

This guide covers 135 familiar birds found in Kerala as well as States like Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and Telangana. For ease of reference, they have been sorted into the following 5 categories.

WETLAND BIRDS

Wetlands include lakes, ponds, rivers, mangroves, swamps and marshy areas, which are important habitats used by birds for breeding and nesting. Most of the birds in this group (eg. ducks, cormorants, waders, herons etc) are only seen at wetlands whereas there are a few (Cattle Egret, White-throated Kingfisher, Yellow-wattled Lapwing) that are frequently seen away from water as well. Several migratory species visit our wetlands in winter.

BIRDS OF PREY

Birds of Prey or Raptors hunt and feed on other animals, including smaller birds. They have excellent eyesight, strong feet, sharp talons for hunting, and a hooked beak for tearing into flesh. Among the birds listed in this group, some (eg. Black Kite, Brahminy Kite, Shikra, Barn Owl) have adapted to human habitats, whereas others (kestrels, harriers, honey-buzzards) are most often seen in open habitats like farmland/scrub. In winter, raptors are also seen hunting at wetlands where there are large congregations of waterfowl in winter.

GROUND FEEDING BIRDS

Ground feeders are a diverse group of birds that are primarily terrestrial and feed on the ground or in the undergrowth. They include large birds like pheasants, pigeons, crows to medium-sized birds like thrushes, babblers, mynas and starlings. Some ground feeders like wagtails are seen at wetlands, and some are forest dwellers (eg. Malabar Whistling-Thrush), but most prefer open areas or scrub. This category also includes birds like shrikes, rollers and chats which may perch low in a bush, but find their prey (small insects or reptiles) on the ground.

AERIAL FEEDING BIRDS

Aerial feeders like swallows and swifts are insectivorous birds that hunt and feed in flight. They have pointed wings and can often be seen gliding gracefully through the air or performing acrobatics to catch insects. They are very fast in flight and prefer open areas near water. At dawn and dusk, they may be found perching in groups on wires.

ARBOREAL BIRDS

Arboreal birds are those whose life cycles are associated with trees and shrubs, and they include a wide variety of birds found in forests, open woodland and urban gardens. Many arboreal birds feed on fruits and berries (eg. hornbills, bulbuls, barbets, parakeets), while others feed on insects from tree bark (eg. woodpeckers), among leaves (eg. cuckoos, orioles, warblers) or in the air (eg. flycatchers, drongos, bee-eaters). Some, like sunbirds, feed on nectar from flowers. Smaller species are seen at a variety of heights while larger birds prefer the forest canopy.

Gender symbols indicate where the male and female of the species look different. If no symbols are shown, it means that they look similar.

Migratory birds which come to peninsular India during the winter (October - March), from their breeding grounds in the Himalayas or Central Asia/Europe.

Birds restricted to well-forested areas of the Western Ghats. They may replace species that are common in other parts of the peninsula.

Size indicates the length of the bird from beak tip to tail tip; **br** indicates breeding plumage.

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കേരളത്തിലെ പക്ഷികൾ - a pocket guide to 135 familiar birds

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WETLAND BIRDS നീർപ്പക്ഷികൾ

DUCKS
feed on the surface of waterbodies

COOTS/MOORHENS
look like small ducks but lack webbed feet

Spot-billed Duck
60 cm
പുളിപ്പൂണ്ടൻ താറാവ്

Northern Pintail
54 cm
സുചിറവാലൻ എരണ്ട

Garganey
40 cm
വരി എരണ്ട

Lesser Whistling-Duck
42 cm
ചുളൻ എരണ്ട

Eurasian Coot
42 cm
വെള്ളക്കൊക്കൻ കുളക്കോഴി

Cotton Pygmy-Goose
35 cm
പച്ച എരണ്ട

Eurasian Moorhen
32 cm
പട്ടക്കോഴി

CORMORANTS
are completely black birds that often perch on the shore or on a submerged twig with outspread wings

Great Cormorant
80 cm
വലിയ നീർക്കാക്ക

Little Cormorant
51 cm
ചെറിയ നീർക്കാക്ക

Indian Cormorant
63 cm
കിനരി നീർക്കാക്ക

Darter
90 cm
ചേരക്കോഴി

GREBES
often dive below the surface for fish

TERNs
have long, pointed wings and a graceful flight

Whiskered Tern
24 cm
കരി തുള്ള

Little Grebe
27 cm
മുങ്ങാക്കോഴി

WADERS
like sandpipers, plovers and greenshanks prefer marshy areas near the edges of waterbodies

