

***The Birds of The Indian Institute of Science Campus
Changes in the avifauna***

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(This version incorporates some corrections and is not identical to the published version)

The Indian Institute of Science campus is a green patch of 170 hectares in the North of Bangalore. Prior to its establishment in 1909, it was probably open scrub and farmland. The present sylvan landscape is largely due to the planning of C.V.Raman, G.H. Krumbiegal, Homi Bhabha and B.S.Nirody.

Avenue trees of May Flower (*Delonix regia*), Rain Tree (*Samanea saman*), Mahogany (*Swietenia mahogani*), several species of *Cassia*, *Tabebuia* and groves of *Ficus benjamina* dominate the scenery. Block plantations of phyllode *Acacia* and *Casuarina* also exist. In places, there are dense thickets of *Lantana*. Grasslands and open ground are found in and around a small area meant to be an airstrip. A small grassy marsh and a pool in an old quarry are the only major wetland habitats.

Over the past seven years there have been changes in the landuse which I think have caused avifaunal changes. A major change has been an increase in tree cover and a decrease in area under scrub and open land. In 1988 a checklist of the birds of the campus was prepared by R.J.Ranjit Daniels in which the Iora, Indian Treepie and Little Brown dove were indicated as locally extinct. These birds are common only in the outskirts of Bangalore where open land and scrub are available. The late K.K.Neelakantan saw Large Grey Babblers in the 1960s (S. Subramanya pers.comm.), a bird which is patchily distributed on the outskirts today. Thickbilled flowerpeckers had been seen in 1977 (M.B.Krishna pers. comm.). I have not seen this bird here although its congener the Tickell's Flowerpecker is abundant particularly on Singapore cherry trees (*Muntingia calabura*), feeding on its berries and also using its fibrous bark for nest building.

The Indian Robin and Pied Bush Chat are today found only along the Northern boundary of the campus and seem to be on their way into the list of local extinctions. With a reduction in area both in and around the campus the Indian Roller and Blackwinged Kite are getting increasingly rare. The marsh once had open water and Baya weaverbirds nested from the wild date palms (*Phoenix sp.*) around it. With the draining of the marsh they are gone and so too has the Small Blue Kingfisher. The quarry pool earlier had clear water and Pied Kingfishers regularly fished in it. Today the water is murky and the kingfishers are not seen.

Avifaunal changes probably occur all the time but are rarely noticed unless careful censuses are carried out on a long term basis. This note is meant to be a precursor to such efforts. The following checklist is based on Ranjit Daniels' 1988 list.

References

- Daniels, R.J. Ranjit. 1990. On the sighting of a Shahin Falcon in Bangalore. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 30(9-10):6
Daniels, R.J. Ranjit. 1991. Stray birds on the IISc campus. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 31(11-12):14
Shyamal, L. 1989. 'New' birds on the IISc Campus. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 29(9-10):8-9

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status
Grey Pelican	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>	x
Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	x
Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	r B
Large Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	x
Smaller Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	x
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	x
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	x
Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	r C
Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>	x
Lesser Whistling Teal *	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	x
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	x
Shoveller	<i>Anas penelope</i>	x
Blackwinged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	s D
Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	v
Pariah Kite	<i>Milvus migrans govinda</i>	rb A
Blackeared Kite *	<i>Milvus migrans lineatus</i>	w
Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>	rb C

Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	rb C
Sparrow-Hawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	v2
Longlegged Buzzard *	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	v1
White-eyed Buzzard	<i>Butastur teesa</i>	- D
Crested Hawk-Eagle	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i>	v2
Booted Hawk-Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	w E
Tawny Eagle	<i>Aquila rapax</i>	v
Indian Longbilled Vulture	<i>Gyps indicus</i>	x
Indian Whitebacked Vulture	<i>Gyps benghalensis</i>	x
Scavenger Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	rb E
Pale Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>	v2
Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	v1
Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	v1
Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	- E
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus japonensis</i>	v1
Shaheen Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus peregrinator</i>	v2
Red-headed Merlin	<i>Falco chicquera</i>	r D
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	w E
Grey Partridge	<i>Francolinus pondicerianus</i>	r D
Yellowlegged Button-Quail	<i>Turnix tanki</i>	v1
Whitebreasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	rb C
Redwattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	rb C
Yellowwattled lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>	rb C
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	w B
Common Sandpiper	<i>Tringa hypoleucos</i>	w C
Fantail Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	w C
Woodcock *	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	v1
Green Pigeon *	<i>Treron phoenicoptera</i>	v1
Blue Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	rb C
Rufous Turtle Dove *	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	v1
Red Turtle Dove *	<i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i>	v1
Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	rb B
Little Brown Dove *	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	e
Roseringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	rb B
Redbreasted Parakeet	<i>Psittacula alexandrii</i>	v2
Blossom headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>	- D
Pied Crested Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>	s C
Common Hawk Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus varius</i>	v3
Indian Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus micropterus</i>	v
Indian Plaintive Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis passerinus</i>	w E
Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopacea</i>	rb B
Crow Pheasant	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	r B
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	rb D
Collared Scops Owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>	rb E
Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama</i>	rb B
Mottled Wood Owl	<i>Strix ocellata</i>	r E
Common Indian Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>	r E
Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>	x
House Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	r C
Lesser Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	- E
Small Blue Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	x
Whitebreasted Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	r C
Blackcapped Kingfisher *	<i>Halcyon pileata</i>	v1
Bluetailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>	v
Small Gree Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	rb B
Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	- E
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	rb C
Small Green Barbet	<i>Megalaima viridis</i>	rb B
Crimsonbreasted Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>	rb B
Indian Pitta	<i>Pitta brachyura</i>	w C
Rufouswinged Bushlark (?)	<i>Mirafra assamica (?)</i>	r C
Ashycrowned Finch-lark	<i>Eremopteryx grisea</i>	rb C

Eastern Skylark *	<i>Alauda gughula</i>	e
Collared Sand Martin *	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	v1
Dusky crag martin	<i>Hirundo concolor</i>	x E
Barn/Common Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	w B
Wire Tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>	w D
Redrumped/Striated Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	r D
Baybacked Shrike	<i>Lanius vittatus</i>	w C
Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	w B
Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	w B
Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	rb C
Grey Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>	w A
Whitebellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>	- E
Haircrested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus hotentottus</i>	v1
Greyheaded Myna	<i>Sturnus malabaricus malabaricus</i>	w D
Whiteheaded Myna *	<i>Sturnus malabaricus blythii</i>	v1
Blackheaded Myna	<i>Sturnus pagodarum</i>	r E
Rosy Pastor	<i>Sturnus roseus</i>	w E
Indian Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	rb A
Jungle Myna	<i>Acridotheres fuscus</i>	rb A
Indian Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>	e
House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	rb A
Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchus</i>	rb A
Common Wood Shrike	<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>	v1
Large CuckooShrike	<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>	w E
Blackheaded Cuckoo Shrike	<i>Coracina melanoptera</i>	w C
Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	w C
Common Iora *	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>	e
Goldfornted Chloropsis	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>	w E
Goldmantled Chloropsis	<i>Chloropsis cochinchinensis</i>	v1
Redwhiskered Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	w D
Redvented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	rb B
Large Grey Babbler *	<i>Turdoides maculolmii</i>	e
Whiteheaded Babbler	<i>Turdoides affinis</i>	rb B
Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa latirostris</i>	w C
Redbreasted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa parva</i>	w C
Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa tickelliae</i>	w C
Verditer Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa thalassina</i>	v1
Whitethroated Fantail Flycatcher	<i>Rhipidura albicollis</i>	v2
Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>	w C
Blacknaped Blue Flycatcher	<i>Monarcha azurea</i>	w C
Streaked Fantail Warbler	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	rb B
Plain Longtailed Warbler	<i>Prinia subflava</i>	rb C
Ashy Longtailed Warbler	<i>Prinia socialis</i>	rb B
Tailor Bird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	rb B
Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>	w B
Booted Tree Warbler *	<i>Hippolais caligata</i>	-
Orphean Warbler *	<i>Sylvia hortensis</i>	v1
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	w C
Tickell's Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus affinis</i>	w D
Greenish Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>	w A
Large Crowned Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus occipitalis</i>	v1
Bluethroat	<i>Erithacus svecicus</i>	v1
Blue chat	<i>Erithacus brunneus</i>	v1
Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>	rb B
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	v2
Pied Bush Chat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>	rb D
Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i>	rb E
Blueheaded Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola cinclorhynchus</i>	w C
Whitethroated Ground Thrush	<i>Zoothera citrina</i>	v1
Grey Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	rb C
Indian Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsonii</i>	v1
Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus novaseelandiae</i>	sb D

Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	w E
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	w D
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	x
Large Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla maderaspatensis</i>	r C
Thickbilled Flowerpecker *	<i>Dicaeum agile</i>	e
Tickell's Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>	rb A
Purplerumped Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i>	rb A
Purple Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>	rb A
Loten's Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia lotenia</i>	rb E
White-Eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosa</i>	rb A
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	rb B
Baya Weaver Bird	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>	e
Red Munia	<i>Estrilda amandava</i>	r E
Whitethroated Munia	<i>Lonchura malabarica</i>	rb D
Spotted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	rb D
Blackheaded Munia	<i>Lonchura malacca</i>	s C

Status codes:

x extralimital / flying over
r Resident (nesting not reported or seen)
rb Resident Breeding
w Winter visitor
s Summer visitor
sb Summer visitor that breeds
e Extinct (locally)
v Vagrant/straggler(number of sightings)

A Abundant
B Common
C Not so common
D Uncommon
E Rare
 * Species not seen by me.

