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Notes Courtes

Gabon. A Pied Hornbill *Tockus fasciatus* left a neighbouring tree, circled the tree containing the nest and then landed with outspread wings near the nest. The thrush gave alarm calls and flew at the hornbill, which ignored this, removed two hatchlings in its beak and took flight. It dropped one hatchling in flight a few metres from the nest and flew out of view with the remaining hatchling in its beak. The fallen chick was collected but died shortly afterwards. It was thought to be less than one week old, having not yet opened its eyes, being unable to stand and having only a few feathers.

Pied Hornbills eat fruit (Brosset & Erard 1986, Chapin 1939) but have been known to rob sunbird and woodpecker nests (Brosset & Erard 1986). This appears to be the first record of one robbing the nest of a thrush.

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A ground nest of the Lanner Falcon Falco biarmicus in Mauritania

Although the Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* is one of few raptor species occurring well into the desert, there seem to be no observations showing that the species nests on the ground where other structures might be rare. Lanners may nest on isolated rocky hills in the desert, including on the top of cliffs, where they are often easily accessible (Jany 1960, McLachlan & Liversidge 1978, Newby 1981, J.-M. Thiollay pers. com.). Apart from this information we are not aware of any record of the species nesting on the ground in Africa, where it either nests in scrapes on cliff edges or in old nests of large raptors, corvids or herons (Brown *et al.* 1982, Kemp 1993). The only reference we found that mentions nesting on the ground, without giving further details, is Hoyo *et al.* (1994). We describe here the discovery of a ground nest of Lanner Falcon in Mauritania.

A trip was made from Ouadâne (20°54'N, 11°35'W) to Bir Amrane (22°47'N, 8°43'W) in early April 2004. North of El Ghallâouîya (21°35'N, 10°35'W) the track led first through rocky areas where isolated bushes grew and then through plain sand desert. The track was marked throughout with scattered stone piles up to 1.5 m high. We realised that Palaearctic migrants such as Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* or

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Northern Wheatears *Oenanthe oenanthe* often perched on these piles. We also found a Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* resting in the shade in such a pile. On some piles we saw clumps of dry branches that suggested nests of Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis* although the species was not observed on the trip. We also recognized Lanner Falcons a few times perching on the piles.

At one of the piles (22°20'N, 9°6'W) on 3 April our guide pointed out a Lanner sitting on the ground next to our car. When we were still sitting in the car the falcon started to show "broken wing" behaviour. After crawling for a few metres it finally flew off. When leaving the nest it revealed an egg and two chicks that were a few days old. The nest itself was a shallow bowl scraped in the sand without any lining (Fig. 1). Sticks and some pellets were lying around the nest but not in any apparent arrangement that suggested that they were placed there deliberately. We quickly took some photographs and left immediately. The area where we found the nest was plain sand desert with no trees nor cliffs in the vicinity. The only other structure where the



Figure 1. Female Lanner showing "broken wing" behaviour when leaving its ground nest (photo VS).

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falcon could have bred was the stone pile c. 3–4 m away. There were some sticks on the pile and also on the ground that must have been carried by birds for quite a long distance.

On 6 Apr we found another Lanner brood approximately 15 km northwest of Bir Amrane in an isolated stand of about 20 *Acacia tortilis* trees (22°55'N, 8°48'W). There, an old nest in a tree contained three chicks (Fig. 2), indicating flexibility in selection of breeding sites in the desert.

Lanners are known to prey on Palaearctic migrants on spring migration in the Sahara and timing of breeding is associated with migration phenology (Jany 1960, Heu 1961, Newby 1981, J.-M. Thiollay pers. comm.). We did not search for food remains around the ground nest because of the disturbance that might have been caused but under the tree nest we found several tails of *Uromastix* lizards. However, passerine migrants were abundant in the area (pers. obs.), so sites and season of our observations are not surprising. Other *Falco* species are known to breed on the ground when other substrates are scarce *e.g.* Sooty Falcon *F. concolor*, Eleonora's Falcon *F. eleonorae* and Peregrine Falcon *F. peregrinus* (Hoyo *et al.* 1994). The abundance of passerine migrants in the desert during spring migration together with the possible scarcity of predators might attract falcons to breed even at an apparently sub-optimal site.



Figure 2. Lanner nest in an *Acacia tortilis* tree; two of the three young in the nest are visible (photo VM).

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A supplementary gazetteer for the birds of Ghana

A number of localities mentioned in Grimes (1987) do not appear in the gazetteer to that work. I give their coordinates or approximate locations here. Localities have been traced using various maps and gazetteers, and double-checked where possible. A few localities are explained in notes and a few alternative spellings included. FR is an abbreviation for Forest Reserve.

Abrobonko, Sweet (Kakum) river mouth ¹	
Abutia Kloe	
Adidome	
Agyabura (Bura river) FR	
Akosombo	
Akwapim ²	c. 5°45′N, 0°15′W
Amminsa (Amisa) lagoon	
Anjuanema Mt, Mpraeso	
Anum	