



THE STUDY OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AT BHIGWAN BIRD SANCTUARY, INDAPUR TAHSIL, PUNE DISTRICT (MAHARASHTRA)

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ABSTRACT:

Tourism or ecotourism is inherent desire of human beings, which developed with the progress of human civilization. Every man on this planet earth is very fond of tourism, hence always attracted towards nature. The Geographical components play vital role for promoting the tourism development. The geographical components like the beautiful landscapes, pleasant weather, forest, waterfalls, wild animal, birds, butterflies, water bodies, are major resources to attract the tourists. The present paper aims to study of tourism development at Bhigwan, a Bird Sanctuary, Indapur tahsil, Pune district. In this paper an attempt has been made to find



out the faunal potential for tourism development in study area. Bhigwan Bird Sanctuary which is situated in the backwater of Ujani Dam in Maharashtra is another famous destination for the bird lovers. What makes this place unique is here you can spot flamingos. It is a heaven for the wildlife photographers and other bird watching people and it is one of the best wildlife sanctuaries in Maharashtra.

KEY WORDS: Tourism development, Bird sanctuary, Wildlife, Eco-tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism sector is one of the emerging service sectors of the Indian economy. According to the Economic Survey 2020-21, the sector has the capacity to create large scale employment both direct and indirect, for diverse sections in society, from the most specialized to unskilled workforce. Flora and faunal resources play important role for recreational activities of tourist that resulted in the fact that recreational value of faunal wealth has been increasing rapidly from the view point of the tourist since the nature accompanies them all along their journey in the form of wayside trees, parks, pleasure gardens etc. The establishments of wildlife sanctuaries are useful for the protection and preservation of the wild life. Now a day's number of rare species of wildlife has disappeared. Therefore, the need for the preservation and protection of the fascinating wildlife of the district, many places are declared as closed areas as notified areas as wildlife sanctuaries. Bhigwan bird sanctuary has very rich in faunal wealth, which attracts many tourists.

METHODOLOGY:

A Physical survey has been conducted to observe the tourism resources like flora and fauna at Bhigwan bird sanctuary. The information regarding to the historical and cultural facts has been

collected from the secondary data. Interviews and discussions are also organized with bird watchers, nature lovers and tourists.

STUDY AREA:

Bhigwan bird sanctuary's area is extended between $18^{\circ}17'59.9''$ N latitude and $74^{\circ}45'49.0''$ E longitude, Bhigwan is a small dusty town on the border of Pune and Solapur district in Central Maharashtra, in India. Bhigwan is located on the Pune-Solapur Highway. The distance between Pune city center and Bhigwan is 105 km. The birding spots are as far away as 10 to 15 kms from Bhigwan main town. Bhigwan sits along the backwater of the River Bhima. This backwater, which is the reservoir of Ujani Dam built downstream on the river, is known colloquially as Bhigwan Bird Sanctuary. The human-made wetland and its surrounding mix of grasslands and farms are home to nearly 300 species of migratory and year-round birds. The greater flamingo, like many migratory birds, arrives here in time for winter. It spends the season feasting on plankton, giving it the characteristic multihued appearance. Sprawled across 357 square kilometres, the backwater has several designated bird watching points where you can hire a boat. These can be accessed through the villages of Diksal and Kumbhargaoon, both within 10 km of Bhigwan. A boat safari on the backwater is the best way to see the wetland birds in their element. But there are also terrestrial birds and other wildlife to explore in and around the villages. Kumbhargaoon Bird Sanctuary is the main stop for wonderful water birds such as Flamingos, Grey Heron, Painted stork, Brown Headed Gull, Red-naped Ibis, Little Ringed Plover and Osprey fish eating bird of prey. There are two areas where one can see the migratory water birds.

