

### 3715: THE HOOPOE *Upupa epops* AS PREY OF BARN OWL *Tyto alba* IN THE CANARY ISLANDS

*La Huppe fasciée* *Upupa epops*, proie de la Chouette effraie *Tyto alba* aux Iles Canaries.

Although birds are secondary items in the diet of the Barn Owl *Tyto alba*, some cases in capture specialization (HEIM DE BALSAC, 1965; CARPENTER & FALL, 1967; FERNÁNDEZ-CRUZ & GARCÍA, 1969; etc.), selection (cf. BUNN *et al.*, 1982; BARBOSA *et al.*, 1989) and consumption of exceptional species have been described. With respect to the latter, worthy of mention is the capture of large species such as *Fulica americana* (SMITH & MARTI, 1976), *Gallinula chloropus* (CRAMP, 1985) and various raptors (*Falco sparverius* [SMITH & MARTI, 1976], *F. naumanni*, *Otus scops* [SIRACUSA & CIACCIO, 1985], etc.). In this note, the presence of the Hoopoe *Upupa epops* in the diet of the Barn Owl in the Canary Islands is reported, a fact which, according to the bibliography and ornithologists consulted (Appendix and Acknowledgments), apparently constitutes the first known record, at least in the Western Palearctic.

Predation has been confirmed at two localities on the island of Tenerife (Los Realejos, 24 February 1978; Granadilla de Abona, August 1986) and at a single site on the island of Lanzarote (Teguise, 14 January 2001). At the three localities, feathers pertaining to 1-2 Hoopoes were found dispersed at the base and in the interior of Barn Owl nesting cavities. Also a pellet containing a Hoopoe skull was located at one site. Furthermore, J.C. RANCO (pers. comm.) identified bones of one adult Hoopoe together with other subfossil remains (mainly of Procellariiformes) which can be ascribed to predatory activity of the Barn Owl in the past. This material was collected in a superficial level of an archaeological deposit situated on the north coast of Tenerife (M.C. LEÓN *leg.*), and now forms part of the island's *Museo de la Naturaleza y el Hombre*.

Although the Hoopoe is larger than the bird species usually captured by Spanish Barn Owls (cf. BARBOSA *et al.*, 1989), its presence or absence in the diet of this owl is most probably related to hunting opportunities as opposed to the imposition of a size restriction. The wide chronological separation of our data in the Canaries tends to indicate that favourable conditions for capturing Hoopoes are infrequent. Moreover, future cases of predation will become even less frequent due to the continued decline of the species in the Archipelago, especially in the western

islands (MARTÍN & LORENZO, 2001). On Tenerife our data were obtained in areas of the lower xerophytic vegetation zone, between 50-150 m. a.s.l., where both species concentrate their distribution range (MARTÍN, 1987; SIVERIO & CARRILLO, 1993). Judging by our observation dates in both islands (cf. MARTÍN, 1987; MARTÍN & LORENZO, 2001), the Hoopoes captured were most likely young birds which are more vulnerable to predation.

In general, the Hoopoe is barely exploited by raptors, and its capture very rarely acquires importance (cf. BERGIER, 1987). In the Canary Islands, predation by Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* (pers. obs.), Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora* (HERNÁNDEZ *et al.*, 1985) and Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* (DELGADO *et al.*, 1988) seems to be very rare, although in some areas of mainland Spain the latter species is its principal predator (M. MARTÍN-VIVALDI, *in litt.*).

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## APPENDIX

List of the bibliography consulted in the preparation of this note.

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## EN BREF...

- **Baguage de Passereaux migrateurs à Doñana.** Cette étude se déroule chaque année sur une période de 9 semaines (septembre à début novembre). Des bagueurs expérimentés sont recherchés. Pour plus d'information voir le site: [www-rbd.ebd.csic.es/segu/aves/Paserif/indice.ht.es](http://www-rbd.ebd.csic.es/segu/aves/Paserif/indice.ht.es).

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- **Bibliographie ornithologique de la région PACA et de la Corse.** Cette bibliographie couvrant la période 1552 à 2004, comporte des monographies, des articles de revues, des thèses, des actes de congrès...

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- **SNPN.** Le programme des sorties d'initiation à la nature est disponible.

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- **24<sup>th</sup> International Ornithological Congress.** La seconde circulaire concernant ce congrès qui se tiendra du 13 au 19 août 2006 à Hambourg (Allemagne) est disponible sur le site:

**Contact** : [www.i-o-c.org](http://www.i-o-c.org). Pour obtenir la circulaire par e-mail : [info@i-o-c.org](mailto:info@i-o-c.org).

- **Le bassin du Rio Pilcomayo paraguayen.** Restée pratiquement inviolée jusqu'à nos jours cette région où se croisent et s'interconnectent divers flux d'oiseaux migrateurs est gravement menacée. Dans le but de compiler un maximum de documents et de données sur cette faune sur le point de disparaître le "groupe Linnaeus" a mit sur pied des excursions d'études.

**Contact** : Se rendre sur les pages Web : [www.linnaeus.com.py](http://www.linnaeus.com.py) et [www.ephe.univ-montp2.fr](http://www.ephe.univ-montp2.fr)

## ERRATUM

- *Alauda* (2) 2005. **Erratum**, page 124, FIG. 6a, b : Dans les légendes, remplacer A= Grand Gravelot et a : Ringed Plover par A= Pluvier argenté et a : Grey Plover.