

EL PASO BIRD STUDY CLUB

THE ROADRUNNER

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LENA MCBEE, CHAIRMAN

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THE MARCH MEETING

A business meeting of the club was held at the home of Mrs. Louise Wilmarth, Tuesday evening, March 19, 1946. Plans were launched for two lectures to be given by General G. Ralph Meyer on April 4 and 11. The group decided to ask for the Audubon Tours next year. A field trip was planned for the near future.

THE APRIL MEETING

Nine members and three guests took the trip to Bosque del Apache Bird Refuge on April 5 and 6. An account of this trip appears on page 2.

GENERAL MEYER'S LECTURES

On the evenings of April 4 and 11, General G. Ralph Meyer lectured before appreciative audiences at the College of Mines Chemistry Building on "The Courtship, Nesting and Migration of Birds", supplementing a series of talks which he gave last fall. In publicizing the recent talks, the Bird Club and the Mines Museum decorated a window in one of the local department stores, which received much attention from El Pasoans during the week preceding the lectures. Specimens, loaned by The El Paso Centennial Museum; eggs from General Meyer's collection; photographs of birds by George McClellan Bradt and nests collected from the area by Mrs. Lena McBee comprised the exhibit. A poster designed and painted by Major George Burrows announced the series of talks. Mrs. Louise Wilmarth, Mrs. J. Owen Allen, Mr. W. S. Strain and General Meyer assisted with the window.

THE NEXT MEETING

The May meeting will be held at the Museum Tuesday, May 14 at 7:30 P.M. A colored film from The National Audubon Society will be shown. Cards will be sent out announcing the title and nature of the film.

NEW MEMBERS

New members include Mrs. Ed. P. Cox, Mrs. Mabel Burge, Mrs. J. A. Rawlings and Mr. Alejandro Lizarraga.

AUDUBON TOURS

Tentative dates for colored bird films, accompanied by the photographer-lecturers who took them, have been arranged by the National Audubon Society and the local bird club. On October 1st Bert Harwell, western Audubon representative, will give bird calls as he shows his film "Music Out of Doors". November brings us Otis Pettingill, Audubon staff lecturer with "Bird Magic in Mexico", showing birds, flowers, butterflies, lizards and scorpions. This film was made under the direction of Cornell University and Carleton College in tropical Tamaulipas. Howard Cleaves, that intrepid photographer who descends in a water-tight tank, cruises in a blimp or roams the night with his chandelier-type flashlight equipment, comes in January with "Animals Unaware". March brings Allan Cruickshanks, famous photographer of elusive

wild life, in a film of rare beauty--"South Along the Suwanee". Karl Mazlowski, noted staff member of the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History and lecturer for the University of Cincinnati, comes in April with "Our Heritage in the Rockies", which was the result of two seasons spent in Yellowstone National Park.

THE BIRD CLUB GOES A-FIELD

The prewar tires began turning about eight o'clock, April 6, on the three cars taking twelve members and friends of the El Paso Bird Club on their first field trip of the season to the Bosque del Apache Wildlife Refuge, twenty miles south of Socorro, New Mexico. There is always a thrill in going north along the Rio Grande for you are joining the procession which passed between these same mountains in prehistoric times over this same Paso del Norte, the oldest road in the United States. White-rumped shrikes, red-winged blackbirds and sparrow hawks looked at the party from telegraph poles and wires.

We crossed the canal to drive among the old adobe walls of Fort Seldon and there a Say's phoebe darted from the top of one of the old ruins. Cliff swallows were also in the air. Some of the party stayed in Hot Springs for lunch while the others went to the picnic tables at Elephant Butte Dam. The fresh green trees were filled with Audubon warblers, a gray vireo was seen among them; and on the water were Bonaparte's and ring-billed gulls. About three o'clock we came to the Indian style, red-toned buildings of the Refuge and Mr. J. J. Sodosuk, the manager, led us to the lakes where we were delighted to see many swimming, wading, bobbing and flying birds. Flying south were a few large white birds with black on their wings that we felt sure were white pelicans. About dark we found our rooms at the very pleasant Val Verde Hotel in Socorro.

