

SOUTH CHINA BIRDS

By

HARRY R. CALDWELL

and

JOHN C. CALDWELL

*A complete, popular and scientific account of nearly five hundred
and fifty forms of birds found in Fukien, Kwangtung, Kiangsi,
Kiangsu and Chekiang provinces. Illustrated by more
than seventy-five original half tones of birds in
life, nests, eggs and haunts, from photo-
graphs by the authors, and Morris
Caldwell. Together with Six
colored plates by Prof.
Andrew Allison.*



STORIES AND LEGENDS

By

MURIEL E. CALDWELL

Published by

HESTER MAY VANDERBURGH, SHANGHAI.



Chinese Pied Woodpecker

*To those pioneers of Chinese
Ornithology, whose untiring,
early work has made possible a
knowledge of the birds of China.*

PREFACE

Ornithology as a science is comparatively young, dating back not to exceed two and one-half centuries. Recent decades have witnessed an ever rising tide of interest in bird life and bird study in every part of the world where research along any line is popular. Ornithology has registered for itself a place in the curriculum of many institutions of learning in various countries throughout the world. It is very much hoped "South China Birds" will be an added incentive to a more scientific and thorough study of the avifauna of China, that the labors of the early pioneers of bird study and bird lovers in the country may not perish.

Few nationals seem to have awakened to the almost priceless heritage of bird life in the country, and we are earnestly hoping that steps may speedily be taken in China to bring to an end the ruthless destruction of these feathered friends of man. With little being done in the country to combat the evil of noxious insects the birds actually are worth multiplied millions of dollars annually to China in their destruction of these various pests. We enter a plea for the life of the birds, realizing their far greater value to China alive and abroad in their helpful activities than in decorating display windows and pleasure places. Shooting with a camera instead of with a gun should be popularized and encouraged.

In the preparation of this work on birds we have labored under the very discouraging handicap of but few helps of a reliable nature. We have been unable to accept as final the reports and findings of even our own trained collectors, because the always present "*Cha-bok-do*" (almost) which satisfied them was not enough for us. We have therefore, had to do additional almost unlimited personal research in order to arrive at facts.

The scope of this volume is far wider than our own research even though we have travelled with notebook for nearly thirty years carefully studying the life history of both resident and migrant species. The past nearly ten years has been not only full of intensive field observations by the authors, but of most careful research in available museums and libraries in order to supplement our own findings with such facts as would enable us to complete our records as far as possible covering every bird authentically reported as often as once in Fukien. Thus, in reality this volume is the "Birds of Fukien," but it covers also most of the birds in the neighboring provinces.

Nomenclature has given rise to unlimited confusion. Sectional and seasonal differences in plumage has become well nigh distracting, and we feel is responsible for sub-divisions to the point that China is today credited with a far greater number of subspecies than future study will recognize. To illustrate this point we mention Genus *Yungipicus* and *Dryobates* among the Woodpeckers. There are eight of the former, the Spark-headed Woodpeckers, and sixteen of the latter, Spotted or Pied Woodpeckers. In some instances with these as with members of other groups, the differences are so slight as to be almost imaginary. To keep one's bearings upon such a sea of confusion of facts has been a difficult and perplexing task.

In the preparation of plumage descriptions we have consulted specimens in both the museum of the Royal Asiatic Society in Shanghai, and that of the Anglo-Chinese College in addition to our very large private collection assembled especially for the purpose, and later turned over to institutions in America. We have encountered numerous difficulties on account of specimens being differently, and sometimes, improperly named. We have endeavored to adopt the names which seemed to us most accurate, and that we felt would be most acceptable to Ornithologists at large.

Though bulky this volume is by no means exhaustive. We have made no attempt to say all that might be said, based upon our own research or the authentically recorded facts, about any given species. We have attempted to give such proportion of facts concerning both plumage and characteristics as to be of some real help in definitely identifying any bird seen in the region. We have had to bear in mind the lay bird lover living within the province and at the same time the person of a more scientific turn of mind elsewhere. Our efforts have been primarily directed to satisfy the layman within our borders. We hope our efforts toward simplicity have not offended the Ornithologist at large.

It had been our purpose to incorporate into the volume stories covering experiences and popular legends concerning birds. It has been necessary to very greatly limit the number of such stories on account of the already bulky proportions of our manuscript. Efforts along this line at all have been in response to a popular demand.

