

THE WILSON BULLETIN

NO. 56.

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ORNITHOLOGY

VOL. XVIII

SEPTEMBER, 1906

NO. 3

MY NEIGHBORS' HOMES IN CLAYTON COUNTY,
IOWA.

BY ALTHEA R. SHERMAN.

In summer I have many neighbors, but in one class only do I feel a consuming interest—an interest that consumes much time and energy. Within one-fourth of a mile of our home thirty species of birds are likely to breed every year. Some years there may be a failure on the part of two or three of these species to come quite within this limit, but they are very near. The nests of sixteen of these, besides the eggs of the Cowbird, have been found upon our grounds, and there is very good circumstantial evidence to show that four common birds, the Bobolinks, Meadowlarks, Dickcissels and Maryland Yellowthroats have had their nests here, although I have failed to find them.

In the summer of 1905 on our home plot eleven species nested whose nests were found, nine being occupied at one time. These eleven were the Mourning Dove, Flicker, Kingbird, Phoebe, Red-winged Blackbird, American Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, Brown Thrasher, House Wren, American Robin, and Bluebird. The five species that have nested with us but did not that year were the Bobwhite, Chimney Swift, Song Sparrow, Barn Swallow and Catbird.

Of the other species within the quarter of a mile limit the Cliff Swallow breeds abundantly if undisturbed; Vesper Sparrows, and Prairie Horned Larks are common away from the



SCREECH OWL (*Megascops asio*)
young of the year.

houses. The nearest ravine is the haunt of a Killdeer whose nest is sometimes found beside a hill of corn; for years a pair of Baltimore Orioles have swung their nestlings' cradle from the twigs of a large cottonwood in preference to a widespread elm directly across the street. Red-headed Woodpeckers have three nesting sites, two are in maple trees in private yards, and the third is in the stump of a cottonwood tree near the school-house. A Warbling Vireo sings from the tops of the tall trees and it is difficult to locate his family nursery.

A pair of Blue Jays, contrary to their general reputation for shyness while breeding, have chosen hotel life, and one summer built their nest in the branches of an apple-tree overhanging the garden walk. The second summer thereafter they built in a small spruce tree whose boughs nearly touched the front porch of the hotel. Chimney Swifts build in the chimneys of the Methodist church and in a store building, while the White-rumped Shrikes choose for raising their young the evergreen trees in the cemetery and certain trees on the County Fair grounds. Hummingbirds are not uncommon, but their nests have not been found in this particular territory.

Were our bird neighborhood described by a radius of two miles the area would embrace a large grove to the westward and on the east reach to the woodlands of the Mississippi River. Here are found the breeding places of Hawks, Owls, the Prairie Hen, Sora, Cuckoos, Nighthawks, Wood Pewee, Crow, Field Sparrow, Towhee, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Scarlet Tanager, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow Warbler, American Redstart, White-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and probably other species.

That pestiferous nuisance, the English Sparrow, claims a few words. In a great grain-growing region such as is Iowa he thrives wonderfully, every old straw stack and straw-covered shed affording nesting places for a score of his kind. His ability to carry from farm to farm the germs of contagious diseases of poultry and swine make him a serious menace to the farmers and the children would do well to hunt sparrow eggs as diligently as those of the fowls.

In a census for July 4th, 1906, the birds observed from my

own doorway are those given here. In taking such a census it is difficult to say, for example, whether one sees several Meadowlarks, or sees the same bird several times, therefore I number only those of a species that were observed at the same time. They were: 1 Mourning Dove, 4 Flickers, 1 Red-headed Woodpecker, 1 female Hummingbird, a pair of Kingbirds nesting, 1 male Phoebe, numerous Bobolinks, 4 male Red-winged Blackbirds, 1 Meadowlark, 2 male and 2 female Goldfinches, Chipping Sparrows, a pair of Song Sparrows having nest with four eggs, 1 male Dickcissel, numerous Swallows, 3 White-rumped Shrikes, 1 Warbling Vireo, 2 male Maryland Yellow-throats, a pair of Catbirds nesting, a pair of Wrens with nestlings, numerous Robins, a pair of Bluebirds, nesting. Twenty-one species in all and on days closely following Bobwhites, Cowbirds, Purple Grackles and Brown Thrashers were seen.

COMMON BIRDS OF WHITTIER, CALIFORNIA.

BY ESTHER CRAIGMILE.

Whittier is located fourteen miles southeast of Los Angeles, and twenty miles from the Pacific Ocean. It is a hillside town standing on the mesa of the Puente Hills, which bound it on the north and east, and commands a fine view of the rich valley to the south and west. Beyond the hills lies the San Gabriel Valley bounded on the north by the Sierra Madre range. From the summit of the Puentes one gets a good view of the patchwork effect of the valley ranches with the variegated foliage which orange, lemon, olive, and walnut produce.

Pepper and Eucalyptus trees are conspicuous in town, while live oaks and sycamores are found in the canyons. The hills are green after the rains begin. Bright yellow mustard assuming the proportions of small trees covers all uncultivated regions. Weeds of all kinds thrive during the rainy season. These weed patches are an eye-sore, yet they afford desirable shelter for birds and abundant food during the dry season.

This list is taken from my notes which date from November