thelium is tough, longitudinally rugous, and of a reddish-brown colour. The intestine is $11\frac{3}{4}$ inches long, its average diameter $3\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths. The rectum, which is 4 twelfths in width, gradually enlarges to the cloaca, which is of an oblong form, with a diameter of half an inch. No cœca.

The trachea is $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, nearly of uniform diameter, only varying from $1\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths to 1 twelfth, a little flattened, its rings about 60. The bronchi are slender, of moderate length, with about 15 half rings. The lateral muscles, which are moderately strong, terminate on the last ring of the trachea, from which also come off the sterno-tracheal muscles; there are no inferior laryngeal.

THE RED-HEADED WOODPECKER.

+PICUS ERYTHROCEPHALUS, *Linn.*

PLATE CCLXXI.—MALE, FEMALE, AND YOUNG.

You have now, kind reader, under consideration a species of Woodpecker, the general habits of which are so well known in our United States, that, were I assured of your having traversed the woods of America, I should feel disposed to say little about them.

The *Red-heads* (by which name this species is usually designated) may be considered as residents of the United States, inasmuch as many of them remain in the Southern Districts during the whole winter, and breed there in summer. The greater number, however, pass to countries farther south. Their migration takes place under night, is commenced in the middle of September, and continues for a month or six weeks. They then fly very high above the trees, far apart, like a disbanded army, propelling themselves by reiterated flaps of the wings, at the end of each successive curve which they describe in their flight. The note which they emit at this time is different from the usual one, sharp and easily heard from the ground, although the birds may be out of sight. This note is continued, as if it were necessary for keeping the straggling party in good humour. At dawn of day, the whole alight on the tops of the dead trees about the plantations, and remain in search of food until the approach of sunset, when they again, one after another, mount the air, and continue their journey.

Red-headed Woodpecker.

1. Male. 2. Female. 3. Young.

With the exception of the Mocking-bird, I know no species so gay and frolicsome. Indeed, their whole life is one of pleasure. They find a superabundance of food everywhere, as well as the best facilities for raising their broods. The little labour which they perform is itself a source of enjoyment, for it is undertaken either with an assurance of procuring the nicest dainties, or for the purpose of excavating a hole for the reception of themselves, their eggs, or their families. They do not seem to be much afraid of man, although they have scarcely a more dangerous enemy. When alighted on a fence-stake by the road, or in a field, and one approaches them, they gradually move sidewise out of sight, peeping now and then to discover your intention; and when you are quite close and opposite, lie still until you are past, when they hop to the top of the stake, and rattle upon it with their bill, as if to congratulate themselves on the success of their cunning. Should you approach within arm's length, which may frequently be done, the Woodpecker flies to the next stake or the second from you, bends his head to peep, and rattles again, as if to provoke you to a continuance of what seems to him excellent sport. He alights on the roof of the house, hops along it, beats the shingles, utters a cry, and dives into your garden to pick the finest strawberries which he can discover.

I would not recommend to any one to trust their fruit to the Red-heads; for they not only feed on all kinds as they ripen, but destroy an immense quantity besides. No sooner are the cherries seen to redden, than these birds attack them. They arrive on all sides, coming from a distance of miles, and seem the while to care little about the satisfaction you might feel in eating some also. Trees of this kind are stripped clean by them. When one has alighted and tasted the first cherry, he utters his call-note, jerks his tail, nods his head, and at it again in an instant. When fatigued, he loads his bill with one or two, and away to his nest, to supply his young.

It is impossible to form any estimate of the number of these birds seen in the United States during the summer months; but this much I may safely assert, that a hundred have been shot upon a single cherry-tree in one day. Pears, peaches, apples, figs, mulberries, and even peas, are thus attacked. I am not disposed to add to these depredations those which they commit upon the corn, either when young and juicy, or when approaching maturity, lest I should seem too anxious to heap accusations upon individuals, who, although culprits, are possessed of many undeniably valuable qualities.

But to return:—They feed on apples as well as on other fruit, and carry them off by thrusting into them their sharp bills when open, with all their force, when they fly away to a fence-stake or a tree, and devour them at leisure. They have another bad habit, which is that of sucking the eggs of small birds. For this purpose, they frequently try to enter the boxes of the

Martins or Blue-birds, as well as the pigeon-houses, and are often successful. The corn, as it ripens, is laid bare by their bill, when they feed on the top parts of the ear, and leave the rest either to the Grakles or the Squirrels, or still worse, to decay, after a shower has fallen upon it.