Care has been exercised in selecting both the scientific and common name of birds. Merely as a help, synonyms have been given. We have adopted what seemed to us to be the most commonly accepted scientific names, but we have made no attempt to list all the names by which various birds have been

known throughout past decades. Some confusion may arise on account of our attempt at simplicity. Take, for instance, birds of the *Turdidae* group. These birds for the most part have been, and now are, known as Genus *Turdus*, *Merula* and *Planesticus*. It would be well if Ornithologists throughout China would unite definitely upon some name whereby the Genus throughout the country would be known.

In compiling facts concerning range and migration we have relied very largely upon others who have made a special study of these points. We are especially indebted to the Peking Society of Natural History for its "Tentative List of Birds of China" compiled by Gee, Moffett and Wilder. The ranges given by us are taken very largely from this book. Both range and migration are fields in which authentic recorded facts are far too meager. Many provinces rich in bird life are hardly mentioned. There is much work yet to be done in order to arrive at facts concerning the distribution of birds in China. We trust "South China Birds" will prove not only a help, but an incentive as well, to a more careful study of the birds throughout the various provinces of China. We congratulate the Peking Society of Natural history upon its very fine beginning, and take this opportunity to record our appreciation for the helps in the matters of distribution of species. We have in all instances given the P.S.N.H. (Peking Society of Natural History) number, thus endeavoring to definitely establish for China something that will correspond to the recognized lists in England and America.

We are indebted to La Touche and Rickett for the extensive research they have done, especially in northwestern Fukien, where many new species were reported by them. The work of La Touche both in Fukien and throughout southern and south-eastern China has been of such accurate and scientific character as to be of the very greatest value in years to come. We trust that his notes will be made available for bird lovers throughout China.

We are indebted to Mr. R. M. Vanderburg of Shanghai, for his very great help in the matter of the photographic and illustrative work of this volume, and for the loan of a camera especially fitted for work at close range. Without such a camera it would have been impossible for us to have secured photographs of many of the nests and eggs in almost impossible positions. Mr. Vanderburg has otherwise rendered invaluable aid and advice.

To Mr. Arthur de C. Sowerby and the Royal Asiatic Society, we are much indebted, for their courtesies in allowing us the "run" of the Museum and Library at all hours. Mr. Sowerby has also rendered valuable advice and counsel.

P R E F A C E

We are greatly indebted to Prof. Andrew Allison of Kiangyin for the loan of his beautiful drawings, for use in colored plates. We are only sorry that we were unable to make use of more of his exceptionally fine material.

We wish to thank Mrs. R. M. Vanderburgh for help with proof reading and other valuable aid.

We have gone about this undertaking with the full feeling that the real joy of work is in the accomplishing of a difficult task. The assembling of the material for making up this volume has been a real task covering years. We have had our fun, but we have experienced very great hardships and much labor as well. Of shortcomings no one could be more sensible than are the authors. Had we opportunity to cover the same field of research and study again we doubtless would find places where we could better the work done. We crave the indulgence of those who may be more critically inclined, assuring all, we have done what we could, while at the same time carrying full responsibility in other activities of life. Someone has reckoned the writing of a book to be like matrimony, "For better or for worse." With fear and trembling we submit to you "South China Birds" which has been evolved through a period of years attended by handicaps and difficulties hardly to be appreciated other than by those who have endured the hardships of real research and study under conditions attending in this part of the world.

C. and C.

Foochow, China
1931.

Authorities and References.

MUSEUM OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY, *Shanghai*.

MUSEUM OF THE ANGLO-CHINESE COLLEGE, *Foochow*.

"BIRDS OF SOUTH-EAST CHINA" by J. D. La Touche.

"BIRD OF INDIA" by Major T. C. Jerdon.

"DUCKS OF INDIA" by Wright and Dewar.

"BIRDS OF WASHINGTON" by W. L. Dawson.

"COMMON BIRDS OF THE LOWER YANGTZE BASIN" by Gee and Moffett.

"NOTES ON BIRDS OF FUKIEN" by La Touche and C. B. Rickett.

