

use of the gun. I advise anyone who shoots them, particularly in the early autumn, to try blackbird pie. Whoever does so will, I think, want to repeat the experiment.

*Rusty Grackle.* This is a much smaller species than the last and is not of any importance to us from an agricultural point of view. I merely mention it as it occurs here in considerable numbers for a short time in the autumn, but as it does not arrive until the early part of September, the crops are safe from its ravages. In Manitoba, where it is very abundant, it unites with the other blackbirds and destroys a large amount of grain. A few pass through this Province in the spring on their way to the north to breed, but they make no delay and are not noticeable.

*Red-winged Blackbird.* From an agricultural standpoint this bird has little to recommend it, but to the lover of nature its beautiful coloring and cheery note in early spring render it an object of interest. They are among our earliest migrants, arriving about the middle of March, and resorting at once to the marshes, in which they remain until after the young are able to fly. While in the swamps their food consists almost entirely of aquatic insects, of which the larvæ of the dragon flies form the principal part. As these larvæ form an important item in the food of some of our most valuable fish, and the mature dragon flies feed largely on mosquitos and other small winged insects, the blackbirds are not doing mankind a particularly friendly service by destroying them. This would perhaps not be worth sufficient consideration to warrant our interference with the birds, were it not for their other and more serious failing. As soon as the young are able to fly strongly, which is about the middle of July, they leave the marshes in which they were bred, and in great flocks resort to the grain fields, where, like the grackle, with which they frequently associate, they do much damage, particularly to oats, which they seem to prefer to any other grain. As these birds are very abundant, the loss caused by their plundering must be very great, but they can fortunately easily be managed if a little attention is paid to them in the spring, when they may be shot off on their breeding grounds.

After the grain is carried, they again return to the marshes and gorge themselves on the wild rice, until not a grain of it is left, thereby depriving the wild ducks, etc., of a most attractive food. As soon as the first frost comes they retire to the south, where they cause much worry to the rice-grower. Little can be said in extenuation of these serious faults. They never interfere with other birds or their nests, and they probably destroy some noxious insects, such as cut worms, etc., in meadows, lying near the swamps they frequent in the early part of the season, but this is all that can be urged in their favor.

*Cow Bird.* Male in summer, all over, except the head, a lustrous, glossy black; the head glossy chestnut. Female and young—dull, sooty black. Length of male, about seven inches, female rather smaller. This bird should be known to everyone, and should be destroyed whenever the opportunity occurs. It is the only feathered creature against which I would advocate a war of extermination, and this I do, because it is not only of no value in itself, but the rearing of each one of its young means a loss to the country of an entire brood of one of our valuable insectivorous birds. It is true that during the early part of the season it frequents the pasture fields where cattle are grazing, and feeds principally on the insects affecting such places, but this is easily counterbalanced by the grain it destroys later on. These birds do not mate, nor do they build a nest for themselves, but the female deposits each of her eggs in the nest of some other small bird. The egg is whitish, thickly covered with greyish brown dots. I have found the eggs of this bird in the nests of nearly all the sparrows, finches, and