

Bird Population in England.

Editor of 'The Auk.'

In 'The Auk' for October, 1932, the reviewer of W. B. Alexander's paper 'The Bird Population of an Oxfordshire Farm' notes that the results of summer and winter counts show about two to three per acre at either season, and observes that they substantially agree with results obtained from similar counts in the eastern United States. He goes on to say that "this result shows that remarks as to the greater abundance of birds in England compared with this country have been prompted by enthusiasm rather than based on facts," and that "we can thank Mr. Alexander for debunking another portion of gush." I wonder if it is quite safe to make so sweeping a generalization from the census of a single 125-acre farm. When I visited England in the summer of 1930, I was prepared by my reading and by conversations with ornithologists who are not given to "gush" to find bird life more abundant there than in New England, and I was not at all disappointed. My experience was not confined to "the birds seen about a greenery embowered residence," but included walks and drives through farming country and woods and over heaths and sheep-pastures in Kent, Hampshire, Westmorland and Cumberland; and I have no hesitation in saying that birds everywhere were far more abundant than I should have found them in any normal July and August in New England. I had the pleasure of spending two days driving over the Lake Country with Mr. W. B. Alexander himself, and I am sure that we saw many more birds than I could have shown him in the same time here. I also remember very well his expressing the opinion that birds were more abundant in England than in any other temperate region in the world!

I may add that in a recent letter Mr. Alexander writes me that the area dealt with in his paper had, actually, very little diversity, consisting, as it did, of five grass fields with hedges around them and one small copse, and that he and his associates are making further censuses on a more diversified area which promise to give quite different results. It may be well to wait until these are published before we make any further comparisons between conditions in England and the United States.

FRANCIS H. ALLEN

West Roxbury, Mass., May 9, 1933.

The Ten-year Index to 'The Auk.'

Editor of 'The Auk.'

For the past two years or more much of my spare time has been devoted to labor upon the fourth ten-year index to 'The Auk,' now completed. It is natural that one so occupied should scrutinize the journal (even the parts on which he is not laboring) from the standpoint of such a cataloger, that he should be critical of features that do not fit in with his labors, and that he might have suggestions to make toward lessening the work of future index makers.