



Sachin Ranade

65. Dusky Eagle-owl adult at Kaziranga National Park, 2019.



Rounaq Ghosh

66. Dusky Eagle-owl, adult and nestling at Demow, 2019.

Stevens (1915) did not mention this species, though he mentioned several other species of large owls, like the Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis*, Buffy Fish Owl *K. ketupu*, Tawny Fish Owl *K. flavipes*, and Spot-bellied Eagle Owl *Bubo nipalensis*. Barua & Sharma (1999) recorded the presence of the Dusky Eagle Owl in Kaziranga National Park as an 'occasional', and were unsure about its status as resident species. There were 89 sightings of this species from Assam that were uploaded to eBird by May 2020, and Choudhury (2000) mentioned it as a rare resident. Ali & Ripley (1983) mentioned its preferred nesting trees, such as, *Ficus religiosa*, *Stephegyne* (now *Mitragyna parvifolia*), and *Dalbergia sisoo* in northern India; while Baker (1934) mentioned *Tamarindus indica* as an example of a nesting tree. Prakash (1988) recorded thirteen nests during 1985–1986 and 1987–1988 in Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur, Rajasthan. The tree species used there were *Mitragyna parvifolia*, *Acacia nilotica*, and *Syzygium cumini*, and the average nest height was 12 m. During our observations the preferred tree was simal, probably one of the commoner tall tree in the north-eastern India.

The species is known to occupy old nests of kite, vulture, and eagle (Ali & Ripley 1983). In Kaziranga, on both instances, the owl occupied nests of the Grey-headed Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus ichthyaetus*, and at Demow, twice, it used the nest of the Slender-billed Vulture *Gyps tenuirostris*.

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## A partially leucistic Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* from Tamil Nadu, India

On 07 March 2017, at Botanical Survey of India's (henceforth, BSI) staff quarters, Pappanaicken Pudur, Coimbatore (11.02°N, 76.92°E; 440 m asl), Tamil Nadu, we noticed a peahen with a peculiar colour pattern. It had white patches on head, neck, wings, and tail. These were not commonly seen among the other individuals of Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* [67A]. We observed the peahen for a couple of months, and on 21 April 2017 we realised that it had more white in its plumage [67B]. On 27 August 2017, we spotted it with a normally coloured male peafowl, that was display dancing [68A,B]. Based on the plumage characteristics, this appears to be a case of partial leucism with normal coloured bill and feet.

Colour aberrant wild peafowls appear to be rare. No instance was reported in a comprehensive review of colour aberrant birds from country by van Grouw et al. (2016). The only instance we know of is a colour aberrant male Peafowl from the Thar Desert, Rajasthan, India, reported by Parihar (2015) as a case of albinism. However, mutant peafowl have been well-known in aviculture and hence the origin of the present bird needs an evaluation. The





67A. Leucistic peahen with normal coloured peahen on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2017;  
67B. Leucistic peahen on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2017.



68A,B. Leucistic peahen with normal coloured peacock on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2017.

Both: Ravi Kiran Arigela

BSI staff quarters are adjacent to the Boluvampatti Reserve Forest of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, Coimbatore. Since 2013, we have observed a free-roaming wild population of Indian Peafowl that also roost in the coconut trees *Cocos nucifera* on the campus. We are not aware of any aviculture activities within the neighbourhood and certainly not inside the premises of BSI staff quarters, which belongs to the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India. On the basis of this, it is likely that our bird was in fact a wild mutant.

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## An aberrant White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus* with a white throat

On 14 March 2020, we visited Mamanduru Reserve Forest, Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh, for bird watching. The reserve forest consists of moist vegetation with interspersed patches of bamboo thickets, which are fed by seasonal streams that flow through this forest. Sightings of White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus* in these bamboo thickets are very common. On our way back from the Mamanduru Stream, VKL and NG heard a song at 1013 h (13.76°N, 79.47°E) from a nearby bamboo thicket and identified it as that of a White-rumped Shama. Upon searching for it, they came across an individual with unusual, prominent white throat [69]. The observed individual did not show any usual signs of albinism such as total lack of both melanins in feathers, eyes, and skin; or leucism such as partial or total lack of eumelanin or pheomelanin in the feathers (Grouw 2006).