

RESEARCH NOTES

(I)

STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION OF BIRDS AT AND AROUND WILDLIFE AND TERRITORIAL DIVISION FOREST OFFICE PREMISES, NEW TURA, WEST GARO HILLS, MEGHALAYA

Tura was the district headquarter of the entire Garo Hills District since the beginning of British administration in 1867. Until recent times, Tura area provided excellent habitat for wild elephant and tiger. The nearest Nokrek Biosphere Reserve provides excellent habitats to many plants and animals to enrich the floral and faunal diversity of Garo Hills. The loss of habitat through deforestation and over-exploitation of wild NTFPs is a major problem. The present study is an attempt to provide base line information on birds during winter season in a particular area, which can be beneficial in future to record birds with changing environs.

The survey was conducted during winter season i.e. November 2006 to February 2007 in and around the premises of Divisional Forest Office of Wildlife, Territorial and Social Forestry campus at Dakopgiri, New Tura (*ca.* 5 ha area).

Tura is situated in West Garo Hills between 25°31'11" N Lat. and 90°13'11"E Long. with an altitude of 349m. The climate of Tura is directly influenced by the South-West monsoon which begins in May and continues until October and is almost dry from November to April with a short winter (December-February).

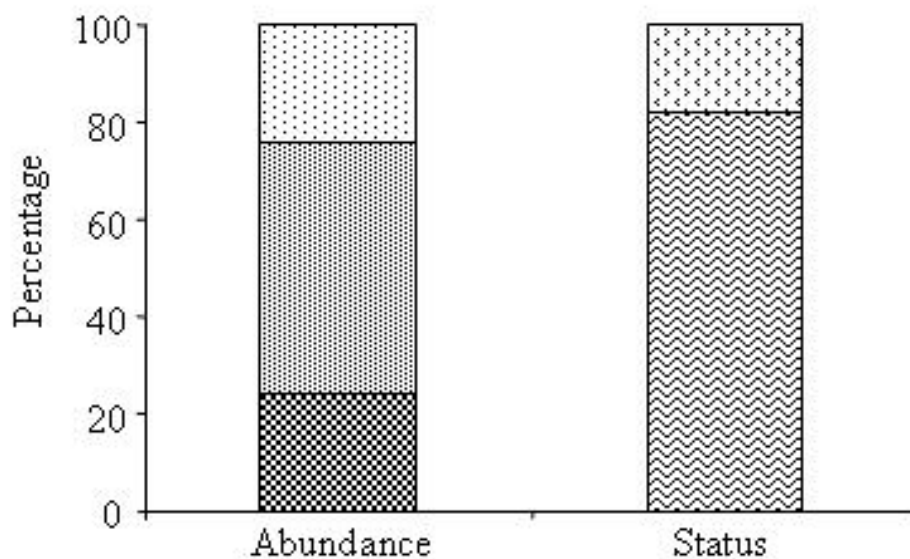
The observations were carried out on

a fixed curvilinear path following Gaston (1973). The birds were identified based on direct observations and indirect evidences (mainly calls) following Grimmett *et al.* (1999) and Ali and Ripley (1983). A check list of birds at and around Forest Office premises was prepared along with their status and abundance. The common plants of the premises were recorded separately following Haridasan and Rao (1985).

During the study period more than 10 times a curvilinear path was followed in the campus. A list of birds and plant species, mainly trees recorded from the area were prepared. A total of 50 species of birds belonging to 38 genera were sighted directly and indirectly (Appendix I) and 29 species of trees belonging to 27 genera were recorded (Appendix II).

The abundance of birds in Tura area shows that the sightings of 12 bird species was very frequent and 26 species occasional, while 12 species were seen in a few occasions (Fig. 1). Of the total bird species, nine bird species were resident to the study area, while 41 bird species were local migrants, mainly to Nokrek Biosphere Reserve, as it provides shelter to birds during peak summer. Shifting cultivation, large scale horticulture activities, mining, poaching and lack of awareness on wildlife are the major threats

Fig. 1



The abundance and status of birds in the study area.

to biodiversity of the area. Three bird species of the area, namely *Chalcophaps indica*, *Gracula religiosa* and

Anthracoceros albirostris are facing problem mainly because of hunting for food, trade and ornamental purposes.

Appendix I

Checklist of birds at and around Divisional forest office premises, Tura.

Common name	Scientific Name	Status	Occurrence
1	2	3	4
Alexandrine parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	LM	O
Asian koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopacea</i>	LM	O
Black bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>	LM	R
Black drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	R	C
Black redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	LM	O
Black-hooded oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>	LM	R
Blue-eared kingfisher	<i>Alcedo meninting</i>	LM	O
Blue rock thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	LM	O

Contd...

