

**DIVERSITY OF BIRDS ASSOCIATED WITH AN IRRIGATION TANK IN  
THE NORTHWEST OF SRI LANKA**

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The diversity of birds associated with Kobeigane tank in the Kurunegala district was studied from December 2002 to November 2003.

Man-made tanks, scattered throughout the low country dry zone, provide rich habitats for many birds, both resident and migrant. Although many of these are not properly maintained at present, these small water holes provide richer habitats than do large reservoirs.

Throughout the year as the climate changes the number of species present in these tanks and the number of individuals in each species vary. Despite the seasons [dry season and wet season], there were 30 species birds belonging to 9 orders and 15 families recorded from the Kobeigane tank. Out of the representatives of 9 orders, 6 include water birds and waders in this study site. Moreover, a total of 22 species of water birds were observed. Additionally 3 species of raptors and 5 species of other associate birds were observed.

These birds show diurnal and seasonal fluctuations in numbers. During the study, the highest peak of activity was observed in mid morning [0800- 0845h] and late evening [1700-1745h] periods. The maximum number of birds was seen during the month of November. This also provides information on their status: whether they are common, resident, rare or migratory. Of the 30 species, majority are common and residents. There were two species of migrants; Pin-tailed snipe and Whiskered eye tern. Furthermore, this study also deals with interactions between organisms and their physical and biological environment.