bird. With them were numerous blue feathers. We collected them, and Mr. Fordyce sent them to Dr. J. T. Nichols, of the American Museum of Natural History, who returned them in two envelopes: one marked "Bluebird" and the other "Mockingbird." He wrote: "Dr. Dwight has compared these feathers with me and agrees that the identification is definite for both species."

We recall that the Mockingbird and some migrating Bluebirds were accustomed to roost in the Virginia Creeper growing on the barn. Just above this vine is an open hay-mow where the Screech Owl was in the habit of perching before starting out for the night. It is quite probable that it was from this point that he observed and caught his prey.—WILLIS H. WARNER, *Canfield, Ohio.*

Some Random Bird Observations from Texas.—Mr. J. A. McLaughlin's use of the word "pour" in connection with the going to roost of Chimney Swifts (WILSON BULLETIN, XXXVIII, p. 36) is a good one. I have watched them do the same in far-western Texas, only it was into the vertical entrance of a deep cave. As the Swifts poured into the seventy-five foot, or so, opening of one cave, at twilight, the bats, which were their fellow residents of the great subterranean chamber, streamed silently up out of the dark hole. Between dawn and sunrise it was the Swifts which streamed forth, and the bats which poured themselves back into Nature's jar of the genii. Of course, we threw rocks down into the underground stream that we could not see, and were rewarded by hearing an almost deafening chorus of squeaks and twitterings, and rushing wings, as parts of the cave's population whirred upward in a cloud of worried little bodies. I have some very fair photographs of this and other big caves, and intend eventually to write more about them and their queerly assorted feathered and furred populations, not to mention the snakes that having, presumably, somehow gotten in cannot get out and so have adapted themselves to their circumstances and bred to an extent that makes exploration hazardous for any but the most constantly alert.

Mr. Frank L. Burns speaks of Cowbirds riding the gale (WILSON BULLETIN, XXXVIII, p. 39). We of the coast know how the ominous figure of the Man-o'-war bird is borne inland from his lonely haunts in the outer reefs and barrier islands just ahead of a hurricane. Fishers and trappers of the coastal plains, who live with and by the wild things of the land-locked bays, the bayous, reefs, barrier islands and marshes, have theories of their own about migration. That birds they know to be given only to short flights, before tiring, can come and go across the waste of salt water between Texas and Mexico requires an explanation. One explanation that they have figured out is that the big birds involuntarily give the smaller ones a lift. I, for one, would admit the possibility of this, were it not altogether unnecessary. For more than thirty years I have seen little birds hop on the backs of big ones. Where the selected steed is sitting or standing, a threatening backward flirt of its head is sufficient to repel the small bird. But when it is a-wing, it is absolutely helpless. To rid itself of its unwelcome guest it must stop and alight, before it can reach around after the annoyer. All of which takes time enough for the little fellow to be gone before he can be punished. Chickadees, nuthatches, titmice and warblers are all prime offenders this way. I have had Mockingbirds, Catbirds, Robins, thrashers and thrushes and other nervous species reduced to hysteria by the particularly sinful eight little chickadees that all came from the same nest, between a spruce tree's trunk and a loosened section of its bark.

But here enters the second possibility; and one to which I unhesitatingly and unreservedly subscribe. As I have before stated, let him who will jeer. On the fitful little southeasterly winds that precede hurricanes strange things, besides the great Frigate Bird, come riding inland from the sand and mud barrens, and the offshore islands, of the farthest and loniest reaches of the broken land-fingers extending out into the Gulf of Mexico. Rarely, a Flamingo or two; often wonderful Tropic Birds; sometimes creatures of the gull, tern and allied tribes, that never come inshore unless driven; and occasionally land birds from distant, and far more southerly peninsulas, or from shell-bank and mud-flat islets, too often awash from human visitation otherwise than by accident. Note that these come *with* the precursors of imminent storms, but not *on* them. The source of our visitants' freightage is the same invisible force that covers the sky, high, high up, with ripples of tiny white cloud, like interminable flocks of sheep, all scudding madly northward and westward, though down at earth level the breezes sigh gustily, from this way and that; then die out as sharply as they arose. On late summer and stilly autumnal nights, when the migrating birds fly so low they can be identified by their call notes, there may not be enough air stirring to set the loose-hung leaves of our willows idly to vibrating. That is, what we *ground-dwellers* can percieve. But if there are any telltale little cotton-batting clouds to drift across the face of the moon, these fleecy small argosies will be seen to have southerly, southeasterly or southwesterly directions, especially straight southerly.