Common Sandpiper
20 cm
നീർക്കാട

Wood Sandpiper
20 cm
പുളിക്കാട കൊക്ക്

Pacific Golden Plover
25 cm
പൊൻ മണൽക്കോഴി

Little Ringed Plover
16 cm
മോതിരക്കോഴി

STILTS
have long bills and long legs

JACANAS
have elongated toes and can walk on floating leaves

Black-winged Stilt
25 cm
പവിഴക്കോലി

Common Greenshank
32 cm
പച്ചക്കോലി

Pheasant-tailed Jacana
30 cm
വലൻ താമരക്കോഴി

Bronze-winged Jacana
30 cm
നാടൻ താമരക്കോഴി

SWAMPHENS/WATERHENS
can be seen in marshy areas or vegetation around the edges of waterbodies

White-breasted Waterhen
32 cm
ചെങ്കോക്കോഴി

Grey-headed (Purple) Swamphen
43 cm
നീലക്കോഴി

KINGFISHERS
have large heads, strong bills and short legs

Common Kingfisher
16 cm
ചെറിയ മീൻകൊത്തി

White-throated Kingfisher
27 cm
മീൻകൊത്തി ചാത്തൻ

Pied Kingfisher
25 cm
പുളി മീൻകൊത്തി

Stork-billed Kingfisher
35 cm
കാക മീൻകൊത്തി

Little Egret
63 cm
ചിന്നമുണ്ടി

Intermediate Egret
80 cm
ചെറുമുണ്ടി

Great Egret
90 cm
പെരുമുണ്ടി

Cattle Egret
51 cm
കാലിമുണ്ടി

Grey Heron
96 cm
ചാരമുണ്ടി

Purple Heron
86 cm
ചായമുണ്ടി

EGRETS/HERONS
are medium- to large-sized birds with long legs and neck, and a thick, sharp bill

Indian Pond-Heron
46 cm
കുളക്കൊക്ക്

Black-headed Ibis
75 cm
കഷണിക്കൊക്കൻ

IBISES
have long, downcurved bills

STORKS
are large birds with a slow-flapping flight

Glossy Ibis
60 cm
ചെമ്പലയൻ എണ്ണിസ്

Woolly-necked Stork
84 cm
കരുവാക്കുരു

Asian Openbill Stork
76 cm
ചേരക്കൊക്കൻ

Painted Stork
93 cm
വർണ്ണക്കൊക്ക്

LAPWINGS
are often seen in farmlands away from

Yellow-wattled Lapwing
27 cm
മഞ്ഞകണ്ണി തിത്തരി

Red-wattled Lapwing
33 cm
ചെങ്കണ്ണി തിത്തരി

BIRDS OF PREY ഇരപിടിയൻ പക്ഷികൾ

RAPTORS
small birds like Shikra to larger eagles and buzzards, are most often seen soaring in the sky

Shikra
35 cm
പാപിടിയൻ

Oriental Honey-buzzard
60 cm
തേൻകൊച്ചിപ്പരുന്ത്

Crested Hawk Eagle
65 cm
കിനരിപ്പരുന്ത്

Crested Serpent-Eagle
65 cm
ചുട്ടിപ്പരുന്ത്

KESTRELS
are often seen hovering

HARRIERS
glide low over grasslands/wetlands

Common Kestrel
32 cm
വീരൻപുളി

Marsh Harrier
50 cm
കരിതലി

KITES
are hawk-like birds often seen around human habitation

Brahminy Kite
48 cm
കുഷണപ്പരുന്ത്

Black Kite
60 cm
ചക്കിപ്പരുന്ത്

Black-winged Kite
35 cm
വെള്ളി എറിയൻ

Barn Owl
36 cm
വെള്ളിമുക്ക

OWLS
are mainly nocturnal and roost in large trees and abandoned buildings during the day

