



# Biodiversity Observations

<http://bo.adu.org.za>



**An electronic journal published by the Animal Demography Unit at the University of Cape Town**

The scope of Biodiversity Observations consists of papers describing observations about biodiversity in general, including animals, plants, algae and fungi. This includes observations of behaviour, breeding and flowering patterns, distributions and range extensions, foraging, food, movement, measurements, habitat and colouration/plumage variations. Biotic interactions such as pollination, fruit dispersal, herbivory and predation fall within the scope, as well as the use of indigenous and exotic species by humans. Observations of naturalised plants and animals will also be considered. Biodiversity Observations will also publish a variety of other interesting or relevant biodiversity material: reports of projects and conferences, annotated checklists for a site or region, specialist bibliographies, book reviews and any other appropriate material. Further details and guidelines to authors are on this website.

Lead Editor: H. Dieter Oschadleus – Paper Editor: H. Dieter Oschadleus

---

## COMMON FISCAL USING MAN-MADE OBJECT DURING FEEDING

*Dawid H. de Swardt*

Recommended citation format:

**De Swardt D 2018.** Common Fiscal using man-made object during feeding. Biodiversity Observations, Vol 9.2: 1-2

URL: <https://journals.uct.ac.za/index.php/BO/article/view/528>

Published online: 15 February 2018

## AVIAN FORAGING

### COMMON FISCAL USING MAN-MADE OBJECT DURING FEEDING

*Dawid H. de Swardt*

Department of Ornithology, National Museum, P O Box 266, Bloemfontein  
9300, South Africa

\*Corresponding author: [dawie@nasmus.co.za](mailto:dawie@nasmus.co.za)

de Swardt (2016) reported on a Common Fiscal *Lanuis collaris* impaling its prey on thorny objects such as Acacia thorns or on the barbs of barbed wire fences. It was always speculated that the shrikes used the thorns of trees or wires to have a better hold on the food item during feeding (see references in de Swardt 2016; Dean 2005).

The following observations were made on 12 July 2017 at Fleurdal, Bloemfontein, Free State, South Africa, of a Common Fiscal. At about 16h30 I observed a female Common Fiscal (one of the few I have ringed) flying with a food object in his beak and perched on the pole of the concrete wall (Figure 1). The female then hooked the prey item on one of the barbs of the security fence above the concrete pole (Figure 2) and started feeding on the food item (Figure 3 & 4). By this feeding technique the Common Fiscal female used the sharp end of the spike of the security fence to obtain a better hold on the food item.

This observation again shows that even in a suburban garden interesting observations can be obtained. Common Fiscals and other *Lanuis* species are known to attach their food items on sharp objects (Dean 2005), but observations like this one are probably few.

Roos & Roos (1988) observed on a rare occasion that a Common Fiscal returned to a stored food item at a later stage.

#### References

**de Swardt DH** 2016. Lesser Grey Shrike and Common Fiscal impaling prey. Biodiversity Observations 7.57: 1-2

**Dean WRJ** 2005. Common Fiscal. In: Hockey PAR, Dean WRJ, Ryan PG (eds). Roberts Birds of Southern Africa (VII th Ed). The Trustees of the John Voelcker Bird Book Fund: Cape Town. pp. 728-729.

**Roos ZN, Roos M** 1988. Do Fiscal Shrikes feed on their stored food? *Mirafr* 5: 28-29.



**Figure 1:** The Common Fiscal female perching with her food item on top of the pole of the concrete wall.



**Figure 2:** The female sitting on the pole after she attached the food item to the sharp point of the security fence.



**Figure 3:** The female start feeding on the food item using the sharp point of the barb assisting her as a hold during feeding.



**Figure 4:** The female start feeding on the food item using the sharp point of the barb assisting her as a hold during feeding.