

COLLARED SPARROWHAWK vs BROWN GOSHAWK
AN IDENTIFICATION COMPARISON TABLE

Characteristic	COLLARED SPARROWHAWK		BROWN GOSHAWK	
Sex	Male	Female	Male	Female
Length (Avg cm)	29-33	35-38	38-45	45-55
Body	Small, lightly built			
Eyes & Eyebrows	Boggle-eyed, wide-eyed, stares		Frowns, menacing, glares. Heavy brow (beetle-browed)	
Head & Bill	Much more robust bill. Has the smaller head. Female cere grey / cream		Bill is quite small. Female cere yellow/green	
Legs	Long, thin, wiry, spindly		More solid, sturdier	
Toes	Last segment of middle toe projects beyond claws of the other toes. Finer toes.		Tip of middle toe does not project beyond claws of the other toes.	
Tail (beware of worn tails)	Sharp cornered tail. Tail slightly forked when folded (bird perched). Long, square (Female) or notched (Male).		Longer, rounded.	
Flight Action	Rapid with bursts of quick wing-beats.		Rapid, powerful with bursts of quick deep wing-beats.	
	Low, direct flight is variously flickering and jerky (hedge hunting).		Can go under low canopy at high speed. Very manoeuvrable	
	Undulating (like cuckoo-shrike).			
Wings - Soaring: - Gliding: - In flight:	- Horizontal or upswept. - Slightly bowed or drooped wings. - From front: Looks longer winged. - From under/silhouette: Curved trailing edge to wing.		- Horizontal or upswept (soars in spirals). Tail fanned. - From front: slightly bowed, with tips bent up. - From under/silhouette: Adult has straight trailing edge to wing.	
Landing	Rapid tail-wagging on landing.		Wags tail sideways on landing.	
Food / Hunting	Prey usually small passerines - usually in flight.		Less frequently takes pursued small birds in flight.	
	Regularly patrols territory - in fast, low flight. Prey taken after turning & twisting pursuit.		May hunt in pairs, one flushing, one hunting. Often hunts from perch, waiting half concealed.	
	Always waits in foliage, launches attacks at small birds passing by.		Skulks, unobserved in cover. Takes more of its prey from ground than sparrowhawk.	
Behaviour	Trusting, approachable		Solitary, secretive	
Habitat	Woodlands, riverine vegetation, inland scrub, gorges, temperate rainforest		Wooded habitats and riverside, open forest, farmland. Often only glimpsed when flushed	
Nest	Small stick nest, usually high but sometimes lower (10 metres)		Large stick nest high in tall tree. Sometimes quite low (6 metres)	
Voice (near nest)	Ki-ki-ki-ki (shrill chattering). Kwiek-kwiek-kwiek (slower). Higher pitched, weaker, more rapid.		Keek-keek-keek (pitch rise). Kik-kik-ki-kikik (descending). ee-you-wick, ee-you-wick (drawn out).	

SOME SOURCES OF IDENTIFICATION

Morcombe	Page 90	Page 90
Pizzey & Knight	Page 130	Page 130
Simpson & Day (Ed'ns 5 & 6)	Page 116 (No.293)	Page 116 (No.292)
Slater	Page 72	Page 72
Beruldsen (Which BofP is that?)	Page 12, 20, 29, 40	Page 12, 20, 27, 37
Hanzab, Vol 2	Page 150, Plates 9, 10, 11 (p 168, 169, 176)	Page 134 Plates 9, 10, 11 (p 168, 169, 176)
Debus (The B of P of Australia)	Page 86, Illustrations 20, 21, 22, 24	Page 77, Illustrations 20, 21, 22, 24
Morris, Frank	Birds of Prey of Aust, a field guide, Lansdowne	Pages 44, 45, 46, 47
Olsen, Penny	Australian Birds of Prey, UNSW Press, 1995	
Condon H.T.	Field Guide to the Hawks, Bird Observer's Club of Australia, 1949	
Czechura, Debus, Mooney	The Australian Birdwatcher, Vol 12, No.2, June 1987, pages 35 – 62 "The Collared Sparrowhawk, A Review and Comparison with the Brown Goshawk"	
Debus, Stephen /Schaefer, Ken	NSW Bird Atlassers, Info sheet on the Raptors of NSW, Vol 2 Forest Hawks	

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Based on a table originally prepared by Bob Forsyth (PO Box 933, Mount Isa, Qld, 4825) and modified by Irene Denton, Newsletter Editor, NSW Bird Atlassers.

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