

if memory serves me right, thus completing the picture of a larger and chubbier and louder edition of the Field Sparrow. There was no mistaking, the incidents and scenes of my first meeting with them four years previously near Browns, Illinois, were too indelibly impressed in the memory. A look at several skins of this species in my collection, when I had come home, added an unnecessary confirmation to the identification.

Thinking that this little batch of *Peucaea* had by the ardor and excitement of migration been carried further north than they had intended, in the companionship of White-throats and others, and would retrace their way south again for a hundred miles or so, to the latitude which, according to latest reports, formed the northern limits of their breeding range in this state, I did not visit the spot the next day. Therefore I was much surprised when on happening that way again on the 12th of May, I found them still in the same place. Later, they seem to have scattered in pairs, two or three of which at least remained in the park, where they had been first seen, as I got glimpses of what seemed to be one of them several times later in May and in June. During the last days of the latter month, two or three were heard singing lustily in a rather open grove across the street from my house, and here, to make the record indisputable, I took one on July 1st. It proved a male, the sexual organs of which showed breeding. Thus it seems that this more or less Carolinian species must now be counted a member of the avifauna of the Chicago area.

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SONG SPARROW, TIRUSII, AND OWL NOTES.

While on a collecting trip in Virginia, during the middle of July of this year, Mrs. Shufeldt captured a young Song Sparrow (*Melospiza m. melodia*), which apparently had very recently left the nest. I placed it in a comfortable cage until such a time as I could arrange to photograph it. This came about in a few days, during which period the bird fed readily on hard-boiled egg, bread, and water, and a few meal worms. It was remarkable how rapidly it developed and grew, and still more surprising how fond it became of meal worms.

An interesting point appeared with respect to its plumage; for, while this was apparently entirely normal, the *proximal third* of all the tail feathers came out pure white, and that portion of the tail is that way at the present writing. The bird appears almost like another species; and if it be a case of partial albinism, it is a very

remarkable form of it. It is hardly possible that it has been caused by fright, incident to its capture, cases of which I have personally seen in men and women,—that is, where the hair, or certain locks of it, has turned white in a few hours from fright or great anxiety.

After this bird had assumed its full summer first plumage, I determined to restore it to freedom, letting it out in a room where the windows were all open. It flew out and lit on one of the shutters. Upon shaking the bottle at it, in which I kept a supply of meal worms, it immediately flew back into the room, lit on my hand, and tried to coax me into giving it a worm. After this the bird became such a pet and so interesting that I have decided to keep it all winter, to note what plumage its tail will take on in the spring. It eats heartily of canary seed, but prefers an insect diet. Its summer notes during the day are charming, and I love to listen to them while at my work. During warm days it takes a bath three or four times between sunrise and dark.

My attention has recently been called to a case of *double-nesting*, the birds being the European Thrush (*Turdus musicus*). The two pairs built their nests side by side, in close contact but not interwoven. The site was in a tree in a copse at Codicote, England, and the photograph shows a clutch of eggs in each nest. It was taken by Mr. G. J. Buller, of the Letchworth Museum, in which institution the specimen is now exhibited. I am interested to know whether any one has ever observed such a "double-nesting" having been resorted to by any of our United States thrushes, as the Wood Thrush, or any others of the genus *Hylocichla*.

Recently, I have been collecting material with the view of publishing some articles, aimed to demonstrate to American agriculturists the usefulness of our Owls. One or two of these articles have already been accepted, and will appear in due course. Mr. John Henry Gurney, a Corresponding Fellow of the Union, writes me that they have been trying for years to impress the fact upon the minds of the gamekeepers in England of the value of Owls; but that they, as a rule, still persist in killing those birds as "vermin." Recently they have been issuing these special slips, printed in very bold type on a fine grade of paper, for distribution among the gamekeepers and farmers, but especially among the former. Copies of one of these slips are now before me. A line of big type, "The Utility of Owls," invites attention to a striking instance given below it, which says: "Taken out of a Barn Owl's Tree at Keswick in Norfolk (April 10, 1911) 114 'Pellets' containing the skulls of:—19 very small rats, 126 Long- and Short-tailed Field-mice, 69 Shrew-mice, and 3 small birds (perhaps Green finches). No Game."

Mr. Gurney writes me (Aug. 3, 1915): "The old tree, which was an oak, blew down; it was quite hollow, and some of the pellets were in fragments, which had the appearance of being many months old. They were all soaked in water, and the skulls carefully laid out in rows and counted."

From the viewpoint of practical, economic ornithology, it would seem that the issuance of such slips by the U. S. Department of Agriculture to the more intelligent class of farmers and general agriculturists, all over the country, would be of immense service in this direction, and doubtless accomplish much good in sparing our smaller and medium-sized species of Owls,—birds which, in fact, belong to the most useful class, in so far as the interests of agriculture are concerned.

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FIELD NOTES FROM THE CHICAGO AREA.

My observations during last spring's migration—limited though they are, owing to preoccupation—confirm Prof. Lynds Jones' remark respecting the correlation between bird migration and the weather. While the last winter was notable here for the continued cold weather, with snow on the ground for a longer uninterrupted period than usually, the second half of February brought us milder and sunnier weather than in other years. As if unable to resist the lure of such fine days the Bluebirds appeared on the 18th, when two were seen, whereas in other years they only appear between the 10th and 15th of March. On the 20th five were seen, which were warbling and enjoying themselves in a way that almost led one to believe that spring was here in earnest and not only up to one of its not too infrequent deceptions. The Robin appeared on the scene on the 21st, to disappear again with the Bluebirds on the 23d, when a cold wave came. The other members of the batch of first arrivals here did not seem to be influenced by the warm days, as the first Meadowlark was heard on the 11th of March and the first Killdeer on the 13th, and owing to the situation and location of my home I can see and hear the first of these without fail. The other members of what I would call the first migrant-association to arrive here are the Junco, Song Sparrow, Redwing, Grackle and Cowbird. The 13th of March seems to have been an auspicious day for birds this year, for while passing through Waller's Park, coming from Thatcher's Woods, where I had seen a Cardinal, I saw 20 to 50 Bluebirds, about the same number of Robins and Tree Sparrows, all singing as loud as they could, and heard a Song Sparrow.