

Short Communications

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON BIRD FAUNA OF RICE CROP-ECOSYSTEM IN THE CHAR LANDS OF RAJSHAHI DISTRICT

Behaviour of different birds and its effects on agricultural crops were studied in charland of the Padma belt under Rajshahi district. A list of different migratory and resident birds were prepared and effects of those birds on agricultural crops, mainly rice, were observed. The study revealed that most of the birds are useful for agricultural crops as they live on injurious insects and thus save the crops from destruction.

The survey was carried out in the cultivated land in major rice growing areas, charlands and the belt of the Padma during different periods from April to December in six different trips covering three years. The paddy fields and some water logged canals of the Padma harbour fishes, crabs, frogs, snakes and aquatic insects to provide the conditions inviting a large number of insectivorous birds to this region.

Though the principal agro-ecosystem in the charlands of Rajshahi district is

rice-based, in the absence of proper irrigation system maximum areas of the charlands are not fit for rice cultivation. The average rainfall here is heavy in the months of July to September and light or nil in the months of October and November. The birds were identified in the field with the help of a binocular and direct observation. The features of the confused birds were noted in the field and they were then identified with the help of authentic books. The observations in respect of status were then summarised as follows :

Among the birds, the paddy bird found in paddy fields and water logged areas of the Padma was very active and beneficial for young seedlings which were being destroyed or cut-up by immature crabs and other insects.

The Black Drongo is purely insectivorous and lives on injurious insects like Leafrollers, Moths, Skippers, etc. of the ricecrop fields. The Myna is highly beneficial

Scientific name	Common name	Status
<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	Common myna	Very common
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Common Sandpiper	Common
<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Common Kingfisher	Common
<i>Apus affinis</i>	House swift	Very common
<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	Paddy bird	Very common
<i>Athene brama</i>	Spotted owlet	Less common
<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Cattle egret	Common
<i>Calidris Subminuta</i>	Long-toed stint	Common
<i>Capella stenura</i>	Pintail snipe	Common
<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Little ringed plover	Common
<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	Pied Kingfisher	Common
<i>Columbia livia</i>	Blue rock pigeon	Common
<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	Magpie robin	Common
<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	Indian roller	Less common
<i>Corvus splendens</i>	House crow	Common
<i>Halcyon smurnensis</i>	Whitebreasted kingfisher	Common
<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	Redrumped swallow	Common
<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	Spotted munia	Less common
<i>Merops orientalis</i>	Small green bee-eater	Common
<i>Motacilla maderaspatensis</i>	Large pied wagtail	Less common
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House sparrow	Very common
<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>	Baya weaver bird	Very common
<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	Roseringed parakeet	Common
<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	Little tern	Less common
<i>Sterna aurautia</i>	River tern	Less common
<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Common tern	Less common
<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	Spotted dove	Common
<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	Redvented bulbul	Common
<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	Redwattled lapwing	Common
<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	Black drongo	Very common

to the agro-crops as it helps to eradicate the soil insects at the time of ploughing and after the harvest. The small green Bee-eater, White-breasted Kingfisher, and Swallow are always present in large numbers in the agricultural field. The Pintail Snipe, Tern, Kingfishers, Cattle Egret, Plover and Lapwings were found in marshy areas of paddy field, river bank and water logged areas of the Padma searching for worms, larvae and other aquatic insects.

From this study, it is evident that certain birds are very useful in the control of

injurious insects damaging the crops. Now-a-days, insects on cereals have become a problem and a considerable amount of hard earned foreign exchange is being annually spent on importing insecticides for their control. Besides, use of insecticides has side effects which may ultimately affect balanced ecosystem. Therefore, it is the time to think about the natural control of injurious insects and in that case selected birds can play an important role. Stress should, therefore, be given for extensive as well as intensive study on this subject.

M. M. Rahman
Wildlife Section
Forest Research Institute
Chittagong, Bangladesh

Simon Wakefield
Ecology Branch
University of Exeter
U. K.

Rehana Begum
Zoology Department
University of Chittagong
Bangladesh