

eight or ten inches deep; this excavation, I have no doubt, was the work of the birds themselves. In the bottom was a small quantity of fibrous, woody matter. This nest was altogether different to any of the Nuthatches that I have seen, and it struck me at the time as very peculiar. I also noted that the birds were darker in color, and their notes considerably different to those commonly observed in the high, hardwood lands, but until years afterwards, when I procured a copy of "Ross' Birds of Canada," I was not aware that the Red and White-bellied birds, were distinct species. Since then I have observed that the habitat of *Sitta Canadensis* is generally the deep evergreen woods, and lately, I note, that its call is louder, more prolonged and plaintive than that of its white-bellied congener, which latter is partial to the hardwood regions, and always makes its large nest (formed of moss, fibrous bark and hair) in the natural hollows of trees. Years ago I had observed some of these birds excavating cavities in old stumps, generally softwood timber, and that in the fall of the year, they laid up a supply of different kind of seeds in such place; I am now disposed to believe that this was particularly the work of the Red-bellied species.

W. L. KELLS, Listowel, Ont.

#### SUPPOSED NESTS OF THE CROSSBILL.

On the 10th of April, when taking a ramble for ornithological purposes, with my two boys, in a cedar swamp, north of this town, I noticed a number of nest-like structures, placed on the branches of cedar and other evergreens, generally about twelve to twenty feet from the ground. I had often, in different places, noticed similar structures before, always in the early spring, and knowing that these had been made in the winter, supposed that they were the work of some squirrel. On the above date, however, curiosity led me to examine several of these structures more closely, and to my surprise, I found that they were the nests of some birds, and had evidently been recently occupied. Compared with the size of the bird that must have built and occupied these hut-like formations, they were large. One which I brought home, measured two feet six inches in circumference; yet the inside cavity was only about four inches in diameter, and the entrance showed that the body of the builder was about the size of that of the pine finch. The outsides of these nests were formed of moss calculated to keep out cold, and throw off the

rain, while the inside was thickly lined with the soft fibrous dry cedar bark, and in some cases, small quantities of hair. The materials of the entrance were of such quality and arrangement as to almost close when the occupant went in or out, and it would appear also that it was the intention of the owners to cover the contents when they found it necessary to leave it for the purpose of procuring food. For a while I was puzzled to know what species of the feathered race had made these nests, and therein reared their young in the midst of our cold and stormy winters. I then recollected and re-read the article in the last February number by Dr. Garnier, on the Crossbills, the mystery was solved. These moss-made hut-shaped structures were the nests of *Loxia curvirostra*. I then recollected that in the winter of 1866, and following years, I had observed these birds in flocks in the barn-yard and among the evergreen woods of North Wallace, where also I first noticed those curious nests, but never thought they were the habitations of birds, or that any bird could rear their young at such a season of the year in our climate. Lately a neighbour informed me that he saw the nest of a bird with four young in the month of March, but could give no information as to the species or formation of the nest. It was, of course, a crossbill. I did not see any of these birds this season, they had evidently departed northward before my advent among their winter homes. I hope another season to see their eggs.

W. L. KELLS, Listowel, Ont.

*Sitta Canadensis*. When I first discovered the nest of this bird, both male and female were busy gathering soft material to complete their nest; the spot selected for this purpose being a hole in a dead tree, about ten feet from the ground; the hole, however, was not the work of these birds, but one which had probably been made by a squirrel or woodpecker some seasons previous, the cavity being about fourteen inches deep. *Sitta Carolinensis*. As the northern limit of this Nuthatch, as a winter resident, is somewhat indefinite, I might mention the fact that one was taken at Westfield March 10th, 1882.

HAROLD GILBERT.

St. John, N.B., April 23, 1882.

DEAR SIR,—In answer to your query in the March number of the SPORTSMAN AND NATURALIST, concerning the nesting of *Antros-*