

ground was covered with the "castings" of the Owls, composed entirely of the fur and bones of the mice.

The committee finally reported: "It would be difficult to condemn too severely the foolish action of those who allow or encourage the destruction of Hawks and Owls. It is with much satisfaction that your committee record that many farmers and land owners seem to have become convinced in late years that Hawks and Owls are not only harmless but most beneficial to agriculturists and have issued orders for the preservation of these birds."

Our position in Ontario may at any time, if we are not careful, resemble that of the Scotch farmers in 1892. It would be well therefore for our people to exert their best influence for the protection of our beneficial Hawks and Owls at once, in order to avert what may develop into a serious calamity.

The birds of prey may be roughly divided into two classes—the Hawks and the Owls. Of the Eagles little need be said; they are now so rarely found in the cultivated districts that their influence for good or ill is practically nothing.

HAWKS.

Of the hawks there are eleven species, occurring regularly in this Province in greater or less abundance every season. These are the Marsh Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Goshawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Duck Hawk, Pigeon Hawk and Sparrow Hawk; there are two or three others, but they are only occasional visitors. Of these eleven, the Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Goshawk, Duck Hawk and Pigeon Hawk are the species which occasionally make raids upon the poultry yards, and which at all times seem to prefer feathered game to either fur or insects; they should, therefore, be shot whenever the opportunity is given. The Sharp-shinned Hawk and Cooper's Hawk are the two species which most frequently attack poultry. They are both small hawks, but make up for their lack of size by boldness and dexterity. It is but seldom they attack a full-grown fowl, but if they once find an accessible lot of chickens they will continue to visit the flock until they have taken them all, or are killed in the attempt to do so. The mischief done by these two species has been the principal cause of the prejudice existing among farmers against all the hawk tribe, and is usually given as an excuse for the slaughter of the valuable species whose constant work inures to man's benefit. The food of the Duck Hawk and Pigeon Hawk consists chiefly of wild birds. They rarely visit the farms, their usual resort being the marshes and shores of lakes frequented by water fowl. The Pigeon Hawk is not so named because it has any preference for pigeons, either wild or domestic, but because it slightly resembles a pigeon in shape both when on the wing and when at rest.

The Goshawk fortunately does not visit the cultivated portion of Ontario in any numbers regularly; it is a winter visitor usually; and rather an expensive one to entertain when it does come. The winter of 1896-7 was one of the seasons in which it was particularly abundant through southern Ontario, and poultry owners suffered greatly from its destructive powers in consequence. This Hawk is a large powerful bird, quite capable of killing and carry off a full grown hen. Owing to its boldness and strength it is capable of doing a great deal of damage, and should consequently be killed whenever seen. As previously stated, this hawk generally occurs in winter, and therefore it is not likely to be mistaken for any of the hawks whose food habits are beneficial. As a general rule, if a hawk is seen about the farm-yard during the winter it is safe to assume that it is there for no good