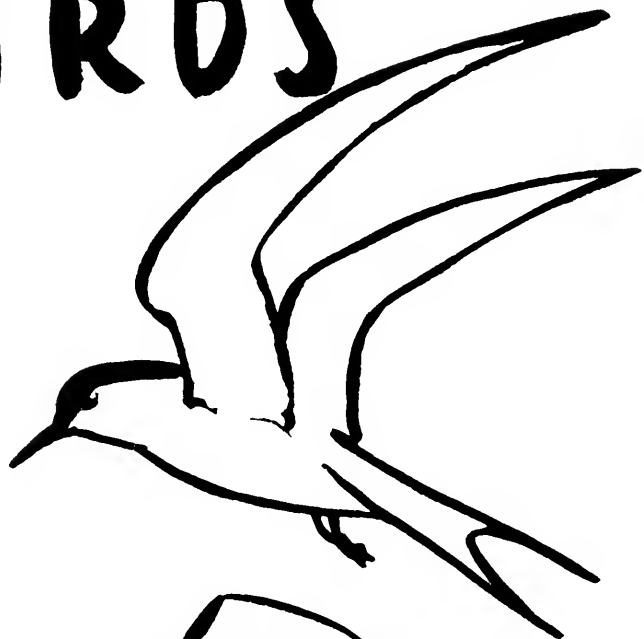


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INVITATION TO BIRDS



VIRGINIA S. EIFERT
ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM

STORY OF ILLINOIS NO. 5



STATE OF ILLINOIS
HON. WILLIAM G. STRATTON, *Governor*

DEPARTMENT OF REGISTRATION
AND EDUCATION

HON. VERA M. BINKS, *Director*

ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM

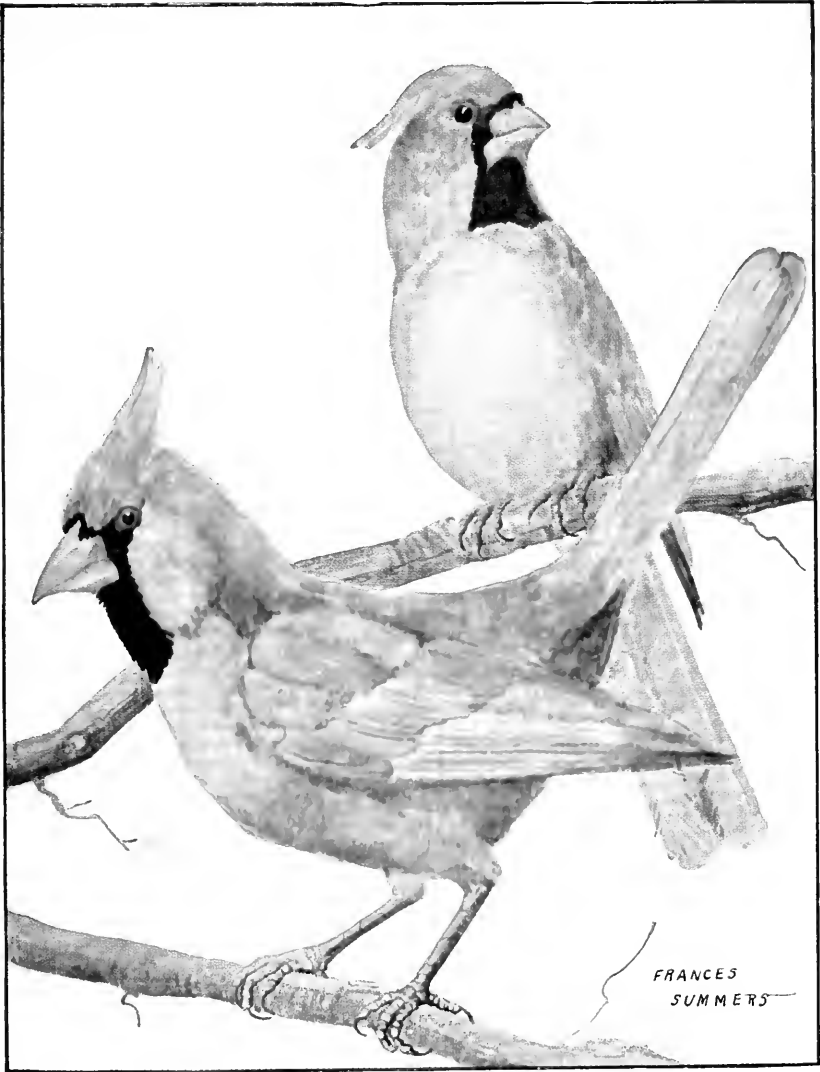
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The Cardinal
(Cardinalis Cardinalis)
STATE BIRD OF ILLINOIS

From a painting by Mrs. Frances Summers Ridgely

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AND EDUCATION

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THORNE DEUEL, *Museum Director*

STORY OF ILLINOIS SERIES, NUMBER 5

INVITATION
TO
BIRDS

A few of the common birds of Illinois—
an invitation to know and enjoy them

by

VIRGINIA S. EIFERT

Illustrations by the Author



SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

First Printing 1948

Second Printing (Revised) 1950

Third Printing (Revised) 1952

Fourth Printing 1953

[Printed by authority of the State of Illinois]

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INVITATION TO BIRDS

Once upon a time not so very long ago, birds were not looked upon as they are today. It was considered fine sport to kill robins and bluebirds. One was a sissy if he enjoyed merely looking at them. Boys felt it was a manly accomplishment to kill as many song birds and rob as many birds' nests as possible. These boys probably grew up to be men who went hunting any time they pleased and often brought home larks or thrushes for the table. Doubtless their wives thought it very fashionable to wear bird wings or entire birds on their hats. Birds were fair game, and only a very few people—generally considered odd—went out for the purpose of looking at them, learning about how they lived, and enjoyed it.

Gradually times changed. The Boy Scouts made it highly unpopular for any boy to kill a bird; collections of mounted birds and their eggs went out of style. The National Audubon Society warred upon the slaughter of birds for the millinery trade, and slowly the fashions changed. National and state laws made it illegal to shoot a song bird or beneficial hawk, and limited the hunting season for game birds to a few weeks during the autumn migration. Somehow, birds all at once became one of the most fascinating and exciting of hobbies. The study of birds has changed, too, from merely looking at a bird, writing its name in a little notebook, and then looking for another bird. Now bird study includes, beside the making of lists, the intense probing into the bird's relation to its surroundings, how it carries on the affairs of its own life, and the part it plays in the whole mechanism of nature.

More than this, many people who are not interested in or able to make such intensive studies, feel a kindness toward birds which is expressed in several ways. Bird houses are put out, bird pools are kept filled with fresh water, food is provided all winter long, cats are kept away from nests, the songs of wrens and catbirds are enjoyed, and the First Robin and the long strings of geese heading north are looked forward to each year.

Birds seem to sense this friendliness, and in spite of the fact that cities appear unsuited for bird life, birds seem to be rather unconcerned with the bustle of populated areas and are to be found almost everywhere. There is scarcely a spot in all Illinois, even in the heart of Chicago, where there are not birds.

Because it is pleasant to know something about the things we see, this publication was prepared as an invitation to look for and enjoy the birds around us. It is not technical and contains relatively few scientific facts. It is, simply, an invitation to become acquainted with some of the birds which are close at hand. Only a few are given here; more than two hundred others are to be seen in Illinois.

To become better acquainted with the birds shown in this book, along with many others, look at them in the Illinois State Museum. Here they may be seen realistically mounted, close at hand, for as long as it is necessary to impress them on your memory.

Material for "Invitation to Birds" has been taken from several sources. Most of the illustrations are reduced in size from the originals which were used in "Birds in Your Backyard", published by the Illinois State Museum in 1941. The European tree sparrow, purple martin, and starling pictures were used in issues of "The Living Museum" (sent free each month on request to residents of Illinois).

THESE BIRDS ARE ILLINOIS

Just as the desert, the mountains, the plains, and the shores have birds which are part of the picture of each region, so Illinois has birds that are typical of the state. Because the tip of southern Illinois is in the same latitude as Norfolk, Virginia, and the northern boundary is only a trifle south of the southernmost tip of Maine, we have an unusually large assortment of birds. Many come here to nest; others stay the year around; still others follow the Mississippi flyway through Illinois on their way to their northern nesting grounds or to their wintering grounds in the south. Therefore, in a year's time it is possible to see well over two hundred and sixty species of birds. In one day in May the keen observer with good binoculars may easily see a hundred birds within a short radius of his home. Singly or by hundreds, there is in the birds of Illinois much of the picture of the state.

The southern tip of Illinois is a rich lowland where the last of the bald cypresses lift their plummy, ragged heads into the hot sunshine. Over the swamps and over the nearby cotton country and the hills, the turkey buzzards float—they are as much a part of the picture of southern Illinois as the cypresses themselves. Buzzards against the sky; thousands of Canada geese bugling on Horseshoe Island near Cairo; the flash of a pileated woodpecker in the deep forests along the Mississippi or the Ohio; the four-note piping of Carolina chickadees ranging from the Ozark foothills almost to the central region; summer tanagers rose-red in the hill woods. In the bottomland marshes are white egrets; European tree sparrows chatter in their colony west of the Cahokia mounds. In the hills of southern Illinois there is the loud calling of a chuck-will's-widow in the night, and the shadow of dark wings blotting out stars.

The picture of birds in Illinois changes in the central section, just as the landscape changes to the rolling prairie which lies between the hills of the north and the south. Central Illinois is full of the singing of meadowlarks, the chanting of dickcissels, the whistling of cardinals, the clacking of crows, the tinkling of prairie horned larks. There is the flutter of whip-poor-will voices in oak woods along the rivers; the small voice of the Bell's vireo in every tangle of blackberries and haw bushes from the Mississippi to the Wabash; the singing of Carolina wrens along a winter stream; the matter-of-fact nesting of robins on the front porch or in the nearby elm. It is the chats singing in the uplands, the tweeting of prothonotary warblers along the rivers, the pattern of chimney swifts upon the sky. It is ten thousand mallards wintering on a lake; house wrens in every garden; English sparrows and starlings taking over business districts and window ledges from Cairo to Chicago.

Northward the bird picture subtly changes again. Cliff swallows nest on the sheer walls of Buffalo Rock, the voice of the water thrush echoes in a Starved Rock canyon, an eagle soars above the Palisades, gulls fly above the Navy Pier. Northern Illinois is a picture decorated with a thousand mergansers on the Grant Park lagoon, and snow buntings in a weedy dumping ground. It is a snowy owl or a flock of redpolls from Canada, or an old squaw duck from Hudson's Bay.

But although some of the birds of the far north come into Illinois during a severe winter, or western birds cross the Mississippi to bring a flavor of the plains to Illinois, or birds of the far south or the east coast come in, these do not paint the true picture of our state as we see it year after year. It is those others—the familiar meadow-larks, dickcissels, redwings and robins, the bluebirds, catbirds, whip-poor-wills, mallards, the cardinals, buzzards, geese, wrens, which most closely and delightfully are part of the section of America known as Illinois.

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Homes for Birds. Kalmbach & McAttee. Cons. Bul. 14, U. S. Dept. of Interior. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wash., D. C., 1942.

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Ready-made Birdhouses, Feeders, and Food may be obtained from National Audubon Society, 1000 Fifth Avenue, New York 28, N. Y.

ATTRACTING BIRDS¹³

W. BRYANT TYRRELL

A feeding station will bring many varieties of birds as regular visitors to your garden. Feeders should be erected well away from the house, preferably near trees or bushes but safely out of reach of cats.

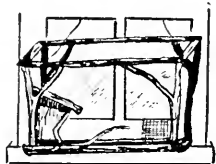
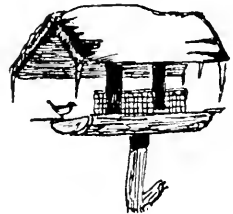
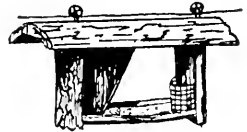
A Suet Stick (1) hung from a branch will attract the climbing birds, as the chickadees, nuthatches, creepers and woodpeckers. The advantage of the Suet Stick is that it is not easy for the larger and more quarrelsome birds, as the bluejays, starlings and English sparrows, to feed from it. The stick should be about 16 inches long, with several holes filled with suet.

The Open Feeder (2) is a simple, attractive and efficient feeder, which is open on three sides. It has ample space for a good supply of seed, and a wire basket for suet.

The Combination Feeder (3) is a rather large though attractive feeder which is open on two sides, with a spacious hopper on the third. This feeder when filled with seed and suet will not need attention more than once a week, except in the most severe weather.

If you are bothered with squirrels, the Trolley Feeder (4) is the most effective means of keeping them from your feed. There are two pulleys mounted on top of the feeder which allows it to run along a wire. Do not use a rope, for the squirrels can run along it.

There are two styles of the Bungalow Feeder (5), the smaller style which hangs, and the larger ones which are erected on a pole. There are three wire baskets on this feeder, the two outer ones for suet and the center and larger one for seed.



BIRD BATH



A naturally hollowed out boulder supported by a stump, sturdy wooden or concrete post will serve. It should be in the open and high enough from ground to be safe from hunting cats.

¹³ This article and the illustrations at the right are reprinted from *Canadian Nature* by special permission.

DIMENSIONS AND LOCATIONS FOR BIRD HOUSES

Species	Floor of cavity, inches	Depth of cavity, inches	Entrance above floor, inches	Diameter of entrance, inches	Height above ground, feet	Location
Bluebirds.....	5 by 5	8	6	1½	5-10	Open sunlit orchards.
Robins.....	6 by 8	8	(*)	(*)	6-15	Shade trees or under eaves of shed or porch roof.
Chickadees.....	4 by 4	8-10	6	1½	6-15	Rustic homes in old orchards and borders of woodlands; suet and nut meats placed on trays in trees especially attract these birds.
Titmice.....	4 by 4	8-10	6-8	1½	6-15	
Nuthatches.....	4 by 4	8-10	6-8	1½	12-20	
House wrens.....	4 by 4	6-8	2-6	¾	6-20	Shady or partly sunlit spots about door yards or orchards.
Carolina wrens.....	4 by 4	6-8	2-6	1	6-20	Borders of woodlands or in brushy areas.
Tree swallows.....	5 by 5	6	1-5	1½	10-15	Dead trees near bodies of water.
Barn swallows.....	6 by 6	6	(*)	(*)	8-12	Shelves placed under eaves of building.
Purple martins.....	6 by 6	6	1	2½	16-20	On poles in open spaces near water.
Song sparrows.....	6 by 6	6	(†)	(†)	1-3	Covered shelves in thickets.
Phoebes.....	6 by 6	6	(*)	(*)	8-12	Bridges or barns near bodies of water.
Crested flycatchers.....	6 by 6	8-10	6-8	2	8-20	Orchards, open woods or in trees in pastures.
Woodpeckers.....	6 by 6	12	10	1½	12-20	

* One or more sides open.

† All sides open.

