

An unsuccessful attempt of predation of a Monitor lizard by a Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus*

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Solapur sub-region is covered with thorny forest patches. Land is covered with Babhul *Acacia nilotica* and Hivar *Acacia leucophloea* sporadically. There are small streams arising from seasonal medium sized ponds and lakes. Land patches ranging from one to two acres surrounding human settlements are being used for cultivation. Grass species like *Melanocenthris jacquemontii*, *Heteropogon contortus* and *Chrysopogon spp.* dominate the landcover. Short grasses fulfil the needs of canids, bovids and wild cats along with the winter visitors including raptors.

On 12 November 2019 authors witnessed an unexpected incident while birding near village Dhotri (17.811953, 76.036957) in the outskirts of the city adjoining the area of Jawaharlal Nehru bustard sanctuary Solapur, Maharashtra. An individual from a pair of Bonelli's eagle *H. fasciatus* launched an attack from a high voltage electric tower on a Monitor Lizard *Varanus bengalensis* which was basking on an ant hill. The two feet longer lizard started running when it saw the predator. Eagle chased the running lizard grasped it in the talons and lifted the lizard. A lizard bit the leg of the eagle and it released the lizard from its claws. The fallen lizard escaped successfully. The lizard retreated beneath the stones. Eagle could not get another chance to catch the monitor lizard. According to Ali (1997) and Naoroji (2006) monitor lizards are one of the food preferences of Bonelli's eagle.

References

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