Indian Scops Owl
24 cm
ചെമ്പിയൻ നന്ത്

Jungle Owlet
20 cm
ചെമ്പൻ നന്ത്

GROUND FEEDING BIRDS
 നിലത്ത് ഇരതേടുന്ന പക്ഷികൾ

PHEASANTS
 are heavy birds that make short flights

COUCALS
 are shy birds with a booming call

PIGEONS/DOVES
 have stout bodies with short necks

CROWS
 are noisy birds, with long straight bills

SHRIKES/ROLLERS
 often perch on a low branch or even overhead wires to watch for ground prey

Grey Junglefowl
 38 cm (f) 70 cm (m)
 കാട്ടുകോഴി

Greater Coucal
 48 cm
 ഉഴൽ

Indian Peafowl
 85 cm (f) 110 cm (m)
 മയിൽ

Rock Pigeon
 33 cm
 അമ്പലപ്രാവ്

Grey-fronted Green Pigeon
 28 cm
 ചാരവെളിയൻ പ്രാവ്

Spotted Dove
 30 cm
 അരിപ്രാവ്

House Crow
 40 cm
 പേനകാക്ക

Large Cuckooshrike
 30 cm
 ചാരപ്പൂണ്ടൻ

Large-billed Crow
 47 cm
 ബലികാക്ക

Long-tailed Shrike
 25 cm
 ചാരക്കുട്ടൻ ശിഷ്ടുകി

Black-headed Cuckooshrike
 18 cm
 കരിമ്പൊടി

Indian Roller
 33 cm
 പനങ്കാക്ക

Brown Shrike
 18 cm
 തവിടൻ ശിഷ്ടുകി

ROBINS
 hop on the ground with their tail cocked

CHATS
 like to perch on a low twig or bush

WAGTAILS/PIPITS
 are slender birds which walk on the ground, often with their tail wagging

THRUSHES
 are usually seen on the ground and have a fluty song

MYNAS/STARLINGS
 make various screeching calls, and feed mostly on the ground (except Hill Myna). They roost in large groups

Indian Robin
 19 cm
 കൽമണ്ണാത്തി

Pied Bushchat
 13 cm
 ചുറ്റിത്തൽക്കിളി

Oriental Magpie-robin
 20 cm
 മണ്ണാത്തിപ്പുളളി

Paddyfield Pipit
 15 cm
 വയൽവരമ്പൻ

Grey Wagtail
 19 cm
 വഴിവാലുകുലുകി

Yellow Wagtail
 19 cm
 മഞ്ഞ വാലുകുലുകി

White-browed Wagtail
 21 cm
 വലിയ വാലുകുലുകി

Malabar Whistling Thrush
 21 cm
 ചുളളൻകൊക്ക

Common Myna
 25 cm
 നാടുമൈന

Jungle Myna
 23 cm
 കിന്നരിമൈന

Hill Myna
 24 cm
 കാട്ടുമൈന

BABLERS
 are usually seen hopping and chattering in groups

LARKS
 are dull-coloured with a melodious song

SPARROWS, WEAVERS & MUNIAS
 are seed-eaters and have thick, conical bills

Baya Weaver
 15 cm
 ആറക്കുറുവീ

Scaly-breasted Munia
 11 cm
 ചുട്ടിആറ്

Jungle Babbler
 25 cm
 കരിമ്പലക്കിളി

Yellow-billed Babbler
 23 cm
 പുത്താകിരി

Jerdon's Bushlark
 15 cm
 ചെമ്പൻപാടി

Puff-throated Babbler
 15 cm
 പുള്ളിച്ചിലപ്പൻ

White-rumped Munia
 10 cm
 ആറക്കുറുവീ

House Sparrow
 15 cm
 അങ്ങാടിക്കുരുവി

AERIAL FEEDING BIRDS
 ആകാശത്തിൽ ഇരതേടുന്ന പക്ഷികൾ

SWIFTS
 have long, pointed wings and are rarely perched

SWALLOWS
 have a streamlined body, they perch on wires

Barn Swallow
 18 cm
 വയൽക്കോതികൂതിക

Red-rumped Swallow
 16 cm
 വയൽ കൂതിക

Asian Palm Swift
 13 cm
 പനങ്കുളൻ

Little Swift
 15 cm
 അമ്പലച്ചുറ്റി

Ashy Woodswallow
 19 cm
 ഇടനാക്കം

ARBOREAL BIRDS
 മരങ്ങളിൽ ഇരതേടുന്ന പക്ഷികൾ

BULBULS
 are gregarious songbirds that prefer open areas and are usually seen in groups

