

Loxia
minor

SBv 97.11.4 (20)

v. 22

Sophia curvirostris minor

1889

April 3^② 4^① 5^③ 15^{1/2} (Dakin's H.) 22^② (Balls H.) 27^{1/2} 1892 1 to 18 "unrecorded" (Hoxton) 1892
 Nov. 25 (W. block) 26 hard - 29 (2d Denton) 1889. 13^{1/2} 1891. 19^{1/2} (Balls) 1893 6^{1/2} hard Concord 1896 Cg. (over)
 Dec. 10 (Aug) - 1890 3^{1/2} (heard by Hoffmann) 1896
 Jan'y Brookline W. Rox. W. Rox. W. Rox. W.
 14^③ N.B. - 19^{1/2} (Fenton) 23^{1/2} (7) - 24 (7) - 26^{1/2} (Dun) - 1890 Chestnut Hill 1^{1/2} (Robinson) 1896 Revere Beach
 Feb. 5^③ (Fenton) 11^{1/2} (Fenton) 12^{1/2} (Fenton) 19^{1/2} 1890 29^{1/2} 1892 22^{1/2} 1895
 May 13^③ 19^{1/2} 1890
 March 6^③ (all morn) 10^{1/2} (all morn) 14^{1/2} (Aug) 21^{1/2}
 " 29^{1/2} (Denton) 30^{1/2} (all day) 1895 14^{1/2} (H. Bradley) 1896 16^{1/2} (all day) 1892
 April 1^{1/2} 3^③ (Denton + several) 8^{1/2} 10^{1/2} 11^{1/2} 13^{1/2} 23^{1/2} 24^{1/2} 30^{1/2} 1895 16^{1/2} 17^{1/2} 1897
 9^{1/2} (Fenton) 10^{1/2} 11^{1/2} 29^{1/2} (flying over) 1899

May

One specimen captured S.W. Denton Cg. 1895 8^{1/2} 1897

June

July 1^{1/2} Concord 1892 1^{1/2} (long flight at W. Rox., n. 1^{1/2} miles) 31^{1/2} 1899

August

S. minor

Maine

1889

July

Loxia c. minor.

" I have tried hard to get the nest and eggs of the Crossbill and from boys have obtained several eggs thought to be such. But they are tree sparrows' and so forth. Today I have sent my boy to get the nest said to contain the eight eggs to see if it is like the nest sent you.

The finding of the nest sent you established several points: first, that Crossbills do sometimes and probably usually lay very late in the season instead of in March as all the lumbermen say; second, that they will build near houses in scattering trees. Seeing the young in scattered junipers at Islesboro and finding this nest in such location indicates their preference of juniper for nesting. And the fact that this nest was composed entirely of grass roots although built close to a tannery where an unlimited amount of hair could be obtained, and so near houses that they could get any other preferred material, proves that they built this nest of grass and roots from choice.

Last September I saw flocks of the Red Crossbill at Trout brook farm near Grand Lake, East branch of the Penobscot. They were on the farm buildings and round the door, just like English sparrows. The keeper of the farm said they staid there all summer and as the young were there I have no doubt they bred regularly close by. This farm contains several hundred acres and since it is well suited for breeding, I think it the most likely locality to find them I ever saw. Being just north-east of Katahdin and the only cleared land near it, here is a fine field for one who has the time.

Maine

Loxia c. minor.

1889

July

(No. 2) seen two hundred in a flock feeding in a lumber camp door yard.

I always find the Crossbill nearer a domestic bird than any other. It is as tame as the English Sparrow. In March I have They eat the tea grounds and pick up the snow where the dish water is thrown. They also come around the camp fires, scratching the ashes where the tea and dish water have been thrown. I have known one to get its feet burned by going so far as to scratch into the live coals. Though I have no proof of it, I think they would nest in sheds and bovels to be near people, if trees were not handy, as I have seen the R. (Purple Finch) do in the California mining camps.

Please excuse me for writing so much about them, but I have studied them a great deal and do not know how much chance you have had to see them. (I have seen them pecking the clay chinking out of a log house, probabl. because the clay was saturated with dish water and urine.

(Letter of Henry Beaufort, July 1889)

36

Doxia curvirostra minor

1889 Mass.

April North Woods. — On April 11th Mr. Miller shot five Red Crossbills Breeding among pitch pines in a deep hollow. Upon dissecting on Cape Cod the three females taken at this time he found that two had deposited all their eggs and the third was laying. There were many Crossbills about at this date. He did not hear the males sing. His specimens prove, on comparison with my skins, to be identical in every way with Specimens breeding at L. Umbagog in March (Two of his skins now in my collection.)

June 12 Belmont. — A single bird seen at Waverley by Faxon.

Oct.-Nov. Belmont, Waverley, Waltham etc. Numerous (Faxon)

Dec. 16 Mt. Graylock. — A flock containing several *B. leucoptera*, also, seen by Faxon at about 2300 ft.

1 Afterwards (17th 18th 19th) seen in considerable numbers by Faxon in the Spruce forest on the ridge of the Graylock range.

1890

Jan. 25 Waverley. — During the past week a small flock seen nearly every day by Faxon in the Norway Spruces on the place where he is boarding. With them were several *B. leucoptera* with them. They came, usually, about noon & stayed about an hour. On the 25th they appeared at 7 a. m. and stayed at least as late as 10 a. m. when F. departed for the city. One day came late in the afternoon. They did not appear at all on the 26th, a cold, still day following a period of cold, blustering weather. They spent their entire time feeding on the cones of the Norway Spruce. Slightly near the top of the pendant cone & hanging head down like a Nuthatch the bird would insert its bill between the scales & pry them apart making them crackle audibly but not disrupting them from the cone. It would then draw out

Doxia curv. minor

1890 Mass. (continued)

Jan. 25 Wellesley - a bird a swallow it very quickly. Taylor could not see that the seed was rolled between the mandible to remove the wings as is done by Redpolls ^{seeds of} but this must have been the case for all of a number of seeds which I took from the gullet of a specimen that he shot yesterday were minus not only the wings but also most of the rough, brown outer covering or "skin". About half of them were whole & showed no marks of the bird's bill. The remainder were more or less crushed or broken. The stomach of this bird contained a quantity of sand mixed with minute fragments of spruce seeds but no whole seeds or large fragments. Are the whole seeds crushed in the stomach by the grinding action of the sand aided by gastric juices?

The bird just mentioned has well-defined, ^{With marked} brownish white wing bars. There were several like ^{wing bars} it in the flock and their wing bars were so conspicuous that Taylor took them, at first, for B. leucoptera. The specimen he gave me was a ♂ ^{Sexual organs} with testes not much larger than ^{*} 12 shot. ^{underdeveloped}

Upon examining all the accessible cones of this species to-day (Jan. 26) Taylor & I found that most of the seeds had either fallen out or been eaten by the Crossbills. Indeed we opened several before finding a single seed. Thus the presence of cones on a tree by no means implies that they contain seeds. When the latter are exhausted the Crossbills, of course, must seek other pastures.

" 26 Wellesley. - Denton saw eighteen or twenty feeding on Norway Spruces on the Hemenway place.

*Saxia c. minor*1890 Mass.

Jan. 25 Arnold Arboretum, Brookline. "Within an hour after ~~with whitish~~
receiving your letter I had a fine chance ~~wing bar~~
to examine a flock of Common Crossbills assembled
in a low apple tree and on the ground beneath.
I was provided with my glass and so could
do them justice. The birds were in all plumages
from the handsome red through the mottled
and olive to the plainest brown-gray. One
bird in a rather sober dress (though not the
plainest) showed a distinct narrow wing bar
of a dull whitish color making him look
noticeably different from the others. *** Most
of the flock showed no signs of the bar but
I thought I detected some connecting links.
The brightest red birds showed no signs of the
bar it seemed to me." (C. E. Fayson letter to Walter Fayson
Jan'y 25. 1890)

" 24 Waverley. "the Crossbills were all here when I got home (3 P.M.) — one in exactly the same Wing-bars
plumage as the Specimen I gave you, another
— a green bird — also showed faint wing-bars.
Observed one filling himself with snow lodged Eating
on the Spruce spray — and in a N. W. Balsam snow,
too" (W. Fayson letter Jan. 24. 1890)

Cambridge. — George Deane found a solitary red & extracting ~~the caught~~
seeds from a Norway Spruce cone which lay on the ground under in the
the tree. Without special caution he approached the bird and had
caught it in his hand. After holding it a moment he let it
go when it flew off but soon returned and attacked the cone
again. He then caught it again and put it in a cage. It
refused all food & even seemed indifferent to its Spruce cone.
The next day it died. It did not seem either starved or sick.
when first taken.

03

Sofia C. Minor

1890 Mass.

Jan'y 29 Waverley. — "The Red Crossbills were here yesterday afternoon ^{Notes by} and again this morning by 7.30 o'clock. It is a W. Faxon shame they slipped Sunday [26th] which I spent with F. Yesterday afternoon I watched them closely. My former Manner of mistake in supposing that they manipulated & swallowed extracting the seeds while their beaks were [buried] in the cone. seeds from came from the fact (which we had proof of Sunday) that cones of a good portion of the seeds have fallen or been eaten Norway spruce from the cones so that a large proportion of their probings are to no purpose. As I told you before the bird almost always alights near the base of the cone (the upper end as it hangs on the tree) head downward. The head is then turned to one side and the beak inserted between the scales of the cone. In extracting the seed the bird apparently uses its tongue which figures prominently within the bill when the bird is seen at the right angle at close quarters. After getting the seed free from the cone, it is worked for a short time between the mandibles (well up toward the base of the beak as it seemed to me) the wing dropping off and then some bits that are probably the thin membrane that invests the seed. (Of the seeds taken from the crop^{ps} of the bird shot on the 23rd some are whole, others more or less broken up. There are remnants of the investing membrane on some of the whole ones). Occasionally one of the birds would alight on the ground and eat snow. Finally the whole flock flew to the roof of the house and ate snow prior to taking themselves off. One of the birds seen this morning showed that wing bar Wing bar so distinctly as to suggest the white-winged species."

(W. Faxon, letter Jan'y 29, 1890)

Massachusetts.

Loxia c. minor.

1602.

Feby. 27. Concord. The Crossbills were at first on the ground under a pine but afterwards kept mainly in the tops of the trees where they worked in a rather solitary way at the cones most of which have now opened. They were unusually shy not permitting me to approach nearer than about 20 yards. The ♂, a bird of mixed orange and red plumage, kept up a low, rather musical piping call quite different from the usual pip. Whenever the Lelichaudes moved or the Crossbills at once forsook their cones and followed closely, taking short flights from tree to tree, I tried to separate them from the Lelichaudes but failed. The Crossbills once descended to the ground and spent several minutes eating snow, hopping about in the surface of a large drift by the side of a stone wall.

April 15. As I was passing Dakin's Hills a ♂ Red Crossbill came flying from the pines & alighting in a maple uttered a soft musical spe-spe-spe-click many times in succession. Is this the song? The ♀ must be sitting on eggs now.

July 1 Suddenly the pip-pip of Red Crossbills comes to my ear and looking up I see seven of these birds flying high in a compact flock. It is more than a month since I have noted any here.

Doxia minor

1893 Mass.

March Near Boston. Red Crossbills have appeared suddenly in small numbers at various places near Boston. Four or five were seen in West Roxbury on March 5th and ten at Melville (by Mr. Albert Moes) on the 6th. Mr. Faxon thinks that he saw a flock near Fresh Pond on the 5th and I am very sure that I heard them calling in the spruces in Hubbard Park on the 8th. It is practically certain that there have been more in Middlesex County during Dec., Jan. & Feb. of this winter although the cold has been excessive & the snow falls heavy & frequent.

• 10 Cambridge. A flock of five (four red one gray) in Fresh Pond Grove Food extracting seeds from hemlock cones. Several descended to the ground and drank snow water from a little pool (Hoffmann)

1895.

April 13 Cambridge. For the past two weeks Red Crossbills have visited our garden daily. Up to within a few days they have been feeding on the seeds of the little Parkman's apples, which the Cedar Birds are so very fond of. But they have now apparently exhausted the supply and merely sit around in the tops of the neighboring trees. The number of Crossbills varies on different days. Usually there are four in the flock, not infrequently six and occasionally nine or ten. The last-named number came this afternoon, six appeared this morning. The males have song freely (especially when the weather has been clear and warm) but always sotto voce. The song is a low, sweet warble but it is rather monotonous, consisting of the same phrase repeated several times in succession. After a pause of a few seconds the bird sings again and keeps this up for half an hour or more at a time. ~~He sits rather~~ without changing his perch. He sits rather quiet and very thin, merely turning his head from side to side & giving his tail slightly. The song reminds me a little of that of Spurus tristis as heard in early Spring when the Goldfinch is merely preparing his summer lay. These Crossbills are in high plumage.

Loxia c.minor.

Peterborough, New Hampshire.

