

Suffice it to say, that we were thoroughly drenched before reaching home. It didn't rain ; just simply poured ; but notwithstanding this, we were content and thoroughly satisfied with our days work.

To be sure Herriford felt somewhat sore, or like Pete Jones, "all shuck up like," yet it was all in the interest of science, and therefore did not count.

Returning to this lake in June, '88, I found the breeding grounds of the coots covered with eight feet of water, and not a single bird of this species to be found anywhere in the lake region.

THE YELLOW-WINGED SPARROW.

Coturniculus passerinus.

BY LYNDS JONES, GRINNELL, IOWA.

In the recollection of my earliest ornithological efforts, Yellow-winged Sparrow bears a prominent part. Then, when the country was quite new, and one might roam unhindered for miles, the short, native prairie grass afforded a much better nesting place than does the close-cropped blue-grass of to-day.

When the prairies were emerging from the native to the present state, by the breaking up and seeding down of large tracts, they were at their usefulness to the sparrows. These fields, unpastured during the first year, abounded with sparrows, especially the Yellow-wing, whose nests, made almost wholly of grass and sunken an inch or more into the ground, could be found on hillsides, hilltops or in the bottom-lands. Early in the season the nests were prettily arched over ; but later this artistic flourish was omitted, and the time thus occupied was spent in depositing the eggs.

Prior to this period, the thistles, scattered here and there over the land, were much resorted to as nesting sites. Almost every alternate thistle afforded protection to the nest and eggs of Yellow-wing. Now the birds are fewer and never resort to the thistles ; why, I do not know. The low-lands seem to be their favorite nesting-places, though occasionally a nest is found on the hillside and even hilltop. Strange as it may seem they have almost abandoned such neglected fields as

were mentioned above.

Its arrival here in Spring, during the last week in April, is made known by its peculiar, insect-like song. It is something like this: zip-zip-zz-rr-r-r-e-e-e-ee or zz-e-e-ee. This is his simple perching song; but while on the wing he often gives utterance to a peculiar warbling, rolling, rollicking whistle, seeming to glide down on the scale of his own music.

Perched on some convenient weed-stalk or blade of grass, his yellow-edged wings and yellow loreal spot, with the buffy line over the eye, and buff-colored breast, show to such advantage that one hardly notices that the bird is otherwise a very plainly colored one. The wings and back are curiously variegated with black, gray, yellowish-brown and purplish-bay; the crown divided by a brownish-yellow line; the neck and rump appear lighter; the flight and tail feathers are plain dusky. Yellow-wing is about five inches from tip of beak to end of tail, with an expanse of wing often equalling $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

The three to six eggs are laid about May 20th, in this locality, though I have taken sets of three in July. The ground-color is grayish-white, speckled and spotted, sometimes blotched, with reddish-brown, and lilac and lavender shell markings—the latter are confined to the larger end, the former may be either pretty evenly scattered over the entire egg, or confined to the large end, where they become confluent with the lilac and lavender shell markings so as to hide the ground color. They measure .72x.60 to .76x.64.

