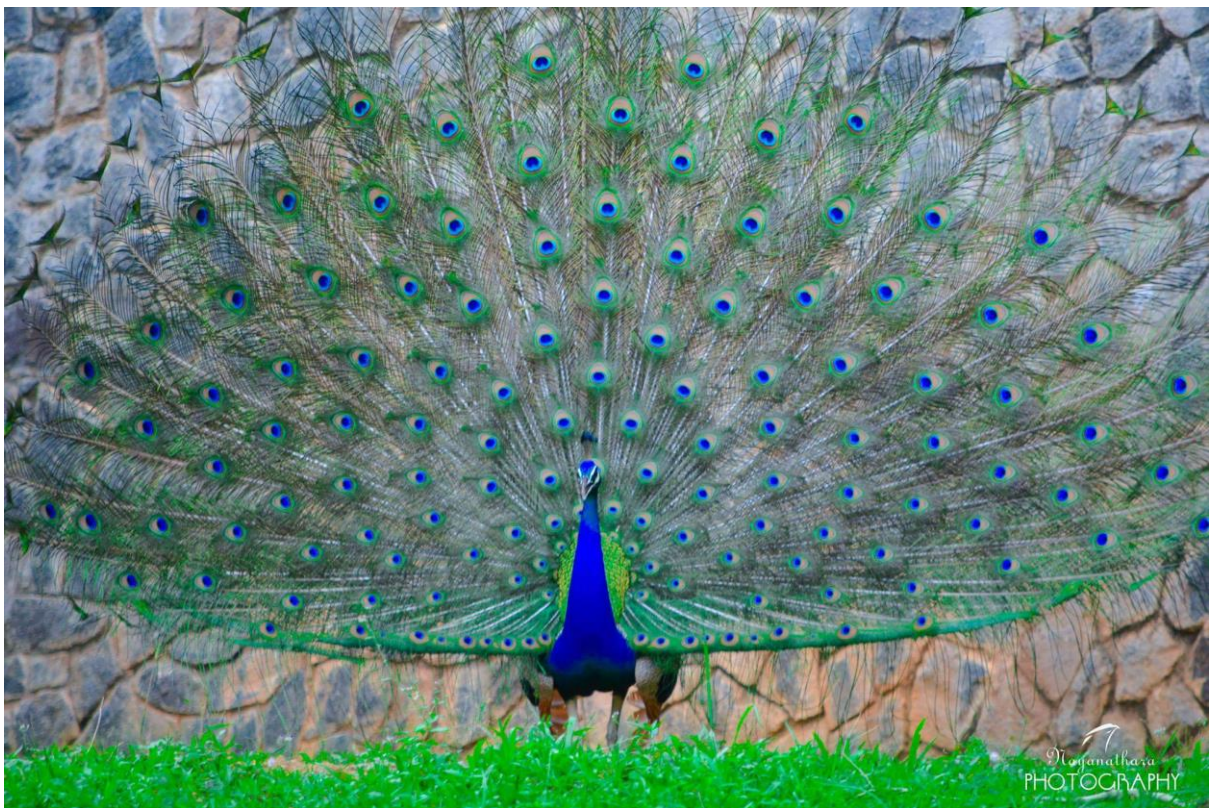


# A Field Guide to the Birds of University of Ruhuna



**M.A.Y.N.Weerasinghe and E.P.S.Chandana**

**Department of Zoology**

**Faculty of Science**

**University of Ruhuna**

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## **Preface**

Sri Lanka is a tropical island with numerous ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, mountain areas that provide different types of habitats to number of bird species. University of Ruhuna is located in the Matara, Sri Lanka where in the wet zone. It provides diverse habitats to different types of bird species ranging from common migrants to rare endemics.

There are now over 52 species of birds belonging to 33 families recorded in the University Premises by authors by this time. Total number of endemic birds observed in the University was 4 and there were 5 migratory species.

