wings of ganga

PART IV

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This publication is the fourth part of the "**Wings of Ganga**" series under the "**Vibrant Ganga: Book Series**" and includes important wetland and wetland associated birds of the Ganga River Basin. The representative species were selected on the basis of the four criteria listed as follows-

- International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Red list categories
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Appendices
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) Appendices
- Indian Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 (IWPA) Schedules

This book covers **14** families of wetland and wetland associated birds of Ganga River Basin, represented by **37** species. The species are described through scientific and common names and are categorized according to their families. The book also provides information on the conservation status of the species, taxonomy, key identifying features, habit and habitat, reproduction ecology and major threats.

PREFACE

The Ganga River holds profound mythological significance within Indian culture, being revered as a "Holy River." This river basin is the largest in India and provides sustenance to approximately 650 million people, while also hosting a diverse aquatic ecosystem across five distinct biogeographic zones: the Himalaya, Semi-Arid, the Deccan-Peninsula, the Gangetic Plains and Coastal regions.

India, recognized as one of the world's top 12 mega-biodiversity countries, supports a remarkable bird population of about 1301 species. The Ganga basin plays a pivotal role in the Central Asian Flyway, a significant global bird migration route. The Gangetic Plains alone supports 177 species of migratory and resident birds, including several globally threatened waterbirds such as the marbled duck, ferruginous duck, and curlew sandpiper etc. The existence and behavior of waterbirds can greatly benefit the variety of life in water environments. For instance, these birds serve as significant carriers in spreading plant and animal materials, which is vital for preserving the overall diversity of wetlands.

In a concerted effort led by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, through the National Mission for Clean Ganga and the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, the "Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation" project was initiated in 2016. In 2020, the project was upscaled for replication in the entire Ganga River Basin. This project adopts a holistic approach, addressing ecological, biological, and socio-economic factors, with the primary goal of devising a science-based plan to restore aquatic species in the Ganga River basin by involving various stakeholders.

To ensure active stakeholder engagement in ecological restoration, it is imperative to sensitize them to the biodiversity of the Ganga and its tributaries. With this objective in mind, "Wings of Ganga - Part IV" is presented as the fourth of the 'Vibrant Ganga' series. This publication serves as an informative booklet, offering insights into the avian diversity along the Ganga River. Designed for a broad audience, including local communities, students, and the scientific community, it serves as a practical field guide for species identification and study. The book describes one critically endangered (CR), five near threatened (NT), one vulnerable (V) and thirty least concern (LC) species of birds.

Editors

All species belong to

Kingdom: Animalia,
Phylum: Chordata,
Class: Aves

Following color coding is adopted to describe the conservation status according to IUCN Red List.

- CR — Critically Endangered
- EN — Endangered
- VU — Vulnerable
- NT — Near Threatened
- LC — Least Concern

Following codes were used for describing migration status of the species

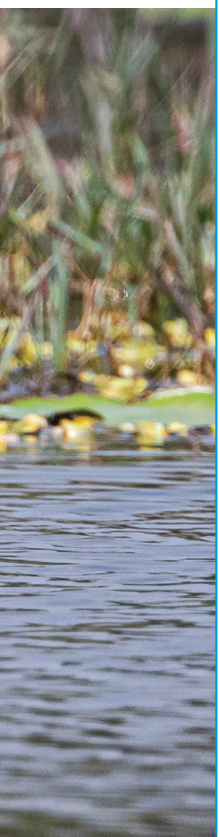
- **Extant (Resident)**
- **Extant (Breeding)**
- **Extant (Non-Breeding)**
- **Extant (Passage)**
- **Extant & Vagrant (Seasonality uncertain)**

Fulvous Whistling Duck

Dendrocygna bicolor

Vernacular Name:	Badi seelhi battakh (बड़ी सिल्ही बतक) (Hindi), Bada sharal (Bengali)
Order:	Anseriformes
Family:	Anatidae
Genus:	*Dendrocygna*
Species:	*D. bicolor*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule I
Population Trend:	Decreasing

LC



Distribution

This species is a wide spread resident in Indian but not yet been recorded from the Ganga River.

Habit & Habitat

Found in small flocks on secluded weed-covered tanks, they are shy and wary. They generally feeds at night and roost near water bodies during the day. Feeds predominantly on aquatic seeds and fruits, bulbs, leaf shoots, buds and the structural parts of aquatic plants such as grasses and rushes. Prefers reedy and vegetation covered jheels with partly submerged trees, flooded paddy fields, ponds and shallow lakes in the plain.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: August to October

Nest site/ type: The nest is made up of sticks, placed in tree holes or on floating vegetation.

Clutch Size: 6-8

Incubation Period: 30-32 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 45-53 cm. The adult is similar to the Lesser Whistling-Duck, but larger with creamy white upper tail-coverts; blackish-brown stripe on nape; pale rufescent-white centre of neck with black streaks; dusky-black bill; dusky plumbeous to bluish-slate legs. Juvenile is duller, and the chestnut portions darker brown.

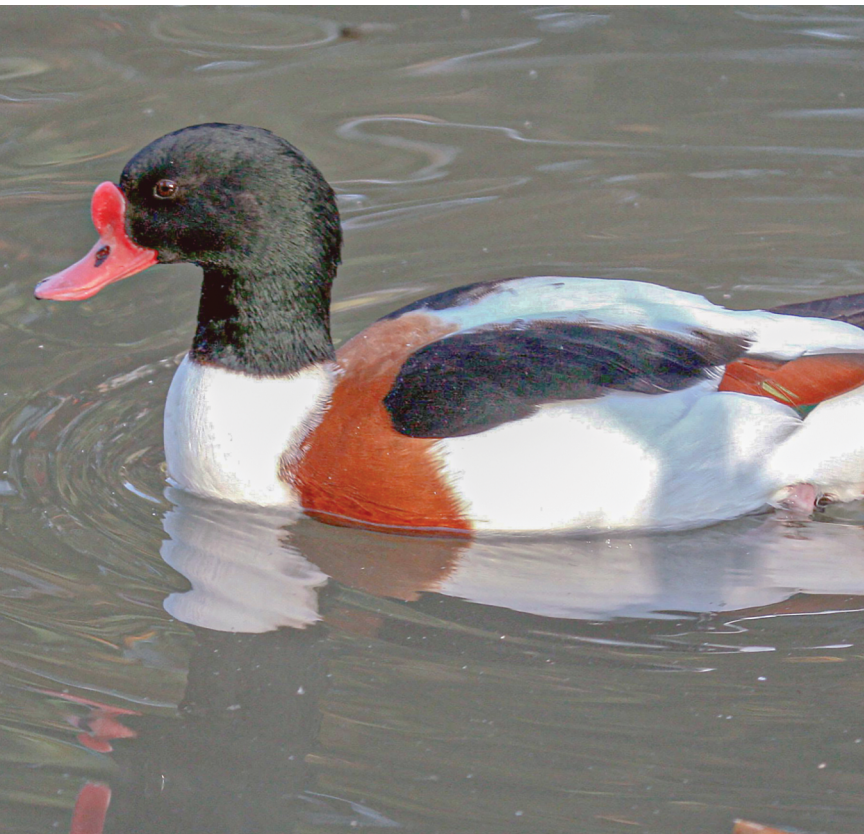
Major Threats

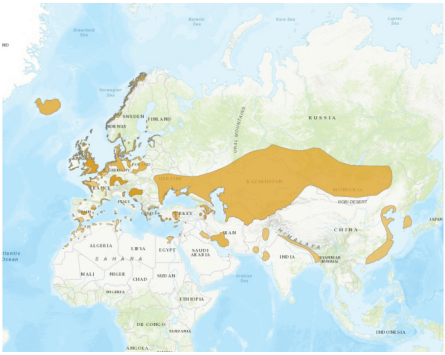
The species is vulnerable to habitat loss and degradation due to increased aquaculture, siltation, construction of dams and barrages, and the growth of invasive freshwater plant species (eg. water hyacinth Eichornia crassipes), as well as hunting and trapping.

Hari K Patibanda (Wikemedia commons)

Common Shelduck
Tadorna tadorna

Vernacular Name:	Safed surkhab (सफेद सुखराब) (Hindi) Shah chaka (Bengali)
Order:	Anseriformes
Family:	Anatidae
Genus:	*Tadorna*
Species:	*T. tadorna*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Increasing





LC

Distribution

Uncommon and irregular winter migrant to India. It is a rare and vagrant species, found in the middle stretch of the Ganga.

Habit & Habitat

Gregarious, occurs in small flocks, feeds by walking on mudflats, which it often frequents. Chiefly carnivorous, feeds on molluscs, aquatic arthropods and, also algae and seeds.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: May to June

Nest site/ type: The nest is a bed of down in a natural crevice or hollow in a cliff or bank.

Clutch Size: 8–16

Incubation Period: 29–31 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 58-67 cm. A distinctive white and black duck with a broad chestnut breast-band, glistening greenish-black head and neck, glossy green speculum bordered above with chestnut, black-tail-tip, bright red bill and pink legs. Adult male has a conspicuous red knob above base of the bill and a broad black band from breast to vent. Female is considerably smaller, dull coloured and without a red knob. In eclipse plumage, male have a dull blackish head with little sheen; feathers of lower black band with white tips.

