

# Birds of Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and Biosphere Reserve, Assam, India

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An ornithological survey was conducted in Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and Biosphere Reserve in Assam between 1992 and 1996 with brief visits in 2001 and 2004. At least 24 Threatened species were recorded that included White-winged Duck *Cairina scutulata*, Baer's Pochard *Aythya baeri*, Pale-capped Pigeon *Columba punicea*, Spotted Greenshank *Tringa guttifer*, Slender-billed Vulture *Gyps tenuirostris*, White-backed Vulture *G. bengalensis*, White-bellied Heron *Ardea insignis*, Greater Adjutant-Stork *Leptoptilos dubius*, Sarus Crane *Grus antigone*, Bengal Florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis* and Black-breasted Parrotbill *Paradoxornis flavirostris*. In addition, 16 Near-threatened and, a few range extinctions were also recorded. Presence of two 'forest villages', habitat destruction through agriculture, logging, settlement, and poisoning of waterbodies for fishing, and erosion by rivers were noticed as major threats. Recommendations include inclusion of Amarpur within the park, translocation of 'forest villages', awareness campaigns and ecotourism. A checklist of 440 species, including historic records, is appended.

## Introduction

The Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and Biosphere Reserve is located in Tinsukia and Dibrugarh districts of Assam, India (27°35'–27°45'N 95°10'–95°40'E). A small part of the buffer zone is in Dhemaji district. The area lies in the Indo-Burma Global Biodiversity Hotspot (Myers *et al.* 2000) and the Assam Plains Endemic Bird Area (Stattersfield *et al.* 1998) (Fig. 1). The terrain of the park is flat and it is situated in the floodplains of the Brahmaputra and the Lohit Rivers. The elevation of the park varies from 110–126 m a.s.l. Other rivers that traverse through the park are the Dibru and the Dangori.

Dibru-Saikhowa was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1986 encompassing 650 km<sup>2</sup>; however, while finalising the boundary of the sanctuary in 1995, its area was reduced to 340 km<sup>2</sup>. In 1999, its status was upgraded to that of a national park. However, the biosphere reserve covers the erstwhile wildlife sanctuary as well as fringe villages spreading over a total area of 765 km<sup>2</sup>.

The floodplain ecosystem of Dibru-Saikhowa has a large number of perennial and seasonal channels. These include the Kolomi (Paroparajan), Salbeel, Dadhia, Chabru, Laikajan, Ananta nala (Kolia nala, Hatighuli nala), Dimoruhola and Nayanadi. Numerous ox-bow lakes and wetlands are scattered through the park. Notable among them being Raidang, Burhi, Tilak, Thekera, Kathgora, Banko, Hatighuli, Dighali, Kurimari, Rongmola and Koliapani. Dighali and Kurimari have almost been silted up. During the wet season, areas like Toralipathar, Nagaon-pathar and Schoolgora-pathar become large seasonal wetlands, but remain dry during winter. In addition, innumerable lagoons form on the riverbeds of the Brahmaputra and the Lohit in winter.

The original natural vegetation was tropical wet evergreen rainforest with grassland and reed beds in the

riverine tracts and depressions. During the great earthquake of 1950, large parts of the reserve sank by a few meters, resulting in the regular flooding of the area. This was followed by the emergence of a new type of vegetation. 'Salix swamps' and deciduous forest now dominate the reserve, and evergreen forest is now restricted to a few patches (Choudhury 1998). About a third of the national park is covered with *Salix tetrasperma* and *Bischofia javanica*—the most abundant tree species. *Dipterocarpus macrocarpus* trees, which were common before 1950, are now rare. *Barringtonia acutangula*, which is a familiar species in the wetlands, was conspicuous by its absence. Grassland and reed beds cover another third of the park. The main reed and grass species are *Arundo donax*, *Phragmites karka*, *Erianthus ravennae*, *Imperata cylindrica*, *Saccharum* spp., etc. The buffer zone of the biosphere reserve covers wide riverbeds as well as adjacent villages.

The climate is tropical monsoon with a hot and wet summer and a cool and drier winter. The annual rainfall is 2,300–3,800 mm at Rongagora Tea Estate near Guijan. The temperature ranges from 7°C–35°C.

## Methods

The first systematic bird survey of Dibru-Saikhowa was done in 1992–1994 (Choudhury 1993, 1994b, 1997, 1998). Sarmah (1996) compiled a checklist for the area ten years ago. Subsequent literature pertaining to birds in the area includes Talukdar *et al.* (1995), Kazmierczak & Allen (1997), Allen (2002) and Das (2006). A more recent site account is available in Islam & Rahmani (2004). Some useful historic information is found in Baker (1902, 1904), Parsons (1935) and Stevens (1914, 1915a,b). There were quite a few unpublished trip reports, notable were Hornbuckle *et al.* (1998), Dryer & Lobo (2004), Prasad (2001), van der Wielen (2006) and Vermeulen (2003).

During fieldwork, I surveyed birds using direct observations, noting calls (only for some species) and by interviewing local forest staff, villagers, fishermen, graziers and hunters. Direct observations were made on foot along existing and newly cut paths, and from country boats along channels and flooded fields. The channels were used as transects. Motorboats were used only on the Lohit, Kolomy and Salbeel rivers. For the White-winged Duck, some forest staff and local youth were also engaged to record sightings. The first mid-winter waterbird census was also carried out in Rongmola area of the reserve in January 1993. I carried out a total of 79 days fieldwork in Dibru-Saikhowa: 69 days between July 1992 and May 1994, seven days in September 1996, one day in November 2001 and two days in the north-eastern corner in March 2004).

## Results

Details are provided for the more interesting and significant records, including 20 Threatened and 12 Near-threatened species, which were observed during the survey. Appendix 1 comprises a complete, updated checklist for the national park and biosphere reserve, including historic records and species recorded by other observers—but not seen by me. A total of 440 species were recorded, which include 24 Threatened, 16 Near-threatened and two Restricted-range species. There were 218 resident and 173 migrant (156 were winter migrants). For many others, the seasonal status was unclear.

## Some significant records

**Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis*** Vulnerable. Resident with local movement. Single birds seen in Koliapani, Motapung and Kolia *chaporis* (*chaporis* = sandy islet, sandbar, etc). Once four birds were seen in Dighalipathar. Five scattered birds observed near Kolia on 1.iv.1994. The largest raft of pelicans was of 28 birds on a *chaporis* of the Lohit River, north of Churke *chaporis* (1.iv.1994). Two nesting sites were located, but both were abandoned due to human disturbance. The actual number of nests could not be counted due to this. The nests were in *Bombax ceiba* trees, one in Churke *chaporis* and two c. 1.5 km west of Hatighuli. This pelican is rare nowadays.

**Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*** Near-threatened. This species is not uncommon in the reserve and was observed on numerous occasions, in small groups or sometimes alone. They also nest in the park, north-east of Dighali-pathar. A photograph by Asif Hazarika (shot in November 1993 and seen by me) showed >30 birds with many immatures in flight.

**White-bellied Heron *Ardea insignis*** Endangered. A single bird was observed in Salbeel area on 24.xi.1993. It was standing in the waters of a channel that connects Raidang *beel* and Dangori River with Salbeel.

**Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*** The commonest stork during winter. It is seen almost everywhere from November to April, singly, in twos-threes or in small musterings. More than 40 were seen in Salbeel on 24.xi.1993. At night, the storks roost in the open sandy *chaporis* of the Brahmaputra and the Lohit rivers. One such roost was observed near Baluchar on 30.i.1994.

**White-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*** Rare in the park. About 10 were seen near Kolomy in November 1993. This stork is

usually seen in twos or threes.

**Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*** Near-threatened. Very rare with local migration. I saw it only twice, both times in Churke *chaporis* on 1.iv.1994. One adult was seen in a small *beel* while at a different site, I observed four immature birds. The presence of immature birds suggested the possibility of nesting activity in the vicinity.

**Lesser Adjutant-Stork *Leptoptilos javanicus*** Vulnerable. A common resident, it also breeds in the park. Although no nests could be seen near survey transects, two nests were seen in an *Alstonia scholaris* in Balijan, just outside the park. The nests contained two fledgelings each and were about 30+ m above the ground. Away from the nests but in the same tree, one more immature bird was observed. This stork was mostly seen singly, in twos or in small musterings of four to five birds.

**Greater Adjutant-Stork *Leptoptilos dubius*** Endangered. Rare but present in the park. Breeding sites however, were not found within the park. The sighting locations were near Saikhowaghat (one bird on 1.ix.1992), near Baluchar (one adult and three immature on 13.ii.1993), and near Amarpur (four single birds on 8.ix.1993). At a roost in the Laluka *kabrstan* (Moslem graveyard) near Dibrugarh town, c. 25 km from the park's boundary, 23 birds was observed on 24.vi.1993.

**Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*** I observed seven birds feeding in the flooded Dhadum pathar on 11.ix.1996. Prior to that, four were seen in the same area on 6.vi.1996 (late Narayan Sarmah, *verbally*). This species was conspicuous by its absence during the 1992–1994 survey. Usually, the Glossy Ibis is present in small numbers in most of the major wetlands of eastern Assam, where it also breeds in Pani-Dihing Bird Sanctuary of Sivasagar (Sibsagar) district (Choudhury 1991a).

**Large Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*** Only four sightings recorded during the survey, all in twos. Near Kolomy (2.viii.1992), in Toralipathar and Paglipathar (both on 22.v.1993), and between Kolomy and Nagaon-pathar (1.viii.1993). In Toralipathar, the ducks were seen in a big *Ficus* tree. The species is uncommon all over Assam (Choudhury 2000).

**Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*** A winter visitor to the area. I have seen it only thrice: a gaggle of 20 near Dotungmukh, Amarpur on 21.xii.1993, two flying near Lalbeel, Amarpur on 22.xii.1993 and 25 in Dhadum Pathar, c. 3 km east of the park, on 25.iii.1993. More than 60 reported from Dhadum Pathar in the winter of 1995–1996 (late Narayan Sarmah, *verbally*).

**Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*** This is a rare and occasional winter visitor to Assam (Choudhury 2000). The only sighting from the park was of nine birds in Rongmola *beel* on 19.xii.1993. My local guides had never seen this duck, which also speaks of its scarcity in the area.

**White-winged Duck *Asarcornis scutulata*** Endangered. A very rare resident. Four nests were located in trees in Kochuonipathar (just outside the sanctuary): in a *Salix tetraspema* (Choudhury 1993) near Kolomy tini-ali, in a *Bischofia javanica* in Mora Dolki, in a *Pterospermum acerifolium*, and near Panikauri pathar in a *B. javanica*. One more nesting site was reported from between Kolomy camp and Kolomy tini-ali where the tree could not be located. Sightings by me and other

Table 1. Sightings of the White-winged Duck *Cairina scutulata*

Date	Site	Remarks
1991	Mora Dolki	One egg collected by a villager from a nest in Hatipolia <i>Pterospermum acerifolium</i> tree by an ex-tea garden labourer, two adults flew away (Jogesh Kharia, <i>verbally</i> ).
i-ii.1992	Holumari hula	Six seen early in the morning (Hari, <i>verbally</i> ).
iv.1992	Kochuoni Pathar	Eggs collected by a villager of Baghjan.
iv.1992	Hatighuli	Two seen in a tree (by Forest staff).
26.vii.1992	Dighaltarang	Two in flight.
x.1992	Houlmari hula	Two seen at c. 15:00 hrs on water.
1.xi.1992	Kolomy	Five seen in flight.
i.1993	Borbhanga beel	A pair seen.
ii.1993	Baghjan	One accidentally caught in a fishing trap.
10.iii.1993	School-gora	Two in flight early in the morning.
v.1993	Hatighuli	Two seen c. 1.5 km W of Hatighuli at c. 14:00 hrs.
vi-vii.1993	Near Kolomy camp	Ducklings (unspecified number) caught in a fishing trap and later collected by a villager of Garamjan.
15.x.1993	Salbeel	Three adults on water.
24.xi.1993	Laijuri beel	Two doubtful in flight at c. 08:00 hrs.
1.v.1994	Torali	One on water amidst dense vegetation at c. 13:30 hrs.
7.ix.1996	Guijan	Call heard; birds flew from south to north at night.

observers engaged by me are listed in table 1.

**Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha*** Although it is a common species, occurrence of two subspecies with different seasonal status in the park was interesting. The nominate race *poecilorhyncha* is a winter visitor, and its records were significant as being its new easternmost limit of distribution. Its original known eastern limit was western Assam, c. 92°E (Ali & Ripley 1987), new easternmost location observed was Hollokbari near Koliachapori of Dibru-Saikhowa (95°30'E) (Choudhury 1994b). *A. p. haringtoni* is resident and also breeds in the park. The third race, *A. p. zonorhyncha*, which is also a winter visitor, is treated in Appendix 1 as a full species *vide* Rasmussen & Anderton (2005).

**Ferruginous Pochard *Aythya nyroca*** Near-threatened. It is a rare winter visitor to the park. I have recorded 50 birds in Rongmola beel on 17.i.1993, 19 in Tiphuk beel (just outside the biosphere reserve) on 2.iii.1993, 14 and 12 in Rongmola respectively on 8.xi.1993 and 6.iii.1994.

**Baer's Pochard *Aythya baeri*** Vulnerable. It is a very rare winter visitor to Assam (Choudhury 2000). Only one sighting of two birds in Rongmola beel on 19.xii.1993.

**Pallas's Fish-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucorhynchus*** Vulnerable. Only two sightings of single birds, one near Kathgora beel on 26.ix.1993 and the other near Dadhia on 9.x.1993.

**White-tailed Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*** Near-threatened. An occasional winter straggler to Assam (Choudhury 2000). An immature bird was seen in flight in the nearby Kobo chapori, just north of the park boundary in Dhemaaji district on 16.i.1990, during a different survey.

**Lesser Grey-headed Fish-Eagle *Ichthyophaga nana*** Near-threatened. A rare bird of the area. Only two sightings of single birds, near Balijan and Kolomy on 31.viii.1993.

**Greater Grey-headed Fish-Eagle *I. ichthyaetus*** Near-

threatened. Common breeding resident. It was among the most familiar of the large raptors observed during 1992–1996. A nesting pair was observed near between Kolomy and Dighalipathr in November 2001.

**Indian White-backed Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*** Critical. A common resident in 1992–1994, with many sightings, usually in association with *Gyps tenuirostris*. However, none seen in November 2001. During a recent survey, only eight nests could be located within 10 km of the park boundary (Choudhury *et al.* 2005).

**Slender-billed Vulture *G. tenuirostris*** Critical. A common resident in 1992–1994, with many sightings. However, none seen in xi.2001. At present the species has become extremely rare. During a recent survey, only two nests could be located within 10 km of the park boundary (Choudhury *et al.* 2005).

**Himalayan Griffon *G. himalayensis*** Only one sighting of three birds near a carcass, in association with *Aegypius monachus*, *G. bengalensis* and *G. tenuirostris* on 25.ii.1993, near Saikhowaghat. Apparently a winter straggler from the nearby Himalaya / Mishmi Hills. Incidentally, this species is now a common winter visitor to the reserve.

**Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*** Near-threatened. A small loose group of 6 birds seen in association with three *G. himalayensis*, and two–three *G. bengalensis* and *G. tenuirostris* near Saikhowaghat, just outside the boundary of the park on 25.ii.1993. They were in an open sandy chapori of the Lohit River. Two more present in another nearby chapori.

**Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus*** Near-threatened. Although reported by late N. Sarmah and other observers, I did not see any in 1992–1994. The only bird I observed was on the ground, east of Saikhowaghat (between Dhola and Hahkhati) in x.1989.

**Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*** Vulnerable. I observed

a single bird at Churke chapori on 8.xi.1992, two birds at Rongmola beel on 6.xii.1992, and single birds at Torali and Dighali on 1.xi.1992.

**Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*** Vulnerable. Only one sighting, probably on passage, at Dighalipathar on 1.xi.2003. A male was spotted in flight and then perched in a shrub. It had bluish grey head and wings. Primaries were blackish in perched bird. Its back was rufous without any black spot. While in flight, the under parts looked plain without markings.

**Swamp Francolin *Francolinus gularis*** Vulnerable. I observed small coveys in Amarpur on 21–22.xii.1993; at Raidang, west of Rongmola on 6.iii.1994 and in Erasuti *chapori*, in the extreme western end of the park on 20.iii.1994. Its call was heard in Churke *chapori* and in areas west of Chabru River. Overall it is rare in the park.

**Sarus Crane *Grus antigone*** Vulnerable. Among the rarest birds of Assam. No resident Sarus are found in the north-east. My only sighting was of two birds in Dhadum pathar (25.iii.1994). The Sarus were present throughout the last week of March as I again spotted them on 29.iii.1994. On 1.iv.1994 when I again visited the site, the cranes were not seen. However, local villagers reported their reappearance in that area in the first half of April. The locals told me that they never came across such 'big' birds in the area. Thereafter, I got reports of only one bird from Churke *chapori*, although I could not verify them. Subsequently the cranes were seen almost every year, their maximum number being 16 in December 1998 (late Narayan Sarmah, *verbally*). The birds were of the nominate race, *G. a. antigone* (with a conspicuous white neck-collar) whose known eastern limit was western Assam (c. 92°E) (Ali & Ripley 1987). The present record has extended its eastern distribution by about 500 km (95°35'E).

**Common Crane *Grus grus*** Chiefly a rare passage migrant. No sightings inside the park. A flock of 20 was seen in Dhadum pathar c. 3 km south of the park and at the edge of the biosphere reserve (23, 25.ii.1993). The flock remained throughout the second half of February and into a few days of March. On 6.iii.1993 I saw 19 cranes in the same area. However, I did not see the species in 1994. Discovery of a new crane migration route through the Dibang River (Choudhury 1994a) suggests that many Common Cranes fly over Dibru-Saikhowa during migration.

**Bengal Florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis*** Endangered. A rare resident of the grasslands. Two sightings besides some reports. I saw two birds in Laimekuri area of Amarpur on 9.ii.1993. Both the birds were brownish and hence, sex could not be determined (immature males are also brownish). A single male was spotted flying west of Lalbeel, also in Amarpur (22.xii.1993). The local graziers reported of sightings in Sibia *chapori*, Churke *chapori*, Sissoo-*chapori* and some other *chaporis* on the Brahmaputra and the Lohit rivers. The habitat in Amarpur where the floricans have been sighted is not of pure *Imperata cylindrica* but was mixed grassland with reeds like *Arundo donax* as the dominant species.

**Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*** Only one sighting during the survey. A lone bird was flushed in Amarpur during a walk through the grassland on 22.xii.1993. The species is a rare passage migrant and winter visitor to Assam (Choudhury 2000).

**Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*** An uncommon winter

visitor. Two lone birds were seen near Kolomy on 1.xi.1992 and a flock of 12 in a marsh, east of Dadhia with a few Black-winged Stilts *Himantopus himantopus* on 19.xii.1993. Three unidentified redshanks were seen near Rongmola on 8.xi.1992, which were also tentatively identified as *erythropus*.

**Spotted Greenshank *Tringa guttifer*** Endangered. Uncommon winter visitor with two sightings during the survey. A single bird was seen near Dighaltarang on the banks of the Dangori River on 21.ix.1993. It was in non-breeding plumage with its upper parts uniformly light grey-brown, breast and flanks white with no markings at all, the basal half of the bill was greenish-yellow while the remaining half horny-grey. Its tail looked entirely pale. Its bill looked slightly upturned. Two more birds were seen and photographed in a marsh beside the Dadhia River on 19.xii.1993.

**Pallas's Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*** A winter visitor as well as a passage migrant in the area. Although not common, a few birds were always seen along the Brahmaputra and the Lohit rivers in winter. Usually seen singly, but once two groups of six and 10 birds respectively, were seen resting on a shingle *chapori* of the Lohit River between Saikhowaghat and Sadiya on 20.xii.1992.

**Black-bellied Tern *Sterna acuticauda*** Near-threatened. Only two sightings: three birds in Rongmola on 8.ix.1992 and 10 (a group of eight and then two birds) in Motapung on 31.v.1993.

**Purple Wood-Pigeon *Columba punicea*** Vulnerable. This colourful pigeon is a rare resident of the park. Three sightings were made during my surveys; two birds in flight near Kolomi on 22.v.1993, and two single birds in flight (separately), east of Salbeel on 1.v.1994. The habitat was semi-evergreen forest and salix swamp. These sightings were very significant being the first in Assam since 1911 (Roonwal 1941), and first in north east India since 1946 (Ali & Ripley 1948). Subsequently, Kazmierczak & Allen (1997) also saw the birds in the park.

**Brown Fish-Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis*** Two birds were spotted perched in a tree c. 2 km upstream of Silikaguri on 13.ix.1996.

**Blyth's Kingfisher *Alcedo hercules*** Near-threatened. Only one bird positively identified between Dadhia and Ranighat on 19.xii.1993.

**Ruddy Kingfisher *Halcyon coromanda*** A rare species. Two sightings recorded, both in Salbeel; one in lower area on 1.v.1994 and the other in Upper Salbeel on 14.v.1994.

**Great Pied Hornbill *Buceros bicornis*** Near-threatened. Once common in most of Dibru-Saikhowa, as is evident from local reports and original habitat type—now it is seen in a few pockets like Tonkrong and Upper Salbeel where some evergreen forest is still present.

**White-throated Bulbul *Criniger flaveolus*** First heard in Dibru-Saikhowa at c. 110 m on 12.vii.1992. Then on every visit, I heard the species and also observed it on a few occasions. This was a new elevation record. Earlier, residential range of the bird was recorded as above 600 m and it occurred in the plains only during winter (Ali & Ripley 1987). Subsequently, this species was found to be a common resident throughout low evergreen and semi-evergreen forests in Assam.

**White-tailed Bushchat *Saxicola leucura*** Two sightings, both of single birds: in Churke *chapori* (1.iv.1994) and in Erasuti *chapori*, in the extreme western end of the park on 20.iii.1994.

**Jerdon's Bushchat *Saxicola jerdoni*** Four sightings, all of single birds: near Kolomy (1.xi.1992), in Salbeel (15.iii.1994), Upper

Salbeel (14.v.1994) and Silikaguri (13.ix.1996). The birds were in tall grass dominated by *Arundo donax*.

