

from a tree off to the right. The two adults were approximately the size of a Hairy Woodpecker with the back and upper wings shiny, solid black. The female had a plain black crown. The male had a yellow patch on the crown. Both birds had a white line above a black mustache, white belly and black and white barring on the sides. The three visible young resembled the adults but didn't appear as shiny. They were actively begging food and we saw the male pass food several times. It was difficult to see the female through the branches. Bull (1974) gives fledgling dates of 20 June to 23 July. Beehler (1978) lists egg dates through 19 June. Fledged young still being fed on 26 August may represent a late nest record for New York State.

Dorothy W. Crumb, 3983 Gates Road, Jamesville, NY 13078

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Unusual Hunting Posture of a Red-tailed Hawk: On June 12, 1985 I observed an adult Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) quartering over a large field. The bird was flying at a height of 50 m. The weather was cool and the winds were out of the southeast at 10-15 mph. The hawk circled the field three times and then began to hover at a distance of 350 m from my observation point. It held this position for 30 seconds. The hawk again flew the width of the field and back to the original hovering location. It then began to drop very slowly to the ground. Its head was held down as if hunting and its descent was totally vertical. The wings, between the body and the wrist, were held up at a 5-10 degree angle. The hand was held down at a slightly greater angle and the wing tips were at an even greater angle downward. The overall impression of the hawk as it was dropping was that of a parachute, with its wings "billowing" against the wind. It took the Red-tail approximately 15-20 seconds to descend out of view from a height of 50 m. Two minutes later the bird ascended, with no apparent prey, and flew out of view. Hunting methods previously described for the Red-tailed Hawk have included hunting from a perch, from a soaring position and by quartering flight over a field in the manner of a harrier (Bent 1937, Fitch 1946). Observations have also been made of Red-tailed Hawks hunting from a hover and kiting position (Bent 1937, Austing 1964). The hawk is described as plummeting toward the earth with pulled back wings. Brown (1976a), has depicted the Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) descending from a hover quite slowly with partly closed wings. He states that as it approaches the prey the hawk raises its wings above its head and quickly plunges to the earth. Brown has also used the term parachute to depict the descent of a hawk on its prey. He describes the hawk as dropping with its wings held upward and at the

last moment plunging rapidly toward the prey (Brown 1976b). The hunting posture observed by me appears to be extremely rare, and given the amount of time it took the Red-tailed Hawk to complete its descent it is doubtful that this is an efficient hunting method. It does illustrate, however, the diversification of hunting methods of the Red-tailed Hawk.

Roberta McDonald, 1392 East Park Rd., Grand Island, New York 14072.

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