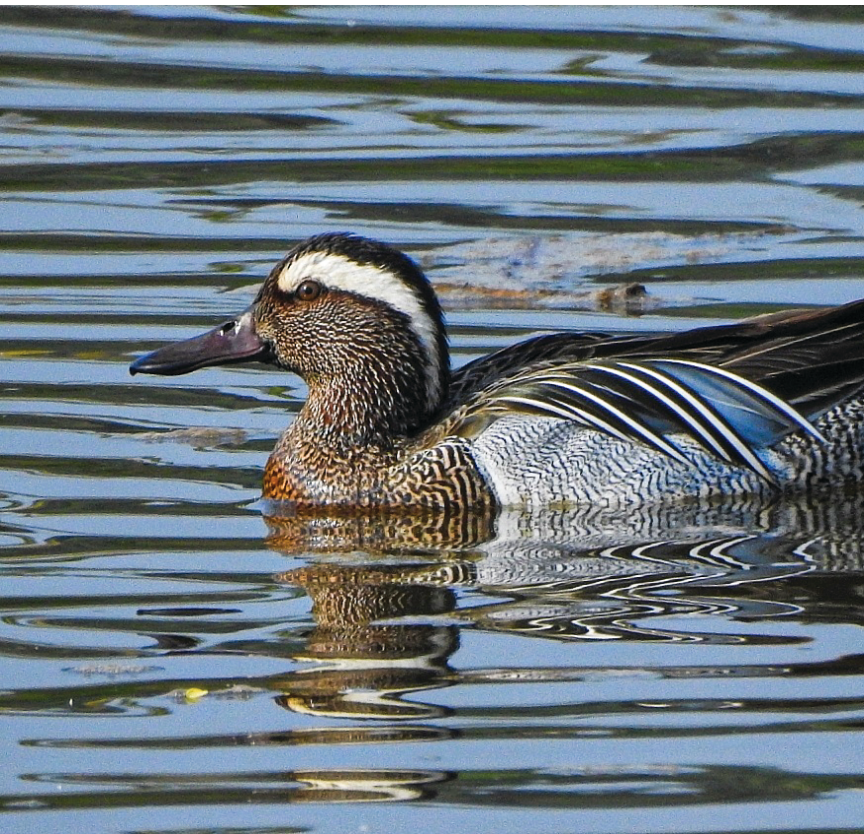
Major Threats

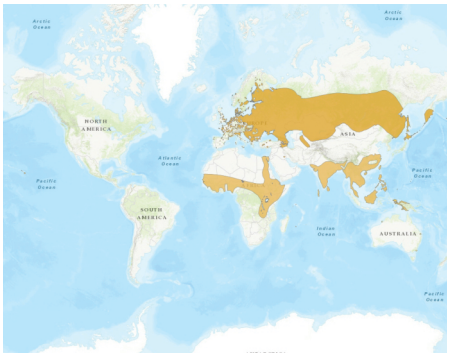
The species is threatened by habitat loss and degradation due to the construction of dams and barrages. It is also susceptible to avian influenza.

Dick Daniels (Wikemedia commons)

Garganey
Spatula querquedula

Vernacular Name:	Chaita (चेता) (Hindi), Giria Hans (Bengali)
Order:	Anseriformes
Family:	Anatidae
Genus:	*Spatula*
Species:	*S. querquedula*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Decreasing





LC

Distribution

A widespread winter migrant in India arrives in late July and leaves by February. Found throughout the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

Gregarious, nocturnal feeder, shy and wary, generally keeps in emergent vegetation. Prefers seeds, arable crops, and occasionally aquatic insect larvae, worms and molluscs. Frequents almost all types of wetlands including jheels, marshes, lakes, reservoirs, rivers and village ponds, with plenty of vegetation.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: May to July

Nest site/ type: The nest is built with twigs, placed generally on the half submerged trees.

Clutch Size: 7-16

Incubation Period: 21–23 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 37-41 cm. Male has white stripe behind eye and brown breast contrasting with grey flanks; shows blue-grey forewing in fight. The female is mottled brown above and white below with whitish eyebrows. Male in eclipse plumage is similar to female, but has upperwing pattern of breeding male.

Major Threats

The species is vulnerable to habitat deterioration through the drainage and reclamation of wetlands, increasing climatic aridity, the transformation of wetlands, increased human disturbances and lead poisoning. It is also susceptible to avian botulism.

Afsarnayakkan (Wikimedia Commons)

Common Teal

Anas crecca

Vernacular Name:	Chhoti murghabi (छोटी मुर्ग़ाबि) Patari hans (Bengali)
Order:	Anseriformes
Family:	Anatidae
Genus:	*Anas*
Species:	*A. crecca*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Unknown

LC

Distribution

A widespread winter visitor all over India, arrives in the middle or end of August and leaves by the end of March. Found throughout the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

Chiefly vegetarian, feeds on aquatic plants, their seeds and arable winter crops. Prefers freshwater shallow inland wetlands like tanks, jheels, marshes, pools, reservoirs and rivers.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: May to June

Nest site/ type: The nest is built with twigs, placed generally on the half submerged trees.

Clutch Size: 8-14

Incubation Period: 21–23 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 37 cm. A small duck with a distinctive tricoloured (black, metallic green and buff) speculum, particularly conspicuous in flight; a black bill; olive-grey to deep slaty-blue legs. The male has chestnut head with a broad metallic green band surrounding the eye and running back to the nape, a yellowish patch on undertail covert. Female has mottled brown and buff plumage with pale belly; black and green speculum. Eclipse male and juvenile are like female.

Major Threats

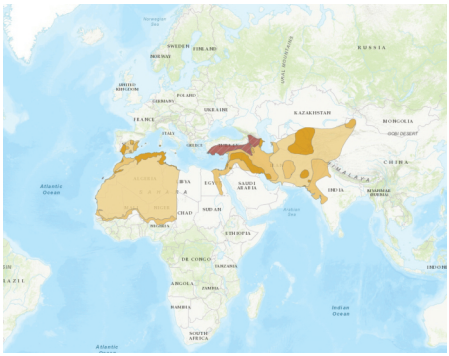
The species is threatened by lowland habitat loss and degradation due to afforestation and other land-use changes, lead poisoning and human disturbances. It is also susceptible to avian influenza and botulism.

Hari K Patibanda (Wikemedia commons)

Marbled Teal

Marmaronetta angustirostris

Vernacular Name:	Marmari battak (मरमरी बतक) (Hindi)
Order:	Anseriformes
Family:	Anatidae
Genus:	*Marmaronetta*
Species:	*M. angustirostris*
IUCN Red List:	Near Threatened
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule I
Population Trend:	Decreasing



NT

Francis C. Franklin (Wikemedia commons)

Distribution

A rare winter visitor in India arrives during the middle or end of August and leaves by end of March. Found in the middle and lower stretch of the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

Generally, occurs in pairs or small flocks. Feeds mainly on aquatic plants, and partly aquatic invertebrates. Prefers shallow freshwater lakes, and matted jheels, favouring shallow brackish waters rich in emergent and submerge vegetation with extensive emergent vegetation, and avoid open waters.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: May to June

Nest site/ type: Nest is made of rushes and weeds, unlined or sometimes scantily with down feathers concealed among weeds and rushes on swampy ground or on an islet in a lake.

Clutch Size: 5-20

Incubation Period: 25 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 39-48 cm. Greyish-brown duck with a distinct dark brown patch from eye to nape; a slight nuchal crest; bluish-grey bill, and horny-brown legs. Above, spotted or marbled with pale greyish buff and blackish; below, more or less transversely barred brown-barred. Females are slightly smaller than males.

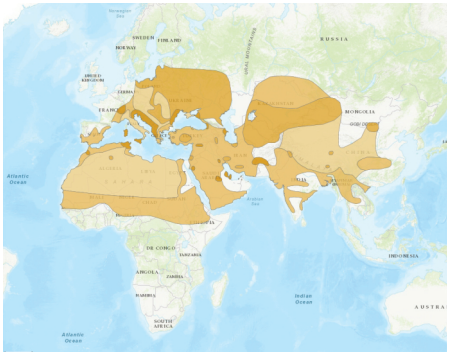
Major Threats

The species is threatened by habitat destruction due to drainage for agriculture, hydrology alteration, pollution and hunting.

Ferruginous Duck

Aythya nyroca

Vernacular Name:	Kurchiya (कुरचिया) (Hindi) Bhuti hans (Bengal)
Order:	Anseriformes
Family:	Anatidae
Genus:	Aythya
Species:	*A. nyroca*
IUCN Red List:	Near Threatened
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Decreasing



NT

Hari K Patibanda (Wikemedia commons)

Distribution

Breeds in Kashmir and Ladakh, and winter visitor elsewhere in India. Found throughout the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

A shy and secretive duck, occurs in pairs or in small groups, feeds mainly by diving at night, and hides in reeds on being disturbed. Feeds on aquatic vegetation and molluscs, larvae, and fish. It occurs in weedy and vegetation covered jheels, open irrigation tanks, reservoirs with thick marginal vegetation, coastal backwaters and lagoons.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: May to June

Nest site/ type: The nest is a low platform of reeds and other vegetation placed on the ground or on an islet or hummock in thick vegetation close to water.

Clutch Size: 8-10

Incubation Period: 25–27 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 38-42cm. Adult male has a deep chestnut head, neck and breast; darker nape; bluish-black bill; white iris. Female is duller with a brownish iris and less contrasting off-white belly. Male eclipse plumage has a brown mantle and dull reddish head, neck and breast.

