

I am certain there was only one pair and they were always found within two or three hundred feet of the spot where first seen, and allowed close observation.

*Cambridge, Ohio.*

MRS. ROBERT T. SCOTT.

#### PLATFORMS TO BIRD-HOUSES.

Many writers on nature study topics have told us that in making a house for birds no platform should be put on under the entrance, as a house with no platform will not be molested by English Sparrows.

Such a statement is wholly unwarranted by the facts. The writer hereof has had upwards of a dozen bird-houses for several years past, some with and some without platforms and close observation leads him to conclude that a sparrow shows no preference on account of a platform—that he will enter one with no platform just as freely as though it had one.

I prefer a house with a platform of liberal size, attached an inch or two below the entrance, as it is a great convenience for young birds to go out and in before they are old enough to leave the nest. Then, too, it enables both parents to sit on their doorstep at one time, and thus better enjoy their home.

A house for a wren should never be without a platform, as in carrying in sticks for the nest foundation the bird nearly always finds it necessary to lay each stick down and get hold of it closer to the end in order to get it through the door, and for this a platform of liberal size is needed.

Such conveniences are enjoyed by birds as much as by people. The better they are pleased with the quarters we provide the more apt they are to return to the same premises the next spring.

*North East, Pa., Nov. 16, 1911.*

L. B. C.

January 25, 1912.

EDITOR, WILSON BULLETIN:—Another spring season is approaching with its opportunities for bird study. Photography has become a very important adjunct to the equipment of the field ornithologist. The writer does not believe it is necessary, or wise, to indiscriminately encourage the amateur to enter the field of bird-photography, but it is desirable that those who do attempt it shall be provided with the conveniences which will increase the probability of success.

Most of the apparatus needed for this work is now on the market, but, so far as the writer can learn, a satisfactory camera stand has not been put out. The worker has been compelled to

devise and manufacture his own, and some of them have been described in the ornithological literature. Such a stand must be light and attachable to a strong tripod or other support; it must be adjustable, so that the camera may be placed at any angle and held rigid.

At least two such stands have been described within the last year. Both have been designed for botanical work, but would serve the ornithologist equally well. In *Knowledge*, for October, 1911, Mr. Somerville Hastings describes and illustrates one, a "tilting table," as he calls it. In the *Botanical Gazette*, for March, 1911, Mr. Harry B. Shaw describes and illustrates another one along similar lines.

Shaw's apparatus, however, permits a much wider range of adjustment, and is longer and much better adapted for a long-focus camera. As an *adjustable* stand it is far ahead of anything so far offered by the large manufacturers of photographic apparatus. These stands can be secured, built to order, from Mr. Frederick Carl, an expert model-maker (address, 623 H. Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.) at a cost of from \$12 to \$15. The writer obtained one toward the end of last season, and, although it was too late to put it to much use, it is thoroughly satisfactory in its mechanism.

T. C. STEPHENS.

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## Publications Reviewed

Birds of Arkansas. By Arthur H. Howell. Bull. No. 38. Biological Survey. 1911. 100 pp.; 1 map, 6 plates, 4 text cuts.

This is a very welcome addition to faunal literature from a region which has been little known. In the words of Mr. Henshaw, Chief of the Biological Survey, "This report fills an important gap in our knowledge of the avifauna of the Mississippi Valley." Following a general survey of the state, with its "Physical Features" and "Life Zones," a general discussion of the "Economic Value of Birds," the "Game Resources and Legislation," "Sources of Information," and a statement of the "Number of Species" actually recorded, which is 255, and a statement that probably 300 species and subspecies occur, the "List of Species" is given. Under this heading some 35 species are given in parenthesis, which should certainly be found in the state, but which the limited number of observers has not made it possible to record. The most notable contribution to the ornithology of the state in recent years has been made by Mrs. L. M. Stephenson, of Helena. Mr. Howell made an extended survey of the state from April 28