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PHOTOGRAPHY, VOL. 2, NO. 2 ***

BIRDS

A MONTHLY SERIAL

ILLUSTRATED BY COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY

DESIGNED TO PROMOTE

KNOWLEDGE OF BIRD-LIFE

VOLUME II.

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BY

NATURE STUDY PUBLISHING Co.

CHICAGO.

INTRODUCTION.

This is the second volume of a series intended to present, in accurate colored portraiture, and in popular and juvenile biographical text, a very considerable portion of the common birds of North America, and many of the more interesting and attractive specimens of other countries, in many respects superior to all other publications which have attempted the representation of birds, and at infinitely less expense. The appreciative reception by the public of Vol. I deserves our grateful acknowledgement. Appearing in monthly parts, it has been read and admired by thousands of people, who, through the life-like pictures presented, have made the acquaintance of many birds, and have since become enthusiastic observers of them. It has been introduced into the public schools, and is now in use as a text book by hundreds of teachers, who have expressed enthusiastic approval of the work and of its general extension. The faithfulness to nature of the pictures, in color and pose, have been commended by such ornithologists and authors as Dr. Elliott Coues, Mr. John Burroughs, Mr. J. W. Allen, editor of *The Auk*, Mr. Frank M. Chapman, Mr. J. W. Baskett, and others.

The general text of BIRDS—the biographies—has been conscientiously prepared from the best authorities by a careful observer of the feather-growing denizens of the field, the forest, and the shore, while the juvenile autobiographies have received the approval of the highest ornithological authority.

The publishers take pleasure in the announcement that the general excellence of BIRDS will be maintained in subsequent volumes. The subjects selected for the third and fourth volumes—many of them—will be of the rare beauty in which the great Audubon, the limner *par excellence* of birds, would have found “the joy of imitation.”

NATURE STUDY PUBLISHING COMPANY.

BIRDS.

ILLUSTRATED BY COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY.

VOL. II.

AUGUST.

No. 2.

BIRD SONG.



WE made several early morning excursions into the woods and fields during the month of June, and were abundantly rewarded in many ways—by beholding the gracious awakening of Nature in her various forms, kissed into renewed activity by the radiance of morn; by the sweet smelling air filled with the perfume of a multitude of opening

flowers which had drunk again the dew of heaven; by the sight of flitting clouds across the bluest of skies, patching the green earth with moving shadows, and sweetest of all, by the twittering, calling, musical sounds of love and joy which came to the ear from the throats of the feathered throng. How pleasant to lie prone on one's back on the cool grass, and gaze upward through the shady green canopy of boughs, watching the pretty manoeuvres, the joyous greetings, the lively anxieties, the graceful movements, and even the sorrowful happenings of the bird-life above us.

Listen to the variety of their tones, as manifest as the difference of form and color. What more interesting than to observe their habits, and discover their cosy nests with their beautiful eggs in the green foliage? Strange that so many persons think only of making a collection of them, robbing the nests with heartless indifference to the suffering of the parents, to say nothing of the invasion which they make of the undoubted rights the birds have from nature to protection and perpetuation.

Strictly speaking, there are few birds to which the word "singing" can properly be applied, the majority of them not having more than two or three notes, and they with little suggestion of music in them. Chanticleer crows, his spouse cackles or clucks, as may be suitable to the occasion. To what ear are these noises musical? They are rather language, and, in fact, the varying notes of every species of bird have a significance which can alone be interpreted by its peculiar habits. If careful note be made of the immediate conduct of the male or female bird, as the case may be, after each call or sound, the meaning of it becomes plain.

A hen whose chicks are scattered in search of food, upon seeing a hawk, utters a note of warning which we have all heard, and the young scamper to her for protection beneath her wings. When she has laid an egg, *Cut-cut-cut-cut-ot-cut!* announces it from the nest in the barn. When the chicks are hatched, her *cluck, cluck, cluck*, calls them from the nest in the wide world, and her *chick, chick, chick*, uttered quickly, selects for them the dainty which she has found, or teaches them what is proper for their diet. A good listener will detect enough intonations in her voice to constitute a considerable vocabulary, which, if imitated

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 57.]

THE AMERICAN OSPREY.

Here is the picture of a remarkable bird. We know him better by the name Fish Hawk. He looks much like the Eagle in July "BIRDS." The Osprey has no use for Mr. Eagle though.

You know the Bald Eagle or Sea Eagle is very fond of fish. Well, he is not a very good fisherman and from his lofty perch he watches for the Fish Hawk or Osprey. Do you ask why? Well, when he sees a Fish Hawk with his prey, he is sure to chase him and take it from him. It is for this reason that Ospreys dislike the Bald Eagle.

Their food is fish, which as a rule they catch alive.

It must be interesting to watch the Osprey at his fishing. He wings his way slowly over the water, keeping a watch for fish as they appear near the surface.

When he sees one that suits him, he hovers a moment, and then, closing his wings, falls upon the fish.

Sometimes he strikes it with such force that he disappears in the water for a moment. Soon we see him rise from the water with the prey in his claws.

He then flies to some tall tree and if he has not been discovered by his enemy, the Eagle, can have a good meal for his hard work.

Look at his claws; then think of them striking a fish as they must when he plunges from on high.

A gentleman tells of an Osprey that fastened his claws in a fish that was too large for him.

