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Sri Venkateswara College University of Delhi



Compiled and designed by : 2015-16

Megha Srigyan¹, Jyotsna Karan², Abdus Samad², Abhishek Singh²,

Student, Department of Biochemistry
Students, Department of Biological Sciences

Updated and edited by : 2017-18

Soumya Mallick³, Sukanya Bhuyan³

³ Students, Department of Zoology

Supervised by :

Dr. Robin Suyesh[,] Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Studies "A bird does not sing because it has an answer. It sings because it has a song." - Maya Angelou

Birds are nature's winged delights. To see them everyday around us is a gift we should appreciate. The campus of Sri Venkateswara College is vibrant with a number of bird species, ranging in habit from passerines, frugivores as well as birds of prey. In this booklet, we attempt to describe the amazing variety of birds found in the campus and hope that this would lead to an increased awareness of local avian diversity as well as an interesting read for bird lovers around!

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Brown Headed Barbet Megalaima zeylanica

Widespread resident.

Found singly or in small feeding groups and in parties of up to 20 or more, sometimes with other frugivorous birds such as green pigeons, bulbuls and mynas.

Voice : Call is a monotonous *kutrookutroo-kutroo* throughout the day, often in chorus.

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout India and Sri Lanka.







Where in Campus: All around the campus especially the canteen area.

Coppersmith Barbet Megalaima haemacephala

Widespread east of Indus river.

Found in open wooded country, groves and wooded urban gardens. Particularly vocal during the day.

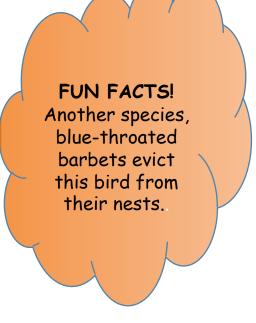
Voice : Call is a loud, metallic, monotonous, repetitive *tuk-tuk-tuk*.

Distribution :

Mostly sympatric with brown headed barbet. Distribution extends to NE India and Pakistan.







Where in Campus: Parking lot and hostel campus.

Black Drongo Dicrurus macrocercus

Widespread resident.

Found around habitation and cultivation.

Voice : A harsh *ti-tiu*, and a harsh *cheececheece-chichuk*; pairs duet during breeding season.

Distribution : Distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! Known for aggressive behaviour towards much larger birds, such as crows. Their courtship includes acrobatic chases and pairs may fall to the ground after locking beaks together.

Where in Campus: Hostel Campus and Front Lawn.

Black Kite Milvus migrans

Widespread resident.

Found around cities, towns, villages and mountains. Gregarious throughout the year.

Voice : Has a shrill, almost musical whistle, ewewir-r-r-r-r.

Distribution : Widespread throughout the Indian subcontinent.







Where in Campus: All around the campus especially in the front lawn.

Black Redstart Phoenicurus ochruros

Widespread in winter.

Found in cultivation and plantations (in winter). Breeds in Tibetan steppe habitat.

Voice : Calls include a short tsip, scolding tucc- tucc and a rapid rattle.

Distribution : Widely distributed in Northern and South Central India.





FUN FACTS! Socially monogamous birds : A male pairs with a female to raise young, guards her against other males and also mates with other females.

Where in Campus: Parking lot and hostel campus.

Brahminy Starling Sturnia pagodarum

Widespread resident.

Found in dry, well-wooded areas and thorn scrub.

Voice : Song is a short, gurgling drawn-out cry followed by a bubbling yodel.

Distribution : Distributed throughout India except NW India and NE India.





FUN FACTS! Starlings have diverse and complex vocalizations. They have a repertoire of about 15-20 distinct imitations of avian species, human speech patterns and sounds like car alarms.

Where in Campus: Parking lot and hostel campus.

Asian Pied Starling Gracupica contra

Red Vented Bulbul Pycnonotus cafer

Widespread resident.

Found in open deciduous forest, secondary growth, gardens and light scrub (in pairs, or in small loose flocks).

