

Winter Delayed, Migratory Birds Few And Far Between

In Contrast, Some That Usually Fly Away By Now Stay Put

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New Delhi: The Delhi-NCR region's wetlands and habitats are largely devoid of winter migratory birds as Nov has continued to be warm as Oct.

Generally, over 80 species of migratory birds arrive in the region by Oct. About 40 species of passage migrants make a pit stop in the region, while there are about 180 species of resident birds. Birders have, however, observed that only a few migratory and passage migratory birds have landed, while some summer migratory birds, which should have flown south by mid-Oct, are still around.

The birders expect that as mid-Nov approaches, the numbers of migratory birds, both in flock strength and species density, might increase significantly.

Earlier, the weather department stated that Oct 2024 was the warmest since 1951.

So far, Nov has also been quite warm, with both minimum and maximum temperatures well above normal. This seems to have impacted the city's winged visitors.

"Migration is late by about a month or so, but now both density and diversity are picking up speed. The capacity of habitat around NCR has decreased manifold due to construction, agriculture and reclaiming of land," birder Maj Gen Arvind Yadav said. He pointed out that among the migratory birds, some had arrived. The passage migratory species that usually stay for weeks are staying for days.

"Among the latest arrived species are the Bar-headed Goose, Greylag Goose, Curlews, Great Crested Grebe, Wryneck, Baillon's Crake, Brown Crake, Common Cranes, Demoiselle Crane, some Buzzards and Harriers. Flycatchers like the Verditer, Red-breasted and Taiga varieties, and the Hume's and Greenish warblers have arrived, but in low numbers. By mid-October, they are generally here in high numbers. The Large-billed Warbler in Sultanpur and Bhondsi was an interesting sighting. Ducks and water birds have arrived in very low density and diversity. Garganey, Gadwall, Northern Shovelers



Photos: Maj Gen Arvind Yadav

A birder pointed out that among the migratory birds, the latest arrived species were tickell's leaf warbler, common cranes, bar-headed goose and great crested grebe (clockwise from top left)

and Pintails arrived by Oct itself. Raptors arrive along with water birds, but they are also scarcely seen. One odd Montagu's Harrier, Greater Spotted Eagle and a couple of Booted Eagles were only seen. The Eurasian Hobby usually arrives at the end of Sept, but this time it has not yet been seen," Yadav said.

Birders in Delhi-NCR have also noted the presence of some wader species — shallow water birds that typically arrive by Sept at various habitats. However, their numbers have depleted this year because the shallow water areas are inundated with deeper water due to a strong monsoon this year. They pointed out that waders like Sandpipers are still there in large numbers as are some plovers.

Among the summer migrants, Bee-eaters and Jacobin Cuckoos have not yet returned as winter has not set in, and the monsoon was intense and long.

The birders pointed out an interest-

ing sighting of passage migratory species. Grey-headed Lapwings and Golden Plovers, which often stay for a week before flying further on, were seen in low numbers compared to a flock of 15 birds that visited last year at the same time.

Birder Kanwar B Singh said the temperature plays a crucial role in migration.

Faiyaz A Khudsar, in charge of the biodiversity park's programme, said: "So far, we have observed some Common Teals, Great Cormorants, Godwits and Northern Shovelers at Yamuna Biodiversity Park. It's evident that the temperature is high, which will have a direct impact on the migration. If the temperature is high here, then the respective countries or regions from where these birds come, like Europe, China, Russia, and Central Asia, will be high as well. Since Central Asia is warm, proper migration might be delayed due to extreme weather patterns."

Blow to Cong as ex-MLA Mateen Ahmed joins AAP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Former Congress MLA and a popular Muslim leader in northeast Delhi, Mateen Ahmed, joined AAP on Sunday. The move has come as a jolt to Congress, which is taking out a month-long 'Delhi Nyay Yatra' against AAP's "mis-governance" in the capital ahead of the assembly polls, due in Feb next year.

Ahmed had won five consecutive elections between 1993 and 2013 — first as a Janata Dal candidate, second as an independent and remaining three on Congress ticket — from Seelampur assembly constituency in northeast Delhi. He, however, lost the 2015 and 2020 election to AAP. He also held important positions such as vice-chairperson of Delhi Jal Board and chairperson of Delhi Waqf Board at different points in time.

Ahmed was among eight Congress MLAs who managed to secure their seats in the 2013 assembly polls when AAP won over a sizable vote back of the grand-old party in its debut election.

His son, Chaudhry Zubair Ahmed, and daughter-in-law Shagufta Choudhry, who's a sitting municipal councillor,



SWITCH-HIT: Mateen Ahmed is welcomed to AAP on Sunday

joined AAP in Oct this year.