The fish drew him under and nothing more was seen of Mr. Osprey. The same gentleman tells of a fish weighing six pounds that fell from the claws of a Fish Hawk that became frightened by an Eagle.

The Osprey builds his nest much like the Bald Eagle. It is usually found in a tall tree and out of reach.

Like the Eagle, he uses the same nest each year, adding to it. Sometimes it measures five feet high and three feet across. One nest that was found, contained enough sticks, cornstalks, weeds, moss, and the like, to fill a cart, and made a load for a horse to draw. Like the Crows and Blackbirds they prefer to live together in numbers.

Over three hundred nests have been found in the trees on a small island.

One thing I want you to remember about the Osprey. They usually remain mated for life.



OSPREY.

From col. F. M. Woodruff.

THE AMERICAN OSPREY.

AN interesting bird, "Winged Fisher," as he has been happily called, is seen in places suited to his habits, throughout temperate North America, particularly about islands and along the seacoast. At Shelter Island, New York, they are exceedingly variable in the choice of a nesting place. On Gardiner's Island they all build in trees at a distance varying from ten to seventy-five feet from the ground; on Plum Island, where large numbers of them nest, many place their nests on the ground, some being built up to a height of four or five feet while others are simply a few sticks arranged in a circle, and the eggs laid on the bare sand. On Shelter Island they build on the chimneys of houses, and a pair had a nest on the cross-bar of a telegraph pole. Another pair had a nest on a large rock. These were made of coarse sticks and sea weed, anything handy, such as bones, old shoes, straw, etc. A curious nest was found some years ago on the coast of New Jersey. It contained three eggs, and securely imbedded in the loose material of the Osprey's nest was a nest of the Purple Grackle, containing five eggs, while at the bottom of the Hawk's nest was a thick, rotten limb, in which was a Tree Swallow's nest of seven eggs.

In the spring and early autumn this familiar eagle-like bird can be seen hovering over creek, river, and sound. It is recognized by its popular name of Fish-Hawk. Following a school of fish, it dashes from a considerable height to seize its prey with its stout claws. If the fish is small it is at once swallowed, if it is large, (and the Osprey will occasionally secure shad, blue fish, bass, etc., weighing five or six pounds,) the fish is carried to a convenient bluff or tree and torn to bits. The Bald Eagle often robs him of the fish by seizing it, or startling him so that he loses his hold.

The Osprey when fishing makes one of the most breezy, spirited pictures connected with the feeding habits of any of our birds, as often there is a splashing and a struggle under water when the fish grasped is too large or the great talons of the bird gets entangled. He is sometimes carried under and drowned, and large fish have been washed ashore with these birds fastened to them by the claws.

Mrs. Mabel Osgood Wright says: "I found an Osprey's nest in a crooked oak on

Wakeman's Island in late April, 1893. As I could not get close to the nest (the island is between a network of small creeks, and the flood tides covered the marshes,) I at first thought it was a monstrous crow's nest, but on returning the second week in May I saw a pair of Ospreys coming and going to and fro from the nest. I hoped the birds might return another season, as the nest looked as if it might have been used for two or three years, and was as lop-sided as a poorly made haystack. The great August storm of the same year broke the tree, and the nest fell, making quite a heap upon the ground. Among the debris were sticks of various sizes, dried reeds, two bits of bamboo fishing rod, seaweeds, some old blue mosquito netting, and some rags of fish net, also about half a bushel of salt hay in various stages of decomposition, and malodorous dirt galore."

It is well known that Ospreys, if not disturbed, will continue indefinitely to heap rubbish upon their nests till their bulk is very great. Like the Owls they can reverse the rear toe.

THE SORA RAIL.

VARIOUS are the names required to distinguish the little slate-colored Carolina Rail from its brethren, Sora, Common Rail, and, on the Potomac river, Ortolan, being among them. He is found throughout temperate North America, in the weedy swamps of the Atlantic states in great abundance, in the Middle states, and in California. In Ohio he is a common summer resident, breeding in the extensive swamps and wet meadows. The nest is a rude affair made of grass and weeds, placed on the ground in a tussock of grass in a boggy tract of land, where there is a growth of briars, etc., where he may skulk and hide in the wet grass to elude observation. The nest may often be discovered at a distance by the appearance of the surrounding grass, the blades of which are in many cases interwoven over the nest, apparently to shield the bird from the fierce rays of the sun, which are felt with redoubled force on the marshes.

The Rails feed on both vegetable and animal food. During the months of September and October, the weeds and wild oats swarm with them. They feed on the nutritious seeds, small snail shells, worms and larvae of insects, which they extract from the mud. The habits of the Sora Rail, its thin, compressed body, its aversion to take wing, and the dexterity with which it runs or conceals itself among the grass and sedge, are exactly similar to those of the more celebrated Virginia Rail.

The Sora frequents those parts of marshes preferably where fresh water springs rise through the morass. Here it generally constructs its nest, "one of which," says an observer, "we had the good fortune to discover. It was built in the bottom of a tuft of grass in the midst of an almost impenetrable quagmire, and was composed altogether of old wet grass and rushes. The eggs had been flooded out of the nest by the extraordinary rise of the tide in a violent northwest storm, and lay scattered about the drift weed. The usual number of eggs is from six to ten. They are of a dirty white or pale cream color, sprinkled with specks of reddish and pale purple, most numerous near the great end."

