

# SPOT-BELLIED EAGLE-OWL

Range extension of *Bubo nipalensis* Hodgson, 1836 (Strigiformes: Strigidae) in Odisha, eastern India



**IUCN Red List:**  
Least Concern  
(BirdLife International, 2016)

Juvenile Spot-bellied Eagle-owl *Bubo nipalensis* in Deobhuin Reserve Forest of Athagarh Forest Division, Odisha, India

**Aves**  
[Class of Birds]

**Strigiformes**  
[Order of owls]

**Strigidae**  
[Family of typical owls]

***Bubo nipalensis***  
[Spot-bellied Eagle-owl]

Species described by Hodgson in 1836

The Spot-bellied Eagle-owl *Bubo nipalensis* Hodgson, 1836 a member of the family Strigidae, is a very large nocturnal owl, native to India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, China, Thailand, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (BirdLife International 2016). In India, the Spot-bellied Eagle-owl is found from the foothills of Uttarakhand to northeastern India, Western Ghats and even the southern Eastern Ghats (Shevaroy Hills) (Grimmett et al. 2011; Srinivasan 2013). According to IUCN it has been categorized as ‘Least Concern’ (BirdLife International 2016). It is also listed in Schedule IV of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and Appendix II of CITES. It prefers evergreen and moist deciduous tropical and subtropical

broadleaved forest (BirdLife International 2016); also inhabit in moist deciduous forest and temperate woodlands (Srinivasan 2013).

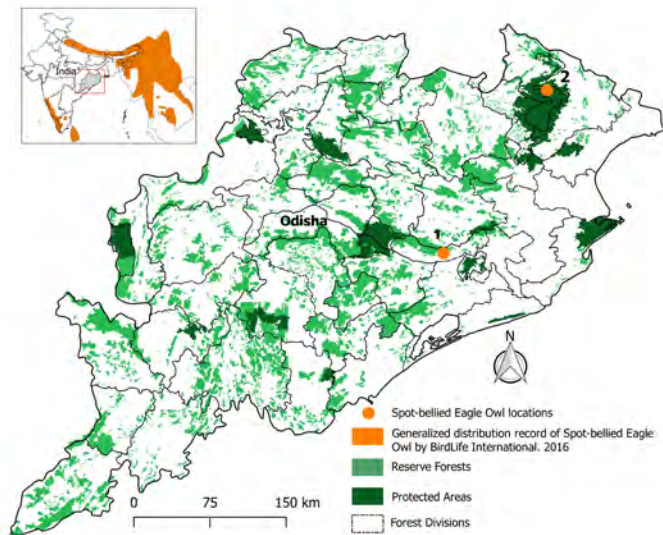
On 9 May 2015, at about 16:30hrs, we rescued a bird in Deobhuin Reserve Forest (20.495293°N & 85.430737°E) of Athagarh Forest Division, Odisha. It was identified as a juvenile Spot-bellied Eagle-owl, based largely on the presence of ear tufts, paler grayish-cream colour body, pale-yellow coloured beak, and creamy yellow coloured legs (Grimmett et al. 2011).

**Global Distribution:**  
Native: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Laos People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam (BirdLife International, 2016)

Its primaries, secondaries and tail feathers were dark with heavy barring. The bird was in a good condition. We kept the bird in captivity at the forest guest house, feeding and fostering it until it flew on 11 May 2015. The area from where the bird was sighted is located in the Eastern Ghats of Odisha with a vegetation largely comprising the northern tropical moist deciduous and dry deciduous forests (Champion & Seth 1968).

The presence of the juvenile Spot-bellied Eagle-owl indicates that this species may be breeding in Odisha. Until the present report, information on the occurrence of Spot-bellied Eagle-owl in Odisha was reported from Similipal Tiger Reserve (Nayak & Naik 2014). The species is considered as two well separated populations in India (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005). This sighting extends the range of this species further south in Odisha and indicate that the species might be more widely distributed in the State.

The present sighting further strengthens the argument that lack of systematic surveys in many parts of Odisha and the Eastern Ghats has resulted in a biased understanding of distribution of many species across the Indian subcontinent as claimed by Mohapatra et al. (2014), Debata et al. (2013, 2015, 2017), Palei (2014). Intensive investigations are required in these unexplored areas of Odisha and northern Eastern Ghats, which might reveal the presence of further unrecorded species.



