

### Brown Wood Owl *Strix leptogrammica* predating on a parakeet *Psittacula* sp., roost

It was at end of May 2021, during the summer's sweltering heat, in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, that we suddenly heard the commotion of parakeets (*Psittacula* sp.) in at 2130 h. Since parakeets are abundantly present in the locality, we ignored the calls. But the same commotion was repeated the next night as well, and this time, on inspection, a surprise was in store. It was overwhelming to see a rarely-sighted Brown Wood Owl *Strix leptogrammica* perched on top of a Shisham *Dalbergia sisso* tree, with a parakeet held firmly in its talons [37]. The parakeet, having already breathed its last, was now being consumed by the owl who carefully clearing off the feathers and tore at the meat. This owl, after consuming its first parakeet for the night, flew away to come back immediately with another parakeet to the same spot. This process was repeated, and we counted the Brown Wood Owl preying on at least four parakeets that the night. For the next three days, this drama was repeated between 2030 and 2330 h, and every night the predator consumed at least four–five parakeets in the same spot. The roosting parakeets were caught totally unaware of presence of this silent predator in their surroundings and seemed to easily fall prey to it. Though it's not unusual for a Brown Wood Owl to prey upon birds as they form part of their diet along with other mammals like rats, mice, bats, lizards, frog, etc., but preying upon so many parakeets one after another in a short duration of time was interesting to watch. This nocturnal routine of the Brown Wood Owl, of preying upon a half dozen parakeets at the same place, within a time span of 45 minutes to one hour, and flying off into the unknown, went on for four days, and then suddenly stopped. We tried our luck every evening for about a week, trying to locate it, but couldn't sight it again even after intense searching. This interesting behaviour of the Brown Wood Owl has been observed in late summer from three consecutive years in June 2019, and May 2020 and 2021. Colony residents claimed sighting of the Brown Wood Owl before 2019 as well, however there is no supporting documentary evidence of this.



Adarsh Kulkarni

37. Brown Wood Owl with a parakeet in its talons.

– Adarsh Kulkarni & Moulik Sarkar  
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### A Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* from Middle Andaman

We report a Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* from Yeratta Jetty, Rangat (12.52°N, 92.90°E), Middle Andaman. This individual was photographed [38–42] on 28 October 2020, during the north-east monsoon season. The bird was observed for ten minutes at the same location. The individual was in the shrub areas of the open forests adjoining agricultural fields and grasslands. The area has a close proximity with the mangrove forests (c.120 m). It looked similar to a Mangrove Whistler *Pachycephala cinerea* in size, but on a closer look through binoculars, it could be made out that it was some other bird. The surrounding area also has a small wetland and small streams.



38. Willow Warbler.



39. Willow Warbler.



40. Willow Warbler.

All: Anit Adhikari