

## MID WINTER WATERFOWL CENSUS AT POBITORA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY FOR THE YEAR 2000

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Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary (26°12' N to 26°15' N - 92°2' E to 92°5' E) is an important site for migratory waterfowl of Assam. Each year during the month of October thousands of birds arrive here. The Sanctuary is situated 58km east of Guwahati City, the capital of Assam. The entire area is flat with gentle incline from east to west. Flood waters from rivers Brahmaputra and Kolong, which pass through the Sanctuary's northern and southern sides flood the entire area. The water remains for the whole year in different lakes and swamps and make Pobitora the abode of migratory as well as resident birds.

The present land use pattern of the Sanctuary are: trees 13.09 per cent with the dominant species of *Albizia procerea*, *Lagerstromia flosreganae*, *Salmalia malabaricum* etc.; grasslands 72.25 per cent with dominant species of *Erianthus ravanae*, *Saecharum elephantinus*, *Imparata cylindrica*, *Saecharum munja* etc.; and the water body 14.61 per cent. Out of that total water body 10.61 per cent is perennial and 4 per cent is swampy. The aquatic vegetation are mainly *Ipomea lactans*, *Learsia hexandra*, *Hanarthia compressa*, *Peltia stafistes*, *Lemnolampi costata*, *Eichhornia* sp., *Salvinia natans*, *Euryale ferox*, *Trapa natans* etc.

We carried out the waterfowl count from 19 January to 22 January 2000. Though the terrain is flat we could cover only around 80 per cent of the total area due to many unavoidable reasons. The wetlands covered in our census were Tamulidova, Haduk, Jugdol, Tuplung-Jan, Solmari, Pagladova and Dholi.

In the morning hours of 19 January 2000 we covered Tamulidova, Haduk, and Jugdol beel and counted 8480 birds of 63 species. On the very next day we covered Tuplung-Jan and Solmari and counted 911 birds of 22 species, and 3154 birds of 32 species respectively. On 21 January we covered Pagladova where we counted 6288 birds of 48 species. On the very last day, on 22 January, we covered Dholi beel and counted 1694 birds of 30 species. Altogether 20,527 birds of 66 species were counted inside the Sanctuary.

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| English Name                  | Scientific Name                    | Numbers |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------|
| <u>Grebes</u>                 |                                    |         |
| Little Grebe                  | <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>      | 12      |
| <u>Pelicans</u>               |                                    |         |
| Spot-billed Pelican           | <i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>      | 16      |
| <u>Cormorants and Darters</u> |                                    |         |
| Great Cormorant               | <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>         | 18      |
| Little Cormorant              | <i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>         | 107     |
| Darter                        | <i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>        | 13      |
| <u>Hérons and Egrets</u>      |                                    |         |
| Cinnamon Bittern              | <i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i>      | 5       |
| Black Bittern                 | <i>Dupetor flavicollis</i>         | 13      |
| Black-crowned Night Heron     | <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>       | 131     |
| Indian Pond Heron             | <i>Ardeola grayii</i>              | 368     |
| Cattle Egret                  | <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>               | 474     |
| Green-backed Heron            | <i>Butorides striatus</i>          | 40      |
| Little Egret                  | <i>Egretta garzetta</i>            | 415     |
| Intermediate Egret            | <i>Mesophoyx intermedia</i>        | 82      |
| Great Egret                   | <i>Casmerodius albus</i>           | 28      |
| Purple Heron                  | <i>Ardea purpurea</i>              | 114     |
| Grey Heron                    | <i>Ardea cinerea</i>               | 105     |
| White-bellied Heron           | <i>Ardea insignis</i>              | 14      |
| <u>Storks</u>                 |                                    |         |
| Asian Open-billed Stork       | <i>Anastomus oscitans</i>          | 556     |
| Black Stork                   | <i>Ciconia niger</i>               | 8       |
| Black-necked Stork            | <i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>  | 16      |
| Lesser Adjutant-Stork         | <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>       | 42      |
| Greater Adjutant-Stork        | <i>Leptoptilos dubius</i>          | 5       |
| <u>Ibis and Spoonbills</u>    |                                    |         |
| Asian White Ibis              | <i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i> | 28      |
| <u>Geese and Ducks</u>        |                                    |         |
| Fulvous Whistling-Duck        | <i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>         | 18      |
| Lesser Whistling-Duck         | <i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>        | 5408    |
| Greylag Goose                 | <i>Anser anser</i>                 | 38      |
| Ruddy Shelduck                | <i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>          | 36      |
| Cotton Pygmy-Goose            | <i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>    | 22      |
| Eurasian Wigeon               | <i>Anas penelope</i>               | 120     |
| Falcated Duck                 | <i>Anas falcata</i>                | 10      |
| Gadwall                       | <i>Anas strepera</i>               | 158     |
| Common Teal                   | <i>Anas crecca</i>                 | 4520    |
| Mallard                       | <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>          | 222     |
| Spot-billed Duck              | <i>Anas poecilorhynchos</i>        | 80      |
| Northern Pintail              | <i>Anas acuta</i>                  | 4800    |
| Garganey                      | <i>Anas querquedula</i>            | 560     |

