



## **AVIFAUNA OF**



**KANNUR UNIVERSITY**  
THAVAKKARA CAMPUS

Dr. Khaleel Chowva

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## Preface

Nestled in the lap of nature along the Malabar Coast, Kannur University's Thavakkara Campus stands as a testament to the harmonious coexistence of academia and biodiversity. Situated strategically near the wetlands, the campus boasts a prime location that plays host to a diverse ecosystem, making it an ideal habitat for a plethora of avian species.

Thavakkara, aptly named for its proximity to the wetland, enjoys the serenade of the Arabian Sea nearby. This geographical setting creates a unique microcosm that attracts a rich variety of flora and fauna. The presence of a wetland ecosystem, coupled with the campus's proximity to the sea, establishes an environment that is particularly conducive to the flourishing of diverse bird species.

The campus is a veritable haven for avifauna enthusiasts and researchers alike. With over 65 species of birds documented, including migratory birds that grace the area during different seasons, Thavakkara Campus has become a hotspot for birdwatching and ecological studies. The birdlife in this region serves as a living testament to the ecological health and vibrancy of the campus surroundings.

The significance of Thavakkara Campus extends beyond its academic pursuits. The symbiotic relationship between the university and its natural surroundings is highlighted through initiatives such as the comprehensive bird survey led by the author. This collaboration between academia and environmental conservation underscores the commitment of Kannur University to holistic education and ecological stewardship.

Special acknowledgment is due to the visionary leadership of the Vice Chancellor and the university authorities, who have recognized the importance of integrating academia with the rich biodiversity of Thavakkara. Dr. Sabu Abdul Hameed, the Pro Vice Chancellor, has played a pivotal role in fostering initiatives that bridge the gap between education and environmental awareness, particularly through the campus bird survey. The author also acknowledges the support from other bird-watchers including Mr. Aswin.

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*Satellite Map of Survey Area*

Kannur University's Thavakkara Campus, strategically positioned near the Kannur Bus Stand and Railway Station at coordinates 11°52' N and 75°22' E, boasts a unique and ecologically vibrant setting that creates an ideal atmosphere for a diverse range of bird species.

The campus features a large water pond, adding to its natural allure. This water body, along with the lush vegetation comprising both local flora and a cultivated plantain farm, establishes a thriving ecosystem. The introduction of a Miyawaki forest further enriches the campus environment, contributing to the ecological balance.

The varied trees and shrubs on the campus provide ideal habitats for different arboreal birds. The diverse vegetation not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of the campus but also creates niches for various bird species, fostering biodiversity within the university grounds.

The presence of a pond within the campus is particularly noteworthy, as it offers a suitable habitat for wetland birds. This water feature contributes significantly to the overall biodiversity of the area, attracting and sustaining a variety of birdlife that thrives in wetland environments.

## Tailor Bird (തുമ്പാശൻ)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Tailorbird (*Orthotomus sutorius*), belonging to the family Cisticolidae, is a small and delightful songbird known for its distinctive nesting behavior and vibrant appearance. Typically measuring around 10 cm in length, these tiny birds exhibit a bright green or olive-colored plumage, often adorned with subtle markings and a white or buff-colored underbelly. Tailorbirds are predominantly insectivorous, with a diet comprising small insects, spiders, and other invertebrates. What sets the Tailorbird apart is its ingenious nest-building technique. Using its sharp bill as a needle, the bird sews large, green leaves together, forming a pouch-like structure that serves as its nest. The female lays a clutch of 3-5 eggs within this intricately woven abode, often concealed within dense vegetation for added protection. The bird's call is a melodious and repetitive series of musical notes, contributing to the vibrant soundscape of its tropical habitats. Tailorbirds are known for their agility and energetic behavior, often observed flitting about in the dense undergrowth as they forage for food or diligently tend to their uniquely crafted nests.

## Magpie Robin (വണ്ണാത്തിപ്പുളള)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Magpie Robin (*Copsychus saularis*), a captivating songbird, stands out with its distinctive size, typically measuring around 20 centimeters in length. Its plumage is a striking combination of black and white, with a sleek black upper body complemented by a contrasting white belly and underparts. Known for its melodious tunes, the Magpie Robin is not just an auditory delight but also a visual one. In terms of diet, these birds are omnivores, enjoying a varied menu that includes insects, fruits, and small vertebrates. When it comes to nesting, Magpie Robins display a keen eye for selection, often choosing sheltered spots to build cup-shaped nests out of twigs, leaves, and grass. The female lays a clutch of eggs, usually numbering around 3 to 5, and both parents actively participate in incubating them. With a reputation for being territorial, Magpie Robins are also known for their curious and bold behavior, making them a fascinating species for bird enthusiasts to observe in various habitats across Asia.

## Red-whiskered Bulbul (ഇരട്ടത്തലച്ചി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Red-whiskered Bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) is a colorful and lively songbird found in South and Southeast Asia. Measuring around 20 cm in length, this medium-sized bulbul exhibits a striking appearance with a distinctive red patch behind its eye, a black crown, and a sleek olive- yellow body. Their diet is varied and includes fruits, insects, and flower nectar, showcasing their adaptability to both urban and natural habitats. Red-whiskered Bulbuls construct cup-shaped nests using twigs, grass, and other plant materials, typically nestled in the branches of trees. The female lays 2-3 pale blue eggs in the nest. Their vocalizations are a melodic and bubbly series of whistles and trills, adding to the lively soundscape of their environment. These bulbuls are highly social, often seen in pairs or small groups, engaging in playful activities and displaying a curious and energetic demeanor. With their vibrant plumage, melodious calls, and sociable behavior, the Red-whiskered Bulbul is a charming and charismatic presence in the avian communities it inhabits.

## Red-vented Bulbul (നാട്ടു ബുൾബുൾ)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Red-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*) is a charismatic songbird found across South Asia. Measuring approximately 20 cm in length, this medium-sized bulbul exhibits a captivating combination of colors, with a sleek olive-brown body, a distinctive red patch beneath the tail, and a black-crowned head. Their diet is diverse, consisting of fruits, berries, insects, and flower nectar. Red-vented Bulbuls often build cup-shaped nests in trees, using a combination of twigs, leaves, and other plant materials. The female lays a clutch of 2-3 eggs, which are usually pale pinkish or white. Their call is a lively and melodious mix of whistles, trills, and chatters, contributing to the vibrant soundscape of their habitats. These bulbuls are known for their agile and acrobatic behavior, hopping from branch to branch in search of food. They are social birds, often seen in small groups, engaging in communal activities such as grooming and playing. With their lively calls and vibrant plumage, the Red-vented Bulbul is a delightful and ubiquitous presence in gardens, parks, and wooded areas across its range.



## Common Myna (നാട്ടു മൈന)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The common myna, scientifically known as *Acridotheres tristis*, is a distinctive and adaptable bird found in various parts of Asia. It is of medium size, measuring around 23 centimeters in length, with a brown body, a black hooded head, and bright yellow eye patches. Known for its omnivorous diet, the common myna consumes a wide range of foods, including fruits, insects, and human scraps. Their nesting habits involve building compact nests in tree cavities, buildings, or even utility structures. The female myna lays a clutch of 4-6 eggs, and both parents take part in the incubation and care of the young. One of the notable features of the common myna is its distinctive call, characterized by a variety of squawks, whistles, and chirps. Their sociable nature is evident in their tendency to form large, noisy flocks, displaying an intelligent and curious behavior. These birds have successfully adapted to urban environments, making them a common sight in many cities across their range.

## Purple-rumped Sunbird (കറുപ്പൻ തേൻകിളി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Purple Sunbird (*Nectarinia asiatica*), a dazzling resident of South Asia, captivates with its petite size, measuring around 10 centimeters in length. As the name suggests, the male Purple Sunbird is adorned in iridescent purple plumage with vibrant hues that shift in the light, creating a mesmerizing display. In contrast, the female dons a more subdued olive-brown attire, providing effective camouflage during nesting. These sunbirds are nectar feeders, utilizing their specialized, slender bills to extract sweetness from a variety of blossoms. When it comes to nesting, the female weaves intricate cup-shaped nests using plant fibers, spider silk, and other materials. Clutches usually consist of 2 eggs, and both parents share responsibilities in incubation and caring for the offspring. The Purple Sunbird's calls are characterized by soft and melodious chirps, contributing to the ambient sounds of its habitat. With agile flight and territorial tendencies, these sunbirds are known for their acrobatic displays and assertive behavior when defending feeding territories.

