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MARCH/APRIL 2015  
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Wood Owls  
*Failure to  
launch*

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RAINS MIGRANTS**

family  
matters

UNUSUAL  
NEST RECORDS

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# reflex

## ACTION

In June 2014 we spent some time in Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. We were fortunate to have a number of interesting sightings, including 25 species of raptor, such as these Pale Chanting Goshawks *Melierax canorus*. This interaction, photographed as we were on our way back to Twee Rivieren campsite, brought to mind a similar sequence of images of Pearl-spotted Owlets that appeared in the January/February 2014 issue of your magazine. Afterwards we realised that we had been privileged to witness a seldom-seen event.

At 17h20, using a 70-200-millimetre lens fitted to a Nikon D300 camera, I photographed the female goshawk perched on a large Sociable Weaver nest. She was clearly at ease, standing on one leg. Having taken some pictures of her impressive perch, I then trained my D800 with a 200-400-millimetre lens on the bird for some close-ups. As I was doing so, a male Pale Chanting Goshawk suddenly appeared in the viewfinder, landed on top of her and they instantly mated. As quickly as I could, I pressed and then held the shutter release. Two seconds later all the action was over. I had taken my shots, the male had stepped off, bowed a few times to the female, and flown away.

The event left us astounded as it had all happened so rapidly. Being a retired fighter pilot I still have fairly fast reflexes, but as the first photograph of their interaction shows, the actual contact was already over when I captured these images.

DICK BOS



*No ceremony required. The male goshawk flew in unexpectedly and, without any hesitation, mounted and mated with the female, before departing the scene just as quickly.*



*opposite On the lookout. The female Pale Chanting Goshawk perched on a large Sociable Weaver nest in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park.*

