

BIRD NOTES

Wm. Niven, Shoho, reports that fairly large numbers of Wilson's Phalaropes are present at nearby Salt Lake each spring, and that they often fly over his yard in small flocks, often just skimming the ground. One night, about dark, a flock came over, "diving like bullets", and crashed into the telephone wires. Mr. Niven estimated that over a dozen were knocked to the ground, for he and his brother found eight birds that were either killed outright, or so badly wounded that they had to be killed. Others were just stunned and ran away through the grass. The phalaropes flew so fast that one bird had its wing sheared completely from the body. Mr. Niven states, "I have seen Sharp-tailed Grouse and Ducks killed by flying into telephone wires, but they generally manage to avoid them. However, the phalaropes dodge here and there when flying and don't seem to watch where they are going".

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While walking through the rushes at Upper Rousay Lake, May 29, Stuart Houston made a totally unexpected discovery - a Marsh Hawk's nest on a platform of bulrushes, twenty inches in diameter, in eighteen inches of water. Three or four small twigs were used in the construction above water, and the nest was lined with grass. Undoubtedly the bird had used an old muskrat house, or possibly a Canvasback nest as the foundation for her nest. Reference to standard bird books reveals no indication of any previous records of Marsh Hawks nesting over water. Of the two eggs, one was infertile, but the other hatched successfully and the young bird was banded.

Another Marsh Hawk nest was found at Lower Rousay Lake, which had originally been in two inches of water, but was on dry land by the time the young hatched. This nest was of much better construction, being eighteen inches above the ground and firmly constructed of interwoven twigs. It, too, was lined with grass. The long grass and rushes of the surrounding vegetation provided excellent cover and shade for the nest, and all three eggs produced young, which were banded before they flew away. The interesting feature about this particular nest, however, was the large number of waterfowl nests in the immediate vicinity. Within 50 yards were 9 nests, including 2 Mallard, 2 Redhead, 1 Canvasback, 1 Blue-winged Teal, 1 Coot, and 2 Lesser Scaup. The two nearest, a Teal and Mallard were 15 and 10 yards away. Within 100 yards were an additional 9 nests. This was the thickest concentration of duck nests found during a summer's survey of waterfowl nests for Ducks Unlimited. Over half the nests were begun after the Marsh Hawk has started building its nest, so it would appear that ducks have little fear of the Marsh Hawk, at least before the young are hatched.

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C. Stuart Francis, Torch River, states, "Goshawks are the bane of all poultry raisers in this area, and it is safe to say that they destroy scores of young chicks for the poultry raiser each year. Two years ago a neighbor of mine killed a Goshawk in his chicken house. It had followed the old hen right through the door, and as they saw it enter they ran out, closed the door, and killed it. This year another party had a Goshawk follow a young chick right into their house, where the lady of the house killed it with a broom. They also killed one in their chicken house. They are so bold they will come down right at your feet to pick up a young chick".