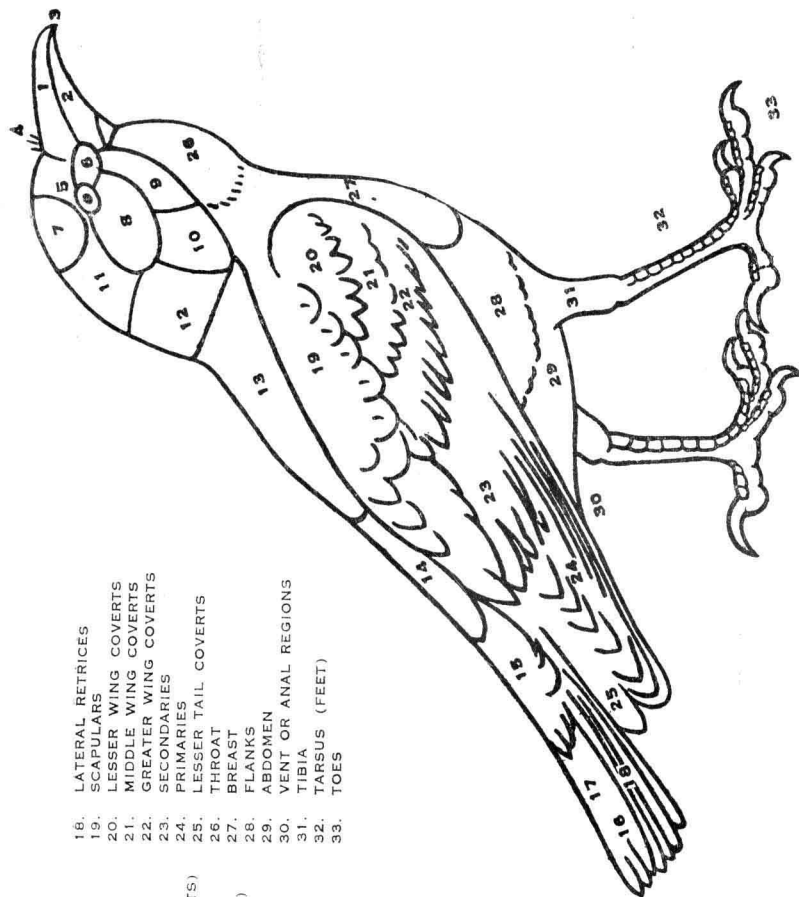
"NEST AND EGGS OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS" by Oliver Davie.

"CYCLOPAEDIA OF NATURAL HISTORY" by J. D. Champlin.

"BIRDS OF YANGTZE VALLEY" by Styan.

"ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTES" of Robert Swinhoe.

"A TENTATIVE LIST OF CHINESE BIRDS" by Gee, Moffett and Wilder.



- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. UPPER MANDIBLE | 18. LATERAL RETRICES |
| 2. LOWER MANDIBLE | 19. SCAPULARS |
| 3. NAIL | 20. LESSER WING COVERTS |
| 4. NASAL TUFT | 21. MIDDLE WING COVERTS |
| 5. FOREHEAD | 22. GREATER WING COVERTS |
| 6. LORES | 23. SECONDARIES |
| 7. CROWN | 24. PRIMARIES |
| 8. AURICULARS (EAR COVERTS) | 25. LESSER TAIL COVERTS |
| 9. MALAR REGION | 26. TROAT |
| 10. SIDE OF NECK | 27. BREAST |
| 11. OCCIPUT (BACK OF HEAD) | 28. FLANKS |
| 12. NAPE | 29. ABDOMEN |
| 13. BACK | 30. VENT OR ANAL REGIONS |
| 14. RUMP | 31. TIBIA |
| 15. UPPER TAIL COVERTS | 32. TARSUS (FEET) |
| 16. TAIL | 33. TOES |
| 17. MIDDLE RETRICES | |

TOPOGRAPHY OF A BIRD

From "Birds of Washington"

INDEX TO FAMILIES

Order PASSERIFORMES

SPARROW-LIKE BIRDS

(PERCHING BIRDS)

