

In the writer's opinion the distribution of "bird pox" is apparently more widespread than is inferred by Mr. Musselman, possibly extending locally throughout the range of the Chipping Sparrow. Its abundance is apparently governed to a large degree by weather conditions during the season when the birds are not taxed with domestic duties and when they are more or less gregarious in their habits. By transmitting the disease from bird to bird, during their migratory movement, it is apparent that new territories will continuously be invaded far removed from the place of original inception.

Although the Chipping Sparrow is the chief subject of attack, the disease is apparently not restricted to this species, but occasionally extends its scope to include other members of the family Fringillidae. To give an idea of the proportion thus afflicted, the total number trapped and banded by the writer, of the species in which the disease was represented, is herewith given, one each of the following having yielded to the attack of this malady. Field Sparrow (13); White-crowned Sparrow (23); Song Sparrow (45); Slate-colored Junco (55).

The writer is aware that the limited number of birds taken by him is inadequate to permit any definite deductions. This note is submitted to point out that insofar as the writer's limited experiences extends, the results of his observations approximately parallel the important findings obtained by Mr. Musselman, and to suggest the probable existence of a more extensive distribution of the disease under consideration.—PAUL A. STEWART, *Lectonia, Ohio*.

New Cliff Swallow Colonies in South Dakota.—In the numbers of the WILSON BULLETIN for March and September, 1928, Dr. F. L. R. and Mary Roberts, Alfred M. Bailey and T. C. Stephens (in Editor's note), gave some information in regard to the nesting of Cliff Swallows (*Petrochelidon lunifrons lunifrons*) along the "Dells," and about one mile south of Dell Rapids, South Dakota.

Dells Creek leaves the Big Sioux River within the city limits of Dell Rapids and again joins it some three and one-half miles down stream. The colony along the gorge of Dells Creek is an old one, and while no accurate data have been kept, it has seemed to the writer that the colony has been on the decrease during the past few years. The English Sparrows have harrassed this colony for years, and any decrease in numbers can probably be mainly attributed to them.

This summer (1929) it was evident that the colony was much smaller, and on July 13 an attempt was made to count occupied nests. Glasses were used in making observations from the opposite bank and the count showed there were about sixty occupied nests. The English Sparrows were much in evidence and had appropriated nests here and there throughout the colony. The colony had moved a few rods south this year.

Some time previous to making this count I had noted Cliff Swallows gathering mud at three points far removed from the old colony, and this led me to believe that there were other colonies being started in the vicinity. During the period from July 13 to 20 I found three other colonies within one and one-half miles of the old colony, and this probably explains why the original colony was much reduced in numbers this year. One of the new colonies was located along the gorge of the Big Sioux River, near the western city limits, and contained about twenty occupied nests. This is about three-fourths of a mile, in a bee line, from the old colony.

There have been a few scattered nests here in previous years but last year I could find only one nest, so while this probably is not strictly a new colony, there is at least a good increase. The two other colonies, both entirely new, were located under eaves of barns on farms, one containing thirty occupied nests and located one and one-half miles southeast from the old colony, and the other about the same distance northwest having about forty occupied nests. English Sparrows had occupied three or four nests in the new colonies but on the whole the Cliff Swallows seemed to be holding their own fairly well. On July 20 there were still quite a number of nests under construction, and this seems late for nest building.

Some thirty or thirty-five years ago it was a common sight to see rows of Cliff Swallow nests under eaves of farm buildings in this vicinity, but these were entirely given up nesting sites probably some twenty or twenty-five years ago, and I think this was mainly due to increase in English Sparrows at that time. Of late years this pest seems rather on the decrease around here. It is to be hoped that these new Cliff Swallow colonies will be able to maintain themselves and that the birds will also spread to other farms in the neighborhood.—EDWIN C. ANDERSON, *Dell Rapids, S. Dak.*

Occurrence of the Russet-backed Thrush in Iowa.—In the Dwight Collection, at the American Museum of Natural History, there is a specimen of the Russet-backed Thrush (*Hylocichla ustulata ustulata*) from Keokuk, Iowa. It is a male, collected May 20, 1907, formerly in the C. K. Worthen Collection, and now No. 26745 in the Dwight Collection. The bird was identified by the late Dr. Dwight and so noted in his catalog. A comparison of the specimen with a series of *H. u. ustulata* shows it to be typical of that subspecies. The back and rump are olive-brown and the upper breast is faintly spotted with a few triangular marks. The tail is a slight shade grayer. Measurements in millimeters are: Length, 172; wing, 99 and 100; tail, 71; exposed culmen, 13.8; tarsus, 30; middle toe, 17.5, and bill from nostril, 9.2. I know of no other record of this bird from the state of Iowa.—PHILIP A. DUMONT, *American Museum of Natural History, New York City.*

The Raptor's Mistake.—An interesting episode was witnessed on a tract of meadow land, with grass six or eight inches high, near Liberty Creek, in Keokuk County, Iowa. There was a woodland on one side of this meadow and a group of farm buildings on the other.

A large Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo borealis borealis*) came out of the timber and leisurely flew around over the meadow, hovering over one point a moment for special inspection. Then he flew back to the woods again. A few minutes later he flew out and hovered over the same place, then returned to the woods as before. After having performed this round trip movement several times, the Hawk finally flew to this point and plunged down into the meadow. Instantly there was a mighty commotion. Hissing, flopping, spitting, caterwauling; and one could see feet, claws, wings and tails whirling about just over the grass. The air was full of fur and feathers for a few moments, then the Hawk made his getaway, and with feathers much ruffled flew for the timber as fast as his wings could carry him. And an old gray tom cat went with great bounds in equal haste for the farm buildings! Both Tommy and hawk were licked but still able to go.—E. D. NAUMAN, *Sigourney, Iowa.*