

uniform treatment when giving details of distribution, ecology and status of birds. In some cases these details are absent or sketchy. No details of habitat and localities of earlier sightings are given for Spoonbilled sandpiper, a rare species in the state. From the details given in some cases, it appears the author is not familiar with the latest status and distribution of all the species dealt with in this book. For instance, it is stated that the first sight record for the Indian Skimmer for south India is by Balachandran (2010) from Manakudy estuary, whereas there have been earlier records (Vikas Madhav and Nagarajan - *Birding Asia*, 13 (2010): 98). Similarly the status of Avocets is slightly outdated. The statement that bronzewing jacana is the commoner of the two species may not be true for the entire state as it is almost absent in the vicinity of Chennai and northern Tamil Nadu. It would have been most appropriate for a book like this to summarize these details and make it available to the birdwatchers of the state.

Tighter editing of the text would have enhanced the value of the book. (eg: pg: 85 - "male alone *hatches* the eggs"; pg: 134 - "House (sic) Swallow is a winter visitor"; pg: 96 - "spotted sandpiper is *imperfectly* but distinctly spotted"; pg: 75 - "These kite-like birds of prey (Marsh and Pied harriers) can be recognized by their steady *flapping flight* low over the water surface..."; pg: 52 - "the adults have a large patch of *red wattles* on the head" (all the emphasis are mine). There are also

some misleading statements concerning the size of certain bird species: Whitebellied sea eagle ("*about four times larger than Brahminy kite*"), Greater and lesser flamingo, jack snipe etc.

It would have been nice to provide the actual sizes of each species and also short accounts that describe the features and ecology of each bird group. Also a glossary dealing with technical terms and a map showing the bird topography would have added value to this publication.

The map showing the important bird-attracting wetlands of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry does not indicate the actual locations of these wetlands. Besides, I find a few important wetlands have been left out in this list such as the Kaliveli wetlands near Puducherry and some other proposed Ramsar Sites (Islam and Rahmani, 2008).

These criticisms apart, the book has been well brought out and is bound to be a valuable field guide for birdwatchers in the field. Some of the photographs are of high quality and the compilation has been painstakingly done. The bilingual text makes it more accessible to the non-English speaking naturalists and would give the birdwatching movement in the state a big boost.

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Letter to the Editor

White-naped Tit *Parus nuchalis* feeding on bagworm (Lepidoptera: Psychidae)

We visited Banni Naliya and Phot Mahadev area in the Greater Rann of Kachchh from 28 October to 1 November 2008, and spotted White-naped Tit *Parus nuchalis* twice. The first sighting was of four birds, one of which had got hold of a bagworm (Lepidoptera: Psychidae), and was trying to detach it from the branch it was stuck to, or get through its thorny shield. We observed one of the birds approaching the one with the bagworm, and interact with it in various ways; the other two did not participate in these interactions. The bird with the bagworm flew into a

thick bush, followed by the other. We could not continue our observations after this, as the birds were invisible to us.

On the second occasion, at the same place, we saw four birds; one of them had got hold of a bagworm, and again it took it into a thick bush. This time we could see the actions of the bird. It grabbed one of the thorns shielding the worm and started pulling it off the bagworm. While it was doing this, another bird approached it, and started begging for food, like most young birds do. The two birds disappeared deeper into the thick bush, and we could not complete the observation.

Later Mr Jugal Tiwari opined that this record could add the bagworm to the dietary of White-naped Tit, as it clearly showed the bird's ability to handle this prey. Usually, White-naped Tits feeds on small insects on the leaves, and under the bark of a tree, and some small fruits; but more such observations will confirm the presence of bagworm in its dietary.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Jugal Tiwari of CEDO for guiding, and helping us to explore the area, Lakshmanbhai our driver-cum-guide, and Rakeshbhai, and Samir Dixit our friends and birdwatchers, for their company.

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