When on the wing the Sora Rail flies in a straight line for a short distance with dangling legs, and suddenly drops into the water.

The Rails have many foes, and many nests are robbed of their eggs by weasels, snakes, Blackbirds, and Marsh Hawks, although the last cannot disturb them easily, as the Marsh Hawk searches for its food while flying and a majority of the Rails' nests are covered over, making it hard to distinguish them when the Hawk is above.



SORA RAIL.

From col. Chi. Acad. Sciences.

THE SORA RAIL.

This is one of our fresh-water marsh birds. I show you his picture taken where he spends most of his time.

If it were not for the note calls, these tall reeds and grasses would keep from us the secret of the Rail's home.

Like most birds, though, they must be heard, and so late in the afternoon you may hear their clear note, ker-wee.

From all parts of the marsh you will hear their calls which they keep up long after darkness has set in.

This Rail was just about to step out from the grasses to feed when the artist took his picture. See him—head up, and tail up. He steps along carefully. He feels that it is risky to leave his shelter and is ready at the first sign of danger, to dart back under cover.

There are very few fresh-water marshes where the Rail is not found.

When a boy, I loved to hear their note calls and would spend hours on the edge of a marsh near my home.

It seemed to me there was no life among the reeds and cat-tails of the marsh, but when I threw a stone among them, the Rails would always answer with their *peeps* or *keeks*.

And so I used to go down to the marsh with my pockets filled with stones. Not that I desired or even expected to injure one of these birds. Far from it. It pleased me to hear their calls from the reeds and grass that seemed deserted.

Those of you who live near wild-rice or wild-oat marshes have a good chance to become acquainted with this Rail.

In the south these Rails are found keeping company with the Bobolinks or Reed-birds as they are called down there.

THE KENTUCKY WARBLER.

Although this bird is called the Kentucky Warbler, we must not think he visits that state alone.

We find him all over eastern North America. And a beautiful bird he is.

As his name tells you he is one of a family of Warblers.

I told you somewhere else that the Finches are the largest family of birds. Next to them come the Warblers.

Turn back now and see how many Warblers have been pictured so far.

See if you can tell what things group them as a family. Notice their bills and feet.

This bird is usually found in the dense woods, especially where there are streams of water.

He is a good singer, and his song is very different from that of any of the other Warblers.

I once watched one of these birds—olive-green above and yellow beneath. His mate was on a nest near by and he was entertaining her with his song.

He kept it up over two hours, stopping only a few seconds between his songs. When I reached the spot with my field-glass I was attracted by his peculiar song. I don't know how long he had been singing. I stayed and spent two hours with him and he showed no signs of stopping. He may be singing yet. I hope he is.

You see him here perched on a granite cliff. I suppose his nest is near by.

He makes it of twigs and rootlets, with several thicknesses of leaves. It is neatly lined with fine rootlets and you will always find it on or near the ground.

In the September and October number of "BIRDS" you will find several Warblers and Finches. Try to keep track of them and may be you can do as many others have done—tell the names of new birds that come along by their pictures which you have seen in "BIRDS."



KENTUCKY WARBLER.

From col. F. M. Woodruff.

THE KENTUCKY WARBLER.

BETWEEN sixty and seventy warblers are described by Davie in his "Nests and Eggs of North American Birds," and the Kentucky Warbler is recognized as one of the most beautiful of the number, in its manners almost the counterpart of the Golden Crowned Thrush (soon to delight the eyes of the readers of BIRDS), though it is altogether a more conspicuous bird, both on account of its brilliant plumage and greater activity, the males being, during the season of nesting, very pugnacious, continually

chasing one another about the woods. It lives near the ground, making its artfully concealed nest among the low herbage and feeding in the undergrowth, the male singing from some old log or low bush, his song recalling that of the Cardinal, though much weaker.

The ordinary note is a soft *schip*, somewhat like the common call of the Pewee. Considering its great abundance, says an observer, the nest of this charmer is very difficult to find; the female, he thought, must slyly leave the nest at the approach of an intruder, running beneath the herbage until a considerable distance from the nest, when, joined by her mate, the pair by their evident anxiety mislead the stranger as to its location.

It has been declared that no group of birds better deserves the epithet "pretty" than the Warblers. Tanagers are splendid, Humming Birds refulgent, others brilliant, gaudy, or magnificent, but Warblers alone are pretty.

The Warblers are migratory birds, the majority of them passing rapidly across the United States in spring on the way to their northern nesting grounds, and in autumn to their winter residence within the tropics. When the apple trees bloom they revel among the flowers, vieing in activity and numbers with the bees; "now probing the recesses of a blossom for an insect, then darting to another, where, poised daintily upon a slender twig, or suspended from it, they explore hastily but carefully for another morsel. Every movement is the personification of nervous activity, as if the time for their journey was short; as, indeed, appears to be the case, for two or three days at most suffice some species in a single locality."