## Purple-rumped Sunbird (മഞ്ഞത്തറൻ കിളി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Purple-rumped Sunbird (*Nectarinia zeylonica*), a delightful resident of South Asia, is a petite avian gem measuring around 10 centimeters in length. The male boasts a vibrant display of iridescent colors, with a deep purple-blue throat and a distinctive purple rump, making it a visual spectacle. The female, in contrast, showcases a more modest olive-brown plumage, blending seamlessly with the foliage. As avid nectar feeders, Purple-rumped Sunbirds utilize their slender, specialized bills to extract sweetness from a variety of blossoms. When it comes to nesting, the female constructs a finely woven cup-shaped nest using plant fibers and spider silk, often suspended from the tips of branches. Clutches typically consist of 2 eggs, and both parents engage in incubation and caring for the hatchlings. The bird's calls are melodic and chirpy, contributing to the ambient sounds of its habitat. With agile flight and territorial tendencies, these sunbirds display charming behavior, flitting about in search of nectar-rich flowers and defending their feeding territories with determination.



## Loten's Sunbird (കൊക്കൻ തേൻകിളി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Loten's Sunbird (*Nectarinia lotenia*), a petite marvel of the avian world, measures around 10 centimeters in length, showcasing a vibrant and iridescent plumage that ranges from metallic green to shades of purple and blue. Found in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia, this sunbird is known for its striking appearance and distinctive long, downward-curved bill. As nectar specialists, Loten's Sunbirds feed on floral nectar, displaying exceptional agility as they hover near blossoms and use their specialized bills to extract sweet sustenance. Females often sport a more subdued olive-brown plumage, aiding in camouflage during nesting. The female constructs a delicate cup-shaped nest, weaving plant fibers, spider silk, and other materials into an intricate structure. Clutches typically consist of 2 eggs, and both parents partake in incubation and caring for the fledglings. Loten's Sunbirds communicate with soft chirps and twitters, contributing to the ambient sounds of their habitats.

## Yellow-billed Babbler (പൂത്താക്കിരി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Yellow-billed Babbler, scientifically known as *Turdoides affinis*, is a lively and social bird found in South Asia. Measuring around 19 cm in length, these medium-sized babblers exhibit a distinctive appearance with a brownish-grey plumage, a long tail, and a striking yellow bill. They are highly social birds, often seen in energetic and noisy groups of five or more individuals, foraging together for insects, fruits, and small invertebrates. Yellow-billed Babblers build cup-shaped nests using twigs, leaves, and other plant materials, usually placed in bushes or trees. The female typically lays 3-5 eggs. The Yellow-billed Babbler's call is a lively and varied series of chattering and melodious notes, contributing to the vibrant soundscape of their habitats. Their behavior includes frequent vocal communication within the group, and they are known for their cooperative foraging, playful interactions, and communal roosting. These babblers are adaptable and thrive in various habitats, from urban gardens to wooded areas, making them a charismatic and dynamic presence in the avian community.

## Rock Pigeon (Ռոք Ստրան)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*), also commonly known as the feral pigeon, is a ubiquitous bird found in urban and rural environments worldwide. Typically measuring 29-37 cm in length, with a wingspan of 62-72 cm, the Rock Pigeon displays a diverse range of colors, including shades of gray, blue, and iridescent green on its neck. Highly adaptable, Rock Pigeons thrive on a varied diet that includes seeds, grains, and human scraps, making them a common sight in city squares and parks. Their nests, often located on ledges and buildings, are constructed from twigs and other available materials. The female usually lays one or two white eggs, and both parents share the responsibilities of incubation and chick-rearing. The call of the Rock Pigeon is a soft cooing sound, often associated with their presence in urban environments. These birds are known for their gregarious behavior, forming large flocks, and their ability to navigate and find their way home over long distances, a trait that has been utilized historically in messenger pigeon roles. The Rock Pigeon's adaptability and resourcefulness contribute to its success in coexisting with human populations across the globe.

## Spotted Dove (അരിപ്പാമ്പ്)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Spotted Dove, scientifically known as *Streptopelia chinensis*, is a charming and widespread bird found in various parts of Asia and Australia. Sporting a soft, muted color palette, its plumage is characterized by shades of cream, gray, and brown, adorned with distinct black spots on its wings and back. These gentle doves primarily feed on a diet of seeds, grains, and small insects, foraging on the ground with a characteristic bobbing motion. Their nests, often constructed in trees or shrubs, are simple platforms made from twigs and grass. Spotted Dove eggs are typically two in number, and the incubation period lasts around two weeks. The call of the Spotted Dove is a soothing and repetitive cooing sound, often heard during the early morning or late afternoon. These doves are known for their peaceful and sociable behavior, frequently seen in pairs or small groups, and their presence adds a tranquil ambiance to their natural habitats.

## Tricoloured Munia (അറ്റുറുചുവന്ന)



*Photo courtesy: Vinay/ Alchetron*

The Tricoloured Munia, scientifically known as *Lonchura malacca*, is a charming and small passerine bird native to Asia. Measuring around 10 cm in length, these finches are distinguished by their attractive tricoloration—chestnut brown head, white belly, and a black back with white edges on the wings. Tricoloured Munias primarily feed on a diet of grass seeds, but they also consume small insects and green shoots. These birds are often found in flocks, foraging for food in open grassy areas. Their nests are intricately woven structures made of grass and placed in tall grasses or reeds. The female usually lays a clutch of 4-6 eggs, and both parents share incubation duties. The call of the Tricoloured Munia is a series of soft, melodious chirps and twittering sounds. Their behavior is characterized by social interactions within the flock, including courtship displays and communal roosting.

## Scaly-breasted Munia (ചുട്ടിയാറ്)



*Photo courtesy: e-bird*

The Scaly-breasted Munia, scientifically known as *Lonchura punctulata*, is a small and delightful bird belonging to the finch family found in Asia and parts of Australia. Measuring around 11-12 cm in length, these munias showcase a distinctive appearance with a scalloped pattern on their breast, giving them their name. Their plumage is primarily brown, with a blackish crown and a hint of blue-grey on the face. Scaly-breasted Munias are granivorous, feeding primarily on grass seeds, but they also consume small insects and fruits. Their nests are typically spherical, woven from fine grass, and situated in tall grasses or shrubs. The female lays a clutch of 4-7 white eggs. The call of the Scaly-breasted Munia is a soft, melodious twittering sound. These birds are often gregarious, forming large flocks, and their behavior includes communal roosting and engaging in social displays. Their adaptability to various habitats, from open grasslands to urban areas, makes the Scaly-breasted Munia a common and charming presence in a wide range of environments.

## White-cheeked Barbet (ചിത കൂട്ടുകുറുവൻ)



*Photo courtesy: e-bird*

The White-cheeked Barbet (*Megalaima viridis*) is a vibrant and charismatic bird found in the Indian subcontinent. With a length of about 20-27 cm, these medium-sized barbets are characterized by their striking plumage, featuring a predominantly green body with distinctive white cheek patches that lend them their name. These birds are known for their elaborate nesting habits, often choosing tree hollows as nesting sites. The female typically lays 2-4 eggs, and both parents take turns incubating them. The eggs are white and slightly glossy. The call of the White-cheeked Barbet is a series of melodious and repetitive notes, often sounds like “kutru....kutru....kutru.....”. These birds are primarily frugivorous, feeding on a variety of fruits, and their lively and social behavior makes them a delightful presence in the wooded habitats they inhabit.



## Red-wattled Lapwing ((ചെങ്കണ്ണി തിത്തിരി))



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Red-wattled Lapwing, scientifically known as *Vanellus indicus*, is a striking bird found across South Asia. Its distinctive appearance includes a black crown, white face, and neck, with a characteristic bright red fleshy wattle surrounding its eyes. The upperparts are brown, and the underparts are white, complemented by striking black markings. Red-wattled Lapwings are omnivorous, feeding on a varied diet that includes insects, worms, and small crustaceans. Their nests are simple scrapes on the ground, often lined with small pebbles and shells. The female typically lays three to four eggs, and both parents share the responsibility of incubation. The call of the Red-wattled Lapwing is a loud, repetitive “did-he-do-it” or “pity to-do-it,” which is often heard during the breeding season. These lapwings are known for their bold and protective behavior, especially when it comes to defending their nests. They are often found in pairs or small groups and are conspicuous in open habitats such as grasslands, wetlands, and agricultural fields.



