

Species of the Month 01/2019 || Spotted Wood Owl

31 January 2019 || TO NUS Community

NUS Students Against Violation of the Earth (SAVE) and the Office of Environmental Sustainability present “Campus in a Tropical Rainforest”, an initiative that aims to create awareness of the biodiversity that surrounds us in NUS. In each monthly issue, we will be featuring a species that can be spotted or found in NUS to help us get to know them better. So, if you happen to be travelling around campus between classes, remember to stop and look around your surroundings, for you may be surprised to come across some of the other inhabitants of NUS.

ISSUE #36 | JANUARY 2019

CAMPUS IN A TROPICAL RAINFOREST

SPECIES OF THE MONTH








Photo by: Spencer Yau

SPOTTED WOOD OWL

Species: *Strix seloputo* | Family: Strigidae

 APPEARANCE	 HABITAT	 DIET	 FUN FACTS
<p>This adorable, chocolate-brown owl has an orange facial disc, large dark brown eyes, and many black and white bars on its breast. The back of the owl is littered with black-edged white spots.</p> <p>With a body length of 46cm, the Spotted Wood Owl is one of the largest owls in Singapore. However, despite the size of this predator, it is actually quite shy. Thus, unless woken up, it will often be motionless and quiet while roosting in the day.</p>	<p>Confined to Southeast Asia, excluding Borneo, the Spotted Wood Owl is not as common or abundant as other resident species of birds in Singapore. They tend to occur at elevations of up to 1000 metres in partially cleared forests, evergreen secondary forests, mangroves, plantations and even human settlements. They typically hunt in open and semi-open country, orchards and parks, and between houses in areas with much parkland. In NUS, they can occasionally be seen roosting and resting during the day, within the branches of tall trees.</p>	<p>Similar to most owls, the Spotted Wood Owl feeds on small animals such as rodents, smaller birds, large insects and sometimes, bats and snakes. After digesting their meal, they will cast pellets: regurgitated balls of indigestible body parts such as bones and fur.</p> <p>Like most owls, the Spotted Wood Owl is nocturnal and thus, will hunt for prey at dusk as well as night. While perching, the owl will scan its surroundings with its huge eyes that allows it to see in the dark. Once prey is located, the owl flies or glides silently, thanks to the feather pattern of its wings, towards its target and kills the prey with either its talons or a bite behind the head.</p>	<p>At dusk, when the Spotted Wood Owl is more active, they will frequently vocalise. They produce various calls such as rolling “huhuhu” or a loud, deep, sudden “whoo or uuh” that sounds very similar to a dog barking.</p> <p>Like the nightjar birds, under artificial light, the owl’s eyes gives off eyeshine, due to a layer of tissue behind the retina that reflects visible light. This provides the photoreceptors in the owl’s eyes with more light and thus, grants the owl with superb night vision.</p> <p>In big countries with abundant farmland, especially the United States, owls are very useful pest control due to their natural predation on rats and thus with them around, there is less need for the environmentally harmful rat poison.</p>

Initiative by:



Office of Environmental Sustainability



Check out other sightings of NUS biodiversity on the Campus Creatures Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/campuscreatures/>

You can also join the community in spotting the flora and fauna in NUS by sharing your sightings with pictures on the Campus Creatures Facebook page and Instagram the photos with #NUSCiTR and #NUSbiodiversity.