

## VOICE.

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The Flicker has a much greater vocabulary and more modes of expression than any other of our North American Woodpeckers, and while the contrast between its so-called song and the inspiring melody of our tree songsters is ever so great, its voice blends harmoniously with the many other voices and sounds of nature without which the hill, meadow and grove would lose much of their charms. Individuality now and then cropping out during and immediately after mating and the earlier part of the breeding season, appearing to be constantly varying and improving, seeking to give expression to its feelings.

Perhaps it is unwise to devote much space to this subject however enticing it may be, for but few have given enough time and thought to it to be classed as competent reporters; then the variability of the notes according to locality adds another difficulty. However, as its notoriety has been largely gained through its versatile voice, it would not do to pass over this fascinating study without an attempt to condense and render intelligible the notes in my possession. For brevity and convenience I have separated them under Calls, Conversational Notes, Common, Scythe-whetting, Flicker and Wake-up Songs.

**Calls.** The vocal call is usually high pitched and penetrating. It is a note characteristic of no particular season and when uttered in a startling shriek which may be heard at a distance of almost half a mile or subdued to a soft but impatient inquiry unnoticed a hundred yards away, it serves as a call or answer to comrade, mate or young, challenge to rival, or precedes the song as an imperative demand for attention. Ordinarily a *chu*, *ka*, *che-u che-ah*, or *chu-ah* in New York and Pennsylvania, and in the northern part of the first state often sounding like *clape* and *kce-yer*. In New England—*pea-up*, *ye-up*, *ye-a-up*, *yar-r-r-up*, *pee-up*, *kru* and *que-ah*. In Georgia

—*wake-up*. Missouri—*cheer*. Illinois—*flicker*. Iowa—*keel-yer*. There are evidently answers to all calls and it is a question whether one sex has a note not possessed by the other.—J. Newton Baskett. During a calm day it may be heard calling *clape* nearly a mile to windward.—H. E. Miller.

**Conversational or Soliloquizing Notes.** These are neither calls nor songs and are evidently not intended for the ears of the public, commonly a scanny, gurgling, almost involuntary *chur-r-r-r* as danger seems to threaten it when on the wing, or when flushed from the ground or just before a-lighting, which may be interpreted as a note of warning or announcement of arrival according to the circumstances. I have heard a low guttural *who-del* as it endeavored to balance itself on a slender branch immediately after arrival. At Wady Petra, Illinois, an old male who spent three successive winters close at hand, usually sat on the house roof for a time in the early morning. On December 1st, '94, he uttered an odd guttural call of *huck-a-woo'-ah* or again only *woo woo* evidently for his own edification.—Virginus H. Chase. At Croton Falls, New York, a low and soft *a-claupee* belongs exclusively to the nesting season.—H. E. Miller. From Ponkapog, Mass., we have another note: On September 12, '94, an adult and four young flew on a tree overhead, uttering a soft measured *sic-err* several times. While making these notes they seemed to be in a sort of ecstasy, holding the limb firmly, spreading their tails, drooping their wings, stretching their necks, pointing their beaks upward and throwing their heads this way and that in a quick, graceful manner, keeping perfect time to the notes.—J. H. Bowles.

**Common or Cackling Song.** This undergoes but few modifications, being a simple *ka* or *cuh* repeated more or less rapidly from six to thirty-five or more times in a loud full voice, rising and falling regularly as the notes are inhaled or exhaled. To correspondents in Massachusetts and Michigan its song sounds like *wet-wet-wet*, while to others in the former state it is *yip-a-yip* or *woit-a-woit*, and in Iowa *hee-chu*, repeated over and over again. Its song reminds me of that occasionally emitted from the throat of our common domestic hen, although the latter is a tame and feeble imitation in comparison. It begins in Southern Pennsylvania on the first

