

# Forest Owlet

(*Heteroglaux blewitti*)

## Fact File



Prachi Mehta

**Prepared By:**  
**Dr. Prachi Mehta**  
**Envirosearch, Pune**

# Introduction

- ◆ **Forest Owlet is one of the rare, endemic and critically endangered birds of India.**
- ◆ **Earlier records of the bird, from 1872 to 1884, were from Eastern Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and North-Western Maharashtra.**
- ◆ **In year 1997, the Forest Owlet was rediscovered in North-Western Maharashtra by two US scientists, Pamela Rasmussen and Ben King.**
- ◆ **Since then the bird has been recorded at a few sites in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.**

# Current Project

- ◆ **Considering the rare and endangered status of the bird, Envirosearch, a wildlife research organization based at Pune, initiated an intensive survey of Forest Owlet in Central Indian States of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Gujarat.**
- ◆ **The survey has been successful in locating two new sites of the bird in Madhya Pradesh and a few new locations in Melghat Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra.**

# Requirement for this Document

- ◆ **Since the Forest Owlet is a recent rediscovery, many people do not have access to literature and photographs of this rare bird.**
- ◆ **It therefore leads to confusion among people about the true identity of the bird.**
- ◆ **Keeping this in view, it was felt necessary to prepare an electronic version of the document with updated information about the Forest Owlet.**

# How to Recognize Forest Owlet

- ◆ **It is a small-sized Owl measuring up to 23 cm.**
- ◆ **It has no ear tufts.**
- ◆ **The bird is diurnal, i.e. it is active during the day time.**
- ◆ **The Forest Owlet appears to prefer dry deciduous teak-bearing forests.**

# Forest Owlet Sketch



# Confusion with Other Owlets

- ◆ **The Forest Owlet is commonly confused with the Spotted Owlet (*Athene brama*) and at times with the Jungle Owlet (*Glaucidium radiatum*).**
- ◆ **The Spotted Owlet and the Jungle Owlet are almost of same size as that of the forest Owlet.**
- ◆ **Both the above-mentioned species are seen during the day time in forest area.**
- ◆ **However, there are distinct differences between the Forest Owlet and the two species that can be used in establishing true identity of the bird.**

