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Exploring the Avian Fauna of Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Abstract: This survey was conducted from January 2013 to December 2013 to explore the avian fauna of Swat valley and to find out the major threats to the avian fauna of the valley. In this survey total 138 species were recorded belonging to 13 orders and 48 families. The order Passeriformes were recorded much in number that were 31 species. Most of the birds were migratory and few were resident. The fauna was much rich due to the flora of the area and also due to less hunting. Order Anseriformes, Apodiformes, Charadriiformes, Columbiformes, Pelecaniformes, Phoenicopteriformes, Psittaciformes were found migratory and order Ciconiiformes, Coraciiformes, Galliformes, Piciformes were found resident while some members of Gruiformes and Passeriformes were found migratory and some resident.

Key words: Avian Fauna · Swat · Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Birds are one of the most popular life forms on the planet and its diversity leads to a richness of life and beauty. Apart from this, birds have always fascinated mankind with their intrinsically beautiful plumage, melodious songs and artistic behavior. There are around 9000 species of birds living in the world today, with a tremendous diversity of life style. Besides this, birds are valuable for many aspects *i.e.* sensitive indicator of pollution and also play great role in pest control.

The bird's species are friend of farmers who believe that bird consumes large numbers of harmful insects, as well as their eggs and larvae which serves as a biological control agent of insect pests in Pakistan [1, 2].

Birds are of great economic importance to the human society. They play an important role in controlling population of different insects and pests. They play the role of scavengers and pollinating agents and also help's in dispersal of seeds of different vegetations. They are helpful and help to provide rich food for mankind and are known to man since ages [3].

Wildlife management and conservation initiatives are only possible with the appropriate information on wildlife

and its habitat [4]. Wildlife habitat basically comprises of food, cover and water. Each species require a particular habitat or the space, food, shelter and other needs of survival so much so that species are said to be the product of their habitat [5].

As regards birds, the total number of birds species in the world today is 9040 and the total number of taxa of birds of Indo-Pakistan subcontinent is 2060 [6]. The variety of avian species in ecosystems reflects the well being of its habitat. Birds are the indicators of environment and are being used for conservation and environmental impact assessment [7].

Of course, the Indian subcontinent, a part of the vast Oriental biogeographic regions, is very rich in biodiversity. Out of the more than 9,000 birds of the world, the Indian subcontinent contains about 1,300 species, or over 13% of the world's birds [8].

Pakistan harbors a wide range of ecosystems which in turn catches the attention of a diverse avifauna to exploit their resources [9]. More than 650 species of birds have been reported in the country and their occurrence in three zoogeographical zones (Oriental, Palaearctic and Ethopian region) is unique in the world [10, 11].

Although the bird is intensively hunted and captured in its native range in Pakistan, owing to which local populations could be declining, but the overall status of the species is regarded as stable [12-14]. The species is a friend of farmers who believe this bird consumes large numbers of harmful insects, as well as their eggs and larvae and serves therefore as a biological control agent of insect pests in Pakistan [1, 2].

The bird is normally found foraging in open cultivated tracks and grasslands intermixed with scrub forests and are rarely observed above an elevation of 1200 m in Pakistan. The Grey Francolin (*Francolinus pondicerianus*) is widely associated with the drier regions of the Indus plains and has penetrated the Thar Desert in Sindh, as well as the Thal and Chohlistan deserts in Punjab. The species also occurs in the lower hills of the Makran and Lasbela districts in Balochistan, the Cherat and Kohat districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, the salt range and agro-forestry tracks of the Pothwar Plateau in the Punjab and in the Margalla hills of Islamabad [15-17].

In Khyber Pukhtoon Khawa the wild fauna is rich and its wildlife flourishing in forests is a preciou heritage of the country but due to motorized and ground hunting these wildlife species were run a point of extinction. For this purpose it is necessary to provide best protection to wildlife in Khyber pukhtoon khawa, therefore several areas were declared as protected areas [18].