1899. Seen or heard almost daily during both months and at various places but oftenest and in the greatest numbers early in July when several good-sized flocks were met with feeding on larch cones of which the trees bore an abundant crop this year. Most of the birds observed in August were adults in pairs although several pairs were often seen in company forming a small flock. During the latter half of July and the first week of August one or two pairs resorted daily to a space of bare, hard-trodden ground just behind Mr. Day's barn coming usually in the morning or early forenoon and at each visit spending half-an-hour or more picking up particles of loose earth and licking the ground with their red tongues extended between the mandibles which were pressed sideways on the ground. At first I supposed that some salt had been spilled there but when I put out a small quantity it was ignored and I finally concluded that the birds were eating the plain dirt which was dry and of a gravelly character. They moved by elastic bounding hops like English Sparrows for which the females might have been easily mistaken.

I heard Crossbills in what appeared to be full song July 7, 26, 27, & 28 and on August 2, 3 & 7. One of the males which visited Mr. Day's would frequently perch on the ridge pole or vane of the barn and sing almost continually for ten

Loxia c.minor.

Peterborough, New Hampshire.

1899. or twelve minutes at a time sitting rather erect and motionless save for an occasional side turn of the head. Some of July & Aug. (2). his notes were liquid and sweet but metallic, harsh or guttural. The song as a whole was monotonous and tiresome. It may be rendered thus:- pip-pip-wut-wut-whink-whink-pip-pip etc.

Summer Bds. Restigouche Valley, N. B.
July, '88. J. Brittain and P. Cox, Jr.

Loxia curvirostra. AMERICAN CROSSBILL.—Not uncommon.

Auk, VI. April, 1889. p. 118

Birds of Magdalen Islands.
Dr. L. B. Bishop.

37. *Loxia curvirostra minor*. AMERICAN CROSSBILL.—Rare. A male seen on Grindstone, July 4.

Auk, VI. April, 1889. p. 148

Some Winter Birds of Nova Scotia. By C. H. Morrell

19. *Loxia curvirostra minor*. AMERICAN CROSSBILL.—I did not see this species until March when it became common. At that time the males were in full song, and the birds were paired, male and female always being seen together. If in flocks an equal number of each sex was present. The males of this and the following species sing well. Both sang much on fluttering, tremulous wings high above the tops of the spruces. I judged both species would nest in April. I was informed by Messrs. Christie that Crossbills were common about their camp all winter. Auk, XVI, July, 1899, p. 252.

39
Summer Bird of the Cobalt Mining Region,
Nipissing District, Ontario.
by Frederick C. Hubel. Auk, XXIV, Jan. 1907, p. 51

39. *Loxia curvirostra minor*. AMERICAN CROSSBILL.—Many large flocks met with. While walking up the railroad from Cobalt one day, a large flock alighted on the trees about us. They showed absolutely no fear, one bird attempting to alight on the end of a canoe paddle which I was carrying over my shoulder, and on the same occasion several flew by within two or three feet of us.

Birds of Toronto, Canada,
by James H. Fleming.
Part II. Land Birds.
Auk, XXIV, Jan. 1907, p. 79

191. *Loxia curvirostra minor*. AMERICAN CROSSBILL.—Irregular winter resident, sometimes abundant, December 25 to May 3. In 1892 crossbills were here from March 30 to May 5, and I took one on July 17, and saw another on the 18th, these latter were attracted by caged birds; a male taken April 14, 1894, is in juvenile plumage.

Loxia curvirostra minor. AMERICAN CROSSBILL. Loxia leucop-tera. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—Both species of Crossbills were abundant everywhere in the island, owing probably to the abundance of food, for the black and the white spruces, particularly the latter, and the balsam firs, were loaded with cones. The natives said it was an unusually abundant crop.

The American Crossbill sang but rarely and then with but little enthusiasm, but the white-winged species was everywhere in full song. One of these I shot and found the testes as large as peas. This and the singing certainly suggested breeding. I saw no fledglings and had no time to look for nests. The great variation in the time of breeding of Crossbills is well known, but it is certainly strange to think of these birds breeding in late August and early September.¹

Ora W. Knight² in speaking of the American Crossbills seen at Jackman, Maine, from August 16–23, 1895, remarks: "What is very odd is the fact that I observed a number of the birds flying about in pairs. These were probably still nesting. Some of the Crossbills probably nest much later than is generally supposed."

¹ Note.—Mr. Brewster tells me that he once found evidence of Crossbills breeding at Lake Umbagog in September.

² Auk, Vol. XII, 1895, p. 391.

notes on the birds of Cape Breton Island.
by Charles M. Townsend, M.D.
Auk, XXIII, Apr., 1906, p. 176-178,

to a low warbling, and again burst out into a loud sweet trilling *whee, whee, whee.*

When singing from a perch, which was always the tip-top of a spruce or fir, the Crossbill frequently twitched its tail, and erected the feathers of its crown. One fairly good singer appeared to be rather immature, being mostly gray with but a faint tinge of red

¹ Loc. cit.

The song was frequently ringing in my ears, and it is a song that is well worth recording, especially as most writers give such an imperfect idea of it. Wilson, Nuttall, Minot, Stearns and Coues, Langille, and Hoffmann do not mention it. Audubon says: "Its song is at times mellow and agreeable." Baird, Brewer, and Ridgway say of captive birds that "their songs were irregular and varied, but sweet and musical." Brewster¹ in his 'Notes on the Birds observed during a Summer Cruise in the Gulf of St. Lawrence' says: "The old males occasionally uttered a feeble, trilling song very like that of the Snowbird." Chapman says: "Their song is low, soft, and sweet, much like that of the American Goldfinch." G. M. Allen in his 'Birds of New Hampshire' says: "The song whieh I have sometimes heard in July is a series of trills alternately high and low."

The last is the best description of the song as I heard it at Cape Breton. The trills resembled so closely those of the Canary-bird, that several persons who heard it spoke of the bird as the "Wild Canary." Far from being low and feeble, the song was delivered with great vigor and abandon, the birds often flying about in large eircles over the woods. Occasionally the song was delivered from the top of an evergreen, but usually its vehemenee was so great that the bird was lifted up into the air, where it flew about slowly, pouring out meanwhile a great volume of musie. This lasted for minutes at a time, and ceased only when the exhausted bird eame to a pereh. The song would often be at onee taken up by another bird, and ooeasionally several were singing in the air at a time.

The volume of the sound was constantly swelling and dwindling, at times a low sweet warbling, then a rough rattling, more like a mowing-machine, then a loud all-pervading *sweet, sweet, sweet,* reealling exaectly a Canary-bird. Anon the song would die down to a low warbling, and again burst out into a loud sweet trilling *whee, whee, whee.*

When singing from a perch, which was always the tip-top of a spruce or fir, the Crossbill frequently twitched its tail, and erected the feathers of its crown. One fairly good singer appeared to be rather immature, being mostly gray with but a faint tinge of red

¹ *Loc. cit.*

in the breast. This full nuptial song is certainly very different from the song occasionally heard at other seasons, and would hardly be recognized by one who had heard the latter only.¹

The American Crossbill, on the other hand, rarely sang. Occasionally one might hear the call-notes so rapidly repeated that they resembled a trilling song. One bird emitted this song as it flew, following it up by several high, quickly repeated squeaky notes.

¹ Since this was written, my attention was called to a very similar description of this glorious song by Olive Thorne Miller in her 'With the Birds in Maine' (Boston, 1904), pp. 10 to 12.

Nesting of Crossbills in Nova Scotia.—During the past winter, which was very mild and open, numbers of American and White-winged Crossbills were found nesting in the vicinity of Wolfville, Kings Co.

The first nests discovered were those of the American Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra minor*) Jan. 31, three in number. Of these, two contained young, just hatched. The others held three eggs, advanced in incubation. These nests were not far apart, in a small, open grove of spruce, fir, and hemlock, and were similarly placed on horizontal limbs of spruces, from twenty to forty feet from the ground and well out from the trunk. Some fifteen or twenty of the birds were constantly feeding about this grove, and by their noisy chattering and restless movements attracted my attention to them.

Though hardly expecting to find them nesting at so early a date, I nevertheless watched them closely. Soon I saw a single bird leave the feeding flock. Darting away through the trees he disappeared among the lower branches from which he soon emerged and joined his companions. A careful search among the branches into which this bird had flown, revealed a nest, well concealed amid clustering sprigs of the evergreen. The sitting female carefully watched my movements as I approached the nest and upon my reaching out to touch her raised the feathers on her crown, opened her bill, and in short made herself look quite ferocious. Finally sliding off the nest, she flitted about within a few feet of me, keeping up an angry chirping, in which she was soon joined by her mate. This nest was some twenty feet up, and fully ten feet out from the trunk, saddled on the horizontal limb among clusters of the foliage and protected from above by overhanging branches. The other two nests were discovered in the same way — by watching the feeding flock, and noting the movements of birds leaving it from time to time.

During the following months, many other nests were found. Great diversity in choice of nesting sites among individuals of both species was noticed to exist. Nests of the American Crossbill were found in spruces, firs, and hemlocks at elevations ranging from ten to eighty feet. Most nests were found in spruces of large growth and with thick, spreading branches in open woods. Others were found in dense groves of evergreens in the little bunch of foliage at the extreme top of otherwise denuded firs, while still others were found concealed in dead trees of the same kind among the hanging moss and twigs, close to the trunk. A few nests were found in young hemlocks in the little clusters of twigs that sprout out at the junction of the branches and trunk.

The character of the woods did not seem to affect the choice of the birds much, provided that cone-bearing trees were near at hand. Thus nests were found in dry open upland woods as well as in the low dense growths of the swamps, and in woods of mixed growth as well as in evergreens alone.

Nests of the White-winged species (*Loxia leucoptera*) were found in spruces only, though some were in trees of large growth and seventy feet from the ground, while others were placed low in small bushes.

During the period of incubation the sitting females were observed to be fed by the males, in the same manner that the young are fed by their parents — that is by the disgorging of the contents of the crop into the open mouth of the bird to be fed. When bringing his mate food in this manner the male crossbill would announce his coming by loud pipings, and perching upon a near by tree would continue his excited chirpings some minutes and then fly direct to the nest. Often after having thus fed his mate, he would circle in the air about his home on outstretched flapping wings, giving vent to a perfect ecstasy of song.

The nests of both species are composed chiefly of twigs and beard-moss. Sometimes feathers, strips of decayed wood and bark, grasses and plant down, were added. On the whole the nests are fairly well built and compact, though quite a difference in this respect is noticeable in different cases.

The nesting period of these birds seems very extended. Thus on Jan. 31, nests were found with young. The birds have been nesting ever since, and at this date (May 7) flocks of full fledged young can be seen feeding about the woods, while nests with eggs are still to be found. Some years ago a nest of the American Crossbill was found on August 4 containing newly hatched young.—HAROLD F. TUFTS, *Wolfville, Nova Scotia.*

Auk, XXII, July, 1903, p. 339-340.

Summer Birds Tim Pond Me. by F. H. C.

American Crossbill, (*Loxia curvirostra americana*). Noticed as common in '85; not any seen in '84. Very tame, coming fearlessly about the camps to feed upon the scraps thrown away when dressing trout.

O. & O. XI. Feb. 1886. p. 257.

**Fall Birds of Northern Maine,
F. H. Carpenter.**

American Crossbill (*Loxice curvirostra minor*). More were seen of this species than any other.

O. & O. XII. Nov. 1887 p. 183

Loxia minor

1896 Penobscot Bay, Maine.

July 8 Ide au Hant.—Two birds certainly Crossbills & I think Red Crossbills flew overhead as we were passing through a spruce-grown bottom. They called hip, hip but somehow the tone did not sound to me just right for L. minor's flight note.

• 9 Stroud's Neck, Deer Island. Early this morning I heard the normal flight notes of Red Crossbills plainly & a dozen times or more in the spruce woods on the point between the boat com & the Bay.

Auk, XII, Oct., 1895, pp. 390-1.
The American Crossbill.—The American Crossbill is usually quite common in this vicinity during the winter months, and a few birds remain until quite late in the spring. A flock of about thirty remained on the Maine State College campus from March 4 to June 19, 1895, and at any time they could be found feeding in the pine trees with which the college campus is covered. Birds shot from this flock at intervals showed no indications of breeding upon dissection. June 19, the flock of Crossbills suddenly disappeared.

While at Jackman, Maine, from August 16-23, 1895, I found American Crossbills to be very common in that vicinity. They were usually in small flocks of five to seven individuals and were very evidently parents and young of the year. A number of times I observed the parents in the act of feeding the young.

What is very odd is the fact that I observed a number of the birds flying about in pairs. These were probably still nesting. Some of the Crossbills probably nest much later than is generally supposed.—ORA W. KNIGHT, Bangor, Maine.

