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Winter Birds Around My Home

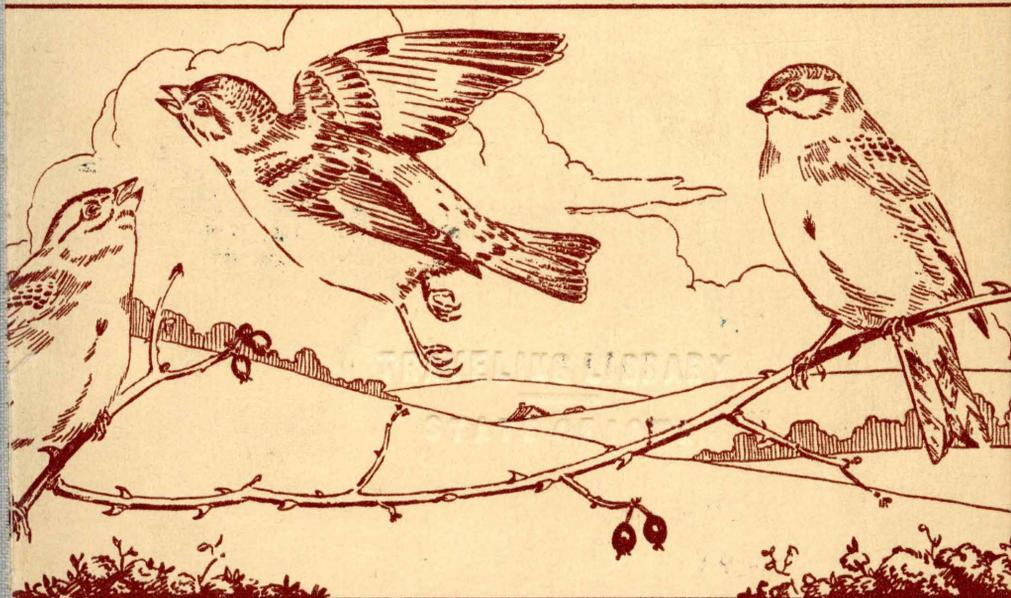
T. G. Scott

Iowa
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Winter Birds

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MAY 18 1944

ROUND MY HOME



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N A M E

COLOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Much of your success in coloring the pictures is determined by the color set. Colored pencils or hard crayons are recommended, for soft or wax crayons are apt to rub and smear from one page to another. It is advisable that the color set should include: dark red, light red, dark blue, light blue, yellow, dark brown, light brown, green, orange, purple, gray and black. The different shades may be obtained from a smaller set by pressing lightly for light shades and heavily for dark shades.

A plate which shows the outside parts of a bird may be seen on the inside of the back cover.

AUTHORS

THOMAS G. SCOTT,
Extension Service in Agriculture and Home Economics,

AND

GEORGE O. HENDRICKSON,
Department of Zoology and Entomology.

ILLUSTRATED BY SID HORN

Iowa State College
Ames, Iowa



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NEARLY everyone is attracted to birds, and would like to know something about each one. For the beginning of bird study, the winter months provide an ideal time. Although the birds are less numerous in the coldest season of the year they tend to become all the more noticeable. The few birds seen on a winter day are recognized more easily than the numerous ones seen during a day in the spring.

With the coming of winter, changes in the woods, fields and home grounds favor the observation of birds. The dense foliage which concealed them during the summer has fallen to the ground, and the bare limbs offer only the poorest of hiding places. Old Man Winter often completes the setting with a revealing background of snow. Those birds which were scattered by the summer nesting activities now tend to concentrate in groups near food and shelter.

With proper management there is no greater field for this beginning study than that which is found around our homes. Besides favoring bird observation, winter conditions also offer an opportunity to do something for the birds. During the winter months the birds often find the supply of natural food low and hard to get. More body energy is used up in their searches for food than they are able to regain. The hunger which they experience at this time makes them bold, and even the most timid will come to the feeding station for something to eat. A timely offering of food may save many of these starving birds from death and encourage them to remain in the neighborhood.

In order that you may be more successful in attracting birds some of their food requirements should be learned. Just as with man's food, the bird diet is made up largely of animal and plant matter. The amount of

Conservation work in Iowa is conducted by the Iowa State College Extension Service, Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station, Iowa State Conservation Commission and U. S. Biological Survey, cooperating with the American Wildlife Institute.

each is determined in part by the kind of bird, and in part by the availability of food. The supply of some natural foods such as insects is lower in winter, and others such as weed seeds are more plentiful. The birds must adjust themselves to these general conditions. The bodies of song birds have been formed to require certain amounts of daily food, and if such amounts are not available the birds must go to a place where they can be supplied or else be in a state of starvation.

Long ago someone discovered that many of the winter birds will eat suet. This food provides a good source of energy for the high body heat which the birds must maintain. The suet is a substitute for the plentiful supply of insects which the birds find so readily in summer. Some of the insect-eating birds which are attracted to suet during the winter are: Woodpeckers, Nuthatches, Chickadees and Kinglets. You will be able to enlarge this list of birds as they come to the feeding stations this winter.

Although beef or mutton suet is a low-priced food it should be put out in such a way that the larger animals cannot carry it away. This may be accomplished effectively by criss-crossing string around a piece of suet, and then suspending it from a limb. The suet should swing freely at least a foot beneath the limb. In this way it is readily available to the Nuthatches, Chickadees and Woodpeckers, but is not obtained so easily by the English Sparrows, Crows, cats and other less desirable characters.

Suet is often fastened to the south side of a tree trunk or post. The pocket-like suet holder, as shown on page 5, is a device used for this purpose. This little 4 x 6 box of 1/2-inch wire mesh is about 1 inch deep. Sometimes a square of this wire mesh is simply tacked to a tree over a piece of suet.

Some people have made use of the common wire soap tray in constructing a suet holder. The soap tray is placed upside down on a board and two staples are tacked over the wire edge on one side to act as hinges. A simple latch on the opposite side completes its construction. In order to be beyond the reach of a springing cat all of these suet holders should be at least 5 feet above the ground.

The plant matter found in the bird's diet during the winter is composed of many different kinds of seeds, berries and other fruits. Some of the

berries are of little value in supplying body heat, but they may serve as tonics or salads in the diet. Particularly the seeds of weeds and cultivated grains are good sources of material for body heat and other energy.

To supply seeds an automatic seed hopper, as shown with the window shelf on page 5, is highly recommended. The hopper is an improvement over other methods in that it keeps the seeds from being covered with snow or blown away. It is built upon the same principle as the feed hopper of the chicken house, and its making requires no great layout of tools or constructive ability. *It is shown here placed on window shelf*

Seeds of sunflower, pumpkin, millet, hemp, rye, barley and wheat are readily taken from the seed hopper. Cracked corn does not seem to be as attractive. Small weed seeds in the screenings from grain elevators and from seed-cleaning mills of the farm are very attractive to the birds. How many birds will come to your seed hopper this winter? What kind will they be? *grit water (no talking)*

While you stand in your warm room, peering out, you may make a good close range study of the winter birds at the window shelf. The shelf may be just a wide board attached to the sill, or it may be the finished product which you see on page 5 with a moulding and wind break. It should be located on the south or east side of the house and preferably near a tree. To increase its attractiveness, the shelf may even be decorated with a tree branch.

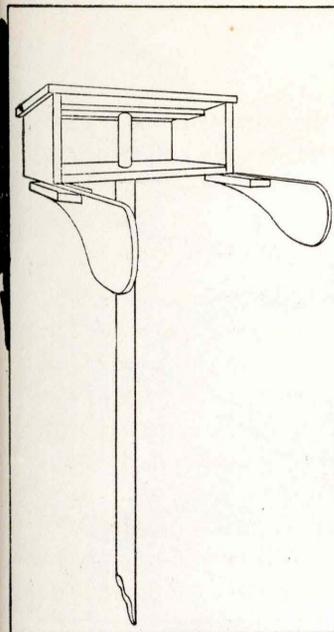
If the English Sparrows prove to be a nuisance around the window shelf, try to take advantage of their suspiciousness in controlling them. For example, one person fastened an extra board to the front edge of the shelf by leather hinges. By rubber bands attached to the top of the wind break and to the front edge of the hinged board, the board was made to spring under the weight of an alighting bird. The English Sparrows were frightened away by the spring board, but nearly all of the other birds hopped on over the shaky edge. If the unwelcome birds do learn to come in over the spring board a tap on the window will send them scurrying away. *700*

Another simple but effective feeding station is made from an old barrel. Only one end and one hoop of the barrel are needed. The end of the barrel

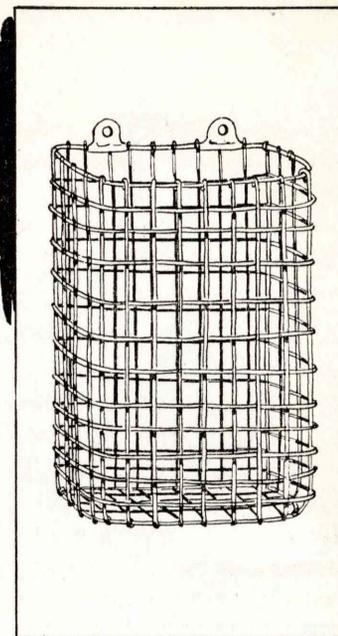
is centered upon a post, and the two halves of the hoop are criss-crossed over the top of it in a handle-like fashion. A canvas may be stretched over the hoops on the windward side, and a few boughs of evergreen should be fastened above the hoops. One disadvantage of this device is that the food may be blown away or covered with snow more frequently.

