

through the tree, alighted by the side of her ladyship and made a dainty, graceful bow, then they took wing and flew away together. The little widow's mournful cry was never heard again, neither did she come back to the rose at night. But often through October the warbling, with all its persuasive trills and twitters, was heard in the trees near the house, and the little

widow was always close by. All winter the two remained together about the place, and in the spring began building on a limb that hung above our kitchen door. On seeing my glasses leveled that way, they deserted the half finished home, and took up their abode half a block away, where prying eyes could not discover every detail of family affairs.



The Northwest Crow

BY J. H. BOWLES, TACOMA, WASH.

ON Puget Sound, in the vicinity of Tacoma, the Northwest Crow (*Corvus caurinus*) can hardly be considered as more than a rather common resident throughout the year, and by my observations are never to be found far away from the reach of salt water. This curious trait, together with their fondness for human society, makes them appear much more numerous in this locality than is really the case.

To the uninitiated they might easily be confounded with the Common or American Crow (*Corvus americanus*), but in color they seldom ever approach the glossy black of their larger cousin, some appearing nearly brown. They are also very appreciably smaller, indeed the first I ever saw came near being noted down as a Purple Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*) that had wandered a few thousand miles from home. He was on a floating log eating shell-fish and salt water insects, which seem to be their staple of diet with the addition of an occasional bug, berry or caterpillar.

Being hardly ever molested in any way, they seem almost ridiculously tame to an eastern observer, accustomed as he is to having a crow take flight at sight of him. It may prove of interest

to mention here what impressed me most forcibly in contrasting the birds of the Atlantic Coast with those of the Puget Sound. This was the extreme tameness of the birds in the last named locality. The gulls, birds to be shot in the east only by the most careful stalking, will scarcely take the trouble to move out of the way of a boat, and at the docks rest on the piles and ships that are being loaded, often within fifteen or twenty feet of hundreds of people.

So it is with the hawks, the Common Crow and many others.

To return to the original subject, in its nesting *caurinus* differs so completely from *americanus* as to make one think it more closely related to the Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*) of Europe. On the Tacoma Flats, at the head of Commencement Bay, is a small cluster of Siwash



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Indian houses, which are bordered by a line of scrubby apple and cherry trees. In these trees six or seven pairs of this sociable little crow band together in a colony during the nesting season. The nest is placed in a crotch at a distance from ten to eighteen feet above the ground, the same one being made over and occupied each returning season. On one occasion I saw two occupied nests in an apple tree only twenty

feet high. Its appearance differs greatly from that of *americanus*, as it closely resembles a round basket, having a very slight projecting rim of sticks. The average rim of projecting sticks in a series of *americanus* I have found to be 9.78 inches, while that of *caurinus* is only a trifle over 4 inches. The inner dimensions average about 7 inches in diameter by 4 inches in depth. The composition also is nearly the same, only the material used is much less coarse, being a foundation of fine sticks and mud, lined with cedar bark.

Fresh eggs may be found from the middle of April to the middle of May, four or five being the number always constituting a complete set. In color they are indistinguishable from eggs of the American Crow, being subject to about the same variation, and the size also is about the same. Those in my collection average 1.61x1.15 inches, the

largest measuring 1.72x1.18 inches, the smallest 1.51x1.13 inches.

The bird clings very closely to the nest, never leaving until nearly reached by the climber. This is due, I think, to its natural tameness, as it then flies to a neighboring tree where very little complaint is made. Generally it is joined by two or three others who appear to discuss the matter in low tones.

At the approach of winter they gather into small flocks of from six to forty, at which period they are more inclined to shyness than at any other season. The call notes are much the same as those of *americanus*, but the "caw" is not, in my opinion, nearly so harsh and the birds are much more fond of talking to themselves. This they do in a soft, throaty tone that is really very fascinating, seeming to be a criticism of everything in general and nothing in particular.



The Intermediate Wren-tit

BY JOSEPH GRINNELL

The Wren-tit (*Chamaea fasciata* Gambel) is a peculiar species in having its habitat restricted almost wholly to California. True it extends a few miles into Lower California on the south, and into the coast district of Oregon on the north, still the extremes in its geographic variation are undoubtedly to be found within the limits of California. The Wren-tit, as far as my experience goes, is a purely resident species. In fact, it does not even wander locally to such an extent as such resident birds, so considered, as the Song Sparrows. It is therefore not surprising to find the Wren-tit following the usual condition in resident species of this region, and varying from a pale form in the south and interior to a dark colored race in the northern coast district. Parallel geographic variation is exhibited throughout the same range by *Thryomanes*, *Otocoris*, *Melospiza*, *Pipilo* and *Junco*.

W. H. Osgood in the "Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington," Vol. XIII, pp. 41-42, has given the subspecific name *phaea* to the extreme northern form, extreme not only in habitat but in the darkness of its coloration. He is undoubtedly right in assigning the type locality of *fasciata* to Southern California, though after looking up Gambel's descriptions and subsequent remarks, I should place it in the vicinity of Los Angeles, rather than in San Bernardino County.

Thus the two extremes of variation are subspecifically recognized. Yet between these extremes there certainly exists an unbroken gradation from one to the other. As Mr. Osgood states, specimens from the vicinity of San Francisco Bay are of an intermediate character, and moreover they are distinct from either *C. f. phaea* or *C. f. fasciata*. Now, trinomial nomenclature is simply a convenient means of recog-