

(209)

Preliminary Survey of Avifaunal Diversity at Horizon Campus**Sahan, H.D.T.^{1,2,3*}, Fernando, T.H.¹, Haputhanthri, B.S.K.¹, Bandara, E.M.C.S.¹, Perera, K.S.¹, Gunawardena, M.P.^{1,2}**¹*Faculty of Science, Horizon Campus, Knowledge City Malabe, Sri Lanka*²*Nature Beyond the Horizon (NatBeHo), Horizon Campus, Knowledge City Malabe, Sri Lanka*³*Young Biologists' Association, Colombo, Sri Lanka***h.d.tharinda@gmail.com***Abstract**

Horizon Campus is located in the Kaduwela divisional secretariat of Sri Lanka and provides habitats for diverse flora and fauna. However, biodiversity within university environments often receives limited scientific attention compared to natural forests and protected areas. Therefore, this preliminary survey was conducted within the premises of Horizon Campus to identify and record the bird species present in the area and to assess its potential as an urban wildlife habitat. Eight observation points were randomly established representing different habitats within the campus premises, with surveys conducted in 10 m radius. Point counts were performed for 10 to 15 minutes per point, twice weekly (one morning session from 6.00 AM to 8.00 AM and one evening session from 4.00 PM to 6.00 PM on two separate days) over a 12-week period from September to November. A total of 51 bird species were recorded, with greater species activity observed during morning, presumably attributable to increased foraging behaviour and cooler ambient temperatures. The highest species richness was recorded at a pond habitat, with a Shannon-Wiener diversity index of 3.4, which provided optimal foraging opportunities and vegetative cover. Frequently observed species included the White-rumped Munia (*Lonchura striata*) and the Red-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*). Endemic species recorded were the Sri Lanka Lesser Flameback (*Dinopium psarodes*), Sri Lanka Swallow (*Cecropis hyperythra*) and Yellow-fronted Barbet (*Psilopogon flavifrons*). Migratory species such as the Brown-breasted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa muttui*), Asian Brown Flycatcher (*Muscicapa dauurica*), Blue-tailed Bee-eater (*Merops philippinus*), and Asian Paradise-Flycatcher (*Terpsiphone paradisi*) which is also both resident and migratory, were observed. In addition, two nearly threatened bird species, the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) and Indian Cuckooshrike (*Coracina macei*), were observed. These findings highlight that Horizon Campus supports a diverse bird community, including common, endemic, migratory, and a few nearly threatened species. This emphasizes the ecological value of maintaining green spaces within urban areas and the importance of promoting awareness and continued monitoring to ensure the long-term conservation of such landscapes.

Keywords: *Biodiversity, Horizon campus, Urban habitat, Endemic species, Migratory birds*