



COOPER'S HAWK



PHOTOS BY JAMES KENDALL

This fierce, locally common raptor is known by many different names throughout North America, including the chicken hawk, striker, and flying cross. It is a crow-sized hawk. It is often identified by its proportionally large flat head, long and banded tail feathers, and fierce hunting habits under the canopy of wooded forests where they use their remarkable speed and agility to stalk



Surveying the landscape



Notice the juvenile's yellow eyes, and the red eyes of the adult.

and ambush elusive prey species. Their long tails act as rudders that allow them to be extremely maneuverable in wooded areas as they careen adroitly through the forest, hunting birds on the wing. While they mainly eat smaller birds, they can also prey on small mammals, including squirrels.

The Cooper's Hawk is a resident, breeding bird that has adapted to



Feasting on a pigeon



flourish in city parks and tree-lined streets with attractively landscaped neighborhoods. Here, it can remain well-concealed in foliage before bursting forth to rapidly seize its favored, unwitting prey of dove-sized birds. Accordingly, a well-stocked backyard bird feeder can unintentionally serve to provide an avian buffet to this keenly vigilant and highly efficient bird of prey.