

Our Wild Birds.

Lovers of wild birds in Canada, as well as in the United States, have been gratified to learn that the new United States tariff bill, as revised, puts no premium on the slaughter of birds for millinery purposes. Owing, perhaps, to the bombardment of appeals from various Audubon Societies and Zoological Associations, it was decided that the duty should not be lowered on plumage intended for this "nefarious traffic," as the late Lord Avebury designated it.

Societies for the protection of bird-life—valuable though it is to the farmer as well as the nature-lover—are not so numerous in Canada as in the United States; yet we have our bird-lovers, too, and, among them all, none is more enthusiastic than Mr. W. E. Saunders, of London, Ont., who has kindly given us permission to pass on to you the account that follows of one of his many trips to Point Pelee. Point Pelee, it may be noted, is a projection of Essex County, which reaches out into Lake Erie. Near its extremity is Pelee Island, and the two form resting-places for the birds in their migrations from the cold North to the Sunny South in fall, and back again to the Northern nesting-places in spring. This will account for the numbers of birds seen by Mr. Saunders during his three-days' trip; incidentally, Mr. Saunders, of course, has developed the "many eyes" of the true nature-lover.

The article appeared first in The Ottawa Naturalist.

THE SHARP-SHINNED HAWK MIGRATION.

(By W. E. Saunders, London, Ont.)

Point Pelee is a place of surprises. One never knows what to expect, but can always feel sure that there will be something doing in the bird line, and frequently that something is of unexpected and absorbing interest.

My visit of September 18th, 19th and 20th, happened to be just the very time to see the celebrated Sharp-shinned Hawk migration from its inception, and thereby to realize more easily the effect it has on other bird life. When we arrived on the 17th, we were told that the hawk flight was not "on," and on the next morning we found that this was quite true. There were, of course, a few hawks drifting down from the north and crossing the lake, as there always are in fall, but there were not a very great many, while on the other hand there were large numbers of small birds. We recorded, that day, 68 species of birds, of which four were hawks, and among these were 100 Sharp-shins, which always comprise the bulk of the early flight. Other birds were there in numbers; for instance, we recorded 300 Waxwings, 150 White-throated Sparrows, 100 Ruby-crowned Kinglets, 80 Flickers, and 50 Olive-backed Thrushes.

The wind, that night, was strong from the west, and the temperature rather high. The next morning we found the hawks very much augmented in numbers, reporting six species, in the following numbers: 250 Sharp-shins, 10 Marsh, 10 Cooper's, 2 Pigeon, 1 Duck, and 1 Osprey. The results of the presence of so many Sharp-shins was strikingly visible among the small birds, reminding us forcibly of the old automobile joke, which stated that the quick were those that got out of the way of the automobile, and the dead were those that did not. Some of the birds were apparently wise, and got out of the way.

Although the Ruby-crowned migration was just beginning, we saw none after the first day. The White-throated sparrows dropped from 150 to 20, and the Olive-backed Thrush, which divides with the Cuckoo the doubtful honor of being the favorite food of the Sharp-shinned Hawk, also dropped to 20, and there was a similar diminution in the numbers of almost every species, while the total number of species observed, which was 68 on the first day, was 31 on the second day.

On the third day the conditions became extreme. I was in the observatory from 9 until nearly 10. The Hawk flight began about 6.15, and was unabated when I left. The rate of flight can be imagined by the fact, that when I undertook to count 100 passing me, the task

occupied only eleven minutes. A few of these were returning, probably one dozen out of 100, this would leave 75 which crossed the lake in 11 minutes, which is at the rate of about 400 per hour. They did not fly in these numbers at all times of the morning, but so far as we were able to judge, the flight continued all day, and we recorded 900 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 50 Marsh Hawks, 10 Cooper's Hawks, 3 Duck Hawks, and 1 Fish Hawk. The total number of species seen besides these 6 Hawks was only 13, and of small birds that might be considered legitimate

one jumped out of the clump within five feet of me.

It is hard to say just where these hawks passed the night, but certainly as they went down in the morning, they looked hungry; all of them apparently were hunting for breakfast, and it was not until nearly 10 that a few of them appeared with a visible crop, showing that they had fed. They stooped at one another often, and occasionally one would be seen in hot pursuit of some small bird, but in every case the latter escaped. Many of the hawks came through the

stay where food is not reasonably plentiful, when by crossing the lake and spreading over the country, they will be able to get their meals with much greater regularity than by staying on Point Pelee.

At one time I chanced to be watching a hawk, which was about 200 yards away, when, apparently sighting a small bird in a bush within 25 feet of where I stood, he set his wings and dived with great rapidity almost straight for me. When he came within 50 yards, his feet, which had been kept close up, were brought forward and extended all ready for business, but just before he reached the bush they were partially withdrawn, and the little bird, which had moved, escaped.

It seemed strange to move around through the cedars and deciduous woods at Point Pelee and have no birds within sight, except hawks. Some species had apparently learned their lesson especially well, as for instance, the Carolina Wren and the Cardinal, both of which are common throughout the year at Point Pelee. Of the former, two of us recorded four specimens on the first day, but the latter was not observed at all, although it must have been there in considerable numbers.

It was decidedly interesting to watch the few Pigeon Hawks which were noted, their graceful, swallow-like flight, contrasting strongly with the alternate flapping and sailing of the Sharp-shinned. One of the former which we saw flying along with the others, surpassed them considerably in speed, and was apparently playing with them as he came, darting first at one and then another, but only in play, as his food consisted of smaller species, which are doubtless more pleasing to his palate. On several occasions I, as well as others, have seen this bird chase its prey over the water, and on this trip, Mr. Norman Wood, of Ann Arbor, noted the same thing occurring at the end of the Point. Later in the day I saw a Pigeon Hawk come in from the lake on the east side. I watched him as he crossed the field and lit on one of the upper dead limbs of a big tree, which was fully one-quarter of a mile away. After marking the spot carefully, I made a circuit, and, on arriving, found him eating a bird, which doubtless he had caught over the water. He paid little attention to me, and I was really able to come within range behind some trees and secure him. Soon after I had located his perch and started to hunt him, I saw another specimen returning from the lake, but was unable to see where it went to. These occurrences lend color to the idea that it is customary with this species to take its prey over the water when opportunity favors this course.



The Gleaners.

prey for the hawk, we saw only 50 specimens, divided among eight species, so it will be seen that almost every species vanished completely. The supposition is that birds which lived in the upper branches were all eaten, but the fact that we kicked out of the bushes occasional White-throats, etc., goes to show that ground-loving and shrub-loving birds concealed themselves elsewhere with tolerable efficacy. A pair of wrens scolded me from a clump of juniper, but would not leave their shelter, although I was within five or six feet of them. Two or three White-throats, which flew out of another juniper clump at my approach, immediately concealed themselves elsewhere, and when, after watching them for a little while, I moved again, another

woods and down the trail at a distance of only a few feet from the ground, hopping no doubt to surprise their prey.

In the few hawks taken, we identified the remains of the Wood Pewee, White-throated Sparrow, and Olive-backed Thrush. Nearly all of the feathered clusters seen on the ground where the meal had taken place, consisted of the remains of the Thrush.

Even mid-winter showed no such lack of birds, as these two hawk-ridden days. The flight had been delayed beyond its usual time, and doubtless this contributed to a congestion of hawks, and the fact that such a large percentage of them crossed the water at once, leads one to suppose that their domination will be short this year. Certainly they will not



Harvesting Poppies.

(From a painting by Jules Breton. Perry Print.)