The Red Crossbill Unusually Common at Portland, Maine, in Summer.—During the early summer of 1899, Red Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra minor*) were numerous about the west end of Portland, Maine,—a section of the city in which there is still a good deal of land devoted to gardens and lawns, and which contains a hill-side park with a large grove of pines. I returned to Portland from the south on June 2. The birds were then everywhere in evidence about my neighborhood, but mainly because of their vociferousness. They were quite elusive, and I found it difficult to estimate their numbers except from the noise they made. It was not until July 1 that I saw a large number together. On that morning, I counted twenty-eight in one open flock which flew slowly over me as I stood in the middle of a wide lawn. On the afternoon of that same day I left Portland for the summer.—NATHAN CLIFFORD BROWN, Portland, Me. Auk, XVII, April, 1900, p. 175.

Loxia curvirostris americana. - Common, Profile House, N. H. Aug. 1865.
Loxia curvirostra americana. - ^{seen here,} Aug. 22 Rye Beach, N. H. 1870.

Winter Birds of Webster, N. H. by Falco.
American Crossbill, (*Loxia curvirostra americana*). |
O. & O. X. Jan. 1885. p. 14

Summer Birds of Presidential Range,
White Mts. A. P. Chadbourne

20. *Loxia curvirostra minor*. AMERICAN CROSSBILL.—Not common, though small flocks were occasionally seen in 1886 near the timber line. I am told that in the country below (no one knows about the mountain itself) they are often entirely absent in summer, and in 1884 we failed to find them. They probably range through the whole of this region, however, though less abundant during the past summer than in some seasons.

Auk, 4, April 1887. p. 105

Bds. Obs. in Franconia, N. H. June 11-21
'86, and June 4-Aug. 1, '87. W. Faxon

29. *Loxia curvirostra minor*. AMERICAN CROSSBILL.—Common.

Auk, V. April, 1888. p. 152

Bds. Obs. at Franconia and Bethlehem
N. H. July-August, 1874. J. A. Allen

21. *Loxia curvirostra minor*. Repeatedly observed at Bethlehem and vicinity.

Auk, V. April, 1888. p. 154

Bird Notes, Central N. H. Winter '91-92
J. H. Johnson

American Crossbill, quite common.

O. & O. Vol. 17, May 1892 p. 72

Breezy Point, Warren, N. H.

Loxia minor

1894.

June 18 1894 2.0 1a 1/2 5 1/2 17
1894 2.0 1a 1/2 5 1/2 17

April 4 a flock of birds, which from the description given me of them must have been Red Crossbills, were seen at this place.

C. O. Tracy, Taftsville, Vt.
O. & O. VIII. Sept. 1883. p. 71

The Red Crossbill made its first appearance on Nov. 20, 1889, although not abundant, as there are no tracts of coniferous trees in this immediate vicinity. I have examined specimens in the Museum of Middlebury College (all collected on the Campus) which have the following dates: Feb., 1884, April 11, 1884, June 28, 1884, with the suggestion that the June birds were breeding.

The year 1888 furnished me one note; June 16, three specimens seen in the same vicinity / and positively identified by A. D. Mead.

Cornwall, Vt. G. H. Parkhill
O. & O. XV. March. 1890. p. 43.

Summer Bds, Mt. Mansfield, Vt.

35. Loxia (curvirostra minor?) CROSSBILL. — I observed (in 1899) several flocks of a dozen or more Crossbills, probably of this species, flying about over the summit. They were very restless, and never alighted near enough for positive identification.

by Arthur H. Howell. Auk, XVIII, Oct., 1901, p. 342.

Sophia americana.

In Mass. in June.

Cambridge, Mass.

June 19, 1878

During the past week I have seen single birds almost every day. The first occurred June 4th at Belmont. Since then I have repeatedly seen them flying over our garden, uttering their single inimitable but unmistakable call-note. As is their wont at this season they seldom alighted but seemed to be wandering restlessly. This call-note resembles that sometimes uttered by English Sparrows when meeting. Though nearly identical it is, however, distinguishable, more by the way in which it is given than by any difference in tone.

Sophia americana.

River Beach, Mass.

March 31, 1853

Two were killed at Point of Pines to-day by Messrs. Chadbourne & Knobell. They were in company with three S. leucoptera.

Wareham, Mass. April 6-10th. Found in abundance by the Bangs Bros. (no S. leucoptera seen although they were abundant in the same woods last November).

Mass. (Belmont)

Loxia americana

1886

Abundance in autumn

Nov. 8

Visiting the evergreen woods bordering Prospect Street I found them swarming with Crossbills. At least 100 were seen during the day, in flocks of from 10 to 30 birds. They were evidently feeding on the seeds of the pine (Pisidia) cones with which the trees were abundantly supplied.

As usual they were excessively restless, alighting for only a moment, then whirling off again. Several fine red ♂'s were seen. It is curious that this species should have reappeared in such numbers after its disappearance last summer. (see notes made at Concord, Mass.)

Jan. 10. 1887. - A flock heard passing over our place, Cambridge.

Mass. (Hyannis) &

Loxia americana

1886

Extinction southward along Atlantic's coast.

Nov. 21-23

Saw several flocks daily in the pitch pine woods of the deer preserve on Great Island. As usual they were restless and noisy; in fact all that I either heard or saw were flying.

Mass. (near Concord). 1887

1887

May 29 ^{avg}
June 5-4 seen. 6 ^{4 seen} flying

Loxia minor

May 3. Two in top sun cherry (our garden).

" 5 - Heard several
" 6 - "

* heard, flying over.
Loxia americana.

Mass. (near Cambridge).

1887
January 10 #

March 1st - 21 #
April 17th - 18[#] - 19[#] - 21[#]

1887 Cambridge, Mass.

May 3. Two in top sun cherry (our garden).
" 5 - Heard several
" 6 - "

* heard, flying.

Loxia americana

8 | *Loxia americana* Nov. 8 ¹⁰⁰ E. Mass. 1886.

Grested. Mass. 1886. 21 ¹⁰⁰ - 22 50. In pine woods (Pisidia)

Dec. 13 ^{1/2} Winchendon, Mass. June, 1888.
1886. *Loxia americana* 13 ^{1/2} Winchendon, Mass. June, 1888.

Mass. (Belmont)

Loxia americana

1886

Abundance in autumn

Nov. 8

Visiting the evergreen woods bordering Prospect Street I found them swarming with Crossbills. At least 100 were seen during the day, in flocks of from 10 to 30 birds. They were evidently feeding on the seeds of the pine (Pisoides) cones with which the trees were abundantly supplied.

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Extinction southward along Atlantic's coast.

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Saw several flocks daily in the pitch pine woods of the deer preserve on Great Island. As usual they were restless and noisy; in fact all that I either heard or saw were flying.

Mass. (near Concord). 1887

1887

May 29 ^{avg}
June 5 ^{4 sun} - 6 ^{4 sun flying}

Loxia m.

seen cherry (one garden).

1887 Cambridge, Mass.

May 3 - Two in top sun cherry (one garden).
" 5 - Heard several
" 6 - "

Loxia americana.

1887 January 10[#]

March 1^L - 21^H
April 17^E - 18[#] - 19^H - 21[#]

* heard, flying.

Loxia americana

8 | *Loxia americana* Nov. 8 ¹⁰⁰ E. Mass. 1886.

Greentl. Mass. 1886. 21 ¹⁰⁰ - 22 50. In pine woods (Pisoides)

13 ² Winchendon, Mass. June, 1886.

1887

Nov. 9th

1888

March 22nd 24th, 25thApril 25^(hur)Nov. 2nd (Wellesley) 14th (Belmont)*Loxia americana*

Mass. (near Cambridge)

1887

In May

May 6

Red Crossbills have been seen in Cambridge at intervals through the past winter but they have been most numerous during the last two weeks when I have seen or heard them daily. A few small flocks seems to have taken up their abode in the pines and spruces in the Hubbard and Clowat places. I have not heard any of them sing. They have appeared less restless than during the winter.

Mass. (Belmont)

R 22178

Loxia americana

1888

March 22

Saw about thirty near Prospect St. & shot seven. Most of them were in pitch pine woods, a few in red cedars, apparently feeding on cedar berries. They were in flocks of from four to ten or twelve. As usual they were restless & hard to find when feeding but noisy & conspicuous when flying. I shot four in one pine, one after the other, using my 32 pistol. A wounded bird bit sharply. The sexual organs of both sexes of the specimens killed

MAR 24 1888

Loxia americana

1888

- March 24 A flock of about a dozen in an orchard sitting in the upper branches of an apple tree, their feathers ruffled, their appearance was-brown & dejected. Saw none in pines or cedars to-day.
- " 25 A flock seen by Taylor.

Mass. (Wellesley)

Loxia americana

1888

- NOV 2 The head gardener on the Hunnewell place tells me that he saw a flock of Red Crossbills there this morning. He sees them frequently at all times of the year & believes they breed there. There are many large Norway Spruces on the place.

Mass. (Middlesex Co.)

Loxia americana

1888-9

- Red Crossbills were fairly numerous in Belmont through Nov. & Dec. but I have seen none since Jan'y 1 (W. Taylor in corresp. Jan. 10/89)

W. Middlesex Co. Mass.
June 25-30, 1889.

Loxia curv. minor

Mt Watatic --- A male seen June 27th among spruces in a ~~the pasture~~ at an elevation of 1000 feet. Others heard on the 28th of June in the spruce forest on the western slope of the mountain.

Nesting of the Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra minor*) in Essex County, Massachusetts.—Our part of Cambridge is not without keen-eyed lads who devote spare hours to watching birds. To have them call on me every now and then with eager questioning or fresh report concerning things of local interest, is always pleasing and may also be instructive — as happened only the other day when Lovell Thompson and Charles F. Walcott came, bringing a nest of the Red Crossbill obtained by them last spring at Marblehead. Just how it was found and taken is explained by the following statement, written out, at my suggestion, by Lovell.

"During the winter of 1916–1917 I visited Marblehead, Mass.; with my friend Charles Walcott, several times. Each time we saw a flock of Red Crossbills there. On April 22, 1917, we noticed two in pitch pines near a house. Looking closer we found their nest, on a pine branch about eighteen feet above the ground. The male Crossbill flew from the tree but when I climbed it the female was on the nest and I got my hand within two feet of her before she left it to fly away. There were two eggs in it, both whitish with some dark markings. About a month later we visited the place again. There was then nothing to be seen of the Crossbills and only one broken egg shell remained in the nest which we took and have since given to Mr. Brewster."

The nest above mentioned somewhat resembles that of a Song Sparrow, being similarly bulky and deep-cupped, with thick walls mostly composed of bleached grass-blades and weed stalks. But it has also a bristling outer fringe of stiff twigs six to ten inches long, such as no Song Sparrow would thus be likely to employ. Moreover its neat lining of fine, soft grasses includes a few Crossbill feathers at least one of which, brick red in color, must have come from an adult male bird. Their presence affords, of course, convincing evidence as to the original ownership of the nest, thereby, indeed, it is "*self-identified*."

Two nests of the Red Crossbills in my collection from New Brunswick, both accompanied by sets of eggs and skins of parent birds, are, unfortunately, not well enough preserved to afford satisfactory comparison with the Marblehead specimen. From it they differ conspicuously in general coloring because abundantly garnished with grey-green *Usnea* moss of which it has none. They are also less shapely and almost devoid of coarse outer twigs but as a few of these remain in place their comparative absence may have resulted from careless handling on the part of the collector. In other respects all three nests seem essentially alike — at least as regards their general plan of construction.

In these days of innumerable bird watchers and voluminous bird literature it is difficult to make sure as to whether this or that is, or is not known and recorded. But to the best of my recollection and belief no nest of a Crossbill has ever before been found anywhere in eastern Massachusetts. Hence my boy friends are entitled to much credit for discovering the Marblehead one, while I am grateful to them both for so generously contributing it to my collection.—WILLIAM BREWSTER, Cambridge, Mass.

Auk vol. XXXV, 1918, p. 225.

Birds Known to Pass Breeding Season
nr. Winchendon, Mass. Wm. Brewster

35. *Loxia curvirostra minor.*

Auk, V, Oct., 1888, p. 389

Notes on Birds of Winchendon, Mass.
William Brewster.

Loxia curvirostra minor.—A single pair seen in spruce woods June 13, 1888, and the male shot. His testes were of large, but not maximum size. Mr. Bailey tells me that this Crossbill is numerous every winter, but he has never seen it in summer before. Its occurrence at the latter season does not prove, of course, that it breeds about Winchendon, although it would be by no means surprising if a few pairs were found to nest there.

Auk, V, Oct., 1888. p. 390

Bds. Obs. near Graylock Mt. Berkshire
Co. Mass. June 28-July 16. W. Faxon

26. *Loxia curvirostra minor.* AMERICAN RED CROSSBILL.—On the 14th of July, in the 'saddle' or depression between Graylock and Bald Mt., a small flock of Red Crossbills flew by but a short distance above my head. I saw them again near the same spot on the following day. Approximate altitude, 3000 feet.

Auk, VI. April, 1889. p. 100

From Eastern Mass. M. A. Frazar.

During January and February and as late as April 1, when I saw two large flocks, red cross-bills were quite common. Of course this was no unusual occurrence, as hardly a winter passes that they do not visit us in greater or less abundance.

