

Assessment of Population Trends of Birds at Taunsa Barrage Wildlife Sanctuary, Pakistan

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Abstract : Population trends learning is an important tool for conservation programs in rare as well as in common species of birds. A study was conducted to assess annual decline in species of birds and to identify the causes of this decline at Taunsa Barrage wildlife Sanctuary, Punjab, Pakistan. Data were collected by direct census method during wintering and breeding periods (2001 to 2002 and 2008 to 2011). The results indicated an increasing trend in 157, whereas a decreasing trend in 14 species of birds. Among the species with declining trend, there was a 92% decrease in White-backed Vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*), 60% in Greater Painted Snipe (*Rostratula benghalensis*), 57% in Garganey (*Anas querquedula*), Pallas's Fish Eagle and Long-legged Buzzard (*Buteo rufinus*) 50% each, 41% in Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*), 39% in Little Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax niger*), 37% in Gadwall (*Anas strepera*), 33% in Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), 30% in Black Drongo (*Dicrurus macrocercus*) and 26% in Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*) population. Habitat exploitation, hunting and grazing were found the main causes of this decline. In conclusion, conservation and management of the study area is foremost to interests of declining bird population. It is suggested, therefore, to take immediate steps for the protection of the sanctuary to conserve the declining population of birds.

Keywords : population trends, wildlife sanctuary, bird, habitat exploitation

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