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Raptor habitats in the high country

Raptors use all habitats in the high country from the elevated tableland plains at 600 m to the slopes and spurs of Mt Kosciuszko at 2228 m, but different raptor species are more common in, and use, some habitats more than others.

City parks, urban gardens – The main urban centre in the high country, Canberra, was designed as an open-space city; extensive planting of trees and shrubs has provided rich, distinctive habitat for birds. Flowering eucalypts, acacias, banksias, grevilleas and numerous exotic berry-bearing shrubs and trees and other plants have diversified the available food and cover for birds such as honeyeaters and currawongs. Most cities around the world are dominated by introduced birds, but Canberra is dominated by native parrots, currawongs and magpies alongside introduced mynas, sparrows and starlings, all major prey species of Peregrines, Brown Goshawks, Australian Hobbies, Nankeen Kestrels and Collared Sparrowhawks which nest in the city (Figure 3.1). Major bird migration routes follow the plantings of the streets and lake foreshores.

Collared Sparrowhawks often nest in introduced pines such as *Pinus radiata* in parks or in people's backyards, and Hobbies (in this book 'Hobby' refers to the Australian Hobby, *Falco longipennis*) choose raven nests in tall eucalypts or sometimes in pines in city parks or backyards. Southern Boobooks select eucalypt hollows in urban parks or along bike paths if these parks are little disturbed, but mostly nest in nature parks and hunt in urban settings after dark. Kestrels nest in eucalypt hollows and on buildings. This tallies with overseas studies where Eurasian Sparrowhawks and Northern Hobbies nest in city parks, often in pines,