For. & Str., April 24, 1890. p. 268

Birds of Bristol County, Mass.
F. W. Andros.

Loxia curvirostra minor (Brehm.), American Crossbill. Winter resident, irregular in appearance.

O. & O. XII, Sept. 1887 p. 140

Some Birds of Lewis Co., N. Y.
C. Hart Merriam

In the Eastern (Adirondack) region
L. curvirostra var. *americana*, is found breeding.

Bull. N.O.C. 3, April, 1878, p. 53

Birds of the Adirondack Region.
C. H. Merriam.

56. *Loxia curvirostra americana* (Wilson) Coues. RED CROSSBILL.—
Abundant resident, rather scarce and irregular in summer but the commonest bird in winter and early spring. Breeds in February and March while the snow is still four or five feet deep on the level and the temperature below zero (Fahr.). Have taken fully fledged young early in April.

Bull. N.O.C. 6, Oct, 1881, p. 229

Have just taken a fine American Crossbill
(*Loxia curvirostra americana*) from a flock of six
or seven. Pretty late in the season for this bird.
—C. H. Wilder, Wayland, N. Y., June 6, 1885.

O. & O. X. July, 1885, p. 110

Loxia c. minor.

For occurrence on Long Island, N.Y.
see under *Loxia leucoptera* "Large
flocks of White-winged Crossbills on Long
Island, N.Y." by C. H. Helme.

Auk, XVII, July, 1900, p

Notes on the Birds of Madison County, New York,
with especial reference to Embodys recent visit.

13. *Loxia curvirostra minor*. AMERICAN CROSSBILL.—Mr. Miller
reports this to be found at Peterboro throughout the summer. Mr.
Embody's latest record is for May 15, but it is said that the "birds may
appear at almost any time during the year."

By William R. Maxon. Auk, XX, July, 1903, p. 264.

Proc. Academy of Nat. Sc. 1888-89

November 30, 1888.—Mr. George B. Sennett, President, in the chair.

Mr. Frank M. Chapman read a paper entitled 'Notes on the Birds of Aiken, S. C.', based on observations made there in November, 1887. Fifty-seven species were noted, among them a flock of fifty Crossbills, probably the third record for the State,

Auk, 8, Apr., 1889, p. 197

Birds of Chester County, Penn.
Cyrus B. Ressel, Ercildoun, Pa.

105. *Loxia curvirostra minor* (Brehm.).
American Crossbill. Winter visitant; rare.
Found occasionally during severe weather.

O & O. XIV. Aug. 1889 p. 113

The Singing of Birds. E. P. Bicknell.

Pinicola enucleator. PINE GROSBEAK.

Loxia curvirostra americana. RED CROSSBILL.

In the spring of 1875 — a late spring, following a severe winter — both of these hardy birds so far relented from their usual reticence while away from their northern homes as to allow us to hear them sing. Of this, I have already written as follows: “ . . . as the winter waned the birds became none the less common, and in the mild mornings of early spring-time this species [the Crossbill], as well as *Pinicola enucleator*, would often be found in full song, frequently on the same tree. As I now recall them, the song of the Grosbeak was a subdued rambling warble interrupted with whistling notes; that of the Crossbill bolder and more pronounced as a song.”* It the context, wherein is described a nest and three eggs of the Crossbill, taken at Riverdale, on April 30, 1875, the species is alluded to as having remained up to that time in full song.

Since that season I have met with flocks of Crossbills here in April, May, June, and July, but except an occasional low twittering in May, 1884, their usual nervous chatter was their only utterance.

As for the Pine Grosbeaks, they too remained late the present year — through March — and showed some disposition to sing. Low warbling notes were heard from them in February, at Sing-Sing, by Dr. A. K. Fisher, and also at Riverdale.

Auk, I, Oct., 1884. p. 325. 327.

* Bull. N. O. C., Vol. V, No. 1, p. 8. January, 1880.

Maine
1888

Brewer

Winter birds

Mr. Crosby tells me that last year at Islesboro, Long Island, Penobscot river, he saw the old of the Red Crossbill, and its young just ready to fly. It was about the last of July. The birds were among juniper and this coupled with the fact that he found their nest there, indicates that for nesting they prefer this tree. In the same locality my boy found a very red ~~one~~ this week I hear also of the finding of a nest of eight eggs. Its description is like one I sent you.

-----Manly Hardy, letter of July 10, 1889.

THE NESTING OF THE COMMON CROSSBILL.—A few days since, looking over my files of old ornithological correspondence, I found a letter written April 21, 1851, containing some notes on the nesting of the *Loxia americana* that seem to me too valuable to be lost. The writer is Mr. Charles S. Paine, the veteran ornithologist of Randolph, Vt. The nest spoken of is the one referred to in "History of North American Birds," Vol. I, p. 487, where it will be seen the mistake occurs of making the month in which this nest was built March instead of April. As so little is known on this subject even now, twenty-eight years and more since the date of this letter, it seems certainly of sufficient value to be placed on record. Mr. Paine's notes are as follows:—

"Since I last wrote you I have seen some interesting sights among the feathered tribes. The Crossbills have been the centres of attraction with me. A few days after I received your letter of March 15, I saw a pair of these birds alight upon a tree by my brother's door, the female upon an old Yellow-bird's (*C. tristis*) nest, plucking the lining therefrom, and, together with her mate, flying off in the direction of the woods. I therefore concluded that they must be building a nest. Soon after I shot a pair, the female of which had eggs half grown. And now, only four days ago, I was in the woods heading in some trees to transplant, when I heard the sharp notes of the Crossbills. They approached to where I was, and the female alighted on the ground, not more than a rod from me, and began pulling on some fibrous roots where I had taken up a tree. I watched her as she flew and saw her alight upon a tall elm, only a few rods from me, and there she deposited her building materials, in the crotch of a limb near the body of the tree. I saw her busy collecting stuff for her nest for some time, all of which she carried to the same spot. I returned to the place the next day and found them still at their labors. The third day I found the female engaged in carrying strips of birch-bark to her nest, and I could see that the structure was about completed, and in the course of the week, if nothing disturbs them, I shall have their eggs. The male did not join in the work, but usually accompanied his mate in her excursions, but would sometimes remain on the elm and chant forth a few notes. The books all say that these birds always build in evergreen trees, but it seems that they do not always do so. I never in all my life saw birds that seemed so much attached to one another. The pair I shot a few days ago were about my barn. When I shot one, the other remained, and would not leave its mate. I shot at her without effect and she flew away, but, finding her mate did not follow, she returned to the spot, and I shot her and have skinned and stuffed this loving pair, and will send them to you in a few days." — T. M. BREWER, Boston, Mass.

Bull. N. O. C. 5, Jan., 1880, p. 50-51.

Winter Birds at Newton Highlands
Mass.

Dec 4
1916

Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra* and *L. leucoptera*)

Mrs George H. Mellen

Arch XXXIV Jan. 1917. p. 92-93.

loving species as the Bay-breasted, Cape May, Blackburnian, and Blue Yellow-backed Warblers, the Red-bellied Nuthatch, the Golden-crested Kinglet, and many others, consorting with Winter Wrens, Water Thrushes, and Canada Flycatchers in the thickets by wood-paths, or along the banks of ponds or rivers; and I know of no more interesting sight, especially if it be a bright September morning, before the sun has risen above the trees. The dark foliage of the alders and viburnums is frosted with innumerable dew-drops, which fall in sparkling showers where a Warbler hops or a Woodpecker taps on the slender stems. Yellow and gold and scarlet liveries flash among the glossy leaves, as the active little forms appear and disappear, while the constant rustling and low-toned conversational chirping from the depths of the thicket suggest all sorts of pleasing mysteries. It is a pretty picture, this gathering of the birds in the quiet depths of the forest, with the tall spires of sentinel-like firs and spruces keeping guard against the sky, and the incessant rasping of the wood-borers, — Nature's time-keepers, — counting the hours of the crumbling trunks around.

REMARKS ON THE NIDIFICATION OF *LOXIA CURVIROSTRA AMERICANA*, WITH A DESCRIPTION OF ITS NEST AND EGGS.

BY EUGENE P. BICKNELL.

AMONG those of our abundant birds whose nidification remains very unsatisfactorily known, the Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra americana*) occupies no inconspicuous position. True, the nesting of the very intimately allied European form (*curvirostra*) is pretty thoroughly understood, but, so far as I can now recall, there is but a single authentic descriptive record of the nest and eggs of *americana* having been discovered. In view of these facts it is with much pleasure that I find myself able to describe the nest and eggs of this species taken in the Lower Hudson Valley; theoretically one of the most unlikely places to be chosen as a breeding station in the State, and well illustrating the uncertain and erratic disposition of the species in question.

The winter of 1874-75 will be remembered as one of extreme

RECORD OF THE BREEDING OF CROSSBILLS IN NORTHERN VERMONT IN 1796. — This early record of the breeding of the Crossbills in New England, which I have found in "The Rural Magazine; or, Vermont Repository" (Vol. II, Rutland, 1796), may not be without interest. Of late years they have been found breeding in Maine and Vermont, though but few instances have been recorded. — RUTHVEN DEANE, Cambridge, Mass.

Account of the Crossbill Bird.

RUTLAND, October 16, 1796.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE RURAL MAGAZINE.

SIR, — There is a small bird, common in the northern part of this State, called Crossbills, from the singularity of their bills, which cross at the extremity. Their bodies are a size larger than the Wren, but more full of feathers. Their color is ash, or brownish, in general; on some of which there are tinges of red. In the depth of winter they collect around houses, oftentimes in flocks of several hundreds, appearing to be particularly fond of feeding and picking in places around an house where slops have been thrown, and especially where anything salt or briny has been cast; and they are so tame as often to be taken. But what is extraordinary, and makes this bird worthy of notice, is, that they lay their eggs and hatch their young in the middle of winter.

Samuel C. Crafts, Esq., informs me that a person of entire credibility in Craftsbury assured him that in the depth of winter, sometimes in February, he discovers at one time as many as twelve of their nests on one small shrubby Haematae-tree, in which there were eggs, and the birds were then setting and hatching. As a confirmation of this, he also assures me, that when they have been taken in the dead of winter, and been opened, litters of eggs have been found in the females, and a part of them with shells, in a state of maturity, to be laid. The naturalist will, I think, be inclined to notice this curiosity, notwithstanding the minutia of the thing, and the insignificance of the bird as to size. He may do it, also, perhaps, with more security from sarcasm than if he lived in the vicinity of Peter Pindar.

I am, sir, yours, &c.,

THOMAS TOLMAN.

30

Red Crossbills.

During the past spring, (1883,) several flocks of Crossbills were frequently observed among the yellow pines which are common on the "Scotch Plains," about two miles south of this place. On the 17th of March I secured seven specimens—five males and two females. The ovaries of the females showed no signs that the breeding season was near at hand.

April 10th I was attracted to the edge of a small clearing by the song of a Red Crossbill on the top of a tall pine. As I approached, he with two or three others which I had not before seen, flew away. Thinking that some of them might have a nest near by I began searching, and soon found one on a horizontal branch of a pine, about thirty feet from the ground, which looked like that of a squirrel; but on climbing the tree I was much gratified to find that it was the nest of a Red Crossbill, (*Loxia curvirostra Americana*), on which the female was sitting. She did not leave the nest until I was within two or three feet of it, when she flew off and disclosed three eggs which were far advanced in incubation. While I was securing the nest she continued hopping about among the branches, often coming within two or three feet of my hand, uttering now and then a single "chip." The nest consists of a slight frame work of small twigs in which, or rather on which, is built the nest proper. It is composed of fine shreds of Chestnut bark and moss; and contains a few pieces of "caterpillar's silk" and is lined with

moss, (*Usnea*), two or three Great-horned Owl's feathers and several of her own. The nest measures $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth by 3 inches in depth; the cavity $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in depth. The eggs have a dull white ground with a faint tinge of blue, marked with small spots and lines of brown and black, which tend to form a circle around the larger end. There are also numerous shell markings of a dull lilac color. The eggs measure as follows: .81×.56, .82×.56, .81×.55. I searched carefully for other nests, but was unable to find any, although I saw several of the birds. About half a mile from this spot I saw five or six White-winged Crossbills, (*Loxia leucoptera*), all adult males. I secured one of them, and could have shot more as they were very tame, but did not as I thought the females and their nests might not be far away; but careful search failed to reveal either.

During the month of May, Red Crossbills could be seen daily among the pines. A flock of eighteen or twenty came every day to drink out of a stump in which some water had collected; here I set a fine wire snare and caught a male and a female, which I placed in a large breeding cage. In a day or two they became quite gentle, feeding readily upon any kind of seed. During the day they were quite contented but about sunset they would begin to call to each other and try to get out; they would continue to do this until dark. The female would then nestle down into a nest which had been placed in the cage for a canary, and the male would station himself on the edge of the nest and settle down for the night. At daybreak they would begin their calling again, and this would continue for some time.