Suborder OSCINES—Song] Birds

FAMILY

-CORVIDAE, Crows, Pies and Jays	1
-STURNIDAE, Starlings and Mynas	8
-ORIOIDAE, Orioles	13
-DICRURIDAE, Drongos or King Crows	14
-CAMPEPHAGIDAE, (Pericrocotidae) Minivets and Cuckoo-Shrikes	18
-PLOCEIDAE, Munias and Java Sparrows	23
-FRINGILLIDAE, Finches	26
Subfamily FRINGILLINAE, Sparrows and Finches	28
„ EMBERIZINAE, Buntings	33
„ COCCOTHAUSTINAE, Hawfinches	26
-ALAUDIDAE, Larks	46
-MOTACILLIDAE, Wagtails and Pipits	48
-TURDIDAE, Thrushes	59
Subfamily TURDINAE, True Thrushes	59
„ BRACHYPTERYGINAE, Shortwings	71
„ SAXICOLINAE, Chats	73
„ PHOENICURINAE, Redstarts and Robins	75
-TIMALIDAE, Babbling Thrushes	81
Subfamily TURDOIDINAE (Timaliinae), Babbling Thrushes	81
„ SIBIINAE, Yuhinas, Staphidiads, etc.	94
„ LEIOTHRICHINAE, Leiothrinx, Shrike-Tits	97
-PITTIDAE, Pittas	100
-PYCNONOTIDAE (Brachypodidae), Bulbuls	100
-ENICRURIDAE, Forktails	109
-SYLVIIDAE, Old World Warblers	112
-REGULIDAE, Gold Crests (Kinglets)	146
-PARIDAE, Tits	147

FAMILY

-PARADOXORNTHIDAE, Crow-Tits	155
-CERTHIIDAE, Creepers	161
-SITTIDAE, Nuthatches	162
-TROGLODYTIDAE, Wrens	164
-CINCLIDAE, Dippers	166
-HIRUNDINIDAE, Swallows	168
-AMPELIDAE, Waxwings	173
-LANIIDAE, Shrikes	175
-MUSCICAPIDAE, Flycatchers	182
-ZOSTEROPIDAE, Silver-eyes	196
-DICAEDAE, Flower-perckers	197
-NECTARIDAE, Sunbirds	198

Order CORACIIFORMES

ROLLER-LIKE BIRDS

Suborder CAPRIMULGI.

FAMILY

-CAPRIMULGIDAE, Goatsuckers and Nightjars	199
Suborder MICROPODII—Hummingbirds, Swifts, etc.	
-CYPSELIDAE (Micropidae), Swifts	201
Suborder TROGONES—Trogons.	
-TROGONIDAE, Trogons	203
Suborder PICI—Barbets, Woodpeckers	
-CAPITONIDAE, Barbets and Honey-Guides	204
-PICIDAE, Woodpeckers, Wrynecks	205
Suborder CORACII.	
-CORACIIDAE, Rollers	213
-ALCEDINIDAE, Kingfishers	214
-UPUPIDAE, Hoopoes	219
-MEROPIDAE, Bee Eaters	223
Suborder STRIGES.	
-STRIGIDAE, Owls	224

Order CUCULIFORMES—

CUCKOO-LIKE BIRDS.

Suborder CUCULI

FAMILY

-CUCULIDAE, Cuckoos	233
Suborder PSITTACI—Parrots	
-PSITTACIDAE, Parrots	243

INDEX TO FAMILIES

Order FALCONIFORMES THE FALCON-LIKE BIRDS.

Suborder ACCIPITRES.

FAMILY

- FALCONIDAE, Falcons . . . 243
- BUTEONIDÆ, Kites, Buzzards,
Eagles, Hawks and etc. . . 251
- Subfamily PANDIONINAE,
Ospreys . . . 265
- „ MILVINAE, Kites,
Buzzard Eagles, Sea
Eagles . . . 254
- „ AQUILINAE, Eagles 251
- „ VULTURINAE, Vultures 257
- „ CIRCINAE, Harriers 255
- „ BUTEONINAE, Buzzards 263
- „ ACCIPITRINAE,
Sparrow Hawks . . 26c

Order GALLIFORMES— THE FOWL-LIKE BIRDS.

Suborder TURNICES

FAMILY

- TURNICIDAE, Bustard Quails or
Hemipodes . . . 267
- Suborder GALLI.
- PHASIANIDAE, Grouse, Pheasants,
Partridges and Quail . . . 271
- Subfamily PERDICINAE, Old
World Partridges and
Quail . . . 271
- „ PHASIANINAE, Pheasants 276

Order GRUIFORMES— THE CRANE-LIKE BIRDS.

FAMILY

- RALLIDAE, Rails, Coots and Crakes 281
- GRUIDAE, Cranes . . . 289

Order CICONIIFORMES— THE STORK-LIKE BIRDS.

Suborder STEGANOPODES.

