

Filling a longstanding data gap for birds: the Central Highlands of India

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Suhel Quader
Nature Conservation Foundation, India

Presented by
Gautam Talukdar
Wildlife Institute of India

Rationale

Despite a long history of ornithology in India, the distribution and abundance of birds in the subcontinent are still relatively poorly known.

The Central Indian Highlands are biogeographically particularly important, and yet information from here is scarce.

The States of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh together account for c.13% of India's land area, but only 2.3% of bird occurrence records in the citizen science platform eBird.



The States of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh

Objectives

To fill this biodiversity data gap by

1. Mobilizing existing bird occurrence records
Identify, digitize and publish existing occurrence and sampling event data
2. Carrying out fieldwork in under-surveyed areas
Identify gaps and fill them using targeted data collection
3. Conducting training sessions and workshops
Train local amateur naturalists in collecting and compiling biodiversity data such that information flow continues in the long term

Execution

The project will be carried out by recruiting two personnel (one in each State), and in collaboration with local partners.

Staff

We are currently in the process of selecting and recruiting two personnel

Existing partners include

The Nature Volunteers, Indore, Madhya Pradesh

Citizens for Nature, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh

Birds & Wildlife of Chhattisgarh, Raipur, Chhattisgarh

We are in discussions with the relevant government agencies (ie the Forest Departments of the two States) to build partnerships with them.

Deliverables

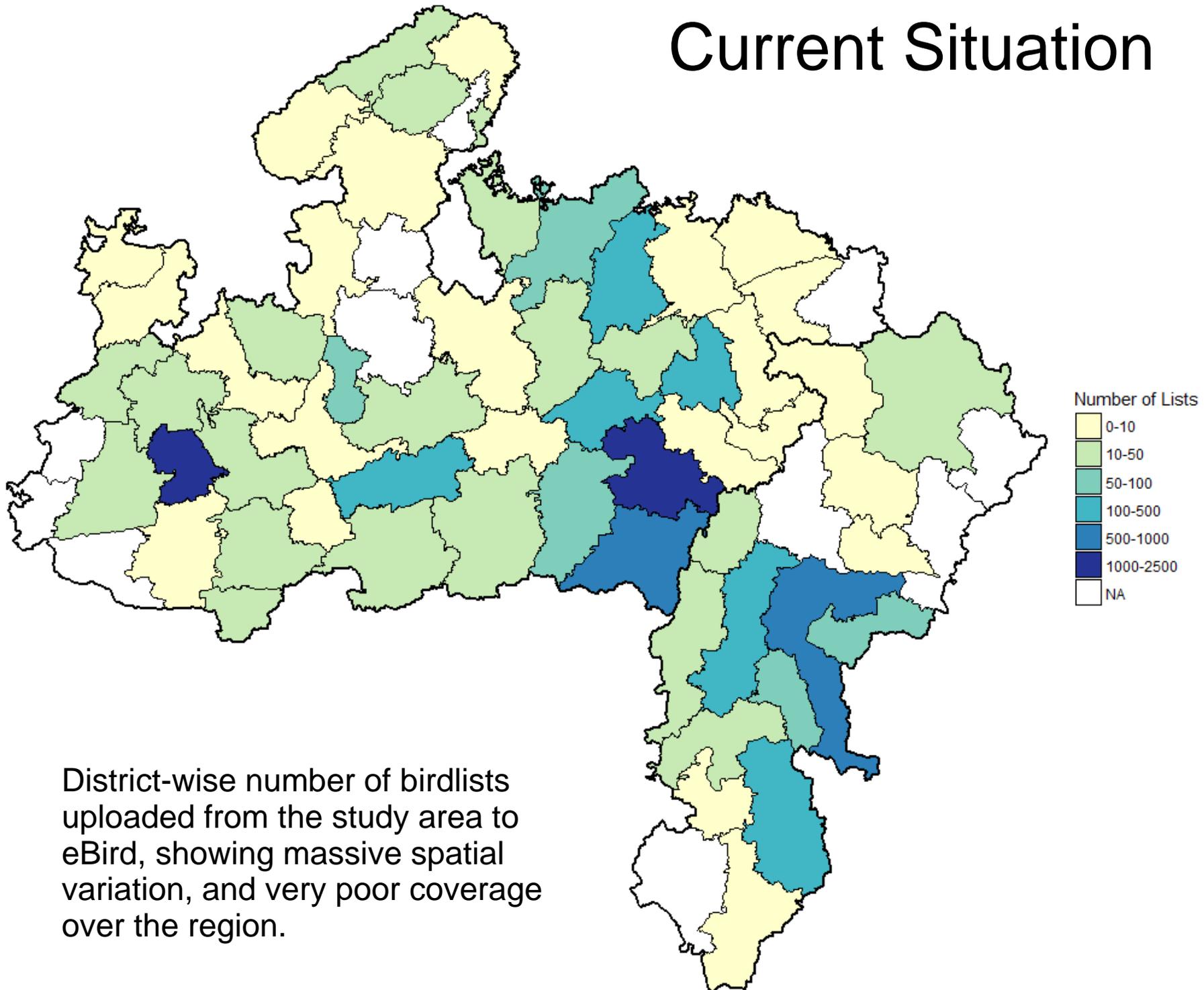
A sharp increase in the number of bird occurrence records from the Central Indian Highlands. We aim to generate over 50,000 records through a combination of data mobilization and fieldwork. These will be published to GBIF

