

Owls Of Chaurakund: A study understanding the Distribution, Nesting Habitat and Behavior of Owls in Melghat Tiger Reserve

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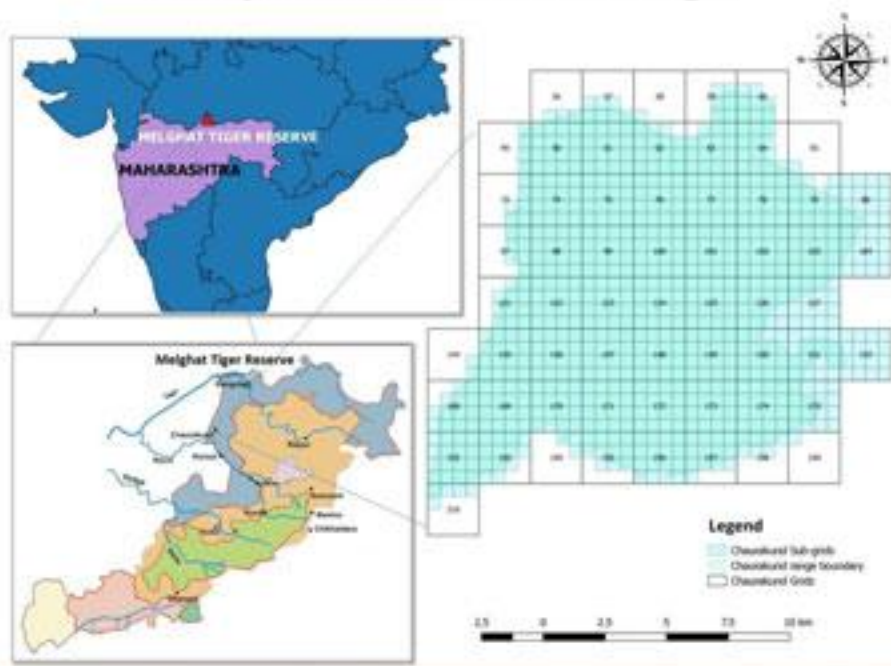
Introduction

Owls are specialized avian predators which are mostly nocturnal and found in a wide range of habitats. Owls feed on small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds and arthropods and thus provide an important ecological service by eliminating many agricultural pests. India is home to 32 species of owls but not much is known about the ecological requirement of most owl species. As part of WRCS's long-term study on Owl Ecology in Melghat, we initiated a preliminary study on the distribution of other owls co-existing with the Forest Owlet in Chaurakund Range of the Tiger Reserve.

Objectives

- To examine the distribution and diversity of large and small owls in Chaurakund Range.
- To understand the nesting, roosting sites of different the owl species.
- To document the behavior patterns of different the owl species.

Study Area: Chaurakund Range



Results

Distribution of Owl Species in Chaurakund Range

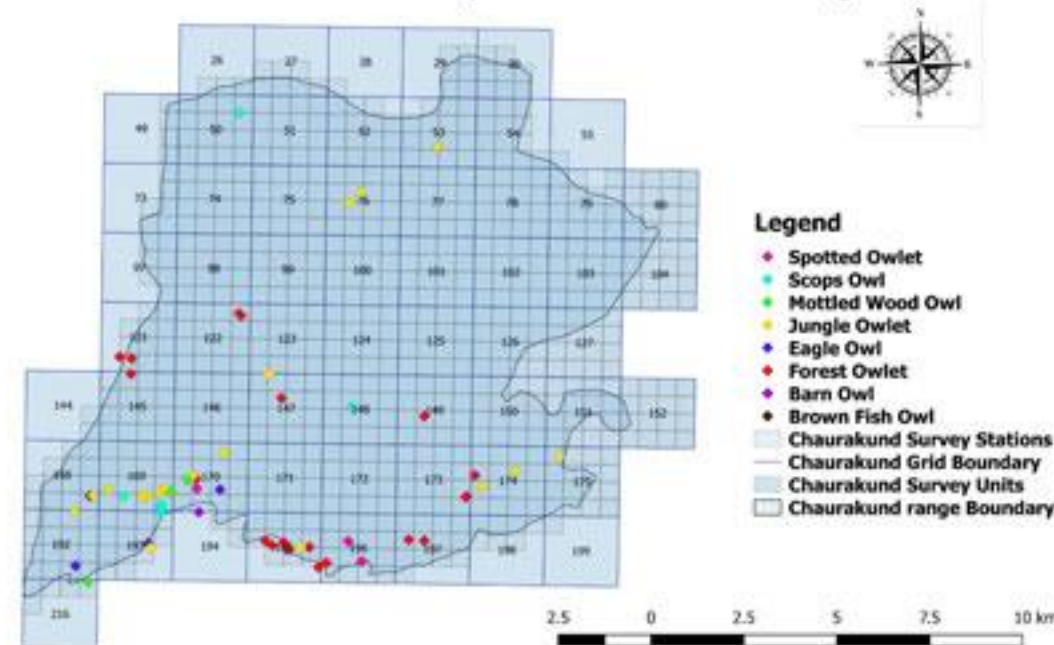


Fig: Time Activity Budget comparing the observed Owl species

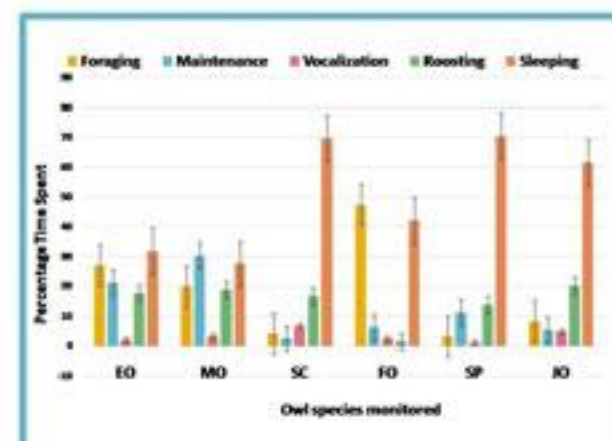
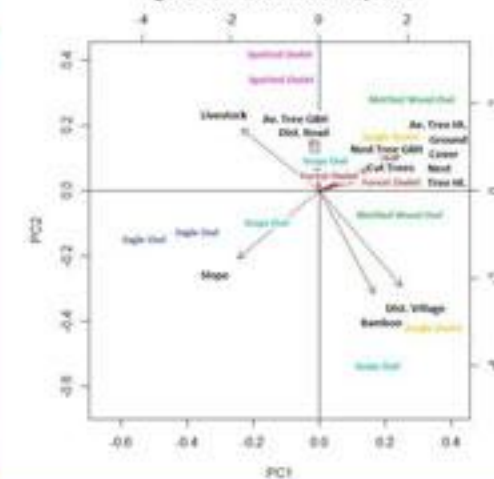


Fig: PCA Bi-Plot of the Owl Species



Methodology



Conclusion

- Eight Owl species were detected in the area namely Indian Eagle Owl, Brown Fish Owl, Mottled Wood Owl, Barn Owl, Indian Scops Owl, Forest Owlet, Spotted Owlet and Jungle Owlet.
- In total 83 Owls of the 8 species were spotted in 58 different locations.
- Forest Owlet and Jungle Owlet were the most widely spread owl species in the study area.
- All the Owl species had teak dominance in the nest plots sampled.
- Each Owl species had favorable parameters for nest selection which governed its presence.
- A basic understanding of the activities, the active hours, other bird interactions and vocalisation was developed.

The Chaurakund Owl Family



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