

# Threatened Birds of Asia:

## The BirdLife International Red Data Book

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## NICOBAR SCOPS-OWL

Data Deficient

### *Otus alius*

**DISTRIBUTION** The Nicobar Scops-owl is known only from a single locality on Great Nicobar, Nicobar Islands, India. Records are from:

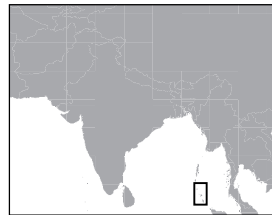
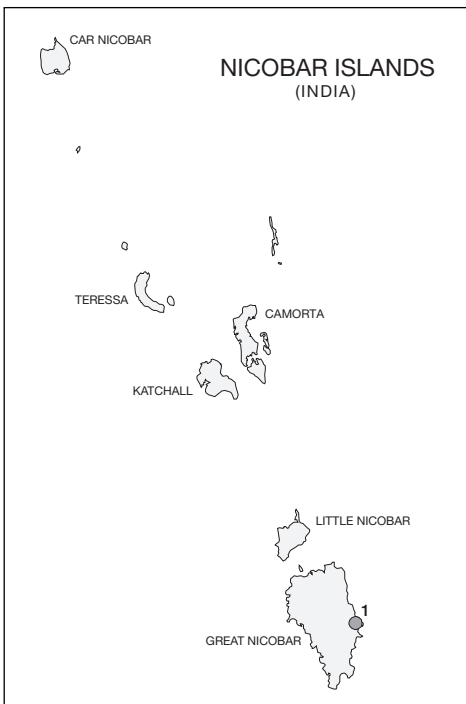
■ **INDIA** ■ *Nicobar Islands Great Nicobar Campbell Bay*, March 1966 and April 1977 (Rasmussen 1998e).

The species may occur on other islands in the group, but equally it may be endemic to Great Nicobar, and indeed restricted in range on that island. The most likely other island where it may be found is Little Nicobar which, like Great Nicobar, is relatively poorly explored (Rasmussen 1998e). The more northerly islands of the group have been well surveyed without evidence of this species being generated (Rasmussen 1998e).

**POPULATION** There is no information. It is probable that the species is distributed throughout forest on Great Nicobar at moderate densities. However, the extent of forest is not known for the island; and it is possible that some ecological constraint operates on the species, confining it to a particular habitat or elevation (it is currently known only from coastal forest presumably at sea-level: see below).

**ECOLOGY** *Habitat* The paratype was found in coastal forest about 1 km from the shore (Rasmussen 1998e).

*Food* The paratype had eaten a four-inch gecko (Abdulali 1978), the holotype “a spider and a beetle (*Apogonia ferruginea* F.)” (Abdulali 1967).



**The distribution of Nicobar Scops-owl *Otus alius*:**  
(1) Campbell Bay.

● Fairly recent (1950–1979)

**Breeding** The holotype from March had greatly enlarged testes and the paratype from April was approaching breeding condition (Rasmussen 1998e).

**THREATS** None is known, but it cannot be assumed that the forest environment on Great Nicobar is secure. Despite various apparent safeguards, including two national parks, the island faces various current and proposed threats, particularly to its coastal forests (see equivalent section under Nicobar Megapode *Megapodius nicobariensis*).

**MEASURES TAKEN** Campbell Bay National Park (426 km<sup>2</sup>) presumably embraces the type locality.

**MEASURES PROPOSED** Survey of Great Nicobar using tape-playback to determine densities of the species in various habitats across the island is required; Little Nicobar should also be visited for this purpose. The programme of habitat conservation proposed for Great Nicobar by Sankaran (1997a) needs to be implemented (see equivalent section under Nicobar Scrubfowl).