Next morning we met Mr. Sodosuk at the Refuge and he became our guide again. The Bosque del Apache Refuge is operated by the United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, with the office of the Regional Director at Albuquerque. The Refuge consists of many acres of very low land covered with salt cedar and willow shrubs. A thin line of cottonwoods marked the main course of the river here. There are several lakes and canals so that much of the land can easily be flooded. We had a delightful surprise when we discovered in a secluded cove a group of Richardson's, lesser Canada and snow geese. In calm dignity they walked to the water and swam about in plain view. They were very important personages. Suddenly some one gave a cry! High in the air were sixteen white pelicans flying north. Their wings caught and reflected the sun and it seemed as if we were seeing a vision of beauty and grace, hardly believable, especially when one remembers how clumsy and grotesque the pelican is on the ground. One bird was good enough to stray from the flock and come quite low so that we could see its markings distinctly.

We again returned to Elephant Butte picnic grounds for our lunch. The wind almost blew our plates away, but it was really lots of fun. When we left we took the lower road running through the fish hatcheries, where the water from the dam rushes jade green with all the force of the Rocky Mountains behind it. There above the green water we saw the most vivid of birds, the vermilion flycatcher. The female was in a tree nearby and her mate was first over the water, then in the tree and then gone again; flying joyously in his Easter glory.

One of the cars turned west and went over the Black Range, which lies within the Gila National Forest, to Santa Rita. There on the desert before the grade begins was a horned lark in just the dry setting that one always pictures him in. At the top of the divide where snow was bright in the shaded places were tall pines filled with the voices and vibrant activity of a most beautiful company of mountain chickadees and white-breasted and pygmy nuthatches. A single brown creeper quietly flew away as we approached. The day ended with a sunset as brilliant as the vermilion flycatcher. All the tires held, there were no casualties and everyone was filled with that perfect contentment that comes from spending two days in the out-of-doors, birding.

Additional birds seen on this trip are treganza's heron, American egret, little blue heron, black crowned night heron, common mallard, gadwall, baldpate, green-winged teal, blue-winged teal, cinnamon teal, shoveller, redhead, ring-necked duck, canvas-back, greater scaup duck, lesser scaup duck, buffle-head, ruddy duck, American merganser, turkey vulture, western red-tailed hawk, marsh hawk, pigeon hawk, Gambel's quail, ring-necked pheasant, American coot, killdeer, Wilson's snipe, lesser yellow-legs, western sandpiper, avocet, western mourning dove, road-runner, red-shafted flicker, Batchelder's woodpecker, cactus woodpecker, Arkansas kingbird, black phoebe, violet-green swallow, tree swallow, rough-winged swallow, barn swallow, white-necked raven, western marsh wren, western robin, American pipit, Stephen's vireo, western meadowlark, yellow-headed blackbird, Brewer's blackbird, great-tailed grackle, cowbird, English sparrow, Cassin's purple finch, house finch, Arkansas goldfinch, gray-headed junco, western chipping sparrow, Gambel's sparrow, Rocky Mountain song sparrow.

A total of seventy-six species of birds was observed by the group.

--Louise Wilmarth

BIRDS IN HIGHLAND PARK

These observations were made in Highland Park, sometimes known as Newman Park, in El Paso. This park is located at the eastern end of Scenic Drive. The elevation is about 3800 feet and the park is one city block in size. It is bordered by residential streets. The yard of one house on the south contains a pool and the park has several dripping faucets connected with a sprinkling system. The sides are bordered by mulberry, cottonwood, mountain ash and tamarix.

There are clumps of cypress, cedar, euonymus, pomegranate and other ornamental trees in each corner, and the center is a lawn. Buses run on the street on the west and turn at the northwest corner. In that corner I have usually observed no birds.

These observations were made between January 8th and April 14th, thus covering about two and a half months of winter and one of spring. All visits were made between 8:30 and 10:00 A.M.

In all I have identified seventeen species of birds and had fleeting glimpses of several others. The red-backed and pink-sided juncos I have noted on every visit. Robins have varied in number from one on January 8th to a flock on January 29th. None were observed from March 20th to April 14th when I saw one. The plain titmouse, seen on more than half of my visits, was not visible on April 14th.

And now for some special days: January 10th was that beautiful winter day when there was a very thick fog and the ground was white with heavy hoar frost. Through rifts in the fog there were magnificent glimpses of Mount Franklin. Against this white background I made my first acquaintance with a little crested gray bird, feeding sometimes on the ground and sometimes clinging upside down to the lower branches, the plain titmouse. He is definitely gray, with no black crest or rusty sides or white underparts. Perched in the top of a tree was Townsend's solitaire; a robin-sized bird, though more slender, gray with a buffy patch in the wing. I saw it only once afterward on January 22nd.

