

A possible roadkill Sunda scops owl at Pasir Ris

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Subject: Sunda scops owl, *Otus lempiji* (Aves: Strigiformes: Strigidae).

Subject identified by: Tan Heok Hui.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Pasir Ris Park, bicycle/jogging track adjacent to Pasir Ris Drive 3; 20 January 2018, around 0820 hrs.

Habitat: Urban parkland.

Observers: Contributors.

Observation: A dead bird of about 20 cm body length was found face-down in the middle of the bicycle track. The carcass was limp and relatively fresh. It was moved to the curb for photography (see accompanying picture), after which it was taken to the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum at the National University of Singapore where it was deposited as a voucher specimen. When the carcass was later examined by Tan Heok Hui, its head was noted to be slightly flattened, indicating a skull fracture. When the eyelids were lifted, both eye sockets were found to be empty. However, no eyes were noted earlier at the scene.



Photograph by Thomas Ang

Remarks: The featured owl could have died from collision with a wheeled vehicle, possibly a bicycle or a personal mobility device. It is speculated that the eyes were dislodged by the impact of the presumed collision. The featured observation suggests that nocturnal birds in the parks can fall victim to human vehicular traffic. The bird could have been killed when it landed on the track to catch prey such as small vertebrates and insects. The Sunda scops owl is regarded as the commonest and most widespread owl in Singapore. It occurs in a variety of habitats from forest to parkland, with insects and geckos forming a large part of its diet (Yong et al., 2017: 86).

Reference: Yong D. L., K. C. Lim & T. K. Lee, 2017. *A Naturalist's Guide to the Birds of Singapore*. 3rd edition. John Beaufoy Publishing, 176 pp.