

CHANGING SCENARIO IN THE FEEDING BEHAVIOUR OF CATTLE EGRET *BUBULCUS IBIS* IN WEST BENGAL

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The Cattle egrets, *Bubulcus ibis* (Linnaeus, 1758), are wetland associated birds, feeding in and around farmlands, grasslands, and fields of rice paddies. Sometimes, they accompany cattle and large mammals for catching insects and lower vertebrate preys disturbed by these animals (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattle_egret). The feeding adaptabilities of cattle egrets are presented hereunder as observed from different locations of rural and suburban southern West Bengal. They were found happily foraging on insects, shrimps and fishes from municipal drainage canal (Fig. 1) and suburban grasslands. In the fields of rural rice paddies, they follow plough, power tillers, etc. Interestingly, cattle egrets were found to visit flowering tree canopies for foraging on pollinators insects. They were noticed foraging from peak flowering Arjun tree (*Terminalia arjuna*) (Fig. 2) and Chhatim (*Alstonias cholaris*) tree tops in the early morning hours around 7-8 am for about five days. However, it seems they are adaptively alert, sensible and able to change feeding strategies and sites as and when opportunity arises.

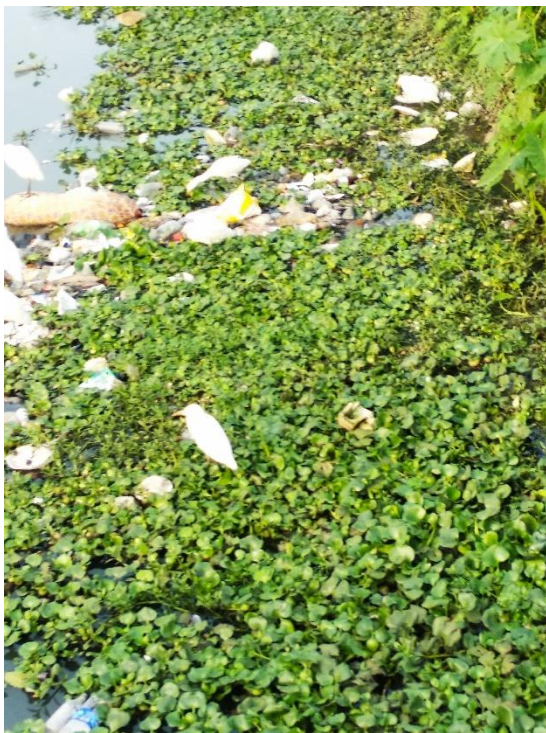


Fig.1 Cattle egret feeding from Municipal drainage canal



Fig.2 Cattle egret feeding from Arjun tree

Reference

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattle_egret