

birds detected borers by percussion, for a sound tree when struck gives forth a peculiar ringing note, while one whose heart is riddled with borers sounds dull and dead. The forester in this way is able to distinguish the unsound from the sound. It is possible that the bird with its sensitive beak may also feel the difference as does the expert physician in percussing a chest.—CHARLES W. TOWNSEND, 98 Pinckney St., Boston, Mass.

Habits of the Flicker.—On August 24, 1924, I observed at Guelph, Ontario, Canada, a Migrant Shrike fly into a small tree in which were four or five Northern Flickers as if it were about to attack them, but they paid no attention to the Shrike and the latter did not venture to attack, and in a few minutes a Sparrow Hawk flew into the tree among the Flickers and they paid no attention to the Hawk. A few minutes later the Sparrow Hawk flew into another tree upon which was sitting a male Northern Flicker. The Hawk flew to a twig within twelve or fifteen inches of the Flicker. The latter immediately faced about so as to point his long bill at the Hawk, but otherwise seemed to ignore the latter and remained motionless. The Hawk faced the Flicker for a few seconds and then began to preen its feathers and in a few minutes flew away leaving the Flicker undisturbed. In both cases the Shrike and Hawk swooped down on the Flickers as if they meant to attack and then hesitated and decided they had better not.—HENRY HOWITT, Guelph, Ontario.

Will the Starling Learn to Migrate in this Country?—During the last week of March and the first week in April, 1924, several interesting observations were made on the Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) on or near the Homewood Campus of Johns Hopkins University.

At the time mentioned, the Purple Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula quiscula*) had already begun to arrive from the south. The flocks observed were usually small, numbering on the average about 20-30 birds. On March 30, 1924, it came as quite a surprise to discover that the Starlings were flocking with the Grackles in about equal numbers.

By the last of April flocking activities had largely given way to the preoccupation of nest life, for two nests of Grackles and three of Starlings were observed on the college campus. At the time, only brief notes were made of the incident and the matter then quite forgotten.

Upon returning to Baltimore (September 26, 1924) to resume academic activities, great flocks of Grackles were observed about the campus and nearby parks, and were reported to have been in the neighborhood in flocks for about three weeks previous to my arrival. Toward evening smaller flocks augmented the larger one already in the wooded section, and added their voices to the din of noisy chortlings made by the assembled birds. An estimate as to the numbers would probably be inaccurate, but there must have been at least three or four thousands of them. During the day the main flock broke up into smaller flocks of a hundred or more, and could be observed in various places on the campus at almost any time until the 18th of October when most of the birds had left the neighborhood.

Observations on the small flocks, and also the large one which congregated in the evening, always revealed great numbers of Starlings in the assemblage—in fact, the Starlings at times seemed to outnumber the Grackles.

In this country the Starling has apparently not learned to migrate as yet, though the species is rapidly spreading as evidenced by numerous reports constantly made farther and farther away from the original place of dispersal (Central Park, N. Y. City).

While in England the Starling seems to be more or less of a resident all the year around, on continental Europe he is a partial migrant, i. e., some birds remaining over the winter, others migrating, for Starlings are said to be found in southern Europe and northern Africa abundantly in the winter, but are quite scarce or totally absent thereabouts during the summer.

The Purple Grackle migrates regularly throughout its range, and the question is raised whether this gregarious association of the Starlings and Grackles may not in time make the Starling a regular migrant as well. He is quite a cosmopolitan fellow and through social relations of this type might easily acquire the habit. Indeed, the recorded occurrences of Starlings from Canada and other places, distant from the original place of dispersal, may have been largely caused by an association of this kind with flocks of migrating, native birds.¹ By joining migrating birds of the eastern coast section, which converge with western and central migrants on the southern range, the Starling may gain an extremely wide dispersal in a comparatively short time; some birds returning over the old route, others remaining in the South, while still others flock with birds returning north along the Mississippi drainage system.—EVERETT C. MYERS, *Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.*

Bobolink in Colorado.—As indicated by Burnett in the October number of 'The Auk,' the Bobolink is considered a rare bird in Colorado. I have often wondered if this is not merely because most ornithologists do not visit localities favorable for them at the right season. For many years I have found males of this species common in pastures immediately east of Boulder during the first week in June, but have not seen the females. Being away from Boulder after that time each year, I have never followed the matter up to ascertain whether the females appear and nest there. However, last summer Mr. Earl Theron Engle found in another meadow near Baseline Reservoir, southeast of Boulder, three males and four or five females, on July 25, 1924. He says the identification of the males was entirely certain, but the females not so certain, though they were with the males. No nests were found, but the date strongly suggests birds which had nested in the vicinity. It seems scarcely likely that the species

¹ Three Starlings were observed July 1, 1924 near University Circle, Cleveland, Ohio.