We recently saw a letter from a gentleman living at Lake Geneva, in which he referred with enthusiasm to *BIRDS*, because it had enabled him to identify a bird which he had often seen in the apple trees among the blossoms, particularly the present season, with which he was unacquainted by name. It was the Orchard Oriole, and he was glad to have a directory of nature which would enable him to add to his knowledge and correct errors of observation. The idea is a capitol one, and the beautiful Kentucky Warbler, unknown to many who see it often, may be recognized in the same way by residents of southern Indiana and Illinois, Kansas, some localities in Ohio, particularly in the southwestern portion, in parts of New York and New Jersey, in the District of Columbia, and in North Carolina. It has not heretofore been possible, even with the best painted specimens of birds in the hand, to satisfactorily identify the pretty creatures, but with *BIRDS* as a companion, which may readily be consulted, the student cannot be led into error.

THE RED BREASTED MERGANSER.



WHY this duck should be called red-breasted is not at first apparent, as at a distance the color can not be distinguished, but seen near, the reason is plain. It is a common bird in the United States in winter, where it is found in suitable localities in the months of May and June. It is also a resident of the far north, breeding abundantly in Newfoundland, Labrador, Greenland, and Iceland. It is liberally supplied with names, as Red-Breasted Goosander or Sheldrake, Garbill, Sea Robin, etc.

There is a difference in opinion as to the nesting habits of the Red-Breast, some authorities claiming that, like the Wood Duck, the nest is placed in the cavity of a tree, others that it is usually found on the ground among brushwood, surrounded with tall grasses and at a short distance from water. Davie says that most generally it is concealed by a projecting rock or other object, the nest being made of leaves and mosses, lined with feathers and down, which are plucked from the breast of the bird. The observers are all probably correct, the bird adapting itself to the situation.

Fish is the chief diet of the Merganser, for which reason its flesh is rank and unpalatable. The Bird's appetite is insatiable, devouring its food in such quantities that it has frequently to disgorge several times before it is able to rise from the water. This Duck can swallow fishes six or seven inches in length, and will attempt to swallow those of a larger size, choking in the effort.

The term Merganser is derived from the plan of the bird's bill, which is furnished with saw teeth fitting into each other.

The eggs of the Red-Breasted Merganser vary from six to twelve, are oval in shape, and are of a yellowish or reddish-drab, sometimes a dull buffy-green.

You may have seen pictures of this Duck, which frequently figures in dining rooms on the ornamental panels of stuffed game birds, but none which could cause you to remember its life-like appearance. You here see before you an actual Red-Breasted Merganser.



RED-BREASTED MERGANSER.

From col. J. G. Parker, Jr.

BIRD SONG—Continued from page 41.

with exactness, will deceive Mistress Pullet herself.

To carry the idea further, we will take the notes of some of the birds depicted in this number of BIRDS. The Osprey, or Fish-Hawk, has been carefully observed, and his only discovered note is a high, rapidly repeated whistle, very plaintive. Doubtless this noise is agreeable and intelligible to his mate, but cannot be called a song, and has no significance to the listener.

The Vulture utters a low, hissing sound when disturbed. This is its only note. Not so with the Bald Eagle, whose scream emulates the rage of the tempest, and implies courage, the quality which associates him with patriotism and freedom. In the notes of the Partridge there is a meaning recognizable by every one. After the nesting season, when the birds are in bevvies, their notes are changed to what sportsmen term "scatter calls." Not long after a bevy has been flushed, and perhaps widely scattered, the members of the disunited family may be heard signaling to one another in sweet minor calls of two and three notes, and in excitement, they utter low, twittering notes.

Of the Sora Rails, Mr. Chapman says, "knowing their calls, you have only to pass a May or June evening near a marsh to learn whether they inhabit it. If there, they will greet you late in the afternoon with a clear whistled *ker-wee*, which soon comes from dozens of invisible birds about you, and long after night has fallen, it continues like a springtime chorus of piping hylas. Now and again it is interrupted by a high-voiced, rolling whinney, which, like a call of alarm, is taken up and repeated by different birds all over the marsh."

Poor Red-Breasted Merganser! He has only one note, a croak. Perhaps it was of him that Bryant was thinking when he wrote the stanzas "[To a Water-Fowl](#)."

"The sentiment of feeling awakened by any of the aquatic fowls is pre-eminently one of loneliness," says John Burroughs. "The Wood Duck (see July BIRDS) which you approach, starts from the pond or the marsh, the Loon neighing down out of the April sky, the Wild Goose, the Curlew, the Stork, the Bittern, the Sandpiper, etc., awaken quite a different train of emotions from those awakened by the land birds. They all have clinging to them some reminiscence and suggestion of the sea. Their cries echo its wildness and desolation; their wings are the shape of its billows."

But the Evening Grosbeak, the Kentucky Warbler, the Skylark, land birds all, are singers. They have music in their throats and in their souls, though of varying quality. The Grosbeak's note is described by different observers as a shrill *cheepy tee* and a frog-like *peep*, while one writer remarks that the males have a single metallic cry like the note of a trumpet, and the females a loud chattering like the large Cherry Birds.

The Kentucky Warbler's song is entirely unlike that of any other Warbler, and is a loud, clearly whistled performance of five, six, or seven notes, *turdle, turdle, turdle*, resembling in tone some of the calls of the Carolina Wren. He is so persistent in his

singing, however, that the Red-Breasted Merganser's simple croak would sometimes be preferable to it.

But the Skylark—

“All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams and heaven is over-flowed.”

—C. C. MARBLE.

THE YELLOW LEGS.

