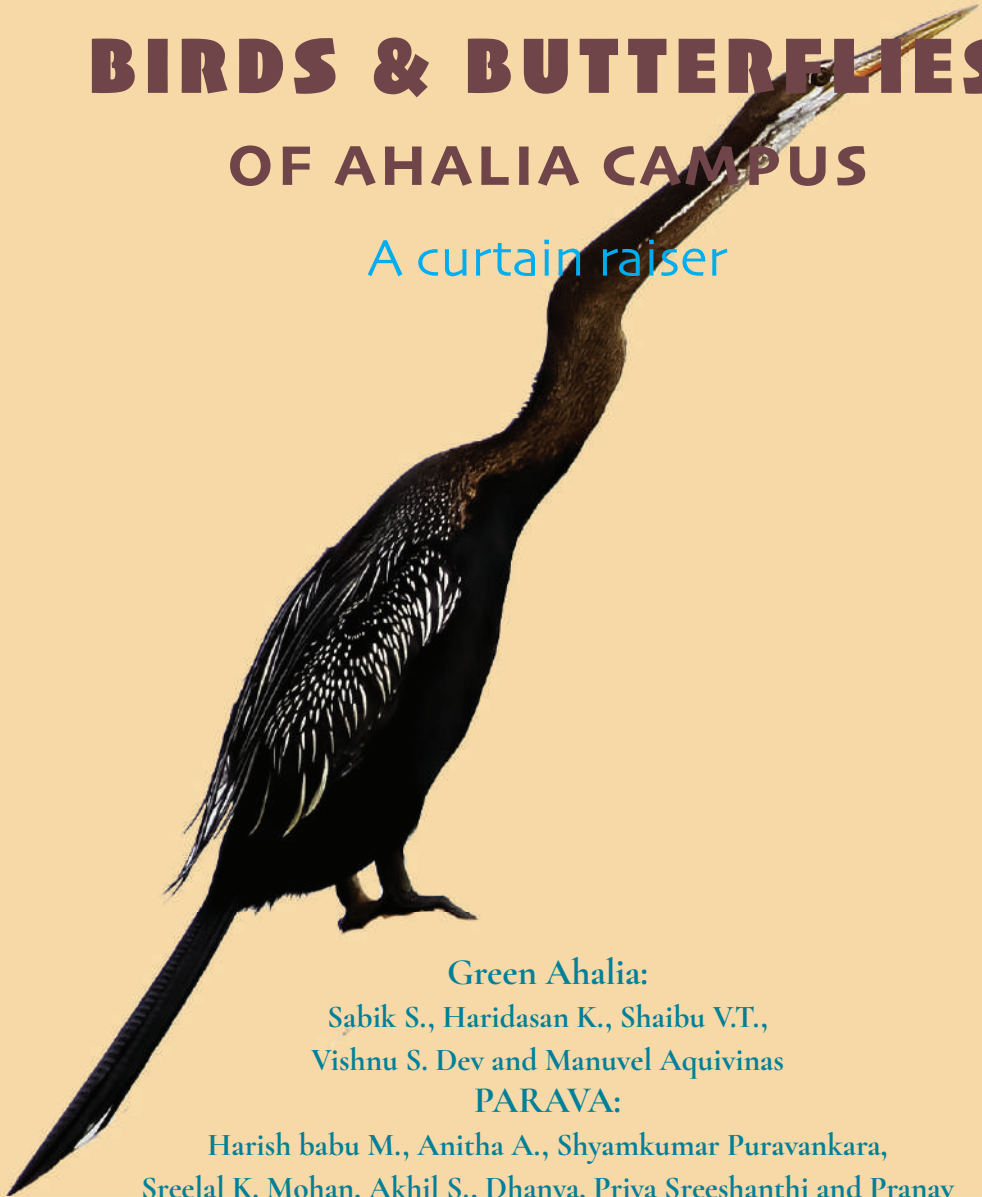


BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES OF AHALIA CAMPUS

A curtain raiser



Green Ahalia:

Sabik S., Haridasan K., Shaibu V.T.,
Vishnu S. Dev and Manuvel Aquivinas

PARAVA:

Harish babu M., Anitha A., Shyamkumar Puravankara,
Sreelal K. Mohan, Akhil S., Dhanya, Priya Sreesanthi and Pranav



Green Ahalia

Green Ahalia
Striving for Better environment

Information Bulletin – 5

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A joint initiative of

Green Ahalia & PARAVA

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Preface

Green ahalia has been engaged in fostering a green landscape in the campus through planned intervention in greening activities. The main target is biodiversity conservation, promoting diversity, sustainable use of resources, and outreach to create awareness on environmental challenges. As part of the outreach activity we have been bringing out information bulletins based on the experience gained from creating theme gardens. These publications dispense information of the composition of individual themes covered in the publications.

Now that we have joined hands with Parava for doing a survey of birds and butterflies in the campus which is a prominent component of the biodiversity and Parava has done a detailed study in one season and brought out a sizeable number of birds and butterflies through the survey that indicates the possibility of having a detailed study and bring out a comprehensive faunal account. Considering the relevance and coverage of the birds and butterflies we are tempted to publish the findings as an information bulletin which will be a fore runner of a detailed account of biodiversity.

Our team members have put in place tremendous information that is compiled here. In this publication we have provided introductory account of the landscape, habitat, an outline of methodology adopted,

checklist of birds and butterflies observed during the month of December 2025. Obviously this is much fragmented account and need elaboration and detailed study. However we hope this will inspire or youth and professional to take on such initiative.

This publication was possible due to the combined effort of the committed team of Parava and able support provided by Green ahalia team We take privilege in acknowledging the contribution of all involved directly or indirectly in making this possible

We do hope the reader will find it useful as a baseline data and create curiosity among them, Needless to mention there are gaps and possible errors which if brought to our notice, we will take care to rectify in further editions.

Team Green Ahalia and Parava

Foreword

Birds and butterflies are among the most captivating elements of nature, enriching our landscapes with their beauty, colour, and movement. Their presence enlivens every habitat, inspiring curiosity, creativity, and a deeper appreciation of the natural world. As integral components of biodiversity, they play vital ecological roles and serve as important indicators of environmental health.

Kerala is blessed with a remarkable diversity of avifauna and lepidopteran fauna, with over 550 species of birds and 328 species of butterflies recorded across the state. Beyond their aesthetic appeal, these organisms provide invaluable ecosystem services, including pollination, seed dispersal, and ecological regulation that support the productivity and sustainability of our natural ecosystems. Their close association with human well-being and ecological processes underscores their significance in biodiversity conservation. Studying the composition and distribution of birds and butterflies therefore offers valuable insights into the health and richness of our environment.

The Ahalia campus, situated in the eastern part of Palakkad district within the ecologically significant Palakkad Gap, occupies a unique position in the biodiversity landscape of Kerala. The phytogeographical importance of this natural corridor, coupled with its distinctive

vegetation, facilitates the movement and dispersal of flora and fauna between the Western and Eastern Ghats. Over the years, Ahalia has earned recognition as an eco-friendly campus through its extensive green initiatives, enriched vegetation, and the creation of several ponds and lakes that enhance habitat diversity.

These wetlands attract a variety of resident and migratory birds during favourable seasons, while the man-made water bodies provide essential habitats for aquatic organisms and numerous bird species. Equally noteworthy is the rich diversity of host and nectar plants within the campus, which support a thriving butterfly population and contribute significantly to local insect diversity.

Recognising the ecological importance of documenting this biodiversity, Green Ahalia joined hands with Parava, a reputed organisation dedicated to ornithological studies and nature conservation, to undertake a comprehensive survey of birds and butterflies on the campus during December 2025. I am delighted to note that the survey has resulted in the documentation of an impressive number of species. The findings have been scientifically validated by experts from Parava and compiled into a well-structured report that will be valuable to researchers, students, naturalists, and the general public alike.

I had the opportunity to review the report and was greatly impressed by both its quality and scope. Building upon this effort, Green Ahalia has taken the commendable initiative of presenting the findings in the form of a field guide, resulting in this informative booklet. The documentation clearly demonstrates the rich biodiversity supported by the campus and highlights the immense potential for further ecological studies and long-term monitoring. Such endeavours will undoubtedly require sustained commitment, resources, and scientific engagement in the years ahead.

I congratulate the teams of Parava and Green Ahalia for bringing

out this simple, accessible, and scientifically valuable publication. I am confident that it will inspire a series of focused studies and conservation initiatives, ultimately contributing to a comprehensive inventory of the faunal wealth of the region and fostering greater awareness of its ecological significance.



Dr. V. Balakrishnan

Member Secretary, KSBB

Message

I am pleased to see this information bulletin dealing with the striking faunal component of our campus biodiversity relating to birds and butterflies. The survey jointly conducted by Green Ahalia and an NGO Parava reputed for their biodiversity management and restoration work.

Though seasonal the survey conducted at Ahalia Campus, has documented 134 species of birds and 61 species of butterflies. This remarkable achievement highlights the rich ecological heritage preserved within Ahalia and reflects our commitment to environmental conservation and sustainable campus development. The presence of such diverse bird and butterfly populations is a strong indicator of a healthy ecosystem and underscores the importance of protecting natural habitats for future generations.

I sincerely appreciate the dedicated efforts of Green Ahalia team and Parava NGO taking up this study and bringing out this publication as an output. This work has enhanced our understanding of the campus biodiversity and strengthened our vision of creating a greener and more environmentally responsible institution.

Let us continue to work together to conserve and celebrate the natural wealth of Ahalia Campus and instill greater awareness about biodiversity conservation.

V S Gopal,



Chairman, Ahalia Group

Acknowledgement

At the outset, we wish to express our sincere gratitude to all those who contributed, directly or indirectly, to the successful completion of this project.

We extend our special thanks to Dr. V. S. Gopal, Chairman, Ahalia Group for his continued support for implementing this project successfully. We are also thankful to the management Ahalia group for facilities and field support.

Dr. K. Haridasan, Consultant, Green Ahalia, Dr. R. V. K. Varma, were involved in discussions in formalising the survey and support in facilitating the bird and butterfly survey at Ahalia campus.

We are deeply indebted to Dr. V. Balakrishnan, Member Secretary, Kerala State Biodiversity Board, for his guidance for getting the project started and providing the foreword for this publication.

We wholeheartedly acknowledge our esteemed team members and expert bird and butterfly resource persons- Mr. Shyamkumar Puravankara, Mr. Harish Babu M., Mr. Sreelal K. Mohan, Mr. Akhil S., Ms. Dhanya, Ms. Priya, Ms. Sreeshanthi, and Mr. Pranav.

Most importantly, we express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Jayaprakash A. K., Executive Member of Pulari, who stood by Parava team throughout the entire process and provided unwavering support.

Overall, the programme proved to be an enriching experience for the entire team, and we sincerely appreciate the collective effort and shared commitment towards understanding, documenting, and conserving the biodiversity of the campus.

Dr. Anitha A.

Parava Coordinator & Pulari Team

Sabik S.

Green Ahalia

Executive Summary

The Bird and Butterfly Census was conducted at Ahalia Campus, Palakkad, on 28th and 29th December 2025 by a 19-member team from Parava, with the objective of documenting seasonal avifaunal and Lepidopteran diversity within the campus. The survey was organised by Green Ahalia in collaboration with Parava (Pulari NGO), Aravath, Kasaragod district, an organisation experienced in biodiversity assessment and ecological surveys.

The team was divided into four sub-teams, and systematic surveys were conducted across multiple habitat types and designated trail routes within the campus. The survey recorded a total of 134 bird species and 61 butterfly species, highlighting the high ecological value and habitat diversity of the campus. The presence of resident, migratory, and habitat-specialist species indicates the effectiveness of the existing green cover, thoughtful landscape planning, and relatively low levels of anthropogenic disturbance.

This report provides a baseline for long-term biodiversity monitoring at Green Ahalia and includes an analysis of species richness, habitat conditions and potential threats.

Introduction

The Green Ahalia Thematic Gardens, established under the Ahalia International Foundation, represent a unique ecological habitat comprising diverse micro-environments that support a wide range of flora and fauna. In order to document, conserve, and promote the biodiversity of this region, Green Ahalia invited Parava- Pulari, an organization well known for its extensive work in biodiversity documentation across Kerala, to conduct a comprehensive Bird and Butterfly Survey.

‘PULARI’ (People’s Union for Learning, Action and Rural Integration), is a registered NGO located in the Panayal Village of Pallikara Panchayath, Kasaragod, Kerala. Started in 1984, ‘Parava’ is a birders group of experts and children, that has been initiated by the NGO, Pulari Aravath in December 2019. Dr. Balakrishnan V., the Member Secretary of State bio-diversity Board and the executive member of Pulari is the guiding light behind Parava and this work.

The campus encompasses a mosaic of open grounds, plantations, wetlands, landscaped areas, and semi-natural vegetation. These varied habitats support a rich diversity of bird and butterfly species and reflect the ecological character of Palakkad, a transitional zone between the Western Ghats and the adjoining plains.

At a time when natural habitats are increasingly under pressure, institutional campuses such as Green Ahalia play a crucial role in

providing refuge and continuity for wildlife.

This initiative is aimed to generate reliable baseline data, facilitate long-term biodiversity monitoring, and enhance awareness of local fauna among students and staff, while also supporting conservation-oriented planning and management practices within the Green Ahalia campus.

Habitat Types Surveyed

Garden and landscaped areas

Located around academic buildings, hostels, heritage structures, and open courtyards, these areas include lawns, ornamental plants, and shade trees. They support common garden birds and butterflies and serve as regular feeding and resting areas.



Open grasslands and rocky patches

The sculpture garden and laterite rocky patches form open habitats with sparse vegetation. These areas are suitable for ground-feeding birds and sun-loving butterfly species, especially during the post-monsoon season.

Wetlands and marshy patches

This includes paddy fields, rainwater harvesting ponds, artificial water



Edge habitats and transitional zones

These occur where different habitat types meet, such as plantations adjoining wetlands or open fields. Such zones often support higher diversity as they offer varied food and shelter resources.



Survey Team

Abhay Krisnan, Akhil S, Anjali M, Dhanya V, Dr. Anitha A. (Coordinator), Harish Babu M, Jayaprakash A. K, Nandana M, Nidhi, Nihal Mahesh, Niranjan, Pranav Karle, Priya P, Revathi, Sarvesh Madhav,



Shyam Kumar P, Sreelal K. Mohan, Sreesanthi C, Yaami Kalyani, Sabik S, Vishnu S. Dev, Manuel, Midhun M, Vishnu'

Methodology

Multiple survey trails covering diverse habitat types were systematically explored across the campus to document bird/butterfly diversity.

Duration: Morning, forenoon and night(nocturnal) sessions

Survey Methods – Birds

- ❖ Line transect method
- ❖ Visual encounter surveys
- ❖ Opportunistic sightings
- ❖ Call-based identification

Survey Methods – Butterflies

- ❖ Pollard walk method
- ❖ Visual counts along fixed trails
- ❖ Opportunistic photographic records



1-Map of day 01 survey hotspots(forenoon sessions)

Trail 1: AIC Lake Near Parents Block, **Trail 2:** Sculpture Park and Hillock

Trail 3: Ahalia Eye hospital, **Trail 4:** Incinerator area



2-Map of day 01 survey hotspots(afternoon sessions)

Trail 1: Chenthamara-sericulture, **Trail 2:** Chathup, near IIT hostel

Trail 3: Heritage Farm, **Trail 4:** Heritage village

Additionally, selected areas were surveyed during late night hours to document nocturnal bird species.

Day Two:

On the second day, off-campus fringe habitats adjacent to the study area were surveyed. Two teams conducted systematic surveys in these peripheral zones until noon, extending the coverage beyond the core campus area.

3-Map of day-02 survey hotspots



Birds of Ahalia Campus

The survey recorded more than **150 bird species**, representing a wide range of taxonomic groups and ecological guilds. The avifauna documented includes waterbirds, raptors, owls, cuckoos, swifts, and numerous passerines, reflecting the rich biodiversity of the study area.

The diversity of birds recorded is closely linked to the variety of habitats present within the landscape. These habitats include wetlands, paddy fields, open water bodies, scrublands, grasslands, woodland patches, tree-lined edges, and human-modified areas. Together, these habitats provide feeding, nesting, and roosting opportunities for both resident and migratory species throughout the year.

The presence of species occupying different ecological roles, ranging from insectivores and nectar-feeders to top predators such as eagles and owls, indicates a healthy and well-balanced ecosystem. The survey highlights the ecological importance of the area and its role in supporting a diverse bird community.

Major Bird Groups Recorded

Waterfowl and Wetland Birds

Wetlands and associated habitats supported a rich assemblage of waterbirds. Commonly recorded species included the Lesser Whistling-Duck,

Knob-billed Duck, and Indian Spot-billed Duck. Other notable wetland birds included Watercock, Eurasian Moorhen, Gray-headed Swampphen, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, and Bronze-winged Jacana. Shorebirds such as Wood Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, and Common Sandpiper were frequently observed, with Wood Sandpiper occurring in particularly high numbers. Little Grebe, Indian Cormorant, and Little Cormorant were also regularly encountered.

The diversity and abundance of these species indicate favourable wetland conditions and good food availability.

Storks, Ibises and Other Large Waterbirds

Large waterbirds recorded during the survey included Painted Stork, Asian Openbill, Asian Woolly-necked Stork, Black-headed Ibis, and Glossy Ibis. The presence of these species suggests that the wetlands provide suitable feeding and resting habitats for large wading birds.

Hérons, Egrets and Bitterns

The survey documented a variety of herons and egrets, including Purple Heron, Grey Heron, Indian Pond Heron, Great Egret, Intermediate Egret, and Little Egret. A noteworthy record was the Black Bittern, a species that is generally uncommon and closely associated with well-vegetated wetlands. Black-crowned Night Heron was also recorded, adding to the diversity of water-associated birds.

Raptors and Owls

Birds of prey formed an important component of the avifauna. Frequently observed species included Oriental Honey-buzzard, Crested Serpent-Eagle, Booted Eagle, Western Marsh Harrier, and Brahminy Kite. Owls recorded during the survey included Brown Fish-Owl, Mottled Wood-Owl, Indian Scops-Owl, Jungle Owlet, and Spotted Owlet.

The occurrence of these predatory birds indicates the presence of a healthy food chain and a well-functioning ecosystem.

Cuckoos, Swifts and Nightjars

Several species of cuckoos were recorded, including Asian Koel, Banded Bay Cuckoo, and Common Hawk-Cuckoo. Asian Palm Swift was among the most abundant species observed during the survey. Jungle Nightjar was also recorded, reflecting the availability of suitable open and semi-open habitats.

Woodland and Open-Country Birds

Woodland and edge habitats supported a variety of species, including Indian Grey Hornbill, Asian Green Bee-eater, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Common Kingfisher, White-throated Kingfisher, and Stork-billed Kingfisher. Rollers, barbets, and other tree-associated birds were also well represented.

Passerines

Passerines constituted the largest group of birds recorded during the survey. Common species included Black Drongo, Ashy Drongo, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Indian Paradise-Flycatcher, several species of bulbuls, warblers, babblers, sunbirds, flowerpeckers, munias, weaverbirds, and wagtails.

The diversity of passerines reflects the structural complexity of the vegetation and the availability of a wide range of ecological niches within the study area.

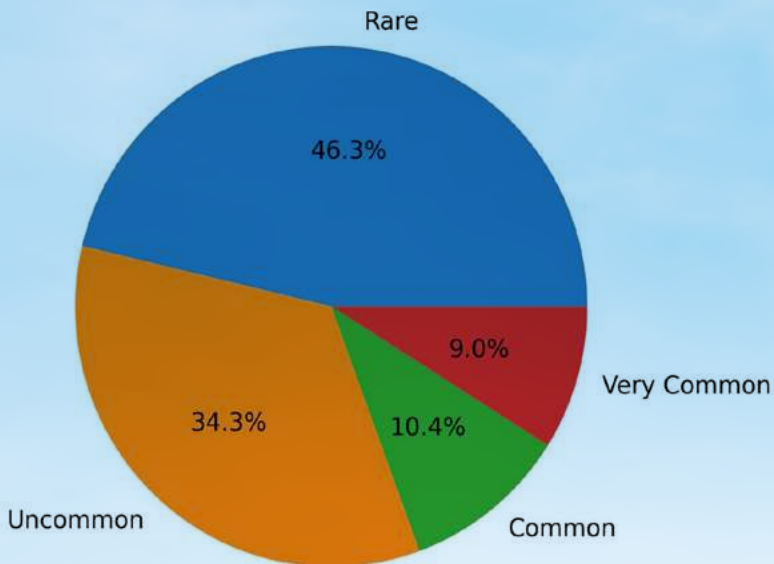
Noteworthy Records

A number of observations are of particular interest due to their ecological significance:

- ✱ **Black Bittern** – an uncommon wetland species associated with dense marsh vegetation.
- ✱ **Brown Fish-Owl** – a large nocturnal predator dependent on healthy aquatic habitats.
- ✱ **Wood Sandpiper** – recorded in high numbers, highlighting the importance of the wetlands for migratory shorebirds.
- ✱ **Asian Palm Swift** – one of the most abundant aerial insectivores recorded during the survey.
- ✱ The occurrence of both wetland specialists and woodland-dependent species demonstrates the high habitat diversity of the area.

