

while, at rest, its short tail, long bill and, if the light is sufficient, its' silvery plumage, make it easy to single out. Wishing specimens for my collection I secured a permit and, in company with Dr. Geo. R. Mayfield, returned a few evenings later. My first four shots brought down four Starlings after which I secured half a dozen Grackles to determine if any were the Purple variety. As expected, they ail proved to be Bronzed Grackles (*Q. g. aeneus*). The birds remained in large numbers until the middle of January, when, fearing damage to the trees, the cemetery superintendent had them "shot out" for several evenings whereupon they left and have not returned. The Robins were not bombarded but took the hint and left also.

Starlings were first recorded at Nashville on December 9, 1921, by Mr. Harry Monk who, observing another Grackle roost, identified the species and estimated 300 present. On December 17th he estimated 500 and on December 23rd 1000. The following day one of the birds was found dead under the roost and was presented to A. C. Webb who in turn gave it to me. A year later Mr. Monk observed Starlings at this roost all through January, the last seen was February 18th when two were noted.

The only published record I have found for Tennessee appears in Bird Lore, Vol. 24, p. 94, in which Mr. Bruce P. Tyler records it on December 12th, 1921, near Bluff City, in the eastern part of the state. The Starling has been reported several times from Montgomery, Ala., and as far south as Baton Rouge, La.

It is likely that a more than casual inspection of the various black-bird roosts throughout the south, will show them a regular and common winter resident throughout this area.

ALBERT F. GANIER.

Nashville, Tenn., March 1, 1924.

MEADOWLARKS

(*Sturnella magna*)

WITH OBSERVATIONS ON SEVERAL OTHER SPECIES

On the morning of October 18, 1923, not having had an opportunity for several days, to make observations, I took a walk of several miles along the tracks of the C. R. I. & P. Ry. to see what progress had been made in the fall migration.

The Railway Company had neglected to mow their right of way. This is an advantage to our winter birds as it affords them more food in the form of seeds and more cover in which to hide. There are also a number of insects that hibernate among these weeds and others which deposit their eggs here to await the coming of spring, when the warm sun hatches them out. All these furnish most welcome tid-bits for the birds.

As I walked along I observed the Slate Colored Junco in considerable numbers; also some Tree Sparrows. The latter had just come from the north and were not yet present in full force. I also observed a few Song Sparrows and a fairly good number of the sprightly and very busy little Black Capped Chick-a-dees. A number of Downy Woodpeckers

attracted my attention in particular. They were rattling their bills vigorously against the dry stems of some tall wild horse hemp and the wild artichoke. A careful examination of some of these stems showed that it was not simply the music they were getting out of this performance that the birds were after, but a small white grub concealed in the center of these stems. The birds were simply working for their daily bread and incidentally ridding the vicinity of some perhaps very injurious insects.

After walking on about two miles, I came to a place where there was meadow land on both sides of the right of way, but there was a continuation of the tall weeds and grass upon the right of way. On one side outside the right of way and in the meadow stands a large boxelder tree. On approaching this tree, I could see at some distance a considerable number of birds among its branches. As I came closer I could see that they were the Eastern Meadow Larks, and I could hear most exquisite music. They were singing in chorus, not the Meadow-lark's usual "Spring Song", but a kind of phantom dream of the same. It was perfectly enchanting, much sweeter than the plaintive whistle which we all know as the Lark's song. Occasionally one would whistle their regular song, then they would all revert to the low, sweet, dreamy autumn song again. There were perhaps twenty larks in the tree and a number more on the ground.

I had stood perfectly still for some time entranced by their music when suddenly everything was hushed, not a sound was to be heard. The silence was painful and the larks began to drop from the tree into the grass and weeds below. I looked about me to see what could be the cause of this most abrupt conclusion of the concert, when I saw a Cooper's Hawk silently winging its way past the tree, evidently having had a craving for lark for dinner that day, but seeing me so near the objects of its quest, he became alarmed and flew on without making an attack on the larks.

I walked on several miles further and saw more of the species above mentioned; also a flock of perhaps 30 American Goldfinches. These were busily engaged getting their dinner in the form of seeds from the various weeds upon the right of way, but seemed to be giving particular attention to the thistles. They are always cheerful little sprites and even with their olive drab winter dress, their black tail and wing primaries and yellowish wing bars, they are objects of beauty and certain to cheer up and delight the heart of most any observer. Their little twitter, "Per-chick-o-ree" is always the same, so they can be identified readily as far away as their voice can be heard.

Turning back I hoped that by the time I should reach the Boxelder tree in the meadow again my chorus of larks might be re-assembled so I could hear the next number of that exquisite concert, but not so. There was not a lark in sight. They had evidently been so thoroughly frightened by the hawk that they would not again appear on that day. And I walked home silently meditating on the wonders of the Universe and the intricacies of Nature.

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