



NOTE OF ROADKILLS OF MEGASCOPS CHOLIBA (VIEILLOT, 1817) (BIRDS: STRIGIFORMS) IN THE SURROUNDINGS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION UNITS IN THE NORTHWEST OF BRAZILIAN STATE OF RIO DE JANEIRO (RJ)

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RESUMO

Many Environmental Conservation Units in Brazil are intersected by highways, which have a negative impact on the conservation of fauna, due to frequent roadkills. Many cases occur at night, and they are mainly of vertebrates, including owls, which provide various environmental services. Some works report the roadkill of these birds from the taxon *Megascops gr. choliba*, which encompasses a complex of nine subspecies, spreading from Costa Rica and the Brazilian territory to the central region of Argentina. Little is known about the trophic and reproductive ecology of its subspecies, however. The present study reports the roadkill of specimens of *Megascops gr. choliba* on highway RJ-214, in the Brazilian State of Rio de Janeiro, in march/2021. This road is paved and connects the municipality of Natividade to the District of Raposo (Municipality of Itaperuna) and to the national highway BR-356. RJ-214 is composed of a single lane, without shoulder. This route is used for access to rural properties and for ecological and religious tourism. On its way, the RJ highway crosses REVIS Sagui da Serra Escuro and the Environmental Protection Area Raposo. In total, we carried out two car rounds, at the speed of 30 km/h, at seven days intervals, totalizing 28 km. Two roadkilled specimens of *M. gr. choliba* were found, one in each round, on the same stretch of the road. The location of the roadkill, although close to the forested area of REVIS Sagui da Serra Escuro, is flanked by open pasture fields with a residence. These birds, who maintain nocturnal hunting habits, probably took advantage of the luminosity from vehicles and also from the lights of the residence in the section aforementioned to capture their prey, being then roadkilled by the passing vehicles. In this stretch, the route is straight, which favors the increase in vehicle speed, reducing the possibility of the owls escaping their demise. To reduce the occurrence of roadkills involving these animals, it is recommended the installation of signs with warnings for nocturnal animals in this stretch of the track.

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