

Birdlife in Nagarparkar, district Tharparkar, Sindh

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Abstract

The paper describes the bird fauna of the Nagarparkar located on the southeastern part of Pakistan. A well-diversified bird fauna was observed in the area consisting of 91 species belonging to 60 genera. Long-billed vulture (*Gyps indicus*), sarus crane (*Grus antiond*) and dusky crag martin (*Ptyonoprogne concolof*) are noteworthy species. Breeding pair of sarus crane (*Grus antiond*) was also observed in the area.

Keyword: Avian biodiversity, Nagarparkar, Tharparkar, sarus crane

Introduction

Nagarparkar is tehsil/taluka of district Tharparkar and is located at southeast part of Sindh. Its climate is extremely hot in summer with temperature soaring upto 50°C in May/June and cold dry in winter when temperature ranging down to 5°C. Nagarparkar and its adjacent areas are regarded as one of the most important wildlife area of Pakistan. Diverse reptile, bird and mammal fauna is known to occur in the area. Wild Ass (*Equus hemionus*), a threatened mammalian species, which used to inhabit both in Sindh and Balochistan, now occurs in small numbers only in Nagarparkar area. Blue bull (*Bosalaphus tragocamllles*) and Indian gazelle (*Gazella bennetti*) are also found in reasonable numbers in the area.

A number of workers have contributed in the studies of birds of Sindh. Some of these include Humes (1989), Ticehurst, (1922-24) Khanum and Ahmad (1986), Roberts (1991-1992) and Ghalib and Hasnain (1994, 1997). Present paper deals with the avian biodiversity of the Nagarparkar and adjacent areas.

Results and Discussion

Adjacent areas of Nagarparkar have different important habitat types. These include desert, Karunjhar hill range, wetlands, agriculture fields and Rann ofKutch.

Desert Area: This area has both sand dunes and plain sandy area. Adjacent area of Nagarparkar town has dominant vegetation of *Prosopis juliflora* while major species found in the area include *Prosopis spicigera*, *Capparis decidua*, *Ziziphus nummularia*, *Calotropis procera*, *Acacia nilotica* etc.

Ponds: There are a number of ponds constructed for drinking of local people and livestock. These ponds got importance since these provide drinking water to wildlife. The ponds have reed vegetation on the banks and trees of *Acacia nilotica*, and *Tamaix aphylla* in surroundings. Occurrence and breeding of a small number of sarus crane has increases significance of these ponds.

Karunjhar: Karunjhar range consists of low altitude hills in the adjacent areas of Nagarparkar. There is sparse vegetation of *Prosopis spicigera*, *Capparis decidua*, *Ziziphus nummularia*, *Salvadora oleoides* etc.

Agriculture fields: There are some patches of agriculture fields in plain desert areas, which are mostly fed by monsoon showers. Kasbo and adjacent area have agriculture land irrigated by wells. Vegetable and wheat is grown in the irrigated fields while in the rain dependent fields sorghum is cultivated. The irrigated fields known to inhabit peafowl and a variety of passerine birds while fields dependent on rainfall have abundant dove and sparrow population.

Rann of Kutch: Rann of Kutch is mainly a salty bare plain with patchy vegetation of *Sueda fruticosa* and *Salsola sp.* Wild Ass occurs in the areas of Rann of Kutch. Major part of the Rann of Kutch is located in India.

Materials and Methods

The study area was periodically visited in different seasons during November 1994 to July 1998. The birds were identified in the field by using spotting scope and binocular.

The study produced 91 species belonging to 60 genera 33 families and 15 orders in the study area (Table-I).

