

VARIOUS

BIRDS, ILLUSTRATED BY
COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY,
VOL. 2, NO. 1

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Photography, Vol. 2, No. 1**

«Public Domain»

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INTRODUCTION

This is the second volume of a series intended to present, in accurate colored portraiture, and in popular and juvenile biographical text, a very considerable portion of the common birds of North America, and many of the more interesting and attractive specimens of other countries, in many respects superior to all other publications which have attempted the representation of birds, and at infinitely less expense. The appreciative reception by the public of Vol. I deserves our grateful acknowledgement. Appearing in monthly parts, it has been read and admired by thousands of people, who, through the life-like pictures presented, have made the acquaintance of many birds, and have since become enthusiastic observers of them. It has been introduced into the public schools, and is now in use as a text book by hundreds of teachers, who have expressed enthusiastic approval of the work and of its general extension. The faithfulness to nature of the pictures, in color and pose, have been commended by such ornithologists and authors as Dr. Elliott Coues, Mr. John Burroughs, Mr. J. W. Allen, editor of *The Auk*, Mr. Frank M. Chapman, Mr. J. W. Baskett, and others.

The general text of Birds – the biographies – has been conscientiously prepared from the best authorities by a careful observer of the feather-growing denizens of the field, the forest, and the shore, while the juvenile autobiographies have received the approval of the highest ornithological authority.

The publishers take pleasure in the announcement that the general excellence of Birds will be maintained in subsequent volumes. The subjects selected for the third and fourth volumes – many of them – will be of the rare beauty in which the great Audubon, the limner *par excellence* of birds, would have found “the joy of imitation.”

Nature Study Publishing Company.

BIRD SONG

IT SHOULD not be overlooked by the young observer that if he would learn to recognize at once any particular bird, he should make himself acquainted with the song and call notes of every bird around him. The identification, however, of the many feathered creatures with which we meet in our rambles has heretofore required so much patience, that, though a delight to the enthusiast, few have time to acquire any great intimacy with them. To get this acquaintance with the birds, the observer has need to be prepared to explore perilous places, to climb lofty trees, and to meet with frequent mishaps. To be sure if every veritable secret of their habits is to be pried into, this pursuit will continue to be plied as patiently as it has ever been. The opportunity, however, to secure a satisfactory knowledge of bird song and bird life by a most delightful method has at last come to every one.

A gentleman who has taken a great interest in Birds from the appearance of the first number, but whose acquaintance with living birds is quite limited, visited one of our parks a few days ago, taking with him the latest number of the magazine. His object, he said, was to find there as many of the living forms of the specimens represented as he could. "Seating myself amidst a small grove of trees, what was my delight at seeing a Red Wing alight on a telegraph wire stretching across the park. Examining the picture in Birds I was somewhat disappointed to find that the live specimen was not so brilliantly marked as in the picture. Presently, however, another Blackbird alighted near, who seemed to be the veritable presentment of the photograph. Then it occurred to me that I had seen the Red Wing before, without knowing its name. It kept repeating a rich, juicy note, *oncher-la-ree-e!* its tail tetering at quick intervals. A few days later I observed a large number of Red Wings near the Hyde Park water works, in the vicinity of which, among the trees and in the marshes, I also saw many other birds unknown to me. With Birds in my hands, I identified the Robin, who ran along the ground quite close to me, anon summoning with his beak the incautious angle worm to the surface. The Jays were noisy and numerous, and I observed many new traits in the Wood Thrush, so like the Robin that I was at first in some doubt about it. I heard very few birds sing that day, most of them being busy in search of food for their young."

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THE BALD-HEADED EAGLE

Dear Boys and Girls:

I had hoped to show you the picture of the eagle that went through the war with the soldiers. They called him "Old Abe." You will find on page [35](#) a long story written about him. Ask some one to read it to you.

I could not get "Old Abe," or you should now be looking at his picture. He is at present in Wisconsin, and his owner would not allow him to be taken from home.

I did the next best thing, and found one that was very much like him. They are as near alike as two children of a family. Old Abe's feathers are not quite so smooth, though. Do you wonder, after having been through the war? He is a veteran, isn't he?

The picture is that of a Bald-headed Eagle. He is known, also, by other names, such as White-headed Eagle, Bird of Washington, Sea Eagle.

You can easily see by the picture that he is not bald-headed. The name White-headed would seem a better name. It is because at a distance his head and neck appear as though they were covered with a white skin.

He is called "Sea Eagle" because his food is mostly fish. He takes the fish that are thrown upon the shores by the waves, and sometimes he robs the Fish Hawk of his food.

This mighty bird usually places his large nest in some tall tree. He uses sticks three to five feet long, large pieces of sod, weeds, moss, and whatever he can find.

