

Biodiversity Record: Crested goshawk preying on Javan myna

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Subjects: Crested goshawk, *Lophospiza trivirgata indica* (Aves: Accipitriformes: Accipitridae); Javan myna, *Acridotheres javanicus* (Aves: Passeriformes: Sturnidae).

Subjects identified by: Wan Ting Chan.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Singapore Botanic Gardens; 5 June 2025; 1737–1755 hrs.

Habitat: Urban parkland.

Observers: Khairuldin Bin Aziz Muhammad, Yi He Lim, Ying Ying Toh and Wan Ting Chan.

Observation: An adult crested goshawk was first observed restraining a Javan myna on concrete ground, with the prey struggling between its talons (Fig. 1a) for about 3 minutes. The goshawk then lifted off slightly to drive the myna towards the ground about 30 cm away from the initial spot (Fig. 1b). Subsequently, it flew up with the myna between its talons to perch on a mid-canopy branch of a *Syzygium polyanthum* tree around 10 m away (Fig. 2a). The timing of its flight coincided with the increasing number of observers gathering close by. Once perched, the goshawk began to pluck the myna's feathers with its beak (Fig. 2b) before consuming it (Fig. 2c). The observers left the scene at approximately 1755 hrs, with the goshawk still actively feeding on the myna on the tree branch. A video of the event can be viewed [here](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1P1eaSlbPnQZcfWfJ4AzMzGbVFTf89Pv6/view) (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1P1eaSlbPnQZcfWfJ4AzMzGbVFTf89Pv6/view>).



Fig. 1. Lateral views of crested goshawk (a) subduing a Javan myna on the ground and then (b) lifting off slightly and (c) driving the prey against the ground (Screengrabs from video by: Ying Ying Toh).

Remarks: While predator-prey relationships between crested goshawks and various prey species, including the Javan myna, have been previously documented in Singapore (e.g., Shepherd, 2018, as *Accipiter trivirgatus*; Wee, 2021; Mendoza & Lim, 2022), our record offers a comprehensive account of the process from prey subdual to consumption on a tree perch. Furthermore, our observation draws attention to the likelihood that tree perch feeding is an important strategy for crested goshawks. This is because most photographs of crested goshawks, predominantly on local nature group websites, depict them with prey perched on trees or do not document consumption on the ground (e.g., Shepherd, 2018, as *Accipiter trivirgatus*; Wee, 2021; Mendoza & Lim, 2022).

Using tree perches with adequate foliage cover likely improves concealment from threats such as predators or kleptoparasites, allowing raptors to feed with reduced vigilance and distraction. This may enhance foraging efficiency and contribute to overall fitness (Lima, 1998; Campos et al., 2009). As such, maintaining perching structures, particularly those offering concealment, such as mature trees, within the urban matrix is likely beneficial for crested goshawks and

similar avian predators, supporting their ecological roles in sustaining complex food webs critical for functional urban ecosystems (Natsukawa et al., 2021). However, these hypothesised links remain underexplored and warrant further investigation.

The crested goshawk is regarded as ‘Near Threatened’ in Singapore (Yong et al., 2024, as *Accipiter trivirgatus*). The presence of such apex predators are apparent indications of a relatively healthy functioning urban ecosystem (Natsukawa et al., 2021).



Fig. 2. Crested goshawk demonstrating perch feeding behaviour with a Javan myna. (a) Goshawk with prey on the tree. (Photograph by: Muhammad Khairuldin Bin Aziz) (b) Goshawk plucking feathers off its prey. (Photograph by: Ying Ying Toh) (c) Goshawk actively feeding on the myna (Photograph by: Wan Ting Chan).

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