The weathervane feeding table is one of the most decorative feeding stations. Its stream-lined construction is illustrated on page 5. The inclosed part is centered upon a revolving point at the top of a post, and the fins are set far enough back of the open side to give it the right direction; hence the inclosed side always faces into the wind, and birds may feed with greater comfort. The windward side may be equipped with a pane of glass to admit light so that the inside is made more welcome to the birds. By placing a wide circular tin shelf around a wooden post several feet from the ground or by using pipe as the mounting post, the barrel and weathervane feeding tables may both be made cat-proof. The feeding tables should be at least 5 feet above the ground.

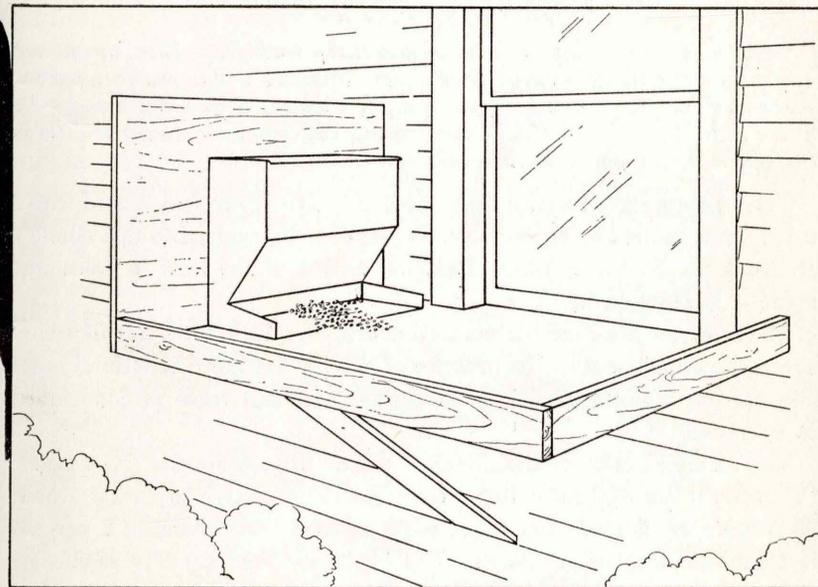
These attractions will bring many birds to your home, and when spring comes you will have become acquainted with many of them. Along with your observations perhaps you will have done some reading. You will recognize some birds as valuable to man and a few as being detrimental. In other words, you will be acquainted with the birds which are to be protected and with the methods that will save them. Your provision of food and shelter for the useful birds is an important part of intelligent conservation.



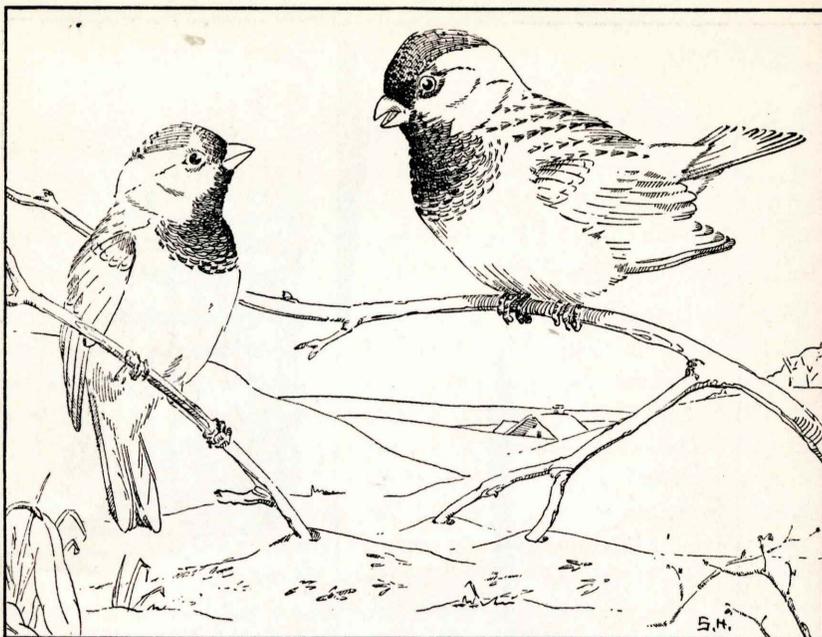
Weathervane feeding table.



Suet holder.



Window shelf feeding station.



2/5 natural size

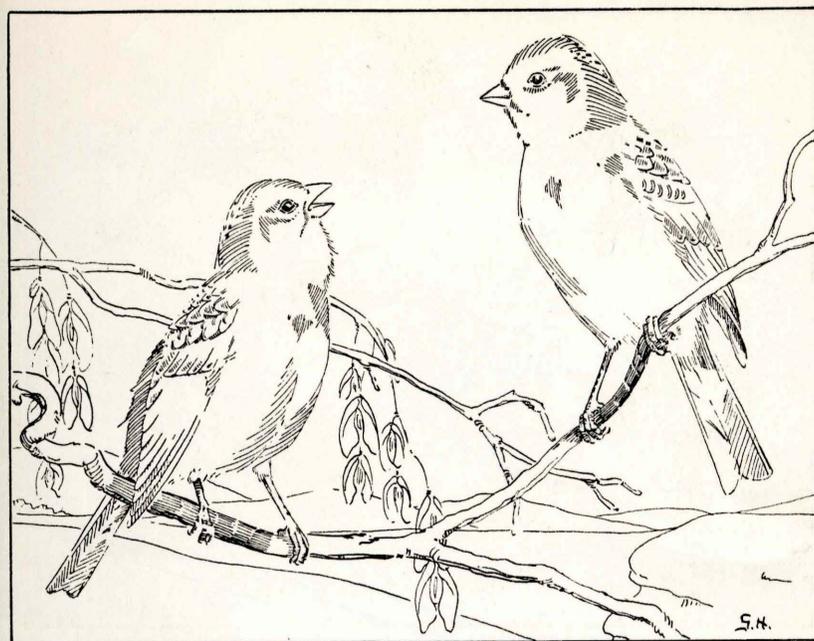
English Sparrow

Color directions: Top of the head and rump dark gray; chin, throat and upper breast black; back of neck, back, tail and wings reddish-brown; patch at side of head and neck and wing-bar white; breast, belly and sides gray; bill, feet and legs black; eye brown. The female is duller and lacks the black throat patch of the male.

The scrappy little English Sparrow is a native of the Old World where it is known as the House Sparrow. It was first introduced to this country at Brooklyn, N. Y., in 1850. The first record of the bird in Iowa was made at Burlington in 1870.

The Sparrow is an industrious and courageous little bird, but its living habits are objectionable. Its practice of driving out more beneficial birds and defiling buildings with its droppings and nest trash is condemned by everyone.

The feeding habits of the Sparrow are of little economic importance. Primarily it is a seed eater, but at times it will eat nearly anything. About 98 percent of its food consists of plant matter; the remaining 2 percent is composed largely of insects. The bird may feed entirely within its rights, and again it may become a pest by feeding extensively upon fruit, seedlings, grain and vegetables.



1/2 natural size

Tree Sparrow

Color directions: Forehead, crown and streak back of the eye reddish brown; back and rump streaked with reddish-brown, dark brown and gray; two bars on wing white, in front of bars reddish-brown; spot in the middle of the breast dark brown; rear half of wing and the tail dark gray; sides marked with reddish-brown; throat, neck, breast, and belly gray; bill light yellow below, soft black above; legs and feet grayish-brown; eye brown. Female similar.

About the time the autumn frosts hit the north country the Tree Sparrows begin to move south. Many of them stop to spend the winter in weed patches and thickets on sunny slopes in Iowa.

These energetic little seed hunters appear to have two songs. While they are busy working on the ground of the weed patch they sing one known as the "whisper song," but occasionally a soloist hops to the top of a weed stalk and gives out a loud sweet warble. This weed patch chorus is really worth going out to hear.

The bird is an important seed-eater. In Iowa, 98 percent of its food is largely of seeds and 2 percent is of fruits and insects.



1/3 natural size

Slate-Colored Junco

Color directions: Belly, outer edges and under parts of tail white; sides ash gray; head, neck, breast, back, rump, wings, upper parts of tail dark gray; bill flesh-pink; feet and legs grayish-brown; eye reddish-brown. Female similar, but duller and less white.

