

A CHECKLIST OF BIRDS OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS, KOZHIKODE, KERALA

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An article by Palot and Pramod (2000) provided a non-annotated checklist of birds found in Calicut University Campus, Kozhikode, Kerala. In this note, we provide a corresponding checklist with relative abundance indicators for a college campus lying east (25km east) of the Calicut University Campus. A comparison among the checklists is attempted as both the campuses have similar sizes and habitats. The study period is also of comparable duration though during different years, 1993-96 for Palot and Pramod (2000) while 1996-2000 in this case.

Study area: The National Institute of Technology (formerly Regional Engineering College) campus in Kozhikode (formerly Calicut) is situated roughly 22km north-east of Kozhikode city, almost at the foothills of the Western Ghats, with an approximate area of 120ha. The topography of the campus is undulating with laterite hillocks supporting mixed groves and bushes with some acacia/cashew plantations in the slopes. The vegetation is dominated by bushes like *Calicopteris floribunda*, *Lantana camara*, *Rauvolfia tetraphylla*, *Eupatorium odoratum* and *Clerodendrum infortunatum* interspersed with tress like *Mangifera indica*, *Macaranga peltata*, *Alstonia scholaris*, *Azadirachta indica* and *Ficus benghalensis*. The road that leads from Kozhikode to the town of Areekode bisects the campus. Most of the administrative and academic buildings are housed in the southeastern corner of the campus. The residential buildings on the northwestern side of the campus are well spaced with lush, wild patches of undergrowth sprayed with native tree species. This includes several fruit-bearing and berry-bearing species (like *Mangifera indica* & *Ficus* spp.), deliberately planted by the authorities over the due course of time. Rest of the campus is uninhabited forest, almost fully contiguous, except for the presence of a couple of football fields cradled in the valley between two hillocks. The presence of these grounds provide better pedestrian access to these forested areas of the campus. A large section in the southern part of this forested zone comprises of a plantation of exotic Acacia trees, a best example of how not to add tree cover!

The authors visited all the habitats and trek routes in the campus during all months of the year with regular frequency during the study period. Hence, the checklist can be considered more or less comprehensive for the region.

Noteworthy species:

1. Malabar Whistling Thrush (*Myophonus horsfieldii*)

A handful of sightings in the forested patches during post-

monsoon months. This might indicate a dispersal of this species from the breeding grounds during the nonbreeding season. The melodious song was never heard though the authors recorded the single noted "swing" whistle. Palot and Pramod (2000) had not reported this species from their study site possibly indicating that the dispersal does not reach that far from the Western Ghats.

2. Indian Rufous Babbler (*Turdoides subrufa*)

Very local. All sightings of this species were at a single locality within the campus and hence could probably be a remnant population. Not more than 10 individuals noted at a time. Not recorded by Palot and Pramod (2000).

3. Brown-breasted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa muttui*)

There was just one single sighting from the campus probably on passage. Not recorded by Palot and Pramod (2000).

4. Yellow-wattled Lapwing (*Vanellus malabaricus*)

This is one species that has been severely affected by the acquisition of open fallow land. This threat, though widespread throughout the country, can be much appreciated in Kerala as the remaining population of this species has localized itself to college campuses where open playgrounds abound. NIT campus has got a good population of these lapwings. Up to 30-odd individuals have been recorded as part of a single group.

Threats and Conservation: Being an academic campus, the remaining wooded patches are always under threat from constant development for new infrastructure. The college nature club thwarted several tree-cutting plans of the authorities during the authors' stay at NIT Calicut. A plan was also chalked out to selectively replace the existing acacia plantations with natural tree cover and afforestation schemes with the help of Social Forestry division of the Forest Department. Saplings of indigenous trees were planted in several areas where acacia was removed. Luckily none of the playgrounds were converted to buildings during the period; any such attempts will severely threaten the existence of birds like Yellow-wattled Lapwings.

Table 1. Comparison of results between NIT Campus and Calicut University Campus.

Attribute	University Campus (Palot & Pramod, 2000)	NIT Campus (This paper)
Period	1993-1996	1996-2000
Area	200 hectares ¹	120 hectares
Species	124	118
Migrants	14	19
Local Migrants	0 ²	4
Vagrants	0 ³	1
Primary Hole Nesting Species (Woodpeckers & Barbets)	8	6
Nest Parasite Species (Cuckoos)	4	3
Undergrowth Species (Pheasants, Quails & Thrushes)	1	4
Birds of Prey (Eagles, Falcons & Owls)	13	12
Western Ghat Endemics	1 ⁴	1 ⁵