## Indian Tree-pie (കാലേന്താലി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Indian Tree-pie (*Dendrocitta vagabunda*), a charismatic member of the corvid family, boasts a sleek and intelligent demeanor. With a length of approximately 45 centimeters, its glossy black plumage is accentuated by bold white markings on its wings and tail. This tree-pie is an omnivorous opportunist, relishing a diverse diet that includes fruits, insects, small vertebrates, and even scavenged scraps. When it comes to nesting, the Indian Tree-pie exhibits resourcefulness, constructing sturdy cup-shaped nests in the upper branches of trees using twigs and other plant materials. The female lays a clutch of eggs, typically numbering 3 to 5, and both parents actively participate in incubation and caring for the young. Renowned for its vocal versatility, the Indian Treepie engages in a variety of calls, showcasing its intelligence and adaptability. Bold and often seen perched on tree branches, this bird's mischievous behavior and knack for mimicry make it a fascinating and entertaining presence in its natural habitat across the Indian subcontinent.

## Greater Coucal (ചെമ്പോത്ത)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Greater Coucal, scientifically known as *Centropus sinensis*, is a distinctive bird found in various parts of Asia, known for its striking appearance and intriguing behavior. Cloaked in deep chestnut-brown plumage with a contrasting black head and tail, the Greater Coucal boasts a long, downward-curved tail and crimson eyes that add to its unique charm. These birds are primarily insectivorous, preying on insects, small reptiles, and occasionally small mammals. Their nests, constructed in dense vegetation, are large, untidy structures made from sticks and leaves. The female typically lays 3 to 5 eggs, and both parents take turns incubating them. The call of the Greater Coucal is a deep, resonant “coo-coo-coo,” often heard in the early morning and late afternoon. Despite their somewhat clumsy appearance, these birds are agile and capable of flying long distances. The Greater Coucal is known for its secretive behavior, often skulking in dense vegetation, and its peculiar habit of sunbathing with wings spread open, a behavior not commonly observed in other bird species.

## Common Kingfisher (ചെറിയ കിങ്ക്വറാൽ)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Common Kingfisher, scientifically known as *Alcedo atthis*, is a small and dazzling bird found in various habitats across Europe, Asia, and North Africa. Measuring around 15 cm in length, these kingfishers display an exquisite combination of electric blue and orange plumage, with a distinctive dagger-like bill. They are skilled and patient hunters, primarily feeding on small fish, aquatic insects, and even crustaceans. Common Kingfishers nest in burrows along riverbanks or in sandy soil, where the female lays a clutch of 6-7 white eggs. Their call is a high-pitched and sharp whistle. These kingfishers are known for their remarkable hunting technique, diving from perches into the water with great speed and precision to catch their prey. Despite their diminutive size, they exhibit territorial behavior and are often seen as solitary birds. The Common Kingfisher's vibrant colors, spectacular hunting displays, and ability to thrive in various aquatic environments make it a beloved and iconic species in the avian biodiversity of its range.

## White throated Kingfisher (മീൻ കൊത്തിച്ചാത്തൻ)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The White-throated Kingfisher, scientifically known as *Halcyon smyrnensis*, is a striking and widespread bird found across Asia and the Middle East. Measuring around 28 cm in length, these kingfishers exhibit a vibrant and distinctive appearance with a turquoise-blue back, a rufousbrown head, and a white throat and belly. They are skilled hunters, preying on a diverse diet of fish, crustaceans, insects, and small vertebrates. White-throated Kingfishers typically nest in burrows that they excavate in riverbanks or sandy soil, where the female lays a clutch of 4-7 eggs. Their calls are loud and distinctive, often described as a series of sharp, cackling laughs. These kingfishers are known for their patient and focused behavior while perched, scanning the water or ground for potential prey. Their powerful and direct flight, coupled with their keen hunting skills, makes them efficient and captivating predators. The White-throated Kingfisher's striking plumage, distinctive calls, and adept fishing abilities contribute to its prominence and charm in the diverse ecosystems it inhabits.

## Green Bee-eater (നാട്ടു വെലിത്തര)



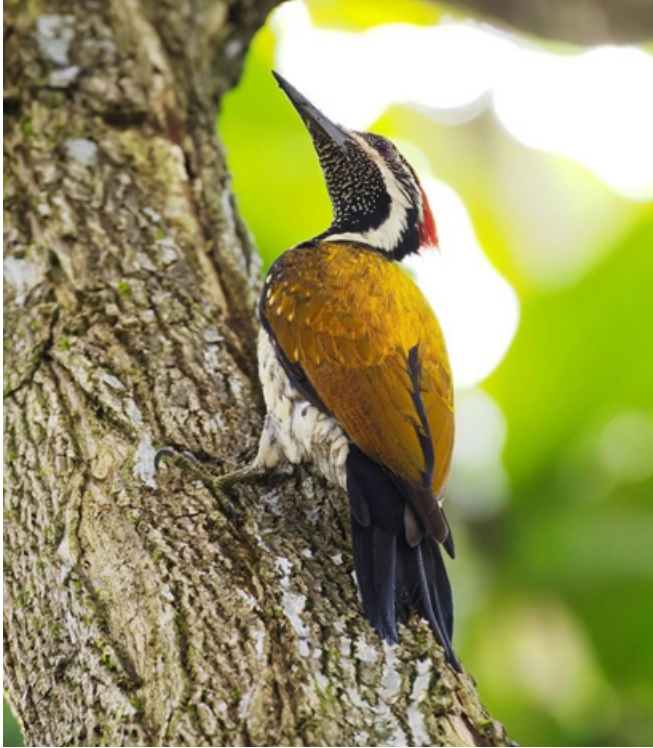
*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Green Bee-eater, scientifically known as *Merops orientalis*, is a vibrant and agile bird found across a wide range of habitats in Asia. Sporting a dazzling emerald-green plumage on its upperparts, a contrasting yellow throat, and a slender black beak, the Green Bee-eater is a visually striking avian species. As the name suggests, these birds predominantly feed on bees, wasps, and other flying insects, skillfully catching them in mid-air with remarkable precision.

Their nests, usually located in sandy banks, consist of a tunnel leading to a nesting chamber where the female lays a clutch of 4 to 7 glossy white eggs. The call of the Green Bee-eater is a melodious series of “tirrr” notes, often heard during flight or when perched. These bee-eaters are highly social, often seen in small flocks perched on exposed branches or wires, where they engage in mutual grooming and maintain a vigilant watch for passing insects. Their swift and acrobatic flight, coupled with their vivid plumage, makes the Green Bee-eater a delightful and enchanting presence in its natural habitat.



## Lesser Golden Back (നാട്ടു മരംകൊത്തി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Lesser Goldenback, scientifically known as *Dinopium benghalense*, is a vibrant and widespread woodpecker found across South Asia. Measuring around 25 cm in length, these woodpeckers exhibit a striking combination of colors with a golden-yellow back, a black-and-white barred pattern on the wings, and a red crown. They primarily feed on insects, probing trees with their strong bills to uncover ants, beetles, and larvae. Lesser Golden backs build their nests in tree hollows, where the female lays a clutch of 2-4 white eggs. Their calls include a series of loud and resonant drumming sounds and sharp, whistling notes. These woodpeckers are often seen hopping up tree trunks or branches in search of food and are known for their distinctive undulating flight. During the breeding season, males engage in drumming displays to establish territory and attract mates. The Lesser Golden back's vibrant plumage, distinctive calls, and arboreal behavior contribute to its prominence and appeal in the wooded landscapes it inhabits.

## Common Iora (ကုဏ္ဍိယ)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Common Iora, scientifically known as *Aegithina tiphia*, is a charming and small passerine bird native to South and Southeast Asia. Measuring around 12 centimeters in length, the Common Iora exhibits distinctive sexual dimorphism in its coloring. The males are adorned in bright yellow plumage with black wings and tail, while females display a more subdued olivegreen hue. These insectivorous birds have a varied diet, preying on small insects and caterpillars, often capturing them with swift and agile movements. During the breeding season, the female Iora constructs a cup-shaped nest in dense foliage and lays a clutch of 2-4 eggs. Their call is a series of melodious whistles and warbles that contribute to the lively soundscape of their habitats. Known for their acrobatic foraging behavior, Common Ioras flit through trees and shrubs with agility, displaying a combination of grace and energy. Their engaging behavior and vibrant plumage make the Common Iora a delightful presence in the tropical and subtropical forests they call home.

## Indian Roller (പനങ്കാക്ക)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Indian Roller, scientifically known as *Coracias benghalensis*, is a stunning bird native to the Indian subcontinent. Its vibrant plumage is a captivating blend of electric blue, turquoise, and hints of brown, making it one of the most visually striking members of the roller family. Indian Rollers primarily feed on a diet of insects, capturing them in mid-air with remarkable agility. Their nests are typically located in tree hollows, where the female lays a clutch of 3 to 5 eggs. The call of the Indian Roller is a series of melodious, throaty notes that are often heard during their aerial displays or when perched prominently on open branches. Known for their acrobatic flight, these birds display their vibrant wings during courtship and territorial displays. Indian Rollers are generally solitary but can be found in pairs during the breeding season. Their charismatic appearance and aerial prowess make them a delightful and iconic presence in the diverse landscapes they inhabit.