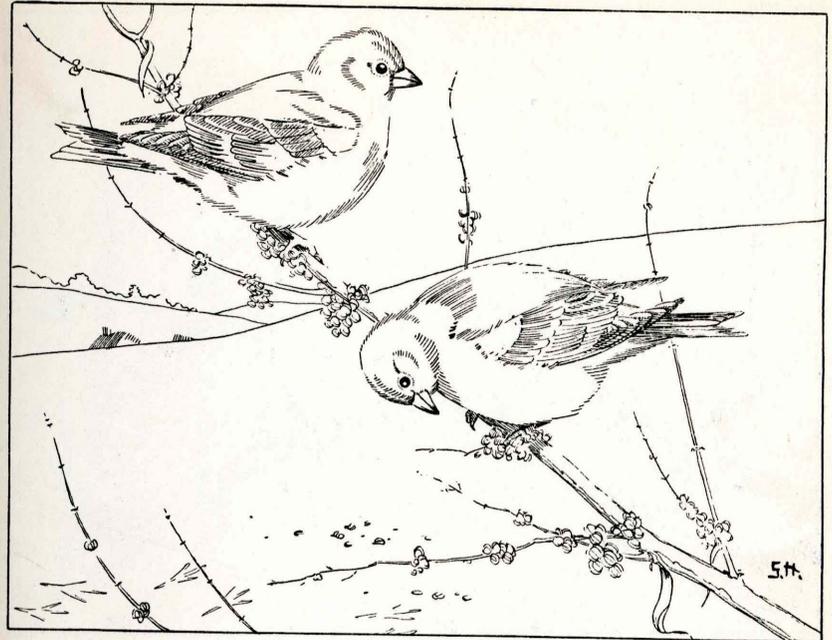
In the fall the Juncos leave their summer nesting grounds in the north and go south to find a winter home. Many of them stop off in our state to await the coming of spring.

They may be seen swarming over a weedy fence row or brushy corner in flocks of 10-100 birds. The flashing of the white outside tail feathers as the birds flit about helps to identify them. No matter how cold or gray the day may be the Junco is there in cheery, twittering flocks.

While they are working on the ground of a weed patch they give out a whispering warble. When alarmed or startled from their work they make a hissing sound.

Seeds make up 78 percent of its food and the remaining 22 percent is largely insects. The Junco prefers to find its food on the ground, but when the natural food gets scarce it may be seen at the feeding stations.

Late in February the Juncos begin to get restless, and by March they are moving off to the north country.



2/5 natural size

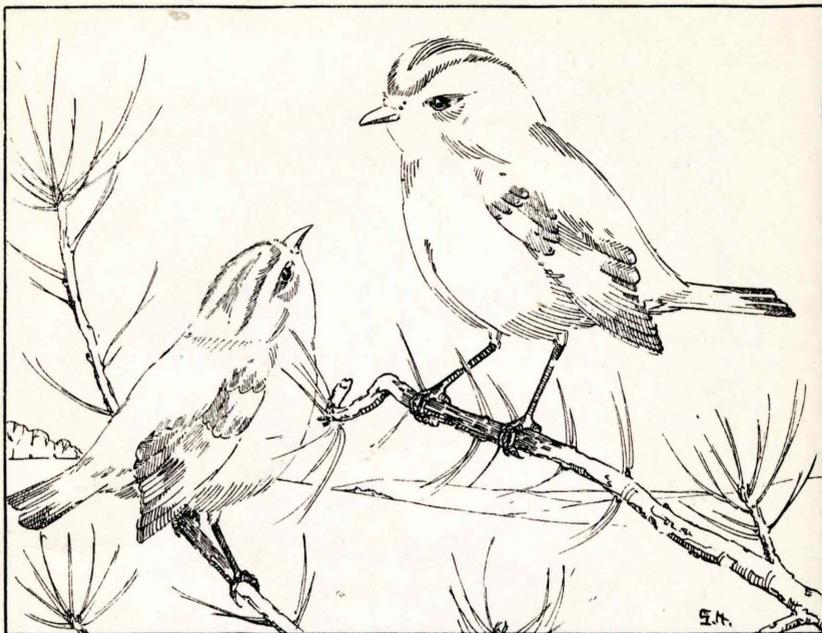
Goldfinch

Color directions: Back and rump olive-brown; head and neck olive tinged with yellow; patch at front of wing yellow; wing black with white bars and white edges of main feathers; tail feathers black with white edges; sides, breast and belly yellowish-gray; legs and feet light brown; bill yellowish-orange; eye brown. This description is typical of the male bird in winter. The female is similar in color but lacks the yellow patches in front of the wings.

The Goldfinch is known to everyone as the state bird of Iowa. People in southern Iowa see many of these little birds working about the weed beds. They enjoy companionship and usually travel in flocks or pairs. So many birds may cling to one weed that it bends to the earth with their weight.

It is often called the "wild canary" because of its coloration and canary-like song. The winter flocks of Goldfinches sing but very little and then only softly.

The food of this bird is almost entirely seeds. It is especially fond of thistle seeds, and its close association with this plant gives rise to the name of "thistle bird." Sometimes the birds may be seen in the orchard searching for insects and their eggs.



5/8 natural size

Golden-crowned Kinglet

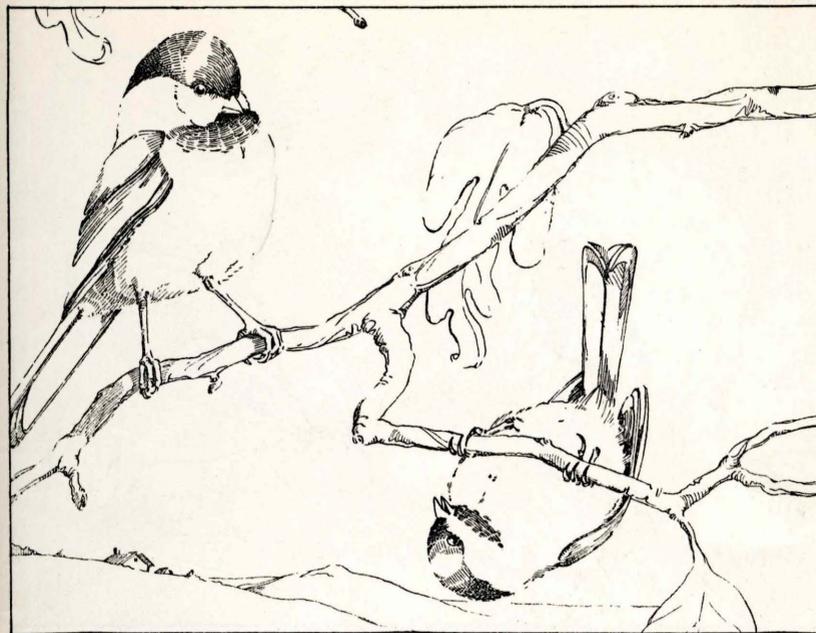
Color directions: Back, neck and streak in front and back of eye olive-green; crown with red streak down middle, red streak bordered by yellow, the yellow bordered by black and the black bordered by white; streak below eye and two bars on wings white; chin white; breast and belly gray; bill black; legs, feet and eye brown. The female is similar in marking except that it lacks the flaming red patch in the center of the crown.

In the autumn the Golden-crowned Kinglets move southward in little bands, and a few remain for the winter in Iowa. They are the smallest of our winter birds and one of the most active.

They seem to prefer the protection of the evergreens during the winter and may be seen nervously flitting about the ends of the branches in search of scale insects and mite eggs.

Most of our winter birds have a large part of their food composed of seeds, but this is not true of the little Kinglet. Insects are about the only things that it will eat. It seems logical to expect this fellow to be a regular caller at the suet holder.

Spring finds these little birds leaving for the north.



1/2 natural size

Black-capped Chickadee

Color directions: Top and back of head, chin and throat black; side of the head from the base of the bill to the neck white; back and rump gray; breast and belly white with a tinge of buff on the sides; wings and tail gray; bill black; legs and feet bluish-gray; eye brown. The female is like the male in color.

The Chickadee is just bubbling over with cheerfulness, courage and industry. Even on the very coldest days this little bird is happily singing "chic-a-dee-dee," and it may stop its bustling about the bushes and trees long enough to sing "phee-be."

Although it remains in Iowa the year around, the number of these birds seems to increase during the winter.

Its feeding habits along with its extreme optimism have made the Chickadee the finest little bird in the land. Like the Kinglet its diet is almost entirely insects, spiders and their eggs picked off branches of trees. So you may expect it to be a frequent caller at the suet holder. Ten trees may be inspected by this black-capped hustler, while larger birds work on one.



