

PLEASE FOR OUR BIRDS

By Claude T. Barnes. M. S. P. R.

"You call them thieves and pillagers; but know they are the winged wardens of your farms. Who from the corn fields drive the insidious feed to the bird's beak. And from your harvests keep a hundred harms; Even the blackest of them all, the crow. Renders good service as your minister-at-arms. Crushing the beetle in his coat of mail, And crying havoc on the slug and snail."

—Longfellow: Birds of Killingworth.

FROM their childhood up, all are taught to be kind to all things, and to love that charming beauty of nature, which evinces, on every side, the omnipotence of God; but despite this instruction many are cruel to a delightful and, in some respects, magnificent part of creation—the birds. This pitilessness is due, frequently, to a mere mania for killing, without regard for the beauty or utility of the animal destroyed; in some cases, as, for example, that of the meadow lark, birds are slain for the table, but by far the most systematic and effective destruction results

from the fact that the birds are the most valuable birds. It spends its time pecking after wood-boring grubs and ants, more than 3,000 of the latter having been found in one's stomach. This Flicker is very destructive to all wood-boring beetles, both larvae and adults, and also to codling moths and caterpillars. How these insects can kill a tree, in a short time, every horticulturist knows; and, for that reason, it behooves both farmers and their sons never to frighten or slay the Red Headed Flicker.

RED HEADED WOODPECKER.

The Red Headed woodpecker, though seen by the writer but once in Davis county, is, nevertheless, included in Utah's avifauna. Its whole head and neck are crimson red, and there is a narrow crescent of black on the upper part of its breast. Its back and tail are bluish black; its under parts, white, and there is a white band across the middle of each wing. It is not so large a bird as the Red Shafted Flicker, being nine inches in length.

Its food consists, largely, of adult beetles and wasps, which it cleverly captures on the wing; and it is stated on undoubted authority that this bird feeds upon scale insects such as the cottony scale, bark louse (mytilaspis pomorum). It is regrettable that so

