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100 Years Ago in The Auk



From "Notes on habits of a few birds of Orange County, Florida" by D. Mortimer
(1890, *Auk* 7: 339):

Ceophloeus pileatus. PILEATED WOODPECKER.

The Pileated Woodpecker is among the birds most limited in the variety of their notes, and indeed its only cry seems to be the wild clatter that has been so often described. On one occasion I discovered a pair of birds of this species apparently at play amongst the trees of a dense hummock. Wishing to secure them, I shot the female as she clung to a broken limb on a large oak. The male, who had been making a great noise, was silent a minute upon the report of the gun, but directly began again, and at the same time flew about rapidly as if trying to discover his mate. Presently he alighted on the very limb from which the other had fallen, and then I fired at him in the midst of one of his outbursts. Although he fell, he did not pause in his clatter for an instant, but came tumbling down until he caught in some moss at a distance from the ground, where he continued to vociferate without apparently allowing himself to draw a breath. Very soon he fell to the earth, but became quiet only when I pressed my hand upon his lungs. It would seem that this bird must have felt pleasure, fear, and pain during the time I observed him, all of which he expressed by the same sounds.