**Marsh Babbler *Pellorneum palustre*** Vulnerable. Restricted-range. A resident bird, long overlooked in areas such as Toralipathar, Paglipathar and Dighalipathar. Its call was heard during most of the visits to these sites in 1992–1994 but the caller could not be identified, as I did not have a recording at the time. I saw single birds, at least 10–12 times, moving down into dense grass with *Vetiveria zizanioides* and other species, on being approached, thus denying closer observation.

**Jerdon's Babbler *Chrysomma altirostre*** Vulnerable. A resident of elephant grass jungle with *Arundo donax* and *Saccharum* spp. I observed two to three birds, at least thrice in Amarpur (near Mingmung, 22.xii.1993). The next sighting was of more than three birds in Churke *chaponi* on 1.iv.1994. Initially I could not identify them from their calls, hence did not list them in Choudhury (1994). I confirmed these subsequently after cross-checking with Desmond Allen. Allen (2002) found them to be common in Amarpur area.

**Black-breasted Parrotbill *Paradoxornis flavirostris*** Vulnerable. Restricted-range. A resident of dense elephant grass dominated by *Arundo donax*, its sighting is not easy unless its call heard. Two birds were present along with Rufous-necked Laughingthrushes *Dryonastes ruficollis* in Amarpur (near Mingmung, 22.xii.1993). These sightings were very significant, being the first in Assam since 1911 (Stevens 1914, 1915a,b), and second in its entire range since 1911 (BirdLife 2001). It was heard in Salbeel and Kolomy on a number of other occasions. Allen (2002) later visited the site and also found the birds.

**Long-tailed Prinia *Prinia burnesii*** Near-threatened. I observed one in Lakhimpur locality in Amarpur on 21.xii.1993. This species was also recorded by later visitors to Dibru-Saikhowa. One seen and another heard in the park on 9.iii.1998 and then two seen with one heard on 11.iii.1998 (Hornbuckle *et al.* 1998).

**Finn's Weaver *Ploceus megarhynchus*** Vulnerable. A 'compact' flock (probably of >20) observed between Torali and Kolomy in June 1993 indicating possible breeding in the area. In almost all the field trips many such 'compact' flocks were encountered but detailed observation as well as identification was difficult as other weavers and munias also move in such flocks.

**Spot-winged Starling *Saroglossa spiloptera*** A wintering species, not very common. More than ten seen feeding on nectar of simul *Bombax ceiba* flowers near Kolomy camp (30.i.1994).

**Brahminy Starling *Sturnus pagodarum*** Only one sight record. A group of five to six birds was seen between Dadhia and Ranighat (19.xii.1993). The birds were basking on top of a shrub. This species is considered a straggler to Assam (Choudhury 2000).

**Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus*** Very rare in Assam (Choudhury 2000). Known eastern limit was Pani-Dihing, Sivasagar district at 94°35'E (Choudhury 1991a). I saw a bird riding on a grazing cow near in the outskirts of Tinsukia town (14.ix.1993), c. 10 km from the park. This is a new eastern limit of the species (95°25'E). A lone bird was seen in Dighalipathar in November 2001.

**Great-tufted Myna *Acridotheres grandis*** First seen near Baluchar where six to seven mynas were attending grazing cattle on 26.ix.1993. Also seen elsewhere, mostly in pairs. This species has extended its range to the plains of Assam fairly recently (Ali & Ripley 1987, Choudhury 1991b).

**Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae*** Seen in the well-wooded areas of the park. Many sightings, especially when they cross channels and clearings. This species was earlier known to occur above 600 m a.s.l. with marked summer–winter altitudinal movement (Ali & Ripley 1987). In Dibru-Saikhowa, during almost every visit, especially in summer, I saw these birds year round at 110–120 m a.s.l.; however, winter sightings were rare (only on a few occasions in February and November 1992). This was a new low elevation record for the species.

## Conservation

This was the first ever systematic survey of birds, as well as general wildlife, in Dibru-Saikhowa. The survey revealed that the park is an important sanctuary for many endangered species. Besides Kaziranga, no protected area hosts 24 Threatened bird species anywhere in India (Islam & Rahmani 2004).

Presence of two 'forest villages' in the core area, habitat destruction through expansion of agriculture, logging, clearance for settlement, and poisoning in the rivers and *beels* for fishing are major threats to Dibru-Saikhowa. Many of the villagers of 'forest villages' and of the fringe villages are engaged in tree felling and timber smuggling. Although there is no significant outside encroachment, the forest villagers of Laika and Dadhia are encroaching upon large areas adjacent to their villages. The notified areas of these villages were 238 and 135 ha respectively but they have cleared more areas on their own and these now cover not less than c. 500 and 300 ha respectively. There are more than 100 *khutis* (cattle and buffalo camps) in the fringe and in forest villages with >6,000 and >5,000 head of cattle and buffalo respectively. Heavy grazing has resulted in degradation of grassland.

Annual floods with periodic high-level flooding, and erosion by river / channels are major natural threats to the area. The normal flood (annual) submerges about three-fourths of the park while during the periodical high-level floods almost the entire area gets submerged. Erosion by the Brahmaputra and Lohit rivers has already taken away large chunk of grassland and woodland of the park. Because of higher flow through Kolomy and Salbeel rivers in recent years, these once narrow channels now resemble rivers and some good forest / grassland have been eroded away by them. A channel of the Lohit called the Ananta nullah has turned the park into a large riverine island. The park suffered immensely during the devastating floods of 1998. For example, prior to the flood, the width of the Dibru River at Guijan was around 100 m but now it is more than 300 m! Insufficient infrastructure, such as inadequate manpower and a weak anti-poaching network, is also a major conservation issue.

A well-defined 'core area', covering about 190 km<sup>2</sup>, should be designated—with no human disturbance—as recommended by Choudhury (1994). Currently, the entire park is disturbed by human activities. In addition, a satellite core area of 1.5 km<sup>2</sup> should be created in Amarpur (existing 'soil conservation' area) where Bengal Florican, Black-breasted

Parrotbill and Jerdon's Babbler occur.

The forest villages of Laika and Dadhia should be translocated out of the notified park area on a priority basis by providing an attractive package to the villagers. More anti-poaching camps are necessary to check / stop timber extraction, poaching and fishing by poisoning. Mobile camps on boats are also recommended. Awareness campaigns are necessary in the fringe villages. Ecotourism and provision of bio-gas, in lieu of wood, for fuel are also recommended.

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Red-capped Babbler ©Anwaruddin Choudhury



## Appendix 1

## Annotated checklist of birds recorded so far in Dibru-Saikhowa (national park and biosphere reserve)

[See end for abbreviations]

**Podicipedidae**

- Little Grebe *Tachybaptus Ruficollis* R,C  
Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* W,U  
Black-necked Grebe *P. nigricollis* W,O

**Pelecanidae**

- Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis* VU,R,L,U

**Phalacrocoracidae**

- Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger* R,C  
Indian Shag *P. fuscicollis* O  
Great Cormorant *P. carbo* W,C

**Anhingidae**

- Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* NT,R,C

**Ardeidae**

- Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* R,C  
Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* R,C  
White-bellied Heron *A. insignis* EN,W,S  
Purple Heron *A. purpurea* R,U  
Large Egret *Casmerodius albus* R,C  
Median Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia* R,C  
Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* R,C  
Indian Pond-Heron *Ardeola grayii* R,C  
Little Green Heron *Butorides striatus* R,C  
Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* R,C  
Malayan Night-Heron *Gorsachius melanolophus* R,U  
Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* R,U  
Chestnut Bittern *I. cinnamomeus* R,C  
Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis* R,U

**Ciconiidae**

- Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* NT,S (Choudhury 2000)  
Asian Openbill Stork *Anastomus oscitans* R,L,C  
Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* W,C  
White-necked Stork *C. episcopus* L,U  
European White Stork *C. ciconia* S  
Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* NT,R,L,U  
Lesser Adjutant-Stork *Leptoptilos javanicus* VU,RL,C  
Greater Adjutant-Stork *L. dubius* EN,L,U

**Threskiornithidae**

- Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* O  
Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* S (Choudhury 2000)

**Anatidae**

- Large Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor* R,U  
Lesser Whistling-Duck *D. javanica* R,C  
Bean Goose *Anser indicus* W  
Three specimens obtained near

- Dibrugarh, towards south-western corner of the reserve (Baker 1921).  
Greylag Goose *A. indicus* W,C  
Bar-headed Goose *A. indicus* W,U  
Red-breasted Goose *A. indicus* VU,W.  
Recorded near Dibrugarh, towards south-western corner of the reserve (Baker 1921).  
Brahminy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* W,C  
Common Shelduck *T. tadorna* W,O  
White-winged Duck *Cairina scutulata* EN,R,U  
Cotton Teal *Nettapus coromandelianus* R,C  
Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata* NT,W,S  
Near Rongagora Tea Estate (Baker 1902).

