

A Village Where Farmers Adopt And Nurture Rare Birds Even If They Harm The Crops!

Author - Shreya Pareek, Published on - 3.7.2018

While in many cities we are seeing a heavy decrease in the number of birds, this village sets an example of how birds and humans can co-exist in complete harmony. Chirping birds of rare species in your backyard, several nests on each tree – Kokrebellur is a delightful sight. Know more about the amazing *village and its conservation efforts*.

When was the last time you saw birds chirping on your window sills? How often do you see a sparrow sipping water from your garden tap? If you have to stop to think, then you have your answer.

Declining numbers of house sparrows and other native species have been a concern for every nature lover in recent times. According to the [BirdLife International](#), the IUCN Red List states that currently 82 bird species in India fall into the globally threatened category.

A delight to watch, these birds are adorable, but sadly we don't get to witness the happy sight these days. Wouldn't it be amazing if you and these lovely tweeting birds could co-exist?

Pelicans.

The village is named after a bird species "Painted Storks" which is called "Kokkare" in Kannada

Picture Source

Kokrebellur, a small village in Maddur taluk of Karnataka, offers you an unusual and mesmerizing sight as you'll find some of India's rarest species of birds chirping in the backyards of these village homes.

The village is named after the "Painted Storks" which are called "Kokkare" in Kannada. Apart from Painted Storks, spot-billed Pelicans are also found here. Both of them are included in "*near threatened category*" in the *IUCN Red List* of 2009. In addition to these, breeds like Little Cormorant, Black Ibis, Grey Heron, Black-Crowned Night Heron and the Indian Pond Heron are also spotted.

It is fascinating to see that these birds have nested in the village in very close proximity to the villagers. Every tree holds many nests, and if you go in May, the sight is amazing as many newborn birds are learning to fly during this period, and the shrill voices of these young ones fill the environment with unusual energy.

The villagers treat these birds as a part of their family and have also created a small area for wounded birds to rest. Birds are so friendly here that they even allow you to go very close to them.

Picture Source

The trust and bonding that these birds and villagers have developed is worth admiring. Kokrebellur is one of 21 breeding sites existing in India. The villagers have adopted these birds as a part of their heritage and consider them as signs of prosperity and good luck.

The birds help the villagers get phosphorus and potassium-rich manure obtained from the bird droppings. S G Neginhal, a senior forest official, had pioneered the efforts to proliferate the breed of Pelicans. In 1976, Neginhal explored possible solutions to expand the cause by launching a compensatory scheme to benefit the villagers. The birds and the villagers have bonded well since decades now.

As these birds nest in the village regularly, and sometimes this can be a disadvantage for the crops, the Karnataka government compensates the villagers with a certain sum of money for every tree that is hosting a nest for these birds, as the land below the tree cannot be used for plantation of any other crop. Additional income is also provided by the influx of tourists, who are encouraged to visit this "man-made bird sanctuary".

Birds here usually nest in groups of 15-20 pairs per tree, and they continue to use these nests throughout the year. They arrive after the monsoon ends in September, hatch their eggs and re-migrate in May.

The uniqueness of this place is that in spite of some loss of crops that these villagers face due to the birds, they have happily adopted the birds and do everything possible to make them feel at home. That is why, gradually, this place has become a hub of rare migratory birds.

Women of the village say, "*For us, these birds are like daughters coming home for delivery.*"

[Picture Source](#)

The spot-billed pelicans are protected by law in India and also in several other countries. The unique thing about Kokrebellur is that it is not a reserved bird sanctuary but a village where these birds freely live and co-exist with the villagers in harmony.

The efforts to conserve these birds have been fruitful and considered as "a role model" to replicate in other areas. Due to a wide variety of rare birds, this place attracts a lot of tourists and bird watchers every year. The government has also established and provided grants to the Village Forest Committee (VFC) to protect the birds by nurturing and enhancing the trees on which they nest.

The village does not just offer you a good bird watching experience but also gives you a completely new take on human-birds relationship. While most of us are busy saving our lush gardens and building exteriors for these birds, these villagers set an exceptional example of [how the two life forms can happily co-exist](#) in a beautiful way.

How to reach there?

The best season to visit Kokrebellur is January to May. It is well connected by both road and railway. It is around 80 kms from Bangalore on the Bangalore-Mysore highway.

Maddur is the nearest railway station. Nearest airport is the Bangalore Airport. You can also take your own transport from there.

First published by

The Better India