

This is raptor number 6 in our series of pamphlets featuring the raptors seen on the CCJ estate. To date we have covered the three Sparrowhawks, the European Honey Buzzard, the Black-winged Kite and Gabar goshawk. Still to come is the Long-crested Eagle, Common Buzzard, African Harrier Hawk and Spotted Eagle Owl.



Want to learn more about the exciting environment of the Greater Woodmead Estate?

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**THE COUNTRY CLUB
JOHANNESBURG**



Gabar Goshawk

**No.6 in our series:
Raptors of the Woodmead Estate**



At CCJ, we are fortunate to have a wide range of raptors visit the Club's estate: Long-crested eagles, African Harrier hawks, three species of Sparrowhawk, Black-winged kites, the European buzzard and Honey buzzard just to mention a few. The Gabar goshawk is one of the smaller raptors that we see on a perhaps more rare occasion.



Description

The Gabar goshawk occurs in two distinct forms which fluctuate in relative abundance across the geographic range of the species. The more frequent, paler form has mostly grey upper parts with white and grey barring on the chest, thighs and underwings, and a dark grey, barred tail. In contrast, the less frequent form (which accounts on average for approximately 25 percent of the overall population) is almost completely black.

The females are significantly larger than the males; the male's weigh 90 - 173g and the females 167 - 240g. The body length is 28-36cm and the wingspan 63cm.



Distribution

The Gabar goshawk is found in sub-Saharan Africa, extending as far north as Chad, Sudan and the Arabian Peninsula.

Habitat

Occurs in open woodland, especially dry Acacia savanna and broad-leaved woodland in the more arid regions of southern Africa such as the Karoo and Namib Desert. It is generally restricted to tree-lined watercourses, but it may be occasionally seen in cities and towns.

Diet / Feeding

Gabar goshawks mostly feed on small birds and their nestlings, But also small rodents, bats, reptiles and insects. Their primary prey is usually flushed from trees and caught following a chase. They also hunt from a perch, swooping down to catch prey off the ground or in flight.

Predation

Known predators of the Gabar goshawk include Tawny eagles, Wahlberg's eagles and Ayre's Hawk-eagles (which means they're pretty safe at CCJ!).



Nesting / Breeding

The platform nest is constructed out of thin twigs and situated on vertical forks in the crowns of thorny trees. When building the nest, Gabars usually incorporate spiders on their webs around the nest; it is believed that these spider webs camouflage the nest and the spiders consume parasites that would otherwise feed on the chicks.

The eggs are laid from July to December. The normal clutch is two eggs, but up to four may be laid, and these are mainly incubated by the female for about 33-38 days. Once hatched, the chicks are brooded by the female for the first 19-21 days of their lives, while the male brings her food to feed to them. They leave the nest around 35-36 days old, becoming fully independent about one month later.

