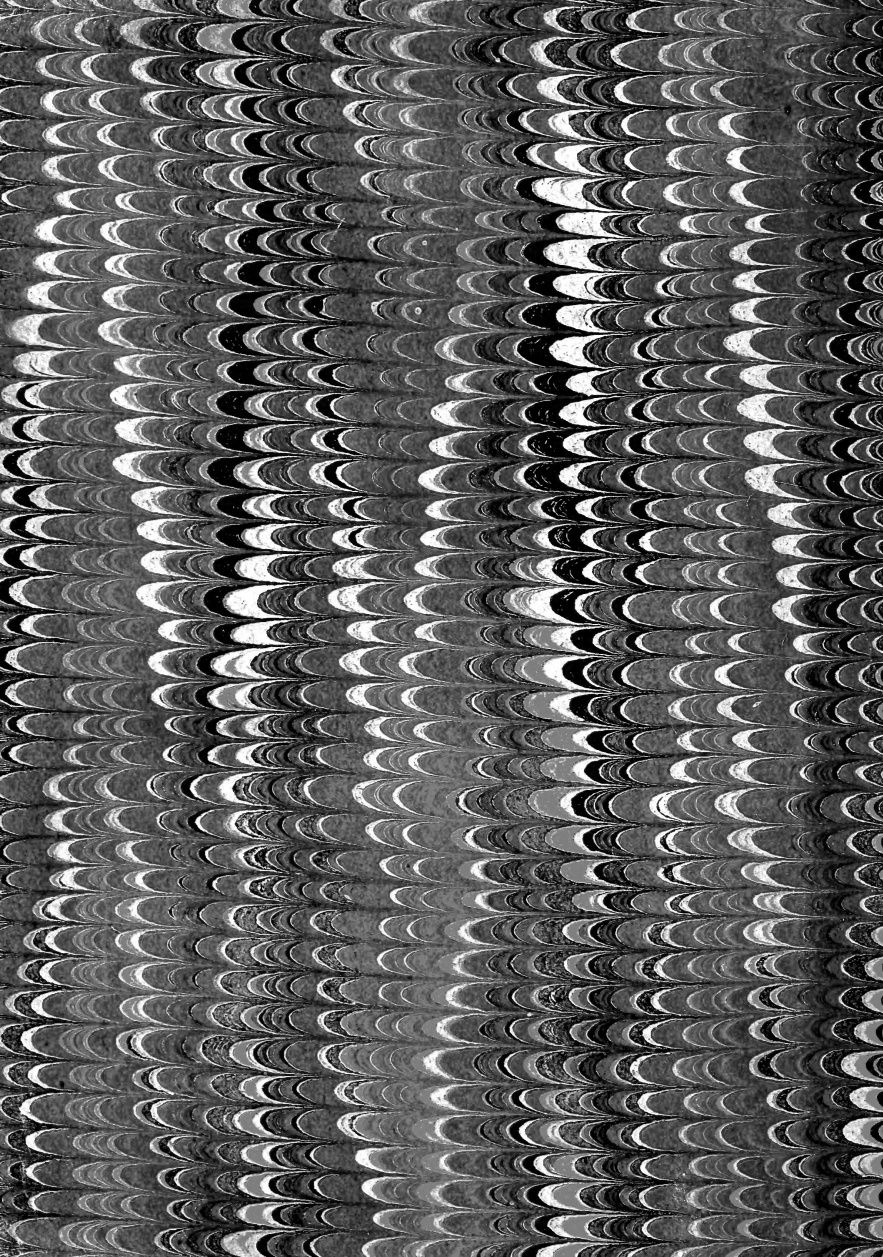


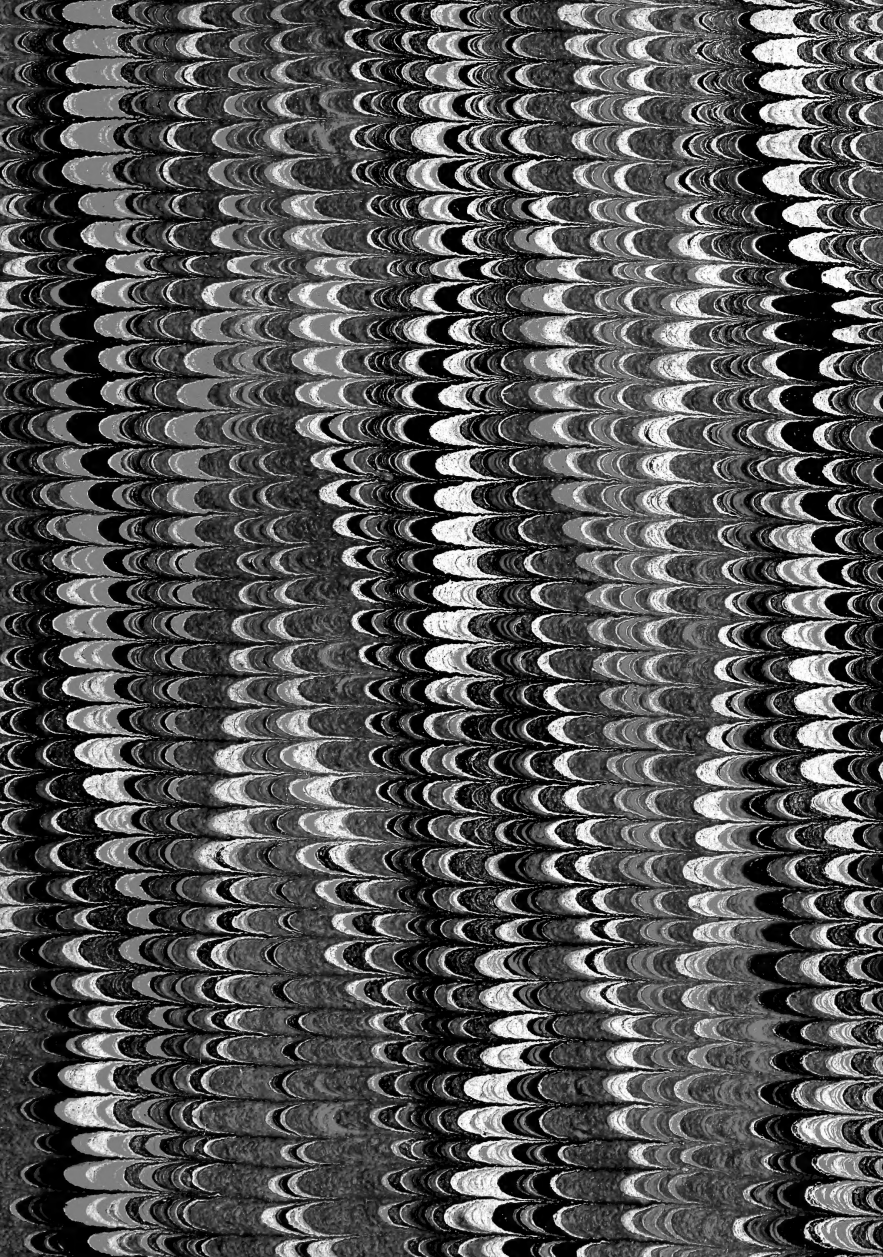
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BIRDS







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Vol. 1.

JANUARY 1889.

No. 1.

DL
671
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birds

THE LOON.

white sul.
w. va

MONTHLY. 50 CENTS PER YEAR.



—PUBLISHED BY—
THAD SURBER,
WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, W. VA

—CONTENTS FOR JANUARY 1889.—

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THE LOON.

VOL. 1. White Sul., W. Va., Jan'y., 1889 No. 1.

The Great Auk. *A. impennis.*

Sixty or seventy years ago the birds were exceedingly common along the northern coast, coming as far south as Nahant. But warfare was commenced upon them, and, though it hardly seems possible, their extermination is doubtless complete, the last living bird having been killed in 1844 on a group of islands called Funglasker, off the southwest coast of Iceland.

In the last century, these birds, which were large, handsome, and striking in appearance, were common at the Faroe Islands; and, as they were found to be good eating, they were slaughtered by the boatload, not only for immediate use, but to be dried and preserved. They were finally driven to a desolate rock that was considered inaccessible; but one calm day a Faroese vessel succeeded in making a landing, and the crew destroyed nearly the entire rookery. A few birds escaped to sea and returned after the departure of the men, and for a time were safe.

Then, as if nature herself were in league against them, the rock, a few years later, was engulfed by a submarine eruption.

The few remaining great auks now assembled and formed a rookery on a rock called Eldey, where, for fourteen years, they lived a precarious existence. During that time sixty of their number were taken, and finally the last pair was destroyed. Their history in other localities is very similar to this. That the birds were once common on the Maine coast is shown by the fact that their bones are found in the oyster shell heaps at various parts of the shore.—[St. Nicholas.]

A Clever Oriole,

An observing correspondent, Mr. G. B. M., sends me a letter about my friends, the orioles, or rather about one of these birds that had a keen eye to business. "It is curious," says Mr. G. B. M., "what a variety of materials Baltimore orioles will use in the construction of their nests

In the lawn of one of the prettiest homes in the State of Maryland a pair of orioles selected a tree in which to build. It was a large fir tree, about forty-five feet from the house. The lady of the house was sewing by one of the windows opposite this tree early one beautiful summer morning, and, on being called away to some other room, she placed her spool of cotton on the window-sill.

When she returned she found the spool was gone, and on looking for it, discovered it on the floor of the porch which was just outside of the window. She found that a

considerable length of the cotton was unwound, and looking for the end of it she traced it up to the nest of the oriole, and saw the bird busily weaving it into the nest.

The lady placed the spool in the window, and it was shown as a curiosity to all who visited the house. I was one who was so fortunate as to see this curious proof of bird ingenuity. —Ex.

Notes from Greenbrier Co., W. Va.

By *Ansar*.

1888—Feb'y. 19th. Warm, sunny day. Robins, blue-birds, black-capped chickadees, blue jays, snowbirds and crows are abundant. Saw one Red-wing blackbird to day.

Feb'y. 23d. Snow, 2 inches. Saw one Mourning Dove which is rather early for them here. Noticed a pair of Red-tails—*B. borealis*.—looking up a tree preparatory to building.

Feb'y. 26th. An albino Snowbird—*Junco hyemalis*—made its appearance this morning. Head, neck and back; almost pure white. It was among a large flock of Juncos and Tree Sparrows.

Mar. 10th. The first Pewee made its appearance this morning, singing very sweetly in a large elm by the roadside. Secured a fine specimen of the Black Mallard.

Mar. 11th. Just listen! Robins, Blue-birds, Meadow Larks and Crow Blackbirds are all singing at once and

fairly deafen a person with their melody, and no wonder for the day is a clear, beautiful one, the temperature being 60 degrees.

Wandering Albatross.


(American Field. June 1888.)

Local naturalists are puzzled by the appearance in this vicinity, of numbers of the wandering albatross (*exulans*). Eight of these great birds have been killed on Puget Sound during the past few weeks, and all have been mounted, to establish the fact of their appearance here. The Young Naturalist's Society, of this city, secured one specimen, Mr. O. B. Still, another, and Mr. Petcovits, two; J. Y. Collins, of Whatecom, one, and two have been mounted for parties in Port Townsend, by taxidermists of this city. Will not Dr. Coues, Robert Ridgway, or some other standard authority, give the readers of the AMERICAN FIELD some information concerning the range and habitat of this winged wanderer of the ocean?

Seattle, W. T.

SILALICUM.

The Smithsonian Report for 1865 contains: "Outline of a Systematic Review of the Class of Birds." By Prof. W. Lillejeborg, of Upsala. A copy of this should be in the hands of every Ornithologist.

 Copy for February issue of THE LOON should be in by Feb. 5th. This number will have a very large circulation.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

Trochilus colubris.

In the latter part of June 1887 as I was rambling through a pine forest, I noticed a Ruby-throat darting from tree to tree and I stopped to watch its movements, when the thought occurred to me a nest might be near, so I stopped and leaning against a tree near by prepared to watch for further developments. She was seated on a limb of one of the trees when presently she darted to a limb on the next tree, and Lo! there about thirty feet from the ground was her nest. You can imagine my feelings as this was my first nest of the "Pigmy among Birds." Well, I climbed to the nest which contained two eggs. The nest was saddled on a dead pine limb about three feet from the body of the tree, and in getting the nest, the limb on which I was standing broke and threw me, nest and all to the ground breaking both eggs, but not seriously damaging the nest or the OOLOGIST. The nest, which was a most beautiful structure, was composed of cobwebs and lichens and lined with willow down. From this nest I have taken the following measurements: Depth inside .75 inches; Depth outside 2 in. Diam. inside .80 in. Diam. outside 1.50 inches. Inhabiting entire Eastern N. America—in summer—this little bird is quite common in West Virginia where it builds in May and June, laying two pure white eggs, measuring .50 by .35—Rebrus.

The Puffin.

One of the oddest birds of the sea is the Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*), or Noddy; Sea Parrot, as it is called by the Nova Scotians. About 13.50 in length, short legged, web footed, and with a curiously formed bill, flatly compressed, it is blackish above and white underneath, the black above extending around the short neck like a collar, and the white on the cheeks continuing in a narrow line around the back of the head, and becoming dusky at the base of the lower mandible. The tip of the bill is red, streaked with yellow and dusky, and the base is blue, margined with red. The callous at the corner of the mouth is yellow; the eyelids are pink, with blue appendages; the feet red. It bred formerly in abundance on some of the Mud Islands, one of which—Noddy Island—is named for it, and a few build there still, as also on the Machias Ledge near Grand Menan; but mostly they have been driven northward, where they breed in great numbers. The nest is a hole in the bank, like that of the Kingfisher, only not so deep, and contains one egg, about 2.50 x 1.75, somewhat pointed, white or whitish, obscurely spotted. In some places the bird lays in deep holes and crevices of steep, rocky ledges. It belongs to the same family with the Auks, and is found also in the Old World. Its food is small crustaceans principally. ——— Our Birds in their Haunts.

