

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK NOTES.

BY W. E. SAUNDERS.

This is a bird that is not often seen by any one but a duck hunter. Once or twice I have had good opportunity of watching this bird for a little while and a certain Autumn day showed one hovering after the manner of the Sparrow Hawk, over a stumpy field where there were not enough trees to afford a perch at the desired spot. To my mind this was a hint that the Hawk had nested in a prairie country where he had accustomed himself to that method of hunting. How these Prairie Hawks must welcome the advent of railroads with its telegraph poles! I can easily imagine that the large numbers of Swainson Hawks, which I saw in my first trips West in the nineties, were really attracted to the railroad by these perches. Before then, the dry prairies must have been hunted almost exclusively on the wing which is contrary to the nature of the Buteo as noticed in the east. Twice in the spring, about the 26th of March, I have seen two or more of these birds, not far apart, near London, but on dismounting from my wheel to watch them, although I got behind a snake fence and used my glass through it, the bird soon flew away, calling once or twice with a note very similar indeed to that of the Red-tail.

In my list of average dates of arrival in the Autumn, which I have compiled from notes extending over twenty-five years, I have a memorandum on October 29th,—“this is the day to see Rough-legged Hawks,” but it was only this Fall that I found out *where* was the *place* to see them. This was on November 2nd, 1908, when Mr. J. S. Wallace and I were near the end of Point Pelee. About the middle of the morning we saw the first Rough-leg. He was circling over a field after the manner of a migrating Broad-wing and drifting south at the same time. Soon he ceased circling and flew past so near us that his markings could be seen very plainly. On the way to camp that morning we saw a number of others but it was not until after dinner that they really appeared in numbers. I was sitting

outside preparing some birds for our drive to the station that afternoon, when I noticed a Hawk at a considerable distance and very high. After a few moments others began to arrive. They kept coming until there were about twenty-six in sight at once and the resemblance between their methods and those of the Broad-wing was very striking. As they reached the location where the leader had chosen to circle each one spread his tail as does the Broad-wing, and joined the circling band. This continued until the Hawks got so numerous that I had thirteen at once in the field of my glass. They were, I should say, half a mile high, so distant that it was almost impossible to say whether they were Red-tails or Rough-legs. At intervals one heard the Red-tail call, but I am not one that can distinguish between the cry of these two birds. After awhile they began to straggle off towards the south but the day was pleasant and those circling apparently disliked to leave the Point. Doubtless, they could readily see the Ohio shore and the Islands between, and they were certainly not, as many others, birds who seem to fear the flight over the water, but the main body so persistently refused to leave their playground that after awhile others came drifting back from the south and joined them once more, and it was on some of these travelers that I had the opportunity of deciding definitely that they were Rough-legs and not Red-tails.

Of course the probabilities all pointed to Rough-legs. We had seen Red-tails in numbers before, but never acting like this. Moreover, on that particular day more Rough-legs had been seen, prior to this circling band, than Red-tails, so that I was confident that when an opportunity occurred to make their identity positive, the verdict would be Rough-legs. The results of several such opportunities were alike, each one proving as I had expected to be a Rough-legged Hawk, so that I had no hesitation in deciding that these, strange acting hawks were all of that species. On this day we saw about 40, a number approximately equal to all that I had ever seen in Ontario before and the finding of such a large number was very unexpected, but Point Pelee is a place that demonstrates

the truth of the old adage, that "It is the unexpected that happens."

SPRING MIGRATION IN MIDDLE WESTERN OHIO.

BY W. F. HENNINGER.

This spring in many respects resembled the wet season of 1907. Birds that usually appear by the middle of April not showing up till late in May, cold waves driving back to unknown regions some of the earlier migrants, for instance the Chimney Swift came on April 24th, 6:30 P. M. and stayed that day till the evening of the 25th, when they disappeared till May 3rd. May 5th and 6th were the only dates on which the more tender birds arrived in great hordes; the ducks and water-birds seemed to be in no way affected by the weather in their migrations. Some interesting and early records were made. I give the list of 140 migrants according to first dates and individuals with some annotations:

February 20—Robin 2.

February 22—Killdeer 1.

March 1—Bewick's Wren 2. Bluebird 2.

March 5—Bronzed Grackle 4.

March 6—Loramie reservoir—Mallard 5. Red-legged Black Duck 1.

March 8—Towhee 2. Phoebe 1. Field Sparrow 2. Red-winged Blackbird 5. (March 9—Dawson's earliest record, perhaps earliest state record.) Pintail 5—shot, American Merganser 1,—Loramie reservoir.

March 16—At Canal (Miami)—shot. American Golden-eye 7. Shoveller 1. Pied-billed Grebe 1. American White Pelican 3 on a ditch in the field five miles west of New Bremen. (An early record and one of the few spring records in this state).

March 19—Vesper Sparrow 3. Turkey Vulture 4.

March 20—Lesser Scaup Duck 1—Loramie reservoir—shot.