

Avitourism takes flight as govt lists birds

'Birds of Goa' charts out around 400 species of birds in Goa

■ NT NETWORK

PANAJI

Goa will soon have people from all around the globe flocking together, to observe birds of different feathers found in various sanctuaries in the state, besides at the Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, an estuarine mangrove habitat located on the Western tip of the island of Chorao along the River Mandovi, where flying sparrows, beautiful peafowl, parakeets, and pelican among others can be spotted.

Managing director of Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) Nikhil Desai told 'The Navhind



Ruby-throated Yellow Bulbul (State bird of Goa)

Times' that the department of tourism is in the process of promoting avitourism, an emerging sub-sector of the nature-based tourism industry, where tourist travel motivations

are focused around bird watching.

Avitourism is one of the fastest growing types of environmental tourism, in which besides the birding-related events, birding festivals, hotspots, trails, preserves, parks and other locations are promoted, so as to encourage ornithologists and bird lovers to travel to these areas.

"The state tourism department, as a first step in this direction has recently released a book titled 'Birds of Goa' by Bikram Grewal and Savio Fonseca, which charts out around 400 species of birds found

>continued on Pg 8

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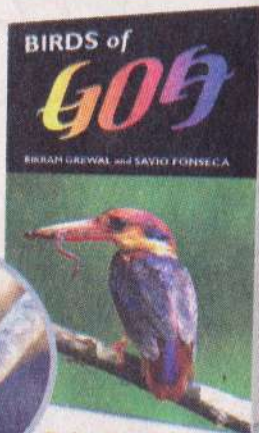
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Goa will soon have people from all around the globe flocking together, to observe birds of different feathers found in various sanctuaries in the state, besides at the Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, an estuarine mangrove habitat located on the Western tip of the island of Chora along the River Mandovi, where flying sparrows, beautiful peafowl, parakeets, and pelican among others can be spotted.

Managing director of Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) Nikhil Desai told 'The Navhind



**Ruby-throated
Yellow Bulbul
(State bird of Goa)**



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>continued on Pg 8

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>continued from Pg 1

in Goa, out of the approximate 1,100 species that are seen in the country," he added, pointing out that the book gives details about birds found in Goa, with the coloured photographs, their nomenclature, family and genus, description and finally, bird-watching sites in the state such as Carambolim and Batim Lake areas, Cumbharjua Canal, Bondla and Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuaries, Pilerne and Socorro Plateaus, and Shirida-Curtorim Wetlands.

"We are planning to promote Goa on the lines of

Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary in Bharatpur, Rajasthan, Kumarakom bird sanctuary, Kerala and Khonoma village in Nagaland, and would be dedicating the newly-renovated 45-room Old Goa Residency run by the GTDC to the bird life, with Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary at Chorao and Carambolim lake with exotic cranes from Siberia visiting it, in the vicinity of this residency," the managing director of GTDC informed.

"We propose to provide a special area on the ground floor of the Old Goa Residency, which would sell as well as keep

on hire books/ catalogs on Goan birds, besides binoculars, straw hats and so on," Desai stated, pointing out that in addition, every room of the residency would be named after a Goan bird, and the respective rooms will have enlarged pictures of the birds they are named after, including the information about the bird. He further maintained that guide tours to the nearby bird watching sites would be organised by the GTDC.

Incidentally, birds have been a part of Goa's environmental culture, with the Ruby-throated Yellow

Bulbul – *Pycnonotus melanicterus gularis* – which is a sub-species of the Black Headed Bulbul, given the status of state bird of Goa.

"Goa has an exceptionally rich bio-diversity cushioned by the Western Ghats. Its wildlife sanctuaries and bird hotspots have become the new-found visitation areas for tourists across the globe and Goa's romance with eco and hinterland tourism, coupled with the rich bird diversity makes it the perfect destination for birders and Bird Watching Tourism," the GTDC MD concluded.