Then hopping like a robin came the California jay. The white frost made a perfect background for the long blue tail, blue crestless head and gray back. Its call was as raucous as the eastern blue jay's. Since then I have seen it in the park four times.

Other birds seen that day were the red-shafted flicker, robin, house finch, red-tailed and pink-sided juncos.

On January 22nd the joy of the day was the ashy ruby-crowned kinglet. Its white eye ring and two pale wing bars were conspicuous and, as it climbed around in a leafless shrub within a few feet of me, it seemed to take particular care to show its ruby crown. I have not seen it since.

February 27th brought a near view of three red-shafted flickers. The black crescent across the breast, brown backs and white rumps as they flew were all clearly seen. This date was noteworthy for my first acquaintance with Audubon's warbler, so much like the familiar myrtle warbler of the North. Both have the heavy inverted V on the breast, the yellow head, side, and rump patches, but the throat of the myrtle is white, not yellow, as is the Audubon's. The female Audubon with its white wing bars, paler yellow spots and streaked breast was also present. I have seen both several times since; and on April 14th observed a flock of fifteen handsomely attired males, and heard a few songs.

On March 20th I sighted an old friend, the black and white creeping warbler, so familiar to me in its northern haunts.*

On April 4th and every visit since I have seen chipping sparrows. The Gambel's sparrow, so abundant elsewhere in the city, I have noted in this park only thrice.

On April 12th came proof that summer is here. Darting about the top of a cottonwood was a large humming bird with a very long bill. At that height and silhouetted against the sky it was dark in color. It could have been a blue-throated.

A surprise flock of cedar wax-wings brightened the mulberry trees, feasting on the ripening fruit, on April 14th.

A flock of house finches were feeding on the seed of a neighboring cottonwood throwing out the cotton and singing a blithe au revoir to the visitor from the North who had greeted old friends and made new acquaintances on their morning visits.

—Sarah Durkee

*Editor's Note. We have but one previous record of this warbler in El Paso.

BIRD WALK IN NEW GUINEA

Major George Burrows

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is a continuation of the article by the same name appearing in the March-April, 1946, issue of "The Roadrunner".

The Song River Valley was ringing with the early bird chorus. I wondered if that was how it got its name. From the edge of the jungle came the harsh, raucous "Squawk" of a Cockatoo. The Myna's clear call was contrastingly musical. But like the repeating theme in a great symphony was the omnipresent note of the Cuckoo, now

stridently carrying the air, now relegated to an undertone, but always its varied strain was there, on through the blistering heat of noonday and even sporadically through the night, incessantly, artfully binding the music into a whole.

Some New Guinea birds are beautifully colored, some are gracefully shaped, some are comical, but its Cuckoo is just plain ugly. It slightly resembles a Thrasher, but the mottled, rusty brown covers its entire body. There seems to be no design, pattern or distinctive mark to relieve it. Its neck is not long enough to be graceful, yet is too long to appear normal. At the end of the scrawny neck is an undersized head. Its plumage always seems ruffled and moth-eaten. I watched the bird hunt caterpillars among the hanging branches and vines in the clearing, occasionally spreading its long tail for balance. I feel sure that its endless loud singing is a defense mechanism, the result of a complex brought on by its displeasing appearance.

Not all tropical birds are radically different from those in the United States. As I proceeded up the steep, verdant ridge some Pacific Swallows went whisking by, turning, banking, gliding for all the world like common Barn Swallows. Their backs were metallic blue-black, with forehead and throat chestnut. Underparts were a bit darker and the tail less deeply incised than the one in the States. When they alighted side by side, twittering, on our field-wire line, I felt a touch of nostalgia.

For a moment I thought I must have been dreaming, for flying with slow, deliberate wing beat across the clearing came a crow cawing in true American style. It went directly to the tallest, most conspicuous of the few scattered forest trees left standing, and promptly disappeared. Binoculars disclosed the startling fact that up there, of all places, that crow had built its nest, nearly 200 feet from the ground! An individualist!

I was thinking of home as I moved up along a narrow trail. Careening by overhead, a chattering flight of Lories brought me back abruptly to the Land of the Southern Cross. It was another species of Brush-Tongued Lory, probably one of the abundant Coconut Lories. It was larger, nearly the size of a Robin, and lacked the bright collar and head markings of the Parrot seen earlier. My fleeting view showed all green above and red below. The wings flashed a blur of red and green in the sun giving the impression of looking through a chromatically uncorrected lens. The birds seemed surrounded by a corona of prismatic colors.

