

## **Technical report**

### **Foraging ecology and habitat use of wading birds and shorebird in the mangrove ecosystem of the Andaman Islands**

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#### **Objectives of the study :**

- To describe the avian community at the Mangrove ecosystem of Andaman Islands
- To investigate the relationship between the birds and their prey
- To provide knowledge about the intertidal of the mangrove ecosystem as a foraging habitat for the birds.
- To evaluate the consumption of the birds in the intertidal of the mangrove ecosystem and its meaning for the avian and the benthic community
- To study the time-activity pattern and foraging behavior of Median Egret, Andaman Little Green Heron, Eurasian Curlew and Common Redshank.

#### **Findings of the Study:**

- As per survey undertaken for the period of three years, it was observed that following the 2014 Tsunami, the number of wetlands have increased in Andaman Islands from 284 in year 2010 to 349 in year 2017. Water levels in most wetlands have also increased.
- The arrival and departure of resident and migratory birds were assessed, which indicates that most of the migratory birds are arriving during the month of August/September and stay up to March/April in Andaman Islands.
- Of the recorded species, Common Redshank showed highest in dominance in south Andaman followed by Curlew Sandpiper, Lesser Sand Plover, Large Egret, Long-toed Stint, Eastern Cattle Egret, Wood Sandpiper Eurasian Whimbrel, Pacific Golden Plover and Little Egret.

## **Recommendations and Outcome:-**

The Study has brought forth important recommendations for the conservation of wetlands and birds of these wetlands in the Andaman Islands.

### **(A) For Conservation of Habitat**

- Conservation of wetlands is essential for conservation of the birds of these wetlands (resident as well as migratory).
- All the development activities which have a bearing on the wetland ecosystem should be regulated, screened, and monitored.
- Strict protection for birds in the wetlands should be enforced. Active patrolling should be carried out by involving the forest department in different locations of wetlands
- Specific projects and programme for the conservation of the wetland ecosystem of south Andaman should be initiated.
- Plans and proposals that concern the future of the wetland ecosystem of south Andaman should be evaluated in a holistic way.
- Warning boards showing details of punishment for poaching of birds and other animals should be displayed.
- Huge quantity of waste material were dumped at Ograbraj, Stewartgunj areas. Waste materials deposited in the wetlands include hardened cement bags, polythene bags and floating materials. Efforts may be initiated to control  
the dumping of waste materials to these sites as there are the prominent site of migratory birds.
- Declaration of wetlands of south Andaman into community reserves in order to protect the migratory water birds.
- Deforestation of mangroves to be stopped and restoration of the same should be executed.

## **B) Research and Monitoring**

- Annual water bird surveys should be undertaken in association with Zoological Survey of India, port Blair.
- Research on migration strategies of water birds should be carried out.

## **C) Education, Information and Awareness**

- Awareness camps on the importance of migratory birds coming to the wetlands should be conducted. Local people near by the wetlands should be given preference for attending the Nature education camp
- Mass awareness should be created and an Interpretation Centre in South Andaman
- Information on the birds visiting the area can be displayed as lists and charts with photographs.
- A watch tower can be built for observing the birds with telescopes. By doing this people coming to the region can watch the birds without much disturbance to the birds.
- An information bulletin should be prepared on the wetlands of south Andaman and migratory birds coming to the locality.