# Forest Owlet

**Size: 23 cm**

**Colour: dark grey to grey - brown**

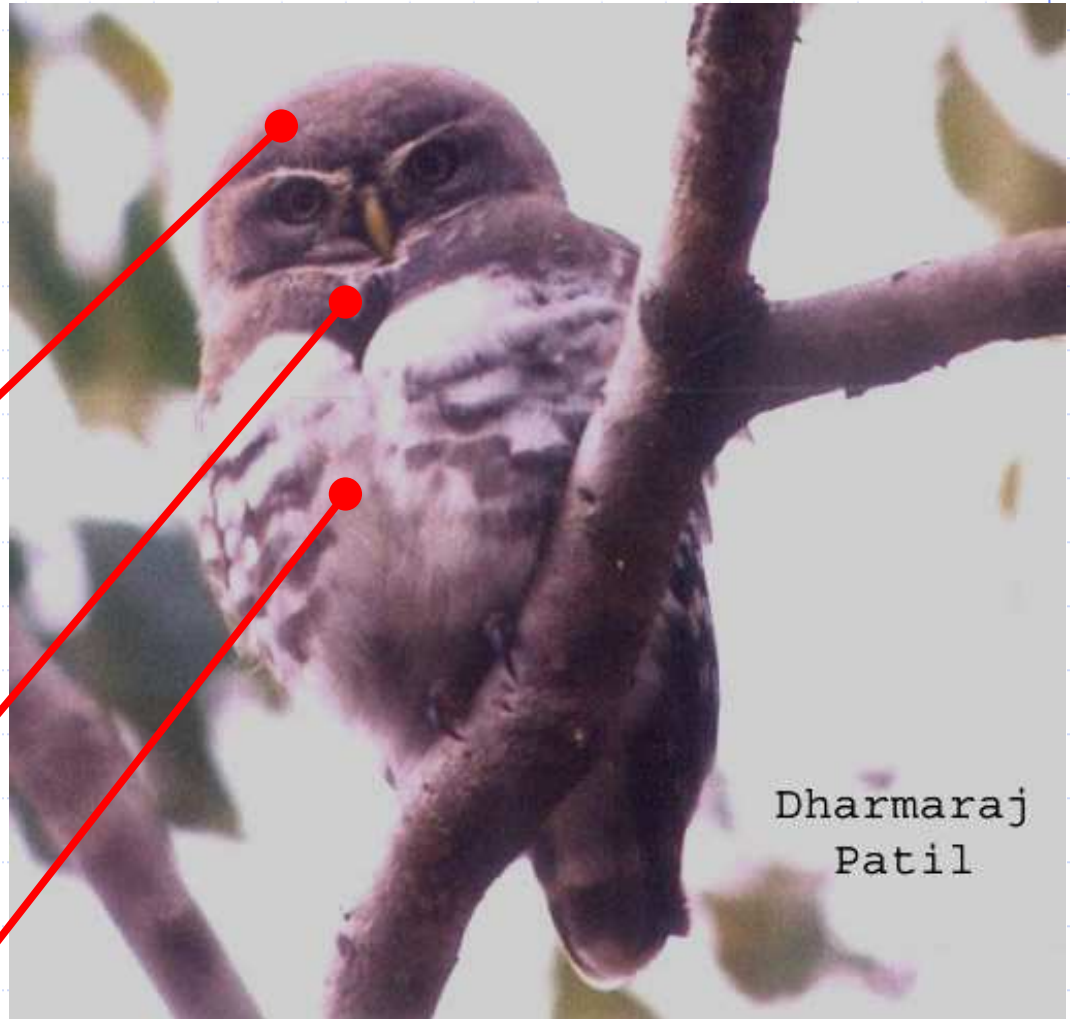
**Crown, nape and mantle not spotted**

**White nape collar, seen in spotted owlet, is absent**

**Frontal Collar is very distinct**

