

the cans from the chimney, fastening the wires to nails driven in the mortar. In this way the cans could be raised to the top of the chimney, and study and photography were easy. Eighteen had been placed at varying levels in this one chimney, and all were occupied. In view of the difficulties sometimes experienced in reaching and photographing occupied nests of Chimney Swifts, I believe that a wide use of this method might be made by interested persons.—MAURICE BROOKS, *West Virginia University, Morgantown, W. Va.*

A Fatal Combat Between Heron and Snake.—That war is a loss to all concerned is sometimes as true of Nature's less highly developed progeny as it is of mankind. On September 10, at the mouth of North Landing River, Currituck Sound, North Carolina, Dr. W. S. Bourn observed mute but clear evidence of a fight to the death between an unusually large Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) and a huge (forty-five inch) water snake (*Natrix* sp.). The bird and snake were found sometime after their death very much entangled with each other. The lower mandible of the heron was found to have first penetrated the skin of the snake on the ventral side approximately four inches from the mouth and then to have been forced forward and upward until the tip of the bill finally emerged through the top of the snake's head. Dr. Bourn reports that apparently while this was taking place, "the snake in its struggle to escape, made a complete half-hitch around the bird's neck and a coil entirely around the right wing. This action resulted in so kinking the bird's neck as to break it and at the same time forced the bird's bill through the head of the snake". The observer further reported that "from the evidence presented by the disturbance of the normally firmly packed sand along the beach the action was vigorous while it lasted".—CLARENCE COTTAM, *U. S. Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

The Invasion of Northern Mississippi by the Starlings.—Almost fifty years have passed since the Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) was introduced into New York City from Europe. It is now fairly abundant in all the southern states, but it is only recently that large flocks have appeared in northern Mississippi. The first record of this bird in Louisiana was in December, 1921 (Walter C. Carey in *Bird-Lore*, XXIV, 95, 122). The first record in Alabama was of one which was blown against a barn during a rainstorm on January 14, 1918 (P. A. Brannon in the *Auk*, XXXV, 224, 1918).

The writer's first contact with the Starling came in December, 1930, when a small flock was observed feeding in a field in company with Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*), near Tupelo, Mississippi. In January, 1934, a flock of nearly one hundred were seen and photographed near Brooksville, Mississippi. Several blackbirds were in this flock. It may be noted here that Starlings almost always appear to mix freely with members of the family Icteridae. The writer has never observed a flock composed only of Starlings.

The first great flocks appeared near State College, Mississippi, in November, 1934. One of these extended over a distance of a quarter of a mile and was estimated to contain more than 5,000 birds. On many successive evenings several of these flocks were observed moving in directions which converged in an area several miles southwest of State College. During the day the flocks foraged over the countryside, but always appeared to retire to this area in the evening. By the process of triangulation the writer was able to locate this area one evening. He arrived at dusk and found the birds arriving in thousands so that the branches

of the pines in which they were roosting were thickly crowded with them. The ground beneath the trees was white with droppings, indicating that this site had been in use for some time. Probably about ten per cent of these birds were Bronzed Grackles.

Nesting pairs were first noted in the vicinity of State College in the spring of 1935. In May, many of them nested in buildings on the campus, and one pair nested in a hole in a telephone pole previously used by woodpeckers. This nest contained four young on May 15. The birds have bred on the campus in increasing numbers since that time. For some reason many Starlings are found dead, and since the species is new to this locality, people bring many of them to the college for identification.—ROSS E. HUTCHINS, *State College, Miss.*

Piping Plover Taken in Central Ohio.—On September 16, 1937, the writer collected an adult female Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) on a mud flat at the east end of Cranberry Island, Buckeye Lake, Licking County, Ohio. It was first observed at the same place on September 15 by Gene Rea and Dale Jenkins, of Columbus. The specimen was donated to the Ohio State Museum (No. 7503).

The Piping Plover breeds locally on many sandy beaches of the Great Lakes, including those of six Ohio counties bordering Lake Erie (Hicks, *Breeding Birds of Ohio*, 1935). The Ohio breeding population from 1925 to 1935 ranged from eight to twenty-six pairs each year. A careful check of all former nesting areas indicated that only six pairs nested in 1937: three in Lucas County, two in Lake County, and one in Ashtabula County. The decrease is explained in part by man's increased recreational use of Lake Erie beaches in summer. Other dune areas have been destroyed by wave erosion or have been made unattractive by vegetation successions.

The rarity of this plover in inland Ohio indicates that few birds nesting on the Great Lakes cross the State, or, that most of those that cross do not stop. This may be due to the prevalence in the interior of the State of shore-bird feeding areas of the "mud-flat" rather than of the "sand-flat" type. A check indicates that the above record is the second collection for inland Ohio (the first since 1879) and that only about five sight records have been made. The gradual decrease in the number of plovers breeding on the shores of Lake Erie decreases the probability of inland occurrence.

No Ohio records (other than for the Lake Erie Counties) were cited in the State lists of Kirtland, Wheaton, Jones, and Dawson. Wheaton, however, listed the plover as a "not common migrant in the interior of the State", and Dawson considered it "rare or casual in the interior". The only other known inland specimen is a female taken by Charles Dury in Hamilton County, Ohio, on May 4, 1879 (Cincinnati Museum of Natural History Collection No. 114). I find the following five sight records: Englewood Dam, Montgomery County, Ohio, one on August 16, 1924, by Ben J. Blincoe (*WILSON BULLETIN*, XLI, 31, 1929); Cranberry Island, Buckeye Lake, Licking County, Ohio, one on September 20, 1929, by Robert B. Geist and Charles F. Walker; O'Shaughnessy Reservoir, Delaware County, Ohio, one on August 17, 1930, by Lawrence E. Hicks, one on September 7, 1932, by Milton B. Trautman, and one on August 24, 1936, by Gene Rea.—LAWRENCE E. HICKS, *Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.*