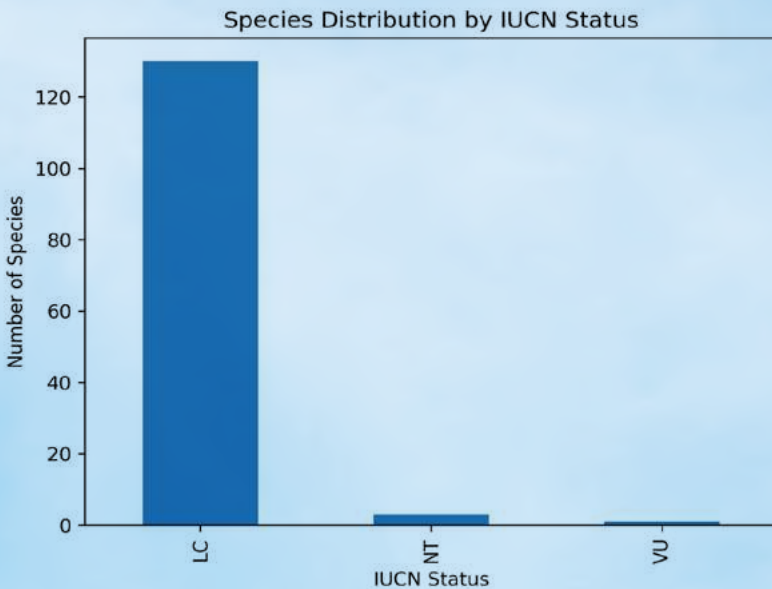
Species Distribution by Abundance Class

Species Distribution by Abundance Class



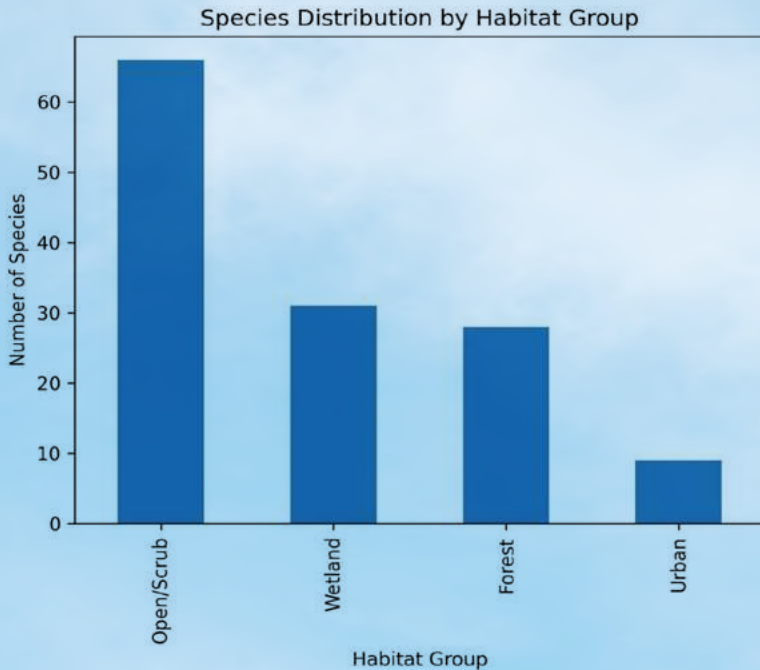
- ✱ Nearly **half of the recorded species are rare**, indicating low **population density**, **seasonal presence**, or **survey limitations** (no dusk/night surveys).
- ✱ Dominance of rare and uncommon species suggests **high diversity but low overall abundance**, typical of **disturbed or transitional landscapes**.

Species Distribution by IUCN status



- ✱ Although most species are LC, the presence of **NT and VU species highlights the conservation importance** of the area.
- ✱ Wetlands act as **critical support habitats** for conservation-priority birds.

Species Distribution by Habitat Group



- ✱ Dominance of **open/scrub** species reflects **reduced forest understorey** and fragmented woodland.
- ✱ **Wetland diversity is good**, but abundance is lower than expected — possibly linked to:
 - » Chemical farming
 - » Reduced prey base
- ✱ **Forest-dependent species are present but limited**, supporting your field observation that **undergrowth is missing**.

The survey shows that the area supports a good variety of bird species, including wetland-dependent birds, forest-associated species, and open-country and urban-adapted birds. This indicates overall habitat continuity and seasonal ecological productivity, especially during the migratory season, highlighting the conservation value of the area.

Birds Checklist

The bird species in this checklist are arranged in taxonomic order rather than alphabetical order. This arrangement groups closely related species together based on their evolutionary relationships. Within each family, species are listed according to the accepted scientific classification.

Sl. No	Common Name	Scientific Name	IUCN Status	Abundance	Remarks
1	Lesser Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	LC	Uncommon	Wetland; resident
2	Knob-billed Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>	LC	Rare	Wetland; seasonal visitor
3	Indian Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>	LC	Uncommon	Wetland; resident
4	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	LC	Very Common	Open landscapes; farmland
5	Red Spurfowl	<i>Gallus perdix spadicea</i>	LC	Rare	Forest undergrowth; shy
6	Gray Francolin	<i>Ortygornis pondicerianus</i>	LC	Uncommon	Scrub, grassland, farmland
7	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	LC	Very Common	Urban and human habitations
8	Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>	LC	Common	Open woodland and settlements
9	Asian Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	LC	Rare	Dense forest interior

Sl. No	Common Name	Scientific Name	IUCN Status	Abundance	Remarks
10	Gray-fronted Green-Pigeon	Treron affinis	LC	Rare	Forest canopy; frugivore
11	Greater Coucal	Centropus sinensis	LC	Uncommon	Dense vegetation and scrub
12	Blue-faced Malkoha	Phaenicophaeus viridirostris	LC	Rare	Forest edge; skulking
13	Asian Koel	Eudynamis scolopaceus	LC	Uncommon	Brood parasite; wooded areas
14	Banded Bay Cuckoo	Cacomantis sonneratii	LC	Rare	Seasonal migrant
15	Common Hawk-Cuckoo	Hierococcyx varius	LC	Rare	Forest and wooded habitats
16	Jungle Nightjar	Caprimulgus indicus	LC	Rare	Nocturnal; dusk survey limited
17	Little Swift	Apus affinis	LC	Uncommon	Aerial feeder near settlements
18	Asian Palm Swift	Cypsiurus balaensis	LC	Very Common	Palm trees; colonial nester
19	Eurasian Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus	LC	Rare	Marshy wetlands
20	Gray-headed Swampphen	Porphyrio poliocephalus	LC	Rare	Wetland edges; reeds
21	Watercock	Gallicrex cinerea	LC	Rare	Secretive marsh bird
22	White-breasted Waterhen	Amaurornis phoenicurus	LC	Uncommon	Wetland margins

Sl. No	Common Name	Scientific Name	IUCN Status	Abundance	Remarks
23	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Thinornis dubius</i>	LC	Uncommon	Mudflats and wet edges
24	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>	LC	Rare	Dry open ground
25	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	LC	Common	Open fields and wetlands
26	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>	LC	Rare	Floating vegetation
27	Bronze-winged Jacana	<i>Metopidius indicus</i>	LC	Rare	Wetland specialist
28	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	LC	Rare	Winter migrant; shorelines
29	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	LC	Rare	Winter migrant; marshes
30	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	LC	Very Common	Peak migrant wader
31	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	LC	Uncommon	Open freshwater bodies
32	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	LC	Common	Wetlands; snail feeder
33	Asian Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>	VU	Rare	Conservation priority species
34	Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>	NT	Common	Large wetlands
35	Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	NT	Uncommon	Fish-eating waterbird
36	Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>	LC	Very Common	Wetlands; colonial roosts

Sl. No	Common Name	Scientific Name	IUCN Status	Abundance	Remarks
37	Indian Cormorant	Phalacrocorax fuscicollis	LC	Very Common	Large water-bodies
38	Glossy Ibis	Plegadis falcinellus	LC	Very Common	Migratory flocks
39	Black-headed Ibis	Threskiornis melanocephalus	NT	Very Common	Wetland indicator
40	Black Bittern	Botaurus flavicollis	LC	Rare	Rare; dense marsh vegetation
41	Black-crowned Night Heron	Nycticorax nycticorax	LC	Uncommon	Crepuscular wetland bird
42	Little Egret	Egretta garzetta	LC	Uncommon	Shallow wetlands
43	Indian Pond-Heron	Ardeola grayii	LC	Very Common	Resident wetland bird
44	Eastern Cattle-Egret	Ardea coromanda	LC	Common	Agricultural landscapes
45	Great Egret	Ardea alba	LC	Uncommon	Large wetlands
46	Medium Egret	Ardea intermedia	LC	Common	Wetlands
47	Gray Heron	Ardea cinerea	LC	Rare	Large water-bodies
48	Purple Heron	Ardea purpurea	LC	Uncommon	Reedbeds
49	Oriental Honey-buzzard	Pernis ptilorhynchus	LC	Rare	Forest raptor
50	Crested Serpent-Eagle	Spilornis cheela	LC	Rare	Forest canopy raptor

Sl. No	Common Name	Scientific Name	IUCN Status	Abundance	Remarks
51	Booted Eagle	Hieraaetus pennatus	LC	Rare	Winter migrant raptor
52	Shikra	Tachyspiza badia	LC	Uncommon	Small resident raptor
53	Western Marsh Harrier	Circus aeruginosus	LC	Rare	Winter migrant; wetlands
54	Black Kite	Milvus migrans	LC	Common	Urban and wetland scavenger
55	Brahminy Kite	Haliastur indus	LC	Very Common	Coastal and wetland raptor
56	Indian Scops-Owl	Otus bakkamoena	LC	Rare	Nocturnal forest owl
57	Brown Fish-Owl	Ketupa zeylonensis	LC	Rare	Top wetland predator
58	Jungle Owlet	Glaucidium radiatum	LC	Rare	Diurnal forest owl
59	Spotted Owlet	Athene brama	LC	Uncommon	Human habitations
60	Mottled Wood-Owl	Strix ocellata	LC	Rare	Dense forest owl
61	Common Hoopoe	Upupa epops	LC	Rare	Open ground forager
62	Indian Gray Hornbill	Ocyrceros birostris	LC	Uncommon	Tree dependent frugivore
63	Asian Green Bee-eater	Merops orientalis	LC	Uncommon	Open areas; insectivore
Sl. No	Common Name	Scientific Name	IUCN Status	Abundance	Remarks

Sl. No	Common Name	Scientific Name	IUCN Status	Abundance	Remarks
64	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	Merops philippinus	LC	Uncommon	Migratory insectivore
65	Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	Merops leschenaulti	LC	Uncommon	Forest edges
66	Common Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis	LC	Uncommon	Streams and ponds
67	Stork-billed Kingfisher	Pelargopsis capensis	LC	Rare	Large waterbodies
68	White-throated Kingfisher	Halcyon smyrnensis	LC	Uncommon	Generalist
69	Indian Roller	Coracias benghalensis	LC	Rare	Open country
70	Coppersmith Barbet	Psilopogon haemacephalus	LC	Uncommon	Fruiting trees
71	White-cheeked Barbet	Psilopogon viridis	LC	Uncommon	Woodland
72	Heart-spotted Woodpecker	Hemicircus canente	LC	Rare	Forest specialist
73	Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	Yungipicus nanus	LC	Rare	Small woodpecker
74	Black-rumped Flameback	Dinopium benghalense	LC	Uncommon	Mature trees
75	Rose-ringed Parakeet	Psittacula krameri	LC	Common	Urban and woodland
76	Vernal Hanging-Parrot	Loriculus vernalis	LC	Rare	Canopy frugivore
77	Indian Pitta	Pitta brachyura	LC	Rare	Forest understorey

Sl. No	Common Name	Scientific Name	IUCN Status	Abundance	Remarks
78	Orange Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	LC	Rare	Forest canopy
79	Indian Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>	LC	Rare	Woodland
80	Black-headed Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Lalage melanoptera</i>	LC	Rare	Forest edge
81	Indian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus kundoo</i>	LC	Uncommon	Tree canopy
82	Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>	LC	Rare	Woodland
83	Ashy Woodswallow	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>	LC	Uncommon	Open country
84	Common Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>	LC	Uncommon	Woodland
85	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>	LC	Uncommon	Shrub layer
86	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	LC	Common	Agricultural fields
87	Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>	LC	Uncommon	Forest edge
88	Greater Rack-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>	LC	Rare	Forest interior
89	Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	LC	Rare	Shady forests
90	Indian Paradise-Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>	LC	Uncommon	Seasonal visitor
91	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	LC	Rare	Winter migrant

Sl. No	Common Name	Scientific Name	IUCN Status	Abundance	Remarks
92	Rufous Treepie	Dendrocitta vagabunda	LC	Un-common	Woodland
93	House Crow	Corvus splendens	LC	Common	Urban
94	Large-billed Crow	Corvus macro-rhynchos	LC	Common	Woodland
95	Common Tailor-bird	Orthotomus sutorius	LC	Un-common	Shrub and hedges
96	Ashy Prinia	Prinia socialis	LC	Un-common	Grasslands
97	Plain Prinia	Prinia inornata	LC	Rare	Open scrub
98	Paddyfield Warbler	Acrocephalus agricola	LC	Rare	Winter migrant
99	Blyth's Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus dumetorum	LC	Un-common	Winter migrant
100	Clamorous Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus stentoreus	LC	Rare	Reedbeds
101	Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica	LC	Un-common	Migratory aerial feeder
102	Eastern Red-rumped Swallow	Cecropis daurica	LC	Common	Cliff and structures
103	Streak-throated Swallow	Petrochelidon fluvicola	LC	Rare	Riverbanks
104	Yellow-browed Bulbul	Acritillas indica	LC	Rare	Forest bird
105	White-browed Bulbul	Pycnonotus luteolus	LC	Common	Dry scrub
106	Red-whiskered Bulbul	Pycnonotus jocosus	LC	Un-common	Gardens

Sl. No	Common Name	Scientific Name	IUCN Status	Abundance	Remarks
107	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	LC	Common	Urban and rural
108	Green Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus nitidus</i>	LC	Rare	Winter migrant
109	Jungle Babbler	<i>Argya striata</i>	LC	Uncommon	Open woodland
110	Yellow-billed Babbler	<i>Argya affinis</i>	LC	Very Common	Highly social species
111	Southern Hill Myna	<i>Gracula indica</i>	LC	Rare	Forest
112	Rosy Starling	<i>Pastor roseus</i>	LC	Rare	Seasonal flocks
113	Chestnut-tailed Starling	<i>Sturnia malabarica</i>	LC	Rare	Woodland
114	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	LC	Very Common	Urban
115	Orange-headed Thrush	<i>Geokichla citrina</i>	LC	Rare	Forest floor
116	Indian Blackbird	<i>Turdus simillimus</i>	LC	Rare	Forest interior
117	Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa dauurica</i>	LC	Rare	Winter migrant
118	Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	LC	Rare	Human habitations
119	Malabar Whistling-Thrush	<i>Myophonus horsfieldii</i>	LC	Rare	Forest streams
120	Pied Bushchat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>	LC	Rare	Open scrub
121	Pale-billed Flower-pecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>	LC	Uncommon	Canopy nectar feeder
123	Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma zeylonica</i>	LC	Uncommon	Garden and woodland

Sl. No	Common Name	Scientific Name	IUCN Status	Abundance	Remarks
122	Nilgiri Flower-pecker	Dicaeum concolor	LC	Rare	Western Ghats endemic
124	Purple Sunbird	Cinnyris asiaticus	LC	Uncommon	Open woodland
125	Loten's Sunbird	Cinnyris lotenius	LC	Uncommon	Coastal scrub
126	Little Spiderhunter	Arachnothera longirostra	LC	Rare	Forest understorey
127	Jerdon's Leafbird	Chloropsis jerdoni	LC	Rare	Forest canopy
128	Golden-fronted Leafbird	Chloropsis auri-frons	LC	Uncommon	Wooded areas
129	Baya Weaver	Ploceus philippinus	LC	Uncommon	Grasslands
130	Scaly-breasted Munia	Lonchura punctulata	LC	Uncommon	Open fields
131	White-rumped Munia	Lonchura striata	LC	Rare	Grassland
132	Tricolored Munia	Lonchura malacca	LC	Rare	Wet grasslands
133	Gray Wagtail	Motacilla cinerea	LC	Rare	Streams
134	White-browed Wagtail	Motacilla maderaspatensis	LC	Uncommon	Rivers and tanks

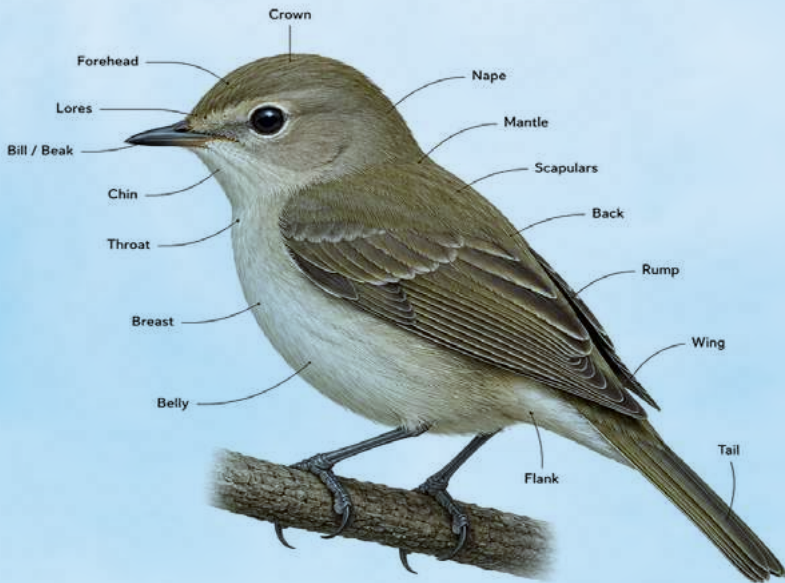
Every species has:

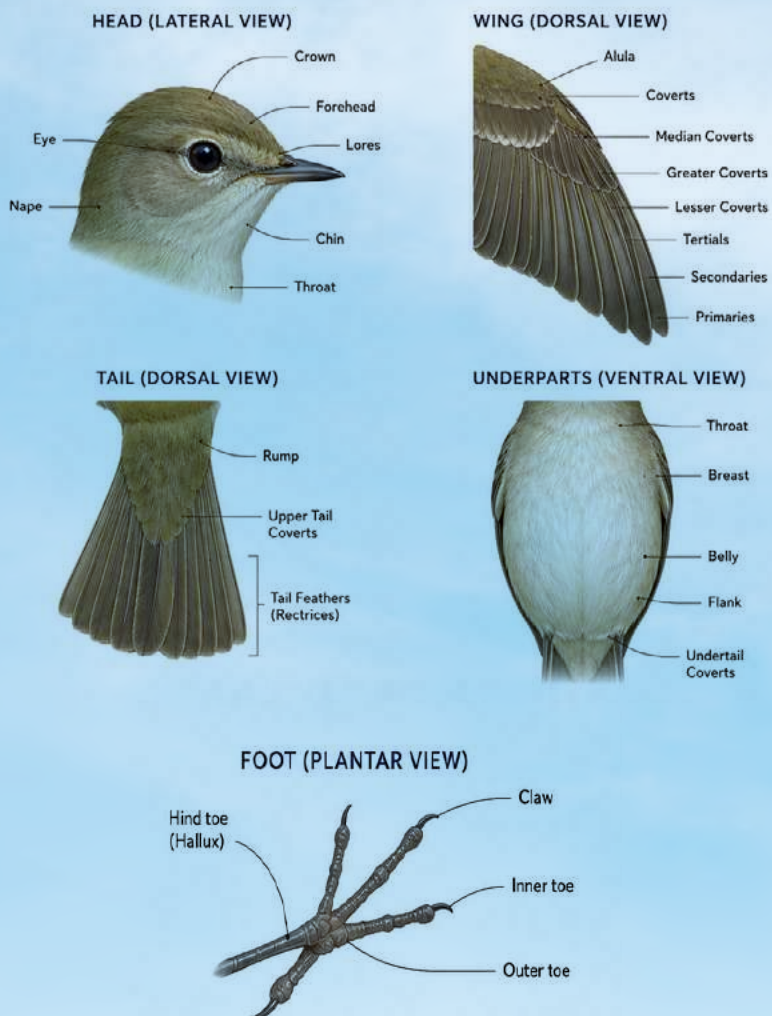
- Habitat information (wetland / forest / scrub / urban, etc.)
- Ecological note (resident / migrant / nocturnal / canopy / understorey)
- Conservation relevance where applicable

Abundance is **derived strictly from survey counts**
IUCN status correctly marked (LC / NT / VU)

Bird identification features

Commonly used in bird description





Lesser Whistling-Duck

Dendrocygna javanica LC – Least Concern



A small, elegant tree-nesting duck commonly found in marshes, village ponds, paddy fields, lotus ponds, and shallow freshwater wetlands. Warm brown overall with a darker crown and nape, chestnut-toned breast and flanks, and finely patterned upperparts. In good light, note the pale buff face, faint yellow orbital ring, and dark gray bill. Sexes alike; juveniles duller and less richly colored. Usually seen in compact flocks resting among floating vegetation or perched surprisingly high in waterside trees. Flight swift and direct with rapid wingbeats, showing dark wings contrasting with chestnut shoulders and rump. Mostly crepuscular and nocturnal in feeding habits, foraging on aquatic vegetation, seeds, rice grains, mollusks, and small aquatic invertebrates. Highly vocal, especially during dawn and dusk, giving soft wheezy whistling calls from which it derives its English name. Breeds during the monsoon in reedbeds and tree cavities near wetlands.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Knob-billed Duck

Sarkidiornis melanotos

LC – Least Concern



A large and striking waterfowl of open wetlands, reservoirs, floodplains, and inundated agricultural fields. Adult male unmistakable with glossy green-black upperparts, white underparts, heavily spotted white neck and head, and a large black fleshy knob at the base of the bill. Females smaller, duller, and lack the prominent knob. Often seen loafing on sandbanks, mudflats, or perched on exposed branches near water. Flight powerful with slow deep wingbeats; broad white wings conspicuous at a distance. Usually occurs in small flocks or scattered groups. Feeds on aquatic vegetation, seeds, insects, mollusks, crustaceans, and small aquatic organisms. Breeding linked closely with seasonal flooding and monsoon wetlands.

