

# Living with Birds A Lifelong Journey in Feathered Company

N Shiva Kumar

**Title:** *Living with Birds: The Memoir of One of India's Greatest Ornithologists*

**Author:** Asad Rahmani

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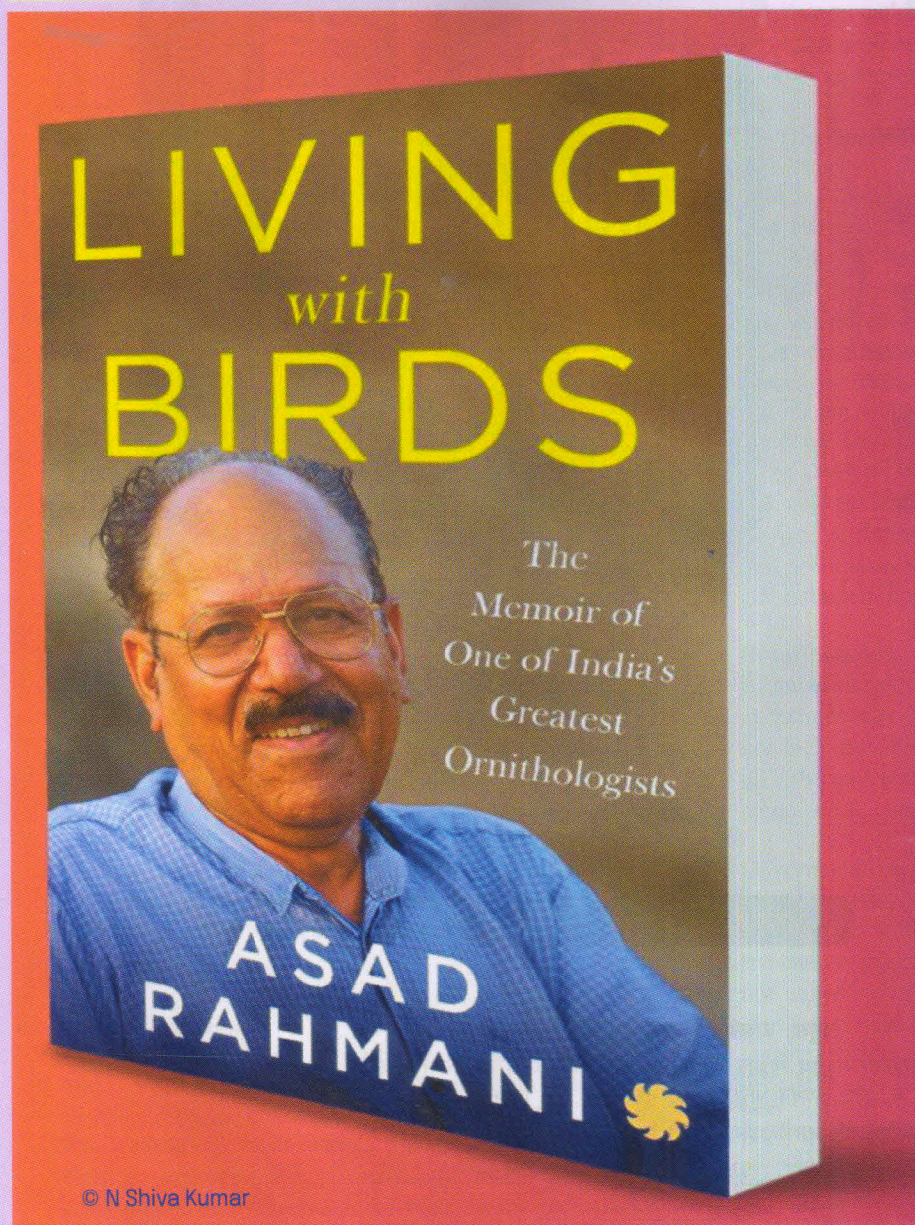
**I**N the book *“Living with Birds”*, noted ornithologist and conservationist Dr Asad Rahmani takes readers on a deeply personal and enriching journey through his decades-long engagement with India’s birds and wild landscapes. Part memoir, part conservation chronicle, the book is a sincere tribute to the winged wonders of the subcontinent and to the joys and battles of dedicating a lifetime to understanding and protecting the beleaguered avifauna of India.

Rahmani, former Director of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), has long been a towering figure in the field of Indian conservation for over four decades and was the longest-serving Director in the 142-year history of the Bombay Natural History Society. This book is not just a record of bird sightings or scientific fieldwork. Rather, it is an emotional and historical archive of India’s conservation movement told through the eyes of someone who stood at its frontlines and fought tooth and nail for the wildlife, particularly bird life. From Great Indian Bustards to Sarus Cranes, from Bengal Floricans to Adjutant storks, Dr Asad Rahmani has worked on numerous Indian birds and is widely regarded as one of the stalwarts in the field of bird ecology in India.

The writing in his book is conversational and welcoming, often infused with gentle humour and quiet nostalgia. From his early birdwatching days in rural Bihar to leading national-level conservation programmes, Rahmani invites the reader into his world with warmth and humility. The book is structured through anecdotes, some charming, others sobering, which offer glimpses into the life of an ecologist who has walked across jungles, deserts, forests, and wetlands, always with a notebook and binoculars in hand.

One of the book’s strengths is its accessibility. Rahmani speaks not only to seasoned naturalists but also to curious general readers. Scientific names are included, but never overwhelm. The joy of observing a Sarus Crane pair or the sorrow of watching wetlands and grasslands vanish under the plough is shared in a tone that is inclusive and engaging. His passion is evident in every paragraph and on every page and in every chapter.

The chapters traverse a variety of themes, from species-specific accounts, like that of the endangered Great Indian Bustard or the elusive Florican, to broader



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