On the 14th of May I saw a flock of ten or twelve. Most of them appeared to be young birds. All the others I have seen since March have been adults. By the 1st of June they had all disappeared.—A. H. Helme, Millers Place, L. I.

O. & O. VIII. Sept. 1883. p. 68-69

The Red Crossbill Breeding in Eastern Massachusetts.—Late in May, 1884, I received information that a flock of *Loxia curvirostra americana* had been seen on the outskirts of the town. Now this was a bird I had been looking for in vain for a number of years, my last record being about ten years ago, and that flock made but a short stay. So on the 31st I visited the locality named, which was 'just the place' for them, being a ledgy tract of pitch-pine, bordering on an alder and maple swamp. I found the flock there, about ten birds, and secured a pair, male and female, in fine adult plumage. On examination I concluded they had not yet bred, and were not likely to for some time. Thinking it probable some would nest there, I made several trips to the grove in June and July, but without result. I requested the man who owned the premises and lived near by, and who was quite interested in my search, to be on the watch for any young birds, and about the middle of July, was gratified with the information that he had twice seen at close quarters a pair of old birds feeding their young; and he has reported their presence quite frequently since, the last time being as lately as November 15.

I regret that I cannot fix the date of hatching (interesting from being so late in the season), and also that I cannot give this at 'first hand'; but my 'assistant observer' is reliable, and has often given me items of ornithological value.—F. C. BROWNE, Framingham, Mass.

Auk, 2, Jan., 1885. p. 105.

Cape Cod. G. S. Miller, Jr.

Loxia curvirostra minor.—On April 24, 1889, while hunting in a deep sink hole known locally as Hell's Bottom, about a mile and a half north of Highland Light, in the midst of a tract of pines covering about one hundred acres, I secured four specimens of this species. Two days later another was taken at the same place. Besides the specimens taken, perhaps half a dozen others were seen. The birds were all found among the pines which in this sheltering 'sink hole' had attained a height of from twenty to thirty feet. For Crossbills they seemed remarkably quiet, and showed none of that restlessness which generally seems so characteristic of these birds. They were quietly flying about among the pines and now and then alighting by the pool at the bottom of the sink hole to drink and bathe. They all seemed to be perfectly silent.

Of the five taken three were females, and upon dissection all showed unmistakable evidence that they were breeding. The testes of the two males were much enlarged. Of the females, the one taken on April 26 had just deposited her set of eggs. The oviduct of this specimen showed that it had very recently been active; while in the ovary were three ruptured capsules. Of the two females taken on April 24, one had several much enlarged ova in the ovary, and in the oviduct an egg upon which the shell had not yet begun to form; while the ovary of the other contained several much enlarged ova.

Unfortunately, after skinning the birds, I was unable to visit Hell's Bottom again in search of nests; but there is little room for doubt that the birds were breeding very near to the place where they were found.

Auk, VII. July, 1890, p. 228.

fused to leave the nest, although a person ascended the tree, and with a stick endeavored to dislodge the sitting bird, she would not move, but pecked at the stick that touched her. It is possible that this is a wise provision to secure the eggs from the cold, as the temperature the night before was 30° lowest, 46° highest, and ice formed in a pond within fifty yards of the nest to the depth of half an inch; and two days after (the first of April) we had one of the heaviest snow storms of the winter. Should the eggs be left for even a short space of time in such weather they would perish.

Owing to the inaccessible position of the nest I had to leave it for a time, and returned in the afternoon with appliances for securing it. By passing a rope with a hook attached to it over the branch above the nest, and then making fast the hook to the branch on which the nest was built, I was able from the ground to support the end. My son, who had ascended the tree, then, with a saw, cut the branch close to the main trunk, and both ends were then lowered simultaneously. During all this time the female bird retained her position on the eggs, and before the nest had come within reach, owing to the intercession of other branches, I found it impossible to keep the unwieldy branch level, and the eggs would have fallen to the ground had not the parent bird been on the nest. Anticipating some such disaster I took off my overcoat and had it held under the nest, and when the female left the nest one egg dropped out and was caught uninjured in the improvised blanket. The other egg was soon secured, and the nest and branch lowered to the ground. The female bird was secured without much difficulty, and when the male (who was away) returned he also was shot.

Nesting of the American Crossbill.

A short time ago I wrote an article for the O. & O. in reference to the nest and eggs of the White-winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*). Since then I have been so fortunate as to find the nest and eggs of the American Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra minor*). I had observed for the past two weeks a male bird frequenting a pine and spruce wood in the neighborhood of our city, and watched him closely, but never having seen a female in the vicinity I had about concluded to abandon the search for the nest.

While sitting on a log on the morning of the 30th of March, however, I observed the male bird on top of a spruce tree busy picking at the cones. After a time he flew directly to a large spruce, and having taken an observation from the top proceeded along a branch into a suspicious looking clump on the end. After remaining a few moments he flew off. There was the nest. The female was on the eggs, and I am under the impression that she seldom, if ever, left it during incubation, and that the male bird carried to her the food he had collected from the spruce cones.

I am led to this conclusion from the fact that the female was never once seen during the two weeks that the male was being watched; and from the persistency with which she re-

I now have the branch containing the nest and eggs, and the parent birds, and they form a most interesting group. On examining the two birds I was confirmed in my impression that the female was fed on the nest by her mate, for while he had a crop full of fine seeds, the female's crop was empty.

The tree on which the nest was found was a large spruce about seventy-five feet high. The nest was on the end of a branch about thirty feet from the ground. A small branch had been partly broken at some time and had turned back on the main branch. It had continued growing, and had formed a snug, well-sheltered clump. In the little bower formed by the secured branch, the Crossbills had built a neat nest of fine grass and moss.

The nest contained two eggs, which were partly incubated, showing that the number was complete—another wise provision for a cold climate, as the bird would have difficulty in covering a larger number.

The eggs (which were a little larger and about the same shape as those of the Common Snowbird, *Junco hyemalis*) were of a greenish tint. One of them is covered with small (almost indistinct) light brown spots, the other with the large end only covered with larger dark brown irregular shaped spots. The eggs were alike in size but very different in marking.

The nest differed from that of the White-winged Crossbill in being deeper and not having any twigs woven in it. There were a few feathers, apparently from the females, about both nests, but not any used in their construction or lining. The nest of the American Crossbill was admirably concealed, but that of the White-winged was easily discovered. There was no mud or clay of any kind about either nest.

Thomas J. Egan.

Halifax, N.S.

O. & O. XIV. June. 1889 p. 89-90

Ithaca, New York.

Regular Summer Crossbills at Ithaca, N. Y.—These erratic nomads have so long enjoyed a reputation for irregularity in their movements, both winter and summer, that the regularity of their appearance at Ithaca, especially during the past four years, seems worthy of note. In fact they have come to be predicted as accurately as many of our spring migrants.

In all we have about 40 records for the species. Of these, none have been made during the fall migration, but six during the winter, five during the spring, from the middle of March to the first of May, and thirty during the month of June.

A more detailed study of our data will better reveal the regularity of their appearance. The first record was made June 16, 1889, by Mr. L. A. Fuertes who with us in recent years has noticed the regularity of their occurrence. In 1900 and 1904 records were also made in June. In 1906 a flock of 10 were seen on the Cornell Campus from June 21 to 24. In 1907 they were first seen on May 28 when twelve were recorded, and they continued common until June 24. In 1908 they were daily noted from June 10 to 17. In 1909 a flock of fifteen appeared June 6 and the species remained until June 14. Thus, for four successive years they have returned in approximately the same season of the year and the appearance is apparently regular.—ALBERT H. WRIGHT, ARTHUR A. ALLEN, *Ithaca, N. Y.*

Auk 27, Jan-1910 p. 83.

Auk, XII, July, 1895, pp. 304-5.
Notes on the Breeding of the American Crossbill in Hamilton County, New York.—I have spent much of my time, during the last three summers, at Camp Killoquah, Forked Lake, Hamilton Co., New York, and have been much interested in watching the habits of some Crossbills that spend most of their time about the camp.

There are several camps on this preserve, which belong to the Hamilton Park Club, but Killoquah seems to be the only one that the Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra minor*) consider thoroughly congenial, and here they replace most acceptably their distant connections, the English Sparrows.

In both 1892 and 1893 I had arrived at Camp too late even to pretend to hunt for their nests, but last year (1894) as soon as I had arrived there, in the last week in July, I immediately inquired for my friends, and was much disgusted to learn that they had built a nest, in under the roof of the tank that supplies the Camp with water, and that on June 5 this nest had been torn down, before any eggs had been laid, as it was clogging the automatic dial, which registers the amount of water in the tank, and as the birds were fouling the water.

Mr. W. Harrison Eisenbrey, the owner of the Camp, as well as the guides who knew the birds well, were present when the nest was torn down, and showed me exactly where it had been placed inside the roof, and on a shelf just above the indicator. The nest, too, was shown me, in a very dilapidated condition; but it was sufficiently well preserved to tell just how it must have looked.

It had been built with a few twigs as a foundation, and a thick layer of bark, stripped from the cedars and hemlocks which grow about there in profusion, and the whole structure, which was very bulky, was topped off and thoroughly lined with plant down. It looked not unlike a large edition of a Phœbe's or Wood Pewee's nest, and was one of the best built and most comfortable nests I ever saw.

The birds, of which there were several pairs, were still about Camp, but no other nests could be found. They were very tame, and extremely fond of salt, and could often be found paddling about in the drippings under the cold storage house, or perched on a yellow birch beside it. Often they might be seen walking sedately about on the banks around the Camp, and the males with their beautiful, clear and almost metallic notes spent much of their time singing from the tops of some of the neighboring pines, a song that once heard can never be forgotten.

Mr. Geo. W. Smith, one of the guides at Camp, informs me that during the latter part of May, 1890, as he and another guide were going through some low spruce brush near Brandreth Lake, Hamilton County, they found a Crossbill's nest placed at the height of about five feet against the stem of a low spruce tree. The nest contained four or five young, which immediately fluttered off in different directions upon his putting his hand into it. This nest he tells me was similar in construction to the one above cited, except that it was not quite so bulky.—F. H. KENNARD, Brookline, Mass.

Probable Breeding of the Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra americana*) in Central Maryland.—May 23, 1884, Mr. George Marshall shot two Crossbills, a male and female, from a flock of five, near Laurel, Maryland. The female showed unmistakable evidence of having recently incubated. Two days afterward another male was shot in the same locality. The three specimens are now in the National Museum collection, two of them having been mounted for the exhibition series. Their measurements are as follows:

Mus. No.	Sex Age.	Register and Locality.	Date.	Wing.	Tail.	Culm.	of Gonys.	Tars.	M.t.	Depth Bill.
97967	♂ ad.	Laurel, Md.	May 25, '84.	3.60	2.30	.68	.40	.50	.67	.60
97972	♂ ad.	" "	" 23,	3.60	2.25	.65	.40	.45	.65	.60
97968	♀ ad.	" "	" 23,	3.40	2.00	.65	.40	.41	.65	.50

From their dimensions they would therefore be referable to *americana* proper, although representing about the maximum of size in this form. (See Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington, Vol. II, pp. 101-107.)

This species probably sometimes breeds in various portions of the State of Maryland. In fact, I have been assured by Mr. A. Wölle, an experienced and reliable collector and bird-fancier of Baltimore, that he had, on several occasions, found the nest of this species in the immediate vicinity of that city.—R. RIDGWAY, Washington, D. C.

Maine (Ktaadn Iron Works)

Breeding

1886

Loxia americana

March 8 Bowler feeds me six pairs that
as above. The females are all evidently
having laid all their eggs.

6	<u>Troglodytes himalais</u>	♂
7	" "	♂
8	<u>Zenaidura olivacea</u>	♀
9	" "	♀
9570	" "	♀
1	<u>Dromicocichla leucophrys</u> ♀ juv.	
2	<u>Pyrrhula rubra</u> ♀	

Clear and a beautiful day. Spent the afternoon in Coe's woods which I found alive with birds. chiefly D. striata, D. castanea, and D. cinnamomea. Shot three "Autumnal" Warblers at random & got two cinnamomea. tho' the Lor. leucophrys in the place where we saw one on the 21st more or less arbitrarily referred above. The majority are typical.

Dwight, Summer Birds of
Prince Edward Island.

Loxia curvirostra minor. AMERICAN CROSSBILL. — Perhaps more abundant than the following species, but the flocks are so often made up of birds of both species, and so much more frequently seen or heard flying overhead rather than allowing a closer examination, that it is difficult to estimate their numbers. At any rate both were occasionally seen in flocks of old and young, sometimes one species predominating (usually the flock was almost entirely made up of one species), sometimes the other. Although the call notes are quite distinguishable, those of leucop-tera being harsher, it is no easy matter to determine percentages in chattering flocks of a dozen or more birds. Their favorite feeding haunts were larch trees, and, unless disturbed, they were silent as they hung about the branches in all conceivable attitudes, usually upside down. They also feed on the seeds from the green cones of the fir which are tipped with freshly exuded pitch at this season, if it be a cone year. The pitch often mats on the bills and feathers of the birds. Dissection showed the breeding season to be long past.

