

BIRDS OF LITTLE ANDAMAN ISLAND

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ABSTRACT

Observation in the forest and non-forest area was made to record the bird species found in Little Andaman Island with an aim to prepare a checklist and compare the species diversity with those of Andaman and Nicobar groups of Island in general. A total of 83 species belonging to 33 families under 13 orders was recorded from Little Andaman Island. Little Andaman harbour some of the endemic species restricted either to Andaman groups or Nicobar groups only. Development of eco-tourism activity has potential role in conservation and protection of avifaunal diversity of this island.

Key word: Avifauna, Indian Purple moorhen, Crab plover, Burmese red turtle dove, Common Hoopoe, Little Andaman Island

Introduction

Andaman and Nicobar group of islands are situated between 6°45' and 13°41'N Latitude and 92°12' and 93°57'E longitude in the Bay of Bengal. The Bay islands comprises nearly 572 islands with a geographical area of 8249 km², stretched over 800 kms. Out of 572 islands, 37 islands are having human habitation.

Climate and Vegetation

The tropical and humid climate of these islands receives both the South-West and North-East monsoon. This climatic condition contributes luxuriant Tropical Rain Forest. According to Champion and Seth (1968), classification of forest types these islands comprise giant evergreen, Andaman tropical evergreen, south hill top tropical evergreen, Andaman semi-evergreen, Andaman moist deciduous, littoral and mangrove forest.

Little Andaman island is one among those 572 islands, situated 55 kms away from South Andaman Islands across Duncan passage. The island comprises an area of 737 km² of which has almost 90 per cent forest cover. Pre-dominantly with evergreen, semi evergreen, moist deciduous, littoral and mangrove forests occurring naturally. Man made plantation also contributed to the forest cover such as raising of *Casuarina*, red oil palm, coconut and areca nut plantation.

An attempt was made to prepare the checklist of birds found in Little Andaman Island and comparing with Andaman and Nicobar groups of island to know its bird species richness and endemism.

Studies on the birds of Andaman and Nicobar Islands started way back in 1845 onward by various researchers and research institute. This includes listing

and avifaunal survey in general and species oriented. Some of them are Abduali (1964, 1965, 1967); Blyth (1845, 1846); Butler (1899c, 1900); Hume (1873, 1876); Das (1971); Pande *et al.* (2007); Sankaran (1995) and Sivaperuman *et al.* (2010)

Method

Randomly forest and non-forest area of Little Andaman islands were visited from April 2009 to March 2012 and all the bird species encountered were recorded. The record was based on direct sighting in the field through binocular. The identification of birds' species was made with the help of reference book on bird by Grimmett *et al.* (1998) and Kazmierczak *et al.* (2003). The current common and scientific name of birds were recorded from working plan of Little Andaman Island for the period 2011-2021 and Birds' the winged heritage of Andaman and Nicobar Islands published by Department of Environment and Forests, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The status and comparison of birds' species was made with the published work on birds of Andaman and Nicobar Islands by Zoological Survey of India and Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History. Tribal and local people were also consulted to confirm the occurrence of rare species.

Result and Discussion

From Andaman and Nicobar Island 284 bird species have been recorded belonging to 56 families under 17 orders. The present study records 83 bird species from 33 families under 13 orders from Little Andaman Island, constituting 29% of the total birds' species recorded in Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Table 1).

Little Andaman Island harboring 21 endemic birds out of 83 recorded bird species indicate a high degree of endemism and diversity of avifauna.

Table 1 : List of bird species recorded in Little Andaman Island.

