

of the same leaf. In this way it will be possible to cut apart your notes into slips and assort with others of same purport, so as to rearrange systematically. Do this for your own notes as well as those you send me: You will often realize the advantage of so doing."

It is unnecessary here to go into details concerning events subsequent to the beginning of this correspondence. Suffice it to say that in all his relations with Professor Baird the writer remembers, with deepest gratitude and reverence, his uniform great kindness of heart, his genial manners, his wise counsels, and his steadfast friendship; and, with others who were so fortunate as to have enjoyed the privilege of his acquaintance, he mourns a departed friend and teacher, whose loss is irreparable.

UPPER MISSOURI RIVER BIRDS.

BY ROBERT S. WILLIAMS.

IT is a bright morning on the 9th of May, and, with gun and game bag, I start out for a walk along the Missouri River above town (Great Falls, Montana). The wind, which has been blowing almost a gale for several days past, is this morning scarcely perceptible; a few fleecy clouds are in the clear sky above, and the prairies are rapidly changing their dull colors to summer tints of green. At a distance, the scattered cotton-woods stand up as bare and gray as in the depth of winter, and the willows scarcely show signs of returning life, except in the warm, sunny nooks, where they are rapidly assuming the misty green that will shortly envelop them and change their whole appearance.

On all sides the birds are doing their best to proclaim the arrival of another spring. In the distance are heard the loud and long-drawn out whistlings of the Curlew as he wings his way here and there over the prairie. Close at hand are Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs uttering their pleasing warbles. The latter bird is constantly flying rapidly upward for a short distance, then with wings motionless above the back, it sails slowly to the ground, reminding one of a huge butterfly,

and all the time singing so vigorously that one might suppose it had forgotten even the motion of its wings in directing all its energies to music. Shorelarks are about, with young almost able to fly, and the loud and well known song of the Meadowlark is heard from all directions, as the birds pause for an instant on some rock or post, or fly after their mates. A bird not so commonly observed, yet quite abundant, is the Missouri Skylark (*Anthus spraguei*), and its song, as usually noted far overhead, would scarcely attract attention from any casual observer, for all its wonderful melody when clearly heard. The notes more closely resemble those of Swainson's Thrush than of any other bird I am acquainted with, but the song is louder and more prolonged. Still another bird of the prairies, oftener heard than seen, is the Western Yellow-winged Sparrow. It is often so shy that one has great difficulty in approaching near enough for a shot. These last two species are recent arrivals from the south. The earliest date I have for the appearance of either is May 8, 1885.

Thus far the birds mentioned are observed while passing over about a mile of prairie, before reaching the river. As I approach some willows by the water's edge, the mellow, ringing song of the Ruby-crowned Kinglet falls on the ear, and directly the bird itself appears flitting about among the lighter sprigs. This species arrives during the first week of May, and breeds commonly in the mountains, but is never seen in the valleys except in migration. Its relative, the Golden-crested, I have only noted in the fall migration, and it is apparently a rare bird at all times. Brewer's Blackbirds, along with Crow Blackbirds and Cowbirds, stop their noise and scolding for an instant as I approach near them. Soon the willows are passed and I proceed along the river bank, which extends only a few feet above the water for some half a mile, to where the surface becomes broken by low sand hills and ridges that run parallel with the river for some distance, and are covered with a scant growth of box elder, cotton-wood, wild cherry, etc. Just before reaching the sand hills I notice three birds out in the river. They are making towards me and I hastily get behind a hummock where it is easy to watch their movements. From their color, large size, and especially the long neck held so upright, I conclude they must be the Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*), and such indeed they prove. While they are still far out of gun shot an American

Golden-eye comes flying low down over the water and plunges in, not twenty yards away. This bird is quite common here in spring. I have seen them as late as the 17th of May, but I have never noticed them in mid-winter. Barrow's Golden-eye is the common winter bird about the falls, etc., mostly leaving by the middle of April. Meantime the Grebes have been constantly approaching. Waiting till the one nearest shore dives I run down to the water's edge, while the Golden-eye hastily betakes himself off. The Grebe shortly coming to the surface affords a fair shot, and a single pellet passing through the neck kills him instantly. A second shot at the others simply causes them to drop suddenly out of sight, and they come up far out in the river. Wind and current shortly bringing the prize to land I dispose of it, and soon reach the brush and timber above. Violet-green and White-bellied Swallows occasionally pass overhead. The two species arrive together, within a day or two of the first of May, and are constantly associated throughout the season. Both have the same irregular flight, varying constantly in direction and swiftness, and were it not for the apparently white rump of the Violet-green, the two species would not be so easily distinguished on the wing.

