Taej Mundkur and M. J. Crosby have taken up proper editing, recasting and rewriting tasks to weed-out imperfections. Their persistent efforts have brought about the cogency of flow and the soundness of factual information into this reliable document.

It is indeed edifying to compare the handbook with *A Field Guide to the Waterbirds of Asia* (Kodansha, Tokyo) brought out a decade ago. The pioneering effort by Bharat Bhushan *et al.* is bettered by the authors of this handbook, who have gone one stage further to include the conservation aspects of wetland birds. The authors have provided ample species facts, included hundreds of useful pictures and packed the book with countless distribution maps, graphs and colourful diagrams.

In the preliminary section of the book, the authors have given notes on 'How to use the book'. The information is presented with coloured distribution maps for each species and symbols to indicate the spatial distribution of population. A list of terms and abbreviations used is also provided.

The introductory chapter discusses the geology and climate of the region. Additionally, topics such as wetlands and their values, heronries and migratory routes have also been covered. Banard Lau of Malaysia has written a noteworthy communication on digital photography. The following chapter, which deals with the wetland and wetland-dependent birds is the focus of the book. Here an impressive checklist of wetland birds has been provided along with their distribution maps for India, conservation and residential status, abundance, population trends and estimates.

However, the authors have excluded Eurasian thick-knee and coursers, probably on account of their preference for arid regions. These species could have been included under a separate category titled 'Birds from wetland-dependent families'.

The authors discuss the status of wetland birds in yet another comprehensive chapter. Here tables of IUCN red-list categories and conservation status of the 51 globally threatened species occurring in India, are provided with photographic plates.

The socio-economic issues pertaining to wetlands have been dealt with in a separate chapter. This section provides insights into direct and indirect usage as well as classification of wetlands. Information provided here will prove exceptionally useful in creating awareness about the multiple roles of wetlands. The sub-chapter on biodiversity in Indian wetlands deals with the vegetation and faunal diversity. The common types of aquatic plants and some cultivable species of fish are illustrated along with photographs of some 16 wetland habitats. Wetland losses, threats to waterbirds, information needs, and effects of climate change are also dealt with.

Wetland sanctuaries, national parks, Ramsar and world heritage sites have been listed with detailed descriptions on each site. This section provides three useful tables, including a list of wetlands identified under the national conservation programme, statewise distribution of wetland-protected areas, and important bird-area sites in India. This being a government document, the tables and figures can be quoted in all conservation-related issues pertaining to these wetlands.

The book concludes with detailed information on national policies and laws, and international conventions and agreements pertaining to wetland conservation. A section on coordination of action in the Asian region and another on the strategy for threatened wetland birds in India deal with the complex issues relating to international cooperation. Additionally, various conservation programmes carried out by government and non-government organizations such as Wetlands International's Asian waterfowl census, have also been discussed.

A cursory glance at the presentation did not reveal any contradictions of body or text. The accentuation on titles and strong construction, which are seldom repeated, can be described as a merit of this work. The design and symmetry of the illustrations are comparable to any international publication. This handbook will be a useful tool for birders, species specialist groups as well as conservationists undertaking programmes to conserve and study our wetlands.

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Glaciers – The Rivers of Ice. V. K. Raina. Geological Society of India, PB 1922, Gavipuram PO, Bangalore 560 017. 2006. 40 pp.

A glacier horn in the Himalayas. These are carved by the headward erosion of two or more glaciers.

This slim, well-illustrated book, second in the 'Popularization of Science Series', is a readable and informative account on the glaciers of India. Glaciers form the most important storehouses of freshwater made available to the vast plains of India lying in front of the Himalayan mountain range. They are large masses of ice formed through the accumulation of snow in the icy cold mountainous regions representing the northern border of India. On solidification, the accumulated snow moves down hill slopes in the form of rivers of ice. Unlike waters in the rivers, glaciers move slowly. Their melt waters feed the great rivers of India like Ganga, Sindhu and Yamuna, which keep flowing even during dry weather and are our greatest natural asset. Chapters are devoted to the scientific study of glaciers, use of satellites in glaciology, glaciers as indicators of past climate, dangers posed to human habitation, etc. Valleys covered by glaciers are some of the most picturesque and scenically beautiful parts of our country.