

UNUSUAL ABUNDANCE OF THE AMERICAN GOSHAWK (*ACCIPITER ATRICAPILLUS*).

BY RUTHVEN DEANE.

REPLACING the notable migration of the Snowy Owl in the winter of 1905-06, we have this season been visited by an unusual influx of these bold robbers of our game and looters of the poultry yard. I believe there has not been such a flight since the fall and winter of 1896-97; when at that time they were particularly abundant in portions of New England, as they have been the present season.

It is reasonable to suppose, as in the case of the owls, that a lack of their favorite food forced them south of their usual range. All specimens examined are reported in good condition, though in some cases the stomachs have been entirely empty. I have obtained most of my information from taxidermists, and to them as well as to others I express my hearty thanks for their assistance and for records of some two hundred and seventy-five specimens.

The S. L. Crosby Co., taxidermists, Bangor, Me., report under date of Feb. 1, 1907, having received from twenty-five to thirty specimens. The first ones were sent in early in the season, the last two on Feb. 1, 1907. This number exceeded any previous year, and nearly all specimens were in adult plumage.

Mr. Wm. Cooper, taxidermist, Milo, Me., writes under date of Feb. 27, 1907, that he had received seven specimens of the Goshawk this winter prior to Dec. 25, 1906, but they ceased coming in after the weather became severe.

Mr. Walter D. Hinds, taxidermist, Portland, Me., writing under date of Feb. 8, 1907, informs me that twenty-five specimens of the Goshawk had been sent to him since Oct. 26, 1906, they having been received from Cape Elizabeth and Damariscotta, Me., Gorham, N. H., and other points. All were adult birds.

Capt. Herbert L. Spinney, Keeper of Sequin Light Station, Me., writing under date of Feb. 15, 1907, states that these hawks have been quite abundant in Sagadahoc County, Me., during the past fall and early winter, and while he had seen only two on Sequin

Island and one on the mainland, he had known of a number seen at other points.

Mr. M. Abbott Frazar, taxidermist, Boston, Mass., writes under date of Feb. 1, 1907, that the present flight of Goshawks had exceeded any in his experience; up to that date he had received over seventy-five specimens for mounting. They were sent in from all over the country, one from as far south as Virginia. Only three of this lot were in immature or in mixed plumage.

Mr. W. P. Conger, taxidermist, Burlington, Vt., in a letter dated Feb. 19, 1907, states that Goshawks have been quite abundant in his locality and that he had received fifteen or more specimens.

Messrs. Angell and Cash, taxidermists, Providence, R. I., have had a very extended experience this season with the Goshawk, and with their usual appreciation of the value of scientific records, have kept careful and accurate data of sixty-five specimens which passed through their hands between Oct. 27, 1906, and Feb. 12, 1907. All of these hawks were received from twenty-two towns within a radius of from three to thirty miles from Providence, R. I., ten from Connecticut, and sixteen from Massachusetts, mostly from localities not far from the Rhode Island border. The exact localities where seventeen of the specimens were taken is not known, but presumably from nearby points in Rhode Island. Mr. Cash writes me that this is the most remarkable flight of Goshawks in his section since 1870, the numbers exceeding those of that date. He also states that hunters have reported a great abundance of Ruffed Grouse, and as examination showed that a large percentage of these hawks had been feeding on this noble game bird, it would seem reasonable to believe that they were attracted by their favorite food.

Of the sixty-five specimens, thirty-five were males and twenty-five females. Sixty were in adult plumage and five in immature dress. The crops of many were filled to the utmost and some hunters who brought in specimens which they had shot, remarked that the hawks appeared inactive after their hearty meals.

A careful examination of the stomachs of forty-eight specimens showed the following results: twenty-eight contained the flesh and feathers of the Ruffed Grouse, in one instance a whole foot being found; five contained the flesh and feathers of the domestic

fowl, four contained partly digested flesh not identified, and the stomachs of eleven were entirely empty. One specimen, a female, killed at North Kingston, R. I., Nov. 12, 1906, when shot was standing on the body of a Ruffed Grouse which she had just killed.

Several instances have been reported showing the ferocity and daring which is so characteristic of this species. Mr. Cash writes that some farmers who had brought in specimens which they had killed, stated that when once a Goshawk succeeded in capturing a fowl from the barn yard he would be sure to return every day or two, so that they were reasonably sure of shooting him sooner or later. In a letter received from Mr. Manly Hardy, Brewer, Me., dated Feb. 18, 1907, in speaking of the abundance of this hawk he writes: "A few days ago a Goshawk came down among the houses near by and captured a tame dove. A week ago a man handed me a specimen which he had just shot in the act of killing a hen, he already having been successful in killing two Plymouth Rocks. In another yard near by a Goshawk had seized a hen, when a woman caught him in her hands, and although she was badly scratched she succeeded in killing him."