## Racket-tailed Drongo (കാടുമുറ്റക്കി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Racket-tailed Drongo (*Dicrurus paradiseus*) is a distinctive and visually captivating bird found in the forests of Southeast Asia. Measuring approximately 28-32 cm in length, this medium-sized Drongo is recognized for its glossy black plumage and remarkably long, forked tail feathers that resemble delicate rackets. The Racket-tailed Drongo is an omnivorous species, displaying a diet that includes a variety of insects, fruits, and small vertebrates. When it comes to nesting, they build cup-shaped nests in the branches of trees, skillfully using twigs, fibers, and spider webs. The female typically lays 2-4 eggs in the nest. Known for its diverse vocalizations, the Racket-tailed Drongo is a proficient mimic, imitating the calls of other bird species as well as various environmental sounds. The bird's behavior is marked by its agile and acrobatic flight, often seen sallying from perches to catch insects in mid-air. Additionally, they are known for their unique habit of engaging in “anting,” where they rub ants on their plumage, possibly to use formic acid from the ants for feather maintenance. The Racket-tailed Drongo's striking appearance, vocal prowess, and dynamic behaviors contribute to its allure in the rich biodiversity of the Asian tropical forests.

## Black Drongo (ആനൊമ്പി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Black Drongo (*Dicrurus adsimilis*), a sleek and striking passerine bird, measures around 28 centimeters in length and is adorned in glossy black plumage, accentuating its slender and forked tail. Found across a range of habitats in Asia, this avian acrobat is a skilled aerial hunter. Feeding primarily on insects, the Black Drongo is known for its agile and dynamic flight, often catching prey in mid-air with precision. The nest, constructed in the forked branches of trees, is made from twigs, grass, and other plant materials. The female typically lays 3 to 5 eggs. The call of the Black Drongo is a series of sharp and melodious whistles, contributing to the soundscape of its surroundings. Known for its assertive behavior, this drongo is often observed perched atop prominent branches, engaging in aerial displays and actively defending its territory from intruders. Intelligent and adaptable, the Black Drongo demonstrates remarkable versatility in its foraging techniques and interactions within its ecosystem.

## Rose-ringed Parakeet (നാട്ടു നാരാ)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Rose-ringed Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) is a vibrant and gregarious parrot species native to Africa and South Asia. Measuring around 40 cm in length, these medium-sized parakeets showcase a striking appearance, with predominantly green plumage, a rose-colored neck ring, and a distinctive long tail. Rose-ringed Parakeets are primarily herbivores, feeding on a varied diet of fruits, nuts, seeds, and blossoms. They are highly adaptable and have successfully integrated into urban environments. Their nests are often located in tree hollows, and the female typically lays a clutch of 2-4 eggs. The call of the Rose-ringed Parakeet is a raucous and loud screech, a sound often associated with their presence in urban areas. These parakeets are highly social, forming large and noisy flocks, and they are known for their playful behavior, acrobatic flight, and impressive vocal mimicry. The Rose-ringed Parakeet's vibrant plumage, energetic behavior, and adaptability have made it a charismatic and widely recognized member of the avian community in its range.

## Vernal Hanging Parrot (തത്തച്ചിന്നൻ)



*Photo courtesy: Tariquddin Ahmed*

The Vernal Hanging Parrot (*Loriculus vernalis*) is a small and captivating parrot species native to Southeast Asia. Measuring around 15 cm in length, these diminutive parrots are characterized by their vibrant and striking plumage. The males exhibit a predominantly green body with a red rump, while the females have a more subdued coloration. Vernal Hanging Parrots primarily feed on a diet of fruits, seeds, and nectar, using their specialized feet to grasp and feed while hanging upside down. Despite their small size, these parrots construct nests in tree hollows or bamboo stems, where the female lays a clutch of 2-4 eggs. The call of the Vernal Hanging Parrot is a series of high-pitched and melodious chattering sounds. They are known for their acrobatic and playful behavior, often seen hanging from branches or exploring the canopy in small, noisy groups. Their vibrant appearance, distinctive feeding habits, and agile aerial displays make the Vernal Hanging Parrot a charming and sought-after species in the tropical forests it inhabits.

## Blue-winged Leafbird (നാടൻ ഇലക്കിളി)



*Photo courtesy: Francesco*

The Blue-winged Leafbird, scientifically known as *Chloropsis cochinchinensis*, is a beautiful bird found in the forests of Southeast Asia. Adorned with a striking combination of vibrant colors, the male boasts an iridescent turquoise-blue crown, wings, and tail, contrasting with a yellow-green body. The female, while less colorful, exhibits an elegant mix of green and yellow. Blue-winged Leafbirds primarily feed on nectar, supplemented with insects and fruits. Their nests, built with finesse, are typically situated in the outer branches of trees. The female lays 2 to 3 eggs, and both parents take part in incubation and chick-rearing. The call of the Blue-winged Leafbird is a melodious series of whistles and musical notes, often heard during their perched or in-flight displays. These leafbirds are known for their agile and acrobatic flight, and their behavior includes foraging in the treetops, making them a charming presence in the lush canopies they inhabit. The Blue-winged Leafbird's stunning plumage and graceful movements contribute to its allure within the rich avian tapestry of Southeast Asia.



## Hoopoe (ഊപ്പൂപ്പൻ)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Hoopoe, scientifically known as *Upupa epops*, is a fascinating bird that captures the imagination with its distinctive appearance and behaviors. This medium-sized bird typically measures around 25-32 centimeters in length and is characterized by its unique coloration. The Hoopoe boasts a striking combination of cinnamon-brown plumage, black and white striped wings, and a prominent crest of feathers on its head. Its diet primarily consists of insects, which it catches by probing the ground with its long, slender bill. The Hoopoe's call is a distinctive “oop-oop-oop” sound, which adds to its charm. When it comes to nesting, Hoopoes are known for their creativity, often choosing holes in trees, walls, or even termite mounds as their nesting sites. The female lays a clutch of 5-8 eggs, and both parents share the responsibilities of incubation and feeding. Hoopoes are known for their agile foraging and probing techniques, using their specialized bill to extract insects from the soil. Their behavior is characterized by a unique display where they raise and fan their crest feathers, adding flair to their already captivating presence.

## Wire-tailed Swallow (കമ്പിവാലൻ കുതിരപ്പക്ഷി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Wire-tailed Swallow (*Hirundo smithii*) is a striking and agile bird found in various habitats across sub-Saharan Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and Southeast Asia. Measuring around 18-20 cm in length, its most distinguishing feature is the exceptionally long tail streamers, which can extend up to twice its body length. Wire-tailed Swallows showcase metallic blue plumage on their upperparts, contrasting with a creamy white underbelly. These swallows are adept fliers, often seen performing acrobatic aerial displays while foraging for insects on the wing. Their diet primarily consists of small flying insects, which they catch in flight with remarkable precision. The nest of the Wire-tailed Swallow is a cup-shaped structure made of mud and lined with grass, often attached to a vertical surface. The female typically lays 3-4 white eggs. Their calls include a series of high-pitched and melodious twittering sounds. These sociable birds are known for their gregarious behavior, often forming colonies during the breeding season.

## Tickell's Flowerpecker (ചെങ്കാക്കൻ ഇത്തിക്കണ്ണിക്കുരുവി)



*Photo courtesy: Arun/ e bird*

The Tickell's Flowerpecker, scientifically known as *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*, is a petite and colorful bird found in parts of South and Southeast Asia. Measuring around 8 cm in length, these flowerpeckers display a combination of vibrant colors, with a dark green upper body, a yelloworange belly, and a distinctive pale red bill. They primarily feed on nectar from various flowering plants, making them important pollinators in their ecosystems. Tickell's Flowerpeckers are also known to consume small fruits and insects. They build cup-shaped nests using plant fibers and spider silk, usually suspended from the outer branches of trees. The female typically lays 2-3 eggs. The call of the Tickell's Flowerpecker is a series of soft and melodious whistles. These active and agile birds are often observed flitting from flower to flower, probing for nectar with their specialized bills. Their behavior includes both solitary foraging and social interactions, and they are known for their acrobatic flight and energetic presence in the canopy. The Tickell's Flowerpecker's small size, striking colors, and ecological role as pollinators make them a delightful and ecologically significant species in the avian community



## Asian Koel (നാട്ടുകുയിൽ)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chowva*

The Asian Koel, scientifically named *Eudynamys scolopaceus*, is a distinctive and vocal bird found across the Indian subcontinent and parts of Southeast Asia. Measuring around 39-46 cm in length, the male Koel sports glossy, iridescent black plumage with striking red eyes, while the female is brown with a scalloped pattern. Renowned for its parasitic breeding behavior, the Koel lays its eggs in the nests of other birds, often crow species, leaving the host to incubate and raise its chicks. Their diet consists of a variety of fruits, berries, and insects. The male Koel is known for its unmistakable and repetitive “kuoo, kuoo” call, a sound that is often associated with the arrival of the Indian summer. Their behavior is characterized by a secretive and elusive nature, often heard more frequently than seen. During the breeding season, the male’s persistent calls echo through the trees, creating a distinctive soundscape in the warm months. The Indian Koel’s unique reproductive strategy and vocal presence make it a notable and enigmatic bird in the avian landscape of South Asia.