Voice : Utters a cherry becare-ful or be quick quick; alarm call is a sharp repetitive peep.

Distribution : Distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! One of the 100 worst invasive alien species world over, that along with red-whiskered bulbuls, has led to changes in the population dynamics of the Danaus butterfly of Oahu, Hawaji.

Where in Campus: All around the campus.

Red Whiskered Bulbul Pycnonotus jocosus

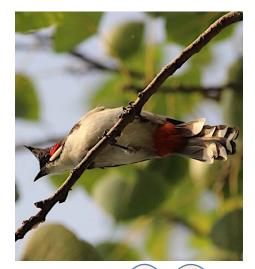
Widespread resident.

Found in forest, scrub jungles, gardens, orchards and bushes around villages and cultivation.

Voice : Calls include a lively Pettigrew or kick Pettigrew.

Distribution : Recorded dominantly in North East India and sparsely distributed in North and South India.





FUN FACTS! The redwhiskered bulbul was introduced by the Zoological and Acclimatization Society in 1880 to Sydney, and became well established across the suburbs by 1920.

Where in Campus: All around the campus.

Common Tailorbird Orthotomus sutorius

Widespread resident.

Found in bushes of gardens, cultivation edges and forest edges.

Voice : Song is a loud pitchik-pitchik.

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! Tailorbirds use large leaves, the edges of which they pierce and then sew using plant fibre or spider silk, as a cradle to build their nests.

Where in Campus: All around the campus especially the canteen area.

House Crow Corvus splendens

Widespread resident.

Found around human habitation and cultivation.

Voice : Main call is a flat, dry kaaa-kaaa, weaker than that of Large-billed Crow.

Distribution :

Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent.







Where in Campus: All around the campus especially in the front lawn.

Eurasian Collared Dove Streptopelia decaocto

Widespread resident.

Found in open dry country with cultivation and groves.

Voice : A repeated cooing *kukkoo....kook*.

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! The song of this bird, is a coo-koo-Koo, phonetically similar to the Greek dedaocto ("eighteen"), to which the bird owes its scientific name.

Where in Campus: All around the campus.

Lesser Goldenback Dinopium benghalense

Widespread resident.

Found in light forest, plantations, groves and trees in open country.

Voice : Single strident *klerk* and a whinnying *kyi-kyi-kyi*.

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! This bird appears in 4.50 rupees Sri Lankan stamp as well as on a postal stamp from Bangladesh.

Where in Campus: All around the campus, especially parking lot and hostel campus

Black Drongo Dicrurus macrocercus

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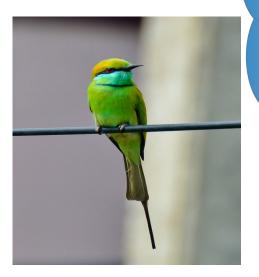
Green Bee Eater Merops orientalis

Widespread resident and summer visitor.

Found in open country with scattered trees; sandy areas on coasts; also in semi deserts and grazing lands.

Voice : Utters a throaty trill, *tree-tree-tree*.

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! It is thought that green bee-eaters may be capable of interpreting the behavior of human observers, and behave accordingly, such as behaving in a way that avoids giving away the nest location.

Where in Campus: Parking lot and hostel campus.

Common Hoopoe Upupa epops

Summer visitor to far north; resident and winter visitor to much of the rest of the Indian subcontinent.

Found in open country, cultivation and villages.

Voice : A repetitive poop, poop; similar to call of Oriental Cuckoo.

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! They have been recorded at high altitudes, as much as at 6400m, by the first Mount Everest expedition.

Where in Campus: Parking lot and hostel campus.

Indian Grey Hornbill Ocyceros birostris

Widespread resident.

Found in open forest and wooded areas with fruiting trees.

Voice : Call includes a loud cracking *k-k-k-ka-e*, rapid piping *pi- pi- pi- pi- pipipieupipipieu* and kite-like cheeoowww.

Distribution : North and South Central India.





