

GENERAL NOTES.

Conducted by M. H. Swenk

The Black Tern Nesting in Calhoun County, Michigan.—A nest of the Black Tern (*Hydrochelidon nigra surinamensis*) was discovered on a small inland pond ten miles east of Battle Creek on June 10, 1928. There was only one egg at the time of discovery, and when I returned the following week this and the nest had been destroyed. The nest, built of small twigs and weed stalks neatly piled, was located on a floating bog among the lily pads in the middle of the lake.—LAWRENCE WALKINSHAW, *Battle Creek, Mich.*

Henslow's Sparrow in a City Yard.—On May 17, 1928, I caught and banded a bird of this species, which made my third record for the species in this county. I recognized the bird by the yellow on the bend of the wing and the heavy bill, and then took note of its other characteristics—the graduated pointed tail feathers, olive head, head markings and streaked sides. My trap was under cherry trees and quite surrounded by lower shrubbery—an unusual locality in which to find this dry field bird.—E. A. DOOLITTLE, *Painesville, Ohio.*

A Freak Junco.—A Slate-colored Junco (*Junco hyemalis hyemalis*) observed in shoulder-high bushes alongside an open field, near Harmarville, Pennsylvania, on May 1, 1926, was of interest because of a distinct grayish white ring, about one-eighth of an inch wide, about its neck. The bird, studied at close range with 12x glasses, had the usual plumage except for the neck ring, the pink bill and the characteristic white outer tail feathers showing plainly as it moved about.—SIDNEY EASTWOOD, *Pittsburg, Pa.*

Unusual Nesting of the Barn Swallow.—A Phoebe built its nest on an iron girder under a low bridge, over a swamp and only five feet above the water, and reared its young. On June 24, 1928, I was surprised to find that a Barn Swallow had built a low rampart of mud pellets on the rim of the Phoebe's nest, lined it with feathers, and was sitting on four very heavily incubated eggs. And to make it still more interesting, the eggs were unusually long and so heavily blotched that had it not been for the birds I would not have recognized them as belonging to the Barn Swallow.—E. A. DOOLITTLE, *Painesville, Ohio.*

The Snowy Owl in Northwestern Iowa.—In November, 1928, Mr. John Hommes wounded and captured a Snowy Owl (*Nyctea nyctea*) about three and one-half miles southeast of Rock Rapids, Iowa. The bird is a beautiful specimen, being snowy white, with a small amount of brown mottling on the back of the head and neck and some brown on the back and upper side of the wings. The bird was sold to F. J. Vickerman, of Rock Rapids, who will keep it alive for a while before having it mounted.—O. S. THOMAS, *Rock Rapids, Iowa.*

Another Snowy Owl Record from Iowa.—On January 3, 1929, Mr. E. W. Sells of Paton, Greene County, in west-central Iowa, sent me a fine specimen of Snowy Owl which had been shot near there a day or two before. It was a female, measuring 25 inches in length and about 56 inches in wing spread and weighing just 4 pounds and 6 ounces. I mailed it to Prof. Kubichek at the Coe College museum, who has mounted it, and it will be preserved in that museum. Prof. Kubichek reported that there was not a particle of food to be found in the stomach. Mr. Sells reported that there had been two of these birds seen there, but only one had been shot. In eleven years' observation of birds in this locality this is my first record of the Snowy Owl, and I was very glad to secure this record

and also very glad to present it to Prof. Kubichek for the Coe College museum.—
W. M. ROSEN, *Ogden, Iowa.*

On the Scent of Vultures.—After reading the articles of Mr. Lewis and Mr. Taber on the scent of Vultures (WILSON BULLETIN, XL, pp. 154-156 and 221-223), I am prompted to relate an incident bearing on this subject and one in which I figured rather ludicrously.

It was on September 17, 1926, that I received from a friend a squirrel which he wanted me to mount for him. The weather was very warm for so late in the summer and the flesh of the squirrel was decidedly tainted. I managed to remove the skin and then threw the carcass over into a stubble field.

On the following afternoon (September 18), the weather still being very warm, I was lying on a log on the edge of a strip of woods adjoining the field, and watching the sky. Presently four Turkey Vultures came sailing along from the east, in a line of flight that would take them directly over the spot where the carcass of the squirrel lay. Upon reaching this place the four birds began to fly around in short circles, peering intently at the ground. Of course the small carcass was hidden by weeds and stubble. My position was about 100 yards away, where I lay very still to observe the action of the birds. One of them, spying me lying on the log, seemed to say to the others, "I see it. There it is," and all four were soon circling over my head. Lower they came with each circle until they were not more than fifty feet above me, and as any moment might bring the gaunt creatures down at close quarters, I jumped up and hurled a stick at them. They then flew away. About five minutes later another vulture flew over the spot where the carcass lay, and it too circled four or five times, but seeing nothing flew away.

I am persuaded that the scent of vultures for decayed flesh is remarkably keen, but for untainted flesh they may rely more upon sight than the sense of smell.—THOMAS M. EARL, *Xenia, Ohio.*

The Return of the House Wren.—During the summers of 1925-26-27 the Eastern House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon aedon*) steadily increased in migration numbers in Hillsboro until it was rather common. In 1928, it extended its range to the immediate vicinity of the town. No bird welcomes its return. The hostility between this wren and the Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewicki bewicki*) is most bitter, and begins at nesting time. Twice it has come to open warfare. In 1926, on the first of June, the House Wren came over and began to investigate every available nesting place, spending several days at a Chickadee's old nest. All the time above the nest, in an apple tree, sat a Bewick's Wren, singing. Suddenly and viciously he darted at the House Wren, striking it on the back. He then returned to the tree and continued his singing. The House Wren sneaked away and nested in the neighbor's box. In 1928, the House Wren invaded an old nest of the Downy Woodpecker, carrying out the material a bit at a time. Three Bewick's Wrens sat on a wire fence, watching. Suddenly one darted after him driving him off the place. With one exception (*cf.* WILSON BULLETIN, XXXVII, p. 92) the House Wrens have nested in the wren boxes, while the Bewick's Wren nests in a neighbor's coal-house. Our premises will always be a battle-ground. Neither will ever give way for the other to nest here. The two will never occupy the same territory. The House Wren has come to stay. At the present time the Bewick's Wren is rather common and is generally distributed. On a drive through the country, we are never out of the hearing of his song.—KATIE M. ROADS, *Hillsboro, Ohio.*