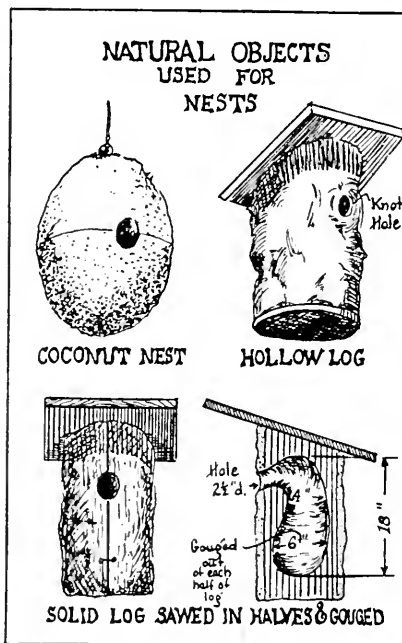
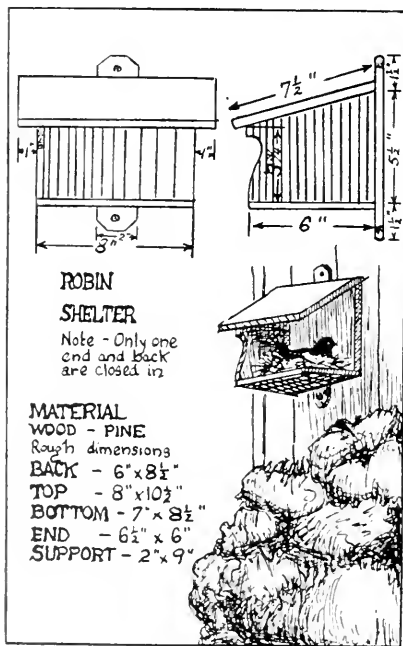
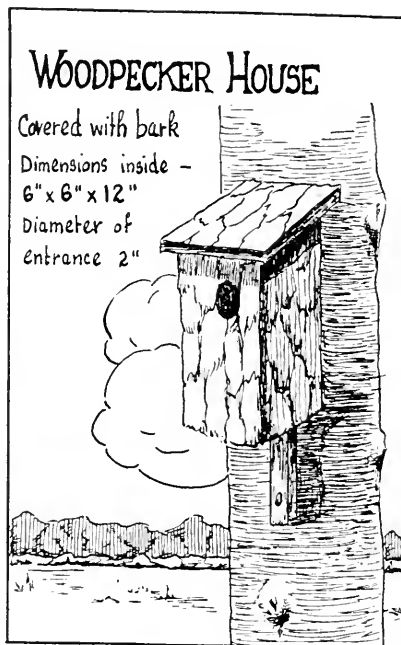
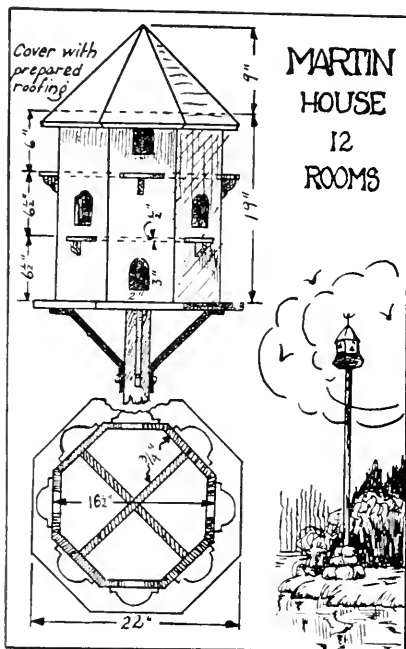
BLUEBIRD HOUSE

MATERIALS
WOOD - PINE
Rough dimensions
FRONT - 6½" x 9½"
BACK - 6½" x 7½"
TOP - 8" x 8"
SIDES @ 5½" x 9"
BOTTOM - 6" x 6"
SUPPORT - 2½" x 12"
PERCH - ½" diam. x 2½"
③ 1" Brads

WREN'S NEST

MATERIALS
WOOD - ½" x 3" x 5" PINE
Rough dimensions
FRONT - 7½" x 7½"
BACK - 6½" x 12"
ENDS @ 4½" x 10"
BOTTOM 6¼" x 4"
TOP @ 6½" x 6½"
SUPPORT 2" x 16"
Make last measurement lengthwise of board.
3 #5 Round head brass screws

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FEEDING THE BIRDS

To a bird in winter, food means life. It is as simple as that—food, or death. To be able to survive in zero cold and in drifting snow, a bird must be equipped to live on food that can be found even at such extreme times. This usually amounts to left-over seeds from the autumn, frozen fruits still hanging on tree or bush, or living creatures themselves. And so as autumn sends the insect-eaters south and leaves only the hardy birds to adapt themselves to winter, we find a bird population which endears itself to us because of its very hardiness and good nature in the face of adversity. They must find a meager living somehow, and most of them do. They are insulated with extra-warm layers of downy feathers to keep the body heat at approximately 110 degrees, and as long as there is enough food to stoke these body fires, the birds will not die of cold.

Under ordinary conditions they manage with ease. They and their forebears have been doing it for thousand of years. In times of blizzard, ice storm, or extreme cold, some perish, but that is the way of Nature in eliminating the unfit. This, too, has been taking place for thousands of years.

But many of us feel sorry for birds in winter. We want to help them by putting out food. This is an excellent thing from our own standpoint because birds are easily observed and enjoyed when they are feeding, especially when the food is placed near the house. Bird-feeding equipment (see page 6) need not be expensive or elaborate. Hungry birds want food, not gadgets, and come to a porch railing or to a simple home-made shelf often more readily than to more elaborate feeders.

Food, too, is simple. Whole corn for cardinals and jays, sun-flower seeds and dried melon and squash seeds as a special treat for those that can manage them; cracked feed and millet for the smaller seed-eaters, though the English sparrows usually clean up the day's ration of this in record time. Suet tied or fastened securely to tree or post invites woodpeckers, titmice, and nuthatches, and is well liked by these birds as a substitute for grubs and insect eggs. Peanut butter is a favorite of finches, chickadees, robins, and blue jays. Birds also like water as much in winter as in summer; a supply of warm water several times a day will be gratefully accepted for bath and drink.

But simple as all this may seem, there is a catch to it. If we are going to feed the birds, we must do it regularly or not at all. Birds congregate in an area in which they are fed, often in greater numbers than is normal for the supply of natural food. If, when a blizzard comes and all the natural provender is covered, and the kind hand of generosity in the house fails to provide daily food, the damage by starvation and freezing may be greater than if the birds had been left to their own rather satisfactory devices from the beginning. There is a certain moral obligation entailed in feeding birds. When this is faithfully observed, in fair weather and foul, then the pleasure of man and bird becomes mutual.

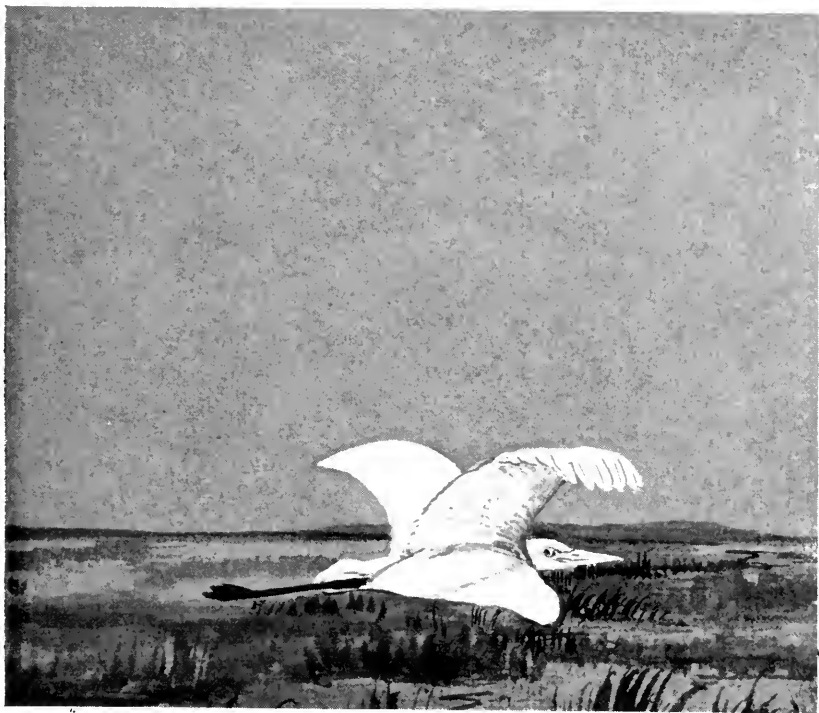


Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)

The great blue heron is a huge bird with a seven-foot wing spread and a masterful flight—a lean, wiry bird with a fish spear for a beak and fishing-poles for legs. The heron is an excellent fisherman. All spring and summer and far into the autumn it wades in the shallows of lakes and rivers and marshes, in search of frogs, fish and crayfish. There the heron stands for long, patient hours, motionless, waiting. To the fish and frogs, the two lean legs are only sticks in the water; the creatures swim about in unconcern until suddenly the fish spear stabs down and catches one. When a fish is caught, it is deftly twisted around until the head points down the heron's long throat—in this way, the fins will not rasp the throat—and with a quick gulp is gone.

When a heron has young in a nest high in a tree somewhere near the swamp, the fish are swallowed but not far enough to be digested. At the nest, the parent bird with a pumping motion brings up the partly softened fish for the young to devour.

Hérons fly with neck drawn in and legs trailing. Cranes fly with the long neck outstretched—this is a good way to distinguish them. Hérons of several kinds are common but cranes in Illinois are rare.



American Egret (*Casmerodius albus egretta*)

Out in the summer marshes where the mudflats steam in the sun, white birds with long necks and broad wings come to feed. They are the egrets, slender white herons which each summer come north to Illinois shores. Most egrets nest in southern swamps, but each year a few more come north to nest in willow tangles along the Mississippi and the Illinois.

These birds are pure white. They stand tall on their long black legs and pose with slim necks pulled in until a fish or frog is located in the water. In careful, slow movements, the long neck stretches out and the bird stalks in slow-motion until it is within striking distance. Then—a sudden flash of a long yellow sword-beak—and the fish or frog is caught, twisted about, swallowed.

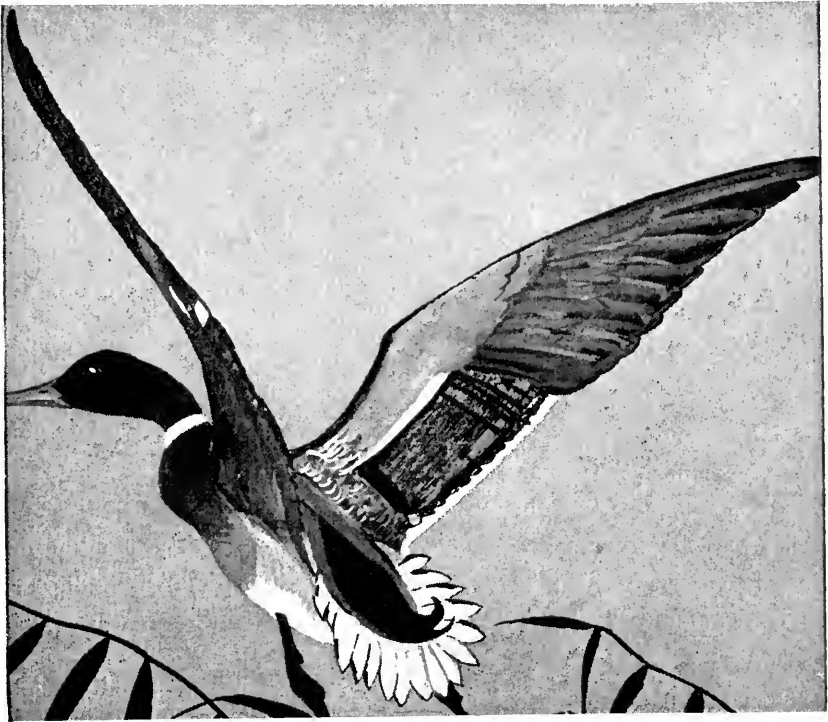
Not many years ago, egrets almost were extinct. It was fashionable for ladies to wear egret plumes, or aigrettes, on their hats, and to satisfy this whim the hunters slaughtered thousands of adult birds at a time when young were in the nests. The National Audubon Society finally brought about laws protecting these birds, and wardens were stationed in the swamps to prevent illegal shooting. Today the egrets are abundant over most of the country, and in Illinois are most common in late summer.



Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

Far north in Canada the geese nested. Here on the chill, damp tundra during the short summer the goose built a warm nest lined with downy feathers from her own body. Whenever she left the nest, which was not often because the ravens were quick to pounce on the eggs if they saw them, she pulled the feathers completely over them. The goslings, too, were closely guarded, although even then the Arctic foxes sometimes made off with one. As late summer came, the young were grown and all moved with their parents to the flats where crowberries grew. Here the geese grew fat and waited for autumn.

One night when the wind from the Arctic suddenly was icy, the geese with a tremendous honking got up in a great flock, which divided itself into V's which were family units, and headed south. Miles they flew, hundreds of miles, with short stops on bodies of water. Then on an October day the long line of geese marked a moving pattern across the sparkling sky of Illinois. The geese were coming. The sun picked out the long black necks, the white cheek patches, the strong wings, the black tails. Calling, calling, they circled over the lake and came down, as they did each year, on the middle of the lake. For several weeks they would stay, flying out to feed in the soybean and corn fields, and then would go on, southward, perhaps to winter on Horseshoe Island near Cairo, Illinois, a famous goose refuge, or to go on still further down the Mississippi to the Gulf region.

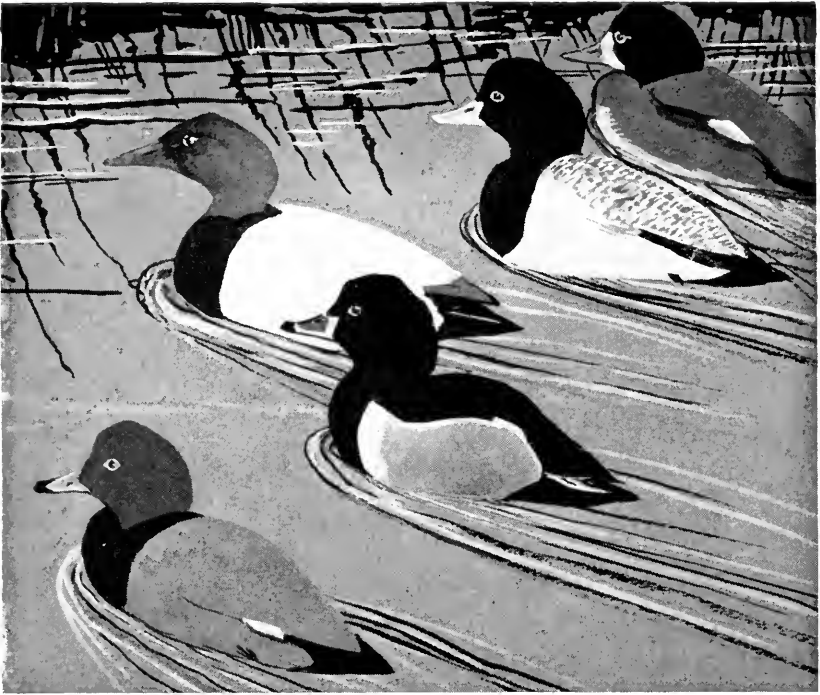


Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*)

Last autumn when the temperature of the Alaskan tundra nightly dropped and ice formed on open pools, the mallard ducks which had nested there in that endless expanse of heath and crowberry, headed south. All over the miles of chilly tundra from the Pribilofs to Hudson's Bay and Greenland, mallards beat their strong wings to flying level and departed. As they came down the Mississippi River valley they were shot at and many fell, for this was the hunting season and mallards are chief of the ducks bagged. Ever since man acquired the taste for roast duck, the mallard has been taken for food.

By late October and November, the water courses of Illinois knew the sudden thousands of mallards dropping out of the sky. Rivers and lakes knew them, but usually the mallards liked shallow water where they could tip up or dabble about for food. Several times during the day the detachments would get up from the water and fly out to fields where corn and soybeans had been dropped after the harvest, and here the ducks fed lavishly on the rich food.

As winter approached, many thousands went on, but others stayed in regions where the supply of food was good. When the water froze, the ducks sat on the ice, their orange legs bright against its blue-white coldness. Now as spring approaches, the mallards are brilliant—bright green-satin heads, a white ring around the neck, a russet breast, quirky black tail feathers, a blue patch on each wing. The females are a mottled brown, but they, too, have that distinguishing mark, the white-bordered blue patch or speculum on the wing.



