

Protecting A Young Marsh Hawk

By Hans Dommasch, Photography Dept., College of Medicine,
University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon



Fig. 1—Young Marsh Hawks—11 days old.

These photographs record my personal experience with a young Marsh Hawk. This spring, a friend of mine found a Marsh Hawk's nest in a field and I pitched a tent near the nest to watch and photograph the birds (see fig. 1). One day, however, I discovered that part of the field had been plowed. The nest was



Fig. 2—Man-made nest.

destroyed and three of the four young hawks were dead. The fourth bird was hiding under cover in the unplowed portion of the field.

I went to the owner of the field who had not known of the nest, but who agreed to help me protect the remaining hawk. Then I cut bushes and built a new nest (see fig. 2) to protect the bird from physical attack, sun and possible escape. The problem was whether the mother hawk would return to this new home. She did!

Day after day I returned to the field to watch the young hawk grow. Finally the hawk (a female) was strong enough to find a new hunting ground. As it left the nest (see fig. 4) I had the satisfaction of feeling that I had probably saved the hawk's life.



Fig. 3—Young Marsh Hawk in man-made nest—14 days old.



Fig. 4—First day out of the nest—21 days old.