

Rishi Valley Bird Survey - 2-3 February, 2013

The Rishi Valley Bird Survey was conducted last week-end. Several students (particularly from the junior school), staff members, parents and visitors participated in this. It was particularly heartening to see several junior school kids up at 6.00 am on Sunday morning, despite the quiz programme that went on until 11.15 pm on Saturday night. We had nine visitors who came in from Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad specially for this event as resource persons.

The survey notched up 93 species of birds recorded from five locations: main school campus, Biodiversity Park, Duranta Hill, Valley beyond Sunrise Point and the mouth of Valley, over two sessions.

The survey recorded a new species for the valley - the **Eurasian Sparrowhawk**, a migratory bird of prey. This was seen and photographed by the group lead by Mr. Kailash Prasad on 2nd evening at the Duranta hill.



As was to be expected, there were hardly any waterbirds - just three species - during the survey. Of the 93 species, at least 18 were long-distance migrants. There were 10 species of raptorial birds (birds of prey). Some of the uncommon birds seen include Marshall's lora, Spangled Drongo, Brown-breasted flycatcher and the Common Rosefinch. However it was surprising that there were no sightings of some of the commoner birds that one usually sees in the campus.

Looking at the distribution of species (Table 1) across the five sites, it was interesting to see that while only one species was seen at all the sites, there were 35 species seen in only at one site. This shows how specific types of habitats may be important to certain bird species and also may indicate the rarity of certain species. We must therefore ensure the diversity of habitats are maintained if we are to have a diverse bird-life.

TABLE - 1

No. of sites	No. of species
5	1
4	11
3	25
2	21
1	35

It is also important that we conduct more such surveys at regular intervals to monitor the bird-life in the campus and surrounds.

- V. Santharam