FAMILY

- PELECANIDAE, Pelicans, . . 291
- PHALACROCORACIDAE,
Cormorants . . . 293
- FREGATIDAE, Frigate Birds, or
Man-o-War . . . 295
- Suborder ARDEAE.
- ARDEIDAE, Herons and Bitterns 296
- Suborder CICONIAE—Storks.
- CICONIIDAE, Storks . . . 311

FAMILY

- IBIDIDAE (Threskiornithidae),
Ibises . . . 313
- PLATALEIDAE, Spoon bills . . 314

Order CHARADRIIFORMES— PLOVER-LIKE BIRDS.

Suborder LIMICOLAE.

FAMILY

- CHARADRIIDAE, Plovers, Snipe
and Sandpipers . . . 316
- GLAREOLIDAE, Pratincoles or
Swallow-Plover . . . 349
- JACANIDAE, Jacanas . . . 351
- Suborder LARI
- LARIDAE, Gulls, Terns and
Skimmers . . . 353
- Subfamily STERNINAE, Terns . 353
- „ LARINAE, Gulls . . 361
- ALCEDAE, Murres, Auks, Puf-
fins, etc. . . . 365
- Suborder COLUMBAE.
- COLUMBIDAE, Pigeons and Doves 366

Order ANSERIFORMES— GOOSE-LIKE BIRDS.

Suborder ANSERES.

FAMILY

- ANATIDAE, Swans, Geese,
Ducks, etc. . . . 271
- Subfamily CYGNINAE, Swans . 430
- „ ANSERINAE, Geese 371
- „ ANATINAE, River
Ducks . . . 380
- „ FULIGULINAE, Sea
Ducks . . . 391
- „ MERGINAE, Mergam-
scrs . . . 393

Order PROCELLARIIFORMES— ALBATROSSES, PETRELS

FAMILY

- PROCELLARIIDAE, Petrels . . 397
- PUFFINIDAE, Shearwaters, Ful-
mars, etc. . . . 398
- DIOMEDEIDAE, Albatrosses . 396

Order COLYMBIFORMES— LOONS, GREBES.

Suborder COLYMBI—Loons.

FAMILY

- COLYMBIDAE, Loons or Divers 399
- Suborder PODICIPIDES—Grebes.
- PODICIPIDAE, Grebes . . . 399

SOUTH CHINA BIRDS

Family CORVIDAE. Crows, Jays, Daws and Pies

Members of this family have strong compressed bills, the nostrils usually being hidden in a frontal tuft of feathers. The group embraces the largest of the Passeres. The legs and feet are powerful, most of the members walking easily upon the ground. The middle toe is united nearly half its length to the lateral one. Eighteen members of this family are listed in eastern China. The highest degree of intelligence and organization is found among the *Corvidae*. We have accounted for ten members of this group in this volume.

EASTERN BLACK CROW

Corvus corone orientalis (Eversmann)

P.S.N.H. No. 889.

Synonym.—Eastern Carrion Crow.

Description.—Length, slightly less than the common collared crow. Universally black throughout, with especial iridescence above.

Recognition Marks.—Small crow size; distinguished from the large black crow by the bill which is neither abnormally large, nor club-like.

Nesting Habits.—The nest is composed of sticks into which is built a deep cup of rootlets, fine grasses mixed with dirt and mud, and lined with hair, wool and other soft materials. It is generally placed high in a banyan or pine tree. The eggs number from three to six, and are pale greenish or bluish-green ground color, spotted, blotched and dashed with greenish-brown, gray and obscure lilac. Season, April.

Range.—Breeding in Siberia, Manchuria, Mongolia, Japan, Korea and north China, south to Szechuen. Recorded from the coast of Chihli and Kiangsu, Fukien and Hainan Straits and from western Szechuen, as migrant and in winter. We have found this bird during the winter around Futsing on the Fukien coast. We have seen it in greater numbers at Yenping, being found congregating around the dung jars of truck gardeners both within the walls of the city and outside. It frequents drains and other places of filth. The numbers are greatly reduced in the spring, though a considerable number remain to breed. We have taken sets of eggs from nests in banyan trees within the city, and from pine trees on the nearby hills. For scientific accuracy it might be that this crow should be given the place of a sub-species, distinguishing between it and the northern species which is reported only as breeding in Siberia, Manchuria and the northern regions of China.

SOUTH-EAST CHINA THICK-BILLED CROW

Corvus coronoides colonorum, Swinhoe

P.S.N.H. No. 890b.

Synonym.—Oriental Raven.

