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Examination of Neediness of Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures in Conservation of Threatened Migratory Birds and Breeding Residents in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Sri Lanka offers habitats to 522 avifauna species at present, including 278 migrant species. Many migrant species are waterbirds and 75% of migrants depend on Sri Lankan wetlands. Sri Lanka is a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity and has legal obligations to conserve biodiversity. Except for the migratory avifauna, the bird species in schedule IV of the Flora and Fauna Protection Ordinance receive legal protection outside PAs. Sri Lanka is also a party to the Convention of Migratory Species (CMS) which holds states responsible for the protection of migrant species, however, according to the National Report–2019, No arrangements and agreements affecting migratory species changed recently, and no waterbirds are included in Appendix I. Against this backdrop, the objective of the study was to examine the appropriate and effective conservation approach. Gangewadiya area in the Lower Kala Oya Basin in Puttalam is one of the four richest waterbird regions in Sri Lanka having ideal habitat for migratory waterbirds, was selected as the study area to examine the neediness for other area-based conservation measures. The study was limited to the threatened, migratory avifauna species, and desk review, conceptual modeling, and Pressure-State-Response methods were chosen to identify and analyze threats and responses. The Biodiversity Baseline Survey Report, 2017; reported 39 Migratory Birds (M) and 142 Breeding Residents (BR) including 03 Critically Endangered (CR), 01 Endangered (EN), and 02 Vulnerable (VU) species in the study area. *Sterna nilotica* Gmelin, 1,789, *Sterna albifrons* Pallas, 1,764, and *Merops philippinus* Linnaeus, 1,766 are BR & M, CR species, not found in Appendix II of CMS. *Falco tinnunculus* is an Uncertain M, EN found in schedule IV of FFPO, while mentioned in Appendix II of CMS. *Charadrius dubius* and *Charadrius alexandrinus* are BR & M, VU is identified as the Appendix II taxa for which Sri Lanka is a Range State that demands international cooperation for conservation. These threatened, migratory/breeding residents *range* not managed as PAs and are adversely impacted due to conversion of land uses, changes in salinity, hydrology, water pollution, and expansion of prawn and salt production. This poses threat to species already nationally threatened, and species called for international obligation for conservation; since disturbances in strategic points along the flyways, breeding, and wintering grounds can badly affect them. Therefore, Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures are required to minimize the key threat to ranges of migratory birds and breeding residents of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Threatened migratory waterbirds, Obligation for conservation, Range, Protected areas, Other effective area-based conservation measures