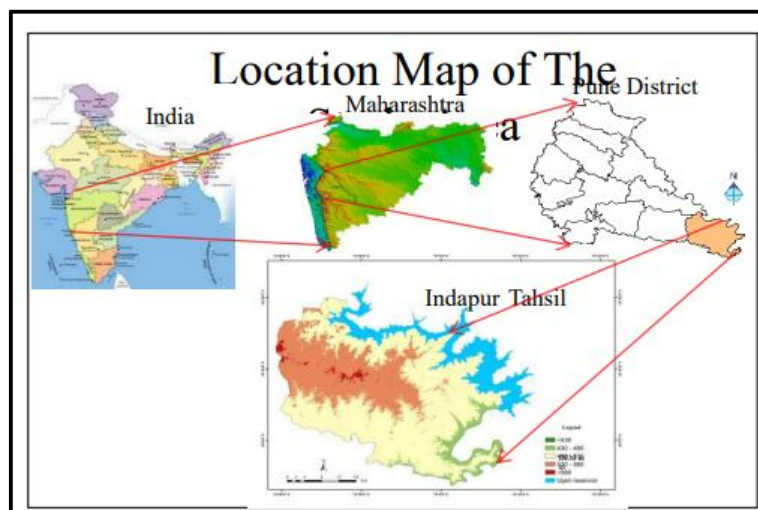


Fig. No. 1 Location Map

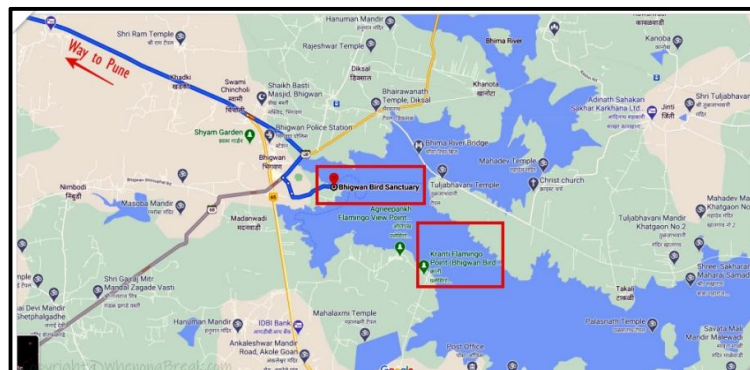


Fig.No.2 Bhigwan Bird Sanctuary Map

CLIMATE:

The sanctuary is characterized by rainy, winter and summer seasons that falls in June to mid-October, mid-October to February and March to May respectively. Maximum temperature falls in the month of May 42° C and minimum temperature in the month of January 23° C. Maximum rainfall received in the month of August 131.12 mm average precipitation recorded around this time is 131.12 mm. The Sanctuary offers comfort and pleasant weather during the months of November to February when tourists can enjoy the bird watching. The winter season can be the best season for bird watchers.

BEST SEASON TO VISIT THE SANCTUARY:

The best time to watch birds in the Sanctuary is during the month of December to February. December to March is when migratory bird numbers peak, but there are plenty of resident birds to be seen outside of the peak season. Summers can be particularly hot and the water level goes down, so it is not an ideal time to visit. A boat safari on the backwater is the best way to see the wetland birds in their element. But there are also terrestrial birds and other wildlife to explore in and around the villages.

WILDLIFE

Birds: The wetland sees local and long-distance migrants such as the greater flamingo, bar-headed goose, and northern shoveler every winter. Occasionally, rare birds such as the Pacific golden plover are also spotted here.

With a bountiful supply of fish and small birds, the wetland is the perfect habitat for raptors such as the osprey, peregrine falcon, western marsh harrier, and greater spotted eagle. You may see a peregrine dive at breakneck speed to catch a black-winged stilt, or an osprey hunt a fish. In the grasslands and farms nearby, you will find the Indian courser, chestnut-bellied sandgrouse, blue-cheeked bee-eater, grey francolin, woolly-necked stork, and demoiselle crane. The resident birds of the area, seen almost throughout the year, are the great thick-knee, little pratincole, pheasant-tailed jacana, Eurasian spoonbill, painted stork, and greater painted-snipe. Variety of Gulls, Terns, Ibises, Sandpipers, Open Bills, Spoonbills and got to see lots of water birds such as flamingo, ibis, heron, cranes etc.

Reptiles: The Indian chameleon is often seen here. After dark, creatures of the night such as the leopard gecko and termite hill gecko are out and about to have their fill of insects. Although rare, common sand boa, rat snake, and Russell's viper are also found in Bhigwan.