FUN FACTS! While nesting, the female is fed by the male through a small hole in its nest sealed using mud pellets and excreta supplied by the male.

Where in Campus: All around the campus.

Jungle Babbler Turdoides striata

Widespread resident.

Found in deciduous forests, cultivation and gardens.

Voice : Call includes a harsh ke-ke-ke-ke.

Distribution : Throughout the Indian Subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! Since they forage in groups of 6 to 10, they are popularly called as "Seven Sisters". When threatened by predators they may feign death.

Where in Campus: All around the campus.

Greater Coucal Centropus sinensis

Found in tall grasslands, scrub, groves and thick cover adjacent to wetlands.

Voice: A deep resonant and primate like hoophoop-hoop-hoop-hoop, descending slightly at first and then rising towards the end of the series.

Distribution : Distributed throughout the base of the Himalayas, extending from the Gangetic plains to Bangladesh.





FUN FACTS! The red blood cells of the birds contain Haemosporidia, a malaria causing parasite.

Where in Campus: Rare sighting around parking lot and hostel campus.

White-throated Kingfisher

Halcyon smyrnensis

Widespread resident.

Found in wide ranging habitat, often far from water, cultivation, forest edges, gardens, freshwater and coastal wetlands.

Voice : Call is a loud, ruttling laugh. Song is a drawn-out musical whistle *kililili*.

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! The state bird of West Bengal, it predates on smaller birds such as the Oriental White Eye, Munias and chicks of Red Wattled Lapwing.

Where in Campus: All around the campus especially in near hostel campus.

Brahminy Starling Sturnia pagodarum

Asian Koel Eudynamys scolopaceus

Mainly resident, widespread.

Found in open woodland, gardens and cultivation.

Voice : A loud, rising and increasingly anxious repeated ko-el...ko-el... ko-el and a bubbling, more repeated koel... koel.

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! The Koel is the state bird of Puducherry as well as Jharkhand.

Where in Campus: All around the campus especially in fruiting trees.

Red Wattled Lapwing Vanellus indicus

Widespread resident.

Found in open flat ground near water. In pairs or small flocks of up to about 12 birds.

Voice : An agitated and penetrating *did he do it, did he do it and a less intrusive did-did-did.*

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! Being very alert, they detect disturbance very easily and warn other animals against human presence by calling loudly!

Where in Campus: All around the campus especially parking lot and sports ground.

Yellow Wattled Lapwing Vanellus malabaricus

Widespread resident.

Found in open lowland habitat. Dry stubbles, fallow fields, stony ground and open dry country.

Voice : An agitated and penetrating *did he do it, did he do it and a less intrusive tchee-it.*

Distribution : Widely distributed in India and Sri Lanka. Absent in North West India, North East India and Northern Himalayas.





FUN FACTS! Endemic to the Indian Subcontinent.

Where in Campus: Rare sighting. Sports Ground especially the unmaintained area.

Bank Myna Acridotheres ginginianus

Widespread resident in North and Central continent.

Found in cultivation, damp grassland and habitation.

Voice : Song is disjointed, noisy and tuneless with gurgling and whistling and much repetition.

Distribution:

Widely distributed in North India.





FUN FACTS! These mynas have been introduced into Kuwait, where they have established in the wild. Flocks have also been found in the Maldives, Taiwan and Japan.

Where in Campus: All around the campus especially sports ground.

Common Myna Acridotheres tristis

Widespread resident.

Found in human habitation and cultivation.

Voice : Song is disjointed, noisy, and tuneless, with gurgling and whistling, and much repetition. Has a most distinctive call, a hoarse chake-chake when alarmed.

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! One of the three birds in World's 100 Most Invasive species, which pose serious impacts on biodiversity.

Where in Campus: All around the campus especially canteen area.

Oriental Magpie Robin Copsychus solaris

Widespread resident.

Found in gardens, groves and open broad leaved forest .

Voice : Spirited, clear and varied whistling.

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout India and Sri Lanka.