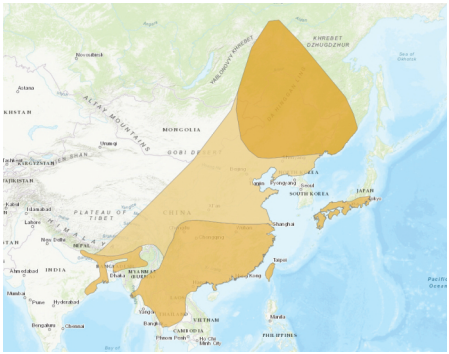
Major Threats

The species is threatened by wetland drainage and hunting.

Baer's Pochard

Aythya baeri

Vernacular Name:	Bada bhuti hans (Bengal)
Order:	Anseriformes
Family:	Anatidae
Genus:	*Aythya*
Species:	*A. baeri*
IUCN Red List:	Critically Endangered
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule I
Population Trend:	Decreasing



Distribution

A rare and vagrant winter visitor in India. Possibly found in the middle and lower stretch of the Ganga river.

CR

Habit & Habitat

Generally, shy, usually found in pairs or small flocks, it feeds by diving. Feeds mainly on aquatic plants and seeds. Prefers Large rivers and lakes, also in coastal waters.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: April to June

Nest site/ type: The nest is a low platform of reeds and other vegetation placed on the ground or on an islet or hummock in thick vegetation close to water.

Clutch Size: 6–12

Incubation Period: 25–27 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 41-47 cm. Male similar to Ferruginous Pochard but head and neck black glossed with green; iris golden yellow; small white spot on chin; breast rich rufous-chestnut; flanks duller chestnut-brown; upperparts dark brown; undertail-coverts white. Male in eclipse plumage is like female but with an unglossed head and neck and white iris. Female's head, breast and upper parts are dark brown; with pale brown oval patch at the base of bill; iris and flanks are brown whereas the belly in white.

Major Threats

The species is vulnerable to habitat loss and degradation from drainage and rice cultivation, and unsustainable exploitation of food.

Sun Jiao (Wikemedia commons)

Brahminy Kite
Haliastur indus

Vernacular Name:	Dhobia cheel (धोबिअ चील) (Hindi) Shankha cheel (Bengali)
Order:	Accipitriformes
Family:	Accipitridae
Genus:	*Haliastur*
Species:	*H. indus*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule I
Population Trend:	Decreasing

LC

Afsar Nayakkan (Wikimedia Commons)

Distribution
Widespread resident in India. Found in the middle and lower stretch of the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat
Often solitary or in pairs, but roost communally and gregarious where common. Feed on fish, frog, crabs and young ducks. Found near the freshwater bodies, marshes, estuaries, and coastal waters.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: December to April

Nest site/ type: The nest is a loose structure of sticks and twigs, occasionally lined with a few leaves, placed in a large tree such as a banyan, peepul or mango, preferably growing near water.

Clutch Size: 1–2

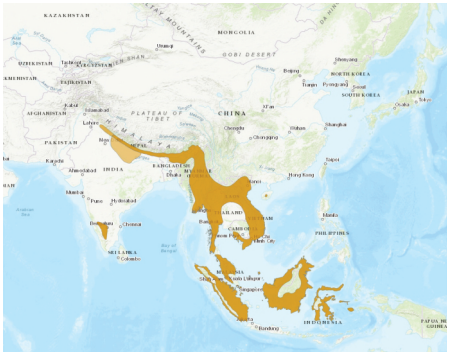
Incubation Period: 26–35 days

Key Identifying Features
Size 48 cm. Adult has a bright chestnut white plumage, and a rounded tail. Juvenile is chocolate brown with pale bars across the upperwing.

Major Threats
The species is vulnerable to habitat loss, persecution and over-use of pesticides.

Lesser Fish-eagle
Icthyophaga humilis

Vernacular Name:	Not Known
Order:	Accipitriformes
Family:	Accipitridae
Genus:	*Icthyophaga*
Species:	*I. humilis*
IUCN Red List:	Near Threatened
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule I
Population Trend:	Decreasing



NT

Distribution

Widespread resident in India. Found in the upper and middle stretch of the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

Solitary or in pairs, it usually perches on trees or rocks overlooking water from where it takes flight for hunting fish, glides and soars on level wings. Feeds chiefly on fish, young birds and small mammals. Prefers forest streams and lakes in foothills and sub-Himalayan terai.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: March to August

Nest site/ type: The nest is a loose structure of sticks and twigs, occasionally lined with a few leaves, placed in a large tree such as a banyan, peepul or mango (*Mangifer sp.*), gular (*Ficus racemosa*) preferably growing near water.

Clutch Size: 2-3

Incubation Period: 26–27 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 64 cm. Small, with broad wings and short tail, and rather small and protruding head and neck. Head is pure grey, with less brown on brown; white belly, thigh and under tail-coverts clearly demarcated from breast, basal two-third of tail-mottled brown, and terminal thirds are blackish.

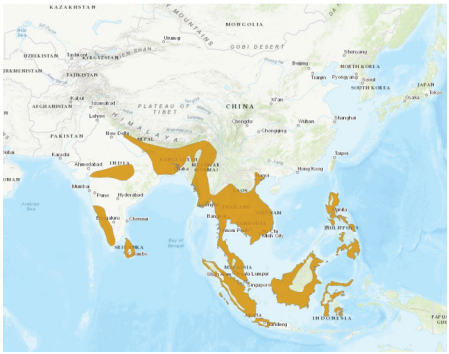
Major Threats

The species is vulnerable to habitat loss along the rivers, water siltation, over-fishing, increasing human disturbance of waterways and use of pesticides.

Subramanyu CK (Wikimedia Commons)

Grey-headed Fish-eagle
Icthyophaga ichthyaetus

Vernacular Name:	Madhuya (मधुआ) (Hindi) Machhmoral (Bengal)
Order:	Accipitriformes
Family:	Accipitridae
Genus:	*Icthyophaga*
Species:	*I. ichthyaetus*
IUCN Red List:	Near Threatened
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule I
Population Trend:	Decreasing



NT

Distribution

Widespread resident in India. Found in the upper and middle stretch of the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

Sluggish and usually perches on trees above water. Feeds mainly on fish, young birds and small mammals. Found near streams, rivers, lakes, reservoirs and tidal lagoons.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: November to January

Nest site/ type: The nest is an enormous platform of sticks and twigs, built 10 to 30 metres up in or at the top of large trees such as *Salmalia*, *Terminalia* or *Albizzia* near forest stream or tank.

Clutch Size: 2-3

Incubation Period: 28–30 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 61-75 cm. Adult can be distinguished from Lesser Fish eagle largely by white tail with broad black subterminal band. Head, neck and throat are grey, with dark brown upperparts and rufous brown breast. Juvenile has boldly streaked head and underparts, and pale supercilium.

Major Threats

The species is vulnerable to loss of undisturbed wetlands, over-fishing, siltation, construction of dams, pollution and persecution.

A. Goonsalves (Wikemedia commons)

Greater Spotted Eagle

Clanga clanga

Vernacular Name:	Kaljanga (कलजंगा) (Hindi)
Order:	Accipitriformes
Family:	Accipitridae
Genus:	*Clanga*
Species:	*C. clanga*
IUCN Red List:	Vulnerable
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule I
Population Trend:	Decreasing

VU

Distribution
Widespread resident in India and breeds in Gangetic plain.

Habit & Habitat
Feeds on frog, fish, reptiles, waterbirds and terrestrial birds. Keeps to well-wooded, well-watered tracts with perennial rivers, Large lakes, swamps, jheels, canals, marshes and mangroves. Usually perched singly high on treetops, stumps and canal banks on the look-out for prey (generally slow-moving prey).

Reproduction
Breeding Season: November to June

Nest site/type: The nest is a massive circular platform of sticks and twigs with a central cup lined with fresh green sprigs or grass, placed 5–25 m above ground in tall. It is often used in successive years, although many pairs have two or three nests used alternately.

Clutch Size: 1 or 2

Incubation period: 41-44 days

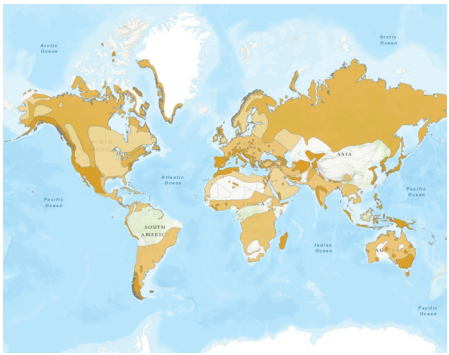
Key Identifying Features
Size 59-71 cm. Sexes alike; female larger. Medium size dark blackish brown eagle with purplish wash on back; slightly paler below; stocky head; shorter tail; black tipped slaty-blue bill; yellow cere; large round nostrils; dull yellow legs and feet. Juvenile has bold whitish tip with dark brown coverts.

Major Threats
The species is threatened by hybridisation, habitat destruction, poaching, electrocution, afforestation, wetland drainage, agricultural intensification, shooting and accidental poisoning.

