The Forest Eagle-Owl is known to predate opportunistically during the day (Ali 1984). It is a large owl and, though chiefly nocturnal, has been observed hunting opportunistically during the day (Ali 1984). The Forest Eagle-Owl is known to predate on mammals like golden jackals Canis aureus, young barking deer Muntiacus muntjak, hares Lepus sp. (Ali 1984), Indian giant flying squirrel Petaurista philippensis (Henry 1971), civets (Viverridae) and carrion of tiger Panthera tigris and goat (Bovidae: Caprinae) (Baker 1927), and also on large birds like Indian Peafowl Pavo cristatus, junglefowl Gallus sp., and Kaleej Pheasant Lophura leucomelanos (Ali 1984), monitor lizards Varanus sp. (Baker 1927), snakes and fish (Ali 1984).

An incident of predation on Indian cheetrayan or mouse deer Moschiola meminna is an Associate Professor interested in forest genetics and recovery of threatened plants of the Western Ghats. He is also a bird enthusiast.

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Predation by Forest Eagle-Owl Bubo nipalensis on Mouse Deer Moschiola meminna
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The Forest Eagle-Owl Bubo nipalensis (Strigidae) inhabits humid and riparian forests up to an elevation of 2,100m in South Asia (Sibley and Monroe 1990) and is rare in distribution in India (Grimmett et al. 1999). It is a large owl, and though chiefly nocturnal, has been observed hunting opportunistically during the day (Ali 1984). The Forest Eagle-Owl is known to predate on mammals like golden jackals Canis aureus, young barking deer Muntiacus muntjak, hares Lepus sp. (Ali 1984), Indian giant flying squirrel Petaurista philippensis (Henry 1971), civets (Viverridae) and carrion of tiger Panthera tigris and goat (Bovidae: Caprinae) (Baker 1927), and also on large birds like Indian Peafowl Pavo cristatus, junglefowl Gallus sp., and Kaleej Pheasant Lophura leucomelanos (Ali 1984), monitor lizards Varanus sp. (Baker 1927), snakes and fish (Ali 1984).
Valparai town (Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu) in the Anamalai Hills (Western Ghats). Walking up a narrow path into a clearing by a stream-bed between 13:00 and 14:00 hrs, my field assistant and I flushed a Forest Eagle-Owl from the ground to our left. It had a small animal in its talons that it dropped as it flew across the stream ahead of us. On closer inspection, we saw it was a freshly killed young mouse deer, whose body was still warm. Its head had been completely torn off and was missing and the first few drops of blood began to flow as it lay on the ground.

The mouse deer occurs in Sri Lanka, peninsular India and possibly in Nepal (Corbett and Hill 1992). It is one of the smallest Artiodactyls in the world and weighs up to 4kg (Menon 2003). Mouse deer live in undergrowth on the edges of heavy lowland forests and are seldom found far from water (Nowak 1999). They are thought to be solitary, and females give birth to one or two young, usually by the beginning of winter (Prater 1971). Mouse deer are prey of Indian wild dogs Cuon alpinus, tigers and Leopards Panthera tigris (Easa 1995, Schaller 1972). Mammals form an important component of the diet of other eagle-owls in different parts of the world (Serrano 2000). Eagle-owls are also opportunistic feeders, taking birds and mammals weighing up to 1.5kg (Frikke and Toft 1997*). Predation studies have also examined differential predation by owls, and it was observed that owls preferred juveniles and sub-adult individuals, and that they killed more often in open areas than in closed areas (Vaseallo et al. 1994, Rohner and Krebs 1996).

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**References**


**Common Mynas Acridotheres tristis robbing the eggs of a nightjar Caprimulgus sp.**

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The Common Myna Acridotheres tristis is one of the most common and familiar birds of India. An accomplished omnivore and opportunist in feeding habits (Krishnan 1954, Murthy 1954, Narang & Lamba 1984, Ali & Ripley 1987) the birds are mostly seen feeding on ground pecking at fallen fruits or leap-frogging in associations with cattle in agriculture fields. They are known to occur in family parties except during the breeding season (Narang & Lamba 1984) and often congregate in large numbers for roosting.

On 14.v.2003, during a regular scanning survey, I was observing otters (Lutra perspicillata) at one of the vantage points at Khinnanauli in Corbett Tiger Reserve along the Ramganga River. It was close to dusk (18:20hrs) when I suddenly heard some loud repertoires of shrieking calls c.25m away. To my astonishment a group of three Common Mynas had attacked a nightjar (Caprimulgidae: unidentified species), which had been incubating in sand in the short grasslands. Incidentally, my attention was diverted to the scene and I made the following observations:

The nightjar immediately ducted and turned its face nearly upside down to look at the attackers. These mynas wheeled around making frequent attempts to mob the nightjar, which ducked out of danger and made loud squawks of protests. Despite mobbing by mynas observed for about 10 minutes, the nightjar constantly defended its clutch. A few minutes later, four more mynas joined the group and all started mobbing the nightjar. With little choice left, the nightjar flew off reluctantly when the attacks became unbearable. Five mynas devoured the eggs while two kept the nightjar at bay. Meanwhile, the nightjar had made several futile attempts to drive away the mynas from the nest by flying close to it and calling out loudly. On close examination, I found that the egg contents were eaten while the eggshells remained scattered. The observations suggest an unusual opportunistic behavior of Common Mynas preying on eggs, so far unreported and hence worthy of placing on record.

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