## Brahminy Kite (ഗരൂഡൻ)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Brahminy Kite (*Haliastur indus*), a majestic raptor, commands attention with its impressive size, typically measuring around 50 centimeters in length. Distinguished by its striking chestnut plumage, contrasting white head and breast, and a distinctive white tail, this kite is a captivating sight in coastal regions of South and Southeast Asia. As a skilled hunter, the Brahminy Kite primarily feeds on fish, swooping down with precision to snatch prey from the water's surface using its sharp talons. When it comes to nesting, these kites often choose tall trees or cliffs, constructing large nests made of sticks and lined with softer materials. The female typically lays 1 to 3 eggs, and both parents contribute to incubation and caring for the chicks. The Brahminy Kite's call is a high-pitched, mewling whistle, adding to the coastal soundscape. Known for its graceful flight and adept aerial maneuvers, this raptor also exhibits territorial behavior, defending its nesting and feeding areas with a combination of majestic displays and assertive flight patterns.

## Black Kite (ചരിവരുന്ന)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*), a widespread and adaptable raptor found across a variety of habitats in Asia, is a bird of impressive stature, typically boasting a wingspan of 150 centimeters. Cloaked in dark brown plumage with a contrasting forked tail, these kites exhibit a striking appearance against the sky. Opportunistic and versatile, Black Kites are known for their scavenging habits, feeding on a diverse diet that includes carrion, scraps, and small live prey. Their nests, constructed in trees or on cliffs, are composed of twigs and other plant materials. The female lays 2 to 3 eggs, and both parents actively participate in incubation and rearing of the chicks. The call of the Black Kite is a series of shrill whistles and mewling sounds, adding to the avian chorus in their habitat. With a keen sense of thermals, these kites are skilled fliers, soaring effortlessly and displaying agile aerial maneuvers.

## Shikra (ഷിക്ര)



*Photo courtesy: Osman / e bird*

The Shikra (*Accipiter badius*) is a small but formidable bird of prey found in a wide range of habitats across Asia. Measuring around 30-40 cm in length, the Shikra displays sexual dimorphism, with males featuring slate-grey plumage on the upperparts and females exhibiting a brownish hue with streaks. These raptors primarily feed on a diet of small birds and insects, relying on their swift and agile flight to capture prey. Shikras build nests using twigs and leaves, often placed high in trees, where the female lays a clutch of 3-5 eggs. Their calls consist of highpitched and repetitive whistles, often heard during the breeding season. Shikras are known for their stealthy hunting behavior, employing surprise attacks on unsuspecting prey. Despite their relatively small size, Shikras are skilled and opportunistic hunters, showcasing adaptability and resilience in various ecosystems.

## White-bellied Sea Eagle (വെള്ളവയറൻ കടൽപ്പരുന്ത്)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The White-bellied Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) is a magnificent bird of prey that inhabits the coastal regions and large inland water bodies across the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and Australia. With a wingspan ranging from 1.8 to 2.2 meters, these raptors are known for their impressive size and powerful build. The adults showcase a striking contrast in colors, featuring a predominantly white head and belly, while their wings, back, and tail are a dark shade of brown. Their diet primarily consists of fish, though they are opportunistic hunters and may also prey on birds, water snakes and small mammals. White-bellied Sea Eagles construct large nests in tall trees near water bodies, often reusing the same site for several years. The female typically lays one to three eggs, and both parents take turns incubating them. These eagles exhibit strong territorial behavior, fiercely defending their nesting sites. Known for their soaring flight and keen eyesight, White-bellied Sea Eagles epitomize the grace and power of avian predators in their coastal habitats.

## Little Cormorant (ചെറിയ നീർക്കൊക്ക)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Little Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax niger*), a charismatic waterbird prevalent in South and Southeast Asia, measures around 50 centimeters in length. Adorned in glossy black plumage with a distinctive slender neck, this cormorant is often spotted perched on rocks or drying its outstretched wings after skillfully diving for fish. With a voracious appetite for small fish, the Little Cormorant displays adept swimming and diving behaviors. During the breeding season, these birds gather in colonies, constructing stick nests usually in trees near water bodies. The female lays a clutch of eggs, and both parents actively participate in incubation and caring for the chicks. Their calls are a series of guttural croaks, contributing to the lively soundscape of their breeding colonies. Social in nature, Little Cormorants often exhibit cooperative fishing behaviors, working together to corral and catch small fish.



## White-breasted Waterhen (കുളുക്കോഴി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The White-breasted Waterhen, scientifically known as *Amaurornis phoenicurus*, is a medium-sized bird commonly found in wetlands and marshy areas across South Asia. Measuring around 33 cm in length, these waterhens exhibit a striking contrast of colors with a dark plumage, red legs, and a distinctive white patch on their breast. Their diet is omnivorous, encompassing a variety of aquatic invertebrates, small fish, seeds, and plant matter. White-breasted Waterhens are known for their secretive behavior, often staying concealed in dense vegetation. They build nests in marshy areas, constructing a platform of reeds and grasses just above the water's surface. The female typically lays a clutch of 4-8 eggs. The call of the White-breasted Waterhen is a loud and repetitive “kek-kek-kek,” often heard during the breeding season. These waterhens are skilled swimmers and adept at moving through dense vegetation, using their long toes and claws. Their behavior includes foraging in shallow water, where they use their bills to probe for food.

## Purple Swamphen (നീലക്കൊഴി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Purple Swamphen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) is a striking and colorful bird found in wetlands and marshy areas across the globe. Measuring around 45 to 50 cm in length, these birds are characterized by their vibrant plumage, featuring shades of blue, purple, and green, with a red frontal shield and long legs. Purple Swamphens have a diverse diet that includes aquatic plants, seeds, insects, small fish, and even small vertebrates. They are adept swimmers and foragers, often seen wading in shallow water. Their nests are constructed in dense vegetation near the water's edge, forming a platform of reeds and grasses. The female typically lays a clutch of 4-7 eggs. The call of the Purple Swamphen is a loud and distinctive series of trumpeting or squawking sounds. These birds are known for their territorial behavior, engaging in aggressive displays and vocalizations to establish dominance. Purple Swamphens are also skilled at walking on floating vegetation, using their long toes to distribute their weight. Their vivid colors, loud calls, and dynamic behaviors make the Purple Swamphen a charismatic and conspicuous resident of wetland ecosystems.

## Cattle Egre (കാലിമുണ്ടി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) is a striking wading bird that has forged a unique ecological niche, often found in the company of grazing livestock. Measuring around 46-56 cm in length, these medium-sized herons display a distinctive appearance during the breeding season, featuring a buff-orange plumage, contrasting with their white feathers in non-breeding plumage. Cattle Egrets are opportunistic feeders, preying on insects and small vertebrates disturbed by the movement of cattle and other large mammals. Their nesting behavior is communal, with colonies forming in trees, bushes, or even on the ground. The eggs, usually 3-4 in number, are pale blue to greenish and are incubated by both parents. The bird's call is a series of harsh, low croaks. Known for their adaptability, Cattle Egrets are often observed perched on the backs of cattle, where they forage for insects stirred up by the animals. Their cooperative and social behavior extends beyond feeding, as these egrets often nest in close proximity to other wading birds, showcasing a fascinating aspect of avian coexistence.

