

some particular section, with which they are familiar because at one time they were nestlings there?—CHARLES R. WALLACE, *Delaware, Ohio*.

The Red-headed Woodpecker Occasionally Wintering in Alabama.—

The Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) is a summer resident in the vicinity of Auburn, Alabama, but also every winter a few of these birds are to be found with us. Their habit of retiring to the heavily timbered swamps explains why this species is not so often noticed during the winter months. The easily distinguished, whining "charr," uttered while on the wing, during migration, on the so-called "moonlight nights of September," has been noted by the southern observer since the days of the early settlers. This is the only note to be heard as the bird passes over at an altitude of about one hundred yards. At about two minute intervals the note is repeated.

The "late hatches" of the breeding season usually constitute the few that remain with us during the winter. But, before the bulk of the species has returned in April, the winter moult has already taken away the grayish feathers from the head of the young and they are dressed like the mature birds. This winter there was one pair of old birds and one young one left on the college campus at Auburn. During the early fall they were busily storing away the insect-infested fruit of the oaks and pecans, which offered an abundant supply. In winter, when food becomes scarce, the redhead returns for the insect larvae that have been kept in this manner. The pecan weevil, which causes a great deal of damage to the southern pecan crop, is largely controlled by this and its closely related species, the "Speckled Red-head" or Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Centurus carolinus*).

It is in winter that the Red-headed Woodpecker is most quarrelsome, uttering its "clattering" series of notes, which resemble the noise of so many strokes of a mowing machine knife while cutting. On warm clear days in February the well known whining "charr" is again heard, along with its numerous other notes which are characteristic of the breeding season, and its habit of "drumming" with its bill on hard surfaces of trees and roofs of buildings. The Red-headed Woodpecker, like the Red-bellied Woodpecker, always builds its nest in dead wood, using no nesting material other than the chips obtained from the making of the nest.

The redhead is very fond of insects. It delights in catching cicadas and grasshoppers, along with many other kinds of insects. Orchards are often attacked by these birds, which is one of its bad habits. But this can be overcome by supplying them with mulberry fruit (*Morus nigra*, *Morus rubra* or *Morus albo*), as the redhead prefers this fruit to any other. One or two trees will be sufficient to attract them from over an area of one square mile. Not only will mulberry trees attract the redhead, but they will tend to greatly increase the bird population in general in the immediate vicinity, as these trees ripen their fruit over the entire breeding season (May 1 to August 10).—T. R. ADKINS, *Auburn, Ala.*