Status in Kerala: Uncommon local resident and seasonal visitor.

Indian Spot-billed Duck

Anas poecilorhyncha

LC – Least Concern



A medium-sized freshwater dabbling duck commonly found in lakes, marshes, reservoirs, village ponds, and flooded paddy fields. Plumage gray-brown with pale feather edges creating a scaled appearance. Distinctive black bill tipped bright yellow, with a reddish spot at the bill base. In flight, shows a metallic green speculum bordered by white. Usually seen in pairs or loose flocks, often feeding quietly along wetland margins. Feeds by dabbling and upending for aquatic plants, seeds, algae, insects, snails, and small crustaceans. Calls include nasal quacks and low conversational notes. Frequently active during early morning and evening hours.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Indian Peafowl

Pavo cristatus

LC – Least Concern



India's national bird and one of the most spectacular pheasants in the world. Adult male unmistakable with iridescent metallic-blue neck and breast, ornate train marked with eye-like ocelli, and elegant fan-shaped crest. Females smaller and duller brownish with green neck sheen and shorter tail. Juveniles resemble females. Found in scrub forests, agricultural landscapes, forest edges, temple groves, plantations, and village outskirts. Usually feeds on seeds, fruits, shoots, termites, insects, reptiles, and small vertebrates. During breeding season, males display elaborate courtship dances by spreading and vibrating the train feathers. Loud piercing calls often heard before rain or during dawn and dusk. Roosts communally in tall trees at night.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Red Spurfowl

Galloperdix spadicea

LC – Least Concern



A shy and secretive forest gamebird usually encountered in pairs or small family groups in dense undergrowth of moist deciduous forests, evergreen forest edges, bamboo thickets, and plantations. Rich chestnut upperparts contrast with finely barred black-and-white underparts. Male brighter and more boldly marked; female duller. Typically runs rapidly through leaf litter rather than taking flight, but when flushed explodes noisily upward with rapid wingbeats. Feeds mainly on seeds, fallen fruits, shoots, insects, and small invertebrates scratched from forest floor debris. Vocalizations consist of loud ringing whistles and cackling calls, especially during breeding season.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Gray Francolin

Ortygornis pondicerianus

LC – Least Concern



A small terrestrial partridge of dry scrub, open grasslands, cultivation, semi-arid plains, and village outskirts. Finely barred gray-brown plumage provides excellent camouflage against dry ground. Buff throat and chestnut tail often noticeable at close range. Usually seen in pairs or small coveys walking rapidly through low vegetation. Feeds on seeds, grains, shoots, insects, termites, and small invertebrates. Reluctant to fly but flushes suddenly with explosive wingbeats when disturbed. The loud repetitive “ka-tee-tar” calls are characteristic of open countryside during mornings and evenings.

Status in Kerala: Local resident, more frequent in drier lowland areas.

Rock Pigeon

Columba livia

LC – Least Concern



A familiar and widespread pigeon occurring in towns, villages, agricultural fields, rocky cliffs, and urban buildings. Typically bluish-gray with iridescent green-purple neck sheen and two black wing bars, though domestic and feral populations show enormous variation in plumage. Fast direct flight with rapid wingbeats and occasional glides. Often gathers in large flocks around grain stores, markets, railway stations, and coastal settlements. Feeds mainly on seeds, grains, food scraps, and cultivated crops. Originally a cliff-nesting species, now heavily adapted to human habitation. Soft cooing calls common around nesting colonies.

Status in Kerala: Common resident.

Spotted Dove

Spilopelia chinensis

LC – Least Concern



A graceful medium-sized dove easily recognized by the black-and-white spotted collar on the hindneck. Plumage warm pinkish-brown with scaled wing coverts and pale gray head. Common in gardens, agricultural fields, wooded villages, plantations, scrublands, and urban parks. Usually seen singly or in pairs feeding on the ground for grass seeds, grains, fallen fruits, and small insects. Flight swift and direct with sharp wing claps during takeoff. Call a soft rhythmic cooing repeated persistently from exposed perches. Often nests close to human habitation in shrubs and small trees.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Asian Emerald Dove

Chalcophaps indica

LC – Least Concern



A beautiful forest dove of shaded woodland interiors, bamboo groves, plantations, wooded streams, and evergreen forest edges. Instantly recognizable by brilliant emerald-green wings and mantle contrasting with chestnut body and pale pinkish forehead. Usually shy and solitary, walking quietly along forest paths searching for fallen fruits, seeds, and berries. Frequently visits water sources during dry periods. Flight fast and low through forest undergrowth with rapid wingbeats. Soft mournful cooing calls often heard from concealed perches inside dense vegetation.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Grey-fronted Green-Pigeon

Treron affinis

LC – Least Concern



© Swapnil Thatte (eBird)

A Western Ghats endemic green-pigeon commonly associated with evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests, wooded valleys, and fruiting trees near plantations and villages. Predominantly green with distinctive gray forehead, maroon shoulder patches, and bluish-gray tail. Often remains motionless among foliage and can be difficult to detect despite bright coloration. Usually seen feeding quietly in small flocks on figs, berries, wild nutmegs, and other forest fruits. Flight swift and direct with characteristic whistling wing sounds. Soft mellow whistles frequently heard during early mornings. Important seed disperser in Western Ghats forests.

Status in Kerala: Resident endemic to the Western Ghats.

Greater Coucal

Centropus sinensis

LC – Least Concern



A large heavy-bodied cuckoo with glossy black head and body, rich chestnut wings, and long broad tail showing greenish-purple gloss in sunlight. Common in reedbeds, scrublands, gardens, paddy fields, mangroves, village thickets, and wetland edges. Usually solitary or in pairs, moving stealthily through dense vegetation with clumsy hopping movements. Unlike many cuckoos, constructs its own nest and raises its chicks. Feeds on insects, caterpillars, snails, frogs, lizards, small snakes, rodents, and occasionally bird eggs. Deep resonant booming calls are characteristic of monsoon mornings and marshy countryside habitats.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Blue-faced Malkoha

Phaenicophaeus viridirostris

LC – Least Concern



A slender long-tailed cuckoo of scrub jungles, mangroves, thorn forests, plantations, and dense gardens. Gray body contrasts with glossy green tail and vivid blue bare skin around the eye. Usually moves quietly through thick foliage searching for caterpillars, insects, lizards, berries, and small fruits. Frequently remains hidden despite being locally common. Flight weak and undulating over short distances. Gives soft chuckling, rattling, and low croaking calls. Unlike parasitic cuckoos, builds its own nest and cares for its young.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Asian Koel

Eudynamys scolopaceus

LC – Least Concern



A large long-tailed cuckoo strongly associated with fruiting trees, groves, urban gardens, plantations, and village habitats. Adult male glossy black with crimson-red eyes and pale bill; female heavily spotted and streaked brown and white. A brood parasite that lays eggs mainly in nests of crows and occasionally other host species. Feeds largely on figs, banyan fruits, papaya, berries, and cultivated fruits, but also consumes insects and eggs. Famous for its loud repetitive “koo-ooo” calls during breeding season, especially before monsoon rains. Flight direct and crow-like with steady wingbeats.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Banded Bay Cuckoo

Cacomantis sonneratii

LC – Least Concern



A small attractive cuckoo of wooded habitats, bamboo groves, plantations, forest edges, and moist secondary growth. Rich chestnut wings and upperparts contrast with finely barred whitish underparts and grayish head. Usually active in middle canopy levels, moving quietly through foliage while searching for caterpillars and insects. Flight swift and direct through forest clearings. Calls consist of sharp repetitive whistles and descending notes during breeding season. A brood parasite, commonly targeting babblers and small passerines as hosts.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Common Hawk-Cuckoo

Hierococcyx varius

LC – Least Concern



A medium-sized cuckoo remarkably similar to a small hawk in both appearance and flight. Gray upperparts, barred underparts, yellow orbital skin, and long barred tail enhance the hawk-like impression. Common in wooded gardens, plantations, scrub forests, forest edges, and semi-urban green spaces. Famous for its loud rising “brain-fever” call heard persistently during hot summer months. Usually remains concealed within dense foliage despite frequent vocal activity. Feeds mainly on hairy caterpillars and insects avoided by many other birds. Like many cuckoos, it is a brood parasite and lays eggs in nests of babblers and other small birds.

Status in Kerala: Resident and local migrant.

Jungle Nightjar

Caprimulgus indicus

LC – Least Concern



A cryptically patterned nocturnal bird of open woodland, scrub forest, dry deciduous forest, laterite plains, plantations, and forest edges. Plumage intricately mottled in shades of gray, brown, black, and buff, providing exceptional camouflage against leaf litter and bare ground during daytime roosting. Usually detected at dusk when it becomes active, flying low with buoyant silent wingbeats while hunting moths, beetles, termites, and other flying insects. In flight, appears long-winged and agile with broad rounded wings. Frequently rests motionless on tracks and roads at night. Males give repetitive churring whistles and metallic calls during breeding season. Like other nightjars, nests directly on the ground without constructing a nest.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Little Swift

Apus affinis

LC – Least Concern



A small compact swift commonly seen flying rapidly around towns, cliffs, bridges, temples, and rocky escarpments. Sooty-black overall with contrasting white rump and shallowly forked tail. Flight fast, erratic, and highly agile with rapid wingbeats interspersed with glides. Usually seen in noisy flocks circling high overhead while catching aerial insects. Rarely perches except at nest sites, spending most of its life airborne. Often nests colonially under bridges, culverts, building ledges, and rock crevices using saliva-bound materials. Calls are shrill rapid twittering screams often heard around nesting colonies.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Asian Palm Swift

Cypsiurus balasiensis

LC – Least Concern



A slender elegant swift closely associated with palm trees, especially coconut and palmyra palms. Very narrow wings and long tail streamers give a distinctive silhouette in flight. Plumage gray-brown overall with slightly paler throat. Flight graceful, buoyant, and highly aerial, often gliding effortlessly around palm groves and agricultural landscapes while feeding on tiny airborne insects. Usually nests on the underside of palm fronds using feathers and plant material glued with saliva. Often seen singly or in small loose groups. Calls are soft high-pitched chirping notes.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Eurasian Moorhen

Gallinula chloropus

LC – Least Concern



A familiar medium-sized rail inhabiting marshes, village ponds, lotus ponds, canals, paddy fields, and vegetated freshwater wetlands. Dark gray-black overall with white flank streaks and conspicuous red frontal shield tipped yellow on the bill. Often seen swimming with characteristic jerky head movements or walking delicately across floating vegetation. Feeds on aquatic plants, algae, seeds, insects, mollusks, frogs, and small fish. Usually shy near disturbance but can become tame in urban wetlands. Flight weak with dangling legs. Loud chuckling, croaking, and squawking calls commonly heard from dense marsh vegetation.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Grey-headed Swamphen

Porphyrio poliocephalus

LC – Least Concern



A large striking rail of reedbeds, marshes, lotus ponds, and wet paddy fields. Plumage rich blue-purple with contrasting gray head, massive red bill, and long reddish legs. Usually seen walking confidently over floating vegetation while pulling up shoots and reeds with its feet. Feeds mainly on aquatic vegetation, tender shoots, seeds, snails, frogs, and insects. Flight heavy and labored with dangling legs. Often noisy and conspicuous in groups, giving loud cackling and honking calls. Breeds within dense reedbeds where nests are carefully concealed above water.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Watercock

Gallicrex cinerea

LC – Least Concern



A secretive marsh bird inhabiting flooded grasslands, reedbeds, marshes, and paddy fields. Breeding male distinctive with glossy black plumage, bright red frontal shield, and thick reddish bill; female and nonbreeding birds brown and heavily streaked, resembling rails. Usually skulks deep inside dense vegetation and rarely emerges into open areas except during dawn or dusk. Feeds on insects, mollusks, aquatic invertebrates, seeds, and tender plant shoots. Flight weak and reluctant. During breeding season males produce loud grunting and booming calls from concealed marsh vegetation.

Status in Kerala: Resident and local monsoon migrant.

White-breasted Waterhen

Amaurornis phoenicurus

LC – Least Concern



A common and conspicuous rail found around ponds, canals, marshes, village tanks, paddy fields, and urban wetlands. Easily recognized by white face, throat, and breast contrasting with dark slate-gray body and chestnut undertail coverts. Frequently walks along wetland edges with tail flicking upward while searching for insects, snails, frogs, worms, seeds, and small fish. Usually solitary or in pairs but can become vocal and territorial during breeding season. Calls loud, harsh, and repetitive, especially during evenings and monsoon months. Flight weak with dangling legs and short rounded wings.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Little Ringed Plover

Charadrius dubius

LC – Least Concern



A small delicate plover commonly found along muddy wetland margins, riverbanks, reservoirs, sandbars, and drying ponds during migration and winter. Sandy-brown above and white below with distinct black breast band, white forehead, and striking yellow orbital ring. Runs quickly in short bursts before stopping abruptly to pick insects and small invertebrates from mud and sand. Flight swift and agile with rapid wingbeats. Often solitary or in small loose groups. Soft whistling calls frequently given in flight.

Status in Kerala: Winter migrant and passage migrant.

Yellow-wattled Lapwing

Vanellus malabaricus

LC – Least Concern



A graceful lapwing of dry open plains, grasslands, scrub habitats, and sparsely vegetated agricultural areas. Sandy-brown overall with black crown, pale supercilium, and distinctive yellow facial wattles. Usually seen in pairs or small groups walking slowly across open ground searching for insects, beetles, termites, and seeds. Flight steady and direct with contrasting black-and-white wing pattern. Ground nests are simple scrapes placed in exposed open habitats where eggs are remarkably camouflaged. Calls are softer and less harsh than those of Red-wattled Lapwing.

Status in Kerala: Local resident, mainly in dry lowland habitats.

Red-wattled Lapwing

Vanellus indicus

LC – Least Concern



A familiar and highly vocal lapwing of wetlands, agricultural lands, riverbanks, grasslands, coastal flats, and urban open areas. Boldly patterned with black breast and head, white cheeks, brown wings, and striking red facial wattles. Usually seen in pairs or small groups near water or open ground. Feeds on insects, worms, mollusks, crustaceans, and seeds. Flight strong and noisy with broad rounded wings. Famous for loud alarm calls often interpreted as “did-you-do-it,” especially during evenings and whenever intruders approach nesting sites. Aggressively defends eggs and chicks from predators.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Pheasant-tailed Jacana

Hydrophasianus chirurgus

LC – Least Concern



An elegant wetland specialist adapted for walking across floating vegetation using extremely long toes and claws. Breeding adults spectacular with white face, golden hindneck, black underparts, and elongated pheasant-like tail feathers. Nonbreeding birds much duller with shorter tails. Inhabits lotus ponds, marshes, village tanks, and wetlands rich in floating aquatic vegetation. Feeds delicately on aquatic insects, seeds, mollusks, and small invertebrates picked from floating leaves. Flight weak and fluttering with dangling legs. Females larger and polyandrous, often mating with several males, while males incubate eggs and rear chicks.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder and local migrant.

Bronze-winged Jacana

Metopidius indicus

LC – Least Concern



A dark handsome jacana commonly found in freshwater marshes, lotus ponds, and wetlands with floating vegetation. Plumage glossy dark brown-black with bronze-green wings and striking white supercilium extending down the neck. Long toes allow effortless movement across lily pads and floating plants. Usually solitary or in pairs. Feeds on aquatic insects, snails, seeds, worms, and small crustaceans. Flight fluttering and low over wetlands with legs trailing behind. Calls include sharp nasal squeals and repeated contact notes. Breeding biology unusual, with males undertaking most parental duties.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

LC – Least Concern



A small migratory wader commonly seen along rivers, reservoirs, wetlands, mudflats, estuaries, and coastal edges during winter. Brownish above and white below with characteristic shoulder notch extending into breast. Constantly bobs tail and rear body while walking briskly along shorelines searching for insects, worms, crustaceans, mollusks, and small aquatic prey. Flight low and direct over water with stiff wingbeats and distinctive white wing stripe. Usually solitary or loosely scattered. Sharp whistling calls often given when flushed.

Status in Kerala: Common winter migrant.

Green Sandpiper

Tringa ochropus

LC – Least Concern



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A medium-sized migratory sandpiper of freshwater marshes, flooded fields, ponds, canals, and shaded wetland edges. Dark brown upperparts finely spotted pale, contrasting with bright white rump visible in flight. Usually solitary and more wary than Common Sandpiper. Feeds by probing mud and shallow water for insects, larvae, worms, crustaceans, and mollusks. Flight fast and direct with loud ringing alarm calls. Often prefers smaller inland wetlands and forest-edge pools rather than open coastal habitats.

Status in Kerala: Winter migrant.

Wood Sandpiper

Tringa glareola

LC – Least Concern



A slim elegant migratory wader frequenting shallow marshes, flooded paddy fields, mudflats, village ponds, sewage lagoons, and temporary monsoon pools. Brown upperparts covered with pale spots and streaks, with long yellowish legs and a distinct pale eyebrow. More delicate and active than Green Sandpiper. Feeds by rapidly picking insects, worms, crustaceans, and aquatic larvae from shallow water surfaces. Flight graceful with quick wingbeats and soft whistling calls. Often occurs in loose feeding groups during peak migration periods.

Status in Kerala: Common winter migrant and passage migrant.

Little Grebe

Tachybaptus ruficollis

LC – Least Concern



A tiny compact diving waterbird commonly found in ponds, village tanks, reservoirs, marshes, canals, and slow-moving freshwater wetlands. In breeding plumage, shows rich chestnut cheeks and neck contrasting with dark brown upperparts and pale fluffy undertail. Nonbreeding birds duller with whitish throat and cheeks. Usually seen singly or in pairs swimming low in water with only head and neck visible. An expert diver that disappears instantly beneath the surface when alarmed, resurfacing unexpectedly far away. Feeds mainly on small fish, aquatic insects, tadpoles, crustaceans, and mollusks. Flight weak and infrequent but surprisingly rapid when undertaken. Calls include loud trilling whistles and bubbling notes, especially during breeding season. Floating nests are constructed among aquatic vegetation.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Asian Openbill

Anastomus oscitans

LC – Least Concern



A distinctive medium-sized stork easily identified by the noticeable gap between the upper and lower mandibles in adults. Plumage largely pale gray-white with glossy black flight feathers and tail. Usually found in wetlands, flooded paddy fields, marshes, reservoirs, and river floodplains. Specializes in feeding on aquatic snails, particularly apple snails, using its uniquely adapted bill to extract soft tissues from shells. Often feeds slowly in shallow water while probing mud and vegetation. Flight graceful with neck outstretched and broad black-and-white wings. Frequently gathers in large flocks near productive wetlands and communal roosting sites.

Status in Kerala: Resident and local migrant.

Asian Woolly-necked Stork

Ciconia episcopus

VU – Vulnerable



A large elegant stork of wetlands, paddy fields, grasslands, riverbanks, and agricultural landscapes. Easily recognized by glossy black body contrasting with striking white woolly neck and lower belly. Usually seen singly, in pairs, or small groups rather than large flocks. Feeds on frogs, fish, insects, reptiles, crabs, and small vertebrates captured in shallow wetlands and cultivated fields. Flight strong and soaring with broad wings and extended neck. Often nests on tall isolated trees close to wetlands. Declining populations are linked to wetland loss, pesticide use, and disturbance.

Status in Kerala: Uncommon resident.

Painted Stork

Mycteria leucocephala

NT – Near Threatened



A large colorful stork unmistakable with pink tertial plumes, black-and-white scaled wings, bare orange head, and long yellow downcurved bill. Common around lakes, marshes, reservoirs, sewage ponds, flooded fields, and large wetlands. Feeds mainly on fish, frogs, mollusks, and aquatic organisms by sweeping its partly open bill through shallow water until prey is detected by touch. Often forages communally in shallow wetlands. Flight majestic with neck extended and black-and-white wings contrasting strongly against pink tertials. Colonial breeder nesting in large mixed heronries with other waterbirds.

Status in Kerala: Resident and local dispersive migrant.

Oriental Darter

Anhinga melanogaster

NT – Near Threatened



A slender fish-eating waterbird often called the “snakebird” because only its long neck remains visible while swimming underwater. Dark brown-black plumage with silvery streaking on wings and long pointed yellowish bill. Usually seen in lakes, reservoirs, marshes, canals, mangroves, and village ponds. Excellent underwater hunter that spears fish with rapid thrusts of its sharp bill. Frequently perches with wings spread wide to dry, since its feathers absorb water more readily than ducks. Flight graceful with alternating glides and flaps, neck extended straight. Breeds colonially near wetlands alongside cormorants and herons.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Little Cormorant

Microcarbo niger

LC – Least Concern



A small all-dark cormorant common in ponds, lakes, rivers, reservoirs, canals, estuaries, and urban wetlands. Adult breeding birds glossy black with tiny white facial plumes; nonbreeding birds browner with paler throat. Usually seen perched low near water or swimming with only neck exposed. Dives repeatedly to pursue fish underwater using strong webbed feet. Frequently spreads wings after diving to dry feathers. Flight direct with rapid wingbeats and characteristic low profile over water. Often roosts communally with egrets and herons.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Indian Cormorant

Phalacrocorax fuscicollis

LC – Least Concern



A medium-sized slender cormorant distinguished by elongated neck, narrow bill, and bluish eyes. Breeding adults show white facial feathers and glossy dark plumage. Usually inhabits larger lakes, reservoirs, rivers, backwaters, and estuarine wetlands. More graceful and elongated than Little Cormorant. Hunts fish underwater in coordinated groups or singly. Frequently perches on dead trees or poles with wings outstretched. Flight rapid and purposeful in V-shaped or linear flocks. Colonial nesting common in mixed waterbird colonies.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Glossy Ibis

Plegadis falcinellus

LC – Least Concern



A medium-sized dark ibis with rich chestnut-maroon plumage showing metallic green and purple gloss in sunlight. Long curved bill adapted for probing soft mud and shallow wetlands. Usually found in marshes, flooded paddy fields, estuaries, sewage ponds, and wet grasslands. Often feeds in loose flocks searching for insects, worms, crustaceans, mollusks, frogs, and aquatic larvae. Flight swift and direct with neck extended and legs trailing behind. During certain seasons may gather in impressive feeding congregations.

