

into the shrubbery. It is at this time that they show a peculiarity that is usually identified with the Snipe family, that of tipping up and down like our common Sand Snipe. This peculiarity is not indulged in so freely while feeding as when they are in the trees, and it is much more noticeable when they are disturbed. This habit has given them the name of "wagtails" in some localities, and it was under this name that the writer was first made acquainted with them.

The streams along which they usually breed are entirely dry in the summer season. They breed early, usually in early May. Eggs usually 6; measure about .74x.60; white with a sprinkling of fine lavender colored specks, and at the larger end with blotches of dark umber. Nest usually placed over running water or very near to it, usually on the banks of streams, but occasionally in the upturned roots of fallen trees.

THE WILSON'S PHALAROPE.

Phalaropus Lobatus.

BY WM. G. SMITH, LOVELAND, COLORADA.

One of the handsomest of our western waders is Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*, and for activity while swimming it surpasses all others, and on land it has but few peers. Its beautiful shades of chestnut and red are so blended and artistic that one cannot but admire it if they possess the least admiration for the beautiful.

One peculiarity, differing from all migratory birds that I am acquainted with, is that the female arrives here several days in advance of the male, which is about the first week in May. She is by far the brightest hued and seems to shun the company of the more sober colored males; but as soon as *they* arrive they begin to talk business to their proud mistresses and after considerable persuasion coax them to lead a more retired life. They mutually select a place to start

housekeeping, scratch a slight depression in the ground and make a rude nest of dead grass, usually on the shady side of a bunch of weeds ; but often in full view.

After depositing the eggs, the female pays very little or no attention to them ; but again joins her more dressy companions and leaves her mate to bear the whole of the cares and responsibility to hatch out the chicks, which he is not loth to do, and even after they are hatched she cares but very little for her offsprings. Though she may materially assist in feeding them, I am afraid they would go to sleep hungry if it was not for their provident papa.

The eggs, four in number, are usually deposited in a swampy marsh. When very wet they are raised a little above the level. Like most of the family pyriform, about 1.25x.95 ; ground color light drab, covered with heavy dark brown spots and splashes, more numerous and heaviest at the larger end. The eggs are placed in nest with small ends downward, close together and the top ends radiate outward. One set that I took a few days ago was packed all around with freshly-plucked green leaves.

The curious trait they possess of spinning around while swimming, I am satisfied is to stir up the mud and also the animalcules upon which they feed, as they never do it in deep water.

