

Avifauna in the Environs of the Polgolla Reservoir

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The Polgolla reservoir is situated in the Central Province of Sri Lanka, and is a part of the Victoria-Randenigala-Rantambe reservoir complex. The reservoir is fed by the River Mahaweli. Around the reservoir are heterogeneous habitats comprising of different types of microhabitats. Downstream of the reservoir is a lentic habitat with a higher water depth whereas upstream is a lotic habitat with a shallow water regime, rocky substrate and intervening flooded grassy patches. Further, the reservoir banks are planted with perennial woody tree species with a tall thick crown. In addition to swamplands, small river islands overgrown with bushes, shallow water areas and highly vegetated marshlands are also present in the region. The major habitat type in the vicinity is home gardens of varying sizes planted with mosaic vegetation. Besides home gardens a significant extent of paddy fields are present in the area.

The avifauna bordering the reservoir including the reservoir premises, the home gardens and other bordering habitats were recorded. The study was carried out for five consecutive years (2003-2005). Observation records were maintained by conducting spot counts and visual encounter surveys in each habitat type. Identification was made using standard bird guides of Sri Lanka. A total of 96 bird species with 4 endemics (Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot *Loriculus beryllinus*, Yellow fronted Barbet *Megalaima flavifrons*, Yellow-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus penicillatus*, Sri Lanka White-eye *Zosterops ceylonensis*) were recorded, representing 20 % of the total avifaunal diversity of the country. Among them 89 species were breeding residents and six were winter visitors (Common Sand Piper *Actitis hypoleucos*, Indian Pitta *Pitta brachyura*, Asian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi* Asian Brown flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica* Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus*). The Asian paradise Flycatcher is known to occur in both forms. A checklist was prepared on the bird species recorded during the study.