



HOME / SCI-TECH / ENVIRONMENT

5% of birds in India are endemic, reveals Zoological Survey of India publication

75 Endemic Birds of India provides details of bio-geographic regions where the species are found, their conservation status, historical relevance, differences in subspecies, distinguishing traits, and preferred habitats

August 06, 2023 09:50 pm | Updated August 07, 2023 12:27 pm IST - Kolkata

SHIV SAHAY SINGH



A white-bellied minivet

A recent publication by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) points out that about 5% of birds found in the country are endemic and are not reported in other parts of the world. The publication, titled *75 Endemic Birds of India*, was recently released on the 108th foundation day of the ZSI.

India is home to 1,353 bird species, which represents approximately 12.40% of global bird diversity. Of these 1,353 bird species, 78 (5%) are endemic to the country.

Amitava Majumder, one of the authors of the publication, said that of the 78 species, three species have not been recorded in the last few decades. They are the Manipur Bush Quail (*Perdicula manipurensis*), listed as 'Endangered' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species with its last recorded sighting in 1907; the Himalayan Quail (*Ophrysia superciliosa*), listed as 'Critically Endangered' with its last recorded sighting in 1876; and the Jerdon's Courser (*Rhinoptilus bitorquatus*), listed as 'Critically Endangered' with its last confirmed sighting in 2009.

ZSI Director Dhriti Banerjee pointed out that the publication highlights the importance of endemic bird species in the country. "Since endemic species are restrictive in nature, it is important that their habitats are conserved so that they don't dwindle out. Ornithologists are aware of the facts related to endemic birds but our effort has been so that common people, particularly students, are aware about these endemic species found in restricted spaces," Dr. Banerjee said.

Nicobar Megapode *Megapodius nicobariensis* | Photo
Credit: Amitava Majumder

The ZSI Director, who is also one of the authors of the publication, pointed out that *75 Endemic Birds of India* comes at a time when the country is celebrating 75 years of Independence with the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebrations.

The publication points out that the 75 bird species belong to 11 different orders, 31 families, and 55 genera, and exhibit remarkable distribution patterns across various regions in India.

The highest number of endemic species have been recorded in the Western Ghats, with 28 bird species. Some of the interesting species recorded in the country's bio-geographic

hotspot are the Malabar Grey Hornbill (*Ocyceros griseus*); Malabar Parakeet (*Psittacula columboides*); Ashambu Laughing Thrush (*Montecincla meridionalis*); and the White-bellied Sholakili (*Sholicola albiventris*).

“25 bird species are endemic to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Endemism in the Andaman group of islands must have developed because of the geographical isolation of the region,” Dr. Majumder said.

White Bellied Minivet *Pericrocotus erythropygus* |
Photo Credit: Amitava Majumder

Some interesting bird species which are only found in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are Nicobar Megapode (*Megapodius nicobariensis*); Nicobar Serpent Eagle (*Spilornis klossi*); Andaman Crake (*Rallina canningi*); and Andaman Barn Owl (*Tyto deroepstorffi*). Four species of birds are endemic to the Eastern Himalayas, and one each to the Southern Deccan plateau and central Indian forest.

The publication also throws light on the conservation status of these endemic species

Of the 78 endemic species, 25 are classified as ‘Threatened’ by the IUCN. Three species (Bugun Liocichla or *Liocichla bugunorum*; Himalayan Quail or *Ophrysia superciliosa*; Jerdon’s Courser or *Rhinoptilus bitorquatus*) are listed as ‘Critically Endangered’. Five of the endemic birds in India are categorised as ‘Endangered’, and 17 as ‘Vulnerable’, while 11 are categorised as ‘Near Threatened’ on the IUCN Red List.

Along with the ZSI Director and Dr. Majumder, Anindya Naskar, a research scholar of the ZSI, has compiled the publication which, along with photographs of the birds, offers vital insights on each species

“The details of endemic bird species contained in the publication include etymology (meanings of scientific names) and their historical relevance along with vital facts such as subspecies’ differences, distinguishing traits, preferred habitats, breeding habits, and food preferences,” Dr. Majumder said.

The ZSI Director said that the publication is aimed at making information about endemic birds of the country available to everyone, and highlighting the efforts to conserve species that are found only in restricted areas.

Related Topics

[nature and wildlife](#)

Latest News

- 19 mins ago - Cricket
NZ vs AUS second Test | Williamson strikes half-century in his 100th Test as New Zealand takes lead against Australia
- 21 mins ago - Lok Sabha
Ex-Arunachal CM Nabam Tuki resigns at state Congress chief
- 30 mins ago - Lok Sabha
Congress holds meetings in Goa ahead of LS polls
- 37 mins ago - Environment
India's golden langur population estimated at 7,396

[READ MORE STORIES](#)