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The World's Biggest Bird-a-thon comes to India!

During the four days between 12 and 15 February, more than a thousand birdwatchers throughout India will come together to document as many birds in as many locations across the country as possible.

*Over one lakh birdwatchers globally participate in the annual **Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)**, and last year India was the second highest contributing country worldwide, and discovered more species than any other!*

In 2020, India stood **fourth** in terms of the number of species reported, behind Colombia, Ecuador, and Brazil and **second** in terms of the number of checklists uploaded, behind the United States. The most common birds reported in India were Himalayan Bulbul in the Himalayas, Black Kite in the north, Common Myna in the east, northeast and Andaman & Nicobar Islands, House Crow in the south, Red-vented Bulbul in the central and Feral Pigeon in the northwest

GBBC is a fun event attracting those new to birding, young and old. Lots of local birdwatching walks and talks are planned across the country for the public to join in.

As Angeline Mano, a passionate birdwatcher from Tamil Nadu, said, ***“My first GBBC is still an unforgettable one, as every bird that I sighted were lifers to me. The one that I enjoyed the most was making a checklist for every 15 minutes in a hyperactive way. I never forget to start my GBBC with a kutrook...kutrook.. call of a White-cheeked Barbet from Yercaud (Tamil Nadu).”***

There is a serious side to GBBC as well, with the power of citizen science helping to answer questions about whether birds in India are doing well or declining.



Kalpana Jayaraman, Professor at Stella Maris College, Chennai stressed that ***“I consider the GBBC and Campus Count as a celebration of birds and bird-watching. It is awesome to realise how the data keyed in by millions of birders worldwide, is being used for research and to find answers relating to several aspects of avian biology. Events like these has given me greater insight into bird habits, habitats, behaviour and interaction of birds with other species”***

Along with GBBC, there are also campuses expected to take part in the sister event “[Campus Bird Count](#)” – an effort to regularly monitor birds that make their home in educational and institutional campuses. Outside protected areas such as national parks and wildlife sanctuaries such habitats are becoming increasingly important for our wildlife.

In India, the GBBC is coordinated by [Bird Count India](#), an umbrella group of a large number of birding, nature and conservation organisations. Anyone is welcome to participate in the GBBC, further details of which are available at <https://birdcount.in/event/gbbc2021/>. The basic activity is to list all bird species seen at a particular location over a period of 15 minutes or more, at any time during the four days, and upload the list to the bird recording platform eBird www.ebird.org/india. This can be repeated as often as is possible.

More information about the GBBC, Campus Bird Count, and other associated events in India can be found at www.birdcount.in. The [global GBBC](#) is organised by Cornell University and the Audubon Society in the USA.

Some high-resolution photos are freely available to download from <http://bit.ly/2jFW85a> and use in publicity for GBBC 2021. In all instances, please ensure the appropriate photographer is credited.

For publicity, posters in English and other languages can be downloaded from <http://bit.ly/3rgpfPQ>

About Bird Count India

Bird Count India is a consortium of organisations and groups working together to increase our collective knowledge about bird distributions and populations. The partnership conducts periodic bird-related events and activities, offers support and resources to birding groups for conducting their own events, and provides information on bird monitoring. Read about us at www.birdcount.in.

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