

Website URL: http://www.orientalbirdimages.org/search.php?Bird_ID=216&Bird_Image_ID=113351 [Accessed on 9 January 2018.]

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Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl *Bubo nipalensis* feeding on Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus*

The Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl *Bubo nipalensis* is a resident species in Uttarakhand (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012), and occurs in the lower Himalayas upto c. 2100 m asl (Ali & Ripley 1981). MS has recorded its presence throughout the year in Corbett Tiger Reserve (MS *pers. obsv.*). Its habitat has been described as 'dense evergreen and moist deciduous forest, usually near water, montane wet temperate forest and riparian gallery forest', and that it 'hunts also in scrub, bamboo jungle, thin deciduous forest, sometimes edges of clearings' (del Hoyo *et al.* 1999). The species is 'largely nocturnal, spending the day dozing on a densely foliated bough in the forest, but sometimes on the move and even hunting during daytime' (König *et al.* 1999). It has been recorded taking fair-sized mammals, birds, and reptiles (Resmussen & Anderton 2012). A formidable hunter, it is recorded taking Kalij Pheasant *Lophura leucomelanos*, and Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus* from their night-time roosts (del Hoyo *et al.* 1999). Kannan (1995) recorded it preying on the Indian giant squirrel *Ratufa indica*, and Nandini (2005) found it feeding on an Indian chevrotain *Moschiola indica*. Its diet is described consisting of game birds including pheasants, jackals, hare, fawn of barking deer, lizards, snakes and fish (Ali & Ripley 1981).

Garjia Village (29.47°N, 79.15°E; 437m asl) is located on the banks of River Kosi, on the eastern boundary of Corbett Tiger Reserve (Uttarakhand, India). The village is surrounded by mature moist, mixed, and semi-deciduous forests, dominated by sal *Shorea robusta* on its western side, and a narrow stretch of river valley on its eastern, with similar mature forest habitat on the opposite bank of the river. On 12 January 2018 at c. 1720 hrs, Naveen Chandra Singh (*verbal comm.*) informed MN about a large owl being seen in a tree by the side of the road at Garjia. MN photographed the owl at c. 1730 hrs [39, 40]. It was holding



Pics: Mohd. Nafees

39. Spot-bellied Eagle Owl feeding on an Indian flying fox.



40. Spot-bellied Eagle Owl feeding on an Indian flying fox.

a dead Indian flying fox *Pteropus giganteus* in its talons, and was feeding on it. The owl was identified as Spot-bellied Eagle Owl, based on such features as: large size, large black-and-white horizontal ear-tufts, large yellow beak, fully feathered tarsii, and prominent spotting on the underparts.

As per del Hoyo *et al.* (1999), bats are incidental prey items for many owls but, except for one species, owls do not specialise in preying upon bats. We could not locate any previous records of the Spot-bellied Eagle Owl feeding on bats, and hence this note.

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