The present study was conducted to study:

- The avian fauna of Swat valley
- To find out the major threats to the Avian fauna of the valley
- To differentiate between migratory and endemic birds

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area: The lush green and historic Swat Valley lies between 34°-40′ to 35° N latitude and 72′ to 74°-6′ E longitude and is part of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of the Khyber Pukhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan. Total area is 5,337 km 2, total population is 1,257,602 and capital is Saidu Shariff.

The survey was conducted from January 2013 to December 2013. The data was collected by using the direct as well as indirect methods in order to study the present status of avian fauna of Swat valley district Swat. Direct data collection will be made by visiting to the study

area once or twice a day early in the morning at 8:00 am till sunset. The bird fauna were observed using Binocular and the status of each bird was stated as M= Migratory, R = Resident, C = Common; r = Rare; WM = Winter Migrant; SM = Summer Migrant.

In indirect data collection: hunters, wildlife staff, local residents, farmers and other knowledgeable persons were interviewed about the present and past status of the birds diversity of the study area. The main focus was made by visiting study area rather to made relay on the data which was collected indirectly.

RESULTS

The survey was conducted from January 2013 to December 2013. In this survey total 138 species were recorded which belong to 13 orders and 48 families. The fauna of the study area was rich. Most of the birds were migratory. Order Anseriformes, Apodiformes, Charadriiformes, Columbiformes, Pelecaniformes, Phoenicopteriformes, Psittaciformes were found migratory and order Ciconiiformes, Coraciiformes, Galliformes, Piciformes were found resident while some members of Gruiformes and Passeriformes were found migratory and some resident.

During the survey total 15 species belonging to family antidae were recorded and all were summer migratory (SM), all the species were rare (r) except (*Mergus merganser*) which was common as shown in Table 1.1.

The species of the family Apodidae were found migratory (M) and were rare (r) in numbers as shown in Table 1.2.

Most of the species of the order charadriiformes were found migratory and were summer migratory (SM) and were noted as common (C) while, *Vanellus vanellus* was winter migratory (WM) and was recorded as rare (r), as shown in Table 1.3.

All species of the family Ardeidae and Ciconiidae were found resident (R) but were rare in numbers as shown in Table 1.4.

The species of the family Columbidae were found migratory (M) and were summer migratory (SM) and all were found as common (C) except *Chalcophaps indica*, *Treron pompadora* and *Treron phoenicoptera* which were rare in numbers as shown in Table 1.5.

The species of the order coraciiformes were resident (R) and were common (C), while *Upupa epops* was found migratory (M) and rare (r) in number, as shown in Table 1.6.

Table 1.1: Order Anseriformes

Famliy	Scientific name	Local name	Status
Anatidae	Aythya baeri	Shingare	M (SM) (r)
Anatidae	Anas Formosa	Shingare	M (SM) (r)
Anatidae	Tadorna ferruginea	Shingare	M (SM) (r)
Anatidae	Anas falcate	Shingare	M (SM) (r)
Anatidae	Anas strepera	Shingare	M (SM) (r)
Anatidae	Anas crecca	Shingare	M (SM) (r)
Anatidae	Anas platyrhynchos	Shingare	M (SM) (r)
Anatidae	Anas poecilorhyncha	Shingare	M (SM) (r)
Anatidae	Anas acuta	Shingare	M (SM) (r)
Anatidae	Anas clypeata	Shingare	M (SM) (r)
Anatidae	Aythya ferina	Shingare	M (SM) (r)
Anatidae	Aythya nyroca	Shingare	M (SM) (r)
Anatidae	Clangula hyemalis	Shingare	M (SM) (r)
Anatidae	Bucephala clangula	Shingare	M (SM) (r)
Anatidae	Mergus merganser	Shingare	M (SM) (C)

Table 1.2: Order Apodiformes

Famliy	Scientific name	Local name	Status
Apodidae	Tachymarptis melba	Lagarai	M (r)
Apodidae	Cypsiurus balasiensis	Lagarai	M (r)
Apodidae	Apus apus	Lagarai	M (r)
Apodidae	Apus pacificus	Lagarai	M (r)
Apodidae	Apus nipalensis	Lagarai	M (r)
Apodidae	Apus pallidus	Lagarai	M (r)