**Underpart has large white area with broad, bold streaks**

**Call: tuhoo...tuhoo...**





# Spotted Owlet

**Size: 21 cm**

**Colour: pale grey to grey brown**

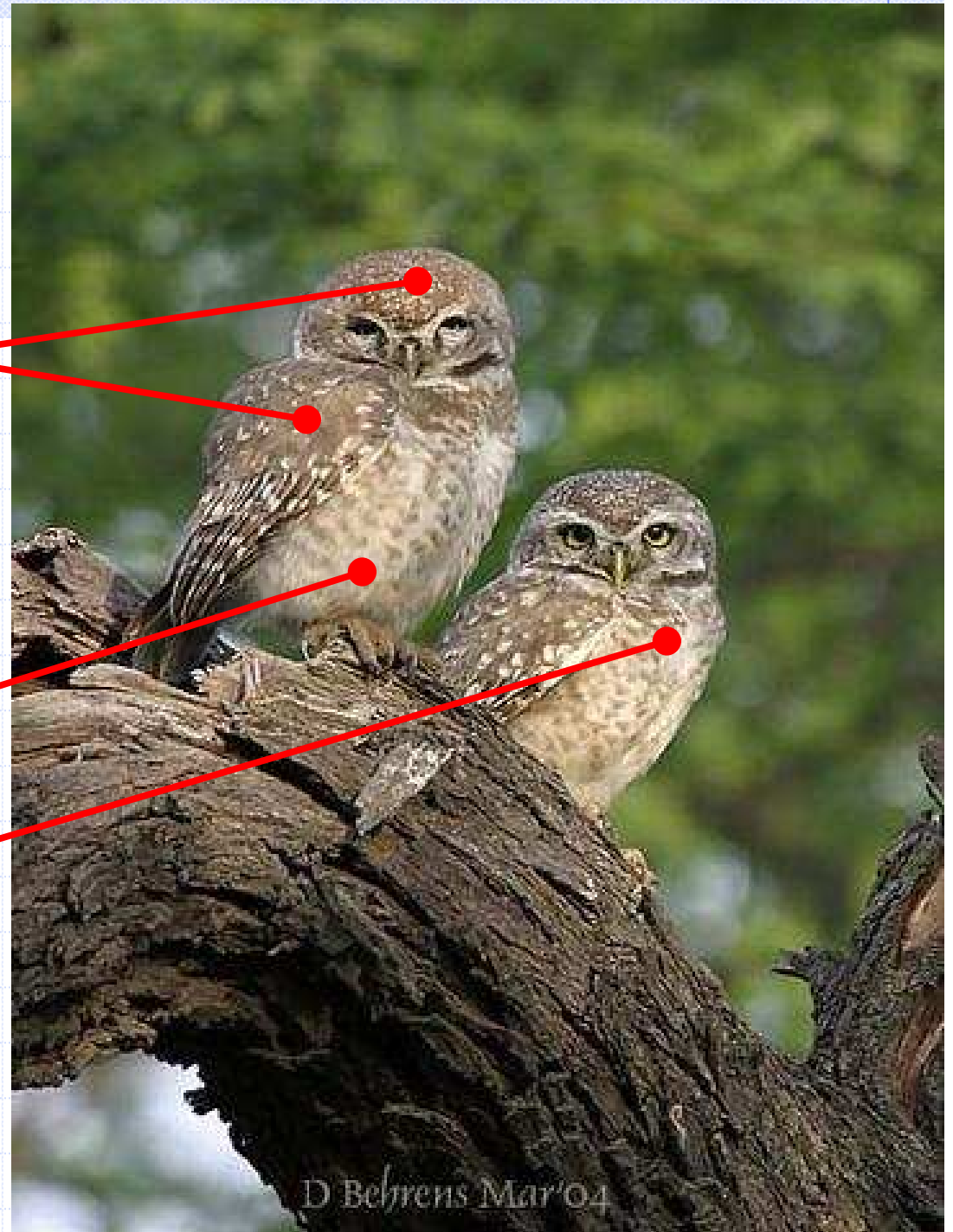
**Distinct spotting on the mantle, wings, back**