The Mockingbird.

Taking them in the order of their classification, we come first to the famous Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottis*) of the Southern States. Some 9.50 long, gray above, white below, with breast and sides tinged with gray; wings and tail, dark-brown, the former with bars and base of primaries, also the tips and edgings of the wing feathers generally, white; the latter with an outer feather on each side, and a mark on the two following, white. The male has more white in the primaries than the female. The marvelous capacity of this species for imitation is truly a wonder in bird-life.

Giving the notes and songs of the Sparrow, the Goldfinch, the Blue Jay and the Robin, in the same breath, it imitates almost any sound within hearing, even voicing fairly the notes of a piano. Indeed, it will so render the songs of other birds as positively to excel them in musical power and sweetness, so that the performance of the birds themselves will sound tame and spiritless in comparison.

Moreover, the Mockingbird's own song, thrown in here and there in the medley of other songs, or sometimes given singly, would itself be enough to distinguish the singer. Its nest is in a bush or tree, and contains some 5 eggs, pale greenish-blue, spotted and blotched with different shades of brown and lilac. Size, .97x.73. It is resident

in the Southern States in great abundance, as far north as Virginia, and occasionally straggles into New England.

—Our Birds in their Haunts.


—oNOTESo—

February Loon will be out Feb. 15th., and, March No. March 1st. We trust our friends will send us "LOTS" of notes for next issue and thereby keep us from "extracting" from other works.

The "OOLOGIST" published by Frank H. Lattin, Albion, N. Y., bids fair to become one of the leading Bird magazines of America. Mr. Lattin offers very liberal premiums for 1889.

The CURLEW, a spicy little magazine, published at 25cts., a year by O. P. Hauger & Co., Orleans, Indiana, is the official organ of the Y. O. A.

The Hawkeye Ornithologist and Oologist, published monthly, at 50 cents per year, by E. B. Webster, Cresco, Iowa, is brimful of good reading matter, relating to Birds, their Nests and Eggs.

 DAVIE'S EGG CHECK LIST AND KEY TO THE Nests AND Eggs of N. A. BIRDS, so long promised, will probably be completed soon. It will contain about 400 pages.

—EXCHANGES and WANTS.—

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The third largest list, an egg of the American Flamingo.

The fourth largest list, an egg of the American White Pelican.

The fifth largest list, a Nest of the Trap-door Spider (Tarantula).

COMMENCE WORK AT ONCE.

Address

THE LOON,

White Sulphur Springs, W. Va.

Vol. 1.

FEBRUARY, 1889.



No. 2.



Published by Thad Surber,
White Sul. Springs, W. Va.

Contents, Feb. 1889.

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The Kingbird.	Chas. T. Hepburn.
An Ostrich Race.	Ex.
Notes.	

 The LOON is published Monthly at 50 cts., per year, and will hereafter, contain *only* articles of greatest importance for the Ornithologist.—Ed. 

* * THE HAWKEYE O. & O. * *

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E. B. Webster,

Cresco, Iowa.

-THE LOON.-

Vol. 1.

FEBRUARY. 1889.

No. 2.

—A Tame Plover.—

By E. B. Webster, Cresco, Ia.

In the early fall of 1886 while I was employed as foreman of a country printing office, a little urchin timidly opened the door one morning and, edging in, asked where Webster was and said he had a bird for him, at the same time pulling out from under his coat a Golden Plover in a badly ruffled condition and if possible more frightened than its captor. After I had paid him his price, he set the bird down and made for the door, eyeing the machinery meanwhile and, judging from the retreating footsteps, evidently feeling greatly relieved. But to return to the bird. He stood there in the center of the floor motionless as a sentinel and scarcely struggled when I picked him up. After carefully examining him and finding that he was perfectly sound, I set him down on the floor and resumed my work. It appeared that the boys had sighted him in a field and, as he was apparently only two-thirds grown and not well acquainted with the use of his wings, had literally run him down. That he was very shy and could run with amazing swiftness was readily to be seen

when I came to catch him again, so that the urchin must have been favored with more good luck than he was aware of.

I took the bird to the house and presented him to my mother, expecting of course that, having entered a taxidermists studio, he would go the way of all good birds in a day or so; but he was doomed to different treatment, for he soon became the family pet. They straightway dubbed him Dick, and proceeded to cage him, which treatment he most urgently resisted, dashing himself against the bars, until they finally gave him the liberty of a small, uncarpeted bed room, where he took refuge under the bed.

In the course of a day or so he would readily respond to his name and come even to the farthest corner of the house, always running with a swift, pattering movement of the feet, regular as clock work, the body never seeming to make the slightest movement save as carried straight forward by the legs. On the least suspicion of danger he would scoot back under the bed so quickly that one would hardly realize that he had started.

His principal food was earth worms and of these he would eat an ordinary handful at one time, taking them from between the fingers; until in fact his crop bulged out and the writhing and squirming of the worms could be plainly seen. He would apparently never over eat, but was ready for another meal in the course of half an hour.

When all was quiet he would spend much time collecting flies, spiders, etc., or standing in a basin of water, at which times he frequently uttered the plover's loud, peculiar whistle. One great peculiarity was his habit of holding his head at the same elevation; if placed on the hand and gradually lowered he would lengthen himself out as far as possible and if raised again would shorten, always keeping his head in the same spot as long as he could.

But the cold November days came and as no amount of persuasion would induce him to eat meat he was taken to the meadows and given his liberty again.—Written for the LOON.

Michigan Field Notes.

By Jno. E. Marble, Ann Arbor.

On the 2nd. of June, 1888, while walking along the Huron River (Ann Arbor, Mich.) I observed nests of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Wood Thrush and Black-billed Cuckoo.

Upon entering a grove of saplings I found a nest of the R. B. Grosbeak situated in the fork of a limb of a small tree. The nest is a frail structure composed of long, slender stems of woody climbers and other stout rootlets. The inner wall is more compactly woven, having a tol-

erably firm brim of circularly disposed fibers. This Grosbeak generally lays three or four eggs of a light, rather pale green color, speckled with dull reddish-brown.

Going on a little farther I came to a low damp piece of ground covered with bushes and small trees. Situated in a low tree, I found a nest of the Wood Thrush. It was composed of alternate layers of leaves, grasses and mud, lined with fine grass. The Wood Thrush lays from four to five eggs of a greenish blue color.

The nest of the Black-billed Cuckoo was found in a low tree. It was a loose structure of twigs, a mere platform, but sometimes they are better finished with leaves and strips of bark. They lay from three to five eggs of a greenish color.

Drumming of the Ruffed Grouse.

[American Field. 1888.]

Dysart, Pa.

Editor American Field:—Having been a constant reader of your valuable paper for some time, I could not help noticing the differences of opinion as to the mode by which the ruffed grouse produces his peculiar drumming sound. As a sportsman, I can safely say that your correspondent, Roxey Newton, is completely wrong. I crept up where one was drumming, and, as I was only five paces

off from him, I can safely assert in what way it was done.

He stood erect on the log, and crosswise, looked about a bit and as he did not see me (I was behind a large root) he began. One! two! three times, then he paused, looked around again, and with head erect and chest expanded, how he did make those wings go, but he never touched the log with them. He drummed at least twenty times while I was there, and never once did he walk around excepting he turned once clean around, shook his feathers, gave a couple of coos and began drumming again. He kept that up until about five o'clock, when the old hen came up, and with tail expanded and wings dragging on the ground, not much unlike a turkey gobbler, he started off with his mate in quest of food. I fully agree with all that T. G. Sargent says and hope to hear often from such men. If no fire comes through the mountain to destroy the nests there will be a large quantity of ruffed grouse, or pheasants, as they are called here.

The Kingbird.

By Chas. T. Hepburn.

The Kingbird is one of the best friends of the farmer, for the reason that its food is entirely insectivorous.

From the time of its arrival it is always on the alert for flying insects. His one fault is his liking for bees,

which has fastened upon him the name, "Bee Martin."

He frequents the neighborhood of bee-hives and lunches off the inhabitants.

But, as a majority of farmers do not keep bees, and those who do ought not begrudge him the few bees he kills for he more than counterbalances that by the number of cabbage moths, rose bugs and the many other flying pests of the farmer's garden which he destroys.

He also makes a good sentry on a fruit tree, never touching fruit himself, and when he builds his nest in an orchard you may be sure no other bird will ever touch the fruit, for they know better than to approach anywhere near his castle.

No Hen Hawks trouble the farmer where this little warrior has taken up his home, for he lights on the hawks back and prods him in the same spot until the old thief will be only too glad to get back to the woods.

He most always builds his nest around farm houses frequently selecting a pear tree, and as he generally builds in the very top, it is difficult to take.

The nest is composed of grass and twigs, and lined with some soft material, such as cotton, wool and feathers.

The eggs are four or five in number, a beautiful cream spotted with chocolate brown, chiefly at the larger end.



Look for Bubo's nests this month.

An Ostrich Race.

At a command from the doctor one of the Madrasese keepers opened the doors of one of the pens, and in response to the doctor's call two superb ostriches came running to him. After caressing the gentle creatures for a few moments he showed them a handful of figs, of which they are extremely fond. Two of his men then restrained the birds by placing nooses about their legs until he and myself had walked to the other end of the course. Then at a signal from the doctor, the birds were released and the race began. Ornithologists tell us that the stride of the ostrich when feeding is from twenty to twenty-two inches; when walking, but not feeding, twenty-six inches, and when terrified from eleven and one-half to fourteen feet. It seemed to me that in this race for a handful of figs from their master these gigantic birds covered the last named distance at every stride.

Like the wind they came, their great necks stretched forward and upward to their utmost length; their wings like arms, working with a motion similar to that made by their legs, and filling the air with a mighty sound like the rushing of a whirlwind. Nearer and nearer they came, their speed increasing with every moment till I was almost terrified lest they should run us down, feeling certain that we could not withstand the shock. They

kept well abreast for nearly half the distance, and then one began to forge ahead. He steadily increased his lead till within a few feet of us, when he turned his head, and seeing that his competitor was considerably in the rear, he slackened his pace, and jogging up to the doctor, received his reward in figs and caresses.—**Ex.**


—oNOTES.o—

March LOON will be out Mar. 1st., and each succeeding No. on first of each month. All "copy" for March issue should be in by Feb. 22nd.

Editors and Publishers:—We will send the Loon one year to any editor or publisher who will give it a notice, and send us marked copy of same.

Jan. No. Hawkeye O & O., is before us. Must say it is a credit to its publisher, Mr. E. B. Webster, Cresco, Ia. Mr. Webster writes us he will have a new engraved cover this month. He also says: "I triple my regular edition in **Mar.**" Success to him.

Jan. No. OOLOGIST, Albion, N. Y., is very interesting especially an article on, "Breeding Habits of the Brilled Tern." By C. J. Maynard. The Oologist is in its 6th. vol. now.

 When the Loon subscription list numbers 500 paid subscribers we will enlarge it to 12 pages monthly. Send in your name and 50 cts.

-Exchanges & Wants.-

Notices not exceeding 40 words, inserted under this heading free of charge to SUBSCRIBERS. To Non-subscribers, 25 cents for 25 words; over 25 words, $\frac{1}{2}$ cent per word. Terms cash.

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The fourth largest list, an egg of the American White Pelican.

The fifth largest list, a Nest of the Trap-door Spider (Tarantula).

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Address

THE LOON,

White Sulphur Springs, W. Va.

Vol. 1.

MARCH, 1889.

No. 3.



Published by Thad. Surber,
White Sulphur Springs, W. Va.

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The Mongolian Pheasant of the Territories,	N. Y. Sun.
Notes,	

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—E. B. WEBSTER, Editor and Publisher.—

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-THE LOON.-

Vol. 1.

MARCH 1889.

No. 3.

A Visit to the home of the "Sand-birds."

By "Avis."

"Sand-bird" is the common parlance, in this section for the beautiful Bank Swallow (*Cotile riparia*). The object of this article is to describe a visit made by the writer hereof, to the breeding site of these birds.

This was located about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles down the rail-road, so one day (the 9th. of June) the writer and a fellow oologist started off with the necessary collecting boxes, note books and instruments. Almost before we got out of the city limits we spied a Yellow Warblers nest in a tree overhanging the track but of course did not take it.

We passed a marsh, after 2 miles steady walking, which was the home of innumerable Red-winged Blackbirds. but resisted the temptation to add another set to our already large series. Near this place we gathered a splendid set of Bobolink, taken on account of its unusually fine markings.

We passed through a large orchard and were rewarded by a set of 4 Nuthatch (*S. carolinensis*), and also a set of Red-eyed Vireo which we gathered in a bush on our way

back to the track. They were 5 in number and looked very pretty, their delicate cream color ground and brownish markings contrasting with the cottony substance which formed the lining of the nest.

We explored several other orchards and woods and at last reached the great sand-bank which was our objective point.

We were delighted to see it honey-combed with little holes, most of which however were beyond our reach. By carefully crawling up the less steep places, with continual mishaps in the shape of slips and tumbles, and much injury to pantaloons, we managed to get at a number of holes. But by this time the entire population, numbering some hundreds, were out and flying around our heads, but they gradually dispersed.

The holes were from 18 in. to 4 ft. deep and the nests were composed of straw, hay, etc., lined with feathers.

We would take out nest and all, then if the set was incomplete we would return it to its cavity, knowing from experience that the birds will not desert a nest so handled. Most of the sets were four, many of five, a few of three, and one containing six eggs was found. As it now began to near sundown we retraced our steps going home through the woods.

