

Photographic record of Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda* feeding on Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*, and bat (Chiroptera)

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Location: Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve (20°15'N, 79°25'E), near Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.



Fig. 1. Rufous Tree Pie *Dendrocitta vagabunda* feeding on Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*.

On 9 June 2010 I spotted a Rufous treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda* feeding on a Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus* (Figs. 1-2). The kill looked fresh and there were no other birds or mammals around at the time. While I did not see the Rufous Treepie actually kill the drongo, I inferred that the bird must have done so since no other predators were present at that time and the bird looked freshly killed and was not decomposed. Fig. 1 shows the treepie eating the drongo.



Fig. 2. The tail streamers of the Drongo are partially visible.



Fig. 3. Rufous Tree Pie about attack the bat.

On the morning of 10 June, and at almost exactly the same place, I witnessed a fascinating battle between a Rufous Treepie and a bat (Chiroptera) (Figs. 3-7). I do not know the species of the bat. It was not the pipistrelle. Its body was about 7.5–10 cm long with a wingspan of 15–18 cm. It had a cream coloured abdomen. The Rufous Treepie attacked the bat ruthlessly, using its feet, and beak, to deliver blows. It was repeatedly striking the bat on its neck while the bat was trying to save itself by biting the bird. The whole attack lasted for three minutes till the treepie caught the bat around its neck and held on to it for a further five minutes till the bat stopped moving. I took images of the entire episode.



Figs. 4 & 5. Rufous Tree Pie attacking bat.



Fig. 6. The Rufous Treepie using its feet to grasp the bat.



Fig. 7. Rufous Treepie gripping the bat on its neck.