All this while the Red-heads are full of gaiety. No sooner have they satisfied their hunger, than small parties of them assemble on the tops and branches of decayed trees, from which they chase different insects that are passing through the air, launching after them for eight or ten yards, at times performing the most singular manœuvres, and, on securing their victim, return to the tree, where, immediately after, a continued cry of exultation is uttered. They chase each other on wing in a very amicable manner, in long, beautifully curved sweeps, during which the remarkable variety of their plumage becomes conspicuous, and is highly pleasing to the eye. When passing from one tree to another, their flight resembles the motion of a great swing, and is performed by a single opening of the wings, descending at first, and rising towards the spot on which they are going to alight with ease, and in the most graceful manner. They move upwards, sidewise, or backwards, without apparent effort, but seldom with the head downwards, as Nuthatches and some smaller species of Woodpeckers are wont to do.

Their curving from one tree to another, in the manner just described, is frequently performed as if they intended to attack a bird of their own species; and it is amusing to see the activity with which the latter baffles his antagonist, as he scrambles sidewise round the tree with astonishing celerity, in the same manner in which one of these birds, suspecting a man armed with a gun, will keep winding round the trunk of a tree, until a good opportunity presents itself of sailing off to another. In this manner a man may follow from one tree to another over a whole field, without procuring a shot, unless he watches his opportunity and fires while the bird is on wing. On the ground, this species is by no means awkward, as it hops there with ease, and secures beetles which it had espied whilst on the fence or a tree.

It is seldom that a nest newly perforated by these birds is to be found, as they generally resort to those of preceding years, contenting themselves with working them a little deeper. These holes are found not only in every decaying tree, but often to the number of ten or a dozen in a single trunk, some just begun, others far advanced, and others ready to receive the eggs. The great number of these holes, thus left in different stages, depends upon the difficulties which the bird may experience in finishing them; for whenever it finds the wood hard and difficult to be bored, it tries another spot. So few green or living trees are perforated by *this* species, that I cannot at the present moment recollect having seen a single instance of such an occurrence.

All Woodpeckers are extremely expert at discovering insects as they lie under the bark of trees. No sooner have they alighted, than they stand for a few moments motionless and listening. If no motion is observed in the bark, the Woodpecker gives a smart rap with its bill, and bending its neck sidewise lays its head close to it, when the least crawling motion of a beetle or even a larva is instantly discovered, and the bird forthwith attacks the tree, removes the bark, and continues to dig until it reaches its prey, when it secures and swallows it. This manner of obtaining food is observed particularly during the winter, when few forest fruits are to be found. Should they, at this season, discover a vine loaded with grapes, they are seen hanging to the branches by their feet, and helping themselves with their bill. At this time they also resort to the corn-cribs, and feed on the corn gathered and laid up by the farmers.

In Louisiana and Kentucky, the Red-headed Woodpecker rears two broods each year; in the Middle Districts more usually only one. The female lays from two to six eggs, which are pure white and translucent, sometimes in holes not more than six feet from the ground, at other times as high as possible. The young birds have at first the upper part of the head grey, but towards autumn the red begins to appear. During the first winter, the red is seen richly intermixed with the grey feathers, and, at the approach of spring, scarcely any difference is perceptible between the sexes.

The Red-headed Woodpecker is found in all parts of the United States. Its flesh is tough, and smells strongly of ants and other insects, so as to be scarcely eatable.

An European friend of mine, on seeing some of these birds for the first time, as he was crossing the Alleghanies, wrote me, on reaching Pittsburg, that he had met with a beautiful species of Jay, the plumage of which was red, black and white, and its manners so gentle, that it suffered him to approach so near as the foot of a low tree on which it was.

On being wounded in the wing, they cry as they fall, and continue to do so for many minutes after being taken, pecking at their foe with great vigour. If not picked up, they make to the nearest tree, and are soon out of reach, as they can climb by leaps of considerable length faster than can be imagined. The number of insects of all sorts destroyed by this bird alone is incalculable, and it thus affords to the husbandman a full return for the mischief which it commits in his garden and fields.

In Kentucky and the Southern States, many of these birds are killed in the following manner. As soon as the Red-heads have begun to visit a cherry or an apple tree, a pole is placed along the trunk of the tree, passing up amongst the central branches, and extending six or seven feet beyond the highest twigs. The Woodpeckers alight by preference on the pole, and

while their body is close to it, a man standing at the foot of the pole gives it a smart blow with the head of an axe, on the opposite side to that on which the Woodpecker is, when, in consequence of the sudden and violent vibration produced in the upper part, the bird is thrown off dead.

