

They did not touch the coot while it was alive. Their actions plainly showed that they were waiting for dead meat, for they never went more than thirty yards from the coot. The morning of the third day I found two gulls dragging the entrails of the dead bird about. When the ice was thick enough to walk on I examined the remains and found nothing but the head, wings and feet, held together by a few shreds of skin.

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CROSSBILL IN KENTUCKY

The Crossbill, recorded for this part of Kentucky only once before, by Professor Gordon Wilson, January 19, 1920 (Auk, April, 1922), was seen by me at close range on the road from Tompkinsville to Gamaliel, Kentucky, on February 2, 1924. J. L. Crawford, Gamaliel, Kentucky.

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Extracts from a letter from John A. Gillespie, Glenolden, Pennsylvania, to the Secretary: "Most of my spare time is taken up with my bird banding, but at the same time I have tried to keep in touch with my friends in the field. Here in southeastern Pennsylvania we have experienced one of the mildest winters for some time. Only twice has the thermometer reached 10°. Only one snowfall of any consequence has occurred, and that was gone in a day or two. Boreal species have been either very scarce or entirely absent. I have seen no Shrikes, Crossbills, Siskins, etc. and my fellow workers of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club say the same thing. White-throated Sparrows were very abundant in November, but only a dozen or so are in evidence now. Purple Finches are common. I imagine they wander about a good deal, for at times they are plentiful, and a day later are absent. Golden-crowned Kinglets have been absent since November 22. Every one else reports them as being plentiful, but in Glenolden we seldom see them in the dead of winter, no doubt on account of the scarcity of their natural food. Here the woods are made up mostly of beech, oak, tupelo, tulip poplar, and hickory. I imagine the Golden-crowned Kinglet prefers coniferous tracts.

"I rather expected more Fox Sparrows would winter than those present. On Christmas Day I saw but one. He wore a band and no doubt was one of "my birds".

"Nuthatches and Titmice have been common all winter; in fact, more so than usual. Woodpeckers of all kinds have been less common than usual. Brown Creepers are more plentiful than I have seen in five years. I have often heard of their tameness, but had it brought home to me rather forcibly the other day: I was leaning against a tree trunk watching one in a tree near by. Suddenly he flew to one of my young peach trees. This surprised me, for generally one sees a Creeper mounting the trunk of a mature tree, while in this case he was stationary. (Later I discovered he had been feeding on an old piece of suet, black with age, forgotten by me, but evidently not forgotten by him.) The next moment he was flying toward me and dropped to the foot of a telephone pole some twelve feet distant. Not finding much there to his liking, he flew to the foot of the tree against which I leaned,

landing on the opposite side of the trunk from me. He crawled around the trunk in plain view and stopped when only a foot from my head. For about five seconds he gazed at me (and I at him). He evidently did not like my looks, for he flew into the upper branches of the same tree, renewing his diligent search as unconcerned as before.

"A Brown Thrasher has wintered with us. This is rather unusual—in fact, my first winter record. I was looking through Bird-Lore's census to see if any Thrashers had been observed in our latitude and was surprised to find only one (Monticello, Illinois). I was amazed not to find any in the southern states until Georgia was reached, where two observers each saw one. In Alabama two observers saw four, and in Florida one observer saw one. Now the Brown Thrasher is one of our commonest birds. Where do they winter? Probably in the dense underbrush in unfrequented districts. Or do they leave the United States? My Thrasher friend now wears a band. He was captured in less than an hour after the trap was set, on December 1, 1923. By the way, Thrashers and also Fox Sparrows are fond of soda crackers. Cat-birds also relish them. I generally take a cracker with me in the morning on my way to the train and crumble it for Mr. Thrasher at a certain spot. He may be nowhere in sight at the time, but before I know it he comes hopping through the underbrush and feeds while I stand in full view, a dozen feet away. It is amusing to watch him hammer a large piece into smaller bits, as a Nuthatch or Titmouse pecks away at a tempting morsel placed in a crevice in a tree trunk."

February 6, 1924

STARLINGS ABUNDANT AT NASHVILLE, TENN.

The western and southward spread of the Starling (*sturnus vulgaris*) has been watched with interest and the following note, from the frontier of its invasion, should be of interest. In one of our large cemeteries, in Nashville, there are several acres of magnolia trees and coniferous evergreens to which each winter immense numbers of the blackbird family congregate at nightfall for roosting purposes. It had been several years since I had closely observed these roosting birds when, last December, it occurred to me that a trip would probably show some Starlings present. On the evening of December 8th I stationed myself in the grove and began to observe the incoming birds. It was almost immediately apparent that the looked for birds were present in considerable numbers among the great throng of Grackles and Cowbirds. As I became accustomed to the physical structure and flight of the Starlings I was in a few minutes able to pick them out from the others at a glance even though at that hour colors were not perceptible.

After a number of piecemeal counts, based on past experience, I estimated the population of the roost that night as 300,000 Grackles, 150,000 Robins, 100,000 Cowbirds and 60,000 Starlings. The Robins, for the most part, used evergreens on the outskirts of the main roost, many of them using low bushy conifers, 5 to 10 feet high. The flight of the Starling, about the roosts, is strikingly like that of the Purple Martin,