



BNHS study reveals 1,21,000 flamingos in Mumbai

January census shows increase in number of flamingos

Mumbai: 2nd February: The pink beauties, as they are fondly called, seem to like Mumbai and how! Results from the latest census by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) reveals 1,21,000 flamingos inhabiting Mumbai. These results were concluded from the flamingo census conducted in January 2019. The study shows that the number of lesser flamingos are on the rise while those of greater flamingos are declining.

In a first comprehensive study on flamingos around Mumbai, BNHS is conducting long term ecological studies on flamingos and other waders at the eastern sea front of Mumbai (Sewri-Nhava sea-scape) to understand the impact of developmental activities on these birds. This study also aims to study the feeding ecology and association of birds with Macro benthic fauna (tiny organisms found in mud), impacts of anthropogenic activities and pollution on Macro benthos and waterbirds. “It is very encouraging to see large number of flamingos arriving around Mumbai. This underlines the importance of the critical habitats in and around the Mumbai region. It also highlights the necessity of such long-term comprehensive studies to understand migratory birds and chart future conservation plans,” said Rahul Khot, Principal Investigator of this project and Assistant Director, BNHS

Count Method

Both the banks of the Thane Creek (Vitava to Sewri and Vitava to JNPT) have been divided into transects of 1 kilometer each. All the transects were surveyed by multiple teams of researchers and assistants in hand-rowed boats to count Lesser and Greater Flamingos in one day. The surveys were conducted on three consecutive days to increase reliability of the counts.

Statistics

Lesser flamingo				Greater flamingo			
Month	Adult	Sub-adult	Total	Month	Adult	Sub-adult	Total
May-18	13300	3400	16700	May-18	6800	600	7400
Oct-18	19300	1600	20900	Oct-18	17000	8100	25100
Nov-18	27000	2100	29100	Nov-18	15700	5200	20900
Dec-18	33200	2900	36100	Dec-18	12800	4800	17600
Jan-19	107300	400	107700	Jan-19	9300	4900	14200

The above tables show the counts of Lesser and Greater Flamingos respectively. It can be observed that numbers of lesser flamingo are on the rise from October 2018 and currently at its peak with more than one lakh birds. Also, number of sub adult birds can be seen decreasing since May 2018. On the other hand, numbers of Greater Flamingos show decreasing trend since October 2018. The increased number of the lesser flamingos could be due to migration of large number of birds during January 2019.

“It is an excellent news. But it also means that we have to be more responsible and sensitive while planning development in the region. We also need to focus and work to clean the highly polluted eastern sea front so that we provide toxicity free habitat for flamingos and other migratory birds. This is indeed a positive news ahead of Convention on Migratory

Species that will be hosted by Government of India in 2020” noted Dr Deepak Apte, Director BNHS.

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