Surendhar Boobalan (Wikimedia Commons)

Peregrine Falcon
Falco peregrinus

Vernacular Name:	Bhyri (female), Bhyri bacha (male) (भयरी, भयरी बाचा) (Hindi)
Order:	Falconiformes
Family:	Falconidae
Genus:	*Falco*
Species:	*F. peregrinus*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule I
Population Trend:	Increasing



LC

Ashika Talreja

Distribution

Widely spread but an uncommon resident up to the lower Himalaya. It is found throughout the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

Winters near large lakes, rivers, coastal lagoons and marshes. Chiefly migratory, seen singly or in pairs; feeds on waterfowl, pigeon, partridge and other birds. Preys actively at dawn and dusk. Chiefly hunts winter waterbirds.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: March to May

Nest site/type: Eggs are usually laid in a scrape or depression in a rock face, with no nest being built.

Clutch size: 5-6

Incubation Period: 33–35 days

Key Identifying Features

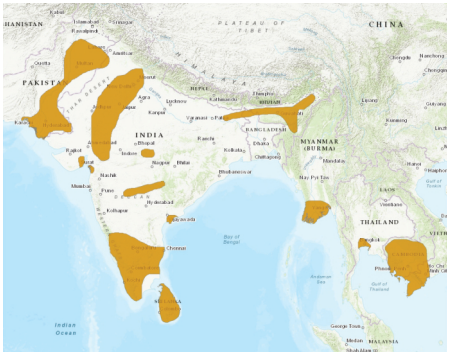
Size 38-51 cm. Sexes alike; females are larger. Prominent slaty-back head; grey upperparts barred with blackish; broad based and pointed wings, black cheek stripes contrasting with chin and, throat and short, broad based tail. Juvenile dark brown above and darkest on head, heavily streaked and rufous-white below.

Major Threats

The species is threatened by habitat degradation and hydrocarbon contamination associated with pesticides.

Indian Cormorant
Phalacrocorax fuscicollis

Vernacular Name:	Pan kowwa (पन कौव्वा) (Hindi) Pan Kawri (Bengali)
Order:	Suliformes
Family:	Phalacrocoracidae
Genus:	*Phalacrocorax*
Species:	*P. fuscicollis*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Unknown



LC

Distribution

A widespread resident in India. Found in the upper, middle and lower stretch of the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

Gregarious, feeds predominantly on fishes. Prefers freshwater lakes, jheels, reservoirs, rivers, estuaries and mangroves.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: August to October

Nest site/ type: The nest is built with twigs, placed generally on the half submerged trees.

Clutch Size: 3-6

Incubation Period: Not Known

Key Identifying Features

Size 63 cm. Chiefly a black waterbird with blue-green eyes, dark-brown bill, yellow gullar skin, white speckled throat and, black legs and feet. Breeding adult is glossy black, with tuft of white feathers on each side of the neck behind eyes. Juvenile has brown upperpart and whitish underpart.

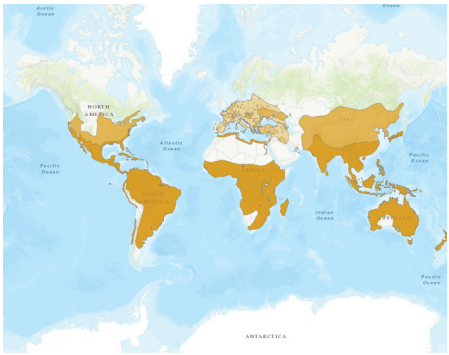
Major Threats

The species is vulnerable to habitat degradation, human activity in the breeding habitats, and drying up of water bodies.

Jameela P (Wikemedia commons)

Great Egret
Ardea alba

Vernacular Name:	Bada Bagala (बड़ा बगुला) (Hindi) Bada Bak (Bengali)
Order:	Pelecaniformes
Family:	Ardeidae
Genus:	*Ardea*
Species:	*A. alba*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Unknown



Distribution
A widespread resident in India. Found in the upper, middle and lower stretch of the Ganga river.

LC

Habit & Habitat
Diurnal, unsocial, generally solitary though roosts and feeds communally. Feeds on fish, amphibians, snakes, aquatic insects and crustaceans. It frequents river margins, lake shores, marshes, floodplains, oxbow lakes, rice-fields, ditches, sewage works, mudflats and coastal swamps.

Reproduction
Breeding Season: May to November

Nest site/ type: The nest is constructed from sticks and vegetation, and normally placed over water at a height of 1-15 m in reedbeds, bamboos, bushes, trees and mangroves.

Clutch Size: 3–5

Incubation Period: 23–26 days

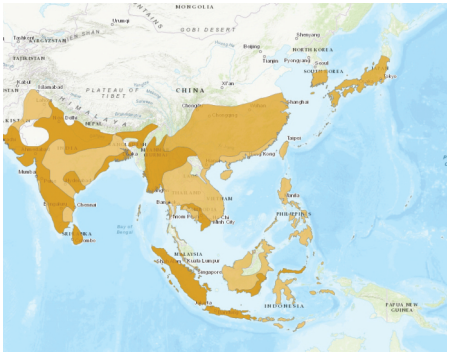
Key Identifying Features
Size 90 – 102 cm. A snow-white bird with yellow bill, black legs, and looks thinner necked with more angular and pronounced kink to neck. Breeding adult has black bill with three sets of transparent white plumes growing from scapulars extending beyond tail. Edge of gape, naked lores and orbital skin behind eyes are bright green.

Major Threats
The species is threatened by habitat loss and degradation through drainage, grazing, increased salinity, groundwater extraction and invasion by exotic plants.

Pradeep (Wikemedia commons)

Intermediate Egret
Ardea intermedia

Vernacular Name:	Patokha Bagula (पटोखा बगुला) (Hindi) Korche Bak (Bengali)
Order:	Pelecaniformes
Family:	Ardeidae
Genus:	*Ardea*
Species:	*A. intermedia*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Decreasing



LC

Ashef Emran (Wikemedia commons)

Distribution

A widespread resident in India. Found in the upper, middle and lower stretch of the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

Diurnal, occurs in small flocks, roosts and feeds communally. Feeds on fish, frogs and aquatic insects. It prefers marshes, flooded grassland, wet-vegetated pools, shores of lakes and reservoirs, mangrove swamps and tidal creeks.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: May to November

Nest site/ type: The nest is a platform of sticks and reed stems, situated near water, in trees or shrubs or in reed beds.

Clutch Size: 2–4

Incubation Period: 25–26 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 65 – 72 cm. Smaller than Great Egret, with shorter bill and neck. Breeding adult develops filamentous plumes on breast as well as back, and yellow bill of non-breeding turns black.

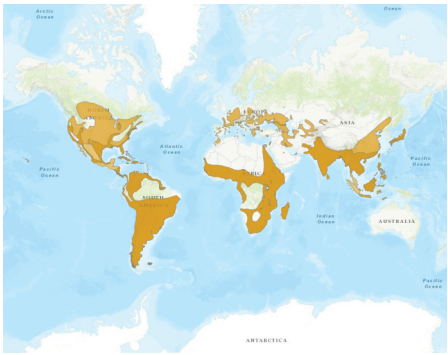
Major Threats

The main threats to this species are wetland loss due to agriculture and industrial operations, pollution and human disturbances.

Black-crowned Night Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

Vernacular Name:	Taal Bagla (ताल बगुला) (Hindi) Bachka (Bengali)
Order:	Pelecaniformes
Family:	Ardeidae
Genus:	*Nycticorax*
Species:	*N. nycticorax*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Decreasing



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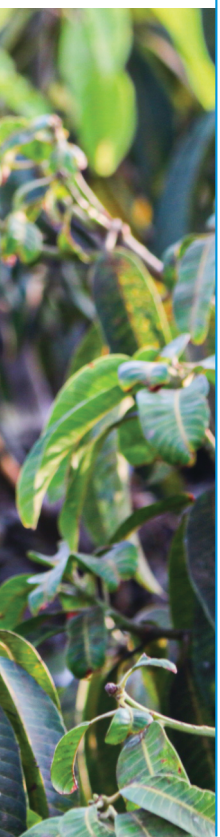


Vijay B Patil (Wikemedia commons)

Distribution

A widespread resident in India. Found in the upper, middle and lower stretch of the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

Nocturnal and crepuscular, except in breeding season. Feeds chiefly on fish, frogs and aquatic insects. Prefers reservoirs, jheels, tanks, streams, ponds, rivers, mangroves and estuaries.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: April to September

Nest site/ type: The nest is platform constructed of sticks and vegetation, placed 2-50 m above water or on dry ground near water in trees, bushes, reedbeds, and on the ground in protected sites

Clutch Size: 3–5

Incubation Period: 24–26 days

Key Identifying Features

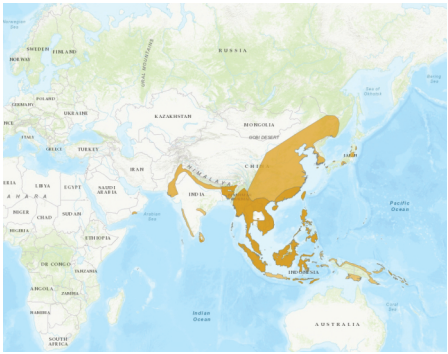
Size 58 – 65 cm. Strongly built grey, white and black heron with stout black bill. Crown, nape and occipital crest are black, contrasting with grey wings and whitish underparts. Crest has two or three very long, narrow white plumes. Juvenile is boldly streaked and spotted.

