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Catching Birds With a Camera.

WITHIN the last two or three years a great deal has been written on the art of photographing birds and their nests, but from all that has been printed not half as much may be gained as by a little experience in the field.

Hunting with a camera affords not only a pleasing pastime but encourages the closest study and its results are likely to be of considerable scientific value.

To be successful the photographer must have a good knowledge of the actions, ways and habits of birds. There is a charm in getting a good picture of a nest in its natural position that one does not experience in the collecting of eggs. There is a fascination in obtaining a good photograph of the bird in its wild state that one misses entirely when he uses a gun. Natural history picture-making shows a much higher development in a man's love for nature than the mere collecting



PHOTO BY HERMAN T. BOHLMAN.
YOUNG BREWER'S BLACKBIRDS.

of specimens to lie hidden away in some cabinet. Of course the latter is essential but not to such an extent as it is carried on by some people, while the former when it becomes more general will open up a much broader and more interesting field of work.

The difficulties of getting good pictures, as one will find by experience, are exceedingly numerous, yet the ability

is utterly incapable of showing some birds to any advantage unless a suitable back-ground can be secured. Besides the difficulty of back-ground there is always an equal one of getting the proper light at the proper time, and the subject is not very often found in a convenient place to take a picture. In a time exposure, which is often necessary, a slight move at the critical moment



PHOTO BY HERMAN T. BOHLMAN
YOUNG RED-SHAFTED FLICKER.

to overcome the many obstacles and secure a good representation of the subject places a just value upon the results. The display of a few good bird plates does not in any way indicate the amount of time that the photographer may have spent in getting them or the number of other plates that may have been wasted. Nature has provided her creatures with wonderful protection as to coloring and the camera

often spoils a plate. Collecting a good series of bird photographs differs from gathering eggs and skins, in that good pictures of even the commonest birds are still rare and so the photographer does not have to go far to find subjects for study.

The interest in bird photography has spread very rapidly in the east and many valuable pictures have been taken, but as yet little has been done among

the birds of the Pacific Coast. Mr. Herman T. Bohlman of Portland, Oregon, has been unusually successful during the past summer in securing some fine photographs of Oregon birds. He was especially fortunate in securing a good series of pictures of the kingfisher, flicker and bush-tit, also in his work among the sea birds of the Oregon coast. While out photographing with Mr. Bohlman last summer among other things we found a Brewer's blackbird's nest in a fir tree a few feet from the ground. We were attracted by the calling of the young birds as they were being fed, and decided they were large enough to make a good photograph. After considerable preparation we were just ready to take a picture of the nest and its occupants when the mother, thinking her children in too much danger, swooped down near the nest and gave a sharp call.

It was easy to see what that meant for the youngsters until then had re-

mained perfectly quiet, but at the loud command from the mother they all set out in different directions, each one flying as far as his wings would carry him. After a long hunt we succeeded in finding three of the four birds and placed them back in the nest where we caught their picture just as they were holding a consultation as to the next move.

Some of the most interesting pictures were taken of the home of a pair of flickers. The nest was found in the top of a stump when it was first begun and many different pictures were taken of the nest, parents and young birds. A good many plates were spoiled but a few good bird photographs well pay for the failures and for the time that has been spent. Anyone having an interest in birds can find no better way of gaining pleasure and information than by spending his leisure hours in the field with a camera.

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Some Winter Bird Notes.

BY MRS. C. A. MOODY, LOS ANGELES, CAL.

THIS does not profess to be a "paper," still less a scientific essay,—but a few hasty notes of bird life on our home place. This is on the Sycamore Grove Tract on what was evidently once the bed of a considerable river. The soil is light and sandy, the uncultivated parts appearing quite barren during a dry year.

From the last of September to this date (December 6,) the absence of birds about here was rather surprising to me. Possibly it was because we had only recently moved in and were strangers to them. The shrike and black phoebe I soon learned were daily visitors. The red-shafted woodpecker was often seen, busily drilling for food in the trees, while occasionally two others appeared, having conspicuous black and white markings, one with a red patch on the head. The latter I concluded was Gairdner's woodpecker and the other

Nuttall's, a species belonging to the ladder-backed group.

This day, however, they came in crowds and with a great clatter. The songsters were unanimous in declaring that it was an ideal morning in bird-land. A certain crispness in the air seemed to bring out the songs fuller and clearer. The linnets were to be heard above all the rest, so that the little goldfinches had to work very hard to be heard at all, while they flitted from branch to branch of the sycamore trees, picking at the tassellated balls packed so full of tiny seeds. Meadow-larks and warblers joined in the chorus and from the distance came the loud call-note of the red-shafted woodpecker, by way of letting us know he was still with us.

The shrike, usually so still and contemplative, caught some of the joyous spirit and rolled out now and then a