Tea, kids and the birds—Birding education in CSI School, Devon Estate, Koppa Taluk, Chikkamagaluru District

Growing up in the Devon tea plantation of Koppa taluk, Chikkamagaluru district, I was always fascinated with the bird diversity over here. It was my dream from a long time to get at least a few kids in the tea plantation interested in birding. So, I organized a two-day birding education from 13–14 December 2023 to the school children of CSI school, Devon Estate.

Since the total strength of the school was 26 students, I took the sessions with everyone seated together in a single classroom. On day 1, I began first with a mini assessment of how much the kids know about birds. So, I asked them to draw any bird that they were familiar with. While most all of the kids drew the peafowl, others drew parakeets which they call as ‘Ramagili’. After this, I asked them how many birds they can name, and interestingly they named around 15 species of birds.
Next, I began by asking the question on what makes a bird? They swiftly responded by saying that the birds can fly and they lay eggs. I appreciated their answer and introduced them to the other aspects of birds such as the feathery body, and nest making. When I asked them what to do they think the birds feed, majority of the answers were pertaining to grains and fruits and one of them mentioned ‘other birds’. So, I followed up this and showed them the examples of frugivorous, granivorous, piscivorous, nectarivorous and carnivorous birds. Continuing with the given examples, I told them about the ecological importance of birds by asking what would happen if each bird in their feeding niche were to disappear.

With the basic concepts covered, I introduced them to birding and dos and don’ts when birding. When I asked them what they should not do when birding, they swiftly responded ‘we should not disturb the birds’. This was a prompt response from their end without me giving them any kind of clue. Then I showed them equipment...
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