**Sighting location of Spot-bellied Eagle-owl *Bubo nipalensis* in (1) Deobhuin Reserve Forest of Athagarh Forest Division and (2) Similipal Tiger Reserve, Odisha, India**

## References

- BirdLife International (2016).** *Bubo nipalensis*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2012.1. <www.iucnredlist.org>. Downloaded on 25 April 2016; <http://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2012-1.RLTS.T22688970A40409044.en>
- Champion, H.G. & S.K. Seth (1968).** *The Forest Types of India*. Government of India Press, Nasik, India, 404pp.
- Debata, S., H.S. Palei., P.P. Mohapatra & A.K. Mishra (2013).** First record of Lesser False Vampire Bat (*Megaderma spasma*, Linnaeus, 1758) from Sundergarh, Odisha, India. *Small Mammal Mail* 5(1): 26–27.
- Debata, S., H.S. Palei, P.P. Mohapatra & S.K. Palita (2015).** Additional records of Cantor's Leaf-nosed Bat *Hipposideros galeritus* Cantor, 1846 (Mammalia: Chiroptera: Hipposideridae) in eastern India: Odisha. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 7(8): 7477–7479; <http://doi.org/10.11609/JoTT.o4247.7477-9>
- Debata, S., T. Kar, K.K. Swain & H.S. Palei (2017).** The Vulnerable Indian Skimmer *Rynchops albigollis* Swainson, 1838 (Aves: Charadriiformes: Laridae) breeding in Odisha, eastern India. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 9(11): 10961–10963; <http://doi.org/10.11609/jott.3445.9.11.10961-10963>
- Grimmett, R., C. Inskipp & T. Inskipp (2011).** *Pocket Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 528pp.
- Mohapatra, P.P., H.S. Palei & S.A. Hussain (2014).** Occurrence of Asian Small-clawed Otter *Aonyx cinereus* (Illiger, 1815) in eastern India. *Current Science* 107(3): 367–370.
- Nayak, A.K. & S. Naik (2014).** *Birds of Similipal Biosphere Reserve*. Similipal Tiger Reserve, Bhanjapur, Baripada, Mayurbhanj, Odisha, 280pp.
- Palei, H.S. (2014).** A first record of the Great Eared-Nightjar *Lyncornis marcotis* (Vigors, 1831) in Odisha, India. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 6(12): 6566–6567; <http://doi.org/10.11609/JoTT.o3968.6566-7>
- Rasmussen, P.C. & J.C. Anderton (2005).** *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley Guide*. Washington DC & Barcelona, Smithsonian Institution & Lynx Editions.
- Srinivasan, S. (2013).** Spot-bellied Eagle-owl *Bubo nipalensis* in northern Eastern Ghats, Andhra Pradesh, India. *Indian BIRDS* 8(4): 106–107.

**Acknowledgement:** We thank the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha for support and encouragement.

**Nimain Charan Palei<sup>1</sup>, Himanshu Shekhar Palei<sup>2</sup>, Bhakta Padarabinda Rath<sup>3</sup> & Arun Kumar Mishra<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1&3</sup> Office of the PCCF (Wildlife), Nilakanthanagar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha 751012, India

<sup>2</sup> Aranya Foundation, 625/12, Mars Villa, Panchasakha Nagar, Dumdoma, Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar, Odisha 751019, India

<sup>4</sup> Divisional Forest Office, Athagarh Forest Division, Cuttack, Odisha 754029, India

Emails: <sup>1</sup>wildpalei@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>himanshu.palei@gmail.com (corresponding author),

<sup>3</sup>bhaktapath@gmail.com, <sup>4</sup>arunkumarmishra5@gmail.com

Citation: Palei, N.C., H.S. Palei, B.P. Rath & A.K. Mishra (2018). Spot-bellied Eagle-owl: Range extension of *Bubo nipalensis* Hodgson, 1836 (Strigiformes: Strigidae) in Odisha, eastern India. *Bird-o-soar*#18. In: *Zoo's Print* 33(6): 6-8