

State of India's Birds report, 2020

April 4, 2020

- This is the **first comprehensive assessment** of the distribution range, trends in abundance, and conservation status for most of the bird species that regularly occur in India.
- The report was released at the **13th Conference of Parties (CoP) of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals**, held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. A massive database of around 10 million observations uploaded by 15,000 birdwatchers on the **online platform, Bird** and **'citizen science data'** to assess the distribution and trends of common Indian birds was used.

Findings:

- **867 species** of Indian birds were assessed in this report.
- Only **48 per cent** of all the species analyzed have **registered a stable bird population** and a slight increase in their numbers.
- During the last two decades, **over half the species assessed have declined.**
- These declines are particularly acute for birds of prey, migrant shorebirds, birds of forests and grasslands and endemic birds of the Western Ghats.
- To the list of **67 globally threatened Indian bird species** identified by the **IUCN Red List**.
- The report adds **34 more species**, making the number of **species of high conservation concern in India now 101.**
- **319 birds** are categorized as **moderate concern** and **442 birds** as **low concern species.**

- India has **witnessed a big decline in:**
 - Migratory shorebirds
 - Raptors
 - Indian Vulture
 - Large-billed Leaf Warbler
 - Curlew Sandpiper
 - Richard's Pipit
 - White-rumped Vulture
- The species which have **registered a healthy spurt** in their numbers include:
 - Rosy Starling
 - Feral Pigeon
 - Glossy Ibis
 - Plain Prinia
 - Ashy Prinia.
- A good growth has been observed in **Indian Peacock's** population and has been mentioned as the species of '**least concern**' on the IUCN list.
- The number of **India's domestic or house sparrows** has **decreased in large cities** but is almost stable overall. The **reasons for decreasing numbers** of house sparrows are lack of suitable nesting sites and lack of insect (a key part of sparrow's diet) population.
- **Raptors overall are in decline**, with 'open country' species such as the Pallid and Montagu Harriers, White-bellied Sea Eagle and Red-necked Falcon suffering the most.
- **Migratory shorebirds**, along with gulls and terns, seem to have **declined the most among water birds**.
- The Indian vulture has recorded a consistent drop in its numbers since the 1990s.
- **White-rumped Vulture** has suffered the most severe declines, followed by **Indian Vulture and Egyptian Vulture** (former two are critically endangered and the latter one is endangered on Red list).
- The **Indian bustards** including the Great Indian Bustard, the Macqueen's Bustard, Lesser Florican and the Bengal

Florican have decreased in numbers due to loss of habitat and hunting practices by humans.