Status in Kerala: Resident and winter visitor.

Black-headed Ibis

Threskiornis melanocephalus

NT – Near Threatened



A large white ibis with bare black head and neck, long black downcurved bill, and black flight feathers visible during flight. Commonly inhabits marshes, floodplains, mudflats, reservoirs, paddy fields, sewage lagoons, and estuarine wetlands. Usually feeds slowly in shallow water by probing mud for fish, frogs, insects, crustaceans, mollusks, and worms. Often seen alongside storks and egrets in mixed feeding flocks. Flight graceful with broad white wings and extended neck. Populations affected by wetland degradation and disturbance to nesting colonies.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Black Bittern

Ixobrychus flavicollis

LC – Least Concern



A secretive marsh heron rarely seen in the open except during dusk, dawn, or short flights between reedbeds. Adult appears dark chestnut-black with buff streaking on throat and neck; juveniles browner and heavily streaked. Usually inhabits dense marsh vegetation, reedbeds, mangroves, swamp forests, and shaded wetland edges. Hunts fish, frogs, aquatic insects, and crustaceans from concealed positions. When alarmed, adopts classic bittern posture by stretching neck upward to blend with surrounding reeds. Flight rapid with deep wingbeats and dangling legs. Vocalizations include deep croaks and booming notes during breeding season.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Black-crowned Night Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

LC – Least Concern



A stocky nocturnal heron of marshes, lakes, mangroves, rivers, estuaries, and urban wetlands. Adults have black crown and back, pale gray wings, red eyes, and white underparts; juveniles heavily streaked brown. Usually roosts communally in trees during daytime and becomes active around dusk. Feeds on fish, frogs, crabs, insects, and small vertebrates, often hunting silently along wetland edges at night. Flight strong and direct with slow wingbeats and retracted neck. Harsh barking calls frequently heard at roosts after sunset.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

LC – Least Concern



A slender elegant white egret with black bill, black legs, and contrasting yellow feet. Frequently found in wetlands, mudflats, estuaries, rivers, paddy fields, and coastal lagoons. Highly active feeder that stalks fish and aquatic prey with rapid darting movements, foot-stirring behavior, and sudden lunges. Breeding adults develop long delicate nape plumes and ornamental back plumes. Flight buoyant and graceful with retracted neck. Often roosts and nests communally with other herons and cormorants.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Indian Pond-Heron

Ardeola grayii

LC – Least Concern



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A small stocky heron commonly encountered in ponds, canals, paddy fields, marshes, village tanks, and urban wetlands. At rest appears dull brown and heavily streaked, blending perfectly with muddy surroundings. In flight transforms dramatically into brilliant white due to pure white wings and tail. Usually hunts patiently from waterside edges before striking suddenly at fish, frogs, insects, tadpoles, and crustaceans. Often surprisingly tame and tolerant of human presence. Breeding adults develop rich chestnut and buff ornamental plumes.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Eastern Cattle-Egret

Bubulcus coromandus

LC – Least Concern



A compact white egret strongly associated with grazing livestock, agricultural fields, wetlands, and urban grasslands. Nonbreeding birds entirely white; breeding adults develop orange-buff plumes on head, chest, and back. Commonly seen following cattle, tractors, and grazing animals to capture disturbed insects, grasshoppers, frogs, and small reptiles. Flight direct with steady wingbeats and retracted neck. Highly adaptable and often nests in dense colonies with other waterbirds. Calls harsh and guttural near breeding colonies.

Status in Kerala: Very common resident breeder.

Great Egret

Ardea alba

LC – Least Concern



A large stately white heron of lakes, marshes, estuaries, rivers, mangroves, and flooded fields. Distinguished by long neck, dagger-like yellow bill, and black legs. Usually hunts patiently in shallow water before striking rapidly at fish, frogs, crustaceans, snakes, and aquatic insects. Flight slow and majestic with broad wings and deeply retracted neck. Breeding adults develop delicate ornamental plumes once prized in the feather trade. Usually solitary while feeding but may gather in rich wetlands and communal roosts.

Status in Kerala: Resident and winter visitor.

Medium Egret

Ardea intermedia

LC – Least Concern



A graceful medium-sized white egret usually found in marshes, paddy fields, village ponds, reservoirs, canals, and shallow wetlands. Intermediate in size between Little Egret and Great Egret, with a relatively shorter neck and thicker yellow bill than Great Egret. During breeding season, develops soft ornamental plumes and facial skin may turn greenish. Typically hunts slowly and deliberately in shallow water, feeding on fish, frogs, aquatic insects, crustaceans, and small reptiles. Flight steady and elegant with slow wingbeats and neck folded into an “S” shape. Often seen singly or in loose feeding groups alongside other herons and egrets.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Gray Heron

Ardea cinerea

LC – Least Concern



A tall, stately heron of lakes, rivers, estuaries, mangroves, reservoirs, mudflats, and marshes. Pale gray overall with black crown stripe, white neck, and long dagger-like yellow bill. Usually stands motionless for long periods before striking suddenly at fish, frogs, crabs, snakes, rodents, and aquatic prey. Flight slow and powerful with broad wings and deeply folded neck. Solitary while feeding but often roosts communally. Loud harsh croaking calls are usually heard in flight or near nesting colonies. Its commanding size and patient hunting posture make it one of Kerala's most recognizable wetland birds.

Status in Kerala: Resident and winter visitor.

Purple Heron

Ardea purpurea

LC – Least Concern



A tall slender heron usually associated with reedbeds, marshes, lotus ponds, mangroves, and densely vegetated wetlands. Rich chestnut, gray, and purplish tones provide excellent camouflage among reeds. More secretive and slimmer than Gray Heron, often remaining hidden in marsh vegetation. Feeds mainly on fish, frogs, snakes, insects, and aquatic animals captured with rapid thrusts of its bill. Flight slower and more buoyant than Gray Heron with neck strongly retracted. When alarmed, may freeze with neck pointed upward to resemble surrounding reeds.

Status in Kerala: Resident and winter visitor.

Oriental Honey-buzzard

Pernis ptilorhynchus

LC – Least Concern



A highly variable medium-sized raptor of forests, plantations, wetlands, wooded countryside, and migration corridors. Shows a relatively small pigeon-like head, long neck, broad wings, and long barred tail. Plumage extremely variable, ranging from pale to dark morphs, often causing confusion with eagles. Specialized in feeding on wasp and bee larvae, using strong claws and bill to tear open nests. Also feeds on reptiles, frogs, insects, and occasionally fruits. Frequently seen soaring high on thermals during migration seasons. Calls are thin whistles, usually heard near breeding territories.

Status in Kerala: Resident and passage migrant.

Crested Serpent-Eagle

Spilornis cheela

LC – Least Concern



A broad-winged forest eagle commonly found in evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests, plantations, wetlands, and wooded hills. Easily recognized by bright yellow facial skin, yellow legs, dark brown plumage, and bold black-and-white tail bands. Usually seen soaring above forests or perched conspicuously while scanning for snakes, lizards, frogs, rodents, and other small prey. Flight broad-winged and powerful with distinct pale patches visible under the wings. Loud whistling calls often echo through forested valleys, especially during mornings.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Booted Eagle

Hieraaetus pennatus

LC – Least Concern



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A small migratory eagle occurring mainly during winter in open countryside, wetlands, grasslands, coastal plains, and agricultural landscapes. Appears in both pale and dark morphs. Pale morph birds show whitish underparts with dark flight feathers, while dark morphs are almost entirely brown. Compact shape, feathered legs, and agile flight help distinguish it from larger eagles. Hunts birds, reptiles, rodents, and large insects through swift aerial pursuits and sudden dives. Often seen soaring singly during migration periods.

Status in Kerala: Winter migrant.

Shikra

Tachyspiza badia

LC – Least Concern



A small agile hawk of gardens, wooded villages, agricultural landscapes, plantations, scrub forests, and urban green spaces. Adults show barred underparts, red eyes, gray upperparts, and long tail with dark bands. Females larger and browner than males. Flight fast and darting with rapid wingbeats through trees and open spaces. Hunts small birds, lizards, rodents, frogs, and insects using surprise attacks from concealed perches. Frequently seen perched quietly before sudden bursts of speed. Calls include sharp repetitive “kik-kik-kik” notes, especially during breeding season.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Western Marsh Harrier

Circus aeruginosus

LC – Least Concern



A large migratory harrier associated with marshes, reedbeds, flooded paddy fields, estuaries, and wetlands. Males show gray wings with black tips and brown body; females and juveniles darker brown with pale crown. Typically flies low over marsh vegetation with wings held in shallow V-shape while searching for prey. Feeds on birds, rodents, frogs, reptiles, and carrion. Flight buoyant and gliding with occasional sudden drops into reeds. Usually solitary in Kerala during winter months.

Status in Kerala: Winter migrant.

Black Kite

Milvus migrans

LC – Least Concern



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A common medium-sized scavenging raptor frequently seen over towns, fishing harbors, markets, wetlands, highways, and urban settlements. Dark brown overall with slightly forked tail and long angled wings. Flight graceful and buoyant with effortless circling on thermals. Opportunistic feeder consuming carrion, garbage, fish waste, rodents, birds, and insects. Often gathers around slaughterhouses, fish markets, and rubbish dumps. Calls are long descending whistling screams commonly heard overhead. Highly adaptable to urban environments.

Status in Kerala: Common resident.

Brahminy Kite

Haliastur indus

LC – Least Concern



A striking chestnut-and-white raptor closely associated with rivers, estuaries, backwaters, mangroves, fishing villages, and coastal wetlands. Rich chestnut body contrasts sharply with pure white head and breast. Usually seen soaring gracefully above water or perched near fishing activity. Feeds on fish, crabs, carrion, frogs, and small vertebrates, often stealing prey from other birds. Flight elegant with broad rounded wings and slightly angled posture. Sharp mewing calls commonly heard along Kerala's coastline and backwaters.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Indian Scops-Owl

Otus bakkamoena

LC – Least Concern



A small cryptically colored owl of wooded gardens, plantations, groves, scrub forests, and village outskirts. Plumage gray-brown and heavily mottled, providing excellent camouflage against tree bark. Prominent ear tufts often raised when alert. Usually roosts motionless during daytime and becomes active after dusk. Feeds mainly on insects, moths, beetles, small rodents, frogs, and lizards. Calls are soft repetitive whistled notes heard during night hours. Often difficult to detect despite occurring close to human habitation.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Brown Fish-Owl

Ketupa zeylonensis

LC – Least Concern



A large powerful owl associated with rivers, reservoirs, wetlands, rocky streams, and forested water bodies. Easily recognized by large yellow eyes, shaggy plumage, and prominent ear tufts. Usually roosts in dense riverside trees during daytime. Hunts fish, frogs, crabs, rodents, reptiles, and aquatic prey mainly at night, often swooping silently to water edges. Deep booming calls echo through forests and river valleys after dusk. Flight heavy but silent with broad rounded wings.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Jungle Owlet

Glaucidium radiatum

LC – Least Concern



A small compact owl of forests, plantations, wooded gardens, and scrubby habitats. Brown overall with dense white barring on head, body, and tail. Unlike many owls, often active during daytime and twilight. Usually perches openly on branches while scanning for insects, lizards, small birds, and rodents. Frequently gives repetitive whistling calls during mornings and evenings. Flight quick and undulating through forest openings. Often mobbed by smaller birds when detected.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Spotted Owlet

Athene brama

LC – Least Concern



A small familiar owl commonly associated with villages, agricultural fields, temple groves, old buildings, and open countryside. Gray-brown plumage heavily spotted white with bright yellow eyes and expressive facial appearance. Usually seen perched near tree cavities, rooftops, or electric wires at dusk. Feeds on insects, rodents, lizards, frogs, and small birds. Highly vocal with screeching chatter, whistles, and chuckling calls, especially during breeding season. Frequently active around human habitation and often roosts communally.

Status in Kerala: Common resident.

Mottled Wood-Owl

Strix ocellata

LC – Least Concern



A large forest owl with beautifully mottled gray-brown plumage and dark expressive eyes. Found in wooded countryside, forest edges, plantations, groves, and large avenue trees. Usually roosts quietly in dense foliage during daytime. Hunts rodents, bats, birds, reptiles, and large insects during night hours using silent flight and powerful talons. Deep resonant hooting calls are often heard during calm nights and breeding season. Its heavily patterned plumage provides excellent camouflage against tree bark and shaded branches.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Common Hoopoe

Upupa epops

LC – Least Concern



A distinctive medium-sized bird easily recognized by its warm cinnamon-orange plumage, broad black-and-white wings, and impressive erectile crest tipped with black. Found in open countryside, grasslands, agricultural fields, coastal plains, village groves, laterite areas, and lightly wooded habitats. Usually seen walking on the ground probing soil with its long decurved bill in search of beetles, grubs, termites, caterpillars, and other invertebrates. Flight slow and undulating, often resembling a giant butterfly. Calls are soft repeated “hoop-hoop-hoop” notes from which the species gets its English name. Frequently nests in tree cavities, walls, and old buildings.

Status in Kerala: Resident and winter visitor.

Indian Gray Hornbill

Ocyrceros birostris

LC – Least Concern



A medium-sized hornbill of wooded villages, groves, plantations, urban parks, and dry deciduous forests. Gray overall with long graduated tail, pale belly, and characteristic curved hornbill bill topped with a modest casque. Flight strong and undulating with loud wingbeats audible from a distance. Usually seen in pairs or small family groups moving noisily between fruiting trees. Feeds mainly on figs and fruits but also takes insects, lizards, nestlings, and small vertebrates. During breeding, female seals herself inside a tree cavity using mud and droppings, leaving only a narrow slit through which the male feeds her and the chicks.

Status in Kerala: Local resident.

Asian Green Bee-eater

Merops orientalis

LC – Least Concern



A slender graceful bee-eater of open scrub, grasslands, agricultural fields, sandy riverbanks, coastal areas, and village outskirts. Bright green overall with bluish throat, black eye-stripe, and elongated central tail streamers. Usually perches on wires or exposed twigs before sallying out to catch flying insects. Feeds mainly on bees, wasps, dragonflies, butterflies, and other aerial insects, often beating prey against perches before swallowing. Flight swift, agile, and buoyant with graceful twists and turns. Calls are soft musical trills frequently heard overhead. Often nests colonially in tunnels excavated into sandy banks.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Blue-tailed Bee-eater

Merops philippinus

LC – Least Concern



A colorful migratory bee-eater commonly found near wetlands, coastal plains, paddy fields, estuaries, and open countryside. Green overall with chestnut throat, black eye-stripe, blue tail, and elongated tail streamers. Frequently seen hawking insects in graceful aerial pursuits above wetlands and agricultural landscapes. Feeds mainly on bees, dragonflies, flying ants, and wasps. Often forms large communal roosts during migration periods. Flight elegant and highly agile with rapid turns. Breeds colonially in sandy embankments and riverbanks.

Status in Kerala: Resident and passage migrant.

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater

Merops leschenaulti

LC – Least Concern



A large striking bee-eater of forest edges, plantations, wooded valleys, and hilly terrain. Distinguished by chestnut head, yellow throat, green body, and blue tail. Usually seen perched high in trees or making sweeping aerial sallies after insects. Feeds mainly on bees, hornets, butterflies, dragonflies, and other flying insects. Calls are rich rolling trills often heard from forest clearings. Flight smooth and graceful with deep wingbeats and glides. Often occurs in small noisy flocks.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Common Kingfisher

Alcedo atthis

LC – Least Concern



A tiny brilliantly colored kingfisher of streams, ponds, canals, mangroves, paddy fields, and shaded wetland edges. Upperparts glittering electric blue with orange underparts and long black bill. Usually seen perched low above water before plunging headfirst to catch fish, tadpoles, aquatic insects, and crustaceans. Flight extremely fast and low over water with rapid wingbeats flashing brilliant blue. Calls are sharp high-pitched whistles often given in flight. Nests in burrows excavated into muddy banks near water.

Status in Kerala: Resident and winter visitor.

Stork-billed Kingfisher

Pelargopsis capensis

LC – Least Concern



A massive and unmistakable kingfisher of rivers, backwaters, mangroves, estuaries, reservoirs, and forest streams. Huge coral-red bill, greenish-blue wings, buff underparts, and chestnut head create a striking appearance. Usually perches silently above water before diving heavily onto fish, crabs, frogs, lizards, and occasionally small birds. Flight powerful and direct with loud wingbeats. Calls are harsh cackling laughs often heard from riverside forests and mangroves. Despite its large size, often remains surprisingly inconspicuous while perched quietly.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

White-throated Kingfisher

Halcyon smyrnensis

LC – Least Concern



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A widespread and highly adaptable kingfisher occurring in wetlands, agricultural lands, villages, urban areas, mangroves, and forest edges. Bright turquoise-blue wings and back contrast with rich chestnut head and underparts and gleaming white throat and breast. Unlike many kingfishers, frequently hunts far from water. Feeds on fish, frogs, lizards, insects, crabs, rodents, and small snakes. Usually perches prominently on wires or exposed branches before diving on prey. Loud rattling calls commonly heard throughout the day. Flight rapid with brilliant flashes of blue.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Indian Roller

Coracias benghalensis

LC – Least Concern



A brilliantly colored bird of open countryside, agricultural fields, roadside avenues, grasslands, and semi-urban habitats. Brownish body contrasts with vivid electric-blue wings and tail, especially striking in flight. Frequently seen perched conspicuously on wires, poles, or bare branches scanning for insects, lizards, frogs, and small rodents. During breeding season performs spectacular rolling aerial displays with dives and twists. Flight strong with flashes of deep and pale blue visible from great distances. Calls are harsh crow-like chattering notes.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Coppersmith Barbet

Psilopogon haemacephalus

LC – Least Concern



A small plump green barbet commonly found in gardens, groves, plantations, urban parks, orchards, and wooded villages. Easily identified by crimson forehead and throat patches, yellow eye-strips, and stout pale bill. Usually detected by its monotonous metallic “tuk-tuk-tuk” call resembling a coppersmith striking metal, often repeated continuously during hot afternoons. Feeds mainly on figs, berries, guavas, and other fruits, but also takes insects. Flight short and undulating between trees. Excavates nest cavities in dead branches and soft wood.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

White-cheeked Barbet

Psilopogon viridis

LC – Least Concern



A Western Ghats endemic barbet common in gardens, plantations, evergreen forests, wooded villages, and fruiting trees. Green overall with bold white cheek patches, brown head, and stout yellowish bill. Usually active in canopy and middle tree levels where it feeds on figs, berries, guavas, mangoes, and other fruits. Also consumes insects during breeding season. Calls are loud repetitive rolling notes frequently heard at dawn and throughout the day. Flight rapid and undulating between fruiting trees. Important seed disperser in Western Ghats forests.

Status in Kerala: Resident endemic.

Heart-spotted Woodpecker

Hemicircus canente

LC – Least Concern



A tiny attractive woodpecker of evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests, bamboo groves, and shaded plantations. Black-and-white plumage with distinctive heart-shaped black spots on pale underparts. Male shows red on the hindcrown. Usually active high in the canopy where it creeps along thin branches searching bark crevices for insects, larvae, ants, and beetles. Flight weak and undulating. Often joins mixed hunting flocks. Calls are soft squeaky whistles and rapid tapping sounds.

Status in Kerala: Resident.

Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker

Yungipicus nanus

LC – Least Concern



A tiny woodpecker of gardens, plantations, groves, wooded villages, and forest edges. Brown-capped with barred black-and-white upperparts and pale underparts streaked brown. Usually active in pairs or small groups climbing thin branches and twigs while probing bark for insects, larvae, and spiders. Frequently hangs upside down while feeding. Flight short and undulating. Calls are high-pitched squeaky trills. Despite small size, often remarkably active and conspicuous.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Black-rumped Flameback

Dinopium benghalense

LC – Least Concern



A large striking golden-backed woodpecker of groves, forests, plantations, coconut gardens, and wooded villages. Bright golden-yellow back contrasts with black rump, heavily patterned face, and crimson crest in males. Frequently climbs trunks and large branches searching for ants, termites, beetle larvae, and wood-boring insects. Loud ringing calls and powerful drumming often reveal its presence. Flight undulating with flashes of golden wings. Common around human habitation where old trees remain available for nesting.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Rose-ringed Parakeet

Psittacula krameri

LC – Least Concern



A familiar bright green parakeet of cities, villages, plantations, agricultural areas, forests, and urban parks. Long pointed tail and swift direct flight easily recognizable. Adult males show narrow rose-and-black neck ring; females and juveniles lack the complete ring. Usually seen in noisy flocks flying between feeding and roosting sites. Feeds on fruits, grains, seeds, buds, flowers, and cultivated crops. Loud screeching calls commonly heard overhead. Nests in tree cavities and sometimes old building holes. Highly adaptable and successful in human-modified landscapes.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Vernal Hanging-Parrot

Loriculus vernalis

LC – Least Concern



A tiny bright-green parrot of evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests, plantations, bamboo groves, and wooded gardens. Short-tailed and compact, often hanging upside down while feeding, giving rise to its English name. Male shows bright red rump and orange-red bill; female duller with less extensive coloration. Usually moves in small noisy groups through canopy and flowering trees. Feeds on nectar, soft fruits, berries, flower buds, and tender shoots. Flight swift and direct with rapid wingbeats accompanied by sharp high-pitched calls. Often difficult to spot due to its small size and leaf-green plumage blending perfectly with foliage.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Indian Pitta

Pitta brachyura

LC – Least Concern



A brilliantly colored ground-dwelling forest bird popularly known as the “Nine-colored Bird.” Shows green upperparts, buff underparts, blue wing patch, black crown stripe, white throat, and striking red vent. Usually found in moist deciduous forests, wooded groves, plantations, bamboo thickets, and leaf-littered gardens during migration and winter. Feeds mainly on earthworms, insects, beetles, termites, snails, and other ground invertebrates. Frequently hops among fallen leaves, flicking aside debris while foraging. Call a loud clear two-note whistle often heard at dawn and dusk. Migratory movements bring it to Kerala mainly during winter and passage seasons.

