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## Turtles in the diet of White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*

On 01 July 2015, at 1700 h, at Chiplun (17.52°N, 73.52°E), Ratnagiri District, Maharashtra, I noticed a White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* carrying something unusual in its beak; to my disbelief, it was a turtle. I approached closer to get a better view, however the bird flew off with the lifeless turtle. Looking at the photographs [201] I realised that the turtle was actually a hatchling of the Indian Flapshell Turtle *Lissemys punctata*. This widespread turtle species lacks a hard shell and is a member of the soft-shell turtle group. It grows to a size of 35 cm (Bhupathy 1989).

The White-throated Kingfisher feeds on a variety of arthropods, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, birds, and occasionally small mammals (Ali & Ripley 2001; Woodall & Kirwan 2020b). A turtle in the diet of a White-throated Kingfisher has not been formally documented from across its distribution range, but I

was able to find four online images of this species with a turtle in its bill, the Indian Flapshell turtle *Lissemys punctata* (Sahu 2019; Singh\* 2019) and the Western Caspian Turtle *Mauremys rivulata* (Eni 2012; Meir 2017). This clearly shows that the White-throated Kingfisher can possibly feed on the hatchlings of the soft-shell, and the hard-shell turtles. Apart from the White-throated Kingfisher, the Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon* and the Buff-breasted Kingfisher *Tanysiptera sylvia* are also known to feed on the turtles (Schablein 2012; Woodall & Kirwan 2020a).



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201. The White-throated Kingfisher holding an Indian Flapshell Turtle hatchling.

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