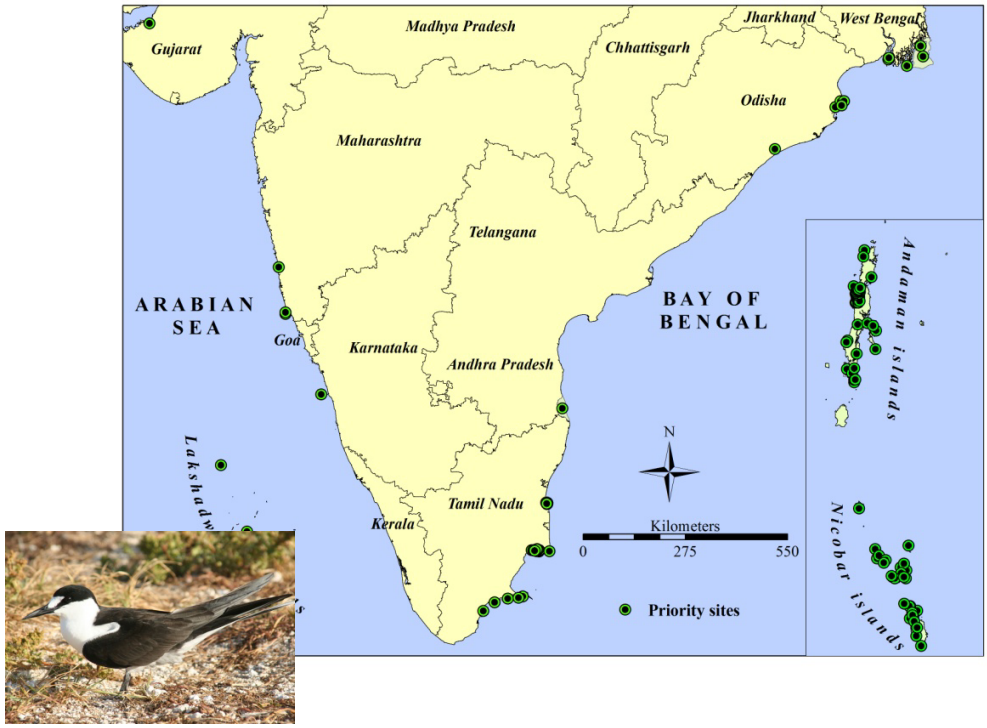
Technical Report No. PR-186

# Mapping key nesting sites of coastal and marine birds for identification of Ecologically Sensitive Areas along Indian coasts