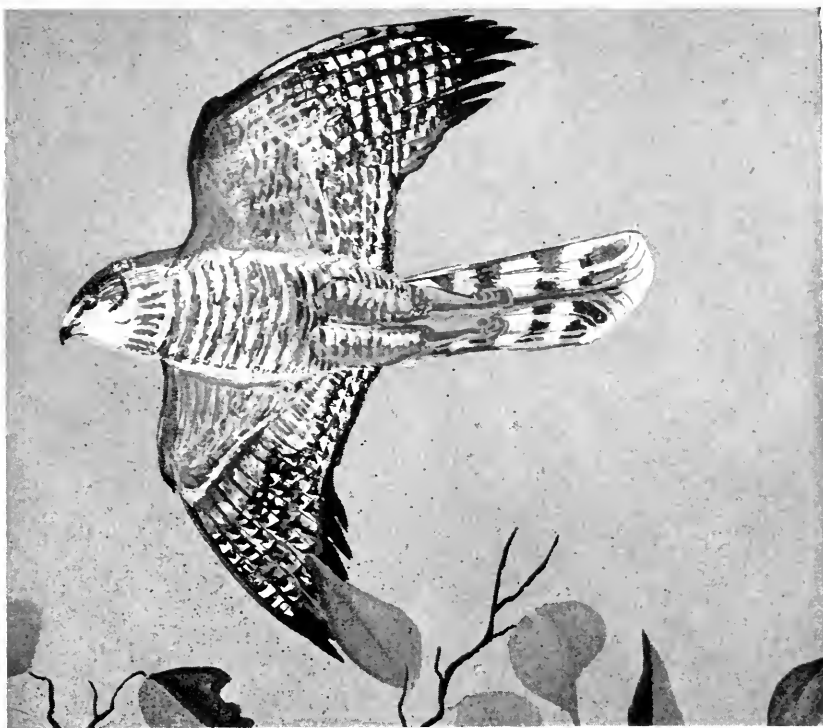
*Left to right: Redhead, Ringneck, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup
(male and female).*

Deep-Water Ducks

Far out on the choppy waters of lake or river in winter, the big flocks of deep-water ducks bob with the motion of the waves and seem unconcerned with cold. They come in November and often stay all winter, or as long as there is any open water in which to dive for their food. Some ducks, like the mallards and teal, find food in shallows, but the deep-water ducks often dive many feet into the depths for small fish and other water life, and small water plants.

Black and white is the coloration of most deep-water drakes, and the way to know them is to learn their individual arrangements of the black and white pattern. The scaup (*Aythya affinis*) is "black at both ends and white in the middle". The ringneck (*Aythya collaris*) is like a black-backed scaup. The American merganser (*Mergus merganser americanus*) is long and large, with much white against the sharp black on head, tail, and wings. The American goldeneye (*Glaucionetta clangula americana*) is black and white with a white spot between eye and beak. The little black and white bufflehead (*Glaucionetta albeola*) has a puffy head marked with a huge patch of white on black, and the little ruddy duck (*Erismatura jamaicensis rubida*) has a white cheek patch on a black head.

With the other black and white divers often are the canvasbacks (*Aythya valisneria*) with their copper-colored heads and sloping foreheads, and the similar redheads (*Aythya americana*) which are distinguished by grey backs and puffy, rounded, coppery heads.

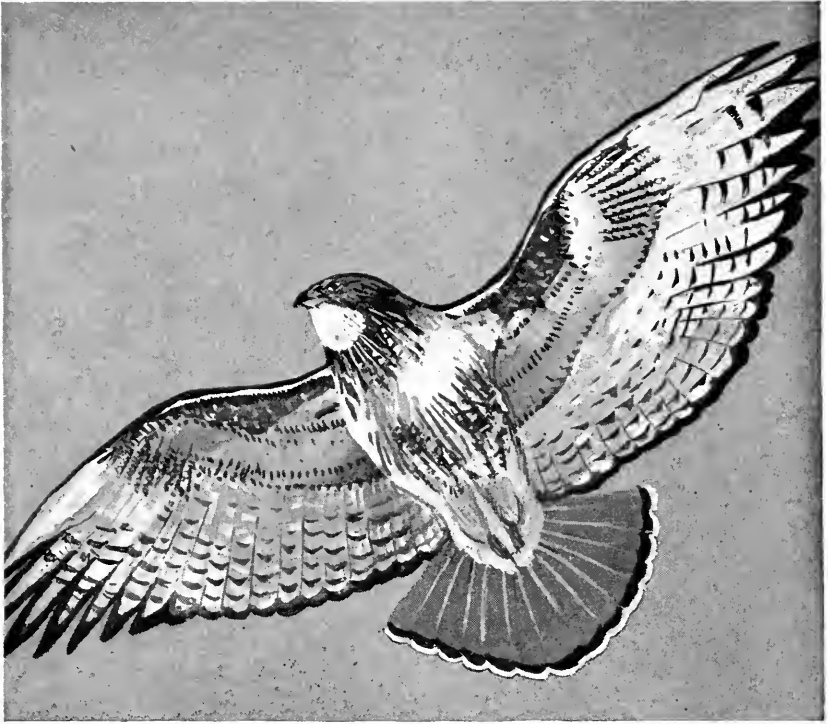


Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*)

Since early days, the hawks have been hated and shot and poisoned without benefit of much justice or wisdom. In the old days, a hawk was a hawk and none was considered good. Now, however, Illinois has become one of the states with a law which makes it illegal to shoot any but the three hawks which are recognized as killers of human property—poultry. These are the sharp-shinned, the Cooper's, and the goshawk. The other big and little hawks which are known as mouse-eaters, rat-and-grasshopper destroyers, and benefactors of the farmer (which indeed they are) are to pass unmolested.

Yet even the killer hawks with their blood-thirsty ways which are so disastrous to the poultry farmer, have their place in the wild. In Nature there seldom are too many birds of prey in proportion to those preyed upon. In this way, the sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks seldom take too many birds or animals, only enough to satisfy their hunger and to feed their young. The big bluish goshawk is rare over most of Illinois. It only comes here in winter and is not the menace which the other two are considered to be.

These three hawks are known by their very distinctive outline in flight—short, rounded wings and a long tail. They are very swift in flight, especially when dashing down to take a young chicken, and they have blood-thirsty dispositions which make an eagle seem almost mild.



Red-Tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Floating back and forth against an autumn sky, the red-tailed hawk alternately shows its broad brown wings and copper-red tail, and its white underparts marked with a black band across the chest. A black mark at the bend of each wing, seen from below, is a further identifying point. Around, around, circling, soaring, the big hawk is master of the air and lord of sky and earth.

The red-tailed hawk, together with the other hawks with broad wings and tails, is known as a beneficial hawk. This means that from the human standpoint they are to be tolerated because they eat more of the creatures which pester man, than they do of those which he wants for himself. A hawk which eats a mouse is to be preferred to one which eats a chicken, or so they are judged.

But they are all wild creatures which are successful in their lives because they find food to satisfy their needs, build big nests of sticks high in a tree, rear their downy, squealing young, and spend long hours floating between sky and earth. Hawks may be seen the year around, but are most abundant during the migration period in April and October.



Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius*)

Among the hawks which spend all or part of their time in Illinois, the little sparrow hawk is perhaps most common and is most easily seen along every highway and country lane. This bird often comes into cities and may be seen catching sparrows in business districts and residence areas where it seems as much at home as in the country.

The sparrow hawk is sharply marked and distinctive. It is bright red-brown on back and tail, slate-bluish on crown and wings, with a black mustache-mark curving on each cheek. When the bird is at rest on post or wire, the tail pumps up and down. In flight, the long tail and long sharp wings (sharp-shinned hawks have rounded wings) and the unique habit of hovering for minutes at a time, distinguish it from all other hawks.

These little mouse-eating hawks nest in an old woodpecker hole or an owl hole in a tree. Both parent birds take turns at feeding the hungry young, which one day in late spring come forth to sit in a stub-tailed row on fence or bough.

In Egypt the sparrow hawk was considered a sacred bird, symbol of the sun god, and was carved in splendid, massive statues which are as recognizable as hawks today as they were to the people of Egypt thousands of years ago.



Bobwhite or Quail (*Colinus virginianus*)

Down in the grass and weeds, the plump little bobwhites listen and watch as men or animals approach. The birds either walk softly in zig-zag trails, away from the sounds, or they huddle watchfully in a thickety place, waiting. Then just as the danger is upon them, they burst into the air with such a racket of wings "as of lions roaring", that it is a nerveless man or fox that does not fall back on his heels in alarm. By the time he recovers composure, the bobwhites are all but out of gun range and are safe for the moment.

This means of escaping has enabled the bobwhite or quail to hold its own and multiply in Illinois. It is a mottled brown bird, a little woods-chicken with black marks on the face. The throaty piping calls are familiar notes across the fields; the flocking call, less often associated with the bobwhite, is one of the loneliest sounds to be heard out of doors.

In a tangle of grass, along a fence row, or under a hedge, the bobwhite makes a roofed-over nest in which the dozen white eggs are laid. The downy young are able to run almost as soon as they are hatched, and scatter to safety among the leaves and grass.



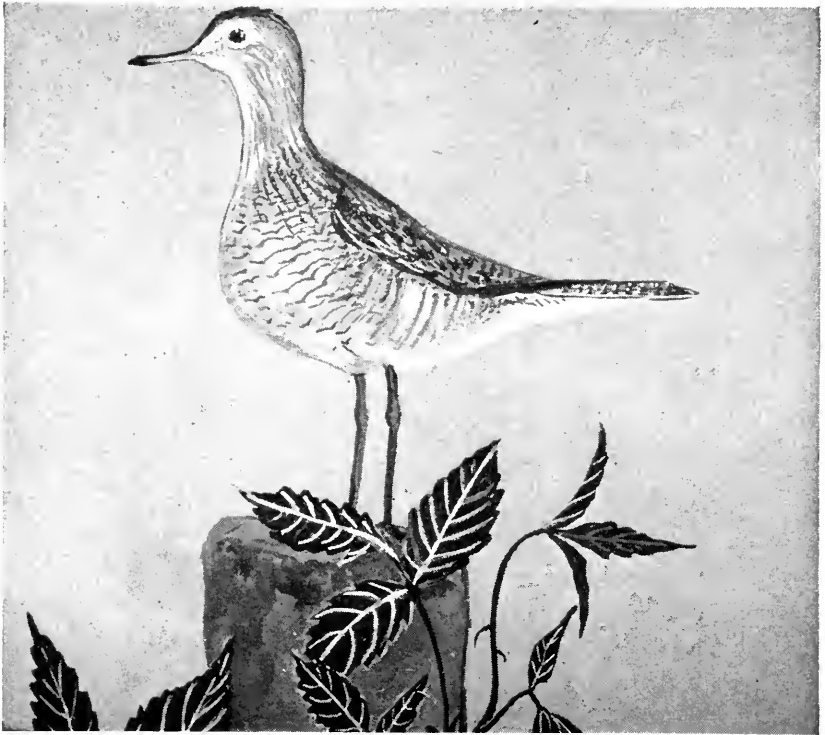
Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus vociferus*)

Across the rainy skies of March there comes the high-pitched crying of a killdeer—now springtime surely must be at hand. The killdeer, on its long wings that flash white below, comes flying from the south very early in the season and stays until the ground freezes in autumn and all worms are frozen in the mud.

The killdeer is a bird of the mudflats and grassy fields. On the flats it marks the mud with a maze of three-toed footprints as it hunts for insects and worms all day long. In grassy meadows or in a gravel road, often in a place in great danger from passing wheels or animals, the killdeer lays its eggs. It makes no nest: the eggs simply are laid in a hollow of gravel or grass and somehow manage to escape disaster. They are pebble-colored and are remarkably well concealed in full view.

The young are fluffy little black and white chicks that almost immediately are able to run on long pink legs. By the end of the summer they join their parents on the mudflats, where they squeal and yip all day and sleep there all night long.

The killdeer is marked with two black bands across a white chest, has a white eyebrow, a reddish tail, and brown back and wings. It is the most common of the plovers in Illinois.



Upland Plover (*Bartramia longicauda*)

Perhaps it is running in the pasture, a long-legged, long-necked brown bird with a slinking gait and wary eye. Perhaps it perches high on the top of a telephone pole or on a fence post—a gawky bird with long legs that seem out of place on such a lofty perch. Or, perhaps, out of the springtime sky, there comes a strange, drawn-out, eerie whinny that is almost like the wind, yet is not.

The whinny announces the approach of a lean, sharp-winged bird that comes flying out of nowhere, utters again that strange call, drops down on a post or on the ground, raises long wings high, claps them briskly against its sides, and stands in wide-eyed contemplation of the world. There—the upland plover.

The plover is a puzzle. It seems to belong along water courses or in a marsh where other plovers gather, but instead prefers the grassy uplands. It likes to perch on a pole, where the bird is ungainly and awkward, and is very easily observed from a passing auto. The plover once was extremely abundant in Illinois; millions came in flocks to the prairies when spring was at hand. Now, however, it is not common, but still is to be found in most of the prairie lands of Illinois.

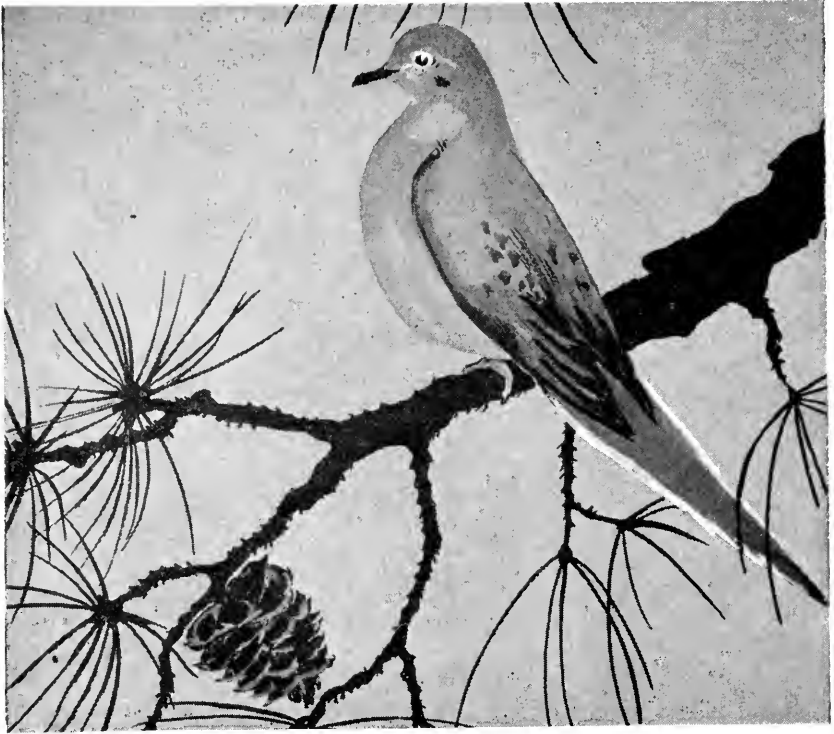


The Gulls

When autumn comes, the first of the gulls appear on the waters of Illinois. They nested northward in the Great Lakes region, but now all winter and far into the spring they bring a sea-coast look to inland rivers and lakes.

Usually most common are the ring-billed gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) but with them are the herring gulls which are much bigger. The ring-bill has greenish yellow legs; those of the herring gull (*Larus argentatus*) are pale pink. Both, however, have the white body, grey wings, and black and white wing-tips which are so characteristic of gulls.

But it does not matter too much on a day in late winter, when the sky is brilliant blue and the lake ice is breaking with a rumbling and a crashing—it does not matter, really, if it is a ring-billed or a herring gull. For there against that splendid sky the gulls soar on set wings. They appear to be pure white, almost translucent in the sunshine, almost moth-like in their effortless flight. From their lofty setting in the air, their eerie calls drift down. Then the gulls may change their courses, come dropping down to follow along the line of shore to pick up dead fish caught in the ice. Or sometimes, like queer, high-tailed ducks, they come down to sit on the water.



Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*)

"The way to make a perfect nest", said the magpie to the assembled birds, "is to take some sticks"

"How lovely," murmured the dove and flew off to get some sticks which she piled in a carefully careless heap in a tree. And that is the reason why, the old story goes, the dove never learned to build a very strong nest. They do the same today—two white eggs are somehow balanced on the frail handful of twigs. To keep from falling overboard, or through the bottom, the young doves cling with their pink feet to the twigs. The parent doves feed the young, watch them as they take their first flight, and then, when they are able to fend for themselves, the doves build another nest just like the first and start all over again.

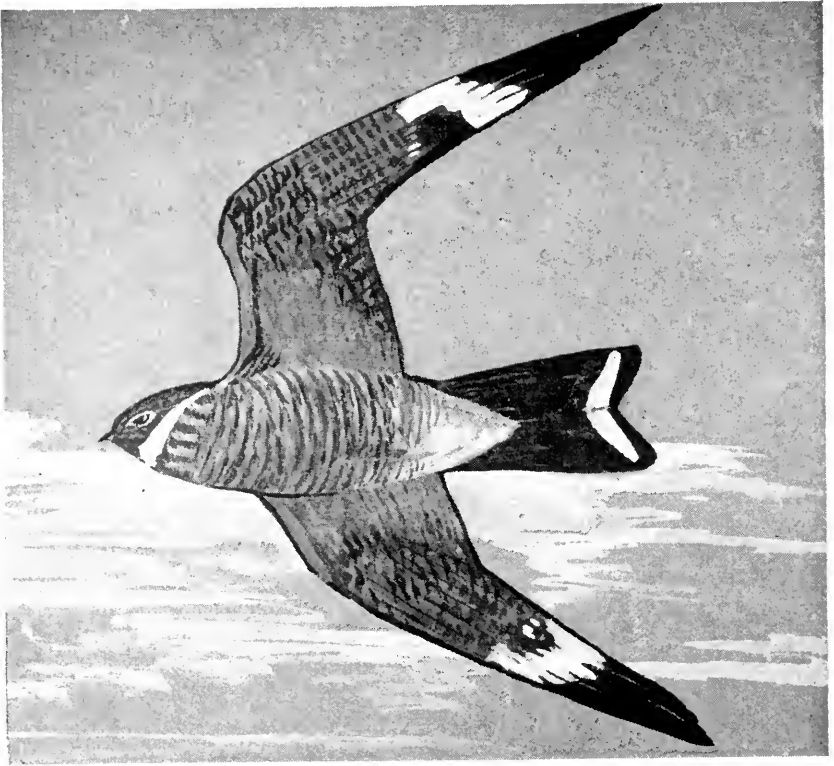
The mourning dove is the only wild dove in Illinois. Long ago, however, the passenger pigeon, which looked something like the dove, swarmed by millions in Illinois. Now these are all extinct, but the quantities of mourning doves, which do not travel in great flocks as the pigeons did, continue to hold their own. They are one of the earliest arrivals in spring and often are seen in protected places throughout the winter.



Screech Owl (*Otus asio*)

As the quiet cold of the long winter night approaches, a small brown owl in the half hollow of an old maple beside the busy street squinches its eyes, blinks in the light, and climbs up in the comfortable hole where it spent the day. The screech owl is a city owl, though it originally dwelt only in woods; now it is fond of those typical rotted-out holes most maples acquire in towns. All day long the sleek little owl appears to be just a knotty place in the tree. At a distance the feather pattern looks like bark.

Now in the gentler light of late afternoon, the owl fluffs itself, comes up to the edge of the hole, and watches folk walking home from work, but few of them look up and see the owl. As dusk nears, the rounded, soft-feathered wings are spread and suddenly a shadow flits away from the tree and goes off among the wintery backyards and back alleys in search of mice. There is a quavering, chilly little sound, mournful and wild, as the hunting owl stops on a clothes-line post and looks about. There is a tiny pattering of mouse-steps across the hard snow by the garbage can, a swoop, a small squeak, and the owl is back on the post. It dines in silence, eats bones, tail, and teeth, and giving a cat-like purr of contentment, flits off on silent wings to the tree-hole to digest the meal of mouse. Later, a small pellet containing the undigested remains of the mouse will be spit up and will lie on the ground as indication of an owl's dinner.



The Nighthawk and the Whip-Poor-Will

Long ago before there were cities, the nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) lived in the barren uplands and cruised the hill-sky; the whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*) lived in the woods where its whimpering cry sounded from dusk until dawn. Both the nighthawk and the whip-poor-will spent their daytime hours asleep on or near the ground.

The nighthawk laid its blotchy, purple-grey, and buff eggs among the gravel and lichens of a stony hilltop or a barren upland; the whip-poor-will's polished, mottled brown eggs were laid secretly on a polished brown oak leaf among the thousands lying on the ground of the spring-time woods. And at dusk both the nighthawk and the whip-poor-wills flew about in the sky, their wide mouths catching night-flying insects.

Today the nighthawk has come into town. Instead of laying eggs on a stony earth, many city nighthawks choose the graveled tops of high buildings on which to lay eggs and rear the young. The adults sleep on the tops of buildings or on a telephone wire during the day, and late in the afternoon fly about with sharp flappings over the town and between tall buildings. The nasal shout of the nighthawk is a familiar sound all the short summer night, especially soon after dusk and before dawn. But the whip-poor-will today, with its fluttering call, still stays in the woods. Except in migration the two are seldom seen together, and then the nighthawk with its forked tail and white patches on the wings can easily be told from the browner whip-poor-will with its rounded tail and unmarked wings.



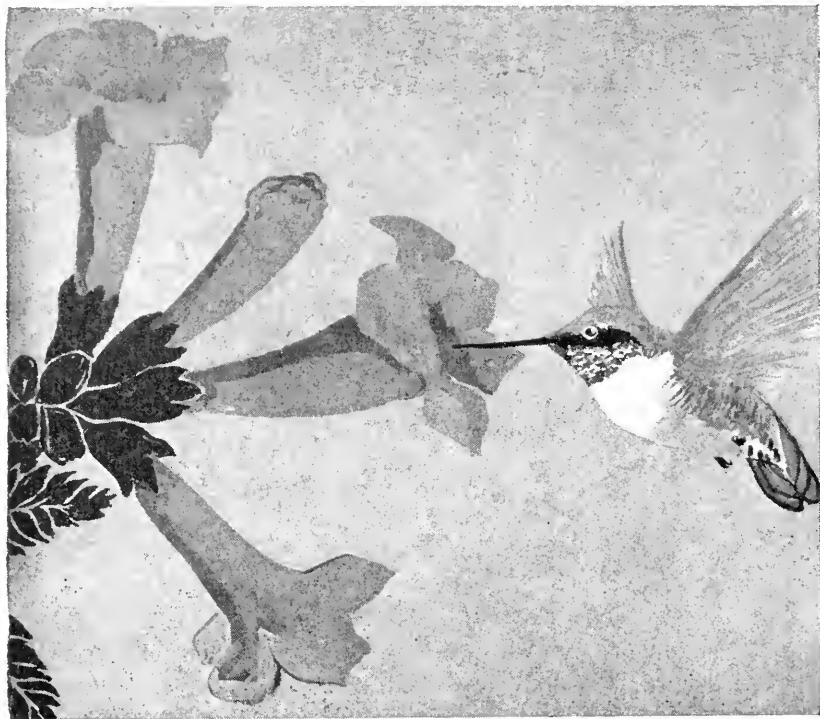
Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*)

Somewhere over the unknown jungles of South America the sky in winter has the sharp wings and rapid flight of thousands of little grey chimney swifts. Here they dart about all day in search of insects and at night stream down into the sheltering trees to hang by their claws from the bark.

It is a long way from this remote scene to the towns and villages of the United States where the swifts spend the summer. About the first of April there suddenly is heard in our sky the high-pitched twittering of the swifts, back again after a long and speedy journey from the jungle.

All day they make wide circles in the sky, and at sunset stream down with a dry rush of wings into chimneys which in April still have smoke in them, and here the birds cling against the rough bricks and sleep all night. Because swifts never come down to the ground, their feet have become small and useless, except for clinging.

The chimney swifts are small grey birds with narrow wings and stiff tails which are used as bracers in the chimneys. Swifts are insect catchers and do a great service to the world in cleaning up some of the thousands of insects in our sky. In spring the swifts fly past a dead tree and with their beaks break off small dead twigs which are glued with the bird's own saliva into a small nest down in the chimney. Here the two white eggs are laid and the young reared, and in autumn all the swifts head back again to the jungles of Brazil.



Ruby-Throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*)

When the first red flowers bloom in the Illinois springtime, the ruby-throated hummingbird arrives from its winter home in Yucatan. Now like a green and scarlet jewel, the tiny bird whirs from the dangling red flowers of wild columbine to the scarlet of coral honeysuckle. And when red tubular flowers are scarce, it comes to the lavender wild phlox, to the bluebells, to the irises and peonies in the garden.

But always, as long as it stays in this region, the hummer seeks out the red and orange tubular flowers. Perhaps the nectar at their bases is sweetest; perhaps the brilliant little bird prefers flowers that match its own color. At any rate, when the columbine is gone, there always is the honeysuckle all summer long, and bergamot, and the jewelweed, and the great orange tubes of the trumpet vine. At last, late in the season, the hummers come to the beds of scarlet salvia in parks and gardens. And when the last salvia blossom is scorched by frost, the hummers whirl away, southward.

They speed south at the rate of some 500 miles a day, swoop like low-zooming bullets in the trough of the waves on the Gulf of Mexico, and somehow make a non-stop trip in one night across the Gulf to the palm-fringed shores of Yucatan.

The ruby-throated hummingbird is the only member of its family east of the Rockies. Hummingbirds are found only in the Americas, and are most common in the tropics and in the western states.



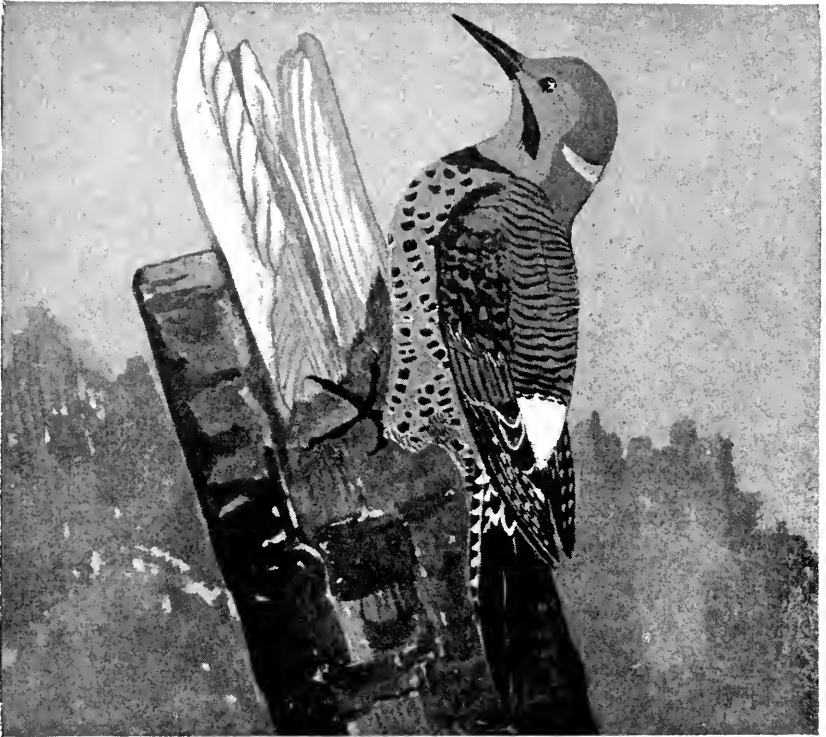
Eastern Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon alcyon*)

On beating wings the kingfisher poises itself above the water, then drops like a spear, straight down, sometimes goes underwater, and comes up with a fish. Shaking water, the bird flies to a nearby tree. Here the fish is deftly twisted about so that it is pointed head first down the kingfisher's throat and is swallowed.

The kingfisher is first of all a fisherman. Fish are its sole food—they and frogs—and are caught by diving on them from above. For this purpose, the kingfisher is constructed with a large head and a long, fish-spear beak. The head itself is crested with a large blue topknot which makes the bird seem almost topheavy.

The eastern kingfisher is grey-blue and white; the male has a blue-grey band across its white chest, and the female has a brown band in addition to the blue one.

The feet are oddly made. The toes are partly joined to make a shovel-shaped foot, for the kingfisher digs a long burrow in a clay bank and at the end hollows out a nest-hole where the eggs are laid. Far inside the bank the young kingfishers eat fish brought to them by their parents, and, until they emerge, rest on a nest of fish bones left from their dinners.



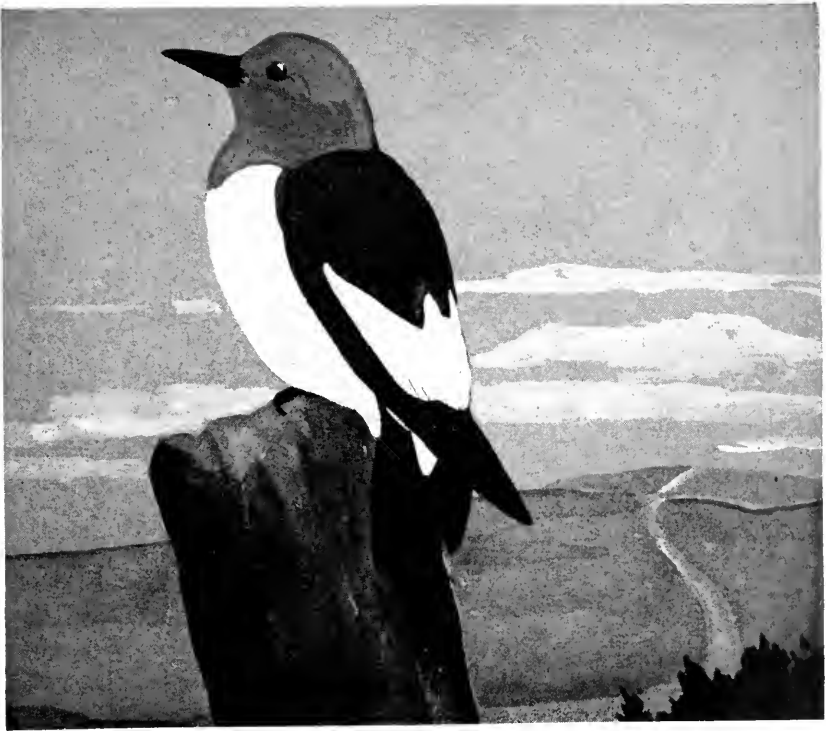
Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)

A brown woodpecker with a white patch on his back, that's the flicker. A loud-voiced, yammering woodpecker performing a laughable dance in a tree on a fine spring morning—that, too, is the flicker. And so is that intent brown woodpecker which hops across the lawn to the nearest ant hill, thrusts a long beak deeply into it, and, as if sipping a chocolate soda, licks up the ants.

The flicker is one of the commonest of woodpeckers. It is at home equally in town and in country, in city trees as well as in parks or woods. Its shrill calling, its dancing and bobbing and antics, all are part of spring, as much as the robins and violets and new leaves on the cottonwoods.

The flicker, like the red-head, has changed some of its woodpecker habits. Getting ants from the ground is only one of them. Sometimes in choosing a place to nest the flicker will be different—will ignore a proper hole in a tree, and instead will nest on a sandy beach or in a corn field, or will industriously bore holes in a barn.

The flicker is brown above and pale, yellow-cream below marked with prominent black spots. There is a black band across the throat, a red patch on the back of the head, a white patch on the back, and bright yellow under the wings, a color which flashes magnificently in flight.



Red-Headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus erythrocephalus*)

The red-headed woodpecker is a bird which in part seems to have forgotten some of the traditional habits of the woodpecker tribe. Most members of this family are birds which live on the trunks of trees, but several, like the red-head, have taken on new habits which have come with civilization.

