

A TAME BROWN THRASHER.

In the hope that some bird lover who has lost a tame brown thrasher may read this item and so learn something of the later life of his pet, I contribute this record of a rather unusual experiences with birds.

It was in the latter half of June that the brown thrasher first appeared at our home near Rantoul, Illinois. My mother and sister were at work on the back porch when the bird alighted on the ground. It's apparent tameness attracted their attention, and when it flew to a nearby fence-post my sister went out to it. When she approached, the bird flew to her shoulder, where it stayed contentedly for at least three minutes.

For two days it stayed about the place, not in the least afraid, in no wise concerned about household activities carried on about it. It allowed the various members of the family to pet it, while it perched upon an arm or shoulder; it ate cherries that my brother fed it, while he held it in his hand; and it showed not the least objection to having its picture taken. The second day it disappeared and we saw it no more.

We have cast about for an explanation of its unusual conduct, and can find none better than that it was a tamed bird that had strayed from its home. Our farm is a haven of refuge for all birds, so that many nest about the house, and it may be that this bird was one of the several pairs that nested near, and that had become so fearless and unafraid that it seemed tame. But if this were so the bird would hardly have appeared and left so suddenly. The more plausible and reasonable explanation would seem to be that it was a tamed bird that had wandered away from its home, and I am waiting to hear from some one who has lost his pet.

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TREE SPARROW AT NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE.

I wish to place on record the first occurrence of the Tree Sparrow (*Spizella m. monticola*) here. Diligent and consistent search throughout the past four winters, by myself and others, has failed to record the presence of this species. To the abnormal and prolonged cold of the past winter is no doubt due its presence south of its usual habitat. For a month following Christmas, 1917, with the exception of a few hours, the weather remained considerably below freezing, going as low as 13 degrees below zero, with deep snow constantly on the ground.

The first record was on January 13, 1918, when at least one individual of this species was seen, with juncos, in a stubble field. Having no gun I could not secure the specimen, but a week later, January 19, I visited the locality again. This time I found five or six tree sparrows in a large weed field accompanying a flock of twenty-five cardinals. All were busily gleaning weed seed, and I secured two specimens. A small flock of song sparrows were nearby, also, gathering weed seed.

The following day I flushed an individual from under an old bridge and observed it at ten feet until it flew away. Later on in the day, near the end of a long tramp, I came upon three more feeding among the weeds at the edge of a country lane. A foot of snow was on the ground and the thermometer registered 12 degrees above zero. Two of the birds flew up and allowed me to approach within ten feet, making the use of my gun unnecessary.

My next trip afield was on February 3, when toward the end of a day's tramp, and in a locality several miles from the ones above mentioned, I located a group of six tree sparrows. They were in a small hillside thicket flanked by woods to one side and cultivated fields on the other. After observing them for a time I secured a female for my cabinet. The weather in the meantime had moderated, there being but little ice formed during the week previous. My field work having been curtailed during the balance of the month, I am unable to say how long they remained.

Under date of January 25, 1918, Mr. Ben J. Blincoc of Bardstown, Nelson Co., Kentucky, wrote me that he had seen a few there during the month. He stated that his only previous record was on March 5, 1912, when he secured a specimen, which he mounted.

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LOCAL BIRD NOTES AT AMES, STORY COUNTY, IOWA.

The notes following are culled from the fragmentary records of my hobby, kept while attending Iowa State College for two years. At all times, I used an eight-power stereo-binocular in making observations.

The locality about Ames is a very favorable one for bird study, the forested valleys of the Skunk river, Squaw creek, and their tributaries, attracting all kinds of woodland birds, while the adjacent farm lands are the favored habitat of the prairie loving species. Water birds are scarce as there is only one small pond and no large lakes or marshes in the vicinity.

I have given the records of the rarer specimens only.