Table-I. Bird fauna of Nagarparkar area

ORDER:	PODICIPEDIFORMES	
FAMILY:	PODICIPEDIDAE	
	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	Little Grebe
ORDER:	PELECANIFORMES	
FAMILY:	PHALACROCORACIDAE	
	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	Little Cormorant
FAMILY:	PELECANIDAE	
	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	White or Rosy Pelican
ORDER:	CICONIIFORMES	
FAMILY:	ARDEIDAE	
	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	Pond Heron

Bubulcus ibis
Egretta garzetta

Cattle Egret
Little Egret

ORDER: PHOENICOPTERIFORMES FAMILY:
Phoenicopterus rubber Greater Flamingo

ORDER: ANSERIFORMES FAMILY: ANATIDAE
Anas penelope Eurasian Wigeon
Anas crecca Common Teal
Anas strepera Gadwal
Anas acuta Pintail
Anas poecilorhyncha Spotbilled Duck
Anas clypeata Shoveler

ORDER: ACCIPITIFORMES FAMILY: ACCIPITRIDAE
Elanus caeruleus Black-winged Kite
Milvus migrans Brahminy Kite
Neophron percnopterus Egyptian Vulture
Gyps bengalensis White-backed Vulture
Gyps indicus Long-billed Vulture
Gypsfulvus Eurasian Griffon Vulture
Aegypus monachus Cinereous Vulture
Circus gallicus Short-toed Eagle
Circus macrourus Pallid Harrier
Butaster teesa White-eyed Buzzard
Buteo rufinus Long-legged Buzzard
Aquila rapax Tawny Eagle
Aquila haliaca Imperial Eagle
Aquila clanga Spotted Eagle
Hieraaetus fasciatus Bonelli's Eagle

FAMILY: FALCONIDAE
Falco tinnunculus Common Kestrel
Falco naumanni Lesser Kestrel
Falco jugger Larger Falcon

ORDER: GALLIFORMES
FAMILY: PHASIANIDAE
Pavo cristatus Indian Peafowl

ORDER: GRUIFORMES
FAMILY: RALLIDAE
Gallinula chloropus Common Moorhen
Fulica atra Eurasian Coot

FAMILY: GRUIDAE
Grus antigone Sarus Crane
Anthropoides virgo Demoiselle Crane

FAMILY:	OTIDIDAE	
	<i>Chlamydotis undulata</i>	Houbara Bustard
ORDER:	CHARADRIIFORMES	
FAMILY:	RECURVIROSTRIDAE	
	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Black-winged Stilt
FAMILY:	CHARADRIIDAE	
	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Little Ringed Plover
	<i>Hoploptems indicus</i>	Red-wattled Lapwing
FAMILY:	SCOLOPACIDAE	
	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	Little Stint
	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Redshank
	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Green Shank
	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Green Sandpiper
	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Wood Sandpiper
ORDER:	PTEROCLIDIFORMES	
FAMILY:	PTEROCLIDIDAE	
	<i>Pterocles exustus</i>	Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse
ORDER:	COLUMBIFORMES	
FAMILY:	COLUMBIDAE	
	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Indian Ring Dove
	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	Little Brown Dove
ORDER:	PSITTACIFORMES	
FAMILY:	PSITTACIDAE	
	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	Rose-ringed Parakeet
ORDER:	STRIGIFORMES	
FAMILY:	STRIGIDAE	
	<i>Athene brama</i>	Spotted Owlet
ORDER:	CUCULIFORMES	
FAMILY:	CUCULIDAE	
	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>	Pied-crested Cuckoo
ORDER:	CAPRIMULGIFORMES	
FAMILY:	CAPRIMULGIDAE	
	<i>Caprimulgus mahrattensis</i>	Sand Night Jar
	<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>	Little Night Jar
ORDER:	PASSERIFORMES	
FAMILY:	ALAUDIDAE	
	<i>Alaemon alaudipes</i>	Persian Desert Lark

<i>Galerida cristata</i>	Crested Lark
<i>Alauda gulgula</i>	Small Skylark

FAMILY: HIRUNDINIDAE

<i>Riparia riparia</i>	Collard Sand Martin
<i>Ptyonoprogne concolor</i>	Dusky Crag Martin
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Common Swallow

FAMILY: MOTACILLIDAE

<i>Anthus compestris</i>	Tawny Pipit
<i>Motacilla alba</i>	White Wagtail

FAMILY: CAMPEPHAGIDAE

<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>	Lesser Wood Shrike
<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeous</i>	Small or Wandering Minivet

