

title, 'status'. Herein the authors give the data for each species from Kerala. Alas, in almost all the cases, this is restricted to a few lines. This reviewer would have revelled in flocks of data for each taxon. Arrival and departure dates, census figures from the various wetlands where such an exercise was carried out, e.g. Kole and Vembanad, breeding areas of the resident waders, etc., are some of the points that come to mind. A map should have been produced for each

species – with details of distribution, of published breeding localities, etc. It is surprising and an eye-opener that “there is no ringing data at all on our shorebirds” (p. 1).

To popularise wader watching, we require a publication that lots of birdwatchers can buy (even if only in Kerala), study and use in the field. The '*Shorebirds of Kerala*' costs Rs700/-, which is a bit heavy on the pocket for the content that one gets in return,

especially with cheaper alternatives of superior quality and content easily available in the market. The publishers should realise that specialist books should necessarily contain a lot more about the subject than general works, especially so if the quality of the latter is excellent and the content wide-ranging.

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Recent ornithological literature on South Asia and Tibet

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Building bridges for migratory waterbird conservation in the Central Asian Flyway

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The Central Asian Flyway (CAF) covers the large continental area of Eurasia between the Arctic and Indian Oceans. This Flyway comprises several important and overlapping migration routes for the different species of waterbirds, most of which extend from the northern breeding grounds in Siberia to South and Southwest Asia. Geographically the flyway includes an area from the frigid arctic coastline and offshore islands of Siberia to the southernmost non-breeding (wintering) grounds in the Maldives and the British Indian Ocean Territory of Dio Garcia, thus incorporating about 30 countries of Central, East and South Asia and the Trans-Caucasus.

The CAF covers at least 274 migratory waterbird populations of 175 species, including 26 globally threatened and near-threatened species that breed, migrate and spend the non-breeding (winter) period within the region. Species such as the critically threatened Sociable Plover *Vanellus gregarious*, vulnerable Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis* and Indian Skimmer *Rynchops albicollis*, Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*, Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*, and Brownheaded Gull *Larus brunnicephalus* are completely (or largely) restricted to the CAF region.

In addition, the breeding ranges of some species, including the critically threatened Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus*, Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris*,

endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus*, vulnerable Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis* and Relict Gull *Larus relictus*, and Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni*, Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus* and Asian Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus* are largely restricted to the region although their non-breeding ranges overlap with adjoining flyways.

Other migratory waterbird species pass through this region on their annual migrations within flyways that connect the northern Central Asian countries with South East Asia and Australasia (the East Asian-Australasian Flyway), Africa and Europe (the East African Flyway), and the Indian Ocean to the south.

The CAF comprises large semi-arid habitats with a limited number of wetlands, particularly in the staging areas of Central Asia and different groups of migratory waterbirds appear to overlap considerably in the usage of important sites. While recent work on satellite telemetry and years of ringing of birds has yielded some information, very little is known about the precise migration routes and staging areas of most species.

Rapid human population growth and development across the region has dramatically increased pressure on intertidal and freshwater wetlands, grasslands and other habitats, which has resulted in their degradation, pollution, and loss. The habitat

pressures coupled with legal and illegal hunting of birds have resulted in the decline and local extinction of many waterbird populations.

Management and conservation of waterbird populations requires precise and up-to-date information on their populations and trends. Information on the status and trends of most waterbird populations in the CAF area is limited and outdated. Actions to promote collection of data and their analysis at the flyway and national level are urgently needed to provide the basis for improving the knowledge base.

As the birds cross international borders of several countries and provide a link between the peoples of CAF region, the responsibility for the well-being and conservation of these species and for the sustainable use of their habitats rests with all countries. Management of waterbird habitats requires coordinated multi-sectoral planning and implementation to realise the needs of biodiversity conservation and local people.

Many countries in the CAF have developing economies with inadequate allocation of resources for research and conservation and for involvement of local stakeholders in sustainable management of wetlands, grasslands, and other habitats. In addition, changes in political systems and instabilities in some countries, language and other barriers have not enabled strong cooperation to be developed between