D – 04

Avifauna at four different agroesosystems: vegetable cultivation, slash and burn agriculture (chenas), paddy cultivation and tea plantations; was studied in the Southern Province over six months, in 1997. Altogether, 32 plots representing four agroecosystems, were surveyed according to the point scan line transect technique.

A total of 106 species, representing 41 families, were recorded from all plots. Vegetable, chena, paddy and tea plots had 47, 60, 73 and 67 species respectively. Avifauna constituted an important bird assemblage in having 8 endemic, 10 migrant, 6 rare and 6 nationally threatened species. Tea plots had all the recorded endemics that represent 34.8% of endemic bird species in Sri Lanka.

Many migrants were found at paddy fields and they represent 9.5% of migrant species in Sri Lanka. Out of the recorded rare birds, two races (*Chrysocolaptes lucidus & Prinia sylvatica*) were endemic to Sri Lanka. Tea plots had all the recorded threatened species. One of them was a rare species (*Ictinaetus malayensis* black eagle) and the others were endemic species or races. All the agroecosystems had many species that distributed throughout the country than species that restricted to the low country.

Many species that restricted to the low-country wet zone were found at tea plots and many species that restricted to the low-country dry zone were found at paddy plots.The incidence of endemic and non-endemic species and the representation of low country, wet-zone and dry-zone species were significantly differed among agroecosystems. The migratory status (migrants or breeding residents), the abundance (common or rare) and the representation of species distributed throughout the country and species restricted to the low country, were not significantly associated with the agroecosystem type. Compared to the other agroecosystems, paddy fields had a unique avifauna.