

## BIRDS OF POHARA-MALKHED RESERVE FOREST, AMRAVATI, MAHARASHTRA - AN UPDATED ANNOTATED CHECKLIST

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Pohara-Malkhed Reserve Forest in Amravati district, Maharashtra is located between 20°57'N-77°57'E. The total area is 80km<sup>2</sup>. Avian fauna of Pohara-Malkhed Reserve Forest was studied from 1997 to 2000 and a comprehensive checklist of birds was prepared. Totally 171 bird species from 56 families were recorded in this study (Wadkatkar & Kasambe, 2002). The study was continued until August 2004 to explore the avian fauna. Birds were identified up to species level. More attention was paid to winter migrants, passage migrants and quails. Also important bird sightings from nearby areas of Amravati district, after publication of first paper, are included in this paper.

**Materials and Methods:** Birds were observed using a pair of binoculars (12X50) and identified following Ali & Ripley (1983), Grewal (2000), Grimmett *et al.* (2000). Bird watching was done in all representative areas like wetlands, grasslands and shrub forests. One of us (RK) studied the quails being traded in Shukravari Bazar in Amravati. Birds were purchased, identified and later released in Pohara-Malkhed Reserve Forest. Many of the species were photographed in the wild whenever we had camera with us.

The observed birds were categorized as A - Abundant; C - Common; O - Occasional; U - Uncommon; Rr - Rare. Status of birds were classified as,

**R - Residents** species found in the study area throughout the year.

**WM - Winter Migrants**, species found in the study area only during winter.

**LM - Local Migrants**, species found in the study area irregularly, but are residents of India.

**BM - Breeding Migrants**, species visiting the area only for or during the breeding season.

**PM - Passage migrants**, species sighted on the passage from their wintering grounds to the breeding grounds.

**V - Vagrants**, species that are not regular, winter migrants or breeding migrants and hence a stray bird sighting.

The abundance and status are based on the *Checklist of Birds of Maharashtra* (Abdulali, 1972), the referred literature and in some cases on the observations of the authors.

**Results and Discussion:** A total of 78 previously unlisted bird species were added to the present checklist. Some important sightings are Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius*, breeding record of Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*, sighting of Punjab Jungle Bush Quail *Perdica asiatica punjaubi*, Ferruginous Pochard *Aythya nyroca*, Pacific Golden Plover

*Pluvialis fulva*, River Lapwing *Vanellus duevaucelli*, Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*, Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor*, Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber* and some raptors. Among vulture species only a single Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* was seen.

### List of species added to the checklist

1. Painted Francolin *Francolinus pictus* (R, O)  
Uncommon in the reserve forest. Regularly traded in the quail market.
2. Jungle Bush Quail *Perdica asiatica* (R, O)  
Uncommon bird, found along grassy patches in the reserve forest. Traded in the quail market.
3. Punjab Jungle Bush Quail *Perdica asiatica punjaubi* (V? Rr)  
A single bird was procured from the local quail market. It was photographed and sent to BNHS for identification. Mr. J.C. Daniel confirmed the identification. Probably this is the first record of the bird in Vidarbha.
4. Rock Bush Quail *Perdica argoondah* (R, O)  
Sighted along the meadows and open scrublands. Traded in the quail market.
5. Small Button Quail *Turnix sylvatica* (R, O)  
Traded in local quail market, seen in the study area occasionally.
6. Yellow-legged Buttonquail *Turnix tanki* (R, O)  
Traded in local quail market. Occasionally seen in the study area.
7. Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator* (R, O)  
It was also procured from local quail market. Occasionally seen in the market.
8. Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus* (WM, U)  
On 25.xii.2003 two birds were sighted at the Chhatra reservoir in the study area. Sighting dates and number of birds sighted outside the reserve are in parenthesis: 25.xii.1998 (14), 12.xii.1999 (20), 24.xii.2000 (21), and 28 birds on 24.xi.2002 (28) (all at Sawardi reservoir), and 32 birds at Jalka Shahapur reservoir on the same day, 29.xii.2002 (65) (at Suryaganga reservoir, as Sawardi went dry), 29.xi.2003 (22) at Sawardi, and at Upper Wardha reservoir on 29.xii.2003 (4).
9. Ferruginous Pochard *Aythya nyroca* (WM, U)  
On 3.i.2004, 8 birds were sighted at Chhatra reservoir and on 11.i.2004, 11 birds were sighted at the Malkhed tank near Sawanga Vithoba village.
10. Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* (WM, U)  
A single bird was sighted on 2.xi.2002 near Chhatra reservoir. On 11.xi.2004 two birds were sighted near Bhankheda village along cultivation.
11. Sirkeer Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii* (R, O)  
On 19.v.2002, a single bird was sighted at the Bandarzeera waterhole in the Chhatra forest range. Another bird was sighted near the Chhatra reservoir on 20.iv.2003.
12. Plum-headed Parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala* (R, C)  
Flocks of these birds are seen in well-wooded country particularly around Pohara reservoir and along Devnadi River.
13. Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* (R, O)  
Flocks are seen only along the Devnadi River near Pohara village.
14. Collared Scops Owl *Otus bakkamoena* (R, U)  
On 19.v.2002 a dead bird was found on a tar road passing through the reserve forest.
15. Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* (R, O)  
Seen only once along the Devnadi River near Pohara village and also seen near Shewati reservoir outside the study area.

16. Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus* (R, U)  
Seen in Amravati University campus throughout the year in the evenings
17. Savanna Nightjar *Caprimulgus affinis* (R, O)  
Seen in Amravati University campus throughout the year in the evenings
18. Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo* (WM, U)  
A single bird was seen in the flock of Common Cranes *Grus grus* at Kekatpur reservoir on 30.i.2000. A single bird was seen at the Chhatri reservoir on 9.xi.2003. However, a flock of around 600 birds landed at a newly constructed Rajura tank near Rajura village on 26.i.2003.
19. Common Cranes *Grus grus* (WM, U)  
Visited the Kekatpur and Dastapur reservoirs and adjoining cultivation and were seen in the area from around 11 November to 30 January. Sightings dates and number of birds sighted is provided in parenthesis: 5.xii.1999 (53), 12.xii.1999 (67), 30.i.2000 (35), 12.xi.2000 (5), 11.xi.2001 (28).
20. Brown Crake *Amaurornis akool* (R, U)  
A single bird at Chhatri tank on three occasions (2.xi.2002, 13.xii.2003 and 17.i.2004).
21. Little Crake *Porzana parva* (WM, U)  
A single bird at Chhatri tank on 15.x.2004.
22. Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla* (WM, U)  
A single bird was sighted on 15.x.2004 at the Chhatri tank.
23. Painted Sandgrouse *Pterocles indicus* (R, O)  
Occasionally sighted in catchment areas of Chhatri reservoir, Bhankheda reservoir and Malkhed reservoir.
24. Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* (WM, O) (Image 1<sup>w</sup>)  
Flocks of these birds are seen in the months of February (29.ii.2004) and March to May every year in breeding plumage. Sometimes a single or two birds are seen in November or December in non-breeding plumage.
25. Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* (PM, U)  
A single bird was sighted on 15.ii.2004 at Chhatri reservoir.
26. Little Stint *Calidris minuta* (PM, U)  
On 2.iii.2003, a flock of around 100 birds was sighted at the Malkhed reservoir.
27. Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* (PM, Rr)  
On 2.iii.2003, a single bird was sighted at Malkhed reservoir.
28. Eurasian Thick-knee *Burhinus oediconemus* (R, O)  
Sighted singly or in pairs along all the reservoirs.
29. Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus* (R, U)  
On 17.i.2004, a single bird was sighted at the Wadali reservoir.
30. Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum* (R? Rr)  
A single bird was sighted on 11.iv.2004 at Malkhed reservoir.
31. Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* (PM, U) (Image 2<sup>w</sup>)  
A single bird was sighted at Malkhed reservoir on 4.v.2003 and on 22.v.2003. The latter bird was having only one leg. Probably this is the first record of *P. fulva* from Vidarbha.
32. Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* (BM, O) (Image 3<sup>w</sup>)  
Summer breeding migrant. The bird breeds in small numbers in Amravati district in summer. On 21.v.2003 (three eggs) nesting was found at Upper Wardha dam (near Morshi town outside study area). This is the first ever record of nesting of Kentish Plover from Vidarbha and peninsular India.
33. River Lapwing *Vanellus devaueilli* (V? Rr) (Image 4<sup>w</sup>)  
A single bird being mobbed by Red-wattled Lapwing was sighted at the Malkhed reservoir on 6.iv.2003.
34. Sociable Lapwing (Sociable Plover) *Vanellus gregarius* (PM, Rr)  
A single bird was sighted at the Malkhed tank on 11.iii.2001 afternoon.
35. Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus* (WM, U)  
