

The Rockwood Review.

MIGRANT SHRIKE.

In the AUK for July 1898, the following description by Mr. Wm. Palmer, of the new Shrike found in Kingston occurs:—

Subspecific Characters.—Adult above bluish gray, beneath pale slaty; throat white; bill smaller, regularly tapering, hook delicate and sharply bent downwards, tail shorter than wing.

Type, No. 163077. Adult, duller, especially beneath, and smaller, Kingston, Ontario, April 4, 1898, Dr. C. K. Clarke.

From Maine, Vermont and Canada to Minnesota, southwards into North Carolina and the Ohio Valley to the Plains. Absent in winter from its more northern and higher habitats, and migrating in the autumn toward the Atlantic coast and into the Carolinas, Tennessee and lower Mississippi valley. Breeding almost entirely above the 500 foot contour in the valleys, casually up to about 2000 feet, and to within about 50 miles of the coast of Maine. From Canada and the edges of the plains intergrading into *excubitoroides*.

In *migrans* the wing is longer than the tail, due to its migratory habit, in *ludovicianus* the tail is longest, thus indicating its fixed habitat. In consequence the third primary feather of the former is usually the longest, or is equal to the fourth, in the latter the fourth is nearly always the longest. The forehead of *ludovicianus* is dark like the top of the head, in *migrans* it is nearly always paler. In the southern bird the underparts are usually almost immaculate, in the other the slaty of the sides of the breast extends across, especially in the breeding plumage. Usually a faint trace of reddish is perceptible on the breast of *ludovicianus*, but is stronger in *migrans*, especially in the females and immature. Signs of immaturity disappear quickly in *ludovicianus*, they soon assume adult plumage; the reverse

is true of *migrans*, the duller plumage, browner primaries, and paler edgings on the wing-coverts lasting longer. Larger areas of white marking occur on individuals of both forms, and are indicative of greater age but some immature are precocious.

Migrans is distinguishable by its darker, duller plumage, especially beneath, by being stouter and longer, and by its larger bill, tarsi and feet.

In *ludovicianus* the upper tail-coverts are almost invariably similar to the back in color, paleness when occurring being due to bleaching and wearing. In *migrans* the male usually has pale upper tail-coverts, bleaching in the breeding season to a dull, dirty whitish. The stronger, duller colors of the females rarely bleaching as much. At the end of the breeding season the plumage usually presents a very ragged, bleached condition, with all the colors very much faded. The great difference, usually, between the purer colors of the males and the darker, duller colors of the females, the difference in size and the consequent varying amount of bleaching of the sexes is responsible for the identification, so common, of *excubitoroides* as an eastern bird. The plumage is always paler when fresh but soon darkens, especially in *migrans*, where the contrast is greater. In this also the contrast between the white throat and the darkish breast is nearly always evident, and exceedingly rare in the southern bird.

Measurements were made of nearly all the specimens grouped by States. These show that the birds taken at the most northern parts of the range of *migrans* are the largest. The averages include all the specimens measured, no weeding out of the smallest or immature being done.

Shrikes are inhabitants of open, wooded, scrubby country. The mixed prairie, savanna, open pine woods, and hummock lands of the southern coasts.