

Note on Aggressive behaviour of
White-eyed buzzard *Butastur teesa*
at Gir National Park, Gujarat, India



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Often, raptors are observed engaged in talon-grappling and cartwheeling behaviour, an aerial interaction whereby birds of prey lock their talons and spin down at a common axis (Farquhar et al. 1994). Cartwheeling can be attributed to multiple factors, including aggression (Simmons & Mendelsohn 1993; Raimilla et al. 2015), food transfers (Kitowski 2001), courtship (Simmons & Mendelsohn 1993), or as a prelude to copulation (Borello & Borello 2004; Murn et al. 2009). The behaviour is both interspecific and intraspecific competition among birds of prey.

A juvenile white-eyed buzzard and an adult white-eyed buzzard were seen engaged in aerial flight. Some of the behaviours used to tackle the intruder included display stooping, display diving, talon lowering, display flapping, talon locking, and cartwheeling. On locating the intruder, the adult white-eyed buzzard behaved aggressively. Initially, the adult first attained height and performed display stooping, followed by display flapping of wings. The display flapping behavior was accompanied by constant warning calls. Along with the display flap warning, the adult approached the intruder with a talon-lowering posture, and when it reached close proximity to its opponent, the adult made a sudden flick over to attack him. The flying opponent reiterated with a talon, resulting in a sudden lock followed by a cartwheel. The cartwheeling pair plummeted with speed, crashing over a high branch of the Red Silk-cotton tree *Bombax ceiba*. The exhausted tussling pair remained locked for a few seconds, followed by continual efforts meant to unravel the talon lock. One amusing moment during talon lock was when the adult was swaying on hanging with the opponent juvenile holding through talon. The adult remained hanging for a few seconds before flapping his wings hard to unlock himself. The effort made by the adult pushed the juvenile to slip down, resulting in both hanging for a second time until the final thrush, resulting in an unlocked talon. After facing the aggressive behavior of an adult, the juvenile immediately escaped from the

site. Prytherch (2009) has well documented and illustrated quite similar assertive flight posture and dive-on, turn-over display in the Common Buzzard *Buteo Buteo*. The white-eyed buzzard is a common resident of Gujarat (Ganpule et al. 2022). We have also noted a dive-on, turn-over display between nesting pairs at Jamwala Range in East Gir, Gir National Park.

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