

Impacts on migratory birds and the local biodiversity from the Proposed Residential Complex 'UTPALAA' by Ambuja Realty Development Limited, at Kolkata, West Bengal

Final Report Submitted to
Ambuja Realty Development Ltd., Kolkata

Research Team

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Sálim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History
(South India Centre of Wildlife Institute of India)
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Urbanization and infrastructure development can pose significant threats to the bird populations, including migratory species. The major threats involved are habitat destruction and fragmentation, collision risk with tall structures, pollution and disorientation caused by artificial night lighting.

As required by the State Level Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) of West Bengal, the present study on migratory birds, and local biodiversity was conducted by SACON for one-year covering all seasons from April 2024 to January 2025. The study investigates the impacts on migratory birds and local biodiversity from the proposed residential complex 'UTPALAA' by Ambuja Realty Development Limited in Kolkata, West Bengal.

The UTPALAA project site is located close to the East Kolkata Wetlands (EKW), a Ramsar site. The intensive study area comprises of the 5km radial distance zone around the site, mostly dominated by the urbanized area. The EKW plays a crucial ecological role, utilizing treated water for agricultural and aquacultural purposes. The EKW supports diverse habitats and local livelihoods, producing significant amounts of table fish and fresh vegetables. However, climate change and urbanization pose challenges to these wetlands and associated avifaunal communities.

Our field surveys documented 59 bird species, including waterbirds, synanthropic species, and migratory birds. There were no endangered species classified as globally threatened by IUCN recorded from the study area during our surveys or in the past e-bird records, and all the 59 species recorded were of least conservation concern as per IUCN. The Diversity indices indicated consistent distribution of avian species across different study zones. The UTPALAA project site is expected to have minimal impacts on bird populations, since the local bird assemblages are numerically dominated by synanthropic species of birds, which are long adapted to human-modified ecosystems including urban buildings. Further, the project has committed sustainable practices such as green building norms and biological sewage treatment plants (Bio-STP) that would help minimize the negative impact on the system.

In conclusion, urbanization has already transformed the study area landscape. Possible bird-friendly measures, such as green building designs, use of minimum glass cover using non-reflective glasses, and reduced night-time lighting, etc. are suggested to mitigate expected impacts and protect the avifauna and local ecosystem in general.