# Description of Avian Bio-Diversity of Damdamma Jheel in Gurgaon District in Haryana, India

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Damdamma Jheel is a wetland of impressive potentials of harboring rich avian bio-diversity in the accompaniment of enhanced habitat reconstruction and improvement. It is located in the National Capital Region, nearby Sohana town in Gurgaon district in Haryana merely 45 Kms from Dhaula Kuan in New Delhi, India. The present studies focus attention on its avian biodiversity as well as its own degraded form and structure. In all, 128 species of birds belonging to 15 orders and 41 families could be enlisted. Order Passeriformes is the predominant one having 54 species, followed by Charadriiformes (14 Species) and Ciconiiformes (12 Species). The prominent winter migratory birds observed from Damdamma Jheel include Asian Openbill Stork Anastomus oscitans, Eurasian Spoonbill Platalea leucorodia, Northern Shoveller Anas clypeata, Northern Pintail Anas acuta, Common Teal Anas crecca, Common Pochard Aythya ferina, Gadwall Anas strepera, Spot-billed Duck Anas poecilorhyncha, Spotted Redshank Tringa erythropus, Common Redshank Tringa totanus, Common Greenshank Tringa nebularia, Kentish Plover Charadrius alexandrinus, White-tailed Lapwing Vanellus leucurus, Marsh Sandpiper Tringa stagnatilis, Wood Sandpiper Tringa glareola, Common Sandpiper Actitis hypoleucos, White Wagtail Motacilla alba and Yellow Wagtail Motacilla flava. The very fact that in October 2012, a large group of Open-bill Storks (Nearly 70-80) have already arrived at Damdamma Lake w.e.f. September-2012 indicates that it is the largest harbour of Open-bill Stork in Haryana. Also, Eurasian Spoonbills were seen in groups of 10-12, again the largest in Haryana. It is argued in this paper, that Damdamma is the pride lake of Haryana in India and prime harbor for uncommon winter migratory birds like Open-bill Stork and Eurasian Spoonbill must be the prime place for habitat reconstruction by Ministry of Environment and Forest, Govt. of India in conjunction with Govt. of Haryana with the active contributions by WWF (India). It can be a nodal point to include Sultanpur National Park, Badkhal Lake, Bhindawas and Keoladeo National Park as an "eco-tourism rectangle" with provision for night halt for tourists of all hues nearby Indian National Capital of Delhi.

Keywords: Avian diversity, Damdamma Jheel, Gurgaon, Haryana

### INTRODUCTION

Haryana state in India is devoid of natural lakes, whatsoever. It is a paradox that until 2005 or so, the only National Park of Haryana, namely Sultanpur National Park is infact, an artificial Lake. This artificial lake suffers from sustained water scarcity. Similarly, Badkhal Lake in Faridabad District, although impressively vast in expanse, is in doldrums since last 10-20 years. In these circumstances, Damdamma jheel in Gurgaon district nearby Sohna town is poten-

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tially a good lake. Just because it is in close proximity with Sultanpur National Park and not very far off from Keoladeo National Park of Bharatpur and Bhindawas jheel in Jhajjar, Damdamma jheel calls for better recognition by Wildlife Department of Govt. of Haryana. Similarly, it has also the possibility of attaining tourism-Contours being in close association of Suraj-Kund Tourist complex of Haryana in India. Damdamma Lake is located at a distance of 55 Kms from "Cannaught Place" of Delhi. It is the biggest natural lakes in Haryana near Aravalli Hills. In 1991, Damdamma Saras resort was built by Haryana Tourism department. It is pertinent to mention that wetland birds in Haryana have been studied by Gupta and Kaushik [1-8]; Gupta et al. [9-11] and Gupta et al. (12-16]. No one has focused attention on avian biodiversity of Damdamma Jheel in India and hence the present studies.

