

# PICTORIAL FIELD GUIDE OF BIRDS FROM ACHANAKMAR-AMARKANTAK BIOSPHERE RESERVE



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# Preface

About 10,000 species of birds are known all over the world. Of these, about 1,224 species exist throughout India. The first book on Indian birds was published with some colored photographs in 1928. Later on, Dr. Salim Ali wrote a book entitled "The book of Indian birds" through Bombay Natural History Society, in which about 190 species of birds were described with coloured photographs. The book is still being used for identification of birds.

Achanakmar-Amarkantak Biosphere Reserve, which has an area of 383551.0 ha. in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh states, has nearly 142 species of birds. Some of them are in the verge of extinction. About 70 main species of birds with their description, colour, size and habitat, which are essential for their identification, are given in this field guide. Hope this field guide will be helpful to all trainees/learners.

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**1. Black Common Kite,**  
*Milvus migrans*  
(Boddaert)

**Status:** Common.

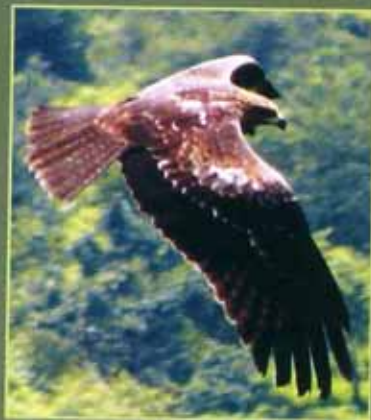
**Salient features:** Size 55-58 cm; dark rufous-brown, with variable whitish crescent at primary bases on under wing; forked tail conspicuous in flight. Found in semi desert region.



**2. Black-shouldered**  
*Kite, Elanus caeruleus*  
(Desfontaines)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 31-35 cm; grey and white with black shoulder, flight buoyant, hovering; found in grass land with cultivation and open scrub.



**3. Eurasian Marsh**  
*Harrier, Circus*  
*aeruginosus*  
(Linnaeus)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 48-58 cm; reddish-brown with lighter yellowish streaks, which are particularly prominent on the breast; a rounded tail; strongly associated with wetland areas



#### 4. Oriental Honey Buzzard, *Pernis ptilorhynchus* (Temminck)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 31-35 cm; greyish brown above and paler brown below; long-necked with a small head, soars on flat wings; summer migrant to Siberia, wintering in tropical south east Asia.



#### 5. Shikra, *Accipiter (Astur) badius* (Gmelin)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 30-36 cm; ashy blue grey upper parts, under side is white, finely barred reddish brown below; tail with broad blackish bands. Found in open woodland including savannah and cultivation.



#### 6. Ashy crowned Sparrow Lark, *Eremopterix grisea* (Scopoli)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 12 cm; brown-black under parts and head apart from brilliant white patches on the nape and a grey crown; found in open dry habitats, scrub, stony wastes and cultivation.





### 7. Common Kingfisher, *Alcedo atthis* (Linnaeus)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 16 cm; blue green upper parts, orange under parts and a long bill; open grassland, found in often near water bodies.



### 8. Pied Kingfisher, *Ceryle rudis* (Linnaeus)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 31cm; white with a black mask, a white supercilium and black breast bands; hovers over clear lakes, rivers before diving for fish makes it distinctive.



### 9. White-breasted Kingfisher, *Halcyon smyrnensis* (Linnaeus)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 28cm; bright blue back, wings and tail, head, shoulders, flanks and lower belly are chestnut; throat and breast are white; found in mostly open country in the plains with trees, wires.

## 10. Spot-billed Duck, *Anas poecilorhyncha* Forester

**Status:** Common.

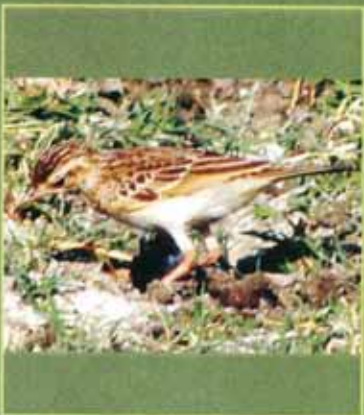
**Salient features:** Size 58-63 cm; grey ducks with a paler head, neck, a black bill tipped bright yellow; occurs near freshwater lakes and marshes in fairly open country.



