

observed that it was hiding behind the steel cot, probably for the whole day. It became active at around 20:10 hrs, drank some water and again flew away towards the east.

We waited till 23:30 hrs, and then we checked every two hours during the night. On 11 November, after 16:00 hrs, we found that it was again roosting at the same place. We noticed that there were four pellets present around the owl. On this day, the owl was active at 17:40 hrs, drank some water, stretched its wings and flew towards the east at 18:10 hrs. Because the stored pellets partially blocked the digestive system of the owl, new prey could not be swallowed until the pellets are ejected. Regurgitation often signifies that an owl is ready to eat again. We observed this owl here for the last four days. It is known that since November is generally the migration time for Pallid Scops Owl, the short time this owl spent in the city would have helped it in its onward migration. This type of rest in a city area is unusual for this species because it is usually found in stony foothills in semi-desert area and it spends the day in a crevice, tree hole or thick foliage (Grimmett *et al.* 2011).

The Pallid Scops Owl is not a well studied species within the Indian Subcontinent (Ali & Ripley 1981). Its distribution in

Pakistan is that of a scarce resident and local migrant, summering in the hills, with a few winter records from the plains (Roberts 1991). For Gujarat, the Pallid Scops Owl is known to be an uncommon winter visitor, with sightings from Saurashtra and Kachchh, and isolated records from other parts of Gujarat (Ganpule 2016). This sighting from the middle of a city like Junagadh is interesting and suggests that the Pallid Scops Owl could be seen in other urban areas with trees, in our state.

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Vocalisation of Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*

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Introduction

The Greater Painted Snipe (*Rostratula benghalensis*) belongs to the genus *Rostratula*, and it is the only resident snipe in India (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). It is a small, quail-sized bird, found around paddy, marshes, and reeds. This species is polyandrous and sexually dimorphic; the female is brighter in colour than the male. It breeds in the monsoon. The female mates with multiple partners in her territory, and leaves the nest after laying eggs. The male performs the incubation and parental role. During the breeding season, females start getting vocal to challenge rival females. The song of the female is deeper and stronger than the male due to the longer trachea. The female utters a 'ook' sound, like blowing in a bottle (Ali & Ripley 1980); the female uttering the call with fluffed out neck while calling from the ground (Mashru 2017), which can be audible as far as one km away (Kirwan 2020). If accidentally flushed, it makes 'kek...kek' calls in flight. So far, there is very little information available about the vocalisation of this crepuscular species, specifically about male vocalizations. I have observed the male making a hissing call, with wing display, when the chicks are around; probably a call made in threat or self-defence.

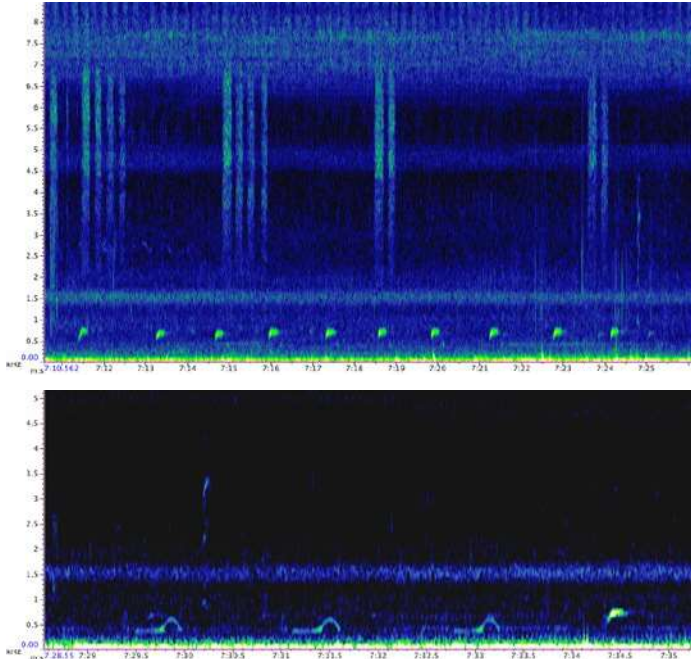
Observations

On 9 September 2020, at around 18:45 hrs, while birding at Saldi Talav (21° 34' 30.18" N, 71° 19' 24.7794" E), near Amreli, I heard a 'ook' call, coming from the marsh area. I immediately recognized the call as that given by the Greater Painted Snipe since I had recorded this call in 2011 for the first time and I am also familiar with other species' calls in this area. There were three-four birds based on sounds heard. I tried to approach closer after a few recordings and I flushed one female, which settled in the marsh a few meters away from me. I recorded calls using a Sennheiser ME66 Microphone paired with Zoom H4N digital recorder on a 44 khz 16-bit .wav format. I was able to record 15-minute recordings. Meanwhile, I noticed a very unfamiliar response to the 'ook' call. It was a very low, 'woohoo', coming from two directions where two other individuals were also calling. During the 15-minute observation, a total of 22 bouts of 'ook' (type A) and 16 bouts of 'woohoo' (type B) calls were recorded. It was noted that call-type B overlapped with A type call 11 times.

I generated spectrograms of both calls and also noted the characteristics. The details are given in table.

Spectrographic parameters of both types of calls

Call type	Low freq (Hz)	High freq (Hz)	Centre freq (Hz)	Time (s)	Note interval (s)
ook	540	808	730	0.22	1
woohoo	346	581	421	0.44	1



Discussion

Polyandrous species have a complex breeding system. Male birds are mostly known as good singers and in many species, female song has also been observed (Odem *et al.* 2014). In Greater Painted Snipe, the female sings to attract the male and also to probably warn rival females. In this observation, I did not understand the function of the B type call. None of the reference works (Grimmett *et al.* 2011, Rasmussen & Anderton 2012) have mentioned this B type vocalization for this species. Could it be a male response to the female call/song? Or could it be a duet? However, duet songs have never been observed in Greater Painted Snipes. With my limited observations, it was difficult to understand this unknown vocal response. We know little about the polyandrous breeding system in Greater Painted Snipes. What is the role of the female song in sexual

selection? Also, male response for female song is not known. This observation has provided a bit more additional information about the different vocalisations in this species. A more systematic study would help understand in more detail about the vocal repertoire of the Greater Painted Snipe.

I have uploaded my recordings on Macaulay Library – see ML262630291 and ML 262630411 for details of both types of calls.

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