FUN FACTS! Considered the national bird of Bangladesh, where it is known as doel. Dhaka even has a landmark named Doel Square.

Where in Campus: All around the campus especially canteen area.

Brown Headed Barbet Megalaima zeylanica

Oriental White Eye Zosterops palpebrosus

Widespread resident.

Found in open broadleaved forest, groves, gardens, orchids and mangroves; also in cardamom plantations in South India .

Voice : Call is a plaintive *chirr* or *prree-u;* song is a tinkling jingle.

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! These lightweight birds can get dispersed in the winds during storms and establish new populations in far off places, becoming invasive.

Where in Campus: Parking lot and hostel area.

Spotted Owlet Athene brama

Widespread resident.

Found around human habitation and cultivation.

Voice : Call is a harsh screechy chirurr-chirurrchirurr, then followed by or alternated with cheevak-cheevakcheevak.

Distribution :

Predominantly found in the arid regions of Indian Subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! Females may attempt pseudocopulation. They are also associated with bad omens (myth).

Where in Campus: Front Lawn and garden area on Neem and Ashoka trees.

Rose Ringed Parakeet Psittacula krameri

Widespread resident.

Found in deciduous forests, wooded areas and cultivation.

Voice : A shrill, loud and variable *kee-ah*, higher pitched and less guttural than Alexandrine's.

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! They have the largest range of any Old World parrot and can be found throughout northern Africa and southern Asia. They have also been introduced to parts of Europe, South Africa, United States and the Middle East.

Where in Campus: All around the campus especially front lawn.

Common Pigeon/Rock Pigeon

Columba livia

Widespread resident.

Found in scrub-covered areas, wooded hillsides and valleys.

Voice : Utters a deep and throaty repeated *kookooo-koo...kookoo*.

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent.







FUN FACTS! Pigeons can pass the mirror test a test of self recognition. They are also invasive species

Where in Campus: All around the campus.

Yellow Footed Green Pigeon

Treron phoenicopterus

Widespread resident.

Found in deciduous forest and fruiting trees around villages and cultivation.

Voice : A mellow, wandering whistle; also a subdued gurgling.

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent except the North West and most of the Himalayan region.







Where in Campus: Commonly seen in parking lot and hostel area.

Purple Sunbird Cinnyris asiaticus

Widespread resident.

Found in deciduous forest and gardens.

Voice : Call is a rapid rattle followed by metallic notes which includes a *chwit* or *Chwing*.

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent except North East and North West regions.





FUN FACTS! Capable of hovering like a hummingbird while in flight and even hanging upside down for short periods of time to feed on nectar.

Where in Campus: Can be seen feeding on the nectars of Callistemon flowers.



Red Collared Dove Streptopelia tranquebarica

Widespread resident.

Found in cultivation, habitation and open forest.

Voice :

A soft mournful krookrukkrukroo.

Distribution :

Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent. Unrecorded from Northwest India, Northern Himalayas and Southern India.





FUN FACTS! Also known as Red Turtle Dove, their ability to breed all-year round is a major reason for their successful populations.

Where in Campus: Rock Garden.

Rufous Treepie Dendrocitta vagabunda

Widespread resident.

Found in open wooded country.

Voice : Variety of metallic and mewing notes, often mixed with a harsh rattling cry.

Distribution : Widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent. Unrecorded from Sri Lanka.





FUN FACTS! One local name is taka chor, meaning coin thief. Carries a blood parasitic protozoan Trypanosoma corvi.

Where in Campus: Front Lawn and garden area.

Little Swift/House Swift Apus affinis

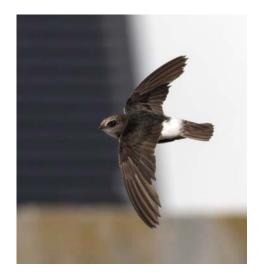
Widespread resident.

Generally seen close to human habitation, fond of ancient forts, ruined mosques and buildings.