## 11. Paddyfield Pipit, *Anthus rufulus* Vieillot

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 15 cm; like the female house sparrow in colouration i.e. streaked grey-brown above and pale below with breast streaking and long tail; open habitats, especially short grassland and cultivation.



## 12. Tree Pipit, *Anthus trivialis* (Linnaeus)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 15 cm; streaked brown above, with black markings on a white belly and buff breast below; open habitats, especially short grassland and cultivation.







**13. House Swift, *Apus (Micropus) affinis* (Gray)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Smaller than sparrow; black except for a white rump, white extending on to the flanks; long narrow wings; open habitats, especially short grassland and cultivation.



**14. Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus ibis* (Linnaeus)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 48-53cm; white plumage, a yellow bill and grayish-yellow legs; damp grass land, paddy field and inland water.



**15. Great Egret, *Casmerodius albus* (Linnaeus)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 65-72cm; white egrets, yellow bill and black legs and feet; paddy field, inland and coastal waters.

## 16. Indian Pond Heron, *Ardeola grayii* (Sykes)

**Status:** Common.

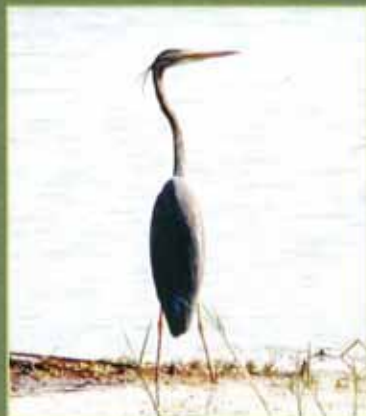
**Salient features:** Size 42-45cm; stocky with a short neck, short thick bill and buff-brown back; inland and coastal wetland.



## 17. Purple Heron, *Ardea purpurea* Linnaeus

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 78-90 cm; bluish to darker grey, darker reddish-brown plumage; inland and coastal waters.



## 18. Indian Grey Hornbill, *Ocyceros (Tockas) birostris* (Scopoli)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 50 cm; grey with a light grey or dull white belly, black or dark grey and white curved bill surmounted by casque tail long and graduated ; large avenue trees.







**19. Coppersmith Barbet, *Megalaema haemacephala* (Muller)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 17 cm; red forehead, yellow eye-ring and throat patch with streaked underside and green upperparts; gardens, groves and sparse woodland.



**20. Little Ringed Plover, *Charadrius dubius* Scopoli**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 14-17 cm; grey-brown back and wings, white belly, white breast with one black neckband; near freshwater, gravel pits, islands and river edges.



**21. Red-wattled Lapwing, *Vanellus (Lobivanellus) indicus* (Boddaert)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 32-35 cm; light brown with a purple sheen, head and chest and front part of neck are black; near freshwater, river edges.

## 22. Yellow-wattled Lapwing, *Vanellus malabaricus* (Boddaert)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 26-28 cm; pale brown waders, black crown separated from neck brown by narrow white band, large yellow facial wattles; dry stony and open grassland, scrub habitats.



## 23. Asian Openbill, *Anastomus oscitans* (Boddaert)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 68 cm; greyish white or white plumage with black wing flight feathers, red legs and dull yellow-grey bill with arching and leaving a narrow open gap between them; near freshwater, inland wetlands and river edges.



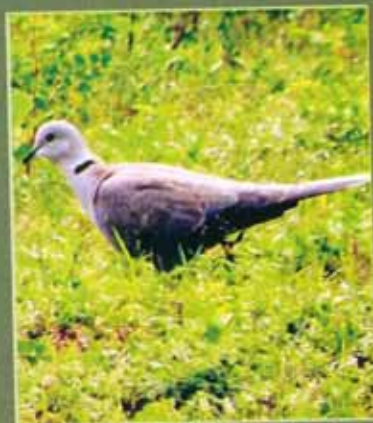
## 24. Pied Crested Cuckoo, *Clamator jacobinus* (Boddaert)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 33 cm; slim, black above and white below cuckoo with a crest is distinctive; a white round patch on wings and white tips of tail feathers; thorny, dry scrub or open woodland.







