They call for no nomenclatorial changes, therefore, and happily may be regarded as innocuous.—W. L. McAtee, *U. S. Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

The Chipping Sparrow's song.—In a recent number of 'The Auk' (55: 125, 1938), Messrs. Brand and Axtell have questioned my statement that the song of the Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*) consists commonly of notes in multiples of eight. It seems worth while to put on record the data on which I based this statement. I have, at present, thirty-four records of the Chipping Sparrow's song. Five of these have notes too fast to count. Another is irregular, consisting of a short trill, followed by thirteen rather slow notes. The remainder are as follows: three are of eight notes, one is of twelve, one of fifteen, eight are of sixteen, two of seventeen, one is of eighteen, two are of twenty-two, one is of twenty-three, five are of twenty-four, one is of twenty-eight, two are of thirty-two and one is of fifty-two. From these data it was natural to conclude that eight, sixteen, twenty-four and thirty-two were the commoner numbers. As Messrs. Brand and Axtell surmise, the majority of my records are from southwestern Connecticut. But among my records are those of two birds at North Elba, New York, in the northern Adirondacks. One of these birds sang sometimes twenty-four and sometimes thirty-two notes. The other, rather curiously, sang just half as many, that is, sometimes twelve and sometimes sixteen.

Chipping Sparrows vary greatly in the rapidity of their notes, and the more rapid ones cannot be counted by ear. But I do not doubt the ability of an observer with a good ear to count the notes when they are not faster than ten to the second. I have one record that is only about six notes to the second, only slightly faster than the ticking of a watch. I have counted the notes in songs that were as fast as fifteen notes to the second, and I think the count was accurate.

While there is no doubt that Mr. Brand's machine-made records are more to be trusted than those made by ear, there will always be greater difficulty and expense in making such records, and to make any considerable number of a single species would probably prove prohibitive. By ear, it ought not to be difficult to obtain several hundred in a single season, from a large number of individual birds. While my thirty-four records do not compare with the one hundred and seventy-nine of Brand and Axtell, nevertheless theirs are from but twelve individuals, while mine are from twenty-eight. I have counted notes in the field a good many times, how many I cannot say, when I made no record; for the making of a record entails timing and taking the pitch as well as counting the notes. Another point that may influence the number of notes and the amount of variation in an individual, is the season of the year. Birds in general sing more regularly and normally in the height of the breeding season, and vary more as the season advances. The majority of my Chipping Sparrow records were made in April and May.

All of the eight-note songs I have heard from Chipping Sparrows have been sung in the very early morning, between daylight and sunrise. I believe that there is then a twilight song, in which the bird repeats its short songs rather rapidly for a time, and accents the first note of each song. I have heard this only a few times, however, and it deserves more careful study.

Whether my original statement about the multiples of eight is right or wrong, I believe the matter deserves more study. Many records from many individual birds in widely separated localities and at varied seasons of the year, ought to help settle the matter. In addition it would be worth while to learn how much the song may vary with changes in the nesting cycle.—Aretas A. Saunders, *Fairfield, Connecticut.*