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Majuli Bird Special Issue

Editorial

The first ornithological study in Majuli

In eleven-twelve century there was a small state namely 'Habung' in the present districts of Lakhimpur, Dhemaji and Majuli. Here the inhabitants mostly were the Mising, Kalitas and Chutias and the area was ruled by the Bhuyans. This state was tearned with Bio-diversity. Later on Ahom king Chu-Ka-Pha occupied the state and one of his successor, ~~Kings~~ Gadadhar Singha, who was a nature lover and mighty administrator engaged 'Charai Choa Barua' - the observer and conservator of Birds. He declared the migratory birds dominated area of Ratanpur-Gayangaon of Majuli as 'Chorai Chung' (habitat of Birds) and it was conserved specially. May be, this is the first royal or Govt. declared Bird Sanctuary in the world. But, such heritage area for birds was un-researched till the year of 2003. We, the Aranya Suraksha Samiti - Assam requested to the Vice-Chancellor of Assam Agricultural University Dr. K. M. Bujarbaruah to make a study on the Birds of Majuli, specially in Dakshinpat wetland, known as 'Rambalia' which is a pocket of migratory as well as local birds of Majuli. Dr. Bujarbaruah sir immediately responded and directed Dr. Prabal Saikia, a reknowned ornithologist of Assam Agricultural University, to make the research and compile the checklist of the birds of Dakshinpat wetland. Accordingly Dr. Prabal Saikia took the responsibility and researched the birds and compiled the list of birds scientifically. This issue of 'Green Letter' is a special issue, where only the report of this study has been published. We feel it as an historical work which may help to declare Dakshinpat wetland as 'Bird Sanctuary' and also support the demand to declare heritage site, which is Majuli as world a long term demand of the people of Assam.

We also hope that the Govt. of Assam will take necessary steps to declare Dakshinpat wetland as a Bird Sanctuary and support the venture.

Acknowledgement :

(A) **Dakshinpat Satra, Majuli:** the 'Rambalia' Beel is a property of Dakshinpat Satra. But, Satradhiker Mr. Nani Gopal Dev Goswami is very much enthusiastic to conserve the wetland as a bird sanctuary. He suggested us to take necessary steps in this regard in the year 2003 itself, when Mr. Nirmal Kr. Bora was the president of Majuli District Aranya Suraksha Samiti. Accordingly we started our venture and the study report is the output of this. We do offer our respectful thanks to Satradhiker Goswami for his kind support, co-operation and suggestion in this regard.

(B) **Dr. K. M. Bujarbaruah**, Vice Chancellor of Assam Agril. University and **Dr. Prabal Saikia**, the ornithologist of AAU deserve our gratitude for their kind effort on the research, without which it would not been possible to complete the work.

(C) **Mr. Janardan Goswami**, the president of Majuli District Aranya Suraksha Samiti organized the work with Dr. Prabal Saikia. We also offer our heartfelt thanks to him.



(Dr. Haricharan Das)

Checklist of Birds of Dakshinpat Satra in Majuli, the biggest River Island of the World.

Location: Dakshinpat Satra ($26^{\circ}55'N$ Latitude and $94^{\circ}15'E$ longitude) of Majuli ($26^{\circ}45' - 27^{\circ}12'N$ latitude and $93^{\circ}39'E - 94^{\circ}35'E$ longitude)

Methodology: The survey was conducted randomly from the month of March 2011 to January 2015. Direct visual counts were carried out with a pair of binoculars (8 '40) and spot identifications were made using field guide (Grimmt et al 1999). Survey was conducted by following the existing trails of variable lengths. The study was conducted in garden, residential area, aquaculture, agricultural field, grass land and wet land (Rambalia) of Dakshinpat Satra in Majuli the biggest river island of the world.

The survey was mainly done during morning hours from 7-00 A.M. to 9-00 A.M.

and late afternoon hours from 4-00 to 5-30 P.M. Opportunistic records were also incorporated in the checklist. The checklist was prepared using the standardized common and scientific names of the birds of the Indian subcontinent by Manakandan and Pittle (2004).

