

2011 Beginners Bird Study Technique Field Workshop

FOGSL successfully concluded its annual Beginners Field Study Techniques Workshop recently, which was held from 14-17th July 2011 at the Rajarata University premises located in the ancient city of Mihintale. 60 participants including eleven FOGSL members and 49 students from the Department of Biology and the Department of Tourism and Hospitality of the Rajarata University participated in this event. The main objective of this four day workshop was to provide an opportunity for the novice birders to obtain hands on experiences in bird identification and several basic bird study techniques. Further lectures conducted by Prof Kotagma provided more information on bird biology, Sri Lanka birds, Bird migration and on bird tourism/Eco-tourism principles.

Participants learned to prepare a simple bird list for the area by using field study techniques such as point and line transects methods, where all birds seen or heard were recorded within a given route within a specific time period. The main difference between a point and a line transect is that in a point transect, birders stop at specific points of the transect to count all birds within a given radius while on a line transect information is gathered simply by walking through the identified habitat. 86 bird species were recorded from the campus grounds and its surroundings including the Mihintale tank, were the birds encountered were dominated by aquatic species or aquatic associates. This bird count was less than what was recorded during the workshop held in 2010 September, where 118 species were observed. The main obstacle for spotting birds this year was the prevailing heavy winds and dry weather conditions.

One of the main tasks of the programme was learning to handle birds caught in mist nets for ringing purposes. Mist net is a fine nylon net stretched between two poles across an area where birds are likely to fly and is normally set during early morning and before sunset when birds are most active and thus easily caught. As indicated in the table given below, 15 individuals belonging to 9 species ranging in size from the tiny Plane Prinia to the much larger endemic Grey Hornbill were caught in the nets and ringed by the participants. The importance of monitoring the nets at regular intervals was stressed while the participants were advised to consider the safety of birds at all times.

Table 1: List of Birds Ringed at Mihintale

	Common Name	No of Birds
01	Indian Robin	04
02	Common Myna	01
03	Brown-headed Barbed	01
04	Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill	01
05	Red-vented Bulbul	04
06	White-throated Kingfisher	01
07	Spotted Dove	01
08	Black-hooded Oriole	01
09	Plane Prinia	01

Total	15
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Ritigala Archeological Reserve was visited on the last day where around 20 bird species were observed. On the conclusion of the workshop certificates were awarded to the participants

FOGSL Participants

No		Name
01	Miss.	Meauranga Perera
02	Mr.	Ranjith Silva
03	Mr.	Janaka Dissanayake
04	Mr.	Vernen Fernando
05	Mr.	G. Herath
06	Mr.	Richard K. Jayaraj
07	Mr.	Adrian Gadriel
08	Mrs.	Shamila Perera
09	Mr.	Upul Wickmasinhe
10	Prof.	S.W. Kotagama
11	Mr.	Indrika Pradeepa

Bird List

#	Common name	Scientific name
1	Sri Lanka Jungle fowl	<i>Gallus lafayetii</i>
2	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
3	Lesser Whistling-duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>
4	Cotton Pygmy-goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>
5	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
6	Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>
7	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
8	Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
9	Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>
10	Indian Pond-heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
11	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
12	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>

13	Great Egret	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>
14	Intermediate Egret	<i>Mesophoyx intermedia</i>
15	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>
16	Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>
17	Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
18	Oriental Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhyncus</i>
19	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
20	White-bellied Sea-eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
21	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
22	Purple Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>
23	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
24	Great Thick-knee	<i>Esacus recurvirostris</i>
25	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
26	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>
27	Spotted Dove	<i>Stigmatopelia chinensis</i>
28	Orange-breasted Green-pigeon	<i>Treron bicinctus</i>
29	Pompadour Green-pigeon	<i>Treron pompadora</i>
30	Green Imperial-pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>
31	Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>
32	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
33	Pied Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>
34	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>
35	Blue-faced Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus viridirostris</i>
36	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
37	Brown Fish-owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>
38	Jerdon's Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus atripennis</i> H
39	Indian Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>
40	Indian Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia unicolor</i>
41	Asian Palm-swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>
42	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
43	Crested Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>
44	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smymensis</i>
45	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
46	Little Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
47	Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros gingalensis</i>
48	Malabar Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>
49	Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>
50	Crimson-fronted Barbet	<i>Megalaima rubricapillus</i>
51	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>
52	Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>
53	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
54	Common Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>
55	Large Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina macei</i> H
56	Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>
57	Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>
58	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>
59	White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>
60	Asian Paradise-flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>
61	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>

62	Jerdon's Bushlark	<i>Mirafrja affinis</i>
63	Grey-breasted Prinia	<i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>
64	Jungle Prinia	<i>Prinia sylvatica</i>
65	Ashy Prinia	<i>Prinia socialis</i>
66	Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>
67	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
68	White-browed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>
69	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
70	Tawny-bellied Babbler	<i>Dumetia hyperythra</i>
71	Dark-fronted Babbler	<i>Rhopocichla atriceps</i>
72	Yellow-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides affinis</i>
73	Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
74	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
75	Oriental Magpie-robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
76	White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>
77	Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicatus</i>
78	Jerdon's Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis jerdoni</i>
79	Thick-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum agile</i>
80	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>
81	Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i>
82	Purple Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>
83	Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>
84	White-throated Munia	<i>Lonchura malabarica</i>
85	White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>
86	Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>