Due to the changes in habitat such as building constructions and land development the total land is now fragmented. Formation of edges is one of the major effects of habitat fragmentation that can be seen in the university premises. Therefore, there are edge specific species and edge avoiding species easily observed in the University premises. However, conservation of existing natural habitats in the University premises is therefore critical for the long term survival of these birds.

This booklet features 36 photographs captured by the author and related descriptions of most common birds in the University of Ruhuna. Description is mainly aimed for the identification of the birds in the field using their morphological characters.

## An Introduction to the University of Ruhuna



An aerial map of University of Ruhuna ([www.google.lk](http://www.google.lk))

### Location and Geography

University of Ruhuna is located in the Matara district, Sri Lanka (5°56'N 80°34'E) where in the wet zone. The total area of the university premises is nearly 72 acres. Southern margin of the premises is located close to the sea and northern margin and eastern margins are surrounded by villages.

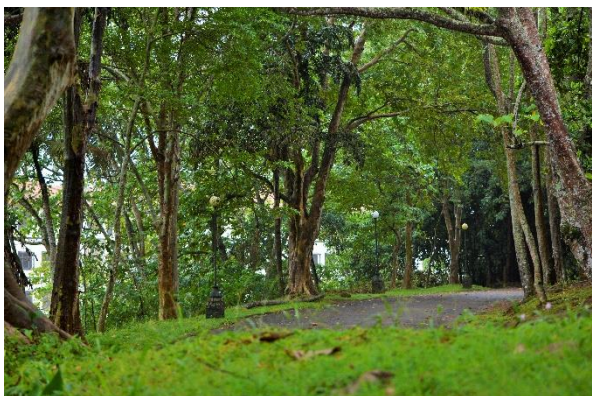
### Climate

The area has a tropical climate. Normally has a significant amount of rainfall during the year even in the driest months. The average annual temperature is 26.8 °C and annual precipitation fall is 2147 mm.



## Habitats

University of Ruhuna premises is providing numerous habitats for flora and fauna. Different types of microhabitats including bushy areas, grassland areas, woody areas, pond system and mangrove vegetation facilitate enormous diversity in the university premises.



Some specific locations in the university premises

## **Fauna and flora**

University of Ruhuna premises is highly diverse with different species of flora and fauna. There are large number of tree species inhabitant in this area including Kumbuk, Attikka, Kottamba, Acacia and large number of medicinal plants. These plants provide food, shelter and other suitable habitats to faunal groups including birds. There are large amount of animal species also can found around the university premises including different types of insects, snails, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.

## Bird Families

	<b>Group</b>	<b>Family</b>		<b>Group</b>	<b>Family</b>
	Herons and Egrets	Ardeidae		Leafbirds and Ioras	Irenidae
	Storks	Ciconiidae		Thrushes	Turdidae
	Ibises	Threskiornithidae		Babblers	Timaliidae
	Pheasants and Allies	Phasianidae		Flycatchers	Muscicapidae
	Rails and Allies	Rallidae		Monarchs and Fantails	Monarchidae
	Plovers	Charadriidae		Sunbirds	Nectariniidae
	Pigeons and Doves	Columbidae		White - eyes	Zosteropidae
	Coucals, Koels and Allies	Cuculidae		Sparrows	Ploceidae
	Kingfishers	Alcedinidae		Starlings	Sturnidae
	Bee – eaters	Meropidae		Orioles	Oriolidae
	Hornbills	Bucerotidae		Drongos	Dicruridae
	Barbets	Capitonidae			
	Woodpeckers	Picidae			
	Cuckooshrikes and Minivets	Campephagidae			
	Bulbuls	Pycnonotidae			