In this bland, benign climate with an abundance of rich soil, sun, heat and rain, no clearing untended maintains its identity for long. Already second growth trees were springing up with amazing speed. A small bird flitted ahead of me like a butterfly and came to rest atop a young papaya. Like a butterfly's wing was the shimmering, interplaying blue-green of its back - greener at the nape and becoming light blue toward the rump. A golden wash gave it an almost luminescent quality. Rainbow Bird is its fitting name. It took off after an insect in flycatcher fashion. As it flew I saw that the central tailfeathers were elongated in a slim spike, like a protruding bit of wire.

Before I had taken another step there was a humming swish and glimpse of green as a close-knit formation of tiny birds flashed by my head, just above the brush, rising and falling like pursuit planes, in perfect unison. At home I would have called them Hummingbirds. Sunbirds are the Hummingbirds of the Old World tropics. They have a long, thin, curved bill, wear metallic colors, feed on nectar, make their nests of spider web and lichens, and prefer open country. Probably, however, the miniature flock just seen were Flower-Peckers. These characteristically travel in small groups. They spend most of their time feeding on insects and mistletoe berries in the treetops.

As I approached the top of the spur I was thinking how odd were the names of the song bird families in this part of the world. The Rainbow Bird is a Bee Eater. There are Sunbirds, Flower-Peckers and Honey-Eaters. The Honey-Eaters are like large Sunbirds in appearance and similarly visit flowers, feeding on their nectar and small insects, but they prefer the top of the primeval forest. This richly developed family occurs only in the Australo-Papuan region. There are sixty-one species in New Guinea alone. The members of all these families have rather long, curved bills and many have green backs.

At the crest of the elevation the ground leveled off toward the jungle. A large bird with short wings was flying rather heavily across the clearing. For a moment I thought it was a Japanese Golden Pheasant, but when it came closer, I realized with a thrill that here was my first Lesser Bird of Paradise. Of all the rare creatures of the tropics there was none that I had looked for more eagerly than the Bird of Paradise. The wondrous golden flank plumes which it ruffles when displaying were lying flat along its back and sides, streaming behind beyond the end of its tail. I got a sensation of gold and rufous, then it was gone. I wanted to see more of this amazing creature of Paradise; I wanted to see it perched; perhaps it would spread its feathers a little or even strut. But I sought in vain. It had gone - back perhaps to the land of the Gods from whence it came.

Between me and the jungle stretched an irregular field of rank kunai grass. I have come upon such clearings in the heart of the forest. Apparently this hardy grass is so persistent that its choking tangle of roots can hold its own against the advance of the engulfing jungle. Men, too, have a certain respect for the cane grasses because they harbor the mite which carries scrub typhus. It is not apt to be picked up if one keeps moving.

THE RED-SHAFTED FLICKERS

There was a knock at the door of the white adobe house where Mr. and Mrs. Hill lived. They walked together to the door and Mr. Hill opened it. There stood Mr. Martin and the children. Mr. Martin asked, "Do you mind if Anita and her cousins stay in your yard to watch for birds?"

"Of course not. If you are very quiet, you may see our flickers. They belong to the woodpecker family, you know," smiled the old gentleman.

Anita seated herself on the stone bench. Tommy stretched out on the grass at her feet. Carlos seated himself on the ground, with his back against a cottonwood tree.

Across the yard there was a small fishpond. Behind it was a rock garden. A dripping faucet kept the plants watered. The water stood in little pockets in the rocks.

A big, fat robin dropped to one of the little water holes from a tree above the fishpond. He would first dip his bill into the water. Then he would raise his head to let the water run down his throat.

The English sparrows began to quarrel in the salt cedars. A house finch sang his rippling song over and over. In a distant field a meadowlark whistled his beautiful song. The children listened for a long time.

"I don't believe there are any woodpeckers in these trees after all," sighed Anita.

Carlos put his fingers to his lips. He could see something moving among the green leaves. Then they heard a loud, clear bird call.

"Wickup! wickup! wickup! wickup! wickup!" With a flash of red, a bird which was larger than a robin, flew into the largest cottonwood. Soon another followed, then another and another and still one more. Right in front of their eyes were five flickers!

