

D-71: Checklist of avifauna in the Sathrukondan wetland area in the Batticaloa lagoon

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Batticaloa lagoon is listed in the Directory of Asian wetlands (1989). The total areas of this is 14,118 ha. This area is not a continuous stretch of land and cannot be considered as a single site. This study was carried out at Sathrukondan which is a section of the wetlands of Batticaloa lagoon. This study area is about 518 ha consisting of mangroves, marshes, freshwater ponds, paddy fields and the lagoon. Although this area is known for its avifauna, no systematic study has been done in the past. One of the aims of the study was to prepare a checklist of avifauna in the study area. The study was conducted from May 1992 to March 1993. Observations were made twice a week on a line transect in the study area.

A total of 65 species of avifauna were recorded during the study period.

This was 15.2% of the total number of species of avifauna recorded in Sri Lanka. Of the total recorded species in the study area, 81.5% (53 spp) were breeding residents, 18.5% (12 sp.) were migrants and 20% (13 sp.) were endemic. Peak counts of some of the species included Little Cormorant 38, Pond Heron 34, Median Egret 77, Lesser Whistling teal 187, Garganey teal 442, Little ringed plover 47, Kentish Plover 303, Marsh sandpiper 99, Green shank 30, Common sandpiper 41, Black winged stilt 117, Gull billed tern 181, palm swift 117 and purple sunbird 59. In comparison, 57 sp. had been recorded in the Tabbowa reservoir with an area of 591 ha.

Thus there is a need for continuous recording of avifauna in this area and to conserve the Sathrukondan wetlands to preserve the decreasing diversity of avifauna.