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## ***Duttaphrynus stomaticus* (Marbled Toad) Avian Predation by Indian Roller (*Coracias benghalensis*) from Central Aravalli foothills, Rajasthan**

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### **ABSTRACT**

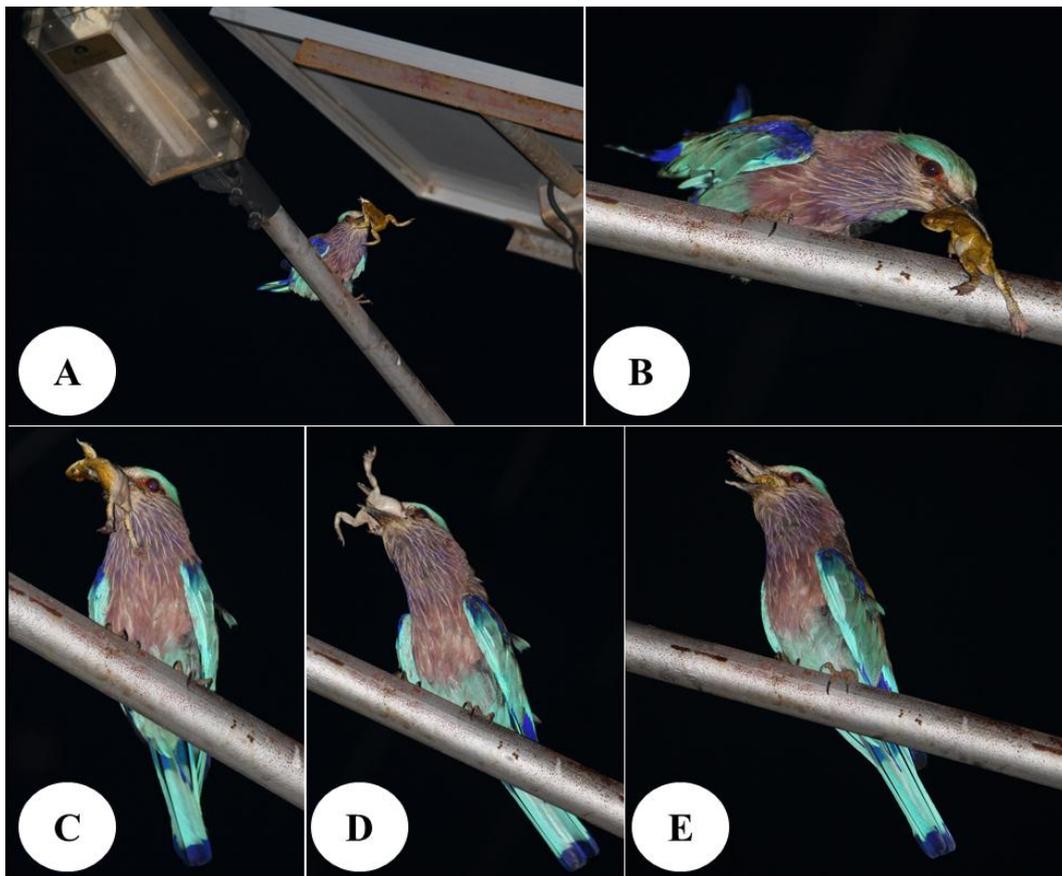
Species interactions in terms of prey–predator are having specific importance to understand the ecology or natural history of that particular species. Present note is an approach to explain the interaction between a diurnal species (Indian Roller) and a nocturnal species (Marbled Toad). The bird Indian Roller identified as opportunistic predator, if they found easy prey the size doesn't matter for them, they some of how mange to feed upon them.

**Key Words:** Central Aravalli, Indian Roller, Marbled Toad.

Inter-specific and intra-specific interactions have been observed in animals that show behavioural plasticity or increase the successive survival possibilities. Indian roller *Coracias benghalensis*, is one of the common birds around the central Aravalli foothills, Rajasthan (Grimmett *et al.* 1999; Kazmierczak & Perlo 2006). This species though diurnal has been observed to engage in nocturnal feeding too (Bharos 1992). Bright roadside lights attract large number of insects during the monsoon and so as attracts predators also. Congregation of various predators of insects i.e. like amphibians, birds and lizards is common during such type of conditions during the monsoon at central Aravalli foothills, Rajasthan. But sometimes the interaction become complicated and shuffles from insect-bird or insect-amphibian to the amphibian-birds.

In this sequence surprisingly on 1st August 2014 at 1940 h, we photographed an adult Indian

Roller (*Coracias benghalensis*) at Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati University campus, Ajmer, Rajasthan, India (26° 16' N 74° 25' E and 26° 27' N 74° 42' E). It predating on an adult toad (*Duttaphrynus stomaticus*) after killing it by beating several times on the pole of roadside lamp until the toad become lethargic and unable to resist (Fig. 1 A-E). The toad was identified as *Duttaphrynus stomaticus* (Anura, Bufonidae) (Daniel 2002; Sharma *et al.* 2011); and after that the bird (Indian roller) consumed the toad by swallow as whole. During this interaction initially toad resists by stretched or stuffed its legs and tried to swell up its belly and become difficult to swallow. Then the bird regurgitate it and start the beating by holding the hind legs of toad, this process repeated continuously 4-5 times till the toad become completely lethargic. Basically Indian roller feeds upon insects, mainly termites, ants,



**Figure 1:** Various stages of Indian Roller (*Coracias benghalensis*) predated on *Duttaphrynus stomaticus* (A, B, C, D and E) on 1st August 2014 at 1940 h.

**Note:** The successive steps during the consumption of toad by the bird (Photos by Kumawat Naresh Kumar)

beetles, grasshoppers, spiders, scorpions etc. But sometimes they found to feed on small frogs, lizards and snakes too (Sharga 1936; Biddulph 1937; Sivakumaran & Thiyagesan 2003). The present observation is the first photographic evidence about the predation by the Indian Roller on such a big toad (*Duttaphrynus stomaticus*) and also found interesting because the activity of prey (*Duttaphrynus stomaticus*) and predator (Indian Roller) are mainly different i.e. nocturnal and diurnal in general at the study area.

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