1	2	3	4
Blue-tailed bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>	LM	O
Blue-throated barbet	<i>Megalaima asiatica</i>	LM	O
Common hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	LM	C
Common kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	LM	O
Common myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	R	C
Emerald dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	LM	R
Eurasian eagle owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>	R	O
Fulvous-breasted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos macei</i>	LM	R
Great barbet	<i>Megalaima virens</i>	LM	C
Greater coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	LM	R
Green bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	LM	C
Green-tailed sunbird	<i>Aethophya nipalensis</i>	LM	R
Grey nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus indicus</i>	LM	O
Hill blue flycatcher	<i>Cyornis banyumas</i>	LM	O
Hill myna	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>	LM	O
House crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	R	C
House swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	LM	C
Indian pond heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	LM	O
Indian robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i>	R	O
Indian roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	LM	O
Lesser racket-tailed drongo	<i>Dicrurus remifer</i>	LM	R
Lineated barbet	<i>Megalaima lineata</i>	LM	O
Little egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	LM	O
Orange-flanked bush robin	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>	LM	O
Oriental magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	LM	C
Oriental pied hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros albirostris</i>	LM	O
Oriental turtle dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	LM	R
Plumbeous water redstart	<i>Rhyacornis fuliginosus</i>	LM	O
Red-whiskered bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	R	C
Red-vented bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	R	C
Rock pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	R	C
Rose-ringed parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	LM	O
Rosy minivet	<i>Pericrocotus roseus</i>	LM	R
Rufous-bellied woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos hyperythrus</i>	LM	R
Rufous treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>	LM	O

Contd...

1	2	3	4
Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	LM	O
Spotted dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	R	C
White-browed wagtail	<i>Motacilla maderaspatensis</i>	LM	R
White-throated kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	LM	O
White wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	LM	O
Yellow-legged buttonquail	<i>Turnix tanki</i>	LM	R
Yellow-crowned woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos mahrattensis</i>	LM	O

As per Grimmett *et al.* (1999)

Status : R = Resident and LM = Local migrant (up to Tura Peak, Nokrek Biosphere Reserve).

Abundance: C = Common (Seen frequently >7 sightings); O = Occasional (<5 sightings); and R = Rare (<3 sightings)

Appendix II

Common trees at and around Divisional Forest Office premises, Tura.

Local name	Botanical name
1	2
Boldubak	<i>Kydia calycina</i> Roxb.
Sakap*	<i>Ficus heterophylla</i> Linn. f
Khelbei/Siso	<i>Albizia odoratissima</i> (Linn.f.) Benth
Bolmatra	<i>Holarrhena antidysenterica</i> (Roth) A. DC
Chirori, Churi	<i>Terminalia bellirica</i> (Gaertn.) Roxb.
Sunari	<i>Cassia fistula</i> Linn.
Megong	<i>Bauhinia</i> spp.
Tebil	<i>Hodgsonia macrocarpa</i> (Bl) Cong
Chambu	<i>Syzygium cumini</i> (Linn) Skeels
Mandal	<i>Erythrina stricta</i> Roxb.
Ora/Ambu	<i>Emblica officinalis</i> Gaertn.
Gambhari	<i>Gmelina arborea</i> Roxb.
Pakram	<i>Trema orientalis</i> Linn. Bl
Sidai	<i>Lagerstroemia parviflora</i> Roxb.
Thibrong	<i>Syzygium balsameum</i> (Wt) Wall.ex AM&SM. Cowan
Kelvai	<i>Albizia procera</i> (Roxb) Benth
Chengsim	<i>Sapium baccatum</i> Roxb.
Neem	<i>Azadirachta indica</i> A. Juss

Contd...

1	2
Gambari	<i>Careya arborea</i> Roxb.
Pharprenkhat	<i>Ficus elastica</i> Roxb.ex Ttornem
Khring	<i>Oroxylum indicum</i> (Linn.) Vent.
Artak	<i>Terminalia citrina</i> (Gaertn) Flem
Bolorong	<i>Elaeocarpus tectorius</i> (Lour.) Poir
Bolchu	<i>Bombax ceiba</i> Auct. non Linn.
Dokime	<i>Premna latifolia</i> Roxb.
Bolbret	<i>Toona ciliata</i> Roem.
Armū	<i>Artocarpus gomezianus</i> Wall. ex Trecul
Saguan	<i>Tectona grandis</i> Linn. f
Gamlingap/Amlenga	<i>Averrhoa carambola</i> Linn.

* Strangler shrub

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