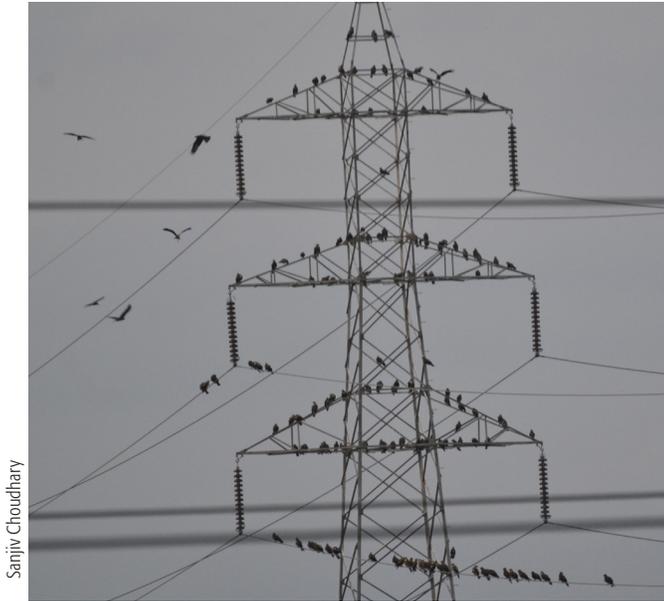


Roosting behaviour of Black Kites *Milvus migrans* on high-tension electrical cables

Pallikaranai (12.56°N, 80.13°E) is a large wetland in Chennai with high-tension electric cables running over the water. On these high-tension cables (not the pylons), around 50 Black Kites *Milvus migrans* were observed roosting [41] along with 250+ Spot-billed Pelicans *Pelecanus philippensis*, and 40 Little Cormorants *Microcarbo niger*. The observations were made from 29 July 2017 to 29 August 2017.



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41. Black Kites roosting on high-tension cables at Pallikaranai Wetland, note the bottom most cable.

In addition to the above, 150 kites also roosted on the pylons. The first batch of kites arrived to the roost on the metal frames of pylons one hour before sunset (1820–1825 hrs). There seemed to be no order of preference that the kites, about first roosting on pylons, or cables. We noted that kites began roosting on cables even when there was ample space available on pylons. Kites were still roosting on cables when the site was revisited at 2130–2200 hrs on several occasions.

Kites always roosted on the lengths of cables running over land (i.e., garbage dump), but never on those over water. The cables were c. 20–25 m above the garbage dump.

Kites continued to roost on cables and pylons till ten to twelve minutes before sunrise, with a majority leaving the roost at this time. The birds dispersed in three big batches: the first batch left the roost 20 min before sunrise.

Similarly, at Sholinganallur Lake (12.89°N, 80.23°E), which is about 10 km southwards, c. 40 Spot-billed Pelicans were observed roosting on high-tension cables, during the same observation period though there were no Black Kites there. There appear to be no previous reports of Black Kites roosting on high-tension cables, though roosts on pylons have been recorded (Mahabal & Bastawade 1985; Mazumdar *et al.* 2017).

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Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* hang-roosting

The Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* is a communally roosting species (Ali & Ripley 2001); except during its breeding season. It is also the most widespread species among the psittacines (Forshaw 2010). There are several studies on the roosting requirements, and behaviour of Rose-ringed Parakeets (Gadgil & Ali 1976; Mabb 1997; Khan & Beg 1998; Zeeshan *et al.* 2016), but none of them refers to its nocturnal sleeping behaviour, neither do Ali (1984), Ali & Ripley (2001), Rasmussen & Anderton (2012), or Neelakantan (2017). Though the aptonymous Vernal Hanging Parrot *Loriculus vernalis* hangs upside-down while roosting, Collar (1997) mentions at least six other psittacids that do this, or at least rest in this posture. It is commonly accepted that this behaviour trait allows the birds to escape quickly from nocturnal predators (Collar 1997).

We observed Rose-ringed Parakeets hanging while roosting at a site in Ramankary, Alappuzha District (Kerala, India). Since a few years, the various tree species in that area, such as *Thespesia populnea*, *Tectona grandis*, and *Mangifera indica* are being used as communal roosts by House Crow *Corvus splendens*, Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*, Jungle Myna *A. fuscus*, and Rose-ringed Parakeets, which latter roost exclusively on the coconut *Cocos nucifera* and areca *Areca catechu* palms. At dusk, when they moved to the ventral surface of the palms' fronds, we thought it was a kind of 'playing behaviour' before they settled for the night. At night, however, we saw, with the aid of an electric torch that the parakeets were hanging on the ventral side of the fronds [42, 43]. We first observed this behaviour in the summer of 2016, and



Pics: S. Prasanth Narayanan

42. Rose-ringed Parakeets hang-roosting on ventral side of palm fronds.



43. Rose-ringed Parakeets hang-roosting on pinnate-leaved palm fronds.

through the months of the south-western monsoon. Despite the presence of several tree species in the area, parakeets roosted only in the pinnate-leaved palms [43] hang-roosting under their leaves at night.

When we posted photographs taken by SPN, on the Facebook Group, 'Birdwatchers of Kerala', (<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1728408393841913&set=gm.1162988080477209&type=3&theater>), Mr. Md. Mothi responded, confirming that he too had noticed parakeets displaying similar behaviour in Chennai, Tamil Nadu (Mothi, *in litt.*, 13 May 2017). At Ramankary, most tree species have an understory, which the roosting-site palms did not. We believe this to be an anti-predatory safety measure adopted by the birds, as mentioned by Collar (1997), which could also help them escape from the strong monsoon winds, and torrential rain.

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The Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* on Great Nicobar Island, India

On 25 November 2015, while on our way to the southernmost point in Indian territory, Indira Point (6.75°N, 93.82°E), Great Nicobar Island, we stopped briefly at Gandhi Nagar, off Gelathia Road, as the damp open habitat with short grass, along the sea, looked promising for birding. We flushed two birds while walking, which, after a short erratic flight, dropped to the ground and resumed foraging. Loathe to disturbing them again, we watched them from a safe distance and immediately recognised them as pipits *Anthus* sp. The birds were alert and proved very shy whenever we ventured closer, flushing several times, uttering a loud *pssssssii* call—but fortunately they did not leave the area, thus allowing prolonged views. We identified them as Red-throated Pipits *Anthus cervinus*. Though they are on the India Checklist, they are scarce here, and so we decided to photograph them [44, 45].



44. Red-throated Pipit on Great Nicobar Island.



45. Red-throated Pipit on Great Nicobar Island.