

Kalmbach and Gabrielson, I'll repeat the following: 'Most of the Starling's food habits have been demonstrated to be either beneficial to man or of a neutral character. Furthermore, it has been found that the time the bird spends in destroying crops or in molesting other birds is extremely short compared with the endless hours it spends searching for insects or feeding on wild fruits.'

"I might say, finally, that nothing is more important than an open mind in properly judging the economic value of any species. While I find a number of questionable species highly valuable on my farm, I would not go so far as to recommend these birds as beneficial universally. There are undoubtedly other areas devoted to other agricultural practices where these birds are not so welcome, and urbanites, of course, are faced with different problems and have their own point of view.

"But I will say this, I think there is a mass of evidence to support the view that earlier ornithologists, as a whole, falsely interpreted the economic status of most of our birds. On the one hand, perhaps in their zeal to build up sentiment for bird protection, they exaggerated the usefulness of many song birds; on the other, they made the mistake of classifying certain species as harmful when actually no species is harmful at all seasons of the year or in all parts of its range. Some of the birds which were painted the blackest - the Great Horned Owl and the Accipiter hawks - we are now learning, serve a very useful function and are among the birds we should be most zealous in protecting.

"Today, we do not have to look for economic reasons to protect our songbirds. We can more than justify their existence upon aesthetic grounds. But for those few, especially the introduced species, whose character and appearance do not inspire affection, we must judge them by their economic record. While we would have to search diligently to find much convincing evidence in support of the English Sparrow or Rock Dove, we can hardly escape recognizing the impressive economic record of the Starling; few birds can compete with it so far as utility to our agriculture is concerned."

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DeWITT P. BROKAW DEAD

Mr. DeWitt P. Brokaw, 176 Rockview Avenue, Plainfield, New Jersey, died on August 29, 1954.

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