- Gadwall *Anas strepera* W,C  
Falcated Duck *A. falcata* W,U  
Eurasian Wigeon *A. strepera* W,C  
Mallard *A. platyrhynchos* W,C  
Indian Spot-billed Duck *A. poecilorhyncha* R,W,C,U  
Chinese Spot-billed Duck *A. zonorhyncha* W,U  
Northern Shoveller *A. clypeata* W,C  
Northern Pintail *A. acuta* W,C  
Garganey *A. querquedula* W,U  
Baikal Teal *A. formosa* VU,W,S  
A male shot by A. E. Evans near Dibrugarh, towards south-western corner of the reserve in 1910 (Choudhury 2000).

- Common Teal *A. crecca* W,U  
Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* W,U  
Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* W,U  
Ferruginous Pochard *A. nyroca* NT,W,U  
Baer's Pochard *A. nyroca* VU,W,U  
Tufted Pochard *A. fuligula* W,U  
Greater Scaup *A. marila* W,S  
Recorded from near Dibrugarh, towards south-western corner of the reserve (Ali & Ripley 1987).  
Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* W,S  
Shot from Brahmaputra River near Sadiya, towards north-eastern part of the reserve in 1935 (Parsons 1935).  
Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* W,S  
Recorded from Sadiya, towards north-eastern part of the reserve in 1903 (Baker 1921).  
Smew *Mergellus albellus* W,S  
Recorded from north-eastern part of the reserve (Ali & Ripley 1987).  
Common Merganser *Mergus merganser* W,U

**Accipitridae**

- Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni* SU,U  
Black Baza *A. leuphotes* R,C

- Oriental Honey-buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* R,U  
Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus* R,L,U  
Black Kite *Milvus migrans* R,C  
Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* L,O  
Pallas's Fish-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* VU,W,U  
White-tailed Sea-Eagle *H. albicilla* NT,W,O  
Lesser Grey-headed Fish-Eagle *Ichthyophaga humilis* NT,L,O  
Greater Grey-headed Fish-Eagle *I. ichhyaetus* NT,R,C  
Indian White-backed Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* CR,R,L,U  
Slender-billed Vulture *G. tenuirostris* CR,R,L,U  
Himalayan Griffon *G. himalayensis* W,C  
Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* NT,W,O  
Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus* NT,L,O  
Short-toed Snake-Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* L,U  
Crested Serpent-Eagle *Spilornis cheela* R,C  
Western Marsh-Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* W,U  
Hen Harrier *C. cyaneus* W,U  
Pied Harrier *C. melanoleucos* W,U  
Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus* R,U (Jan Vermeulen 2003)  
Shikra *A. badius* R,C  
Japanese Sparrowhawk *A. gularis* S.  
One obtained from Rongagora in 1901 (Stevens 1915).  
Besra Sparrowhawk *A. virgatus* R,L,U  
Eurasian Sparrowhawk *A. nisus* R,W,C  
Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* W,U  
Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis* L,U  
Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* VU,W,U  
Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus* S  
Rare in Assam with a handful of records (Choudhury 2000). Only record of the reserve was from Motapung in July 1992.  
Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* W,O  
Rufous-bellied Hawk-Eagle *Hieraaetus kienerii* L,U  
Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus cirrhatu* R,C

**Pandionidae**

- Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* W,C

**Falconidae**

- Pied Falconet *Microhierax melanoleucos* R,U  
Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* VU,P,U  
Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* W,C  
Red-Headed Falcon *Falco chicquera* SU,U  
Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis* P,O

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* W,U  
(Manoj Nair, *in litt.*)  
Oriental Hobby *Falco severus* L,U  
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* R,L,U

#### Phasianidae

Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus* R,U  
Swamp Francolin *Francolinus gularis*  
VU,R,U  
Blue-breasted Quail *Coturnix chinensis*  
R,AU.  
Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus* R,U  
Kaleej Pheasant *Lophura leucomelanos*  
*lathamii* R,U

#### Turnicidae

Small Buttonquail *Turnix sylvatica* R,AU.  
Yellow-legged Buttonquail *Turnix tanki*  
R,W,AU (Allen 2002).  
Common Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator*  
R,AU.

#### Gruidae

Sarus Crane *Grus antigone* VU,O.  
Common Crane *Grus grus* W,P,U

#### Rallidae

Brown Crake *Amaurornis akool* R,U  
White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis*  
*phoenicurus* R,C  
Elwes's Crake *Porzana bicolor* R?U  
Ruddy-breasted Crake *P. fusca* R,U  
Watercock *Gallicrex cinerea* R,U  
Purple Moorhen *Porphyrio porphyrio* R,C  
Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* R,C  
Common Coot *Fulica atra* W,U

#### Heliornithidae

Masked Finfoot *Heliopais personata*  
VU,R,L,U  
Recorded in Dighaltarang area of the  
reserve in July 1904 (Baker 1904).

#### Otididae

Bengal Florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis*  
EN,R,L,U

#### Jacaniidae

Pheasant-Tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus*  
*chirurgus* R,C  
Bronze-Winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus*  
R,C

#### Rostratulidae

Greater Painted-Snipe *Rostratula*  
*benghalensis* R,AU.

#### Charadriidae

European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*  
W,P,S  
(Ali & Ripley 1987; Das & Das 2006).  
Pacific Golden Plover *P. fulva* W,C  
Long-billed Plover *Charadrius placidus*  
W,U  
Little Ringed Plover *C. dubius* R,W,C  
Kentish Plover *C. alexandrinus* W,U

Lesser Sand Plover *C. mongolus* W,P,U  
Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* W,C  
River Lapwing *V. duvaucelii* R,C  
Grey-headed Lapwing *V. cinereus* W,C  
Red-wattled Lapwing *V. indicus* R,C

#### Scolopacidae

Pintail Snipe *Gallinago stenura* W,C  
Common Snipe *G. gallinago* W,C  
Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus* W,U  
(Das 2006)  
Bar-Tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* W,O  
(Das 2006)  
Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* W,U (Manoj  
Nair, *in litt.*)  
Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* W, P,U  
Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* W,U  
Common Redshank *T. totanus* W,C  
Marsh Sandpiper *T. stagnatilis* W,C  
Common Greenshank *T. nebularia* W,C  
Spotted Greenshank *T. guttifer* EN,W,U  
Green Sandpiper *T. ochropus* W,C  
Wood Sandpiper *T. glareola* W,C  
Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*  
W,C  
Asian Dowitcher *Limnodromus*  
*semipalmatus* NT,W,P,S  
Recorded from near Dibrugarh,  
towards south-western corner of the  
reserve (Ali & Ripley 1987).  
Little Stint *Calidris minuta* W,U  
Temminck's Stint *C. temminckii* W,C  
Long-Toed Stint *C. subminuta* W,P,U

#### Recurvirostridae

Black-Winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*  
R,C  
Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avocetta* W,P,O  
(Das & Das 2006).