2/5 natural size

Brown Creeper

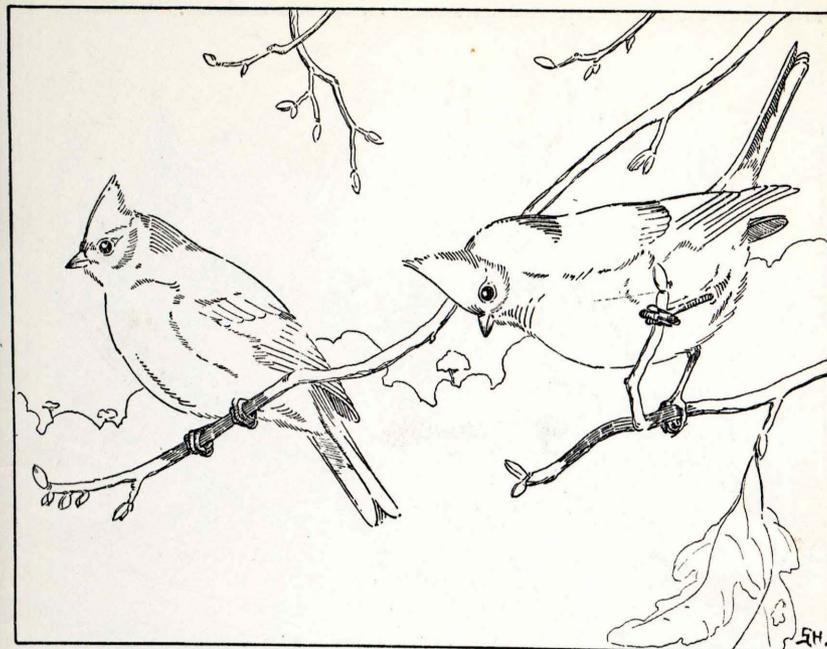
Color directions: Head, back and rump brown, thickly streaked with white and dark brown; tail feathers brown; wings brown crossed by two white bars; sides and under parts from bill to base of tail white; sides of neck and head mottled brown and white; bill, legs and eye brown. Female similar.

The Brown Creepers move southward when the weather begins to chill, and some of them often stop to spend the winter with us.

This slender bird seems to spend all of its time in an endless scramble. It is not often seen, but when you see a small brown bird traveling spirally up a tree trunk by little hitches, now and then stopping to inspect the bark, you may expect it to be the Brown Creeper. The tail feathers are long and stiff, making a trusty prop for each stop.

They call to one another with faint notes which sound like "seet-seet-seet."

Like the Chickadee and Kinglet, food of the Brown Creeper is almost entirely composed of insects and their eggs. Its sharp eyes and rather long curved bill make fine equipment for finding and removing the insects and their eggs from the bark. When food gets scarce you may see this bird with the other insect eaters at the suet.



1/2 natural size

Tufted Titmouse

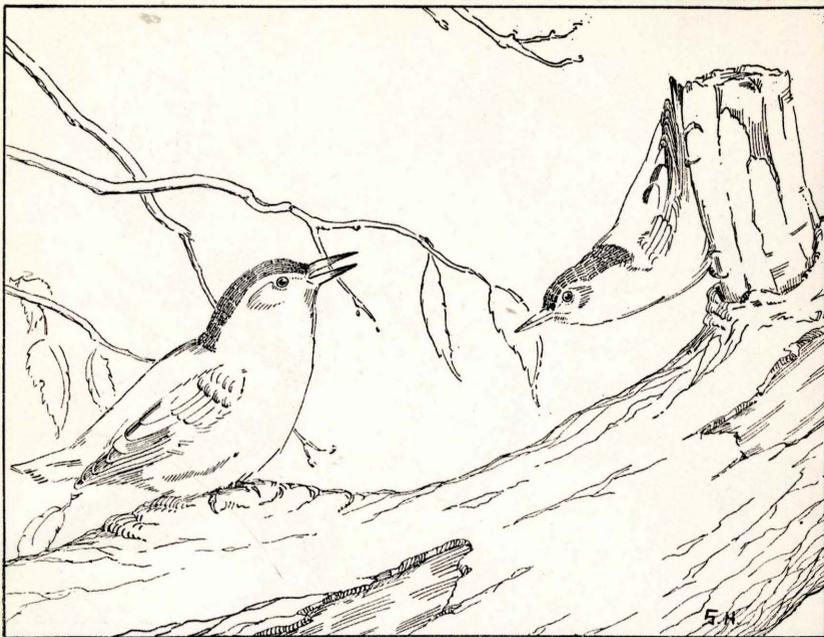
Color directions: Forehead black; crest, back of neck, back, rump, wings and tail lead gray; lower part of side of head, throat, breast and belly grayish-white; sides buff; legs and feet lead gray; bill black; eye dark brown. Female similar.

The Tufted Titmouse is now a common resident of the woodlands and orchards of southern Iowa as a result of its gradual movement northward from its original home in the south.

The color of this active little bird matches so thoroughly with bark that it is very hard to see. You will have better luck in finding them by listening for their loud whistled call notes, "pe-to, pe-to," which are similar to the Cardinal's "what-cheer" call. They may also call "de-de-de" like the Chickadee, but with a louder and harsher tone.

The food of this bird has been calculated as 66 percent insects, and 34 percent weed seeds. The percentage of insects in the diet probably falls off very noticeably in the winter, but the birds will satisfy the need of animal matter from the suet at the stations.

Sometimes it is called the "top-knot-bird" for the little gray crest on the top of its head.



1/3 natural size

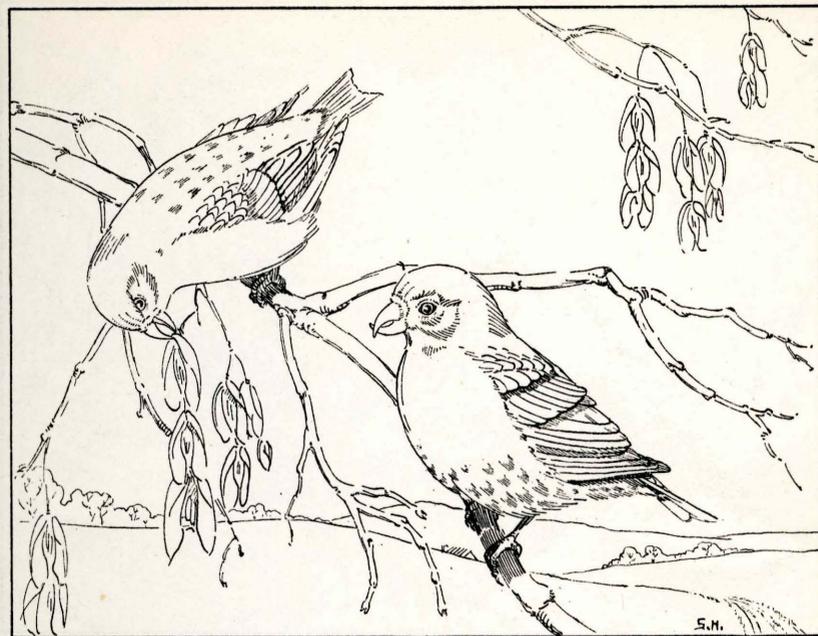
White-breasted Nuthatch

Color directions: Forehead, top of head and back of neck black; side of head, neck, breast and belly white; sides and under parts of tail white, tinged with reddish-brown; back and rump bluish-gray; wings bluish-gray, inner feathers marked with black; two middle tail feathers blue-gray; the remaining tail feathers black with large white tips; bill bluish-gray; feet and legs brown; eye dark brown. The female is the same in coloration.

This small woodpecker-like bird may be seen scrambling about over the bark of a tree apparently as much at home as a fly. It is the only bird which comes down the tree regularly with its head foremost, and because of this some people call it the "Upside-down-bird." Other tree-climbing birds must fly down and then hop up the bark.

They "hatch" or hammer open soft-shelled nuts like the Blue Jay does except that they stick the nut into a crevice instead of holding it with one foot while hammering. *longer bill*

In summer their food is composed largely of insects, but in the winter when the insects get scarce they eat such food as acorns, and grain instead. They are here all year.



1/3 natural size

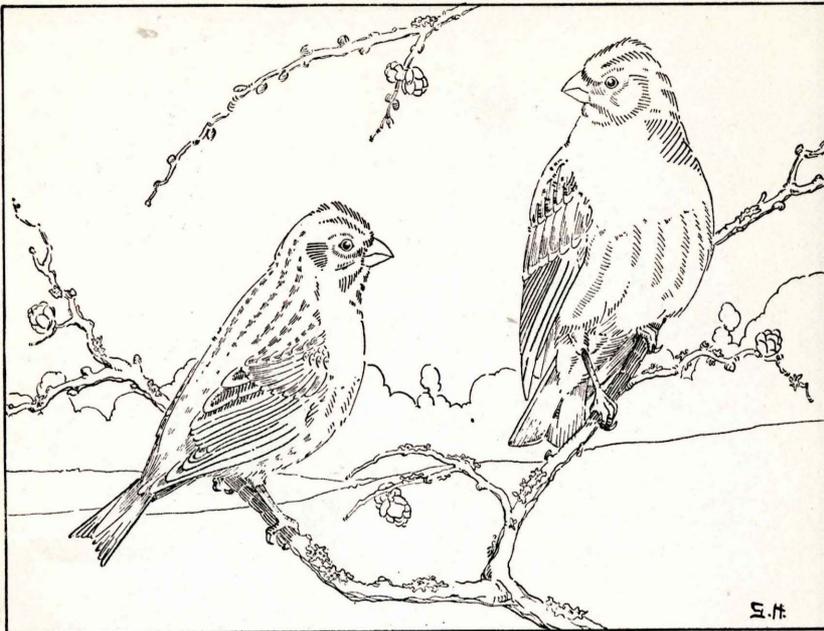
Red Crossbill

Color directions: Head, neck, back, rump, breast, sides, and belly red; wings and tail blackish-brown; legs and feet dark brown; eye brown; bill grayish-brown. On the female olive-green displaces the red of the male.

