

GENERAL NOTES

THE PINON JAY IN NEBRASKA.

The movements of birds and mammals, not only in migration, but in occupation of new territory, in search of food and suitable breeding grounds, is of immense interest to the student of animal life. I am not able to pay the attention to the subject that it deserves, as my time is largely taken up with plant movements. But I have been much interested in one rather rare bird, now becoming common in Western Nebraska: the Pinon Jay (*Cyanocephalus cyanocephalus* Wied.), an extremely social and fearless creature, with no more consciousness of wrong-doing when he is driving his beak into the skull of a young chicken than the driver of an U boat striking a Lusitania or a hospital ship of the Allies, bearing German wounded.

Following my notes, rather than my memory, I find my first acquaintance with this gentle robber beginning at Holly, Sheridan County, July 15, 1897, as far as Nebraska is concerned. Holly is a post office on the road from Rushville to Pine Ridge Agency, less than half way. I don't recall inquiring whether they nested there, but they undoubtedly did. Pines are abundant, and furnish much food. Thus much for my notes. But I recall that when I visited Newcastle, Wyoming, June, 1896, for ten days and found them common there, they were not new to me, and I have no doubt I made their first acquaintance at Chadron and Crawford in 1889-90. At Newcastle, I found the chicken yards fenced against them on five sides,—every side but the bottom. They could not raise chickens but under cover.

In Long Pine, Brown County, I saw a few, August 9, 1897; also October 2 in the noted canon. October 18, 1900, I estimated a flock at 100. Food of all kinds is abundant there. This is 120 miles east of Holly. April 11, 1911, I found about 40 that were wintering at Gibbon, Buffalo County, on the Union Pacific. They picked up the crumbs every day, in the school yard, after the country children had lunched. By inquiry I learned that about the same number wintered at Norfolk, on the Northwestern, about 100 miles east of Longpine. In 1913, I found them summering in the city park at Valentine, Cherry County, in July and August. This is situated on the Minnehaduzza Creek, and is well stocked with pines, cedars, and berries of deciduous shrubs and trees. No one could tell me whether they had nested, but there is no reason to think otherwise. I ought to have consulted the boys for that.

In the winter of 1915 and 1916 I found them at Wood River, two stations west of Grand Island. In October, 1916, I found them at

Bloomington, Franklin County, on the St. Joe and Denver, and November 1, about twenty appeared at Red Cloud, 29 miles east. This was their eastern advance line. They fed heavily on the fruit of the box elders and a few planted red cedars. During the winter they were observed over most of the town, and many inquiries were made of me, so that I found it desirable to put a note in one of the papers. They were last seen May 21, 1917, and I noted their departure for the wild west with feelings not unmixed with pleasure. (Valentine is the most eastern point for their summering, so far reported.)

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Red Cloud, Nebraska.

SOME BIRD NOTES FROM NEBRASKA.

In the fall of 1916 a Woodcock lingered in one of the smallest parks in the heart of the residence district of Omaha from August 10 to September 24, thanks to the underbrush which had been left undisturbed in this park.

A flock of four Pine Grosbeaks was noted twice in March, 1917, first on the fourth, and again on the eighteenth, in one of the parks which has been the scene of my regular observations. There can be no error in my identification of these birds as they were observed at very close range, in fact their tameness made the cautiousness of my first approach towards them seem almost ludicrous.

The following observations have been made during the fall and winter of 1917-18 in two parks and a strip of wild growth connecting them on the outskirts of Omaha. This area is broken by hollows and ravines, which afford good winter shelter for the birds, and has groves of oaks and pines.

First dates in the fall of 1917: October 7, Myrtle Warbler, White-throated Sparrow; 14, Brown Creeper, Slate-colored Junco, Tree Sparrow and Harris Sparrow; 21, Fox Sparrow.

Last dates in the fall of 1917: September 2, Wood Pewee; 9, Baltimore Oriole; 15, Oven-bird; 16, Redstart and Bell Vireo; 23, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Brown Thrasher; 30, Wood Thrush, Catbird; October 2, Chimney Swift, Barn Swallow; 14, Robin; 21, Myrtle Warbler; 28, Fox Sparrow, Towhee; November 4, Bluebird, Western House Wren, Song Sparrow; December 21, Harris Sparrow.

The Red-headed Woodpecker has remained up to January 27, in spite of the severe cold. Individual Flickers have been noted during the winter, and on Christmas day I saw a flock of five of them. A covey of 12 or more Bob-whites seems to have successfully wintered and escaped destruction by hunters. About a dozen Blue