

An observation of successful bat predation by Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar* at Ndoto Mountains, Kenya

Bat predation by diurnal raptors is a widespread phenomenon, but only occasionally observed or studied in detail. Observations of such behaviour have been published from the African continent, including Kenya, for the following species: Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*, Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* (Thomsett 1987), Taita Falcon *Falco fasciinucha* (Thomsett 2006), African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro* (Mumford 1980), Black Kite *Milvus migrans* (McWilliam 1989), Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus* (Jackson 2000) and Ayres's Hawk-Eagle *Hieraaetus dubius* (Wolf 1984).

On 3 February 2015 at 17:30 we observed such hunting behaviour in Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar*. We were exploring a streamside forest at the foot of the Ndoto Mountains about 3 km from the Salato campsite (1°43'25"N, 37°16'49"E) near Ngurunit Village, northern Kenya. We saw a small unidentified bat hanging on a tree branch. A Gabar Goshawk flew towards it and tried unsuccessfully to catch it. After the initial attack the bat tried to escape, but the goshawk turned back and during a second attempt successfully caught it in mid-air. The bat was crying loudly and trying to escape by wing flapping, but the goshawk flew with it for several tens of metres, landed on a wide tree branch and began to consume it. We attempted to get closer to the feeding goshawk, but it flew away with its prey, thus making a precise determination of the bat species impossible.

The Gabar Goshawk's diet consists mainly of small to middle-sized birds and lizards, and mammalian prey is also taken to a lesser extent (Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001). As far as we know, our observation is only the second published account of bat predation by this species. The first was by McGrew (1980) in Niokolo-Koba National Park in Senegal where a Gabar Goshawk successfully attacked an unidentified bat in mid-air and then drowned it in a nearby stream.

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