

AN UNUSUAL FLIGHT OF HAWKS IN 1858.

BY RUTHVEN DEANE.

The following letter is not only of interest in itself, but the fact that it is addressed to Audubon's two sons, John Woodhouse and Victor Gifford, adds to its historical value. While it is well known that there are conspicuously large migrations of hawks every spring and fall, when birds are almost continually in sight and at times lasting several consecutive days, yet such a one as here described quite reminds us of the enormous flights of the Passenger Pigeon in the early days, as related by Audubon and Wilson.

As to the thirteen specimens shot being those of the Goshawk, would seem most unlikely, as all authorities for the state quote the species, not only as a winter visitor, but one of quite rare occurrence.

I am much indebted to Miss M. R. Audubon, who has recently presented me with this letter:

"CINCTI, Sept. 27th, 1858.

"My Dear Sirs,

I wish to communicate an important fact in natural history, never known to me before, and which I would hardly have believed, had it not been witnessed by an old friend, who is a good observed of nature—Mr. G. C. Coney¹—in whose veracity I can place the most implicit confidence.

"On the 17th inst., at 8 o'clock A. M., he went out with his gun, when he happened to see, what he considered a rather large flock of hawks, but upon casting his eyes around, he saw as far as he could see a continuous stream of them coming.

"This flock was about 40 yards in width, and took by his watch one and a half hours to pass.

"They came from N. N. E. and flew S. S. W. They sailed in a direct line with extended wings, but at certain distances some of them kept wheeling around and around in a circle, and were joined by others, while some of them floated off again with the main stream.

"He shot two of them which were a little lower than the rest. As it was such an unusual sight, when he saw them he immediately ran and shouted for some of the neighbors, who all witnessed the facts.

¹George C. Coney, St. Marys, Ohio. An enthusiastic and well known sportsman, as well as a keen observer of birds. Died several years ago.

"The place where this occurred was on a great reservoir in Mercer County, Ohio, midway between St. Mary's and Celina. This body of water feeds the Miami Canal, is ten miles long, and from three to five miles in width. During the summer season there are always some of these hawks—a smaller species—and also a few of a much larger kind—are always about there. Owing to the facility of procuring their food, as there are a great many young ducks, squirrels, etc., they also do great damage to the farmers' chickens. One friend had upwards of one hundred young chickens and only forty-five are now remaining.

"He shot thirteen of the species in controversy, which according to his description must have been the Goshawk (*Astur palumbarius*) and also shot many of the other two kinds during this summer, but never saw more than from two to ten (the highest number) in one flock together before.

"Such migration of hawks I believe was never heard of before, and the question is will they do so annually? and in day or night time. If the first, I should think they would have been seen before.

"I was on the prairies in August, grouse were scarce, owing to the first brood being nearly all destroyed by the heavy rains in May and June, when these level prairies were all under water. The young ducks, however, were very plenty. When will Agassiz be out with his fish?

Truly yours,

J. S. UNZICKER.¹

"Messrs. J. W. and V. G. Audubon, N. Y."

¹ Dr. J. S. Unzicker, Cincinnati, Ohio. Born August 11, 1812, died April 18, 1876. A prominent physician, an ardent sportsman, and lover of birds, and had been personally acquainted with Audubon and his sons.

A TRIP TO GARDINER'S ISLAND.

that my wish was realized.

BY FRANK BRUEN.

It would be presumptuous for me to try to write up the birds of Gardiner's Island after the admirable article contributed by Mr. Frank M. Chapman to the Nov.-Dec. (1903) number of *Bird-Lore*; but it would be nearly impossible to visit Gardiner's Island and write nothing at all. Ever since reading the above-mentioned article, I have had a consuming desire to visit the island; but it was not until June 17, 1904,