It was too dusky most of the way to find anything, but, nevertheless, we secured the greatest prize of all by

flushing the bird from a low bush. It was a set of four Brown Thrasher, which is the first I have ever found in this locality. They are too common to collections to need description.

We reached home after a five hours jaunt, very well satisfied with the results, it being one of the most successful *short* trips made by me in the season of 1886, when it occurred, as I had very little time to devote that year.—*For the Loon.*

Biddeford, Me.



Nesting of the Tufted Titmouse.

By W. F. Lewis.

About the first of May, 1888, while strolling through an orchard near Martins Ferry, O., I saw a female Tufted Titmouse fly into a cavity in the crotch of an apple tree. I secreted myself to watch. She soon came out again and flew away. After a short time she came back with some moss in her bill, this time accompanied by the male bird.

As soon as she again came out and the pair flew away in search of more nesting material, I went to the hole and peeped in and saw a nest almost completed.

On the 10th. of May I again visited the place and found the bird on the nest. She hissed and snapped her

jaws at me very angrily. I took a small stick and lifted her off the nest several times before I could get her to come out of the cavity and after she did I found it just as difficult to get the eggs out which I did by making a long handled spoon out of a stick. I kept spooning out eggs till I had a beautiful set of seven which is now in my collection.

During that month I collected three sets as follows:

Set No. 1 May 10th. Seven eggs, white, sprinkled with reddish-brown and lilac; average measurement .73 x .54. Nest in cavity of apple tree about eight feet from the ground, composed of grass, moss, leaves and snake skin.

Set No. 2 May 20th. Four eggs, white, with reddish-brown spots. Nest in crotch of apple tree about four ft. from the ground, composed of moss, leaves and snake skin. I think this was second set of those collected on May 10th.

Set No. 3 May 23d. Six eggs, white, spotted with reddish-brown and lilac; average measurement .72 x .53. Nest in cavity of apple tree about two feet from the ground, composed of moss, leaves, grass and snake skin.

I have examined several nests and have never found a nest that did not contain more or less snake skin. I was with Mr. Fred Jones of Martins Ferry, O., when he collected a set of six eggs at a height of fifty feet from the ground in a beech tree.—*For the Loon.*

East Liverpool, Ohio.

THE SWALLOW.

Habits of the Bird in England.

(Golden Days.)

The British *Hirundines*, or birds of the swallow kind, says the St. James' Gazette, are four—the swallow, “the temple-haunting martlet,” the sand martin, and the swift; while in close relation stand the purple martin (a casual visitor to our shores) and the Alpine swift (a species still more rare). The swallows are essentially birds of return; and it may be easily proved that the birds which this year nest beneath our eaves are those which occupied the self-same spot twelve months ago.

About the beginning of April the *Hirundines* begin to arrive in Great Britain. First comes the sand-martin. This is the smallest member of its family, and for a time after its arrival it seldom strays far from the stiller pools and sheltered reaches of the river, where insects are abundant. The sand-martin is closely followed by the true swallow, which, with the sun glinting from its steel-blue back, may usually be seen about the second week in April, skimming low over the meadows. Some days later follows the familiar house-martin; and toward the end of the month or the beginning of May the large black swift makes its appearance.

The knowledge concerning these birds has much advanced of late years. We know now more accurately the

lines and the times of migration, and the manner in which they are performed. When in autumn the migratory instinct comes strong upon birds of the swallow kind, they do not, as was once supposed, tower straight up and then start in direct flight for their winter quarters. So that the birds which in the morning might be seen hawking for insects over Hyde Park and catching flies over the mosques of Jerusalem the same evening are now looked upon by ornithologists as myths.

Swallows, like all migratory birds, stick close to land, never leaving it unless compelled. It is noticeable that they do not cross straits invariably at the narrowest parts but probably by a route which indicates some long-lost land line—that is, they cross now where their remote ancestors crossed centuries ago.

Swallows have alighted upon vessels four hundred miles from nearest land; but, from their exhausted state, would seem to have been blown out of their course, and to have suffered great fatigue. Their food is taken exclusively from the air, and they drink when flying. This, so far as is known, cannot be said of any other bird.

Various species of gnats constitute their food upon their arrival in this country; but, as summer advances, winged beetles are also greedily taken. So rapidly does the bird capture these, that after it has been on the wing but a few moments, it has accumulated sufficient to form

a pellet as large as an ordinary rifle-bullet; and in summer, when the young birds are on the wing, this pellet is often transferred from old to young in mid-air.

In some respects the swallow has several traits distinct from most migratory birds. In the case of almost all the soft-billed wood-birds, which are also summer migrants, the males arrive and attain to their full song from a week to a fortnight before the arrival of their consorts; but the swallows invariably come in pairs. Their coming has been marked at various stations along the Mediterranean, and on through Northern into Central and Southern Africa. It is here among the palm-groves that our visitants take their annual rest, molt, and return again perfect plumage.

(To be continued)

—The Mongolian Pheasant of the Territories.—

(New York Sun)

Four years ago Dr. Miner, of Seattle, W. T., imported some Mongolian pheasants and liberated them on Whitby's Island, in Puget Sound. He also procured the passage by the Legislatur of the Territory of an act prohibiting the shooting of the birds for five years. They have increased rapidly, emigrated to the mainland, and the other day one was shot in Oregon and has been stuffed and

mounted. The bird is a cock, and is about the size of a game rooster of middle weight. The feathers on the top of the head are gray, encircled by a band of white. Two small tufts of green feathers project back of the ears. The eyes are surrounded by fine feathers of deep crimson, below which the neck feathers are green. A band of white marks the junction of the neck and body. The breast is a rich bronze and the wing and body feathers are mottled brown, bronze and black being the prevailing hues. The tail feathers are brown, crossed with black bars, the two chief plumes being eighteen inches in length.

—o NOTES.o—

April LOON will be out April 1st. This number will have a very large circulation and will therefore pay any wide-awake dealer to have his ad. therein. MS. should be in by March 22d.

The Literary Companion, Will H. Plank, Editor, Kansas City, Kansas, Vol. 1. No. 1. Feb'y 1889 received. It is a monthly review of Popular Science and Philately.

WEBSTER, publisher of the H. O. & O., has had placed at his disposal a collection of 300 species of Am. Birds' Eggs, comprising 3000 specimens, and is raffling it off. Send for full particulars without delay.

—EXCHANGES & WANTS.—



Notices not exceeding 40 words inserted under this heading free of charge to SUBSCRIBERS. To Non-subscribers, 25 cents for 25 words; over 25 words, $\frac{1}{2}$ cent per word. Terms cash.

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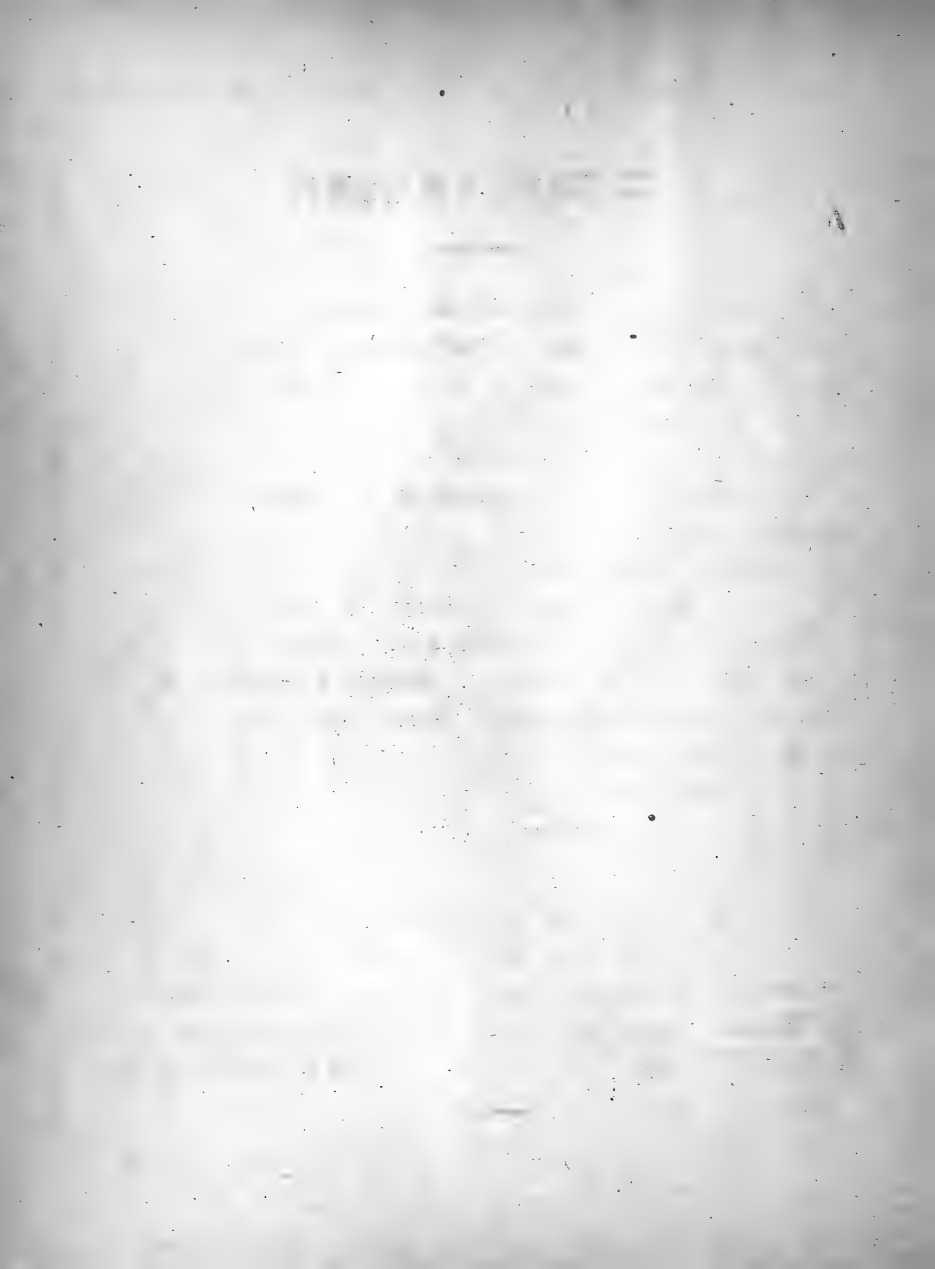
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Vol. 1.

APRIL, 1889.

No. 4.



Published by Thad. Surber,
White Sulphur Springs, W. Va.

Contents for April 1889.

The Swallow.	Golden Days.
A day with a Maine collector.	“R. M.”
Gt. Horned Owl.	Walter Wood.
Aepyornis' Eggs.	Ex.
Notes.	

* * THE HAWKEYE O. & O. * *

—E. B. WEBSTER, Editor and Publisher.—

The Leading Ornithological Journal of the Central and
Western States.

Commenced Vol. 2 January 1st., 1889; 12 pages, monthly
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States and Canada on the Staff.

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E. B. Webster,

Cresco, Iowa.

-THE LOON.-

Vol. 1.

APRIL, 1889.

No. 4.

THE SWALLOW.

(Golden Days.)

(Continued from page 23.)

The birds have not been long with us before they commence their nests. After the site is chosen, small mud-pellets are worked round centres of straw or stick; and so the nest is built up lump by lump, though as is well known, each layer is allowed to dry before a second is added. It is not known whether water or saliva is used as a cement in the construction of the nest. When completed, the nest is thickly lined with feathers, upon which usually five eggs are laid; these are white, spotted with red and dark brown.

The site which the swallow proper chooses for its nest is usually upon a beam or rafter of a barn or shed, and rarely in chimneys, as one of its provincial names would seem to imply. Many and curious are the sites chosen from time to time by the birds; and not least so that

up and brought down six heavily marked green eggs.

We pushed on, but soon found ourselves barred from further progress in that direction by the narrowness of the channel, so we retraced our path and started in a new direction, intending to visit the western part of the marsh where the water birds breed.

But we never reached there for a violent storm coming up we had to hide under a little shed to avoid getting drenched to the skin. For a while it "rained pitchforks" but then it cleared off, and it getting rather late, we proposed to row back to our starting point by another route.

Here while moving slowly along we flushed another Spotted Sandpiper and secured another fine set of three. We found the Red-winged Blackbirds nesting in great numbers and secured several handsome sets.

After putting up the boat we proposed to walk throu' an orchard before going to the train, and while there we noticed a cavity in the lower trunk of a large apple tree which might have escaped notice had it not been for the feathers round the opening.

Beating on the tree with a club, out flew a female Screech Owl (*S. asio*) in the gray plumage. Upon examining the hole we found, to our sorrow, only one egg which after some discussion we left and passed on. But we had hardly passed three trees before out of another hole higher up in a different tree rushed another Screech Owl.

This nest contained six white eggs, almost spherical in shape, which were received with joy. It is worthy of notice that the last female was in the red plumage; also that the orchard was nearly destitute of birds, probably the effect of two pairs of Owls breeding in such proximity. We took the train for home where we arrived safe with our specimens, much pleased with the result of an afternoon's collecting.

GT. HORNED OWL.

Walter Wood, Hillsdale, Mich.

This is without an exception the best known of all our large owls. It is a bold and daring bird and in thinly populated districts does great damage among the poultry of the farmer. In deep swampy forests clear of cultivated lands, this bird takes up its residence, coming forth only at night.

Its voice is of a hollow, weird character and may be heard throughout the night in localities where the bird has made its home. The eggs are two to four in number, pure white, nearly spherical, and a trifle larger than those of the Red-shouldered Hawk.