This highly colored bird is unusual for Iowa. Sometimes it comes in from the north in flocks when winter sends a severe cold spell. Perhaps its appearance in Iowa forecasts a cold winter.

The food is largely composed of seeds and buds of evergreens with some weed seeds and wild fruit. With the peculiar crossed bill it is able to tear open the toughest pine cones. The most careless observer may be attracted by the racket which a flock of these birds make while tearing open pine cones. At times they are very trustful and you may approach them very closely. When they are frightened off they will fly away calling a keen "pip-pipe, pip pip-pipe." Late in the winter they may be heard singing a song much like that of the Goldfinch.

The actions of this bird have been branded as "queer." It has been known to start constructing a nest in the middle of winter. Perhaps you will observe this bird doing some unusual things.



1/2 natural size

Purple Finch

Color directions: Head and neck bright red; back reddish-pink, mottled with dark brown; rump red; tail blackish; small area beneath the eye gray; wings blackish with two white bars; breast red, fading to pink on sides and on belly; eye, bill, feet and legs brown. Female brownish over back, streaked brown and gray beneath.

Late in the fall flocks of these birds leave their northern summer homes and fly south. Occasionally some of them remain through the winter.

The name "Purple Finch" is perhaps a little off color, for the bird is really a deep red. In New England the Purple Finch is often called the Linnet. This name was handed down by the old English settlers who recognized a similarity in the singing of this bird and a bird known as the Linnet in England.

The Finch will come to the feeding stations, and will repay the feeder with a song in the autumn and spring. The bird is more or less silent during the cold winter months.

During the winter the Finch lives upon wild fruits, berries, weed seeds and tree seeds. Its food preferences seem to be juniper berries, sunflower seeds and the seeds of white ash. The sunflower seeds seem to be the best to try at the feeding station.



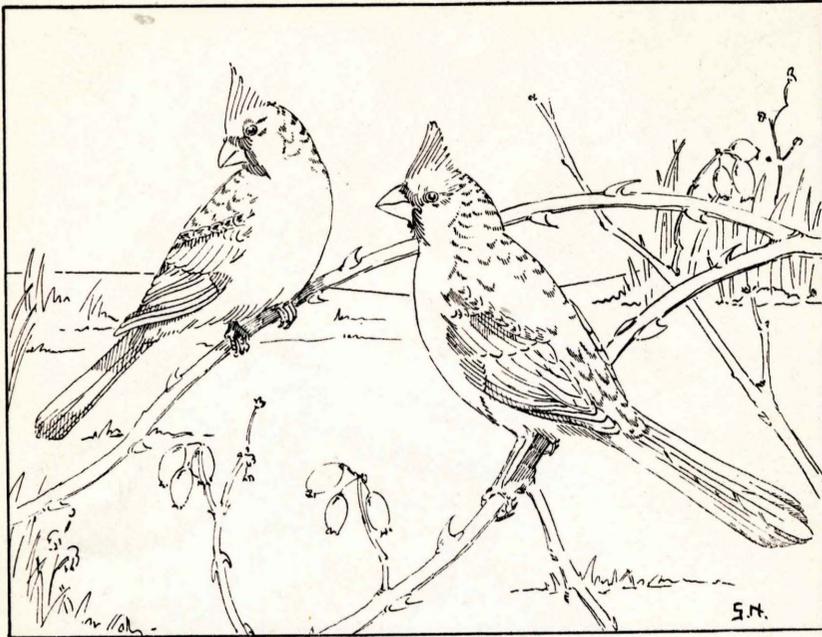
3/8 natural size

Cedar Waxwing

Color directions: Chin black; black strip between eyes and above the back of eyes; white line between black chin and black eye strip, extending upward back of eye; thin white line between crest and black eye strip; crest, neck and back olive-brown; breast and sides olive-brown, shading out to a yellow belly; underside of tail white; narrow band at end of tail yellow; often small red spots at end of middle wing feathers; bill, feet and legs black; eye dark red or brown. The female is similar.

The trim, sleek Waxwing is an attractive winter bird. It remains in Iowa the year around and may be seen traveling about the country in flocks while searching for wild fruit.

During the winter they feed extensively upon the red cedar berries; this is how the Cedar Waxwing acquires a part of its name. Seventy-four percent of the Waxwing's food is composed of fruits and seeds. Some of the food which it consumes, other than the berries of red cedar, is berries of mountain ash, haw, sumac, hack-berry and choke cherry. The birds are frequently seen sitting upon a limb all facing in the same direction and passing berries to one another. Because of this action they are often called "polite birds."



1/3 natural size

Cardinal

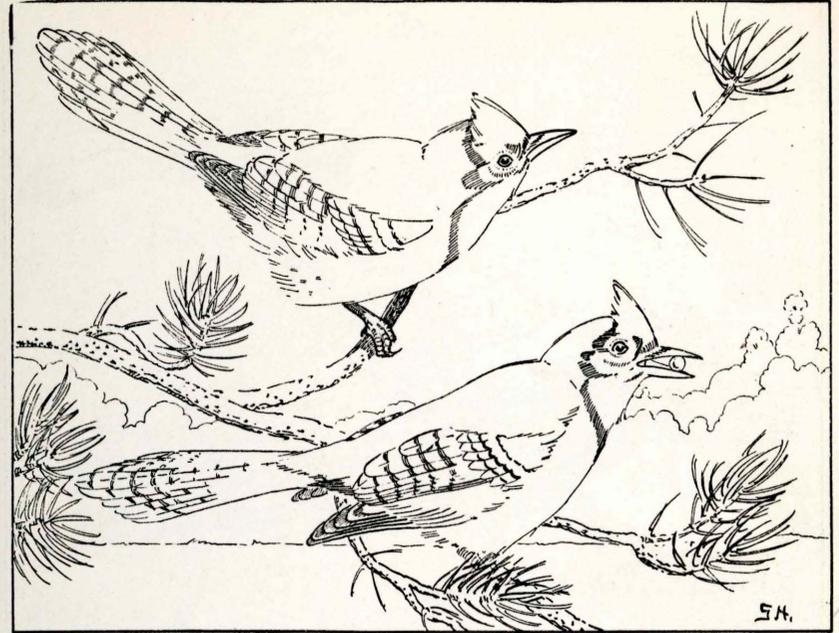
Color directions: Around the base of the bill and on chin black; remainder of head, breast, sides and belly red; back, rump and tail brownish-red; bill orange red; feet and legs dark brown. The female is a rich brown with a reddish tinge to the head, wings and tail.

Although the Cardinal has come but recently into Iowa it may be seen everywhere, and remains throughout the entire year.

These birds are usually found in the underbrush of the woodlands. A rare picture is that of an old Cardinal sitting in a spruce thicket all puffed up to keep warm during a snowstorm.

The varied songs of the Cardinal are heard almost as much in the winter as they are in the summer. Its most characteristic song is a shrill, whistled "What-cheer, What-cheer." It is interesting to note that the female also has a song, which is like that of the male except that it is not so shrill and perhaps a little more musical.

The Cardinal's staple food during the winter is composed of various seeds to which fruit and insects are added. They prefer to feed upon the ground, but they may come to the feeding station.



1/4 natural size

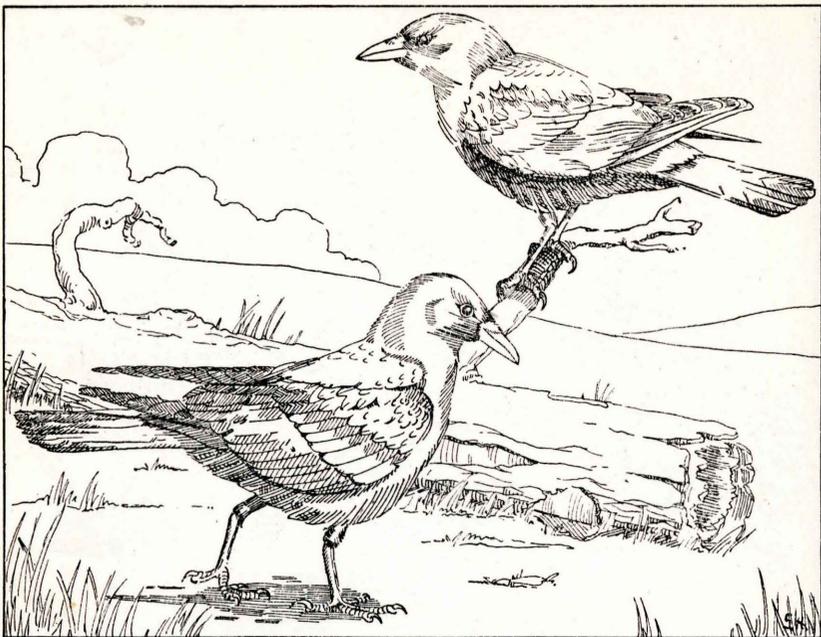
Blue Jay

Color directions: Around and below eye, on chin and throat bluish-gray; at base of bill a line with a V-mark at each end black; irregular ring around head, and neck black; crest, back of neck, back and rump purplish-blue; wings bright blue with white bar across the wing about one-third of the way back and tips of feathers at back of wing white; corners of tail white; rest of the tail bright blue with black bars; breast and sides dusky gray; belly white; bill, feet and legs black; eye dark brown. The female is similar in color.

