pressed, with 2 large dimidiate rings. The rings are broad, firm, 56 in number. The bronchi, *o p, o p*, are wide, of about 15 half rings. The muscles are the same as in the Thrushes and Warblers, there being four pairs of inferior laryngeal.

THE BLACK WALNUT.

JUGLANS NIGRA, *Willd.*, Sp. Pl., vol. iv. p. 456. *Pursh*, Flor. Amer. Sept., vol. ii. p. 636. *Mich.*, Arbr. Forest, vol. i. p. 157, pl. 1.—MONECIA POLYANDRIA, *Linn.*—TEREBINTHACEÆ, *Juss.*

The *black walnut* of the United States is generally a tree of beautiful form, and often, especially in the Western and Southern States, attains a great size. Wherever it is found, you may calculate on the land being of good quality; the wood is very firm, of a dark brown tint, veined, and extremely useful for domestic purposes, many articles of furniture being made of it. It is also employed in ship-building. When used for posts or fence rails, it resists the action of the weather for many years. The nuts are gathered late in autumn, and although rather too oily, are eaten and considered good by many persons. The husking of them is however a disagreeable task, as their covering almost indelibly stains every object with which it comes in contact.

THE FISH-CROW.

†CORVUS OSSIFRAGUS, *Wils.*

PLATE CCXXVI.—MALE AND FEMALE.

This may be said to be the only species of *Black-bird* found in the United States that is not constantly subjected to persecution. You would suppose it fully aware of its privileges, were you to witness the liveliness of its motions, and to listen to its continued chatter. While the Raven and the Common Crow are ever on the watch to escape the effects of the enmity which man harbours towards them, the Fish-Crow pays little attention to

Fish Crow.

1 Male. 2 Female.

Honey Locust.

him as he approaches, and even enters his garden to feed on his best fruits. Hundreds are seen to alight on the trees near the towns and cities placed along our southern shores; many fly over or walk about the pools and rivers, and all pursue their avocations without apprehension of danger from the lords of the land. This sense of security arises entirely from the circumstance that man generally believes the bird to be perfectly inoffensive, and glad am I, reader, that it at least bears so good a character.

The Fish-Crow is almost entirely confined to the maritime districts of the Southern States, and there it abounds at all seasons. Those which migrate proceed to the eastward about the beginning of April, and some go as far as New York, where they are, however, rather rare. They ascend the Delaware river in Pennsylvania, nearly up to its source, and some breed in the State of Jersey every year; but all return to the south at the approach of cold weather. Some go up the Mississippi for four or five hundred miles, but I have not seen any higher on that stream, which they generally leave to return to the vicinity of the sea-shore in the winter season. In East Florida, where they abound, I found them breeding in February, in South Carolina about the 20th of March, and in New Jersey a month later.

While on the St. John's river in Florida, during the month of February, I saw flocks of Fish-Crows, consisting of several hundred individuals, sailing high in the air, somewhat in the manner of the Raven, when the whole appeared paired, for I could see that, although in such numbers, each pair moved distinctly apart. These aerial excursions would last for hours, during the calm of a fine morning, after which the whole would descend toward the water, to pursue their more usual avocations in all the sociability of their nature. When their fishing, which lasted about half an hour, was over, they would alight in flocks on the live oaks and other trees near the shores, and there keep up their gabbling, pluming themselves for hours. Once more they returned to their fishing-grounds, where they remained until about an hour from sunset, when they made for the interior, often proceeding thirty or forty miles, to roost together in the trees of the *loblolly pine*. They scarcely utter a single note during this retreat, but no sooner does the first glimmer of day appear than the woods around echo to their matin cries of gratulation. They depart at once for the sea-shores, noisy, lively, and happy. Now you find them busily engaged over the bays and rivers, the wharfs, and even the salt-ponds and marshes, searching for small fry, which they easily secure with their claws as they pass close over the water, and picking up any sort of garbage suited to their appetite.

Like the Raven, the Common Crow, or the Grackle, the Fish-Crow robs other birds of their eggs and young. I observed this particularly on the Florida Keys, where they even dared to plunder the nests of the Cormorant

and White Ibis, waiting with remarkable patience, perched in the neighbourhood, until these birds left their charge. They also frequently alight on large mud flats bordering the salt-water marshes, for the purpose of catching the small crabs called *fiddlers*. This they do with ease, by running after them or digging them out of the muddy burrows into which they retire at the approach of danger. I have frequently been amused, while standing on the "Levéé" at New Orleans, to see the alacrity and audacity with which they pursued and attacked the smaller Gulls and Terns, to force them to disgorge the small fish caught by them within sight of the Crows, which, with all the tyrannical fierceness of the Lestris, would chase the sea birds with open bill, and extended feet and claws, dashing towards their victims with redoubled ardour, the farther they attempted to retreat. But as most Gulls are greatly superior in flight to the Crow, the black tyrants are often frustrated in their attempts, and obliged to return, and seek their food in the eddies by their own industry. They are able to catch fish alive with considerable dexterity, but cannot feed on the wing, and for that purpose are obliged to retire to some tree, stake, or sandbank; and like the Common Crow, the Magpie, and the Cow Bunting, they sometimes alight on the backs of cattle, to search there for the larvæ which frequently harbour in their skin.