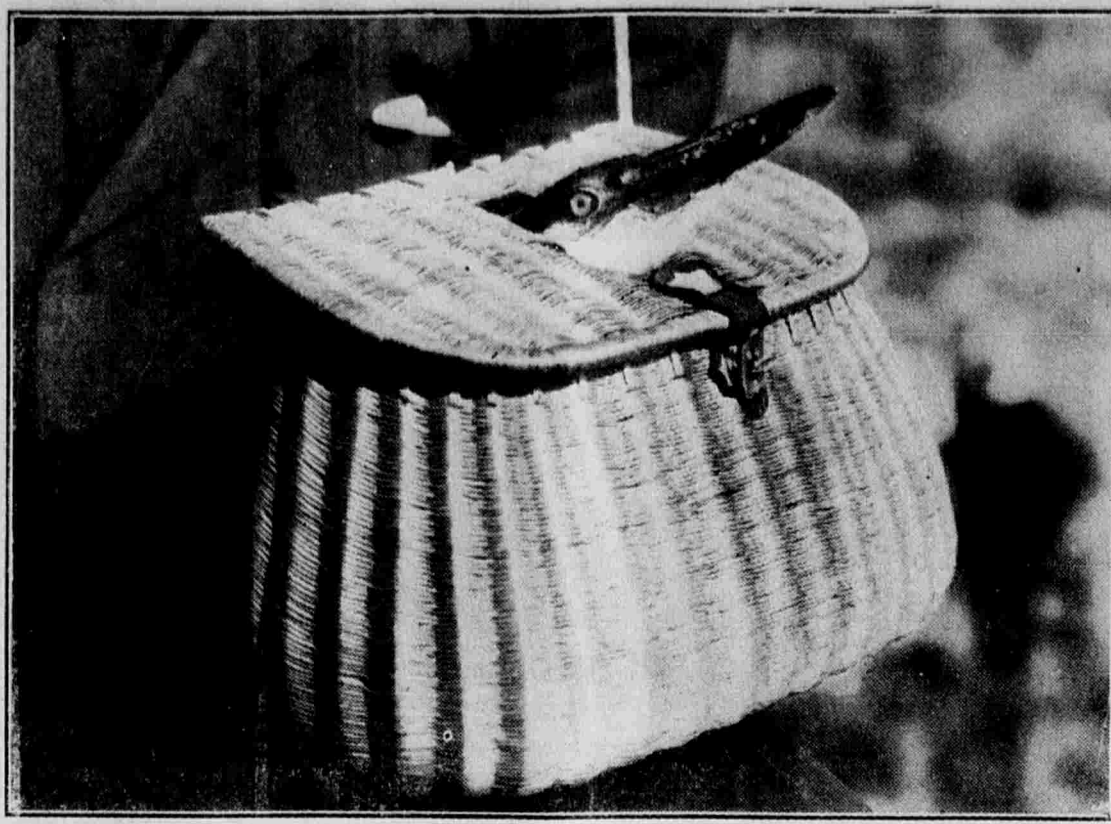


Photo by J. F. Gullihur.

BLUE HERON IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.

Captured on Bird Island, Great Salt Lake, on Tuesday and Presented by The Desert News to The Liberty Park Zoo.

with the bird for it is one of our commonest slingers; and unfortunately is much sought for food. It is so well known that a description of it, for purposes of identification were superfluous.

The lark is despised by none for it is, in every respect, beneficial. It is stated on good authority that destructive insects constitute 73 per cent of its subsistence. Among the ground species that it lives on, may be mentioned white bugs, cut worms, beetles, army worms, grasshoppers, caterpillars, crane flies, boll worms, wasps, ants,

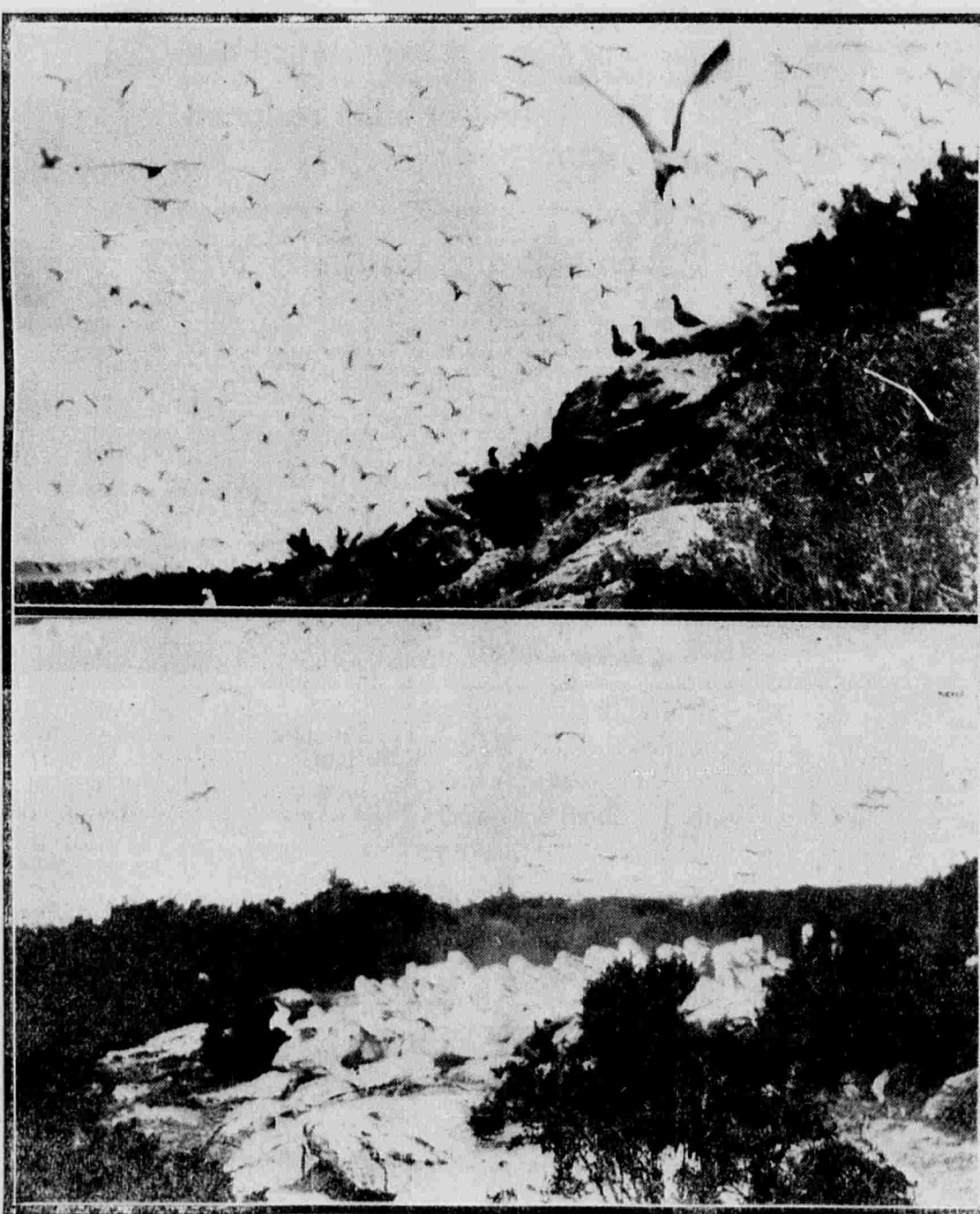
poison ivy, it would deserve to live in Utah.

