

Feather Fascination!

with local Birdwatcher,

Jim Butler

Salute a Sleek Hunter

THE Grey Goshawk (38-55cm) is endemic to Australia. This splendid, powerful, day-time bird of prey is found in coastal areas in northern and eastern Australia. On average, the male weighs 356 g and the female 797 g; which means she is more than twice as large. The Grey Goshawk is found in



most forest types, especially tall closed forests, including rainforests. Grey Goshawks form permanent pairs that defend a home territory year-round. Both sexes construct a stick nest lined with leaves high in a tree fork, and often re-use the same nest. While the female does most of the incubation, the male relieves her when she needs to feed, and catches most of the food for the young, which the female tears up for them to eat.

Grey Goshawks rely heavily on the element of surprise to catch their prey. In hostile pursuit mode it flies boldly through forests and dense vegetation in pursuit of prey which it strikes unawares at high speed. The larger females can catch much larger prey than the males. When preying on birds, the males take the small birds such as honeyeaters; while the females attack larger birds such as currawongs, herons, pigeons and parrots. Prey birds are caught mid-air or on the ground. Females also prey on mammals such as rabbits, possums, and bats; and on reptiles.

The Grey Goshawk also uses a stealth mode of hunting where it hides in the canopy or dense bushes and attacks prey in the open, on the ground or inside the cover. It prefers dense forest, but is occasionally found in more open woodlands. The best chance of seeing this sleek predator is when it is roosting in the canopy in stealth mode and its presence is broadcast by the noisy mobbing alarm calls of other birds such as honeyeaters. There is evidence that the Grey Goshawk is the prey of the mighty Powerful Owl, so at night they may be in danger themselves!

Search the forest for this lethal beauty!

~ Jim

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Digital Bird Guide: <http://www.moggillcreek.org/>

Image: Grey Goshawk by Ed Frazer
at Brookfield