

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