Y

ELLOW LEGS, or Lesser Tell tale sometimes called Yellow-leg Snipe, and Little Cucu, inhabits the whole of North America, nesting in the cold temperate and subarctic districts of the northern continent, migrating south in winter to Argentine and Chili. It is much rarer in the western than eastern province of North America, and is only accidental in Europe. It is one of the wading birds, its food consisting of larvae of insects, small shell fish and the like.

The nest of the Lesser Yellow Shanks, which it is sometimes called, is a mere depression in the ground, without any lining. Sometimes, however, it is placed at the foot of a bush, with a scanty lining of withered leaves. Four eggs of light drab, buffy or cream color, sometimes of light brown, are laid, and the breast of the female is found to be bare of feathers when engaged in rearing the young. The Lesser Yellow legs breeds in central Ohio and Illinois, where it is a regular summer resident, arriving about the middle of April, the larger portion of flocks passing north early in May and returning about the first of September to remain until the last of October.

A nest of this species of Snipe was found situated in a slight depression at the base of a small hillock near the border of a prairie slough near Evanston, Illinois, and was made of grass stems and blades. The color of the eggs in this instance was a deep grayish white, three of which were marked with spots of dark brown, and the fourth egg with spots and well defined blotches of a considerably lighter shade of the same.



YELLOW LEGS.

From col. F. M. Woodruff.



SKY LARK.

From col. F. M. Woodruff.

THE SKYLARK.

This is not an American bird. I have allowed his picture to be taken and placed here because so many of our English friends desired it.

The skylark is probably the most noted of birds in Europe. He is found in all of the countries of Europe, but England seems to claim it. Here it stays during the summer, and goes south in the winter.

Like our own Meadow Lark, he likes best to stay in the fields. Here you will find it when not on the wing.

Early in the spring the Skylark begins his song, and he may be heard for most of the year.

Sometimes he sings while on the ground, but usually it is while he is soaring far above us.

Skylarks do not often seek the company of persons. There are some birds, you know, that seem happy only when they are near people. Of course, they are somewhat shy, but as a rule they prefer to be near people. While the Skylark does not seek to be near persons, yet it is not afraid of them.

A gentleman, while riding through the country, was surprised to see a Skylark perch on his saddle. When he tried to touch it, the Lark moved along on the horse's back, and finally dropped under the horse's feet. Here it seemed to hide. The rider, looking up, saw a hawk flying about. This explained the cause of the skylark's strange actions.

A pair of these Larks had built their nest in a meadow. When the time came for mowing the grass, the little ones were not large enough to leave the nest. The mother bird laid herself flat on the ground, with her wings spread out. The father bird took one of the little ones from the nest and placed it on the mother's back. She flew away, took the baby bird to a safe place, and came back for another.

This time the father took his turn. In this way they carried the little ones to a safe place before the mowers came.

Like our Meadow Lark, the Skylark builds her nest on the ground—never in bushes or trees. Usually it is built in a hole below the surface of the ground. It is for this reason that it is hard to find.

Then, too, the color of the nest is much like that of the ground.

Four or five eggs are usually laid, and in two weeks the little larks crack the shells, and come into the world crying for worms and bugs.

T

HE English Skylark has been more celebrated in poetry than any other song-bird. Shelley's famous poem is too long to quote and too symmetrical to present in fragmentary form. It is almost as musical as the sweet singer itself.

"By the first streak of dawn," says one familiar with the Skylark, "he bounds from the dripping herbage, and on fluttering wings mounts the air for a few feet ere giving forth his cheery notes. Then upward, apparently without effort he sails, sometimes drifting far away as he ascends, borne as it were by the ascending vapors, so easily he mounts the air. His notes are so pure and sweet, and yet so loud and varied withal, that when they first disturb the air of early morning all the other little feathered tenants of the fields and hedgerows seem irresistibly compelled to join him in filling the air with melody. Upwards, ever upwards, he mounts, until like a speck in the highest ether he appears motionless; yet still his notes are heard, lovely in their faintness, now gradually growing louder and louder as he descends, until within a few yards of the earth they cease, and he drops like a fragment hurled from above into the herbage, or flits about it for a short distance ere alighting." The Lark sings just as richly on the ground as when on quivering wing. When in song he is said to be a good guide to the weather, for whenever we see him rise into the air, despite the gloomy looks of an overcast sky, fine weather is invariably at hand.

The nest is most frequently in the grass fields, sometimes amongst the young corn, or in places little frequented. It is made of dry grass and moss, and lined with fibrous roots and a little horse hair. The eggs, usually four or five in number, are dull white, spotted, clouded, and blotched over the entire surface with brownish green. The female Lark, says Dixon, like all ground birds, is a very close sitter, remaining faithful to her charge. She regains her nest by dropping to the ground a hundred yards or more from its concealment.

The food of the Lark is varied,—in spring and summer, insects and their larvae, and worms and slugs, in autumn and winter, seeds.

Olive Thorne Miller tells this pretty anecdote of a Skylark which she emancipated from a bird store: "I bought the skylark, though I did not want him. I spared no pains to make the stranger happy. I procured a beautiful sod of uncut fresh grass, of which he at once took possession, crouching or sitting low among the stems, and looking most bewitching. He seemed contented, and uttered no more that appealing cry, but he did not show much intelligence. His cage had a broad base behind which he delighted to hide, and for hours as I sat in the room I could see nothing of him, although I would hear him stirring about. If I rose from my seat he was instantly on the alert, and stretched his head up to look over at me. I tried to get a better view of him by hanging a small mirror at an angle over his cage, but he was so much frightened by it that I removed it."

