



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BIRDWATCHERS

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Today's birdwatchers are a powerful force for nature conservation. Our members are rising continuously and as birdwatchers and nature lovers, we must take seriously our responsibly to protect birds and their habitats.

On a personal level, we should present a responsible image to non-birdwatchers by following this code of conduct for birdwatchers on a national and global level.

There are about 550 species of birds in Sikkim. There are following points to bear in mind: -

- 1) The welfare of birds must always come first.
- 2) Habitat must be protected.
- 3) Minimize disturbance to birds and their habitat.
- 4) When you find a rare bird think carefully about whom you should tell.
- 5) Do not harass rare migrants.
- 6) Abide by the National park and wildlife conservation at all times.
- 7) Respect the right of landowners.
- 8) Respect the right of other people in the countryside.
- 9) Respect local people and their customs and act responsibly.
- 10) Make your records available to the local bird recorder.
- 11) Behave abroad as you would when watching birds at home.

1) INTRODUCTION OF BIRD WATCHING

Birds are interesting and beautiful creatures that all over the world. There are thousands of people whose hobby is watching them. Some of them form societies and others enjoy watching birds just to see how they live and discover unusual kind of birds that seldom seen.

The observation of live birds in their natural habitat, a popular pastime and a scientific sport that developed almost entirely in the 20th century. Modern bird watching is made possible largely by the development of optical aids, particularly binoculars which enabled people to see and study wild birds without harming them, better then ever before. In the 19th century almost all students of bird used guns and could identify unfamiliar species only which its corps was in their hands. A great surge of interest in wild birds occurred from about the 1880s on ward.

Bird watching is a hobby that combines the joy of discovery, scientific curiosity and esthetic appreciation. The sweetness of bird's song the beauty of their forms and coloring, the vivacity of their movement and the buoyancy of their flight attract every people of the world and every one enjoys birds. Observation by people who habitually watch birds even merely for pleasure, are often of great value to the scientist trying to unravel some particular phase of bird life. Interest in bird watching has been stimulated by bird books, journals and magazines. They have also contributed to the growth of interest on birds as have the broadcasting media.

One of the great appeals as bird watching is that it is a relatively inexpensive activity. Thus, it is a very popular amongst diverse people. It is revolving around the following questions since the 19th century.

- How does the bird live and behave?
- In what way is it fitted or fitting itself to its habitat?
- How is it influenced by or is influenced it environment?

It is best to go bird watching alone to avoid frightening the birds. It is best also to wear dull colored clothing and to move very slowly and cautiously. A bird watcher should have binoculars so that he can see the birds clearly without being so close that he might frighten them away many books are available that describe birds often with pictures in colored tell that the habits of different birds are. The bird watchers greatest thrill comes from seeing a bird that rarely occurs in his locality or in the season in which he sees it.

2) TIME OF BIRD WATCHING

Birds are on the move all day long. Their activity is greatest in the early mornings. Therefore, early rising is a most important pre requisite for successful bird watching. Most song the birds are most vocal is also heard during the early morning hours.

Discovery the identity of a songster often entails patient watching and the chances of tracking him down are naturally greatest in the early morning when the birds are most vocal.

3) RESPECT THE RIGHT OF LANDOWNERS

The wishes of landowners and occupiers of land must be respected. Do not enter land without permission. Comply with permit schemes. If you are leading a group. Please give advance notice of the visit even

if a formal permit schemes is not in operation. Respect rights of the other people. Have proper consideration for birdwatchers. Try not to disrupt their activities or scare the birds they are watching. There are many other people who also use the countryside. Do not interfere with their activities. If it seems that what they are doing is causing unnecessary disturbance to birds. Please try to be courteous but firm in advising them. Non-birdwatchers goodwill towards birds must not be destroyed by aggressive attitudes of birdwatchers.

4) RESPECT LOCAL CUSTOMS AND ACT RESPONSIBLY

Please respect the Sikkimese customs. Always behave responsibly as an employer when hiring a guide and porter (s).

5) BIRD WATCHING ABROAD

Behave abroad as you would at home these rules should be firmly adhered to when abroad (whatever the local laws). Well-behaved birdwatchers can be important ambassadors for bird protection.

6) WELFARE OF BIRDS MUST COME FIRST

Whether your particular interest is in photography, ringing sound recording, scientific study or just watching birds. Remember that the welfare of the birds must always come first. Do not throw stones to flush birds. Do not use excessive play back of bird's song.

7) HABITAT AND ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

Habitat is vital to birds and therefore we must ensure that our activities do not cause damage. When trekking to protect the forest habitats. Use kerosene or gas stove instead of wood. Put on extra jumper or go to bed early instead of making campfire. Think about how you can protect grassland and wetlands, which are also critical bird habitats. At all times do not litter. Burn all of your combustible waste and either carry out or bury other rubbish.

“Save the birdlife and their habitat.”