Table 1.3: Order Charadriiformes

Famliy	Scientific name	Local name	Status
Scolopacidae	Limosa lapponica	Tum Tel	M (SM) (C)
Scolopacidae	Calidris ferruginea	Tum Tel	M (SM) (C)
Scolopacidae	Lymnocryptes minimus	Chaghat	M (SM) (C)
Scolopacidae	Calidris acuminata	Tum Tel	M (SM) (C)
Scolopacidae	Limicola falcinellus	Tum Tel	M(SM)(C)
Scolopacidae	Actitis hypoleucos	Tum Tel	M(SM)(C)
Scolopacidae	Calidris alpine	Tum Tel	M(SM)(C)
Scolopacidae	Calidris alba	Tum Tel	M(SM)(C)
Scolopacidae	Calidris temminckii	Tum Tel	M(SM)(C)
Dromadidae	Dromas ardeola	Tum Tel	M (SM) (C)
Recurvirostridae	Himantopus himantopus	Tum Tel	M(SM)(C)
Glareolidae	Cursorius cursor	Tum Tel	M (SM) (C)
Glareolidae	Cursorius coromandelicus	Tum Tel	M (SM) (C)
Charadriidae	Vanellus vanellus	Babozai	M (WM) (r)
Charadriidae	Charadrius hiaticula	Tum Tel	M(SM)(C)
Charadriidae	Vanellus leucurus	Tum Tel	M (SM) (C)
Charadriidae	Charadrius mongolus	Tum Tel	M(SM)(C)
Stercorariidae	Stercorarius pomarinus	Tum Tel	M(SM)(C)
Laridae	Larus canus		M (SM) (C)
Laridae	Larus heuglini	Tum Tel	M (SM) (C)
Laridae	Larus ridibundus	Tum Tel	M(SM)(C)
Rostratulidae	Rostratula benghalensis	Tum Tel	M (SM) (C)
Haematopodidae	Haematopus ostralegus	Tum Tel	M (SM) (C)

Table 1.4: Order Ciconiiformes

Famliy	Scientific name	Local name	Status
Ardeidae	Ardea modesta	Bagh	R (r)
Ardeidae	Ixobrychus flavicollis	Bagh	R (r)
Ardeidae	Nycticorax nycticorax	Bagh	R (r)
Ardeidae	Ardea cinerea	Bagh	R (r)
Ardeidae	Ardea goliath	Bagh	R (r)
Ardeidae	Ardea purpurea	Bagh	R (r)
Ardeidae	Egretta intermedia	Bagh	R (r)
Ardeidae	Egretta gularis	Bagh	R (r)
Ardeidae	Egretta garzetta	Bagh	R (r)
Ardeidae	Ardeola grayii	Bagh	R (r)
Ardeidae	Bubulcus ibis	Bagh	R (r)
Ardeidae	Butorides striata	Bagh	R (r)
Ardeidae	Ixobrychus minutus	Bagh	R (r)
Ardeidae	Ixobrychus cinnamomeus	Bagh	R (r)
Ciconiidae	Ciconia nigra	Zanrai	R (C)
Ciconiidae	Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus	Zanrai	R (C)
Ciconiidae	Ciconia ciconia	Zanrai	R ©

Table 1.5: Order Columbiformes

Famliy	Scientific name	Local name	Status
Columbidae	Chalcophaps indica	Toti ranga kautara	M (SM) (r)
Columbidae	Streptopelia decaocto	Kautara	M (SM) (C)
Columbidae	Columba livia	Shna Kautara	M (SM) (C)
Columbidae	Columba rupestris	Shna Kautara	M (SM) (C)
Columbidae	Columba leuconota	Kautara	M(SM)(C)
Columbidae	Columba eversmanni	Banj karoro kautara	M (SM) (C)
Columbidae	Columba palumbus	Shna Kautara	M (SM) (C)
Columbidae	Columba hodgsonii	Tapasai kautara	M(SM)(C)
Columbidae	Streptopelia turtur	Kanra kautara	M (SM) (C)
Columbidae	Streptopelia chinensis	Kautara	M(SM)(C)
Columbidae	Streptopelia senegalensis	Spalama kautara	M(SM)(C)
Columbidae	Treron pompadora	Toti ranga kautara	M (SM) (r)
Columbidae	Treron phoenicoptera	Toti ranga kautara	M (SM) (r)
Columbidae	Streptopelia orientalis	Karkorai kautara	M (SM) (C)