**25. Eurasian Collared  
or Ring Dove,  
*Streptopelia decaocto*  
(Frivaldszky)**

**Status:** Common.

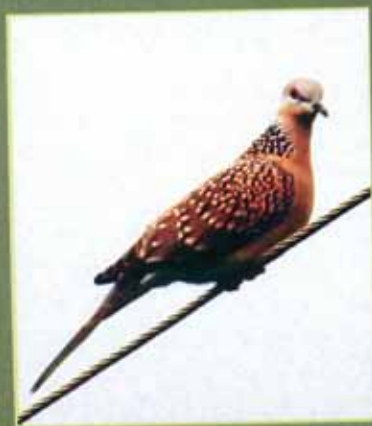
**Salient features:** Size 33 cm; grey-buff to pinkish-grey overall, a little darker above than below, with a blue-grey underwing patch; warm temperate and subtropical



**26. Rock Pigeon,  
*Columba livia* Gmelin**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 33 cm; dark bluish-grey head, neck, and chest with glossy yellowish, greenish, and reddish-purple iridescence along its neck and wing feathers; warm temperate and natural cliffs, coasts.



**27. Spotted Dove,  
*Streptopelia chinensis*  
(Scopoli)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 30 cm; back, wings and tail are pale to pinkish brown, heavily white spotted black with buff; open woodland, farmland and natural range.



**28. Laughing Dove,  
*Stigmatopelia  
senegalensis*  
(Linnaeus)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 27 cm;  
reddish-brown wings, blue-  
grey tail; open woodland,  
farmland and natural range



**29. Indian Roller,  
*Coracias benghalensis*  
(Linnaeus)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 33 cm;  
deep purplish blue with a band  
of pale blue, tail is sky blue  
with a terminal band of  
prussian blue, central feathers  
are dull green; grassland and  
scrub forest habitats.



**30. House Crow,  
*Corvus splendens*  
Vieillot**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 40 cm;  
glossed black forehead, crown,  
throat and upper breast, whilst  
the neck and breast are a  
lighter grey-brown; near  
human habitations, busy  
streets.





**31. Jungle (Large-billed) Crow, *Corvus macrorhynchos* Wagler**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 46-59 cm; dark grayish plumage from the back head, neck, shoulders and lower body; woodland, parks and gardens, cultivated regions with less trees.



**32. Rufous Treepie, *Dendrocitta vagabunda* (Latham)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 46-50 cm; cinnamon black head, bluish grey long graduated tail and is tipped in black; open forest, scrub, plantations and gardens.



**33. Asian Koel, *Eudynamis scolopaceus* (Linnaeus)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 43 cm; cinnamon black head, bill black with yellowish green in male and spotted barred in female; bluish grey long graduated tail and is tipped in black; open forest consisting of scrub, plantations and gardens.

### 34. Black Drongo, *Dicrurus macrocercus* Vieillot

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 28 cm; glossy blue-black underpart and white rictal spot, tail-fork may be lost during moult; around habitation and cultivation.



### 35. Blackwinged Stilt, *Himantopus himantopus* (Linnaeus)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 35-40 cm; black long pinkish legs extend along way behind tail in flight; fresh water wetland, brackish marshes and salt pans.



### 36. Pheasant-tailed Jacana, *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* (Scopoli)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 31 cm; white with yellowish patch on the sides of neck, breeding has brown under part in long tail; fresh water wetland, brackish marshes and salt pans.







### 37. River Tern, *Sterna aurantia* Gray

**Status:** Common.

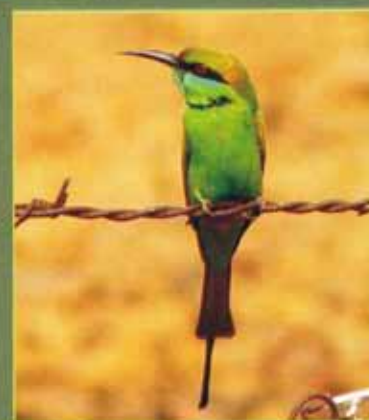
**Salient features:** Size 38-46 cm; orange-yellow bill, black cap, grayish-white underpart, and long grayish-white outer tail feathers legs short red; found near large inland waters.



