

PREDATION ON A SNAKE-EYED LIZARD BY A HOOPOE

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Hoopoes Upupa epops are known to prey occasionally on reptiles. This is excellently documented by a photograph in Roedelberger & Groschoff (1963: 175), which shows a Hoopoe with a lizard in its bill and yet actual observations of predation on reptiles are rarely reported.

On 8th August 1985 I was lucky enough to witness such an event. While scouting the cottonfields of Kibbutz Netzer Sereni, Israel, for insect pests, two Hoopoes were seen foraging at the edge of a field among some ruderal vegetation. The area in question is densely populated by Snake-eyed Lizards Ophisops elegans.

To my surprise one of the birds managed to catch an adult Snake-eyed Lizard of + 15cm length. It kept the lizard in its bill for a while held at midbody. Then the victim was thrown into the air in typical Hoopoe-manner and caught again head down in the open bill after which it was swallowed completely.

Reference

Roedelberger F A & V I Groschoff, 1963. The wonders of wildlife in Europe. 232pp. London, New York, Toronto.

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