Status in Kerala: Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Orange Minivet

Pericrocotus flammeus

LC – Least Concern



A striking canopy-dwelling bird of evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests, plantations, and wooded hills. Adult male brilliant orange and black; female yellow and gray. Usually seen in pairs or small parties moving actively through upper canopy levels. Feeds mainly on caterpillars, beetles, winged insects, and other arthropods captured by agile sallies and foliage-gleaning. Flight graceful and slightly undulating. Frequently joins mixed-species feeding flocks. Soft whistling calls and constant movement through treetops often reveal its presence.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Indian Cuckooshrike

Lalage macrocerca

LC – Least Concern



A medium-sized gray bird of open woodland, plantations, groves, forest edges, and agricultural landscapes with scattered trees. Male pale gray with darker wings and tail; female browner with faint barring. Usually seen singly or in pairs perched quietly in canopy and middle tree levels. Feeds mainly on caterpillars, insects, berries, and small fruits. Flight smooth and direct between trees. Calls include soft whistles and nasal notes. Often overlooked because of its subdued coloration and quiet behavior.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Black-headed Cuckooshrike

Lalage melanoptera

LC – Least Concern



A handsome cuckooshrike of forests, wooded plantations, riverine groves, and forest edges. Male pale gray with contrasting black head and wings; female browner with barred underparts. Usually active in canopy and upper branches, often in pairs or family groups. Feeds on caterpillars, beetles, insects, and fruits gathered from foliage or captured during short aerial sallies. Flight graceful and direct. Calls are mellow whistles and soft chattering notes. Frequently associates with mixed feeding flocks.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Indian Golden Oriole

Oriolus kundoo

LC – Least Concern



A brilliantly colored summer visitor and passage migrant of groves, orchards, plantations, wooded gardens, and riverine forests. Adult male vivid golden-yellow with black wings and eye-stripe; female greener and more streaked below. Usually remains hidden high in leafy canopy despite bright coloration. Feeds on fruits, berries, caterpillars, insects, and nectar. Flight smooth and undulating through treetops. Rich fluty whistles are among the most melodious sounds of wooded habitats during migration seasons.

Status in Kerala: Passage migrant and winter visitor in parts of the state.

Black-hooded Oriole

Oriolus xanthornus

LC – Least Concern



A striking yellow-and-black oriole common in gardens, plantations, evergreen forests, coconut groves, and wooded villages. Bright yellow body contrasts sharply with black hood, wings, and tail. Usually active in canopy levels where it feeds on fruits, figs, berries, caterpillars, insects, and nectar. Flight fluid and direct between treetops. Calls include loud fluty whistles and harsh scolding notes. Frequently visits flowering and fruiting trees close to human habitation.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Ashy Woodswallow

Artamus fuscus

LC – Least Concern



A sleek gray aerial bird commonly seen perched on exposed wires, dead trees, and open branches in agricultural lands, wetlands, open woodland, and coastal plains. Ashy-gray overall with darker wings and forked tail. Usually occurs in small flocks. Feeds mainly on flying insects caught in agile aerial sallies resembling swallows. Flight buoyant and swift with graceful glides. Often roosts communally. Calls are soft twittering and nasal notes.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Common Woodshrike

Tephrodornis pondicerianus

LC – Least Concern



A medium-sized gray-brown bird of open woodland, plantations, scrub forests, and wooded villages. Broad dark eye-mask and stout hooked bill give a shrike-like appearance. Usually seen singly or in pairs moving methodically through foliage searching for insects, caterpillars, spiders, and small lizards. Often joins mixed feeding flocks. Flight direct and undulating over short distances. Calls include soft whistles and chattering notes. Builds neat cup nests on horizontal branches.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Common Iora

Aegithina tiphia

LC – Least Concern



A tiny lively bird common in gardens, groves, plantations, scrub, forest edges, and urban greenery. Breeding males bright yellow below with glossy black upperparts and white wing bars; females greener and duller. Extremely active and acrobatic while searching leaves and branches for caterpillars, insects, spiders, and small berries. Frequently hangs upside down while feeding. Song a varied series of whistles, squeaks, and bubbling notes often delivered during display flights. Nests delicately woven between forked branches.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Black Drongo

Dicrurus macrocercus

LC – Least Concern



A glossy black aggressive drongo commonly seen in open countryside, agricultural fields, wetlands, grazing lands, and roadside trees. Deeply forked tail and upright posture distinctive. Frequently perches prominently on wires or exposed branches before launching aerial sallies for insects. Feeds on beetles, dragonflies, termites, grasshoppers, and occasionally small birds or lizards. Highly fearless and often mobbing much larger raptors and crows. Flight agile and acrobatic with sharp turns. Calls varied, metallic, and harsh.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Ashy Drongo

Dicrurus leucophaeus

LC – Least Concern



A graceful gray drongo of forests, plantations, wooded valleys, and hill slopes. Uniform ash-gray plumage with long deeply forked tail and red eyes. Usually seen singly or in pairs perched quietly before darting after flying insects. Flight swift and elegant with agile twists and glides. Frequently joins mixed hunting flocks in forest canopy. Calls include sweet whistles and mimicry of other birds. More common in hill forests and migratory passages.

Status in Kerala: Winter visitor and local migrant.

Bronzed Drongo

Dicrurus aeneus

LC – Least Concern



A small, glossy drongo of evergreen forests, moist deciduous woodlands, plantations, and well-wooded foothill habitats. Appears black at a distance but shows a distinctive metallic greenish-bronze sheen in good light, giving the species its name. Tail is moderately forked and shorter than that of larger drongos. Usually seen singly, in pairs, or accompanying mixed-species feeding flocks in the forest canopy and middle storey. Actively sallies after flying insects with swift, agile flights and often returns to the same perch. Vocalizations include sharp metallic notes, whistles, and a variety of mimicry. More secretive than other drongo species and often remains within dense forest cover.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo

Dicrurus paradiseus

LC – Least Concern



One of the most spectacular forest birds of the Western Ghats, recognized by elongated outer tail feathers ending in racket-shaped tips. Glossy black overall with metallic sheen and curling forehead feathers. Common in evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests, plantations, and wooded valleys. A highly intelligent and vocal species capable of remarkable mimicry of other birds and animals. Feeds on insects, small reptiles, and occasionally fruits, often catching prey in agile aerial sallies. Frequently accompanies mixed-species feeding flocks and sometimes uses mimic alarm calls to steal prey from other birds. Loud whistles, metallic notes, and mimic calls echo through forest interiors.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Black-naped Monarch

Hypothymis azurea

LC – Least Concern



A delicate flycatcher of evergreen forests, shaded groves, plantations, mangroves, and wooded streams. Male bright azure-blue with glossy black nape patch and narrow black collar; female duller bluish-gray. Usually active in shaded middle canopy where it makes quick aerial sallies after insects. Flight light and fluttering. Frequently joins mixed feeding flocks. Calls are soft sharp whistles and thin notes. Builds delicate cup-shaped nests suspended from thin branches.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Indian Paradise-Flycatcher

Terpsiphone paradisi

LC – Least Concern



A graceful and spectacular woodland flycatcher famous for the long ribbon-like tail streamers of adult males. Males occur in rufous and white morphs; females and immature birds rufous with shorter tails. Common in forests, bamboo groves, wooded gardens, plantations, and shaded riverine habitats. Feeds on flying insects captured through elegant aerial sallies from shaded perches. Constant tail flicking and agile movements characteristic. Calls are sharp sweet whistles and clicking notes. Breeding males with flowing white tails are among the most striking birds of Indian forests.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder and local migrant.

Brown Shrike

Lanius cristatus

LC – Least Concern



A migratory shrike commonly seen in scrublands, agricultural fields, forest edges, mangroves, hedgerows, and open countryside during winter. Warm brown upperparts, pale underparts, and distinct dark eye-mask give a characteristic shrike appearance. Usually perches upright on exposed bushes, wires, or fence posts while scanning for prey. Feeds mainly on insects, beetles, grasshoppers, lizards, frogs, and occasionally small birds. Like other shrikes, may impale prey on thorns or barbed wire for storage. Flight direct and slightly undulating. Calls are harsh chatter and sharp scolding notes.

Status in Kerala: Common winter migrant.

Rufous Treepie

Dendrocitta vagabunda

LC – Least Concern



A long-tailed, highly vocal member of the crow family commonly found in wooded villages, groves, plantations, scrub forests, gardens, and forest edges. Rich rufous body contrasts with black head and gray wings with white patches. Tail long and graduated with black tip. Usually active in noisy pairs or small groups moving acrobatically through trees. Omnivorous, feeding on fruits, insects, eggs, nestlings, lizards, rodents, and scraps near human habitation. Flight undulating with frequent glides. Calls varied and harsh, including metallic notes, rattles, and loud chatter.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

House Crow

Corvus splendens

LC – Least Concern



A familiar urban crow common around towns, fishing harbors, markets, villages, wetlands, and human settlements. Slim black crow with gray neck and breast, long legs, and slender bill. Highly intelligent, opportunistic, and adaptable. Feeds on almost anything including garbage, carrion, fish waste, insects, fruits, eggs, and human food scraps. Often forms noisy communal roosts and nesting colonies. Flight steady with regular wingbeats. Vocalizations include loud harsh caws and complex social calls. One of the most successful birds in human-dominated environments.

Status in Kerala: Abundant resident.

Large-billed Crow

Corvus macrorhynchos

LC – Least Concern



A large powerful all-black crow of forests, hills, plantations, towns, mangroves, and coastal areas. Distinguished from House Crow by heavier bill, bulkier build, shaggy throat feathers, and entirely black plumage. Usually seen singly, in pairs, or small groups. Omnivorous and highly adaptable, feeding on carrion, fruits, insects, reptiles, eggs, and refuse. Flight strong and direct with deep wingbeats. Calls are deep guttural croaks and resonant caws, noticeably harsher than House Crow. Frequently associated with forested and hilly regions.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Common Tailorbird

Orthotomus sutorius

LC – Least Concern



A tiny active warbler-like bird of gardens, scrub, plantations, hedges, wetlands, and urban greenery. Olive-green above with rufous forehead, pale underparts, and long often cocked tail. Usually restless and vocal, moving through dense shrubs and low vegetation while searching for insects, caterpillars, spiders, and small invertebrates. Famous for stitching leaves together using plant fibers and spider silk to create a cradle-like nest. Calls loud repetitive “cheeup-cheeup-cheeup” notes frequently heard throughout the day. Flight weak and fluttering between bushes.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Ashy Prinia

Prinia socialis

LC – Least Concern



A small lively prinia common in scrublands, gardens, grasslands, agricultural fields, wetlands, and village outskirts. Grayish upperparts, pale underparts, and long graduated tail often held upright. Breeding birds develop darker upperparts and more distinct plumage contrasts. Usually active low in bushes and grasses where it constantly flicks tail while feeding on insects, caterpillars, termites, and spiders. Calls are repetitive buzzy whistles and chirping notes. Flight short and weak between patches of vegetation.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Plain Prinia

Prinia inornata

LC – Least Concern



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A small plain-colored prinia inhabiting grasslands, reedbeds, paddy fields, marsh edges, and open scrub. Warm brown above with buff underparts and relatively shorter tail than Ashy Prinia. Usually skulks low in grasses and reeds, occasionally climbing stems while giving repetitive “zit-zit-zit” calls. Feeds on tiny insects, spiders, and larvae collected from grasses and low vegetation. Flight weak and fluttering. Often difficult to observe clearly due to secretive behavior and well-camouflaged plumage.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Paddyfield Warbler

Acrocephalus agricola

LC – Least Concern



A small migratory reed warbler found in marshes, reedbeds, flooded paddy fields, wet grasslands, and vegetated wetlands during winter. Brown above with pale buff underparts and a faint pale eyebrow. Usually remains hidden within reeds and grasses, moving mouse-like through dense vegetation while feeding on insects, larvae, spiders, and tiny aquatic invertebrates. Occasionally emerges briefly to sing or call from exposed stems. Calls are soft chacks and dry rattling notes. Flight weak and low over marsh vegetation.

Status in Kerala: Winter migrant.

Blyth's Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus dumetorum

LC – Least Concern



A plain-looking migratory warbler wintering in scrub, gardens, forest edges, reedbeds, plantations, and thick undergrowth. Brownish-olive above with pale underparts and faint supercilium. Usually secretive, moving quietly through dense bushes searching for insects, caterpillars, aphids, and spiders. Frequently flicks wings and tail while foraging. Song on breeding grounds highly musical, but wintering birds in Kerala are usually quiet, giving only soft ticking calls. Easily overlooked due to drab appearance and skulking habits.

Status in Kerala: Winter migrant.

Clamorous Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus stentoreus

LC – Least Concern



A large robust reed warbler of marshes, mangroves, reedbeds, canals, paddy fields, and wet grasslands. Warm brown above with pale buff underparts and long broad tail. Usually seen climbing among reeds and aquatic vegetation. Feeds on insects, spiders, snails, larvae, and small aquatic prey. Famous for its loud harsh chattering song delivered from exposed reed tops, especially during breeding season. Flight low and weak between reed patches. Frequently remains concealed despite loud vocalizations.

Status in Kerala: Resident and winter visitor.

Barn Swallow

Hirundo rustica

LC – Least Concern



A graceful migratory swallow of wetlands, agricultural fields, lakes, open countryside, and urban areas. Glossy blue-black upperparts, chestnut throat, pale underparts, and deeply forked tail with long streamers distinctive. Highly aerial, feeding continuously on flying insects captured in agile sweeping flight. Frequently seen skimming low over water and fields. Often gathers in large migratory flocks and communal roosts in reedbeds. Calls are cheerful twittering notes given in flight. Builds mud cup nests on buildings and bridges.

Status in Kerala: Winter migrant and passage migrant.

Eastern Red-rumped Swallow

Cecropis daurica

LC – Least Concern



A slender swallow recognized by pale underparts, blue-black upperparts, chestnut rump, and finely streaked buff underparts. Common around cliffs, bridges, wetlands, valleys, and open countryside. Flight graceful and buoyant with long glides and sweeping turns while catching aerial insects. Often flies higher than Barn Swallow. Builds enclosed mud nests with narrow entrance tunnels under bridges, culverts, and rocky ledges. Calls soft twittering and liquid chirps.

Status in Kerala: Resident and local migrant.

Streak-throated Swallow

Petrochelidon fluvicola

LC – Least Concern



A colonial swallow commonly associated with rivers, reservoirs, bridges, wetlands, and open water bodies. Distinguished by streaked throat, square tail, pale rump, and dark upperparts. Usually seen flying low over water catching insects in agile twisting flight. Frequently nests colonially under bridges and culverts using mud cup nests attached to vertical surfaces. Calls are soft twittering and buzzing notes. Often forms mixed flocks with other swallows.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Yellow-browed Bulbul

Acritillas indica

LC – Least Concern



A Western Ghats endemic bulbul of evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests, shaded plantations, and wooded valleys. Olive-green overall with bright yellow eyebrow, yellow throat, and pale eye-ring. Usually active in pairs or small groups in middle and upper canopy levels. Feeds on berries, figs, nectar, insects, and caterpillars. Flight short and direct between trees. Song rich, musical, and varied, often heard from dense foliage. An important seed disperser in forest ecosystems.

Status in Kerala: Resident endemic.

White-browed Bulbul

Pycnonotus luteolus

LC – Least Concern



A lively bulbul of scrublands, gardens, thorn forests, plantations, and dry open woodland. Brownish-olive overall with pale underparts and distinct white eyebrow. Usually active in pairs or small groups moving through bushes and low trees searching for berries, fruits, nectar, insects, and caterpillars. Calls cheerful and varied with bubbling whistles and chattering notes. Flight quick and direct between shrubs. Frequently nests in low bushes close to human habitation.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Red-whiskered Bulbul

Pycnonotus jocosus

LC – Least Concern



A striking and lively bulbul commonly found in gardens, plantations, forest edges, groves, and village habitats. Easily recognized by pointed black crest, white cheeks, red whisker patch below the eye, and crimson vent. Usually seen in pairs or small family groups moving actively through shrubs and fruiting trees. Feeds on berries, fruits, flower nectar, petals, insects, and caterpillars. Flight quick and undulating between trees. Song rich, bubbly, and highly varied with cheerful whistles and chatter. Frequently nests in ornamental shrubs close to human habitation.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Red-vented Bulbul

Pycnonotus cafer

LC – Least Concern



One of the most familiar garden birds across Kerala, occurring in towns, villages, plantations, scrublands, gardens, and agricultural landscapes. Dark brown-black overall with scaly patterning, black crest, white rump, and bright crimson vent. Highly adaptable and usually seen in pairs or small groups. Feeds on fruits, berries, flower petals, nectar, insects, and cultivated crops. Flight direct with rapid wingbeats. Calls are loud, varied, and often harsh, including whistles, chatter, and scolding notes. Aggressive around food sources and commonly nests near houses and gardens.

Status in Kerala: Abundant resident breeder.

Green Warbler

Phylloscopus nitidus

LC – Least Concern



A tiny migratory leaf warbler wintering in wooded gardens, forest edges, plantations, and evergreen forests. Bright green upperparts, pale underparts, and distinct pale supercilium give a fresh appearance. Constantly active among foliage, gleaning tiny insects, caterpillars, aphids, and spiders from leaves and twigs. Frequently flicks wings and tail while feeding. Flight weak and fluttering between trees. Calls include soft high-pitched “tsee” notes. Easily overlooked due to small size and restless canopy behavior.

Status in Kerala: Winter migrant.

Jungle Babbler

Argya striata

LC – Least Concern



A noisy sociable babbler of scrublands, gardens, groves, plantations, and village outskirts. Brownish-gray overall with pale eyes and loose fluffy plumage. Usually seen in noisy groups of six or more birds, giving rise to the nickname “Seven Sisters.” Feeds on insects, caterpillars, termites, fruits, seeds, and small reptiles while foraging actively on ground and low vegetation. Flight short and clumsy. Calls include constant chatter, squeals, and scolding notes. Strongly social and cooperative in nesting and chick-rearing behavior.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Yellow-billed Babbler

Argya affinis

LC – Least Concern



A common babbler of gardens, scrub forests, coconut groves, villages, plantations, and dry open woodland. Gray-brown overall with pale eye and distinctive yellow bill. Highly social and usually seen in noisy groups moving through bushes and ground vegetation. Feeds on insects, caterpillars, fruits, seeds, nectar, and small invertebrates. Frequently dust-bathes and sunbathes communally. Flight weak and hopping. Calls loud, varied, and conversational with continuous chatter among flock members.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Southern Hill Myna

Gracula indica

LC – Least Concern



A glossy black forest starling endemic to the Western Ghats, famous for its loud whistles and remarkable vocal mimicry. Distinguished by bright orange-yellow bill and fleshy yellow wattles on the head. Usually found in evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests, plantations, and wooded hills. Feeds mainly on figs, berries, fruits, nectar, and insects. Flight strong and direct with broad rounded wings. Often seen in noisy flocks visiting fruiting trees. Calls include whistles, screeches, gurgles, and accurate imitation of other birds.

Status in Kerala: Resident endemic.

Rosy Starling

Pastor roseus

LC – Least Concern



A striking migratory starling wintering in agricultural fields, wetlands, grasslands, orchards, and urban areas. Adults show glossy black head, wings, and tail contrasting with pale rosy-pink body. Usually seen in large flocks often mixed with Common Mynas and other starlings. Feeds on insects, locusts, termites, berries, fruits, and cultivated grains. Flight swift and highly synchronized in flocks. Calls are squeaky whistles and chatter. Numbers vary greatly depending on seasonal insect abundance.

Status in Kerala: Winter migrant.

Chestnut-tailed Starling

Sturnia malabarica

LC – Least Concern



A graceful pale-colored starling found in groves, plantations, fruiting trees, forest edges, and wooded villages. Creamy-gray body contrasts with glossy black cap and rich chestnut tail. Usually occurs in small flocks feeding on figs, berries, nectar, flower petals, and insects. Flight direct and swift with pointed wings. Calls are soft whistles, squeaks, and nasal chatter. Frequently visits flowering coral trees and fruiting figs.

Status in Kerala: Resident and local migrant.

Common Myna

Acridotheres tristis

LC – Least Concern



A highly adaptable and familiar bird of towns, villages, gardens, agricultural lands, and urban habitats. Brown overall with black head, yellow bill, yellow eye patch, and white wing flashes visible in flight. Usually seen in pairs or small groups walking boldly on the ground searching for insects, fruits, scraps, grains, frogs, and human food waste. Flight strong and direct. Calls extremely varied, including whistles, chatter, squeaks, and mimicry. Frequently nests in building cavities, roofs, and tree holes close to human habitation.

Status in Kerala: Abundant resident breeder.