### Study Site

Damdamma Jheel is a very healthy wetland. It is located in district Gurgaon nearby Sohna town in Haryana near Aravalli Hills. Damdama Lake is known as nature's paradise and located in the lap of Aravali hills. Damdama Lake is just 23 km from Gurgaon and 42 km from Delhi. It is approximately 9 km from Sohna. It can be approached from Delhi by travelling to Gurgaon city to Sohana town and finally to Damdamma Jheel. Actually this Jheel is very near to village Damdamma and hence its name. Also, its very designation as Jheel verifies its potential deep and vast expanse compared to a traditional pond/Pokhar. Its exact geographical position is28°18'14"N 77°07'44"E28.304°N 77.129°E. Its general appearance is substantiated by Fig.3. It is an artificial Jheel built in 1947 by the Britishers to harvest rainy water in a hilly terrain of the receding Aravalli Hills in Gurgaon district in Haryana. It is perhaps the biggest water body in Harvana. It is one of the most unkept, uncared for and neglected nature- related tourists spot in the very bosom of our national capital where facilities for varied water sports are available. It is 20-60 feet deep having blue waters in the very serene pristine, divine and exclusive environs. It is a prime place for variety of winter migratory birds and few of them available only in this lake and nowhere else in Haryana. The present studies aim to highlight the magnanimity of this vast wetland and its uniqueness to receive migratory birds in terms of very rare and globally sensitive birds. The present studies attempt to requisite substantial care from quarters assigned the duty to protect and conserve wetlands as also their winter migratory birds which come to India.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present studies have been carried out during 2005 to 2012 for the investigation of avian diversity of Damdamma Jheel in Gurgaon district in Haryana, India. Several visits have been made w.e.f. 2005. However the present paper is based on express visits made in October 2012 to dwell on the pitiable condition and its incapability to serve as a habitat to provide bare minimum needs to Open-bill Stork and Eurasian Spoonbill and many more other resident as well

as wetland birds. Extensive photography has been done with the help of Zenith Camera with Russian made tele-lens and Digital Nikon Coolpix P500 camera. The entire precincts of the wetland were analyzed in depth and evidence. Just because Damdamma Jheel is a beautiful wetland, many people visit it for recreation. Birds were identified with the help of field guides and reference books [17-20, 21]. The nomenclature follows Manakadan and Pittie [22]. The aim is to understand the avian potential of this grand lake of Haryana.

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The avian biodiversity is contained in Table-1. It is evident that a total of 128 species of birds can be spotted at Damdamma Jheel. In all15 orders are represented.

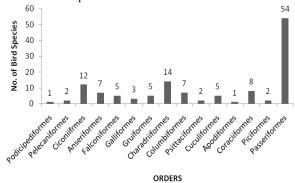


Fig.1. Showing incidence of avian biodiversity spotted in Damdamma Jheel in Gurgaon district in Order-wise manner during 2005-2012

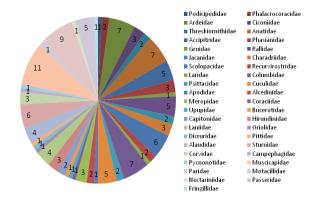


Fig.2. Showing incidence of avian biodiversity spotted in Damdamma Jheel in Gurgaon district in familywise manner during 2005-2012

The highest numbers of species of birds are contained in Order Passeriformes (54 Species) spread over 16 families including Hirundinidae, Laniidae, Oriolidae, Dicruridae, Pittidae, Alaudidae, Sturnidae, Corvidae, Campephagidae, Pycnonotidae, Muscicapidae, Paridae,

Motacillidae, Nectariniidae, Passeridae and Fringillidae. Similarly, the lowest species of birds is found in order Podicipediformes and Apodiformes. Gupta et al. [13] reported 192 species of birds from Bhindawas Bird Sanctuary in Jhajjar district in Haryana. At the same time Gupta et al. [16] reported 164 species of birds belonging to 16 Orders, 44 families from Khaparwas Bird Sanctuary in Jhajjar district. It is interesting to point out that birds like Darter Anhinga melanogaster, Chestnut Bittern Ixobrychus cinnamomeus, Glossy Ibis Plegadis falcinellus, Greater Flamingo Phoenicopterus ruber, Graylag Goose Anser anser, Bar-headed Goose Anser indicus, Brahminy Shelduck Tadorna ferruginea, Mallard Anas platyrhynchos, Eurasian Wigeon Anas Penelope, Garganey Anas querquedula, Tufted Pochard Aythya fuligula, Pallas Fish Eagle Haliaeetus leucoryphus, Egyptian Vulture Neophron percnopterus, Eurasian Curlew Numenius arquata, Common Snipe Gallinago gallinago, Indian Courser Cursorias coromandelicus and Black bellied Tern Sterna acuticauda could not be observed from Damdamma jheel but reported from Bhindawas Bird Sanctuary in Jhajjar district in Haryana [17].

