



*In subsequent frames the Starling seems to be wholly submerged, this hawk standing with wings half-open.*



*In the last frame, taken with the same lens, the hawk is so occupied with the drowning, it allows closer approach.*

## **Marsh Hawk drowns Common Gallinule**

**O**N SEPTEMBER 23, 1978, in the company of five other observers, I witnessed the following incident at Holiday Beach Provincial Park, on Lake Erie, near Harrow, Ontario.

A female Marsh Hawk (*Circus cyaneus*) was flying over a low water marshy area where there were gallinules, coots, snipe, and other shorebirds feeding. The Marsh Hawk struck at an adult Common Gallinule (*Gallinula chloropus*), fastening her talons into its back.

Instead of carrying the gallinule off, she pushed it down into the water which varies in depth from 2 to 10 inches in this particular area.

After submerging the gallinule, the Marsh Hawk remained upright with the water midway up her breast.

She then maintained this position for approximately the next ten minutes. She occasionally flapped her wings and brought the gallinule up out of the water. Each time it was brought up while still alive, the gallinule thrashed about, whereupon the hawk would resubmerge it.

After the gallinule had obviously drowned, the Marsh Hawk dragged the dead bird to an exposed clump of ground about 4 feet away.

She then proceeded to tear at the

breast and belly portions of the gallinule, feeding for about ten minutes.

At no point during this entire procedure did the hawk appear flustered or agitated by the submergence. It was the opinion of most of us that the method of kill had been her intention from the start.

The weather on this day was clear. The incident described took place at midday, approximately 60 yards from the observers. All observers were equipped with binoculars, and we had two spotting scopes which we also used.

—Michael D. Fitzpatrick, 96 Miller, Mt. Clemens, Michigan 48043.