

Flamingo

Newsletter of the Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat



Habitat Concerns....

Many of our natural lakes and ponds in rural landscape are shallow and seasonal with fluctuating water-spread. However, people (including their leaders and policy-makers) usually desire permanent water bodies with perpetual and long-lasting water owing to the apparent livelihood, recreational and aesthetic needs. There is a prevailing ignorance about the fact that perennial water bodies are not beneficial ecologically. Prolonged high water levels can cause decline in emergent vegetation required by ducks and other water birds for food and shelter. Wetland literature also says that persistent, high level of waters in a wetland encourages aggressive growth of submerged vegetation, which eventually becomes so dense that free movement of water as well as birds is obstructed. Repeated inadvertent and sometimes deliberate addition of seepage from irrigation infrastructure can change the character of a wetland in ecologically undesirable manner. Narmada water is the potential example. It has cast doubt upon preservation of natural character of many important wetlands including a recently declared Ramsar Site, Nalsarovar, located in Ahmedabad-Surendranagar Districts of Gujarat. It is locally believed that its hydrophytic vegetation characteristics have been changing.

- Ketan Tatu, *PhD*



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Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat (BCSG) was founded in 2000 with the objective of conservation of birds of the State through field research, documentation, training, awareness activities, networking with like-minded NGOs; and lobbying for protection of birds and their habitats. It is the only statewide network of bird-watchers, ornithologists and conservationists of Gujarat striving to achieve the above goal.

BCSG brings out a quarterly newsletter – 'Flamingo'. Articles, notes on bird-life of Gujarat, interesting bird sightings, knowledge about important bird areas, information / appeal regarding conservation issues, reports on society's events and activities are published in 'Flamingo'. For publication of articles/notes in the Flamingo, both the common English and scientific names must be given when a bird species is mentioned for the first time and later references, common English name only. Common English and scientific names should follow Richard Grimmett, Carol Inskipp and Tim Inskipp (2011), Birds of Indian Subcontinent, Second edition. Oxford University Press, New Delhi. If the nomenclature is adopted from other source, full reference should be given.

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Editorial....

Dear Readers,

Resurgence of Flamingo - a printed newsletter on ornithology of Gujarat in the age of internet and social media is of tremendous significance. Gujarat being adorned with a spectrum of diverse habitats, meticulous documentation of its avian life is a worthy task, especially to aid its conservation. Two glaring phenomena have been currently observed about bird-life in general - its improved documentation with outrageous amplification in documenting gadgets and available facilities on one hand, and its worsening status with gross degradation of natural habitats under tremendous anthropogenic pressures, on the other.

Not undermining the importance of the internet-based birding sites and information available elsewhere, we cannot deny the value and power of a physically available in-the-hand document in generating greater awareness amongst masses, inspiring more birders and bird-photographers for data-keeping and showcasing the facts to the custodians and the policy-makers. With the advent of this newsletter, we hope to inspire and involve increasing number of individuals in generating the all important database on the bird-life of Gujarat, so as to facilitate the birders, researchers, field-workers, and forest officers to work in mutual co-operation for bird conservation in the State.

As you will notice while going through this issue, plenty of interesting bird sightings are taking place in the state. Some information puts question mark on the existing literature; like distribution of number of species in popular field-guides on birds of India, available to us. The observations on Watercock in Bharuch District are encouraging and add to prevailing knowledge on the distribution and occurrence of the species. We are also producing a compiled list of articles on Gujarat Birds, published during the last 5 years, as was customarily carried out before as well. I thank Hiren Soni for this exhaustive work accomplished satisfactorily.

Though 'Flamingo' is a Newsletter of BCSG, we have decided to keep a subscription to increase its reach among non-members, even as to strengthen its financial condition. We seek your support in every possible way.

In the end, I would like to express gratitude to my friend Girish Adesara, who has been taking lots of initiative in collecting funds and enrolling subscribers, so also the donors who are helping us fulfill our dream of a quality publication.

Bakul Trivedi, M.S.