



FOUNDATION FOR ECOLOGICAL SECURITY

FES takes immense pleasure to inform you of the launch of the Avian Information System (AVIS). The AVIS is a portal that features detailed information on all Indian Birds, covering nearly 1329 species from Indian region. The portal is part of an initiative to build an interactive web-based database and information system on the biodiversity of the Indian subcontinent, called the Indian Biodiversity Information System (IBIS).

The portal was launched on 14th December 2010 by Shri Vijai Sharma, Honorable Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) Government of India, thus marking an important initiative in the International Year of Biodiversity.

A fundamental prerequisite in the conservation of biological diversity is the availability of adequate and reliable information, which aids in developing conservation strategies. However, much of this data and literature is archived in books and not easily accessible. FES has built upon IBIS so as to enable more people to access and build such information.

To start with, all available data on birds of India have been collated and digitised to develop the first phase of the IBIS Portal titled 'Avian Information System (AVIS)'. In the coming year, IBIS will expand to build similar portals on mammals, reptiles, amphibians and flora involving interested individuals, organisations, researchers and scholars across India.

Besides all archival information available at single place, the IBIS is an "open beta version" enabling it to obtain feedback from users, add features and build upon the existing database. The interactive portal uses open-source software and helps the users to contribute data to the portal that would be periodically reviewed by experts. IBIS follows the creative commons licensing policy enabling appropriate attribution to the data provider and collaborators.

Initiated by FES, IBIS would evolve as a collaborative platform with interested individuals, organizations, researchers and scholars across India for biodiversity conservation.

AVIS At-A-Glance

Modules on the portal:

General species profiles, which will be public participatory but peer reviewed

Copyright-free books on birds and natural history

Taxonomy module with the various checklists

Excerpts from various existing books and literature

About 18,126 excerpts from 37 Books have been entered into the database. These books encompass the year span of 1862 to 1949. Old taxonomy has been linked to latest taxonomy. All major ornithological publications have been covered, including Fauna of British India –Birds (1st and 2nd Editions – 12 volumes), Nests and Eggs of Indian Birds (3 volumes), The Birds of India (3 volumes), The Avifauna of British India and its dependencies (2 volumes).

Bibliography and scientific literature

Bibliography of Indian Birds with almost 1,00,000 + citations in global coverage have been incorporated. There has been an extensive coverage from the year 1758 to 2010, spanning almost 252 years.

Links to other copyright publication

The portal also features links to other dedicated database (presently covering approximately 23 databases).

GBIF database on museum collections

About 93,974 museum records have been incorporated in the exclusive Museum Collection Database covering about 32 major avian collection museums such as the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology (15,802 Records), Field Museum, Chicago (6,690 Records), Yale University Peabody Museum (4,832 Records), Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University (4,114 Records).

Bird Calls and Sound

We have embedded Bird calls with the help of xeno-canto.org

Avian Information System is one of the first steps towards creating a larger resource base (IBIS) on the invaluable biodiversity of the Indian subcontinent. Not only will this be followed by similar portals on various other floral and faunal groups, but it is also envisaged that the portal will serve as a model for developing similar systems and evolve through public participation, use and contribution. The success of the initiative lies in the manner in which the various interactive tools will serve the efforts towards achieving research, conservation and education goals, or just help arouse/address simple curiosity. It is hoped that the various modules/ tools incorporated for public participation will encourage the involvement and interest of different user groups.

We welcome feedback, contribution and active participation.....at

<http://avis.indianbiodiversity.org/>