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal formalised Ahmed's joining. He said Ahmed had finally joined the right political party. "He is a prominent figure in Delhi's politics. Like AAP, which is known for its commitment to the people, Chaudhary Mateen Ahmed is renowned in his area for always being there for his constituents, through good times and bad," Kejriwal said.

Ahmed said he was inspired by Kejriwal's "politics with purpose". "My sole objective now is to strengthen the party and serve the people

wholeheartedly," he said.

Reacting to the development, Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav said "opportunistic people may switch loyalties. But people are now hoping for a change and believe in Congress". He added that Congress had no plans to enter into an alliance with AAP for assembly polls. "Mistakes are made once; they are not repeated over and over again. By doing an alliance with AAP, Congress suffered the consequences. There will not be any alliance with AAP and any other party in future," he said.

4-time MLA returns to BJP from AAP

New Delhi: Former Delhi minister and four-time MLA, Harsharan Singh Balli, returned to BJP on Sunday after spending nearly four years with AAP. He was re-inducted into the party by Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva.

Balli won four consecutive Delhi assembly polls from 1998 to 2008 from Hari Nagar assembly constituency. He was denied a ticket in 2013 when the seat went to BJP's alliance partner, Shiromani Akali Dal. He joined AAP ahead of 2020 Delhi assembly polls.

BJP functionaries said along with Balli, his son Gurmeet Singh 'Rikku' Balli, who was

said to be a "youth functionary in AAP", was also joining them. Balli was minister of industries in Madan Lal Khurana govt. Sachdeva said as a minister, Balli played a significant role in the expansion of industrial trade in the capital. He added that in Balli, Delhi BJP had got a strong leader who was popular among the Sikh community as well as the industrial trade sector.

Balli said he joined AAP with great hope but was leaving in disappointment, alleging that AAP govt was mired in "corruption". No immediate reaction was available from AAP. **TNN**

AAP and BJP trade barbs on law & order

New Delhi: Following reports that a trader in Rohini received extortion calls from gangsters, AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal expressed concern over the "deteriorating law and order situation" in the capital. Blaming the BJP-led Centre, Kejriwal questioned how people could entrust the responsibility of Delhi to a political party that could not "manage" the law and order.

BJP accused AAP of "using" the recent criminal incidents to "wash away the stains of failure" on every front of development.

Former deputy CM Manish Sisodia also raised the issue. "If BJP cannot handle the law and order, it should transfer this responsibility to the elected govt of Delhi. Under Kejriwal's leadership, law and order would be brought under control within ten days."

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva alleged that Kejriwal govt failed on every front, including pollution, education, health, water supply, public transport, and social security schemes.

"But it leads in corruption, misgovernance, and the luxury of their own leaders. While there have been some recent crime incidents in Delhi, police acted swiftly to arrest the perpetrators. Most of these incidents were rooted in personal rivalries," Sachdeva said. **TNN**

Two hurt in firing incident

New Delhi: A firing incident involving multiple individuals was reported on Saturday night in outer north Delhi's Mukundpur. The altercation left two of them hospitalised and four others in police custody. Cops said the confrontation began when one of the accused verbally harassed the victim's sister, triggering an argument. **TNN**

Future innovators draw inspiration from IIT-D Open House

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New Delhi: Nearly 4,000 students from 58 schools and colleges across Delhi-NCR, along with their teachers and other visitors, came together at IIT Delhi over the weekend for the 17th edition of its annual Open House. The event, aimed at inspiring young minds in the fields of science and technology, featured an impressive array of activities

and presentations designed to engage and motivate the next generation of innovators.

At the heart of the event was a diverse collection of around 250 innovative research projects on display. Faculty members and students from IIT Delhi presented their work through live demonstrations, posters, and three-minute research presentations, making complex scientific concepts accessible and exci-

ting for the young audience.

The Open House offered a unique opportunity to explore the institute's cutting-edge research, student projects, and state-of-the-art facilities and laboratories. "We began with a strong focus on science and engineering, and that focus remains. However, we are also expanding into areas like healthcare and social sciences. For example, we are collaborating with AIIMS to estab-

lish a Centre of Excellence for AI in Healthcare," said professor Rangan Banerjee, director of IIT Delhi.

The event was officially inaugurated by professor Randeep Guleria, former director of AIIMS and the chief guest, on Saturday. In his address, Guleria highlighted the future of healthcare and the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration.

Among the main highlights was an AI-based project for detecting

gallbladder cancer from ultrasound images, aimed at saving lives through early, non-invasive diagnosis. Other standout projects included a laser-based solid-state lighting system for efficient white light, a smart walking stick enhancing mobility for the elderly, and a portable microscopic air quality monitoring and bioaerosol imaging system for real-time environmental monitoring.

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