Orange-headed Thrush

Geokichla citrina

LC – Least Concern



A beautiful shy thrush of evergreen forests, bamboo groves, plantations, wooded streams, and shaded gardens. Rich orange head and underparts contrast with bluish-gray upperparts and white wing markings. Usually solitary and secretive, hopping quietly through leaf litter searching for insects, worms, snails, berries, and fallen fruits. Song rich, melodious, and flute-like, especially during breeding season. Flight low and swift through undergrowth. Often remains hidden despite bright coloration.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Indian Blackbird

Turdus simillimus

LC – Least Concern



A Western Ghats endemic thrush of evergreen forests, sholas, plantations, wooded gardens, and hill slopes. Male glossy black with bright orange-yellow bill and eye-ring; female dark brown with paler throat. Usually seen singly or in pairs hopping on ground and leaf litter searching for worms, insects, snails, berries, and fruits. Song rich, melodious, and flute-like from exposed perches during mornings. Flight swift and direct between trees. More common in higher elevation forests and shaded habitats.

Status in Kerala: Resident endemic.

Asian Brown Flycatcher

Muscicapa dauurica

LC – Least Concern



A small plain migratory flycatcher wintering in forests, plantations, wooded gardens, mangroves, and shaded groves. Brownish-gray overall with pale throat, large dark eyes, and fine bill. Usually perches quietly on exposed twigs before making short aerial sallies to catch flying insects. Often returns repeatedly to the same perch. Flight light and fluttering. Calls soft thin whistles and ticking notes. Its calm behavior and unobtrusive plumage often make it easy to overlook.

Status in Kerala: Winter migrant.

Oriental Magpie-Robin

Copsychus saularis

LC – Least Concern



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A familiar songbird of gardens, villages, plantations, scrub, forest edges, and urban greenery. Male glossy black-and-white with long tail often held upright; female grayer with similar pattern. Frequently seen hopping on ground or low branches searching for insects, worms, larvae, and small invertebrates. Song exceptionally rich and melodious, especially during breeding season and early mornings. Flight quick and direct with flashes of white wing patches. Often nests in cavities, walls, and building crevices near houses.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Malabar Whistling-Thrush

Myophonus horsfieldii

LC – Least Concern



A large dark thrush endemic to the Western Ghats, famous for its rich melodious whistling song resembling human whistling. Glossy blackish plumage with brilliant cobalt-blue shoulder patches visible in sunlight. Found along shaded forest streams, waterfalls, rocky ravines, and evergreen forests. Usually solitary or in pairs hopping among wet rocks searching for crabs, snails, insects, frogs, and aquatic prey. Flight strong and low along streams. Calls among the most beautiful sounds of Western Ghats forests.

Status in Kerala: Resident endemic.

Pied Bushchat

Saxicola caprata

LC – Least Concern



© Albin Jacob (eBird)

A small upright chat of grasslands, scrublands, agricultural fields, marsh edges, and open countryside. Male glossy black with bold white wing patch; female brown with paler underparts. Usually perches conspicuously on grass stems, fences, and shrubs before darting down onto insects. Feeds mainly on beetles, grasshoppers, termites, caterpillars, and other small invertebrates. Flight short and fluttering. Calls include sharp clicks and musical whistles. Frequently flicks tail while perched.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Pale-billed Flowerpecker

Dicaeum erythrorhynchos

LC – Least Concern



One of India's smallest birds, commonly found in gardens, groves, plantations, scrub forests, forest edges, and urban greenery. Tiny and compact with olive-brown upperparts, pale underparts, short tail, and distinctly pale curved bill. Usually active high in flowering and fruiting trees where it feeds on tiny berries, nectar, flower buds, and small insects. Important disperser of mistletoe seeds, which pass rapidly through its digestive system. Flight fast and direct between trees with rapid wingbeats. Calls are thin high-pitched "tsee-tsee" notes often heard before the bird is seen.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Nilgiri Flowerpecker

Dicaeum concolor

LC – Least Concern



A small plain flowerpecker endemic to the Western Ghats, inhabiting evergreen forests, sholas, plantations, and wooded hills. Uniform grayish-brown overall with short tail and fine dark bill. Usually inconspicuous and active in canopy foliage where it feeds on berries, figs, nectar, and tiny insects. Frequently visits mistletoe-bearing trees and flowering plants. Flight quick and darting. Calls are soft thin whistles and sharp high notes. Often associates with mixed-species feeding flocks.

Status in Kerala: Resident endemic.

Purple-rumped Sunbird

Leptocoma zeylonica

LC – Least Concern



A tiny colorful sunbird common in gardens, plantations, flowering trees, mangroves, groves, and urban habitats. Male striking with metallic green crown, maroon back, yellow underparts, and distinct purple rump visible in flight; female olive above and yellow below. Feeds mainly on nectar from flowers but also catches insects and spiders, especially during breeding season. Frequently hovers briefly at flowers though usually feeds while perched. Flight rapid and hummingbird-like over short distances. Calls are sharp metallic chirps. Builds delicate hanging pouch nests suspended from branches or wires.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Purple Sunbird

Cinnyris asiaticus

LC – Least Concern



A widespread and highly adaptable sunbird occurring in gardens, scrublands, plantations, flowering trees, agricultural fields, and urban areas. Breeding male glossy metallic purple-black appearing blue in sunlight; nonbreeding males and females yellowish below with olive upperparts. Feeds mainly on nectar, insects, spiders, and small arthropods. Frequently hovers around flowers but more often clings to blossoms while feeding. Flight swift and buzzing with rapid wingbeats. Calls include high-pitched twittering and metallic notes. Builds hanging purse-shaped nests from fibers, cobwebs, and plant fluff.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Loten's Sunbird

Cinnyris lotenius

LC – Least Concern



A large long-billed sunbird common in coastal vegetation, gardens, plantations, scrub forests, and flowering groves. Male glossy purple-black with maroon sheen and remarkably long curved bill; female olive-brown above with yellowish underparts. Feeds on nectar from tubular flowers such as hibiscus and coral trees, along with insects and spiders. Usually active and restless among flowering branches. Flight rapid with audible wing hum. Calls metallic and sharp. Particularly common in coconut-growing regions and coastal Kerala.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Little Spiderhunter

Arachnothera longirostra

LC – Least Concern



© Gavin Emmons (eBird)

A long-billed forest sunbird of evergreen forests, plantations, bamboo groves, and shaded gardens. Olive-brown overall with yellow underparts and long decurved bill specially adapted for feeding from deep tubular flowers. Unlike most sunbirds, often hangs from leaves and flowers while feeding rather than hovering. Diet includes nectar, spiders, insects, and small arthropods. Frequently visits banana flowers, heliconias, and forest blossoms. Calls are thin rapid squeaks and high whistles. Builds elongated hanging nests suspended beneath large leaves.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Jerdon's Leafbird

Chloropsis jerdoni

LC – Least Concern



A brilliantly green canopy bird of evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests, plantations, and wooded hills of the Western Ghats. Male bright green with black throat and bluish moustachial markings; female duller and lacks black throat. Expertly camouflaged among foliage. Feeds on nectar, fruits, berries, insects, caterpillars, and spiders. Agile and acrobatic while foraging among flowering and fruiting trees. Song highly musical with remarkable mimicry of other birds. Flight swift and direct between canopy trees.

Status in Kerala: Resident endemic to the Western Ghats region.

Golden-fronted Leafbird

Chloropsis aurifrons

LC – Least Concern



A vivid green leafbird of forests, plantations, gardens, groves, and flowering trees. Male shows golden-orange forehead, black face and throat, and bright green body; female greener and duller. Usually active in canopy and middle tree levels where it feeds on nectar, fruits, berries, insects, and flower petals. Flight rapid and direct between trees. Calls include whistles, chirps, and impressive mimicry of other species. Often associates with bulbuls, flowerpeckers, and sunbirds around flowering trees.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Baya Weaver

Ploceus philippinus

LC – Least Concern



A sociable weaverbird of grasslands, wetlands, paddy fields, agricultural landscapes, and village outskirts. Breeding male bright yellow on crown and breast with dark face mask; females and nonbreeding males streaked brown and sparrow-like. Famous for constructing elaborate hanging woven nests from grass strips, usually suspended over water or thorny trees for protection. Feeds mainly on grass seeds, grains, rice, insects, and small invertebrates. Often forms large flocks outside breeding season. Calls are continuous chattering and buzzing notes around colonies.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Scaly-breasted Munia

Lonchura punctulata

LC – Least Concern



A small finch-like bird common in grasslands, paddy fields, scrub, wetlands, gardens, and agricultural areas. Brown upperparts contrast with white underparts covered in dark scale-like markings. Usually seen in flocks feeding on grass seeds, rice grains, and small seeds. Flight fast and undulating with frequent flock cohesion. Calls are soft twittering and chirping notes. Frequently roosts communally in reeds and bushes. Builds ball-shaped grass nests hidden within dense vegetation.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

White-rumped Munia

Lonchura striata

LC – Least Concern



A small dark munia of grasslands, wetlands, reedbeds, bamboo thickets, paddy fields, and cultivated areas. Chocolate-brown overall with contrasting white rump clearly visible in flight. Usually occurs in noisy flocks feeding on grass seeds, grains, and tender shoots. Flight rapid and tightly coordinated. Calls are soft twittering whistles. Frequently roosts communally in reeds and thorny bushes. Breeds during monsoon when grasses are abundant.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Tricolored Munia

Lonchura malacca

LC – Least Concern



A striking munia of marshes, wet grasslands, paddy fields, and reedbeds. Adults have black head and underparts, chestnut back and wings, and white belly. Usually found in small flocks feeding on grass seeds, rice grains, and aquatic grass seeds. Flight swift and undulating over reeds and fields. Calls are soft twittering notes. Often nests colonially in tall grasses and reeds close to wetlands. Populations fluctuate with rainfall and grass seed availability.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Gray Wagtail

Motacilla cinerea

LC – Least Concern



A slender migratory wagtail wintering along streams, rivers, waterfalls, canals, reservoirs, and wet rocky habitats. Elegant gray upperparts contrast with bright yellow underparts and long constantly wagging tail. Usually seen walking actively along water edges searching for aquatic insects, larvae, flies, and small invertebrates. Flight graceful and undulating with sharp metallic calls. Frequently perches on rocks and exposed branches near flowing water. One of the most attractive winter wagtails in Kerala.

Status in Kerala: Common winter migrant.

White-browed Wagtail

Motacilla maderaspatensis

LC – Least Concern



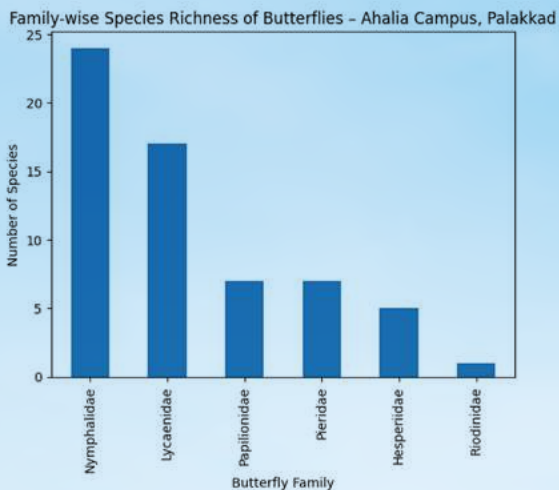
India's largest wagtail, commonly found around rivers, lakes, tanks, canals, reservoirs, and urban wetlands. Bold black-and-white plumage with conspicuous white eyebrow and constantly wagging long tail. Usually seen singly or in pairs walking along shorelines and muddy edges searching for insects, larvae, worms, and aquatic invertebrates. Flight undulating with sharp metallic calls often given in flight. Frequently nests near bridges, culverts, and waterside structures. Confident and conspicuous around human settlements.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Butterflies of Ahalia Campus

The butterfly survey conducted at Ahalia Campus recorded a total of 61 species belonging to six families, demonstrating the importance of the campus as a habitat for butterfly diversity. The variety of species recorded reflects the presence of diverse habitats and a rich assemblage of flowering and host plants within the campus.

The campus comprises a mosaic of gardens, lawns, wetlands, open spaces, shrublands, and tree-covered areas that provide suitable conditions for feeding, breeding, and shelter. These habitats support both common and habitat-sensitive butterfly species throughout the year.



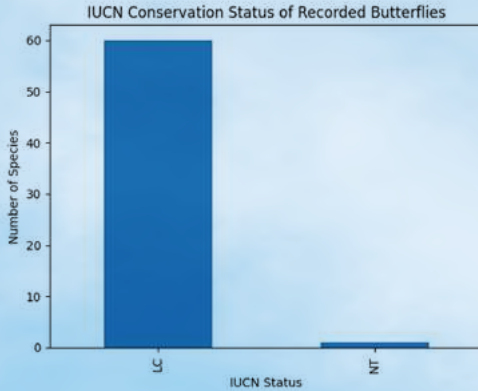
(Refer to Bar Chart: “Family-wise Species Richness of Butterflies – Ahalia Campus, Palakkad”)

Survey recorded **61 butterfly species** belonging to **six families**, with a clear dominance of **Nymphalidae (Brush-footed butterflies)**, which accounted for the highest species richness.

Nymphalidae	24 species ($\approx 39\%$)
Lycaenidae	17 species ($\approx 28\%$)
Papilionidae	7 species ($\approx 11\%$)
Pieridae	7 species ($\approx 11\%$)
Hesperiidae	5 species ($\approx 8\%$)
Riodinidae	1 species ($\approx 2\%$)

Interpretation

- ✱ The dominance of Nymphalidae indicates habitat heterogeneity, including open grasslands, shrub layers, and semi-wooded patches.
- ✱ High Lycaenidae diversity suggests the availability of host plants, grasses, legumes, and ant-associated microhabitats, typical of managed green campuses.
- ✱ Presence of Papilionidae reflects good larval host plant diversity, including trees and climbers.
- ✱ Riodinidae being represented by a single species is expected, as Judies are generally habitat-specific and less diverse in campus ecosystems.

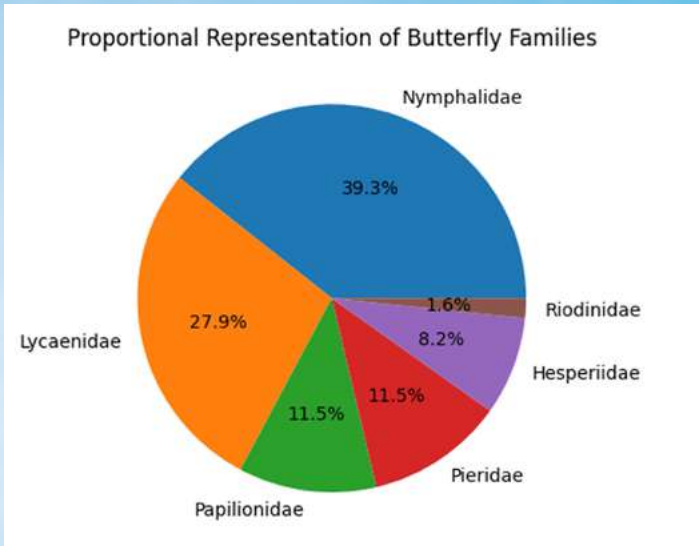


(Refer to Bar Chart: “IUCN Conservation Status of Recorded Butterflies”)

- ✱ Least Concern (LC): 60 species
- ✱ Near Threatened (NT): 1 species
 - » *Troides minos* (Sahyadri Birdwing)

Interpretation

- ❖ The overwhelming dominance of Least Concern species indicates a stable butterfly assemblage with no immediate conservation alarm.
- ❖ The occurrence of Sahyadri Birdwing (NT) is ecologically significant, as it is:
 - » Endemic to the Western Ghats
 - » Sensitive to habitat disturbance
 - » Dependent on specific larval host plants (*Aristolochia* spp.)



(Refer to Pie Chart: “Proportional Representation of Butterfly Families”)

The pie chart visually reinforces that:

Nearly **two-thirds of the species belong to Nymphalidae and Lycaenidae**

Remaining families contribute smaller but ecologically important shares

Ecological Implication

High proportion of **generalist and habitat-adaptive families** reflects:

Continuous nectar availability

Seasonal floral diversity

Mosaic of lawns, gardens, wetlands, and tree cover

The campus acts as a **refuge for common and moderately sensitive species**, supporting both resident and dispersing butterflies.

Butterfly Checklist

The butterfly species in this checklist are arranged family-wise

following the commonly accepted taxonomic classification used in Indian butterfly literature and field guides.

Sl. No.	Common Name	Malayalam Name	Scientific Name	Family	Status
1	Tailed Jay	വീരവാലൻ	Graphium agamemnon	Papilionidae	LC
2	Blue Mormon	കൃഷ്ണശലഭം	Papilio polymnestor	Papilionidae	LC
3	Northern Lime Swallowtail	നാരക ശലഭം	Papilio demoleus	Papilionidae	LC
4	Common Mormon	നാരകക്കുറ്റപ്പൻ	Papilio polytes	Papilionidae	LC
5	Sahyadri Bird-wing	ഗന്ധശലഭം	Troides minos	Papilionidae	NT
6	Common Rose	നാട്ടുരോസ്	Pachliopta aristolochiae	Papilionidae	LC
7	Crimson Rose	ചക്കരരോസ്	Pachliopta hector	Papilionidae	LC
8	Oriental Lemon Emigrant	കൊന്നമുത്തി	Catopsilia pomona	Pieridae	LC
9	Oriental Mottled Emigrant	തകരമുത്തി	Catopsilia pyranthe	Pieridae	LC
10	Sylhet Three-spot Grass Yellow	തകര പാപ്പാത്തി	Eurema blanda	Pieridae	LC
11	Oriental Common Grass Yellow	മഞ്ഞ പാപ്പാത്തി	Eurema hecabe	Pieridae	LC
12	Oriental Psyche	പൊട്ടു വെള്ളാട്ടി	Leptosia nina	Pieridae	LC
13	Sahyadri Common Albatross	വെൺശലഭം	Appias albina	Pieridae	LC
14	Indian Jezebel	വിലാസിനി	Delias eucharis	Pieridae	LC
15	Indian Angled Castor	ചിത്രകൻ	Ariadne ariadne	Nymphalidae	LC
16	Dakhan Common Castor	ആവണച്ചോപ്പൻ	Ariadne merione	Nymphalidae	LC
17	Oriental Plain Tiger	എരിക്കുതപ്പി	Danaus chrysippus	Nymphalidae	LC

Sl. No.	Common Name	Malayalam Name	Scientific Name	Family	Status
18	Oriental Striped Tiger	വരയൻ കടുവ	Danaus genutia	Nymphalidae	LC
19	Indian Common Crow	അരളി ശലഭം	Euploea core	Nymphalidae	LC
20	Double-branded Black Crow	പാൽവള്ളി ശലഭം	Euploea sylvester	Nymphalidae	LC
21	Coromandel Glassy Tiger	തെളിനീലക്കടുവ	Parantica aglea	Nymphalidae	LC
22	Oriental Blue Tiger	നീലക്കടുവ	Tirumala limniace	Nymphalidae	LC
23	Dakhan Dark Blue Tiger	കരിനീലക്കടുവ	Tirumala septentrionis	Nymphalidae	LC
24	Tawny Coster	തീച്ചിറകൻ	Acraea terpsicore	Nymphalidae	LC
25	Dakhan Baron	കനിത്തോഴൻ	Euthalia aconthea	Nymphalidae	LC
26	Indian Common Sailer	പൊന്തച്ചുറ്റൻ	Neptis hylas	Nymphalidae	LC
27	Danaid Eggfly	ചൊട്ടശലഭം	Hypolimnasia misippus	Nymphalidae	LC
28	Oriental Peacock Pansy	മയിൽക്കണ്ണി	Junonia almana	Nymphalidae	LC
29	Chocolate Pansy	ചോക്കളേറ്റ് ശലഭം	Junonia iphita	Nymphalidae	LC
30	Chinese Lemon Pansy	പുള്ളിക്കറുന്തൻ	Junonia lemonias	Nymphalidae	LC
31	Oriental Common Evening Brown	കരിയില ശലഭം	Melanitis leda	Nymphalidae	LC
32	Dakhan Bamboo Treebrown	മുളന്തവിടൻ	Lethe europa	Nymphalidae	LC
33	Common Treebrown	പൂർത്തവിടൻ	Lethe rohria	Nymphalidae	LC
34	Sahyadri Long-branded Bushbrown	ചെറുവരയൻ പൊന്തത്തവിടൻ	Mycalesis igilia	Nymphalidae	LC

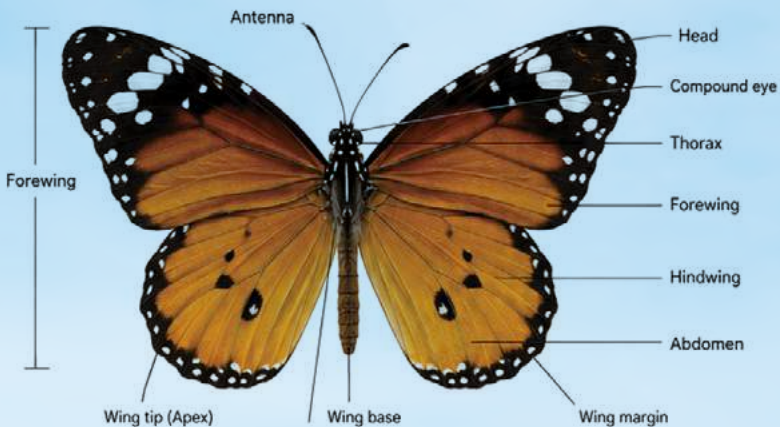
Sl. No.	Common Name	Malayalam Name	Scientific Name	Family	Status
35	Dakhan Common Bushbrown	തെക്കൻ പൊന്തത്തവിടൻ	Mycalesis perseus	Nymphalidae	LC
36	Sahyadri Medus Brown	കരിംപൊന്തത്തവിടൻ	Orsotriaena medus	Nymphalidae	LC
37	Common Five-ring	പഞ്ചനേത്രി	Ypthima baldus	Nymphalidae	LC
38	Common Four-ring	നാൽക്കണ്ണി	Ypthima huebneri	Nymphalidae	LC
39	Lankan Plum Judy	ആട്ടക്കാരി	Abisara echeirus	Riodinidae	LC
40	Continental Common Pierrot	നാട്ടുകോമാളി	Castalius rosimon	Lycaenidae	LC
41	Indian Lime Blue	നാരകനീലി	Chilades lajus	Lycaenidae	LC
42	Indian Cupid	മണിമാരൻ	Cupido lacturnus	Lycaenidae	LC
43	Oriental Gram Blue	പയർനീലി	Euchrysops cnejus	Lycaenidae	LC
44	Oriental Grass Jewel	രത്നനീലി	Freyeria putli	Lycaenidae	LC
45	Indian Dark Cerulean	കരിംപൊട്ടുവാലാട്ടി	Jamides bochus	Lycaenidae	LC
46	Oriental Common Cerulean	പൊട്ടുവാലാട്ടി	Jamides celeno	Lycaenidae	LC
47	Pea Blue	പട്ടാണി നീലി	Lampides boeticus	Lycaenidae	LC
48	Asian Zebra Blue	സീബ്ര നീലി	Leptotes plinius	Lycaenidae	LC
49	Oriental Plains Cupid	നാട്ടുമാരൻ	Chilades pandava	Lycaenidae	LC
50	Dakhan Pale Grass Blue	വെൺ പുൽനീലി	Pseudozizeeria maha	Lycaenidae	LC
51	Indian Red Pierrot	ചെങ്കോമാളി	Talicauda nyseus	Lycaenidae	LC
52	Dark Grass Blue	ഇരുളൻ പുൽനീലി	Zizeeria karsandra	Lycaenidae	LC