They hopped from branch to trunk and back again. One flew to the ground and began to peck in the earth with its long bill. The other four followed.

"Look!" whispered Carlos. "The bird in the center has no red on its face. That must be a female. Each of the others has a red moustache. They are males. Each male bird is trying to make her think he is the finest."

The female flew back to a tree and the others followed her. One stopped on the rough bark of the trunk. He turned his head this way and that, as if to show off the red marks on his face. He stretched out his wings, showing a great deal of red under them. The black curved mark on his breast was beautiful to see. But the female only turned her head away and began pecking on the branch.

Another bird flew to the same branch and began to show off. He hopped and bowed. He pranced back and forth, softly calling, "Yucker, yucker, yucker." The female took no notice of him either.

"Wick-up, wick-up, wick-up!" This flicker flew in from the orchard and lighted on the grass at the foot of the tree. The others dropped to the foot of the tree and made a circle about him, like boys around a new child at school. Perhaps the new bird was alarmed. Perhaps he just wanted to start a new game. He hopped to the bark at the base of the tree and called, "If-if-if-if-if-if-if-if." He started circling up the trunk.

Another bird took up the call and circled after him. The rest followed, each a foot lower than the last. The air was filled with their noisy calls, "If-if-if-if!"

When the leader came to the place where the trunk divided, he turned and flew back to the orchard, with his "Wick-up, wick-up, wick-up" call. The other flickers followed him. They flew in a wavy, up-and-down line, as if the air was full of waves, like the ocean.

The children stood up and stretched. "Well, did you ever?" said Tommy, as he brushed the ants from his neck.

"No, we never did," laughed Carlos. "Anita, there's a bug on your leg. And see this funny little cricket!"

"Who minds an ant and a bug?" asked Anita, "when such interesting birds can be seen."

"It's time to go," said Carlos. "Here come the folks. Remember the little poem I taught you?"

'If you can lie upon the grass
Relaxing in the sunlight's glow,
And study birds and clouds that pass
For several hours in a row,
And never feel the insects bite,
You do love nature then, all right.'**

"Did you see any birds?" asked Mr. Hill.

"Oh, yes," said Carlos, "a whole bunch of flickers."

The old gentleman smiled. "We have had a pair nesting here for several summers. They cut a hole in a dead limb with their hard, sharp bills and use it for a nest. In it they lay from four to ten white eggs. Come back in a few weeks and see if we don't have some young birds to show you."

"Thank you, we will be back. Goodby, Mr. Hill," called the three as the car started back toward the city.

—Marguerite H. Wright

Can you match these questions and answers?

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| 1. How large is a red-shafted flicker? | <input type="checkbox"/> | The flicker eats ants and other insects. |
| 2. What kind of a bill has a flicker? | <input type="checkbox"/> | The nest is in a hole in a tree. |
| 3. Where does Mrs. Flicker make her nest? | <input type="checkbox"/> | The eggs are white. |
| 4. What color are the eggs? | <input type="checkbox"/> | It is a little larger than a robin. |
| 5. How does the flicker help the farmer? | <input type="checkbox"/> | The bill is long, hard and sharp. |
| 6. How can you tell the male from the female flicker? | <input type="checkbox"/> | The male flicker has a red mustache. |

Read these:

- MOSTBIRDSEATBUGS
- ALLBIRDSHAVEFEATHERS
- BIRDSHAVETWOFEET
- BIRDSLAYEGGS
- SOMBIRDSSING
- SOMBIRDSHOPANDSOMEWALK

Write the correct word in the blanks:

