

ORNITHOLOGY.

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Winter visitants.--The winter of 1892-3 was marked by a great scarcity of bird life in the neighbourhood of Ottawa. Irregular and uncertain though the movements of the winter birds always are, it is seldom that the winter season passes without the appearance of some one or more species in considerable numbers. Probably these visits depend more upon food supply than upon the mildness or severity of the temperature; but in both of these respects our district showed itself last winter a very inhospitable quarter for the birds. The weather here, as throughout the whole of North America was marked by unusual and almost unbroken cold; and as the rowan-berry crop of 1892 had been a total failure, with tamarac cones and cedar seeds much below the average, the "visible supply of breadstuffs" for the feathered population must have been alarmingly short.

Of Crossbills, Redpolls and Pine Siskins there have been no reports whatever. The Purple Finch which is usually fairly well represented throughout the winter in suitable localities did not put in an appearance until the 4th May, and the Goldfinch came seven days later, after having donned his summer plumage elsewhere. A few straggling Pine Grosbeaks, (one 25th January), and an occasional small flock of Snowflakes (one 11th February) were the only representatives of these frequently abundant species.

It is often asserted, however, by ornithologists that in their favorite study, at all seasons and in every locality, the diligent student is sure of some reward, and that there is much truth in this claim the following further records will show:

Robin.—One seen 18th January on Wellington Street, by Prof. Macoun. Mr. Fletcher also reports one, a fine male, in Archville on 12th March, and another has been reported as appearing several times in New Edinburgh. It is possible that all these records refer to the same individual—perhaps a wounded bird that was unable to undertake the hardships of migration, and was yet so fortunate as to find food throughout the severe weather.

Prairie Horned Lark.—(*O. alpestris praticola*). On 27th February three or four were seen along the roads on the Experimental Farm.