A doubling in the rate at which such observations are added by amateur enthusiasts to eBird (and thus to GBIF)

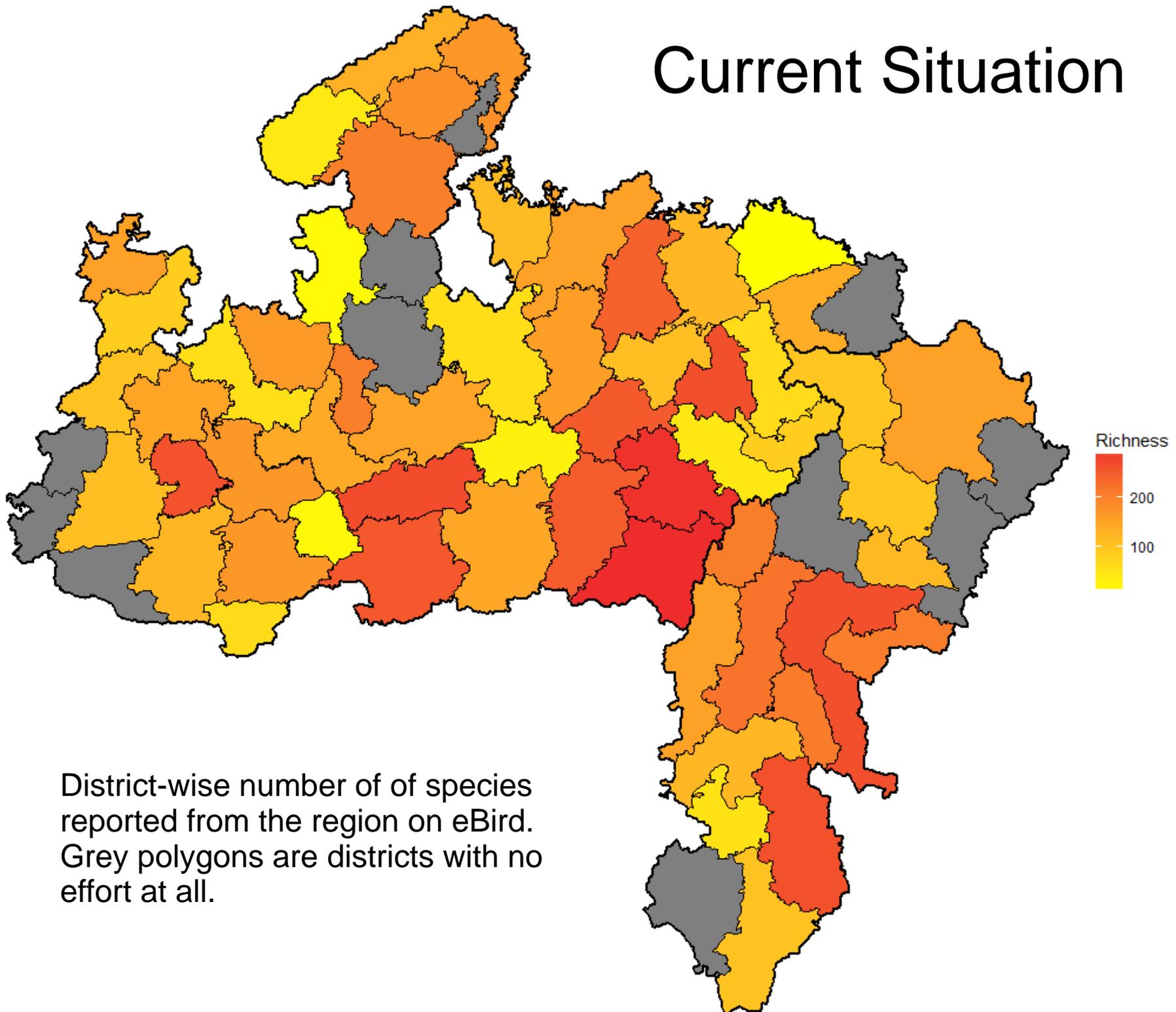
Training and outreach reaching a minimum of 300 birdwatchers across the region, which will contribute to the two deliverables above.

A plan, based on experiences from this project, for how to begin filling data gaps in other parts of India.

Current Situation



Current Situation



District-wise number of species reported from the region on eBird. Grey polygons are districts with no effort at all.