Instead of perching on the side of a tree—clinging with toes especially constructed to hook into the bark—the red-head often likes to sit on a telephone wire. Here, with tail dangling, the woodpecker waits for passing insects and, in flycatcher fashion, darts out and turns a ridiculous flip-flop in the air. He comes back with a slightly dizzy look and perhaps a butterfly in his beak. The red-head frequently comes down to feed on the ground, sometimes in the middle of a highway to pick up spilled corn, and here the bird with its slow take-off sometimes is struck by passing cars.

The red-headed woodpecker still nests in proper woodpecker fashion in holes he bores in trees. The eggs, like those of woodpeckers, are white and round, and the young when they emerge from the nest hole have grey, not red, heads. By the end of the year, however, a few tiny red feathers appear, and by the next spring the woodpecker has the crimson head and black and white pattern which is so unforgettable.



Downy Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos pubescens*)

That little black and white bird with the red dot on the back of its head—that little bird hitching itself up the trees and busily poking its sharp beak into crevices of bark—that is the little downy woodpecker. It is perhaps the most common of the woodpeckers both in town and in country, a bird alike of city trees and of weed patches. In the latter place in winter the little bird climbs the dry stalks of wild parsnip and horseweed, beats a thin tattoo with its chisel beak, and digs in to find a sleeping grub or borer. And a morsel like that is a welcome bite on a bitter day in winter.

The downy woodpecker is a small edition of the hairy woodpecker. The downy is six inches long, the hairy nine inches, proportioned accordingly. The beak of the hairy is stouter, stronger, the whole bird marked more strongly, yet very similarly to the downy.

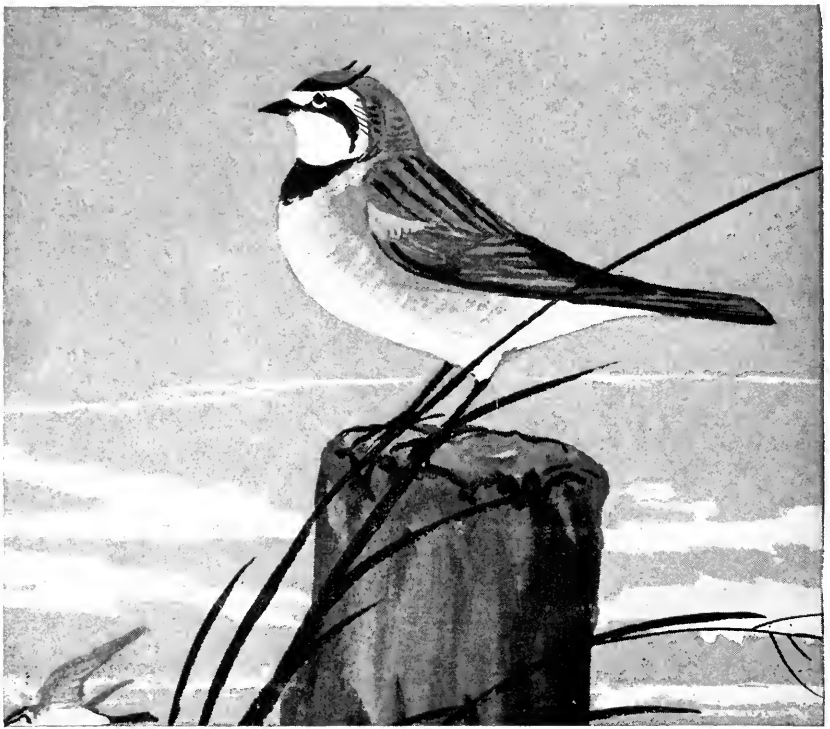
Both are part of the winter woods and weed patches. The strong beak chisels a hole, the long tongue with its barbed end is thrust deeply inside, the impaled grub is hauled forth, is eaten. All winter the woodpeckers, in feeding themselves, help to rid the trees of their insect enemies.



Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*)

The kingbird is a bird of open country, a flycatcher of the roadsides, a chaser of crows and pursuer of hawks. The kingbird is a self-appointed committee of one to chase every crow or hawk to a suitable distance. The smaller kingbird, dwarfed by the flying hawk or crow, darts under, around, down on top of the escaping bird, seems determined to pull feathers from its head or back, yet never quite strikes. Shrieking and tormenting, the kingbird sees to it that its enemies are routed, then comes flying back, the vivid scarlet patch on the black crown all a-glow, and screeches a final note of triumph from the vantage point of a barbed wire fence.

The kingbird, both male and female, is black above and white below, with a squared-off tail neatly marked across the end with a band of white. The scarlet crown-patch on the head is not often seen, but the remainder of the coloration is distinctive and easy to remember. It is perhaps most often seen on the fences and wires along highways where it darts out to tumble after a passing butterfly or other insect, and keeps a sharp lookout for crows.



Prairie Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*)

At last there comes a day when winter steps back and a hint of springtime is in the air. It is not really spring, not yet. But the thing which suddenly brings springtime closer is a faint tinkling in the February sky. There appears to be nothing. The tinkling is a sweet scattered voice sounding here and there remotely over the blue. The voice is from birds—the prairie larks are flying.

The prairie horned larks spend the winter from Illinois to the Gulf. They walk about in quiet flocks in stubble fields and glean bits of grain and weed seeds from the rows. In the early days of February the larks start north. They are perhaps the first birds to come through Illinois on the northward migration, first to head into the teeth of the north while the wrath of February and the deceit of March still lie ahead. Some may go as far as Manitoba to nest; others may stay in Illinois fields.

Prairie horned larks are quiet, dust-colored birds that live in open country. There are black markings on face and throat; a pair of small black feather horns stand erect on the head when the bird sings from a clod of earth or a bean stack. There often is a wash of pale yellow on the white throat; the tail is black beneath; the eyebrow is white. Horned larks are ground dwellers which walk with a long stride; they almost never perch in trees. The nest is made on the ground at the edge of a field and the eggs are laid very early in spring.

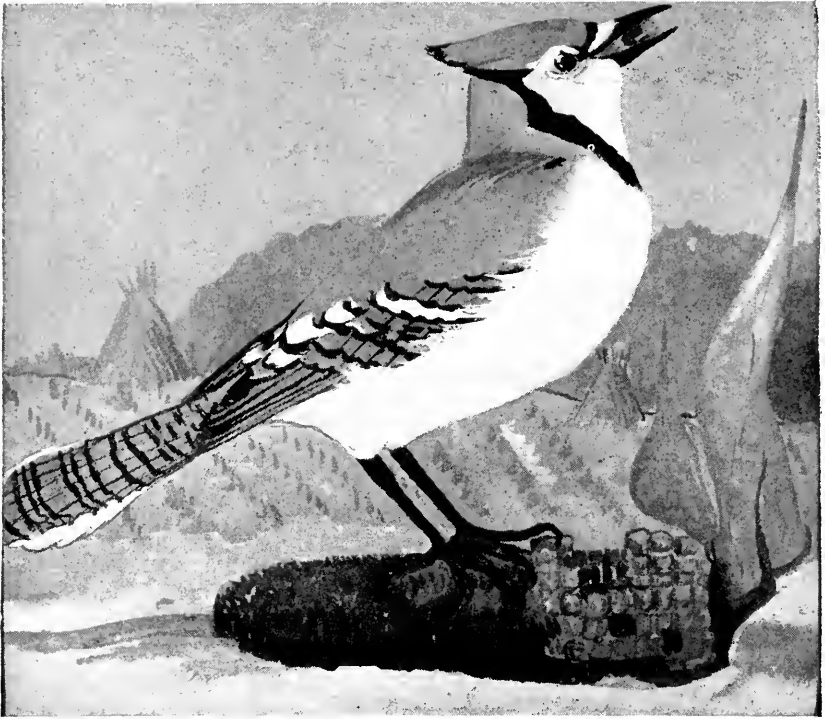


Purple Martin (*Progne subis subis*)

By the end of March the purple martins have come up from their wintering grounds over the flood plains of the Amazon and over Brazilian jungles, and have arrived matter-of-factly in Illinois. The martins' guttural chattering and their excited gurgling and tweeting as they fly about or sit on telephone wires is a new note in the catalog of arriving bird voices.

These large purple-black swallows since early times have lived close to the homes of men. Originally, perhaps, they nested as some martins still choose to do—in rock crevices, on cliffs, and in old woodpecker holes in dead swamp trees. But even in the days of the Indians, it is said, martins nested in great hollowed gourds hung up for them on a pole or sapling in the Indian villages. Even then the cheerful commotion and pleasant ways of these swallows somehow belonged to men.

Martins are insect-eating birds—their chief food is mosquitoes and flies caught on the wing—so they spend long hours in the air. Over many thousands of years in which martins seldom came down on the ground to walk about, their feet have become so small and spidery that they are almost useless for anything but perching. Nevertheless the birds come to the muddy pond shores in spring to gather bits of mud and grass to add to the nests; the birds hobble painfully about, fill their beaks, and then in apparent relief take to the air.

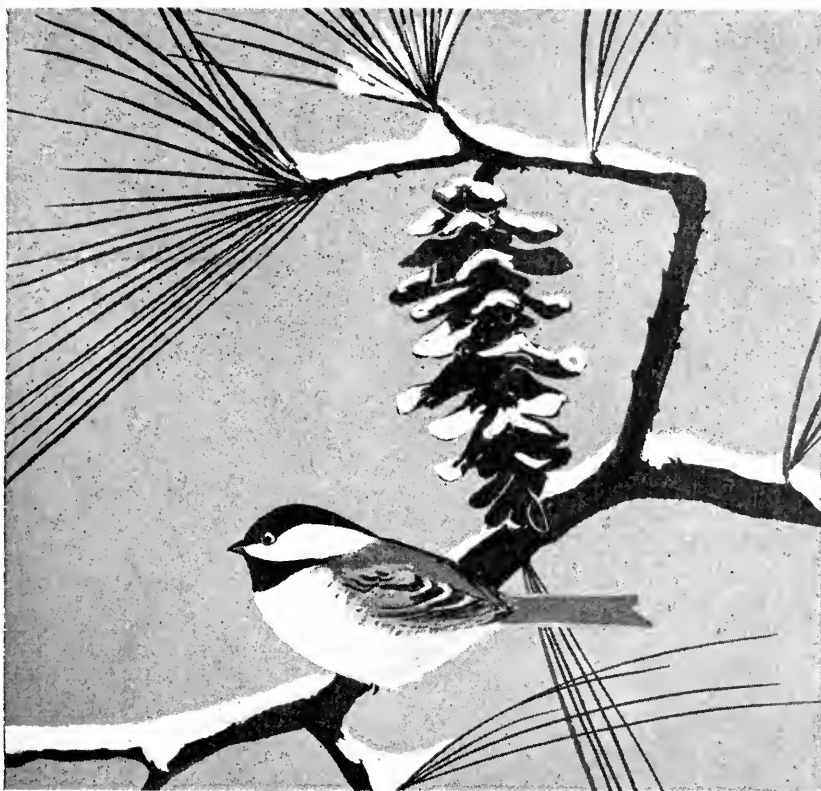


Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*)

Clanging and tootling through the woods on a morning in early spring, there comes a flock of blue jays out for fun. They are full of the delight of a warming sun, and they are in an excitable state of mischief which must find outlet somewhere. So they stream through the woods, swoop down in a body to worry a squirrel who flashes his tail at them in anger, dash off to watch the progress of a farm dog along the creek, discover an owl asleep in a sycamore. Ah, here is fun!

There is nothing like a sleepy owl to please a blue jay, and when there is a crowd of them, the fun begins. Screaming, they dart down almost upon the owl, who shrinks into his feathers and glares at them. They sit about in the tree, utter irritating noises, yell tiresomely, until the owl has had enough and suddenly flies off. Joyously, like a streaming train, the jays follow after, and repeat their game in the next tree until the owl at last manages to escape. Then the jays head off to find something else to amuse them on this beautiful spring day.

Bluejays, although they often are unpopular because of some of their less pleasing habits such as robbing birds' nests or eating chicken feed, are among the most beautiful birds in America. No other American jay has that clear lavender and blue coloration set off with black and white, with a crested head and a well marked face. For this alone, if for nothing more, the blue jay has a permanent spot among our best known birds.



Black Capped Chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*)

A morsel of a bird with a black cap and bib, the chickadee somehow manages to survive the most ferocious winter storms and zero cold, flits merrily among the grim bare trees, finds enough food in a snowy world, and seems to like it very well. Chickadees stay with us throughout the year and seem happiest—or perhaps we are happiest to see them then—when the wind is ruthless as a knife and the air is so sharp it hurts to breathe it. In such an atmosphere the chickadee murmurs its busy little “dec-dee-dec-dec!”, finds food that maintains its body temperature at 114 degrees, and manages very well indeed.

Winter birds must live on an available food supply. In the case of the chickadees, they must find tiny sleeping insects and insect eggs tucked into crevices of bark—enough to keep up that supply of body heat through the short day and the long bitter night. With enough food and with that extra-warm downy layer of feathers which lies between the skin and the outer feathers, no chickadee is apt to freeze.

In early spring the chickadees fill a tree hollow with quantities of soft feathers and fluff, and in the midst they lay their little chocolate and pink eggs. By the time the eggs hatch, it is high summer, and hot. The young chickadees, however, survive the smothering of a hot feather bed as well as their parents survive winter, and come forth at last into the light of day.



Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*)

A small, lively, grey bird with a crest on its head—that's the tufted titmouse. It is found in town and in park and in woods, wherever there are trees, and on a day in early spring its voice is rollicking and gay. It puts a tune in a chilly day, puts life in the bare trees, puts gaiety and brisk wings wherever it goes.

Perhaps the most distinctive thing about the titmouse is its cheerful whistle. It may be heard from a great distance and even makes the dogs take notice. It is a whistle which is easy to imitate—and usually at sound of it, all the titmice in the neighborhood, with fluttering wings and fussy squeakings, gather around to see what is making that odd yet strangely familiar sound.

The titmouse is related to the chickadee. The two stay throughout the year in Illinois and are among the most sociable of birds. In winter they often travel about together; they frisk about, explore twigs and bark for sleeping insects or insect eggs, and keep the woods merry with their whistling. Winter gives the titmouse a chubby, well-fed appearance, for the feathers are fluffed out to create more body warmth in frigid weather. The titmouse is unlike any other bird. Only one other grey bird in this region, the cedar waxwing, has a crest on its head, and no other bird has that delightful call.



House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*)

The Latin name for wren means "cave-dweller", because long ago all wrens lived in little caves and crannies on the faces of cliffs and canyons, or in hollow trees and deserted woodpecker holes. But when the kindly hand of man offered bird houses for the use of wrens, most of them gave up their cave-dwelling habits and moved into ready-made dwellings near the haunts of men.

But often the wren houses offered for their use do not satisfy. The finicky, tilt-tailed, sputtering house wren goes flipping about, bright eyes peering everywhere, and sometimes perversely nests in an old tin can. Often, too, the thankless but wise wrens seem to prefer a battered, leaky old bird house to the finest of new creations. That is why it is better to leave bird houses unpainted or stained a weathered brown. Something too new or conspicuous alarms the birds.

The house wren is one of six wrens which come to Illinois. There is the long-tailed, greyish Bewick's wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), the permanent resident Carolina wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) with its white eyebrow, the short-billed marsh wren (*Cistothorus platensis stellaris*), the long-billed marsh wren (*Telmatodytes palustris*), both of which live and nest in swamps, and the tiny, plump winter wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) which is sometimes seen in migration.



