



Six new Records of Birds from Andaman and Nicobar Islands

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The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, popularly known as 'Bay Islands', are situated in the Bay of Bengal, mid way between peninsular India and Myanmar, spreading like a broken necklace in the North-south direction. These islands are located between 6° 45' and 13° 41' N and 92° 12' and 93° 57' E. There are 572 islands lies 193 km away from Cape Negrais in Myanmar, 1255 km from Kolkata and 1190 km from Chennai. Total geographic area of Andaman and Nicobar Islands is 8249 km², of which Andaman group of islands cover 6408 km² while Nicobar group cover 1841 km². Out of 572 islands, 37 islands (24 in Andaman and 13 in Nicobar group of islands) are inhabited by human beings. The climate is typical of tropical islands of similar latitude. It is always warm, but with sea-breezes. Rainfall is irregular, but usually dry during the north-east and wet during the south-west monsoons. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands comes under the zone of tropical rain forest of the world. The tropical hot and humid climate with abundant rainfall has resulted in very luxuriant and rich vegetation in these islands.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands constitute a globally important biodiversity hotspot. Due to isolation from the mainland, the endemism is very high in all taxa including avifauna (Rao *et al.* 1980; Das, 1999a, 1999b and Andrews, 2001). This archipelago is one of the Endemic Bird Areas and nineteen sites are identified as Important Bird Areas and twenty eight species are considered endemic to these islands (Stattersfield *et al.*, 1998). A total of two hundred and eighty four taxa of birds were reported from Andaman and Nicobar Islands, belonging 56 Families under 17 Orders (Sivaperuman *et al.*, 2010).

Avifaunal explorations in Andaman and Nicobar Islands was started by British researchers during the middle of 19th century (Blyth, 1845, 1846, 1863 and 1866) followed by Beavan (1867), Hume (1873, 1874a, 1874b, 1876), Butler (1899a, 1899b, 1899c, 1900). Later, Bombay Natural History Society, conducted several surveys on the avifauna of Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Abduali, 1964, 1965, 1967, 1971, 1976, 1979, and 1981). Zoological Survey of India also carried out many surveys (Das, 1971; Tikader, 1984; Mukherjee and Dasgupta, 1975; Dasgupta, 1976; Saha and Dasgupta, 1980; Mukherjee, 1981; Chandra and Kumar, 1994; Chandra and Rajan, 1996; Sivaperuman *et al.*, 2010, 2012, Sivaperuman, 2011a,b,c; 2012, 2013 and Sivaperuman and Venkataraman 2012). The Pondicherry University conducted few surveys on bird communities on various islands of Andaman (Davidar *et al.*, 1996, 1997, 2001, 2002, 2007, and 2010). Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History also carried out studies on the avifauna of this archipelago (Sankaran and Vijayan, 1993; Sankaran, 1995, 1998, 2001; Vijayan, 1996, 2007; Sivakumar and Sankaran, 2002; Ezhilarsi and Vijayan, 2006; Sivakumar, 2007; Rajan and Pramod, 2012) and Pandey *et al.* (2007) carried out an avifaunal survey in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

As a part of major ecological studies on wetland bird communities in south Andaman supported by the Science Engineering Research Board (SERB), Department of Science and Technology, Ministry of Science & Technology and INS-Utkrosh, Ministry of Defence, Government of India, we have been surveying the area regularly since 2012.

During these surveys, we have recorded six species of birds from the tsunami inundated wetlands of South Andaman which are new records to Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* Linnaeus, 1758

Five individuals of Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* were sighted on 17th November 2013 from the tsunami inundated wetlands at Ograbraj, South Andaman (Lat.: 11°39.598' N; Long.: 92°41.927' E) (Fig. 1).

It is widespread and common winter visitor to Southern Asia and Africa and breeds in Central Asia (Ali and Ripley 1983; Arun Kumar *et al.*, 2005; Clements, 2007). The Eurasian Wigeon also sighted from the same locality on 18th, & 19th November 2013. According to Ali and Ripley (1983), Tikader (1984), Arun Kumar *et al.* (2005) and Grimmett *et al.* (2008), this species has not been reported from Andaman and Nicobar Islands.



Fig. 1. Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* (Bechstein, 1803)

Six individuals of Marsh Sandpiper were recorded in the tsunami inundated wetlands at Chouldhari, South Andaman (Lat.: 11° 37.301' N; Long.: 92° 40.357' E) (Fig. 2) on 5th November 2013, along with a flock of Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* (Linnaeus), Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* (Linnaeus), Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis gulva* (Gmelin) and

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Linnaeus. The Marsh Sandpiper is a true migratory wader and wintering in India, Africa and also parts of Southeast Asia and Australia (Ali and Ripley 1983; Arun Kumar *et al.*, 2005). The Marsh Sandpiper was sighted again on 16th & 18th, November 2013 in the same locality. Review of literature revealed that this species has not been reported from Andaman and Nicobar Islands.



Fig. 2. Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Eight individuals of Black-tailed Godwit were sighted on 1st October 2013 at Garacharma, South Andaman (Lat.: 11° 37.045' N; Long.: 92° 42.366' E) (Fig. 3) and again sighted from the same location on 15th, 16th, and 18th November 2013. The Black-tailed Godwit is a

winter migrant and widely distributed all over India extending up to Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives (Arun Kumar *et al.*, 2005). According to Ali and Ripley (1983), Tikader (1984), Arun Kumar *et al.* (2005) and Grimmett *et al.* (2008), this species has not been reported this species from Andaman and Nicobar Islands.



Fig. 3. Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* (Linnaeus, 1766)

Five individuals of Collared Pratincole were sighted on 28th March 2014 at Garacharma, South Andaman (Lat.: 11° 37.107' N; Long.: 92° 42.437' E) (Fig. 4) and again sighted from the same location on 2nd, 4th and 5th April 2014. The Collared Pratincole is a rare winter migrant

and distributed North West India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and breeding in Mediterranean, Black sea, Middle East to West Pakistan. (Arun Kumar *et al.*, 2005). According to Ali and Ripley (1983), Tikader (1984), Arun Kumar *et al.* (2005) and Grimmett *et al.* (2008), this species has not been reported this species from Andaman and Nicobar Islands.



Fig. 4. Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*.

Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger* (Vieillot, 1773)

One individual of Little Cormorant was sighted on 13th April 2014 at Ograbraj, South Andaman (Lat.: 11° 39.431' N; Long.: 92° 39.491' E) (Fig. 5) along with the flock of Large Egret (*Casmerodius albus*), Purple Moorhen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*), and Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) and the same individual

was again sighted from the same location during fourth week of April 2014 and first week of May 2014. The Little Cormorant is widespread resident in the coastal and freshwater habitats of India (Arun Kumar *et al.*, 2005). According to Ali and Ripley (1983), Tikader (1984), Arun Kumar *et al.* (2005) and Grimmett *et al.* (2008), this species has not been reported this species from Andaman and Nicobar Islands.



Fig. 5. Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger*.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* Linnaeus, 1758

Two individuals of Common Starling was sighted on 14th January 2014 at Sippighat, South Andaman (Lat.: 11° 36.165' N; Long.: 92° 41.335' E) (Fig. 6) in the open grass lands and

the same individual was sighted again on 17th and 20th January 2014. According to Ali and Ripley (1983), Tikader (1984) and Grimmett *et al.* (2008), this species has not been reported this species from Andaman and Nicobar Islands.



Fig. 6. Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*.

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