## Little Egret (ചിന്നമുണ്ടി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) is a captivating wading bird that graces wetlands and water bodies with its slender elegance. Measuring between 55 to 65 cm in length, with a wingspan of 85 to 95 cm, this egret species boasts a striking all-white plumage, enhanced during the breeding season by ornamental plumes on the head, neck, and back. Little Egrets are skilled hunters, adept at capturing fish, amphibians, and invertebrates with their long, dagger-like bills in shallow waters. They are known for their patient stalking behavior before making a precise strike at their prey. These birds nest in colonies, crafting platform nests from sticks and lining them with softer materials. The female typically lays a clutch of 3-5 pale blue-green eggs. The call of the Little Egret is a soft, high-pitched “kow-kow,” a sound often heard during the breeding season. Their behavior is characterized by graceful and deliberate movements as they wade through water, displaying a cautious and methodical approach to their hunting endeavors. Little Egrets are social birds, often seen in colonies, contributing to the vibrant dynamics of their aquatic habitats.

## Median Egret (ചെറുമുണ്ടി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Median Egret, scientifically known as *Egretta intermedia*, is an elegant wading bird that graces wetlands and water bodies across Asia. With a height of approximately 56-72 cm, these medium-sized egrets exhibit a striking appearance, featuring pristine white plumage and a distinctive slender neck. Known for their stealthy hunting techniques, Median Egrets primarily feed on fish, crustaceans, and aquatic insects, using their sharp bills to make precise strikes.

Their nests are typically constructed in colonies, often in trees or reed beds, using sticks and lined with softer materials. The female Median Egret usually lays a clutch of 3-5 pale blue-green eggs. The call of the Median Egret is a soft, low croaking sound, contributing to the auditory ambiance of their wetland habitats. These egrets display both solitary and sociable behavior, often seen foraging alone or in small groups, yet congregating in larger colonies during the breeding season. Their graceful movements, coupled with their adept fishing skills, make the Median Egret a captivating and vital component of the ecosystems they inhabit.



## Great Egret (പെരുമുണ്ടി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Great Egret, scientifically known as *Ardea alba*, is a majestic bird renowned for its impressive size and striking appearance. Standing tall at an average height of 3.3 feet (1 meter) with a wingspan of nearly 4.3 feet (1.3 meters), this graceful wader boasts a pristine white plumage, a slender S-shaped neck, and a distinctive yellow bill. The Great Egret emits a low, guttural croak as its call, a sound often heard in its freshwater habitats, such as marshes, ponds, and wetlands. Its diet primarily consists of fish, amphibians, and small aquatic creatures, which it adeptly captures using its long, dagger-like bill. During the breeding season, these elegant birds construct large stick nests nestled high in trees, creating a communal atmosphere in colonies. The eggs, typically three to four in number, are a pale blue-green hue. Known for their patient and stealthy hunting techniques, Great Egrets often stand motionless in the water, waiting for prey to approach. Their courtship displays involve elaborate feather displays and aerial acrobatics, showcasing their remarkable breeding behaviors.



## Pond Heron (കുളുക്കൊരി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Pond Heron (*Ardeola grayii*), a slender and elegant wader commonly found in wetland habitats, measures around 40 to 50 centimeters in length. Cloaked in subtle shades of buff and brown, these herons exhibit camouflaging plumage that aids in their foraging endeavors. With a keen eye for aquatic prey, Pond Herons primarily feed on fish, insects, and amphibians, employing their long bills and sharp eyes for efficient hunting. Their nests, constructed in vegetation near water, are simple platforms made of sticks and twigs. The female typically lays a clutch of 3 to 5 eggs. While generally silent, Pond Herons may emit a series of croaks during the breeding season. Known for their patient and methodical feeding behavior, these herons can often be observed standing still or slowly stalking their prey in shallow waters, demonstrating both grace and precision in their hunting techniques.

## Night Heron (പാതിരാക്കൊക്ക്)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), a nocturnal marvel of wetland habitats, is a medium-sized heron with a wingspan ranging from 60 to 70 centimeters. Cloaked in a distinctive cryptic plumage of gray and black, these herons possess striking red eyes that pierce through the darkness. True to their name, Night Herons are adept hunters during the night, preying on fish, amphibians, and other aquatic creatures using their sharp bills. Their nests, often constructed in trees or dense shrubs near water, consist of sticks and other plant materials. The female typically lays a clutch of 3 to 5 eggs. While generally silent, Night Herons emit a series of croaks and squawks, especially during the breeding season. These herons are known for their solitary and secretive behavior, often remaining concealed in dense vegetation during the day and emerging at dusk to forage for food with stealth and precision.

## Grey Heron (ചാരമുണ്ടി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Grey Heron, scientifically known as *Ardea cinerea*, is a majestic waterbird widely distributed across Europe, Asia, and Africa. Standing tall at an average height of 90-100 centimeters, the Grey Heron is characterized by its long neck, dagger-like bill, and striking grey plumage, which contrasts with its white head and neck. An adept hunter, the Grey Heron's diet primarily consists of fish, amphibians, and small mammals, often stalking its prey with a patient and deliberate approach. During the breeding season, these herons build large stick nests in trees, reed beds, or even on the ground, and the female typically lays a clutch of 3-5 eggs. The call of the Grey Heron is a distinctive, loud "kraaank," often heard in flight or when they are disturbed. Known for their solitary and patient demeanor, Grey Herons are often seen standing motionless at the water's edge, waiting for the opportune moment to strike at passing prey.

## Little Grebe (മുഞ്ഞാലകോഴി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Little Grebe, scientifically known as *Tachybaptus ruficollis*, is a small and diving waterbird commonly found in freshwater habitats across Europe, Asia, and Africa. Measuring around 23 cm in length, these grebes are characterized by their compact size, dark brown plumage, and a distinctive rufous-colored neck during the breeding season. Little Grebes are skilled divers, feeding primarily on aquatic invertebrates, small fish, and plant matter. They build floating nests anchored to vegetation, often hidden in reed beds or water plants. The female typically lays a clutch of 4-7 eggs. The call of the Little Grebe is a series of high-pitched whistles and trills, often heard during the breeding season. These grebes are known for their secretive behavior, frequently submerging themselves to avoid detection. Their diving skills are remarkable, allowing them to swiftly navigate underwater in search of prey.



## Bronze-winged Jacana (മാടൻ താമരക്കുഴി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Bronze-winged Jacana, scientifically known as *Metopidius indicus*, is a fascinating bird characterized by its distinct appearance and remarkable behaviors. This unique wader, found in the wetlands of South and Southeast Asia, boasts striking features such as long legs and toes, enabling it to gracefully navigate floating vegetation. The Bronze-winged Jacana exhibits sexual dimorphism, with the females being larger and more brightly colored than the males, showcasing vibrant bronze wings. Its call is a series of sharp, metallic notes. The diet of the Bronze-winged Jacana primarily consists of insects, small invertebrates, and seeds, which it adeptly forages for by walking on the floating vegetation using its long, slender toes. During the breeding season, these birds are known for their polyandrous mating system, where a female may mate with multiple males who then take on the responsibilities of incubating the eggs and caring for the chicks. The nest, a floating platform constructed from aquatic vegetation, provides a secure environment for the eggs, which are typically mottled and cryptic in color.