## Legend

### Abundance:

**\* = Abundant/common**

**\*\* = Uncommon**

**\*\*\* = Rare**

### Ecological Status:

**R = Resident**

**M = Migrant**

**ⓔ = Endemic**

### Common habitat:



**Parks/ Home gardens**



**Mangrove**



**Grasslands**



**Wetland**



**Forest**



## Herons and Egrets



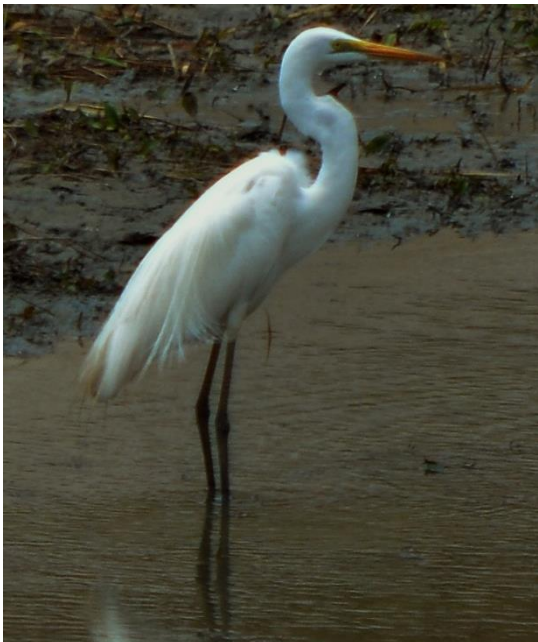
**Little Egret** (පුංචි අනුකොකා / පුංචි සුදුකොකා)  
*Egretta garzetta*

\* R



**General description:** A yellow bill with black legs and yellow feet. Greeny - yellow facial skin. Small in body size.

Nesting: Colonially on sticks in trees



**Intermediate Egret** (සුදු මැදිකොකා)  
*Egretta intermedia*

\* R



**General description:** A yellow bill with black feet. Smaller than Great Egret and larger than Little Egret.

Nesting: Colonially with other herons on sticks in trees



**Purple Heron**  
*Ardea purpurea*



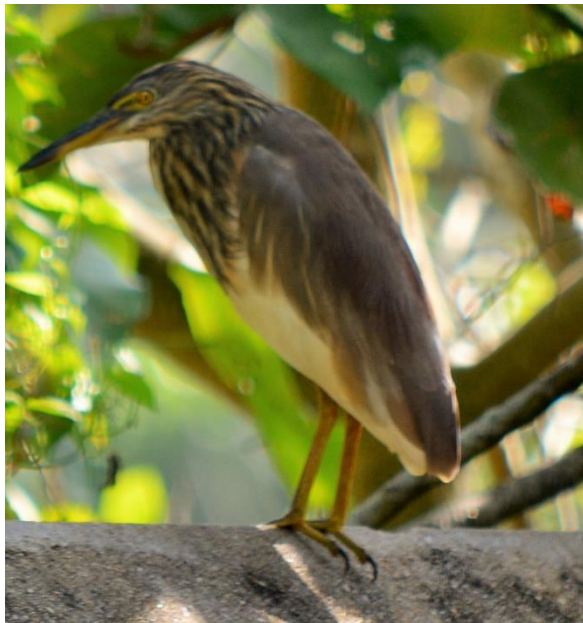
\* R



**General description:** Black crown extended to crest, back of neck rufous with black streaks with a more slender and angular neck. Body

Nesting: Colonially with other herons on sticks in trees

**Purple Heron (കരലിള കോക്കാ)**  
*(Ardea purpurea)*



\* R



**General description:** Upper parts of the body is streaked brown. When it takes flight, white wings are visible. Bill greenish yellow with a dark tip.

Nesting: Colonially in trees.

