



By Express Features

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Waiting for the rainbird

BANGALORE: The advent of the monsoon has for generations been associated with the appearance of the pied cuckoo in many parts of India.

The strong association between the pied cuckoo and rain, is part of Indian folklore, in which this species is described as a harbinger of the monsoon. Now, MigrantWatch Bird, an initiative of National Council for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bangalore is starting a campaign from Wednesday, (as part of it's Citizen Science Programme) to improve their understanding of the migration of this intriguing specie.

According to the organisers of this campaign, the format of this campaign is very similar to the existing format of Migrant- Watch, which they have been using since 2007. The organisers explain, "We request participants to send us the date on which they first sight the Pied Cuckoo, the location of the sighting, and a few other pieces of relevant information. Information on the arrival and duration of stay of the species will help in distinguishing the resident and migratory distributions of the species." About the pied cuckoo, they said that the birds make a sudden appearance in many areas of central and northern India in the last week of May or early June, proclaiming the imminent arrival of the monsoon with its unmistakably loud metallic calls. Reports indicate that the arrival of the pied cuckoo varies a little from year to year, coinciding with variation in the arrival of the monsoon .

Despite this folk knowledge about the species, little information is available on its migration in relation to the monsoon, apart from a few attempts to compile relevant information in the early 1900s .

By this campaign MigrantWatch aim to improve their understanding of the migration of the species by collecting data on its arrival across India.

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