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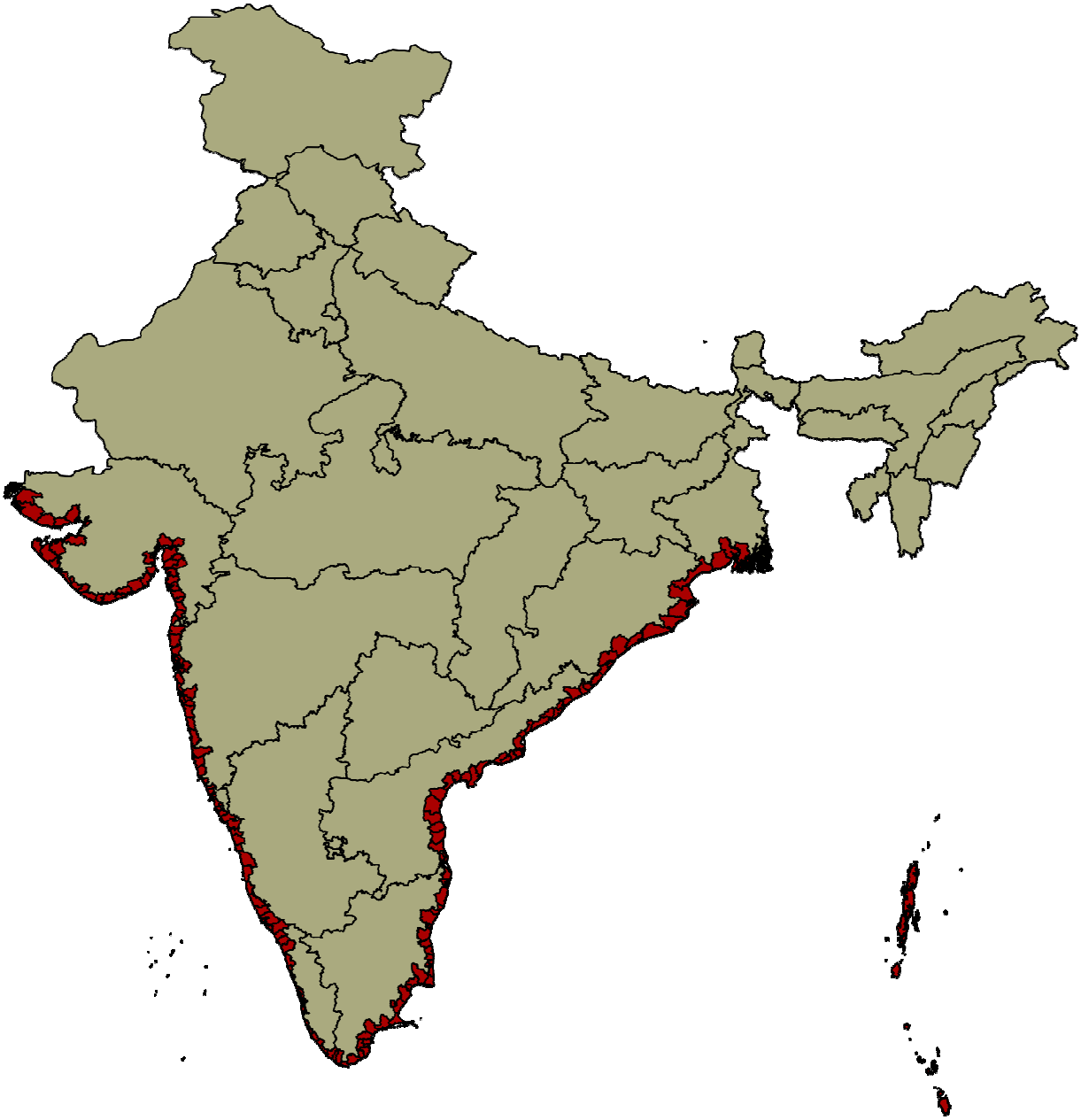
**Front cover**:
Map showing all the key nesting sites of coastal and marine birds prioritized for ESA network along the Indian seaboard. The inset shows Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*), an important marine species that nests colonially in Lakshadweep Islands (Source: Wikimedia Commons).

## Contents

**Summary**

*Important nesting sites of coastal and marine birds have been recognized as one of the 11 key criteria employed to identify Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs) along the Indian coasts. We undertook a study to collate information on nesting sites of birds along India's seaboard, prioritize sites based on their conservation significance, and map their extent with boundaries. In total, 56 species of coastal and marine birds that are known to regularly nest along the Indian coasts were shortlisted and 719 records of their nesting in 242 sites from both published and unpublished sources were collected. Our database also includes site names, geographical coordinates, microhabitat type, abundance of birds (if available), nesting information (if provided), number of nests (if available), and protection status of nesting sites. Based on these criteria, a prioritization algorithm was developed to identify and shortlist the nesting sites for recommendation as potential ESAs. Our database contained the highest number of nesting records for coastal heronries (49%), followed by mangroves and littoral forests (21%), woods on seaboard (16%), seashore and sandbank (15%), and coastal caves (6%). Based on the multiple criteria, 61 sites were prioritized to be considered as ESAs along the Indian coasts. The highest number of shortlisted sites were from Andaman & Nicobar Islands (45) followed by West Bengal and Tamil Nadu (4 each). Using habitat-based algorithm in Google Earth Pro and 1:50,000 SoI toposheets, exact boundaries of prioritized sites were demarcated and final maps (polygons) were then integrated with the master spatial database maintained at NCSCM.*



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