

BIRD MONOGRAPHS:

by Donald Wilkinson

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*)

Order: FALCONIFORMES
Family: ACCIPITRIDAE - Woodpeckers

Species #: 13-03-103

Distribution:

Extends from the northern tree limits of North America, from coast to coast, south through Mexico, Central America, to Northern Argentina and Uruguay. Also the West Indies. Some movement of Canadian birds south in winter, otherwise considered a resident species.

Nest:

A twig platform in a dense conifer, oak, or other woodland tree. Inhabits highland forest of the tropics to 3,000 metres altitude. Also utilizes forest edges, second growth, open woodland, pastures, and clearings.

Eggs:

3 to 5; bluish, spotted.

Diet:

Birds, squirrels, lizards, rodents, other small mammals and insects.

Song:

High "ke-ke-ke-ke" cackling call near the nest and when training young to hunt; also squealing cries.

Size:

25 to 36 cm (10 to 14 inches).

Note:

Many bird identification books concentrate on the feather patterns and colours or wing shapes and say little about the behaviour of the bird which can be invaluable in the field. The next time you are struggling to identify a distant flying raptor look for the characteristic series of flaps interspersed with a glide behaviour of the accipters (woodland hawks). Use caution as they will use soaring to capture thermal lift. The book *Hawks in Flight* by Pete Dunn, David Sibley and Clay Sutton provides a wealth of information on identifying hawks.

Illustration: See cover.

SAYING GOODBYE:

Dan McAskill

In different languages, saying goodbye means many things. With good friends on the Island, it really means "until we meet again". No matter how it is said, it is always difficult. So it is with difficulty that we say goodbye to the Rev. Donald Wilkinson and his family. Donald has been one of the good things that has happened to the Society in the past decade.

Despite a busy schedule with his congregation and family, he was and is a true friend to our Society. He appeared at one of our meetings in 1990 and, almost from the evening of his arrival, conveyed his infectious love of nature. Through the past 7 years he has been an active participant in our meetings, provided wonderful slide shows on waterfowl, judged our slide show, illustrated and wrote a column on birds for the newsletter, served as Director in charge of publicity for our evening presentations, and much more.

Donald, it is with real regret that we send you off to Calgary. We wish you lots of "lifers" and know that you will quickly establish yourself with the local birding scene there. We will think of you often when we tell birding stories here on the Island. Thanks for all that you and your family have given to the Islanders who were fortunate enough to cross your path. We sincerely appreciate it and wish you the best in Calgary!

PS - Enjoy the birding in the mountains and sloughs.