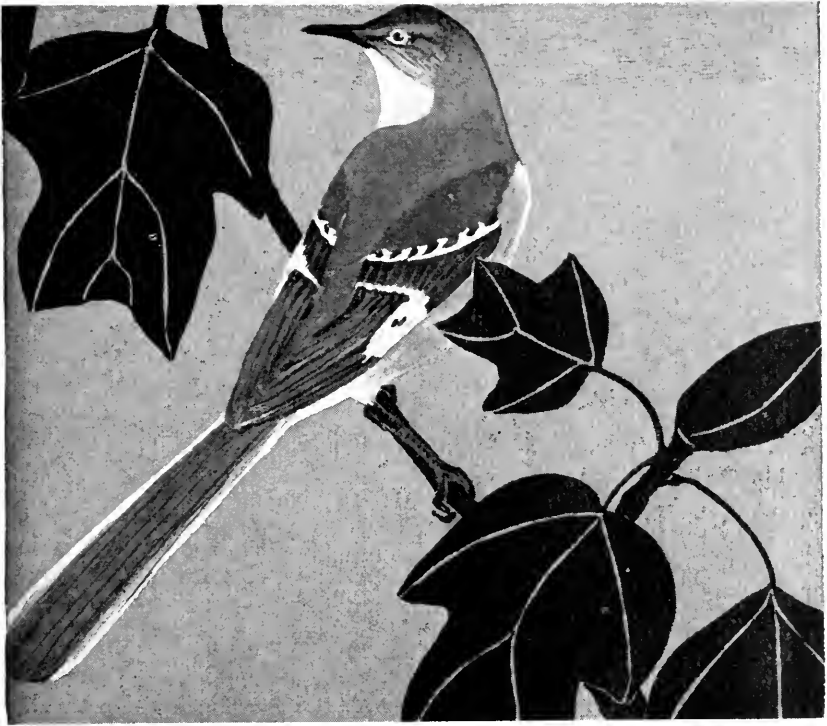
Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*)

For nearly five months of each year—from late April to late September—the catbird is part of the garden, the farm, the thicket. The rest of the year is spent in Mexico or Central American jungles. The catbird travels a long way each year just to build a nest in Illinois or other northern states, where one brood is reared before the long journey back is made all over again.

The catbird is a dark slate-grey bird with a black cap and a red-brown patch under the tail. The black eyes are bright and intelligent and seem to spy out everything. The voice is a jumble of squeaks and sweet music, of cat-calls, of musings, of mockings. Hidden in a bush, the catbird gurgles and giggles, peeks out with a clownish eye, mocks the neighbor's cat or imitates the rusty gate.

The nest is placed in a tangled bush and contains four or five green-blue eggs which are much deeper in color than those of a robin. The stub-tailed young soon hop forth into the garden and come almost at once to the bird bath that their parents have been using wholeheartedly ever since their arrival in spring. Catbirds love a good bath and the young start at an early age to acquire the habit.

Sleek, sly, full of personality, the catbird is a pleasant part of any garden in city or country.



Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos polyglottos*)

That flying bird with the big white patches on its wings—that's the mockingbird. It's the one that sings so gaily from hedge or telephone pole, and then goes flapping upward, madly, wildly, wings flopping, and plummets down again, singing still. It's the one that tootles and sings at two o'clock on a moonlit night, and tosses melodies to the stars. It's the bird with the long grey tail margined with white, with the black and white wings, the snappy grey eyes—the bird with the nest in the hedge, the boldness of a bluejay and the shyness of a thrush. That's the mockingbird.

Mockingbirds often come into towns, but they are more frequently found in open country, especially along osage orange hedges, brushy places, farms, sunny uplands, pastures. The mockingbird, once rare in the northern states, is becoming common and is scattered abundantly over most of Illinois.

Here the magnificent song of the mocker, a rolling, trilling, caroling song full of imitations and improvisations without end, is heard through spring and summer. It is a song which is the same as that heard in the south—it is as much a part of Illinois hedge rows as it is of magnolias, crepe myrtles, and cottonfields.



Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum rufum*)

The brown thrasher, the catbird, and the mockingbird all belong in the same family of birds, along with their cousins, the wrens, and all have wonderful songs that are full of life and good feeling and musical ability. The catbird has a jumbled song and seldom repeats anything he says; the brown thrasher usually repeats everything twice over; and the mockingbird, when he says something he likes, repeats it endlessly, on and on and on.

The brown thrasher often is miscalled the "brown thrush", but the thrasher is far from being a thrush. The thrasher is cinnamon brown above with a long tail, a long, curved, yellow-brown beak, a fierce yellow eye, and long brown streaks traced on a cream-colored breast. A thrush is plump, has round brown spots on an ivory breast, a short tail, brown eyes, and a short brown beak. And no thrush has the burst of music which comes from the brown thrasher on a morning in April.

Very early in April or sometimes by the end of March the thrashers suddenly appear from the south. Now their glad voices challenge each other all over town. Soon in the lilac bush or in the rose tangle there will be a bulky nest with five speckled brown eggs. Then the songs of the thrasher grow less, until by summer they are seldom heard and never with the brilliance that is so much a part of an Illinois spring.



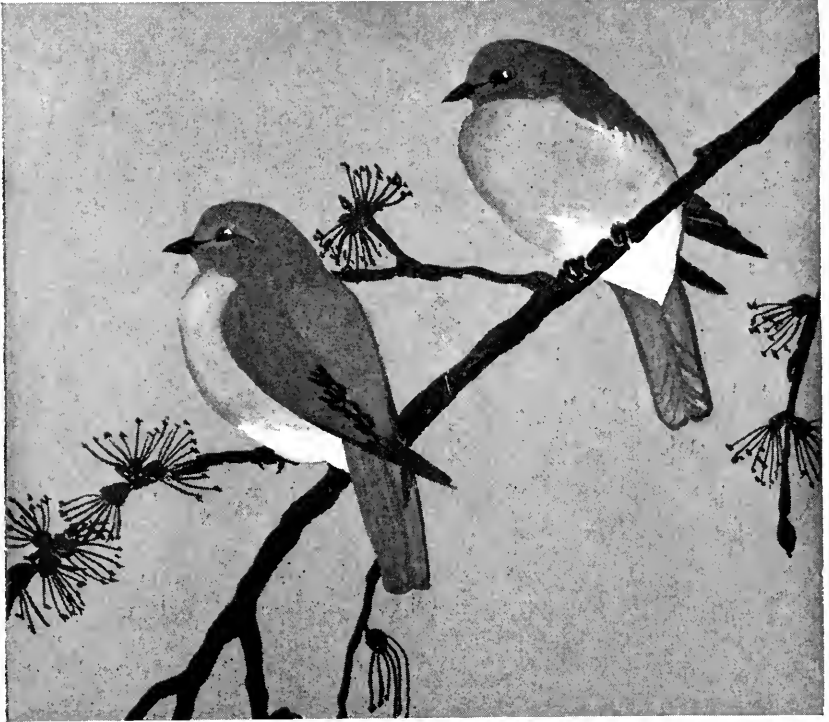
Robin (*Turdus migratorius*)

It is a grim day in late winter with a bite in the air and a cold wind blowing out of the north again. Nowhere is there the slightest sign of spring, for January in Illinois is stern midwinter. And yet—and yet—perhaps spring cannot be so far away. Because there is a robin, a plump, russet-breasted robin with white-rimmed bright eyes who shouts impatiently into the weak January sunshine, claps his wings, and runs importantly on the lawn. One robin—spring!

That robin in January very likely spent the winter in the neighborhood. Properly he has no right to be called the "First Robin". But in southern Illinois there are others wintering, marking time until early spring. On the first thawing days a few of these head northward—these really are the First Robins and they are welcomed with joy.

They are hardy creatures. They fluff themselves when the usual hard freeze follows the thaw; they are cheerful, chubby, and somehow find enough to eat.

The early robins usually continue northward toward Canada, and if they time themselves properly, they may be called First Robins all along the way. Later arrivals in Illinois are those which will build a mud nest in April and spend the season here, rearing broods of young and pulling fat angleworms from the lawn.



Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*)

To the Indians, the bluebird was the sign of spring. Not only did the bird arrive suddenly when winter still seemed at hand, but it carried with it the symbols set there by the Great Spirit—the blue of the spring-time sky, the red-brown of thawed earth, and a bit of white to show where snow still remained.

Today the bluebird is as certain a sign of spring as it was to the Indians and to the people of Plymouth. It was they who saw the American bluebirds for the first time, in that raw springtime long ago on the Massachusetts coast, and who called it the “blue robin” because it reminded them of the English robin they had left forever behind them.

A sign of spring—the bluebirds are back. They seem too frail to withstand the sudden return of winter which inevitably comes on the heels of a thaw. Yet the intensely blue feathers are fluffed, and somehow the bluebirds manage to find food in the frozen grass. When at last the sun grows warmer, the bluebirds prospect about in the orchard to find a likely old woodpecker hole or hollow fence post. To this they carry a few soft grasses and lay their pale blue eggs. The young bluebirds show their kinship with baby robins and thrushes—they all have speckled breasts.



Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*)

Once there was a wood thrush who lived in a city park. Close to the picnic ground the bird built her nest, and every day during the picnic season she ran about under the tables to pick up scraps left from outdoor dinners. There was a good deal of competition here because the blue jays, the red-headed woodpeckers, the sparrows, and the grackles all came regularly and were much bolder than the thrush in getting bites to eat.

But the thrush did very well, and when she built her nest in May she gathered up paper napkins to put into the nest foundation. Here, plastered with mud and twined with dried grass, the napkins fluttered in the wind, and a long trailing tatter of paper hung down from the bottom of the nest. It made the nest very noticeable, but the park policemen were watchful and no one harmed it. There were five polished, deep green-blue eggs; the spotted young soon reared their heads for food brought from the picnic grounds. It was not very long before the young thrushes on their pink legs were running about early in the morning to pick up their own bits of sandwiches from under the tables.

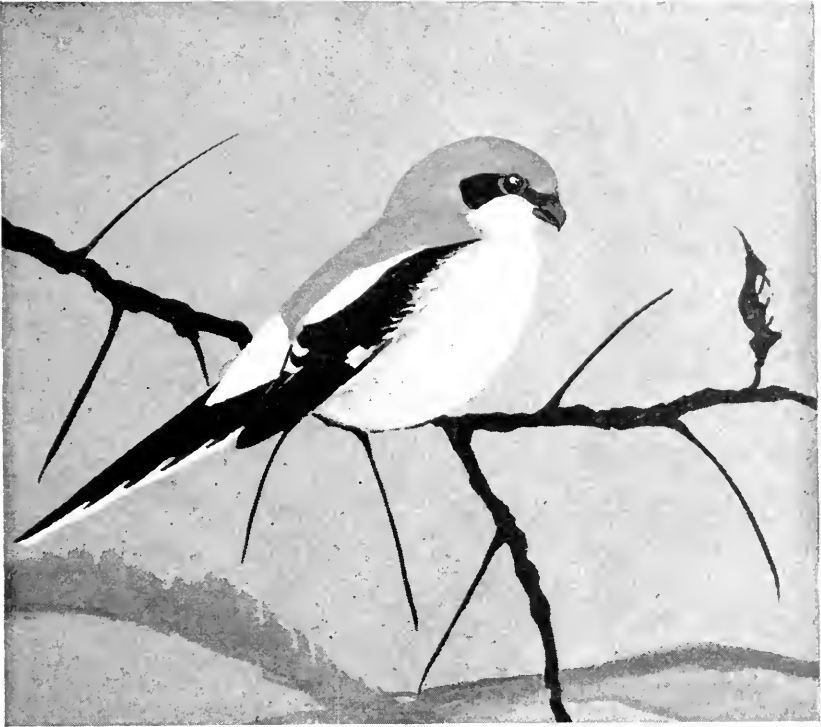
The wood thrush is common in our parks and woods. It is a richly colored cinnamon brown bird built like a robin (whose cousin it is), with an ivory breast marked with round black spots. The song of the wood thrush is a series of bell-like fluting tones like nothing else to be heard from the midst of the city park to the depths of the river woods.



Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*)

The snow lay thickly on the ground and only the shrivelled fruits of high-bush cranberries and privets held food for fruit-eaters—but the cedar waxwings had found them and were perching and fluttering as they ate. Cedar waxwings are unpredictable birds. They drift about in flocks, now abundant, now rare, sometimes stay all winter, sometimes are not seen until spring. They appear where there is fruit to eat, from the last-of-the-year fruits on shrubs to the abundance of cherry time.

The waxwing appears to be a delicate, fragile bird that seems doomed to perish in the severe weather in which, however, it survives with little trouble. But although the delicately-colored, dove grey and brown feathers seem unusually soft, the waxwing is a hardy bird. It is known by its thin, erect crest on the head, black marks on the face, waxen red tips on the wing feathers, a yellow band across the tail and yellow on the breast. It is one of our two crested grey birds. The other is the tufted titmouse, a bird very different both in temperament and activity from the waxwing. The titmouse is nervous and fussy; the waxwing is slow and suave, easy-going and quiet. Its only song is a soft hiss.



Migrant Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

In a low, swooping glide which carries it close to the ground, the shrike leaves its perch on a fence wire, drops down, and captures a field mouse running between the rows of corn. With an upward swoop that flashes black and white wings, the bird with its mouse lands on a twig in the osage orange hedge. At once there are shrill baby-cries from a nest hidden there in the thorns. The mouse is torn apart and crammed into five hungry baby shrikes.

The young are hungry and there is a place for every mouse the hard-working parent birds can bring in, but at another time the mouse may be thrust on a thorn and left until wanted. It is because of this habit of hanging up its meat that the shrike has been called butcher bird. Here in a song bird are the habits of a hawk.

The shrike is a robin-sized bird of grey, black, and white, with a black mark through the eyes and striking black and white wings. It is indeed a songbird, and sometimes on a day in spring the shrike mounts to a high perch and sings, with mimickings and mockings, a song that is but rarely heard.

The migrant shrike is a midwestern form of the more southern loggerhead shrike. Sometimes in winter the rare northern shrike with its barred grey breast is seen in Illinois.



Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris*)

Long ago and far away in the land below the Himalayas, there lived certain birds who liked the companionship of men so well that they dwelt in and around their homes. Brahmans in that land honored these birds—members of the starling tribe—by giving them the use of certain pagodas. So after centuries of such privileges, it is no wonder that the starling today still likes to perch upon tall buildings in American cities—upon domes and in towers and upon window ledges.

The tribe of starlings began, it is said, in very ancient times in pleasant valleys of the Himalayas. From there the families spread down the valleys into China and the Orient, while others traveled into the Arctic and into Europe, and spread from the Tyrol to the Thames and from Greece to Granada. They were well known in Greece a thousand years before Christ was born and were one of the first of all birds to be named. Psar, the Greeks called them. Sturnus, said the Romans. From the Romans came the Latin name, Sturnus, which still designates the family, and the common name of starling comes from the Greek.

On a day in March, 1890, eighty European starlings were brought from England and released in Central Park, New York City. In a short while they had increased tremendously. In a few years they spread westward, and about 1929 were seen in Illinois. Rapidly, they took over the state and today are among the most abundant birds. Their splendid massed flights, their odd habit of mimicking other birds' songs, their hunger for almost anything edible, their long beaks which are yellow in spring and early summer, their short tails and stubby bodies, all distinguish the starling from our native birds.



Bell's Vireo (*Vireo belli belli*)

It is a small bird, one that is not especially beautiful, not brightly marked, not easy to see, and its song is small and unmusical. Yet the Bell's vireo is one of the most sought Illinois birds by visitors from the East. This is because Bell's vireo is a western bird which reaches what is believed to be its normal eastern boundary in Indiana, and the Eastern ornithologists, always eager for the sight of a new bird, are anxious to see it. And the vireo usually leads them a chase.

The bird is typical of the open prairie country of Illinois. Here where the sunny uplands are dry and hot, or along the willow tangles of a marsh, or along a thickety road or osage orange hedge, the gabbling bit of song is heard. For a long time it may seem to be a Voice Without a Body. The little vireo is grey-green and inconspicuous; it moves thinly through the leaves, peers forth, hides easily behind a single leaf. "Gabble-gabble-gabble", says the little bird, huskily, with a rolling quality to its odd ditty, and slips away. It may take years to see it, yet it may nest in the hedge across the road or sing every day in the nearest blackberry tangle.

Like other vireos, the Bell's weaves a strong basket of a nest which is suspended from a fork in a low bush. The nest is so sturdy that it often outlasts the rigors of winter, and indicates, when the vireos come back in spring, just where they nested before.