Auk X, Jan. 1893. p.10 - 11.

Unusual Occurrence of the Red-winged Crossbill in Mass.

About the first of March a friend of mine who lives in Quincy, Mass., showed me nine birds of this species that he had shot in that locality the day previous. He told me that he also saw several large flocks the same day. One month later I visited the same locality and collected quite a number and saw the birds in abundance. These birds have been seen almost every day from March 1st up to the present writing. My friend, who has been collecting all winter, informs me that he had seen none of this species previous to the above date.

Now will some kind reader of the O. AND O. who is better posted on the movements of birds than I am, please explain why this species should occur in such large numbers at a season of the year, when they are commonly supposed to be breeding in the extreme northern countries?

Boston, Mass.
O. & O. XII. July 1887 p.115

J. F. W.

Birds of Dead River Region, Me. F. H. O.

45. Loxia curvirostra americana, (Red Crossbill). No nests of this species were found, but in August they were very common about the camps, often coming at our feet in small flocks and feeding on the refuse when preparing trout for the regulation camp fry. By this it would seem that they did not confine themselves to the usual bill of fare which anatomists assign them, from a study of their bill and its mechanical properties. A peculiar note of these birds, which is uttered while in flight, is especially interesting. I can liken it to nothing but the tinkling of several small sweet-toned bells.

O. & O. XI. Oct. 1886. p. 146

Loxia curvirostra americana et "bendirei"

A series of thirty-eight specimens in C. Hart Merriam's collection: twenty-one adult ♂ and immaturer (fall pl.) ♂'s; three immaturer ♂ only a trifle redder than the ♀; four young ♂ in first plumage with traces of the coming fall plumage; and eleven adult or immaturer ♀'s.

Upon separating this series (by the eye not having time to take measurements) I find them separable as follows.

Loxia c. americana: adult (approximately) ♂ - - - 14

; immaturer ♂'s one in fall pl. only

slightly reddish

1

adult & fall plumaged ♀'s

4

Young in first plumage

5

Loxia c. bendirei Approximately ad. ♂ 7

Immaturer ♂'s one in

1

fall plumage slightly reddish

Young ♂'s in first plumage with
some reddish feathers

4

♀ & adult ♂ immaturer

7

Specimens of both sub-species were shot
from the same flocks Apr. 12, 1884 (Mount Gros)

Three of the four young ♂ L.c. bendirei were shot at
Big Moose Lake (Adirondacks) Oct. 15, 1884. The fourth
bird is not dated.

In this series are three or four intermediates
more or less arbitrarily referred above. The majority are typical.

Dwight, Summer Birds of
Prince Edward Island.

Loxia curvirostra minor. AMERICAN CROSSBILL. — Perhaps more abundant than the following species, but the flocks are so often made up of birds of both species, and so much more frequently seen or heard flying overhead rather than allowing a closer examination, that it is difficult to estimate their numbers. At any rate both were occasionally seen in flocks of old and young, sometimes one species predominating (usually the flock was almost entirely made up of one species), sometimes the other. Although the call notes are quite distinguishable, those of *leucophaea* being harsher, it is no easy matter to determine percentages in chattering flocks of a dozen or more birds. Their favorite feeding haunts were larch trees, and, unless disturbed, they were silent as they hung about the branches in all conceivable attitudes, usually upside down. They also feed on the seeds from the green cones of the fir which are tipped with freshly exuded pitch at this season, if it be a cone year. The pitch often mats on the bills and feathers of the birds. Dissection showed the breeding season to be long past.

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O. & O. XI. Oct. 1886. p. 146

CROSSBILLS.—The article on Crossbills, in "Vol. VI. No. 3," reminds me of an incident occurring three years ago during a trip to Tennessee. I was hunting for specimens on a clearing near Rugby, in the eastern part of the State, when a bird was startled and flew to a wall a rod or two off. My eye was no sooner focused, as it were, on him, than he dropped on the opposite side of the wall; but on my running up, he was *non est*. The three or four seconds I saw him were sufficient to distinguish the outlines of a Crossbill; but

the place and season (August) were more powerful an argument than my momentary glance, and I passed on, thinking I was deceived by the quickness of the occurrence. A day or two later I was surprised, on visiting the same place, by procuring three veritable Red-winged Crossbills from a flock of five—two adults, one immature. Two weeks after, while deer-hunting fourteen miles from the former place, I saw another, but only having a rifle, it was not taken. Several days after this I killed two more, four miles from the first place. My last specimen was taken a mile from the last locality. The habits of my birds seemed to differ essentially from others of this erratic species. The country was covered with oak forests; the birds, keeping near the extremities of broken limbs, exploring the holes and crevices, pulling away the decayed wood, and devouring the insects contained therein. My last specimen was shot from the roof of a log-house stable. The workmen said the birds were often seen thereabouts, and fed on the manure incident to the locality.

Mr. Allen kindly compared my birds with a large series of northern and Mexican types, and considers them an intermediate variety, as regards the formation of their feet and bills. My adults were all much redder than the Mexican variety. From the diversity of the locations, testimony of the natives, the plumage of the birds and the season of the year, it is to be inferred that the occurrence was not accidental and that they bred in Tennessee. Sorry I am unable to give complete details, as my note-book and the skins are with my collection in Boston.—G. S.

Smith, London, Canada.O.&O. V111.Jan.1883.p.7

THE RED CROSSBILL (*Loxia curvirostra americana*) IN TENNESSEE.—The morning of August 7, 1880, found the writer collecting in the woods near Rugby on the Cumberland Plateau in East Tennessee. Coming to a clearing, I observed, among other birds, two which at first I did not recognize. The "clearings" of that section differ from those in other parts of the country. Lumber being comparatively valueless in that region, the settlers kill the trees by girdling, leaving them standing. In time all but the largest limbs fall, and the trunks become rotten and filled with vermin; thus they are the resort of Woodpeckers for both feeding and breeding purposes. It was in such a locality, and on the top of one of the largest trunks, that I saw a small bird, whose plumage I could not distinguish against the sky, hopping up and down and around the trunk, seemingly extracting insects from the decayed knot-holes. Supposing it to be a species of Nuthatch, I shot it, when I was greatly astonished to pick up a Red Crossbill. The report of my gun revealed the whereabouts of four more, the remainder of the flock. Observation of their habits showed me they kept near the tops or broken ends of the limbs, hopping about and crawling under them after the manner of Woodpeckers. As I shot another, the rest rose high in the air and, with an irregular, undulating flight, disappeared. My specimens proved to be in good plumage.

I subsequently saw two more in a barn-yard some four miles from the first locality. I was informed that they had been frequently seen thereabouts of late, but the natives were unable to identify them. I shot one of them,—a fine male, whose upper tail-coverts were of an unusually brilliant red. I find entered in my notebook that on August 13 I saw two more while on a deer hunt fourteen miles from the other places. Of course, under the circumstances, I was unable to shoot them. This would seem to show that the first flock was not an accidental occurrence.

The Tennessee Plateau is a comparatively level section of country about one hundred miles long and forty miles wide, with an average elevation of two thousand feet above the adjacent region. Its forests consist almost entirely of white oaks, interspersed with chestnuts, and occasionally a pine. This, with the above statements, indicate that the habits of my birds differ materially from those of others of this erratic species.

In respect to external characters, Mr. J. A. Allen, after having compared my birds with a large series of New England specimens and with examples of var. *mexicana* from Colorado, writes me that the Tennessee specimens present no essential difference in average measurement, but that the bill is considerably larger than in average New England examples, but much smaller than that of *mexicana*. The plumage of the males is much brighter than in northern specimens. The Tennessee birds he regards as almost exactly intermediate between the Red Crossbills of Northern New England and those of Colorado.—G. S. SMITH, Boston, Mass.

Bull. N.O.C. 6, Jan., 1881, p. 56-57.

THE AMERICAN CROSSBILL (*LOXIA CURVIROSTRA MINOR*) IN LARGE NUMBERS NEAR CHARLESTON, S. C.

BY ARTHUR T. WAYNE.

IT will doubtless be interesting to the readers of 'The Ank' to know that the Red Crossbill has been very abundant at McPhersonville, a beautiful little village four miles from Yemassee and about sixty miles from Charleston, during the months of November and December, 1886, and January and February, 1887.

The first intimation I had of the bird in question as having been captured near Charleston was from my friend Dr. G. E. Manigault, the well-known osteologist, who called to tell me of the good news on Sunday evening, in the early part of January, 1887. Dr. Manigault received a very fine adult male from a gentleman at McPhersonville, to whom is due the credit of adding the Red Crossbill to the birds of South Carolina.

This gentleman is W. D. Gregorie, Esq., who has observed the habits of birds around Yemassee and vicinity for years, and is a great enthusiast in matters pertaining to ornithology, and whose knowledge of the birds of that region is very great.

I wrote Mr. Gregorie, in the latter part of January, to secure specimens of the Crossbill for me, and after the lapse of a few days I received from him three fine specimens, a male and two females. I therefore resolved to explore the country around Yemassee for a day, with the hope of seeing the bird alive, and left Charleston on January 28. The result of this day's trip rewarded me by the capture of a female, which I shot out of a pine tree one hundred feet high; the bird was feeding on a burr. I also had the pleasure of seeing a large flock of about twenty individuals. I secured during my stay only a single example. Although I was somewhat discouraged, I did not give up hope, but determined to visit Yemassee again and explore the country thoroughly.

During my stay at Yemassee, from February 5 to 14, I was the guest of Mr. Gregorie, and he took me to the best localities where I would be sure to get the Crossbills. My stay was a very pleasant and satisfactory one and I will give the result in detail: On February 7, I shot thirteen examples, five

*With author's compliments.*⁴⁴⁰

... FROM ...

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Indiana Academy of Science

1892.

BROOKVILLE, IND.

MOORE & LANGEN, PRINTERS, TERRE HAUTE

THE RANGE OF THE CROSSBILL IN THE OHIO VALLEY, WITH NOTES ON THEIR
UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE IN SUMMER. By A. W. BUTLER.

In 1838 Dr. Kirtland had not met with the American Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra minor*) in Ohio and Indiana. Dr. Haymond omitted it from his "Birds of Southeastern Indiana" in 1856. Dr. Wheaton reported it from Ohio in the winter of 1859-60. Evidently it was quite well known to Dr. Haymond in 1869. The winter of 1868-9 they were very abundant in the vicinity of Cincinnati. (Charles Dury.) This was doubtless the case at other places also. The range of the species at this time was supposed to be northern North America, south in the Appalachian mountains into Pennsylvania, extending in winter, irregularly over much of the United States. A letter from Mr. C. E. Aikin, of Salt Lake City, Utah, informs me that this species became very abundant in the city of Chicago in July and August 1869, and remained until late in the fall. They fed greedily upon seeds of sunflowers and were so sluggish that one could approach within a few feet of them so that they fell an easy prey to boys with catapults. In the latter part of August of the same year, he found them common in Lake county, Indiana. He also notes that they were not rare the succeeding year in the vicinity of Chicago. Dr. F. W. Langdon notes the capture of a single specimen from a flock of six or eight at Madisonville, near Cincinnati, O., Nov. 30, 1874. In the winter of 1874-5 Mr. Eugene P.

Bicknell noted these birds were present in the lower Hudson valley, and in April of the latter year found their nest. In the same article is noticed the occurrence of the species about New York City in late spring and early summer; on Long Island in midsummer, and on the Bermudas from March to May. (Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, Vol. V., pp. 7-11.) Mr. E. W. Nelson in his paper on "Birds of Northeastern Illinois," read before the Essex Institute, December 4, 1876, says it was "formerly a common winter resident; now rare." Messrs. Dury and Freeman (Journ. Cin. Soc. Nat. Hist., 1879, p. 4), note its occurrence at Westwood, O., in 1879. Dr. J. M. Wheaton (Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, 1879, p. 62) gives the following account of the occurrence of the species in Ohio: "On the 18th of June last, Mr. Charles Hinman killed one of these birds out of a flock of eight or ten which visited the coniferous trees in his garden in this city (Columbus). The specimen, which came into my possession by the kindness of Mr. Oliver Davie, was a male, not in full plumage. I have since learned that the Red Crossbill has remained during the season in the vicinity of Cleveland in considerable numbers, and is reported to have nested there." In commenting on this note (Ohio Geol. Survey, Vol. IV., Zoology and Botany, p. 317), Dr. Wheaton says: "I was unable to learn whether its nest had been actually discovered," and adds: "It has been known to nest in Indiana within a few years." I regret very much that I have been unable to get any clue whatever to the authority upon which this statement is made. Prof. A. J. Cook in writing of the Birds of Michigan says of the American Crossbill: "Occasional in summer. Dr. H. A. Atkins took nests of this species at Locke, July 13, 1880." It had previously been reported as breeding in Minnesota. In July and August, 1880, they were noted at Rugby, Tenn. (The Oologist, Vol. V., pp. 78-9; Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, Vol. VI., pp. 56-7.) Dr. C. Hart Merriam notes it as an "abundant resident" in the Adirondack region. He says it is "rather scarce and irregular in summer, but the commonest bird in winter and early spring. Breeds in February and March while the snow is still four or five feet deep on the level and the temperature below zero (Fahr.). Have taken full fledged young in April." (Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, Vol. VI., p. 229.)