Mammals: Open areas around the villages host mammals such as the black-naped hare, jungle cat, golden jackal, and Indian grey mongoose. Asian palm civet can also be spotted, especially at night.

Amphibians, arthropods and fish: While largely unnoticed, frogs, toads, damselflies, dragonflies, beetles, and scorpions also inhabit the area. A study published by the Zoological Survey of India in 2002 reported 54 species of fish.

Migratory birds - Greater Flamingo, Lesser Flamingo, Little Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Rock Pigeon, Yellow-eyed Pigeon, Oriental Turtle-Dove, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Red Collared-Dove, Asian Emerald Dove, Gray-fronted Green-Pigeon, Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Painted Sandgrouse, Jungle Nightjar, Sykes's Nightjar, Asian Palm-Swift, Eurasian Moorhen, Eurasian Coot, Greater Painted-Snipe, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Eurasian Curlew, Eurasian Woodcock, Small Buttonquail, Yellow-legged Buttonquail, Asian Openbill, Woolly-necked Stork, Egyptian Vulture, Oriental Honey-buzzard, Eurasian Griffon, Tawny Eagle, Steppe Eagle, Eurasian Marsh-Harrier, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Northern Goshawk, Oriental Scops-Owl, Eurasian Hoopoe, Malabar Gray Hornbill, European Roller, Eurasian Wryneck, Eurasian Hobby, Eurasian Kestrel, Eurasian Crag-Martin, Himalayan Bulbul, Western Crowned Warbler, Eastern Orphean Warbler, Rosy Starling, Asian Pied Starling, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Siberian Stonechat, Asian Fairy-bluebird.

Resident birds-Indian Spot-billed Duck, Red-crested Pochard, Indian Peafowl, Red Spurfowl, Painted Spurfowl, Red-necked Grebe, Nilgiri Wood-Pigeon, Yellow-eyed Pigeon, Red Collared-Dove, Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon, Painted Sandgrouse, Common Hawk-Cuckoo, Indian Cuckoo, Indian Nightjar, Indian Swiftlet, Watercock, White-breasted Waterhen, Gray-headed Swamp-hen, Common Crane, Dunlin, Common Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper, Small Buttonquail, Black-headed Gull, Indian

Skimmer, Woolly-necked Stork, Black-necked Stork, Indian Cormorant, Black Eagle, Indian Spotted Eagle, Indian Scops-Owl, Indian Gray Hornbill, Common Kingfisher, Indian Roller, Indian Pitta, Indian Golden Oriole, Red-vented Bulbul, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Common Myna, Indian Blackbird, House Sparrow.

Approach and Accommodation

The area is easily approachable by road distance from Pune is 105 km and the distance from Mumbai is 252 km. Bhigwan is small Railway station on Chennai mail, Hyderabad Express etc. There trains can be boarded from Pune, Mumbai and New Delhi. The nearest airport to Bhigwan are Pune 105 km. and Mumbai 252 km. The two are very well connected with all major cities in India, like New Delhi, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad etc. A few budget homestays are conveniently located close to the water. There are also budget hotels within a 10-km radius of the bird watching points, but they are suitable for those travelling by their own vehicle.

CONCLUSION

Tourism provides opportunities to visitors to experience powerful manifestations of nature and culture. It focuses on the significance of conservation of biodiversity and local culture. At the same time it generates income for conservation and economic benefits for the communities living in rural and remote areas. The relationship between tourism and conservation is symbiotic one. While the tourists enjoying nature through nature and wildlife tour, the local people provide services like tour guide, translator, story teller, food and beverage and even facilitate tourists by providing accommodation. Income generated from these activities is used in the development of infrastructure and it is also directed to environment protection. Active participation of local communities in eco-tourism will convince that their resources are more valuable when intact than extracted from ecosystem. The tourism promotional strategies designed should match environment quality, social equality, community empowerment, cultural integrity and economic efficiency through training and awareness programmes for all stakeholders. Enormous potential of Bird sanctuary in Bhigan, Indapur tehsil will benefit the society and environment and lead to economic development of the region and conserve endemic species.

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