Results: In all 133 species belong to 48 families identified (Table). Highest number of species were recorded from the family Anatidae (n=16) followed by Ardeidae (n=9) During the study period 3 species of birds were recorded as Near Threatened (NT), 3 species as vulnerable (VU) and one Endangered (EN). First Record of a near Threatened (NT) bird species in Agricultural landscape of Majuli by the scientist of AINP on Agril. Ornithology, AAU.

Recorded Oriental White Ibis *Threkiornis melanocephalus* as a Near Threatened (NT) bird in Agricultural landscape of Dakshinpat Satra. Majuli - the biggest River Island of the world and included in the Bird check list of the Island for the first time.

Survey conducted & Checklist prepared by Prabal Saikia, Principal Scientist (Agricultural Entomologist & Ornithology). RAR, North Lakhimpur, AAU.

Table: Checklist of Birds of Dakshinpat Satra, Majuli.

Order	Family	No. of Species recorded	Common Name, Scientific Name and Status
1. Podicipitiformes	1. Podicipedidae	1	1. Little grebe, <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i> BR. C
2. Pelecaniformes	2. Phalacrocoracidae	2	2. Little Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax niger</i> BR. C
	3. Anhingidae	1	3. Indian Shag, <i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>
	4. Ardeidae	9	4. Darter, Anhinga melanogaster R.C (NT)
			5. Purple heron, <i>Ardea purpurea</i> R.C.
3. Ciconiiformes			6. Indian Pond heron, <i>Ardeola striatus</i> R.C
			7. Cattle Egret, <i>Bubulcus ibis</i> BR. C
			8. Median Egret, <i>Egretta intermedia</i> R.C.
			9. Little Egret, <i>Egretta garzetta</i> BR. C
			10. Large Egret, <i>Casmerodius albus</i>

Order	Family	No.	Common Name, Scientific Name and Status
3. Ciconiiformes (Contd.)	4. Ardeidae (Contd.)		11. Black Bittern, <i>Dupetor flavigollis</i> 12. Black- crowned Night-Heron, <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> BR.C 13. Chestnut Bittern, <i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i> BR.C
	5. Ciconiidae	3	14. Asian Openbill-Stork, <i>Anastomus oscitans</i> BR.U 15. Lesser Adjutant -Stork, <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i> RC. 16. Greater Adjutant Stork, <i>Leptoptilos dubius</i> L.U. (EN)
	6. Threskiornithidae	2	17 Glossy Ibis, <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i> 18.Oriental White Ibis (NT), <i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i> <i>(First report from Majuli)</i>
	7. Anatidae	16	19. Greylag Goose, <i>Anser anser</i> W.C. 20. Bar-headed, Goose <i>Anser indicus</i> W.C. 21. Large Whistling -Duck, <i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i> 22. Lesser Whistling- duck, <i>Dendrocygna javanica</i> BR.C 23. Common Teal, <i>Anas crecca</i> W.C. 24. Spot billed Duck, <i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i> BR.C 25. Cotton teal, <i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i> R.C. 26. Gadwall, <i>Anas strepera</i> . 27. Ferruginous Pochard, <i>Aythya nyroca</i> . 28. Eurasian Wigeon, <i>Anas penelope</i> . 29. Brahminy Shelduck, <i>Tadorna ferruginea</i> 30. Northern Pintail, <i>Anas acuta</i> . 31. Mallard, <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> . 32. Marbled Teal, <i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i> (G.U). 33. Baer's Pochard, <i>Aythya baeri</i> (VU). 34. Red-crested Pochard, <i>Rhodonessa rufina</i> .
4. Anseriformes	8. Accipitridae	5	35. Black - shouldered Kite, <i>Elanus caeruleus</i> BR.C. 36. Black Kite, <i>Milvus migrans govinda</i> R.C.