## Paddy Field Pipit (പായൽ പരമ്പൻ)

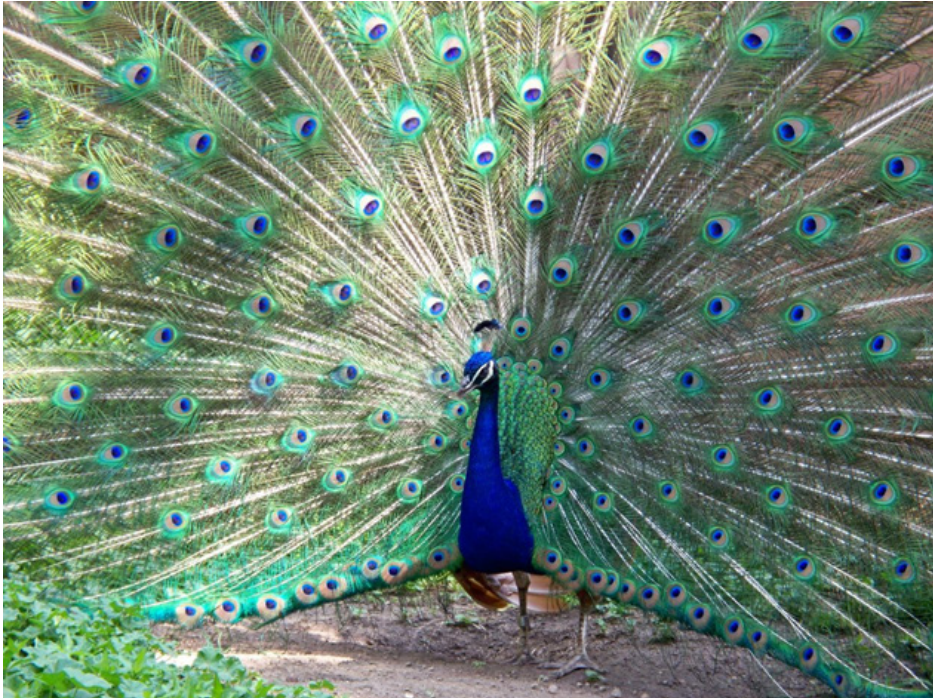


*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Paddyfield Pipit, scientifically known as *Anthus rufulus*, is a small passerine bird that thrives in the agricultural landscapes of Asia, particularly in paddy fields and grassy habitats. This slender and streaked bird measures around 15 cm in length and displays a subdued brown and buff coloration, providing effective camouflage in its preferred habitats. The Paddyfield Pipit's call is a melodious, trilling song, often heard as it takes to the sky during its display flights. Its diet primarily consists of insects and small invertebrates found in the grassy vegetation, which it captures with agile ground foraging and quick movements. The nest of the Paddyfield Pipit is a cup-shaped structure made of grasses and placed on the ground amidst vegetation. The eggs are typically speckled and blend well with the surrounding environment. These pipits are known for their territorial behavior, defending their nesting sites vigorously. Observing short, undulating flights and ground-hopping foraging, the Paddyfield Pipit embodies the resilience and adaptability required to thrive in agricultural landscapes, becoming a familiar sight and sound in these cultivated fields.



## Indian Pea fowl (മയിൽ)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Indian Peafowl, scientifically known as *Pavo cristatus*, is a majestic bird native to the Indian subcontinent and one of the most iconic and recognizable species in the pheasant family. Males, commonly referred to as peacocks, boast a remarkable size of up to 2.3 meters, featuring an iridescent blue-green plumage, an ornate fan-shaped crest, and an extravagant train of strikingly patterned, elongated feathers. Females, or peahens, exhibit a more understated appearance, with mottled brown plumage for effective camouflage. Indian Peafowls are omnivores, foraging for a diet that includes grains, seeds, insects, and small reptiles. Their nests, usually simple ground scrapes lined with leaves and grass, serve as the incubation site for a clutch of 4-8 large, brownish eggs laid by the peahen. The resonant and unmistakable calls of the peafowl, particularly the raucous trumpeting of the male, contribute to the acoustic tapestry of their habitats. Beyond their stunning physical attributes and vocalizations, Indian Peafowls are known for their elaborate courtship displays, wherein the male fans out his iridescent train and vibrantly hued plumage to attract potential mates.

## Lesser Whistling Duck (ചുളുൻ എരണ്ട)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Lesser Whistling Duck, scientifically known as *Dendrocygna javanica*, is a charming waterfowl species that adds a touch of elegance to wetlands and freshwater habitats. Measuring around 41-51 cm in length, these ducks are characterized by their sleek and compact build. Their plumage is predominantly dark brown, with distinctive white markings on the face and neck. Lesser Whistling Teals are omnivorous, feeding on a diet consisting of aquatic plants, seeds, insects, and small aquatic invertebrates. When it comes to nesting, these ducks often select concealed locations amidst tall grasses or reeds. The female typically lays a clutch of 8-12 eggs, and both parents actively participate in incubation and caring for the ducklings. The name “Whistling Duck” is derived from the melodious whistling calls these ducks produce, a characteristic sound that adds to the ambiance of their wetland habitats. Lesser Whistling Teals are known for their sociable behavior, forming large flocks, and their propensity for nocturnal feeding, making them a fascinating and adaptable species in diverse aquatic ecosystems.

## Jungle Owlet (ചെമ്പൻ നത്തു)



*Photo courtesy: Sanjeev / birds of Gujarat*

The Jungle Owlet (*Glaucidium radiatum*) is a small and cryptic owl species native to the Indian subcontinent. Measuring around 18 cm in length, these diminutive owlets are known for their distinctive appearance, featuring a mix of brown, gray, and rufous plumage with intricate patterns that provide effective camouflage in their wooded habitats. Their diet mainly consists of insects, small rodents, and other small vertebrates. Despite their elusive nature, they are recognized by their sharp calls that echo through the dense forests. The Jungle Owlet is notable for its peculiar nesting behavior, often utilizing abandoned tree holes or woodpecker nests for breeding. The female typically lays a clutch of 2-4 eggs. These owlets are mostly nocturnal, exhibiting solitary and territorial behavior. They are known for their keen hunting skills, relying on their exceptional hearing and sharp vision to locate prey in the dim light of the forest understorey.



## Barn Owl (വെള്ളിമുങ്ങ)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) is a captivating nocturnal bird of prey known for its heart-shaped facial disc and ghostly appearance. Found on nearly every continent, the Barn Owl exhibits a wingspan of about 80-95 cm and showcases a distinctive plumage of pale golden-brown and white. Its specialized facial structure aids in capturing sound, allowing for remarkable accuracy in locating prey, primarily small mammals like rodents. The Barn Owl typically nests in barns, hollow trees, or other sheltered locations, laying a clutch of 4-7 white eggs. Its call is a distinctive, eerie screech, often heard during the night in rural landscapes. Despite their silent flight and solitary hunting style, Barn Owls are also known for their adaptability and may be found in a variety of habitats, including farmlands, grasslands, and marshes. Their nocturnal behavior and exceptional hunting skills make the Barn Owl a symbol of mystery and efficiency in the avian world.

## Spotted Owlet (പുളളിനത്ത)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Spotted Owlet (*Athene brama*) is a small and charismatic owl species native to South Asia, Southeast Asia, and parts of China. Measuring approximately 21-23 cm in length, these compact owlets are characterized by their distinct spotted plumage, featuring a combination of brown, buff, and white feathers. Their round facial disc and bright yellow eyes add to their endearing appearance. Spotted Owlets primarily feed on insects, small mammals, and occasionally small birds, showcasing their adaptability in urban and rural environments. They often nest in tree hollows or man-made structures, where the female lays a clutch of 3-5 white eggs. The call of the Spotted Owlet is a series of soft, melodious hoots, frequently heard during the night. Despite their nocturnal nature, Spotted Owlets are known to be crepuscular as well, becoming active during the early evening and morning hours. Their behavior is characterized by a mix of agility and stealth, and they are often observed perched on exposed branches or structures while scanning for prey.

## Clamorous Reed Warbler (കൈതക്കളൻ)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Clamorous Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus stentoreus*) is a migratory bird found in wetland habitats across South Asia. Measuring around 18 cm in length, these warblers are characterized by their streaked brown plumage, relatively long bill, and a prominent eye stripe. They primarily feed on insects, spiders, and small invertebrates, foraging skillfully among reeds and dense vegetation. The nest of the Clamorous Reed Warbler is an intricately woven cup constructed from reeds and grasses, typically suspended over water. The female lays a clutch of 3-5 eggs. True to its name, the call of the Clamorous Reed Warbler is loud and melodious, often resembling a series of varied and repetitive chattering notes. Their behavior involves active foraging within dense vegetation, and they are known for their secretive nature, making them more often heard than seen. During the breeding season, males engage in territorial singing to establish and defend their nesting territories.



## House Crow (പേനക്കുറുക്ക)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The House Crow (*Corvus splendens*), also known as the Indian House Crow, is a highly adaptable and intelligent bird found in urban and suburban areas across South Asia. Measuring around 40 cm in length, House Crows are characterized by their jet-black plumage and a distinctively squared-off tail. Their diet is incredibly diverse, encompassing everything from insects and small vertebrates to human food scraps. They are opportunistic foragers and have successfully adapted to coexist with human settlements. House Crows build bulky nests, usually in trees, using sticks and other available materials. The female typically lays a clutch of 3-5 eggs. The call of the House Crow is a loud and harsh “kaakaa,” often heard throughout the day. Known for their cunning and resourcefulness, House Crows are skillful problem solvers and have been observed using tools to extract food. They are social birds, often seen in large, noisy flocks, and their adaptability to various environments has led to their widespread distribution and successful integration into urban ecosystems.

## Jungle Crow (ബലിക്കാക്ക)



The Jungle Crow (*Corvus macrorhynchos*), also known as the Large-billed Crow or Thick-billed Crow, is a widespread and adaptable bird found in various habitats across Asia. Measuring around 48-52 cm in length, these crows are relatively large with glossy black plumage. They are opportunistic omnivores, with a diet encompassing a wide range of food items such as insects, small vertebrates, fruits, and human scraps. Their nests, constructed in trees using sticks and twigs, provide a sturdy foundation for the female to lay a clutch of 3-5 eggs. The call of the Jungle Crow is a series of harsh and cawing sounds, characteristic of many corvid species. Known for their intelligence and resourcefulness, Jungle Crows are often observed using tools and engaging in problem-solving behavior. They are highly adaptable to urban environments, thriving in proximity to human settlements, and are often seen in large, communal roosts. Their social behavior, keen intelligence, and adaptability make the Jungle Crow a fascinating and integral part of the avian fauna in their diverse range.