I will not here go into the autumnal behavior of my own Purple Martins, nor that of my Nighthawks and other high-flying, wing-feeding birds, nor of the wild birds I have watched, for nearly twenty-five successive seasons, down in this region of far-flung, open vistas where the watching is so very good, other than to say that, by the way all these fought their way up or down, through opposing air currents, unseen or otherwise non-perceptible except by the way the birds tacked and veered or were turned end for end when the currents were strong and themselves persistent, I am satisfied that they who hold that the birds simply mount until they strike an air current strong enough to support them are right. Just *how determining* a factor this is in migration as a whole, I do not know. That is, whether or not birds, restless and uneasy, because of a growing food scarcity, fly up and are caught by aerial streams, too powerful for them to do otherwise than let themselves be passively carried, north or south, as the case may be, and for hundreds of miles, till the intangible river sinks to low enough strata for them to alight, or its force and volume lessens with the same result; or, whether their rising, with vague ideas of changing their ranges for more abundantly supplied ones, brings them into contact with the warning chill of high currents flowing down from the north, long before such will be known below, and they thus flee, less actually *before* than *with* the first breath of these. That the question of food is the *first* motivating factor in the equation hardly admits of argument. Everyone knows these preliminaries to migration: That tender young insects and worms have grown mature and tough, often armor-encased, or else have walled themselves into cocoons or strong, ill-tasting shells of one kind and another. Also springtime's and early summer's fruits are wholly or nearly gone and autumnal, or later, ones are still unripe, when the first ripples of southward migration become apparent. All this independent of physiological conditions, or

of the tendency of the season's nestlings to follow anywhere and at any time the older bird's lead.

What seems to me pretty absolute proof that migration is far from being merely instinctive, is that of all the hundreds of migratory birds I have raised, I have never had one, unless where free to blindly stray after transients of its kind to show the slightest interest in the passing through of its relatives. That is, further than to fight at these, or to talk to them. My free Purple Martins would go off with passing flocks of Martins all right—Oonah often straggled with such to their roosting place for the night, so far from home that she might not get back until well after the next day's sunrise, but the others always came home in time to shuffle into their own sleeping baskets. And Oonah so invariably set up a mournful yelping to be taken in, of an early morning after one of her nights out, that had she ever failed to do so I would have known her to have met with an accident. Not that she always came directly to her own house. Uncounted times some neighborhood child has come to one of our doors and yelled: "Mrs. Reid, Mrs. Reid, Oonah is over on our street!", or "down at the car shed," or "out in the tankfield," or "up on the rice mill." Men at the rice mill would telephone me that Oonah was telling the world, from the top of the elevator, or one of the huge spider-legged water tanks, how wearied and hungry she was, and how wanting to fly down to me, or to be tolled the rest of the way home. Everybody knew her, and she would answer to her name, no matter who called. But she came down into my hands alone, and accepted food from no one else, which was the real cause of her death. Purple Martins, common as they are, and as well known, to a casual extent, are remarkable birds, in more ways than on the score of a high degree of intelligence.

Birds, taken after having migrated, are tremendously concerned over the flights of their leaving kind, and to a certain extent, about the reappearance of the homing ones stopping over here on their way up from the South. Hand-raised ones, which never made the journey, are worse than indifferent to the matter. There are other phases of the subject, likewise suggested by the ways of hand-raised birds. But what I have already said may be enough to insure my being turned out of the church!

