

obs.). This seasonal abundance of the common lesser toad might compensate for what might otherwise be a marginal resource.

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CONSUMPTION OF A RINGED KINGFISHER (*MEGACERYLE TORQUATA*) BY A WHITE-TAILED HAWK (*BUTEO ALBICAUDATUS*) IN SOUTHEASTERN BRAZIL

The White-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albicaudatus*) is a poorly known species ranging from southern Texas to northern Argentinean Patagonia (Farquhar 1992, *The Birds of North America*, No. 30, Washington, DC U.S.A.). Few data are reported on its diet, which comprises insects, rodents, reptiles, and birds (Farquhar 1992, Sick 1993, *Birds in Brazil: a natural history*. Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, NJ U.S.A.). Virtually no data are published on its ecology in South America.

We observed a feeding event by the White-tailed Hawk in the 2300 ha Itirapina Ecological Station (22°12'S, 47°54'W), State of São Paulo, Brazil. On 23 April 1998, at 1300 H, while driving a car through the savannah grassland, we observed an adult White-tailed Hawk feeding on dead Ringed Kingfisher (*Megaceryle torquata*). The fresh kingfisher remains were in a small tree, ca. 2 m above the ground. As we approached, the hawk flew away and the remains fell to the ground. Only the complete cranium, cervical vertebrae, ulna, metacarpals, phalanges, and some rectrices were left by the hawk when we inspected the carcass. The Ringed Kingfisher is a piscivorous and semiaquatic bird associated with rivers, ponds, lakes, and reservoirs, occurring from extreme southern Texas to southernmost South America (del Hoyo et al. 2001, *Handbook of the birds of the world*. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona, Spain). The nearest aquatic environment, a reservoir, was located ca. 2 km away from the observation site. It is possible, therefore, that the kingfisher could have been passing over the grassland savannah when captured. This may have been the case as the White-tailed Hawk is known to kill and consume prey in or nearby the site of predation (M.A.M. Granzinoli pers. obs.). The Brazilian subspecies, *B. a. albicaudatus*, has a mass ranging from 850–884 g (del Hoyo et al. 1994). The Ringed Kingfisher body mass ranges from 305–341 g (Sick 1993). Therefore, the kingfisher represented 34.5–40.1% of adult mass of the hawk. Other authors have reported consumption of birds by White-tailed Hawks, but few with a mass of more than 300 g (see Farquhar 1992). However, 43 of 259 pellets from the State of Minas Gerais in southeast Brazil contained birds and, except for one individual with a mass of 72 g, all the others were less than 40 g (M.A.M. Granzinoli and J.C. Motta-Junior unpubl. data). According to the latter study, which evaluated the hawk's diet over a 1-yr period, birds are relatively uncommon prey, totaling 11.1% of consumed biomass of this species. Thus, the present observation suggests that this hawk subspecies can also prey upon larger birds occasionally. Also, we note that White-tailed Hawks are known to scavenge on dead animals (Farquhar 1992) and that the kingfisher carcass we found may not have been captured and killed by the hawk. Nonetheless, we suggest that the feeding event we observed was the result of predation and our record documents the consumption of a relatively large bird in the diet of the White-tailed Hawk.

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