"This bird," Mrs. Miller says "never seemed to know enough to go home. Even when very hungry he would stand before his wide open door, where one step would take him into his beloved grass thicket, and yet that one step he would not take. When his hunger became intolerable he ran around the room, circled about his cage, looking in, recognizing his food dishes, and trying eagerly to get between the wires to reach them; and yet when he came before the open door he would stand and gaze, but never go in. After five months' trial, during which he displayed no particular intelligence, and never learned to enter his cage, he passed out of the bird room, but not into a store."



WILSON'S PHALAROPE.

From col. F. M. Woodruff.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE.

PERHAPS the most interesting, as it is certainly the most uncommon, characteristic of this species of birds is that the male relieves his mate from all domestic duties except the laying of the eggs. He usually chooses a thin tuft of grass on a level spot, but often in an open place concealed by only a few straggling blades. He scratches a shallow depression in the soft earth, lines it with a thin layer of fragments of old grass blades, upon which the eggs, three or four, are laid about the last of May or first of June. Owing to the low situation in which the nest is placed, the first set of eggs are often destroyed by a heavy fall of rain causing the water to rise so as to submerge the nest. The instinct of self preservation in these birds, as in many others, seems lacking in this respect. A second set, numbering two or three, is often deposited in a depression scratched in the ground, as at first, but with no sign of any lining.

Wilson's Phalarope is exclusively an American bird, more common in the interior than along the sea coast. The older ornithologists knew little of it. It is now known to breed in northern Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, the Dakotas, Utah, and Oregon. It is recorded as a summer resident in northern Indiana and in western Kansas. Mr. E. W. Nelson states that it is the most common species in northern Illinois, frequenting grassy marshes and low prairies, and is not exceeded in numbers even by the ever-present Spotted Sandpiper. While it was one of our most common birds in the Calumet region it is now becoming scarce.

The adult female of this beautiful species is by far the handsomest of the small waders. The breeding plumage is much brighter and richer than that of the male, another peculiar characteristic, and the male alone possesses the naked abdomen. The female always remains near the nest while he is sitting, and shows great solicitude upon the approach of an intruder. The adults assume the winter plumage during July.

THE EVENING GROSBEAK.

HANDSOMER birds there may be, but in the opinion of many this visitant to various portions of western North America is in shape, color, and markings one of the most exquisite of the feather-wearers. It has for its habitation the region extending from the plains to the Pacific ocean and from Mexico into British America. Toward the North it ranges further to the east; so that, while it appears to be not uncommon about Lake Superior, it has been reported as occurring in Ohio, New York, and Canada. In Illinois it was observed at Freeport during the winter of 1870 and 1871, and at Waukegan during January, 1873. It is a common resident of the forests of the State of Washington, and also of Oregon. In the latter region Dr. Merrill observed the birds

carrying building material to a huge fir tree, but was unable to locate the nest, and the tree was practically inaccessible. Mr. Walter E. Bryant was the first to record an authentic nest and eggs of the Evening Grosbeak. In a paper read before the California Academy of Sciences he describes a nest of this species containing four eggs, found in Yolo county, California. The nest was built in a small live oak, at a height of ten feet, and was composed of small twigs supporting a thin layer of fibrous bark and a lining of horse hair. The eggs are of a clear greenish-ground color, blotched with pale brown. According to Mr. Davie, one of the leading authorities on North American birds, little if any more information has been obtained regarding the nests and eggs of the Evening Grosbeak.

As to its habits, Mr. O. P. Day says, that about the year 1872, while hunting during fine autumn weather in the woods about Eureka, Illinois, he fell in with a number of these Grosbeaks. They were feeding in the tree tops on the seeds of the sugar maple, just then ripening, and were excessively fat. They were very unsuspecting, and for a long time suffered him to observe them. They also ate the buds of the cottonwood tree in company with the Rose-Breasted Grosbeak.

The song of the Grosbeak is singularly like that of the Robin, and to one not thoroughly familiar with the notes of the latter a difference would not at first be detected. There is a very decided difference, however, and by repeatedly listening to both species in full voice it will be discovered more and more clearly. The sweet and gentle strains of music harmonize delightfully, and the concert they make is well worth the careful attention of the discriminating student. The value of such study will be admitted by all who know how little is known of the songsters. A gentleman recently said to us that one day in November the greater part of the football field at the south end of Lincoln Park was covered with Snow Birds. There were also on the field more than one hundred grammar and high school boys waiting the arrival of the football team. There was only one person present who paid any attention to the birds which were picking up the food, twittering, hopping, and flying about, and occasionally indulging in fights, and all utterly oblivious of the fact that there were scores of shouting school boys around and about them. The gentleman called the attention of one after another of ten of the high school boys to the snow birds and asked what they were. They one and all declared they were English Sparrows, and seemed astounded that any one could be so ignorant as not to know what an English Sparrow was. So much for the city-bred boy's observation of birds.



EVENING GROSBEEK.

THE EVENING GROSBEEK.

In the far Northwest we find this beautiful bird the year around. During the winter he often comes farther south in company with his cousin, the Rose-Breasted Grosbeak.

