

World Endemic Bird Day

Puducherry: The heaven for birds and bird lovers

World Endemic Bird Day aimed at documenting various species of birds and creating awareness on the importance of birds in the planet and its existence was celebrated in Puducherry on **11-05-2018** by the Students' Council of the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Veterinary Education and Research (RIVER). Two speakers, **Mr. Ravikumar**, Project Co-ordinator, SPCA, Kodaikanal and **Mr. Azharudeen**, Education Programme Co-ordinator, Wildlife Nature and Conservation Trust (WNCT) delivered talks on the topic to the students and faculty of RIVER. They emphasized on the role played by birds like their link to the food chain at the top and bottom.

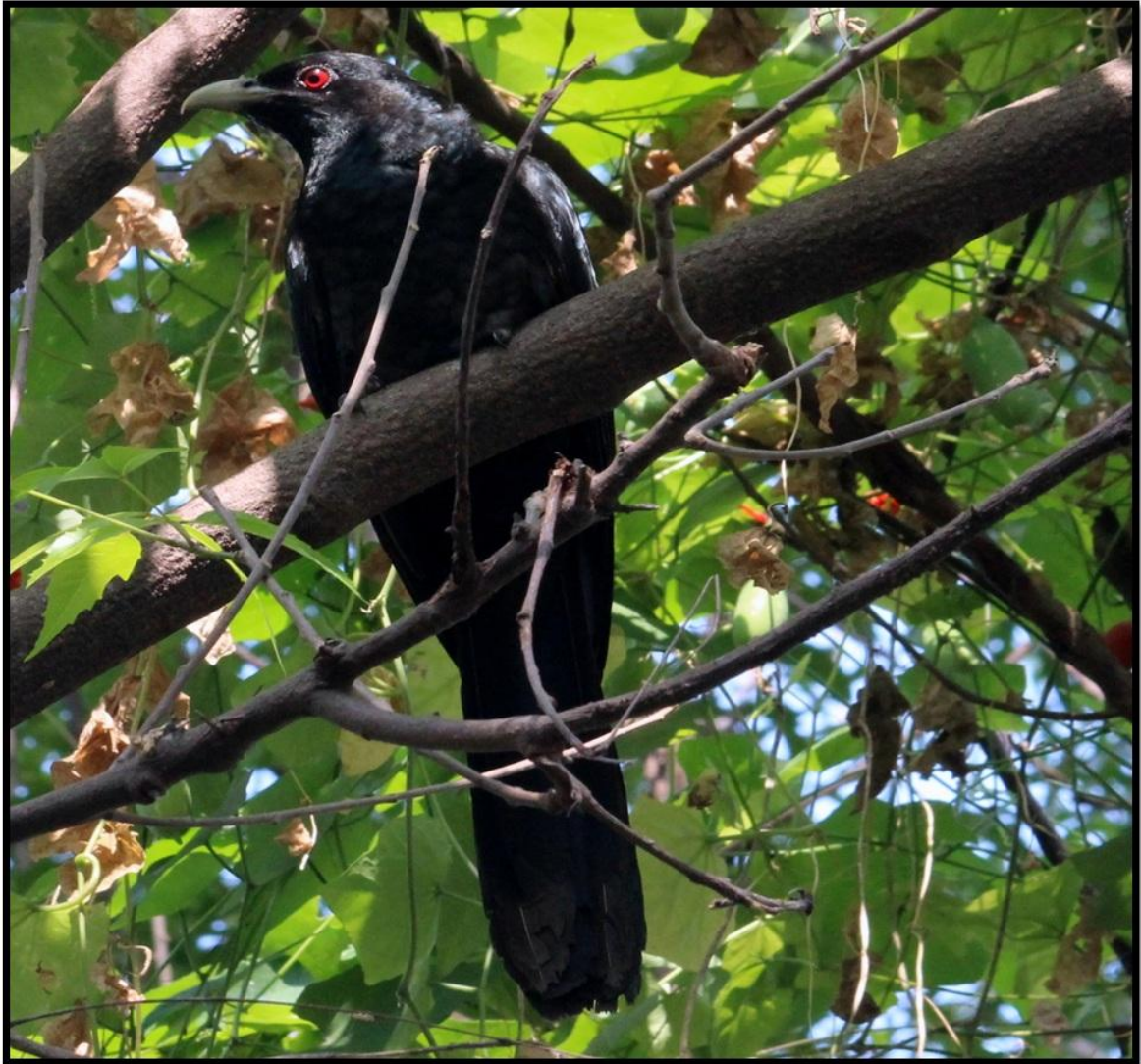
Birds play an important role in the food chain vital for the existence of flora and fauna. Endangering of birds will be harmful to the ecosystem affecting humans, animals and plants. They also play a significant role as 'indicator species' of health of a particular environment. The presence of certain birds indicates that the environment is healthy and thriving. For example, the Pondicherry State bird, Asian Koel (*Eudynamus scolopacea*) is a resident bird of the campus. In addition, birds like Grey Francolin (*Francolinus pondicerianus*), White-breasted Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*), Common Myna (*Arcidotheres tristis*) Red vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*) are resident to the campus. In addition we have so many seasonal visitors to Pondicherry too.



Prof. S. Ramkumar, Dean, RIVER, emphasized the need to create awareness on the importance of birds to students and common public. Dean said that Puducherry has a great potential to offer for tourists, bird watchers and students - being a beautiful place of home for many birds. RIVER will be happy to open its campus on specific times for bird watchers and nature enthusiasts and will be able to spare the guidance of experts on this. Prof. S. Ramkumar, Dean, RIVER said that the institute campus has more than 65 species of birds - an amazing treat for persons who have a passion for ornithology. This was documented by a study led by Prof. D. Sreekumar and team over a period of ten years. It was published in ZOOS PRINT.

The campus with its preserved rich greenery is a preferred home for a variety of birds. Nature lovers enjoy bird watching in this campus. The rehabilitation of water tanks and lakes recently initiated by the Government of Puducherry has helped in bringing back birds to their environment. For example, the Ossudu lake very near to the RIVER campus provides a pristine habitat to many water birds including herons, egrets, jacana and water hen, in addition to migratory birds like Spot-billed Pelicans, Painted Storks and Flamingoes.

An Intercollegiate Photography Competition on the theme of "Birds of Puducherry" was also arranged by the Students Council of RIVER for students.



Asian Koel (Kuyil) - male - the State bird of U.T. of Puducherry.