The shrewdness and craftiness of this colorful bird is almost as well known as that of the Crow. It remains in Iowa throughout the year.

The big fellow is a great mimic of other birds, but its characteristic song is a harsh "jay-jay," or "thief-thief."

The Jay will eat nearly anything, but 75 percent of its diet is composed of nuts, fruit and grains; the other 25 percent is composed of animal matter. It has a bad reputation for eating cultivated fruit and eggs of smaller birds. A habit which this bird has of burying all surplus food is given credit for the reforestation of some areas.



1/6 natural size

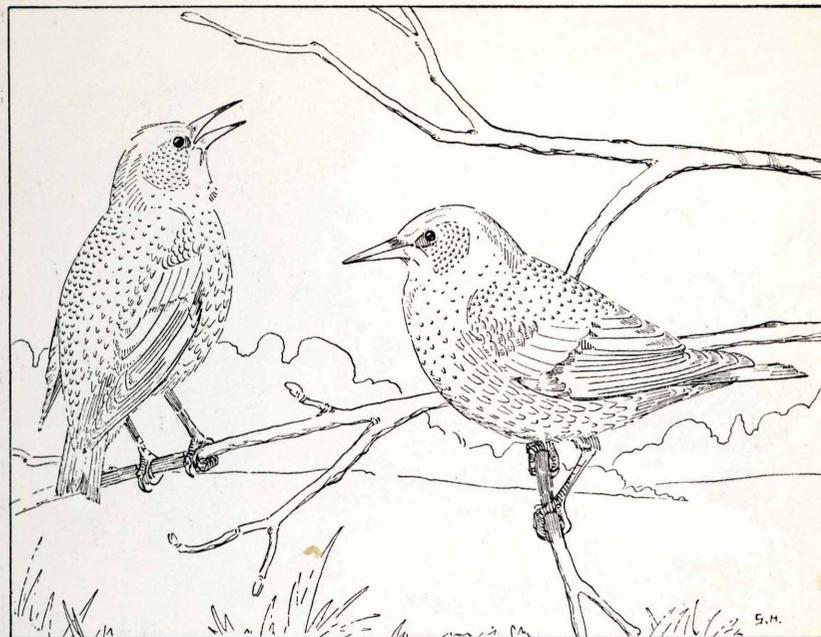
Crow

Color directions: Entirely black; iridescent with purplish, bronze and green when seen at different angles in bright sunlight.

Everyone is familiar with the Crow and the great amount of writing which has been devoted to it. If nothing else this bird might be called a victim of publicity, for some of the feats which it accomplishes are little short of miraculous.

The ability of this crafty creature to perform such misdeeds as eating bird eggs, pulling corn and the like is due to its high degree of social co-operation. Although these birds are with us all year they are seen at their best in the large flocks which form in groves during the winter. The groves which house the flocks become known as roosts or rookeries. Some observers have estimated such flocks to contain as high as 300,000 birds.

While the Crow is admired for its shrewdness, it is often unwisely condemned for its feeding habits. Food studies show that the food of this bird (over a period of a year's time) will be composed of approximately equal parts of vegetable and animal matter. Its feeding habits may be bad at times, but the wise agriculturist will investigate the habits of the Crow in his own neighborhood before wasting ammunition on it.



1/8 natural size

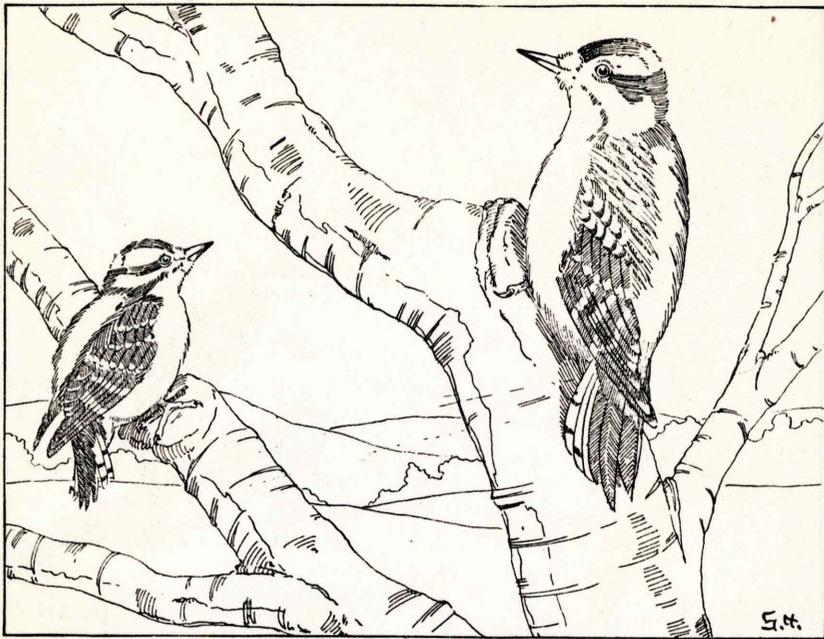
Starling

Color directions: Head, back of neck, side of neck, back and rump blackish speckled with buff feather tips; front of neck, breast, sides and belly blackish speckled with white feather tips; the metallic reflections are greenish in the face region, purplish on neck, and greenish on the back and breast; wings and tail greenish-black with buff edged feathers; bill blackish, yellowing toward the face; eye dark brown; feet and legs reddish-brown. The female is similar but duller in color.

This bird like the English Sparrow is not a native of this country. The Starling was introduced into this country in 1890 at New York, and was first reported from Iowa in 1922.

The Starling remains with us throughout the year and has become very masterful at finding places sheltered from the winter's cold. In order to keep its feet warm one Starling was seen in a barn roosting on the back of a cow.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture has estimated that 57 percent of the food is composed of animal matter and the remaining 43 percent is of plant matter. The same report showed that only 6 percent of its food was taken from the cultivated fields. Its habit of driving out other birds is an undesirable trait.



1/2 natural size

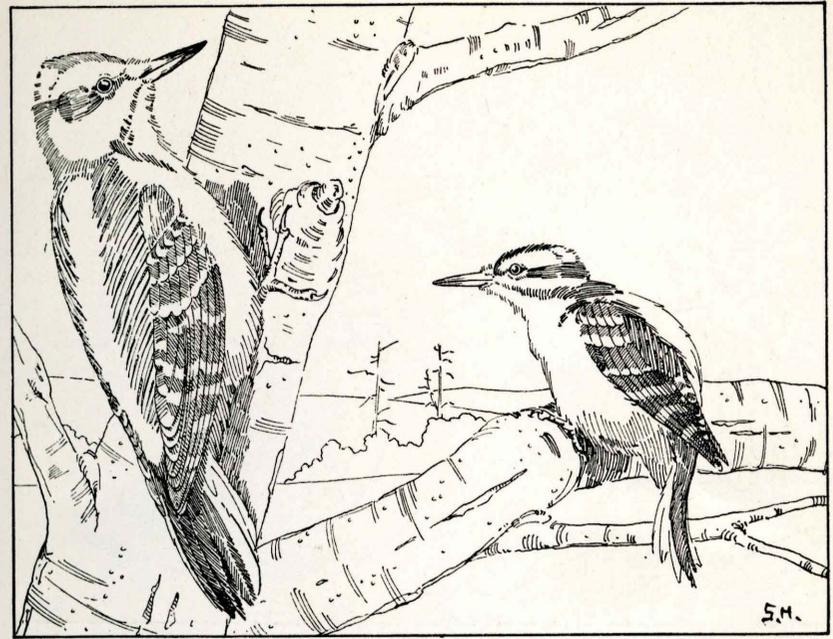
Downy Woodpecker

Color directions: All of the shaded areas on the illustrated bird are black; the remaining areas are white except for the red patch on the back half of the white streak which starts from the eye; bill bluish-black; legs and feet bluish-green; eye dark red. Female similar, but black displaces the red spot.

This little bird, the smallest of our woodpeckers, is a common resident of Iowa. It is an industrious worker and may be seen searching the orchards, scattered shade trees and forest trees or fence rows for insects.

Perhaps it is interesting to learn that the bird spends its nights during the winter in cavities of trees. One observer noticed that a particular Downy Woodpecker went to its winter sleeping quarters every evening between 4:12 and 4:30, and left in the morning from 7:00 to 7:20 o'clock. This fellow apparently doesn't have to worry about getting the proverbial worm.

