

THE RED-TAILED HAWK IN MANITOBA.

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The Red-tail is one of the most beautiful of our Canadian hawks and in Manitoba among the semi-wooded areas, is still one of the commonest. That it is still numerous is due to the fact that its more secluded haunts have enabled it to escape much of the persecution to which the misinformed public have subjected its close allies, the Rough-legged and Swainson's hawks.

The favourite nesting sites of the Red-tail are along the wooded borders of rivers and streams, though the bird is by no means confined to such places, but is found breeding over much of the semi-wooded portions of the province. In general habits this hawk does not differ greatly from Swainson's hawk, to which reference was made by the writer in a previous volume of *THE OTTAWA NATURALIST*. It is, however, two or three weeks earlier in arriving from the South in spring time, commences to build earlier, and is far more a bird of woodlands than either Swainson's or the Rough-legged hawk. Moreover, it has never been found nesting upon the ground and rarely in isolated trees.

The nest of this species is composed of large and small twigs, well lined with the inner bark of aspen poplar, being a somewhat bulky structure. There seems a general tendency, on the bird's part, to seek a new nesting site each year. This, however, is not always done, some birds being known to occupy the same nest for two or more years in succession. The same nests have also been rebuilt and used after one or more years interval. There is reason to suspect that old nests would be much more frequently utilised were it not for the fact that the Western Horned owl habitually takes possession of these before the hawks return. Thus, the nests available for the latter depend upon the number of horned owls present in the vicinity.

The number of eggs laid by each female varies somewhat and seems to depend, at least to some extent, upon the food supply. In 1917, the six nests under observation close to the writer's home, contained but two eggs each and in only one of the six did the parents succeed in rearing more than one young though both were hatched in every instance. The first nest was discovered on May 6, containing two eggs. Other nests with eggs were located as late as June 14. It is difficult to account for the mortality among the young, though it is noteworthy that the deaths occurred while they were still quite small, and that the latest hatched, and consequently smallest, was invariably the one to die. Dead examples presented no indication of violence but seemed to show that, in all probability, death was due to