

SHORT NOTES

Gabar Goshawk capturing nestling Laughing Dove

(Plate VII)

While observing and photographing the nest of a pair of Laughing Doves (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) from a hide in the savannah-woodland country of the *Atlantica Ecological Research Station* of Mr. R. BOULTON near Salisbury, Rhodesia, on 1 September 1964, I witnessed the following incident of the capture of a nestling dove by a Gabar Goshawk (*Micronisus gabar*).

I was just making my notes when I heard a rustling of feathers above my hide. Looking upwards I saw a Gabar Goshawk in adult plumage sitting on one of the branches and looking intently to the only chick in the nest, which at that moment was unattended by its parents. The chick was 5 days old. It took a few seconds before the hawk actually pounced upon the young, during which time I adjusted my camera and at the same time tried to decide whether or not I should scare away the hawk. Presently the hawk alighted on the nest, seized the young and dragged it away. Most remarkable of the incident was, that the hawk's first act was not seizing its prey with its talons, but killing the chick by pecking it in the neck. Subsequently it made off with the small bird firmly gripped in its talons. Fortunately, the moment of the hawk seizing the nestling with the bill appeared on the photograph.

H. N. KLUIJVER

Gabar Goshawk capturing Barbet

On 17th August 1965 we observed a Gabar Goshawk (*Micronisus gabar*) hunting and capturing a prey in a patch of open acacia bush around Seronera, Serengeti National Park, Tanzania.

When we first discovered the hawk, in an impeccable grey adult plumage with long red legs, red cere and dark coloured eye, it was perched right in the middle of a low acacia which was standing leafless in the dry yellow savannah grass. It hopped around a little, keeping close to the main stem and intently looking up and down and to all sides, apparently in search of prey. Silently it sailed to the next tree, some ten yards away, where it continued its search hopping with closed wings from branch to branch, mostly remaining well hidden amongst the tangle of dry branches. This continued for some while, the bird giving the impression of actively searching for a prey which did not appear. When finally, after some minutes search through the crowns of four or five trees, a little bird moved among the high grass at the base of the tree the hawk was inspecting, the hawk dived down and dashed after it. But the small bird, which proved to be an *Apalis* warbler, escaped after a whirling flight and disappeared among the denser branches of the crown of a flat-topped acacia where the hawk did not continue its chase. Instead, it immediately diverted its attention to a Red-fronted Barbet (*Tricholaema diadematum*) which suddenly came flying towards the tree where the hawk was following the warbler.

Now a most exciting scene followed, in which the barbet flew around and

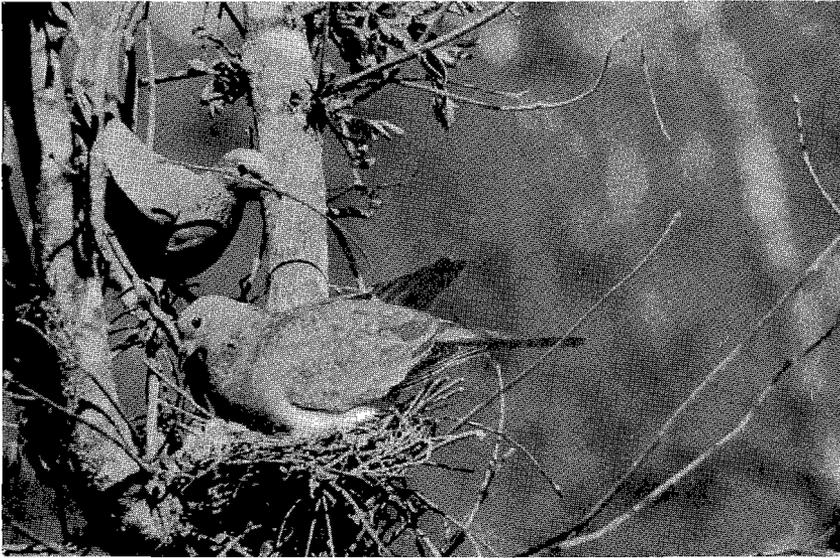


FIGURE 1. *Streptopelia senegalensis* nest building. Near Salisbury, Rhodesia.

H. N. KLUYVER phot.



FIGURE 2. *Micronisus gabar* killing five days old chick of *Streptopelia senegalensis* at nest.
This is the same nest as in Figure 1.

H. N. KLUYVER phot.

through the trees with many sharp quick turns, both horizontally and vertically. Several times it tried to escape into the densest parts of the crowns of the flat-topped acacias but everywhere it was pursued very closely. The raptor managed to follow the sharp turns of the barbet with remarkable speed of reaction and kept up with its prey on wing and on foot in the trees in an unmistakably accipitrine way. After a pursuit which lasted about one and a half minutes, during which both birds remained silent, the barbet was caught in the top of an acacia: a piercing cry was heard and all was over. We could not clearly observe whether the hawk seized or killed its prey with its beak or talons but got the impression that only the feet were used.

The systematic careful search through the trees could well be considered to have been made primarily for bird nests as the Gabar Goshawk is known to be a nest robber.

H. KRUK
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Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) in eastern Atlantic Ocean

The following observation of an Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) made on board H. Neth. M. research-vessel "Snellius" in the Atlantic Ocean, in the Bermudas Seas, at approximately 295 nautical miles (= 545 km) from the nearest land, Cape Kennedy (Hatteras), North Carolina, and 375 miles (= 690 km) from Bermuda, may be of some interest.

13 May 1965, approximately 36° 42' N, 69° 20' W, at 21.45 h G.M.T.: one Osprey alighted on the ship's mast during heavy rain and thunderstorm and disappeared afterwards. This bird probably was on its northbound spring migration. It had a distinct black eye-stripe and therefore did not belong to the Bahaman subspecies. Professor K. H. Voous, who saw the photographs of this bird made while it was perched on the ship's rigging, kindly confirmed the identification.

T. DE VRIES