

Crested Goshawk Courtship Feeding Behaviour

Li-Li Wong & Tim Looi

Introduction:

Bird breeding behaviour involves a variety of activities from courtship to fledging, such as, mate pairing, nest building, egg laying and incubation, and parental care of chicks and fledglings. This article is based on observations of part of the breeding cycle of the Crested Goshawk *Lophospiza trivirgata* where, during courtship, the male's mating effort involves offering prey to the female (off the nest). Prey offering may signal the ability of the male to provide for the female and their future offspring and strengthen the bond between the pair (Carlier & Gallo 1995; Royama 1966).

Observations

Observations by Li-Li Wong were made at Taman Rimba Kiara, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from February to March 2024 and involved 19 hours over seven days. Tim Looi watched a pair at Taman Zaaba, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from July to Sept 2021 over 15 days. Both sites are well maintained city parks with large trees; Taman Rimba Kiara also has ponds and streams.

The behaviour involved daily offering of prey, at least one to three times a day. Most times after the offering the pair will copulate (Plate 1). At times, prey offering would occur without copulation (Plate 2). At its peak, 12 times of cloacal copulation by the pair was observed in a single day. However, towards the end of the period, before the female laid eggs, less copulation episodes were observed although prey offering continued.



Plate 1: Copulation after prey being offered. Left Taman Rimba Kiara, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, March 2024. Taman Zaaba, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, August 2021.

The behaviour of prey offerings were observed in the morning and towards noon and evening. The male was observed to bring prey and perch on a branch while calling out. The female would then fly in, receive the offering and the male would start to copulate just when the female was consuming the prey. There were also times that male perched nearby after the offering, seemingly waiting for the approval from the female for copulation. The courtship

feeding behaviour lasted around 2-3 weeks. During the observation period at Taman Rimba Kiara, the female was almost never seen hunting for food.



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Plate 1: No copulation after prey offering. Taman Rimba Kiara, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, February 2024.

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References

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