



ROUGH & *tumble*

Lanner Falcons *Falco biarmicus* are regularly seen in attendance at waterholes in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. The majority of these birds are youngsters which move into the Kalahari Desert in late summer and early winter, probably from breeding grounds situated well to the north and east. The falcons seem drawn to the area by the huge aggregations of seed-eating birds which visit Kgalagadi waterholes to drink every day.

These juvenile Lanners, brilliantly photographed by Chris van Rooyen at Rooiputs waterhole, however, seemed to be more interested in each other than in the hunting opportunities at hand. Newly fledged broods of falcons often chase and displace one another in mock attacks as they hone their skills as bird-hunters. It is possible that these two birds were simply continuing with this behaviour into sub-adulthood, or else each was attempting to stake a temporary territorial claim to the local hunting rites.

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