THE ROBIN.

Another member of the family turridae (thrushes) that is known and held dear the country over, is the American robin or Redbreast, whose song is the first of spring and the last of fall. It needs no description, but the author's observations lead him to believe that our bird is larger than the eastern, and that its head, which has more dull white streaked with black, is somewhat smaller.

beetles, rose chaffer, climbing cut-worms, cabbage worms, root maggots, cucumber beetles, crane flies, white grubs, ants, root lice, spider and snails are all despatched with a relish by robins; and in July and August, one third of each meal consists of grasshoppers, the pest of dry farming. If robins do eat some cherries, it is because they have lived on insects for 16 months and think that for all this labor the farmer ought to give them a change for at least a few weeks in spring. Can you blame them? They are so much beloved, why kill them?

GULLS RISE SCREAMING AT THE APPROACH OF MAN.



A BUNCH OF YOUNG PELICANS

chinch bugs, root worms, root lice and spiders. Even in winter, when every fence rail is topped heavily with the lark sings, beautifully, "U-tah's a pretty place!" and is perfectly satisfied with his dinner of insects. Crickets and grasshoppers constitute about one-third of its yearly subsistence and in August they form 70 per cent of its daily diet.

The farmers throughout Utah and Wyoming are greatly troubled with a certain grasshopper (melanoplus alfalfa fields; and as high as 37 of them have been found in the stomach of one meadow lark.

When we consider that besides eating all these insects, the meadow lark destroys many weed seeds and fills every grassy lane with delectable song, how can one have the heart to kill them?

THE CATBIRD.

Anyone who has approached the catbird must have recognized it by its cry which resembles, in slightly harsher tone, that of a cat. It is somewhat smaller than a robin and its prevailing color is dark plumbeous, slightly ashy beneath. Its wings are dark brown edged with lead color, and its tail is black tipped with plumbeous. The under part of its tail is brownish chestnut.

About half of its food consists of insects; and, from the writer's observations, it prefers Russian mulberries to any of the garden fruits. It is quite tame and will build its nest in mulberry trees directly above the habitation of man. It feeds on ants, beetles, leaf caterpillars, grasshoppers, aphids, bugs, stick caterpillars and spiders of the insect group; and dogwood, elderberries, sour gum, greenberry, spice berries, black alder, sumac and poison ivy of the vegetable world. If the catbird fared only on grasshoppers and

in the spring, Robins gormandize on angleworms which they pull with great dexterity from the ground. Our common English sparrows are aware of this trait, and, consequently, follow the robins about ready to fight for the next worm. Rose slugs, strawberry slugs, root worms, leaf hoppers,

Have you ever noticed those neat little nests of admirable structure that hang like a pendulum from the most inaccessible limbs of our highest locust trees? They belong to the Bullock's Oriole. This bird is about seven inches long and is more easily identified by its hanging nest than by

its own colors. The upper parts of its head, neck, back and wings are black, white, its under parts, generally, the sides of its head and neck, rump, and most of its tail feathers are yellow-orange. A broad white band extends across its wings. The female has more yellow tints and is altogether lighter than the male.

Bullock's Oriole eats caterpillars, beetles, bugs, ants, wasps, grasshoppers and spiders. It will make a meal any time on click beetles, the larvae of which are ruinous to plant life; and it relishes almost any variety of bark lice. It is such a fascinating and useful bird that it ought never to be destroyed.

