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The abundance and diversity of bird communities associated with paddy fields were studied in eight fields over six months at Ambalanthota, in 1997. Point estimates of the number and abundance of species were obtained according to the point scan line transect technique during 1580 5-minute observation, over 79 field visits. At eight fields, 6542 birds of 73 species or 4.09 birds per observation were recorded. The mean relative density of birds per census per ha was 56.95.

The percent contribution by bird groups distinguished according to the total abundance of species was the most abundant (n (100:5 sp.-79.30%), abundant (100>n (40:12 sp.-13.20%), less abundant (40>n (10:20 sp.-6.14%) and rare (n<10:26 sp.-1.36%). There were no significant differences in species richness, abundance and diversity of birds between fields. The percentage of abundance contributed by the two most abundant species (common mynah *Acridotheres tristis* and rose-ringed parakeet *Psittacula kramerii*) was between 22.79 and 38.97.

Simpson's index was between 0.91 and 0.96. Species composition in bird communities (SÖrensen's index>60%) was similar between fields. Ecological groups distinguished according to the habitat and food preferences of species revealed that many forest bird species (22 sp.-13.77%) and insectivorous species (20 sp.-7.86%) were not contributed much to total abundance.

The higher abundance of wetland species (31 sp.-46.68%), species preferring human habitats (8 sp.-29.65%), frugivorous species (12 sp.-30.86%) and species feed upon a mixed diet (19 sp.-34.62%), were found. An integrated view of the nature of the paddy field avifauna and their abundance and diversity highlighted tat paddy fields are good

wetland sites for bird abundance and stimulate an important increase in regional bird richness.