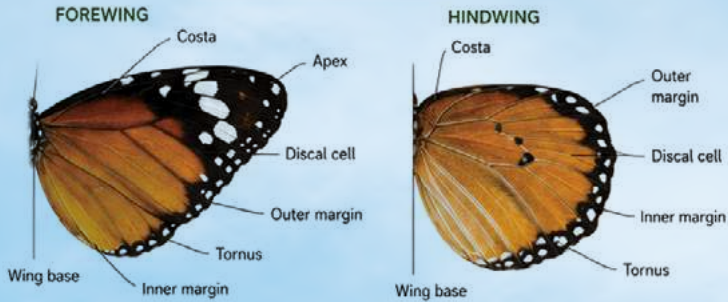
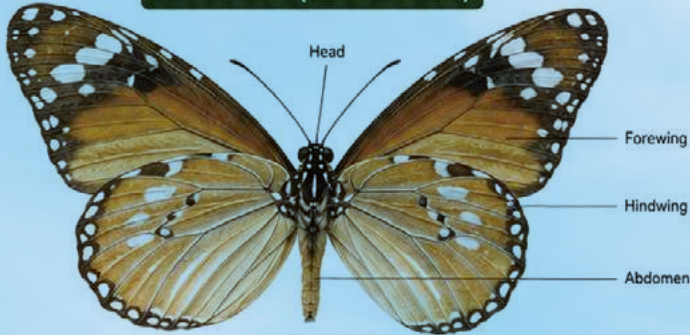
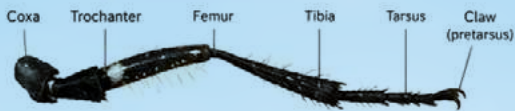
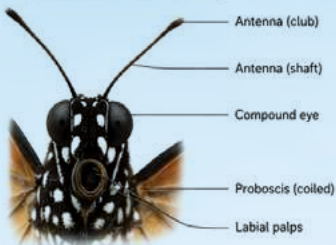
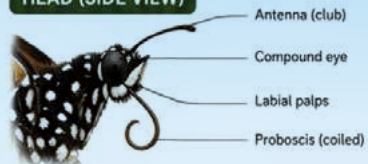
Sl. No.	Common Name	Malayalam Name	Scientific Name	Family	Status
53	Indian Lesser Grass Blue	ചെറു പുൽനീലി	Zizina otis	Lycaenidae	LC
54	Indian Tiny Grass Blue	ചിന്നപുൽനീലി	Zizula hylax	Lycaenidae	LC
55	Tamil Centaur Oakblue	യവന തളിർനീലി	Arhopala centaurus	Lycaenidae	LC
56	Monkey Puzzle	ഇരുതലച്ചി	Rathinda amor	Lycaenidae	LC
57	Pygmy Scrub Hopper	ചിന്ന പുൽച്ചാടൻ	Aeromachus pygmaeus	Hesperiidae	LC
58	Rice Swift	നാട്ടു ശരശലഭം	Borbo cinnara	Hesperiidae	LC
59	Oriental Grey Swift	ചതുരപ്പെട്ടൻ ശരശലഭം	Parnara bada	Hesperiidae	LC
60	Southern Chestnut Bob	ചെങ്കുന്തൻ	Iambrix salsala	Hesperiidae	LC
61	Dakhan Golden Angle	സ്വർണ്ണപ്പൂപ്പൻ	Abaratha ranssonettii	Hesperiidae	LC

Butterfly identification features

Commonly used in bird description

WHOLE BUTTERFLY (DORSAL VIEW)



WING (DORSAL VIEW)**UNDERPARTS (VENTRAL VIEW)****ABDOMEN (DORSAL VIEW)****LEG (SIDE VIEW)****HEAD (FRONT VIEW)****HEAD (SIDE VIEW)**

Tailed Jay (വിറവാലൻ)

Graphium agamemnon

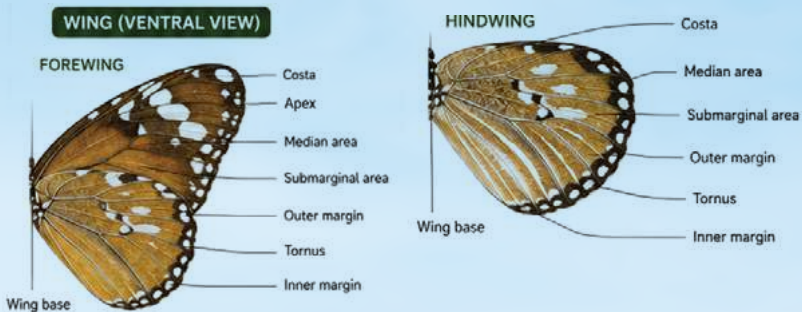
Family: *Papilionidae*

LC – Least Concern



A fast-flying and striking swallowtail commonly seen in evergreen forests, gardens, plantations, forest edges, and urban green spaces. Black wings boldly marked with bright apple-green spots and streaks create a highly distinctive appearance in flight. Unlike many swallowtails, lacks elongated tails on hindwings despite the name. Flight extremely rapid, erratic, and restless, often rarely settling except to nectar or mud-puddle. Frequently visits flowering plants such as *Ixora*, *Lantana*, and *Clerodendrum*. Caterpillars feed mainly on plants of the custard-apple family (*Annonaceae*), including *Polyalthia* and *Annona*. Often active throughout the year in humid regions of Kerala.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.



Blue Mormon (കൃഷ്ണശലഭം)

Papilio polymnestor

Family: Papilionidae

LC – Least Concern



One of India's largest and most spectacular swallowtails, designated as the State Butterfly of Maharashtra but also common in Kerala. Velvety black with brilliant iridescent blue patches on hindwings. Female slightly larger and paler. Common in evergreen forests, gardens, citrus orchards, plantations, and wooded urban areas. Strong and graceful flight with slow deep wingbeats. Frequently visits flowering trees and damp ground for minerals. Larvae feed primarily on citrus plants including lime, orange, and curry leaf relatives. Particularly active during monsoon and post-monsoon months.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Northern Lime Swallowtail (നാരക ശലഭം)

Papilio demoleus

Family: Papilionidae

LC – Least Concern



A widespread and highly adaptable swallowtail often found in gardens, agricultural lands, citrus plantations, scrublands, and urban habitats. Black with cream-yellow markings and red-blue spots near hindwing margin. Unlike many swallowtails, lacks tail extensions. Flight fast, direct, and energetic. Frequently visits flowers and mud-puddling sites. Caterpillars are serious pests of citrus plants, feeding on lemon, lime, orange, and curry leaf species. Young larvae resemble bird droppings for camouflage. Adults active year-round in warm climates.

Status in Kerala: Very common resident breeder.

Common Mormon (നാരകക്കുറ്റപ്പൻ)

Papilio polytes

Family: Papilionidae

LC – Least Concern



A highly variable swallowtail common in gardens, plantations, scrub forests, forest edges, and urban habitats. Males black with pale spots; females occur in multiple forms, several mimicking toxic butterflies such as Common Rose and Crimson Rose. Flight strong, graceful, and relatively low. Frequently visits flowers including Ixora, Lantana, and Jasmines. Larvae feed mainly on citrus plants and curry leaf trees. A classic example of mimicry in Indian butterflies. Often among the first large butterflies noticed in gardens.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Sahyadri Birdwing (ശാസ്ത്രലഭം)

Troides minos

Family: Papilionidae



LC – Least Concern

The largest butterfly in southern India and endemic to the Western Ghats. Magnificent black-and-golden-yellow butterfly with broad wings and powerful flight. Males brighter yellow; females larger and darker. Usually seen gliding majestically above forest canopy, river valleys, plantations, and flowering trees. Feeds on nectar from large flowers including Mus-saenda and Lantana. Larvae feed on Aristolochia vines, from which they derive toxic compounds that deter predators. Flight slow, strong, and highly conspicuous. Symbolic species of Western Ghats biodiversity.

Status in Kerala: Resident endemic to the Western Ghats.

Common Rose (മാട്ടുതോൽ)

Pachliopta aristolochiae

Family: Papilionidae



LC – Least Concern

A graceful black swallowtail with crimson body, white patches on forewings, and brilliant scarlet spots on hindwings. Slow floating flight and warning coloration advertise its toxicity to predators. Common in gardens, scrublands, plantations, forest edges, and urban habitats. Larvae feed on Aristolochia vines and accumulate toxic compounds, making both caterpillars and adults distasteful. Frequently visits flowering plants and often flies low over vegetation. Serves as an important model species for mimicry by female Common Mormon butterflies.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Crimson Rose (ചക്കരറോസ്)

Pachliopta hector

Family: Papilionidae

LC – Least Concern



A spectacular black swallowtail with crimson-red body, white forewing patches, and vivid scarlet hindwing markings. Larger and more striking than Common Rose. Flight slow, elegant, and sail-like. Common around gardens, scrub forests, plantations, coastal vegetation, and forest edges. Larvae feed on *Aristolochia* species and are toxic to predators. Adults frequently nectar on flowering shrubs and perform communal roosting in vegetation. One of the most recognizable butterflies in peninsular India.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Oriental Lemon Emigrant (കൊന്നമുത്തി)

Catopsilia pomona

Family: Pieridae

LC – Least Concern



A medium-sized yellow-white butterfly famous for seasonal migrations and mass movements. Occurs in gardens, scrublands, agricultural areas, wetlands, and forest edges. Color varies from lemon-yellow to creamy white depending on sex and seasonal form. Flight rapid, purposeful, and often high above ground. Frequently visits flowering plants and damp mud. Larvae feed mainly on cassia species (Senna and Cassia). During migration seasons, large directional movements may be observed across Kerala landscapes.

Status in Kerala: Common resident and seasonal migrant.

Oriental Mottled Emigrant (കരമുത്തി)

Catopsilia pyranthe

Family: Pieridae

LC – Least Concern



A pale yellow to creamy-white butterfly with faint mottled markings beneath the wings. Common in scrublands, gardens, agricultural fields, dry deciduous forests, and urban greenery. Flight swift and wandering, often low over open ground. Frequently visits flowers and mud-puddling sites. Larvae feed on cassia plants and related legumes. Seasonal forms vary considerably in wing coloration and markings. Often seen migrating in loose groups during favorable weather conditions.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Sylhet Three-spot Grass Yellow (തകര പാപ്പാത്തി)

Eurema blanda

Family: Pieridae

LC – Least Concern



A small bright-yellow butterfly of forest edges, gardens, scrublands, and grassy habitats. Distinguished by three dark spots on underside hindwing and narrow black borders above. Usually flies close to the ground with weak fluttering movements. Frequently gathers at damp soil and wet patches for mineral uptake. Larvae feed on legumes and small shrubs. Most active during sunny mornings and after rains.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Oriental Common Grass Yellow (മഞ്ഞ പാപ്പാത്തി)

Eurema hecabe

Family: Pieridae

LC – Least Concern



One of the most widespread and abundant small yellow butterflies in Kerala. Bright yellow with black wing borders, especially prominent in females. Found in gardens, grasslands, agricultural lands, roadsides, wetlands, and forest clearings. Flight weak, fluttery, and close to vegetation. Larvae feed on legumes and cassia species. Adults frequently nectar on small flowers and gather in large numbers on damp ground. Seasonal forms vary in intensity of markings.

Status in Kerala: Very common resident breeder.

Oriental Psyche (പൊട്ടു വെള്ളാട്ടി)

Leptosia nina

Family: Pieridae

LC – Least Concern



A delicate ghostly-white butterfly of shaded gardens, forest edges, bamboo thickets, and moist woodland. Extremely thin wings and slow fluttering flight resemble a drifting leaf or small moth. Usually flies weakly through undergrowth and low vegetation. Underside marked with delicate brown lines and dots. Larvae feed on caper family plants (Capparaceae). Adults frequently rest beneath leaves and are easily overlooked despite abundance. One of the daintiest butterflies of Kerala forests.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Sahyadri Common Albatross (വെൺശലഭം)

Appias albina

Family: -e

LC – Least Concern



A medium-sized white butterfly endemic to the Western Ghats region. White above with dark wing borders and greenish-yellow undersides marked with delicate veins. Common in evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests, plantations, and forest streams. Flight rapid and direct, often along forest paths and canopy gaps. Frequently mud-puddles in groups on wet ground. Larvae feed on plants of the caper family. Seasonal forms show variations in underside coloration.

Status in Kerala: Resident endemic to the Western Ghats.

Indian Jezebel (മലയാളത്തിൽ)

Delias eucharis

Family: Pieridae

LC – Least Concern



One of India's most beautiful butterflies, easily recognized by white upperwings and brilliantly colored undersides with yellow, crimson, and black patterns. Slow floating flight usually high among flowering trees, gardens, groves, and forest edges. Feeds on nectar from flowering shrubs and trees. Larvae feed mainly on mistletoe plants growing on trees. Bright warning coloration advertises distastefulness to predators. Frequently roosts communally during evenings.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Indian Angled Castor (ചിത്രകൻ)

Ariadne ariadne

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A medium-sized orange-brown butterfly with fine wavy lines and sharply angled wings giving a dry leaf-like appearance. Common in scrublands, gardens, plantations, dry forests, and open country. Flight rapid and jerky close to ground level. Frequently basks with wings spread open in sunlight. Larvae feed mainly on castor (*Ricinus communis*) and related euphorbia plants. Adults visit flowers, damp patches, and fallen fruits. Dry-season forms are more angular and cryptic.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Dakhan Common Castor (ആവണച്ചൊപ്പൻ)

Ariadne merione

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A medium-sized orange-brown butterfly common in scrublands, dry forests, gardens, plantations, grasslands, and open countryside. Wings marked with fine wavy brown lines and slightly scalloped margins, giving a dry leaf-like appearance when at rest. Usually flies low and rapidly with jerky movements, frequently settling on sunlit leaves or bare ground. Adults often bask with wings spread open. Larvae feed mainly on castor (*Ricinus communis*) and related euphorbia plants. Seasonal forms vary in brightness and wing shape, especially during dry periods.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Oriental Plain Tiger (എരിക്കുരച്ചി)

Danaus chrysippus

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



One of the most widespread and recognizable butterflies in India. Bright orange-brown wings bordered black with white spots. Flight slow, floating, and unhurried, often gliding gracefully over grasslands, gardens, wetlands, agricultural fields, and scrub habitats. Larvae feed mainly on milkweed plants (*Calotropis* and related species), absorbing toxic compounds that protect both caterpillar and adult from predators. Adults frequently nectar on flowering plants and often gather in communal roosts. An important model species in butterfly mimicry systems.

Status in Kerala: Very common resident breeder.

Oriental Striped Tiger (വരയൻ കടുവ)

Danaus genutia

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A striking orange butterfly with bold black vein-like stripes and white-spotted black borders. Common in gardens, plantations, forest edges, wetlands, and coastal habitats. Flight slow, graceful, and highly characteristic, usually several feet above ground. Larvae feed on milkweed plants, especially *Calotropis* and *Tylophora*, becoming distasteful to predators through stored toxins. Adults frequently visit flowers for nectar and may form communal roosts. Often confused with Plain Tiger but distinguished by stronger black striping.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Indian Common Crow (അരളി ശലഭം)

Euploea core

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A large dark chocolate-brown butterfly with rows of white spots along wing margins. Common in gardens, plantations, mangroves, forest edges, scrublands, and urban habitats. Flight slow, lazy, and floating. Larvae feed on toxic plants including milkweeds and oleanders, making adults distasteful to predators. Frequently involved in mimicry relationships with other butterflies. Adults often visit flowering shrubs and damp patches. Communal roosting behavior common during evenings and migration periods.

Status in Kerala: Very common resident breeder.

Double-branded Black Crow (പാൽവള്ളി ശലഭം)

Euploea sylvester

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



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A dark forest butterfly distinguished by velvety brown-black wings with bluish sheen and characteristic double scent-brand marks in males. Usually found in evergreen forests, shaded plantations, forest edges, and wooded streams. Flight slow, gliding, and graceful through shaded habitats. Larvae feed on toxic plants of the dogbane and milkweed families. Adults frequently visit flowers and damp patches for minerals. More strongly associated with forests than the Common Crow.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Coromandel Glassy Tiger (തെളിനീലക്കടുവ)

Parantica aglea

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A beautiful semi-transparent butterfly of evergreen forests, plantations, wooded gardens, and forest edges. Wings pale bluish-white with black veins and borders creating a glass-like appearance in sunlight. Flight slow, buoyant, and floating, often through shaded canopy openings. Larvae feed on toxic milkweed relatives and creepers, making adults distasteful. Frequently seen mud-puddling or visiting flowers for nectar. May participate in seasonal migrations and communal roosting.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Oriental Blue Tiger (നീലക്കടുവ)

Tirumala limniace

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A striking black butterfly marked with bluish-white streaks and spots. Common in gardens, wetlands, plantations, forest edges, and coastal habitats. Flight graceful, slow, and drifting, often gliding effortlessly between trees. Larvae feed on toxic vines and milkweed relatives. Adults nectar widely and frequently gather in large migratory congregations and communal roosts. During migration seasons, spectacular directional movements may be observed across Kerala.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder and seasonal migrant.

Dakhan Dark Blue Tiger (കരിനീലക്കടുവ)

Tirumala septentrionis

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A large dark butterfly resembling the Blue Tiger but with deeper black coloration and narrower bluish markings. Common in forest edges, plantations, moist deciduous forests, and shaded habitats. Flight smooth and floating, usually through middle canopy levels. Larvae feed on milkweed relatives and toxic climbers. Adults frequently visit flowers and mud-puddling sites. Often participates in seasonal migrations with other tiger butterflies.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder and local migrant.

Tawny Coster (തീച്ചിറകൻ)

Acraea terpsicore

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A bright orange butterfly with black spots and semi-transparent wings, common in scrublands, gardens, grasslands, roadsides, and urban habitats. Flight weak, fluttering, and leisurely, usually close to the ground. Larvae feed on passionflower vines and related plants, accumulating chemicals that deter predators. Adults frequently bask with wings open and visit flowering herbs for nectar. Expanding rapidly in distribution across southern India in recent decades.

Status in Kerala: Very common resident breeder.

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern

A medium-sized forest butterfly with rich brown wings marked by pale bands and subtle blue or green gloss. Usually found in evergreen forests,



moist deciduous forests, plantations, and wooded streams. Flight fast, darting, and territorial, often returning repeatedly to favored perches. Males frequently bask on sunlit leaves or mud-puddle for minerals. Larvae feed on trees and woody climbers. Adults rarely visit flowers, preferring tree sap, overripe fruits, and damp ground.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Indian Common Sailer (പൊന്തച്ചുറ്റൻ)

Neptis hylas

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A graceful black-and-white butterfly common in forest edges, gardens, plantations, scrublands, and wooded streams. Distinctive white bands across dark wings create a striking pattern. Flight characteristic: several quick wingbeats followed by short glides, resembling the motion of a sailing boat. Frequently settles on leaves with wings spread flat. Larvae feed on legumes and related plants. Adults visit flowers, damp soil, and occasionally animal droppings.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Danaid Eggfly (ചൊട്ടശലഭം)

Hypolimnas misippus

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A sexually dimorphic butterfly common in gardens, scrublands, roadsides, agricultural lands, and coastal habitats. Male velvety black with white wing patches bordered iridescent blue; female highly variable and often mimics toxic Plain Tiger butterflies. Flight strong, rapid, and territorial. Frequently basks on sunlit ground and visits flowers. Larvae feed on purslane and related herbaceous plants. One of the classic examples of female mimicry in Indian butterflies.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Oriental Peacock Pansy (മയിൽക്കണ്ണി)

Junonia almana

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



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A bright orange butterfly with spectacular eye-spots resembling peacock feathers on both wings. Common in gardens, grasslands, wetlands, scrublands, and agricultural fields. Flight fast and erratic close to the ground. Dry-season forms become duller and more leaf-like beneath. Adults frequently bask in sunlight with wings spread wide. Larvae feed on herbs and creeping plants, especially acanthus relatives. Eye-spots help deter predators by startlinging them.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Chocolate Pansy (ചോക്ലേറ്റ് ശലഭം)

Junonia iphita

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A richly patterned brown butterfly of shaded gardens, forest edges, plantations, and scrub habitats. Wings beautifully marked with wavy bands and eye-spots in shades of chocolate, cream, and orange. Usually flies low with quick jerky movements before settling on ground or leaves. Frequently basks with wings open in patches of sunlight. Larvae feed on herbs and creeping plants. Dry-season forms become darker and more cryptic.

