

G A L A X T H E A T R E

Thursday July 16

Rated G

Shows at 7:30 & 9:35

Feature Approx. 7:50 & 9:55

Adm. 50¢ & \$1.25



BLUE JAYS

Reprint - By Elizabeth Roe Tyson

Have you ever heard Blue Jays give their warning signal to other smaller birds? Watch them carefully and you will probably see and hear their little act of protection. I remember one time watching a flock of white-throated sparrows eating and picking away at the seed which had been put out for them, making little talking sounds which are characteristic of White Throats. Suddenly a Blue Jay flew in, perched on a high branch above them, and screamed his warning. Every little White Throat was off the ground, up in the trees and bushes and perfectly silent. We watched to see what had been the danger and saw that a cat had been stalking the sparrows, and the warning had come just in time. I have seen this little drama, with variations, played many times when there has been danger to small birds. The familiar Y-a-a-h, Y-a-a-h, Y-a-a-h of the Blue Jays means security and safety.

Acorns and Beech nuts form a large part of the food of Blue Jays and in order to provide for times when food is scarce they bury some of the nuts and acorns in little holes in the ground to be dug up and eaten later. But memories are short, and many of these little hoards are forgotten. So come Spring, nature takes her natural course and Blue Jays are given credit for planting many a Beech and Oak tree.

This propensity for hiding things affords us much amusement with the pieces of suet which they pull out of our holders. These we often find, high up in some big tree, carefully tucked into a crotch, and always well away from the feeders where other birds might find them too easily.

As we would expect, Jays are careless in their eating habits, and many bits of sweet acorn meat and Beech nut drop to the ground. There this ready prepared food is often found by little Bob Whites, a real find in winter when food is hard to come by. Some observers believe that

the Jays have saved many coveys of Quail with these crumbs which have fallen from their tables.

But like most things the story isn't all rosy. Blue Jays do many things for which we, with our limited knowledge of nature and her ways, condemn them. They are accused of robbing other birds' nests of eggs and of young. But the Fish and Wildlife Service reports that of 300 stomachs examined remains of small birds were found only in two. This, of course, is a natural check on the over-population of small birds. As to the eggs taken that again is a natural check, a provision of nature to keep all birds of one species from hatching at the same time. In that improbable event there wouldn't be enough food to go around and nestlings would starve. So eggs and nests destroyed, most small birds start all over again and have their young ready for their insect "Pablum" when earlier broods are

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