

Urban Heronries of Kolkata Metropolitan: An Insight to Nest Stratification, Resource Based Guilds and Conservation Priorities

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ABSTRACT

Kolkata Metropolitan harbors a total of 13 out of 26 communal nesting water bird species found in Indian subcontinent. They are found to aggregate in six major heronries located within and adjacent to the urban landscape. Among these heronries, two artificial lakes located inside the city area support highest number of water bird species. These communal breeding water birds were seen to segregate into two groups namely stratum exclusive and stratum interface species to reduce competition for resource among them. Wading Ichthyophagous was the predominant resource-based guild among the 13 species recorded from the study sites. Three species sited here belongs to near threatened category; four local migrants and one winter migrant and rest were resident birds of this area. Necessity to restrict vegetation cleanup around nest trees during breeding season to keep provision of adequate nesting materials, creating alternative nesting habitat blocks wherever possible, periodical cleaning of uric acid rich fecal depositions, restricting human access and introducing bird-safe building norms were identified as important conservation strategies.

Key words: urban heronries, Kolkata, urbanization, waterbirds