**Indian Pond Heron (കുഴക്കോക്കാ)**  
*Ardeola grayii*



\* R

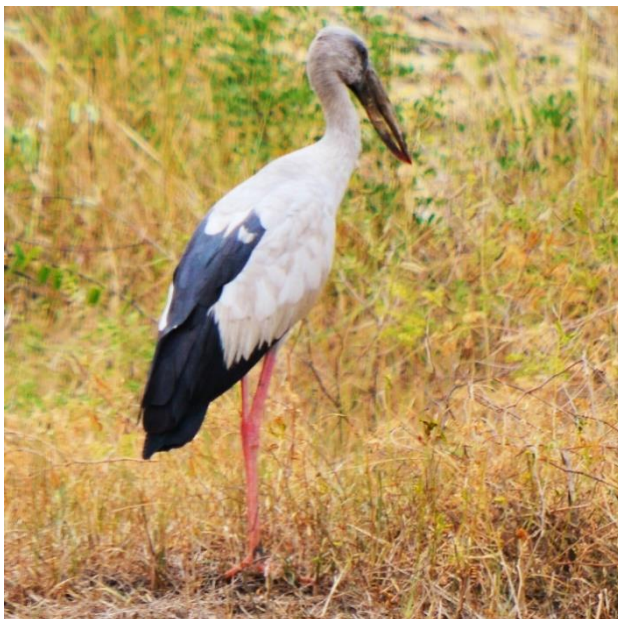


**General description:** Black mantle, pale grey underparts and grey flanks present. Yellowish legs present and become red in breeding season. Juveniles brown spotted with white.

Nesting: sticks below tree canopy.

**Black – crowned Night – heron** (ඊ කණකොකා / ඊ කොකා)  
*Nycticorax nycticorax*

## Storks



\* R



**General description:** Black and white plumage. Thick bill with a gap between mandibles. Bill colour is a dirty white.

Nesting: Colonially on tops trees and bushes

**Asian Openbill** (වීචරතුඩුවා / බෙල්ලන්කොකා)  
*Anastomus oscitans*



## Ibises



\* R



**General description:** Black down curved bill. Head, neck and legs are also black in colour with a white body.

**Nesting:** Colonially with other species on sticks of trees

**Black – headed Ibis (හීස්කලු දැකුත්තා)**  
*Threskiornis melanocephalus*

## Pheasants and Allies



**Indian Peafowl (මොණරා)**  
*Pavo cristatus*

Male



Female

R



**General description:** Males have train of feathers during breeding season. Generally stays on ground.

**Nesting:** slight hollow in ground

## Rails and Allies



White – breasted Waterhen ( ලය සුදු කොරවක්කා)  
*Amaurornis phoenicurus*

\* R



**General description:** Face, throat, breast and belly are white in colour.

**Nesting:** Mass of weed in vegetation on wet ground or in low bush.

## Plovers



Red – wattled Lapwing (රත් යවිමල් කිරලා/ රත්තලි කිරලා)  
*Vanellus indicus*

\* R



**General description:** Black crown and nape, White ear patch and white rump. Legs are yellow. Red wattle and ring round eye present.

**Nesting:** In shallow scrape in open on stony ground



## Pigeons and Doves



**Rock Pigeon** (පරවියා / ගල් පරවියා)  
*Columba livia*

\* R



**General description:** Two black bands across inner wings, blue – grey rump, metallic look present in the neck and breast

**Nesting:** Colonially, on a pad of sticks and grass



**Spotted Dove** (අළු කොබෙයියා)  
*Streptopelia chinensis*

\* R



**General description:** One of the most common birds in Sri Lanka. Hind neck is spangled with black and white spots. Body is grey brown with pale spots.

