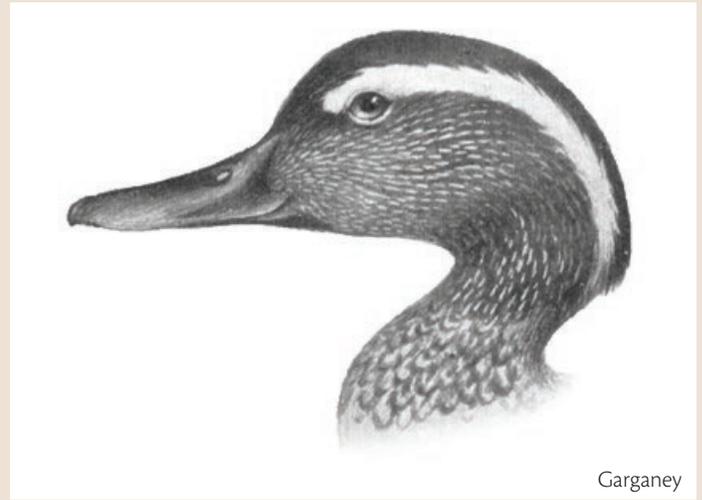
This bird communication is reminiscent of the way humans form meaningful words.

Lead author Sabrina Engesser from the University of Zurich said: "Although previous studies indicate that animals, particularly birds, are capable of stringing different sounds together as part of a complex song, these songs generally lack a specific meaning and changing the arrangement of sounds within a song does not seem to alter its overall message. But the babbler bird does not sing, instead its extensive vocal repertoire is characterized by discrete calls made up of smaller acoustically distinct individual sounds". She explained, "for instance, two sounds that scientists named 'A' and 'B' were combined for a flight call ('AB') and for a feeding call ('BAB'). When the researchers played the sounds back, birds showed different reactions - such as looking at their nests when they heard a feeding prompt call and by looking out for incoming birds when they heard a flight call". Researchers said, their findings reveal a potential early step in the emergence of the elaborate language systems we use today.

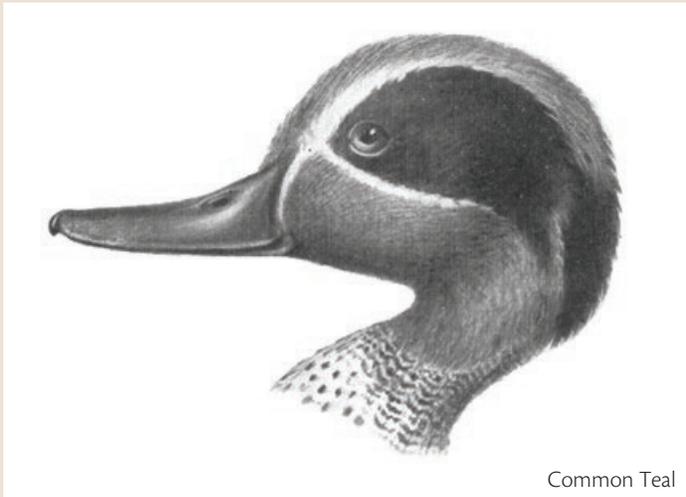
Source:[www.independent.co.uk/news/science/chestnutcrowned-babbler-australian-bird-first-known-nonhuman-species-to-communicate-using-language-10353537.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/chestnutcrowned-babbler-australian-bird-first-known-nonhuman-species-to-communicate-using-language-10353537.html)



