

## FIRST OBSERVATION OF THE ORANGE-BREASTED FALCON IN THE YUCATAN PENINSULA OF MÉXICO

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The Orange-breasted Falcon (*Falco deiroleucus*) ranges from eastern México south to northern Argentina, Paraguay, and Southern Brazil, but in México it has been recorded only in the state of Veracruz (Friedmann et al., 1950, Pacific Coast Avifauna No. 29, p. 65). The species is known from northern

## OBSERVATIONS AT A NEST OF THE BLACK-AND-WHITE HAWK-EAGLE

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The breeding biology and nest of the Black-and-white Hawk-eagle (*Spizastur melanoleucus*), which ranges from southern México to Paraguay (Brown and Amadon, Eagles, hawks and falcons of the world, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1968), have not yet been described. On 17 September 1972 I found a pair of this species building a nest in the crown of a quipo tree (*Cavanillesia platanifolia*) about 9 km E of Chepo, Panamá Province, Republic of Panamá. Wetmore (Smithsonian Misc. Coll. 150, 1965) reported a specimen of this species collected 22 April 1949 in the hills at Camarón above Chepo.

The nest tree was next to a newly gravelled road that connects the Inter-American Highway with the settlement of Jesus Maria on the Río Bayano. The road crosses a series of ridges, some of which rise to about 350 m elevation; the nest tree was near the crest of one of these ridges at about 300 m, no more than 8 km from the Río Bayano. These hills are covered by a dry, open forest in which quipo trees up to about 50 m tall tower over almost all other vegetation. Land surrounding these hills or ridges has been cleared for cattle range and cropland; numerous clearings can be found within the forest itself. Brown and Amadon (1968) stated that *Spizastur* prefers forested country in which there is some open country or rivers; the nest location combined all of these preferences. The nest was about 40 m above the ground, as measured with a range finder by Neal G. Smith. From the nest tree the hawk-eagles would have had an unobstructed view of about 240 degrees.

On 24 September the nest appeared to be in the same stage of construction as on the 17th. As I

Peten, Guatemala, being found about the Mayan ruins at Tikal (Smithe and Paynter, 1963, Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool., 128:259).

On 13 July 1973, we observed an adult Orange-breasted Falcon, probably female (because of apparent large size), approximately 15 km north of Xpujil, Campeche. When sighted, the bird was about 40 m from our vantage point at roadside, and about 10 m from the ground. It remained so for about 4 min. We decided not to collect it, in the name of conservation of rare species and the special need to preserve the often persecuted diurnal birds of prey.

All of us had become familiar with the similar but markedly smaller Bat Falcon (*F. ruficularis*) in the previous 2 weeks of our work in this area. Only the Aplomado Falcon (*F. femoralis*) is otherwise similar; we made especially certain that the bird in question was not *F. femoralis*.

We report this observation because the range of this species in México is so poorly known and because its occurrence in Campeche represents an extension of range into the Yucatan Peninsula, a fairly discrete avifaunal region from which the bird had not previously been reported.

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watched, two hawk-eagles landed in a small grove of trees across the road from the nest tree. They then copulated, while the male called repeatedly in a short high-pitched scream. On 19 October I observed two hawk-eagles soaring in the vicinity of the nest tree; the nest appeared to be larger, about 1 m in diameter. On 28 October I saw one hawk-eagle land in trees across the road from the nest tree, where it remained for about one hour before flying off. On 18 November one bird flew in and sat in trees across the road from the nest tree for about 15 min before flying away. There had been no change in the nest since 19 October. There were no signs that the nest had been used when I visited it again in February 1973.

Most records from wooded regions of the tropics indicate that almost all species of hawks begin breeding during the dry season (Brown, African birds of prey, Collins, London, 1970; Haverschmidt, Birds of Surinam, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1968; Wetmore 1965); yet, since their nesting cycles take several months to complete, active nests may be found in both dry and wet seasons (Brown 1970). About a third of the active nests reported for Surinam (Haverschmidt 1968) were in the wet season. *Spizastur* eggs have been taken in Guyana in March and April (Brown and Amadon 1968); these dates indicate that *Spizastur* probably starts to nest there in the dry season.

The nest I observed was built in the middle of the wet season. The wet season of 1972 was extremely dry, however, especially during the period just before I found the nest. After the nest was started, the dry weather was interrupted by occasional heavy rains. The birds I observed may have initiated nesting in response to the dryness of the season only to abandon their efforts when heavy rains fell.

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