

Birders spot 152 species around Kaiga generating station

68 bird-watchers participate in Kaiga Bird Marathon 2012



Sitting pretty : The area around the Kaiga atomic plant is a biodiversity hotspot, being located in the Western Ghats, not far from the Anshi National Park.— File Photo: K. Ananthan

Staff Reporter - The country's third-largest nuclear power station, Kaiga Generating Station (KGS) in Uttara Kannada, may be in the news for some rather pressing concerns over environmental safety and rehabilitation. But holding on, however tenuously, in the evergreen forests around the atomic plant are 152 species of birds, many of which are rare, a new survey has found.

The Kaiga Bird Marathon 2012 held on Sunday offered some surprising insights into the avian population, such as the presence of the Grey-headed Lapwing (*Vanellus cinereus*), which normally breeds in north-east China and Japan. As many as 68 bird-watchers, from Hubli, Kadra, Sirsi, Raichur and Kaiga, who were divided into six teams, took part in the marathon. Armed with their field guides and binoculars, the teams — each with at least one professional ornithologist — fanned out in designated transects around the plant, covering a total of 43 km.

According to senior technician in the Heavy Water Management Section of KGS 1 and 2 and avid birdwatcher K.V. Rajeev, the area around the atomic plant was quite a biodiversity hotspot, being located in the Western Ghats, not far from the Anshi National Park. He said the transects covered all major types of habitats around Kaiga — forests, aquatic areas and paddy fields. The birders also spotted the Laughing Dove (*Stigmatopelia senegalensis*), the Indian Silver Bill (*Euodice malabarica*), the Jungle Owlet (*Glaucidium radiatum*), the White-bellied Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) and the Malabar Pied Hornbill (*Anthracoceros coronatus*). Winter migrants were also sighted here: the Forest Wagtail (*Dendronanthus indicus*), the Osprey (*Pandion haliaetu*) and the Brown Shrike (*Lanius cristatus*).

The results of the study would be helpful in understanding the population of migratory and resident birds in the area and their conservation, believes K.K. Bajaj, convener of the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd's Environment Stewardship Programme at Kaiga. Last year, 143 species were identified during Kaiga Bird Marathon 2011.

Rare bird spotted at Kaiga

KAIGA: [Bird watchers](#) have sighted a gray-headed lapwing ([Vanellus Cinereus](#)), which normally breeds in North East China and Japan during the Kaiga Bird Marathon - 2012 held at Kaiga recently. This sighting is said to be the first in the north Karnataka region.

As many as 152 species of birds were identified during the marathon, nine more than what was identified during Kaiga Bird Marathon held in February last year.

Besides this, the birders also spotted birds endemic to this region like laughing dove (*Stigmatopelia Senegalensis*), Indian silver bill (*Euodice Malabarica*), jungle owlet (*Glaucidium Radiatum*), white rumped shama (*Copsychus Malabaricus*), white bellied sea eagle (*Haliaeetus Leucogaster*), malabar pied hornbill (*Anthracoceros Coronatus*) and winter migrants like forest wagtail (*Dendronanthus indicus*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetu*) and brown shrike (*Lanius cristatus*).

The bird watchers from North Karnataka Birders Network and students from Forestry College, Sirsi also took part in the marathon. The results of the study would be helpful to better conservation of birds, to understand the population of migratory and resident birds and ultimately to create awareness among the local population to protect nature, said Kaiga authorities.

Bird diversity still intact around Kaiga nuclear plant

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Despite all the radiation fears around the nuclear plants in India, the Kaiga Generating Station (KGS) here found out that the bird diversity in the 5 km radius of the KGS was intact and flourishing.

The annual bird watching and identification event held on Monday has confirmed that all the varieties of birds that were inhabitants of this region were still in great spirits.

“The KGS organises the event Kaiga Bird Marathon every year and we keep a track of birds that are found and identified in this area specially around the KGS, amateur ornithologists with a group of bird enthusiasts go deep into the forests and carry out a bird watching session and for the last few years we have found that the watchers have identified all the birds that are generally seen here,” JP Gupta director of the KGS told *DNA*.

It was a part of NPCIL’s Environment Stewardship Program (ESP) and this year 68 birdwatchers from Hubli, Kadra, Sirsi, Raichur and Kaiga, took part in the marathon. The teams were mix of older and new faces. Six teams were formed to identify and count the birds around Kaiga. Each team had an expert ornithologist as leader and a coordinator from Kaiga. Each team had travelled through their allotted transect of about 6-7 km distance and recorded aquatic and land birds sighted by them.

A total distance of about 42 km in all directions from the KGS was covered. All the data collected by these teams has been compiled and analysed by the organisers.

During the event, 152 species of birds were identified. The birdwatchers sited grey-headed lapwing (*Vanellus Cinereus*), which normally breeds in North-East China and Japan.

They also spotted birds endemic to this region including laughing dove (*Stigmatopelia Senegalensis*), Indian silver bill (*Euodice Malabarica*), jungle owlet (*Glaucidium Radiatum*), white rumped shama (*Copsychus Malabaricus*), white bellied sea eagle (*Haliaeetus Leucogaster*), Malabar pied hornbill (*Anthracoceros Coronatus*), etc.

Grey-headed Lapwing sighted in Kaiga for first time

PTI | 10:03 PM, Mar 06, 2012

Kaiga (Uttara Kannada), Mar 6 (PTI) It was a rare sighting for bird-lovers as the grey-headed Lapwing (*Vanellus Cinerus*), which normally breeds in north-east China and Japan, was seen here for the first time. This was among the 152 species of birds, sighted by bird-watchers during the "Kaiga Bird Marathon 2012", organised by Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited on March 4 here, a press release by NPCIL said today. Sixty-eight bird watchers from Hubli, Kadra, Sirsi, Raichur and Kaiga took part in the event. Six teams were formed to identify and count the birds around Kaiga. The area in and around Kaiga was divided into six transects. Each team travelled through their allotted transect of about 6-7 km distance and recorded aquatic and land birds sighted by them. Some 42 km was covered during the event. Last year, 143 species of birds were identified during the same marathon. The results of the study will not only help in conservation of birds but also help understand the population of migratory and resident birds.



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