BARBETS
 have bristles at the base of their stout bills

HORNBILLs
 are large birds with big, downcurved bills

PARAKEETS/PARROTS
 are green and have screeching calls, often uttered in flight. They are usually seen in flocks

Red-vented Bulbul
 20 cm
 നാട്ടുമ്പൂൾപ്പൂൾ

White-browed Bulbul
 20 cm
 തവിടൻമ്പൂൾപ്പൂൾ

Red-whiskered Bulbul
 20 cm
 ഇരുട്ടതലച്ചി

Yellow-browed Bulbul
 20 cm
 മഞ്ഞച്ചിന്നൻ

White-cheeked Barbet
 23 cm
 ചിന്നക്കുട്ടന്മാർ

Indian Grey Hornbill
 50 cm
 കോഴി വേഴാമ്പൽ

Malabar Grey Hornbill
 45 cm
 നാട്ടുവേഴാമ്പൽ

Great Hornbill
 100 cm
 മലയുഴക്കി വേഴാമ്പൽ

Rose-ringed Parakeet
 42 cm
 മോതിരത്ത

Plum-headed Parakeet
 36 cm
 പൂന്ത

Malabar Parakeet
 38 cm
 നീലത്ത

Vernal Hanging Parrot
 16 cm
 തത്തച്ചിന്നൻ

TREEPIES
 are related to crows but have long tails

CUCKOOS
 have bulky bodies and long tails, and loud, repetitive calls

ORIOLES/LEAFBIRDS
 are brightly coloured with fluty songs

WOODPECKERS
 have a sturdy bill to probe tree trunks

DRONGOS
 have forked tails and an upright stance

FLYCATCHERS
 have small, flattened bills

BEE-EATERS
 have long, curved bills, and often perch on wires, making short sallies to catch insects

Rufous Treepie
 48 cm
 രാജത്തൊലി

Asian Koel
 43 cm
 നാട്ടുകുയിൽ

Golden-fronted Leafbird
 19 cm
 കാട്ടിലക്കിളി

Common Hawk-Cuckoo
 34 cm
 പേക്കുയിൽ

Golden Oriole
 25 cm
 മഞ്ഞക്കിളി

Ashy Drongo
 29 cm
 കാക്കത്തമ്പുരാൻ

Black-rumped Flameback
 27 cm
 നാട്ടുമരകൊത്തി

Black Drongo
 28 cm
 ആനറാബി

Indian Paradise-Flycatcher
 24 cm
 നാകമോഹൻ

Green Bee-eater
 17 cm
 നാട്ടുമ്പലിത്ത

MINIVETS
 are slender, colourful birds, seen in groups

TAILORBIRDS & PRINIAs
 have long tails

WARBLERS
 are dull-coloured, hyperactive birds

FLOWERPECKERS
 are the smallest birds in India

SUNBIRDS
 are colourful and have a long, thin, curved bill

WHITE-EYES
 are usually seen in noisy flocks

TITS
 are very active birds with small beaks

IORAS
 are small, active birds with a musical song

Small Minivet
 16 cm
 തീച്ചിന്നൻ

Common Iora
 14 cm
 അയോറ

Orange Minivet
 21 cm
 തീക്കുരുവി

Ashy Prinia
 13 cm
 കരിൻവായൻ കുരുവി

Blyth's Reed Warbler
 13 cm
 ഇളംപച്ചവെട്ടാടിക്കുരുവി

Purple Sunbird
 10 cm
 കറുപ്പൻ തേൻകിളി

Purple-rumped Sunbird
 10 cm
 മഞ്ഞത്തേൻകിളി

Cinereous Tit
 14 cm
 ചാരമരവെട്ടാടൻ

Common Tailorbird
 13 cm
 തുമ്പനാൻ

Plain Prinia
 13 cm
 വയൽ കുരുവി

Greenish Warbler
 10 cm
 ഇളംപച്ചവെട്ടാടിക്കുരുവി

Pale-billed Flowerpecker
 8 cm
 ചെങ്കൊക്കൻ ഇത്തിക്കണ്ണിക്കുരുവി

Long-billed Sunbird
 13 cm
 കൊക്കൻ തേൻകിളി

Oriental White-eye
 10 cm
 വെളുക്കണ്ണിക്കുരുവി