Rev. C. W. G. Eifrig, Ottawa, Ont., in writing on winter birds (*The Ottawa Naturalist*, Vol. XX, Feb. 15, 1906) states, in reference to the Goshawk: "On Oct. 18, a fine large female was shot by a farmer near East Templeton in the act of carrying away a good sized Plymouth Rock rooster. On November 3, a boy shot a nice male near the rifle range, which had just put himself on the outside of a Ruffed Grouse. Mr. E. G. White noticed a pair together near Pembroke, one also in the act of devouring a grouse."

Mr. H. K. Coale, Highland Park, Ill., informs me that in November, 1906, the coachman at a private residence of that town, caught an adult Goshawk in the barn yard, while in the act of carrying off a large hen he had just attacked. The hawk was kept alive and exhibited at the public school and afterwards liberated.

Mr. W. H. Brownson, of Portland, Me., informs me that while observing birds on Cape Elizabeth late in October, and while passing through a field adjacent to a farm-house, he found the skeleton of a domestic fowl. It was picked clean, nothing but the feathers of the head and wings remaining. Mr. Brownson called the attention of the farmer to it, who was, however, well aware how it hap-

pened, for he produced the hawk which he had shot and thrown on the woodpile. It was an adult Goshawk.

Mr. C. E. Dionne, of Laval University, Quebec, in a letter written March 6, 1907, states that the Goshawks have been abundant this winter in his locality. He had examined eight specimens of both sexes, all of which were in adult plumage.

Mr. Cash writes that a female killed at West Mansfield, Mass., Dec. 22, 1906, had descended into a poultry yard, fastened on to a large hen, and in attempting to escape with the prize, collided with a wire netting so forcibly that the scalp was torn away from the base of the bill to beyond the eyes. She was picked up stunned.

Mr. George R. White, Ottawa, Ont., writes under date of Feb. 25, 1907: "The Goshawk was very abundant last fall during the last of October and the beginning of November, large numbers being seen. At Kingston, Ont., regular flights were observed during the first week in November, while they were very common all the month of November."

Mr. J. H. Fleming, Toronto, Ont., writes under date of Feb. 20, 1907, that the Goshawks first reached his territory early in November, 1906, and were still scattered through the Province. He states that this flight was possibly not a quarter as large as that which occurred in 1896 and recorded by him (*Auk*, Vol. XXIV, p. 72), but has lasted longer. All specimens taken were adult birds, and the first arrivals were stuffed with flickers. Mr. Fleming also states that there have been no rabbits in the far north this winter, and the past season has been the worst known in Ontario for Ruffed Grouse.

Mr. Lou J. Eppinger, taxidermist, Detroit, Mich., writes under date of Jan. 31, 1907: "Goshawks are very plentiful and seem to be all over this part of the State. Most of them are in mature plumage, while the few which I received last year were all immature birds."

Mr. W. C. Kæmpfer, taxidermist, Chicago, Ill., informs me that only a single specimen has been received by him from Illinois (Melrose Park, Nov. 30, 1906), a few others having been sent from Wisconsin and Michigan.

Mr. Henry W. Howling, taxidermist, Minneapolis, Minn., under date of Feb. 7, 1907, writes that he rarely receives more than

three or four Goshawks during the fall and winter, but this season fourteen specimens had already been sent in, all but one being in the adult plumage.

Mr. Alexander Calder, taxidermist, Winnipeg, Man., informs me in a letter dated Jan. 18, 1907, that ten Goshawks had been received, the first record being Sept. 8, 1906. The stomachs of those examined contained portions of rabbits and squirrels.

Mr. George E. Atkinson, taxidermist, Portage la Prairie, Man., writes under date of Feb. 11, 1907, that Goshawks had been more abundant this season in Manitoba than for the past nine years.

NOTES CONCERNING CERTAIN BIRDS OF LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK.

BY WILLIAM C. BRAISLIN, M. D.

THE species here referred to have recently been met with as birds of Long Island. Most are recorded because of their rarity. One, the Hermit Thrush, is herewith for the first time definitely announced as a breeding species on Long Island. The evidence is based on the capture of a single specimen of an immature bird just out of the nest, with but little power of flight, at Lake Ronkonkoma. Lake Ronkonkoma lies nearly at the geographical center of Long Island, several miles from the sea. The temperature there is, however, tempered by its influence, both in summer and winter, as the thermometer records, carefully made for a series of years by a medical friend who lives near there, show. The Hermit Thrush is said to breed regularly on Cape Cod. The present record brings its coastal nesting range somewhat further south. Further investigation will probably show that the Hermit Thrush is, though rare, a regular summer resident on Long Island.

Alle alle. LITTLE AUK OR DOVEKIE.—Another specimen (several have been previously recorded by me in 'The Auk') was recently sent from Montauk by Mr. Baker. It was secured on