

Common Name/Scientific name: Pacific Baza / *Tregellasia capito*

The Pacific Baza is a raptor of tropical and subtropical woodlands where it breeds in tall trees, placing its shallow, cup-shaped nest of sticks and twigs among the foliage. When breeding, its principle food is stick insects, which are snatched from the outer foliage of the canopy, sometimes after perching in the canopy and inspecting the leaves, or scrambling about through the foliage, but most usually by plunging into the foliage after flying just above the treetops. It is also known as the Crested Hawk, Crested Baza, or the Pacific Cuckoo-Falcon.



Description: The Pacific Baza is a medium-sized, long-tailed hawk with a prominent crest. It is slim-bodied, with a narrow head and neck. The wings are paddle-shaped, well-rounded and deeply 'fingered'. The head, neck and breast are grey and the underparts are white with bold dark banding. The legs are short with weak toes. The eyes are golden-yellow and domed, placed well on the side of the head, giving a slightly 'pop-eyed' look. The female is heavier and browner on the crown than the male.

Feeding & Behaviour in the gardens: The Pacific Baza's favourite prey is large insects, particularly stick insects and mantids, and frogs. They sometimes eat fruit as well. Bazas will move through the canopy, or perch and watch, then make short dives, with feet extended, to snatch prey from the foliage or from the air. They also will fly low just above the canopy while foraging.

Breeding and Nesting: The Pacific Baza builds a flimsy flat nest of sticks, which is placed high in the upper leafy branches of a tree. Often the nest blows down. They are very secretive when breeding and the parent sits quietly on the nest, with its long tail sticking out over the rim. Both parents brood and feed the chicks. Bazas have a spectacular tumbling display-flight during courtship.

Similar species seen in the gardens: The Pacific Baza's crest and boldly barred abdomen make this bird of prey distinctive. The breast is much more finely barred than on the somewhat similar Collared Sparrowhawk, *Accipiter cirrhocephalus*, or the Brown Goshawk, *Accipiter fasciatus* (both seen occasionally in the Maroochy gardens)