

sons. And finally for the betterment of biotechnology research and education in India, students who choose their career in any branch of life sciences should know about the classical aspects of the organisms they are going to work on. For this, the current syllabus of NET

should be maintained or further expanded with classical aspects.

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1. Choudhary, K., Singh, M., Rathore, M. S. and Shekhawat, N. S., *Curr. Sci.*, 2008, **95**, 295.

No objection to apply for jobs

Several institutions and universities put a condition that the candidates applying for faculty or other positions should forward their applications through 'proper channel'. This may be fine for those in Government institutions or universities. However, for those in private institutions or organizations, this may be bothersome. This is because if they approach the management to forward their applications, either they would be asked to quit their existing jobs before applying for the

new job. Even if one is well qualified to get the new job, he/she would not be in a position to resign/quit from his/her existing jobs beforehand. Under these circumstances my plea to all the organizations that seek new recruitments is to do away with the condition that the candidates have to apply through the proper channel.

Job seekers are also asked to get Gazetted Officer's signature in all the photocopies of certificates along with their

application. This is another type of torture which should also be done away with so that applications could be sent hassle-free.

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Conservation of Painted Stork habitats in Andhra Pradesh

The Painted Stork, *Mycteria leucocephala* is a tropical bird species found in the South and South-East Asian region. There are an estimated 15,000 birds in South Asia and fewer than 10,000 in South-East Asia¹, with a declining trend in population. Although it is considered as one of the most numerous and secure of Asian storks, this is more a reflection on the rarity and endangerment of most storks in the region than the security of this species. The species is placed as 'Near Threatened' in the IUCN Red List Category 2007, because it is thought to be undergoing a moderately rapid population decline owing to hunting, habitat destruction, local trade and agricultural pollution². It is a broad-winged soaring bird that flies with its neck outstretched. A few birds have been spotted on the banks of Akeru stream at Chintapalli village, Khammam district and Chinna Maduru village, Warangal District, Andhra Pradesh. They were found nesting on top of tamarind trees (*Tamarindus indica*) nearby the village pond and banks of the stream. According to the villagers, the birds come in January and leave by late June or July after the breeding season is over. Now their habitats are in danger

due to human disturbances and hunting of adult species. Poachers kill the birds to be sold as meat in towns. As the tamarind trees on which the birds build their nests are being felled, they stray to the open fields and rooftops, which also make them an easy prey for poachers. Due to lack of suitable nesting trees, the breeding potential of the species is also affected. Other factors such as changes in prey species populations and in the ecological condition of habitats (pollution), and human disturbances have undoubtedly played a role in the declining species population in this area.

Protection of the species and conservation of their habitats is the need of the hour. For this, immediate steps need to be taken to enhance public awareness about the status of the threatened Painted Stork. Specific awareness programmes should be implemented targeting residents and resource users of villages where the birds reside. Artificial construction of ponds/tanks with trees on the banks is required for providing the birds a natural habitat. Complete and permanent protection should be ensured for all breeding congregations. Enough care must be taken not to destroy the foraging habitat of the

species. The State Wildlife Department will have to review the status of existing population and take appropriate steps to conserve the remaining population.

1. Perennou, C., Mundkur, T. and Scott, D., *The Asian Waterfowl Census 1987-91: Distribution and Status of Asian Waterfowl*, Kuala Lumpur, 1994.
2. IUCN 2007, 2007 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species; www.iucnredlist.org, accessed on 21 July 2008.

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