The common, pretty, little American-beauty-pink, greyish-brownish, streakedy-stripedy House Finch of the West will build anywhere, and with any of the same materials, as the English Sparrow. Aside from their pleasing appearance, and equally pleasing little warble, these hardy little fellows, if introduced into a locality in sufficient numbers, could hold their own against any species of approximately their own size or bigger. I have carried them around, from place to place, with me, and have had them show no ill effects from it, as well as quickly adapting themselves to an entirely new environment. And I have had them employ, in self defense, those tactics which alone make the English Sparrow so formidable, "ganging up" on a foe. Successfully, too. Whipping off such fighters as English Sparrows, Mockingbirds, thrushes, jays, etc.

Has an attempt ever been made to supplant our greatest imported pest by first cleaning them out as thoroughly as possible, and then releasing numbers of tame House Finches in their places? Of course the automobile, by taking away the horse's and the mule's occupations, and so making livery stables practically extinct, and more self-assertive civic consciences reducing the numbers and obviousness of manure and other refuse piles, have already dealt the nuisance what

will eventually prove to be its death blow insofar as *city* life is concerned. But it is possible he may utilize his amazing adaptiveness to where he can successfully compete for a living with the birds of the woods and the fields, though I do not believe this, otherwise than in greatly decreased numbers, because the very boldness which so fits him for town life will militate against him, where he must gain so many, to him, unaccustomed enemies, while at the same time he will have been robbed of most of his safe roosting and nesting sites. In any case, the birds previously established, and ready to prove that possession is nine points of the law, and just as able as himself at gang offensive and defensive, will have little to fear from him. And right now is the time to begin getting the House Finches together, for hand-raising, teaching them that humankind are their friends, and generally preparing them for being freed, as soon as they are able to care for themselves, so that they may make themselves at home long before winter sets in. Of course they should also be provided, for at least a season or two, with winter shelter, food and water. But their demands in these lines could be met at little expense, and with little trouble, since here again they show points of similarity to the English Sparrow, stowing themselves warmly away, sparrow-wise, for first preference around street or outdoor building lighting fixtures, and against chimneys, or under house eaves, and so forth, as well as making acceptable grist of practically all that comes to their little mills.—Bessie M. Reid, *Port Arthur, Texas.*

BIRD BANDING NEWS

Conducted by W. I. Lyon

BANDING GULLS AND TERNS IN LAKE MICHIGAN; 1924 AND 1925

BY FREDERICK C. LINCOLN

In the Wilson Bulletin for March, 1924 (pp. 38-41), I presented under a similar title, an account of the banding work done at the Beaver Islands, in northern Lake Michigan, during the summers of 1922 and 1923, in co-operation with W. S. McCrea, of Chicago, who, with the help of Mrs. McCrea, carried on the initial activities there in 1922. Because of his continued interest in this work it was my privilege to continue banding operations at that point during the summers of 1924 and 1925.

Accompanied by Mrs. Lincoln, I arrived again at St. James on July 18, 1924, following two weeks work for the Bureau of Lighthouses at the Charity Islands in Saginaw Bay, Lake Huron, and at the lighthouse reservations in the Straits of Mackinac. We were cordially greeted by the McCreas and, taking advantage of calm weather, we made a trip that same afternoon to Mire Island. In 1923 this islet supported a colony of about 100 Herring Gulls, which in 1924 had grown to about 500. From subsequent observations a certain yearly fluctuation in the size of the colonies was evidently to be expected, for which I have no reason to offer, other than the idiosyncrasies of the birds, which cause them to abandon partially one island in favor of another that is seemingly not so well suited for their needs. This lack of consistency is reflected also in their migratory movements.

Despite the large number of adults present, only sixty-nine young were banded, the season apparently being early, since many young noted were already