

THE COMMON BIRDS OF BANGALORE

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Corvus splendens

House Crow

Corvus macrorhynchos

Jungle Crow

Both these Crow species are widespread and common. They are easily distinguished from each other by their colouration.



Milvus migrans

Black Kite (Pariah Kite)

Haliastur indus

Brahminy Kite

The Black Kite is a widespread and common scavenger. The Brahminy Kite is usually seen close to water. Immature Brahminy Kites can look like Black Kites but lack a forked tail and have a lighter coloured beak.



Acridotheres tristis

Common Myna

Acridotheres fuscus

Jungle Myna

The Mynas are commonly seen in open areas most often on the ground, as they search for insects. The Jungle Myna is recognized by a tuft of feathers at the forehead and lacks the Common Myna's yellow patch behind the eye.



Passer domesticus

House Sparrow

This finch is closely associated with humans and is usually seen nesting in buildings. This bird is on the decline in Bangalore and is commoner on the outskirts. The female is duller coloured and without the black throat patch.



Eudynamys scolopacea

Asian Koel

This cuckoo is noisy during its breeding season which largely coincides with that of the House Crow in whose nest it lays its egg. The female is speckled, while the male is black with ruby-red eyes. They are fruit eaters and are regularly seen at Singapore Cherry trees.

Psittacula krameri

Rose-ringed Parakeet

Another common city-dweller, this Parakeet is usually seen in flocks. Flocks can be seen flying in into the city in the evenings to roost. They visit fields and fruit-gardens in and around the city.



Columba livia

Blue Rock-Pigeon

A very widespread bird, originally a resident of cliffs, that has taken to life on tall buildings all over the world. Many colour variants may be noticed.

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Megalaima viridis
White-cheeked Barbet
(Small Green Barbet)

Megalaima haemacephala
Coppersmith Barbet
(Crimsonbreasted Barbet)

The Barbets are stout-billed fruit-eating birds that chisel out tree trunks to construct their nest holes. The Small Green Barbet has a familiar 'kotroo-kotroo' call and is more widespread than the smaller Crimsonbreasted Barbet. The Small Green Barbet is often seen at Singapore Cherry trees. The Coppersmith Barbet is named after its repeated single note 'tonk' call that sounds like metal being beaten. It is often seen calling from atop an exposed tree branch.

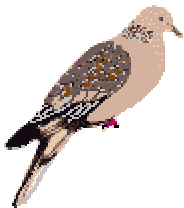


Merops orientalis
Green Bee-eater

Usually seen perched on electric wires or fences in small groups. This bird can be seen sallying out and capturing insects on the wing and returning to hit the insect on the perch before swallowing them.

Upupa epops
Common Hoopoe

A brightly patterned bird of open areas usually seen walking on the ground. It nests in pre-existing tree or building hollows. It is named after its low 'hoo-poo-poo' call. This bird is possibly on the decline in Bangalore but still seen in the outskirts.



Streptopelia chinensis
Spotted Dove

A slim relative of the pigeon with a longish tail and a 'kuturr-koo-koo-koo' call. This bird can often be seen on wires, buildings and on the ground. They often nest in gardens, building a thin platform of twigs inside a low bush or creeper.



Alcedo atthis
Common Kingfisher
(Small Blue Kingfisher)

Halcyon smyrnensis
White-throated Kingfisher
(Whitebreasted Kingfisher)

The White-throated Kingfisher is myna sized and is often seen away from water often perched on electric wires in open areas. The Small Blue Kingfisher is just a little larger than a sparrow and is seen near water. It is often spotted as it rapidly flies close to the water surface. This tiny Kingfisher can be found at the Sankey, Lalbagh and Hebbal lakes.



Ceryle rudis

Lesser Pied Kingfisher

A Myna-sized kingfisher usually spotted hovering over water hunting for its prey and dropping into the water to catch. Can be observed at the Lalbagh, Hebbal and Sankey tanks.



Dicrurus macrocercus (Dicrurus adsimilis)
Black Drongo

A distinctive all black bird with a forked tail. This insectivorous bird is seen in open areas and often accompanies grazing livestock. Commonly seen in the outskirts of Bangalore.

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Coracias benghalensis

Indian Roller

A fairly common crow-sized bird often seen perched on electric wires and posts in open areas. In flight it reveals several shades of blue and ultramarine. Commonly seen off the roads in the outskirts of Bangalore.

Elanus caeruleus

Black-shouldered Kite (Blackwinged Kite)

A crow-sized bird of prey that is seen in open areas. Hovers low over the ground with shallow wing beats as it looks for prey. Seen in the outskirts of Bangalore.



Porphyrio porphyrio

Purple Waterhen(Purple Moorhen)

A waterside bird that lives on aquatic vegetation. Seen in groups often on the shores of water-hyacinth covered lakes. The lake inside the Lalbagh botanical gardens is a good place to observe them.

Fulica atra

Common Coot

A black duck-like waterbird that is seen in open waters. The Lalbagh and Hebbal lakes are good places to observe them.



Tachybaptus ruficollis (Podiceps ruficollis)

Little Grebe (Dabchick)

This small bird is seen in open waters and has the characteristic habit of diving underwater and surfacing some distance away. Can be observed at the Lalbagh Lake.



Vanellus indicus

Red-wattled Lapwing

Vanellus malarbaricus

(*Vanellus malabaricus*)

Yellow-wattled Lapwing

Lapwings are ground birds usually seen in open stony ground and grasslands. The Red-wattled Lapwing is larger, often seen close to water and has a distinctive 'did-he-do-it' alarm call. The Yellow-wattled Lapwing has a 'tee-yew' call.



Accipiter badius

Shikra

This pigeon-sized bird is the commonest hawk. It has short rounded wings and flies with fast wing beats alternated with short glides. It preys on lizards, squirrels and small birds.