The nest is sometimes five or six feet through. Eagles use the same nest for years, adding to it each year.

Young eagles are queer looking birds. When hatched, they are covered with a soft down that looks like cotton.

Their parents feed them, and do not allow them to leave the nest until they are old enough to fly. When they are old enough, the mother bird pushes them out of the nest. She must be sure that they can fly, or she would not dare do this. Don't you think so?

THE BALD-HEADED EAGLE

THIS mighty bird of lofty flight is a native of the whole of North America, and may be seen haunting the greater portions of the sea coasts, as well as the mouths of large rivers. He is sometimes called the White-headed Eagle, the American Sea Eagle, the Bird of Washington, the Washington Eagle, and the Sea Eagle. On account of the snowy white of his head and neck, the name Bald Eagle has been applied to him more generally than any other.

Sea-faring men are partial to young Eagles as pets, there being a well established superstition among them that the ship that carries the "King of Birds" can never go down. The old Romans, in selecting the Eagle as an emblem for their imperial standard, showed this superstitious belief, regarding him as the favorite messenger of Jupiter, holding communion with heaven. The Orientals, too, believed that the feathers of the Eagle's tail rendered their arrows invincible. The Indian mountain tribes east of Tennessee venerated the Eagle as their bird of war, and placed a high value on his feathers, which they used for headdresses and to decorate their pipes of peace.

The United States seems to have an abiding faith in the great bird, as our minted dollars show.

The nest of the Bald Eagle is usually placed upon the top of a giant tree, standing far up on the side of a mountain, among myriads of twining vines, or on the summit of a high inaccessible rock. The nest in the course of years, becomes of great size as the Eagle lays her eggs year after year in the same nest, and at each nesting season adds new material to the old nest. It is strongly and comfortably built with large sticks and branches, nearly flat, and bound together with twining vines. The spacious interior is lined with hair and moss, so minutely woven together as to exclude the wind. The female lays two eggs of a brownish red color, with many dots and spots, the long end of the egg tapering to a point. The parents are affectionate, attend to their young as long as they are helpless and unfledged, and will not forsake them even though the tree on which they rest be enveloped in flames. When the Eaglets are ready to fly, however, the parents push them from the perch and trust them to the high atmospheric currents. They turn them out, so to speak, to shift for themselves.

The Bald Eagle has an accommodating appetite, eating almost anything that has ever had life. He is fond of fish, without being a great fisher, preferring to rob the Fish-hawk of the fruits of his skillful labor. Sitting upon the side of a mountain his keen vision surveys the plain or valley, and detects a sheep, a young goat, a fat turkey or rooster, a pig, a rabbit or a large bird, and almost within an eye-twinkle he descends upon his victim. A mighty grasp, a twist of his talons, and the quarry is dead long before the Eagle lays it down for a repast. The impetuosity and skill with which he pursues, overtakes and robs the Fish-hawk, and the swiftness with which the Bald Eagle darts down upon and seizes the booty, which the Hawk has been compelled to let go, is not the least wonderful part of this striking performance.

The longevity of the Eagle is very great, from 80 to 160 years.

THE SEMI-PALMATED RING PLOVER

IN THEIR habits the Plovers are usually active; they run and fly with equal facility, and though they rarely attempt to swim, are not altogether unsuccessful in that particular.

The Semi-palmated Ring Plover utters a plaintive whistle, and during the nesting season can produce a few connected pleasing notes. The three or four pear-shaped, variagated eggs are deposited in a slight hollow in the ground, in which a few blades of grass are occasionally placed. Both parents assist in rearing the young. Worms, small quadrupeds, and insects constitute their food. Their flesh is regarded as a delicacy, and they are therefore objects of great attraction to the sportsman, although they often render themselves extremely troublesome by uttering their shrill cry and thus warning their feathered companions of the approach of danger. From this habit they have received the name of “tell-tales.” Dr. Livingstone said of the African species: “A most plaguey sort of public spirited individual follows you everywhere, flying overhead, and is most persevering in his attempts to give fair warning to all animals within hearing to flee from the approach of danger.”

The American Ring Plover nests as far north as Labrador, and is common on our shores from August to October, after which it migrates southward. Some are stationary in the southern states. It is often called the Ring Plover, and has been supposed to be identical with the European Ringed Plover.

It is one of the commonest of shore birds. It is found along the beaches and easily identified by the complete neck ring, white upon dark and dark upon light. Like the Sandpipers the Plovers dance along the shore in rhythm with the wavelets, leaving sharp half-webbed footprints on the wet sand. Though usually found along the seashore, Samuels says that on their arrival in spring, small flocks follow the courses of large rivers, like the Connecticut. He also found a single pair building on Muskeget, the famous haunt of Gulls, off the shore of Massachusetts. It has been found near Chicago, Illinois, in July.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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