Voice : Quite vocal. Commonest call is a pleasant twittering descending trill "*ti-ti-titititirrrr*....".

Distribution : Patchily distributed in the Indian subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! Cannot perch due to a strange foot structure but can only cling to rough surfaces. The nest is made of feathers and straw cemented with the bird's saliva.

Where in Campus: Arts Block near library.

Alexandrine Parakeet Psittacula eupatria

Inhabit dry, deciduous forests, moist lowland forests, trees surrounding cultivated areas, groups of old trees, mangroves and woodlands.

Voice : Call is a ringing *trrrieuw*, low kee-arr and *keeak*, deep klak-klak-klakklak, harsh scolding screee and resonant g-raaak graaak.

Distribution : Widely distributed in the Indian subcontinent, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.





FUN FACTS! Named after Alexander the Great, who is known to introduce this species in Europe from Asia.

Where in Campus: Staff Quarters

Eurasian Golden Oriole Oriolus oriolus

Summer migratory bird in Delhi.

Dwellers of open wooded country and grooves around cultivation.

Voice : A screech, but the song is a beautiful weelawheo-oh. It also has a harsh 'chr-r-r' alarm call.

Distribution : Widely distributed in India excluding the North-East; Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.





FUN FACTS! Despite its bright plumage, the Eurasian golden oriole is often surprisingly wellhidden amongst dense foliage, but its distinctive, flute-like, whistling song often reveals its location.

Where in Campus: Parking lot.

Lesser Whitethroat Sylvia curruca

Winter migratory bird in Delhi

Found in thorny scrub, woodland, grassland, farmland, urban and suburban areas.

Voice : A subdued *tek... tek*, uttered every few seconds.

Distribution : Winter visitor in northern and peninsular India and the plains of Pakistan.





FUN FACTS! Unlike many typical warblers, the sexes are almost identical.

Where in Campus: Hostel Campus.

Jungle Babbler Turdoides striata

Ashy Prinia Prinia socialis

Resident bird of Delhi.

Found in tall grass and scrub, open secondary growth, reedbeds and forest edges.

Voice : A sweet, repetitive tchup, tchup, tchup but when suddenly disturbed off its nest, the warbler emits a peculiar *kit-kit-kit* as of electric sparks.

Distribution : Widespread in the Indian subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! Rare cases of birds reusing material from a nest to rebuild a nest at a new location have been noted

Where in Campus: Botanical Garden.

Laughing Dove Streptopelia senegalensis

Resident bird of Delhi.

Found in dry cultivations and scrub covered hills.

Voice : A soft coo-roorooroo

Distribution : The drier portions of the entire Gangetic Plain and peninsular India east to about Bangladesh and Tripura





FUN FACTS! The male laughing dove has a spectacular courtship display. With noisy wing beats, it leaves its perch and flies to a considerable height before sailing downwards with its wings and tail spread wide.

Where in Campus: Mostly in open grounds like the parking lot.

Plum Headed Parakeet Psittacula cyanocephala

Local migrant

Found in broadleaved forests and well wooded areas.

Voice : A high pitched, ringing tooi-tooi.

Distribution : India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar.





FUN FACTS! They are found in flocks, the males having a pinkish purple head and the females, a grey head. Endemic to Indian Subcontinent.

Where in Campus: Parking lot

Jungle Crow Corvus macrorhychos

Resident bird of Delhi.

Found in forests, cultivation and open countryside above the treeline.

Voice : A loud "caa-haacaa", deeper and usually more resonant than the House Crow.

Distribution India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar.





FUN FACTS! Jungle Crows have developed a fascinating habit of using clothes hangers to construct nests!.

Where in Campus: Parking lot and hostel campus.

House Sparrow Passer domesticus

Resident bird in Delhi.

Inseparable from human habitations, found in hills and plains alike.

Voice : A loud, monotonous tsi, tsi, tsi or cheer, cheer, cheer.

Distribution Widespread throughout India; Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar.





FUN FACTS! They can swim to escape predators, even though they are not considered as water birds.