**Nesting:** In trees or bushes



**R**



**General description:** Hind neck, upper tail are grey. Green mantle with purple and orange breast bands.

Nesting: Trees in woodland edges

**Orange – breasted Green Pigeon** (ලය රන් බටගොයා)  
*Treron bicincta*



**R**



**General description:** Largest local pigeon. Head, neck and underparts are iliac grey. Upper parts are bluish green.

Nesting: On forest trees

**Green Imperial Pigeon** (නීල මහගොයා)  
*Ducula aenea*

## Coucals, Koels and Allies



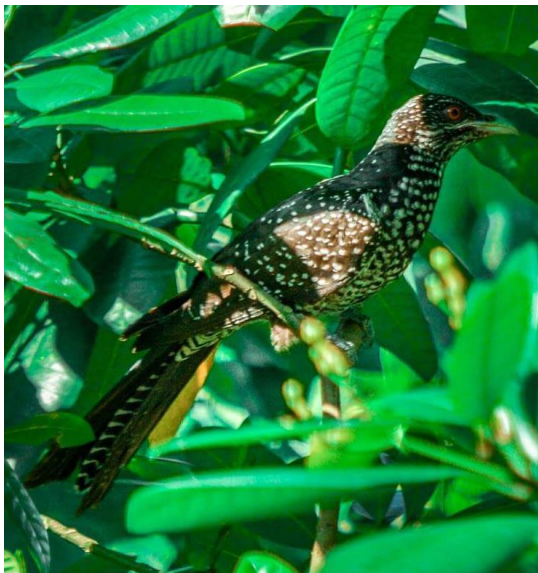
Southern Coucal (ඇටි කකුළා)  
*Centropus sinensis*

\* R



**General description:** Black bird with chestnut colored wings. Black beak with red eyes. Previously known as Greater Coucal but now it identify as another species in India.

Nesting: Lined, domed nest



Asian Koel ( මකාහා)  
*Eudynamys scolopacea*

Female

\* R



**General description:** Male glossy black, a crow like, Female brown with white spots. Bill is ivory color with red eyes.

Nesting: Parasitizes crows



## Kingfishers



White – throated Kingfisher (පිළිහුඩුවා)  
*Halcyon smyrnensis*

\* R



**General description:** A red bill, chocolate brown head and underparts with a distinctive white throat, blue upper parts with brown wing covers.

Nesting in holes in banks.

## Bee - eaters



Blue – tailed Bee – eater (නිල් පෙද බිඟුහරයා)  
*Merops philippinus*

\* R, M



**General description:** A blue tail present with elongated feathers. Crown is green, cheeks are blue, yellow chin and chestnut throat present.

Nesting: Burrows in banks



## Hornbills



**General description:** Has a white throat and fore neck. Mandibles are yellow in color with dark patches. Other parts of the body is grey.

Nesting: Tree holes

**Ceylon Grey Hornbill** (අළු කැඳැත්තා)  
*Ocyeros gingalensis*

## Barbets

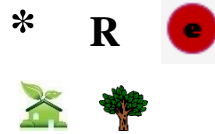


**General description:** Small body with a red forehead, yellow face patches and black bill. A blue patch present below cheeks.

Nesting in tree holes

**Ceylon Small Barbet** (රන් මුණක් කොට්ටෝරුවා)  
*Megalaima rubricapilla*

## Woodpeckers



**General Description:** .Crown in female – Black at front and in males – Red, bright red upper back and scapulars, black with red tinge on lower back and rump. Nesting in tree holes.

**Ceylon Red – backed Woodpecker (කැරලා)**  
*Dinopium psarodes*

## Cuckooshrikes and Minivets



**R**



**General description:** Rump is scarlet, Head is black, uppertail coverts and outer tail feathers. In female scarlet areas are more yellowish than males.

Nesting: In a small cup nest on a branch

**Small Minivet (පුංචි මිනිවක්කා)**  
*Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*

## Bulbuls



**Red – vented Bulbul** (කොණ්ඩ කුරුල්ලා)  
*Pycnonotus cafer*

\* **R**



**General description:** Black head with a tufted head. Dusky breast shades with white. Vent is bright red in color. Tail tips are white.

**Nesting:** In small cup nest on a branch

## Leafbirds and loras



**Common Iora**  
*Aegithina tiphia*

Male

**R**



**General description:** Yellow underparts and two white bars across the wings. Upper parts and tail end are black in color. Female does not have back areas. Black plumage occur in breeding season in males.