mild day in March and increasing in length, frequency and rapidity as the season progresses, with intervals of depression during cold or stormy weather, until about April 10th when it becomes monotonous, the notes often being uttered at the rate of four or five to the second; this continues until about the 20th, after which it becomes infrequent, much shorter and rather subdued in tone, until nest building, incubation and care of young claim its undivided attention and the song is restricted as much from caution as from any thing else, it is only semi-occasional until late in June when the young are well along; it revives once more for a few days in a brief early morning—5:30 to 7:15—or before or after shower song. As a cooler day appears in August or September it becomes more frequent and even lively, especially after a refreshing shower, but by the first week in October is heard no more. A careful observer at Perry and Madison, Wisconsin, has arrived at about the same conclusion, i. e., it begins the cackling song in the country previous to the towns, is more clamorous in the morning and evening, almost ceasing after it becomes well mated, and cropping out again in the months of August and September.—J. Eugene Law.

**Love or Breeding Songs.** The last three songs are essentially of this character. I am aware that some are mating notes only while the active breeding season claims others exclusively, yet I am unable to make such separation. The **Scythe-whetting or Rollicking Song** is probably a form of greeting as well as love, as it is uttered when two or more meet. It has been likened to the sound produced by the sharpening of a scythe, and is a sharp metallic *wich-cr, wich-ah, wick-ah, wee-chee, ka-wick, or co-flick* of the New England and Middle States; *quit-to* and *quit-tu*, of Ohio; *hurrick-ah*, of Minnesota; *tse-wet* and *chuck-a-chuck*, of Iowa, repeated from two to twelve times. The **Flicker Song** is so hopelessly entangled and interwoven with the **Scythe-whetting Song** as hardly worth recognizing as separate when all the localities are taken into consideration. The **Wake-up Song** is less frequently uttered, and is the same throughout the north, from Maine to Iowa, as an oft-repeated *wake-up, wa-cup, we-cup, we-cough, wick-up, wick-ah, or hick-up*, and in Georgia *chuck-up*; great emphasis being laid on one or the other syllables, usually the first. I regard

I APPEND TABLES IN ORDER THAT THE READER MAY OBSERVE THE PROGRESS AND DURATION OF THE SONG PERIOD AS WELL AS CORRELATIVE DATA FOR NEARLY TWO SEASONS AT BERWYN, CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA.

DATE.	NO. OF BIRDS.	WEATHER CONDITIONS.	COMMON SONG.	OTHER SONGS, CALLS, ETC.
1897				
March 22-3	3-5	Warm and cloudy.	Occasional, 6 to 10 notes duration.	Several drum calls
" 26	2	Cold N. W. wind	Throughout day. Not more than 6 notes	Call at 2 P. M. Drum call at 6 P. M.
" 30	6	Very warm. Fair	Frequent 6 to 10 notes duration.	Several drum calls
" 31	2	Warm, fair, brisk N. E. winds.	A trifle longer during day.	" " "
April 2	4	Warm, fair, wind N. shifting E.	8-12 notes repeated slowly.	" " "
" 3	4	Warm, fair, wind East	Loud, long, rapid and frequent. 12-35 notes	Wicker twice in succession. One or two calls.
" 4	8	Cloudy, mild, rain at 4 P. M.	Loud, long, rapid and frequent. 25-35 notes	Two calls. Frequent drum calls.
" 5	8	Rain until 10 A. M. Fair until 6 P. M.	Short and infrequent	" " "
" 6-7	2-2	Cloudy, some rain, cooler.	Longer and faster. 12-20 notes	" " "
" 8	4	Cloudy, rain from 1 P. M. to night.	Short	" " "
" 9-11	3	Rain and fog or fair and cool	Shorter and longer (P. M.)	" " "
" 12	2	Cloudy A. M. Fair P. M.	Much longer.	Wick-up frequent at 3 P. M.
" 15	2	Rain, cloudy.	Frequent. Monotonous.	Wick-up, wick-up and wicker common.
" 16	18	Fair, mild.	Frequent. Very long	Wick-up frequent. Calls common
" 18	9	Fair, warm.	Once in A. M. Frequent in P. M.	Wick-up several times.
" 20	7	Freezing A. M. Very warm P. M.	Shorter and fainter	Probably excavating nests.
" 21-26		Fair and mild.	Renewed, long and lively	Probably incubating.
May 1-10	5		Occasional, neither loud nor long.	
" 11			Increasing in force and length.	
" 12-26			Occasional early A. M. or before or after rain	
" 27-31			An increase.	
June 10	8	Fair. North breeze.	Frequent	Probably young well along
" 12-25			Infrequent	Wick-up once. Several calls
July 4-9			Infrequent. Short duration	
" 11-17			Short and broken, before 8 A. M. after 5:30 P. M.	
" 19-20			One short song	
August 1, 3, 16				Short wicker song

