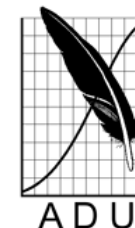


Ornithological Observations



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Ornithological Observations accepts papers containing faunistic information about birds. This includes descriptions of distribution, behaviour, breeding, foraging, food, movement, measurements, habitat and plumage. It will also consider for publication a variety of other interesting or relevant ornithological material: reports of projects and conferences, annotated checklists for a site or region, specialist bibliographies, and any other interesting or relevant material.

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UNUSUAL FORAGING BEHAVIOUR OF AMUR FALCONS

AM Archer

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UNUSUAL FORAGING BEHAVIOUR OF AMUR FALCONS

AM Archer

Corresponding author: tony@archer.co.za

Amur Falcons *Falco amurensis* are non-breeding Palaearctic migrants (Nov-May) to the eastern parts of Southern Africa. This species forage mainly by perch-hunting as well as hover-hunting over open grass- and croplands. On non-breeding grounds, it consumes almost exclusively arthropods (locusts and grasshoppers, termite alates, beetles, bees); they may occasionally capture small birds (Jenkins 2005).

It was therefore surprising to observe 4 of these birds that were were apparently foraging in a manner very similar to that of Whiskered Terns *Chlidonias hybrida*. These observations were made on 6 January 2012 around 16:40 at a farm dam south of Klerksdorp (26 52S 26 32E). Terns normally hover and plunge-dive, also surface-dip, snatching insects from above water surface and picking amphibians and invertebrates from vegetation (Hockey 2005).

It could not be established what prey they were foraging on but the birds repeatedly dived into the water, immersing their legs all the way to their bellies. They appeared to have something in their claws as they left the water. The distance to the birds was such that I could not identify what they were foraging. They repeated this behaviour for approximately 45 minutes.

To view a short video clip of this novel foraging beaviour, follow this link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjEZc-TICbw&list=UUs27mdkYoWjOiTg588H5Wxw&index=1&feature=plcp>

References

Jenkins AR 2005. Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis* in Hockey PAR, Dean WRJ, Ryan PG (eds). Roberts – Birds of Southern Africa, VIIth Edition. Cape Town: The Trustees of the John Voelcker Bird Book Fund.

Hockey PAR 2005. Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* in Hockey PAR, Dean WRJ, Ryan PG (eds). Roberts – Birds of Southern Africa, VIIth Edition. Cape Town: The Trustees of the John Voelcker Bird Book Fund.