Red-shafted Flickers are abundant. They have already paired and are busily arranging their summer homes. Only one other species of this family, a single Downy Woodpecker, was noted during the morning, although six or seven species are more or less common in the mountains. A few Yellow-rumped Warblers are flying about singly here and there in the cotton-woods and willows. The specimen shot proved to be *Dendroica coronata*, although in my experience *D. auduboni* is much the commoner bird of the two in the Territory, and is the one usually breeding in the mountains. Two Yellow Warblers (*D. aestiva*) are noted. They have doubtless just arrived, and in a short time the species will become common; also two Brown Thrushes are heard, for the first time this year. Other recent arrivals are the Western House Wren and Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus arcticus*).

Hearing a great noise and stir out in the river I walk to the bank and look across, and there, near a sand bar, two or three hundred yards away, is a large flock of Avocets. They are wheeling about, alighting first on the bar, then in the water,

keeping up a constant noisy piping. A few birds, at least, remain about alkali ponds on the prairies during the summer. A little farther up the river a flock of Shoveler Ducks fly past. Their every note and action is full of vigor, as they drop suddenly to within a few feet of the water, or as quickly rise upward, or wheel to one side, as if flight to them were only play. Farther on and the mellow, piping notes of some Green-winged Teal are heard from a bit of quiet water. The birds are so busy feeding that they do not notice my approach till within a few rods of them, when they quickly rise from the water and are off. Flocks of the males are to be found here commonly throughout the winter. As compared with this species, the Blue-winged Teal is quite rare, and is never found here in winter, I believe.

During the morning several pairs of Canada Geese are seen flying low over the prairies, to or from their feeding grounds. Small numbers of them remain throughout the year, and these apparently breed very early, beginning to lay even toward the latter part of March. Where the cotton-wood timber is heavy, the nest is doubtless sometimes placed in trees. I have seen the birds alight on large limbs thirty or forty feet above ground, although I never observed the nest in such places. The Mallard is another winter bird, many males, at least, remaining during the coldest weather. I have obtained their nest, with mostly fresh eggs, as late as May 24, though probably they sometimes breed much earlier.

As one of the small islands in this part of the river is passed, the cooing of many Turtle Doves comes across the water. Sometimes two birds begin and continue their notes in unison to the close, producing a curious sort of duet. The Doves arrived this year about May 5. They are common in nearly all the valleys, but I have never seen them in flocks of any size. Among Sparrows that inhabit timber and brush, the Intermediate White-crowned is abundant now. A week or so later none are found outside the mountains, where they breed commonly. The White-throated Sparrow, so like this in many of its habits, I have never seen in Montana except on one occasion. September 18, 1886, I observed a few along with the preceding species, in brush on lower Sun River. The only specimen shot was so badly torn by the charge that I was unable to preserve the skin. Song Sparrows are occasionally heard singing from some brush

pile or thicket. They arrive early, April or thereabout, and Grass Finches, which appear about a month later, are common everywhere. I will mention two other Sparrows, specimens of which I obtained this spring, though none were noted on the present occasion. One is the Fox-colored Sparrow, which seems to be of uncommon occurrence here, and the other Lincoln's Sparrow. Both are so retiring in their habits as to be readily overlooked. I have shot but two or three specimens of each in the Territory.

On returning to town shortly before noon, little further of interest is observed, as the ground traversed is about the same. It is still early for many of the smaller birds, some of which do not arrive till about the first of June.

AN ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS BREEDING IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

BY CHARLES W. RICHMOND.

IN treating of the fauna and flora of the District of Columbia, authors generally extend the limits twenty miles from the Capitol in all directions. Owing to the fact that his experience does not extend far beyond the District limits proper, the writer has preferred to restrict the present notes, as much as possible, to within that boundary. Some species are left out, therefore, which would otherwise be included. Among such birds are the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), the Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), and the Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*), which are known to breed at Mt. Vernon, Va., about fourteen miles from Washington; the Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*), and the Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*), breeding near Wilson's Station, Md., about seven miles from here, as the writer is informed by Mr. Frank White. The Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo borealis*) has been found breeding at Sandy Spring, Md., about eighteen miles distant, by Dr. A. K. Fisher.

Mr. Hugh M. Smith kindly contributes the following interesting note on the breeding of the American Scaup Duck (*Aythya*