The natural food of this bird is largely insects with some fruit and nuts. By placing its head close to the tree, the bird can hear the borers working beneath the bark, and thus can locate a supply of food into which the Chickadees and Nuthatches can't drill.



1/3 natural size

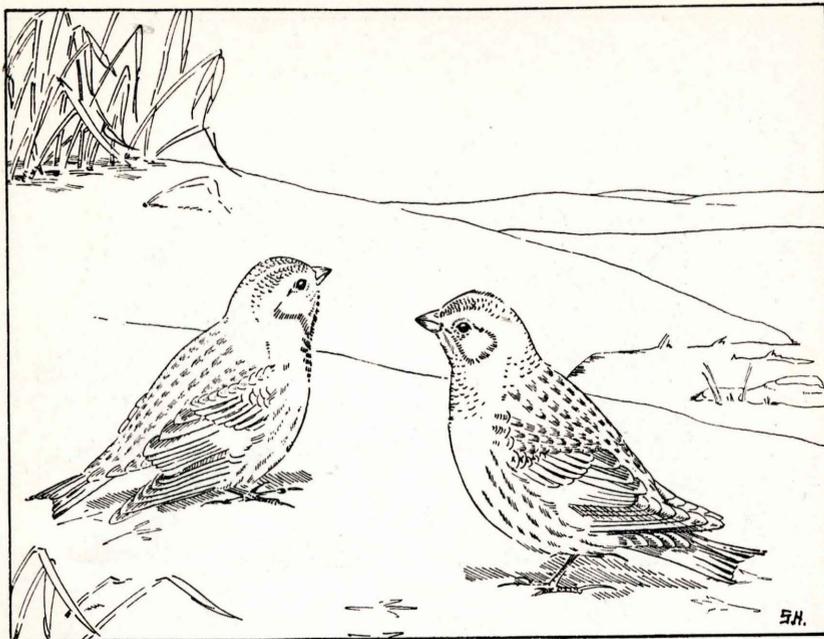
Hairy Woodpecker

Color directions: The directions given for the Downy Woodpecker are to be used here also.

The Hairy Woodpecker is exactly like the Downy in outward appearance except that it is larger and that the outside tail feathers are entirely white instead of black barred.

This bird is larger than the Downy, but it is every bit as industrious. It is seen the year around in Iowa and is likely to be found wherever there are trees. Although the bird is shy and goes far into the woodlands during the summer it will move into the parks and orchards of man when winter sets in. If the birds do not attract your attention by their high, sharp metallic voice while in flight, then perhaps you will be attracted by the clatter of their bill as they dig out borers. These birds have a long barbed tongue which may be thrust into an insect to jerk him into the bird's mouth.

The food consists of 75 percent insects and a remaining 25 percent of wild fruit and seeds. The Hairy Woodpecker is usually found in the woods and is not as much inclined to feed near the house as is the little Downy Woodpecker.



1/3 natural size

Lapland Longspur

Color directions: Back and rump buff, streaked with black, back of neck reddish-brown; forehead and top of head black, except for buff stripe in middle; sides of head above eye buff, below eye buff except for a few black feathers; tail black in shaded areas, brown elsewhere; wings black in shaded areas with two white wing bars and the rest reddish-brown; breast and belly white; sides white streaked with black; eye brown; feet and legs black; bill yellow, black at tip. The female is similar but slightly duller in color.

In the fall the Lapland Longspur moves southward from its northern home and often stops to spend the winter in Iowa. The claw of the hind toe is as long as the toe itself, and from this the bird acquired a part of its name.

The Lapland Longspur may be seen in large flocks of its own kind, or perhaps only one or two in company with Horned Larks and Snow Buntings. They are all birds of the prairie lands and may be noted running about the ground searching for seeds. Unlike the Horned Lark, the Lapland Longspur is sometimes seen perching upon weed stalks while feeding. This Longspur looks very much like the Snow Bunting, but is distinguished from it by the darker head coloring.



1/2 natural size

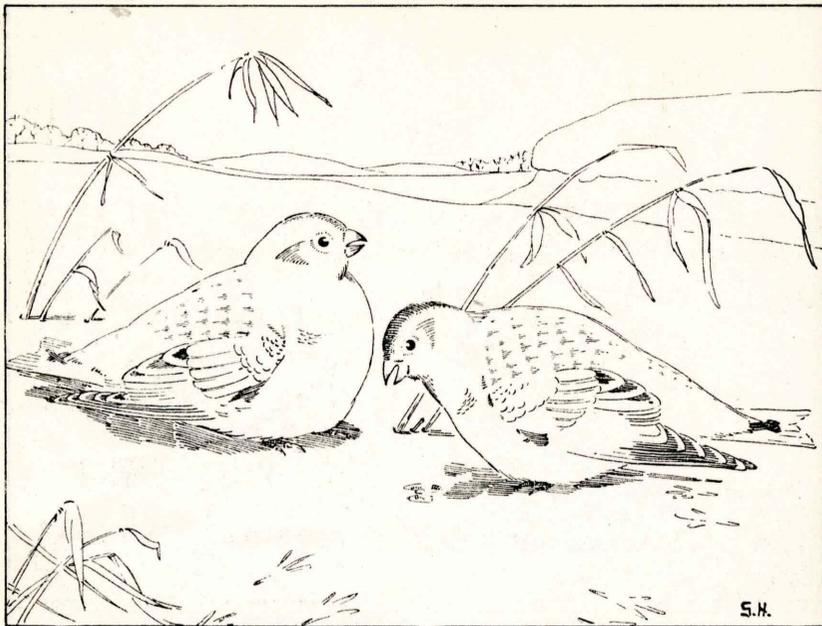
Redpoll

Color directions: Forehead bright red; chin and upper front part of the throat black; back gray, streaked with blackish-brown; lower throat, breast and rump pinkish-white; sides white but darkly streaked; two white bars on wing; wings and tail brownish with feathers buff-edged; bill light yellow; eye brown; legs and feet black. The female is similar except that the breast and rump are not noticeably tinged with pink.

It is thought that this hardy little bird leaves the north country only when driven out by lack of food. Perhaps that is why it is such an irregular visitor to Iowa.

The birds prefer birch and alder swamps, but in Iowa they must be satisfied with wooded streams and weed patches. Rarely are they seen except in large flocks. In size, shape, song and even in color they resemble the Goldfinch and may be found associating with the latter.

Their food is composed almost entirely of tree and weed seeds during the winter. The bird is apparently very unsuspecting and may come to the feeding stations for sunflower seeds, millet, hemp and rolled oats.



3/8 natural size

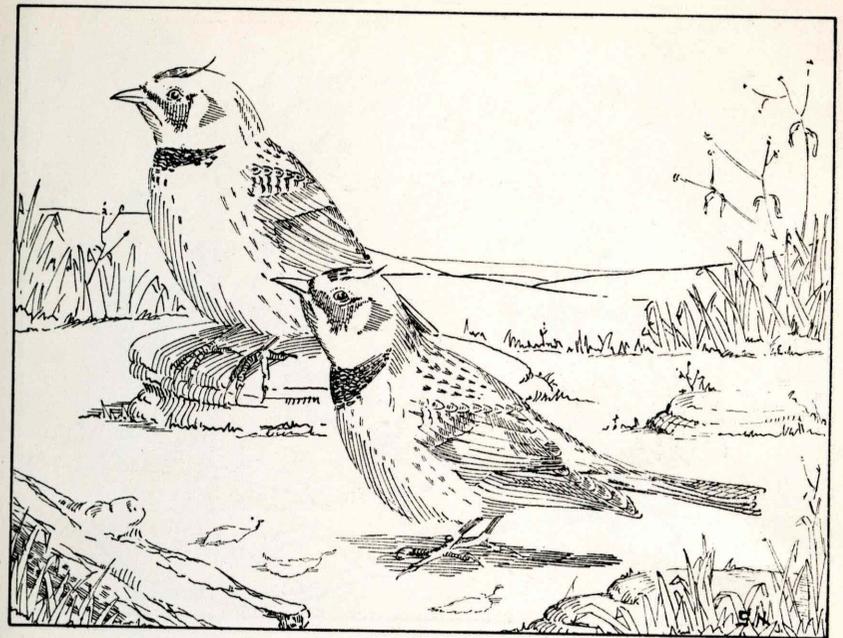
X Snow Bunting

Color directions: General color white; wide stripe from beak to back of head chestnut; small buff patch behind the eye and another just in front of the wing; upper part of back white, mottled with black; lower back and rump white, mottled with buff; tail white except for the black tips on the two inside feathers; the six longest feathers of the wing black, edged with white; upper middle feathers of wing with white edge, buff in middle and black farther in; bill light yellow, eye brown; legs and feet black. The female is like the male, but more brownish over the back.

The Snow Bunting grudgingly leaves its home in the Arctic wastes and travels southward when winter closes in. These birds may be called irregular in their visits because they will not leave the North unless the weather is severe.

This bird prefers the open country and almost all of its food is taken from the weed beds.