| English Name                       | Scientific Name                 | Numbers |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------|
| Northern Shoveller                 | <i>Anas clypeata</i>            | 74      |
| Common Pochard                     | <i>Aythya ferina</i>            | 286     |
| Baer's Pochard                     | <i>Aythya baeri</i>             | 68      |
| Ferruginous Pochard                | <i>Aythya nyroca</i>            | 296     |
| Tufted Pochard                     | <i>Aythya fuligula</i>          | 70      |
| <u>Rails, Gallinules and Coots</u> |                                 |         |
| Water Rail                         | <i>Rallus aquaticus</i>         | 12      |
| Brown Crake                        | <i>Amauornis akool</i>          | 32      |
| White-breasted Waterhen            | <i>Amauornis phoenicurus</i>    | 70      |
| Water Cock                         | <i>Gallicrex cinerea</i>        | 8       |
| Common Moorhen                     | <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>      | 58      |
| Purple Swampphen                   | <i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>      | 9       |
| Common Coot                        | <i>Fulica atra</i>              | 16      |
| <u>Finfoots and Jacanas</u>        |                                 |         |
| Pheasant-tailed Jacana             | <i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i> | 74      |
| Bronze-winged Jacana               | <i>Metopidius indicus</i>       | 228     |
| <u>Shore Birds - Waders</u>        |                                 |         |
| Greater Painted-Snipe              | <i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>  | 6       |
| Northern Lapwing                   | <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>        | 134     |
| Grey-headed Plover                 | <i>Vanellus cinereus</i>        | 60      |
| Red-wattled Lapwing                | <i>Vanellus indicus</i>         | 45      |
| Long-billed Plover                 | <i>Charadrius placidus</i>      | 12      |
| Little Ringed Plover               | <i>Charadrius dubius</i>        | 6       |
| Common Redshank                    | <i>Tringa totanus</i>           | 24      |
| Marsh Sandpiper                    | <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>       | 125     |
| Common Greenshank                  | <i>Tringa nebularia</i>         | 31      |
| Nordmann's Greenshank              | <i>Tringa guttifer</i>          | 5       |
| Common Sandpiper                   | <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>       | 80      |
| Pin-tailed Snipe                   | <i>Gallinago stenura</i>        | 7       |
| Common Snipe                       | <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>      | 57      |
| <u>Gulls, Terns and Skimmers</u>   |                                 |         |
| River Tern                         | <i>Sterna aurantia</i>          | 22      |
| <u>Additional species</u>          |                                 |         |
| Eurasian Marsh Harrier             | <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>       | 8       |
| Osprey                             | <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>        | 2       |

Common names after Manakadan, *et al.* (1998).

## References

Manakadan, R., J.C. Daniel, A.R. Rahmani, M. Inamdar and G. Ugra (1998). Standardised English common names of the birds of the Indian Subcontinent - a proposal. *Buceros* 3(2): 55pp. Bombay Natural History Society, Mumbai.

## THE INDIAN PANGOLIN (*MANIS CRASSICAUDATA*) IN THE CHAMBAL RAVINES OF ETAWAH

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Little is known about the habits of the Indian Pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*). Also called the Scaly Anteater, the pangolin has a wide distribution range in India (Prater, 1997). Pangolins are known to live in a variety of habitats ranging from deserts to rain forests (Prater, 1997). It is protected under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

In the Chambal ravines of Etawah District in southwestern Uttar Pradesh, we recorded a pangolin at Chakarnagar Village caught within the confines of a forest bungalow. Subsequent enquiries in the region proved that the species is fairly widely distributed in the ravines. Locals call the animal *Sechi* and we obtained reliable records of pangolin sightings from Bindwa, Sindaus and Bhareh villages (within an area of ca. 100 km<sup>2</sup>). The captured pangolin was measured to be .91m (3ft) in length. This fits within the range mentioned for the species by Prater (1997) and was probably not a full grown one.

Most villagers are familiar with the species and it seems to be common in the area. Pangolins are known to dig into houses with mud walls looking for food. A few villagers in the area kill the animals for food.

This is the first record of the pangolin from this area to the best of our knowledge. In Sabalgarh, Madhya Pradesh, one specimen was killed by the local people in the summer of 1984 and brought for identification (L.A.K. Singh, additional information). Dacoity in the Chambal ravines discourages wildlife enthusiasts from exploring the region. Further studies in the area on this elusive animal may provide useful information on its ecology and help in its conservation.

## Reference

Prater, S.H. (1997). *The book of Indian Animals (10<sup>th</sup> impression)*. Bombay Natural History Society, Mumbai, pp. 301-303.

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