The peculiar large sized wetland birds include, amongst several others, Saras Crane *Grus antigone*, Asian Open-bill Stork, Painted Stork, Whitenecked Stork, Grey Heron, Eurasian Spoonbill, Great Egret and Purple Heron. The fanciful Jheel include Woodpeckers and Kingfishers. It is pertinent to mention that Saras Crane was spotted in agriculture field in the vicinity of Damdamma Jheel in 2007 only. After that Saras Crane was never seen. It is crucial to mention that a large flock of Asian Open-bill Storks (approximately 60-70) were spotted regularly from Damdamma Jheel during 2005-2012. At the same time, White-necked Stork, Oriental White Ibis and Painted Storks were observed rarely.

Regular winter migratory birds seen in winter include Asian Open-bill Stork Anastomus oscitans, Eurasian Spoonbill Platalea leucorodia, Northern Shoveller Anas clypeata, Northern Pintail Anas acuta, Common Teal Anas crecca, Common Pochard Aythya ferina, Gadwall Anas strepera, Spot-billed Duck Anas poecilorhyncha, Spotted Redshank Tringa erythropus, Common Redshank Tringa totanus, Common Greenshank Tringa nebularia, Kentish Plover Charadrius alexandrinus, White-tailed Lapwing Vanellus leucurus, Marsh Sandpiper Tringa stagnatilis, Wood Sandpiper Tringa glareola, Common Sandpiper Actitis hypoleucos, White Wagtail Motacilla alba and Yellow Wagtail Motacilla flava.

It is interesting to note that Red-crested Pochard, Tufted Pochard, Mallard, Garganey,

Pallas's Gull and Black-headed Gull sighted elsewhere in Northern Harvana [8-9] are seldom sighted in Damdamma Lake in winter season in southern Haryana. Little Egrets, Pond Herons, Egrets, Black winged Stilts, Red-wattled Lapwing (in plenty) are seen regularly. Our studies hints towards one salient feature of Damdamma Lake in respect of its avian peculiarity is that Asian Open-bill Stork and Eurasian migratory birds are seen in largest groups in Haryana territory; Open-bill Stork may reach a number nearby 80-100. Eurasian Spoonbill may reach a number nearby 20-30.



Fig.3. Showing the various views of Damdamma Lake in Gurgaon District in Haryana, India.

The overall position of Damdamma Lake is pitiable in all respect of care and habitat conservation. It is argued here that Damdamma lake need to be rehabilitated to impart it the status of winter home of winter migratory birds like Open-bill Stork and Eurasian Spoonbill which are not seen in these high numbers anywhere else in Haryana. Very extensive studies carved out by Gupta and Kaushik [1-2, 4-5, 8] in rural ponds between 2005-2012 indicate that in the first place these two birds are seldom seem, or even if observed, seem to be passage birds for 2-3 days in Umri village in September and March only. The fascinating birds observed on its campus include Yellow-Legged Green Pigeon Treron phoenioptera, Red Collared Dove Streptopelia tranquebarica, Rose-ringed Parakeet Psittacula krameri, Indian Roller Coracias benghalensis, Indian Grey Hornbill Ocyceros birostris, Brown-headed Barbet Megalaima zeylanica, Coppersmith Barbet Megalaima haemacephala, Wire-tailed Swallow Hirundo smithii, Eurasian Golden Oriole Oriolus oriolus, Indian Pitta Pitta brachyuran, Common Crested Lark Galarida cristata, Brahminy Starling Sturnus pagodarum, Rufous Treepie, Red-vented Bulbul Pycnonotus cafer, Yellow-eyed Babbler Chrysomma sinense, Lesser Pied Kingfisher Ceryle rudis, Indian Robin Saxicoloides fulicata, Paddyfield Pipit Anthus rufulus, Yellow Wagtail Motacilla White Wagtail Motacilla alba. It is flava, recommended that the entire precincts of Damdamma Lake be regenerated by way of ensuring proper water sheets expanse, Kikar trees on the brim and multiple land platforms within the precincts of Damdamma Lake regimes of water expanse. Damdamma Lake can be promoted as the largest Wintering Home for large sized migratory birds of global significance.



