

This ride took in a circuit of twenty miles, and convinced us that though the number of resident birds to be met with in winter is very small, yet there is always the chance of meeting unexpectedly something very rare and desirable. We were also quite satisfied that while here the Pine Grosbeaks do not remain in the bush, but keep by the towns and villages where they find the berry-bearing trees and bushes, especially the mountain ash, which yields their favorite fare.

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## NOTES ON SOME OF THE WINTER BIRDS OF MASSACHUSETTS.

BY HERBERT K. JOB.

It has been my privilege for several years past to enjoy many opportunities for observing the habits of the birds found in Eastern Massachusetts, and being less engaged during the winter season than at other times, I have been enabled to become rather better acquainted with the birds found then than with those seen at other times. Last winter (1882-83) was quite interesting as regards its feathered creatures, and it is my purpose in this article to refer to such of our visitors during that season as may be of interest to the readers of the *Bulletin*, and also to give some notes relative to past seasons.

All collectors in this section must have noticed how promptly most of our winter birds arrived last year; so, although my subject is winter birds, I shall have to begin back as early as October. The 11th of that month brought immense flocks of Pine Finches, some flocks containing as many as three hundred individuals. They remained mostly in localities where cone-bearing evergreens grew more or less plentifully, and were abundant until early in November, when they suddenly disappeared. A few scattering ones were seen in February, but scarcely any until a short time since, when quite a number appeared in my garden in Roxbury, feeding invariably in a small row of larch trees. Many of them were single birds, and none were

seen in parties of more than three or four. A number were shot, but others kept coming. This was May 8 to 11 inclusive, since which time no more have appeared.

Horned Larks came October 20, followed in three days by the Snow Buntings. Both of these usually retire northward early in March, but on May 27, 1882, I started a Horned Lark almost from under my feet on a rocky beach at Scituate. No nest was to be found, and whether it was breeding or not, I cannot say.

Crossbills of both species arrived November 4, and were found sparingly until late in February. It was my good fortune a short time ago (May 12) to meet a flock of five or six Crossbills in a grove of tall pines in Brookline, from which I secured two White-wings (*leucoptera*), adult male and female. Upon dissection it was evident that they were not breeding. What could have brought them here at this time?

Ipswich Sparrows can at last be ranked almost as common birds upon our seacoast in the late fall. Last year I saw them first on October 28, in Boston Harbor, and for about a month found more specimens than I could possibly desire to shoot. The main body leaves us late in November, but stragglers are occasionally found during the winter.

The first snow fell November 17. I was on an island in Boston Harbor the next day, where I met with an unlooked-for bird. As I was crossing the island I was surprised to see a shore-bird running over the snow, beneath which lay a mud-flat, a former resort for such birds. I had no difficulty in shooting the stranger, which proved to be a Killdeer Plover (*Ægialites vociferus*). The day was bitterly cold, and although these birds are known to linger here quite late at times, it is surprising that the delay in the present instance was not fatal. A week before this,—on the 11th,—I secured a Short-eared Owl on this island, which started up from a potato field as I approached.

The Pine Grosbeaks were later than the other birds in putting in an appearance. The first, as far as I know, came on November 23; still they were scarce for a couple of weeks, but from that time up to the middle of February they were one of our most common birds. They then grew scarcer, but were seen until March 10.

November 25 brought the Snowy Owls, which were not uncommon during most of the winter, especially the early part.



I did not see any Rough-legged Hawks myself, but a friend received one from a farmer's son, which the latter had shot as it sat perched on the chimney of his house one cold day in December,—perhaps to get warm. Another good capture was a Hermit Thrush, which I took on Christmas day in a pine grove, in company with a flock of Robins.

I have been interested for the last few years in noticing the irregular movements of our Nuthatches in winter. One season both kinds were present; another followed in which the White-bellied species (*carolinensis*) was common, but in which no Red-bellies (*canadensis*) were seen. I did not see one of either kind during the whole of the next winter, but in the last the Red-bellies were abundant, while the others hardly occurred at all. The cold evidently does not drive them from us, for it is during the severest winters that they seem to remain. What then does influence them?

Last winter was, as all know, a very cold one, and considering this I was much surprised to learn from a friend that on January 3 he met with a flock of some five or six Bluebirds near his home in Sharon. The winter before would have seemed more favorable for their occurrence.

