

WILDLIFE ON THE EDGE

BY SALLY LACKAFF © 1993
11-5



The Pintails are settling into our waters once again for the long rainy winter. They are recognizable by their sharp sword-like tails and long, graceful necks.



Always lurking in the background is the indestructible Coyote. A lean, savvy survivalist, he justifies his existence... Somewhat in our eyes by preying on small Rodents, such as the Chipmunk. Not that these little seed collectors are the Bane of Mankind. They are far too busy now gathering grub for the winter.




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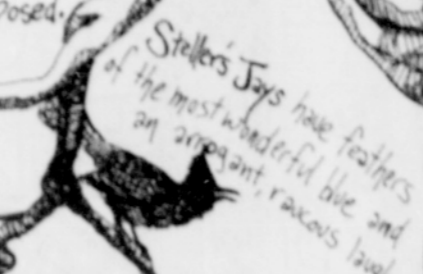
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1/14

BIRDS OF WINTER


The bright and lively plumage of birds seems to stand out more richly against leafless, sparse winter branches. Now, more than ever, the jewel tones of Jays, Ducks, and others of our—mostly male, I'm afraid—local birds glow against the hedgerows and waters. And the bare branches also hide less of the constant fluttering and preening of smaller, better camouflaged birds, whose quick eye catching movements are now exposed.




The male Varied Thrush is very Robin-like, but with an orange belly rather than its cousin's scarlet.




Steller's Jays have feathers of the most wonderful blue and an arrogant, raucous laugh.




The tiny black-hooded Oregon Junco




A constant local, the Western Gull



The gorgeous Green-winged Teal is small with emerald patches on the wing and around the eyes.



Most people are familiar with the Mallard.



The Brown Creeper is barely visible no matter the season.

In impending celebration of a grant received by Ms. Lackaff from the Cannon Beach Arts Association, presented are columns previously printed in the Daily Astorian and soon to be seen again elsewhere. The grant will be Sally's means of publishing a compilation of the Wildlife on the Edge columns in book form, also later, hopefully, in quantity. The columns shown represent a seasonal year of wildlife seen only by Astorian readers as well as some subjects formerly unheard of in the Edge. We hope you enjoy. We look forward with jittery anticipation to the horrors and delights of manufacturing a book. You will be informed when it comes about.

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BY SALLY LACKAFF © 1994
2/25

Three familiar and welcome harbingers of impending Spring are the budding of Pussy Willows, the arrival of Robins, and their consequential devouring of Earthworms.




Pussy Willows are one of the most charming means of pollination that Nature has yet devised, and the sight of these soft silvery buds gracing lowlands and swamps is always an uplift in the gloom of late winter grey.


The American Robin, a variety of Thrush, has a sweet voice and a warm red chest, another welcome glimpse of colour in our midst. Robins are famous, or infamous, for their ingenious skills at hunting earthworms; which brings to mind the near-arrival of new robins and their care and feeding, also a delight to observe. Worms in their turn are invaluable for their hard work at turning the soil and creating the best compost known to man.

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BY SALLY LACKAFF © 1994
8/26



This, the—possibly—final column here deals, minimally, with subjects seldom or more & more infrequently seen. The Chinook Salmon has gained a lot of attention in recent times for its increasing reproduction difficulties and migratory travails, but its newfound celebrity has not made it any happier this season.



A rarely public little beast is the Aplodontia, sometimes known as Mountain Beaver, though it shares no similarities with its Rodentia cousin but extremes—the Beaver being the largest Rodent and the Aplodontia the most ancient. The Aplodontia has an array of fascinating habits but is reclusive and nocturnal, so what with increasing development on its favored damp lands and much trapping, it will soon be impossible to ever catch a glimpse of this unassuming little tunneler.



The Sitka Spruce, one of the largest of which resides nearby, is also diminishing in number. When cut, it is rarely replanted because it grows gnarly and twisted and does not work well into needful floors and end tables. It does, however, look good in a forest.

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