The Bunting enjoys flying in a snow storm, and while in the air keeps up a tinkling "tee-tee-tee." This bird is known as the "snow-bird" to some of us. John Burroughs says that it is the only bird that seems to be a part of winter.



3/8 natural size

Horned Lark *True Lark*

Color directions: Back of head and neck light brown; back and rump light, streaked with dark brown; middle tail feathers brown and other tail feathers black, except white at outside edges of tail; forehead, remainder of side of head and neck, chin and throat yellowish-white; bill black; band from base of bill, under eye, and down on side of neck black; breast and sides gray with brown spots; lower breast and belly gray; bill bluish-gray above, gray below; legs and feet black; eye brown. Female similar.

We have several kinds of Horned Larks. Many of those that nest with us move south for the winter, and many which we see in winter have come to us from the north.

Rarely is one found in a tree, for they are birds of the open country. Flocks of from 10-15 may be seen in the meadows, pastures and other open areas.

Like other larks this bird has a straight claw (the "lark-spur") on the hind toe. They do very little, if any, singing during the winter. They do not hop or jump about as does the Robin but run over the ground when in search of seeds and insects. About 70 percent of their food is composed of weed seeds.



1/4 natural size

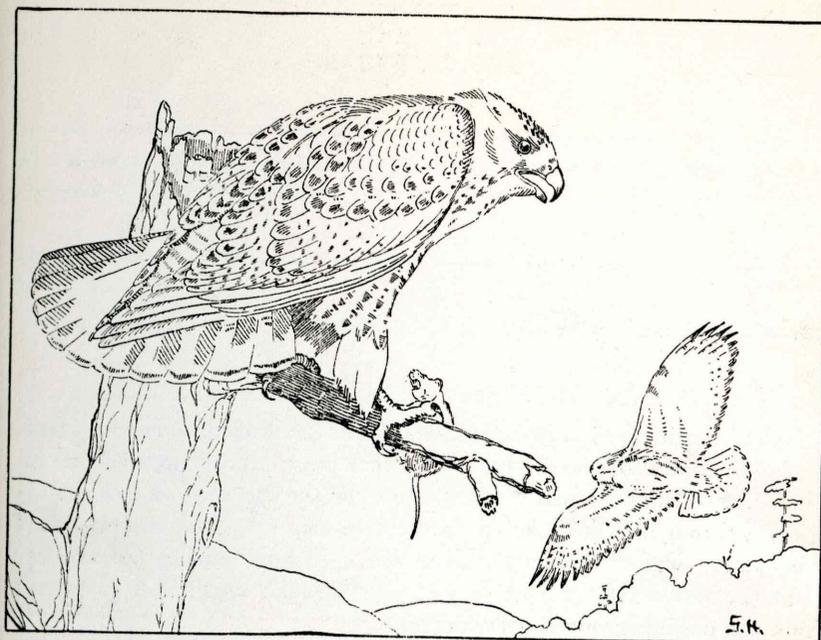
Screech Owl

Color directions: General color brownish-red; face whitish, tinged with a brownish-red; head, neck, back, rump and wings streaked with black; breast and sides are brownish-red, streaked with black, fading out to white, streaked with black on the belly; eye yellow; bill dark gray; white feathers on the feet and legs; claws black. This description is of the "red phase"; the "gray phase" may be had by substituting gray for red. Female similar.

This bird is a common resident of Iowa and is recognized as our only small owl with ear-tufts.

It is not only a common owl of the wooded areas, but may also be found in orchards, groves and along fence rows. At dusk you may hear the mournful and tremulous wail of the bird as it leaves the day time hideout in a hollow tree or heavy foliage for a night of feeding. The mournful notes of this bird have been a sign of ill-omen for many years, but to you who are used to hearing the song it is as welcome as the song of the Goldfinch.

The food is largely composed of mice, English Sparrows, insects, crayfish and other small creatures. The large number of Sparrows in town are suspected of attracting the Screech Owls.



1/8 natural size

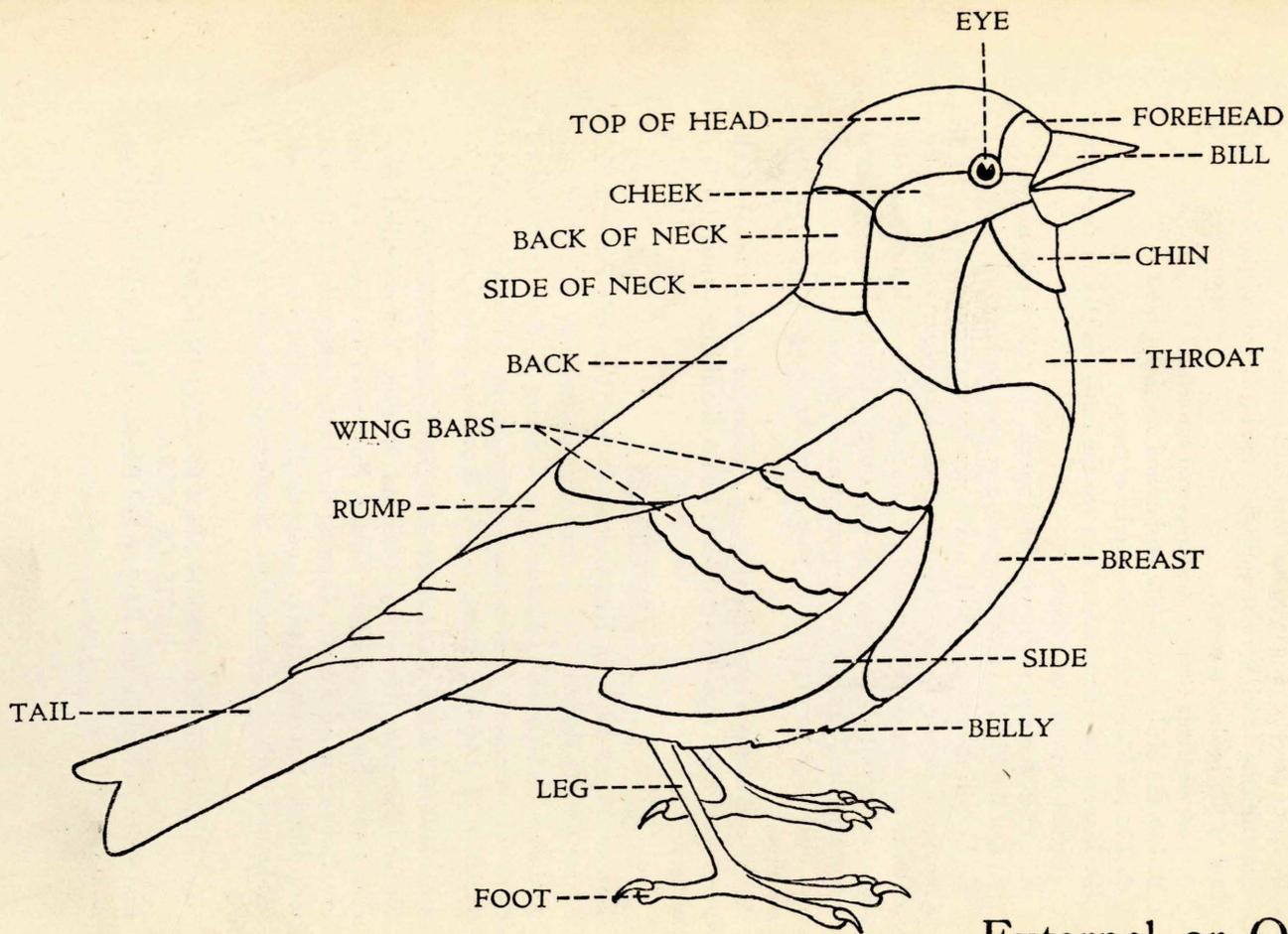
Red-tailed Hawk

Color directions: Back, rump and wings dark brown, mottled with white tips on shorter feathers, and longer feathers partly edged and barred with white or light brown; head and neck brown with white streaks; chin, breast, and belly white; sides white streaked with dark brown; tail brownish-red with a black bar just above a narrow white edge on the tip; bill bluish-gray yellowing towards base of upper part; white feathers down the legs; legs and feet yellow; claws black; eye brown.

The Red-tailed Hawks are most numerous during the summer in Iowa, but many of them spend the entire year here.

This Hawk prefers the thinly wooded country and is often found away from the woods where a single tree stands in a meadow. The bird usually makes its kill from a perch in such a tree rather than from the wing. While its circling, soaring flight is sluggish, the speed of its swoop from the perch upon an unwary mouse is terrific.

Mice, insects and gophers are kept in check by this bird, but it will bear watching around the poultry yards. When other sources of food are low or difficult to obtain the Red-tail may take chickens if they can be found, but it does not make a habit of this act.



External or Outside
Parts of Bird

JUL 25 '44

JAN 10 '46

MAR 22 '46

MAR - 8 '45

APR 18 '46

SEP 12 '46

NOV 18 '46

FEB 10 '47

JUN 25 '47

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