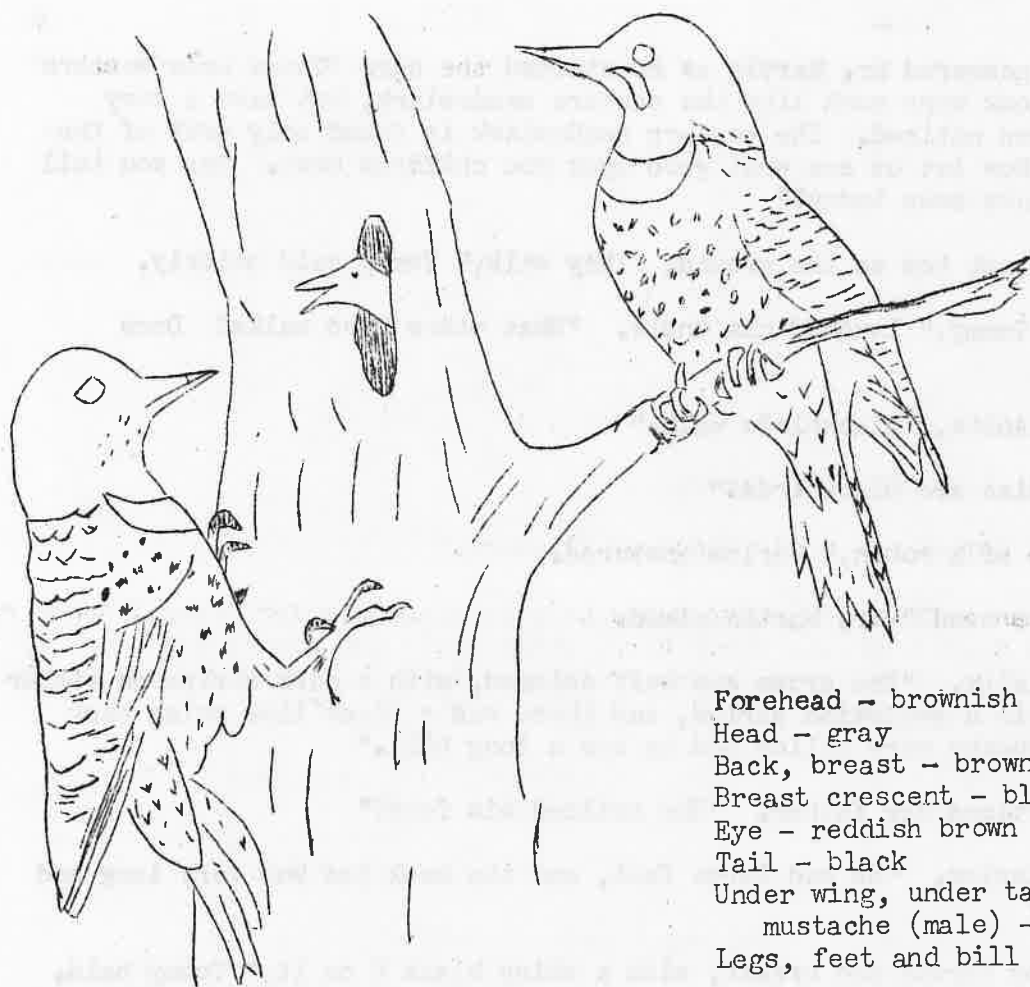
- The male flicker has a red _____.
 - He climbs up the trunk of a _____.
 - The under side of his wings and tail are _____.
 - Mrs. Flicker lays from five to ten _____.
 - They eat hundreds of _____.
- tree ants mustache red eggs

mustache—tree—red—eggs—ants

Some birds hop and some walk.
Some birds sing.
Birds lay eggs.
Birds have two feet.
All birds have feathers.
Most birds eat bugs.

Key:
5-3-4-1-2-6

**"Acid Test" by W. E. Farbstein.



Forehead - brownish red
 Head - gray
 Back, breast - brownish
 Breast crescent - black
 Eye - reddish brown
 Tail - black
 Under wing, under tail and
 mustache (male) - red
 Legs, feet and bill - dark

Teachers' Note:

Colored picture - Examine bird books for illustrations or use National Audubon Society Leaflet No. 135 - Red-Shafted Flicker (Research Department of Public Library).

THE WESTERN MEADOWLARK

A small gray car rolled slowly along the highway. Mr. and Mrs. Martin were in the front seat. In the back were Anita and her cousins, Carlos and Tommy Lamar.

It was the last Sunday in March. The wind, tired of blowing, was taking a nap. Weeping willows were softly green with small new leaves. The Chinese elms had strung their pale green buttons on every twig. Buds were swelling on the bare cottonwood trees. Plum, peach and pear trees were in full bloom. The children sniffed the air happily.

Carlos looked up from a pad where he had been writing. "There," he said, "that makes us eight English sparrows, six juncos, seven house finches and twenty redwings. Oh, Uncle John, please stop just a minute."

Beside the road was a low spot filled with water. Dozens of blackbirds were in the cat-tails and willows, calling and singing. As they sang they spread their wings and tails. Their red shoulder patches were beautiful against their shining black feathers. With them were two yellow-headed blackbirds.

"Thirty-eight redwings and two yellow-heads," murmured Carlos as he wrote. "Thank you, Uncle John."