¹ A probable error in [3], where area is mentioned as 25km² which is unlikely

² Palot and Pramod do not classify this status

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⁴ Small Sunbird

⁵ Rufous Babbler

Table 2. Birds of National Institute of Technology Campus, Kozhikode

S. No.	Common Name	Scientific Name	Status
1.	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	C
2.	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	R
3.	Median Egret	<i>Mesophoyx intermedia</i>	R
4.	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	F
5.	Large Egret	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>	R
6.	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	C
7.	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	R
8.	Chestnut Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i>	R
9.	Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	R
10.	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	F
11.	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>	F
12.	Shikra	<i>Accipiter Badius</i>	F
13.	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	R
14.	Changeable Hawk Eagle	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i>	R
15.	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	R, M
16.	Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>	F
17.	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	R
18.	Red Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix spadicea</i>	F
19.	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amauromis phoenicurus</i>	F
20.	Bronze-winged Jacana	<i>Metopidius indicus</i>	R
21.	Common Sandpiper	<i>Tringa hypoleucos</i>	R, M
22.	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	R, M
23.	Little-ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	R, M
24.	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	C
25.	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>	C
26.	Common Snipe(?)	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	R, M
27.	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	C
28.	Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	C
29.	Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	C
30.	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	C
31.	Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>	C
32.	Vernal Hanging-Parrot	<i>Loriculus vernalis</i>	C
33.	Common Hawk Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus varius</i>	F
34.	Grey-bellied cuckoo (?)	<i>Cacomantis passerinus</i>	R
35.	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopacea</i>	C
36.	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	C
37.	Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama</i>	C
38.	Jungle Owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>	C
39.	Collared Scops Owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>	F
40.	Black-Nest Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia fuciphaga</i>	F
41.	Brown-backed Needletail Swift	<i>Hirundapus giganteus</i>	R
42.	White-rumped Needletail Swift	<i>Zoonavena sylvatica</i>	R
43.	Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>	R
44.	House Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	C
45.	Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>	C
46.	Lesser Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	R
47.	Small Blue Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	F
48.	White-breasted Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	C
49.	Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>	R
50.	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>	R, M
51.	Small Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	F
52.	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	F
53.	Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	R
54.	White-cheeked Barbet	<i>Megalaima viridis</i>	C
55.	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>	F
56.	Rufous Woodpecker	<i>Celeus brachyurus</i>	R
57.	Lesser Golden-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>	F
58.	Common Golden-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dinopium javanense</i>	R
59.	Grey-capped Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos canicapillus</i>	R
60.	Indian Pitta	<i>Pitta brachyura</i>	R, M
61.	Bengal bush-lark	<i>Mirafrass assamica</i>	C
62.	Ashy Crowned Sparrow Lark	<i>Eremopterix grisea</i>	R
63.	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	R
64.	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo fluvicola</i>	R
65.	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	C, M
66.	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	F, M
67.	Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>	C
68.	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	C
69.	Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>	C, M
70.	Bronzed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus aeneus</i>	F
71.	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>	C
72.	Ashy Wood Swallow	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>	C
73.	Grey-headed Starling	<i>Sturnus malabaricus</i>	C, M
74.	White-headed Starling	<i>Sturnus erythropygius</i>	R, LM (?)

S. No.	Common Name	Scientific Name	Status
75.	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	C
76.	Indian Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>	C
77.	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	C
78.	Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	C
79.	Black-headed Cuckoo-Shrike	<i>Coracina melanoptera</i>	R
80.	Large Cuckoo Shrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>	R
81.	Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	C, LM (?)
82.	Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	F
83.	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>	F
84.	Jerdon's Chloropsis	<i>Chloropsis cochinchinensis</i>	F
85.	Gold-fronted Chloropsis	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>	F
86.	Red-whiskered Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	C
87.	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	C
88.	White-browed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>	F
89.	Rufous Babbler	<i>Turdoides subrufus</i>	F
90.	Jungle Babbler	<i>Turdoides striatus</i>	F
91.	Yellow-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides affinis</i>	C
92.	Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa dauurica</i>	R, M
93.	Brown-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa muttui</i>	R, M
94.	Tickell's Blue-Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>	R
95.	Asian Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>	F, M
96.	Black-naped Monarch-Flycatcher	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	F
97.	Streaked Fantail-Warbler	<i>Zisticola juncidis</i>	R
98.	Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>	R
99.	Grey-breasted Prinia	<i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>	R
100.	Common Tailor Bird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	C
101.	Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>	C, M
102.	Greenish Leaf-Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>	C, M
103.	Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	C
104.	Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicatus</i>	C
105.	Malabar Whistling Thrush	<i>Myiophonus horsfieldii</i>	R, LM (?)
106.	Orange-headed (White-throated) Ground Thrush	<i>Zoothera citrina</i>	F, LM (?)
107.	Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	F, M
108.	Paddy field Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>	C
109.	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	F, M
110.	White-browed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla madaraspatensis</i>	C
111.	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>	F
112.	Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i>	C
113.	Loten's Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia lotenia</i>	C
114.	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	F
115.	Yellow-throated Sparrow	<i>Petronia xanthocollis</i>	F, M
116.	Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>	R
117.	White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>	C
118.	Spotted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	R

M	Migrant	Considered migratory in the whole of Kerala.
LM	Local Migrant	Migrating locally outside the campus
V	Vagrant	On passage.
C	Common	Indicates the species can be spotted during any normal outing (For migrants during the months they stay)
F	Fairly Common	Indicates the species can be spotted only after a few regular visits to the habitat.
R	Rare	Not more than five sightings during the study period.



It should be realized that large college campuses like NIT has a role to play in conservation of natural eco-systems. These areas are possibly the least affected in terms of biotic pressure and hence can be used to harbor rich bio-diversity through careful planning.

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