

Wintering Pigeon Hawks

By J. F. ROY, Saskatoon

How frequently does the pigeon hawk winter in Saskatchewan? During the past eight winters this bird has been reported from four widely separated areas. On December 31, 1948, Maurice Street of Nipawin recorded the first wintering pigeon hawk in the annual Christmas Bird Count (**Blue Jay**, Vol VII, No. 1, page 12). Three years later, December 26, 1951, Yorkton observers added a second wintering bird to the provincial records (**Blue Jay**, Vol. X, No. 1, page 15). During the winter of 1954-55, the Regina Natural History Society studied a bird which frequented the grounds of the Legislative Buildings (**Blue Jay**, Vol. XIII, No. 2, page 39). Again, on December 26, 1955, Regina members were able to add a pigeon hawk to the Christmas Bird List. (**Blue Jay**, Vol. XIV, No. 1, page 6).

Now it is Saskatoon's turn. The writer and Bernie Gollop have each seen the pigeon hawk on two occasions this winter. The first bird was noted flying over the Saskatchewan River, February 15, 1956. Three days later one pigeon hawk was noted two miles south of the city and another was seen within city-limits. The last observation was made on February 19 when Bernie Gollop noted the hawk along the highway five miles east of Sutherland. It does not seem likely that all four records were of the same bird.



—F. W. Lahrman
Richardson's Merlin

The evidence is that the pigeon hawk is a sporadic winter resident in Saskatchewan. Since the inauguration of the Christmas Bird counts many new facts about winter distribution have come to light. It is likely that many more of our hawks and owls remain for the winter than was once suspected. Short-eared owls and prairie falcons, for instance, turn up every year in the bird counts. Any observations of wintering pigeon hawks and prairie falcons would be most welcome.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History has a recent specimen record of the Pigeon Hawk (6046 — study skin). This specimen was received December 17, 1955, from Frank Brazier who picked it up dead in the Legislative Grounds, Regina. It was identified as a female Richardson's Merlin (*Falco columbarius richardsoni*).

Try "Drawing" Bird Song

By MARIAN NIXON, Wauchope, Sask.

When trying to identify a new bird, from illustrations in a book or its descriptive test, one often thinks, "If they only gave its song, how much simpler identification would be!" But to date, I have found only one book, Schuyler Matthews' **Wild Birds and their Music** that helps one in this way.

However, I worked out my personal method of recording birdsong, which acts as a sort of shorthand of their music which I can later

interpret with the ear of memory.

You will have noticed that it is hard for some children, and even older persons, to remember just how a certain bird tune goes once they no longer hear it. Again, when another spring comes, a song is remembered as familiar yet one cannot remember which bird it was that used those notes.

When a person deliberately tries to make a memory last, one notices more carefully the various details.