

## Review

### **Common birds of India**

by Asad R. Rahmani. Published by the Publications Division Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Government of India, New Delhi 110003. Pp. 106+xiv, 89 colour photographs. ISBN: 81-230-1170-9. Hardbound. Price: Rs 180/-.

In spite of his various pre-occupations and commitments, Dr Asad R. Rahmani could find time to write a book on the common birds of India, which has been published by the publications Division of the Govt. of India. Dr. Rahmani has been involved in the field-work and study of birds for nearly 30 years or more. This makes him one of the most competent and the right person to write on the subject of birds of India. As he himself writes in the book, "Much of the description is based on my personal field

notes. Additional information is from books by Dr Salim Ali, Grimmett et al., and from other sources"... The author admits that "It is not a comprehensive book on Indian birds, because many common birds have been left out due to lack of space."

In this small book of about 106 pages, nearly 119 commonly seen birds from all types of habitats across India have been covered besides 12 species (including 2 vultures) which are not so common have also been discussed. This is less than 10 percent of all the birds to be found on the Indian subcontinent, which number about 1,300. In the brief but fairly comprehensive introduction, the reader is informed of the biogeography of the country and its climate and the distribution of birds in some important regions including the Andaman and Nicobar and the Lakshadweep Islands.

There are sub-sections on bird migration, sanctuaries, birds in Indian culture, bird trade, wildlife protection and threatened bird species. The chapters at the end, on books for further reading, glossary, bird research institutes and extinct, threatened and endangered birds are informative and useful. The main text is in narrative style.

The book is well printed with almost no printing mistakes, but the binding could have been better and stronger. Low price of Rs 180/- should put it within the reach of many birdwatchers. If the colour photographs had been numbered and the corresponding numbers inserted, the text would have been more convenient for beginners.

Siraj A. Taher

2-B Atlas Apartments, Road No. 10,  
Banjara Hills, Hyderabad 500034, India.

## Correspondence

### **The birds at home**

'The birds at home' by Pragati Nayak (*Indian Birds* of Jan-Feb 2006) is one of the most charming essays I have read for a long time. Her approach to ornithology is probably what appeals to most of us. At some stage of our lives we suddenly find that we are smitten by birds. It happened to me at the Doon School, Dehra Dun when I was eleven. The school campus was well wooded and full of birds. But as members of the Naturalists, a society for junior boys, my friends and I used to go out on most Sundays to study the avifauna of the Doon Valley, which lies between the Shivaliks and the foothills of the Himalayas. We were also responsible for the collection of stuffed birds that Dr Salim Ali had bequeathed to the Doon School.

Today, I am 74, but the thrill of birding has not left me. I cannot take part in field trips like I used to—in Kerala, the Palani hills, the Kaveri delta, the leeward side of

the Western Ghats in Tamil Nadu—but if I hear a call outside my window I still want to go out and ascertain who is singing the song.

I wish Mrs Nayak years and years of pleasure and friendship with the birds of her neighbourhood.

Dr Aminuddin Khan  
Hyderabad

Email: [mzkhan@hathway.com](mailto:mzkhan@hathway.com)

### **Correction**

Wednesday's post brought the January-February issue of *Indian Birds*, as ever containing some interesting articles. Joe Homan's initiative to organise the first South Indian Bird Watchers' Fair was most inspiring. Pragati Nayak's short article, 'The birds At home', strongly conveyed the message that one does not have to be a professional to enjoy bird watching, and that one can observe the bird life in one's

immediate vicinity.

Living in the Kumaun my attention was first drawn to Dr Arun P. Singh's description of his observations while trekking in the valleys of the Saryu and eastern Ramganga, and over the intervening high ridges. I would however like to draw your attention to one error that has crept in. Dr Singh describes his trek as being in Bageshwar and Almora districts. However when he crossed the Ramganga bridge (1,870 m) between Gogina and Namik, he entered Munsiyari block of Pithoragarh district, and the rest of his trek as far as Birthi was in this block. The E. Ramganga down as far as Nachni (between Tejam and Thal) forms the border between Bageshwar district on its west bank and Pithoragarh on the east.

David Hopkins

Lakshmi Ashram, P.O. Kausani, District  
Almora, Uttaranchal 263639, India