Northern Pintail



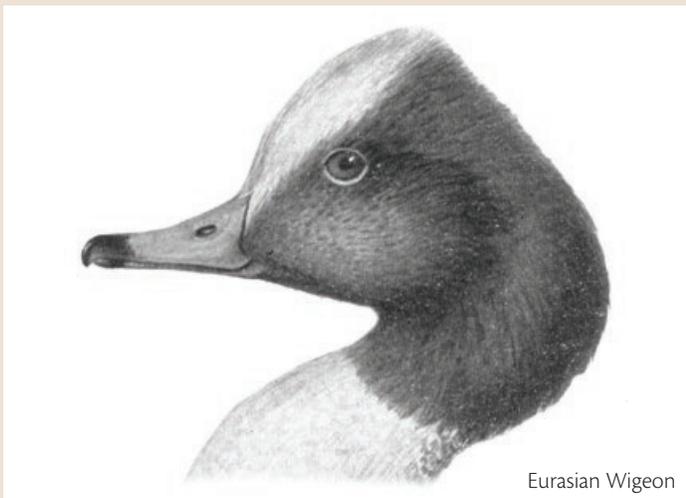
Garganey



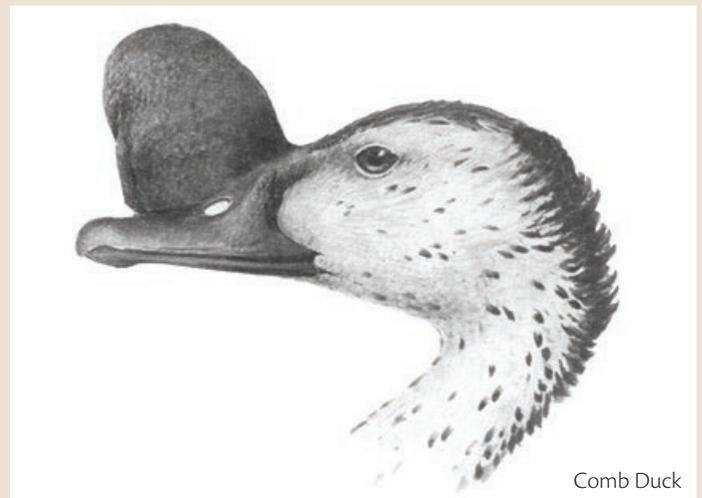
Common Teal



Northern Shoveler



Eurasian Wigeon



Comb Duck

**Source: 'The Water Fowl of India and Asia' by Frank Finn**

**Printed by : Thacker, Spink and Co., Calcutta, 1909**

These drawings are taken from a book which was a revised edition of the original work 'How to know the Indian Ducks'. It was supposed to help as a wild fowl guide to the sportsmen East and West of an Indian Empire as well as Anglo-Indians. To make it more user friendly for the beginners, drawings of heads of the commoner ducks (those most likely to fall to the gun in ordinary Indian shooting) by the most accurate artist of those times **Mr. H. Gronvold**, were added to this newer version.

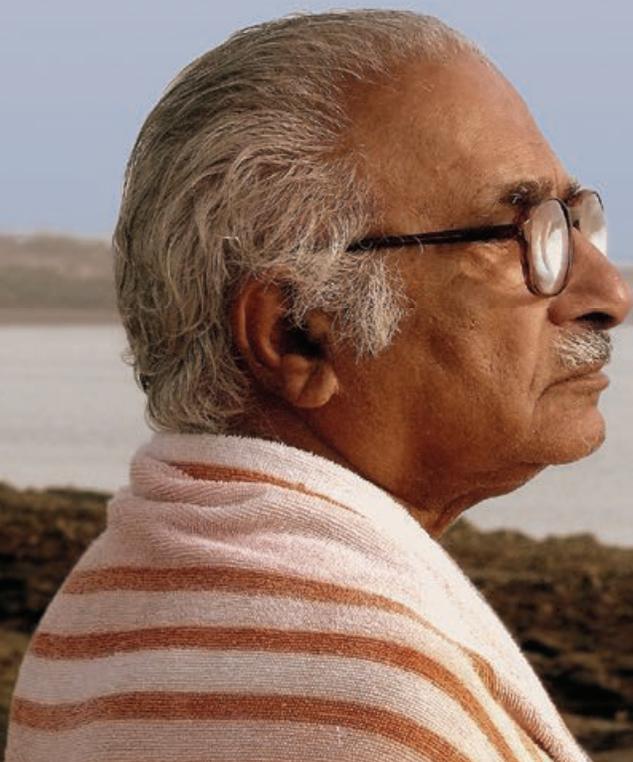
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How can a collective destiny be realized if we fail to have clarity for our own individual destinies? Individual destinies have build up into the collective destiny. We who are fortunate (or unfortunate) enough to have developed a feeling and a concern for the environment must concern ourselves in how best we can, not only advance our own programs and ambitions, but in doing so come closer and closer together to generate a force that provides direction to what is a popular will. If we fail to achieve, speaking in a physicist's jargon, critical mass, all this awareness will be swept away before the strong gales of selfish avarice, exploitations for personal gains, which are influencing democratic compulsions appearing as they do the popular wish.

Over the long years, I have come to realize that we all will have to work out ways and means to generate a strong unity. We just cannot hope to save anything against what would seem is a mindless force which by its mindlessness has the power to overwhelm everything in its path. Individuals, howsoever influential just cannot stand against its constant pressures for long. This force which seems mindless, many would like to consider it evil, is biological and as much a part of Nature as everything else. Individuals have necessarily to worry about daily needs. We all are concerned about the immediate security of our families. How can then, declining numbers of insects or of vultures take any precedence over human needs? What meaning does bird watching have in a highly competitive world? Are any of us able to provide clear answers? I regret the conservation groups have totally failed to provide reasonable answers. Nor, for that matter, have we been able to evolve demonstrable models proving that our concerns are, not esoteric but highly pragmatic.

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- Lavkumar Khachar



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