

**Traill's Flycatcher Nesting at Sioux City, Iowa.**—While the migration of the small flycatchers is usually quite noticeable in this region, the presence of nesting small flycatchers is rather uncommon. During June and July, 1930, the writer found at least three pairs of Traill's Flycatchers (*Empidonax trailli*) within the city limits. The identification of the birds was kindly verified by Dr. T. C. Stephens. On August 4, young birds just out of the nest were seen as they were being fed by the parents. This species will be watched with interest to see whether it is a regular summer resident, or is an irregular summer visitor.—WM. YOUNCWORTH, *Sioux City, Iowa*.

**An Oddly Colored Harris's Sparrow.**—While making a field trip in a favorable locality near Sigourney, Iowa, on October 19, 1930, I saw considerable numbers of Tree Sparrows, Slate-colored Juncos, Song Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows and Harris's Sparrows, merged to some extent in one general flock. There were present also a few Cardinals, Chickadees, and Tufted Titmice to add color and animation to the scene.

But what particularly attracted my attention was the very peculiar color of one of the Harris's Sparrows (*Zonotrichia querula*). There were eight or ten of these birds in the flock. The juveniles could easily be distinguished by the absence of black in their plumage. All but one of the adults showed the usual black crown and black throat patches. However, this odd bird's entire head and neck were black. Approximately the same area of this bird's plumage that is red in the adult Red-headed Woodpecker was solid black. It would be interesting to know if any of the other readers of the WILSON BULLETIN have ever noticed this peculiar coloration in a Harris's Sparrow.—E. D. NAUMAN, *Sigourney, Iowa*.

**Cavity-Nesting Robins.**—On May 19, 1929, while in a sparsely tree-covered pasture, seated near a tree which annually harbors a nesting pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers, a bird, presumably a Starling (as viewed from a distance), was seen to enter a woodpecker nesting cavity. With a desire to obtain an unquestionable identification, the tree was approached and vigorously rapped—but in vain. It was not until the ascent was well in progress that a boisterous Robin (*Planesticus migratorius migratorius*) emerged from the cavity, which was located some twenty feet from the ground. Upon examination, amidst protests from the parent birds, the cavity (which had been enlarged by decomposition) was found to contain a typical mud structure and two naked young Robins. A second hole had been provided by decay, which served as an exit. A second instance of a similar placing of the nest by a Robin has since been brought to my attention. In this case one room of a four-compartment Purple Martin house had been utilized by the birds as a place to bring forth their offspring.

Lack of suitable natural nesting places, coupled with the idiosyncrasies of birds, should account for such peculiar selections.—PAUL A. STEWART, *Leetonia, Ohio*.

**Nesting of the Starling in the Chicago Region.**—On April 16, 1929, while out with a class of boys, the writer saw three Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) in Thatcher's woods in River Forest, a western suburb of the great metropolis. Not seeing them again on subsequent visits, nothing was thought of the occurrence. On May 21, however, we again saw a Starling, this time on the opposite side of the DesPlaines River, in a tree at the water's edge. The bird flew over to our

side of the river, carrying something in its bill. I marked the spot, and after about a half hour came back to it. To my surprise there was a young Starling, almost fully grown, looking out of an old woodpecker hole about twenty-five feet up in a dead tree, which was broken a few feet above the hole and had no branches whatever. Soon the adult male Starling came and fed the youngster. One or two more seemed to be inside, because they could be seen making ineffectual attempts to get their head out of the hole. So far as the writer is aware this is the first authentic instance of the nesting of the Starling in the immediate vicinity of Chicago.

In 1928, Mr. C. A. Eickemeyer, a teacher near Crete, Illinois, thirty miles south of Chicago, described to the writer some birds new to him that had nested in his orchard. From the description it was at once apparent that the birds had been a pair of Starlings, the gentleman in question being also perfectly familiar with our native birds. This year (1929) he again notified me that they had arrived and were starting nesting operations. I have heard of similar instances in 1928 from near Waukegan. This, therefore, registers another gain of breeding territory in the westward march of this species.—C. W. G. EIFRIC, *River Forest, Illinois*.

**Winter-Killing of Barn Owls in Wisconsin.**—A Barn Owl (*Tyto alba pratincola*) was picked up dead in what is known as the Shorewood Quarry, west of Madison, Wisconsin, on February 10, 1930. Four days later another owl of the same species was found within sixty yards of the one first mentioned. Both owls had the appearance of having been dead for a week or more. They were lying on the ground at the base of the quarry face, in the crevices of which face they had been accustomed to roost. A careful post-mortem disclosed that these birds had not met death from shooting or from direct mechanical injury of any sort. Though lean, they were not emaciated. Their alimentary tracts were quite empty, except for a small amount of fecal material in the intestine of one of them.

Barn Owls are rare in Wisconsin, but the presence of these two in the quarry had been known for some months, and their pellet accumulations had been gathered from time to time for food habits study. It had been noted, as the winter had progressed, that the pellets had been becoming smaller, due presumably to the protection afforded mice and shrews by the snow. Many of the pellets last deposited contained remains of but a single meadow mouse (*Microtus*), instead of the three to six small mammals making up a full size pellet. The owls were apparently unable to take advantage of the winter population of small birds; at least, they had not done so.

Madison and environs had experienced the coldest weather of the season during the last half of January, the temperature having dropped as low as 24 degrees below zero. The inference is that a scarcity of food, coincident with the cold weather, proved too much for these individual owls.—PAUL L. ERRINGTON, *Madison, Wisconsin*.

**A Hint on the Character of Catbirds.**—While bird banding in the spring of 1929 I had the unusual experience of catching the same Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) three times in one day in the same trap. The trap was located in our back lot in a clump of elderberry bushes, where later in the year Catbirds could always be seen devouring the juicy berries. It was an ordinary pull-string drop-trap, equipped with a broken stick as support. As bait a mixture of bread