

MAY 11.—Among the male birds that habitually feed the females while they are nesting, Crows and Chickadees are notable examples. The former does so throughout the brooding period, and it is a strange fact that the hen bird reverts to that method of calling for food so characteristic of the young, with the same excitement and fluttering of wings when food is brought within view. The Chickadee goes still further and feeds his mate with nice juicy caterpillars weeks before she commences to lay. He, also, like the Crow, takes an active share in nest building. Blue Jays likewise become very polite to the females by procuring food before and when she is brooding. They make an extremely affectionate couple at this time of year and can constantly be heard talking softly together. I believe there are few, if any, Canadian birds that have such a complete code of signals.

MAY 30.—The Redbacked Cutworm is doing an immense amount of damage to growing grain, and our friends the Crows are once more at work for their own benefit and incidentally ours. From 18 to 32 were counted together at different times to-day on an infested field, and close inspection shows where they have dug the Cutworms out, while watching detects many a beak full being taken to the nests.

Crows have by no means a good reputation, especially in corn belts, or among sportsmen, who accuse them of much damage to winged game through eating eggs and young, but the injury is much exaggerated. We are apt to overlook the good deeds, as the picking up of small objects, such as noxious insects; whereas, to see a Crow fly off with a young bird is much more likely to attract attention, especially if the parents are attempting some sort of defence. As to the destruction of eggs of Grouse by Crows, these birds are so admirably suited in colour for concealment that it is only on very rare occasions, provided the birds are not otherwise disturbed, that their nests are discovered.

JULY 14.—Found the nest of an Ovenbird in woods near some large aspens. It was of a dome shape, rather elliptical in outline, and so remarkably well constructed, outside with dead leaves and grass, that it would almost surely have passed for a slight rise in the ground had I not flushed the bird. Inside the nest were four young, surrounded by a lining of fine grass and horsehair.

JULY 15.—Several Crows have been found dead recently, apparently in good condition. They seem to have died suddenly, sometimes while flying, but I could discover no cause for this. If the death role has been as high in other parts, many thousands must have perished.

JULY 27.—Three more Crows found dead, two full grown