

Migratory raptor diversity in Jhargram District, West Bengal

The presence of raptors in the wild serves as an indicator for ecological health. They play a crucial ecological role by keeping the balance. Six-hundred species of raptor are present all over the world, out of them 106 species can be found in India alone. There are primarily two kinds of raptors – diurnal (day flying) and nocturnal (night flying) (Mandal et al. 2022).

Jhargram (22.45° N, 86.98° E, 81 m) District is part of the Chota Nagpur Plateau which gradually slopes down towards the east; hilly terrain occurs in the northwestern part. The Kakrajhore area has the highest elevation of about 300 m. The weather much as of Bengal, is extremely humid and tropical. Temperature can reach as high as 46°C (115°F) in the hot and dry in summer months but can plummet to 8°C (46°C) in the chilly nights of December and January. During our continuous survey from

2023 to February 2025, we photographed all 10 migratory raptors. We used a binocular (Olympus 10×50) along with Canon DSLR and Nikon P900 for photography. We consulted literatures for the proper identification of the birds (Naoroji 2006; Grimmett et al. 2016; Praveen et al. 2018).

Oriental Honey-Buzzard is the largest *Pernis* in the world, a long-distance migrant, it breeds in southern Siberia, northern Mongolia, northeastern China, North Korea, Japan and winters mainly in southeastern Asia, Indonesia, and the Philippines (Wells 1999).

It can be identified by the pigeon-like grey head with a dark eye, thick black trailing edge to the wing and dark primary tips, and the boldly barred tail and its six primary fingers. We found it in forest areas which are located near water

Birds of prey from Jhargram District and their conservation status.

Sl. No.	Family	Common name	Scientific name	IUCN Red List status
1	Accipitridae	Oriental Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	LC
2		Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	LC
3		White-eyed Buzzard	<i>Butastur teesa</i>	LC
4		Crested Serpent-Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>	LC
5		Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	LC
6		Black-eared Kite	<i>Milvus migrans lineatus</i>	LC
7		Pied Harrier	<i>Circus melanoleucos</i>	LC
8		Shikra	<i>Tachyspiza badia</i>	LC
9		Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	LC
10	Falconidae	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	LC



White-eyed Buzzard



Black-winged Kite



Crested Serpent Eagle



Shikra



Black-eared Kite



Peregrine Falcon



Oriental Honey-buzzard



Black Kite



Long-legged Buzzard

bodies but most of the time they are seen before entering the human settlement.

Long-legged Buzzard is a medium-sized bird of prey and has a large range from northern Africa, Europe from Hungary to the Balkans, Ukraine. Also recorded in Russia, from Turkey through Iran, Afghanistan to and central Asia to north-western China, Pakistan and north-western India (Snow & Perrins 1998; Friedemann et al. 2021). It is a rare winter visitor in this region. It hunts all sizes of prey. We found the bird sitting on a sand dune in the middle of the river.

White-eyed Buzzard is a medium-sized raptor. It is easily identified by their squared tail, long yellow leg, yellow cere, white eyes, yellow bill with a black tip. We spotted the bird in river side forest, and in agricultural lands.

Crested Serpent-Eagle or Snake Eagle is medium-sized bird of prey. It is primarily a snake hunter but a variety of other small animals have also been reported as part of its diet, including lizards, amphibians (frogs and toads), insects, and birds (Smythies 2001). It is found in all kinds of forests in India. They were also found in hilly terrain, near agricultural fields and even near villages. It is identified by its white belly with dark streaks on both side of body. The upperparts are brownish or blackish on the head, a prominent crest is found.

Black Kite is a medium-sized bird of prey. It is easily identified by their dark brown body parts with angled wing and forked tail. It is a common resident and passage migrant (Grimmett et al. 2014). It is mostly found in

urban ecosystem. It is commonly seen collecting food from garbage.

Black-eared Kite is a subspecies of Black Kite. It is very difficult to distinguish from Black Kite. It mostly looks the same, has some white patch in the lower body. All kinds of small and medium size prey belong in its diet. It can be seen gliding and soaring in the sky over agricultural lands and forests, searching for prey.

Pied Harrier is a medium-sized bird of prey. It is identified by white underparts with black colour from back to neck and edge of the wing and black band across the upperparts of the body, yellow cere and eyes. It is mostly found in open areas, like agricultural land, swamps, and near water bodies. All kinds of prey in its diet. It is mostly a winter visitor in this region.

The Shikra is a small bird of prey. It is distributed throughout the Indian sub-continent. The Shikra prefers relatively various types of habitats: open wooded, dry to moist-deciduous and degraded tropical evergreen forest biotope, hills, and cultivated plains, including villages and cities also, rarely found in desert but common in semi-arid areas (Grimmett et al. 2006; Naoroji 2006). We found it mostly in forest and paddy field areas.

Black-winged Kite is a small bird of prey. It was found through out the year in India. It is easily identified by the black wing in bright white underparts, gray or ashy toned in the upper body with red eye. Juveniles have scaly striped black and brownie breast. It is mostly found in agricultural land. It hunts its prey precisely, able

to stay fixed in the sky for a periods of time. In our survey we sighted the Black-winged kite highest in number.

Peregrine Falcons is the key falcon over most of the continent, with long, pointed wings and a long tail. Long primary feathers give the Peregrine a long-winged shape; males are smaller than females.

Healthy habitats, tolerable weather, good food sources, attract all migratory birds to the Jhargram District.

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Pabitra Mahata & Suman Pratihari*

Department of Zoology, Sukumar Sengupta Mahavidyalaya, Keshpur College, West Medinipur, West Bengal 721150, India.

*Email: pratihar_vu@rediffmail.com

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