

maintains its ground, or springs from a short distance on its foe. So, bravely, it dies, without a thought of glory, or without a chance of fame; for of its kind there are no cowards."

Mr. Wheelwright describes it as by far the commonest Owl in the district of Quickiock; and although lemmings form its principal food when they are 'in season,' he believes it does not migrate to any extent, but remains stationary throughout the year. In winter it is occasionally killed as far south as Wermland; but these have merely strayed from their native haunts—the lower fir-forests at the foot and by the sides of the fells. He proceeds to say that "it is by no means shy, and in the breeding-season is one of the boldest of birds. Seated on the top of a dead pine, close to the nest where his mate is sitting, the old male keeps a constant watch, and, as soon as any one approaches, raises his tail and head, after the manner of the cuckoo, and, uttering a shrill cry, not unlike that of the Kestrel, down he comes full on the head of the intruder. Dashing by with the speed of lightning, he returns to the charge again and again, till he has either driven him away or paid the penalty of his rashness with his life. The lad who attended me was really frightened at this bird, and always hated to go up to a nest; and well he might; for on one occasion, when taking the eggs out of a dead pine, without a branch to help him, holding on, as the sailors say, 'by his eyelids,' forty feet from the ground, the old bird made a swoop down on his head, struck off his cap (through the top of which a large slit was cut), and in a moment returned to the charge, tearing off a very fair-sized clawful of his hair. I was standing at the bottom of the tree with my gun; and had I not knocked the bird over, the lad might have been easily beaten off his hazardous perch. There is no trouble in shooting the Hawk Owl if you have a dog with you; for whatever time of the year it may be, as soon as the bird spies the dog, it descends to give battle.

"In flight, manners, and appearance this bird is closely allied to the hawks. It is strictly diurnal in its habits, and to the stealthy quiet flight of the Owl adds the spirit and courage of the Falcon. Hardly a forest bird is safe from its attacks. I have seen it strike down a Siberian Jay, its nearest neighbour, on the wing; and more than once have disturbed it while feeding on an old Willow Grouse, a bird half as large again as itself. Its principal food appears to be birds, lemmings, and wood mice; but I have often found insects in the stomach. There is little difference in the plumage of the two sexes; but the female is rather the largest, and in the breeding-season has the breast and belly strongly tinged with reddish brown. I know the male takes his turn in sitting upon the eggs, for I have shot both sexes as they flew out of the hole in which they were deposited.

"The Hawk Owl moults early; the old birds may be seen without tails before the young are able to fly, and the autumnal moult is complete by the time the young are fully feathered. The bird is then in its best plumage, and its clean, pure, shiny dress is very different from the dingy colouring of spring."

The number of eggs laid by this Owl seems to vary from six to seven or eight. Mr. Newton, in his '*Ootheca Wolleyana*,' mentions one with eight, two with seven, and one with six. Their usual size is $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch by $1\frac{1}{8}$.

The late Sir John Richardson states, in the '*Fauna Boreali-Americana*,' that this "Owl, which inhabits the Arctic Circle in both continents, remains all the winter in high northern latitudes, and is rarely seen so far south as Pennsylvania, and then only in severe winters. It is a common species throughout the fur-countries from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific, and is more frequently killed than any other by the hunters, which may be attributed to its boldness and its habit of flying about by day. In the summer season it feeds principally on mice and insects; but in the snow-clad regions which it frequents in winter neither of these are to be procured, and it then preys mostly on Ptarmigan. It is a constant attendant upon the flocks of these birds in their spring migrations to the northward. When the hunters are shooting Grouse, this bird is occasionally attracted by the report of the gun, and is often bold enough, on a bird being killed, to pounce down upon it, though it may be unable from its size to carry it off. It is also known to hover round the fires made by the natives at night."

Mr. H. E. Dresser informs me that the Hawk Owl is not uncommon in New Brunswick, and often to be seen on "rampikes" (large dead trees so called) standing alone on the blueberry barrens. At certain seasons it occurs in large numbers, and is supposed (by the country people) to bring ill luck. My friend Mr. George Boardman, of St. Stephen, N. B., has found the eggs of this Owl in that neighbourhood; but I myself never succeeded in finding them, though I have seen the birds all the year round on the Musquash river, where I resided. They appear to feed almost entirely on a small species of mouse that is numerous on the barrens; for, though I have dissected many, I never found the stomach to contain anything but the remains of these animals. They seek their prey during the daytime, and seem to enjoy sitting on the very top of an old scathed tree in the full glare of the sun.

The front bird in the Plate is of the natural size; the other is somewhat reduced.