FAMILY: PYONQNOTIDAE

<i>Pycnonotus leucogenys</i>	White-checked Bulbul
<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	Red-vented Bulbul

FAMILY: TURDIDAE

<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	Stonechat
<i>Saxicola caprata</i>	Indian Bush Chat
<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	Isabelline Wheatear
<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	Desert Wheatear
<i>Oenanthe xanthopyrmyna</i>	Red-tailed Wheatear
<i>Saxicoloides fulvicata</i>	Indian Robin

FAMILY: SYLVIDAE

<i>Prinia buchanani</i>	Rufous-fronted Wren Warbler
<i>Sylvia nana</i>	Desert Warbler
<i>Sylvia hortensis</i>	Orphee Warbler
<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	Lesser White Throat
<i>Phylloscopus neglectus</i>	Plain Willow Warbler

FAMILY: NECTARINIDAE

<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>	Purple Sunbird
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FAMILY: LANIIDAE

<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	Great Grey Shrike
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FAMILY: CORVIDAE

<i>Corvus corax</i>	Punjab Raven
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FAMILY: STURDINAE

<i>Sturnus pagodarum</i>	Black-headed Myna
<i>Sturnus roseus</i>	Rosy Starling
<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	Indian Myna
<i>A. ginginianus</i>	Bank Myna

FAMILY:	PASSERIDAE	
	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House Sparrow
	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	Spanish Sparrow
	<i>Euodice malabarica</i>	White-throated Munia
	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>	Black-headed Bunting

The study revealed the presence of well-diversified bird fauna in the Nagarparkar area. Cream coloured courser and Indian courser were seen both in winter and summer with small number in the area. In the area of Rann of Kutch about 15 km. east of Nagarparkar a number of rare waterfowl species were seen in December 1994. These include rosy pelican, demoiselle crane and flamingo. A pair of spot-billed duck was observed at Bhartala in July 1998.

Peafowl was found with considerable population in the adjacent areas of Nagarparkar mostly in the southern and southwestern sides. Long-billed vulture was seen in the Karunjhar. Other important raptor species include laggar falcon, Imperial eagle, tawny eagle and spotted eagle. Houbara bustard was found in winter both in the areas of desert and Rann of Kutch.

Roberts (1991) mentioned sarus crane, which was once resident and breeding bird, has become extinct in the country. According to him, two pairs were seen in Larkana district on Drigh Lake in 1929. In 1939, a breeding pair was found in Larkana on one of the larger lakes (Robert, 1991). This was last record of breeding of the species in Pakistan. During the present study a pair with two young were observed at Bhansar Lake near Nagarparkar district Tharparkar in December 1994. According to the local people the pair has been breeding at the site for many years. In July 1997, a nest with a single egg was also seen.

Demoiselle crane (*Anthropoides virgo*) is passage migrant through Pakistan. Its occurrence has not been referred from Tharparkar except areas of Thar Desert adjacent to Sanghar (Robert, 1991). During the present study four birds were seen on 1994 in Rann of Kutch near Nagarparkar. Long-billed vulture and dusky crag martin were found only in the Karunjhar range near Nagarparkar (Roberts, 1991). These species were not recorded by Ticehurst (1923) from any other part of Sindh. During present studies both species were recorded. Long-billed vulture was seen in the cliffs while dusky crag martin was observed both in the hills and adjacent plain areas.

Black-headed myna is distributed in West Pakistan roughly east of Indus valley (AH and Ripley, 1968) whereas according to Roberts (1992) this species more or less continuously distributed as summer breeding visitor in the outer Himalayan foothills areas and broadest valleys from Chitral in the west to the foothills of Jhelum and Sialkot district and in some areas of Kashmir. During survey a single bird was recorded a few kilometers in the east of Nagarparkar.

According to Roberts (1992) lesser-wood shrike is widespread in Sindh and Punjab and it penetrates into the fringes of the Thar Desert in *Prosopis spicigera* scrub around Khipro (Sanghar) district and Chor (Tharparkar district). During the present study it was seen with small numbers between Islamkot and Nagarparkar.

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