Additional Notes:

Yellow-wattled Lapwing. Termite alate emergence after rains attracted large numbers of Jungle Crows leading to predation of eggs.

Red-breasted Parakeet. One bird seen on 21 August 1993 foraging with a flock of Rose-ringed Parakeets. Possibly an escapee. This bird is sometimes seen in the local bird trade.

Postscript

This article was based on about twelve years (1983-1995) of mostly casual bird observation. Living on the campus during those years made it possible to watch many birds from the comfort of a balcony or window as well as on casual strolls. In the early years most of the observations were done alone. For some years around 1989, I had the company of R.J. Ranjit Daniels who guided a team of youngsters like me.

Unfortunately it is not possible for the general public to visit the I.I.Sc. campus for birding without some kind of permission.

Blue-throated Flycatcher, Indian Great Reed Warbler, Common Rosefinch and Lesser Golden backed Woodpecker - Four New Species in the Indian Institute of Science Campus, Bangalore.

Vikram Gadagkar, Shyamal L., Mukund Ramakrishnan, Navanit Arakeri, Swaroop Venkatesh, Abhishek Lahiri and Anand Hariharan.

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It was the morning of 14th October 1994 when we (LS, NA, VG, MR, AL and AH) saw a male Blue-throated Flycatcher (*Muscicapa rubeculoides*) amidst the greenery of a garden in the IISc campus. This species has been observed in Bangalore only thrice before (BWFCB, 1994).

On 27th February 1995, we (LS, VG and MR) were walking past a small piece of marshland when to our surprise there was an Indian Great Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus stentoreus*) sitting on a *Lantana* bush. The habitat and call led us to believe that it was not a Great Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*) or a Thick-billed Warbler (*Acrocephalus aedon*).

The 12th of April 1995 was a really bright day for us. We (SV and VG) were indeed excited to spot two males and a female of the Common Rosefinch (*Carpodacus erythrinus*) resting high up on a *Casuarina* tree, and what is more, all three birds stayed put for a whole hour giving us ample opportunity to confirm our identification. The males were crimson on their heads and breasts while the female was dull brown with streaks on her breast.

A Lesser Golden-backed Woodpecker (*Dinopium benghalense*) was heard calling on the 1st May 1995 by one of us (LS).

We would like readers to add these four species in addition to the White-browed Bulbul sighted recently (Gadagkar *et al* 1994) to the checklist of the birds of the IISc campus.

Some corrections to the earlier checklist of birds of the IISc campus (LS). The Cattle Egret status code(x C) was missed in the earlier note (Shyamal, 1994). Species not seen by me were to be shown by an asterisk and there are Lesser Whistling Teal, Blackeared Kite, Longlegged Buzzard, Woodcock, Green Pigeon, Rufous Turtle Dove, Red Turtle Dove, Little Brown Dove, Blackcapped Kingfisher, Collared Sand Martin, White-headed Myna, Common Iora, Large Grey Babbler, Booted Tree Warbler and Orphean Warbler. The following five species are to be indicated by the code 'rb' instead of 'r' - Pariah Kite, Blue Rock Pigeon, Spotted Dove, House Crow and Jungle Crow.

References

BWFCB, 1994. Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Bangalore.

Gadagkar, V. Arakeri, N. and Ramakrishnan, M., 1994. White-browed Bulbul : A new sighting in the Indian Institute of Science Campus, Bangalore. Newsletter for Birdwatchers, 34(4):96.

Shyamal, L., 1994. The Birds of Indian Institute of Science Campus - Changes in the Avifauna. Newsletter for Birdwatchers, 34(1):7-9.

ADDITIONS

A Dabchick nested in the Jubilee park pool in Aug-Sep 1995.

Joby Joseph - Reported a Rufous-backed shrike from the Airfield area somewhere in 1998 (emailed on 18 Sep 2000)

Also notes Forest wagtail on 31/10/99 in the Jubilee gardens.

Joby Joseph - Reported Indian Button-quail breeding Jan-Feb 2001

Anup Vishwanathan – Yellow-legged Button-Quail - 2001