**Nesting:** In a cup nest on a branch



## Thrushes



**Oriental Magpie Robin** ( පොල්කිව්වා )  
*Copsychus saularis*

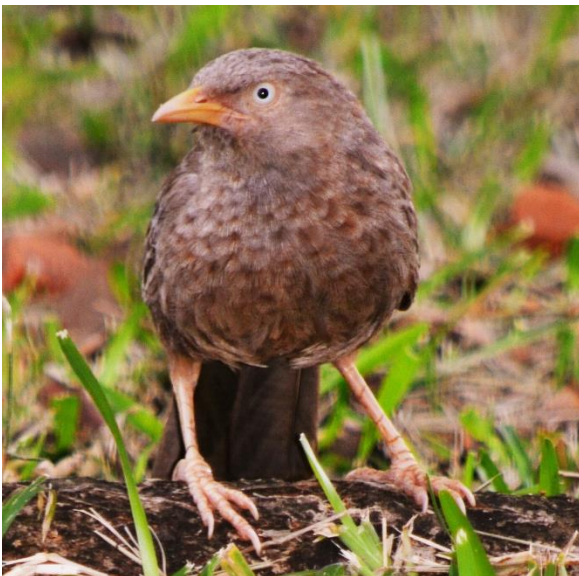
\* R



**General description:** Glossy blue black with white patch on wings, outer tail feathers are white, white belly, flanks and undertail coverts

Nesting: cavities in trees

## Babblers



**Yellow – billed Babbler** ( දෙමලිව්වා )  
*Turdoides affinis taprobanus*

\* R



**General description:** Horny yellow bill, white eye. Brownish grey in colour. Sexes alike.

Nesting: In a deep cup hidden in bushes



## Flycatchers



**Asian Brown Flycatcher**  
*Muscicapa dauurica*

M



**General description:** Dark grey brown legs, have pale dark – tipped lower mandibles, Upper parts are grey – brown in colour. Breast is somewhat browner in colour.

## Monarchs and fantails



**Asian Paradise Flycatcher (සිවුරු හොරා)**  
*Terpsiphone paradasi ceylonensis*

M



**General description:** Dark grey brown legs, have pale dark – tipped lower mandibles, Upper parts are grey – brown in colour. Breast is somewhat browner in colour.

## Sunbirds



Male

**Purple – rumped Sunbird** (නිකම දම් සුවික්කා)  
*Leptocoma zeylonica zeylonica*



Female

\* R



### General description:

One of the smallest birds in Sri Lanka. Female has paler ashy grey face and brown wings. Males with iridescent green crown, yellow belly and glistening purple rump.

Nesting: In fibrous – pear shaped bag hanging from a twig

## White - Eyes



**Oriental White – eye** (පෙරදිග සිතාසියා)  
*Zosterops palpebrosus egregia*

\* R



### General description:

Greenish yellow in colour, lemon – yellow and white underparts, white eye ring only narrowly broken into front.

Nesting: In small cups between thin branches

## Sparrows



**House Sparrow** (ගේ කුරුල්ලා) Male  
*Passer domesticus*

\* R



### General description:

Male has a grey crown. Females have dull brown underparts with darker streaks and a pale eyebrow.

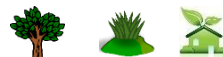
Nesting: In cavities in buildings

## Starlings



**Common Myna** (මයිනා)  
*Acridotheres tristis*

\* R



### General description:

Glossy black head, neck and breast with yellow bill and yellow facial skin behind eye. Underparts are chocolate brown in colour. White vent and white wing patches present. Yellow legs present.

Nesting: In holes in trees



## Orioles



**Black – hooded Oriole** (කහ කුරුල්ලා)  
*Oriolus xanthornus*

\* R



### General description:

Adults have distinct black heads. Body is yellow colour, tail and wings black. Red beak and feet present.

Nesting: In hammock of stems and leaves hung in foliage

## Drongos



**Black Drongo** (කළු කවුඩා)  
*Dicrurus macrocercus*

\* \*



### General description:

White spot near the base of the bill. Body is totally black. Sexes alike.

