“STUDY OF AVIAN DIVERSITY OF SAJJANGARH WILDLIFE SANCTUARY”

NAME- DR.KARNIKA JANI

PRESENT POST- LECTURER ZOOLOGY

COLLEGE- S.P.U.P.G.COLLEGE, FALNA, PALI (RAJASTHAN)

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UNDER GUIDENCE- DR.CHHAYA BHATNAGAR

MOB.NO- 9610668829

EMAIL.ID- janiavsk@gmail.com

UNIVERSITY NAME - MOHANLAL SUKHADIA UNIVERSITY, UDAIPUR

COLLEGE NAME - COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, UDAIPUR

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

The concept of forest and wildlife conservation is very old to India. Indian culture and literature teach nonviolence and respect for even lovely animal forms. Wildlife is a general term for life in ecosystem, deserts, rain-forests, plains and other areas including the most built up urban sites – all have distinct form of wildlife.

There are 12 countries in the world, which are rich in biodiversity and are called “Megadiversity areas”. India is ranked as sixth mega diversity country in the world. Its immense biological diversity represents about 7% of the world’s flora and six and half of the world’s fauna. There are about 1225 species of birds in India. Out of these, 78 species of birds are considered as threatened. India has five Heritage sites and six Ramsar sites. Amongst the five heritage sites one is present in Rajasthan – The Keoladeo Ghana National Park. The Keoladeo National Park and Sambhar Lake both are Ramsar sites of Rajasthan.

Rajasthan with an area of 34.2 million ha, which constitutes 10.41% of the land area of the country, is one of the largest states of India in terms of area. Almost 60% of the geographical area of Rajasthan is desert but in spite of this about 510 species of birds can be seen in the state (Grimmett and Inskipp, 2003). There are 02 National Parks and 25 Wildlife Sanctuaries in Rajasthan. Keoladeo National Park is famous for its avifauna and is the only place in the country where the Siberian Crane used to visit during its winter migration.

Udaipur Wildlife Division includes four sanctuaries viz. Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary, Kumbhalgarh, Jaisamand Wildlife Sanctuary, Jaisamand, Fulwari ki Nal Wildlife Sanctuary, Kotda and Sajjangarh Wildlife Sanctuary, Udaipur. Amongst these, the Sajjangarh Wildlife Sanctuary is the smallest wildlife sanctuary of the largest state of the country. It covers only 5.19 km² area.

Udaipur has eight Important Bird Area sites (Islam and Rahmani, 2004). Important Bird area (IBA) are sites particularly important for bird conservation because they regularly hold significant population of one or more globally or regionally threatened endemic or congregator bird species or highly representative bird assemblages.

Birds form important bio-indicators of the general health of any ecosystem. Habitat degradation is today a major threat for the extermination of avian species. The conservation and management of threatened and endangered species is a tremendous challenge. The present investigation was therefore taken up with a view to analyze the status regarding
diversity of avian species in the available habitat type. An attempt has also been made to study the habitat preference of these species in order to formulate steps to be undertaken for improvement of habitat to facilitate better conservation.

To carry out this study, following objectives were laid down:

I. To study the avian diversity of the Sanctuary.

II. To study the habitat and habitat preference of different birds found in the Sanctuary.

III. To study rare and endangered birds of the Sanctuary.

IV. To study management aspects of various birds of Sanctuary and formulate appropriate strategies for better conservation and protection of the fauna.

V. Microscopic analysis of bird feather to identify important species of the Sajjangarh Wildlife Sanctuary.

Ecotourism and its impact on birds of the Sanctuary.