Fig.4. Prominent wetland birds observed at Damdamma Lake in Gurgaon District in Haryana, India during 2005-12.

## CONCLUSION

The prominent winter migratory birds observed from Damdamma Jheel. Damdamma Lake can be promoted as the largest Wintering Home for large sized migratory birds of global significance.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The authors wish that the old glory of DAMDAMMA JHEEL will be restored by

District Authorities of Gurgaon in conjunction with Tourism Department, Haryana.

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# Supplementary Data

Table.1. Checklist of avifauna of Damdamma Jheel in Gurgaon district in Haryana, India.

No.	COMMON NAME	RES. STATUS	SCIENTIFIC NAME
1	Little Grebe	R	Tachybaptaus rufficollis (Pallas, 1764)
3	Little Cormorant Great Cormorant	R R	Phalacrocorax niger (Vieillot, 1817) Phalacrocorax carbo (Linnaeus, 1758)
4	Little Egret	LM	Egretta garzetta (Linnaeus, 1766)
5	Grey Heron	WM	Ardea cinerea Linnaeus, 1758
6	Purple Heron	LM	Ardea purpurea Linnaeus, 1766
7	Large Egret	LM	Casmerodius albus (Linnaeus 1758)
8	Median Egret	LM	Mesophoyx intermedia (Wagler, 1829)
9	Cattle Egret	R	Bubulcus ibis (Linnaeus, 1758)
10	Indian Pond-Heron	R	Ardeola grayii (Sykes, 1832)
11	Painted stork	LM	Mycteria leucocephala (Pennant, 1769)
12	White-necked Stork	LM	Ciconia episcopus (Boddaert, 1783)  Anastomus oscitans Boddaert, 1787
14	Asian Open-bill Stork Oriental White Ibis	WM LM	Threskiornis melanocephalus (Latham,1790)
15	Eurasian Spoonbill	WM	Platalea leucorodia Linnaeus,1758
16	Comb Duck	WM	Sarkidiornis melanotos (Pennant, 1769)
17	Gadwall	WM	Anas strepera Linnaeus, 1758
18	Spot-billed Duck	WM	Anas poecilorhyncha J.R. Forester, 1781
19	Northern Shoveller	WM	Anas clypeata Linnaeus, 1758
20	Northern Pintail	WM	Anas acuta Linnaeus, 1758
21	Common Teal	WM	Anas crecca Linnaeus, 1758
22	Common Pochard	WM	Aythya ferina (Linnaeus, 1758)
23	Brahminy Kite	R	Haliastur indus (Boddaert,1783)
24	Black-shouldered Kite	R	Elanus caeruleus (Desfontaines,1789)
25	Black Kite	R	Milvus migrans (Boddaert,1783)
26	Shikra	R	Accipiter badius (Temminck,1824)
27 28	Lesser Spotted Eagle Common Quail	LM R	Aquila pomarina Brehm,1831 Coturnix coturnix (Linnaeus,1758)
29	Jungle Bush Quail	R	Perdicula asiatica (Latham,1790)
30	Indian Peafowl	R	Pavo cristatus Linnaeus,1758
31	Saras Crane	R	Grus antigone (Linnaeus, 1758)
32	White-breasted Waterhen	R	Amaurornis phoenicurus (Pennant, 1769)