BREWER'S SPARROW.

If, in the summer time, you wander about the low fields, in Utah's valleys, you will occasionally see in the willows and thick brush, a tiny Brewer sparrow, the brightness and vivacity of whose song is unexcelled in all the finch family. It is usually on the ground searching for weed seeds and insects, and is difficult to identify unless actually in hand. It is five inches long and has a light grayish taken from the breast and streaks extending down over the back. Its under surface is whitish, tinged with brown on the breast and sides; its ear coverts are brownish-

called by the boys "the Cedar Bird" in its dignified loveliness of form and exquisite elegance of color, unexcelled in all the bird family. It is what Dearnborn calls "the tip-top of the feathered aristocracy." It is seen here only in winter, when it gathers in flocks in the tops of tall trees, uttering, continuously, its quiet song, "tree-dee." It is smaller than a robin; and is quite easily identified by its long crest of vinaceous-chestnut. A color, which it raises or lowers at will. Its body, generally, is a soft, silky, brownish-ash color with a purplish tint; its wings brownish ash, towards the front, reddish. The rump is pure ash and the plumage extends from its back over the eye and under the crest; and a similar black patch is under the chin. The larger wing feathers and the tail are slaty black; and on the secondary wing feathers are little patches of bright vermilion red, closely resembling, in purity of color, red sealing wax. There is also across the tail a broad band of rambogey-yellow. All these characteristics can easily be seen without glass, as, when the birds sit in apple trees eating rotted unpicked apples, they permit one to go within a few feet, directly under them.

They are known to eat canker-worms, leaf caterpillars, elm leaf beetles and



JUST A FEW CRANES ON HAT ISLAND.

yellow margined heavily, above, and narrowly, below, with dark brown. The prevailing color is a pale brownish yellow with a grayish tinge.

The writer's observations lead him to believe that this little bird lives almost wholly on grass and weed seeds; and though the specimens he procured were all taken from the brushy margins of wheat fields, the stomach of one only contained grain—two oat seeds! About one-third of its subsistence is animal food, consisting of young grasshoppers, cut worms, army worms, crane flies, white grubs, root borers, snout beetles, weevils, leaf beetles, wasps and bugs. Whenever they come within its notice, it slays root maggots, cabbage worms and cucumber beetles. In consideration of this great utility to man, it is necessary only to say that the song of this bird is so delicious, and our Utah singers are so pestered by the English sparrow, that this tiny species ought fully to be protected.

RED BACKED SNOWBIRD.

Go up into the thick pine woods of some canyon of the Wasatch; and, even though it be a warm spring day, you will see the red backed snowbirds preparing their nests. In winter, they descend to our valleys, in great flocks, shaking the seed from tall weeds and filling the air with their simple trills. They are somewhat smaller than our English sparrows and have yellowish bills. Their heads, necks, backs and sides are ashy color, while their under parts are white. There are triangular patches of chestnut brown on the backs of their necks, and the outer tail feathers are white.

It is unnecessary to praise these little birds, as anyone who watches a flock for an hour soon becomes convinced that they must destroy even the seed of the locust tree. Even though their great numbers are an attraction for any lad with a shot gun, they, nevertheless, ought to work in happiness, undisturbed.

BLACK HEADED GROSBEEK.

The black headed grosbeak is one of Utah's handsomest birds; but it is not common enough to be very well known. It is a member of the finch family, with a thick heavy bill; and it is not quite so large as a robin. Its head above and on the sides, its chin, back, wings and tail are all black; but a collar around its neck, its rump and under parts are brownish-orange, almost light cinnamon. The under parts of its wings are yellow and the under surface of its tail together with the tips of its primary wing feathers, are white. The female is lighter, having more whitish and lemon tints.

The song of this bird is melodious, varied, lightened and fascinating, having an ending of exquisite sadness. Once heard, it can never be forgotten. The farmer can ill afford to shoot the black headed grosbeak, as it often saves whole potato fields by its destruction of the Colorado potato beetle. The scale question, too, is settled, once for all, by the grosbeak as there is certainly no doubt that it eats the frosted scale (Eucyrtus prunosum) which attacks apricot, peach, plum and cherry trees, and the apricot scale (Culecanium armeniaceum), which is deleterious to plum, apricot and pear orchards. The black headed grosbeak is so useful and beautiful, and its song so delightful that it ought never to be killed even when the oyster shell ladies' hats with its variegated feathers.

