

The Baltimore oriole is the most gaily attired of all our garden songsters, and none build a more artistic nest. About the middle of the first week in May, the clear flute-like notes of the male are heard for the first time in the garden in the early morning, the journey from the south having been performed by short stages during the night. A few days afterwards the females arrive, and soon the pair are seen busily engaged weaving their curious purse-like nest, which is usually suspended from the drooping branch of an elm, or other suitable tree. It is a pleasing sight to see the glowing colors of this bird shewn against a background of Norway spruce, and no one of our feathered tribes more quickly attracts the notice of strangers, but it is charged with visiting the orchard to the injury of the fruit.

The food of the oriole, however, consists largely of insects, and it is known to take many of the injurious forms which other birds do not care for. As an instance of this, it has been seen to put its head through the web of the tent caterpillar, and remove the inmates. It is also known to feed freely on the insect known as leaf rollers, as many as twenty-five having been taken from the stomach of one oriole. It thus takes a high stand among beneficial birds, and should be protected accordingly.

The American goldfinch is another of our most showy birds. It resides with us throughout the year but loses its gay colors during the winter and is therefore less noticed during that season. It is very abundant and is generally distributed in all open places, feeding almost exclusively on the seeds of noxious weeds, such as the dandelion, burdock, fox-tail grass, etc. For the consumption of the seeds of the Canada thistle alone it is entitled to our protection and I think it is seldom molested.

The case of the crow is one which requires consideration, and I have no official report on it to refer to. Many writers give it credit for doing great good in the destruction of caterpillars, grubs, beetles, etc., which it picks up while following the plow. No doubt it eats these as it will eat anything else that is eatable, but it also does great havoc by pulling up and devouring the sprouting corn.

In the opinion of many observers it destroys more young chickens, ducklings, goslings, etc., than all the hawks and owls put together. It is known to rob the nests of small birds, taking the eggs and even tearing out and devouring the callon young.

I would strongly urge those who have opportunity to do so, to observe and take notes on the habit of the crow and to let him have his true position as the evidence may direct.

The woodpeckers as a class deserve our protection on account of the service they render in the destruction of the wood-boring grubs and other noxious insects which infest our fruit and forest trees. They all take a little fruit now and then by way of a relish but the true feeding ground of the woodpecker is among the timber. The yellow bellied species, a bird of handsome plumage, is the one which makes those horizontal rows of holes which we see around the trunks of the trees. In some sections where trees are scarce it is said that those holes are so numerous and so close together that the tree becomes girdled and dies in consequence, but no instance of this kind has come under my notice. I believe that the holes are drilled to allow the birds to feed on the saccharine fluid which exudes from them. So far as I have noticed the tree is not thereby in any way injured.

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