

### MICRASTUR OR ACCIPITER, THAT IS THE QUESTION

“... the more you look the more you see” (Peter Grant 1986, *Ecology and evolution of Darwin’s finches*. Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, NJ U.S.A.).

The main point made by Thorstrom (2002, *J. Raptor Res.* 36:335–336) concerns the behavior of our birds, which he claims is not the behavior of *Micrastur* (he should perhaps say the behavior of *M. ruficollis* and *M. semitorquatus*, as the behavior of the other four species is still unknown). We can report that the Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon (*Micrastur mirandollei*) was present in the area of its now defunct 1997 stick nest (de Vries and Melo 2000, *J. Raptor Res.* 34:148–150) in March of 1998. Although we cannot be sure that it is the same bird we saw previously at and around the nest, it responded (vocalized, but did not come out into the open) to the species’ call as recorded by John Moore in his series of bird sounds of eastern Ecuador. So far, we have been unable to locate its new nesting site.

The Grey-bellied Goshawk (*Accipiter poliogaster*) was present at some 5 km distance from the *Micrastur* nest site in both 1997 and 1998. We observed this species in the more open and bare branches of the canopy, rather than the densely-vegetated, middle canopy layer, where we noted *Micrastur mirandollei*.

We hope that the comment by R. Thorstrom (2002) stimulates more observations on *Micrastur*, which are badly needed. In addition, further study on why some avian raptors are so similar in plumage patterns, as is the case with *M. mirandollei* and *Accipiter poliogaster*, would be valuable in understanding the potential adaptive benefits of such “mimicry.” In our field experience, the “capped” appearance and tail banding of *Accipiter* are diagnostic, as are the round grey head and yellow face that *Micrastur* features.—**Tjitte de Vries and Cristian Melo, Departamento de Biología, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, Apartado 17-01-2184, Quito, Ecuador; E-mail address: tdevries@puceuo.puce.edu.ec**

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