They are usually deposited in cavities of trees or deserted Hawks' nests, but when the bird constructs a nest of its own the main fork of a large limb high up in some

tall monarch of the forest is generally selected. Why does this owl become scarce with the increasing population?

Well, he does not seem wise enough to keep away from traps set for his benefit. Another reason is that every one who gets a chance to shoot one does so.

His flight is remarkably powerful, easy, graceful and noiseless, enabling him to pounce upon many an unsuspecting partridge, rabbit, or other game. I once had an opportunity to observe how enormously powerful his grip is. I was walking along the edge of a swamp when an owl of this species pounced upon a large weasel directly in front of me.

The animals struggles were of a most violent nature. He bit, clawed, sprang into the air, and then rolled upon the ground trying to rid himself of his feathered antagonist but in vain. At last I capped the climax by riddling both with duck shot.

This owl usually chooses those species of feathered or furred creatures which man has acknowledged to be fit for the table. One night I shot at and wing-tipped a large male which I brought home and kept for a pet for some time.

As his wing was broken and he could not fly I turned him loose in the yard. The cat tried to make his acquaintance, but after losing part of his ear and a good

deal of hair and hide, he gave him a wide berth as indeed all the others soon learned to do.

Although I fed him regularly he never became the least bit tame and at my approach gave evidence of his displeasure by a hiss and snap of the bill. After the lapse of three months he suddenly disappeared and I never saw him again.

In the latter part of last March while passing through some timber a friend expressed a wish to see the nest of a Red-shouldered Hawk. Fortunately I knew one in the vicinity and took him to it.

As we neared the place a Great Horned Owl left the nest and disappeared in the tamaracs. Upon climbing I found it to contain two eggs which were thinly dotted with black spots.

ÆPYORNIS' EGGS.

(Christian at Work.)

The largest birds' eggs in existence are found in the island of Madagascar, belonging to an extinct species known among the naturalists as the æpyornis, or the tall bird. An egg of the æpyornis was offered to the Museum of Natural History in Central Park, a few years ago, which had a holding capacity of two gallons, and equaled in bulk one hundred and fifty hens' eggs. The

Talker has seen a plaster cast of this monster egg at the museum.

The discovery of these eggs was made by a sea captain who stopped at a port in the southern part of Madagascar to trade with the natives. * * * * The price of the original egg offered to the museum was three hundred dollars. At that rate a dozen eggs for breakfast would be rather expensive eating.

Note—The true dimensions of an egg of *Æpyornis maximus* are the following: major axis $12\frac{1}{4}$ inches, minor axis $9\frac{2}{3}$ inches, weight avordupois 3 lbs. 11 oz.—Editor.

—NOTES.—

We have not received enough subscribers from competitors in the subscription contest to warrant us in awarding premiums and we therefore intend to extend the time to June 1st. Friends, exert yourselves, help us enlarge the Loon.

We learn that Messrs Menefee & Corless, San Jose, Cala., intend shortly to issue a New Oologists and Ornithologists Directory. This is just what our collectors need. Judging by the zeal displayed in compiling it, it will be the largest and best ever published. They insert names free.

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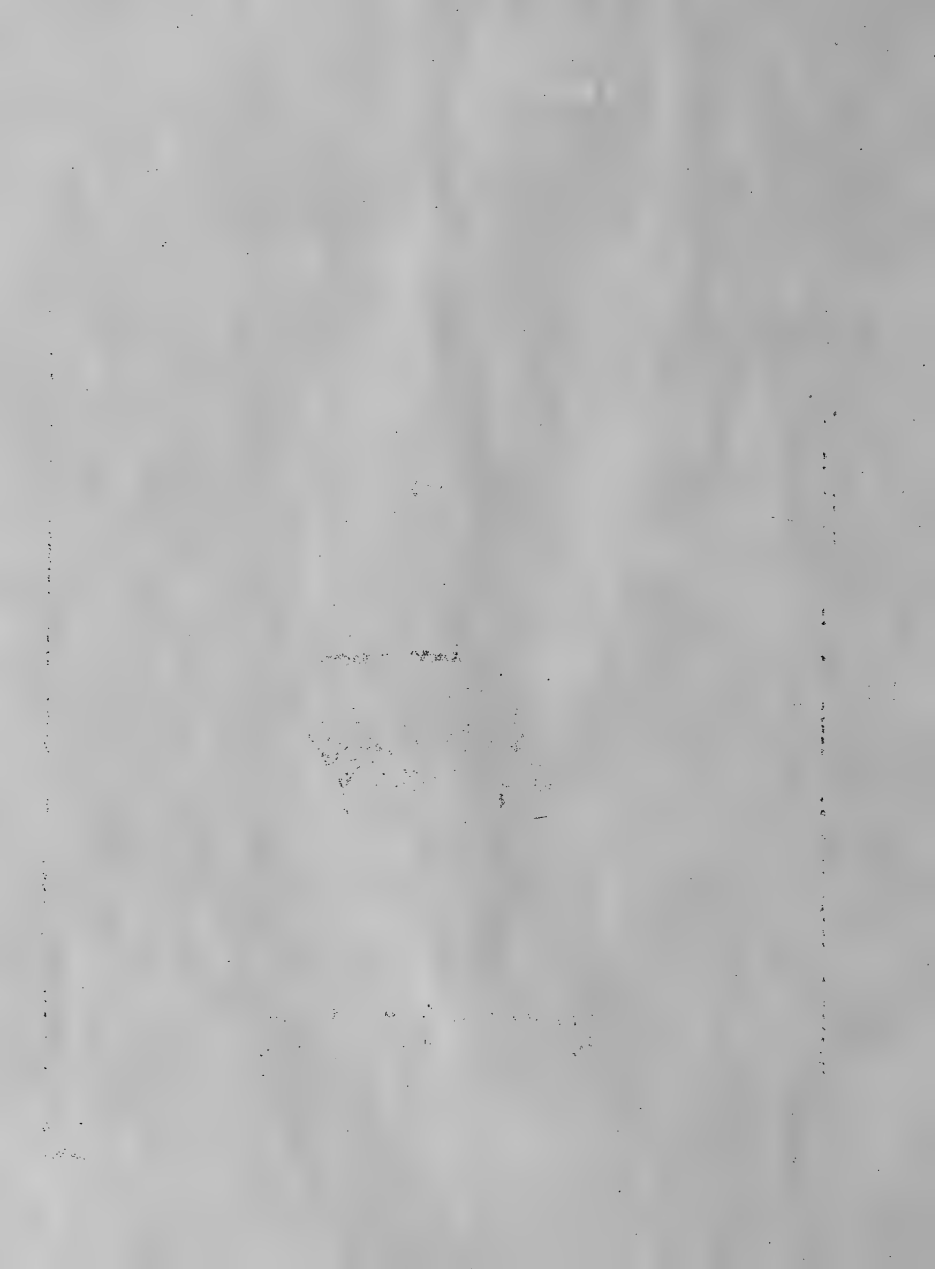
WANTED—Eggs in exchange for the LOON. Will give the LOON one year for eggs to the amount of \$1.35 (Luttin's Hand Book). Address the Publisher.



“You say you would die for me?”

“Yes,” he said, earnestly.

“That’s just like you men, to slide out of it and leave me with an undertakers bill on my hands. James M. Brindlehow, you do not care a cent for me.”—*Tid-Bits.*



Vol. 1.

MAY, 1889.

No. 5.



Published by Thad. Surber,
White Sulphur Springs, W. Va.

- Contents for May 1889. -

The Whippoorwill,	William H. Hayne.
The Brown Thrush,	Commercial Gazette.
Common Crow,	"Anser."
Ages attained by Birds,	R—s.
Publications Received.	



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-THE LOON.-

Vol. 1.

MAY, 1889.

No. 5.

THE WHIPPOORWILL.

THE old moon confined in a cloud
Withholds her beams from vale and hill,
While through the sultry silence comes
The quaint song of the whippoorwill.

In leaf-bound quietude he sings,
And does not crave the boon of light,
Save those small lamps the fireflies bear,
Winged nomads of the summer night!

William H. Hayne.



The BROWN THRUSH.

JOHN E. DOUGLASS, JR.

The brown thrush, by common consent, is the favorite song bird of our North. He arrives about the 10th of April, a little earlier or later as the season is retarded or advanced; but when the lilacs are in bloom he is in full

song. To-day all is silence, save the chirping of the inferior singers, but tomorrow his joyous notes will burst upon you like an unexpected pleasure. All through the fragrant season of buds and blossoms is heard his sweet madrigal that awakens the tender lyric chords of the human heart.

The brown thrush is not the bird to live in obscurity. You can not pass through the country in the early morning of blooming spring without having your ear charmed with the rich notes, which, with such a nicety of modulation, fall from, you know not where.

The eye wanders in search of him from tree to tree, till at last, upon the very topmost bough, he is seen gently swaying in the morning breeze, with the rise and fall of his song. In size he is somewhat larger than the familiar robin, but of a more slender and elegant form.

The back and wings are of a rich tawny russet, and the breast and sides are light, spotted with dark brown.

Decked in his rather sober suit, he leads you to think he is of a prosaic turn, while, in truth, his nature is the most poetic.

Though he is inclined to be friendly, there is a cautious dignity about him that demands respect. Upon your too near approach he watches you with his beautiful yellow eye, with an expression of half curiosity, half distrust; and, at last, when compelled to seek safety in flight, it is with a dropping, fluttering motion. Unlike his Euro-

pean cousin, the storm-cock, whose song is loudest when the snow blows fiercest, he leaves his Northern home ere the frost has chilled the air, to spend the coming winter in the genial South.

When the season for his Northern migration arrives it is amusing to watch his curious flight. Along the banks of streams from bush to bush, across logs and where the underbrush is the thickest he steals cautiously along like a scout in the enemy's country. Now he is silent and shy, his only note that of alarm, is a quick, sharp chirp, but when in company with his mate he has reached his breeding ground his whole aspect is changed as if by magic. He is no longer a timid skulking traveler, but a bold rollicking lover perfectly at home, and conscious of his power to please. In his song he is to the North what the mocking-bird is to the South. Possessing an accurate and varied range of imitation his notes sweet and clear only suffer by comparison with the far-famed Southern bird's.

The brown thrush, or French mocking-bird, as he is sometimes called, has not a little eccentricity and conceit. He seems to prefer the prominent trees near the house or public highway, where he can be heard and seen; and there perched upon the topmost bough his rich rhapsody is poured forth with untiring ecstasy.

When the dusky scenery of the night is shifted and the purple curtain of the dawn is raised, he is the grand

leader of the feathered orchestra. Over and over he repeats the notes of the different birds; as if to teach that expression and arrangement is the key to melody.

At the height of his tuneful revelry his vain dignity is relaxed, and he sits with tail adroop and his head thrown back, the very soul of song. Then, as the heated hours approach, he leaves his exposed and lofty bough and seeks the shady seclusion of the thicket to feed and rest during the day. He is insectivorous in his diet; the friend of man and the forest; charming the former, protecting the latter. His hours of usefulness and pleasure are nicely balanced, so that when evening draws nigh again he mounts his favorite branch and continues his delightful performance which only ceases with the setting sun.

But the romance of his honeymoon is soon over and he settles down with a royal will to the bitter and sweet of matrimony.

The building of the nest is a most important care; the chosen site is a matted brush-heap, stump, leafy bush or tree and even on the ground, when early in the season the leaves are scant and unconcealing. Here and there he searches for material with the nicety of the architect's artificer; leaves and small twigs are loosely interlaced and the nest is lined with bark fibers, rootlets, and the softer leaves. The nest once finished the imposing task of raising the brood commences.

The eggs are from a white to a light-blue color, thickly spotted with reddish brown, and usually four in number, though sometimes the fifth is deposited. When everything has caught the busy bustle of advancing spring the poor female is compelled to remain an anxious but not an idle spectator. During the tedious days when time hangs heavy the male bird cheers her hope courage with his mellow song. Not far off upon a flaunting bough his two-fold mission is to please and guard. Let but an enemy now approach, and he darts upon him like a very fiend and with a bravery that among the birds is unexcelled. At length as the days roll by suddenly there is a great commotion and splutter in the nest, and four gaping, greedy mouths are never satisfied. The distracted mother sets off on long and weary forages, full of anxiety for that unguarded home which the ill-reputed jay may plunder.

The male bird also supplies the family board; perhaps awkwardly enough at first, but he soon drifts in that steady routine that reminds one of the once jolly young bachelor now hampered with the matrimonial knot and trudging with his market basket home.

What a gulf between the poetic and the realistic! The thrush no longer pipes his merry notes: poor fellow! Where before he sang, he must now "dance to another tune." At last the young birds leave the nest, and he seeks a long vacation amid the haunts of his poetic days.

Little he cares to wait for the gipsy landscape of our Indian summer; and when September is at hand he wings his southern flight, only to return with the lilacs of the spring, to a life of usefulness, of song and devotion.—
Cin'ti Commercial Gazette.

—o—

COMMON CROW.

BY "ANSER."

There are no birds found here in greater abundance than our common crow (*C. frugivorous*), and probably none of our residents have more enemies. Farmers and the smaller species of birds seem to vie with each other in their dislike for this bird. He is a cowardly bird too. I've seen him chased by a pair of *V. gilva*, on coming too near their nest, and they were making him leave that vicinity in a hurry.

His especial delight is robbing nests of the smaller birds and in this respect resembles some oologists of my acquaintance who rob all the nests they can find. But, are those who rob nests in this manner oologists? Large numbers gather at a common roosting place in January and February, which is generally in a thicket of white pines near some swamp. I once visited, accompanied by some friends, a place of this kind where probably 2000 crows were gathered from miles around. But I will not

weary you with an account of this visit, suffice it to say, I will never visit another crow roost.