Major Threats

The species is threatened by wetland drainage and destruction, pesticides and petroleum contamination. It is also susceptible to avian influenza.

Yellow Bittern
Ixobrychus sinensis

Vernacular Name:	Karchis Bagula (करचीस बगुला) (Hindi) Korche Bak (Bengali)
Order:	Pelecaniformes
Family:	Ardeidae
Genus:	*Ixobrychus*
Species:	*I. sinensis*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Unknown



LC

G. Gokulakrishnan

Distribution

A widespread resident in India. Found in middle and lower stretches of the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

Generally crepuscular and nocturnal, active on cloudy day. Very voracious feeder on fish, frogs and aquatic insects. Prefers scrubby swamps with reeds and inundated paddy fields.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: June to September

Nest site/ type: The nest is a platform of grass, leaves, fronds and stalks of marshy vegetation and placed in trees or among the grass or rice fields, about less than 3 metres above the ground or water.

Clutch Size: 4–6

Incubation Period: 17–20 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 38 cm. Male of this species has pinkish-brown mantle and scapulars, and face and the sides of neck are vinaceous. Female is similar to male, but has rufous streaking on black crown, variable rufous-orange streaking on foreneck and breast, and buff streaking to rufous-brown mantle and scapulars.

Major Threats

The species is threatened by habitat destruction due to rapid urbanization, and water pollution.

White Stork
Ciconia ciconia

Vernacular Name:	Laglag (लगलग) (Hindi)
Order:	Ciconiiformes
Family:	Ciconiidae
Genus:	*Ciconia*
Species:	*C. ciconia*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Appendix II
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule I
Population Trend:	Increasing

Distribution

A winter visitor and passage migrant in India. Arrives by September-October and departs by March-April. Found throughout the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

LC

Usually shy and difficult to approach. Stalks quietly on dry or moist ground in search of prey. Carnivorous and opportunistic feeder, feeds on frogs, reptiles and crustaceans, occasionally fish, and voraciously feeds on swarming population of locusts, which makes it a specially protected bird in many countries. Inhabits dry and wet grassland, damp ploughed or fallow fields.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: February to April

Nest site/ type: The nest is constructed of sticks and is commonly positioned up to 30 m above the ground in trees or on the roofs of buildings, as well as on pylons, telegraph poles, stacks of straw and other anthropogenic sites (including specially erected nesting structures), cliffs and occasionally among rushes on the ground.

Clutch Size: 1–5

Incubation Period: 33-34 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 100 – 102 cm. Chiefly a white stork with black primaries and striking red bill and legs. It has long and lanceolate feathers on head, neck and breast. Juvenile is similar to adult, but black parts are replaced by brown.

Major Threats

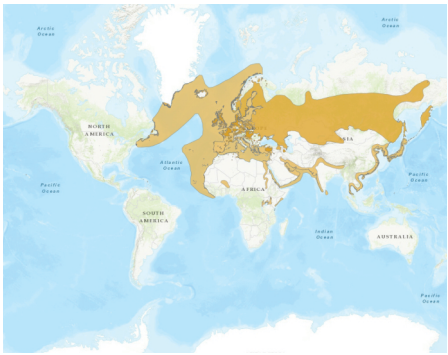
The species is threatened by habitat alteration due to drainage of wet meadows, prevention of floods on flood-plains, conversion of foraging areas, development, industrialization and intensification of agriculture.

Mohith Shanoy (Wikemedia commons)

Black-headed Gull

Larus ridibundus

Vernacular Name:	Kalsiri gangachilli (कलसिरी गंगाचिल्ली) (Hindi) Kalosir Gangchil (Bengali)
Order:	Charadriiformes
Family:	Laridae
Genus:	*Larus*
Species:	*L. ridibundus*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Unknown



LC

Distribution
A widespread winter visitor in India. Arrives by September-October and departs by March-April. Found throughout the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat
Gregarious, generally roosts and feeds with Brown-headed Gull. Carnivorous, feeds predominantly on insects, earthworms, fish and crustaceans. Prefers estuaries, coasts, large rivers and inland lakes.

Reproduction
Breeding Season: March to May

Nest site/ type: The nest is a rough construction of vegetation based on a shallow scrape and placed on a floating mat, in broken reeds, on a hummock, or sometimes on dry, grassy or sandy ground. The species shows a strong preference for nesting near vegetation.

Clutch Size: 1–4

Incubation Period: 22–26 days

Key Identifying Features
Size 37 – 43 cm. Smaller than Brown-headed Gull, with narrower bill and more pointed wing. Adult has distinctive white flash on upper primaries and primary coverts of upperwing, and black on wing tips. Breeding adult has blackish-red bill and uniform dark brown hood. In non-breeding and first winter plumages, bill tipped black and head largely white with dark ear-covert patch.

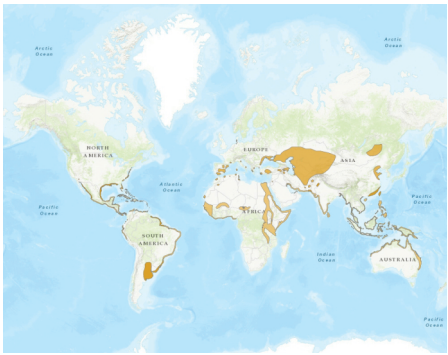
Major Threats
The species is threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation, human disturbances and pollution. It is also susceptible to avian influenza and avian botulism.

G. Gokulakrishnan

Gull-billed Tern

Gelochelidon nilotica

Vernacular Name:	Nil Tehari (नीलटेहरी) (Hindi)
Order:	Charadriiformes
Family:	Laridae
Genus:	*Gelochelidon*
Species:	*G. nilotica*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Appendix II
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule I
Population Trend:	Decreasing



LC

Distribution

A widespread winter visitor in India. Arrives by September-October and departs by March-April. Found throughout the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

Gregarious, generally roosts and feeds with Brown-headed Gull. Carnivorous, feeds predominantly on insects, earthworms, fish and crustaceans. Prefers estuaries, coasts, large rivers and inland lakes.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: April to May

Nest site/ type: The nest is a rough construction of vegetation based on a shallow scrape and placed on a floating mat, in broken reeds, on a hummock, or sometimes on dry, grassy or sandy ground. The species shows a strong preference for nesting near vegetation.

Clutch Size: 1–4

Incubation Period: 22–23 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 35 – 38 cm. Pale grey and white tern with stout black gull-like bill, slightly forked white tail and black legs. In non-breeding plumage, head is white streaked with black in front and behind the eyes. Breeding adult has jet-black head, forehead and crown down to eyes and nape.

Major Threats

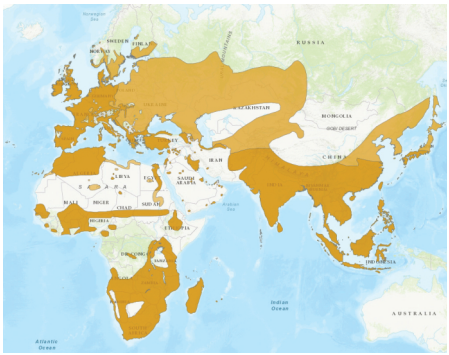
The species is threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation, human disturbances and pollution.

Tejinder Singh Rawal (Wikemedia commons)

Common Moorhen

Gallinula chloropus

Vernacular Name:	Jal murgha, Pani murghi (जल मुर्गा, पानी मुर्गी) (Hindi) Jal murgi (Bengali)
Order:	Gruiformes
Family:	Rallidae
Genus:	*Gallinula*
Species:	*G. chloropus*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Stable



LC

Distribution
Resident, common and widely distributed all over India.

Habit & Habitat
It is an omnivorous bird that feeds on aquatic plants, molluscs, insects, small fish and frogs. Singly, in pairs or in small flocks in winter and spends most of its time foraging in open water with floating vegetation. Occurs in marshes, lakes, ponds, village tanks, jheels, swamps and ditches with emergent vegetation.

Reproduction
Breeding seasons: March to September

Nest/type: The nest is a bulky structure of sedges and weeds placed amongst aquatic herbage, or rarely even in a tree overhanging or near water.

Clutch Size: 2 to 17

Incubation Period: 17-22 days

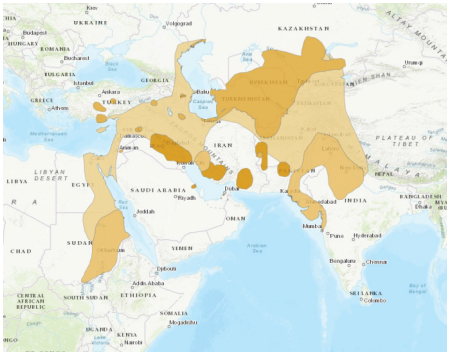
Key Identifying Features
Size 30-38 cm. Sexes alike. Blackish head and neck, dark olive-brown upperparts, closed wings with white edges, underparts slaty-grey red bill with greenish-yellow tip and white lateral undertail-coverts with a black central stripe. Juvenile browner, less grey above with whitish throat, much mixed with white below, and dull green bill.

Major Threats
This species is threatened by avian influenza, avian botulism and hunting.

