

Mr. Gurney writes me (Aug. 3, 1915): "The old tree, which was an oak, blew down; it was quite hollow, and some of the pellets were in fragments, which had the appearance of being many months old. They were all soaked in water, and the skulls carefully laid out in rows and counted."

From the viewpoint of practical, economic ornithology, it would seem that the issuance of such slips by the U. S. Department of Agriculture to the more intelligent class of farmers and general agriculturists, all over the country, would be of immense service in this direction, and doubtless accomplish much good in sparing our smaller and medium-sized species of Owls,—birds which, in fact, belong to the most useful class, in so far as the interests of agriculture are concerned.

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FIELD NOTES FROM THE CHICAGO AREA.

My observations during last spring's migration—limited though they are, owing to preoccupation—confirm Prof. Lynds Jones' remark respecting the correlation between bird migration and the weather. While the last winter was notable here for the continued cold weather, with snow on the ground for a longer uninterrupted period than usually, the second half of February brought us milder and sunnier weather than in other years. As if unable to resist the lure of such fine days the Bluebirds appeared on the 18th, when two were seen, whereas in other years they only appear between the 10th and 15th of March. On the 20th five were seen, which were warbling and enjoying themselves in a way that almost led one to believe that spring was here in earnest and not only up to one of its not too infrequent deceptions. The Robin appeared on the scene on the 21st, to disappear again with the Bluebirds on the 23d, when a cold wave came. The other members of the batch of first arrivals here did not seem to be influenced by the warm days, as the first Meadowlark was heard on the 11th of March and the first Killdeer on the 13th, and owing to the situation and location of my home I can see and hear the first of these without fail. The other members of what I would call the first migrant-association to arrive here are the Junco, Song Sparrow, Redwing, Grackle and Cowbird. The 13th of March seems to have been an auspicious day for birds this year, for while passing through Waller's Park, coming from Thatcher's Woods, where I had seen a Cardinal, I saw 20 to 50 Bluebirds, about the same number of Robins and Tree Sparrows, all singing as loud as they could, and heard a Song Sparrow.

On the 29th of March, when it was cold enough the night before to freeze over a bay in the Fox River, I saw a Coot stalking among the alders at the river's edge. On April 17th we flushed five Prairie Chickens in one of the brushy *woods* which cover some of the hills of glacial drift along the Fox River near Cary, Ill. On April 26th the martial music of the first Bobolinks was heard, four days earlier than is customary here.

On the first of May I rediscovered in the Addison woods, the scene of many former rambles, the colony of Night Herons, which I had given up as lost. They had now located a short distance north of their old home, in a growth of small oaks, the twenty odd nests being no higher up than 15 to 20 feet. There were no eggs in the nests yet, and some more nests seemed to be building. If proof were necessary for the statement that Chimney Swifts migrate in day-time, that day brought it conclusively to me. When I left the house in the morning, and even at noon, there were no Swifts about; when we returned at five o'clock there were three to four sailing around overhead. The Lapland Longspurs were in the fields in their usual abundance. Their apparent predilection for Addison is difficult of explanation.

Since early in April there was a flock of about 25 Cowbirds on the campus of the school and on the lawns. Forming a rather formidable flock with English Sparrows they would rise from and settle down on the ground together, no doubt doing much good in eating weed seeds and such insects as were to be found. But the depredations of the Cowbirds showed up with the first nest found. This was one of a Meadowlark on the 5th of May, which held three eggs of the rightful owner and two of the parasite. Another egg of the Meadowlark was found just outside of the nest, another a foot away, in the bird's way of approach. Query: Did the Meadowlark *feel* her complement of eggs to be complete, or did the Cowbird maneuver the eggs out, or did she cajole *Sturnella* by other means into laying outside of the nest? I think the first solution is probably the correct one.

The principal find of the season for us, that of Bachman's Sparrow, on May 9th, I have recorded more in detail elsewhere. On the 15th of the month I saw a pair of Lark Sparrows at Cary; this species must be classed as rare in this territory. It may be added that the Dickcissel is notable this year only by its absence. I have not seen a single specimen in places where they were last year. He is apparently striving to keep up his reputation for eccentricity. On the other hand the Goldfinch, Flicker and Redhead seem to be increasing in numbers from year to year. The Robin has been more plentiful than I have seen it during the six years of my resi-

dence in Illinois. I thought that abundance of earth worms, owing to the unusually rainy summer we had, had something to do with it. But, alas for theories! At Arlington Heights, about a dozen miles away, they have been so rare this summer that competent observers say, they did not see one in five or six weeks.

At Cary our camp is within a few yards of the edge of a marsh. Here one can easily make notes on the voices of the marsh heard at night. Beside the clucking and cackling of coots, gallinules and rails the Prairie Marsh Wren (*Telmatodytes palustris illaca*) sings spasmodically at least till one o'clock. The Warbling Vireo nesting nearby also puts in a few notes from time to time, as if talking in his dreams.

On July 3d, a Bob-white came in the open spaces near my home and called out loudly, the only one I have seen or heard here this year. Too bad that this fine bird is becoming so rare! Also one only is the sum total of Ruffed Grouse seen by me. This was at Miller, Ind., in the sand dune region, where the abundance of wild fruit and underbrush and absence of the *genus homo* furnish this fine primeval denizen of our woods a chance to subsist.

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