Myrtle Warbler (*Dendroica coronata coronata*)

At five o'clock on a perfumed May morning, when the air is clean and fresh after the night, and birds swarm in every tree, there comes to our woods and city trees and parks a wonderful gathering of birds. Sometimes on such a day, more than a hundred kinds of birds may be seen from dawn to dusk. And the number of warblers alone may reach past thirty.

For up from the tropics there have come hordes of tiny, brightly colored, piping, chattering birds on their way to their nesting grounds. Most of them go on to Wisconsin, Michigan, and Canada to nest, but some stay in Illinois. Most of them, therefore, arrive only in late April and May.

There are so many. They are all so different, yet so similar, so nervous in their flittings, so confusing in their thin songs—field glasses and a well-illustrated bird guide are needed to identify them all.

But among all that delightful, provoking throng are hundreds of myrtle warblers. They are the first warblers to arrive in spring and in autumn they stay after others are gone. They are patchy birds, colored in lemon yellow, white, slate-blue, and black. The yellow rump is a spot to look for in identifying myrtle warblers.



Northern Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*)

Some of the warblers which come through Illinois in a delightful, confusing passage of bright birds in spring and autumn, do not continue northward to nest. Half a dozen kinds stay in Illinois, and one of these is the northern yellowthroat.

It is a spunky, cocky, inquisitive, beautiful little morsel which is found in the weedy jungles along dusty lanes, in cocklebur patches behind the barn, along grassy streams, or in marshes. Wherever the country is overgrown with safe tangles, the yellowthroat is found.

It is not easy to see, not at first. We may hear a clipped-off "weechity-weechity-weechity!" sputtered a dozen times, a hundred times, before the singer is finally tracked down. But more easily, if we wait a bit, the curious little yellowthroat will come slipping and peeking and flitting through the protection of stalks and stems, and finally, with a bright and attentive black eye, will peer out at us.

There—a bit of a bird, green-brown above, bright yellow below, a grey head, a white eye-brow, and a sharp black mask over the face. The mask is a point not soon to be forgotten. There's the yellowthroat, and in a moment it is gone.

The yellowthroat lays three to five speckled eggs in a small nest hidden in weeds, in the grass, or under a cocklebur leaf.

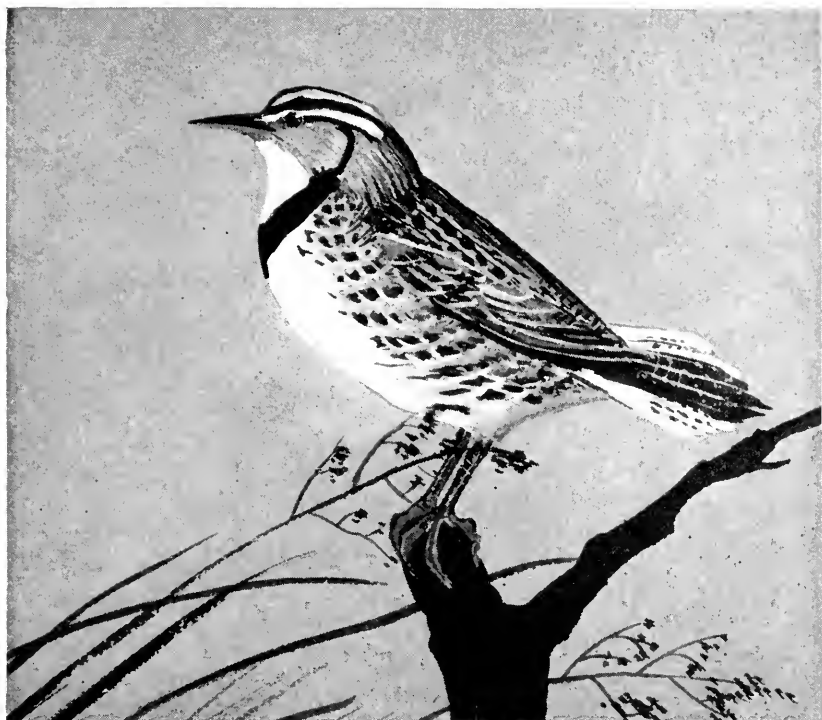


European Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus montanus*)

In the 1870's it was a hobby of many people to import birds from Europe and liberate them in the hope that they would become naturalized in America. With perhaps four exceptions, most of these unfortunate birds died. But the English sparrow, the starling, the pigeon, and the European tree sparrow not only lived but multiplied. The first two became pests, but to this day the European tree sparrow remains rare and localized. It is found in the St. Louis-Alton region and at Horseshoe Lake, Illinois, on Route 111 east of East St. Louis, and in rare, scattered spots elsewhere in central Illinois.

For many years the European tree sparrows lived and multiplied moderately in South St. Louis where they were originally liberated, but when the English sparrows came westward, the weaker cousins lost ground. They scattered through the region and became rare and hard to find. Today they are still rare but are gaining ground.

The European tree sparrow at first glance resembles its tough and unpopular cousin, the English sparrow. But the tree sparrow is smaller, more slender, is far less pugnacious and its notes are more musical. The markings are somewhat similar, but the bright white cheek patch of the tree sparrow, marked with a sharp black spot, is enough to set it apart from the English sparrow. This black spot on a white cheek is the thing to look for when looking at English sparrows in the hope of finding the European tree sparrow.



Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*)

It is June and a meadowlark sings in the wheat. On bowed wings he flits with a harsh sputtering and a flashing of white tail feathers to a fence post across the field. Into the sun the lark thrusts his golden bosom with its great black V, so that he glints in his pride as he opens a long beak widely to sing over and over again. Along the fence row are the flat rosettes of snowy Queen Anne's lace, emblem of June. The scent of ripe wild prairie strawberries fills the warm air of the sunny roadside. It is the time when pale pink wild roses blossom fleetingly along the railroad tracks and highways; when insects sing in the grass all day and all night, a time when the clover is in bloom. Meadowlarks, flowers, clover—these all are June.

But the first meadowlarks of the springtime are more welcome than any in June—by summer they are common and one hardly gives them a second glance. But in March—a meadowlark in March sings the kind of song that makes the listener tingle with the sudden impact of spring. This is it! This is spring! This is the first meadowlark.

In the pleasant days of May and June when meadowlarks no longer mean springtime, a nest full of eggs is carefully brooded in a shelter beneath a hummock of grass. The songs are not so fluent now; by mid-summer they are all but silenced, until autumn gives the larks a thought of the vanished spring, and they sing before they fly south.



Redwinged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)

The redwings are back! On the bare willow that blows in the late February wind, the first redwinged blackbird of the season teeters and sways and clacks, displays bright scarlet and golden shoulders, spreads his tail, and forces out a gurgling song. The full burst of song will come later, beginning usually two weeks after the first males arrive. By that time the bronzy females are here, and now the marsh comes alive with the wings and songs of blackbirds.

The marsh is filled with redwings. Their jumbled chorus begins before dawn and continues all day until sunset. It sounds as if there were ten times as many birds as there really are. And now as the new green shoots of cattails come up from the mud and water, the redwings weave new nests of old cattail leaves and anchor them to the old stalks that still stand erect. The nest is deep, woven well and strongly, and in the bottom are the pale bluish eggs of the blackbirds, eggs that bear strange, mystic scrawlings in black, spring symbols whose true meaning only redwings know.

By late summer the redwings are scattered. Where they were abundant in spring, they now are almost completely gone. But in other places, in smartweed lowlands or in swamps near the rivers, the redwings gather as autumn comes. In massed flocks of thousands, they head southward.



Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*)

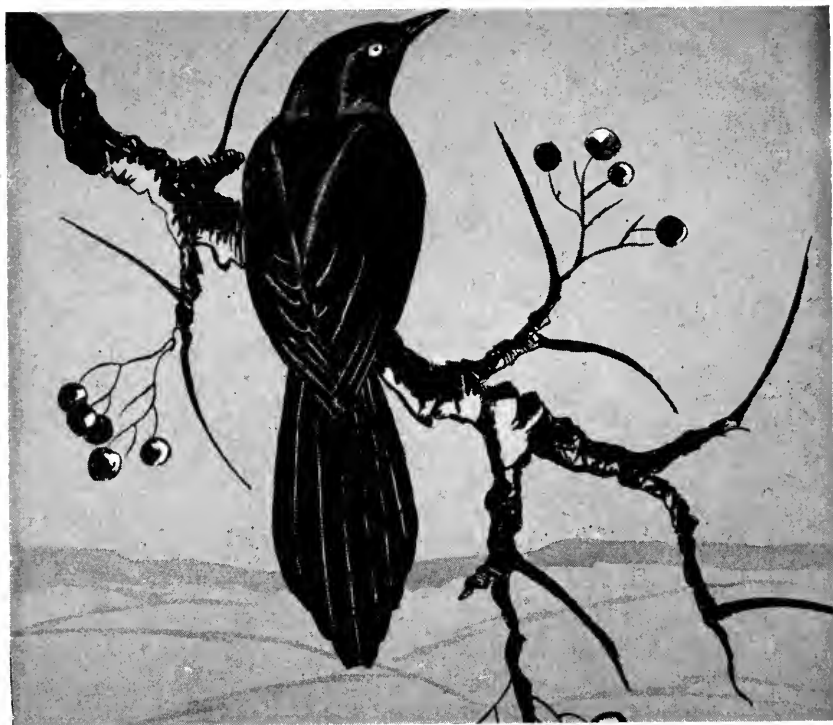
When cherry trees are white with bloom there comes a bird of fire that flits on brilliant wings through the blossoming trees. The Baltimore orioles are back and spring is really here.

They came from warm jungles far to the south. Back there, perhaps on the forested slopes of Mount Turrialba in Costa Rica, perhaps in Maya land, or in the forests of eastern Mexico, the orioles spent the winter. For orioles are tropical birds whose ancestors long ago lived in the semi-tropical forests of North America. Migration seems to have begun when the northern glaciers changed the climate of this continent, but each spring the orioles come back to the haunts of their ancestors.

That gaudy orange-gold and black of the oriole seems to belong to the deep purple gloom of the jungle, rather than to an Illinois orchard, yet here in the north the bird seems delighted with new leaves and bright cherry blooms, with growing gardens and the cool hospitality of elms.

Here in an elm the orioles often choose to build the long, pendant, woven nest where the white eggs scrawled with black are laid in perfect safety high above the ground.

The Baltimore oriole often is found in town, but its cousin, the orchard oriole, russet-brown where the Baltimore is orange, is almost always found in orchards and on farms.



Bronzed Grackle (*Quiscalus versicolor*)

Grackles show the changing season. When the first flock of these long-tailed, clacking blackbirds comes streaming across the late afternoon sky on a day in early March, and settles, talking and creaking, in the top of a poplar, it is a sure sign of spring. It is as certain as robins, as definite as dandelions. And in autumn when leaves begin to drift from the trees, when the scent and sound of autumn is in the air, and sunset every day comes just a little earlier, the grackles begin to gather in ever growing flocks. Sunset after sunset, they flock across the sky, gather in trees in town to talk and flutter all night. They begin this flocking in August when the young are grown. The blackbirds linger until there comes a night when frost is keen in the air and will whiten every living thing by morning. Then quickly and completely they depart—it is a complete and sudden departure to parts south, with only a very laggard individual now and then staying through the winter.

The bronzed grackle is the common blackbird of the middle-west. It is a long-tailed blackbird with a brilliant gloss of purple and green on the head and back, with bronze on the shoulders, and a cynical, startling white eye. The purple grackle is found in the east.

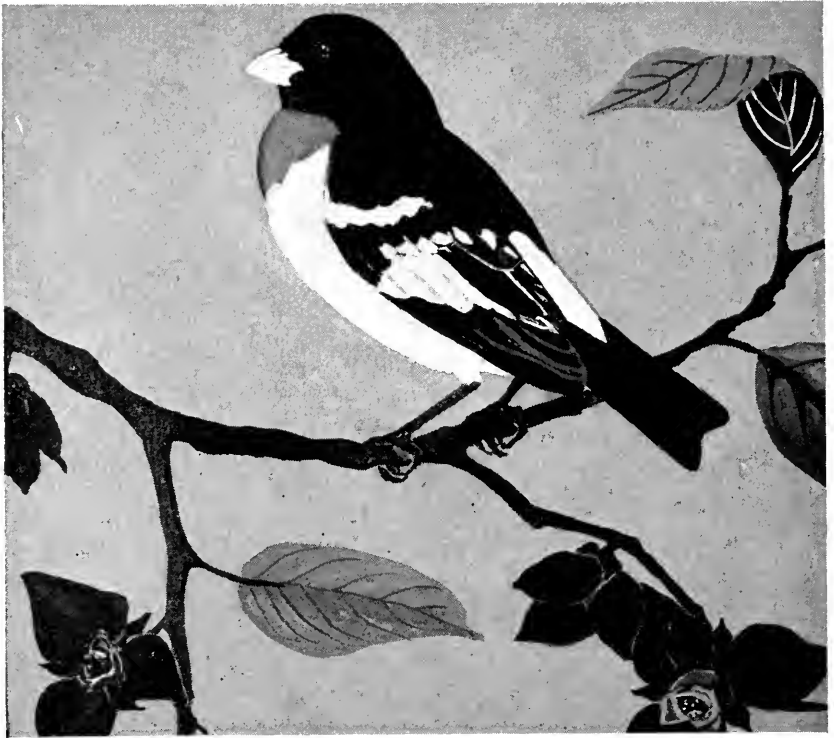


Cardinal (*Richmondia cardinalis*)

Perhaps nothing else so colorful or so elegant in the bird world chooses to stay the year around in Illinois—there is nothing like the cardinal, and in Illinois it is a common bird. With its crimson feathers which grow their brightest in spring, a black area around the scarlet corn-cracker beak, a strong crest on the head, and the keen lines of a wild bird, the cardinal is a splendid creature. It is this bird, of all others which live in Illinois, which was made the State bird.

With head upflung against a brilliant sky, so early in the spring that spring has made no appearance at all and the air is chill and the snow dirty on the ground, the cardinal sings. The whistling of a cardinal on a surly day in February can do more to raise the sagging morale of winter-weary Illinoisans than perhaps anything else out of doors. Louder and more enthusiastic grow the whistlings, for the females whistle as well as the males.

Cardinals, it is believed, mate for life. Now in spring they begin to gather shreds of grapevine bark to weave in a nest that is hidden in the lilac bush or the rose tangle, and here the eggs are laid. Sometimes three nests with three broods are produced in a season, to make it possible for cardinals to be found everywhere in Illinois. And when winter comes, the cardinal in the snow is a sight not to be soon forgotten.

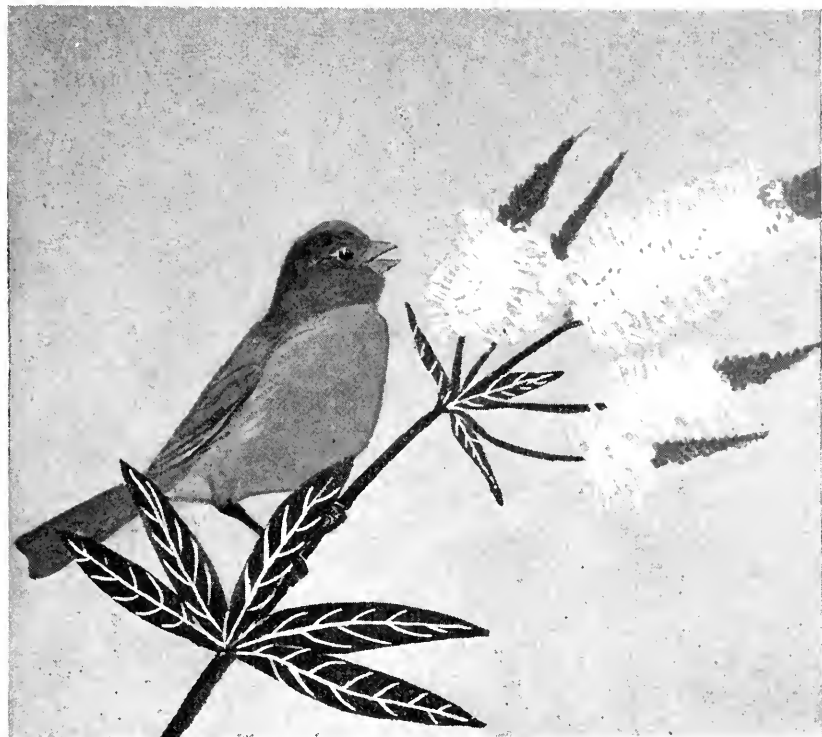


Rose-Breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*)

There is an old story which may be of Indian origin, or it may have begun in the cabin of a pioneer family—or may have begun even before these—that tells why the rose-breasted grosbeak has a crimson front. Said the Indians, perhaps—the bird with the big white beak must have been eating berries, and the juice stained its breast—see the red stain. And a Quaker farmer might have varied it by telling his children that the grosbeak stole cherries and the juice marked its bosom, but he forgave the theft because grosbeaks also ate potato beetles.

