

men. The Marsh Hawk, *Circus Hudsonius*, is familiar to every farmer who has a slough near his place and also to every sportsman who hunts feathered game in our province. He is usually seen sitting on a fence post near a slough, on some elevation in the marsh, as the top of a muskrat hut, or sailing about in a very erratic fashion over the fields or marsh, and is always readily recognized by the broad white band across the rump. Many of this species meet their death from sheer wantonness and the desire to kill or practice wing shooting, while many others are dropped by the sportsman from his cover in the marshes because of the annoyance caused by frightening the game, but few are ever picked up, and fewer still are the stomachs examined to determine the food of the bird. Many claim that the bird kills small chickens, but an examination of 124 stomachs shows only 7, or less than 6 per cent. containing poultry or game birds, and as this bird, no doubt, catches wounded ducks and other game birds which are dying in pain, and unable to escape, consequently the damage to poultry is nowhere verified by stomach examination and the assertion that it destroys game is disproven by the fact that the weak claws and bill of the bird will not permit its catching or killing game birds only when badly wounded and when they would otherwise die from injuries received from the sportsman's gun. The majority of injurious records against the bird are for small birds whose economic value is doubtful on account of inability to determine the species, and the following extracts from experiences with the bird will show that it is unable to secure game birds unless wounded:—

From E. E. Thompson's "Birds of Manitoba."

Oct. 8, 1888, near Shoal lake, west, saw a Blue Harrier trying to catch some teal in a very small shallow pond. Each time the harrier pounced the teal would dive below the surface and at the same time splash the water as high as possible. This happened several times and at length the baffled harrier gave up the attempt.

Sept. 9, Saw a Brown Harrier pounce on a prairie chicken, but the latter struggled and got free and made a dash for life with the harrier in close pursuit, but as the chicken gained at every beat, in less than 100 yards the hawk gave up the chase and turned about in search of go-piters, grasshoppers and other game more within his reach.

These birds turn a very light slaty blue and almost white on the breast as they get older, but always have the white band on the rump. The blue hawk, as this spe-

cies, from its plumage, is called, is a much shier bird than the brown, and also capable of more remarkable feats of wing. They are sometimes seen careering up and down, almost perpendicular, for a height of from 60 to 100 feet, at the same time uttering a harsh screeching noise as though attacking something below them, and they will as suddenly turn and sail off in a lazy fashion as though nothing had happened. This is considered an eccentricity of the species, which is not accounted for and for which he is probably not accountable, unless it may be for a



Swainson's Hawk.

(*Buteo Swainsoni*.)

show of bravado before his mate, as I never saw it acting thus, only in the spring about mating time.

The four remaining species of this class belong to one genus, and while their habits are somewhat different their habits are similar. They are a heavy, broad-winged sailing and heavy bodied group, on the whole much more suited for sitting silently watching the appearance of their prey and dropping on it rather than in capturing it while on the wing.

The smallest of these is the Broad-Winged Hawk, *Buteo latissimus*, a bird somewhat rare in Manitoba and which