THE NORTHERN WAXWING.

The Northern Waxwing, sometimes called by the boys "the Cedar Bird" in its dignified loveliness of form and exquisite elegance of color, unexcelled in all the bird family. It is what Dearnborn calls "the tip-top of the feathered aristocracy." It is seen here only in winter, when it gathers in flocks in the tops of tall trees, uttering, continuously, its quiet song, "tree-dee." It is smaller than a robin; and is quite easily identified by its long crest of vinaceous-chestnut. A color, which it raises or lowers at will. Its body, generally, is a soft, silky, brownish-ash color with a purplish tint; its wings brownish ash, towards the front, reddish. The rump is pure ash and the plumage extends from its back over the eye and under the crest; and a similar black patch is under the chin. The larger wing feathers and the tail are slaty black; and on the secondary wing feathers are little patches of bright vermilion red, closely resembling, in purity of color, red sealing wax. There is also across the tail a broad band of rambogey-yellow. All these characteristics can easily be seen without glass, as, when the birds sit in apple trees eating rotted unpicked apples, they permit one to go within a few feet, directly under them.

bugs. They catch flies as readily as do swallows and kingbirds, feeding their young extensively upon them; and are known to devour destructive scale beetles. They are braudous birds; and, as they visit us only when the orchard limbs hang heavy with snow, they certainly deserve to live.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN BLUE BIRD.

In the open spaces near the tops of our highest ranges can be seen the pretty Rocky mountain bluebird. It is about six inches long and is greenish-ash blue above and below, brightest, however, above. Its abdomen and under tail surface are white; and the tail is tipped with a bluish tinge. The female has blue only on the wings, tail and rump.

More than three-fourths of the subsistence of this bird consists of insects. It is very destructive to beetles, the following being some Utah species that fall by thousands under its bill: the mountain pine beetle (dendroctonus monticola) which is ruinous to lodgepole pine; the spruce beetle (dendroctonus ponderosae) which injures Engelmann spruce; the Douglas spruce beetle (dendroctonus pseudotsugae) which is subversive to red fir trees and the western pine beetle (dendroctonus brevicornis) which attacks the pine trees. It also feeds upon the cedar heartwood borer (trachylele blondeli) which makes some cedar posts worthless, and the fir tussock moth (notolophus deflorator), which causes extensive defoliation of the tops of the white fir. Besides these, it is known to destroy a species of slug caterpillar (dalmanella ingenta) which, in Arizona, defoliates live oak acorns.

The bluebird eats some spiders; and, in August, three-fourths of its food consists of grasshoppers. At other times of the year, it fattens upon chokeberries, juniperberries, pokeweed berries, greenberries, huckleberries, haws, sorrel ragweed and sumac. With such beneficial habits, may the Rocky mountain bluebird beautify our canyons and mountain lowlands, unmolested by the unthinking sport of man.

THE BROWN CREEPER.

In the willows and pine groves of the Wasatch is sometimes heard the little Brown Creeper. It is quite easily identified by its habit of creeping up and down, under and over the delicate limbs, and by its thin curved beak, which is as long as its head. Above, it is dark brown with a rufous tinge, the rump however being a rust color. It is a silky white beneath, the under surface of the wings however having a faint rust tinge. It has a white streak over each eye and its tail feathers are brown fringed with yellowish. Altogether the bird is somewhat smaller than a sparrow.

Concerning the Brown Creeper, V. H. Lowe says: "That it feeds extensively on the scale insects, there is little doubt. It may often be seen on scale infested trees, both in summer and winter, pecking at the scales, especially the larger ones, such as the oyster shell bark louse, evidently for the purpose of getting the eggs or the live scales."

It may be noticed, en passant, that our long tailed chickadee (parus atricapillus) which is ruinous to the same louse, being both insectivorous, neither the Brown Creeper nor the Long Tailed Chickadee ought ever to meet destruction.

SLENDER BILLED NUTHATCH.

This is a Utah bird resembling the chickadee, its chief colorations being ashy-blue above, black on the head and neck, white on the under parts and the sides of the head, and brown on the under part of the tail.



