

General Notes

DESTRUCTION OF BIRDS BY TRAINS

George O. Ludcke, of Sioux City, reports a singular instance of the fatality which besets bird life. On October 11, 1919, he was proceeding by rail from Sioux City to a point in South Dakota for the purpose of shooting ducks. Having a personal acquaintance with the engineer of the train, he was invited to ride in the engine cab for a part of the journey. The trip being made at night, the track ahead of the engine was illuminated by the powerful rays of the electric headlight which is required by the law of South Dakota. As the locomotive rushed through the darkness, Mr. Ludcke observed in the light ahead of it great numbers of small birds, apparently aroused from the grass and weeds along the right of way by the noise of the passing train. It can be conjectured, also, that the birds may have been in migratory flight. However it may be, many of them, bewildered by the dazzling light of the locomotive, flew directly into it and were struck by the engine. Numbers of the birds struck the window glass of the engine cab with an impact almost sufficient to break it. In this way, Mr. Ludcke estimates, hundreds of birds were killed during the short time he was in the engine cab. He inquired of the engineer if such a thing were of frequent occurrence, and was told that birds often were killed in that manner, but not frequently in such numbers as on this particular occasion. The question immediately occurs, if this one train killed so many birds, how many other birds are similarly killed by the thousands of other trains which bear through the night everywhere during the migratory seasons? Mr. Ludcke is not certain about it, but he judges from the brief glimpses he had of the birds seen that the greater number of them were Prairie Horned Larks.

A. F. ALLEN.

Sioux City, Ia., Nov. 10, 1919.

WINTER WREN IN WESTERN IOWA

The Winter Wren (*Nannus hiemalis hiemalis*) is a rare visitor in this locality, and there are few existing records of it. The only local records that I have knowledge of are those of Dr. G. C. Rich, who recorded it on March 11, 1908, and April 4, 1909. No record of the species breeding here has been established. An individual (sex not determined) was seen in the outskirts of Stone Park, Sioux City, on October 5, 1919. It first attracted attention by its call note, uttered repeatedly while the bird was