

GENERAL NOTES

Conducted by O. A. Stevens

Fall Records of Golden Plover in Iowa.—On October 9, 1937, the first day of the open season on ducks, I was hunting on a pond five miles east of Salix in Woodbury County. Early in the morning several large flocks of plovers flew over my blind. One of the hunters on the pond shot into one of the flocks and brought down one bird. I took it to Dr. T. C. Stephens of Morningside College, who identified it as a Golden Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*). These birds were reported in flocks of from twenty to two hundred for several days in that vicinity. On October 17, while out with the Sioux City Bird Club, a flock of about forty Golden Plovers were identified by Dr. Stephens and myself. They were feeding on a fall-plowed field three miles east of Remsen in Plymouth County.—WILFRED D. CRABB, *Sioux City, Iowa*.

Duck Hawks Nesting in Western Tennessee.—While several pairs of Duck Hawks (*Falco peregrinus*) are known to breed annually among the rocky crags of eastern Tennessee, there is only one record, so far as known to the writer, of their nesting in the western part of the State. Consequently it was with great surprise that the writer, with Dr. S. C. Kendeigh, noted an adult of this species circling over the tree tops and screaming incessantly in the extensive swamp forests on the west side of Reelfoot Lake, March 27, 1937. Near at hand stood a tall, dead cypress with the crown broken off. The writer, upon pounding the base of this tree, frightened another Duck Hawk from the broken top of the trunk, some sixty feet in height. Both adults now flew about overhead, screaming continually, one daring to re-alight on the cypress. These actions left no doubt in the writer's mind that they were nesting in the top of the tree stub.—FRANK BELL-ROSE JR., *Brussels, Ill.*

Canada Geese Nesting in Indiana.—My observation of wild geese has always been of the V-shaped flock making its semi-annual pilgrimage to the far north in the spring, or to the south in the fall. Occasionally I have seen them feeding along the Kankakee River or on the small lakes in northern Indiana. Imagine my surprise when I found Canada Geese nesting in Porter County, north-western Indiana, about eight miles north of Hebron, and not twenty rods from State Highway No. 2 (a concrete road), and not more than 400 feet from a dwelling house. I investigated all places where domesticated geese were kept, and was informed by all owners that none of their birds were missing. Returning to the nesting place I found one gander and three females. The nest was made in the marsh grass at the edge of a pond (not a lake), and contained six eggs. When I approached they rose and flew in a circle, and returned to the nest when I departed.—CHARLES H. REIDER, *Valparaiso, Ind.*

A New Device for Studying Chimney Swifts.—During the summer of 1937 Mr. John Kee, a farmer living in Roane County, West Virginia, showed me a device for studying and photographing Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*) which was new to me, and which may be of some interest to ornithologists in general. Mr. Kee had become convinced that it was desirable to have these birds about his home, and, to encourage them, he had taken tin coffee cans, open at the top, had fastened wires on either side of the cans near the top rim, and had suspended

the cans from the chimney, fastening the wires to nails driven in the mortar. In this way the cans could be raised to the top of the chimney, and study and photography were easy. Eighteen had been placed at varying levels in this one chimney, and all were occupied. In view of the difficulties sometimes experienced in reaching and photographing occupied nests of Chimney Swifts, I believe that a wide use of this method might be made by interested persons.—MAURICE BROOKS, *West Virginia University, Morgantown, W. Va.*

A Fatal Combat Between Heron and Snake.—That war is a loss to all concerned is sometimes as true of Nature's less highly developed progeny as it is of mankind. On September 10, at the mouth of North Landing River, Currituck Sound, North Carolina, Dr. W. S. Bourn observed mute but clear evidence of a fight to the death between an unusually large Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) and a huge (forty-five inch) water snake (*Natrix* sp.). The bird and snake were found sometime after their death very much entangled with each other. The lower mandible of the heron was found to have first penetrated the skin of the snake on the ventral side approximately four inches from the mouth and then to have been forced forward and upward until the tip of the bill finally emerged through the top of the snake's head. Dr. Bourn reports that apparently while this was taking place, "the snake in its struggle to escape, made a complete half-hitch around the bird's neck and a coil entirely around the right wing. This action resulted in so kinking the bird's neck as to break it and at the same time forced the bird's bill through the head of the snake". The observer further reported that "from the evidence presented by the disturbance of the normally firmly packed sand along the beach the action was vigorous while it lasted".—CLARENCE COTTAM, *U. S. Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

The Invasion of Northern Mississippi by the Starlings.—Almost fifty years have passed since the Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) was introduced into New York City from Europe. It is now fairly abundant in all the southern states, but it is only recently that large flocks have appeared in northern Mississippi. The first record of this bird in Louisiana was in December, 1921 (Walter C. Carey in *Bird-Lore*, XXIV, 95, 122). The first record in Alabama was of one which was blown against a barn during a rainstorm on January 14, 1918 (P. A. Brannon in the *Auk*, XXXV, 224, 1918).

The writer's first contact with the Starling came in December, 1930, when a small flock was observed feeding in a field in company with Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*), near Tupelo, Mississippi. In January, 1934, a flock of nearly one hundred were seen and photographed near Brooksville, Mississippi. Several blackbirds were in this flock. It may be noted here that Starlings almost always appear to mix freely with members of the family Icteridae. The writer has never observed a flock composed only of Starlings.

The first great flocks appeared near State College, Mississippi, in November, 1934. One of these extended over a distance of a quarter of a mile and was estimated to contain more than 5,000 birds. On many successive evenings several of these flocks were observed moving in directions which converged in an area several miles southwest of State College. During the day the flocks foraged over the countryside, but always appeared to retire to this area in the evening. By the process of triangulation the writer was able to locate this area one evening. He arrived at dusk and found the birds arriving in thousands so that the branches