

THE NAMES OF HAWKS

By DR. STUART HOUSTON

One of the problems that concerns us greatly is the needless and wanton destruction of our beneficial hawks. Our commoner hawks are a great asset to the farmer, as they destroy large numbers of mice and gophers. As one method of educating our younger members to these facts, we try to teach them how to identify the different groups of "Hawks."

First of all, the big, fat, sleepy-looking hawks that perch on a fence pole or telegraph pole, are "gopher hawks" or Buteos. They are beneficial. Secondly, the birds that diet predominantly on smaller birds, and farmers' chickens, are the Accipiters. They are wary, swift moving birds, who spend most of their time in wooded areas, and it is hard to get a good look at them, and I have yet to meet a farmer in this district who has been able to shoot one. As a good safe rule, which will rarely be wrong, I always say, "Never shoot a hawk you can get near enough to shoot."

Peterson, in his "Field Guide to Birds" says that in England the only birds called hawks are the "Accipiters." The colonists who first settled on this continent were not naturalists, so they applied the name Hawk to almost all the day-flying raptors. This has been a great handicap because of the stigma attached to the name "Hawk."

In Yorkton, we have found that the boys can soon learn to recognize the beneficial "Buteos," and name them often at up to a mile away, long before we can tell which species it is. We have stopped calling them "Hawks." We also try to follow Peterson in calling the Marsh Hawk, the Marsh Harrier; the Sparrow Hawk, the Kestrel; the Pigeon Hawk, the Merlin; and the Duck Hawk, the Peregrine. To help with this little project, we have similarly changed the names in the new Field Checking List.

Saw-Whet Owl

George M. Hruska, Gerald, Sask.



This little Owl is a Saw-whet and it has been around our straw cattle shed for about four winters. It seems to be very tame. I came so close when taking this picture that I could easily have touched it with my hand.

We've had a very good year for hawks at Gerald this spring. I counted twelve in the sky at once within

a half mile from me. Also I have seen four Bald Eagles, so far. Probably the reason for their abundance is because of the large number of bush rabbits.

The Return Of The Hawks

Joyce Gunn,
Spirit Lake, Sask.

The week end of April 10th and 11th was noted in this district for the great number of hawks in evidence. We had noticed a few going over each day but it was not until Saturday that the numbers really increased and then on Sunday the 11th they were really here in full force. In the morning I spotted a large flock circling and after three counts finally decided there were between 55 and 60 in the flock.

In the afternoon, armed with a sketch pad, pencil and binoculars I took up a position on one of the higher sandhills and proceeded to see how many species there were. The most numerous seemed to be the Redtailed, followed closely in num-

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