### 38. Bluetailed Bee-eater, *Merops philippinus* Linnaeus

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 23-26 cm; blue rump, tail and undertail-coverts, chestnut throat, forehead and supercilium are mainly green, concolorous with crown, touch of blue on supercilium; near water in wooded country.



### 39. Green Bee-eater, *Merops orientalis* Latham

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 16-18 cm; slender bright green, blue cheeks, with black necklace, golden to rufous coloration of crown, green tail long slightly curved bill with elongated central feather, open country.

**40. Asian Paradise  
Flycatcher,  
*Terpsiphone  
(Techitrea) paradisi*  
(Linnaeus)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 20 cm;  
black head and crest, with  
white or rufous upperparts and  
long tail-streamers; forest and  
well-wooded areas.



**41. Indian Robin,  
*Saxicoloides fulicata*  
(Linnaeus)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 19 cm;  
sprightly black with little  
reddish vent and black cocked  
tail in all plumages, white  
shoulders and black underpart;  
dry stony areas with scrub,  
and cultivation edges.



**42. Jungle Babbler,  
*Turdoides striatus*  
(Dumont)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 25 cm;  
earthy brown variable dark  
mottling and streaking on  
throat and breast, uniform tail;  
always in flocks of half a dozen  
tall grass and bamboo at forest  
edges.





**43. Oriental Magpie Robin, *Copsychus saularis* (Linnaeus)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 23 cm; black/slate-grey and white, with white on wings and at sides of tail; garden, groves and open broad leaved forest.



**44. Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, *Cyornis tickelliae* Blyth**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 14 cm; orange throat and breast with clear horizontal division from white flanks and belly, grayish – blue upper parts; open dry forest and wooded area.



**45. Verditer Flycatcher, *Eumyias thalassina* (Swainson)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 16 cm; greenish-blue, with black lores, duller and greyer, with dusky lores; open forest and wooden areas.



#### 46. Purple Sunbird, *Nectarinia asiatica* (Latham)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 10 cm; metallic purple male, yellowish upper parts female; found in open deciduous forests and gardens.



#### 47. Black-hooded Oriole, *Oriolus xanthornus* (Linnaeus)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 25cm; black head and breast adult, young with yellow forehead, black -streaked white throat and yellow breast; found in open broad leaved forest and wooded area.

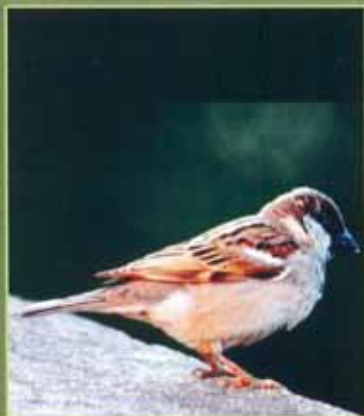


#### 48. Eurasian Golden Oriole, *Oriolus oriolus* (Linnaeus)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 25cm; golden -yellow, with black mask and mainly black winged male, yellowish -green upper parts female; found in open woodland, trees in cultivation.





**49. House Sparrow,**  
*Passer domesticus*  
(Linnaeus)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 15cm; grey crown, black throat and upperbreast, chestnutnape, and brownish mantle, buffish supercilium and unstreaked grayish-white underpart; found in cultivated areas in winters.



**50. Baya Weaver,**  
*Ploceus philippinus*  
(Linnaeus)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 15cm; like female house sparrow, yellow crown, dark brown ear coverts and throat, unstreaked yellow breasts, mantle and scapulars in male; unstreaked buff to pale yellowish under parts in female; found in



**51. Chestnut-shouldered Petronia,**  
*Petronia xanthocollis*  
(Burton)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 13.5cm; unstreaked brownish grey head, chestnut lesser coverts and white wings bar in male; lesser coverts brown and wings bar buff in female; found in open dry forest and scrub.

