

**The Breeding of the Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher in Northwestern Iowa.—**

For the past two years we have heard the song of the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea caerulea*), and at various times have seen the songster from a distance, but until this summer (1931) have been unable to observe the bird closely.

This year we first heard the song the latter part of May. On June 14 we first saw the bird sitting in an ash tree some thirty or thirty-five feet above the ground, singing. The song, although faint, is a cheery one. In the many times we have heard it we have been unable to tell which notes were accented, but we are fairly certain that the second and fifth ones are. The song is very sweet, short, and often repeated. On this particular day, after singing its little song, it darted down from its limb and struck at the head of a female Cowbird as she sat with her mate on the branch below. As soon as it struck it darted back to its perch and sang again. This was repeated anyway a dozen times. Its movements were swift and as it sang each note the tail gave a little jerky flip.

An hour or so later I went out to the ash tree by the front walk and stood looking at the leaves through the glasses. Soon the little bird flew to a clump of leaves and alighted there for possibly fifteen or twenty seconds. Then it scurried down the limb for a couple of feet, and soon disappeared into another little clump of foliage just below the limb. Upon examining the spot more closely I discovered a tiny nest hanging in the fork of a branch some twenty-six feet over the sidewalk. At first the nest appeared to be empty. Then I saw a tail sticking out of it, and a little later a head peered over the edge. In the many times afterwards when we went out to look at it we always noticed that only the tail showed until our presence was discovered, when the head would appear.

On June 21 we first noted that the birds were carrying insects to the nest. A week and a half later I saw three young birds fly from the ash tree, and soon after they were in the elm south of the house. One of the old birds was with them. Since then I have not seen the young ones, but every once in a while the male could be seen sitting high up in one of the cottonwood trees, singing.—  
MARGARET L. WEIR, *Hawarden, Iowa.*

**Goldfinches Feeding Upon Goatsbeard Seeds.**—Mrs. J. M. Leen of Ray, Williams County, North Dakota, writes that she has been watching the Goldfinches feeding upon seeds of the goatsbeard (*Tragopogon pratensis*). She states that a friend observed as many as fifty birds in a flock feeding on these seeds. She sends a head of the plant in the condition in which they are taken. This agrees with my own observation on the dandelion, that some of the bracts are removed and the seeds picked out just before the head is ripe enough to open for the seeds to blow. The goatsbeard is abundant in North Dakota, especially in the central and western part, apparently becoming much more common and spreading eastward in recent years.—O. A. STEVENS, *Fargo, N. D.*