

A Tame Field Sparrow.— An unusual experience with a Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*), had while in camp near Paul Smith's, N. Y., this spring, seems worthy of note. I will transcribe from my note-book the account of it made at the time.

"May 3, 1908.— Last night and early this morning there was a heavy fall of snow, covering the ground to a depth of 8 to 10 inches. The birds had a hard time of it and a number of Juncos and Chipping Sparrows took refuge in our tents during the night. In the morning there were fifteen or twenty birds — Juncos, Vesper, Chipping, and two Field Sparrows — searching for food about the tents, so, about ten o'clock, I scattered bread crumbs and some grass seed which we happened to have in camp. While doing this one of the Field Sparrows, a female, hopped right up to me, paying no heed to my presence or movements, hopped on to my feet when I stood still, allowed me to walk rapidly up to her, kneel down and stroke her with my hand, in fact permitted me to handle her quite roughly without showing the slightest sign of timidity. Once I pushed her away from the seed, but she would not go and instead actually forced her head under my fingers, raising them up in order to reach the seed beneath them. Another time she squeezed herself in between my knees while I was kneeling on the ground, and fed on some seed beneath me. The presence of other people did not frighten her, for four of my men came up to watch me and she permitted them also to touch her — all the time feeding as busily as she could.

"Her fearlessness was probably not due to hunger alone, for after having eaten all she wanted, she perched herself on a heap of straw under a tent-fly close by, tucked her head under her wing and went to sleep. Ten or fifteen minutes later I woke her up, whereupon, after preening herself for a minute or two, she flew over to me and resumed feeding from my hand. Swift and sudden movements on my part, such as casting seed, would not frighten her in the least, even though my hand might pass within a few inches of her. Several times pieces of bread or seed would strike her quite forcibly, but even that would not disturb her. The other birds were all comparatively shy, the other Field Sparrow, a male, particularly so, though a few would allow me to approach within eight or ten feet of them. The grass seed was invariably taken in preference to the bread crumbs." — E. SEYMOUR WOODRUFF, *State Forester, Albany, N. Y.*

Destruction of English Sparrows.— Many unsuccessful attempts have been made to reduce the numbers of these pests. Fire-arms cannot be used within the city limits, the bounty law proved a failure and the free use of poisoned grain, except in certain isolated sections, would include too many of our native species. The balance of nature's forces, however, sometimes weighs a little in our favor, though unfortunately such occurrences are too few and far between.

At 8:40 p. m. August 11, 1908, Chicago and vicinity were visited by a

torrent of rain which is seldom exceeded in force or quantity. The down-pour continued with but little cessation until 3:55 A. M. the following day, during which time 3.30 inches of rain fell. No hail accompanied the storm and the temperature averaged 72°. The storm was evidently more severe in certain sections of the city, as the Superintendents of some of the parks and cemeteries have communicated that the destruction of Sparrows was not noticeably large. The daily papers reported that two thousand were gathered and buried by the school children in the vicinity of West 60th and Ada Streets. Of this I have no authentic record, but I am much indebted to Mr. Luther E. Wyman for an account of his personal observations which were made the morning following the storm. Mr. Wyman writes:

“An unusual disaster to bird life came in the form of the terrific storm that visited Chicago and vicinity on the night of Aug. 11th. On the following morning residents of the West and South sides, where the storm was most severe, reported great numbers of dead sparrows on walks and pavements. In the vicinity of 64th Street and Harvard Avenue the destruction was so severe that an observer states there were not enough sparrows left on the following night ‘to make a cheep.’

“My own observations were confined to Garfield Park, where they roost in great numbers. Here I found them dotting the grass under the trees, but massed around the trunks of the larger trees, though many lay even under such dense-growing shrubs as the lilac. The majority, however, were found within eighteen inches of the tree trunks, most numerous on the side away from the wind, and of these probably ninety per cent. lay with heads toward the trees, as though when beaten from the branches by the rain they had instinctively fluttered toward the trunk, or had hopped toward it in the grass, only to be actually drowned by the incessant down-pour. The area I examined would cover probably less than a third of a city block, yet I found upward of a thousand birds, all sparrows but one,—a young robin. A Yellow Warbler, however, that has haunted this section all summer, escaped the storm, as evidenced by his cheerful song.”—RUTHVEN DEANE, *Chicago, Ill.*

Swainson's Warbler and Chuck-will's-widow Breeding North of James River, Virginia.—On the 31st of May, 1908, I found the nest and three eggs of the Swainson's Warbler (*Helinaia swainsonii*) in Warwick Co., Virginia. The location was about thirty feet from the head of a mill pond, in some second growth bushes in a clearing in woods. The nest was placed between two upright main branches of the bush, about 5½ feet above the ground, and composed of dry birch leaves, fine weed stems and seed tops, lined with very fine rootlets and straws. Both birds were very tame and kept up a constant chipping while the nest and eggs were being securely packed away. Visiting this locality again two weeks later in hopes to find that a second attempt at breeding had been made, I was not disappointed by finding a new nest similarly located not far