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As its name suggests, the diet of the Black-chested Snake-Eagle (*Circaetus pectoralis*) is made up mainly of snakes, supplemented occasionally by lizards, amphibians, birds and rodents. In one record, a 1.8 m-long cobra was killed. The eagle hunts either from a perch or in flight, often hovering on winnowing wings, observing the ground below. Snakes are killed with crushing grasps of its small but powerful talons; smaller snakes are then swallowed whole, even venomous ones. The nest is a small platform of sticks placed on the crown of a thorn tree or euphorbia where it is difficult to detect, unlike the large structures of most other eagles.

Photo and text: Peter Steyn  
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