These were sighted at the Malkhed tank and at the Chhatri tanks in the winters of 2002 and 2003.
36. Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* (PM, U)  
A single bird was sighted at the Malkhed tank on 9.vi.2002. On 14.v.2003, a flock of around 50 birds was sighted at Chhatri tank and another flock of 28 birds was sighted at Malkhed reservoir.
37. Pallas's Gulls *Larus ichthyaetus* (WM, U) (Image 5<sup>w</sup>)  
A flock of 25 birds in various plumages was seen at Upper Wardha reservoir on 29.xii.2003. Again 29 birds were seen here on 31.xii.2003 and on 7.i.2004. Probably this is the first sighting of Pallas's Gulls in Central India (D'Abreu 1923, 1935).
38. Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* (PM, U) (Image 6<sup>w</sup>)  
A flock of 6 birds was sighted at Malkhed reservoir on 18.iv.2004. This is the first record of Gull-billed Terns from Vidarbha.
39. Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* (WM, Rr)  
A single bird was sighted on 28.xii.2003 at the Shewati reservoir.
40. Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* (R, Rr)  
A single bird was sighted at the Kekatpur reservoir outside the study area on 30.i.2000. A single bird was sighted on 25.xii.2003 near Chhatri reservoir near a carcass. It was observed that stray dogs prevented it from feeding and ultimately it flew without feeding.
41. Oriental Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* (R, U)  
A single bird was sighted three times at Devnadi grove, near Pohara village.
42. Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraetus fasciatus* (R, Rr)  
A pair was seen soaring high over the study area on 7.xii.2003. It was photographed in flight and then identified.
43. Booted Eagle *Hieraetus kienerii* (WM, Rr)  
A single bird was seen on 28.i.2003 hunting near the Chhatri reservoir.
44. Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanini* (PM, U)  
Sighted many times at various reservoirs and flying over scrub forest on 3.x.2002, 2.ii.2003 and on 6.ii.2003.
45. Red-necked Falcon *Falco chicquera* (R, U)  
A breeding pair and nest was located near the reserve forest in the summer of 2003. The nest was on Peepal *Ficus religiosa* tree around 6m above ground. The pair was seen hunting House Sparrows *Passer domesticus* in the nearby cultivation. Then two fledglings and the parents were sighted many times at the nearby Chhatri reservoir. Then adults were sighted at the breeding site nearly throughout the year.
46. Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* (WM, Rr) (Image 7<sup>w</sup>)  
On 25.xii.2002 morning a single bird was sighted at the Chhatri tank. It did not mix with other waterfowl and was feeding in deep waters.
47. Indian Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis* (R, U)  
The birds are regularly sighted at the Shewati reservoir, Rajura reservoir and Ghatkheda reservoir during the winter.
48. Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (R, U)  
The birds are sighted at Shewati reservoir and Indla reservoir during the winters.
49. Intermediate Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia* (R, C)  
Sighted at all the reservoirs in the reserved forest in small numbers.
50. Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* (R, U)  
Sighted in small numbers at all the reservoirs in the study area.
51. Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* (R, U)  
The bird was sighted at Chhatri tank twice on 15.vi.2003 and 22.vi.2003 among reedbeds.

