

# LARGE-TAILED NIGHTJAR

## Breeding notes on *Caprimulgus macrurus* in Jahangirnagar University Campus, Bangladesh



IUCN Red List:  
Global —  
Least Concern

Adult Large-tailed Nightjar incubating eggs

**Aves**  
[Class of Birds]

**Caprimulgiformes**  
[Order of Nightjar, Frogmouth, Owlet-nightjar, Oilbird]

**Caprimulgidae**  
[Family of Nightjar and Nighthawks]

**Caprimulgus macrurus**  
[Large-tailed Nightjar]

Species described by  
Horsfield in 1821

The Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus* is widely distributed throughout southern Asia, Malay Peninsula, Southeast Asia, Papua New Guinea and northeastern Australia (Cleere & Kirwan 2016). Six subspecies are recognized: *C. m. albonotatus* in foothills of Himalaya, Pakistan, Bhutan, India and Bangladesh; *C. m. bimaculatus* in northeastern India, China, through Southeast Asia to Sumatra; *C. m. johnsoni* in Philippines; *C. m. salvadorii* in Borneo; *C. m. macrurus* in Java and Bali; and *C. m. schlegelii* in Moluccas, Sundas, New Guinea and northeastern Australia (Cleere & Kirwan 2016).

In Bangladesh, the Large-tailed Nightjar is a common resident with a wide distribution (Haque & Kamruzzaman 2008). The breeding biology of the species is poorly known in Bangladesh, and we describe the first breeding record of the species in Jahangirnagar University campus (23°52'N & 90°16'E),



Two eggs of Large-tailed Nightjar

located at 32km north of Dhaka City, the capital of Bangladesh. This area is about 200ha and locally

**Global Distribution:**  
Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, China, Philippines, Borneo, Java, Bali, Moluccas, Sundas, New Guinea and Australia

well known for

its large number of bird species. A total of 194 species of bird belonging to 43 families have been identified (Begum 2016). The campus area comprises of diverse ecological habitats (Datta & Khaledin 2017). Large-tailed Nightjar is a rare resident in Jahangirnagar University

campus and previously it was recorded as a non-breeding bird in the study area (Mohsanin & Khan 2009). It is very cryptically coloured, not often seen in the campus and hard to identify. It is rarely seen in the day and therefore, is more easily identified by its calls than by its plumage. It is a nocturnal, insectivorous bird with an erratic flight like a moth, which hawks about open spaces near trees as dusk turns into darkness.

On 2 April 2016, we saw an adult Large-tailed Nightjar sitting on the ground in the woodland of mixed plantations in the campus. On approach, it flushed and we found that there were two eggs on the ground. The nest had a shallow depression and was located in shady area with leaf litter. The incubating bird was observed well camouflaged with its brown feathers and it remained quiet and almost motionless until anybody almost steps on it. The eggs were well camouflaged and looked like pebbles. The eggs were pink-buffy ground with lavender gray blotches. One egg was slightly bigger (31.83mm x 23.54mm) than the other (29.94mm x 22.44mm).

The incubating bird came back to the nest after we finished the measurements. One bird, probably the female (see Lamont 2000) was observed incubating the egg, whereas the male was found 8m far from the nest. The male was found in another



Broken egg shell of Large-tailed Nightjar

place the next day. We observed the nest regularly until 16 April from a distance to avoid disturbances. On 17 April, we found the nest site empty and there was one broken egg shell with signs that the chick had hatched. The Large-tailed Nightjar is a precocial species (Cleere 1999; Nath et al. 2014) and the chicks must have moved away from the nest after hatching. We searched the area but did not find either adult or newly hatched Large-tailed Nightjar. The breeding site was the woodland of mixed plantation which is dominated by Mahogany *Swietenia mahagoni*, Teak *Tectona grandis*, Neem *Azadirachta indica*, Amlaki *Phyllanthus emblica*, Haritaki *Terminalia chebula*, Accacia *Acacia auriculiformis*, Sisso *Dalbergia sissoo*, some fruit yielding trees and bamboo thickets. The area had natural fencing with *Calamus guruba* plantation, which appears to be typical habitat for the species.

Our observation constitutes that the Large-tailed Nightjar breeds in Jahangirnagar University campus and also provides the preliminary information on the breeding behavior of the species. This result will lead to the further studies on the breeding behavior of Large-tailed Nightjar especially incubation period, nestling, fledgling behavior and as well as parental care in future.

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