Raju Kasambe (Wikemedia commons)

White-tailed Lapwing
Vanellus leucurus

Vernacular Name:	Safed-dum titihari (सफेद–दमटिटेरी) (Hindi)
Order:	Charadriiformes
Family:	Charadriidae
Genus:	*Vanellus*
Species:	*V. leucurus*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Appendix II
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Unknown



LC

Distribution

Locally common winter migrant to north, north-west and central India. Found in the middle and lower stretch of the Ganga River.

Habit & Habitat

Carnivorous, feeds on aquatic insect, crustaceans, molluscs etc. Gregarious, occurs in large flocks when migrating, otherwise in smaller groups of up to 25 birds. Usually, it feeds in shallow water and also on land, by pecking at the surface and by foot dabbling. Prefers freshwater marshes and marshy grassy edges of lakes and jheels.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: Mid April-May to mid-June

Nest site/type: Shallow scrapes in the open, usually near water

Clutch size: 4

Incubation period: 21-24 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 26-29 cm; Sexes alike. A light brown and white Plover with large dark eyes, blackish bill, and long yellow legs. Forehead and indistinct supercilia greyish-white, ashy-grey chin, throat and fore-neck, dark grey breast and abdomen and under tail-coverts rosy-white. Juvenile darker above and sullied white below.

Major Threats

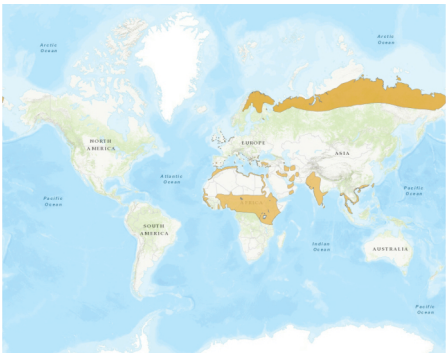
The species is threatened by habitat destruction.

Raju Kasambe (Wikemedia commons)

Spotted Redshank

Tringa erythropus

Vernacular Name:	Batan, Gatni, Surma (बटन, गतनि, सूरमा) (Hindi)
Order:	Charadriiformes
Family:	Scolopacidae
Genus:	*Tringa*
Species:	*T. erythropus*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Stable



Distribution

A locally common winter migrant found throughout the Ganga River.

Habit & Habitat

LC

Carnivorous, feeds on molluscs, crustaceans and insects. Generally, solitary or in small flocks with other waders, they forage either in water or by picking from surface in open deep waters. Prefers inland jheels and tanks, muddy banks and shallow waters of lakes and rivers, also tidal estuaries and creeks.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: Mid May-June

Nest site/ type: Nest, a scantily lined depression in a grass tussock in a bog

Clutch size: 4

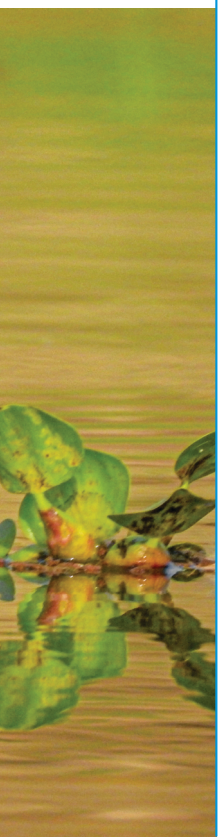
Incubation period: Unknown

Key Identifying Features

Size 29-32 cm; Sexes alike. Red at base of bill and red leg, paler grey above and whiter below, with more prominent white supercilium. In non-breeding, ashy brown head, hind neck and back, white supercilia, upper back with tiny white fringes on each feather, wing-coverts with broad white fringes, lower back, rump and tail-coverts white and ashy-brown tail, barred with white on edges. Underparts are white with brown on neck and upper breast, dusky tinge on flanks. In breeding overall sooty, black spotted and scalloped with white.

Major Threats

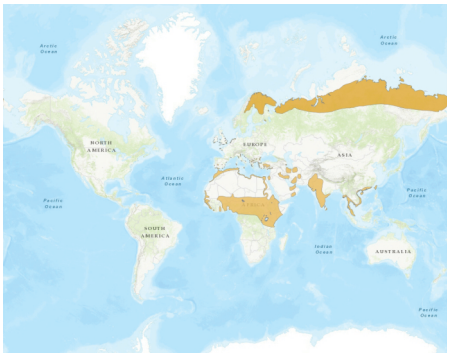
This species is threatened by habitat loss, declining river flow, increased pollution and unsustainable harvesting of benthic fauna.



Tisha Mukherjee (Wikemedia commons)

Common Redshank
Tringa totanus

Vernacular Name:	Chhota batan (छोटा बटन) (Hindi)
Order:	Charadriiformes
Family:	Scolopacidae
Genus:	*Tringa*
Species:	*T. totanus*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Unknown



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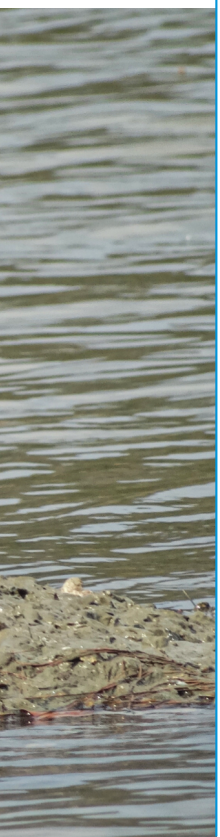


G. Gokulakrishnan

Distribution
A common winter migrant, found throughout in the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat
It is a carnivorous bird that feeds on molluscs, aquatic insects and worms. Occurs alone or in small groups with other waders, wary and noisy, feeds by picking from surface while walking. Found at marshes, muddy edges of rivers, lakes, muddy pools, mudbanks of mangroves, saltpans, tidal creeks and estuaries.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: May to July

Nest/type: A grass-lined deepish depression usually concealed in a grass tussock in a swamp.

Clutch size: 4

Incubation period: 22-29 days

Key Identifying Features
Size 27-29 cm; Sexes alike. Non-breeding plumage is mottled grey-brown above and white below with orange-red legs and basal third of bill, lower back, rump and tail white, finely streaked with brown breast. In breeding plumage, upperparts streaked and spotted with black and fulvous, upper breast heavily streaked with brown, lower breast with dark crescent spots. Juvenile has brown upperparts entirely fringed and spotted with buff, heavily streaked with dark brown underparts and dull orange legs and base to bill.

Major Threats
This species is threatened by habitat loss (wintering and breeding) and avian influenza.

Green Sandpiper
Tringa ochropus

Vernacular Name:	Not Known
Order:	Charadriiformes
Family:	Scolopacidae
Genus:	*Tringa*
Species:	*T. ochropus*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Increasing

LC

Distribution
A common winter visitor found throughout in the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat
Carnivorous, feeds on molluscs, crustaceans and aquatic insects. Generally, solitary gathers into small flocks of 15 to 20 when migrating, runs about and feeds at water edge, also wades in shallow water and probes by bill. Generally, they prefers small freshwater wetlands like village tanks, puddles, streams, marshes and paddy fields.

Reproduction
Breeding Season: Late April to July

Nest site/type: Deserted nests of thrushes and other birds fairly high up in trees; only rarely on the ground like most other sandpipers.

Clutch size: 3-4

Incubation period: 20-23 days

Key Identifying Features
Size 21-24 cm. Sexes alike. In non-breeding, ashy brown head and neck, remaining upperparts are dark brown with green-bronze sheen, white tail with faint blackish terminal bars and white underparts with fine brown streaks on throat, breast and flanks. Adult breeding is darker, spotted lightly with white. Juvenile has bronze narrow scalloping on upperparts and narrow bars with a broad terminal band on tail.

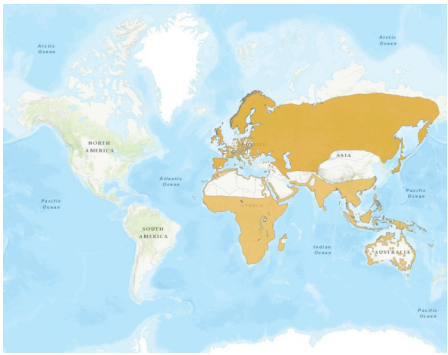
Major Threats
This species is susceptible to avian influenza (strain H5N1) so may be threatened by future outbreaks of the virus.

Raju Kasambe (Wikemedia commons)

Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

Vernacular Name:	Samanya batan (सामान्य बटन) (Hindi)
Order:	Charadriiformes
Family:	Scolopacidae
Genus:	*Actitis*
Species:	*A. hypoleucos*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Decreasing



LC

G. Gokulakrishnan

Distribution

Resident and winter visitor in India. Found throughout the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

Carnivorous, feeds on small molluscs, crustaceans and aquatic insects. Gregarious, occurs in small flock, runs actively on sandy banks along water edge, often forages by turning over pebbles and shells. Regularly wags its tail and bobs the head constantly while feeding. Generally, found at hill streams and rivers during breeding seasons. In winter prefers freshwater bodies, village tanks, stream banks, ditches, rivers, canals and lakes.

Reproduction

Breeding season: May-June

Nest site/type: A hollow in the ground lined with dead leaves and dry grass under the concealing shelter of bush or boulder.

Clutch size: 4

Incubation period: 20-23 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 19-21 cm. Sexes alike. Dark brown and white wader with glistening white chin and throat, straight conical black bill and orange-red legs. In non-breeding upperparts olive-brown and white below, with more ash-brown on head and sides of necks, lower back, rump and tail-coverts are white. Underparts including chin and throat pure are white. The breeding plumage has irregular dark streaking and barring on upperparts. Juveniles are more heavily barred above and have buff edges to the wing feathers.

