

ENEMIES.

Its natural enemies are few and rather unimportant in the extent of their depredations, as far as the adults are concerned, confined almost exclusively to the Hawks and Owls. Mr. J. H. Bowles observes that the swift little *Accipiter velox* considers it a great delicacy. I witnessed one instance of its unsuccess, however, while watching a number of Flickers feeding in a meadow. Suddenly a commotion occurred half way up the hillside, exciting the whole community; a young male Sharp-shin had darted to where a pair were feeding. Tumbling over in their haste and terror, they dodged and ran with half-spread wings, uttering despairing shrieks, finally taking flight, hotly pursued by the now confident Sharp-shin until directly overhead, when I gave him the contents of my little 68-caliber collecting gun; he instantly wheeled to the right and made for the woods, but dropped dead before going fifty yards. Mr. J. N. Baskett once found a Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius*) and a Flicker on the ground clutched in a life and death struggle, while dozens of the latter species sat on near-by trees, simply sneezing an alarm or threnody. I am inclined to think they are much less successful when attacking it about the tree trunks on account of its skill in dodging.

Mr. Bowles offers circumstantial evidence in the form of numerous feathers discovered in nesting cavities, of nocturnal visits of the Screech Owl (*Megascops asio*) which he places among its most dreaded foes. An unique instance of these two birds dwelling together in peace and harmony is furnished by Mr. John Meisky, Columbia, Pa. One day in May—about the 16th—he found a nest of the Flicker in a limb of a chestnut tree, and in the same hole was a Screech Owl. Visiting the place twice subsequently he found both birds present, seemingly contented. Although occupying the same cavity the Owl was not on the eggs.

The eggs and callow young are sometimes destroyed by

Red Squirrels (*Sciurus hudsonicus*) and subspecies, Flying Squirrel (*Pteromys volucella*), Weasel (*Mustela vulgaris*), Mice of various species, Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*), Crows (*Corvus americanus*), (*C. ossifragus*), Jays, (*Cyanocitta cristata*); and probably a few others. Mr. C. L. Rawson, who has had a wide experience in collecting, says that he has never seen snakes in holes in trees, *a la* school books, but mice, Red and Flying Squirrels often.

Mr. A. O. Garrett, Fort Scott, Kans., writes that the Flicker appears to be subject to internal parasites to an unusual degree. In skinning a number he found wire worms in the stomachs of fifteen or twenty; also parasites were noticed on the occipital bone in several cases.

Undoubtedly quite a number succumb to extremely cold weather. Prof. Jones records an instance observed in Iowa. Mr. J. H. Armfield notes it among the birds that suffered during the extremely cold winter. One found dead in a post oak cavity, Feb. 22, '99, at Greensboro, N. C. Harry Gordon White made note of one found dead with its feet frozen to a sheet of ice on the floor of a cavity, many years ago.

Man is its greatest enemy. Protection is needed particularly in the South, where most of the surviving adults, plus their progeny, reside for at least one-third of the year. Dr. M. T. Cleckley, writing from Augusta, Ga., states it is being gradually exterminated by the hunters. Mr. Gustave Kohn says that it is shot during the winter season by most hunters, as it is considered as good eating as Doves. He has seen them in bunches for sale on the streets and in the markets of New Orleans, La. This practice, although common enough in the times of Wilson and Audubon, has long ago ceased in the older Northern States. Mr. Fritz V. Raymond, referring to the town of Ludlow, Ky., writes that it is difficult to study birds whose nests are easily found, as a class of destructive boys scour the country for miles around and kill and plunder for the very love of it, stringing eggs like beads and taking the young birds. Plainly the most intelligent people of America are often too thoughtless and indifferent to instruct their children by precept and example in the common laws and economy of nature. As to the ignorant, next to enlightenment—with which I do not qualify my remarks when

including the vicious—a deep-rooted superstition tending to the protection and preservation of our birds is wanted. For example, the absurd saying, “The sting of a humming bird results in death,” has stayed many a hand itching to examine this living gem. Again, the number of Catbirds slain on the altar of a deep-rooted prejudice cannot be estimated.

Mr. Walter G. Savage, Hillsboro, Iowa, says he can note no increase or decrease in the past five years, but there has been a decrease of about 20 per cent. in the last twenty years.