Chinese Lemon Pansy (പുള്ളിക്കറുമ്പൻ)

Junonia lemonias

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A medium-sized brown butterfly with prominent yellow-ringed eye-spots on all wings. Common in gardens, roadsides, grasslands, scrublands, wetlands, and agricultural areas. Flight rapid, low, and highly territorial; males often return repeatedly to the same perch. Frequently basks on bare ground with wings spread flat. Larvae feed on various herbs and acanthus family plants. Seasonal forms vary considerably in coloration and wing markings.

Status in Kerala: Very common resident breeder.

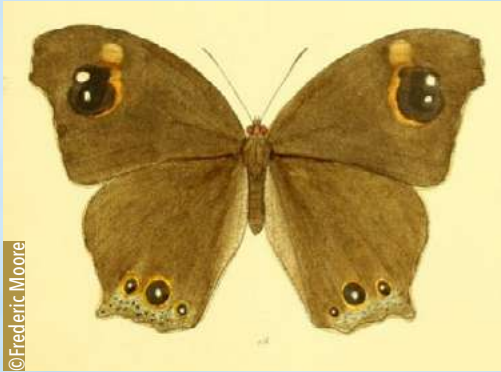
Oriental Common Evening Brown

(കരിയില ശലഭം)

Melanitis leda

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



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A medium to large brown butterfly commonly active during dusk and cloudy conditions. Found in gardens, forest edges, bamboo thickets, grasslands, plantations, and shaded habitats. Wings mottled brown with eye-spots and intricate leaf-like underside patterns that provide excellent camouflage among dead leaves. Flight weak, bouncing, and usually close to the ground, especially during evening hours. Dry-season forms are more cryptic and angular. Larvae feed on grasses, bamboo, rice, and related plants. Adults often rest quietly in dark corners during daytime.

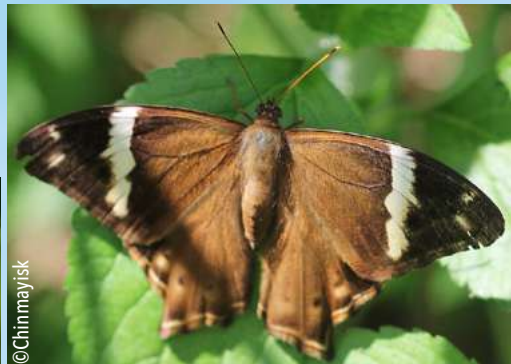
Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Dakhan Bamboo Treebrown (മുളന്തവിടൻ)

Lethe europa

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A secretive forest butterfly associated with bamboo thickets, evergreen forests, shaded plantations, and wooded valleys. Brown wings marked with eye-spots and wavy lines providing excellent camouflage among dry leaves. Usually flies weakly in shaded undergrowth and settles quickly on leaf litter or tree trunks. More active during early morning and late evening. Larvae feed mainly on bamboo and forest grasses. Adults often visit fallen fruits, tree sap, and damp patches rather than flowers.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Common Treebrown (പുൽത്തവിടൻ)

Lethe rohria

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A medium-sized brown forest butterfly inhabiting evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests, plantations, and shaded streamside habitats. Wings decorated with subtle eye-spots and fine brown lines, blending perfectly with dead leaves. Usually flies low and slowly through dense undergrowth. Frequently rests with wings closed against tree trunks or leaf litter. Larvae feed on grasses and bamboo species. Adults often attracted to fermenting fruits, damp ground, and sap flows.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Sahyadri Long-branded Bushbrown

(ചെറുവരയൻ പൊന്തത്തവിടൻ)

Mycalesis junonia

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A Western Ghats endemic bushbrown found in evergreen forests, shaded plantations, grass clearings, and forest paths. Brown overall with distinctive elongated brand mark in males and eye-spots on underside. Usually active during dawn and dusk, flying weakly among grasses and low vegetation. Underside strongly resembles dead leaves for camouflage. Larvae feed mainly on grasses and bamboo. Adults rarely visit flowers, preferring damp patches and fallen fruits.

Status in Kerala: Resident endemic to the Western Ghats.

Dakhan Common Bushbrown (തെക്കൻ പൊന്തത്തവിടൻ)

Mycalesis perseus

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A common brown butterfly of grasslands, scrub forests, forest edges, gardens, and plantations. Wings marked with eye-spots and delicate wavy lines. Flight weak and fluttering close to grasses. Usually settles quickly with wings closed, becoming nearly invisible against dry vegetation. Seasonal forms vary considerably, with wet-season individuals showing larger eye-spots. Larvae feed on grasses and cereal plants. Most active during early morning and evening.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Sahyadri Medus Brown (കരിംപൊന്തത്തവിടൻ)

Orsotriaena medus

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A dark brown butterfly of moist grasslands, forest edges, shaded plantations, and marshy clearings. Characterized by eye-spots on underside wings and soft velvety brown coloration. Flight weak, skipping, and low over grasses. Usually active during cloudy weather and twilight hours. Larvae feed on grasses and sedges. Adults frequently rest among dense ground vegetation where they are difficult to detect. Wet-season forms tend to have more prominent markings.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Common Five-ring (പഞ്ചനേത്രി)

Ypthima baldus

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A small grassland butterfly recognized by five eye-spots on the underside hindwing. Common in grassy clearings, scrublands, paddy bunds, roadsides, and open forest patches. Brown above with subtle markings; underside pale with eye-spots aiding camouflage and predator deterrence. Flight weak and fluttering close to ground level. Larvae feed on grasses. Adults often bask in sunlight and settle quickly among low vegetation.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Common Four-ring (നാൽക്കണ്ണി)

Ypthima huebneri

Family: Nymphalidae

LC – Least Concern



A small inconspicuous butterfly of grasslands, scrub habitats, wetlands, gardens, and forest edges. Brown wings marked with four distinct eye-spots on underside hindwing. Flight weak and erratic, usually only short distances before settling among grasses. Larvae feed on grasses and sedges. Adults commonly bask in sunny patches and are especially abundant after monsoon rains. Seasonal forms vary slightly in coloration and spot prominence.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Lankan Plum Judy (ആട്ടക്കാരി)

Abisara echerius

Family: Riodinidae

LC – Least Concern



A small elegant butterfly of evergreen forests, shaded stream valleys, plantations, and forest edges. Rich dark brown above with delicate orange markings and fine tail-like extensions on hindwings. Flight unique and jerky with rapid wing flicks and frequent pauses. Usually settles beneath leaves or on damp ground in shaded areas. Larvae likely feed on shrubs and small forest plants. Adults occasionally visit flowers and wet soil. One of the more delicate and less commonly noticed forest butterflies of Kerala.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Continental Common Pierrot (നാട്ടുകോമാളി)

Castalius rosimon

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



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A tiny black-and-white butterfly common in scrublands, gardens, grasslands, agricultural fields, and urban habitats. White wings patterned with black spots and lines; underside finely marked. Flight rapid and fluttering close to low vegetation. Frequently settles with wings closed. Larvae feed on legumes and succulent plants. Often associated with ants during larval stages, which provide protection in exchange for sugary secretions. Adults frequently visit small flowers and damp patches.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Indian Lime Blue (നാരകനീലി)

Chilades lajus

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



A tiny delicate blue butterfly commonly found in gardens, citrus groves, scrublands, grasslands, and urban greenery. Upperwings bluish in males; females browner with blue suffusion. Underside pale gray with fine dark markings and small orange spots near hindwing tails. Flight weak and close to ground. Larvae feed mainly on citrus plants and related species. Frequently visits small flowers for nectar. Caterpillars often attended by ants.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Indian Cupid (മണിമാരൻ)

Everes lacturnus

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



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A small pale blue butterfly of grasslands, forest edges, scrublands, gardens, and cultivated areas. Underside delicately marked with fine gray spots and lines; hindwings possess tiny tail-like projections. Flight delicate and fluttering low over vegetation. Larvae feed mainly on legumes and flowering herbs. Adults nectar on tiny flowers and often bask with wings partially open. Easily overlooked because of small size and subtle coloration.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Oriental Gram Blue (പയർനീലി)

Euchrysops cnejus

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



A small active butterfly commonly found in grasslands, agricultural fields, gardens, roadsides, and scrub habitats. Males bluish-purple above; females brownish with blue near wing bases. Underside pale with rows of dark spots and orange hindwing markings. Larvae feed on legumes including beans, peas, and pulses, occasionally becoming agricultural pests. Flight quick and low over vegetation. Adults frequently nectar on small flowers and mud-puddle in groups.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Oriental Grass Jewel (ഓത്നീലി)

Freyeria trochylus

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



One of the smallest butterflies in India, commonly occurring in grasslands, gardens, roadsides, scrublands, and open dry habitats. Tiny grayish-brown butterfly with orange and black hindwing spots and minute tail projections. Flight extremely weak and close to ground level. Often settles on tiny herbs and grasses. Larvae feed on small legumes and creeping plants. Adults nectar on minute flowers and are especially abundant during sunny weather. Despite abundance, easily overlooked because of minute size.

Status in Kerala: Very common resident breeder.

Indian Dark Cerulean (കരിംപൊട്ടുവാലാട്ടി)

Jamides bochus

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



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A small shimmering blue butterfly found in gardens, forest edges, plantations, scrublands, and flowering groves. Males bright metallic blue above; females paler with dark borders. Underside pale gray with delicate white bands and fine tail projections. Flight swift, fluttering, and restless around bushes and flowering plants. Larvae feed mainly on legumes and various shrubs. Frequently mud-puddles and visits tiny flowers for nectar. Ant associations common during caterpillar stages.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Oriental Common Cerulean (പൊട്ടുവാലാട്ടി)

Jamides celeno

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



A delicate shimmering blue butterfly common in gardens, forest edges, plantations, scrublands, and flowering groves. Males brilliant pale blue above with narrow dark borders; females slightly duller with broader margins. Underside pale grayish-white with fine wavy brown bands and tiny tail-like projections on hindwings. Flight quick, fluttering, and restless among shrubs and low vegetation. Larvae feed mainly on legumes and flowering climbers. Adults frequently nectar on small flowers and gather at damp patches for minerals. Caterpillars are often attended by ants.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Pea Blue (പട്ടാണി നീലി)

Lampides boeticus

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



A widespread small blue butterfly of gardens, agricultural fields, grasslands, scrub habitats, and forest edges. Males violet-blue above; females browner with blue suffusion near wing bases. Underside pale with delicate streaks and small orange hindwing spots. Hindwings possess fine tail projections. Flight swift and low over vegetation. Larvae feed mainly on pea family plants including beans, peas, and cultivated legumes, occasionally becoming crop pests. Adults frequently visit flowers and mud-puddle in groups.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Asian Zebra Blue (സിബ്ര നീലി)

Leptotes plinius

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



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A tiny attractive butterfly recognized by zebra-like black-and-white stripes on the underside. Common in gardens, scrublands, dry open habitats, roadsides, and agricultural areas. Upperside pale bluish in males and browner in females. Flight rapid and jerky close to ground level. Frequently settles on low herbs and flowering shrubs. Larvae feed on legumes and creepers. Adults nectar on small flowers and often bask in sunlight with partially open wings.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Oriental Plains Cupid (നാട്ടുമാരൻ)

Luthrodes pandava

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



A small blue butterfly strongly associated with cycads and ornamental sago palms. Males shining violet-blue above; females darker with blue restricted near wing bases. Underside grayish-white with fine dark markings. Common in gardens, parks, plantations, forest edges, and urban greenery where cycads are present. Flight weak and fluttering around host plants. Larvae feed voraciously on young cycad leaves and can become serious ornamental pests. Adults frequently rest on low foliage.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Dakhan Pale Grass Blue (വെൺപുൽനീലി)

Pseudozizeeria maha

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



A very small pale bluish-gray butterfly of grasslands, gardens, roadsides, wetlands, and open scrub habitats. Upperside pale bluish in males; females more brownish. Underside marked with tiny dark spots and faint bands. Flight weak, close to ground, and highly erratic. Larvae feed on small herbs and creeping legumes. Adults frequently bask on low vegetation and nectar on minute flowers. Often abundant after monsoon rains.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Indian Red Pierrot (ചെങ്കോമാളി)

Talicauda nyseus

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



A striking tiny butterfly with black upperwings spotted white and vivid orange-red hindwing underside markings. Common in gardens, rocky areas, urban habitats, temple grounds, and scrublands. Closely associated with *Kalanchoe* and *Bryophyllum* succulents, which serve as larval host plants. Flight rapid and low around host plants. Caterpillars feed on succulent leaves and may become locally abundant. Adults frequently bask on sunlit rocks and walls. One of the easiest small butterflies to identify in Kerala gardens.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Dark Grass Blue (ഇരുളൻ പുൽനീലി)

Zizeeria karsandra

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



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A tiny brownish-blue butterfly common in grassy areas, scrublands, paddy bunds, roadsides, and open country. Males bluish above; females mostly brown. Underside pale gray with fine dark spots. Flight weak and fluttering very close to ground level. Larvae feed on small herbs and legumes. Adults often settle on grasses and tiny flowers, making them easy to overlook. Most active during sunny mornings.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Indian Lesser Grass Blue (ചെറുപുൽനീലി)

Zizina otis

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



A minute butterfly of grasslands, gardens, wetlands, agricultural fields, and open scrub habitats. Upperside pale bluish-violet in males and duller in females. Underside delicately marked with rows of small dark spots. Flight weak, skipping, and close to grasses. Larvae feed mainly on legumes and creeping herbs. Adults nectar on tiny flowers and frequently gather around damp patches. Easily confused with other small blues but generally paler and more delicate.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Indian Tiny Grass Blue (ചിനപ്പുൽനീലി)

Zizula hylax

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



One of the smallest butterflies in India, inhabiting grasslands, gardens, roadsides, scrublands, and cultivated fields. Tiny grayish-blue butterfly with fine underside markings and extremely delicate appearance. Flight very weak and fluttering just above ground level. Frequently rests on tiny herbs and grasses. Larvae feed on low-growing legumes and creeping plants. Adults often abundant after rains but easily overlooked because of minute size.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Tamil Centaur Oakblue (அவன தஜிரீலி)

Arhopala amantes

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



A beautiful forest blue butterfly of evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests, wooded plantations, and shaded stream valleys. Upperside males shining violet-blue with dark borders; females darker brown with blue patches. Underside pale brown with delicate bands and subtle tails. Usually flies rapidly around tree canopy and forest clearings, rarely descending low. Larvae feed on forest trees and are often attended by ants. Adults frequently visit damp ground, sap flows, and fallen fruits rather than flowers.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Monkey Puzzle (ഇരുതലച്ചി)

Rathinda amor

Family: Lycaenidae

LC – Least Concern



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A tiny and unusual butterfly of evergreen forests, shaded plantations, and forest edges. Males display striking metallic purple-blue upperwings; females darker and less colorful. Underside intricately patterned in shades of brown and gray. Flight rapid, jerky, and localized around shrubs and forest undergrowth. Adults often settle beneath leaves or on shaded foliage. Larvae likely associated with forest shrubs and ant interactions. One of the more attractive but less frequently observed Western Ghats lycaenids.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Pygmy Scrub Hopper (ചിനപ്പുൽച്ചാടൻ)

Aeromachus pygmaeus

Family: HesperIIDae

LC – Least Concern



A tiny dark skipper butterfly of grasslands, scrub habitats, forest edges, and paddy bunds. Brown wings with small translucent spots and rapid skipping flight typical of skippers. Usually flies low over grasses and frequently settles with wings partly open. Larvae feed on grasses and bamboo. Adults nectar on small flowers and bask in sunny patches. Difficult to observe due to tiny size and sudden darting flight.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Rice Swift (നാട്ടു ശരശലഭം)

Borbo cinnara

Family: HesperIIDae

LC – Least Concern



A small brown skipper associated with paddy fields, wetlands, grasslands, gardens, and agricultural landscapes. Wings dark brown with pale yellowish spots. Flight extremely rapid and darting close to ground level. Frequently settles on grass blades with wings partly folded. Larvae feed on rice, grasses, and related plants. Adults nectar on tiny flowers and are especially common around cultivated wetlands.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Oriental Grey Swift (ചതുരപ്പാട്ടൻ ശരശലഭം)

Pelopidas agna

Family: HesperIIDae

LC – Least Concern



A medium-sized skipper of grasslands, wetlands, gardens, agricultural areas, and forest edges. Brownish-gray overall with translucent white wing spots. Flight fast, jerky, and highly energetic. Usually active during bright sunshine, frequently basking with wings spread partly open. Larvae feed on grasses including cultivated cereals. Adults often nectar on small flowers and visit damp ground. Easily confused with related swifts but generally grayer and larger.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Southern Chestnut Bob (ചെങ്കുമ്പൻ)

Iambrix salsala

Family: HesperIIDae

LC – Least Concern



A tiny chestnut-brown skipper commonly found in wetlands, grassy marshes, paddy fields, stream edges, and damp open habitats. Small white spots on dark wings visible in sunlight. Flight quick, low, and bobbing among grasses. Usually rests on grass blades with wings partially open. Larvae feed on grasses and sedges. Adults frequently nectar on tiny flowers close to wet ground.

Status in Kerala: Common resident breeder.

Dakhan Golden Angle (ഡാക്ഹൺ ഗോൾഡൻ എഞ്ച്)

Caprona ransonnettii

Family: HesperIIDae

LC – Least Concern



A distinctive dark skipper butterfly with angular wings marked by golden-yellow patches and spots. Common in scrub forests, dry deciduous forests, plantations, and wooded clearings. Flight rapid and darting with frequent pauses on leaves and rocks. Usually basks with wings spread flat. Larvae feed mainly on plants of the acanthus family. Adults often visit flowers and damp patches. The sharply angled wing shape gives the species its common name.

Status in Kerala: Resident breeder.

Glossary of terms

This glossary explains common terms used in bird and butterfly studies and field observations.

A

Abdomen

The rear section of an insect's body containing the digestive and reproductive organs.

Adult

The fully developed stage in the life cycle of a bird or butterfly.

B

Breeding Season

The period during which birds court, nest, and raise their young.

C

Camouflage

Protective coloration or patterns that help an animal blend into its surroundings.

Canopy

The uppermost layer of vegetation formed by the crowns of trees in a forest.

Caterpillar

The larval stage of a butterfly. It is primarily a feeding stage during which growth occurs.

Conservation Status

The level of risk faced by a species, often assessed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

D

Diurnal

Active during the daytime. Most birds and butterflies are diurnal.

Distribution

The geographical area where a species naturally occurs.

E

Endemic

A species that is naturally restricted to a particular geographic region and found nowhere else in the world.

F**Family**

A taxonomic category grouping related genera and species.

Flight Period

The time of year when adult butterflies are active and can be observed.

G**Genus**

A taxonomic rank above species that groups closely related organisms.

H**Habitat**

The natural environment in which a species lives and obtains food, water, and shelter.

Host Plant

A plant on which butterflies lay eggs and whose leaves are consumed by the caterpillars.

I**IUCN Red List**

A global system used to assess the conservation status and extinction risk of species.

L**Larva**

An immature stage of insects that differs significantly from the adult form. In butterflies, the larva is called a caterpillar.

M**Metamorphosis**

The process through which butterflies transform from egg to larva, pupa, and adult.

Migratory Species

A species that moves seasonally between breeding and non-breeding areas.

Migrant

An individual bird or butterfly that undertakes seasonal movements between regions.

N**Nectar**

A sweet liquid produced by flowers that serves as a primary food source for adult butterflies.

Nectar Plant

A flowering plant that provides nectar for butterflies and other pollinators.

Nestling

A young bird that remains in the nest and depends on its parents for

food and protection.

O

Observation Record

A documented sighting of a species at a specific location and time.

P

Perch

A branch, wire, or other structure where a bird rests or surveys its surroundings.

Pollination

The transfer of pollen between flowers, often aided by butterflies and other insects.

Pupa

The stage between larva and adult in a butterfly's life cycle, during which transformation occurs.

R

Resident Species

A species that remains in the same area throughout the year without undertaking long-distance seasonal movements.

Raptor

A bird of prey characterized by strong talons, hooked beaks, and keen eyesight.

S

Scientific Name

The internationally accepted two-part Latin name of a species, consisting of its genus and species.

Sexual Dimorphism

Differences in appearance between males and females of the same species, such as size, coloration, or markings.

Species

The basic unit of biological classification; a group of organisms capable of interbreeding and producing fertile offspring.

Subspecies

A distinct population within a species that shows consistent physical or geographical differences.

T

Territory

An area defended by an animal against others of the same species, especially during breeding.

U

Understory

The layer of vegetation beneath the forest canopy, consisting of shrubs, saplings, and small trees.

V**Vagrant**

A species occurring outside its normal geographic range, usually as a result of unusual dispersal or weather conditions.

W**Wetland**

An area where water is present permanently or seasonally, supporting specialized plant and animal communities.

Wing Span

The distance between the tips of fully extended wings.

Life Cycle of a Butterfly

Egg → Larva (Caterpillar) → Pupa (Chrysalis) → Adult Butterfly

Common Conservation Categories (IUCN)

LC – Least Concern

NT – Near Threatened

VU – Vulnerable

EN – Endangered

CR – Critically Endangered

DD – Data Deficient

NE – Not Evaluated

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Dr. Anitha A.

Parava Coordinator & Pulari Team

Sabik S,

Green Ahalia

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Online Resources

[EBird India](#)

[Bird Count India](#)

[Birds of Kerala Database](#)

[Butterflies of India Foundation](#)

[India Biodiversity Portal](#)

[Bombay Natural History Society \(BNHS\)](#)

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