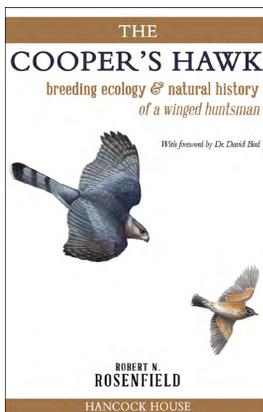


## The Cooper's Hawk: Breeding Ecology & Natural History of a Winged Huntsman

By Robert N. Rosenfield. 2018. Hancock House. 164 pages, 49.95 CAD, Cloth, 34.95 CAD, Paper.

One could think of Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) as a "feeder bird", because it frequently hunts mid-sized birds attracted to feeders, such as sparrows, starlings, and doves, and chipmunks that are attracted to spilled seed. They hunt mostly ground- and shrub-foraging birds and small mammals from a perch, scanning for movement, followed by a sudden burst of flight. They will even run after prey on the ground or dive into thick cover in pursuit. Having evolved as a forest raptor, with adaptations for



swift flight through tight spaces, the species has adapted well to fragmented urban environments with abundant prey as long as there is nesting habitat.

In his Preface, Rosenfield sets out three goals for the book: 1) to aid the curious public in interpreting the behaviour of Cooper's Hawks and to recognize their ecological contexts, 2) to serve agency and academic biologists charged with management of raptors, and 3) to prompt new questions for study. The author tackles these goals in six chapters, broadly titled as: "You are What You Eat", "Courtship and Nesting Biology", "The Breeding Population and Habitat Suitability", "Individual Traits (the Descriptive Currencies of Natural History Dynamics)", and "The Meaning and Implication of Natural History Variation".

I think the author achieves these goals admirably. This book is a well-written account of the natural history of Cooper's Hawk, based on the author's own 38 years of research in Wisconsin and other studies in

British Columbia, North Dakota, Arizona, and Florida. It is a good example of how a long-term study of a single species (six generations) enables a researcher to explore questions they didn't even know to ask in the beginning. Rosenfield is an author on approximately one-quarter of the papers in the lengthy reference section, but he enlivens his research results with incidental observations to weave a compelling story. The text is supplemented with numerous photographs with extensive descriptive captions that are a significant addition to the information presented. There are a few maps and sketches.

The problem I have with the book is the layout. The 15 cm × 23 cm size is very nice, but to achieve that the publishers used very narrow margins, such that to read the text near the spine you must force the book flatter. Most photos 'bleed' right to the edge of the page, including the bound edge such that part of the photo is effectively hidden. Multiple photos are laid out side-

by-side with no border or white space to separate them or give eye relief. Many photos appeared to be very grainy, perhaps the result of scanning original slides at insufficient resolution or cropping distant photos to emphasize the bird in the picture. And captions run very tightly to the edge of the photos. These layout choices were undoubtedly influenced by trying to keep the number of pages to 164—most book printing relies on 'signatures' in multiples of four for more economical printing. I doubt if any of these decisions were Rosenfield's.

While I found these layout issues distracting, I do recommend this book to anyone interested in Cooper's Hawks. As Rosenfield says in the final chapter, "... without comprehensive natural history accounts of where a species lives, how it behaves, and what it eats, a species is simply a dot on a graph" (p. 133).

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