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A Few Records of Birds Infrequently Seen in Southeastern Iowa

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A FEW RECORDS OF BIRDS INFREQUENTLY SEEN IN SOUTHEASTERN IOWA

H. E. JAQUES AND PETE PARKS

The following few bird notes are based on observations sufficiently rare that it seems they should be permanently recorded in the biological literature of the state.

A golden eagle, *Aquila chrysaetos* (Linn), was brought to the college in a rather badly mutilated condition October 19, 1930. It had been shot a few miles south of Mount Pleasant. The boy who killed it seemed to have had some misunderstanding of the bird's motives. The stomach contained a ball of hair and feathers but nothing that could be identified. Two species of lice (*Mallophaga*) were found on it in fairly large numbers. The lice were identified as *Philopterus naevius* Giebel and *Ferrisia flavescens* (Nitz.).

Three bald eagles, *Haliaeetus leucophalus leucophalus* (Linn), have been shot within Henry county and reported to us within recent years. Two of these, one of which had not yet attained the white head, passed through our laboratory. The older bird was examined for lice and yielded several specimens of *Laemobothrion titan* Piag which is an exceptionally large louse, some of the specimens being nine millimeters in length. Both species of lice already referred to as found on the golden eagle were comparatively small.

A nesting pair of mocking birds, *Mimus polyglottos polyglottos* (Linn), were found in the south part of Henry county during the spring of 1925, which is the only authentic report of the appearance of this bird in our county in recent years that has come to our attention. This nest was found on a bird class trip and visited again later by the class at which time the eggs were being incubated. (Fig. I).

We would not label the blue-gray gnatcatcher, *Polioptila cerulae cerulae* (Linn), as rare for our region though the casual observer likely never sees one. A nest of this species was found north of Mount Pleasant the spring of 1923 and was visited repeatedly. (Fig. II). The nest, a beautiful piece of decorative workmanship, was placed in the crotch of a little wild crab tree not over three feet from the ground. This low nesting site seems unusual, though numerous opportunities were close at hand to have placed it higher.

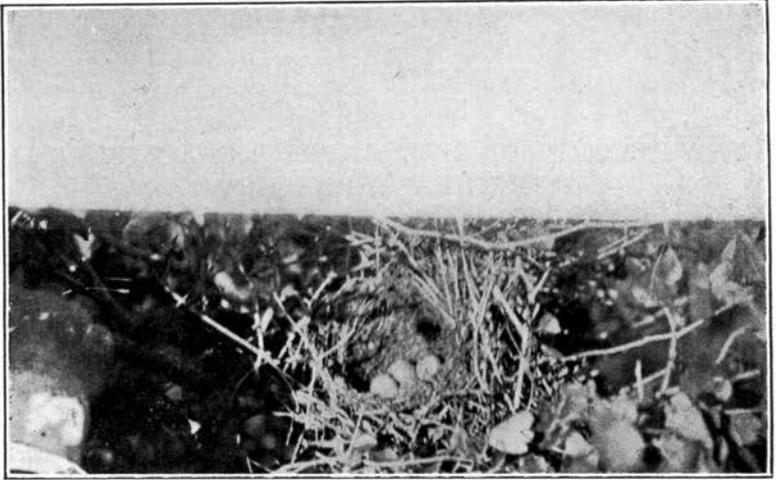


Fig. I. Nest of the Mocking Bird



Fig. II. Nest and young of Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

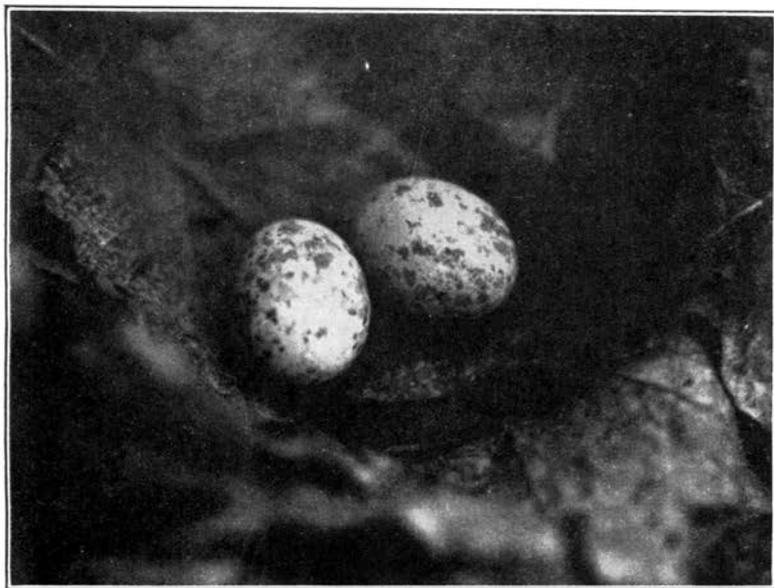


Fig. III. A Whip-poor-will "nest"

The nest was photographed with its four eggs and later a set up was made to take the adult bird as she fed her young. The camera did not seem to seriously disturb her and several pictures were snapped by string as she passed her catches to the half grown young. When the films were developed we found to our disappointment and interest that she was quicker than the shutter and had gotten away every time on the click of the camera. The pictures of young with up-reaching heads were good but no traces of their parent could be seen.

Starlings, *Sturnus vulgaris* Linn, have been reported in several parts of Iowa. Two specimens have reached our laboratories, one during the late summer of 1929 was found with others of its kind among the migrating grackles. The other specimen was shot from a group of a dozen or more starlings that were wintering around a cattle feeding lot north of Mount Pleasant. This one was taken in January, 1930. Since that time no others have been seen or reported to us in our region.

The red-breasted nuthatch, *Sitta canadensis* Linn, though decidedly uncommon in our region, is occasionally seen.

The nest of the Whip-poor-will, *Antrostomus vociferous vociferous*, is sufficiently hard to find to warrant publishing a photo of the two eggs as being incubated. (Fig. III.) It takes very careful

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looking to locate the eggs even after the bird is seen to fly from her nest.

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