S.No	Common Name	Scientific Name	Status
	Order – Ciconiiformes		
	Family – Ardeidae		
1	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta garzetta</i>	R
2	Little Green Heron	<i>Butorides striatus spodiogaster</i>	R
3	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	R
4	Chinese pond Heron	<i>Ardeola bacchus</i>	R
5	Eastern Reef Heron	<i>Egretta sacra</i>	RM
6	Chestnut Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i>	RM
7	Great Egret	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>	RM
I	Order – Anseriformes		
	Family – Anatidae		
8	Andaman teal	<i>Anas gibberifrons albogularis</i>	R
	Order – Falconiformes		
	Family – Accipitridae		
9	White bellied sea eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	R
10	Andaman dark Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis elgini</i>	R
11	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	R
	Order - Galliformes		
	Family – Rallidae		
12	Andaman white breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	R
13	Indian purple Moorhen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio poliocephalus</i>	R
14	Common moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	RM
	Order – Charadriiformes		
	Family – Charadriidae		
15	Eastern Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis dominica fulva</i>	M
16	Greater Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius leschanaultii</i>	M
	Family – Scolopacidae		
17	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus phaeopus</i>	M
18	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	M
19	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	M
20	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	M
	Family – Dromadidae		
21	Crab Plover	<i>Dromas ardeola</i>	M
	Family – Laridae		
22	Black Napped Tern	<i>Sterna sumatrana</i>	R
	Order – Colimbiformes		
	Family – Colimbidae		
23	Blue Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	R
24	Andaman Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	R
25	Andaman Pompadour Green Pigeon	<i>Treron pompadora chloroptera</i>	R
26	Andaman Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea andamanica</i>	R
27	Pied Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula bicolor</i>	R
28	Burmese Red Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i>	R
29	Nicobar Pigeon	<i>Caloenas nicobarica nicobarica</i>	R
	Order – Psittaciformes		
	Family – Psittacidae		
30	Vernal hanging Parakeet	<i>Loriculus vernalis vernalis</i>	R
31	Andaman Red Breasted Parakeet	<i>Psittacula longicauda</i>	R
32	Andaman Red Checked Parakeet	<i>Psittacula longicacuda</i>	R
33	Large Andaman Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	R
34	Blyth's Nicobar parakeet	<i>Psittacula caniceps</i>	R
	Order – Cuculiformes		
	Family – Cuculidae		
35	Violet Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus</i>	R
36	Andaman Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopacea dolosa</i>	R
37	Andaman Crow Pheasant	<i>Centopus sinensis andamanensis</i>	R
	Order – Caprimulgiformes		
	Family – Caprimulgidae		
38	Large Tailed Night Jar	<i>Caprimulgus macrurus</i>	RM

	Order – Apodiformes		
	Family – Apodidae		
39	Glossy Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia esculenta</i>	R
	Order – Coraciiformes		
	Family – Alcedae		
40	Andaman Ruddy Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon coromanda</i>	R
41	Andaman Strobilled Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon capensis</i>	R
42	Andaman White Breasted Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	R
43	Andaman White Collared Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus chloris</i>	R
44	Andaman Broad Billed Kingfisher		
45	Black Capped Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon pileata</i>	R
46	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	RM
	Family – Meropidae		
47	Andaman Chestnut Headed Bee Eater	<i>Merops leschenaultia</i>	R
	Family – Coraciidae		
48	Dollar bird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>	R
	Family – Upupidae		
49	Common Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	RM
	Order – Piciformes		
	Family – Picidae		
50	Fulvous Breasted Pied Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos macei</i>	R
51	Andaman Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus hodgei</i>	R
	Order - Passeriformes		
	Family - Hirundinidae		
52	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	RM
53	Japanese Red Rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	R
54	Javan House Swallow	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>	RM
	Family – Motacillidae		
55	Forest Wagtail	<i>Dendronanthus indicus</i>	RM
56	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	RM
	Family - Campephagidae		
57	Andaman Large Cuckoo Shrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>	R
58	Andaman Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	R
59	Eastern Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	R
	Family – Pycnonotidae		
60	Andaman Red Whiskered Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus whistleri</i>	R
61	Andaman Black Headed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus atriceps</i>	R
	Family – Irenidae		
62	Asian Fairy Blue Bird	<i>Irena puella andamanica</i>	R
	Family – Laniidae		
63	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus cristatus</i>	M
	Family - Turdinae		
64	Orange headed Thrush	<i>Zoothera citrina andamanensis</i>	R
65	Andaman Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	R
66	Orange Flanked Bush Robin	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>	V
67	Andaman Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>	R
	Family - Monarchinae		
68	Andaman Black Napped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	R
	Family – Dicaeidae		
69	Andaman Flower Pecker	<i>Dicaeum concolor virescens</i>	R
	Family – Nectariniidae		
70	Nicobar Olive Back Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia jugularis klossi</i>	R
71	Andaman Olive Back Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia jugularis andamanica</i>	R
	Family - Estrildidae		
72	Andaman White Backed Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>	R
	Family - Passerinae		
73	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	R
	Family – Turnidae		
74	Andaman Glossy Stare	<i>Aplonis panayensis albiris</i>	R
75	Andaman White Headed starling	<i>Sturnus erythropygius</i>	R
76	Andaman Hill Myna	<i>Gracula religiosa andamanensis</i>	R

