

# FALCON, AFRICAN PYGMY

## RANGE:

Two separate populations in Africa. North east Africa in Ethiopia, Sudan and Kenya. The other population is in South Africa in the north west corner.

## HABITAT:

Open savannahs, particularly arid flat arid grasslands with scattered acacia trees.

## SIZE:

Up to 7.5 inches in length, head to tail.

## LIFE EXPECTANCY:

Unknown.

## REPRODUCTION:

- Usually monogamous, the breeding pair will prospect for suitable nest chambers left vacant from their previous host.
- These birds do not build their own nests, they use an unoccupied nest chamber in a communal nest mass populated by the sociable weaver.
- One to 4 small rounded oval eggs will be laid 24 hours apart. A larger clutch may be laid in wet years.
- The newly hatched chicks are pink with a white down.
- The male will feed the young while they are still in the nest. After fledging the young birds will return to the nest for feeding.
- The pygmy falcon has a fairly high success rate as they are able to defend the nest from predators that raid the host weaver.

## DIET:

**Wild:** They feast on small reptiles such as lizards, agamas and skinks. They will also eat insects, like large beetles and small rodents.

**Zoo:** mice.

## BEHAVIOR:

- They perch on elevated branches looking for prey, which is mostly terrestrial.
- After catching the prey they carry it in their beaks or talons to a suitable perch to eat.
- They do occasionally hunt birds aerially and will even take weaver nestlings from their nests.
- These birds are very vocal with a sharp high-pitched song tee..tee..twip. And during breeding a kirr..kirr..kirr and a ki..ki..ki in alarm. They will also imitate the call of the host weaver.

## STATUS:

Not threatened. Although, the spread of agriculture and the removal of nest trees for the weavers have depleted numbers.

## POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Young are fed by both parents.
- These birds live solitary or in breeding pairs.
- In the winter, when food is scarce, they will spend 18 hrs in roosting in a hypothermic torpor.

## REFERENCES:

<http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/fitpatrick/docs/r186.html>

<http://home.hccnet.nl/r.goedegebuur/roofvog/afrikaansehalsbandvalke.html>

theZOO  
LOUISVILLE

PHOTO  
COMING  
SOON

Order:	<b>Falconiformes</b>
Family:	<b>Falconidae</b>
Genus:	<b>Polihierax</b>
Species:	<b>semitorquatus</b>