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*Verreaux's Eagle-Owl Bubo lacteus was formerly known as the Giant Eagle-Owl. Measuring 62 cm and weighing about 2 kg, it is larger than some eagle species. Despite its somewhat somnolent appearance and bizarre pink eyelids, it is a powerful nocturnal butcher, capable of killing a roosting Secretarybird or warthog piglet, and has been known to pounce opportunistically on unsuspecting prey passing beneath its roost during the day. Its diet includes a wide variety of mammals; where they occur, hedgehogs are preferred. Avian prey records comprise such species as guineafowl, francolin, nestlings of birds of prey, other species of owl and various small birds. It usually breeds in the disused stick nests of birds of prey such as eagles, and in some cases may even dispossess the rightful resident.*

**Photo and text: Peter Steyn**  
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