<sup>w</sup> See Images in the web supplement at [www.zoosprint.org](http://www.zoosprint.org)

52. Cinnamon (Chestnut) Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* (R, U)  
Sighted once at Chhatri tank on 13.xii.2003 among reedbeds.

53. Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber* (PM, Rr) (Image 8<sup>w</sup>)  
On 9.vi.2002 a flock of 22 birds sighted at the Malkhed tank gave a pleasant surprise to us. The flock stayed at the tank for a week and then disappeared.

54. Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor* (PM, Rr) (Image 9<sup>w</sup>)  
On 12.v.2002 we sighted 2 birds were sighted at the Malkhed tank.

55. Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis* (R, O)  
The birds are seen singly perched on the electric wires or on the fencing of the cultivated lands.

56. White-bellied Minivet *Pericrocotus erythropygus* (R, O)  
Seen many times in the study area.

57. White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura albicollis* (R, O)  
Seen many times in the study area along dense vegetation and in shady areas.

58. Common Wood-shrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus* (R, U)  
Seen many times in the study area along dense vegetation and in shady areas

59. Blue-capped Rock Thrush *Monticola cinclorhynchus* (WM, R) A pair was sighted near Pedhi River on 7.iii.2004 near to Amravati-Paratwada road.

60. Red-throated Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* (WM, Rr)  
Once seen in the study area along dense vegetation near Pohara.

61. Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassina* (WM, U)  
A single bird was sighted near Malkhed tank on 1.xii.2002.

62. Variable Wheatear *Oenanthe picata* (WM, Rr)  
A single bird was sighted on 24.xi.2002 in the Amravati University campus.

63. Streak-throated Swallow *Hirundo fluvicola* (R, C)  
Regularly sighted flying over the tanks in the morning and in the evening.

64. White-browed Bulbul *Pycnonotus luteolus* (R, U)  
Two birds were sighted along the Wardha River on 22.vi.2003. On 24.xi.2002, two birds were sighted at Shewati reservoir, which were calling continuously.

65. Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii* (R, Rr)  
On 22.vi.2003, a single bird was located in the Pohara range of forests.

66. Jungle Prinia *Prinia sylvatica* (R, C)  
Sighted regularly in scrub country.

67. Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* (R, C)  
Sighted regularly in scrub country.

68. Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus* (WM, C)  
Regularly seen in the reed beds of *Ipomoea* (*Besharam*) at all the reservoirs.

69. Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata* (WM, C)  
Common winter visitor throughout the reserve forest as well as the Amravati city.

70. Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* (WM, U)  
Seen many times in the study area along dense vegetation and in scrub forest.

71. Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis* (WM, U)  
Seen many times in the study area along in scrub forest.

72. Tawny-bellied Babbler *Dumetia hypertythra hypertythra* (R, U)  
A flock of 8 to 9 birds was sighted in scrubs on 30.iii.2004 along the Devnadi grove near Pohara village.

73. Chestnut-shouldered Petronia *Petronia xanthocollis* (R, C)  
Regularly seen along the open or fallow land, also flocks are seen along road-sides and in scrub jungle.

74. White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* (WM, C)  
Seen many times in the study area near all tanks and in the open country.

75. Crested Bunting *Melophus lathami* (R, Rr)  
Sighted once at Chhatri reservoir on 19.iii.2003. Though this bird is common in Melghat (Sawarkar, 1987), it is rarely sighted here.

76. Grey-necked Bunting *Emberiza buchanani* (WM, U)  
Seen along cultivated land boundaries and along the roads in the reserve forest.

77. Common Chiff-chaff *Phylloscopus collybita* (WM, U)  
On 14.ii.2004 a single bird was located in the Pohara range of forests.

78. Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope* (WM, Rr)  
A single bird was seen early in the morning near Chhatri reservoir in scrub forest on 4.xii.2003. Probably this is the first sighting record from Vidarbha.

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