Table 1.6: Order Coraciiformes

Famliy	Scientific name	Local name	Status
Alcedinidae	Halcyon pileata	Shentagh	R (C)
Alcedinidae	Alcedo atthis	Shentagh	R (C)
Alcedinidae	Megaceryle lugubris	Mula chargakh	R (C)
Coraciidae	Coracias garrulus	Shentagh	R (C)
Upupidae	Upupa epops	Mula chargakh	M (r)

Table 1.7: Order Galliformes

Famliy	Scientific name	Local name	Status
Phasianidae	Alectoris chukar	Zarka	R (C)
Phasianidae	Francolinus francolinus	Taro	R (C)
Phasianidae	Francolinus pondicerianus	Tanzarai	R (C)
Phasianidae	Coturnix coturnix	Batair	R (C)
Phasianidae	Coturnix coromandelica	Batair	R (C)
Phasianidae	Perdicula asiatica	Batair	R (C)
Phasianidae	Lophophorus impejanus	Late	R (C)
Phasianidae	Catreus wallichi	Sham	R (C)
Phasianidae	Lophura leucomelanos	Taro	R (C)

Table 1.8: Order Gruiformes

Famliy	Scientific name	Local name	Status
Turnicidae	Turnix suscitator	Nwaraz	R (C)
Turnicidae	Turnix sylvatica	Nwaraz	R (C)
Gruidae	Grus antigone	Deng	M (C)
Gruidae	Grus nigricollis	Deng	M (C)
Gruidae	Anthropoides virgo	Deng	M (C)
Rallidae	Gallicrex cinerea	Khwar chargai	R (C)
Rallidae	Gallinula chloropus	Khwar chargai	R (C)

Table 1.9: Order Passeriformes

Famliy	Scientific name	Local name	Status
Sturnidae	Sturnus vulgaris	Sakhakha	M (WM) (C)
Sturnidae	Acridotheres ginginianus	Kharoo	R (C)
Sturnidae	Acridotheres tristis	Kharoo	R (C)
Zosteropidae	Zosterops palpebrosus	Zyar chatai	R (C)
Dicaeidae	Dicaeum erythrorhynchos	Chatai	R (C)
Passeridae	Passer domesticus	Chanchanra	R (C)
Corvidae	Corvus splendens	Kargha	R (C)
Corvidae	Corvus corone	Kagha	R (C)
Leiothrichidae	Turdoides caudate	Soorra	R (C)
Hirundinidae	Hirundo rustica	Totakarkai	M (WM) (C)
Dicruridae	Dicrurus macrocercus	Toranakha	M (SM) (C)
Monarchidae	Terpsiphone paradisi	Partoghakhai	M (WM) (C)
Certhiidae	Certhia himalayana	Tak takai	R (r)
Ploceidae	Ploceus philippinus	Tan tanai	R (C)
Laniidae	Lanius vittatus	Teghak	R (r)
Fringillidae	Carpodacus pulcherrimus	Sur sare	M (SM) (C)
Pycnonotidae	Pycnonotus atriceps	Balbala	R (C)
Pycnonotidae	Pycnonotus leucogenys	Balbala	R (C)
Pycnonotidae	Pycnonotus leucotis	Balbala	R (C)
Pycnonotidae	Pycnonotus cafer	Balbala	R (C)
Emberizidae	Emberiza melanocephala	Tan tanai	R (C)
Emberizidae	Emberiza fucata	Chanchanra	R (C)
Emberizidae	Melophus lathami	Tan tanai	R (C)
Motacillidae	Motacilla alba	Sper lakai	R (C)
Motacillidae	Motacilla madaraspatensis	Sper lakai	R (C)
Motacillidae	Motacilla citreola	Sper lakai	R (C)
Motacillidae	Motacilla lugens	Sper lakai	R (C)
Campephagidae	Pericrocotus erythropygius	Tan tanai	R (C)
Regulidaes	Regulus regulus	Tan tanai	R (C)
Aegithinidae	Aegithina tiphia	Tan tanai	R (C)
Cinclidae	Cinclus pallasii	Dabagai	R (C)