In West Virginia they begin building about the last of March and the nests are ready for the reception of eggs about the first week in April. The nests are quite easy to find on account of the noisy habits of the birds, specially the male. He will follow the female about while she is building her nest and keep up a continual caw.

The nest, which is quite bulky, is composed of sticks, twigs, moss and dried grass, lined with horse and cow hair, fine black rootlets, grape-vine bark and dried grass. It is generally placed in an evergreen tree. I have found nests at a height of 80 feet from the ground and in one instance found a nest in a crab-apple bush 8 feet from the ground, but the average height is about 20 ft.

The eggs, four to six in number, are light green thickly spotted and blotched with dark brown, but great variations exist in both ground color and markings; the average size is 1.15x1.75. An egg in my collection measures 1.25x2.05.

Have any collectors ever found "warbles" in crows? Last spring (1888) I took 4 young crows, which were nearly ready to fly, and in the wings and around the heads of each one found worms which exactly resemble those found in gray squirrels in fall and spring. Didn't have an opportunity to examine any except these four, but shall watch closely this spring. Shall be pleased to

hear from collectors regarding this.

—o—

Ages attained by Birds.

The following are said to be the ages attained by the birds named, given in years:—Blackbird 12, Canary 24, Crane 24, Crow 100, Eagle 100, Common Fowl 10, Goldfinch 15, Goose 50, Heron 60, Lark 18, Linnet 23, Loon 80(?), Nightingale 18, Parrot 60, Partridge 15, Peacock 24, Pelican 50, Pigeon 20, Raven 100, Robin 12, Skylark 31, Sparrow Hawk 40, Swan 100, Thrush 10, Wren 3.—R—s.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

The CURLEW, Vol. I No. VI., March 1889, published by O. F. Hauger & Co., Orleans, Ind., for the Y. O. A. Thanks. Editors and publishers we wish you success.

The OLD CURIOSITY SHOP, published by C. R. Orcutt, San Diego, Cal., E. M. Haight, Editor, is an interesting monthly journal devoted to N. History, Numismatics, Antiquities etc.

* * **THE HAWKEYE O. & O.** * *

E. B. WEBSTER, Editor and Publisher.

The Leading Ornithological Journal of the Central and
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Commenced Vol. 2 January 1st. 1889; 12 pages, monthly
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150, 161, 168, 172, 193a, 204, 210, 234, 235, 257, 260,
263, 335, 354, 357, 369, 397, 405, 408, any of the Fal-
conidae except Red-tail, Marsh and Sparrow Hawks, 469, -
any of the Herons except Green, 500, 503 579, 580-86,
686, 687, 690, 736 and any of the Loons and Auks.

First class sets and singles to exchange. Send lists
and receive mine.

Thad. Surber, WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, W. VA.

1910

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Vol. 1.

JUNE, 1889.

No. 6.

THE LOON.

—CONTENTS.—

A Woodland Reverie,
Notes from Michigan,
A Day with the Birds,
Notes.

E. B. Webster.
Walter Wood.
J. Claire Wood.

DEVOTED TO
ORNITHOLOGY
AND
OOLOGY.

THAD. SURBER,

Editor.

Published Monthly.

—50 cents per annum.—

WHITE SUL. SPRINGS, W. VA.:

LOON PRESS,

1889

-THE LOON.-

Vol. 1.

JUNE, 1889.

No. 6.

A WOODLAND REVERIE.

BY E. B. WEBSTER.

The habits of the majority of our birds are extremely interesting when studied aright. If we would see them, not as preserved mummies in our cabinets and museums, but as tenants of the air, possessing life and freedom, we must wander away from the noise of busy city life to the woods and fields, where the voice of nature alone is heard. Here we shall see the birds in all their freshness and beauty, and as we seek the shade of a cluster of vine covered oaks, reposing on a mossy bank, with the smoke lazily curling up from our comforting cigar, we may observe their varied habits and modes of life.

Across the meadows before us, on yonder hill, we may, if it be early eventide, catch faint echoes of the booming of the pinnated grouse, while to our right and rear his near cousin is loudly drumming defiance to all his former rivals. The noisy chatter of a troupe of charming little chickadees directs our attention upwards and we notice, through the interstices of the sparse foliage,

two or three dark looking objects apparently like crows, which seem to float mere specks in the already reddening sky. They sail in easy circles, with hardly any apparent effort, sometimes mounting high in the air and again dashing off with considerable velocity. These are the Turkey Buzzards, as awkward, unsightly and inanimate a bird when on the ground as one could imagine, and when we see one gorging himself with putrid flesh from the carcass of some horse or ox we feel completely disgusted, and wonder how they can be such graceful birds when on the wing.

And yet they are the most useful birds we have. Their senses of smell and sight are most wonderfully acute, and should one sight a carcass his spiral descension is always observed by another, far away, and his by another, until a large number gather to the repast, and that too, frequently, where but one or two tiny specks could have been seen in the air a few hours before. 'Tis said that at the Crimean war, the whole race from the Caucasus and Asia Minor collected to enjoy the abundance. The Arabs even stated that they left Northern Africa, gathering from the Atlas.

But we cease our reflections on the birds of other climes and return to our pleasant couch in the grove. We notice the soft and not unmusical voice of the Pewee and wonder the modest little bird has built its nest, for

though the trees are hardly leaved, the Pewee has repaired its old nest or built anew, in its favorite summer resort. The Swallows twitter gaily as they sail over the meadows and the Winter Wren hops unconcernedly through the dead brush to our right. As we turn our head to more carefully observe him we notice a chipping sparrow, minus the head, impaled on the broken limb of a plum tree near by and know that the Shrike has perhaps laid by a meal. A handsome and showy bird alights in the tree above and announces himself with a loud "chee-ah" as the Flicker; but catching sight of us, in a moment he is gone. Aroused at last from our reverie we retrace our steps homeward, our thoughts elevated by the contemplation of these objects to him, who,

With consummate skill devised the plan
That creation's every voice should whisper
Words of peace, and joy, and hope to man.

NOTES FROM MICHIGAN.

BY WALTER WOOD.

Thinking that a few extracts from my note book would be interesting to the readers of THE LOON I send the following:

1887, March 18th.—Visited five last year Blue-birds' nests. At one of these I noticed a Blue-bird tugging at

a dark object which seemed fixed in the entrance. After working a few minutes she gave it up and flew to a neighboring tree. Stepping forward I found the hole plugged with a rotten apple which I at once removed. Saw three pair of Red-shouldered Hawks sailing in graceful curves over the city gradually working their way north-east.

March 28th.—Saw four Marsh Hawks and two Shrikes. The latter species seemed to know the exact range of gunshot and after chasing them once or twice around a field I gave up. Crows are pairing and will soon commence building their nests.

April 8th.—Started on my first trip for eggs and was rewarded, after a long tramp, with four fresh eggs of the Am. Crow and 3 young of *Buteo lineatus*.

April 9th.—Found two hawks' and a few crows' nests in different stages of completion. My brother found one fresh egg of the Red-shouldered Hawk in a nest which was robbed last year.

April 14th.—Took a walk to a piece of woods across the river. The most important finds were two nests of the Crow with the old birds sitting on them, and a nest of the Red-shouldered Hawk containing one egg. As the former were in high trees, and not having my climbers with me, I did not attempt to climb to them.

May 12th.—Set of six eggs of Am. Sparrow Hawk. They were laid at bottom of cavity of flickers hole.

June 13th.—Today is hot and sultry. Saw several Goldfinches and a few Swallows sitting on the telegraph wires. On the corner of a certain orchard there stands an old apple tree. The top has blown over and the partly decayed trunk is covered with rows of small holes, the work of various woodpeckers. Last year a Yellow-bellied Woodpecker drilled a hole about four feet from its base but unfortunately before her home was completed she was killed. The cavity has this season been occupied by a pair of Blue-birds, and today I secured their five fresh eggs.

October 4th.—I was watching a flock of crows feeding in a field when a large hawk dropped from the spotless sky and lit on the dead top of a huge cottonwood tree. The sentinel gave a cry of alarm and in an instant the whole flock arose with a tremendous “cawing” and surrounded the bird of prey. Occasionally one would poise in the air over him then suddenly shoot downward whizzing past in close proximity with his head, but his hawkship regarded these feigned attacks with contempt and would, I have no doubt, remained there for some time, for he had already commenced “pluming” his feathers, had I not approached too near for his comfort. When I was within 50 feet of the tree he spread his strong pinions and flapped lazily away with the crows strung out in his wake and soon both he and his tormentors disappeared

in a neighboring woods.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A DAY WITH THE BIRDS.

BY J. CLAIRE WOOD.

On the 10th. of March 1887 I wandered into the woods with note book and shot gun to spend the day among the birds and secure a few specimens for a friend.

The part of the woods I first entered was high and covered mostly with beech trees. No bird-life was to be seen except a Downy Woodpecker busily engaged in drilling a hole in a knotted limb and a single black Snow-bird. As I descended to the lower ground however I found myself among bluebirds and many other early arrivals. I approached the trunk of a rough bark elm where two Nuthatches were feeding and stood within arms length of them without their even noticing me.

Brown Creepers peered anxiously around the trees, and occasionally I passed a flock of Chickadees. These tiny specimens of the feathered creation often meet with a very warm reception from the fowling piece of the boy sportsman. I emerged into a field covered with small clumps of berry bushes and was skirting around the edge of it, for my boots were leaky and I was desirous of avoiding the water, when a large Hawk left the trees a-

head; I shot at him but he was too far away. I pushed my way into the timber and up a hill. As I reached the top I saw a flock of cowbirds leave the ground a little lower down and descending secured three of them.

Soon a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker swept by and lit on a tree but instantly seeing me retired around the trunk, leaving only his head exposed to view, at this I fired and down he came whirling around as only a bird shot in the head can. I hastened and picked him up before he, in his struggles, could soil his plumage with the blood from the wound. About 150 yards from this place I came out on a road and crossing it found the ground higher and covered with large trees. There was little or no undergrowth and I could see for a considerable distance ahead. Birds however were scarce. Found a stream of ice cold water and in attempting to cross it on a decayed log went in and got both feet wet. I soon struck a road used by lumbermen while carrying logs from the woods. This led me through a number of clearings and finally out of the woods and into a piece of low ground surrounded on three sides by tamarack and other swamp loving trees, while the fourth side was a marsh of reeds through which a road had been made. The place smelt strongly of skunk and I kept a sharp look-out in the hopes of seeing one. I had walked a long ways and was tired so climbing to the top of a fence, sat down to rest.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

NOTES.

Special offer.—In order to increase the LOON subscription list as much as possible during the next two months we have decided to send it for the balance of 1889, beginning with July No., for the low sum of 15c. This offer will hold good until Aug. 1st. ONLY. Persons who desire to send Eggs in payment can secure this offer by sending eggs to the amount of 50c., Lattin's Hand Book rates. Please remember, Exchanges and Wants are inserted *free*.

"*Preservative Taxidermy, with chapters on making skins and skeletons,*" 20pp. and cover. This is the title of a new work written by E. B. WEBSTER, Editor H. O. & O. We can not speak too highly of this work. Mr. Webster has presented the preservative method in a clear concise form that may be readily understood by the inexperienced at one reading. He teaches us a new and easy method of preserving birds for our cabinets and museums. A copy of this work should be in the hands of every naturalist in America. The price is 50c. Our thanks are due for a copy.

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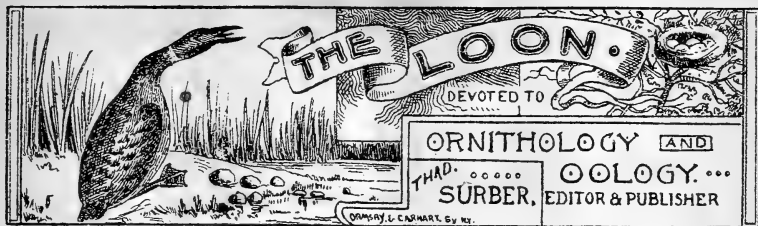
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Vol. 1.

JULY 1889.

No. 7.

BLACKBIRDS AND MIGRATION.

BY S. A. BALL.

An observation of the Grackles and Blackbirds when engaged in singing, induces the belief that music is an art for which they have no natural taste, but which they cultivate rather assiduously in order to be in the fashion. Their creaking notes and the apparent difficulty the bird experiences in getting them out makes one long to get hold of them and give the larynx of each a good oiling.

The extreme mildness of the past winter ('88-'89) has allowed *Quiscalus* to hang around here in South-west Missouri, in company with blackbirds, through nearly the whole season—a thing that is not common with him. They stayed all through the fall and on Jan. 19th. while I was on the creek, I happened on a mingled flock of thirty or forty birds who were chinking notes together very comfortably, tho' they presently flew off southwest.

They were moving before a storm; the next day we had a norther that cleared the woods and prairies of most migratory species, and I did not see Blackbirds again until Feb. 15th., when they begun their northward journey, going over first by ones and twos then gradually increasing in numbers till they came by hundreds, and dwindling down again to scudding flocks of less than a dozen. Yesterday (May 6th.) there were still some of the Rusties passing through.

¶ In watching the migration of birds from year to year, every observer must have been struck like myself by the alternately increasing and decreasing numbers of certain of our common kinds as from season to season they pass through his district.

Take for instance, the Robin, the Bobolink and the Dove (Carolina). In the spring of 1884 the Carolina Doves went through here in enormous numbers; swooping down in great flocks to fall a prey by hundreds to the gunners. No succeeding spring has seen such an influx of these birds.

