

Only twice did I see any signs of trouble between the two families, and in both cases the male Bluebird was the aggressor. He made a dash at one of the wrens, who at once took refuge in their nest, when the Bluebird went on about his business. On August 7, the young wrens had left the nest, but I cannot say just when they left, as I had been away for three days prior to that date. The young Bluebirds left the nest on August 12. As the wrens left the nest at least six days before the Bluebirds did, they probably began housekeeping a little the sooner, though a shorter incubation and feeding period might have made up that difference.

I am sorry that other demands on my time made it impossible for me to keep closer watch on these two families.—JOHN B. LEWIS, *Lawrenceville, Va.*

Watching the House Wrens.—The returning birds of two springs ago (1925) found our garden ready for their reception. Of attractive plants there were the Bush Honeysuckle, High-bush Cranberry, Russian Olive, Wild Gooseberry, Snow-berry, Barberry, Bittersweet vines, a grape arbor, three cherry trees, and an apple tree. There were a couple of feeding stations, a bird bath, Robin shelves, a Purple Martin house, and a Bluebird house. The advertisements read that you should have three House Wren houses for each pair, and for fear they would not understand my hospitality, I put up four of them. These, with the two on my neighbor's lot to the north, made six wren boxes within fifty feet. With the sparrow trap going full blast and the cat trap doing its duty all was set for the coming of my bird friends.

A pair of Bluebirds came first. They had some difficulty in deciding which house they would take—the green keg on the grape arbor, the three entrance house on the pole or the little brown cabin—but they finally selected the last named. The Purple Martins rented sixteen apartments in their house. About this time my attention was called to an article in the *WILSON BULLETIN*, which urged that the placing of wren boxes be discontinued. Against this I protested, saying that I just couldn't turn against the wren. I had never seen so much song and energy concentrated in such a tiny mite. Then it was so busy attending to its business that I couldn't see when it could find time for any mischief. I intended to put out my wren houses and *watch*. Not a bad idea if one will *watch*. This I did.

When the birds arrived I began to watch the House Wren. Not much was seen. I found Robin's eggs punctured, the Catbird's nest destroyed with punctured eggs on the ground, but I really didn't see the wren do these things. I was still in love with him and was glad to feel something else must have happened.

The Bluebirds brought out two of their family. Their accustomed absence occurred and in due time the little family returned with the children pretty well grown. Mother selected this time the keg on the arbor. Father was too busy feeding the first family to help much in furnishing house number two. The House Wrens soon sent their family on its way and then decided on the cabin, which in the meantime had been cleaned and put up on the east end of the arbor. The Bluebirds didn't want the wrens for neighbors and one day there was a lot of trouble until about noon.

I went down town that afternoon and wasn't in the garden until the next morning. Then I settled myself on the bench under the apple tree to watch my happy family. The wrens were very busy with the cabin, but no Bluebirds about.

I waited and watched. The wrens seemed to be having everything fine, no interference whatever. I went close to the Bluebird box and on the ground directly under it was a punctured egg containing a well formed embryo. Three feet away lay another egg and the Bluebirds were *gone*. That dear little song of the wren turned to an unearthly clatter, the little mite of energy turned to a long-billed murderer quicker than it takes to tell it. I pulled all the wren houses down at once and barricaded the Bluebird houses. The following days I could hear the wren's "yap" in the distance, but it wasn't any too far to suit me.

Last spring the Bluebirds did not return, but House Wrens came and started to build in the neighbor's box north of my Purple Martin house and about ten feet from it. In desperation I put up a wren box in its old place in front and drew the wrens that far from the martin house. One time I saw a wren go to the Robin's nest and as I tried to frighten it away the mother Robin returned. She threw out a broken egg and flew to the ground for some dry leaves, evidently to cover the dampness left by the leaking egg. An English Sparrow had a nest under the eaves, to which the wren would dart the minute the sparrow left her nest. When this nest was torn down it held just one lone sparrow. The wren is undoubtedly economically helpful, and I can understand its attractions, but I for one am thoroughly convinced there is no garden big enough for it along with other species of birds.—MRS. ARTHUR LEE, *Atlantic, Iowa*.

Notes on the Habits of the House Wren.—My observations of the habits of the House Wren, extending over many years, and in widely different places, confirm my early impressions of its destructive traits, in my opinion over-balancing in importance its economic value. For many other birds are economically important, too, but have no means to retaliate against so tiny, alert and persistent a foe, himself immune to the attacks of others.

Although during the five years we have occupied this ten-acre place, no wrens have been allowed to nest upon it, each summer shows a renewed influx of the young (supposedly) after the first broods are on the wing, and also older ones, probably seeking second nesting sites. During the first nesting period I am now practically free from them. This year, after the Bluebirds had taken off their first brood in the latter part of May, I trapped eighteen House Wrens, between that time and the Bluebirds' expected return, the first week in July. This gives some idea of their numbers, since nowhere in this vicinity of large places are there any wren boxes. Each time they came, they proceeded to fill the empty bird houses with sticks. Practically every day I cleared these unoccupied houses; but with all my vigilance, the Bluebirds, returning a day earlier than expected, found the fateful sticks in two of their homes. I knew only too well their cries of alarm and disapproval, and, although as soon as they had gone, I took out the sticks, and they returned to look over the premises once more, they did not remain, and I had no second nesting of Bluebirds. On the 27th of September, however, they came back with five young, and for over an hour, warbled and fluttered around their now empty boxes, with all the joyous ecstasy of springtime, so I now look forward to their homing flight, next February. On October 1, they were again at the favorite box, with one young bird.

Boy friends, who have been satisfied with Purple Martins for several years, have become deeply interested of late in attracting other birds. They put up a