Table 2.1: Order Pelecaniformes

Famliy	Scientific name	Local name	Status
Phaethontidae	Phaethon aethereus	Batha	M (SM) (C)
Pelecanidae	Pelecanus onocrotalus	Batha	M (SM) (C)
Pelecanidae	Pelecanus philippensis	Batha	M (SM) (C)
Pelecanidae	Pelecanus crispus	Batha	M (SM) (C)
Anhingidae	Anhinga melanogaster	Batha	M (SM) (C)

Table 2.2: Order Phoenicopteriformes

Famliy	Scientific name	Local name	Status
Phoenicopteridae	Phoenicopterus roseus	Deng	M (SM) (r)
Phoenicopteridae	Phoenicopterus minor	Deng	M (SM) (r)

Table 2.3: Order Piciformes

Famliy	Scientific name	Local name	Status
Picidae	Dendrocopos moluccensis	Tak takai	R (r)
Table 2.4: (Order Psittaciformes		
Famliy	Scientific name	Local name	Status
Psittacidae	Psittacula krameri	Toti	M (C)
Psittacidae	Psittacula himalayana	Toti	M (C)
Psittacidae	Psittacula cyanocephala	Toti	M (C)

The members of the family Phasianidae were resident (R) and found as common(C) as shown in Table 1.7.

The members of the family Turnicidae and Rallidae were resident (R) and were common (C), while the members of the family Gruidae were migratory (M) and were also noted as common (C), as shown in Table 1.8.

Most of the species of the order Passeriformes were resident (R) and were common except Sturnus vulgaris, *Hirundo rustica* and *Terpsiphone paradise* were found winter migratory (WM) and were common, while *Dicrurus macrocercus* and *Carpodacus pulcherrimus* were summer migratory (SM) and were common, as shown in Table 1.9.

All members of the order Pelecaniformes summer migratory (SM) and were found common as shown in Table 2.1.

Species of the order Phoenicopteriformes were found summer migratory (SM) and were rare in numbers as shown in Table 2.2.

The *Dendrocopos moluccensis* was the only member of the family Picidae, recorded during the study and was resident (R) and was found as rare (r) as shown in Table 2.3.

Members of the family Psittacidae were found migratory (M) and were common as shown in Table 2.4.

DISCUSSION

The food availability, feeding and habitats may be the main factors of variation in the birds population slightly than any other risk [19]. In our study it was observed that the avian fauna of the study area was rich because the flora of the study area was much thick and we know that the fauna is totally defendant on the flora as it provide shelter, food, habitat so the avian fauna of the study area was much rich.

The birds are intensively hunted and captured in its native range in Pakistan, owing to which local populations could be declining, but the overall status of the species are regarded as stable [12-14]. In our study it was observed that the birds were hunted but the hunting ratio was low due to current situation of terrorism in swat, therefore the bird fauna was rich.

To avoid the severe winter season large number of birds migrate from central Asian countries and Europe towards wetlands of Pakistan. There are seven fly zones all over the world in which the one zone (Indus fly zone) is present in Pakistan. The birds reach Pakistan flying over Karakorum, Suleiman Ranges and Hindu Kush along the Indus river. Falcons, cranes, swans, ducks, flamingos, waders and geese are important migratory birds in host country [20]. Similarly in our study the migratory birds recorded were ducks, geese and swans, which were mostly summer visitor.

Birds are normally found foraging in open cultivated tracks and grasslands intermixed with scrub forests and are rarely observed above an elevation of 1200 m in Pakistan [21].