Mr. C. W. Beckham (Birds of Nelson County, Kentucky; Ky. Geol. Surv., p. 24), says: "A flock of six or eight of these birds appeared here on November 18, 1882 on some pine trees, the first time I had ever observed them. They remained only a day or two, and none were seen until the 17th of March following, when I shot eight out of a flock of about twenty,

in the same place where they had previously been seen. Several flocks were observed about the same time near Bloomfield and Glenville in this county, and excited considerable comment on account of their queer bills. The weather at the time was quite mild, so that their appearance here was probably due to some other cause."

The winter of 1882-3 they were unusually abundant in many localities between the great lakes and the Ohio river. Prof. B. W. Evermann first observed them at Bloomington, Indiana, February 10, 1893. This was the second record for the state. For some time after they were common in Monroe county. March 15, 1883, Mr. E. R. Quick reported having seen a single specimen near Brookville, Indiana. April 2, my attention was attracted to a peculiar crackling sound which came from among the pine trees in my yard at Brookville. Close investigation revealed the fact that the cause was a lot of Crossbills. They were shelling the seeds out of the pine cones and the breaking of the cone scales made the sound which attracted my attention. I observed others were upon the ground feeding upon the seeds of the fallen cones. April 3 I saw six more in my yard. April 4 I saw one in a flock of Pine Finches. April 5 Mr. Quick noted one. Of those observed but one was in the red plnimage. Prof. B. W. Evermann saw a few at Delphi, Carroll County, Indiana, the middle of March, 1883. At the same place about twelve were seen December 26, 1884. Mr. J. W. Byrkit informs me that they were very abundant at Michigan City, Ind., in the winter of 1883-4. Miss H. E. Colfax, in her report of the bird noted at the light house, at the same place, gives it January 16, 1884. In the winter of 1883-4 Prof. Evermann reported them very common in Monroe County, Ind. The Ornithologist and Oologist, Vol. VIII., p. 68, contains an account by A. H. Helme of their breeding April 10, 1883, near Miller's Point, L. I. Mr. Robert Ridgway (The Auk. Vol. I., p. 292), notes the probable breeding of the Red Crossbill in central Maryland in May, 1884. Mr. F. C. Brown reported their breeding in Eastern Massachusetts in the summer of 1884 (The Auk., Vol. II., p. 105). In the winter of 1884-5 they were tolerably common in Monroe county, Ind. (W. S. Blatchley, Hoosier Naturalist, 1886, p. 170). The late Mr. C. H. Bollman noted them "quite common," in the same county through March, April and early May 1885. He saw them first March 2, and last observed them May 12. Mr. J. W. Byrkit informed me that he saw the first Crossbills for the year March 24, 1885. He adds: "I am not quite positive but think the Crossbill breeds here (Michigan City), as they make their appearance about this

time and leave for the north about the middle of May." Mr. Charles Dury informed me they were abundant at Michigan City, Ind., one winter, which he thinks was 1885. He also reported Pine Finches and Redpolls from the same locality the same year. Prof. B. W. Evermann reported it from Carroll County, Ind., March 27, 1885. I am indebted to Mr. E. M. Kindle for the information that Mr. Sam Hunter reported a pair of American Crossbills to have bred at Bloomington, Ind., in 1885. Mr. Hunter informed him they nested in a pine tree and that the nest was made exclusively of pine burrs. Mr. R. R. Moffitt informs me that Red Crossbills were taken in Tippecanoe County, Ind., in 1885. He says they nested there. Prof. B. W. Evermann noted them at Camden, Ind., March 27 and April 13, 1885, also a large flock at Burlington, Ind., April 23, 1885.

Mr. Wm. Brester reported its occurrence in the mountains of Western North Carolina in the summer of 1885 (The Auk., Vol. III., p. 107) and says: "Seen only on the Black Mountains where it was numerous in small flocks throughout the balsam forests above 5,000 feet. At Highlands I was told that it regularly appeared in winter about the outskirts of the town." Mr. Charles W. Richmond (The Auk., Vol. V., p. 22), gives upon the authority of Mr. Hugh M. Smith, the information that an adult male American Crossbill, accompanied by a young bird, was seen May 17, 1885, within the District of Columbia. Prof. L. L. Dyche reports the occurrence, in the winter of 1885-6 of the Western Red Crossbill, *Loxia curvirostra stricklandi*, at Lawrence, Emporia, Manhattan and Wakarusa, Kan. They were first observed November 1, 1885, and were last seen January 26, 1886 (The Auk., Vol. III., pp. 258-261). The following winter I was fortunate in securing, through the kindness of Mr. A. O. Garrett, a series of specimens of *Loxia curvirostra minor* from Lawrence, Kan. March 13 and 14, 1887, he obtained four which he sent me, and later he sent me nine others which were taken March 24 and 25. The meeting of the range of these two forms is of considerable interest. Prof. B. W. Evermann reports a crossbill, species not determined, from Bloomington, Ind., February 23, 1886, and another March 8, 1886. The same authority states the late Mr. C. H. Bollman found a few specimens of the Red Crossbill near Bloomington, Ind., July 10, 13 and 14, 1886. Mr. Arthur P. Chadbourn says, in the summer of 1886 it was found in the White Mountains, N. H. (The Auk., Vol. IV., p. 105). Mr. George B. Sennett, in the same volume, p. 242, gives an account of finding this species in

the mountains on the borders of North Carolina and Tennessee in July and August 1886. Mr. Arthur T. Wayne, in the same volume, pp. 287-289, notes their abundance near Yemassee, S. C., in November and December, 1886, and in January and February, 1887. He noted them again in the same vicinity November 20, 1887 (The Auk., Vol. V., p. 115), also during January, 1888 (Ibid, p. 208). Mr. Frank M. Chapman also reports them from Aiken, S. C., November 12, 1887, (Ibid, p. 324). Mr. G. G. Williamson observed them in Monroe County, Ind., January 18 and February 6, 1886. Mr. J. G. Parker reports them from Lake County, Ind., in May, 1887. In the fall of 1887, I again observed them at Brookville, Ind. They came to feed among the pines in my yard. October 29 several were seen and they last appeared November 19. Prof. Walter Faxon and Dr. J. A. Allen give it as common in the White Mountains, N. H., in July 1874, June 1885 and June 1886 (The Auk., Vol. V., p. 152.) Dr. J. A. Allen on the next page of the same number of "The Auk," speaks of a pair of American Crossbills taken at Mandeville, La., March 27, 1888. Prof. B. W. Evermann found them in Vigo County, Indiana in the spring of 1888. They were first seen February 6 and disappeared May 6. Mr. J. O. Snyder found them at Waterloo, Ind., March 13 and 17, 1888. Mr. H. N. McCoy informs me they were quite common in Wayne county, Ind., in the early part of 1888. They were last seen April 5. Mr. G. G. Williamson saw six or eight individuals near Muncie, Ind., April 17, 1888. May 4 he saw three others. Mr. Otho C. Poling notes their occurrence in Adams county, Ill. He gives no account of their occurrence in summer (The Auk., Vol. VII., p. 239). Mr. John A. Balmer, informs me these Crossbills were found in the vicinity of Vincennes, Ind. in the winter of 1888-9. Mr. J. F. Clearwaters told me of the capture of two of these birds in Putnam county, Ind., in the winter of 1888. A flock of American Crossbills was seen by Mr. J. O. Snyder at Waterloo, Ind., April 27, 1889. Mr. Stewart E. White informs me he found them common on Mackinack Island, Mich., August 3 to August 9, 1889. Mr. H. W. McBride wrote me of taking three specimens at Waterloo, Ind., April 2, 1890. February 14, 1891, Mr. Stewart E. White saw six at Grand Rapids, Mich. He next noted the species March 16. He says it is quite rare in that vicinity. Mr. J. F. Clearwaters gave me the following account of their occurrence in Putnam county, Ind.: "On July 27, 1891, Jesse Earll was down beside the old mill pond, where we collect all our water birds, and noticed five birds on the ground, apparently probing in the mud with their bills. As they

rose he shot one which proved to be a male Red Crossbill in breeding plumage. He preserved the skin and still has it. The others were females or young, as he says none of them had any red on them."

Mr. Jonathan Dwight reported the American Crossbill on North Mountain, Penn., in June, 1891. (The Auk. Vol. IX., p. 137.) Dr. B. H. Warren, in his admirable "Report on the Birds of Pennsylvania," p. 228, gives it as breeding in the counties of Clinton, Clearfield, Luzerne, Lycoming and Cameron in that state.

March 1, 1892, Messrs. A. B. Ulrey and E. M. Kindle report seeing six in Monroe county, Ind. Mr. G. G. Williamson noted six near Muncie, Ind., April 16, 1892, and another April 24. Messrs. Charles D. and Lewis A. Test have kindly sent me the following interesting notes from the observations of the spring of 1892. The notes were taken near Lafayette, Ind. March 8, 1892, they saw the first American Crossbill. They were seen on the following succeeding dates: March 11; April 15, 19, 23 and 30; May 1, 3, 6, 8, 18, 20, 21, 27 and 30; June 2, 6, 22, 23, 27 and 30. The birds were seen in pine trees and also in yards and along the road. Search was made for nests but none were found. I am indebted to Mr. Otto Widmann for some valuable notes relating to the American Crossbill in Missouri last winter and spring and summer (1891-2). He says: "I never suspected these cone loving nomads to descend into a country so flat and uninteresting as St. Louis county, Mo., where nature never rears a cone without the help of the gardener. Thousands of young evergreens, especially Norway Spruces, have been planted during the past decade, but old cone-bearing conifers are few and far between. There are on my place, besides a few Norway Spruces, eighteen pine trees about thirty years old. Half of them are Austrian pines, the rest White and Scotch pines. Coniferous trees do not bear fruit every year, but last winter the Austrian pines were full of cones, getting ready to drop the seeds in early spring. Besides the maturing pine seeds our section had another attraction for erratic fruit eaters in the orchards. The apple trees had yielded an enormous crop and the demand not being sufficiently great to gather them in time, thousands of apples were still hanging in the trees when the Crossbills appeared on the scene. It was in the orchard that they made their appearance on November 13—the day after the first 'blizzard' had visited the upper Missouri valley. From this day on, the Crossbills remained in the neighborhood until the end of the month but none were here in December and January—at least I did not notice any until they began to

visit my pine trees in February. They were daily visitors all through March and until the 17th of April. From that day until May 8th none were seen, but from the 8th to the 14th they were again daily callers. After this date they were noticed twice; a party of six on June 5th, and two birds a male and female, in one of my pines on July 21st. I looked for their nest in the tree but, unfortunately it was not there! I think now that I have met with the species on several occasions in former years but did not know them. Frequenters of private gardens they were only seen when on wing or distant tree tops, and evaded identification. With us it is a shy and restless bird, easily alarmed and flying a great distance. Before taking wing and while in the air they are quite noisy with a note closely resembling the parent call of *Progne*; but when feeding in a pine tree the whole troop keeps perfectly silent, and nothing is heard but the noise made by breaking the cone scales. When present in May they are also feeding in elms." Mr. W. S. Blatchley gives me the following notes: "While sitting on the porch of a farm house in Putnam county, Indiana, July 11, 1892, I saw a single Crossbill, *Loxia curvirostra minor*, alight in the top of a pine tree in the yard and begin searching the cones for seeds. I watched it for almost ten minutes and then, that there might be no possibility of mistake in the identification, procured a gun and shot it. It proved to be a young male. On July 15 another young male, i. e. a male presumably of the previous year's hatching, was secured from the same tree and kept in confinement for several days, but was finally allowed its liberty."

The American Crossbills have, as has been shown, been noted within the region between the great lakes and the Ohio river in the following winters: 1868-9; 1869-70; 1874-5; 1882-3; 1883-4; 1884-5; 1885-6; 1887-8; 1888-9; 1889-90; 1890-91; 1891-2. From 1882 to 1892 they were only absent one year; 1886-7. In the winters of 1882-3, 1884-5, 1887-8 the area of dispersal was wide and the birds seem to have been generally distributed. Other years as 1868-9, 1869-70, 1883-4, they appeared, or at least were observed, in but few localities but where noted they were abundant.