33	Purple Moorhen	R	Porphyrio porphyrio (Linnaeus, 1758)
34	Common Moorhen	WM	Gallinula chloropus (Linnaeus, 1758)
35	Common Coot	WM	Fulica atra Linnaeus, 1758
36	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	LM	Hydrophasianus chirurgus (Scopoli, 1786)
37	Bronze-winged Jacana	R	Metopidius indicus (Latham, 1790)
38	Kentish Plover	WM	Charadrius alexandrinus Linnaeus, 1758
39	Red-wattled Lapwing	R	Vanellus indicus (Boddaert, 1783)
40	White-tailed Lapwing	WM	Vanellus leucurus (Lichtenstein, 1823)
41	Spotted Redshank	WM	Tringa erythropus (Pallas, 1764)
43	Common Redshank Common Sandpiper	WM WM	Tringa totanus (Linnaeus, 1758) Actitis hypoleucos Linnaeus, 1758
44	Common Greenshank	WM	Tringa nebularia (Gunner,1767)
45	Marsh Sandpiper	WM	Tringa stagnatilis (Bechstein,1803)
46	Wood Sandpiper	WM	Tringa glareola Linnaeus,1758
47	Black-winged Stilt	R	Himantopus himantopus (Linnaeus, 1758)
48	Pied Avocet	WM	Recurivirostra avosetta Linnaeus, 1758
49	River Tern	R	Sterna aurantia J.E.Gray, 1831
50	Yellow-Legged Green Pigeon	R	Treron phoenioptera (Latham,1790)
51	Blue Rock Pigeon	R	Columba livia Gmelin,1789
52	Oriental Turtle Dove	LM	Streptopelia orientalis (Latham,1790)
53	Eurasian Collared Dove	R	Streptopelia decaocto (Frivaldszky,1838)
54	Red Collared Dove	R	Streptopelia tranquebarica (Hermann, 1804)
55	Spotted Dove	R	Streptopelia chinensis (Scopoli,1786)
56	Little Brown Dove	R	Streptopelia senegalensis (Linnaeus,1766)
57 58	Alexandrine Parakeet Rose-ringed Parakeet	R R	Psittacula eupatria (Linnaeus,1758) Psittacula krameri (Scopoli,1769)
59	Pied crested Cuckoo	SM	Clamotor jacobinus (Boddaert,1783)
60	Common Hawk Cuckoo	SM	Hierococcyx varius (Vahl,1797)
61	Indian Cuckoo	SM	Cuculus micropterus Gould,1838
62	Asian Koel	R	Eudynamys scolopacea (Linnaeus,1758)
63	Greater Coucal	R	Centropus sinensis (Stephens,1815)
64	House Swift	R	Apus affinis (J.E.Gray,1830)
65	Lesser Pied Kingfisher	R	Ceryle rudis (Linnaeus, 1758)
66	White-breasted Kingfisher	R	Halcyon smyenensis (Linnaeus,1758)
67	Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	WM	Merops persicus Pallas, 1773
68	Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	R	Merops leschenaultia Vieillot,1817
	Green Bee-eater	R	Merops orientalis Latham,1801
69			
70	Indian Roller	R	Coracias benghalensis (Linnaeus,1758)
		R R R	Coracias benghalensis (Linnaeus,1758) Upupa epops Linnaeus,1758 Ocyceros birostris (Scopoli,1786)

