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## Short Communication

# First record of breeding of the Long-eared Owl, *Asio otus* in Jordan

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The Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*) is a medium-sized nocturnal species with distinct erect, blackish ear-tufts. It has a broad distribution across the northern latitudes of North America, Europe, Eurasia, and the Levant (Cramp and Simmons, 1985). It prefers forests close to open country, edges of semi-open woodland and urban areas (Cramp and Simmons, 1985). It is known as an opportunist feeder and takes a high diversity of small-sized prey (Birrer, 2009). This owl is considered as an uncommon winter visitor in Jordan (Andrews, 1995). Along its global distribution, diet have been extensively studied in North America and Europe, yet, reports on its ecology and diet within the most southern limits of its distribution are under-represented and far from satisfactory (Birrer, 2009). Only recently, Obuch (2018) reported on the diet of this owl in Jordan, including localities from the Mediterranean bioclimatic region (Amman, Marj al-Hammam, Wasfi Al Tal forest and Dibbin forests), while reported from arid regions including Shaumari and Mafraq Jordan sits at the most southern edge of distribution of the Long-eared Owl, yet no studies have been conducted to establish evidence to its breeding in Jordan.

During July 2018, a Long-eared Owl roost site was spotted on the edge of Mutah University campus (31° 5.792' N, 35° 43.091' E) in southern Jordan. The owl was seen within a plantation of pine trees overlooking open steppe vegetation (Fig. 1). The area sits within the non-forest, dry Mediterranean vegetation. The area is highly degraded by overgrazing and accommodates a suite of urban areas, agricultural farms, and open areas. The majority of the open area is barren and rarely covered by vegetation with a few water run-off-systems (wadis) vegetated by bushes and shrubby microsystems. Later in October of the same year, two sub-adults along with two adults were observed in the same roosting site. The owls fed on several species of birds as well as rodents as their pellets revealed (Abu Baker et al., In press). This report represents the first documentation of breeding of the Long-eared Owl in Jordan as its most southern range for breeding within the southern Mediterranean region.



**Figure 1:** Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* roosting site at the edge of Mutah University campus (5.792 °31' N, 43.091 °35' E) in southern Jordan.

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