

Weavers of India in Illegal Bird Trade



Symbols Male ♂ Female ♀

Weaver birds are highly gregarious, small, sparrow-sized birds (≥15 cm), popularly known for their excellent nest-weaving skills. During the monsoon season these birds build a vertical oval nest with a side entrance (tunnel). All weaver birds have a breeding and non-breeding plumage. The males acquire a distinctive breeding plumage with a yellow crown, head and breast ornamentation. However, non-breeding males are brown and streaky similar to females and juveniles.

India is home to four species of weaver birds, belonging to the family Ploceidae. However in India, the Baya Weaver is represented by two sub species.

1. a. 'Indian' Baya Weaver (Common Baya or Indian Weaver) *Ploceus philippinus philippinus*
b. 'Eastern' Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus burmaricus*
2. Streaked Weaver *Ploceus manyar*
3. Black-breasted Weaver (Black-throated Weaver Bird) *Ploceus benghalensis*
4. Finn's Weaver (Finn's Baya or Yellow Weaver) *Ploceus megarhynchus* (Endemic to India & Nepal)

Threat: Although protected as native species, weaver birds are illegally traded in India - breeding males are caught for the cage bird trade during summer, while the females and non-breeding males are sold for food and also as release birds throughout the year. Often, the breeding male birds are dyed in various colours by traders to make them look attractive and exotic and for deceiving the enforcement agencies.

Legal Status: Hunting, trapping or trade of weaver birds is prohibited in India and is a punishable offence.

Wildlife (Protection) Act of India, 1972: Schedule IV

CITES: None of the species are listed

IUCN: Finn's Weaver-Vulnerable
Other three species/sub-species-Least Concern

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TRAFFIC is a strategic alliance of WWF and IUCN and is a leading specialist on wildlife trade issues. In India, TRAFFIC operates as a programme division of WWF-India. TRAFFIC carries out research and provides analysis, support and encouragement to efforts aimed to ensure that wildlife trade is not a threat to the conservation of nature.