

I waited and watched. The wrens seemed to be having everything fine, no interference whatever. I went close to the Bluebird box and on the ground directly under it was a punctured egg containing a well formed embryo. Three feet away lay another egg and the Bluebirds were *gone*. That dear little song of the wren turned to an unearthly clatter, the little mite of energy turned to a long-billed murderer quicker than it takes to tell it. I pulled all the wren houses down at once and barricaded the Bluebird houses. The following days I could hear the wren's "yap" in the distance, but it wasn't any too far to suit me.

Last spring the Bluebirds did not return, but House Wrens came and started to build in the neighbor's box north of my Purple Martin house and about ten feet from it. In desperation I put up a wren box in its old place in front and drew the wrens that far from the martin house. One time I saw a wren go to the Robin's nest and as I tried to frighten it away the mother Robin returned. She threw out a broken egg and flew to the ground for some dry leaves, evidently to cover the dampness left by the leaking egg. An English Sparrow had a nest under the eaves, to which the wren would dart the minute the sparrow left her nest. When this nest was torn down it held just one lone sparrow. The wren is undoubtedly economically helpful, and I can understand its attractions, but I for one am thoroughly convinced there is no garden big enough for it along with other species of birds.—MRS. ARTHUR LEE, *Atlantic, Iowa*.

Notes on the Habits of the House Wren.—My observations of the habits of the House Wren, extending over many years, and in widely different places, confirm my early impressions of its destructive traits, in my opinion over-balancing in importance its economic value. For many other birds are economically important, too, but have no means to retaliate against so tiny, alert and persistent a foe, himself immune to the attacks of others.

Although during the five years we have occupied this ten-acre place, no wrens have been allowed to nest upon it, each summer shows a renewed influx of the young (supposedly) after the first broods are on the wing, and also older ones, probably seeking second nesting sites. During the first nesting period I am now practically free from them. This year, after the Bluebirds had taken off their first brood in the latter part of May, I trapped eighteen House Wrens, between that time and the Bluebirds' expected return, the first week in July. This gives some idea of their numbers, since nowhere in this vicinity of large places are there any wren boxes. Each time they came, they proceeded to fill the empty bird houses with sticks. Practically every day I cleared these unoccupied houses; but with all my vigilance, the Bluebirds, returning a day earlier than expected, found the fateful sticks in two of their homes. I knew only too well their cries of alarm and disapproval, and, although as soon as they had gone, I took out the sticks, and they returned to look over the premises once more, they did not remain, and I had no second nesting of Bluebirds. On the 27th of September, however, they came back with five young, and for over an hour, warbled and fluttered around their now empty boxes, with all the joyous ecstasy of springtime, so I now look forward to their homing flight, next February. On October 1, they were again at the favorite box, with one young bird.

Boy friends, who have been satisfied with Purple Martins for several years, have become deeply interested of late in attracting other birds. They put up a

Crested Flycatcher house this June and were delighted soon after to have a pair occupy it. I warned them to be on the lookout for wrens, but they said they thought there was no danger, as none were nesting in their yard or neighboring yards. They watched with the thrill of a new discovery, the building of the flycatcher's home, and the bringing and carrying in of the snake-skin, which just precedes the laying of the eggs. All was a novel sight to the boys, and the chatter and call of the male bird, "*What-what-what*," ending in notes humanly near to laughter, they enjoyed immensely. I did not see the boys for two or three weeks, then as I met them, I inquired about the flycatchers. "Oh," said one dejectedly, "a wren came along and tossed the eggs out. I was right there, and saw him do it and the flycatchers have gone." His eyes flashed: "And you bet there'll never be a wren around again if I can help it. I'm pretty good aim, and I shot this one. And I know now what broke the eggs and tore up the nest twice, when some Bewick's Wrens built in one of the martin houses—it was just a wren. We laid it to the English Sparrows, but wrens are worse than sparrows—they're just bullies, but wrens are murderers."

If the balance in Nature had not been destroyed, and valuable birds had not so alarmingly decreased, they might still hold their own against their enemies, but as matters are now, it is nothing less than cruelty to encourage and protect the House Wren.—ELIZA DANA WEIGLE, *Lafayette, Ind.*

Some Observations Made in Florida and Enroute to Iowa.—While in Florida in the spring and early summer of 1926, opportunity was afforded for only one long bird trip and a few short ones, but in spite of that we saw more American Egrets than we did in the same locality three years before. We also saw two Snowy Herons in flight one day, and the first pair of wild Wood Ducks of our experience. The most interesting sight, though, was a flock of about 200 White Ibis. A neighbor said that he believed that there were about 400 in the flock when he saw it.

While driving from Florida to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, later in the same summer I started to keep a record of the birds that I saw lying dead on the road, but the coat in the pocket of which I carried my note book was lost out of the car, so that nearly all my Florida records were lost, along with some other data. I recall, however, that dead birds were rare along the highway until we reached Illinois, when they became appallingly frequent, Red-headed Woodpeckers predominating and Flickers second in numbers. A Barred Owl, a Green Heron, and an American Bittern are three that I remember from Florida; there were perhaps as many more.

Another thing which interested me on the trip from Florida to Iowa was the fact that at every camping place that we saw or heard birds at all, the Tufted Titmouse was always one of the number and usually the most noisy one.—BERYL T. MOUNTS, *Macon, Ga.*

The Re-use of Nesting Material by the Migrant Shrike.—In looking over some back numbers of the WILSON BULLETIN I noticed an article in the March, 1926, number by John B. Lewis telling of the re-use of nesting material by the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and by the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and this brought to mind a record of a somewhat similar nature that I made early in 1923.

Almost every day of the week of May 10-17, 1923, I had been finding the head and sometimes part of the body of one or more Song or Chipping Sparrows