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A REMARKABLE FLIGHT OF BROAD WINGED HAWKS.

BY B. H. BAILEY.

On Friday a. m., September 22, 1911, a flock of Broad Winged Hawks (*Buteo latissimus* Wils.), remarkable for its size and compact character, passed about two miles north of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The birds were moving in a westwardly direction on a light breeze blowing from the east.

The day was clear, and we first saw the flock some four miles up the river from the city.

From our launch we could see large birds circling at varying heights in the air above the bluffs on the east bank of the river, and moving toward us as we came down stream.

We were soon close enough to make out the species and, although the flock was mainly composed of Broad Wings, while watching them four other species were identified, viz., Red Tailed Hawk (*Buteo borealis*), Harlans Hawk (*Buteo borealis harlani*), Coopers Hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*), and Marsh Hawk (*Circus hudsonius*).

After landing, Mr. S. N. Harris and the writer climbed the bluffs to the eastward and from the heights observed hawks circling in and out among their fellows far up the ravines, and both east and west as far as we could see. A bird which was shot seemed immature. The stomach contained insect remains, chiefly beetles.

For nearly an hour the birds continued passing to the westward and up the river.

From an unfavorable point on the river bank which afforded no view of the great numbers of birds beyond the bluffs and in the ravines, Professor J. H. Scott counted over eight hundred individuals.

It is conservative to estimate the flock at from two to three thousand birds, as, viewed from a distance, at times they sailed so close together as to remind one of a swarm of gnats.

Returning later in the morning to a point farther up the river, we found hawks scattered through the timbered bottom lands.

One was frightened from a willow covered sand bar where grasshoppers were plentiful.

The presence of such an unusual number of these birds in Linn County may be explained by the extraordinary abundance of such food as these birds subsist upon.

During the fall insect life was unusually abundant in this locality, especially grasshoppers.

Unlike species which feed on more noble quarry, and which must of necessity spread over a considerable area in order to secure it, these hawks doubtless find food in sufficient quantity to supply their needs within a comparatively limited area.

The specimen shot was very fat and, if the remainder of the flock had fared as well, the mass of insects destroyed by them daily must have been considerable.