

ach No. 2, the remains of two mice; stomach No. 3 the remains of three mice and a shrew.

It has been stated that the apparent scarcity of Barn Owls in times ago was not due to the actual scarcity of the birds, but was due to the fact that they had better means of concealment, and that with the gradual destruction of woodlands, came the gradual increase in numbers observed. Be this as it may, no bird is deserving of more protection than the Barn Owl, for it is truly the farmer's friend.

CIRCLEVILLE, OHIO, Jan. 5, 1909.

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### MIGRATION HALTS.

ALTHEA R. SHERMAN.

It is difficult to ascertain whether the duration of visits from migrating birds is that of a minute, a day, a week, a month, or even more, except when the visitors are of rare species, or have some distinguishing marks, or are associated in some special manner with others of their kind. Of this last named class was a Downy Woodpecker, attended by one of his young, which he was feeding constantly, although the youngster appeared quite able to take care of itself; their advent was upon the Fourth of July, and they staid two days. This may not be considered a true migration halt, yet the early shifting of birds from their breeding range is worthy of note, and possibly may mark the beginning of their southward movement. The summer visiting species that come under my observation are of two sorts, as regards their breeding haunts, those of the true woodland varieties, and the marsh birds.

Usually during June only our neighborhood breeding birds are to be seen, but in the early days of July the forest birds begin to come upon the prairie. In 1908 the Downy Woodpeckers were the first pioneers, followed by a juvenile male Rose-breasted Grosbeak, then Hairy Woodpecker, Chickadee, Black-billed Cuckoo, Yellow Warbler, Redstart, and Screech Owl came in rapid succession. One summer a very ragged Redstart was seen about our place almost every day for nearly

a month. The Solitary Sandpiper and Wilson Snipe are rare callers during migration, therefore when one of the former, or a small flock of the latter is seen almost daily for a week or two, it is natural to conclude that they are the same birds each time. Of the rails, both Sora and Virginia individuals have been recognized as remaining in one locality for more than a month.

Sparrows, apparently, are great laggards, yet it is difficult to say whether flock succeeds flock day after day, or the same birds linger many days. Sometimes a Junco, flecked with white spots, or one with reddish sides (presumably a Montana Junco) makes it certain that the same bird remains for several days. Very convincing evidence was furnished last autumn of a long stop made by some of the Fringillidae. By most observers near the Mississippi River the Harris Sparrow is reported as a rare migrant. I usually am able to mark him as present upon several days in the fall, and sometimes in the spring, but hitherto the longest visit has been for a few days only. Last fall he arrived promptly on September 30 and remained until November 2, being seen every day but four of this period, and those were windy or stormy days. On several days three of the Harris Sparrows were seen together, and once I saw four of them sitting so closely together on the top of a brush-pile that all were within the field of my binocular. The black on throat of one was quite distinct throughout its whole extent, on another bird the black showed on one side and was almost wanting on the other. These points, taken with the rarity of the species here, and the constancy with which they were watched, make it pretty convincing that the same birds were here during the thirty-four days.

They, in company with a half-dozen other sparrow species, chose to roost in dense shrubbery near the east side of the house. A note they uttered, when going to roost more frequently than at other times, suggested the happy chirp of a chicken when under the shelter of its mother's wing. Probably thick foliage to protect them at night, food found in a riotous weed-patch (furnished by a neighbor), and mild weather were the inducements that led the Harris Sparrows to postpone their

departure, which was later than that of most of the other sparrows. Associated with them during the greater part of their stay were three Fox Sparrows; at times also numerous White-throated, Song, Swamp, Field and Tree Sparrows, Juncos, a half-dozen or more Lincoln and two or three Clay-colored Sparrows. Somewhat apart from this company was a small flock of Purple Finches, the same birds it is believed were seen every day and remained nearly three weeks. During the day the Harris Sparrows were generally to be found in one of four places, either in a brush-pile, a thicket composed of dwarf plum trees and raspberry bushes, a weed patch, or in willow trees that overhung a favorite bathing place for the birds; all four of these places can be described within a circle having for its radiance one hundred yards.

While driving ten or twelve miles over prairie roads during migration days, one soon comes to look for Juncos and their congeners chiefly in the vicinity of the farm-houses, which, more often than not, are built on hill-tops and provided with wind-breaks of evergreen trees. On the other hand, a drive of equal length through the neighboring woodlands with farm-houses in clearings reveals the sparrow hosts, not near the farm buildings, but where thickets are growing in sheltered places. These observations may lead one to think that sparrows in their migration halts are influenced to tarry in certain places quite as much by sheltered roosting-places as by good food supplies.

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### AN EXERCISE IN BIRD STUDY.

BY W. F. COPELAND.

During the summer school at Ohio University, the class in Bird Study did some work that I wish to report. Students were asked to select a nest containing young birds, make observations for one day, and report same to the class. Such studies have been made by others and have always been highly recommended by them. Others have made the criticism that there is a probable error because the birds are more or less disturbed by the presence of the observer. In the reports here