

AMONG THE WATER-FOWL

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Among the water-fowl by Herbert K. Job

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HERBERT K. JOB

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WATER-FOWL**



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A HERRING GULL IN THE PROTECTED COLONY AT GREAT DUCK ISLAND, MAINE, APPROACHING ITS NEST

AMONG THE WATER-
FOWL OBSERVATION, ADVENTURE,
PHOTOGRAPHY. A POPULAR NARRA-
TIVE ACCOUNT OF THE WATER-FOWL
AS FOUND IN THE NORTHERN AND
MIDDLE STATES AND LOWER CANADA,
EAST OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by
HERBERT K. JOB

*PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS FROM NATURE,
MOSTLY BY THE AUTHOR*



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PREFACE

It was the beautiful bird-pictures of Audubon that fascinated me as a child and made me love the birds and begin to watch them, such as could be found in the home garden in the suburbs of Boston. By the time that I was old enough to be trusted afield, the limits of the city became too narrow, and I began to roam abroad, seeking out the haunts of the birds. In due time I had formed a considerable acquaintance with all the familiar songsters, and many others. Soon I came to feel a special interest in the shyer and more mysterious species that the average youngster knew nothing of. The Hawks and Owls were my especial delight, and to discover their nests no amount of effort was too great a price to pay.

This enthusiasm soon took me to the sea-coast, where there were new worlds to conquer in the hordes of migratory Waders and strong-winged fowl of the deep, about which the books were all too silent. Audubon knew them best, but my other favourite writers seemed to have sadly neglected them. Samuels' "Birds of New England" I almost knew by heart, but many of my bird-favourites its author was evidently little acquainted with. Minot was intensely interesting, but he stopped short of the Water-Fowl.

In pursuit of these inhabitants of shore and ocean, various were the craft that I owned and navi-

PREFACE

gated, and many the narrow escapes. However, I am yet alive, and the Wild-Fowl have thought it best, in view of my persistency, to take me in some measure into their confidence and divulge to me some of their secrets. And now, after rounding out a full quarter-century of these prying, on land and sea, I hope that I am not abusing the confidence of my wild friends in telling what they have taught me. The Robins and Chippies, with their kin, have been popularized in books innumerable; but why should not the great Nature-loving public find also interesting and instructive the lives and ways of the Water-Fowl? In time past these have been thought of largely as targets for the gun. Perhaps they will pardon me for laying bare their lives to scrutiny, as I protest to them, upon the first occasion of our future meeting, that I am trying to raise up friends for them, not foes. It will mark a new era in our civilization when the now persecuted Wild-Fowl can alight in the village pond and feed in peace, the object only of friendly admiration.

As yet they are fearful of that new, mysterious Cyclops with its staring eye, the camera; but I hope they may learn to recognize in it a real friend, for in thousands of hands this is taking the place of the gun. Far be it from me to deny that there are legitimate uses for the dead bird. But owing to relentless, short-sighted slaughter, hitherto carried on, it is coming to be a question of birds or no birds. Every true sportsman will practise great moderation in the capture of game, and every thoughtful lover of wild life stand for its protection. Exercise afield and contact with Nature are invaluable,