

# MERLINS WINTERING AND BREEDING AT BRANDON, MANITOBA

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Previously, Mrs. B. A. Robinson and I reported on winter records of the Pigeon Hawk in Brandon from 1962-63 through 68-69.<sup>1</sup> Since that report, Mrs. Robinson and I have noted the Pigeon Hawk (now designated Merlin) from November through April in Brandon on several dates. On each date one bird was seen except where two are mentioned.

Almost 70 per cent of our sightings were made in the Brandon Cemetery and Brandon Fair Grounds, which are about a quarter mile apart and have many planted deciduous and coniferous trees.

On May 11, 1977, a pair of Merlins was seen in the Fair Grounds and it was suspected they might be nesting. They were seen and heard frequently in May, June and into July in the same part of the Fair Grounds, and the male was often observed on a dead branch of a cottonwood. On July 10, Mrs. R. H. Patmore and I were fortunate in seeing five Merlins, four of which appeared to be young birds. They were in the cottonwood and flying to nearby trees. While we watched, an adult bird came to the cottonwood with food and gave it to one of the young ones. On July 13 and 17, I saw four Merlins in the Fair Grounds, which I took to be the young birds. On the latter date, two of them were swooping low over a grassy area and gravelled roadway and alighting. On July 22 there were six Merlins soaring high overhead — a thrilling sight!



*Merlin*

*Lynn Oliphant*

<sup>1</sup>ROBINSON, Mrs. B. A., and MAMIE McCOWAN. Winter Pigeon Hawk records at Brandon. Blue Jay 27:92.

## Table 1. MERLIN OBSERVATIONS AT BRANDON

1969-70 — Dec. 25; Feb. 17; Apr. 16.

1970-71 — Feb. 13; Apr. 23.

1971-72 — Dec. 5, 18, 25, 26, 28; Jan. 1, 16, 19; Feb. 24.

1972-73 — No records within the city; four sightings within 15 miles of city limits.

1973-74 — No records.

1974-75 — Feb. 10; Mar. 4, 18, 22 (2 birds); Apr. 11, 20, 21.

1975-76 — Nov. 16; Dec. 8 (2 birds); Jan. 19; Feb. 10, 14; Mar. 16; April 29 (2 birds).

1976-77 — Nov. 7; Jan. ?; Mar. 12 (2 birds), 17 (2 birds), 18; Apr. 5 (2 birds), 8 (2 birds), 9, 17, 23.