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BirdLife International

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BirdLife International

BirdLife International is the world’s largest partnership of nature groups. **It focuses on birds and the places they need to survive.**



An Indian Skimmer (Rynchops albicollis), an Endangered species that BirdLife’s Indian partner BNHS works to protect. Photo: Hrishikesh Rane, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

At a Glance

Four facts to hold on to.

01
Partnership

National conservation groups, not one NGO.

02
IBAs

Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas.

03
Red List Authority

For birds, under the IUCN Red List.

04
India partner

BNHS, founded 1883.

IBAImportant Bird and Biodiversity Area.
KBAKey Biodiversity Area, for any threatened species or ecosystem.
Red List Authority The body whose data decides a group's Red List status.
BNHSBombay Natural History Society.

What BirdLife International Is

Must Know

A global partnership, and IBAs

- BirdLife is a global partnership of national nature conservation organisations.
- It is the world's largest such partnership, with well over 100 national member groups.
- It identifies **Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs)**.
- IBAs hold significant numbers of threatened or migratory birds.

Not the hotspots origin

- BirdLife did **not** originate the "biodiversity hotspots" idea.
- That came from **Norman Myers**, working with Conservation International, in 1988.
- BirdLife co-founded the Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) Partnership with IUCN and others.

> **Quick check 1.** BirdLife International originated the "biodiversity hotspots" concept. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

A Century of Bird Conservation

Good to Know

Founded 1922, and the Red List role

- BirdLife traces back to the International Council for Bird Preservation, founded in London in **1922**.
- It took its current name in 1993.
- It is the official **Red List Authority for birds** under the IUCN Red List.

- Its data decides how each bird species is classified, from Least Concern to Critically Endangered.

Cambridge, and India’s partner

- The international secretariat is in Cambridge, United Kingdom.
- It coordinates work across more than 100 countries.
- The **Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)**, founded in 1883, is the official partner in India.

> **Quick check 2.** BirdLife International is the official Red List Authority for birds under the IUCN Red List. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Exam Edge

Previous Year Questions

UPSC 2015 asked about BirdLife.

> **Quick check 3.** In the UPSC CSP 2015 question, all three statements about BirdLife International were correct. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Why the Partnership Model Matters

Great to Know

Not a single NGO

- BirdLife is not one central organisation with branches.
- Each national partner, like BNHS, is an independent organisation that BirdLife coordinates and supports.

The KBA standard, and policy reach

- Key Biodiversity Areas extend the IBA idea to sites critical for any threatened species or ecosystem.
- They use a global standard BirdLife helped write.
- BirdLife data feeds international policy, including UN biodiversity conferences.
- Its Red List assessments are seen as authoritative.

Think it through: why partner with national groups like BNHS instead of opening branch offices?

A partner like BNHS already has decades of local skill and relationships. It was founded in 1883, nearly 40 years before BirdLife's predecessor. Partnering uses that depth at once. It keeps work locally led and accountable. BirdLife then coordinates standards and shares global data like Red List assessments.

Quick check 4. BNHS, BirdLife's Indian partner, was founded in 1883, well before BirdLife's predecessor organisation in 1922. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Guarding the Indian Skimmer (2026)

Current Affairs

- BNHS launched a project under the National Mission for Clean Ganga.
- It aims to protect the Endangered **Indian Skimmer** across the Ganga Basin.
- Union Minister C.R. Patil inaugurated it.
- Local residents are trained as "Nest Guardians" and "River Guardians".
- They protect nesting colonies, monitor birds and collect data. The project also creates local jobs.
- It spans the Chambal, the Upper Ganga near Bijnor and Narora, the Ganga-Yamuna confluence at Prayagraj, and the Lower Ganga near the Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary.
- Source: Down To Earth.

Quick check 5. The Indian Skimmer protection project trains local residents as “Nest Guardians” and “River Guardians” to monitor birds and protect nesting colonies. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Quick Q&A

What is BirdLife?

The largest partnership of nature groups.

What are IBAs?

Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas.

Who created hotspots?

Norman Myers, 1988.

Who is its India partner?

BNHS.

What is it for birds on the Red List?

The official Red List Authority.

Practice: BirdLife International

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Practice MCQs

1. With reference to an organization known as 'BirdLife International', which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. It is a Global Partnership of Conservation Organizations.
2. The concept of 'biodiversity hotspots' originated from this organization.
3. It identifies the sites known/referred to as 'Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas'.

A. 1, 2 and 3

B. 2 and 3 only

C. 1 only

D. 1 and 3 only

See answer ↓

2. The concept of 'biodiversity hotspots' is credited to which of the following?

A. The Ramsar Convention

B. Norman Myers, working with Conservation International

C. The IUCN Red List

D. BirdLife International

See answer ↓

3. Which organization identifies and documents sites known as 'Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas' (IBAs)?

A. United Nations Environment Programme

B. World Wide Fund for Nature

C. Ramsar Convention Secretariat

D. BirdLife International

See answer ↓

4. Which organisation is the official Red List Authority for birds under the IUCN Red List?

A. Convention on Migratory Species

B. UNEP

C. WWF

D. BirdLife International

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **D.** Statements 1 and 3 are correct: BirdLife is a Global Partnership of Conservation Organizations that identifies Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas. Statement 2 is false. ↑ Q1
2. **B.** Norman Myers first proposed the biodiversity hotspots concept in 1988, developed with Conservation International. This is a common exam trap since BirdLife is also a major conservation partnership. ↑ Q2
3. **D.** BirdLife International's global partnership has identified and documented more than 13,000 Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas worldwide. ↑ Q3
4. **D.** BirdLife International, tracing back to the International Council for Bird Preservation founded in 1922, is the IUCN's official listing authority for birds -- its data decides how every bird species gets Red List classified. ↑ Q4

Quick-check answers

1. **False.** ↑ 1
2. **True.** ↑ 2
3. **False.** ↑ 3
4. **True.** ↑ 4
5. **True.** ↑ 5

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