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BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES IN THE LANDSCAPE OF THE MYSORE RACE COURSE

The URBANISATION is fast changing the Landscape of the HERITAGE City of Mysore, the Lung spaces are vanishing.

The need to conserve our NATURAL HERITAGE like the Birds & Butterflies which are essential as they play an important part in a City like Mysore where the value still holds good.

One such place where the ideal landscape for BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES for thriving is around the MYSORE RACE COURSE situated next to the Tropical deciduous scrub forest CHAMUNDI HILLS which has a natural advantage.

They play a vital part in the rich Bio-diversity of the RACE COURSE in Mysore. One will be amazed with the wide variety of BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES thriving in this area.

RACE COURSE is a unique place where a lot of action takes place along with the HORSE RACING as a Sport.

For instance when the Horse racing is taking place one can see a flock of either Myna's, larks or the Egrets fly from the Turf. They are there for a reason that is when the horses have moved on disturbing the Turf or the Grass the insects tend to expose themselves which helps the Birds to feed on them. If you go around the stables you will come across some rare Butterflies taking Nutrients from the Horse droppings.

The place itself is a home to at-least 20-22 species of Birds like the GREY HORNBILL, LESSER GOLDEN BACKED WOODPECKER, COPPERSMITH SHIKRA, COPPERSMITH BARBET, WHITE CHEEKED BARBET, FANTAIL FLYCATCHER, two varieties of SUNBIRDS, MAGPIE ROBBIN, INDIAN ROBBIN, SMALL GREEN BEE-EATER, Etc just to name a few. The recorded observations over a period of few years has led to the sightings of 90 species. Out of which 20-22 are RESIDENTS, some are PASSERINES and WINTER visitors.

SOME RARE SIGHTINGS

It's a great hunting ground for the Raptors.

It has been observed where in a SHORT TOED SNAKE EAGLE preying on the RAT SNAKE. The BLACK EAGLE which is a local migrator and the Biggest EAGLE in INDIA gliding at a slow pace in a bid to find the small mammals and Reptiles. They MIGRATE LOCALLY during their Non-Breeding season.

BOOTED HAWK EAGLE which is a migratory Winter visitor travelling all the way from Mongolia can be seen from October to March.

SHAHEEN FALCON is one more important visitor to the place which has been seen sitting on the Golf Flag Post or on the Railings along the Track. This happens to be the Fastest Predatory Raptor in the World.

Then we have this BONNELLI'S EAGLE a powerful Predator, a resident of the Chammundi Hills taking down a HARE, the SHIKRA which is commonly seen with a Garden Lizard Kill.



Those FLYING JEWELS found in the RACE COURSE.

BUTTERFLIES play an important role in the sustaining the Ecology & Bio-Diversity around us, they are the main pollinators along with the Bee's. If they are wiped out from our planet we have just 30 odd years before the planet turns into barren land as no pollination takes place.

Mysore is home to about 175-180 species of BUTTERFLIES from the 6 Families those are the HESPERIIDAE, LYCAENIDAE, PAPILIONIDAE, NYMPHALIDAE, PIERIDAE & RIODINIDAE.

MYSORE RACE COURSE is a place where you tend to see a the RAJAH'S, NAWAB'S, ROYAL'S, TIGERS, Leopard's etc among Butterflies from the above mentioned Families.

From the GRASS on the TRACKS to the TAMARIND TREES you can see them Breeding which is a positive sign for the sustaining Ecology.

You get to see the smallest Butterfly of INDIA i.e the BLACK SPOTTED GRASS JEWEL which is about .7-1.2 mm, to the Largest Butterfly of INDIA i.e the SOUTHERN BIRD WING with a wing span of 170-190 mm which is a size of a small Bird.

Some of the important species which has been observed in the MRC premisis are INDIGO FLASH, RED FLASH, CORNELIAN, GUAVA BLUE, INDIAN CUPID, SILVER-STREAK BLUE, PEACOCK ROYAL, SCARCE SHOT SILVERLINE, INDIAN SUNBEAM, LARGE OAKBLUE, RED-SPOT, SILVER-STREAKED ACCACIA BLUE, STRIPED PIERROT, Etc which are important ones found from the Lycaenidae family.

COMMON BANDED PEACOCK, RED HELEN, NORTHERN LIME SWALLOWTAIL, NARROW BANDED BLUE BOTTLE, INDIAN BLUE MORMON, INDIAN COMMON ROSE, CRIMSON ROSE belonging to the Pappilionidae Family

INDIAN JEZEBEL, LITTLE ORANGE TIP, ONE SPOT GRASS YELLOW, SPOTLESS GRASS YELLOW, WANDERER, PLAIN ORANGE TIP, COMMON ALBATROSS, GREAT ORANGE TIP, WESTERN STRIPED ALBATROSS, Etc are some from the whites & yellow butterflies belonging to the Pieridae family.

From the Brush Footed Nymphalidae family we can get to see ANOMALOUS NAWAB, BARONET, BLACK RAJAH, COMMON TREE BROWN, JOKER, THREE RINGS, ANGLED CASTOR, DARK BLUE TIGER, DOUBLE BANDED CROW, PEACOCK PANSY, PALE BLUE PANSY, YELLOW PANSY, STRIPED TIGER, CHESTNUT - STREAKED SAILER, GREAT EGGFLY, GREY PANSY, MEDUS BROWN, Etc

Among the Hesperidae family we get to see MARBLED SKIPPER, OBSCURED BRANDED SWIFT, BROWN AWL, COMMON BRANDED RED EYE, SMALL BRANDED SWIFT, WATER SNOW FLAT, DARK PALM DART, VARIABLE PLAIN PALM DART, ROUNDED PALM, BLANK SWIFT, CHESTNUT BOB, MOORE'S ACE, Etc are important.

SUFFUSED DOUBLE BANDED JUDY is the lone one from the Riordinidae family.

Its a pleasure during the months of May-June to witness the MIGRATION of BUTTERFLIES when they travel in their Millions. It usually takes place after the first Rains of the season. This phenomenon is possible because we are close to the WESTERN GHATS, from where the journey starts and they pass through Mysore and proceed towards the EASTERN GHATS. Again the 2nd generation tends to travel back to the Western Ghats during their REVERSE MIGRATION during the months of October-November as the rains recede.