In 1885 the Robins swarmed through on their way north until one was fain to believe they were quartined on all other routes. This year they have come over in comparatively small numbers and passed through quickly. As for the Bobolinks, there has been a steady decrease for years in their numbers until now they pass

over with a clash of merry music, in small squadrons only, scarcely alighting at all.

Every observer, I imagine, can furnish similar records, can tell of years when this or that bird was especially numerous, and some other species unusually scarce. It seems to me the problem of these varying numbers offers an interesting study to observers. It is not likely the birds are governed by mere caprice in their choice of lines of travel and why should they alternately favor and shun certain routes?

I account for the falling off of the Bobolinks by the fact that the wild lands here, which formerly constituted their feeding grounds, have been gradually brought under cultivation and so he has been obliged to change off. Again, the long loitering and unusual numbers of the Blackbirds in this section during their migration for this season, may be explained by the mildness of the winter and the heavy spring rains which have brought the worms and insects to the surface of the ground. But on the other hand, the Robin, which is also a ground feeder, has hustled through on double-quick this year.

NOTES AND NEWS.

The Summer Yellowbird.—This little warbler arrives

here (Cutchogue, N. Y.) about the first of May. In a few weeks their nests are completed and taken possession of. The eggs, usually four in number, are a very light blue, splashed, dotted and marked with brown, lilac and black, usually forming a pretty wreath around the larger end. Their size differs. The nest is usually placed in an apple, pear or shade tree. The height varies from 10 to 30 ft. It is a neat affair composed of grass, hempen fibers, feathers and horse-hair. This bird sometimes lays two or three sets in a season. The Cowbird sometimes selects this little nest as a receptacle for its eggs. J. S. GRIFFING.

Eggs of the Blue-winged Yellow Warbler, *H. pinus* (LINN.) BAIRD.—Not long since I secured from a collector in Indiana a set of eggs of *H. pinus*. Thinking a description of the nest and eggs would interest the readers of the LOON I shall attempt to describe them.

The nest was found on the ground in a bunch of weeds and was composed of leaves and bark, lined with fine grasses and rootlets. Being large and bulky it was, in shape, not unlike an old-fashioned churn, that is, larger at the bottom than at the top. The eggs, four in number, are white, with a few small reddish and light dirty-brownish spots and blotches scattered over the entire egg but more thickly at the larger end. They give the following measurements: .63x.41, .65x.47, .65x.46 and

.67x.49. They were collected in DE KALB Co., Indiana
May 21st., 1889. T. S.

A LETTER

From a Boston Taxidermist.

Editor of the Loon:—Two copies of your magazine having wafted this way I cannot restrain the impulse to drop you a line. Why you should have selected the name you have is I presume one of those things that no fellow can find out? Nevertheless you might have looked further and have done worse. Those who have rested by the side of the placid waters of our Lakes, or have watched the rise and fall of the tide-waters of our Coast, becoming oblivious to all but the silvery light of Nights Queen, as it dances on the waters, and have been suddenly aroused by the loud weird cry of the Loon, can perhaps guess at the inspiration. In looking into my cabinets I find no skin demands more room than the Loon; as I glance over the sets of eggs my attention is arrested by the large, rich brown ones marked "Loon." I can scarcely find a shelf in my place that will hold that large beautiful bird stuffed, with its green-black velvety head and neck stretched to its utmost, its wings extended, showing those exquisitely marked under coverts, in

the act of raising, marked the "Loon," and I know of no bird that requires more skill to preserve it properly. I have many Loons sent to me that are taken in the weirs. Swimming into them they become entangled and fall an easy prey to the fisherman. A few years since one dropped into a small pond in my native city. It was a signal for all the boys to collect on its banks. Locating in the middle, a good rifle shot distance from shore, it stood a fusilade from all the old firelocks for several days till finally it succumbed the verdict being "By accident." As I write several sets, all two in number, varying in shades and markings, but with general appearance too well known to require description, I find measure as follows:

FROM LAKE WINNIPISEOGEE, N. H.

Set one.*	Taken June 13 88.	3.72x2.30	3.50x2.27
two,	May 31 86.	3.78x2.27	3.41x2.25

FROM GOODRICH, MICH.

Set ten.	Taken June 25 85.	3.66x2.26	3.57x2.27
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FROM LAKE SEBAGO ME.

Set eleven.	Taken June 18 85.	3.52x2.40	3.69x2.36
twelve.	18 85.	3.62x2.31	3.58x2.31

But excuse me, my impulse was to wish you a fraternal success merely.

June 15th. 89.

Boston Taxidermist.

* Sets three to nine omitted on account of printer running short of figures.—Ed.

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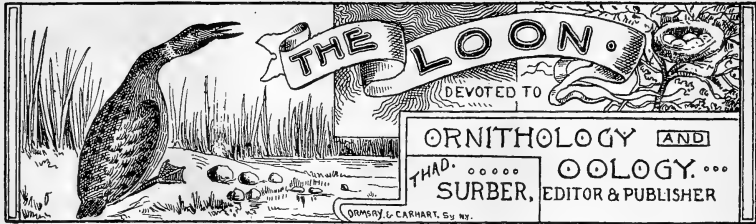


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VOL. I.

AUGUST, 1889.

No. 8.

Written for the Loon.

Nesting of the Black-Throated Blue Warbler.

This species (the "Dendroica Carulescens") is, perhaps, during the summer season generally distributed through the dry, hard-wood timbered tracts of Ontario, but from the facts that it does not arrive here till the trees are a sunning their summer foliage, and the bird itself generally keeps pretty high among the branches of the wild woods where it makes its summer home, and there being but few in the rural districts who make study of Ornithology a recreation, this species, its nest and eggs are but little known. Yet a few descriptions of its nidifications have appeared in some Ornithological magazines. I first became certain of the identity of this bird in certain woods in this locality some four or five years ago, and now, year after year, I expect its arrival at the same time as the Wood Fly-Catchers and the Vireos, but I had no knowledge of its nesting habits until three years ago, when I discovered two of its nests. Some account of these have been published in the pages of the "Ornithologist and Oologist." Another nest, which I found and collected the present season, I will now at-

tempt to describe. On the 24th of May I was out on a nest-hunting ramble in the same woods where I had found the nests of this species above alluded to. The trees and underwood were beginning to assume their summer foliage, and the pleasing melodies of many species of our woodland birds—especially that of the Wood Thrush—were heard on every side.—Close attention required to be paid in order to discover a nest at a few yards distance, but I had not advanced far into this particular wood when a somewhat bulky nest, placed in the forks of a small hemlock, attracted my observation. At first, I thought it was the nest of some warbler—new to me—but a closer examination of the form and structure of the nest itself, and the one egg it contained, led me to conclude that it belonged to the Black-throated Blue Warbler, (“*Dendraca Cærulescens*,”) some of whom were singing in the branches overhead. This nest was much more bulky than the others I had seen. The foundation was composed of dry leaves, and on this was placed a neat and firmly-felted structure, mostly composed of fine strips of a certain kind of wood-bark with a little rootlets and hair. Expecting that the full set of eggs would be deposited by the 27th I returned on that date, and, as I approached the nest, I saw the bird seated upon it, and this she did not leave till I was very close and fully identified her. I was, however, disappointed in not getting a good full set of eggs, as there were but two of the bird’s own eggs and a cow bird’s in the nest. These I took with the nest, and they are now, with those of a number of other rare warblers, in my collection.

As on a former occasion, I noticed that this species, on leaving the nest, did not fly straight out or upwards, but down toward

and along the ground, as if thereby trying to draw the intruder after her. The site of this nest was about eighteen inches off the ground, the color of the eggs is clear white, dotted, especially towards the large end, with spots of a brownish-like hue.

WM. L. KELLS.

Listowell, Ontario.



Written for the Loon.

Nesting of the Swamp-Sparrow.

BY W. L. KELLS.

This species (the "Melospiza Georgiana") is the rarest of the sparrow genus that makes its Summer home in this vicinity, and only in low, swampy places where there is low brushwood, or tall grasses, or an intermingling of both, is it to be found at all; and there only is it likely to be distinguished by the few, who, making Ornithology a special study, have a keen appreciation of the senses of sight and sound. This is accounted for from the facts of the peculiar places that it frequents, which are generally covered with water in the spring season, before the leaves come out, and that the bird seeks concealment as soon as it is disturbed by the approach of human kind, that even at a short distance it has a close resemblance to the Song-Sparrow, ("Melospiza Fasciata,") and that its song, generally emitted from the top of some low bush or stalk of grass, is so like those of the slate-colored Junco ("Junco Hyemalis") and Chipping-Sparrow ("Spizella Socialis") that it requires more than ordinary observations of the rural farmer or sportsman to distinguish it. Some ten years ago I first dis-

tinguished this species from the other swamp-frequenting sparrows, but only some three years ago did I become certain of its identity, and not until the present season did I secure a good full set of its eggs. The first nest that I saw, when I first distinguished the bird, was placed on the ground among some swamp grass and low willows, near the brink of a small creek, in a swampy place. It was formed almost wholly of fine, dry grass, and contained two eggs. About these there was nothing specially remarkable, and I would have passed them by without further notice if the sharp "chip"-like notes of the bird, which had flushed off among the bushes, had not arrested my attention. Then on a closer view of the plumage and actions of the bird I saw that she was a different species to either the White-throated or Song Sparrows, the only other species of this genus that I had previously known to frequent such situations. Occasionally since then I have seen specimens of this species, but they always darted into concealment as soon as they became aware that they were being observed.— However, since I have learned to distinguish its song, I note that, though not abundant, yet that some pairs of them generally frequent most of the low, wet places, where a second growth of brush-wood has succeeded the original forest. Last season the sharp notes of a pair of these birds, in a piece of low ground on "Wildwood," caused me to look for the nest. I found it placed in some fallen brush, which kept it out of the water, but gave it little shelter from above. This contained two young, a few days old, and two addled eggs. On the 3rd of June of the present season I discovered in a piece of swamp, placed in a tuft of beaver meadow grass, a nest containing two eggs which I thought belonged to this species,

but the resemblance between it and that of a Song Sparrow was so close that it would be difficult, without seeing the birds, to identify it. Three days afterwards I re-visited the spot and found the owner seated on the nest. In leaving it she did not fly out directly, but acted much in the same manner as a Water Thrush, by jumping down into the shallow water and skulking off among the grasses, and then, when a few rods off, rose to a perch and began her scold, which enabled me to identify her with certainty. I found in the nest a full set of five beautifully-marked eggs, which I collected with as much pleasure as though it belonged to a more rare and valuable species. This nest was composed of pieces of half rotten weeds and coarse grasses, and neatly lined with fine dry grass, quite compact, and warmly put together, and was about a foot above the water, out of which the tuft of grass arose. The eggs, which average about .78x.55, are of a greenish-white hue, variously mottled with reddish brown. This species usually arrives in this vicinity about the 20th of April, and leaves again in September, but its advent and departure vary with the temperature of the seasons. Its food is chiefly the smaller species of such insects as frequent the low, damp places, which, during the summer, are effected by its presence, and also such small, soft berries as grow amid such scenery.

Listowell, Ontario.



My First Hunt in Florida.

BY F. C. BAKER.

One morning, in the early part of January, I arose at an early

hour and prepared to show the "Crackers" what a "Yankee" could do in the way of hunting. Young collectors on their first trip to a new country are a "little" inclined to be conceited, and I was no exception to the rule. I first carefully extracted my bran-new breech-loader from its case and gave it a thorough cleaning and rubbing down. I next fastened around my waist my cartridge belt, with ammunition enough to kill half the birds in Florida, and that same belt was exceedingly heavy—fifty cartridges (brass ones, too,) with extremely heavy loads. I must have had an idea that I was going out to hunt elephants instead of small birds. Well, to make a long story short, I started out upon the ocean trail (a trail leading from the plantation where I was boarding to the ocean) in search of game and specimens.

After walking half way through the trail I was brought to a stand by the sweet notes of a bird concealed somewhere in the trees near at hand. Look as close as I would my eyes were not keen enough to see it. Very soon I heard it, as it seemed, directly over me, and upon looking up into the branches of a tree near at hand, I saw a sight that would make any naturalist jump for joy, for sitting upon a branch and singing for "all he was worth" was a handsome male specimen of the Cardinal or Red-bird ("*Cardinalis cardinalis*."). I quickly gave him a charge of dust, and as he fell to the ground I picked him up.—How beautiful he was with his rich crimson breast and black throat. The Cardinals have a very heavy bill which enables them to eat readily the berries of the palmettos. This bill is a characteristic of the Grosbeak family.

I continued on toward the beach and was softly whistling to myself, and having my mind on anything but my business,

when I saw a shadow cross my path, and, upon looking up, I saw not one but three Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) sailing around in the air. How gracefully they sail, now standing still and again shooting along in long, graceful curves. I determined to secure one of these birds for a specimen, and so, just as one of them was sailing over me, I took a hasty aim at him and fired. "The Buzzard kept on sailing." Again I fired, "he still sailed." By this time I was beginning to get a little "riled," and, quickly ejecting the empty shells, I thrust in two 000 buckshot cartridges. "Now," thinks I, "we will see who's what." As he sailed over me a second time I let him have both barrels, one after the other, but with the same result; he declined to fall. I gave up the idea of shooting buzzards and continued on toward the beach, arriving there in a few moments. The first specimens to greet my eyes were a flock Sanderlings (*Calidris arenaria*) quietly feeding along the shore. In my excitement I wildly fired two barrels at them and had the satisfaction of seeing them all fly up the beach.

I spent the morning and part of the afternoon in hunting, and late in the afternoon I returned to the house, having obtained, with my fifty cartridges, one Cardinal, one Cat-bird, (*Galeoscoptes carolinensis*,") two Mocking-birds, (*Mimus polyglottus*,") and a black-bellied Plover (*Charadrius squatarola*.") Before dark I skinned the Cardinal and Cat-bird.

