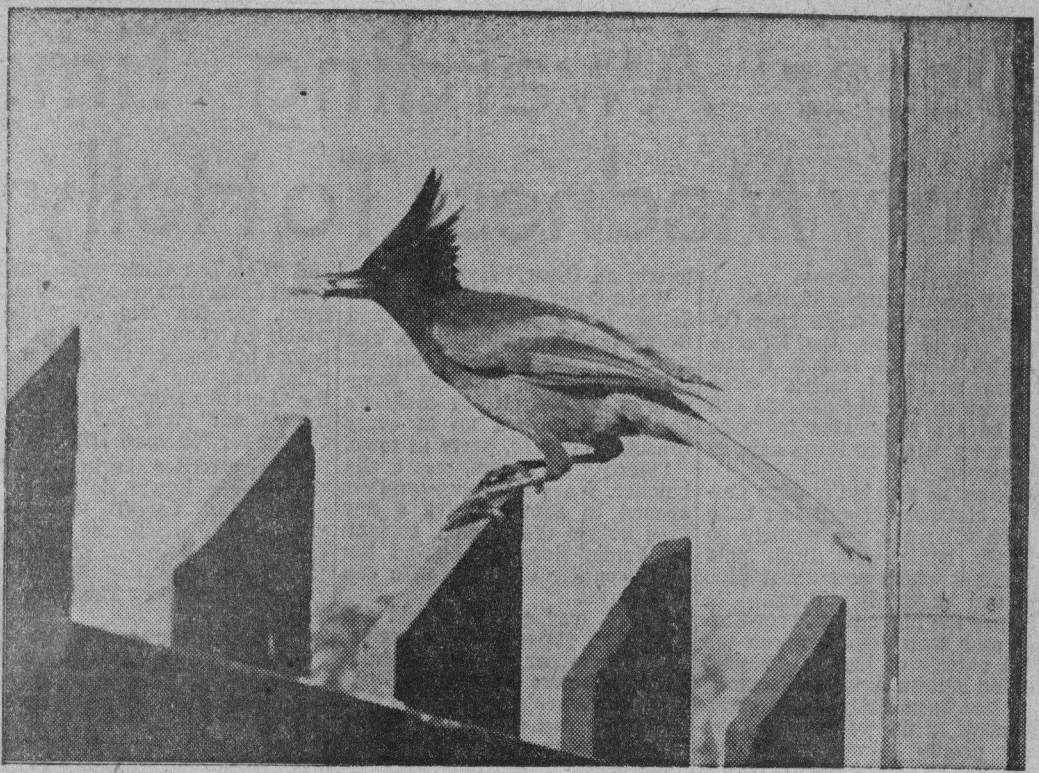


Stellar's Jay Is Bold And Busy



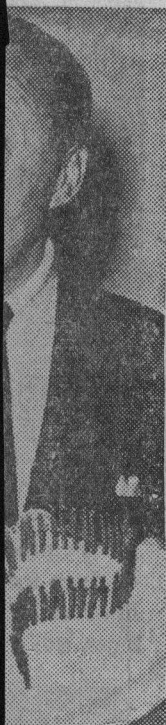
Ready to call down vengeance on some marauder or pounce off to snatch a quick mouthful of food, this Stellar's jay poses prettily if perhaps unwillingly for Author-Photographer Ken Legg. The bird is described as being one of the greatest clowns in nature.

Santa Cruzans To Seminar Praisers

Cruzans are planning the eighth annual seminar of the American Association of Real Estate Appraisers, to be held March 15 and 16 at the more hotel in Los

Wilson and Joe T. members of the in attend the event. is part of the National Association of Real Estate Appraisers conference is co-located in California Real Estate and the Los Angeles area.

planning to visit are required to



—NEA Telephoto

comedian Jack says birthday wood with a k in candles e customary 63 this month people should says and ages. ne people feel use they keep ber each year.

Y

Along The Trail by ken legg

The Stellar's jay is certainly no stranger to most visitors to the woods. He is a bird of curiosity; nothing seems to happen in the woods without his knowing about it. He seems to be the self-appointed guardian of woodland places, and is the first to proclaim the presence of intruders, real or fancied.

This big, bold, blue fellow with the unruly crest is certainly no shrinking violet nor bashful boy. So noisy is he and the reinforcements that he calls from the woods, that one could scarcely fail to take notice of him.

Stellar's jays are confined, generally, to forests of redwood, Douglas fir, Monterey pine, or other conifers. At times there is a slight overlap in range between them and the chaparral-inhabiting California jay, but this is incidental and each usually holds forth in his own realm.

We usually think of the Stellar's jay as a permanent fixture in a given area, but it is also known that there is some shifting of individuals from place to place during winter and summer. In the winter time they are frequently found feeding upon the ground, often with apparent disregard for their hated enemy, the hawk. Only once have I ever seen a hawk take a jay.

Only a few weeks ago several Stellar's were hopping around on the ground beneath an apple tree. Something must have been wrong with their radar system for what they didn't know was that a Cooper's hawk was perched in the tree above them. The first thing I knew of the whole affair was when one jay let out a shriek, and the other two began to protest excitedly. The hawk hit the jay in a shower of blue feathers. The jay struggled in vain, for within seconds after the hawk hit him cruel fishhooks were biting into his flanks and the hawk was hammering him on the back of the head with his beak. It was all over but the plucking and the hawk proceeded to tear huge mouthfuls of feathers from his prey while the other jays decided that protest was useless and left the scene.

For a bird that deliberately seeks out other birds' nests and eats their young, this may seem just punishment. Yet, though I have seen Stellar's jays picks holes in live baby grosbeaks and juncos, I don't believe Nature thinks about meeting out justice. Any wild creature is simply fair game when his predator chances by—it is the law that certain species shall feed others.

The Stellar's jay is quite a clown and mimic. He has a variety of sounds in his repertory and can produce a red-tailed hawk's scream as well as the hawk itself. Some naturalists say he gives this call to warn the other birds of the forest. Whether this is his reason, or whether just in fun and to confuse the hawk, we do not know.

He is an omnivorous feeder, eating almost anything he chances upon. In places where

we know him best he is well fed on bread. In parks he hops upon the picnic tables while the picnickers are eating and will steal the food from one's hand if he isn't cautious.

If those of you who have fed bread to jays have wondered how they could possibly eat all the bread they carried away, the answer is that they can't, at least not as one time. When several jays are present, and one seems to beget swarms, each tries to outdo the other in taking the proffered food.

The birds fly with it to a knot hole, a limb fork, or a bark crevice and stuff the bread away for a rainy day. Just the other day I had the opportunity of seeing one of these greedy guys hammer my offering into a moss-covered clay bank. I often wonder how much of the food, thus stored, is actually recovered.

Stellar's jays build great bulky nests of sticks. These are often at considerable height in redwood trees, but I recall seeing one that was on a low beam in a shed.

These brilliant, dark blue birds live up the woods all the way from Canada to Mexico in the Sierras, and from Canada to Monterey county in the coast ranges. The woods will not be a dull place as long as these clowns are around.

According to U.S. census reports, 2½ million children in the United States belong to families who earn less than \$10 a week.

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