

**HUNTING ASSOCIATION BETWEEN AUSTRALIAN HOBBY AND PIED BUTCHERBIRDS.** The hunting association between Australian Hobbies *Falco longipennis* and Pied Butcherbirds *Cracticus nigrogularis* has been observed previously (Le Souef 1918; Barnard 1925; Slater 1961; Schrader 1974; Czechura and Debus 1986; Nevinson 1988; Newling 1988; Maher 1989). In most instances the attacks by these two species on other birds seemed to be of short duration. My encounter suggests a more lengthy period of association.

On 23 May 1998 near Timor Ruin on Calperum Station (33°52'S, 140°39'E) I identified a party of at least four Pied Butcherbirds. The full black bib was seen on at least two birds. While following this group through open mallee woodland containing little understorey I noticed that an Australian Hobby stayed within 50–100 m of the butcherbirds. The butcherbirds appeared to be actively foraging while the hobby seemed to be watching for an opportunity to feed as it quietly followed and perched. I observed this pattern for ten minutes then moved on approximately 1.5 km to Timor Ruin and had lunch. An hour had elapsed since leaving the foraging party when three butcherbirds approached and flew directly overhead once again closely followed by the hobby. They continued in this way over Timor Dam and into the distance where I lost sight of them in trees. I presume the birds were from the group I had seen earlier as they came from direction I had come from and no other birds of either species had been seen.

Although there are a number of published observations of an association between hunting

hobbies and Pied Butcherbirds, the nature of this association varies. For example Nevinson (1988) indicates that the butcherbirds seem to follow the hobbies and attempt to catch small birds that the raptors scare into the bushes. This is the opposite behaviour to that described in this paper. Two other observers in New South Wales describe simultaneous attacks on a Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* by a hobby and a Pied Butcherbird (Schrader 1974; Maher 1989). Rather than co-operative behaviour, as described by some authors, the hunting association appears to be opportunistic behaviour by both species, taking advantage of prey flushed by either species.

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