The car went on. Beyond the next farmyard and orchard were green alfalfa fields. Mr. Martin drove to the side of the road and stopped. From the field came a beautiful clear song. As the singing bird finished his last note, another bird sang, then another. One flew to a fence post near the car and opened his beak.

"Oh," whispered Tommy, "he is going to sing just for us."

"Look at his beautiful golden breast," whispered Carlos, "and the black V below his throat. Is it a meadowlark? It is the right size--about as big as a robin. But I never heard a song like that before."

The bird finished his song, rested a moment, then repeated it. Then he spread his wings and sailed down into the alfalfa. A moment later he had disappeared.

"Yes, Carlos," answered Mr. Martin as he started the car. "Those were western meadowlarks. They look very much like the eastern meadowlark, but have a very different song, as you noticed. The western meadowlark is found only west of the Mississippi River. Now let us see what good eyes you children have. Can you tell something that you have seen today?"

"Meadowlarks do not hop on the ground. They walk," Tommy said quickly.

"Score one for Tommy," laughed his uncle. "What other bird walks? Does anyone know?"

"I know," said Anita, "blackbirds walk."

"Right. What size are blackbirds?"

"About the size of a robin," Carlos answered.

"Who noticed his head?" Mr. Martin asked.

"I did," said Anita. "The crown was buff colored, with a dark stripe on either side. Over the eye is a yellowish stripe, and there was a black line going back from the eye. His cheeks were yellow and he has a long bill."

"Fine work," praised her father. "Who noticed his feet?"

"I did," said Carlos. "He had large feet, and the back toe was very long and curved like a claw."

"He had a yellow throat and breast, with a shiny black V on it," Tommy said. "That is two points for each of us."

"I looked carefully at his back when he left the fence post," Carlos told them. "It was brown, all streaked and barred with black and white. It made him look just like the ground, so he was hard to see when he stopped moving."

"I noticed his tail," said Tommy. "It was short, and when he flies, he spreads it out. Then you can see that the outer tail feathers are white, like the little junco. When he got to the ground, he gave his tail two or three flirts and then walked away."

"Maybe he was saying 'good-by' to us," laughed Mrs. Martin. "Anita, tell the boys about the nest your father found last spring."

"Oh, I wish you could have seen it, boys. It was under a bunch of grass. Mrs. Meadowlark had laid three eggs in it. They were white with brown and purple spots on them. The Bird Lady says that sometimes they lay six or seven eggs."

"I always look for a meadowlark when we drive in the Valley. I love to see them and to hear their song. Are they useful, too?" Mrs. Martin asked her husband.

"Indeed, yes," answered Mr. Martin. "He is a friend with no bad habits so far as we know. He eats lots of grasshoppers and other harmful insects and weed seeds."

"May we get out and look for a nest?" Tommy asked.

"I think they will not start building nests till April or May, and besides, their nests are not easy to find. Your Auntie and I are going to stop and call on an old friend," continued his uncle. "While we are in the house, you children may watch for the flickers that live in their old cottonwood trees."

"What is a flicker?" This time it was Anita who asked.

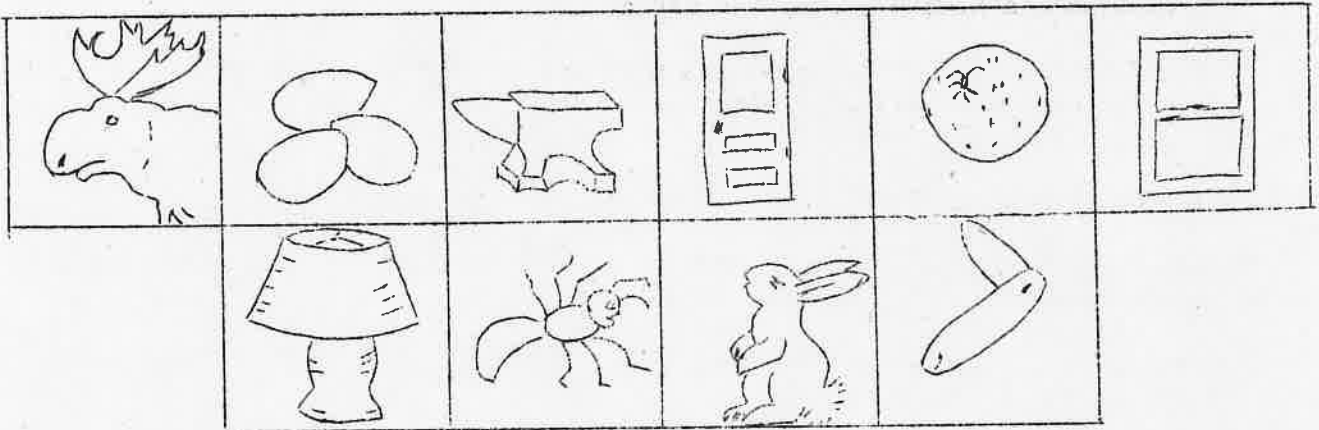
"It is a woodpecker. The one we have in the west is the red-shafted flicker. And here we are." Mr. Martin turned into a driveway.