Where in Campus:

Commonly seen in hostel area, staff quarters and near bamboo rooms.

Asian Pied Starling Gracupica contra

Resident Bird in Delhi

Found in human habitations, cultivations and damp grasslands.

Voice : They a wide repertoire of calls consisting of whistles, trills, buzzes, clicks and warbling notes.

Distribution India east of a line from Ambala (Haryana) to Hyderabad and Masulipatam (Andhra); Bangladesh, Myanmar.





FUN FACTS! The ability of these mynas to mimic human voices made them popular as cagebirds. The Sema Nagas will not eat this bird as they believe it is the reincarnation of a human.

Where in Campus: Parking Lot and Front Lawn.

White-throated Kingfisher Halcyon smyrnensis

Common Chiffchaff Phylloscopus collibita

Winter migratory bird in Delhi.

Found in a wide range of habitats, especially in low bushes and close to water. It breeds in open woodlands and with some taller trees and ground cover for nesting purposes.

Voice : A short, quick '*hwiit*', one syllable.

Distribution : Not widely distributed in India.





FUN FACTS! The name Chiffchaff is onomatopoeic in reference to the bird's two-note, metronomic "chiffchaff" song. Interestingly, other European languages have similar names for Chiffchaff-Dutch use "Tjiftjaf", Germans use "Zilpzalp" and Welsh say "Siffsaff".

Where in Campus: Parking Lot, Hostel campus.

White Wagtail Motallica alba

Winter migratory bird in Delhi

Likes to be around water and damp areas, found in big fields and golf courses.

Voice : The call of the wagtail is a sharp 'chisick', with the song being a pleasant twittering, more regular in white than pied.

Distribution Winter visitor in most parts of India; Bangladesh and Pakistan.





FUN FACTS! Buckingham Palace supports a wagtail roost and the biggest wagtail roost may have as many as 4000 individuals.

Where in Campus: Football Field

Rosy Starling Pastor roseus

Winter Migrants in Delhi

It is a bird of steppe and open agricultural land.

Voice : Song a long series of bubbling, warbling, whistled and grating phrases.

Distribution : The breeding range of this bird is from easternmost Europe across temperate southern Asia. It is a strong migrant, and winters in India and tropical Asia.





FUN FACTS! Rosy starlings are highly gregarious birds, and often form large, noisy flocks, which can on occasion be a pest for growers of cereal crops or orchards.

Where in Campus: Parking lot and hostel campus.

Scaly Breasted Munia Lonchura punctulata

Widespread resident.

This species is found in tropical plains and grasslands.

Voice : Individuals communicate with calls that include a short whistle, variations of *kitty-kitty-kitty*, and a sharp chipping alarm note.

Distribution : The species is endemic to Asia and is found throughout the Indian Subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! In India, they are especially common in paddy fields where they are considered a minor pest on account of their feeding on grain.

Where in Campus: Hostel campus.

Peafowl Pavo cristatus

Widespread resident.

They are forest birds that nest on the ground, but roost in trees. They are terrestrial feeders.

Voice : A high-pitched loud and nasal "may-awe."

Distribution : The species is found throughout the Indian Subcontinent.





FUN FACTS! The peafowl is native to India, while also displaying significance in its culture. In Hinduism, the Indian peacock is the mount of the God of war, Lord Kartikeya.

Where in Campus: Hostel area boundary with South Campus.

Rose Ringed Parakeet Psittacula krameri

Eco Club Sri Venkateswara College

Principal and Chairperson Prof. C Sheela Reddy

Special Thanks: Dr. P Hemalatha Reddy (Former Principal, Sri Venkateswara College)

Convenor Dr. Vartika Mathur, Department of Zoology

Members

Dr. Robin Suyesh, Department of Env. Studies Dr. Abhishek Chandra, Department of Env. Studies Dr. Pooja Gokhale, Department of Botany Dr. P. Jayraj, Department of Zoology Dr. Aarti Seherawat, Department of Zoology

Bibliography

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