What a beautiful sight it must be to see a flock of these birds—Evening Grosbeaks and Rose-Breasted in their pretty plumage.

Grosbeaks belong to a family called Finches. The Sparrows, Buntings, and Crossbills

belong to the same family. It is the largest family among birds.

You will notice that they all have stout bills. Their food is mostly grains and their bills are well formed to crush the seeds.

Look at your back numbers of "BIRDS" and notice the pictures of the other Finches I have named. Don't you think Dame Nature is very generous with her colors sometimes?

Only a few days ago while strolling through the woods with my field glass, I saw a pretty sight. On one tree I saw a Redheaded Woodpecker, a Flicker, an Indigo Bunting, and a Rose-Breasted Grosbeak. I thought then, if we could only have the Evening Grosbeak our group of colors would be complete.

Have you ever wondered at some birds being so prettily dressed while others have such dull colors?

Some people say that the birds who do not sing must have bright feathers to make them attractive. We cannot believe this. Some of our bright colored birds are sweet singers, and surely many of our dull colored birds cannot sing very well.

Next month you will see the pictures of several home birds. See if dull colors have anything to do with sweet song.

THE TURKEY VULTURE.

This bird is found mostly in the southern states. Here he is known by the more common name of Turkey Buzzard.

He looks like a noble bird but he isn't. While he is well fitted for flying, and might, if he tried, catch his prey, he prefers to eat dead animals.

The people down south never think of burying a dead horse or cow. They just drag it out away from their homes and leave it to the Vultures who are sure to dispose of it.

It is very seldom that they attack a live animal.

They will even visit the streets of the cities in search of dead animals for food, and do not show much fear of man. Oftentimes they are found among the chickens and ducks in the barn-yard, but have never been known to kill any.

One gentleman who has studied the habits of the Vulture says that it has been known to suck the eggs of Herons. This is not common, though. As I said they prefer dead animals for their food and even eat their own dead.

The Vulture is very graceful while on the wing. He sails along and you can hardly see his wings move as he circles about looking for food on the ground below.

Many people think the Vulture looks much like our tame turkey.

If you know of a turkey near by, just compare this picture with it and you won't think so.

See how chalk-white his bill is. No feathers on his head, but a bright red skin.

What do you think of the young chick? It doesn't seem as though he could ever be the large, heavy bird his parent seems to be.

Now turn back to the first page of July "BIRDS" and see how he differs from the Eagle.



TURKEY VULTURE.

From col. F. M. Woodruff.

THE TURKEY VULTURE.

TURKEY BUZZARD is the familiar name applied to this bird, on account of his remarkable resemblance to our common Turkey. This is the only respect however, in which they are alike. It inhabits the United States and British Provinces from the Atlantic to the Pacific, south through Central and most of South America. Every farmer knows it to be an industrious scavenger, devouring at all times the putrid or decomposing flesh of carcasses. They are found in flocks, not only flying and feeding in company, but resorting to the same spot to roost; nesting also in communities; depositing their eggs on the ground, on rocks, or in hollow logs and stumps, usually in thick woods or in a sycamore grove, in the bend or fork of a stream. The nest is frequently built in a tree, or in the cavity of a sycamore stump, though a favorite place for depositing the eggs is a little depression under a small bush or overhanging rock on a steep hillside.

Renowned naturalists have long argued that the Vulture does not have an extraordinary power of smell, but, according to Mr. Davie, an excellent authority, it has been proven by the most satisfactory experiments that the Turkey Buzzard does possess a keen sense of smell by which it can distinguish the odor of flesh at a great distance.

The flight of the Turkey Vulture is truly beautiful, and no landscape with its patches of green woods and grassy fields, is perfect without its dignified figure high in the air, moving round in circles, steady, graceful and easy, and apparently without effort. "It sails," says Dr. Brewer, "with a steady, even motion, with wings just above the horizontal position, with their tips slightly raised, rises from the ground with a single bound, gives a few flaps of the wings, and then proceeds with its peculiar soaring flight, rising very high in the air."

The Vulture pictured in the accompanying plate was obtained between the Brazos river and Matagorda bay. With it was found the Black Vulture, both nesting upon the ground. As the nearest trees were thirty or forty miles distant these Vultures were always found in this situation. The birds selected an open spot beneath a heavy growth of bushes, placing the eggs upon the bare ground. The old bird when approached would not attempt to leave the nest, and in the case of the young bird in the plate, the female to protect it from harm, promptly disgorged the putrid contents of her stomach, which was so offensive that the intruder had to close his nostrils with one hand while he reached for the young bird with the other.

The Turkey Vulture is a very silent bird, only uttering a hiss of defiance or warning to its neighbors when feeding, or a low guttural croak of alarm when flying low overhead.

The services of the Vultures as scavengers in removing offal render them valuable, and almost a necessity in southern cities. If an animal is killed and left exposed to view, the bird is sure to find out the spot in a very short time, and to make its appearance as if called by some magic spell from the empty air.

“Never stoops the soaring Vulture
On his quarry in the desert,
On the sick or wounded bison,
But another Vulture, watching,
From his high aerial lookout,
Sees the downward plunge and follows;
And a third pursues the second,
Coming from the invisible ether,
First a speck, and then a Vulture,
Till the air is dark with pinions.”

TO A WATER-FOWL.

Whither, 'midst falling dew
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far through their rosy depths dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocky billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean side.