	Family - Oriolidae		
77	Andaman Black Napped Oriole	<i>Oriolus chinensis andamanensis</i>	RM
	Family – Dicruridae		
78	Andaman Racket Tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>	R
79	Large Andaman Drongo	<i>Dicrurus andamanensis dicruriformis</i>	RM
80	Andaman Drongo	<i>Dicrurus andamanensis</i>	R
	Family – Artamidae		
81	White Breasted Wood Swallow	<i>Artamus leucorhynchus</i>	R
	Family – Corvidae		
82	Andaman Tree Pie	<i>Dendrocitta bayleyi</i>	R
83	Large Billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchus</i>	R

(R-Residents, RM-Local Migrants-Trans-Continental Migrants, V- Visitor).

Table 2 : Comparison of Birds of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Little Andaman.

S.No	Order	A&N Islands	Little Andaman Island
1	Procellariiformes	2	-
2	Pelecaniformes	6	-
3	Ciconiiformes	15	7
4	Anseriformes	7	1
5	Falconiformes	28	3
6	Galliformes	5	3
7	Gruiformes	11	-
8	Charadriiformes	45	8
9	Colimbiformes	16	7
10	Psittaciformes	6	5
11	Cuculiformes	11	3
12	Strigiformes	9	-
13	Caprimulgiformes	2	1
14	Apodiformes	6	1
15	Coraciiformes	15	10
16	Piciformes	3	2
17	Passeriformes	97	32
	Total	283	83

During the study a close species association among Andaman black napped monarch (*Hypothymis azurea*) Andaman black headed bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocosus whistleri*), Andaman black napped oriole (*Oriolus chinensis andamanensis*), Andaman racket tailed drongo (*Dicrurus paradiseus*), Andaman scarlet minivet (*Pericrocotus flammeus*) eastern small minivet (*Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*), Andaman white headed starling (*Sturnus erythropygius*), Asian fairy blue bird (*Irena puella andamanica*), Large Andaman drongo (*Dicrurus andamanensis dicruriformis*) and Andaman red whiskered bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocosus whistleri*) were encountered in the forests and in the open area on many occasion. A large flock of Andaman red breasted parakeet (*Psittacula longicauda*) and Large Andaman parakeet (*Psittacula eupatria*) can be seen on *Casurina equisetifolia*, pyima (*Lagerstroemia hypoleuca*) and arecanut trees. Andaman green imperial pigeon (*Ducula aenea andamanica*) and Pied imperial pigeon (*Ducula bicolor*) regularly visits red oil palm Plantation for feeding an its fruits. From October to May groups of Andaman glossy stare (*Aplonis panayensis albiris*) were found

feeding on jungli neem (*Ganophyllum falcatum*) and hill mohwa (*Diploknema butyracea*) trees.

