

belonged to the subspecies *ludovicianus*, the habit was doubtless specific rather than subspecific.) Wilson ('American Ornithology', London, 1: 384, 1832) says of his captive bird that in eating the seeds of the cockle-bur "it always employed its left foot to hold the bur, as did several others that I kept for some time," and he goes on, "I began to think that this might be peculiar to the whole tribe, and that the whole were, if I may use the expression, left-footed; but by shooting a number afterwards while engaged in eating mulberries, I found sometimes the left, sometimes the right, foot stained with the fruit; the other always clean; from which, and the constant practice of those I kept, it appears, that, like the human species in the use of their hands, they do not prefer one or the other indiscriminately, but are either left or right footed." It would be interesting to note whether hawks or owls or any other birds that grasp their food use one foot more than the other.—FRANCIS H. ALLEN, *West Roxbury, Massachusetts*.

Western Olive-backed Thrush in West Virginia and Tennessee.—The western form of the Olive-backed Thrush, described by Oberholser as *Hylocichla ustulata almae* is not recognized in the last edition of the A. O. U. 'Check-list,' but recent discussion by van Rossem (Field Mus. Nat. Hist., 23: 457, 1938) and by Oberholser (Louisiana Dept. Cons., Bull. 28: 472, 1938) indicates that it is distinct. Examination of specimens substantiates the claim that it is to be differentiated by grayer, less-brownish dorsal coloration, a character that separates it clearly from the eastern race.

As *Hylocichla ustulata almae* ranges eastward in migration, I have reexamined specimens secured recently in West Virginia and Tennessee for the U. S. National Museum, with the result that several prove to be of the western form. One of these is a male taken on Pine Creek, near Enon, West Virginia, May 8, 1936. The following come from Tennessee: male, nine miles north of Waynesboro, Wayne County, May 11, 1937; male and female, near Reelfoot Lake, Obion County, April 27 and 28, 1937; and two males, four miles west of Hornbeak, Obion County, May 1, 1937. Other specimens listed in the two reports on collections from the two States in question are *Hylocichla ustulata swainsoni* as previously indicated.—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.*

Starlings nesting near Rogers, Arkansas.—A pair of Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) appeared at a bluebird box on May 2, 1938. After some chasing by Mockingbirds, Flickers, and Red-headed Woodpeckers the Starlings settled in a woodpecker's nest hole, working on the nest till May 8 when the first egg was deposited. May 13 the complement was complete, six eggs. On May 19, ten Starlings settled in the nest tree. On May 26, three young were in the nest; they left the nest June 14. On May 30 a flock of young Starlings was seen in an oat field, apparently an earlier hatching not far away. A second brood was begun in the same nest tree, June 20, but removal of four eggs apparently prevented rearing of this brood. A second nest observed in Rogers was in an old woodpecker's nest in a tree. Four young Starlings left the nest (June 27) when boys attempted to investigate. A third Starling nest was found in a telephone post, west of Rogers.—F. D. CROOKS, *Rogers, Arkansas*.

Starlings in New Mexico.—Suspecting the presence of Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) in eastern New Mexico because of their occurrence nearby in the Texas Panhandle, I had my suspicion confirmed on March 7, 1939. At Texico, Curry County, on that date I observed a flock of seven, and a few hours later at Clovis saw several more. On March 8, several hundred were observed in the vicinity of Clovis. Several residents in the vicinity of Clovis mentioned to me that the birds were new

and unfamiliar. The Starlings were very wild and despite my efforts to collect one I was unsuccessful. However, the birds were often seen close by and observed with a 7 x 35 binocular.

Many years of familiarity with the Starling in the East leave no doubt in my mind as to the identity of the birds. To the best of my knowledge this bird has not been reported previously from New Mexico. It is also worthy of record in the history of the westward progress of the Starling.—PHILIP F. ALLAN, *U. S. Department of Agriculture, Amarillo, Texas.*

Seasonal Starling numbers in suburban Long Island.—The Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) has long been well established in suburban Long Island, and there seems to have been no material change in its abundance there for many years. To obtain an index of its numbers for comparison with other localities, and learn something of the seasonal fluctuation, I made approximate counts of Starlings noticed from the trains in commuting between Garden City (occasionally Mineola, an adjacent village also about twenty miles from town) and New York, from September 8, 1936, to September 8, 1938. The first year comprised 57 such counts for 100 miles or more of observation each (100 to 143 miles), the second year 61 similar counts. The first year the counts averaged 1.6 to 5.9 birds per mile. The total for the year was 19,998 Starlings and 6,286 miles, or 3.2 per mile. The second year they averaged 1.4 to 7.1 birds per mile. The total was 18,620 Starlings for 6,762 miles, or 2.75 per mile. The seasonal fluctuations did not correspond for the two years but followed a similar pattern. The numbers were found to be lowest in the Starling's breeding season, April 20 to May 30, 1937 (varying from 1.6 to 2.3), April 21 to June 14, 1938 (varying from 1.4 to 2.35). Coincident with the appearance of young birds on the wing there was an appreciable rise in numbers in June of both years. The highest counts, attributed as an hypothesis to invasion of the area by young from outside, came between July 26 and August 15, 1937 (average 5.0), and August 11 and September 8, 1938 (average 4.1). The regular fall migration peak of adults, which from other data are thought to leave the breeding area by October normally (Bird-banding, 8: 76, 1937), is presumably reflected in a later abundance, from September 29 to October 24, 1936 (average 4.55), and from September 20 to October 20, 1937 (average 4.1). After this, numbers fall off, and there was a winter minimum from November 12 to December 31, 1936, with averages fluctuating between 1.8 and 3.1, from November 11, 1937, to January 7, 1938, between 1.3 and 2.3. Later figures seem to corroborate data from banded birds observed which indicate that the vernal return of residents is already under way in January (Bird-banding, 1937, l. c.). In 1937, numbers rose sharply for January, remained constant for February and rose again for March and April. In 1938, a slight rise for January was continued in early February, after which numbers were appreciably lower.

For the two years, September 8, 1936, to September 8, 1938, counts total 38,618 Starlings for 13,048 miles, 2.95 per mile. Combining all the averages, each for upwards of 100 miles, by averaging all those in whole or in part within each of six five-day periods of every month, gives a curve of seasonal variation in numbers (the main features of which would presumably remain unchanged if based on several years' data) as follows.

September 16-20, 3.1 per mile; 21-25, 3.6; 26-30, 3.9; October 1-5, 4.5; 6-10, 4.1; 11-15, 4.2; 16-20, 4.35; 21-25, 4.1; 26-31, 3.1; November 1-5, 3.3; 6-10, 3.5.

November 11-15, 2.5 per mile; 16-20, 2.1; 21-25, 2.2; 26-30, 2.5; December 1-5, 2.2; 6-10, 2.3; 11-15, 2.05; 16-20, 2.1; 21-25, 2.3; 26-31, 2.25; January 1-5, 2.8; 6-10, 2.8; 11-15, 2.8; 16-20, 2.75; 21-25, 2.85.