

7. A NOTE ON THE CATCHING OF MIGRATORY BIRDS WHICH VISIT ALIPORE ZOO, CALCUTTA IN WINTER

(With a photograph)

Several thousands of migratory birds (wild ducks) visit the Alipore Zoological Garden, Calcutta each Winter and take shelter in its lake. These birds include the following —

1. Lesser Whistling Teal — [*Dendrocygna javanica* (Horsfield)]
2. Garganey Teal — [*Anas querquedula* (Linnaeus)]
3. Greater Whistling Teal — [*Dendrocygna bicolor* (Vieillot)]
4. Pintail Duck — [*Anas acuta* (Linnaeus)]
5. Comb Duck — [*Sarkidiornis melanotos melanotos* (Pennant)]

Among these birds, Lesser Whistling Teals come in large numbers and represent about 70% of the total population. The percentage of Garganey Teal is about 29% and the remaining 1% is represented by Greater Whistling Teals, Pintail Ducks and Comb ducks. They generally start coming in the middle of October and leave the Garden at the end of April each year. The number of these birds in the Zoo varies from time to time but the number of birds is generally seen in the month of January.

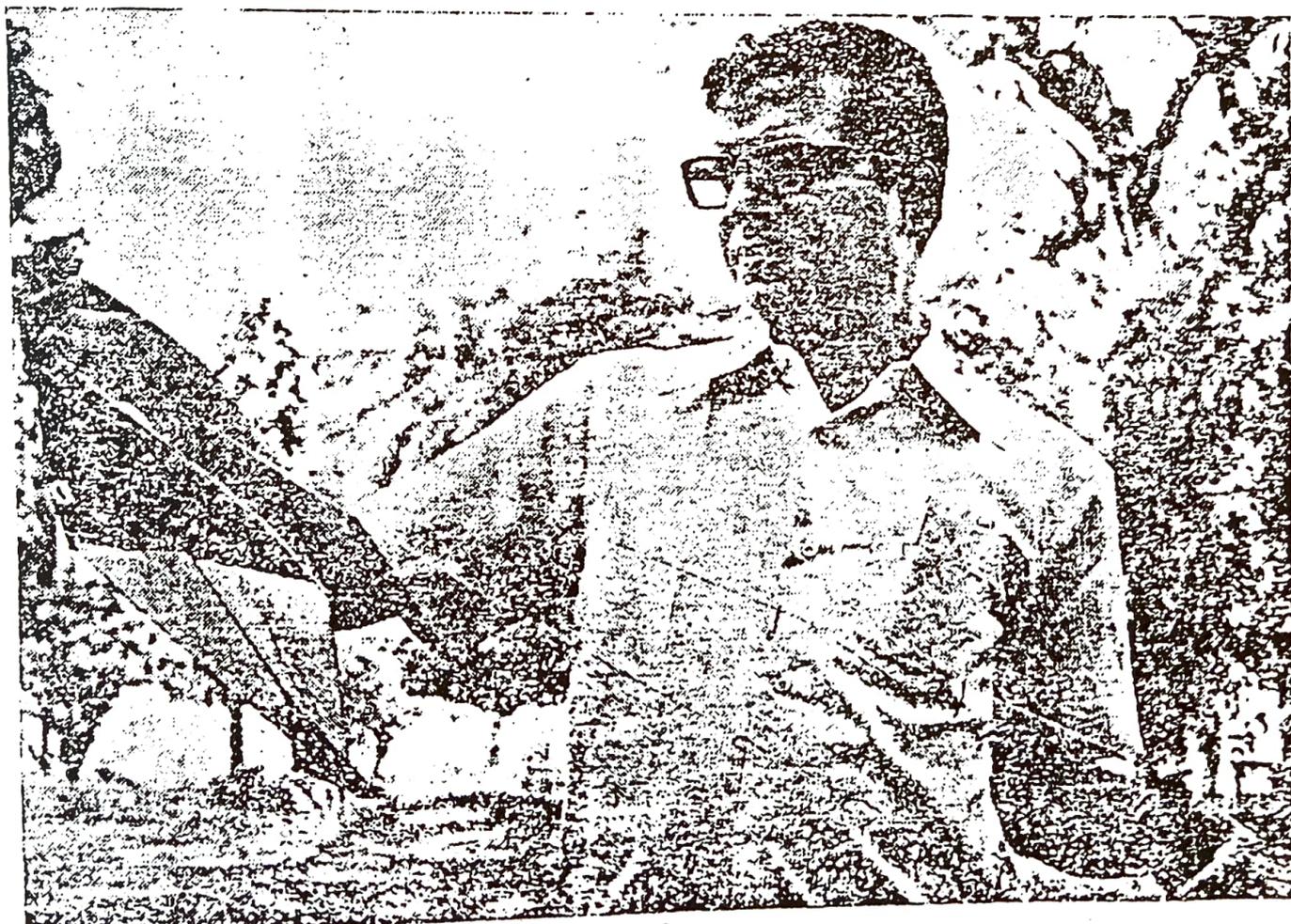


Photo. 1. Photograph of a kite showing fishing hooks being tied with the flying string.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

The birds during their stay at the Zoo spend the day in the lake and leave at dusk to feed many miles away in the countryside and come back to the lake at dawn. These movements of birds at dusk and at dawn take place throughout their stay (about 6 months) at this Zoo.

It has been observed that some people of the nearby Orphanage market area fly Kites, the threads of which are full of fishing hooks tied at intervals of 6 to 8 inches (as shown in the plate) with the threads for catching the birds. The kites are flown in the evening and also in the early morning on the flight paths of the duck. These birds generally fly

in flocks, of 5 to 15 birds in each flock. The bird-catchers fly the kites in such a way that they can easily put the threads with hooks on the flight paths of the birds by alternately pulling and releasing the kite's string. Some of the ducks during their flight to and from the lake of the Zoo become entangled with the fishing hooks and are caught.

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