Rose ringed parakeet, house crow, house sparrow, mynas, bulbuls were common among the resident birds; while, kingfisher, koel, rollers and tree pie were rare in number and have small spread families [22]. House Sparrow, house crow, myna and bulbul were recorded as residential and abundant as also reported previously [23, 24]. In our study the resident birds were chakurs, pheasants, house crow, house sparrow, mynas and bulbuls which are quite similar to the previous studies.

Common sand piper is common winter visitor to Azad Kashmir, Plumbeous redstart and river chats are also common and locally migrant [24]. Similarly in our study sand piper were found winter visitor.

Alectoris chukar has worldwide distribution, found in India, Afghanistan, Middle East and Western Himalayas, east to central Nepal [6]. In Pakistan, Alectoris chukar is very adaptable to all kinds of the arid, rocky and hilly country ascending to the higher mountain valleys of the inner Himalayas ranges [15] and bare, arid hillside of the Punjab and western Himalayas [25]. It is distributed throughout Pakistan in certain places, that is Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan, Chitral, Salt range, Swat, Kohistan and Gilgit [15,25]. This bird is also found throughout the AJK [26]. In our study the Alectoris chukar was found widely in much number due to the less hunting in the study area due to the cease fire in the swat.

The Grey Francolin (Francolinus pondicerianus) is widely associated with the drier regions of the Indus plains and has penetrated the Thar Desert in Sindh, as well as the Thal and Chohlistan deserts in Punjab. The species also occurs in the lower hills of the Makran and Lasbela districts in Balochistan, the Cherat and Kohat districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, the

salt range and agro-forestry tracks of the Pothwar Plateau in the Punjab and in the Margalla hills of Islamabad [16, 17]. In our study the Grey Francolin was found in much numbers.

The Quail carries out all its vital functions (Feeding, nest-building) in the herbaceous strata of natural coastal grasslands (Abundant grasses), high altitude prairies (e.g. uncultivated land in the Aveyron and Capcir, France) or, as for the Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*, the grassy areas of open agro-systems (With the notable exception of ryegrass). The Quail prefers cover which, although dense enough to provide protection, allows fluid movements, hence the choice of alfalfa, winter barley and winter wheat when still green and showing abundant basal leaves or early shoots [27]. As the flora of the study area was much thick so the Quails and Grey Partridge were found in large numbers as there were many places of shelters for their breeding and other activities.

Red turtle dove is summer visitor and spotted dove is common [15]. Roberts [24] Reported its status as common. This species is found in Himalaya and Kashmir but locally migrant [23]. In our study the Rock Pigeon, Hill Pigeon, Snow Pigeon, Pale-backed Pigeon, Common Wood-Pigeon, Speckled Wood-Pigeon, Eurasian Turtle-Dove and other members of the same family were recorded as migratory and were found summer visitor.

Common Myna (4.4143), Bank Myna (4.3969), House sparrow (4.1641) and Blyth's Reed Warbler (3.1128), Small Sky-lark (2.3416), Common Babbler (2.6398), Blue-cheeked Bee-eater (2.0016), Small Sky Lark (2.3416), Long Tailed Grass Warbler (1.6631) and Indian Robin (1.6681) have abundance respectively. Herbivorous (2), Grainivorous (15), Omnivorous (12), Insectivorous (32) and Carnivorous (17) birds were founds [28]. Similarly in our study the members of the Passeriformes family were recorded in much numbers while Herbivorous, Grainivorous, Omnivorous, Insectivorous and Carnivorous birds were found in our study.

CONCLUSION

Hunting and habitat destruction are major threat to wildlife. Fauna of an area depend on the flora present in the area because it provide food and shelter to the fauna and destruction of the habitats also results in the elimination or migration of species. The avian fauna of the study area was rich because the flora was thick. Hunting in the study area was very much loss due to the cease fire

in the swat due to the current situation of terrorism in swat. It was concluded from the current study that hunting and habitat destruction are the major threats to the wildlife.

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