During winter and spring, the Fish-Crows are very fond of feeding on many kinds of berries. After the frosts have imparted a rich flavour to those of the cassina (*Ilex cassina*), they are seen feeding on them in flocks often amounting to more than a hundred individuals. They are also fond of the berries of the holly (*Ilex opaca*), and of those of an exotic tree now naturalized in South Carolina, and plentiful about Charleston, the tallow-tree (*Stillingia sebifera*). The seeds of this tree, which is originally from China, are of a white colour when ripe, and contain a considerable quantity of an oily substance. In the months of January and February these trees are covered by the Crows, which greedily devour the berries. As spring advances, and the early fruits ripen, the Fish-Crows become fond of the mulberry, and select the choicest of the ripe figs, more especially when they are feeding their young. A dozen are often seen at a time, searching for the tree which has the best figs, and so troublesome do they become in the immediate vicinity of Charleston, that it is found necessary to station a man near a fig-tree with a gun, not to burn powder to drive the Crows away by the smell, but to fire in good earnest at them. They eat pears also, as well as various kinds of huckleberries (*Vaccinium*), and I have seen them feeding on the berries of at least one species of smilax.

In the Floridas, Georgia, and the Carolinas, this species usually breeds on moderate-sized trees of the loblolly pine (*Pinus Tæda*), making its nest

generally about twenty or thirty feet from the ground, towards the extremities of the branches. In the State of New Jersey, where they are frequently killed in common with the larger Crow, in whose company they are often found, they are more careful, and place their nests in the interior of the deepest and most secluded swamps. The nest is smaller than that of the Common Crow, and is composed of sticks, moss, and grasses, neatly finished or lined with fibrous roots. The eggs are from four to six, and resemble those of the Common American Crow, but are smaller. I once found several nests of this Crow a few miles from Philadelphia, in the State of New Jersey, which were placed on high oaks and other trees. The birds when disturbed, evinced much concern for the safety of their brood. Although I have found this species breeding in different districts, from February till May, I am unable to say decidedly whether it raises more than one brood in the year, although I am of opinion that it does not.

The common note of the Fish-Crow is different from that of the other species of the genus, resembling the syllables *ha, ha, hae*, frequently repeated. At times the sound of their voice seems as if a faint mimicry of that of the Common Crow; at others, one would suppose that they are troubled with a cough or cold. During the breeding season, their notes are much varied, and are not disagreeable.

Their flight is strong and protracted. While searching for food, these birds hover at a moderate height over the water; but when they rise in the air, to amuse themselves, they often reach a great elevation. While on the ground, their movements are graceful, and resemble those of the Boat-tailed Grackle. Like the other Crows, they are fond of replacing their wings, as it were, in their proper situations, frequently opening them out a little, and instantly closing them again.

On several occasions, when one of these birds had been wounded, I found, on approaching it, that it had the power of disgorging its food somewhat in the manner of the Turkey Buzzard. When one is thus wounded, its companions come sailing over you, with a loud scream, in the manner of Gulls, so that several may be brought down by an expert marksman, as they are not easily intimidated at such times. Indeed, this species is easily approached, and may be killed without difficulty. I have known fifteen of them shot at once, while feeding on the cassina berries.

During winter, when they are chiefly frugivorous, they become extremely fat and very tender. Their pouch-like stomach, although large, is not muscular; the intestines are large and baggy. Very few are bare on the lower mandible; perhaps among a hundred which I have examined, not more than six or seven exhibited this nakedness, without removing the feathers of that part with the hand.

This species does not appear to proceed westward along the coast beyond the mouths of the Mississippi, where it is, however, abundant; for, after leaving this place, none were seen on our way to the Texas; where we found the Common American Crow in great abundance. The Fish-Crow is, however, plentiful on the Columbia river, according to Mr. TOWNSEND, who brought specimens from that country.

FISH-CROW, *Corvus ossifragus*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. v. p. 27.

CORVUS OSSIFRAGUS, Bonap. Syn., p. 57.

FISH-CROW, *Corvus ossifragus*, Nutt. Man., vol. i. p. 216.

FISH-CROW, *Corvus ossifragus*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. ii. p. 268; vol. v. p. 479.

Feathers of the head and neck oval and blended; third quill longest; tail considerably rounded, a small space at the base of the lower mandible on each side bare; general colour black, with blue and purple reflections above, blue and greenish beneath. Young brownish-black, with the blue and purple reflections less brilliant.

Male, 16, 33. Female, 15, 31.

From the mouths of the Mississippi upwards to Natchez, and along the Atlantic to New York. Common. Resident in the Southern States. Columbia river.

THE HONEY LOCUST.

GLEDITSCHIA TRIACANTHOS, Willd., Sp. Pl., vol. iv. p. 1097. Pursh, Fl. Amer., vol. ii. p. 221.—POLYGAMIA DICECIA, Linn.—LEGUMINOSÆ, Juss.

Fish Crow.

1 Male. 2 Female.

Honey Locust.

Audubon, John James. 1842. "The Fish Crow, *Corvus ossifragus*, Wils. [Pl. 226]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 4, 94–98. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319339>.

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