

Report on a Treatment of an injured Brown Wood Owl *Strix leptogrammica indranee* Sykes from Karnataka, India

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Brown wood owls [*Strix leptogrammica* Temminck; Family Strigidae; Order Strigiformes] are the very rarely sighted owls of India (Ali and Ripley, 1987). They belong to larger owl category and resemble the size of pariah kite (47–53 cm). This chocolate brown owl is well distributed in the Indian sub-continent, Himalayas, North Eastern hill states and Sri Lanka. The wood owls are residents of dense evergreen and moist deciduous forests of the Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats and their associated hill ranges (Ali, 1996; Kazmierczak and Van Perlo, 2003). In India, five species of wood owls are present. Two races of Brown wood owl viz, Himalayan brown wood owl (*Strix leptogrammica newarensis*) and peninsular brown wood owl (*Strix leptogrammica indranee*) have been recognized based on the facial disc pattern. The former is distributed in North-Eastern states, while the latter occurs throughout the peninsular region (Ali and Ripley, 1987; Grimmett, 1998). In 1870's these brown wood owls were introduced to Lakshadweep Islands under harebrained governmental plan to keep the check on rat population for combating plague. Unfortunately these islands doesn't have a good forest cover, made an incompatible ecological conditions for the survival of these owls (Ali and Ripley, 1987).

An owl was found in the premises of Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) field station, Sirsi, Uttara Kannada, Karnataka (14° 36.33' N, 74° 50.98' E; 619 m above sea level). The owl was attacked by the crows and closer approach to bird revealed that it was attacked by red ants. This hostile condition made the owl to fly only for a shorter distance and it fell



A) Condition of owl when brought to field station for treatment, B) Recovery of owl after 3 days of treatment, C) Radiography of owl legs for to detect fracture, D) Radiography Film reveal no fracture in legs, E) Persistent of curl toe after 6 days of treatment, F) Fully recovered owl after 12 days of treatment

helplessly on the ground due to lack of energy. The bird was taken to the field station and forcefully fed with weak sugar solution. Immediately a veterinarian was called to treat the bird (one of the authors, Dr. Yuvaraj Hegade). The bird was administered with Dexamethazone-0.25ml I/V through wings vein and antibiotics Cefazoline-10 mg (total dose) I/M for pain and infection. The owl was later identified as brown wood owl with the help of field guide Salim Ali's *The book of Indian birds*. The bird was in severe shock and the closer examination revealed bleeding through the nares, injury to left eye, closed

right eye and toe in the left leg is curled. The bird was kept in a big cardboard box and placed in the dark for a day without any disturbance. At night, the bird seemed to have recovered and had opened the right eye and was standing. The bird was offered a minced boneless chicken in a plate. It did not make any attempt to feed. The mince, (about 20 g) was force fed along with electrolyte water by opening its beak. The bird was unable to open its left eye; hence it was administered eye drops containing Gentamicin and Dexamethazone @ two drops twice a day. The medical treatment was continued

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for three days. Neurobion tablet was supplemented for 6 doses @ 1/4th tablet per day on alternate day basis and daily massaging and hot fomentation to left leg was carried out. Every day bird was offered sufficient quantity of finely smashed mutton and chicken (about 25–50 g) for about five days. Meanwhile the bird was allowed free range in the big room at the ATREE field station. It started flying inside the room and opening the left eye fully and also started feeding on its own. But the injury to left toe persisted for 5 days even after the treatment. Hence it was radio graphed in the Rotary General hospital, Sirsi to detect any fracture or dislocation of bone at toe region.

The radiographic examination did not reveal any abnormalities. The bird was handed-over to the custody of Deputy Conservator of Forests, Sirsi Forest Division and was shifted to Sirsi mini zoo. The

administration of Neurobion tablet and massaging of the left leg was continued for another five days. Gradually the left toe became normal and later it was shifted to Sri Chamarajendra Zoological Garden, Mysore. This suggests that owls become more active and are susceptible to secondary attacks by other birds during their breeding season (January–February; Ali and Ripley, 1987).

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Announcements

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