73	Brown-headed Barbet	R	Megalaima zeylanica (Gmelin,1788)
74	Coppersmith Barbet	R	Megalaima haemacephala (P.L.S.Muller,1776)
75	Wire-tailed Swallow	R	Hirundo smithii Leach,1818
76	Common Swallow	R	Hirundo rustica Linnaeus, 1758
77	Eurasian Crag Martin	LM	Hirundo rupestris Scopoli,1769
78	Great Grey Shrike	R	Lanius excubitor Linnaeus,1758
79	Bay-backed Shrike	R	Lanius vittatus (Valenciennes, 1826)
80	Rufous backed Shrike	R	Lanius schach Linnaeus,1758
81	Brown Shrike	WM	Lanius cristatus Linnaeus,1758
82	Eurasian Golden Oriole	SM	Oriolus oriolus (Linnaeus,1758)
83	Black Drongo	R	Dicrurus macrocercus Vieillot,1817
84	Indian Pitta	R	Pitta brachyura (Linnaeus,1766)
85	Red-winged Bush Lark	R	Mirafra erythroptera Blyth,1845
86	Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark	R	Eremopterix grisea (Scopoli,1786)
87	Common Crested Lark	R	Galarida cristata (Linnaeus,1758)
88	Eastern Skylark	R	Alauda gulgula Franklin,1831
89	Brahminy Starling	R	Sturnus pagodarum (Gmelin,1789)
90	Rosy Starling	WM	Sturnus roseus (Linnaeus,1758)
91	Common Starling	WM	Sturnus vulgaris Linnaeus,1758
92	Asian Pied Starling	R	Sturnus contra Linnaeus,1758
93	Common Myna	R	Acriditheres tristis (Linnaeus,1766)
93	Bank Myna	R	Acridotheres ginginianus (Latham,1790)
95	Rufous Treepie	R	Dendrocitta vagabunda (Latham,1790)
96	House Crow	R	
97	Jungle Crow	R	Corvus splendens Vieillot,1817 Corvus macrorhynchos Wagler,1827
98	Small Minivet	R	Pericrocotus cinnamomeus (Linnaeus,1766)
99	Red-vented Bulbul	R	Pycnonotus cafer (Linnaeus, 1766)
100	Yellow-eyed Babbler	R	, , ,
101	Common Babbler	R	Chrysomma sinense (Gmelin,1789)  Turdoides caudatus (Dumont,1823)
101	Striated Babbler	R	Turdoides earlie (Blyth,1844)
102	Large Grey Babbler	R	Turdoides earne (Blyth,1844) Turdoidesmalcolmi (Sykes,1832)
103	Jungle Babbler	R	
104	Ashy Prinia	R	Turdoides striatus (Dumont,1823)
105	Jungle Prinia	R	Prinia socialis Sykes,1832
107	2 0	R	Prinia sylvatica Jerdon,1840
	Common Tailor Bird		Orthotomous sutorius (Pennant, 1769)
108	Oriental Magpie Robin	R	Copsychus saularis (Linnaeus, 1758)
109 110	Pied Bush Chat	WM	Saxicola caprata (Linnaeus, 1766)
	Indian Robin	R	Saxicoloides fulicata (Linnaeus, 1776)
111	Blue Rock Thrush	R	Monticola solitarius (Linnaeus,1758)
112	Great Tit	R R	Parus major (Linnaeus, 1758)
113	Indian Tree Pipit		Anthus trivialis (Linnaeus,1758)
114	Paddy-field Pipit	R WM	Anthus rufulus Vicillot,1818
	Brown Rock Pipit		Anthus similes Jerdon,1840
116	Forest Wagtail	WM	Dendronanithus indicus (Gmelin,1789)
117	White Wagtail	WM	Motacilla alba Linnaeus, 1758
118	Large Pied Wagtail	WM	Motacilla maderaspatensis Gmelin, 1789
119	Citrine Wagtail	WM	Motacilla citreola Pallas, 1776
120	Yellow Wagtail	WM	Motacilla flava Linnaeus, 1758
121	Grey Wagtail	WM	Motacilla cinerea Tunstall,1771
122	Purple Sunbird	R	Nectarinia asiatica (Latham,1790)
123	House Sparrow	WM	Passer domesticus (Linnaeus, 1758)
124	Baya Weaver	R	Ploeus philippinus (Linnaeus,1766)
125	Black-breasted Weaver	R	Ploeus benghalensis (Linnaeus,1758)
126	Red Avadavat	R	Amandava amandava (Linnaeus,1758)
127	Spotted Munia	R	Lonchura punctulata (Linnaeus,1758)
128	Common Rosefinch	WM	Carpodacus erythrinus (Pallas,1770)

**Abbreviation:** WM=Winter Migratory; SM=Summer Migratory; LM=Local Migratory; R=Resident; Res. Status=Residential Status