

GENERAL NOTES

Trap-shy House Sparrows.—In the winter of 1923-24, I banded several House Sparrows at Garden City, Long Island, N. Y., cornered, by chance, in a pigeon-enclosure from which they could not readily escape. Although no attempt was made to retake these birds, for a couple of years thereafter I made occasional observations on banded sparrows about the place with a bearing on certain interesting problems, and had it in mind to follow these problems up by banding and trapping at some favorable opportunity.

There is a good deal of loose feed about for poultry and pigeons, and in January, 1930, the flock of House Sparrows frequenting the premises probably numbered upwards of one hundred. A wire sparrow-trap was obtained (with the kind assistance of Mr. W. I. Lyon), and my son and I started operations on January 26th. That day we captured, banded, and released nine birds. Sparrows went into the trap three times, three at a time. The two following Sundays we had the trap set all day—not a sparrow entered it.

The singular feature is not that House Sparrows that had been in the trap should be trap-shy, as they unquestionably are, but that this small minority should thus communicate their caution to the entire flock.

The last two Sundays in February I was out of town, but on March 2d the trap was set out again. Meanwhile two or three Song Sparrows had arrived upon the scene and were frequenting the neighboring shrubbery, and in the course of the day all three Song Sparrows (there proved to be three) one by one, found their way into the trap. Not a House Sparrow entered, though at times they crowded about the opening. We had not had the trap out since February 9th.

How did the few trapped sparrows communicate the *tabu* to their fellows? Have other observers noticed this same thing? Do House Sparrows become trap-shy as quickly when trapped birds are not released? Presumably not, as we understand they can be, and are, 'controlled' by trapping.—
J. T. NICHOLS.

Weighings of the Northern Form of the Eastern Song Sparrow (*Melospiza m. melodia*).—The writer's station is directly on the south shore of Lake Erie in Ohio. While direct observation is impossible owing to the migrations taking place at night, the direction of the calls of migrating birds heard during foggy nights and other observations tend to show that the smaller birds, including sparrow, juncos, warblers, and thrushes, fly directly across the lake during the fall migration, a distance of not less than sixty miles.

For several years it has been noticed that the Song Sparrows arriving here in September and October, after nearly all the resident Song Sparrows have departed, have had weights not differing to any extent from the resident birds, but after a period of several days their weight increased until it averaged from three to four grams more than the weight of the resident birds. A possible cause is the weight lost during the uninterrupted flight across the lake. If this is true, then the same effect should not be observed in the spring when the flight from the south entirely across land affords opportunity to find food and rest when required.

From February 17th to 26th, 1930, the weather here was unusually warm, and on the 22d, when the temperature reached 72 degrees, a few Robins, Bluebirds, and Song Sparrows appeared in Lakewood. On the 27th winter again returned with a one-inch snowfall. At this time the first Song Sparrow came to feed at the traps, but it remained shy until four inches