But no matter how the rose-breasted grosbeak obtained his marking, he is the only one of our birds to be distinguished by bright black and white wings, back, tail, and body, a black head, and that rosy-red breast. The beak is large and white, shaped much like the cardinal's scarlet beak. The female is like an overgrown brown sparrow with white eyebrows.

In April when the grosbeak comes back from South America to nest in Illinois woods, parks, and garden trees, it adds its strong warble to the jumble of song which already fills the springtime air. Here is a rolling, masterful melody, sung by each bird with a little variation, so that each grosbeak is an artist in song. Even the females sing. The male, sharing the duties of incubating the eggs, often sings to himself to while away the time he must spend on the nest.



Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*)

Brilliant as the spot in a peacock's tail, an indigo bunting dashes across the sunny road and flies to a telephone wire to sing. Against the sky the little bird may appear black or very dark blue, but the color is often an optical illusion. Actually the feathers are brown, overlaid with a transparent layer which reflects light and produces blue. Therefore the bunting's magnificent color varies with the time of day and the location in which it is seen. Black against the sky, purple-blue in the shade, green-blue in the sun. And early in the morning, so early that there is really no light at all, only a faint indication of it in the east, the lights of cars on country roads catch the indigo buntings in the dust. And now, strangely, they are almost white, a very pale blue-white in the shaft of headlight and against darkness. They are like fairy birds, unreal and fragile. Close at hand in daylight, however, the bunting is a bird of iridescent blue-green, with a shading of intense purple on the head and blackish on the wings.

But aside from the technicalities of its blueness, the indigo bunting is a small, joyous bird that sings in the hottest summer weather, nests in a tangle of blackberry briars, is mated to the brown, sparrow-like female bunting, and is the only all-blue bird to be found commonly in Illinois.

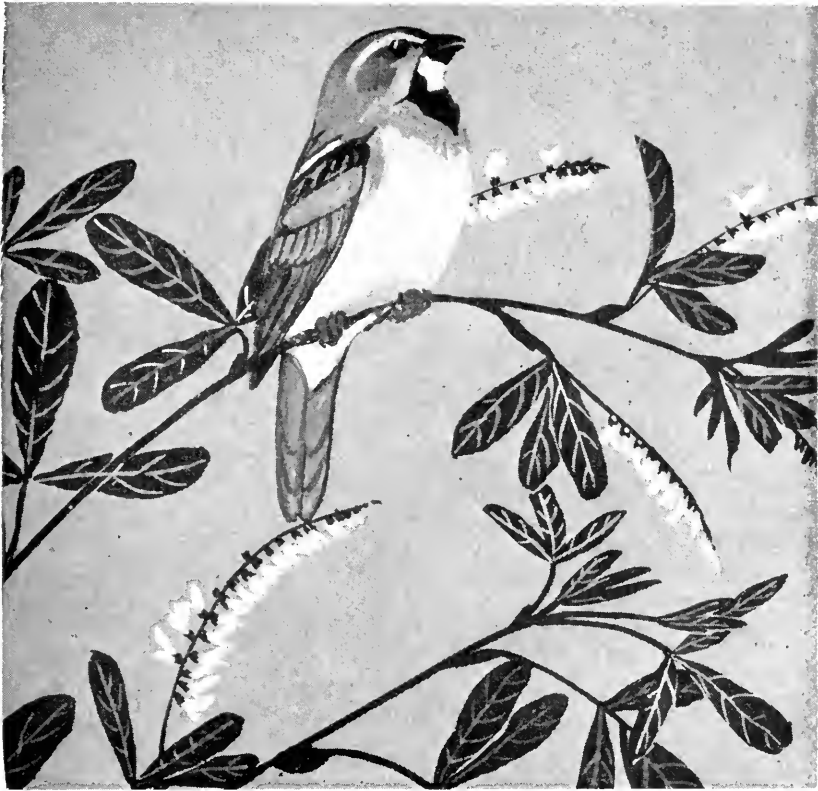


Eastern Goldfinch (*Spinus tristis tristis*)

When midsummer comes and the other birds long since have built their nests, and the robins already have reared two broods, the goldfinches begin to think belatedly of nesting. They take their time; they have only one brood in a year and there is no hurry—the summer is before them. And goldfinches prefer to nest when the thistles are blooming. Here in the midst of the spiny fortresses of the big thistle plants, the goldfinches weave a little cup of a nest, soft and comfortable with old thistle down and milkweed silk. Here the eggs are laid and the little young goldfinches sit until they are big enough to leave their protected bed.

And by that time it is late summer. The milkweeds and the thistles have been blooming all the long hot days and now the first seeds are ripening. Here to the tall sturdy plants the goldfinches come and pick open the pods, eat the seeds, let the silks fly off. Wherever there are weed patches and ripening seeds, the goldfinches come. Even the dandelions in June, seeding in heads of fluff, are descended upon by the little black and yellow birds. And when they fly up with a tweeting and a bubbly, bounding flight, it is as if the dandelions themselves had taken wing.

The goldfinches in autumn wear the dull yellow and brown feathers of the females. All winter they stay in the weed patches but are inconspicuous as sparrows, except for that tell-tale flight. And when spring comes, the goldfinches blossom out in gold and black again, and bound about in spring gladness on the winds of April.



Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*)

Once upon a time a long while ago, it is believed that all dickcissels were birds of the Great Plains. In those days the dickcissels probably did not come into Illinois nor further eastward, but some time later they began a curious migration. They moved across the Mississippi. They came into the new cornfields and clover fields of Illinois. They even went eastward into western New York and Pennsylvania where they were greeted as a great rarity.

Today the dickcissel is one of the commonest summer birds in Illinois, but in the eastern states it is still only a rare and casual visitor. The dickcissel, no matter what it did in more reckless journeyings, still prefers open country where the sun is hot and the winds are strong, where the blades of corn glitter in the sun, and where the chirring of grasshoppers is loud all day and all night. Here on a fence post or on a stalk of corn, on a wire or a clover head, the dickcissel throws back its head and chants a monotonous clacking song. Over and over and over, it is sung without variation a thousand times a day and resumed next day with equal vigor, and so all summer long.

The dickcissel is marked very much like a miniature meadowlark, with a yellow breast crossed with a black V. There are white underparts, a yellow eyebrow, a white streak down the wing, and bright chestnut-brown shoulders. Down in the cool shelter of pink clover blossoms there may be a nest where sky-blue eggs are brooded by the shy female.

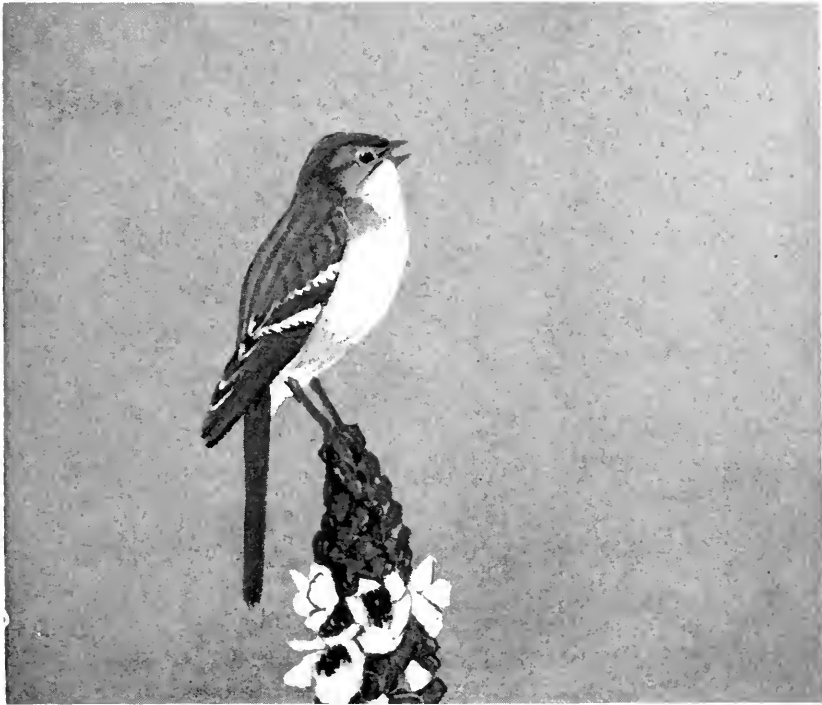


Slate-Colored Junco (*Junco hyemalis*)

Snow-birds, some people call them, but junco is a better name. They are small, slate-grey, black, and white birds that come to Illinois at the end of September or in early October and spend the winter here until time to leave for their nesting ground in the northern pine country. During their time with us they flit about in groups and small flocks, glean weed seeds from the roadside and woody thickets, often live in parks or cruise out to nearby feeding stands, and are among our most delightful and most abundant winter birds.

The blue leaf-smoke of autumn brings the juncos down from their summer home in Canada. Here they nested near some huge old lichened boulder and then moved south as Arctic storms swirled into the cool summer lands. Suddenly juncos are in Illinois. Their snowy-white outer tail feathers, contrasting with the dark grey of the middle feathers, flash in flight, and the little bone-white beaks click with small staccato notes as the flocks dash from thicket to thicket.

When spring comes on, the juncos begin to sing. In the warming sunshine of March and early April they utter small jingling choruses of song that increase as spring comes on, and then suddenly they are gone to the calling north.



Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla pusilla*)

All day long in summer when the sun is hot and the waving prairie grass glistens in the heat, the brown field sparrow sings its thin, high-pitched song. It is one of the few birds to sing in hot weather, and, as if to make up for the lack in most other birds, the field sparrow sends its ringing whistles into the sunshine from early morning until sundown, and from late March until September.

The field sparrow is a bird of open country. It is common in the sunny uplands, thorny pastures, roadsides, cornfields, and clover fields in Illinois. Here, in a low thorny bush or clump of weeds, or among the tall grass, a little nest of dried grass wreathed around in a deep cup is made to hold the eggs. The eggs are tiny, pinkish-brown, speckled with darker brown; they are well hidden although they are placed so low.

The field sparrow is slim, small, and brown, paler beneath, with a whitish ring around the eye, two white wing-bars, and a small, pale pink beak which is a guiding mark in identifying the field sparrow. It is much smaller than the English sparrow, and has no marks on the whitish breast—most native sparrows have streaks or other marks. Plain, shy, flitting quickly out of sight from a perch on a mullein stalk, the field sparrow is one of the familiar birds of Illinois.



White-Throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*)

Song of the deer country, wings of the spruce bogs, bird of the northern wilderness—this is the white-throated sparrow. Illinois may be far from the deer country, from spruce bogs and aspen woods and blueberry uplands, yet each spring and each autumn, as regularly as the calendar, the white-throated sparrow comes to Illinois. On its way north or south, it stays for a few weeks in our woods and gardens.

It is not a rare bird, not hard to find; it comes fearlessly into the wet spring gardens in the middle of a town, scratches industriously among damp old leaves in woods and parks, flits among the blossoming wild crab apple trees, pipes sweetly in the April rain. The white-throat is as much a part of our autumn picture as it is of spring. In October the white-throats whistle brokenly from the weed tangles, flutter among the goldenrod, join the fox sparrows and tree sparrows along the wooded roadsides.

The white-throated sparrow is larger than the English sparrow and is distinguished from all other sparrows by the striped black and white crown and bright yellow spot before the eye. The wings, back, and tail are brown, the breast pale grey with a pure white throat patch. Sometimes with the white-throats is the white-crowned sparrow, a larger, greyer bird. Its crown has more white than black and the breast is all grey with no white throat.

MANY BIRDS ARE PROTECTED BY LAW

The *Game Code* of Illinois protects song-birds, game birds, game and fur-bearing animals and provides open seasons for certain of the latter groups. These laws are found in Senate Bill No. 575, approved July 16, 1941, Laws of Illinois, 1941, Vol. I, pp. 767-797 as amended by Senate Bill No. 373, Approved July 21, 1947, Laws of Illinois, 1947, pp. 1039-1057. These Acts are administered by the Department of Conservation. Senate Bill No. 373 provides:

"Section 21. This Act shall apply only to the wild birds and parts thereof (their nests and eggs), and wild animals and parts thereof, which shall include their green hides, in the State of Illinois, or which may be brought into the State of Illinois, which are hereby defined as follows:

All song, insectivorous, or non-game birds (except English Sparrow, *Passer domesticus*; European Starling, *Sturnus vulgaris*; Crow, *Corvus brachyrhynchos*; Blue Jay, *Cyanocitta cristata*; Cowbird, *Molothrus ater*; Rusty Blackbird, *Euphagus carolinus*; Bronzed grackle, *Quiscalus quiscula*; Sharp-shinned Hawk, *Accipiter velox*; Cooper's Hawk, *Accipiter Cooperi*; Great Horned Owl, *Bubo virginianus*; and Domestic Pigeon, *Columba livia*; Homing Pigeon, *Columba livia livia*. **GAME BIRDS**—Ruffed grouse, *Bonasa umbellus*; Bobwhite Quail, *Colinus virginianus*; Hungarian Partridge, *Perdix perdix*; Chukar partridge, *Alectoris graceca*; Pheasants, *P. colchicus*, *P. c. Torquatus*; Prairie Chicken, *Tympanuchus cupido*; Wild Turkey, *Meleagris gallopavo*. **MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS**¹—Waterfowl, including little brown, sandhill, and whooping cranes, Gruidae; Rails, including coots, gallinules, and sora and other rails, Rallidae; Shore birds, including avocets, curlews, dowitchers, godwits, knots, oyster catchers, phalaropes, plovers, sandpipers, snipe, stilts, surf birds, turnstones, willet, woodcock, and yellow-legs, Limicolae; Pigeons, including doves and wild pigeons, Columbidae.

It is unlawful to take any said wild birds and parts thereof (their nests and eggs), and wild animals and parts thereof, including their green hides, with such devices, during the protected seasons* and in such manner, as defined by this Act."

If you thought it lawful to kill eagles, hawks, and owls, read what this Act enjoins.

"Section 36. **EAGLES AND HAWKS—OWLS.**] It shall be unlawful for any persons at any time to take any of the following defined species: Red-tailed hawk, *Buteo borealis*; Red-shouldered hawk, *Buteo lineatus*; Broad-winged hawk, *Buteo platypterus*; Swainson's hawk, *Buteo swainsoni*; Rough-legged hawk, *Buteo lagopus*; Ferruginous rough-leg, *Buteo regalis*; Marsh hawk, *Circus hudsonius*; Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus*; Goshawk, *Astur atricapillus*; Duck Hawk, *Falco peregrinus*; Pigeon hawk, *Falco [columbarius]†*; Sparrow Hawk, *Falco sparverius*; Golden eagle, *Aquila chrysaetos*; Bald eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*; all species of owls, except Great Horned Owl."

There is no open season for hunting or "taking" Ruffed grouse, Prairie Chickens, Chukar and Hungarian Partridge. (Sections 25, 26, 27, Senate Bill No. 575).

¹ Migratory game birds are protected by Federal law as stated in Section 31 of this Act.

* For open seasons on game birds and animals, see "Game and Fish Codes of Illinois", Department of Conservation, Springfield, Illinois.

† Erroneously printed in the law, *peregrinus*.

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