#### Burhinidae

Stone-Curlew *Burhinus oedicephalus* R,AU.  
Great Stone-Plover *Esacus recurvirostris*  
R,AU.

#### Glareolidae

Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea* L,R,C

#### Laridae

Pallas's Gull *Larus ichthyaetus* W,P,U  
Brown-headed Gull *L. ichthyaetus* W,P,U  
Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus* W,P,U  
River Tern *Sterna aurantia* R,C  
Black-bellied Tern *Sterna acuticauda*  
NT,R,U  
Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus* W,U

#### Columbidae

Blue Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* L,U  
Purple Wood-Pigeon *C. punicea* VU,R,U  
Oriental Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*  
R,C  
Spotted Dove *S. chinensis* R,C  
Red Collared-Dove *S. tranquebarica* R,C  
Eurasian Collared-Dove *S. decaocto* R,C  
Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica* R,C

Orange-Breasted Green-Pigeon *Treron*  
*bicincta* R,C

Pompadour Green-Pigeon *T. pompadora*  
R,C

Thick-Billed Green-Pigeon *T. curvirostra*  
R,C

Yellow-Footed Green-Pigeon *T.*  
*phoenicoptera* R,C

Pin-Tailed Green-Pigeon *T. apicauda* R,L,C  
Wedge-Tailed Green-Pigeon *T. sphenura*  
R,L,C

Green Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula aenea* R,C  
Mountain Imperial-Pigeon *D. badia* L,O

#### Psittacidae

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*  
R,U

Rose-ringed Parakeet *P. krameri* R,U

Red-breasted Parakeet *P. alexandri* R,C

#### Cuculidae

Pied Crested Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus*  
M,U (Das 2006)

Red-winged Crested Cuckoo *C.*  
*coromandus* M,U

Large Hawk Cuckoo *Hierococcyx*  
*sparverioides* R,M

Brainfever Bird *Hierococcyx varius* R,C

Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus* R,L,C

Common Cuckoo *C. canorus* R(?), M,AU

Lesser Cuckoo *C. poliocephalus* R,M,AU

Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cacomantis sonneratii*  
R,L(?),O

Rufous-Bellied Plaintive Cuckoo *C.*  
*merulinus* R,M,C

Asian Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx*  
*maculatus* M,O (Das 2006)

Drongo Cuckoo *Surniculus lugubris* M,AU

Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea* R,L,C

Large Green-Billed Malkoha  
*Phaenicophaeus tristis* R,C

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* R,C

Lesser Coucal *C. bengalensis* R,C

#### Tytonidae

Barn Owl *Tyto alba* R,L,U

#### Strigidae

Oriental Scops Owl *Otus sunia* W,U  
(Manoj Nair, *in litt.*)

Brown Fish-Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* R,U

Tawny Fish-Owl *K. flavipes* R,U

Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei* R,U

Asian Barred Owlet *G. cuculoides* R,L,C

Jungle Owlet *G. radiatum* R?U  
(Jan Vermeulen 2003).

Spotted Owlet *Athene brama* R,C

Brown Hawk-Owl *Ninox scutulata* R,C

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* O (Das &  
Das 2006)

#### Caprimulgidae

Indian Jungle Nightjar *Caprimulgus indicus*  
R,L,C

Large-tailed Nightjar *C. macrurus* R,L,AU



**Apodidae**

Himalayan Swiftlet *Collocalia brevirostris* SU,U

In February 2001 (Prasad 2001).

White-throated Needletail-Swift

*Hirundapus caudacutus* S

(Manoj Nair, *in litt.*)

Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis* R,C

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* O

(Manoj Nair, *in litt.*)

House Swift *Apus affinis* R,L,C

**Trogonidae**

Red-headed Trogon *Harpactes*

*erythrocephalus* R,U

**Alcedinidae**

Blyth's Kingfisher *Alcedo Hercules* NT,R,U

Small Blue Kingfisher *A. atthis* R,C

Blue-eared Kingfisher *A. meninting* R,U

Stork-billed Kingfisher *Halcyon capensis* R,C

Ruddy Kingfisher *Halcyon coromanda* SU,U

White-breasted Kingfisher *H. smyrnensis* R,C

Lesser Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* R,C

**Meropidae**

Blue-Bearded Bee-eater *Nyctornis*

*athertoni* R,C

Small Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*

R,C

Blue-Tailed Bee-eater *M. philippinus* M,U

Chestnut-Headed Bee-eater *M. leschenaulti* R,C

**Coraciidae**

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis* R,C

Oriental Broad-Billed Roller *Eurystomus orientalis* R,U

**Upupidae**

Common Hoopoe *Upupa epops* R,C

**Bucerotidae**

Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris* R,C

Great Pied Hornbill *Buceros bicornis* NT,R,L,U

**Capitonidae**

Lineated Barbet *Megalaima lineata* R,C

Blue-Throated Barbet *M. asiatica* R,C

Blue-Eared Barbet *M. australis* R,U

Coppersmith Barbet *M. haemacephala* R,C

**Picidae**

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* W,O One seen in march 2006 (van der Wielen 2006)

Speckled Piculet *Picumnus innominatus* R,U

Rufous Piculet *Sasia ochracea* R,U

Grey-Capped Pygmy Woodpecker

*Dendrocopos canicapillus* R,U

Fulvous-Breasted Pied Woodpecker *D. macei* R,C

Rufous Woodpecker *Celeus brachyurus*

R,AU

Small Yellow-Naped Woodpecker *Picus*

*chloropus* R,AU

Large Yellow-naped Woodpecker *P.*

*flavinucha* R,U

Little Scaly-bellied Green Woodpecker *P.*

*xanthopygaeus* R,C

Black-naped Green Woodpecker *P. canus*

R,C

Lesser Golden-backed Woodpecker

*Dinopium benghalense* R,AU

Greater Golden-backed Woodpecker

*Chrysocolaptes lucidus* R,C

Pale-headed Woodpecker *Gecinulus*

*grantia* R,AU

**Eurylaimidae**

Hodgson's Broadbill *Serilophus lunatus*

R,U

Long-tailed Broadbill *Psarisomus dalhousiae*

R,U

**Alaudidae**

Bengal Bush-Lark *Mirafra assamica* R,C

Indian Short-toed Lark *Calandrella raytal*

R,AU

Eastern Skylark *Alauda gulgula* R,C

**Hirundinidae**

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* R,L,U

Plain Martin *R. paludicola* R,C

Common Swallow *Hirundo rustica* R,W,C

**Motacillidae**

Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus* SU,O

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* W,C

Citrine Wagtail *M. citreola* W,C

Yellow Wagtail *M. flava* W,C

Grey Wagtail *M. cinerea* W,C

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* W,AU.

