

within a hundred feet with the sun at our backs we saw that the birds were really "Gold-backs;" one male in full nuptial plumage with two females. Collection would have been not only sacrilege but unnecessary for identification as the birds were later approached to within fifty feet, being as tame as the numbers the writer found on the golf course at Galveston, Texas, early in March. We believe that this is the first authentic record of this species along the Westchester-Fairfield shore of Long Island Sound, and, to our knowledge, the only spring record for the New York City region since May 10, 1885.—RUTGERS R. COLES, *Mamaroneck, N. Y.*

**Another Late Nesting of Bob-white.**—In the "General Notes" of 'The Auk,' January, 1926, I mentioned having found a Bob-white (*Colinus virginianus virginianus*) incubating eggs on September 11, 1924. An even later nesting date occurred this year (1926). On September 21 young hatched from nine eggs in a nest observed by Mr. Allen A. Green in Des Moines County, Iowa, who states that some twelve days before, while mowing alfalfa, the female Bob-white was flushed from the nest, and the eggs were left so generally exposed it was a surprise they were not abandoned.—HAROLD M. HOLLAND, *Galesburg, Ill.*

**Monetary Value of Marsh Hawks.**—The appraisal of the value of birds and its estimation in dollars and cents has given rise to a varied assortment of figures. From the very complexity of the problem and the many intangible factors that may enter into it, not to mention the variable degree of personal zeal displayed by the appraiser himself, such figures fall largely in the category of mere guesses. Few of them can be looked upon as products of truly scientific deduction. With any one of our common birds feeding on hundreds of specifically different items, each one of which in turn may have a greater or less effect for good or harm, what chance is there in our present state of knowledge to interpret this work in terms of the coin of the realm?

It is with a bit of hesitation, therefore, that I submit this contribution on the Marsh Hawk. The fact that the appraisal given is an estimate of the value of only one activity of this bird, exhibited under peculiar conditions where its worth could be readily compared with factors upon which a more or less definite monetary value could be placed, affords the necessary excuse.

During September, 1926, I was engaged in working out measures of crop protection against the depredations of Red-winged Blackbirds and Bobolinks on the Oaks Plantation, ten miles south of Wilmington, N. C. With the exception of a few acres on one other plantation a few miles to the south, the Oaks Plantation supports the only cultivated rice now being grown in North Carolina. Here Bobolinks on their southward migration meet the first of the few remaining ricefields in the South Atlantic States. These birds aided by resident and migratory Redwings are still important hindrances to the successful production of rice. Bird minding must be

resorted to, and in some seasons severe losses are experienced in spite of the expenditure of considerable ammunition and labor in bird minding. It is as an aid in this work that I wish to extol the virtues of the Marsh Hawk.

During the period of my stay (September 7-18) Marsh Hawks were plentiful, and Big Island, containing 130 acres of the rice on the Oaks Plantation, was a favorite hunting ground. Sometimes as many as eight or ten could be seen quartering back and forth over this island and the adjacent mainland. Five would seem to be a fair estimate of the average number of individuals present throughout all hours of daylight.

These birds kept the Redwings and Bobolinks in constant turmoil, the flocks taking wing whenever a Marsh Hawk approached. Though never seen to strike into such flocks, these birds of prey were always on the lookout for cripples, and in the course of the day appeared to secure a sufficient supply from those maimed by the bird minders.

Their constant flight back and forth served as an effective aid in the bird-patrol work, and, although they were indiscriminate in their wanderings, flushing the flocks from patches of wild growth as readily as from the cultivated rice, their work was more thorough than that of the human bird minder. Few, if any, Blackbirds or Bobolinks remained after one of these Hawks had passed. Two weeks' observation of their activities resulted in the conclusion that in general one Marsh Hawk was fully as effective an agent for crop protection as an individual bird minder armed with a shotgun. In this opinion I am supported by resident farmers, who hold the Marsh Hawk in almost universal esteem—a fact reflected in the common name that they give to it. The name, "Old Charley," as they apply it, reflects their conceptions of both reliability and faithful comradeship.

On the basis of five Marsh Hawks constantly present in the rice area of the Oaks Plantation, doing patrol work equivalent to that of five men armed with shotguns, it is not difficult to give monetary equivalents for this service. The cheapest colored labor of the section demanded \$2 a day. Without making allowance for the cost of ammunition shot by such minders, an item that might amount to several dollars a day for each man, it will be seen that the services of the Marsh Hawks on this one plantation can be conservatively estimated at \$10 a day. Including the periods of the "milk," "dough," and "harvest" stages of the crop, during all of which rice is subject to attack by either Bobolinks or Blackbirds, thirty days of useful service may be expected annually from the Marsh Hawks on the Oaks Plantation—service that could not be hired by the owner for less than \$300.—E. R. KALMBACH, *Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

**An Autumn Hawk Flight.**—On September 14, 1926, at 11:50 A.M. (standard) near the top of Mt. Monadnock, N. H., an extraordinary flight of Hawks was seen. A light breeze blew from the east, and overhead