

of scavenging by peregrine falcons, all upon birds or mammals by immature peregrine falcons (D. Dekker 1980, *Can. Field-Nat.* 94:371–382; D.C. Holland 1989, *J. Raptor Res.* 23:184; J.B. Buchanan 1991, *Northwest. Nat.* 72:28–2). W. Heinrich (pers. comm.) saw a fish-bearing peregrine falcon in Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, and believed kleptoparasitism upon ospreys was the likely explanation.

Brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) remains were found in a Scottish peregrine eyrie (D.N. Weir 1979, *Bird Study* 26:200). T. Cade (1960, *Univ. California Publ. Zool.* 63:151–290) witnessed a peregrine falcon capture a live fish from an Alaskan river and J.B. Tatum (1981, *Br. Birds* 74:97) saw a peregrine falcon in British Columbia capture a Pacific sand lance (*Ammodytes hexapterus*). In Tasmania, A. Hardy (1992, *Australas. Raptor Assoc. News* 13:14–15) observed a male take two 15–20-cm-long fish from the sea.

We thank Joseph Buchanan and Steve Sherrod for their editorial comments.—**Larry J. Barnes and Robin R. Garwood, Sawtooth National Recreation Area, Sawtooth National Forest, Star Route, Ketchum, ID 83340 U.S.A.**

*J. Raptor Res.* 29(4):284

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#### AN AMERICAN KESTREL CAPTURES A WHITE-THROATED SWIFT IN FLIGHT

On 25 June 1994, at 1030 H, about 4 km south of the north entrance to Yellowstone National Park (Highway 89), we observed a female American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) capture a white-throated swift (*Aeronautes saxitalis*) along the bank of the Gardiner River. We first observed the kestrel perched on a bare dead branch protruding above the greenery of a cottonwood (*Poplar* spp.) about 15 m above the ground. The falcon left the perch and flew in a slightly descending but essentially straight line, with continuous vigorous flapping, toward a small flock of white-throated swifts that were foraging over the river. As the kestrel reached a position slightly below and head to head with a swift she flared upwards, reached out and grasped the swift as it attempted a steep evasive climb. After grabbing the swift, the kestrel carried it back toward the perch tree when we subsequently lost sight of her.

This rapid head-on approach along with the falcon's position slightly below the swift may have forced the swift to use the only available escape route, which was a steep climb. By using precise timing at the beginning of its flair and climb, the kestrel's greater weight may have allowed it to catch the swift in the very early stages of a climb where the change of direction and gravity worked to slow down the swift. The easy and proficient manner with which the kestrel caught the swift suggested that she had successfully used such techniques previously.

Although American kestrels are known to capture insects, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and a variety of birds, we could find no reference in the literature of a kestrel taking a swift or other fast flying highly maneuverable bird from the air in this head-on approach manner. Kestrels have been observed capturing prey species with flight characteristics that we consider similar to or approaching the aerial capabilities of white-throated swifts. For example, Freer (1973, *Wilson Bull.* 85:231–233) reported aerial captures of immature bank swallows (*Riparia riparia*), but all of these captures were cases in which the kestrel simply overtook the young swallows in flight and snatched them from the air. Windsor and Emlen (1975, *Condor* 77: 359–361), also observed kestrel predation on bank swallows, but with only one exception (reported as an aerial capture) all were nestlings taken from the entrance of their natal burrows. Another species of swallow, the cliff swallow (*Hirundo pyrrhonota*), was also reported taken from its nest (P. Bonnot 1921, *Condor* 23:136). Page and Whitacre (1975, *Condor* 77:73–83) saw kestrels taking a variety of small shorebirds including least sandpipers (*Calidris minutilla*) but the kestrel captured them on the ground, after a low gliding flight.—**Carl A. Johansson and Clayton M. White, Department of Zoology, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602 U.S.A.**

*J. Raptor Res.* 29(4):284–285

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#### FURTHER EVIDENCE OF NESTING ADAPTABILITY IN OSPREY: NEST ATOP A 61-METER TELEVISION TOWER

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) nests occur in a variety of settings including directly on the ground using plant materials gathered from wrack lines (D. Puleston 1977, pages 143–151 in J.C. Ogden [Ed.], *Transactions of the North American*

osprey resource conference, USDI Natl. Park Serv., Washington, DC U.S.A.), stumps (J.F. Parnell and R. Walton 1977, pages 139–142 in J.C. Ogden [ED.], Transactions of the North American osprey resource conference, USDI Natl. Park Serv., Washington, DC U.S.A.), on low structures such as channel markers and duck blinds (J.G. Reese 1970, *Auk* 87:747–759), and in trees of various sizes. Ogden (1977, pages 143–151 in J.C. Ogden [ED.], Transactions of the North American osprey resource conference, USDI Natl. Park Serv., Washington, DC U.S.A.) recorded 29 nests in dead trees at a mean height of 3.6 m (range 1–6.7 m) and 17 nests in living trees at a mean height of 4.9 m (range 1–7.6 m). Other reports (J.M. French and J.R. Koplin 1977, pages 223–240 in J.C. Ogden [ED.], Transactions of the North American osprey resource conference, USDI Natl. Park Serv., Washington, DC U.S.A.) record nests as high as 76 m in a redwood tree (*Sequoia sempervirens*) located in the median of a heavily traveled highway in California.

These records highlight the adaptability of ospreys in the selection of their nesting sites. To these I now add the occurrence of a nest atop a 61-m television tower situated at the edge of a *Phragmites* marsh in Brick Township (Ocean County), New Jersey. The tower is located near the west end of the Mantoloking Bridge, which crosses the Intracoastal Waterway in Barnegat Bay. At 61 m, the tower is about the height of a 15-story commercial building, hence comparable to nesting sites selected by peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) in urban areas (e.g., R.A. Herbert and K.G.S. Herbert 1963, *Auk* 82:6294). Thus, like peregrines, ospreys have found tall structures suitable as nesting habitat in human-dominated landscapes (see E.G. Bolen 1991, *Landscape and Urban Plann.* 20:285–289).

Ospreys, presumably the same pair, have nested atop the tower for several years (the tower was erected in 1983). A strong wind in December 1993 broke off the uppermost antenna on the tower, destroying the nest as well. However, the ospreys again nested at the site after the antenna was replaced. The antenna is rotated periodically (more or less monthly) in keeping with its function and, interestingly, this movement has not dissuaded the birds' nesting activities, including incubation.

The presence of the nest, which is a substantial structure of sticks and assorted trash, has not interfered with television transmission, hence the cable company owning the tower has tolerated the nest. During the nesting season, the birds react with displeasure when persons climb the tower to replace light bulbs—"circling the tower and squawking loudly," according to the climbers—but the birds have not physically attacked the humans. Unfortunately, the nest is situated about 1.5 m above the highest point that workers can reach or see, hence they are unable to report on the birds' nesting effort (e.g., number of eggs or offspring).

I appreciate the cooperation of Cablevision of Monmouth, and especially the helpful information supplied by Howard G. Applegate, who also reviewed an early draft of this manuscript.—**Eric G. Bolen, Department of Biological Sciences, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Wilmington, NC 28409 U.S.A.**