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and nest,
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,
Soon o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet on my heart
Deeply has sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.



GAMBEL'S PARTRIDGE.

From col. F. M. Woodruff.

GAMBEL'S PARTRIDGE.

GAMBEL'S PARTRIDGE, of which comparatively little is known, is a characteristic game bird of Arizona and New Mexico, of rare beauty, and with habits similar to others of the species of which there are about two hundred. Mr. W. E. D. Scott found the species distributed throughout the entire Catalina region in Arizona below an altitude of 5,000 feet. The bird is also known as the Arizona Quail.

The nest is made in a depression in the ground sometimes without any lining. From eight to sixteen eggs are laid. They are most beautifully marked on a creamy-white ground with scattered spots and blotches of old gold, and sometimes light drab and chestnut red. In some specimens the gold coloring is so pronounced that it strongly suggests to the imagination that this quail feeds upon the grains of the precious metal which characterizes its home, and that the pigment is imparted to the eggs.

After the nesting season these birds commonly gather in "coveys" or bebies, usually composed of the members of but one family. As a rule they are terrestrial, but may take to trees when flushed. They are game birds *par excellence*, and, says Chapman, trusting to the concealment afforded by their dull colors, attempt to avoid detection by hiding rather than by flying. The flight is rapid and accompanied by a startling whirr, caused by the quick strokes of their small, concave, stiff-feathered wings. They roost on the ground, tail to tail, with heads pointing outward; "a bunch of closely huddled forms—a living bomb whose explosion is scarcely less startling than that of dynamite manufacture."

The Partridge is on all hands admitted to be wholly harmless, and at times beneficial to the agriculturist. It is an undoubted fact that it thrives with the highest system of cultivation, and the lands that are the most carefully tilled, and bear the greatest quantity of grain and green crops, generally produce the greatest number of Partridges.

SUMMARY.

AMERICAN OSPREY.—*Pandion paliaetus carolinensis*.

RANGE—North America; breeds from Florida to Labrador; winters from South Carolina to northern South America.

NEST—Generally in a tree, thirty to fifty feet from the ground, rarely on the ground.

EGGS—Two to four; generally buffy white, heavily marked with chocolate.

Page 48.

SORA RAIL.—*Porzana carolina*.

RANGE—Temperate North America, south to the West Indies and northern South America.

NEST—Of grass and reeds, placed on the ground in a tussock of grass, where there is a growth of briers.

EGGS—From seven to fourteen; of a ground color, of dark cream or drab, with reddish brown spots.

Page 51.

KENTUCKY WARBLER.—*Geothlypis formosa*.

RANGE—Eastern United States; breeds from the Gulf States to Iowa and Connecticut; winters in Central America.

NEST—Bulky, of twigs and rootlets, firmly wrapped with leaves, on or near the ground.

EGGS—Four or five; white or grayish white, speckled or blotched with rufous.

Page 55.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER.—*Merganser Serrator*.

RANGE—Northern parts of the Northern Hemisphere; in America breeds from northern Illinois and New Brunswick northward to the arctic regions; winters southward to Cuba.

NEST—Of leaves, grasses, mosses, etc., lined with down, on the ground near water, among rocks or scrubby bushes.

EGGS—Six to twelve; creamy buff.

Page 60.

YELLOW LEGS.—*Totanus flavipes*.

RANGE—North America, breeding chiefly in the interior from Minnesota, northern Illinois, Ontario County, N. Y., northward to the Arctic regions; winters from the Gulf States to Patagonia.

EGGS—Three or four; buffy, spotted or blotched with dark madder—or van dyke—brown and purplish gray.

Page 61.

SKYLARK.—*Alauda arvensis*.

RANGE—Europe and portions of Asia and Africa; accidental in the Bermudas and in Greenland.

NEST—Placed on the ground, in meadows or open grassy places, sheltered by a tuft of grass; the materials are grasses, plant stems, and a few chance leaves.

EGGS—Three to five, of varying form, color, and size.

Page 66.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE.—*Phalaropus tricolor*.

RANGE—Temperate North America, breeding from northern Illinois and Utah northward to the Saskatchewan region; south in winter to Brazil and Patagonia.

NEST—A shallow depression in soft earth, lined with a thin layer of fragments of grass.

EGGS—Three to four; cream buff or buffy white, heavily blotched with deep chocolate.

Page 70.

EVENING GROSBEAK.—*Coccythraustes vespertina*.

RANGE—Interior of North America, from Manitoba northward; southeastward in winter to the upper Mississippi Valley and casually to the northern Atlantic States.

NEST—Of small twigs, lined with bark, hair, or rootlets, placed within twenty feet of the ground.

EGGS—Three or four; greenish, blotched with pale brown.

Page 73.

TURKEY VULTURE.—*Catharista atrata*.

RANGE—Temperate America, from New Jersey southward to Patagonia.

NEST—In hollow stump or log, or on ground beneath bushes or palmettos.

EGGS—One to three; dull white, spotted and blotched with chocolate marking.

Page 78.

GAMBEL'S PARTRIDGE.—*Callipepla gambeli*.

RANGE—Northwestern Mexico, Arizona, New Mexico, southern Utah, and western Utah and western Texas.

NEST—Placed on the ground, sometimes without any lining.

EGGS—From eight to sixteen.

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