Description.—Length 21 inches. Bill very club-like, slightly arched, black. Tarsus and irides black. Plumage glossy black with purplish reflections.

Recognition Marks. Large size; very prominent club-like bill, feathered at the base. The largest black crow in southern China.

Nesting Habits.—The nest is composed of sticks into which is formed a deep depression lined with dirt, moss and grass roots, upon which is embedded hair, feathers, wool and pliable bits of bark, strips of rags and such other soft material as may be found in the neighborhood. It is usually placed high in trees, either upon some remote hillside or within the habitat of man. We took one set of eggs from a nest in the top of a tree over the play-ground of a college campus. The eggs number from three to five, are greenish-blue to greenish-drab ground color, spotted more or less profusely with pale brown, gray to black over pale lilac. Season, late April to June. Average size of egg 1.71×1.17 inches.

Range.—Resident in south China, the lower Yangtse Valley to Fukien and Kwangtung. This large raven-like black crow is never seen in any such colonies as is common with certain other members of the *Corvidae* group. Quick sighted, cunning and audacious, this bird has been invested by the superstitious people with some kind of a semi-sacred or evil character. In some way its ominous croaking is thought to have prophetic import. Even the long robed scholar of the old school will pause to spit back at the bird its call from overhead. The urchin tending cattle upon the hill will stop his game of jack-stones long enough to spew back the call of this giant of the Order Passeres.

The call of this crow is a harsh nasal croak. The appearance of the bird is generally more loosely made-up and slovenly than that of other members of this group. Though found in the plains the bird is essentially a hill species. It is bold in its quest for food, even venturing in the door yard after anything that attracts it. It doubtless is guilty of not only being a master pirate in robbing the nests of other birds in keeping with the traits of the tribe, but the hub-bub around a home of the peasant people when the croak of this bird is heard, condemns it as a marauder of young chickens and ducks. The interesting thing about this crow is that it nests in May or June, while the other large crows breed much earlier.

COLLARED CROW

Corvus torquatus, Lesson

P.S.N.H. No. 892.

Synonym.—White-necked Crow; Parson Crow; White-necked Raven.

Description.—Length 17 to nearly 20 inches. Bill, feet and irides black. The entire plumage glossy black, except a broad white collar which broadens upon the breast forming a prominent bib-like patch.

Recognition Marks.—Large size; the prominent white collar and breast patch, unmistakable.

Nesting Habits.—The nest is comparatively small, composed of sticks and weed stalks, reinforced upon the inside by a thick layer of dirt mixed with grass, and heavily lined with hair, wool, rootlets, feathers and whatever can be pilfered about. It is placed in the fork of a tree in almost any location and any distance from the ground. The eggs number from three to seven, and are bluish-green to greenish-drab ground color, mottled and spotted with burnt umber, gray to black, with some pale purplish under markings. There is a great variation in the size and color of eggs. Season, January and February, one brood. Size of egg about 1.66×1.18 inches.

Range.—Resident throughout China to Formosa except in the mountains. Recorded from Chihli to Szechuen, Fukien and Hainan.

This is the well known Parson Crow of the plains. It may be seen singly or in colonies practically everywhere. It abounds in newly ploughed fields and partly flooded regions, feeding upon slugs, field snails and small crustaceans. It is a common scavenger along rivers, feeding upon animal matter thrown up by the tide. The common call of the bird is a harsh "caw, caw," though it sometimes utters a more musical note which has been likened to the soft peal of a bell.

At all times the crows are sociable, but in the winter are doubly so, assembling by the hundreds at some common roosting place. True to the traits of the *Corvidae* group throughout the world, this crow holds "caucuses" at which time crows from miles around assemble to participate in the discussion of weighty clan affairs. During some such spirited conference it is very easy to distinguish between the common "caw" of the bird and the many accents of debate, though it is impossible to understand. We have noticed that "kawk-kawk-kawk" seems to announce danger, while a double note much like "caw-aw, caw-aw, caw-aw" seems to restore order again. One can almost read into the assemblage of crows, courts of justice, some kind of a military system and the maintaining of observation posts. There is no family of birds where society seems to come so nearly having an organization and a system for maintaining order as with the *Corvidae*. We brand the parson crow a thief,

a brigand and a rascal, all of which he is, yet we must in fairness to facts, agree that the eggs and nestlings destroyed, and the destruction to various crops of the farmer folk are insignificant wrongs as compared with the good done in the search for food with which to satisfy the demands at home.