Order	Family	No.	Common Name, Scientific Name and Status
5. Falconiformes (Contd.)	8. Accipitridae (Contd.)	37.	Brahminy Kite, <i>Haliastur indus</i> R.C.
	9. Falconidae	38.	Himalayan Griffon, <i>Gyps himalayensis</i> W.C.
	10. Phasianidae	39.	Greater Grey headed Fish-Eagle, <i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus</i> .
6. Galliformes	11. Rallidae	40.	Common Kestrel, <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> R.C.
7. Gruiformes		41.	Common Quail, <i>Coturnix coturnix</i>
		42.	White-breasted waterhen, <i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i> BR.C.
		43.	Common Moorhen, <i>Gallinula chloropus</i> BR.C.
		44.	Purple Moorhen, <i>Porphyrrio porphyrio</i> BR.C.
		45.	Watercock, <i>Gallicrex cinerea</i> .
		46.	Common Coot, <i>Fulica atra</i> W.C.
	12. Jacanidae	47.	Pheasant-Tailed jacana, <i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i> BR.C
		48.	Bronze-winged jacana, <i>Metopidius indicus</i> BR.C.
8. Charadriiformes	13. Charadriidae	49.	Red-Wattled Lapwing, <i>Vanellus indicus</i> BR.
		50.	Northern Lapwing, <i>Vanellus cinereus</i> .
		51.	Grey-headed Lapwing, <i>Vanellus cinereus</i> W.C.
		52.	Little Stint, <i>Calidris minuta</i>
		53.	Coomon Redshank, <i>Tringa totanus</i> .
		54.	Common Greenshank, <i>Tringa nebularia</i> .
		55.	Common Sandpiper, <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
		56.	Pintail Snipe, <i>Gallinago stenura</i> .
	14. Scolopacidae	57.	River Tern, <i>Sterna aurantia</i> R.C.
		58.	Whiskered Tern, <i>Chlidonias hybridus</i> R.C.
9. Columbiformes	16. Columbidae	59.	Yellow-legged Green Pigeon, <i>Teron curvirostra</i> R.C.
		60.	Blue Rock Pigeon, <i>Columba livia</i> BR.C.
		61.	Green Imperial-Pigeon, <i>Ducula aenea</i> BR.
		62.	Imperial Pigeon, <i>Ducula badia</i> R.C.

Order	Family	No.	Common Name, Scientific Name and Status
9. Columbiformes (Contd.)	16. Columbidae (Contd.)	63. Spotted Dove, <i>Streptopelia chinensis</i> BR.C. 64. Red collared Dove, <i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i> R.C. 65. Little Brown Dove, <i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i> BR.C.	
10. Psittaciformes	17. Psittacidae	2	66. Rose-Ringed Parakeet, <i>Psittacula krameri</i> BR.C. 67. Alexandrine Parakeet, <i>Psittacula eupatria</i> RC.
11 Cuculiformes	18. Cuculidae	4	68. Asian Koel, <i>Endymamus scolopaceus</i> R.L.C. 69. Indian Cuckoo, <i>Cuculus micropterus</i> . 70. Plaintive Cuckoo <i>Caconotis merulinus</i> .
	19. Tytonidae	1	71. Lesser Coucal, <i>Centropus toulou</i> BR.C. 72. Barn Owl, <i>Tyto alba</i> R. UC.
			73. Spotted Owlet, <i>Anthene brama</i> , BR.C.
12. Strigiformes	20. Strigidae	3	74. Collard Scops Owl, <i>Otus bakkamoena</i> . 75. Eurasian Eagle-Owl, <i>Bubo bubo</i> .
13. Apodiformes	21. Apodidae	2	76. House Swift, <i>Apus affinis</i> R.
14. Coraciiformes	22. Alcedinidae	4	77. Lesser Pied Kingfisher, <i>Ceryle rudis</i> BR.C. 78. Small blue Kingfisher, <i>Alcedo atthis</i> BR. 79. White-breasted Kingfisher, <i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i> BR.C. 80. Stork-billed Kingfisher <i>Halcyon capensis</i> BR.C.
			81. Small Bee eater, <i>Merops orientalis</i> R.C. 82. Chestnut-headed Bee eater, <i>Merops lischenaulti</i> R.L.U. 83. Blue-tailed Bee eater, <i>Merops philippinus</i> R.L.U.
			84. Indian Roller, <i>Coracias benghalensis</i> BR.C.
15. Upupiformes	25. Upupidae	1	85. Common Hoopoe, <i>Upupa epops</i> BR.C.
16. Piciformes	26. Capitonidae	3	86. Blue-throated Barbet, <i>Megalaima asiatica</i> BR.C. 87. Coppersmith Barbet, <i>Megalaima haemacephala</i> BR.C. 88. Lineated Barbet, <i>Megalaima lineata</i> BR.C.

