

thickest near the large end ; but seldom inclined to form a wreath. I have taken sets in which there was one pure white egg. The eggs measure .65x.58 to .70x.56.

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## THE BIRDS OF SOUTHEAST TEXAS.

PAPER No. 1.

BY JAS. H. RACHFORD, BEAUMONT, TEXAS.

Every year hundreds of people go to Florida to collect birds and birds' eggs, while Texas, with its birds, is as yet almost unmolested. Yet a wider and more diversified field nowhere in the United States presents itself to the collector than here in Texas. As yet we know little of the birds in this State. Every year some new bird is found here which is represented in scientific books as being only the inhabitant of Florida or some other particular locality ; as for example, the Florida Barred Owl and Florida Crow are said to be strictly local species of Florida, yet they both are abundant, and the most common birds of their kind in South-east Texas. Thinking that perhaps a detailed description of the birds here will be instrumental in causing some one to become interested in the study of our birds, the writer will try to describe some of them, and tell something of their habits, and the times when they may be found among us.

During the months of February and March, thousands of little winged journeymen stop to rest among us, and wait for the bright, sunshiny days of spring to chase away the cold of winter before they venture further north, where they make their summer home. These are known as the American Robin, and can be known as having their upper parts of slate color, with a shade of olive ; a black head ; eye-lids and spot over the eye white ; eyes dark brown ; bill yellow, often with a dusky tip ; the throat streaked with white, and the under parts chestnut. This bird usually goes to the Northern States to nest, building its nest, which is composed largely of mud, upon the horizontal bough of a tree, depositing from four to six eggs ; size, about 1.18x.80 inches, of a uniform greenish-blue color.

The next bird, which shall claim our attention, is the Mockingbird,

called by ornithologists, *Minus polyglottos*, meaning the many-tongued mimic. This bird needs no introduction, and we shall describe it but slightly, and try to bring out some of the points whereby the male or singing bird can be distinguished from the female. The upper parts of the adult male bird are ashy-gray; lower parts soiled white; wings blackish-brown, and the primaries, with the exception of the first, marked with a large white space, restricted on the outer quills usually to half or less of these feathers, but occupying nearly all of the inner quills. The female bird is similar to the male, but the color is less clear and pure; above rather brownish than grayish-ash; below, sometimes quite brownish-white, at least on the breast. In general, the clearer and purer are the color and the more white there is in the tail and wing, the more likely is the bird to be a male and prove a good singer. Usually, the female is smaller than the male. This bird lays a greenish-blue egg, spotted with brown, and builds its nest of twigs anywhere in trees or bushes.

Hopping around amongst the low undergrowth in the darkest portions of our woods, will be seen flitting hither and thither a brown bird about the size of the "Mocker," and one which almost rivals the "Mocker" with his song. This bird is known as the Brown Thrasher, more commonly called Brown Thrush and by some the "French Mockingbird." Its upper parts are uniform rich rust-red, with a bronze tinge; tail same color as back; under parts white, more or less strongly tinged, especially upon the breast and flanks, with tawny or pale cinnamon-brown, and throat immaculate, marked with a necklace of spots. This bird builds in low bushes or clusters of bushes, and builds a bulky nest of twigs, sticks and bits of bark and fibrous roots; lined with horse hair and a few feathers.

Flitting here and there from one tree to another and clinging upon the smallest branches of the trees, will be seen the Black-capped Chickadee, a small bird with the crown of its head, and its chin and throat black, separated by white on side of the head; its upper parts brownish-ash, and under parts more or less pure white or whitish. This little fellow builds its nest in hollow logs. The nest is composed of a soft mass of hair and fur, downy feathers and fine dry grasses.

[The above is the first of a series of some fifteen or twenty papers by Jas. H. Rachford of Beaumont, Texas, which are now being published in two Texas papers, one in Beaumont and the other in Houston. Mr. Rachford has kindly offered us the privilege of republishing

these papers, and they will appear in future issues of the O. & O. SEMI-ANNUAL. The object of these papers is to awaken an interest in Ornithology and Oology in Texas, and as they will contain a list of all the birds which pass through Texas as well as those that remain there, giving a brief description of each, their habits, etc., they will be of considerable interest to our readers, especially those residing in Texas. After the completion of the papers, Mr. Rachford proposes to publish them in pamphlet form. We will furnish our readers with copies as low, if not lower than they can be procured elsewhere. Ed.]

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### BRAINS OF BIRDS.

Mr. Park has kept a complete record of the weight of the brains of the birds mounted by him, and of the principal parts of the brain and the eyes. The following table shows approximately the relative weight of the brains of birds to the entire weight of the birds of the families found in the vicinity of Troy :

NAME OF FAMILY.	WEIGHT OF BRAIN.		WEIGHT OF BIRD.
Grebes,	1	to	230
Gulls,	1	to	155
Terns,	1	to	72
Petrels,	1	to	78
Ducks,	1	to	165
Bitterns and Herons,	1	to	138
Coots,	1	to	167
Phalaropes,	1	to	61
Snipes and Sandpipers,	1	to	75
Plover,	1	to	67
Grouse and Partridges, (including Prairie Hens)	1	to	240
Hawks,	1	to	86
Owls,	1	to	56
Cuckoos,	1	to	59
Kingfishers,	1	to	77
Woodpeckers,	1	to	34
Hummingbirds,	1	to	30