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A Study of Avian Diversity of Kopra Reservoir, Bilaspur: A Potential Bird Sanctuary

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Kopra reservoir located geographically 22°4'2.6616"N, 82°2'34.026"E, and lies 13 km East to the Bilaspur city. The dam was constructed as a part of irrigation project by Government of Chhattisgarh, India, as well as a primary source for drinking water supply to Kopra village. This region provide rich food sources viz., variety of nectar and seed flora, fruits, insects, beetles, grubs, molluscs, shrimps, crustaceans, tadpoles, fishes, amphibians and reptiles etc. Such fascinating conditions of an ecosystem attract most of the resident and migratory species of bird for feeding as well as nesting. A total of 161 species belonging to 19 orders and 50 families were documented in our survey work since the year 2015. In which 103 resident and 58 migratory species were recorded including one Endangered (EN) species Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*); three Vulnerable (VU) species Common Pochard (*Aythya ferina*), Woolly-necked Stork (*Ciconia episcopus*), Lesser Adjutant Stork (*Leptoptilos javanicus*) and three Near Threatened (NT) species Painted Stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*), Black-headed Ibis (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*), Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*). At present Chhattisgarh has no bird Sanctuary, so this wetland is ideal to develop as one, as it has such a rich avifaunal diversity and due to plenty of food materials and availability of better water and atmosphere the area has become a safe haven for the resident and migratory birds. In this paper, it has endeavoured to bring to the fore the virtuous features of this unique place for bird watching and its linking in a fruitful way with ecotourism and sustainable development.

Keywords: Kopra, wetland, avifauna diversity, ecotourism, conservation.