Major Threats

The species is threatened by habitat destruction.

Little Stint
Calidris minuta

Vernacular Name:	Chhota panlowwa (छोटा पनलोवा) (Hindi)
Order:	Charadriiformes
Family:	Scolopacidae
Genus:	*Calidris*
Species:	*C. minuta*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Increasing

Distribution
A widespread winter migrant found in the upper, middle and lower stretches of the Ganga River.

Habit & Habitat
Chiefly carnivorous feed on small molluscs, crustaceans, insects, and sometimes also on aquatic plants and seeds. Gregarious, often found in large flocks with other waders in coastal areas, constantly runs around on mud, and frequently darts about to catch very tiny prey items. Generally found at mudflats, coastal lagoons, tidal creeks, marshes, jheels, lakes and paddy fields in winters.

LC

Reproduction

Breeding season: June to July

Nest site/type: The nest is a cup-shaped depression lined with willow leaves, situated on grassy marshland.

Clutch size: 4

Incubation period: 20-21 days

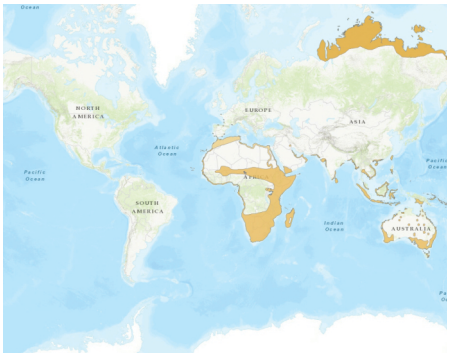
Key Identifying Features
Size: 12-14 cm. Sexes alike. Black bill, white forehead and supercilia, scaly grey-brown upperparts with smoky-brown outer tail feathers, white underparts with faint streaks on breast and legs and feet blackish in non-breeding. In breeding forehead and supercilia often obsolete pale fawn, pale mantel V, rufous wash to face, neck side and breast, and rufous fringes to upperparts. Juvenile has greyer hind neck and less rufous mantle, white below.

Major Threats
The species is threatened by illegal hunting, habitat degradation, avian malaria and avian botulism.

Raju Kasambe (Wikemedia commons)

Curlew Sandpiper
Calidris ferruginea

Vernacular Name:	Curlew chaha (Hindi)
Order:	Charadriiformes
Family:	Scolopacidae
Genus:	*Calidris*
Species:	*C. ferruginea*
IUCN Red List:	Near Threatened
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Decreasing



Distribution
Uncommon winter migrant, a wader species of the Ganga river, individuals recorded in middle stretch of the river.

NT

Habit & Habitat
Carnivorous, feeds on small molluscs, crustaceans, insects and worms. Gregarious, often in flocks with other waders, while foraging runs over wet mud and wades near water edges and also in deeper water. Found at coasts, tidal creeks, mudflats, and seashore, rarely on inland lakes and rivers.

Reproduction
Breeding season: June-July

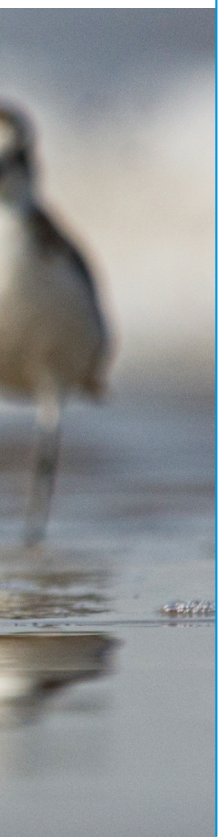
Nest site/type: The nest is a cup positioned on the margins of marshes or pools, on the slopes of hummock tundra, or on dry patches in Polygonum tundra.

Clutch size: 4

Incubation period: 19-20 days

Key Identifying Features
Size: 18-23 cm; Sexes alike. Often confused with Dunlin but differs by its slightly larger size and with longer more downcurved bill and longer legs. Adult breeding has upper-and underparts mainly chestnut and rich rufous, crown and grey-brown mantle, fairly distinct supercilium from the forehead to nape. Underparts white.

Major Threats
The species is threatened by habitat degradation, illegal hunting, avian influenza and avian botulism.



Vedant Raju Kasambe (Wikemedia commons)

Pied Kingfisher

Ceryle rudis

Vernacular Name:	Kauriala (कौड़ील्ला) (Hindi) Phatka machhranga (Bengali)
Order:	Coraciiformes
Family:	Alcedinidae
Genus:	*Ceryle*
Species:	*C. rudis*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Unknown

Distribution

A widespread resident in India. Found throughout the Ganga river.

LC

Habit & Habitat

Has a characteristic habit of hunting by hovering over water with bill pointing down and fast beating wings; plunges vertically downwards to catch fish. Feeds predominantly on fish, tadpoles and aquatic insects. Prefers ponds, lakes, canals, irrigation tanks, flooded ditches, jheels, slow-flowing streams and rivers.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: February to April in northern India

Nest site/ type: The nest is made in an earth banks over or up to 1 km from water or occasionally in flat grassy ground. The nest-tunnel is typically 1-2.5 m long with an unlined chamber at the end.

Clutch Size: 4–5

Incubation Period: 23–24 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 25 cm-30.5cm. A black and white kingfisher with black crest. Has white streaks on black crown and crest, white supercilium contrasting with broad black eye-stripe, white underparts with black breast-band and black-and-white wings and tail. Male has double breast band. Female has single, usually broken breast band.

Major Threats

The species is vulnerable to habitat loss and degradation, climatic shifts, river pollution and inadequate food due to canalization of streams.

Dinesh Pundir

White-throated Kingfisher

Halcyon smyrnensis

Vernacular Name:	Safed-chati kilkila (सफ़ेद चटट्रीकिलकिला) (Hindi) Sadabuk machhranga (Bengali)
Order:	Coraciiformes
Family:	Alcedinidae
Genus:	*Halcyon*
Species:	*H. smyrnensis*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Unknown

LC

G. Gokulakrishnan

Distribution

A widespread resident in India. Found throughout the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

Characteristically perches on telegraph wires, poles and branches. The diet is widely variable and includes insects, scorpions, centipedes, snails, crustaceans, earthworms, fish, frogs and toads, lizards, chameleons, snakes, birds, mice and squirrels. Prefers a wide range of habitat, often ranging away from water, streams, rivers, canals and village tanks.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: April to July

Nest site/ type: The nest is excavated in an earthen bank of a ditch, stream, river, pond and can also sometimes be in termatarium, tree or mud hole.

Clutch Size: 4–7

Incubation Period: 18–20 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 26.5-29.5 cm. A large kingfisher with large red bill, chocolate-brown head and underparts except white throat and centre of breast, and brilliant turquoise-blue upperparts including rump and tail.

Major Threats

The species is vulnerable to habitat loss and degradation due to irrigation, overgrazing, dam construction and pesticide pollution.

Grey-throated Martin

Riparia chinensis

Vernacular Name:	Abali, Ababil (अबली, अबाबील) (Hindi) Nakuti (Bengali)
Order:	Passeriformes
Family:	Hirundinidae
Genus:	*Riparia*
Species:	*R. chinensis*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Decreasing

LC

Distribution

A widespread resident in India. Found throughout the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

Highly gregarious. Commonly seen perches in long close-packed rows on telegraph/phone wires, roosts communally in reedbed. Prefers large rivers, Stream and lake with vertical sandy bank. Chiefly feed on insects (Diptera and small beetles).

Reproduction

Breeding Season: October to February

Nest site/ type: A pad of dry grass, straw and roots lined with a few feathers.

Clutch Size: 2–4

Incubation Period: Undetermined

Key Identifying Features

Size 10-12 cm. Sexes alike. Pale brownish-grey throat and breast merging with drab white of underpart. Juvenile has rufous fringe to upperpart and throat and paler breast and is washed with pinkish buff.

Major Threats

There are currently no known significant threats to this species.

G. Gokulakrishnan

Red-rumped Swallow

Cecropis daurica

Vernacular Name:	Masjid ababil (मस्जिद अबाबील) (Hindi) Chhit ababil (Bengali)
Order:	Passeriformes
Family:	Hirundinidae
Genus:	*Cecropis*
Species:	*C. daurica*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Stable

LC

Imran Shah (Wikemedia commons)

Distribution

A widespread resident in India. Found throughout the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

Gather in huge numbers in winter and on migration, frequently seen in close-packed flock on wires or in reedbed. Found in upland cultivation and on open grassy hill slopes, during summer and winters in open scrub, cultivation and forest clearing. Generally, feed on Dipteran, Coleopteran winged ant and termite.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: April to August

Nest site/ type: It is made of mud pellets sometimes mixed with a little dry grass and lined with a mixture of white feathers, hair, leaves, pine needles or dry grass.