THE FLICKER.

DATE.	NO. OF BIRDS.	WEATHER CONDITIONS.	COMMON SONGS.	OTHER SONGS, CALLS, ETC.
1898				
February 10, 13	1-1	Fair, mild	At 7 A. M. 6-8 notes duration	Calls
March 16	2	Cloudy, mild	At 10 to 11 A. M. 6-10 notes after rain	
" 21	3	Rain, cooler	1 to 8 notes duration	Calls
" 27	10	Threatening, warm	All day, 6-12 notes, once 28 notes	<i>Ka-wick</i> and <i>lick-up</i> songs, calls and drums
" 30	4	Cloudy, warm	8 to 12 notes duration	Calls and drums
April 3	2	Cloudy, mild	Short and few	Short <i>Ker-wick</i> + P. M. Calls
" 8	1	Cold and blustery	" "	few calls
" 9	3	Fair, mild	More frequent, 8-20 notes	
" 10	1	Mild, showery	More frequent, 12-22 notes	
" 11	4	Mild, cloudy	Frequent, 12-24 notes	
" 12-13	2	Fair, warm	Frequent, 16-24 notes	<i>Wee-ep</i> song
" 14	2	Mild, raining at 4 P. M	Short duration	
" 15	1	Cold and windy	" "	
" 17	1	Fair, windy	" "	
" 18	9	" "	Frequent, 12-20 notes	Calls
" 19	2	" "	Frequent, 10-24 notes	Much drumming between mates.
" 20	12	Cold, showery	Infrequent	Much drumming. Nearly all appear mated.
" 21	14	Cold, windy	Common at any time, 16-32 notes	Drum calls
" 22	11	Showers and squalls	Less frequent	<i>Wicker</i> and <i>wick-ough</i> notes. Long drums
" 26	10	Mild, cloudy	Common, 2-30 notes.	Several <i>wick-up</i> songs. Drum calls
May 11	5		Frequent	Frequent <i>wick-up</i> songs. Much drumming
" 18, 23, 27			Short or silent	<i>Ka-wick</i> and <i>wick-ki</i> song at 6 a. m.
" 28, 31			Frequent	Silent except occasional call
June 1, 8, 17, 28			Not frequent.	
			Occasional, short duration	

this song as by far the most musical of any of its attempts in this line. On May 16, '96, I heard an apparently rare variation, a metallic *ka-wick-wick-wick-wick-wick-wick-wick-wick-wick-wick-ka* by the male while close to the nest.

Quite a number of birds have certain cries which might easily be mistaken for the Flicker's notes. Bendire and others mention the following: Groove-billed Ani, *Crotophaga ani*, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, *Coccyzus americanus*, Pileated Woodpecker, *Ceophleus pileatus*, Blue Jay, *Cyanocitta cristata*, Long-crested Jay, *C. stelleri macrolopha*, and Oberholser in "**Birds of Wayne County, Ohio,**" states that the imitation by the Cardinal, *Cardinalis cardinalis*, was so perfect as to almost induce an erroneous note book entry.