

**BATHING HABITS OF THE COOPER'S HAWK**

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I observed the bathing habits of a Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), assumed from field marks to be a male, in the North Phoenix Mountain Preserve area, Arizona, for the past 4 years from September through March. Daily between 0800 and 1000 the hawk visited a shallow stone water catchment (56 cm x 36 cm x 7.5 cm) in an otherwise dry desert wash. I had an excellent view using a 20 power scope at a distance of about 60 m. Usually the hawk took several drinks, then stepped into the water and stood there with the feet and legs partially immersed. The time spent standing in the water varied from 15 minutes to 1.5 hours. It would pick up each foot and carefully clean the scales on the tarsi and toes with its mandibles, also giving close attention to the claws. After the cleaning the hawk inspected its feet, including turning them over to examine the undersides. When the soaking, cleaning and inspection were completed the bird flew to a nearby perch and proceeded to oil the tarsi, toes and claws using oil from the oil gland at the base of the tail. The oiling process usually lasted about 10 to 20 minutes.

The hawk took a complete bath only about twice a week and spent little time on feather care, at least at the observed location. I assume that the above procedure occurred shortly after feeding, since its crop appeared full and the hawk showed little interest in other birds near the catchment.

Veterinarians find frequent injuries to the legs and feet of desert dwelling raptors, caused by contact with cacti spines. Whether or not this problem relates to the above observations could not be determined. A comparison of the bathing habits of desert Cooper's Hawks with those of birds from a non-desert environment would be of interest.

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