Paddyfield Pipit *A. rufulus* R,C

Oriental Tree Pipit *A. hodgsoni* W,C

Rosy Pipit *A. roseatus* W

**Campephagidae**

Large Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina macei* R,C

Black-winged Cuckoo-Shrike *C.*

*melaschistos* W,U

Rosy Minivet *Pericrocotus roseus* SU,O

Small Minivet *P. cinnamomeus* R,U

Long-tailed Minivet *P. ethologus* W,AU

Short-billed Minivet *P. brevirostris* W,U

Scarlet Minivet *P. flammeus* R,C

Pied Flycatcher-Shrike *Hemipus picatus*

R?,W,U

Large Woodshrike *Tephrodornis gularis*

R,U

**Pycnonotidae**

Black-crested Yellow Bulbul *Pycnonotus*

*melanicterus* R,U

Red-whiskered Bulbul *P. jocosus* R,C

Red-vented Bulbul *P. cafer* R,C

White-throated Bulbul *Alophoixus flaveolus*

R,L,C

Brown-eared Bulbul *Hemixos flava* W,U

Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus* W,C

**Irenidae**

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia* R,C

Jerdon's Chloropsis *Chloropsis*

*cochinchinensis* R,C

Gold-fronted Leafbird *C. aurifrons* R,C

Asian Fairy-Bluebird *Irena puella* W,U

**Laniidae**

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* W,C

Rufous-backed Shrike *L. schach* W,C

Grey-backed Shrike *L. tephronotus* W,C

**Turdinae**

Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush *Monticola rufiventris* W,O

Blue Rock-Thrush *M. solitarius* W,U

Blue Whistling-Thrush *Myophonus*

*caeruleus* W,U

Orange-headed Thrush *Zoothera citrina*

M,AU

Scaly Thrush *Z. dauma* W,U

Black-breasted Thrush *Turdus dissimilis*

W,U

Grey-winged Blackbird *T. boulboul* W,O

Dark-throated Thrush *T. ruficollis* W,P,U

Lesser Shortwing *Brachypteryx leucophrys* W,O (Das 2006)

Himalayan Rubythroat *Luscinia pectoralis* W,U

Bluethroat *L. svecica* W,U

Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis* R,C

White-rumped Shama *C. malabaricus* R,C

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* W,P,U

Hodgson's Redstart *P. hodgsoni* W,U

Daurian Redstart *P. aureus* W,C

Blue-fronted Redstart *P. frontalis* W,S (Jan Vermeulen 2003)

White-capped Redstart *Chaimarrornis*

*leucocephalus* L,O

Plumbeous Water Redstart *Rhyacornis*

*fuliginosus* L,O

White-tailed Robin *Mylomela leucura* W,U

Black-backed Forktail *Enicurus*

*immaculatus* R,U

Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* W,C

White-tailed Stonechat *S. leucura* R,U

Jerdon's Bushchat *S. jerdoni* R,U

Grey Bushchat *S. ferrea* R,C

**Timaliinae**

Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush

*Garrulax pectoralis* R,C

Rufous-necked Laughingthrush *G.*

*ruficollis* R,C

Abbott's Babbler *Malacocincla abbotti* R,U

Spot-throated Babbler *Pellorneum*

*albibentre* W,U

Marsh Babbler *P. palustre* VU,RR,R,C

Spotted Babbler *P. ruficeps* R,C

Hodgson's Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus schisticeps* R,U

- Lesser Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler  
*Pnoepyga pusilla* W,U
- Rufous-fronted Babbler *Stachyris rufifrons*  
R,C
- Grey-throated Babbler *S. nigriceps* W,U
- Yellow-breasted Babbler *Macronous gularis*  
R,C
- Red-capped Babbler *Timalia pileata* R,C
- Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense*  
R,C
- Jerdon's Babbler *C. altirostre* VU,R,U
- Striated Babbler *Turdoides earlei* R,C
- Slender-billed Babbler *T. longirostris*  
VU,R,U van der Wielen (2006)
- Nepal Tit-Babbler *Alcippe nipalensis* W,C
- White-bellied Yuhina *Yuhina zantholeuca*  
W,U (Prasad 2001)
- Panurinae**
- Black-breasted Parrotbill *Paradoxornis flavirostris* VU,RR,R,U
- Sylviinae**
- Streaked Fantail-Warbler *Cisticola juncidis*  
R,C
- Golden-headed Fantail-Warbler *C. exilis*  
R,AU
- Long-tailed Prinia *Prinia burnesii* NT,R,U
- Franklin's Prinia *P. hodgsonii* R,C
- Graceful Prinia *P. gracilis* R,U  
Seen 3-4 times in the *chaporis* with degraded grass (grazed by domestic stock) and *Tamarix dioica* shrubs off Laika (26.ix.1993) and in Kolia (1.iv.1994).
- Yellow-bellied Prinia *P. flaviventris* R,C
- Plain Prinia *P. inornata* R,C
- Slaty-bellied Tesia *Tesia olivea* W,U
- Grey-bellied Tesia *T. cyaniventer* W,U
- Blanford's Bush-Warbler *Cettia pallidipes*  
W,O
- Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler *C. fortipes*  
W,U
- Chestnut-crowned Bush-Warbler *C. major*  
W,U (Allen 2002)
- Aberrant Bush-Warbler *C. flavolivacea* W,O
- Grey-sided Bush-Warbler *C. brunniifrons*  
W,U
- Spotted Bush-Warbler *Bradypterus thoracicus* W (Prasad 2001, Hornbuckle *et al.* 1998)
- Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*  
W,C
- Blunt-winged Warbler *A. concinens* W,AU
- Blyth's Reed Warbler *A. dumetorum* W,AU
- Indian Great Reed Warbler *A. stentoreus*  
W,U
- Thick-billed Warbler *A. aedon* W,U (Chatterjee 2004)
- Mountain Tailorbird *Orthotomus cuculatus*  
L O (Hornbuckle *et al.* 1998)
- Common Tailorbird *O. sutorius* R,C
- Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*  
W,O (Hornbuckle *et al.* 1998)
- Dusky Warbler *P. fuscatus* W,C
- Smoky Warbler *P. fuligiventer* W,U
- Tickell's Leaf Warbler *P. affinis* W,C
- Grey-faced Warbler *P. maculipennis* W,U (Dryer & Lobo 2004)
- Yellow-browed Warbler *P. inornatus* W,U
- Hume's Warbler *P. humei* W,U (Manoj Nair, *in litt.*)
- Greenish Warbler *P. trochiloides* W,U
- Blyth's Leaf-Warbler *P. reguloides* W,AU
- Eastern Crowned Warbler *P. coronatus*  
W,U
- Black-Browed Leaf-Warbler *P. cantator*  
W,U (Dryer & Lobo 2004)
- Gold-spectacled Flycatcher-Warbler  
*Seicercus burkii* W,U
- Grey-headed Flycatcher-Warbler *S. xanthoschistos* W,O
- White-spectacled Flycatcher-Warbler *S. affinis* W,O
- Chestnut-crowned Flycatcher-Warbler *S. castaniceps* W,O
- Rufous-faced Flycatcher-Warbler  
*Abroscopus albogularis* W,U (Hornbuckle *et al.* 1998)
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher-Warbler *A. superciliaris* W,U (Hornbuckle *et al.* 1998)
- Striated Marsh-Warbler *Megalurus palustris* R,C
- Rufous-rumped Grass-Warbler  
*Graminicola bengalensis* NT,R,U  
Two sightings of lone birds at Dighalipathar in November 2001. The habitat was grassland with waterbodies around.
- Common Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* W,O (Hornbuckle *et al.* 1998)
- Muscicapinae**
- Red-throated Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*  
W,C
- Little Pied Flycatcher *F. westermanni* L,U
- Slaty-blue Flycatcher *F. tricolor* W,U
- Sapphire Flycatcher *F. sapphira* R?,W?U
- Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassina*  
W,C
- Large Niltava *Niltava grandis* W,U
- Small Niltava *N. macgrigoriae* W,C
- Rufous-bellied Niltava *N. sundara* W,U
- Brook's Flycatcher *Cyornis poliogenys*  
L,W,U
- Pale Blue Flycatcher *C. (Muscicapa) unicolor* SU,U
- Grey-headed Flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis* W,C
- Monarchinae**
- Black-naped Monarch-Flycatcher  
*Hypothymis azurea* R,L,C
- Rhipidurinae**
- White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura albicollis*  
R,C  
[White-browed Fantail *R. aureola* listed by Allen (2002) was in all probability *R. albicollis*]
- Paridae**
- Great Tit *Parus major* R,C
- Sultan Tit *Melanochlora sultanea* R,C
- Sittidae**
- Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch *Sitta castanea*  
R,C
- Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *S. frontalis* R,U
- Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria* W,S (Das 2006)
- Dicaeidae**
- Tickell's Flowerpecker *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos* R,AU
- Plain Flowerpecker *D. concolor* R,C
- Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker *D. cruentatum* R,C
- Nectariniidae**
- Ruby-cheeked Sunbird *Anthreptes singalensis* R,U
- Purple Sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica* R,U
- Black-throated Sunbird *Aethopyga saturata*  
R,L,W,U
- Crimson Sunbird *A. siparaja* R,L,C
- Streaked Spiderhunter *Arachnothera magna*  
W,C
- Zosteropidae**
- Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus*  
R,C
- Emberizinae**
- Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* W,C
- Yellow-breasted Bunting *E. aureola* W,C
- Black-faced Bunting *E. spodocephala* W,C
- Estrildidae**
- Red Munia *Amandava amandava* SU,O
- White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata* R,C
- Spotted Munia *L. punctulata* R,C
- Black-headed Munia *L. malacca* R,C
- Passerinae**
- House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* R,C
- Eurasian Tree Sparrow *P. montanus* R,C
- Ploceinae**
- Black-breasted Weaver *Ploceus benghalensis* R,C
- Streaked Weaver *P. manyar* R,C
- Baya Weaver *P. philippinus* R,C
- Finn's Weaver *P. megarhynchus* VU,R?L,U
- Sturnidae**
- Spot-winged Starling *Saroglossa spiloptera*  
W,U
- Grey-headed Starling *Sturnus malabaricus*  
R,C
- Brahminy Starling *S. pagodarum* SU,O
- Common Starling *S. vulgaris* W,O (Allen 2002)
- Asian Pied Starling *S. contra* R,C
- Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* R,C
- Bank Myna *A. ginginianus* O