--Marguerite Wright

Draw a line under every word that tells about meadowlarks.

- Food: insects ice cream eggs fruit
 Eggs: fifteen four to six twenty two
 Nest: near a house in a tall tree on the ground
 over the water
 Breast: yellow red brown blue
 Size: huge tiny sparrow-sized robin-sized
 Head: black red striped bald

Write the first letter of the name of each of these pictures. What does it spell?



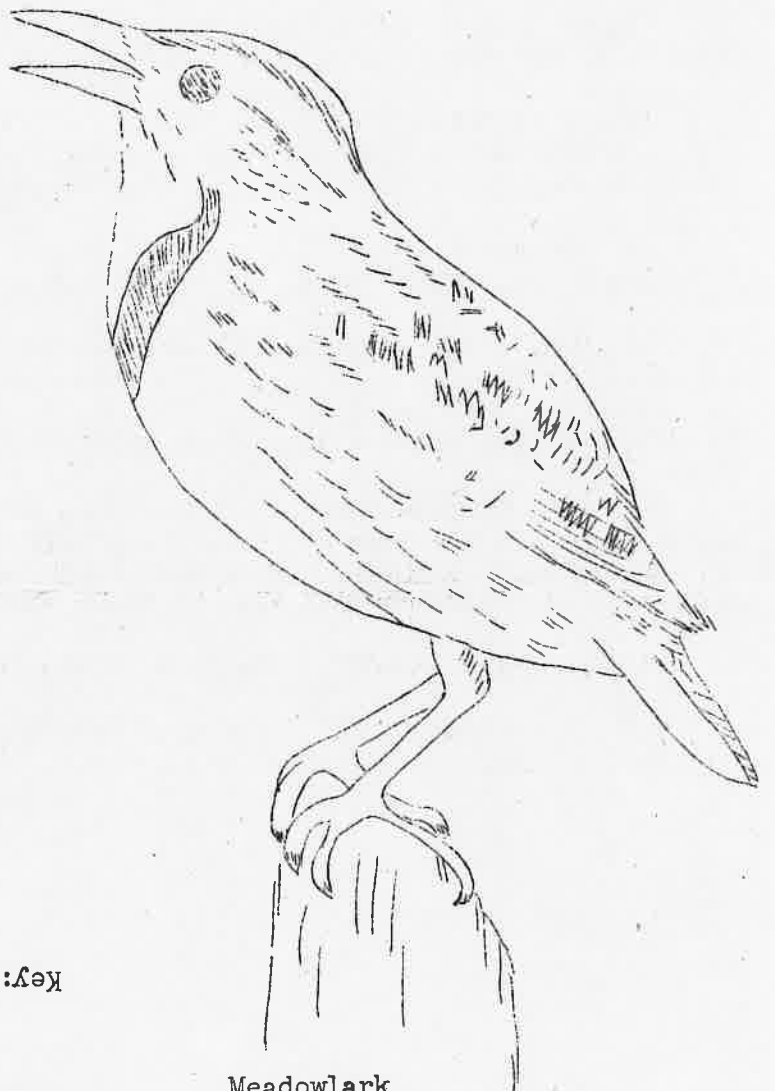
Meadowlark

Read the list of birds below. Put the correct number in each square.

Can you color this bird when you have finished the story?

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| | a yellow head |
| | a yellow breast |
| | red on head and breast |
| | red shoulders |
| | red on breast only |
| | a black V |
| | a round, black bib |

- Robin
- Red-wing
- English Sparrow
- House Finch
- Yellow-headed Blackbird
- Meadowlark



Meadowlark

Key: 5-6-4-2-1-6-3