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### The Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides* in Kenya

The Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides* breeds in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, and further to the south in northern Sudan and the Yemen (Cade 1982). In Kenya it has been considered to be a very rare Palearctic migrant. One of two falcons migrating with other birds of prey was shot near Loiyengalani on 4 November 1958 (Owre & Paulson 1968), and this proved to be a female Barbary, the only record given for East Africa by Britton (1980).

On 21 February 1981 an adult male Barbary Falcon was found at Marania Farm, Timau, at some 2500 m, on the northern slopes of Mt Kenya. It had a badly injured wing and could not be released. It has since been maintained successfully in captivity. It has mated with a captive female Peregrine Falcon *F. peregrinus* in late 1983, mid 1986 and June 1989 although no eggs were laid. The Barbary has been used as a foster parent for young falcons, kites and, on one occasion, a Great Sparrowhawk *Accipiter melanoleucus*, although this chick was too aggressive and had to be removed. The male Barbary is now at least 11 years old.

During my stay at Timau, between 1981 and 1984 I observed other Barbary Falcons in the area on several occasions. On the northern cliffs of Lewa Downs (about 15 km south of Isiolo town) I noted an adult male on 17 September 1981, adult male and female together the next day and a single bird on 21 January 1982. Close views were obtained on 18 October, and the male perched on the cliff only a metre or so from me. Meanwhile, at Marania Farm, about 7 km south of the cliffs, the injured captive male called down other Barbary Falcons on 23 November 1981 (a male), on 21 June 1983 (an unexpected date; another male) and on 24 October 1983. On the last date the attracted female perched in a tree above a pair of Verreaux's Eagle Owls *Bubo lacteus*. It was very aggressive towards the owls and curious of the captive Barbary, and was watched at about 10 m for half an hour. I saw what I believed to be this female nearby on 10 and 21 November 1983. On 10th it attacked a wounded Crowned Plover *Vanellus coronatus* within 3 m of me, and on 21st it attacked a pet Indian House Crow *Corvus splendens*, but without success.



I made one other sighting of a Barbary Falcon in the area during this period, obtaining close views of a bird at Ololokwe (north of Archer's Post) on 15 November 1982. No more sightings have been made since 1984. Despite numbers of large falcon nest sites being studied in the Kedong and Machakos areas during the last six years, no Barbary Falcons have been seen.

The cliff birds may have been the same individuals as those attracted to the captive male. However, assuming that the Ololokwe bird was a different individual, at least four different birds were thus encountered in the Isiolo area between 1981 and 1984. The pair that took up residence could have been wintering as they were present during those months that Palaearctic migrants visit Kenya. It is possible, however, that they were migrants from only as far as northern Sudan or Yemen, where their breeding season is likely to be in the northern summer. It must be considered, however, a possibility that the Barbary Falcon breeds in northern Kenya. Ecologically, some of the semi-desert and desert areas there would be ideal for this species.

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### Barbary Falcons *Falco pelegrinoides* in Tsavo

On 24 November 1987, a medium-sized, Peregrine-like falcon was seen at dusk 'dashing' along the cliff east of Ngulia Lodge in Tsavo West National Park, Kenya. Further brief views, presumably of the same bird, were obtained the next evening by DJP, GCB and M.A.C. Coverdale.

The bird had brownish-grey upperparts, particularly pale on the rump, and a bold moustache pattern, but it appeared slender for a Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*. Despite two more brief sightings, it was not until 29 November that good views of the bird were obtained. On this occasion it flew past three times, low and in good light at some 50–100 m range. It then circled for about a minute 50–70 m overhead, well illuminated by the low morning sun. The following points were noted by GCB, DJP and DAT: wings pointed, tail medium length (longer than in a Hobby *F. subbuteo*), generally smaller and slimmer looking than a Peregrine. The whole underparts looked pale, with no barring obvious on the underwing. There were clear narrow dark streaks on the sides of the breast, extending to the flanks. The upperparts were brownish grey, noticeably paler on the rump. The upper-tail was grey. A bold moustachial mark contrasted with whitish cheeks and dark cap, but rufous was visible on the hind neck. The bird was identified as a Barbary Falcon *F. pelegrinoides* from its size and jizz, its pale upperparts, the lack of any heavy marking





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