Jungle Myna *A. fuscus* R,C  
 Great-tufted Myna *A. cinereus* R,U  
 Common Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa* R,C

**Oriolidae**

Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus* R,C  
 Maroon Oriole *O. traillii* R,C

**Dicruridae**

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* R,C  
 Ashy Drongo *D. leucophaeus* R,L,U  
 Bronzed Drongo *D. aeneus* R,C  
 Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo *D. remifer* R,U  
 (Hornbuckle *et al.* 1998)  
 Spangled Drongo *D. hottentottus* R,C  
 Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *D. paradiseus* R,C

**Artamidae**

Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus* R,C

**Corvidae**

Common Green Magpie *Cissa chinensis* R,C  
 Indian Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda* R,C  
 Grey Treepie *D. formosae* L,W,C  
 House Crow *Corvus splendens* R,C  
 Jungle Crow *C. macrorhynchos* R,C

**Threatened status:**

CR=Critical.  
 EN=Endangered.  
 NT=Near-threatened.  
 RR=Restricted-range.  
 VU=Vulnerable.

**Status:**

L=local movement.  
 M= migrant including summer and breeding visitors.  
 P=passage migrant.  
 R=resident.  
 SU=status unclear.  
 W=winter visitor.

**Abundance:**

AU=abundance unclear.  
 C=common (seen in large numbers, or small numbers on a regular basis round the year or during their season of occurrence).  
 O=occasional.  
 S=stray or vagrant.  
 U=uncommon (small numbers seen infrequently).

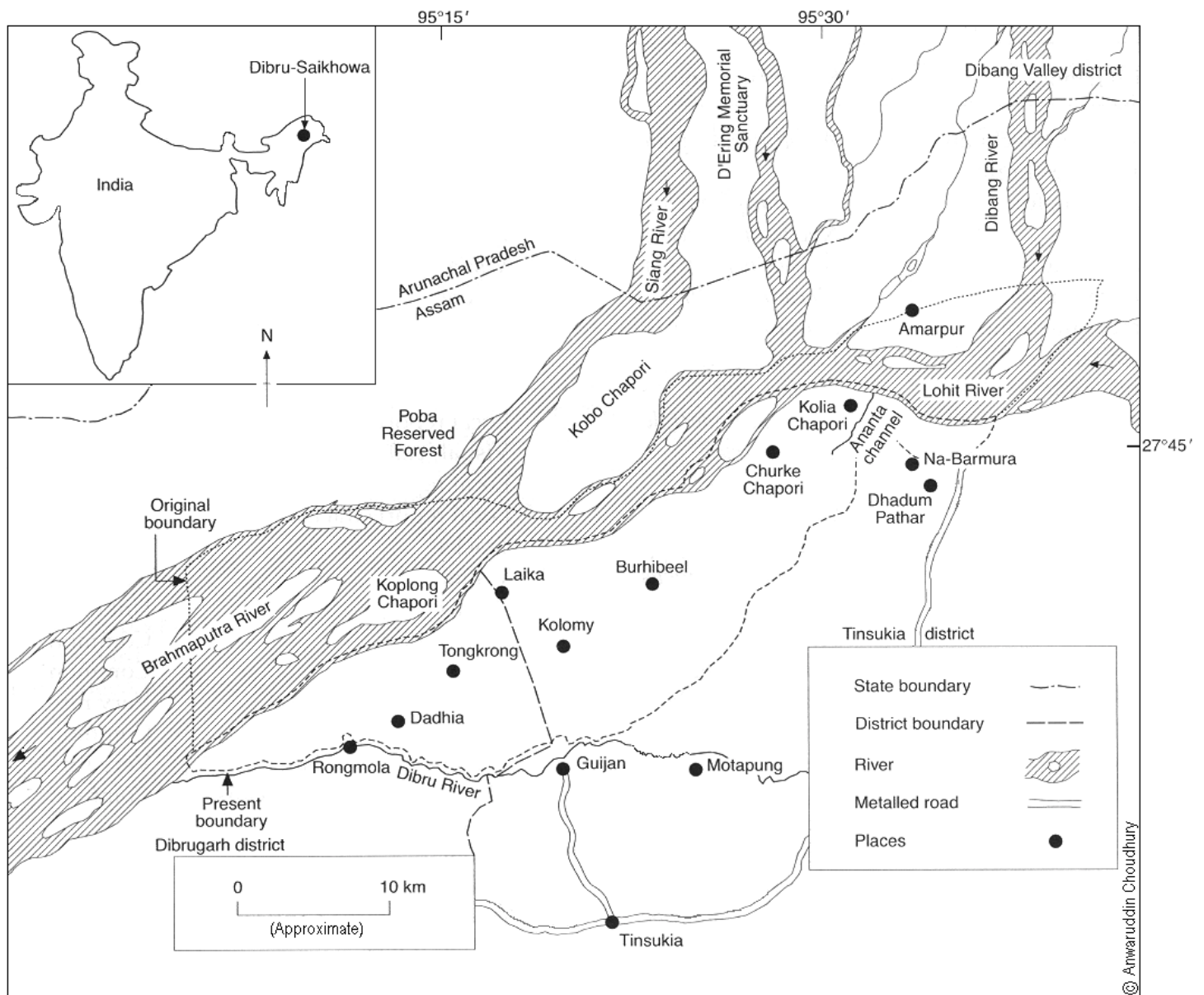


Fig. 1. map showing Dibru-Saikhowa national park (shown as present boundary). Biosphere Reserve includes original boundary and fringe villages as buffer.

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