

“Amur Falcon Watch 2024”

A Triumph of Conservation and Discovery



From the 26th to the 28th, the Bird Conservation Society of Gujarat orchestrated a three-day event dedicated to observing the remarkable return migration of Amur falcons from Africa. Celebrated for their extraordinary long-distance journeys spanning continents, this event was tailored to witness the majestic Amur falcons' pilgrimage back to their breeding grounds in Mongolia and eastern China.

The inaugural sessions on the 26th saw participants congregating in a hall, where Viral Joshi, the program coordinator, extended a warm welcome to all. This was followed by enlightening addresses from the Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat (BCSG) President Shri Dr Bakul Bhai Trivedi and Secretary Shri Uday Bhai Vora, shed light on the significance of the event and the intricacies of Amur counting. Renowned Scientist Dr R Suresh Kumar from the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun then captivated the audience with an expert discourse on species migration, focusing mainly on the Amur falcons and the ecological relevance of their remarkable journey, drawing insights from a decade's worth of satellite-tagged data. The evening culminated in a heartfelt tribute to Shri Batuk Bhil, lauding his invaluable contributions to Gujarat Ornithology.

Following dinner, teams were assigned to designated points stretching from Gopnath to Dharabandar, encompassing 12 Strategic locations across Mahuva in the Bhavnagar district and Rajula in the Amreli district. Covering a span of 100 kilometres along the picturesque Saurashtra coast.

On the morning of the 27th, teams set out to their designated points, fueled by a quick breakfast and packed lunch, eagerly anticipating the spectacular sight of Amur falcons gracing the skies. As the day progressed, excitement grew with each sudden burst of falcons spotted in the sky. Reports flooded in from various points, with Gopnath reporting over 100 birds, sparking lively discussions during dinner. The following day,

teams embarked on the second counting day, the morning count. The program concluded with a closing ceremony, leaving participants with cherished memories to look back on. Teams eagerly set out again on the 28th for the final counting day, filled with fresh energy. The program ended with a heartfelt closing ceremony, leaving everyone with cherished memories.



Besides marvelling at the Amur falcons' migration, the event also focused on conservation efforts:

- **Learning Together:** Participants joined in educational activities to learn about bird migration, especially the incredible journey of Amur falcons.
- **Helping Science:** The event helped gather important information about Amur falcon migration, behavior, and populations, which can guide conservation efforts.
- **Getting Communities Involved:** By including locals, students, and nature lovers, the event encouraged everyone to care for the region's birdlife.
- **Bringing People Together:** The event provided a space for different groups like Bird watchers, conservationists, scientists, wildlife photographers and policymakers to work together towards protecting migratory birds and their habitats.

Amur Falcon Watch 2024 brought 35 people from busy streets to university halls to appreciate Gujarat's birds. As it ended, everyone felt grateful for the chance to experience nature's wonders firsthand.

Viral Joshi: Member, BCSG

Devvratsinh Mori: Executive member, BCSG