Nesting: In cups in trees but not in well-hidden places



**White – bellied Drongo (බඩ සුදු කවුඩා)**  
*Dicrurus caeruleus*

\* **R**



**General description:**

Body is black in colour with variable white on belly and vent. Two races present: Dry zone race – *D.c. insularis*, Wet zone race – *D.c. leucopygialis*

Nesting: In shallow cup on a fork in tree

## List of birds in university premises

No	Common name	Scientific name	Family	Status		
				NCS	GCS	ES
01	Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	Psittacidae	LC	LC	R
02	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopacea</i>	Cuculidae	LC	LC	CR
03	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	Ciconiidae	LC	LC	R
04	Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>	Apodidae	LC	LC	R
05	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo concolor</i>	Hirundinidae			CM
06	Black – headed Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina melanoptera</i>	Campephagidae			R
07	Black – hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>	Oriolidae	LC	LC	R
08	Blue – faced Malkoha	<i>Rhopodytes viridirostris</i>	Cuculidae	LC	LC	UR
09	Blue – tailed Bee - eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	Meropidae	CR	LC	CM
10	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>	Accipitridae	LC	LC	R
11	Brown – headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>	Capitonidae	LC	LC	CR
12	Ceylon Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>	Monarchidae	LC	LC	R
13	Ceylon Red – backed Woodpecker	<i>Dinopium psarodes</i>	Picidae	LC		CE
14	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Alcediniadae	LC	LC	R
15	Common Mynah	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	Surinidae	LC	LC	CR
16	Common Tailor Bird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	Sylviidae	LC	LC	CR
17	Crimson - fronted Barbet	<i>Megalaima rubricapilla</i>	Capitonidae	LC	LC	CE
18	Flame Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	Campephagidae	LC	LC	R
19	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	Cuculidae	LC	LC	CR
20	Greater Flameback	<i>Chrysocolaptes stricklandi</i>	Picidae	LC		E
21	Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i>	Columbidae	LC	LC	R
22	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	Corvidae	LC	LC	CR
23	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	Phasinidae			R
24	Intermediate Egret	<i>Mesophoyx intermedia</i>	Ardeidae	LC	LC	CR
25	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	Phalacrocoracidae	LC	LC	CR
26	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Ardeidae	LC	LC	CR



27	Long – billed Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia lotenia</i>	Nectariniidae	LC	LC	R
28	Orange – breasted Green Pigeon	<i>Treron bicincta</i>	Columbidae	LC	LC	R
29	Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	Anhingidae	LC	NT	UR
30	Oriental Magpie – robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	Turdidae	LC	LC	CR
31	Oriental White – eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>	Estrildidae	LC	LC	R
32	Pale – billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>	Dicaeidae	LC	LC	CR
33	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	Ardeidae	LC	LC	R
34	Purple – rumped Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i>	Nectariniidae	LC	LC	CR
35	Red – vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	Pycnonotidae	LC	LC	CR
36	Red – wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanullus indicus</i>	Charadriidae	LC	LC	CR
37	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba torringtoni</i>	Columbidae	CR	LC	UR
38	Rose – ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	Psittacidae	LC	LC	CR
39	Scaly – breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	Estrildidae	LC	LC	R
40	Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	Columbidae	LC	LC	CR
41	Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill	<i>Tockus gingalensis</i>	Bucerotidae	LC	LC	E
42	Stork – billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>	Alcediniadae	LC	LC	UR
43	Tri – coloured Munia	<i>Lonchura Malacca</i>	Estrildidae	LC	LC	R
44	White – bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>	Dicruridae	LC	LC	CR
45	White – breasted Water Hen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	Rallidae	LC	LC	CR
46	White – browed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>	Pycnonotidae	LC	LC	R
47	White – browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>	Monarchidae	LC	LC	R
48	White – rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>	Estrildidae	LC	LC	R
49	White – throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon capensis</i>	Alcediniadae	LC	LC	CR
50	Yellow – billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides affinis</i>	Timaliidae	LC	LC	CR
51	Yellow – rumped Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula zanthopygia</i>	Muscicapidae			V