

98. **Sitta carolinensis.** WHITE-BREADED NUTHATCH.—Common resident.
99. **Parus atricapillus.** CHICKADEE.—Abundant resident.
100. **Regulus satrapa.** GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET.—Abundant migrant. These birds usually winter with us in small numbers, and some are seen in summer.
101. **Regulus calendula.** RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET.—Common migrant.
102. **Turdus mustelinus.** WOOD THRUSH.—Common summer resident.
103. **Turdus fuscescens.** WILSON'S THRUSH.—Abundant summer resident.
104. **Turdus aonalaschkæ pallasii.** HERMIT THRUSH.—Not uncommon during migrations.
105. **Merula migratoria.** ROBIN.—Abundant summer resident.
106. **Sialia sialis.** BLUEBIRD.—Abundant summer resident.

THE MAGPIE IN WASHINGTON.

(*Pica pica hudsonica*.)

W. L. DAWSON.

In his chosen haunts amongst the brown hills of Yakimer County, there is no bird more interesting than the Black-billed Magpie. Like all the other aborigines who will not adapt themselves to the ways of civilization, he has been compelled to seek his home in out of the way places.

During a residence in eastern Washington of some four seasons, I had ample opportunity to note the habits of this bird, both as it wintered in the valleys, and as it spent the breeding season in the lonesome foot-hills.

Through the short winter it hangs about the farmhouses, with an eye to pilfering from the poultry yard, or else in anxious expectation of its annual festival, "slaughtering time." Necessity alone makes him so bold, for as soon as the warm Chinook winds drive off the snow, early in March, he repairs to the lonesome canons in the foot-hills, and for the rest of the year severs his connection with the busy world.

I made four different visits to their retreats, and each time returned well laden with specimens for the cabinet.

Starting early in the morning, on horseback, a ride of three hours would bring us—for I usually went with a brother collector—over the hills, barren save for sage-brush, bunch-grass, and resin-weed, to one of several “Springs” known to us. The springs themselves were mere excuses for the presence of some scores of willows, quaking asps, and thorn bushes, placed in a deep ravine and somewhat sheltered from the wind by the steep hill-sides. In these trees and bushes the magpies build their nests, at a height varying usually from five to thirty feet, although I have found nests resting on the ground.

A well built magpie's nest is quite an affair; in its normal shape a huge ball of sticks, with the under half shaped and strengthened by a cup of mud a foot across and an inch in thickness; this in turn well dried and carefully lined with roots. The dome is shaped like the bottom, but no mud is used in its construction. The main entrance is through a rather indistinct hole in the side, but as I generally tried to approach the nest from this side, I noticed that the birds often struggled through a less marked opening in the other side. The whole structure averages two or two and a half feet through from top to bottom; but of this there is every variation; in some rare instances the nests had no tops.

Whether or not the birds believe that they can protect their eggs from man, if they only built their nests strong enough, the tendency certainly seems to be toward larger and larger nests. One that I found last spring was a perfect mediæval castle. It was four feet in height by three and a half in breadth, and that, too, making liberal allowance for projecting sticks. It was evidently a new nest and built on the most approved plans of modern magpie architecture. As magpies are most inveterate egg thieves, this huge structure might have been reared with a special view toward securing for its owners a safe retreat from the just indignation of the bird world. In vain were all their precautions, for when I stormed the fortress the bold brigand was obliged to flee, and leave his treasures.

The size of the sticks that they bring to their nests is sur-

prising; some having been found as much as three feet long, and others, shorter ones, as much as three-fourths of an inch in thickness; these last however are rather remarkable exceptions.

The average set of eggs is eight, although nine is not infrequent and one set of ten eggs is recorded. Breeding begins in the latter part of March and is at its height in the middle of April.

Although for the most part the birds keep at a respectful distance, occasionally an over-bold one comes near enough to give you a sound scolding. It is an experience to be remembered, being up in a thorn tree on a windy day, clinging with one hand to a branch, and with the other trying to force an entrance to a magpie's stronghold, while the wind blows the thorns against you, and the magpie, perched just out of reach, gives you a good curtain lecture.

Of the magpie in captivity much has been written, beginning as far back as Plutarch; and small wonder, for surely nothing could succeed better in entertaining than the sly genius and originality of a tame magpie. His well known penchant for hiding bits of meat and chance odds and ends "for future reference" is a constant source of amusement. But he is not to be trusted around the poultry-yard if once he acquires a taste for eggs. I once saw a magpie flying away from a hen coop with a hen's egg in its bill, and I watched it till it lighted several rods away. I immediately frightened it away and the egg was not pierced, broken, or in any way injured, but showed simply the dirty marks of the magpie's bill. The egg was of medium size and certainly made quite a mouthful for such a bird.

Last year, in the latter part of May, I succeeded in capturing a couple of young birds which evidently had quitted the nest several days before. The indignation of the parent birds knew no bounds. I have taken quite a little "sauce" from birds, but I think I never before stood under such a torrent of abuse as those birds heaped upon me when I held up their fledgelings. They could not find ad-

jectives enough in their vocabulary to apply to me, and when strong language failed them, in their impotent fury, they fell to pecking the limbs on which they stood, snapped at and broke off the twigs, and even lit on the ground near me and tore up the earth with their bills, perfectly beside themselves with rage.

Although their range in Washington crowds up to the pine belt, evergreen timber does not seem congenial to them. On this account their presence west of the Cascade mountains has not been recorded, as nearly as I can find out, except in the following instance. On October 7th, 1890, in that time of year when non-migrants have nothing to do but to loaf around and kill time, I met a party of about twenty sight-seeing magpies within a mile of the sea shore and at least a hundred miles west of their usual range.

The magpie is a notable bird; but after all, obscurity is the best passport to long life. According to Nicollet magpies were once common in Cook County, Illinois, but now they are rare anywhere east of the Rockies. At this rate one might almost be led to think that they must ere long join the bison. Perhaps, however, when it comes to the test, their native cunning will stand them in hand in the struggle for existence even better than it has with the crow.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT FOR THE WORK OF 1891, ON THE FRINGILLIDÆ.

The following report has been compiled from notes received from members of the chapter from several states: Messrs. John A. Donald, Decatur, and Chas. D. Oldright, Austin, Texas; Messrs. F. M. McElfresh, Champaign, and F. A. Gregory, Rockford, Ills.; Messrs. C. P. Howe, Waukesha, J. N. Clark, Meridian, and R. M. Strong, Wauwatosha, Wis.; Mr. D. D. Stone, Lansing, N. Y.; Mr. H. P. T. Weather, West Farmington, Maine; Mr. John H. Sage, Portland, Conn.; Mr. J. W. P. Smithwick, Sans Souci, N. C.,