

**Association of Marsh Hawk and Game-bird Nests.**—During the past few years much has been written in support of our diurnal birds of prey, the hawks, but little has been done for them especially in the Northern Great Plains States where certain species of hawks are protected legally, but their status is ignored and enforcement is conspicuous by its absence.

In recent years certain state game departments and many so-called "sportsmen's" organizations have gone on record in their local weekly and daily newspapers recommending that hunters shoot hawks their chance to meet while afield. These recommendations have too often been blanket condemnations with no restrictions on any species. Maybe the recommendations were made with the knowledge that the average sportsman can't identify our common hawks in the hand let alone on the wing.

Not so long ago I heard a man, holding an administrative position in a state game department, make this statement to a group of representative sportsmen from every section of the state: "I have always been a firm believer in the beneficial food habits of the Marsh Hawk until this morning, when I found one feeding on a duck. From now on the Marsh Hawk is on my black list". That statement made by a man in an official position, coming as it did just prior to the hunting season, probably did more harm than the hawk supporters in his state can live down in the next five years. That official, like the layman who ventures in any scientific field, arrived at a snap conclusion about as logically as the man who condemned a rat for killing a horse upon which he found it feeding.

Last summer I made an interesting observation on the nesting of a Marsh Hawk (*Circus hudsonius*) and Greater Prairie Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido americanus*). For some time I had been visiting weekly a sweet clover field in which four young Marsh Hawks were rapidly approaching the time when I could band them and feel reasonably assured that they would take to wing before some prowling marauder destroyed them. Each time I visited the nest the car was driven through the waist-high sweet clover to a lath set about fifty feet away. One day early in July as I visited the nest to band the young Marsh Hawks, I diverted from my usual path about ten feet and to my surprise flushed a Prairie Chicken from a nest containing ten eggs, a few of which were pipped. This was only fifty feet from the nest of young hawks!

Unfortunately I left on my vacation the following day and was unable to continue observations. Upon returning two weeks later I visited the location again and found only eggs from which the young grouse had emerged normally and an abandoned hawk's nest. This was mute evidence to the fact that a grouse and hawk had successfully reared broods of young within, we might say, calling distance. To those who are hasty in passing judgment upon the Marsh Hawk, I hope the above observations will not be termed "coincidental".

One of my associates, Mr. Irvine Dietrich, has kindly permitted me to add a similar incident observed by him near Mandan, North Dakota, a few years ago. A Ring-necked Pheasant was flushed and ran into one of the small patches of Wolfberry bushes (*Symphoricarpos occidentalis*) which are so common on the prairie in this region. At once the pheasant came out again post haste with a female Marsh Hawk in hot pursuit. The hawk overtook the pheasant, struck it and knocked it rolling on the ground. The hawk then returned to the bushes where its nest was located and the pheasant went its way.—ADRIAN C. FOX, *Park River, North Dakota.*