I wish now to speak of that season (1881-82), which was rather exceptional as regards its birds. The weather being very mild and warm, few northern birds were found as far south as this State, while on the other hand some of the more southern species, such as seldom remain with us during the winter months, were more often noticed. Pine Grosbeaks, Crossbills, and Redpolls were altogether absent, but in their place flocks of Purple Finches roamed about the country; also Goldfinches, Robins, Jays, Golden-winged and Downy Woodpeckers and other such birds were much more frequently seen than is usual. The Sharp-shinned Hawks seemed to take advantage of this state of affairs, and remained here in force. On several occasions I saw them in the densely populated parts of Boston, and once I saw one fly boldly up to the window of a house, as if seeking something within.

I do not remember having known of a Great Blue Heron here in winter before, but last year, late in December, I observed one on an island in Boston harbor, where it was feeding in a marsh. Happening to revisit the island about the first of January, I met

the Heron again, feeding in the same spot. Another bird that I did not expect to see was the Red-headed Woodpecker. Numbers of them had been seen during the fall, but about the first of December most of them disappeared. Still some remained, and were seen in Brookline during the entire winter, not leaving us until the middle of April.

On February 4, while a severe snow storm was raging, I met another straggler. This was a Fox-colored Sparrow. I never took one before in winter, and think that their appearance in that season is exceptional. Another one, the second that I have known of, was taken February 17, by a friend.

Of course, even in a very mild winter, no great number of birds such as I have just been mentioning are found. No one notices them except the collector, and he only a stray one or two now and then. Some other instances of such wandering it might be well to speak of. In January, 1880, a friend of mine was skating on a pond where a number of men were engaged in cutting ice, when he noticed a curious looking bird sitting on the edge of the ice in a rather dazed manner, not heeding at all the presence of the workmen. He went for a gun, returned, and shot the bird, which I ascertained was a Black Guillemot. There had been a severe northeast storm the day before, and the poor creature had evidently got lost.

Another victim to a northeaster was a Woodcock, one day late in November last. This incident was also observed by a friend, who while passing along one of the streets of Boston, while a gale was blowing and the snow falling thickly, saw a Woodcock shoot down the street, borne on the wings of the wind. The unfortunate bird passed within a few feet of him, rendering identification certain. Nothing more was heard from it, so it is probable that it escaped in safety from the city.

It is not an uncommon thing to meet Kingfishers where open water can be found inland. One was noted last February in Brookline, and I have known of one or two more in about twice as many years. Titlarks were an agreeable surprise on February 25, 1882, when I came close upon two as they sat perched upon a rock on Moon Island, Boston Harbor. On February 8, 1879, I found a flock of Rusty Blackbirds in Brookline, where they were feeding in a swamp, there being some ten of them in the flock. Then on the 20th. of December of the same year I saw a party



of White-throated Sparrows hopping about in a street, quite near a house.

This, I think, will suffice to show the freaks of some of our winter birds. Although our birds are pretty well known, yet, since they indulge in irregular movements in different seasons, much close observation is still needed to make us fully conversant with their modes of life.

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### LISTS OF BIRDS OBSERVED IN THE VICINITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO, DURING MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY, 1882.

BY J. A. ALLEN AND WILLIAM BREWSTER.

[The field notes of this List are based on the joint observations of Mr. Brewster and myself. The technical notes, in smaller type, are entirely by Mr. Brewster.—J. A. A.]

The area covered by the present list has a radius of about six miles, Colorado Springs being the central point. It therefore embraces the plains immediately adjoining the town, Austin's Bluffs to the northward, the Garden of the Gods, and that portion of Bear and Cheyenne Creeks between the base of the mountains and their junction with Fountain Creek. The places chiefly visited were the wooded bottoms of the two first-named creeks, and Austin's Bluffs. The broken ridges of the latter are scantily wooded with pines, and the intervening narrow ravines by oak scrub.

Excursions were made almost daily from April 7 to May 23, within which dates is included almost the whole period of the spring migration, few birds arriving either before the first date or after the second. The senior author also spent the month of March at Colorado Springs, and the summer at a ranch on West Monument Creek, about twelve miles northwest of Colorado Springs. A few notes are accordingly included respecting the occurrence of certain species of special interest from the fact that their breeding range does not extend below the base of the foothills. The