Three species namely Nicobar pigeon (*Caloenas nicobarica nicobarica*), common hoopoe (*Upupa epops*) and Violet cuckoo (*Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus*) sighted once only during the study period. On 10th October 2011 at 0930 hrs. Common hoopoe (*U. epops*) was sighted in the littoral forest of Herminder Bay. The nicobari tribal people also confirm the sighting of hoopoe inside their coconut plantation. Nicobar pigeon (*C. nicobarica nicobarica*) is restricted to nicobari settlement in the southern portion of the island. Hunting of nicobar pigeon is carried out by the nicobari tribe but they occasionally get the Nicobar pigeon.

Little Andaman Island has large number of water bodies and forest type which provides unique habitat type and micro-climates suitable for water and inland birds species so endemism proportions is higher in this island ecosystem. In the present study 21 species and sub-species of birds were recorded as endemic to Little Andaman Island in comparison to 28 endemic species of birds recorded from A and N Islands. Some commonly seen endemic species are Andaman hill myna (*G. religiosa andamanensis*), Andaman red whiskered bulbul (*P. jocosus whistleri*), Andaman white breasted waterhen (*A. phoenicurus*), Andaman black woodpecker (*D. hodgei*), Andaman white headed starling (*S. erythropygius*), Andaman teal (*A. gibberifrons albogularis*), Andaman crow pheasant (*C. sinensis andamanensis*), Andaman shama (*C. malabaricus*) and Asian fairy blue bird (*I. puella andamanica*).

The strategic location and size of Little Andaman Island provides shelter to certain endemic species beyond which their distribution is restricted such as Andaman crow pheasant (*C. sinensis andamanensis*) is not found in Nicobar groups. Similarly, Nicobar pigeon (*C. nicobarica nicobarica*), Blyth's nicobar parakeet (*P. caniceps*) and Andaman koel (*E. scolopacea dolosa*) are endemic to Nicobar groups of Island. Comparison of endemic bird shows that both Andaman and Nicobar Islands have fewer common endemic species. This is an

indication that the fauna of the two island groups have evolved separately and isolated with each other. Species richness and diversity may be influenced by factor such as the composition of plant communities, forest type and other environmental factors.

According to the list of threatened bird species prepared by Bird life International, 2001, six bird species recorded from Little Andaman are in the category of threatened birds namely Andaman tree pie (*D. bayleyi*), Large Andaman drongo (*D. andamanensis dicruriformis*),

Andaman red checked parakeet (*P. longicacuda*), Blyth's Nicobar parakeet (*P. caniceps*), Andaman dark serpent eagle (*S. elgini*) and Andaman black woodpecker (*D. hodgei*).

Conservation and Threats

Eco-tourism activity and scientific research on ecology of species can help in protection and conservation of avifauna diversity in Little Andaman Island. Clearance of forest by encroachers and raising of large scale monoculture is today a major threat to endemic bird species of Andaman.

छोटे अन्डमान द्वीप समूह के पक्षी

ए.सी. तिलक

सारांश

छोटे अन्डमान द्वीप समूह में पाये जाने वाले पक्षियों को रिकार्ड करने, उनकी चेकलिस्ट तैयार करने तथा प्रजाति वैविध्य की तुलना सामान्यतः अन्डमान निकोबार द्वीप समूह से करने के उद्देश्य से वनीय तथा गैर वनीय क्षेत्रों में अवलोकन किये गये। छोटे अन्डमान द्वीप समूह से 13 अनुक्रमों के तहत 33 कुलों की कुल 83 प्रजातियों को रिकार्ड किया गया। छोटे अन्डमान में कुछ देशज प्रजातियां पाई जाती हैं जो केवल अन्डमान क्षेत्र की हैं या केवल वहीं पाई जाती हैं। पारिपर्यटन क्रियाकलापों में इस प्रायः द्वीपीय पक्षिवैविध्य के संरक्षण और रक्षण में मुख्य भूमिका निभाने की क्षमता है।

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