EAST ASIAN ROOK

Corvus frugilegus pastinator, Gould

P.S.N.H. No. 893.

Description.—Length 19 inches. Bill black, straight and without hook at end. Iris and tarsus black. The base of bill is bare of feathers and is covered with a white scale-like skin. Entire plumage iridescent black.

Recognition Marks.—Straight bill with bare patch at base; small crow appearance and living in large harmonious colonies.

Nesting Habits.—Does not nest in south China.

Range.—Eastern Siberia and China with exception of extreme southeast; Japan and Formosa. Resident and migrant from Chihli to Kansuh, Szechuen and Chekiang. Reported from Fukien and Kwangtung in the winter.

This bird everywhere when resident lives in great colonies, occupying for nesting purposes trees in parks and along the most busy and noisy thoroughfares of large cities. It is common in the comparatively low trees along the bunds of eastern cities. The rook is found in Fukien and Kwangtung in sufficient numbers to give it a place in the avifauna of the provinces, but is by no means common.

THE BLACK JACKDAW

Coleus neglectus (Schlegel)

P.S.N.H. No. 894.

Description.—Length about 13 inches. Bill and tarsus black. The color above is black except for a dark gray patch on back of head. The under parts are dark sooty gray.

Recognition Marks.—Small size; crow-like appearance and dark gray underparts.

Nesting Habits.—Does not nest in south China.

Range.—Eastern Siberia to Japan, Korea and China, except in the extreme west and southeast. Breeds in the northern mountains, in the winter migrating south where it often mingles in considerable numbers with the rooks in colonies. This bird is rarely seen as far south as Fukien, though it is reported crossing the Chekiang border sufficiently often to give it a place among the *Corvidae* of the region.

CHINESE MAGPIE

Pica pica sericea, Gould

P.S.N.H. No. 895.

Description.—Length 18 inches. Bill and tarsus black. Head, back and breast glossy black. Wing coverts and under

parts white. Wings glossy iridescent black, reflecting green in the sunlight. Tail black with bluish iridescence. Sexes similar, female less iridescent.

Recognition Marks.—The black and white, and long tail, unmistakable; hoarse cackling call common to no other bird.

Nesting Habits.—The nest is a huge dome of sticks and trash with one or more openings and placed almost any distance from the ground in anything from a thorn bush to the tallest tree about. From one nest we took strips of scrap iron, a mirror and a framed picture, pilfered from some nearby home. Within the large dome is the nest proper which is composed of grasses, roots and other pliable material, and lined with hair and feathers. It is deeply cupped and embedded into a foundation of dirt and mud. Eggs number from three to ten, varying greatly both in color and size. The ground color varies from a bluish-green to olive-drab, the markings being spots and streaks of pale brown, gray to black. Season, February on. Average size of eggs $1.37 \times .97$ inches.

Range.—Resident throughout China, from Manchuria and Chihli to Szechuen, Fukien, Yunnan and Hainan. While essentially a bird of the plains the magpie wanders in its range to high and arid parts. Wherever found it is a bird of bad reputation, a pronounced rogue and rascal, but as some one has said of the Devil, "Perhaps he is not as black as his reputation." We have seen the magpie defy the attacks by parent birds of fair size, while it mercilessly killed and devoured the fledglings in a nest. The blue jay of eastern North America has no blacker reputation than this reprobate in bird land who will stoop to any depths in order to get a square meal.

The magpies are noisy and boisterous, quarrelling among themselves and becoming a nuisance about the habitation of man. The common call is a "clack clack" uttered with varying intensity and rapidity in expressing the feelings of the individual. There is one community where the magpie is always a welcome resident, and that is a region infested by tigers. The rapid-fire "clack clack clack" of the magpie is usually interpreted in such a region as meaning "cat, cat, cat." Cattle and goats are hurriedly corralled when the magpie strikes up his rat-ti-tat-tat behind the village. Serving as a sentinel of this kind a magpie is at his best.

CHINESE BLUE MAGPIE

Urocissa erythrorhyncha erythrorhyncha, Boddaert

Urocissa melanocephala melanocephala, Latham

P.S.N.H. No. 897.

Synonym.—Blue-winged Magpie.

Description.—Length 21 to 23 inches. Bill and tarsus vermilion. Forehead black, the feathers delicately tipped with blue. Crown and neck light bluish gray. Back slate color with