## Rosy Starlin (റോസ് സ്തർലിൻ)



The Rosy Starling, scientifically known as *Pastor roseus*, is a captivating bird that inhabits a vast range spanning Eastern Europe and Asia. Measuring approximately 20 centimeters in length, the Rosy Starling boasts striking plumage characterized by a rosy-pink body, glossy black wings, and a distinctively black head during the breeding season. Their diet primarily consists of insects, fruits, and seeds, showcasing their omnivorous nature. During the breeding season, these starlings construct nests in tree hollows or cavities, laying clutches of 3-6 eggs. The calls of the Rosy Starling are a melodic mix of chirps and whistles, often contributing to the lively ambiance of their surroundings. Renowned for their gregarious behavior, Rosy Starlings form large and noisy flocks, especially during migration. This species is known for its impressive aerial displays and acrobatic flight patterns, creating a spectacle in the skies as they navigate their migratory routes.

## Indian Golden Oriole (മഞ്ഞക്കിളി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Indian Golden Oriole, a winter visitor in Kerala, scientifically named *Oriolus kundoo*, is a stunning passerine bird native to the Indian subcontinent. Characterized by its vibrant plumage, the male boasts striking golden-yellow feathers with black wings and tail, while the female exhibits a more subdued yellow-green hue. Measuring around 25 centimeters in length, this oriole is known for its melodious and flute-like song, often heard echoing through the deciduous and semi-evergreen forests it frequents. The Indian Golden Oriole's diet primarily consists of insects, fruits, and nectar, showcasing its diverse foraging habits. The nest, a pendulous structure made from fine plant fibers, is typically suspended from the outer branches of trees. The eggs are a pale blue, adding a touch of delicacy to the intricately woven nest. These orioles are often observed in the treetops, where they display acrobatic maneuvers while hunting for prey.

## Lesser White-throat (ലെസ്സ് താലിക്കുരുവി)



*Photo courtesy: Birdfact*

The Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*), a small migratory bird from Africa, measures around 12 centimeters in length and is characterized by its subtle yet charming appearance. With a grayish-brown upper body and a whitish throat, this warbler is often identified by its distinct eye ring and subtle markings. Feeding primarily on insects, the Lesser Whitethroat forages skillfully among vegetation, employing its slender bill to catch prey. The nest, intricately woven with grass, leaves, and twigs, is typically built close to the ground in dense shrubbery. The female lays a clutch of 4 to 6 eggs. The bird's calls are a series of soft, rapid chattering notes, contributing to the natural symphony of its habitat. Known for its secretive behavior, the Lesser Whitethroat tends to stay concealed within thick foliage, and its evasive movements make it a delightful challenge for birdwatchers to observe in its preferred habitats, which include scrublands, gardens, and woodland edges.



## Greenish Warbler (പച്ച പൊടികുരുമ്പി)



*Photo courtesy: Craighbrelsford*

The Greenish Warbler, scientifically known as *Phylloscopus trochiloides*, is a small passerine bird that belongs to the family Phylloscopidae. With a length ranging from 11 to 12.5 centimeters, this warbler showcases a subtle yet striking appearance, characterized by its olivegreen plumage with a yellowish undertone. Its diet primarily consists of insects and small invertebrates, and it is often observed foraging in tree canopies. The Greenish Warbler is recognized by its distinctive and melodious song, a series of high-pitched notes that resonate through its woodland habitat. During the breeding season, these birds construct cup-shaped nests in shrubs or low branches, laying a clutch of pale-colored eggs. Noteworthy is their remarkable migratory behavior, with populations breeding in the Himalayan region undertaking extensive journeys to wintering grounds in South Asia.



## Paradise Flycatcher (നാകമോഹൻ)



The Paradise Flycatcher (*Terpsiphone paradisi*), a winter visitor in Kerala, graces the woodlands of Africa and Asia with its exquisite presence. In India it nests at central and north India. Measuring around 20 to 25 centimeters, this flycatcher is renowned for its long, trailing central tail feathers, particularly pronounced in males. Males boast a resplendent white plumage with contrasting black markings, while females adopt a more subdued brownish-gray attire. Feeding primarily on insects, the Paradise Flycatcher employs its agile flight to catch prey on the wing. The nest, a delicate creation of twigs and other plant materials, is often suspended from the end of a branch, camouflaged amidst the foliage. The female lays a clutch of 2 to 4 eggs. Their melodious and variable calls contribute to the enchanting soundscape of their habitats. Known for their graceful and acrobatic flight, these flycatchers are often observed performing aerial displays during courtship.

## Common Sandpiper (നീർക്കുട)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*) is a migratory shorebird found across a wide range of habitats, from freshwater to coastal areas. Measuring approximately 18-20 cm in length, this slender bird is characterized by its brownish-gray plumage with a distinctive white belly and a noticeable white eye-ring. Common Sandpipers are adept foragers, primarily feasting on small invertebrates like insects, crustaceans, and mollusks along the water's edge. Nesting in shallow scrapes on the ground, often lined with grass and other plant material, the female Common Sandpiper typically lays a clutch of 4 eggs with cryptic brown markings for camouflage. The bird's call is a series of high-pitched, melodious whistles, adding to the ambient sounds of its habitat. Known for its solitary and territorial behavior during the breeding season, the Common Sandpiper becomes more gregarious during migration, forming loose flocks. Their distinctive bobbing motion and teetering gait contribute to the charm of these wading birds as they navigate the shorelines with agile elegance.

## White Wagtail (വെള്ള വാലുകുലുക്കി)



The White Wagtail, scientifically known as *Motacilla alba*, is a slender and elegant bird belonging to the wagtail family. Measuring approximately 18 cm in length, these migratory birds display a distinctive black and white plumage pattern, with a characteristic long tail that constantly wags. White Wagtails are highly adaptable and can be found in a variety of habitats, including open fields, riversides, and urban areas. Their diet primarily consists of insects and other small invertebrates, which they glean from the ground with quick and agile movements. They build cup-shaped nests made of grass and other plant materials, typically positioned on the ground or in crevices. The female typically lays 4-6 pale blue eggs. The call of the White Wagtail is a sharp “chissick” or a soft, high-pitched “seep,” often heard during the breeding season. These birds are known for their energetic and constant tail movements, and they are often seen foraging near water sources or on open ground.

## Yellow Wagtail (മഞ്ഞ വാലുകുലുക്കി)



*Photo: Dr. Khaleel Chovva*

The Yellow Wagtail, scientifically known as *Motacilla flava*, is a vibrant and petite passerine bird that inhabits a wide range of habitats across Europe and Asia. Typically measuring around 15 centimeters in length, the Yellow Wagtail is adorned with striking yellow plumage, often accompanied by contrasting black or grey markings. These agile birds are insectivores, feeding primarily on insects, spiders, and other small invertebrates, which they catch with quick, darting movements. During the breeding season, the female Yellow Wagtail lays a clutch of 4-6 eggs in a well-hidden nest on the ground, often nestled in vegetation. The call of the Yellow Wagtail is a sweet, melodic “tslee-ip” or “tslee-ee,” adding a cheerful note to its surroundings. Known for their active and restless behavior, Yellow Wagtails are often seen bobbing their tails while foraging on the ground or flying low over grassy fields. These delightful birds are migratory, covering impressive distances during their annual journeys, and their bright colors and lively antics make them a delightful addition to diverse ecosystem.







**Dr. Khaleel Chowva** is currently the Principal of Sir Syed Institute and a member of the Advisory Committee on Coastal Protection for the Government of Kerala. Previously, he served as the Research Guide and Course Director in the Department of Environmental Studies at Kannur University and as the Executive Director of Scole Kerala. Dr. Khaleel Chowva has been honored with the Best Teacher Award from Air India in 2004 and the Dr. S. Radhakrishnan National Award in 2013. A plant was named after him as *Rotala khaleeliana* and he discovered a fungus namely *Meliola kannurensis*. Attended Ramsar Convention, UNESCO conference and many International Conferences across different Countries. He has authored three books, published 53 research papers, and mentored nine students to obtain their Ph.D. under his guidance. 12 new birds are sighted / photographed at Kannur.