Clutch Size: 4 or 5

Incubation Period: 14–15 days

Key Identifying Features

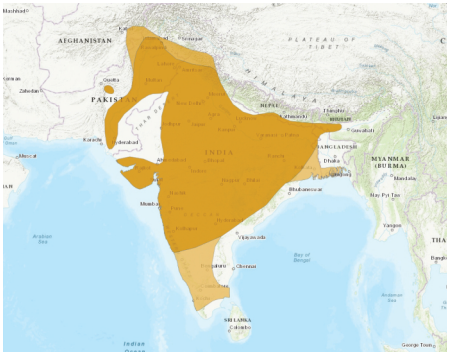
Size 16-17 cm. The Rufous rump separates it from all Swallows except Striated Swallow. Neck, sides and rump rufous-orange; upperpart glistening blue-black; fine streaked buff-white underparts and black undertail covert. Juvenile has duller upperpart; paler neck-collar and rump; buff tip ton tertial, and shorter tail streamer.

Major Threats

The species may be threatened by competition with other birds which use its nests.

Streak-throated Swallow
Petrochelidon fluvicola

Vernacular Name:	Nahar ababil (नहर अबाबील) (Hindi) Naowa ababil (Bengali)
Order:	Passeriformes
Family:	Hirundinidae
Genus:	*Petrochelidon*
Species:	*P. fluvicola*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Increasing



LC

Distribution
A widespread resident in India. Found throughout the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat
Highly gregarious. Usually keeps in large rabbles, forages in close proximity to water with other swallows. Found in open country and cultivation near rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs. Generally, feed on Midges, gnats and other dipterous insects.

Reproduction
Breeding Season: In cold-winter northern districts chiefly March to June; elsewhere practically all year with peak periods December to April and July to October.

Nest site/ type: A large agglomeration of mud, reminiscent of an untidy honeycomb or a cluster of potter wasp nests. Egg-chamber cosily lined with grass and feathers.

Clutch Size: 3–4

Incubation Period: Not Known

Key Identifying Features
Size :11-12 cm. Sexes alike. Very slightly forked tail; glossy steel blue above with narrow white streaks on mantle; chestnut nape and crown with brown streaking on chin, throat and breast, narrow white streaks on mantle and pale brown rump. Juvenile has duller, browner crown, and brown-toned mantle and wings with buff fringes.

Major Threats
There are currently no known significant threats to this species.

Afsarnayakkan (Wikemedia commons)

White Wagtail
Motacilla alba

Vernacular Name:	Dhoban (धोबन) (Hindi) Sada khanjana (Bengali)
Order:	Passeriformes
Family:	Motacillidae
Genus:	*Motacilla*
Species:	*M. alba*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Stable

LC

Distribution
A widespread resident in India. Found throughout the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat
Keeps singly, in pairs or in small loose flocks. Swiftly moves around wetland and field; wags its tail continually up and down. Inhabit stream and river in hill during summer, winter in open country near marshes, river, stream, canal, lake etc. Roost at night in large mixed gatherings amongst reed- and tamarisk-beds standing in water. Chiefly feed on insects.

Reproduction
Breeding Season: May - July

Nest site/ type: The nest is a cup of twigs, grass stems, leaves, rootlets and mosses, lined with hair, wool or feathers. It is placed in a hole or crevice in a riverbank, wall or bridge.

Clutch Size: 4–6

Incubation Period: 12-14 days

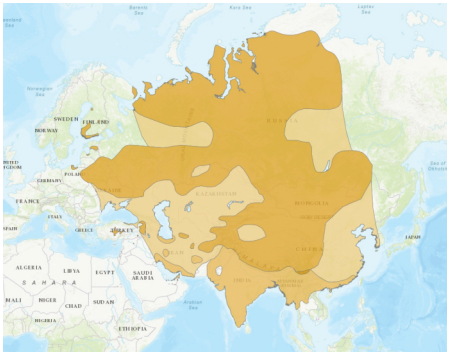
Key Identifying Features
Size 16.5-18 cm. Sexes alike. Black and white head pattern, grey or black mantle, wing-coverts largely black. Considerable variations occur in breeding adults. Juvenile with grey head, mantle and breast with whitish supercilium.

Major Threats
Climate change is thought to affect the timing of migration for this species.

Ashika Talreja

Citrine Wagtail
Motacilla citreola

Vernacular Name:	Pilkya, Pani-ka-pilkya (पीलक्या, पानी का–पीलक्या) (Hindi) Holde-matha khanjana (Bengali)
Order:	Passeriformes
Family:	Motacillidae
Genus:	*Motacilla*
Species:	*M. citreola*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Increasing



LC

Distribution

A widespread resident in India. Found throughout the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

Summer in marshy patches below glaciers and melting snow, winters around lakes, jheels and tanks. Highly gregarious during winter, generally occurs at wetlands, sometimes forages on floating vegetation on lakes. The diet includes a wide variety of invertebrates, often aquatic, and their larvae.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: Late April-June

Nest site/ type: The nest is a cup of moss and plant leaves and stems, lined with hair, wool and feathers and sited on the ground in grassy vegetation.

Clutch Size: 3-6

Incubation Period: 14-15 days

Key Identifying Features

Size 16.5-20 cm. Male has yellow head and underpart black or grey mantle, and broad white tips to median and greater coverts. Female has broad yellow supercilium which joins the yellow of throat and have greyish crown, nape, ear-coverts and mantle and underpart mainly yellow. Juvenile with brownish crown, ear-coverts and mantle, buff supercilium and buff-whit underpart.

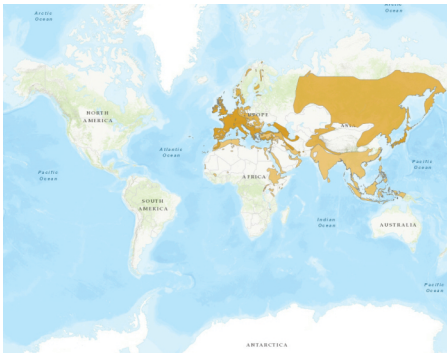
Major Threats

There are currently no known significant threats to this species.

G. Gokulakrishnan

Grey Wagtail
Motacilla cinerea

Vernacular Name:	Saleti khanjan (सलेटीखंजल) (Hindi) Dhusar khanjana (Bengali)
Order:	Passeriformes
Family:	Motacillidae
Genus:	*Motacilla*
Species:	*M. cinerea*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Stable



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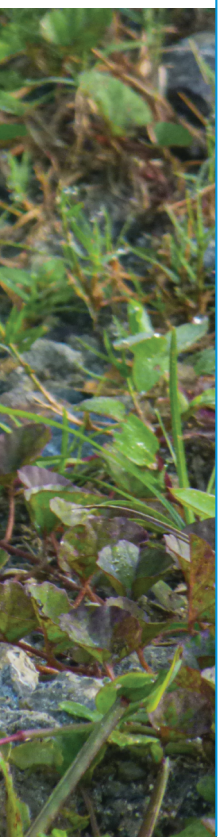

G. Gokulakrishnan

Distribution
A widespread resident in India. Found throughout the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat
It is a solitary bird, inhabits fast-flowing mountain streams and rivers with rocky banks and also in forested areas. The tail is constantly wagged up and down. The diet consists entirely of small insects including butterflies, and occasionally; tiny molluscs.

Reproduction
Breeding Season: May to July

Nest site/ type: The nest is cup-shaped made of coarser material, lined with finer grasses, root fibers and often horse hair placed in banks, stone walls or among boulders, occasionally in a clump of weeds.

Clutch Size: 4 or 5, rarely 6

Incubation Period: 11-14 days

Key Identifying Features
17-20 cm. White supercilium, above, head and back grey, upper tail-coverts greenish yellow. Wings dark brown with whitish margins to tertials. Tail blackish brown with white outer edges. Below, throat black with a white malar streak. Rest of underparts bright yellow.

Major Threats
There are currently no known significant threats to this species.

Plumbeous Water-redstart

Phoenicurus fuliginosus

Vernacular Name:	Slate-nil pangirdi (Bengali)
Order:	Passeriformes
Family:	Muscicapidae
Genus:	*Phoenicurus*
Species:	*P. fuliginosus*
IUCN Red List:	Least Concern
CITES:	Not Listed
CMS:	Not Listed
IWPA, 1972:	Schedule II
Population Trend:	Stable

Distribution

A widespread resident in India. Found only in the upper stretch of the Ganga river.

Habit & Habitat

LC

Solitary or in pairs. Confined to mountain streams, and rivers, where it flits from boulder to boulder, crepuscular, and hunts until late dusk. When perched, the tail is continuously opened and shut rapidly with a scissors-like action and simultaneously wagged up and down. This species breeds at high elevation, globally between 1000 and 4000 meters, and winters down to adjacent lowlands. Feed chiefly on wide variety of insects and occasionally takes berries and seeds.

Reproduction

Breeding Season: April to July.

Nest site/ type: The nest is a cup made of grass, green moss, rootlets and a few dead leaves lined with rootlets, fibres, hair or wool placed in placed in cavity or hole in rock or bridge, or on side branch in tree-stump, on ledge covered with vegetation but almost always near water. The nest is rarely parasitized by the Common Cuckoo.

Clutch Size: 3 to 6, normally 4

Incubation Period: Unknown

Key Identifying Features

Size 12-13 cm. Stocky and short-tailed. Male entirely bluish-slaty with chestnut tail and rufous vent. Female above, dark grey-brown with tworows of white spots on wing, mottled slate and white below and a pale eye-ring. Juvenile resembles female but has buff spotting on browner underparts and buff underparts with black scaling.

Major Threats

Currently, the species is not threatened.

Koshy Koshy (Wikemedia commons)

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Notes

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