

feeds, like the Crossbill, on the seeds of the pine, the hemlock and the larch, and when so employed often hangs head downward, swinging from the end of the branch, like the Titmouse. They are said also to be very partial to the seeds of the thistle, feeding on them much after the manner of the American Goldfinch, which this finch resembles somewhat in its flight, and also in the character of its song, the notes of which are clear and sweet, and uttered frequently on the wing. It glides through the air in deep, graceful curves, emitting, like the Goldfinch, its common call-note as it rises and falls in its flight.

The general colour of the upper parts of the Pine Finch is yellowish-grey, streaked with dark brown; the wings and tail dusky, margined with greyish-white; the bases of the secondary quills, the tips of their coverts and the margins of the rump feathers, cream-coloured, brightening into yellow on the rump; the lower parts greyish-white, tinged with brown on the fore-neck, and all streaked with dull brown; lateral tail feathers yellow on the lower half.

The Lesser Red Poll (*Ægiothus Linaria*) is a more or less constant visitor at this season of the year, and may frequently be seen gleanings its scanty food of different kinds of seeds in our gardens and orchards, or feeding by the roadsides on the catkins of the elder and the birch. They generally move in little companies of seven or eight, sometimes as many as fifteen or twenty, flying somewhat in the undulatory manner of the Goldfinch and Pine Linnet, and uttering a call-note not unlike that of the latter bird.

Their food consists of the seeds of the larch, birch and alder, and of various grasses and wild plants. I have seen them also feeding, like the Goldfinch, on the seeds of the sunflower, and sometimes, though rarely, on the thistle. On alighting on a tree or bush they display great quickness and agility in searching for their food, picking at the buds while perched over them, or, swinging head downward from the end of a spray of birch or alder, extract the seeds from the pendant cones with the greatest dexterity. They are by no means a shy bird, but will allow themselves to be approached very closely before taking flight. If disturbed when feeding they will rise from the tree or stump, and after performing one or two wide, circling flights in deep undulations, will alight again nearly in the same spot, and after pluming themselves and chattering together for a few minutes, recommence to feed as before.

The plumage of the Red Poll is a rich crimson on the crown of the head; a band edging the forehead, the level space and the throat, brownish-black; the reversed feathers on the base of the bill, yellowish; the hind part of the head, the neck, the fore part of the back and the scapulars, yellowish-brown; the feathers on the hind part of the back margined with whitish and tipped with carmine; the wings and tail dusky, with yellowish-brown edges, and two transverse bands of the same on the tips of the first row of small coverts and the secondary coverts. The sides of the neck, its forepart, the breast and

flanks, rich carmine; the middle of the breast, the abdomen and the lower tail coverts, white, tinged with rose colour, the sides longitudinally streaked with dusky.

That beautiful bird, the Snowy Owl (*Nyctea Nivea*), is occasionally seen in this part of Canada during this and the two succeeding months. I have not met with a specimen in this immediate neighbourhood for many years, but at one time they were not uncommon on the Peninsula or Island forming the southern boundary of the harbour of Toronto. Its partiality for fish may, perhaps, account for its frequenting so bare and bleak a spot. It feeds also upon birds of large size, such as grouse and wild ducks, but condescends even to squirrels and rats and mice, when other game is scarce. Its pure white plumage, rendering it scarcely discernible from the surrounding snow, and its rapid, noiseless flight, make it a most formidable hunter, and it is but seldom that its destined prey escapes its resistless talons.

Of its place and mode of breeding but little is known. It is said to breed occasionally both in Maine and New Brunswick, but I have not met with any authentic description of its nest or eggs.

The plumage of the Snowy Owl is particularly soft and compact; the general colour, white; the face, forehead, nape, fore-neck, anterior part of the breast, abdomen and rump, unspotted; the upper part of the head and back marked with crescent-shaped brown spots, and the breast, sides and thigh coverts marked with transverse curved lines of the same colour; wing coverts, wings and tail, barred with transverse, oblong dark brown spots.

Of the birds I have just been describing, some, like the Snowy Owl, the Snow Bunting and the Pine Grosbeak, arrive at this particular season, and leave us again on the approach of spring; others, like the Crossbill, are more frequently seen in the depth of winter, although met with in some parts of Canada throughout the whole year.

In addition to both these classes, however, there are not a few of our summer friends, (many more perhaps, than most persons not observant of such things would imagine), whose notes and familiar cries are heard more or less frequently breaking the solitude of the woods and fields through all the dreary winter season.

The scream of the Blue Jay (*Cyanina Cristata*), one of the handsomest as well as the noisiest of the tenants of our woods, may be heard just as often in the depth of winter as in the middle of summer, his accommodating appetite enabling him to feed with as much apparent relish on beech nuts and acorns, the seeds of the pine and the berries of the mountain ash, as on his summer fare of strawberries, cherries, caterpillars and grubs.

Of the Woodpecker tribe both the Hairy Woodpecker (*Picus Villosa*), and the still smaller species, the downy Woodpecker (*Picus Pubescens*), may be seen hard at work in the very coldest weather, tapping away at the hollow trunk of