**White collar at the nape is distinct**

**Underparts are spotted and not plain white**

**Frontal Collar not distinct or incomplete**

**Call : Chirurr, chirurr, chirurr....**



# Jungle Owlet

Size : 20 cm

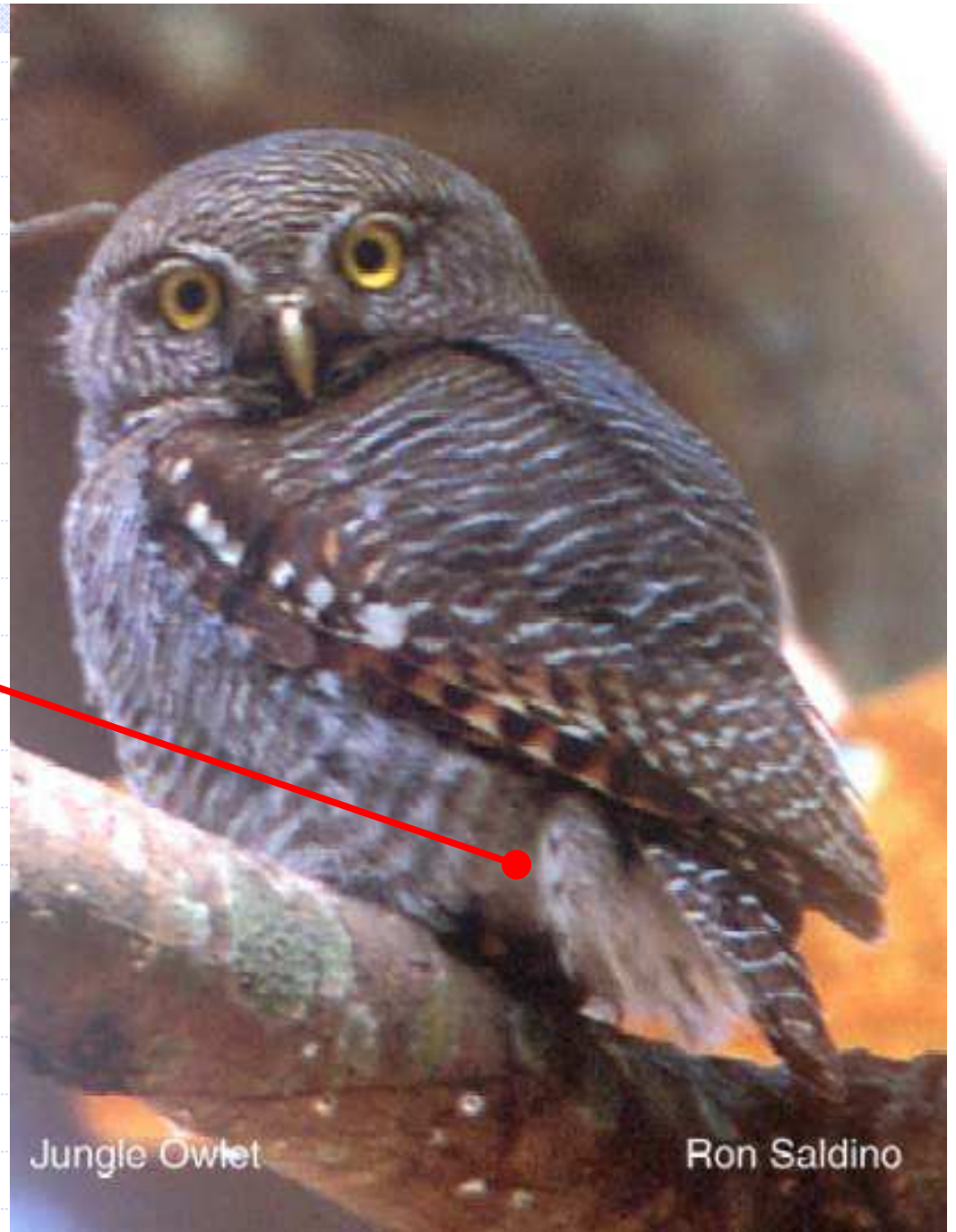
Color: Dark Brown  
to Rufous brown

There is no white  
anywhere on the  
Underparts

Extensive barring all  
over the body

Call: tuhoo—tuhoo—  
kookuk--kookuk---

First note of its call  
can be confused  
with that of the  
Forest Owlet



Jungle Owlet

Ron Saldino

# Contact Us

◆ It is essential to get authentic information about the presence of this very rare bird. We request all Forest Department officers, staff and naturalists to inform us, if you see the Forest Owlet in your state.

◆ If you have photographs of Forest Owlet, please send the pictures for verification to :

**Dr. Prachi Mehta / Mr. Jayant Kulkarni**

**Envirosearch: Phone: 020-65222903/25871310**

**Email: [main@envirosearch.in](mailto:main@envirosearch.in)**

# Acknowledgements

- ◆ **The PCCF (Wildlife) of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, and Orissa**
- ◆ **Madhya Pradesh Biodiversity Board**
- ◆ **Chhattisgarh Forest Department**
- ◆ **Oriental Bird Club, United Kingdom**
- ◆ **Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi**
- ◆ **Forest Department Officers and Staff**



**Dharmaraj Patil**

# Forest Owlet



**Dharmaraj Patil**

# Forest Owlet Juvenile Emerging From Nest



Dharmaraj Patil

# Forest Owlet Juvenile



**Dharmaraj Patil**