In the evening we had a call from Bob and Charlie, two "crackers" who have a small plantation to the north of the plantation at which I was stopping. They brought their violins with them and I was agreeably entertained by their music, which was entirely new to me, their style being of a rough

and ready sort, and they knew absolutely nothing about music, but had picked up all they knew. As I had studied music for a number of years I was able to show them some "points," for which they were very grateful.

They had heard about my hunt, and plied me with questions, of which the following are samples:

"What'd yer shoot ter-day?" "Kill any b'ars?" "How about them 'ar buzzards?" "Do you like shootin' sandpepes?" (Sandlings.)

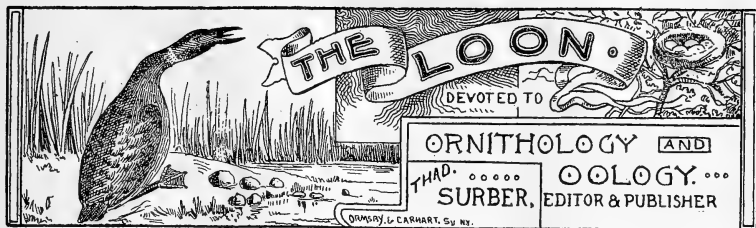
They departed for their homes late in the evening, promising to "take me on a hunt that was worth something" one of these days. I "turned in" that night to dream of shooting Buzzards and Sandpipers, with visions of bears and wild-cats floating through my tired brain.

Notes.

"The Oologists' Exchange," published by Arthur E. Pettit, P. C. Box 2060, New York, at 20 cents per annum, is the paper formerly published by Dickinson & Durkee, Sharon, Wis. Since the paper passed into his hands Mr. Pettit has made many improvements, and it will, no doubt, be a grand success.

We give Mr. W. H. Foote's "Semi-Annual" a hearty welcome. Among the contributors in the January number we notice the names of such men as W. L. Kells, Prof. J. A. Singley, Le Grand T. Meyer, Walter Raine, H. W. Davis and others, who are known all over the United States by their ornithological writings. With such a corps of writers we don't see how he can do otherwise than succeed. We extend our best wishes.

We respectfully request our friends to mention the LOON when answering advertisements.



VOL. I.

SEPTEMBER, 1889.

No. 9.

For the Loon.

“Some Heron Notes.”

Prominent among the various species of herons that inhabit Florida is the Great Blue or Silver Heron, as the “natives” call it. This large heron is found throughout the entire State. I have even noticed them on the outside beach picking up the fish brought in by the surf. But they are most abundant in the shallow bayous and marshes along the coast and in the numerous lakes that dot the interior.

The heron is a very handsome bird, and in the spring is covered with beautiful plumage, and of course is destroyed by “plume” hunters. According to some of these hunters they commence to lay in February, but I have never found any eggs earlier than March. On the coast they build on low mangrove keys, and usually six or more nests are in one herony. The nests are generally made of dry sticks and green mangrove branches—generally a large, inartistic platform slightly hollowed and covered with excrement. In this the bird deposits from two to six greenish-blue eggs,

according to *Davie*. (I have never taken more than four.)—In size they vary much. I have had variations of 50-100 in eggs of the same set. By the latter part of March many of the eggs are hatched. The young birds are only excelled in ugliness by the Pelican's offspring, and when they are three or four weeks old and commence "learning to walk" they are a caricature of a boy taking lessons in stilt-walking. They are very impolite, and on the slightest provocation eject a fish from their mouths—nasty things! The parent birds rear two broods in one season sometimes, but not always. I think they sometimes raise a "Cracker" brood and then go North and raise a lot of "Hoosiers," "Suckers" or "Buckeyes."

Let us hear from those States, and others as well, concerning the breeding habits of this prince (if not king) of birds. I have done my best. Brother oologists, follow suit.

CHAS. L. MCPHERSON.

St. Petersburg, Florida.

For the Loon.

A Trip to Melbourne, Fla.

One bright and sunny morning in the early part of January the proprietor of the plantation where I was stopping, whom we will call Mr. L., another boarder and myself, started for Melbourne, a small town of a few hundred inhabitants situated 12 miles above Micco, the name of the place at which I was stopping, in the sloop *Lida*.

We had a fair wind and everything went on smoothly. The scenery of Indian river is most charming. At one point it will consist of tall, majestic palmettos, at another a dense fringe of mangrove. Upon our way up the river we passed numbers of birds, all of which it was my luck to miss. After a sail of a few hours we arrived at the town and I immediately landed to look around. Melbourne is a thriving little town situated upon the left bank of Indian river, 39 miles from Titusville.—It has a population of about two hundred, and supports two groceries, a postoffice, a drug store, three hotels, two churches, a school, and a weekly paper—the *Indian River News*.

After looking over the town to my entire satisfaction I shouldered my gun and started out to see what I could get in the way of specimens. Near the river I had a snap shot at a great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*,) but missed him. Just in front of where I stood were two crows strutting along the shore just beyond a sand bar, and about thirty yards away. Kneeling down I took a careful aim and succeeded in knocking one of them over very neatly with a charge of No. 6 shot. It proved to be a very fine specimen of the Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*.)—Farther up the river I saw three large American Egrets (*Ardea egretta*,) but could not succeed in getting a shot at them.

About this time I heard a very curious noise to the left of where I stood, and stopping a few moments I discovered the noise to be produced by a flock of black ducks (*Anas fubi-gula*) which were hidden from me by the thick foliage. By the racket they made I should judge that they were holding a political caucus or a camp-meeting. Perhaps they were electing a president or trying a “boodle” alderman. I decided to put a stop to their convention, and so carefully creeping up

to within twenty-five yards of them I poised my gun through a cut in the foliage, took aim at the centre of the flock and fired. With a mighty roaring of wings the whole flock, except two fine specimens which I had stopped, rose up and with outstretched necks flew rapidly away. And now came the tug of war to get my two dead birds. They lay in the centre of a small pond, and that same pond did not look very inviting to a fellow, as far as taking a bath was concerned, and I did not know how many moccasins there might be hidden away in its slimy depths. But, moccasins or not, I must have those ducks, and after considerable debating in my own mind as to whether I should venture in or not I removed my shoes, stockings and pants and boldly stepped in with my heart in my mouth.—Fortune seemed to favor me, and I completed my perilous task successfully and without accident. As I laid the two ducks down upon the bank I could not but admire their beautiful plumage. The Florida duck is a variety of the common black duck (*Anas obscura*.) The back and upper parts are of a beautiful brown, with black dashes. The spectrum of this species is of a beautiful blue-green color, its bill is orange-yellow, and its feet are deep orange in color.

I picked up my birds and resumed my tramp—this time toward the boat, as it was getting late. Presently, just as I was day-dreaming and walking carelessly along, a flock of plover rose up from under my very feet and sailed away out of gunshot. I quickly gathered my scattered senses together and looked around me. Just ahead of me I saw a flock of sanderlings (*Calidris arenaria*,) and laying low I succeeded in tumbling over a pair of very fine specimens, making five for the day so far.

I continued on to the boat and arrived there without mishap, and also without seeing any more birds.

At nine o'clock in the evening we weighed anchor and started for home with the moon shining calmly down upon us and the strange cries of the night birds ringing in our ears.

F. C. BAKER.

Academy of Nat. Sciences,
September, 1889.

For the Loon.

Eggs of *Nyctale Acadica*.

On May 1st, '89, I determined to take a half day off and look for the hawks, so after dinner I started out intending to keep my eyes open (as I always intend to) for anything interesting to an ornithologist or oologist.

After traveling a number of miles and climbing a number of tall pines, all with like result, viz., finding an old nest filled with leaves, very likely the home of *Rubus squirrelus*, I began to think of turning homeward. Passing through an old field I came to a large swamp, and wishing to reach a road on the other side I struck in, becoming more disgusted with "stealing bird eggs" each rod I gained, as the brush and fallen wood were so thick the rabbits that run through them have nothing but stubs left for tails. When well out in the swamp I spied a hole in a dead maple stub about twenty feet up, and thinking there might be a flicker or hairy woodpecker there I made my way out to it and gave it a thump. Ah! something at the hole! not a flicker or flying squirrel, but an owl, and not seeing any ear-tufts I quickly decide it is the Saw-whit or Acadian Owl.

I came up out of my boots right away. I didn't say much, yet as I found an owl's nest before and did not have an egg of this species in my cabinet felt much better than a short time before. Did not dare to trust my weight on the stub, but being a Yankee I was soon within reach of the hole, and using my knife vigorously soon have the pleasure of seeing feathers and an egg. Mrs. Owl is still there. Making the hole larger I put my hand in and receive a very intimate grasp. I take her out, find she is about seven inches long, and can spread her wings eighteen inches. After looking her over closely I release her, when she flies to a pine near by and watches operations.

Taking out four eggs I pack them snugly in my box. The nest is made of feathers on top of chips, and contains part of a field mouse. The cavity is about six inches deep—may have been an old flicker nest, but I hardly think it was. I succeeded in blowing the eggs, though incubation was well advanced. The eggs measure as follows: 1.32x1.05, 1.33x1.04, 1.30x1.03 and 1.25x1.09.

C. W. SWALLOW.

Dustable, Mass.



Editor of the "Loon:"

DEAR SIR: It may interest some of your readers to hear what I saw a short time since. I was sitting on the porch after breakfast, reading, when all of a sudden I heard a noise among the chickens. Thinking it was a hawk I got my gun and ran to the place as fast as possible. When I got there I was much surprised to find that a hen with chickens was being attacked by robins. The chickens were all lying hid in the

grass and the robins were darting down on the hen from the surrounding trees. Their mode of attack was very similar to a blackbird when driving away a crow. There were four or five full-grown robins, but two seemed more active than the rest. I watched them for nearly half an hour and then tried to drive the robins away, but they would only fly a short distance and as soon as my back was turned renew the attack. I examined the surrounding trees to see if I could find a robin's nest, but without success. I finally had to drive the hen away and had some difficulty in finding the young chickens. The place where this attack was made was only a few yards from my chicken coop, and there were several other broods of chickens close at hand, but the robins only fought the one hen.— This hen always ranges about the place where she was attacked, but as far as I know has not been molested by robins either before or since.

I hope some of your readers can throw some light on the subject. I could see neither nest nor young robins, so am at a loss to account for it. Yours, respectfully,

A. MACLEOD.

White Sul. Springs, June 24th.

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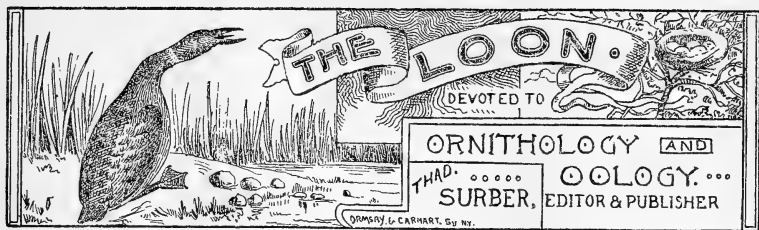
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HAWKEYE O. & O.,
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VOL. I.

OCTOBER, 1889.

No. 10.

For the Loon.

Another Hunt among Florida Birds.

I remember well a certain hunt which I was engaged in, the results of which greatly increased my ornithological collection.

Starting out one morning just before sun-up I wended my way toward the beach and arrived there just as old king Sol was kissing the broad waters of the mighty Atlantic. How extremely beautiful the scene was! The waves were majestically rolling in and the sunbeams were sparkling from wave to wave in a perfect shower of gold. As I stood facing the north to my right lay the ocean, and to my left a large tract of level country covered entirely with a growth of Sow-palmetto (*Chamærops serrulata*.) with here and there a solitary Cabbage Palm (*C. palmetto*.) The soil was composed entirely of sand, and was a magnificent place for the rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*.) Just at the edge of the beach there was a sort of levee running up and down for a distance of five miles, and this levee in some places was covered with a heavy growth of sow palmetto which afforded a very good cover to stalk game.

Well, as I said, I arrived at the beach just as the king of day was rising, and immediately looked out for game. At first I

saw nothing, but after a time a few spicks were seen in the distance. They are gulls (*Sterna maxima*,) and now I ask myself the question, "Will they come near enough for me to get a shot at them?" As nearer they come I crouch down lower and lower, scarcely daring to breathe, my gun resting over the levee with both barrels cocked ready for action. Nearer and nearer they come. Now they are within easy gunshot. Slowly and carefully I raise my gun and glance along the clean brown tubes and pull the triggers of both barrels. Hastily running down I find that I have obtained two very fine specimens of the Royal Tern. As I picked one of them up I could not but notice how handsome it was. Its breast was pure white, wings of a slaty color, and the back of its head was jet black. The bill was orange-yellow and the feet and tarsus were jet black. Picking up my birds I was about to resume my journey, when chancing to look toward the south I saw a curious and (to me) new bird swiftly flying toward me. Hastily shoving in a load of No. 4 shot I awaited developments. The bird kept right on, seeming not to mind me in the least. As it came opposite me I gave it both barrels, one after the other, but to my chagrin I missed both of them. So swiftly did it fly that although it sailed within twenty-five feet of where I stood yet I could not hit it. The bird seemed to belong to the Kite family from the brief sight which I had of him.

Seeing a flock of birds alight in a clump of bushes a short distance inland I pushed my way through the sow palmetto toward them. As I reached the clump the flock of grackles (*Tinscalus quiscula aglaens*,) for such they proved to be, left the bushes and flew rapidly inland, but not before I had succeeded in securing three of them.

