

March 16 – 31, 2018

MADRAS MUSINGS

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Bird Count 2018 at Stella

A February weekend was hectic, with the faculty of the Zoology Department at Stella Maris College going all out to interest students in birding, especially on campus. Interested students were taken around the campus and at the end of four days, we had 88 checklists that documented 27 species.

Apart from the usual species, we once again documented the



The black kite.



The shikra.

Asian Brown Flycatcher as well as the Blyth's Reed Warbler this year. There were a couple of bird calls that we were unable to identify. Could be Sykes's Reed Warbler, though we were not too sure. The cute spotted owlet did not show itself except once, much to the disappointment of the students, but the bright male Golden Oriole was

greeted with many "Awesomes" and "Oohs."

The black kite sitting boldly on a coconut tree feeding on a rodent in spite of mobbing by crows, the shikra carrying twigs to build its nest, courting shikras high up in the sky, the occasional spot-billed pelican and painted stork flying strongly and purposefully overhead,

shouts of 'give me the binocs' and 'I think I saw _____', (any bird from the birding book which is not even remotely present on campus) — all this made the campus count a memorable one. Looks like we have more than the usual number of students 'hooked' on to birding this year.

– Kalpana Jayaraman