THE HOME OF THE GULLS ON GREAT SALT LAKE.

from a belief that some species do more harm than good, as in the orchard, the barnyard and the field.

Without taking into consideration the rapacious songs of some of Utah's commonest birds, such as that of the yellow throated dendroica (nectary); and without splendor of such birds as the Louisiana tanager (pyrauga uldoviciani), let us see if there are not such habits, in most of our birds, that even from a pecuniary standpoint, it were better to let them chant in our gardens undisturbed.

To the horticulturist, the gardener and the farmer, a study of entomology is extremely important, as, without doubt, some seasons' crops are practically destroyed by such pests as the Hessian fly, the chinch bug, the boll weevil, the codling moth and the San Jose scale. In order fully to appreciate the utility of our birds in preventing the ravages of insects, therefore, it will be necessary to point out in detail, a few of those birds which deserve our fullest protection for the service they render.

CALIFORNIA GULL.

A bird that is beloved by every early settler in Utah is the California Sea Gull, which breeds, abundantly, on the islands of Great Salt Lake. Years ago, when a species of locust (melanoplus spretus) occupied the noontide sun, and cleared away everything green, the Sea Gulls destroyed the pest by a continual process of eating and vomiting, thus preventing starvation of the early settlers. If Utah has a sacred bird it certainly is the Sea Gull.

It is unnecessary to proceed further, as it has been shown that the birds are a blessing to the intermountain home. Even the common English sparrow despatches the spiny larvae of Vanessa antiope, which kills our shade trees, and is known to eat luna and tussock moths, large beetles (dytiscus), green cabbage worms, winged ants (termites flavipes), angleworms, maple scale and an insect of the same variety on the climbing rose.

We may say, then, generally, that shrubs and small fruits perish from the attacks of rose slugs, root worms, strawberry slugs, leaf hoppers, aphids, flea beetles, rose chaffer, cut worms and spinous caterpillars, all of which are devoured by robins, canaries, blue birds and Brewer's sparrows.

The garden is troubled with cabbage worms, cutworms, root maggots, cucumber beetles, potato beetles and grasshoppers which in turn are eaten with a relish by the black headed grosbeak, robins and Brewer's sparrows.

The orchard trees perish from the ravages of codling moths which are slain by woodpeckers; or from ants and bark lice which are eaten by the black headed grosbeak, or from leaf hoppers, canker worms and leaf caterpillars which are devoured by catbirds, bluebirds, chickadees, waxwings and Bullock's orioles.

Sparrows, robins, blackbirds, sea gulls, and meadow larks protect your hay fields from the ruinous cutworms, army worms, crickets, white grubs and root borers.

The grain fields all suffer from the ravages of white grubs, wire worms, root lice, chinch bugs and ants; and all of these destructive insects are killed by meadow larks, blackbirds, robins, woodpeckers, and California quail.

The timber in our mountains fights continuously against bark borers and trunk borer; but woodpeckers, bluebirds, brown creepers and chickadees destroy the larger part of these pests.

Swamps and ponds are made unpleasant at times, by the presence of angleworms, green beetles, and caterpillars, but these are all devoured by red winged blackbirds; and water beetles, water bugs, dragon flies and May flies fall, similarly, before ducks and cotbirds.

In the summer time, when the air seems filled with dangerous wasps, winged ants, and beetles, besides moths, flies and locusts, it is pleasant to know that swallows, kingbirds and Wilson flycatchers are doing their best to exterminate these things; and in the summer evening, when all about the camp the world is so warm and refreshing, were it not for the mosquitoes, moths, bugs and flies, which pester our faces, how delightful it is to listen for their enemies, the night hawk and the whippoorwill!

In the face of such service, beauty, and song, who can have the heart to destroy our birds?

RED SHAFTED FLICKER.

In describing our insectivorous birds, it seems necessary to commence with a species concerning which there can be no doubt—the woodpeckers. The Red Shafted Flicker is very likely one most common woodpecker, being known by nearly every schoolboy. It is about 13 inches long, and, as hawk and the whippoorwill!

Though somewhat noisy about houses, this Flicker is, nevertheless, one of

THE WESTERN MEADOW LARK.

In all the rambles in the fields or along the grassy lanes, few more melodious and beautiful songs are heard than those of the clear rich song of the meadow lark. Everyone is acquainted

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