I was brought from a reverie into which I had fallen by the

hammering of a woodpecker near at hand. Glancing up I saw a yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Spirapicus varius*) sweep by and alight upon a tree near by, but upon seeing me he retired around the trunk leaving nothing but his head exposed to view. I fired at him and down he came, whirling around as a bird does when shot in the head. I quickly picked him up before he, in his struggles, could soil his plumage with blood from the wound. This was exceedingly good luck, and, as the old saying is, "luck never comes singly," for to cap the climax a Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes vura*) came and lit on a tree not fifty feet away. I carefully crawled forward and shot him—making the sixth bird for me inside of half an hour.

I have, while skinning birds, noticed that no sooner had I commenced than dozens of these ungainly birds would come flocking around within twenty feet of me and watch with greedy eyes the operation. Occasionally I would throw a bit of meat to them, and of all the scrambling and fighting for that piece of meat! Each one would try to swallow the meat before the others, and their large, horny beaks actually clashed together as they struggled for the coveted morsel.

But to proceed. I returned to the shore and continued walking along, when I discovered ahead a flock of sanderlings (*Caladris arenaria*.) I crawled carefully forward and succeeded in obtaining one out of the flock. A little further along I discovered a Black-billed Plover calmly stalking along the shore. This would be a prize worth having if I only could get him. I carefully crawled along behind the levee and upon arriving opposite to him I poked my gun through the interstices of the sow palmetto and fired. Quickly dropping my gun I ran forward and found to my joy that I had shot him stone dead and that there was very little blood upon him. I

now began to think seriously of returning as I had had no breakfast and my inner man was crying out vociferously for "more provinder," so I picked up my birds and began my homeward march. I had gotten half way through the woods when I was startled by a harsh scream which appeared to come directly from under my feet, but upon looking under a tree to the side of the path I found that a red-shouldered Hawk (*Suteo hucatus allini*) had gotten himself caught in one of my traps which I had forgotten until now. I quickly dispatched him and added him to my list.

I continued on and arrived at the house without further mishap. After breakfast—rather late, by the way, 11.45—I proceeded to my skinning tent, completing all of my specimens before dark. While engaged in doing this work I was very much amused to see the small birds flock around my tent. There were cardinals, cat-birds, robins, grackles and warblers. They were so very tame that I could not have the heart to shoot any of them.

In the evening I summed up my day's work, and was very agreeably surprised at the result—2 royal terns, 3 grackles, 1 buzzard, 1 hawk, 1 sanderling and 1 black-billed plover. In all 9 birds.

F. C. BAKER.



Written for the Loon.

Among the Herons.

BY F. H. ANDREWS, Carlinville, Ill.

An article in the September number of THE LOON, entitled "Some Heron Notes," recalls to my mind my first experience with this bird in its haunts. I had chosen, on account of proximity, a swamp of a circular shape and almost inaccessible to the hunter, for our introduction. This swamp is one of a chain of lakes which at some time has been the end of a creek which at that time flowed for some distance almost parallel with the larger stream of which it is a tributary but has since cut thro' the harder formation that first turned it aside into the larger stream some miles above, thus leaving a series of swamps, one of which a company, by building a dam, has transformed into a beautiful lake for pleasure purposes. A few miles below this lake, and the last of the series, lies the swamp out of the reach of molesting pleasure-seekers. Along the south side of the swamp is a narrow lagoon where the timid collector might content himself with the rails and shore birds that seek their food in its miry depths; but far beyond this, through the dense growth of beer-seeds which stand six feet out of the water and mud, and into which one sinks to his hips at every step; beyond this and through the maze of water-lilies and reddish-colored aquatic plants which grow in bunches scattered over an expanse of open shallow water; here is where numerous Egrets and Great Blue Herons make their summer sojourn.

I have described this swamp at length, not that it differs materially from most others—indeed it is many times smaller

than the average of those lakes which stretch along the Illinois river for miles—but because there seems to be an inverse proportion between its size and the difficulties which are augmented by one's not being able to get a boat through it.

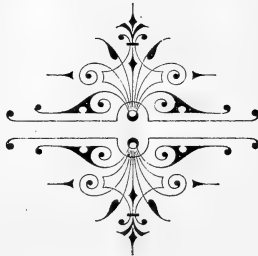
One day in mid-summer a Professor of the Institution I had been attending and myself determined to make a visit to this place. A short ride on the cars and a long walk took us to the haunts of our feathered friends. As we drew near the swamp we saw an Egret (*A. candidissima*) standing on the bank of a muddy stream. This one we shot, and also another which flew over us. When we first reached the swamp another was procured, making three, which was as many as we wanted. Next we looked for birds along the edge, walking around one end and across the other which was uncovered by water. Here were Sandpipers, Green Herons innumerable, and also Coots (*F. Americana*) whose colloquial chatter was heard on every hand but the birds themselves were not seen. As we came across the upper end a very large Water Adder disputed the right of way with us, but an agreement was soon made whereby we gave him a "charge to keep" and passed on. But as we wanted some Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*), we did not consider our mission to the lake fulfilled. So I was detailed to penetrate the interior while my companion perched himself on an eminence whereby he could keep track of me by the motion of the reeds as I made my way through them.—As I made my way along numerous Green Herons flew up before me or looked down from the reed tops high above my head plainly showing their disgust at such means of locomotion, while around on every hand little water moccasins peered at me with an impertinent and unconcerned curiosity, vividly

recalling to my mind scenes from Dante. After I had passed through the reeds and lilies I was obliged to traverse some three or four hundred yards of open water in full view of the Herons to reach a line of rushes which ran near where the birds were feeding. This proved fatal to the success of my efforts as some Least Bitterns (*A. exilis*) and Green Herons flew up and over them and gave the alarm, whereat the Herons gave one look and were gone. Despairing of them I turned my attention to the Least Bitterns but they were not to be found.— Nothing remained for me to do but to get out by the shortest route, which was to continue on to the opposite side. On the way two or three Least Bitterns arose from the reeds, but I did not shoot as it would have entailed a walk of thirty or forty yards out of my way. From the other side I skirted around the edge back to the place at which I had entered.

Here we rested awhile, and as it was getting late we set out for the depot, shooting some Kingfishers on the way. From here the train soon landed us at home.

Since the above occurred I have had more experience and have been more successful in the pursuit of Herons, as the collection will testify. Wishing my new acquaintance, THE LOON, the success it deserves, I remain, etc.,

H. F. A.





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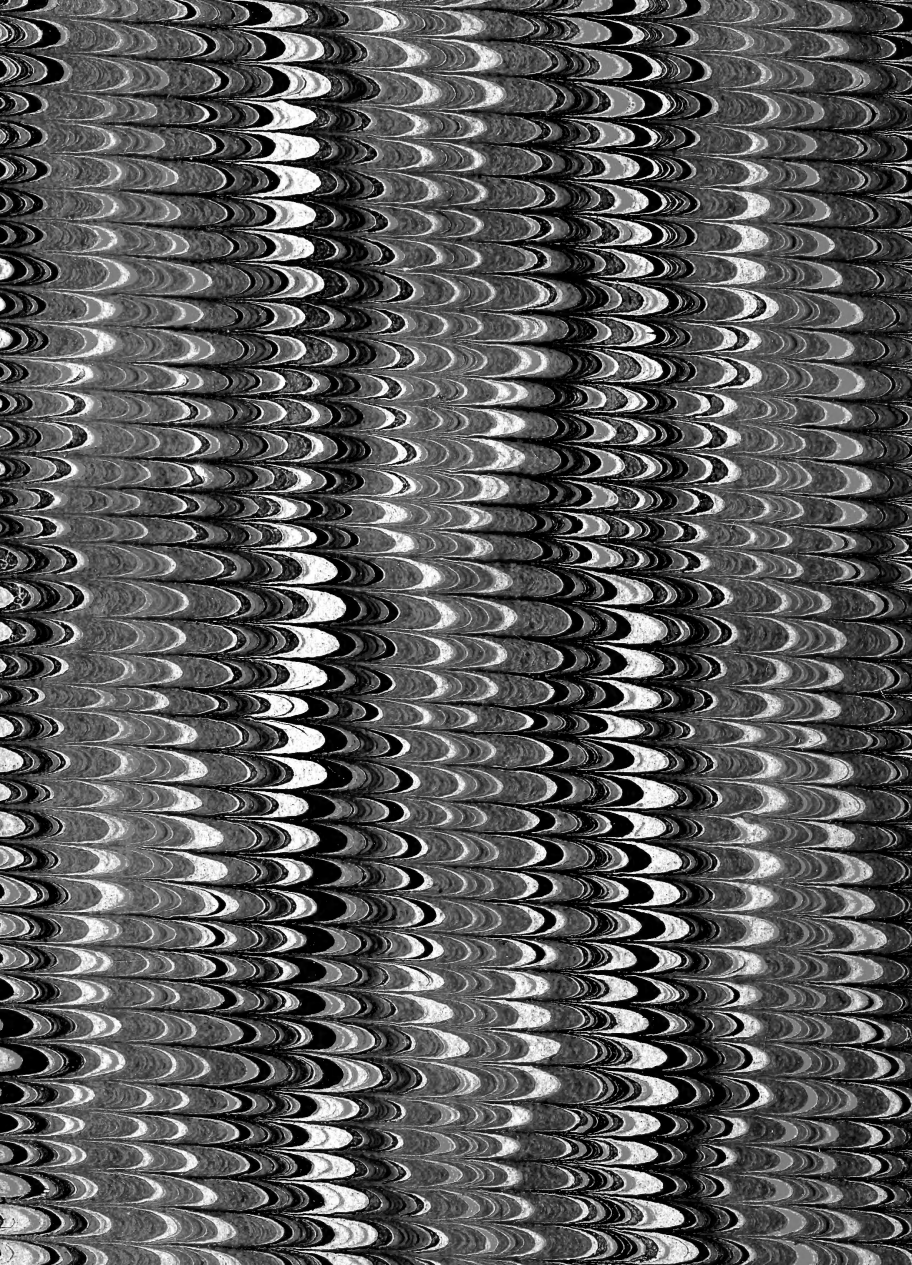
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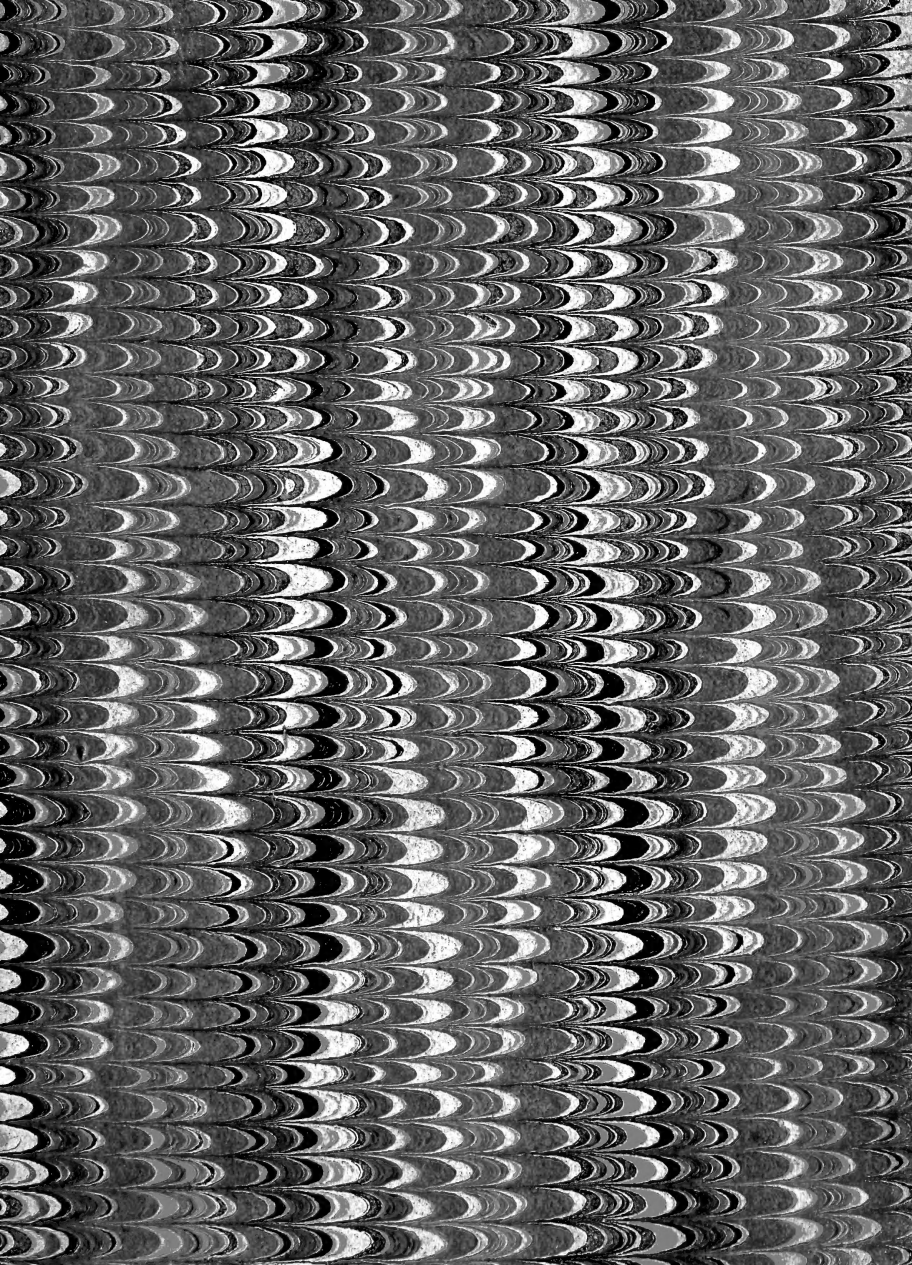
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