Neophron percnopterus

Egyptian Vulture

Larger than a Kite and with a wedge-shaped tail showing in flight as it glides in a thermal. This black and white bird is the commonest vulture in the Bangalore area.

Athene brama

Spotted Owlet

The commonest night bird of Bangalore. The chuckling-cackling call of this species can be heard at dusk and dawn. They roost by day in the hollows of trees and sometimes seen catching termites under streetlights.



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Phalacrocorax niger

Little Cormorant

A large waterbird often seen swimming in the water or drying its outspread wings on the shore. This bird can be seen in the deeper water bodies such as the Hebbal and Lalbagh lakes.



Egretta garzetta

Little Egret

A tall white waterbird usually seen standing still by the shore as it looks for its aquatic prey. The black legs with yellow feet are characteristic. During the breeding season the plumes at the back of the head are distinctive.



Bubulcus ibis

Cattle Egret

Another white bird that is usually seen in flocks. It can be seen following cattle. It can be seen in open areas and grasslands and often close to water.

Ardea cinerea

Grey Heron

A tall waterbird seen at deeper and larger water-bodies. Can be seen at the Lalbagh and Hebbal lakes.



Ardeola grayii

Indian Pond-Heron

A medium sized waterbird that can be found even at small ponds. This dull looking bird can be easily missed as it stealthily stalks frogs, fish and insects. Its bright white wings becomes very conspicuous when it is put to flight.



Apus affinis

House Swift

A small bird that spends most of its time flying, gliding and whirling in small flocks high in the air. One flock can be seen on M.G. Road nesting under the eaves of the Cauvery Arts Emporium. The tail is square ended and the white rump is distinctive.

Hirundo daurica

Red-rumped Swallow

Another bird that is found in the air most of the time and only rarely seen perched on a wire. This small, agile flier can be identified by its forked tail as it flies low over open areas to catch flying insects.



Motacilla maderaspatensis

Large Pied Wagtail

A distinctive black and white bird that is seen sitting atop water tanks, rooftops and near drains. They often nest on top of buildings. Wags its tail up and down as it walks or runs about catching insects.

Saxicola caprata

Pied Bushchat

A sparrow-sized bird often seen sitting on top of a bush in dry open grassland and rocky areas. The female is all brown. This bird nests in hollows in rocks and walls.



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Saxicoloides fulicata

Indian Robin

Similar in size and appearance but the reddish vent is distinctive in the Indian Robin. The Indian Robin is usually seen in dry, rocky and open country while the Magpie-Robin is seen in well-wooded garden and forest.

Copsychus saularis

Oriental Magpie-Robin



Sturnus pagodarum

Brahminy Starling (Brahminy Myna)

Smaller than a Common Myna, this bird is seen in flocks in open areas often close to water. The loose cap of black feathers is distinctive.



Pycnonotus jocosus

Red-whiskered Bulbul

Bulbuls are birds of scrub and garden land. Both have red vents but the Red-whiskered is larger with a more pronounced crest and whitish underside. Commoner in the scrub areas in the outskirts but can also be seen in the heart of the city. The Red-whiskered is common in the Nandi hills and Bannerghatta areas.

Pycnonotus cafer

Red-vented Bulbul



Centropus sinensis

Greater Coucal

This non-parasitic cuckoo family is larger than a crow and is often seen walking on the ground. It has a hollow 'coop-coop' call. They are found in areas with good undergrowth and vegetation. They prey on lizards, fledglings and eggs.



Turdoides affinis

Pale-capped Babbler (Whiteheaded Babbler)

A dove-sized bird of gardens and open areas with the habit of flying about in groups of 6 to 10. They make shrill calls as they hop about on the ground and move through foliage. With their short rounded wings they are weak fliers.

Parus major

Great Tit

Slightly smaller than a sparrow, this bird is seen in gardens and scrub lands. It nests in tree-hollows and sometimes in telephone poles and electric switch boxes. Can often be seen hanging upside down as it searches for insects in foliage.



Prinia socialis

Ashy Prinia

(Ashy Wren-Warbler)

Common garden birds smaller than a sparrow but with long tails that are usually held upright. Both of them nest among garden plants by binding leaves with cobwebs. In residential areas, the Ashy Prinia is the commoner species.

Orthotomus sutorius

Common Tailorbird



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Zosterops palpebrosus (*Zosterops palpebrosa*)

Oriental White-eye

Smaller than a sparrow, this bird is seen in small groups in well-wooded localities. Has a quiet, low-pitched 'cheer' contact call that is distinctive. The white ring around the eye gives it its name. They feed on insects as well as nectar.

Dicaeum erythrorhynchus

Tickell's Flowerpecker

This is the smallest bird in the Bangalore area. It is plain light olive brown with a pinkish bill. It is most commonly seen at fruit trees. The Singapore Cherry Tree is a favourite of this species.



Nectarinia zeylonica

Purple-rumped Sunbird

These tiny nectar feeding birds are seen in parks and gardens with flowering trees and shrubs. The females of both species are dull olive green above and yellowish on the underside. The colours of the males of both species are clear only in good light and at close range.

Nectarinia asiatica

Purple Sunbird



The illustrations and descriptions are just rough tips for identifying these common species of birds in Bangalore. The species listed here occur throughout the year and are known to breed in Bangalore. In spite of their being common, very little is known about their lives, habits and distributions and a lot remains to be learnt.

The Birdwatchers' Field Club of Bangalore is an informal group of birdwatchers. Interested persons can join the group outings held on the second Sunday of every month. The group meets at the Lalbagh Glass House at 7.30 AM.

You can also join an email discussion group by sending a blank email to

bngbirds-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

This document was created in November 2001
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