## 52. Little Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax niger* (Vieillot)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 51cm; black with few white plumes on forecrown and sides of head; compressed bill, sharply hooked at tip. Found near inland and coastal waters.



## 53. Indian Peafowl, *Pavo cristatus* (Linnaeus)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size male 180- 230 cm, female 90-100 cm; blue neck and breast, glossy green train of elongated upper tail covert feathers with numerous ocelli in male, female lacks elongated upper tail coverts; found in forest undergrowth and cultivated areas.



## 54. Black Redstart, *Phoenicurus ochruros* (Gmelin)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 15cm; black breasts and rufous underparts male, dusky brown underparts with orange buff wash to flanks and vents; found in cultivation and plantations.







**55. Blackrumped  
Flameback  
Woodpecker,  
*Dinopium  
benghalensis*  
(Linnaeus)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 26-29cm; black eyes stripe and throat spotting on wings, coverts and black rumps; found in light forests, plantation and groves.



**56. White-naped  
Woodpecker,  
*Chrysocolaptes  
festivus* (Boddaert)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 29 cm; white hind neck and mantle, and black scapular and back scapulars; found in light forest, scrub and scattered trees.



**57. Indian Pitta, *Pitta  
brachyura* (Linnaeus)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 19 cm; bold black stripe through eye, white throat and supercilium, buff lateral crown-stripes, and buff breast and flanks; mainly found in broad leaved forest.

**58. Plum headed Parakeet, *Psittacula cyanocephala* (Linnaeus)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 36 cm; head is plump-red male, pale grey female, yellow upper mandible, and white-tipped blue-green tail; found in forest and well-wooded areas.



**59. Rose-ringed Parakeet, *Psittacula krameri* (Scopoli)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 42 cm; green head and blue-green tip to tail, blackish chin stripe and pink collar in male; found in forest, wooded and cultivation areas.



**60. Red-Vented Bulbul, *Pycnonotus (Molpastes) cafer* (Linnaeus)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 20 cm; black head with slight crest, and white rump mantle and breast vary from pale brown, heavily scaled; found in open deciduous forest and secondary growth.





**61. Spotted Owlet,  
*Athene brama*  
(Temminck)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 21 cm; white spotting on upperparts, including crown, and diffuse brown spotting or barring on under-parts, pale facial discs and nuchal collar; found near habitation and cultivation.



**62. Asian Pied  
Starling, *Sturnus  
contra* Linnaeus**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 23 cm; black and white, orange orbital skin and large, pointed yellowish bill adult, black of plumage replaced by brown juvenile; found in Cultivated, damp grassland and habitation.



**63. Brahminy Starling,  
*Sturnus pagodarum*  
(Gmelin)**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 21 cm; black crest, rufous-orange side of head and underparts; found in dry, well-wooded areas and thorn scrub.



#### 64. Common Myna, *Acridotheres tristis* (Linnaeus)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 25 cm; brownish myna with yellow orbital skin, white wing patch and tufted browner; found near habitation and cultivation.



#### 65. Ashy Prinia, *Prinia socialis* Sykes

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 13 cm; slate-grey crown, ear coverts, red eyes, slate grey or rufous-brown upperparts, orange-buff wash to underparts; tall grass and scrub, found in open secondary growth and reedbeds.



#### 66. Black Ibis, *Pseudibis papillosa* (Temminck)

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 68 cm; stocky, dark ibis with relatively stout down curved bill, white shoulder patch and reddish legs; found near marshes, lakes, and fields.





**67. Common Hoopoe,  
*Upupa epops* Linnaeus**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 31 cm; rufous-orange or orange-buff, with black-and-white wings and tail black-tipped fan-like crest; found in open country, cultivation and village areas.



**68. Oriental White-eye,  
*Zosterops palpebrosus*  
(Temminck )**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 10 cm; yellow throat and breast with white eye-ring, whitish belly; found in open broad leaved forest and wooded areas.



**69. The Coot, *Fulica atra*, Linnaeus**

**Status:** Common.

**Salient features:** Size 36-42 cm; largely black except for the white facial shield, with partial webbing on its long strong toes; found in freshwater lakes and ponds.