

Flight Behavior of a Flock of Slate-colored Juncos in the Late Afternoon.—

In observations on a flock of Oregon Juncos (*Junco oreganus*) at a feeding station in Deep Springs, Inyo County, California, it was noted that flight behavior at the end of the afternoon was sometimes markedly different from that observed at other times of the day. A group of late-feeding birds tended to leave together and to fly in a direction that was always the same when this behavior was observed.

Between January 3 and March 9, 1954, a flock of nine color-marked Slate-colored Juncos (*J. hyemalis*) was watched for fifty-two days at a feeding station in Ithaca, New York, to see whether similar behavior could be detected. On 28 days the flock made no late visit to the station. On six days there were visits which might have been late enough to be the last feeding period of the day, but no distinctive behavior occurred. On 18 days the flock's final flight behavior was distinctly different from that displayed in its normal daytime visits. (1) Each bird, when it finished feeding, perched for a short time, perhaps a half minute to a minute, at the station. (2) The birds gradually assembled in a dense clump of arbor vitae about forty feet from the station. After they were all collected there was a pause of from three to five minutes during which they made small movements in the bush. (3) The whole flock then left the arbor vitae together, closely following one another. (4) The flock then flew as a group into some adjacent tree, climbed high in it, took off from its highest branches to the highest branches of a neighboring tree, and so moved along a ridge toward the northeast. This was not a swift, directed flight but was sometimes interrupted by short periods of perching. The same trees were not always used, though certain trees were favorites. The direction of flight, however, was invariable. Since the branches of the deciduous trees were clearly outlined against the sky, the flock's progress could be observed with no difficulty.

This behavior was highly distinctive of the late afternoon flight, and different from the birds' usual daytime behavior in several respects. The whole flock moved together; it flew higher than was usual; the flocking was close; and the direction was the same on each of the eighteen occasions when this behavior was observed. It seems a reasonable conjecture that the flock had a common goal, and this in turn suggests the hypothesis that a common roost may be a feature of the integration of junco flocks.—WINIFRED S. SABINE, *Ithaca, New York*.

Redheads Killed by a Downdraft.—At about 3:00 P.M. on March 4, 1956, on the east side of Horsetooth Reservoir, Larimer County, Colorado, I observed a flock of approximately 40 Redhead Ducks (*Aythya americana*) flying northward, with the wind, about 25 yards above the ice. The ice was just starting to break up. Strong, gusty winds had been blowing all day. At this time I heard the telephone wires whistle above me and immediately felt a strong downdraft. The ducks were caught in the downdraft and driven down toward the ice. Seven were killed or so disabled that they could not take flight again. Four were killed outright. They struck so hard that discolored skid marks from six to ten feet long were clearly visible behind them. One was injured so that it could neither walk nor fly, and remained sitting upright on the ice. The other two evidently suffered broken wings, but were able to walk to fissures in the ice and swim away.

The weather was perfectly clear and the ducks had been flying swiftly with the wind, indicating that they had not mistaken the ice for open water with the intention of landing. Moreover, the ice was breaking up and roughened on the surface, so that it contrasted distinctly with the open water in the coves.—HENRY RATE, *School of Forestry, Colorado A. & M. College, Fort Collins, Colorado*.