Order	Family	No.	Common name, scientific name and status
	27. Hirundinidae	2	89. Common Swallow, <i>Hirundo rustica</i> L.C. 90. Sand Martin, <i>Riparia riparia</i> R.L.
	28. Motacillidae	5	91. Paddy field Pipit, <i>Anthus rufulus</i> R.C. 92. Citrine Wagtail, <i>Motacilla citreola</i> W.C. 93. Grey Wagtail, <i>Motacilla cinerea</i> W.C. 94. Yellow Wagtail, <i>Motacilla flava</i> W.C. 95. White Wagtail, <i>Motacilla alba</i> W.C.
	29. Pycnonotidae	2	96. Red-Vented Bulbul, <i>Pycnonotus cafer</i> BR,C 97. Red-Whiskered Bulbul, <i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i> BR,C
	30. Irenidae	1	98. Common Iora, <i>Aegithina tiphia</i> BR.
	31. Laniidae	2	99. Brown Shrike <i>Lanius cristatus</i> 100. Grey backed Shrike <i>Lanius tephronotus</i>
	32. Turdinae	3	101. Oriental Magpie-Robin, <i>Copsychus saularis</i> BR.C 102. White-rumped Shama, <i>Copsychus malabaricus</i> BR.C 103. Common Stonechat, <i>Saxicola torquata</i> W.C.
	33. Timaliinae	1	104. Striated Babblar, <i>Turdoides earlei</i> BR.C.
	34. Sylviiinae	3	105. Common Tailorbird, <i>Orthotomus sutorius</i> BR.C, 106. Striated Grassbird, <i>Megalurus palustris</i> BR.C. 107. Plain Prinia, <i>Prinia subflava</i> R.C.
	35. Muscicapinae	1	108. Red-throated Flycatcher, <i>Ficedula parva</i> .
	36. Rhipidurinae	1	109. White-throated Fantail, <i>Rhipidura albicollis</i> R.U.
	37. Artamidae	1	110. Ashy wood Swallow, <i>Artamus fuscus</i> BR.C.
	38. Paridae	1	111. Grey Tit, <i>Parus major</i> BR.C.
	39. Dicaciidae	1	112. Plain Flower Pecker, <i>Dicaeum concolor</i> R.C.
	40. Nectariniidae	2	113. Purple Sunbirds, <i>Nectarinia asiatica</i> R.U. 114. Crimson Sunbird, <i>Aethopyga siparaja</i> BR.

Order	Family	No.	Common Name, Scientific Name and Status
17. Passeriformes (Contd.)	41. Zosteropidae	1	115. Oriental White-Eye, <i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i> BR.C.
	42. Estrildidae	3	116. White-Rumped Munia, <i>Lonchura striata</i> BR.U 117. Scaly-breasted Munia, <i>Lonchura punctulata</i> BR.C. 118. Black-Headed Munia, <i>Lonchura malacca</i> BR.
	43. Passerinae	2	119. House Sparrow, <i>Passer domesticus</i> BR. 120. Eurasian Tree Sparrow, <i>Passer montanus</i> BR.C.
	44. Ploceinae	3	121. Baya Weaver, <i>Ploceus philippinus</i> BR.C. 122. Black-breasted Weaver, <i>Ploceus benghalensis</i> R.C. 123. Streaked Weaver, <i>Ploceus manyar</i> BR.C.
	45. Sturnidae	5	124. Chestnut-tailed Starling, <i>Sturnus malabaricus</i> R.C. 125. Asian Pied Starling, <i>Sturnus contra</i> B. 126. Common Myna, <i>Acridotheres tristis</i> C. 127. Jungle Myna, <i>Acridotheres fuscus</i> 128. White vented Myna, <i>Acridotheres</i> BR.C.
	46. Oriolidae	1	129. Black-headed Oriole, <i>Oriolus xanthis</i>
	47. Dicruridae	1	130. Black Drongo, <i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i> BR.C.
	48. Corvidae	3	131. Indian tree-Pie, <i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i> 132. House Crow, <i>Corvus splendens</i> BR. 133. Jungle Crow, <i>Corvus macrohynchos</i>

*Prepared by Dr. Prabal Saikia, Principal Scientist (Entomology)
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AAU. (01-08-2015)*

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