According to Dr. RICHARDSON, this species ranges in summer as far north as the northern shores of Lake Huron. A specimen in the Museum of the Hudson's Bay Company is stated to have been brought from the Columbia river. No mention is made of this species as occurring there by Mr. TOWNSEND, who saw it only on the Missouri. I found none in Newfoundland or Labrador, though it is not uncommon in Nova Scotia, from whence I have traced it to the Texas, where it breeds.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER, *Picus erythrocephalus*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. i. p. 142.

PICUS ERYTHROCEPHALUS, Bonap. Syn., p. 45.

MELANERPES ERYTHROCEPHALUS, *Red-headed Woodpecker*, Swains. and Rich. F. Bor. Amer., vol. ii. p. 316.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER, *Picus erythrocephalus*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. i. p. 141; vol. v. p. 536.

Male, 9, 17. Female, 8½.

Breeds from Texas to Nova Scotia, and throughout the interior to the head waters of the Missouri; thence to Lake Huron. Extremely common. Great numbers spend the winter in Louisiana.

Adult Male.

Bill longish, straight, strong, compressed toward the tip, which is vertically acute; upper mandible with the dorsal outline nearly straight, the edges acute and overlapping; under mandible with acute, slightly inflected edges. Nostrils basal, elliptical, direct, open. Head rather large; neck short; body robust. Feet short; tarsus and toes scutellate; two toes before and two behind, the inner hind toe shortest; claws strong, arched, acute.

Plumage glossy, generally blended, on the back and wings compact. Wings longish, third and fourth quills longest. Tail much rounded, of twelve decurved stiff feathers, worn by rubbing to an acute, ragged point. Palpebral region bare.

Bill light blue, dark at the tip. Feet of the same colour. Iris dark hazel, palpebral region bluish. Head and neck bright crimson. Back-wing-coverts, primaries and tail-feathers black, with blue reflections; rump and secondaries white, the shafts of the latter black. Breast and abdomen white, tinged with yellowish-brown; an irregular transverse narrow band of black at the junction of the red of the fore-neck and the white of the breast.

Length 9 inches, extent of wings 17; bill along the ridge 1, along the gap 1½; tarsus 1.

Adult Female.

The female differs from the male only in being smaller, and in having the tints of the plumage somewhat less vivid.

Length $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Young Birds.

The young, when fully fledged, have the bill and iris dark brown, the feet bluish. The head and neck are dark brownish-grey, mottled with small streaks of dark brown; the back and wing-coverts of the same colour, spotted with darker; the primaries brownish-black, margined with whitish, the secondaries yellowish-white, barred with black; the tail brownish-black, tipped with white; the rump and under parts greyish-white.

In a male preserved in spirits, the width of the mouth is $6\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths. The tongue is $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches long; its horny part $7\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths, flat above, convex beneath, for 4 twelfths from the tip furnished on each side, not with prickles, but with several series of very slender filaments, which are directed obliquely backwards. The covering of the fleshy part of the tongue is also bristled all over with minute papillæ directed backwards. The horns of the hyoid bone curve round the occiput as in the other species, and then pass along the median line until about 3 twelfths from the base of the bill. The œsophagus is 3 inches 7 twelfths long, passes as usual along the right side of the neck, and has a nearly uniform width of $3\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths. The breadth of the proventriculus is 4 twelfths. The stomach is rather large, of an elliptical form, placed obliquely, its length $9\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths, its greatest breadth 1 inch. The lateral muscles are very large, one of them being 5 twelfths, the other 4 twelfths in thickness; the epithelium thin, tough, longitudinally rugous. The contents of the stomach are remains of maize, some very hard small seeds, and numerous particles of quartz. The intestine is rather short and wide, its length $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches, its width $3\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths. There are no cœca. The cloaca is ovato-oblong, 9 twelfths long, $7\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths in width.

The trachea is 2 inches 8 twelfths in length; its breadth at the upper part $1\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths, somewhat less toward the lower end, a little flattened; the rings 65, with 2 dimidiate, well ossified. The contractor muscles are moderate; the sterno-tracheal slips come off at the distance of only 2 twelfths from the lower extremity; and the inferior laryngeal slips are thus scarcely distinguishable. The cleido-tracheal muscles are inserted about the middle of the furcula. The bronchial half rings are 12, slender, and cartilaginous.

Red-headed Woodpecker.

1. Male. 2. Female. 3. Young.

Audubon, John James. 1842. "The Red-Headed Woodpecker, *Picus erythrocephalus*, Linn. [Pl. 271]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 4, 274–279.

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