

# AVIFAUNAL DISTRIBUTION IN THE RATMALE TANK IN AMBAGASWEWA TANK CASCADE, SRI LANKA

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**Abstract:** Ratmale tank is a seasonal tank located in the middle part of Ambagaswewa cascade system, Anuradhapura district, Sri Lanka. The faunal diversity and their abundance in this tank were investigated. This work also highlights the threats to bird conservation in Ratmale tank. The point count method and opportunistic observation were used to collect data both day and night, during the dry spell in year 2023. The data were collected from four zones, dam of the tank and slope (Z1), adjacent dry mixed evergreen forest patch (Z2), aquatic zone (Z3), and inundated area (Z4). We identified 62 bird species belonging to 40 families including aquatic, semi-aquatic, and terrestrial birds. Among the observed 34 terrestrial birds, *Gallus lafeyetii* and *Treron pompadora* are listed as endemic species. The site contains *Nettapus coromandelianus* listed as nationally vulnerable and *Merops philippinus* listed as nationally critically endangered. Moreover, observed *Haliaeetus ichthyaeus*, *Threskiornis melanocephalus*, *Anthracoceros coronatus*, *Limosa lapponica*, and *Anhinga melanogaster* have been listed as globally near threatened. The presence of *Ciconia episcopus* listed as globally vulnerable reflects prime conservation attention. *Pavo cristatus* (23%) and *Acridotheres tristis* (18%) were observed as the most abundant species in Z1 zone. In Z2 zone, *Psittacula krameri* is the most abundant species while *Microcarbo niger* was the most abundant species in Z3 (44 %). *Porphyrio poliocephalus* is the most abundant species (65%) in Z4 zone. Grazing to both bird number and abundance in the tank and its surroundings. Grazing by cattle and frequent visits of herder by motorbikes during day and night were more detrimental Thus developing a site-specific conservation plan is vital to protect the status of bird species in the tank landscape.

**Keywords:** Abundance; Endemic; Dry spell; Grazing; Zones