The results of the inquiries concerning its summer range, particularly with relation to the Ohio valley and the territory adjacent thereto, have been wholly unexpected. Summing up the occurrence in summer and the evidence of its breeding in the region last referred to we note as follows: In the summer of 1869 they were abundant in the vicinity of

Chicago, both in Illinois and Indiana. In the summer of 1878 they were found at Columbus, O., and abundantly at Cleveland, where it was reported to have bred. Dr. Wheaton refers to their having nested in Indiana as a fact well known to him. Dr. H. A. Atkins is said to have taken nests of this species near Locke, Michigan, in 1880. The spring of 1885 they were common at Michigan City, Ind., and Mr. Byrkit thought they might have nested. In the summer of 1885 they were reported to have nested in Tippecanoe county, Ind. The same summer they are reported to have nested at Bloomington, Ind. They were reported from Monroe county, Ind., three different dates in July 1886. They were reported from Putnam county, Ind., in the summers of 1891 and 1892. They remained throughout a part of the summer of 1892 at Lafayette, Ind. They remained even later at Old Orchard, Mo., in 1892.

These notes but serve to bring more clearly to mind the peculiar, erratic character of the bird, of which we have known, to some degree, before. The notes would also seem to indicate that much of our lack of data is due to the scarcity of observers in years past. A few years ago the collection of data regarding almost any species of bird from Indiana, or almost any other state, would have been impossible. It is not improbable, could we begin with the abundance of Crossbills at Cincinnati in 1868-9, with a number of intelligent observers equal to that available now, we could have a collection of observations covering its whole range between the Ohio river and the lakes and perhaps including its movements for almost every year. Those blank years do not necessarily signify that it was wanting in the territory studied, but that for some one of a great many reasons, it was not observed. The erratic distribution of the species applies as well to its summer range as to that in winter. It seems very probable that the species breeds to some extent throughout the Ohio Valley. It is true that no specimens representing either the nest or eggs have been, so far as I know, preserved. Yet the evidence presented indicates that the breeding range of the species in the United States is not confined to the coniferous forests of the mountain ranges.

Loxia leucoptera, WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL. This species is not met with in the Ohio valley so often as the last mentioned form. Its range lies farther to the northward. Its distribution within the United States, both in winter and summer, is much less extensive than is that of the American Crossbill. Audubon mentions its breeding in Pennsylvania in summer, but this is probably an exceptional case. Dr. J. M. Wheaton gave

it in his catalogue of Birds of Ohio, in 1861. Mr. Charles Dury found them abundant in the vicinity of Cincinnati, O., in the winter of 1868-9, in company with the last mentioned species. He says, "they were in large flocks containing both species in the proportion of two of the former to one of the latter" (the present) "species." Mr. C. E. Aiken informs me that this species was in company with the American Crossbill when they were so common in the vicinity of Chicago in the summer of 1869. He also noted them in Lake county, Ind., the latter part of August of that year. He says they displayed the same habits as the preceding species. His recollection is that the White-winged form was less abundant, a little later in their arrival, and more wary. They remained through the winter. Prof. A. J. Cook informs me that one was killed by Dr. H. A. Atkins, at Locke, Mich., Aug. 9, 1875. A pair of White-winged Crossbills were taken at Fort Wayne, Ind., about 1878. The female is now in the collection of Mr. C. A. Stockbridge of that city. Mr. W. L. Scott notes the occurrence of a flock of White-winged Crossbills near Ottawa, Canada, towards the latter part of June 1882 (The Auk., Vol. I., p. 159). Mr. Fletcher M. Noe notes the occurrence of this species near Indianapolis, Ind., in the early part of 1883. February 6, 1883, Prof. B. W. Evermann shot two males from a flock of fifteen of these birds in a yard at Bloomington, Ind. February 10 he secured a female, and a few days later, two other specimens near the same place. Miss H. E. Colfax reports it from Michigan City, Ind., June 26, 1884. Mr. J. W. Byrkit found both species together in large flocks near Michigan City, Ind., the winter of 1883-4. Mr. Charles Dury reports it from Michigan City, Ind., he thinks in 1885. Faxon and Allen report seeing a few in the White Mountains, N. H., June 1886. (The Auk., Vol. V., p. 152.) Hon. R. W. McBride has noted it as a winter visitor in DeKalb county, Ind. Dr. C. Hart Merriam gives it as a resident in the Adirondack region but adds, comparing it with the American Crossbill, "not nearly so common as the last." (Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, Vol. VI., p. 229). Prof. B. W. Evermann informs me that he saw one in his brother's yard at Burlington, Ind. He says, "after watching it for a while I struck it with a stick, killing it." March 16 he saw another specimen of this species at Camden, Ind.

The only instance I know of its occurring in the Ohio valley in summer is that given by the late Mr. C. H. Bollman. He wrote me that he saw eleven on a fir tree in Bloomington, Ind., June 24th, 1886. A few days later he several times noted specimens of the other species.

Everywhere in the Ohio valley this species seems to be quite rare and exceedingly irregular in its occurrence. Mr. E. W. Nelson and Mr. Otto Poling note it as much less common in Illinois than formerly. With the exception of the winter of 1868-9 and the succeeding summer I do not know of its having appeared in any considerable numbers in any of the tier of states just north of the Ohio river.

From the Journal of the Cincinnati Society of Natural History, January, 1888.

THE AMERICAN CROSS-BILL, *Loxia (L.) curvirostra minor*; (*Brehm.*) AS TO SOME OF ITS HABITS AND ITS FONDNESS FOR SALT.

By WILLIAM HUBBELL FISHER.

Read November 1 and December 6, 1887.

During my stay in the Adirondacks, I was much interested in the American Cross-bill, *Loxia (L.) curvirostra minor*, (*Brehm.*). One of the most marked and interesting characteristics of this bird is its fondness for living in the close neighborhood of human abodes, and its boldness in the presence of man. As I observed them during the latter part of August and the first part of September of this year (1887), at Dunbar's grounds, Stillwater, on Beaver River, in Township number five of Brown's Tract, Lewis County, New York, these birds reminded me of the European sparrow, in the numbers in which they flocked around the hotel, and around the empty cottages in front of the hotel. With the rising sun they would begin their "cheep," "cheep." They would fly in a flock to a small tree about eight feet high, near the kitchen, and in such numbers as literally to fill the branches. Anon, you would see a whole row of them on a fence between the hotel and the side cabin, and while sitting there they would allow you, in passing, to approach so near that one was tempted to touch them with the hand. At another time you would see a garbage pile covered with them. They enjoyed sitting on a peak or ridge-pole of a cottage where the roof on each side slanted up to a meeting line. A favorite place for some of them was the slender flag-pole; one would sit on the top, while others seemed to enjoy hanging to the sides of the pole and looking around at the world beneath.

From Dunbar's three of us made an excursion northward past the Kettle-hole, near which the sheriff of Lewis County was so badly frozen last spring, while assisting to stock one of the lakes with fish, then past Slim Pond, thence to Raven Lake, where we were hospitably entertained at the camp of Rufus J. Richardson, by the latter and his pleasant, agreeable family. I had not been seated in their camp more than ten minutes before a couple of birds audaciously swept down and confronted us—cross-bills again.

Loxia curvirostra americana:

See article by Bicknell, "The Singing of Birds," under *Pinicola Enucleator*.

Ank I. Oct. 1884. p. 327.

68. *Bird Notes.* By G. L. [i. e. S.] Smith. *Ibid.*, V, pp. 78, 79. Dec. 1880.—Records the capture of Red Crossbills at Rugby, Tenn., July 27 and August 7, 1880, with notes on the nesting of various species. The same title covers notes furnished by Fred. T. Jenks, one of which relates to the capture of the Cape May Warbler at Auburn, N. Y.

Sunny So. Oologist, 1505, *The Red Crossbill*. By F. A. Falton. *Ibid.*, p. 22. Ann. VII, 56.

69. *Red Crossbills.* By A. H. Heime. *Ibid.*, p. 68.—Found breeding, and nest and eggs secured, April 10, 1883, near Miller's Place, L. I., N. Y., & Q. C., & Q. V. VIII.

Fisher, Wm. II. (1) The American Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra minor*); as to some of its Habits and fondness for Salt. (Journ. Cinninati Soc. Nat. Hist., Jan. 1886, pp. 203, 204.)

In the April number are notes on the breeding of the Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*) at Riverdale, N. Y. (p. 237), by E. A. Bicknell.

Amer. Naturalist, Vol. 10, Mar.

70. *The Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*, — Lin.).* By J. H. Garner. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 111, 112.—Habits and nesting near Lucknow, Ont.

Q. & Q. Naturalist

71. *Crossbills [in Tennessee].* By G. S. Smith. *Ibid.*, p. 7.—Relates to the instances previously recorded in Bull. N. O. C., Vol. & Q. VIII, 56.

514. *Supposed Nests of the Crossbill [*Loxia curvirostra*].* By W. L. Kells. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 138.—Near Listowel, Ont. Q. & Q. Sport. & Naturalist

leucoptera

Loxia leucoptera

1889 Mass.

Dec. 16 Mt. Greylock. - I heard a flock flying and Faxon saw a mixed flock of ten or twelve which, as he could easily tell by their notes, contained both species of Crossbill. All these were observed at an elevation of about 300 ft. near extensive belts of Black Spruce. He did not ~~observe~~ find either Crossbill on Mt. Watactic.

1890

Jan'y 25 Waverley-Waltham. - Faxon saw them, all gray birds, feeding on the cones of the Norway Spruce, in the grounds about his house, in company with a dozen or more *Loxia curvirostra*. Later in the day he saw ^{two}, one a red ♂, the other a gray bird, in Norway spruces in Waltham. He noticed nothing peculiar or characteristic in the actions of the White-winged species save that it seemed to him to hang head downward less often when feeding. He has seen *leucoptera* once before (two specimens) this month (Jan'y 18) in the Norway spruces on his place in Waverley.

January Arnold Arboretum, Brookline. - "White-winged Crossbills seem to be rather plenty this winter. . . . Does not this species have two very distinct notes, one almost a whistle twice repeated, the other a sort of chattering sound suggesting the Redpoll? And are not they often associated with the Red Crossbill?" (C. E. Faxon in letter Jan. 25/90 to Walter Faxon)

Jackson, N. H. City on Aug. 1889. Master Forster, C. F. Belcher ^{setting off}
and cousin, report seeing these Crossbills cut off, by a slow ^{spine cones}
sawing motion, cones of the native Spruce [probably *A. nigra*]
and carry them to a stout branch where holding the
cones under one foot they extracted the seeds at their leisure.
He examined one of the cones & found ^{the spine} as smoothly cut
^{as with a sharp knife}

Doxia Coccoptera

1890 Mass

Feb. 3

Waverley

A flock of eight visited Tayson's place and eating seeds stayed an hour or more feeding on the ground of spruce under the Norway spruces and doubtless picking up the on ground seeds of these spruces which have fallen from the cones, for on Jan 26 we found that most of the cones on these very trees had shed their seeds. The birds were very tame allowing him to approach within a few feet. Seven of the eight were in the full red plumage of the adult ♂, the eighth being a ♀ apparently. The day before (Feb. 2) he saw what must have been the same flock (in Arlington) for it had the same number of birds, similarly made up of seven red ♂♂ & one ♀. He has not seen the flock before this winter.

" 5 Chadbourn visited Tayson to-day and in the spruces Habits on his place saw five White winged Crossbills with eight of the common species. The two were evidently drawn together by considerations of food only, for they did not actually intermingle but, on the contrary, kept apart most of the time. The White wings fed chiefly on the ground under the spruces, where they hopped about picking up the fallen spruce seeds, the Red Crossbills chiefly in the trees, where they operated directly on the cones.

Chadbourn thought that the ink note resembled the spring pipe of Hyla pickeringii to which Tayson also agreed. It was given repeatedly by a single bird, a ♂, while perched on the topmost spur of a spruce just before the flock took wing.

ink note

Loxia leucoptera

1890 Mass

Feb. 10 Cambridge - Cloudy and still a snow-storm gathering Habits
which began at noon. Therm. 20° at 7 a.m.

At 8.15 a.m. I discovered a flock of five White-wings in a Norway Spruce thickly hung with cones on Brattle St. next Mrs. Dennis's house. Four were males in the fully matured rosy-red plumage, the fifth a gray bird doubtless a female. I watched them for about fifteen minutes as they fed among the Spruce cones. They were exceedingly active and animated (much more so, I thought, than L. minor) scrambling from cone to cone, moving out along the branches with a nimble yet somewhat automatic sidelong gait between a hop and walk, clinging on the cones usually set or near the top of the cone with the head down and the tail pointing straight up, frequently sideways with one foot above the other, the body nearly horizontal with one side up, occasionally back down and feet up working at the cone from beneath like a Titmouse. They plunged their bills deep in between the scales of the cones inserting them sideways and working them about with a vigorous, somewhat impatient motion, and tearing out the winged seeds with great rapidity moved them about between their mandibles to get off the wings before swallowing the seeds. Sometimes they tore out forcibly (perhaps first cutting them partially off) a mass of the outer scales and shaking them free from their bills allowed them to float down to the ground. This was evidently done to expose the seeds within.

Sure for the light crackling sound made by their work on the cones they were wholly silent when feeding but just before they flew they chattered a little like Redpolls. The rosy-red of the ♂'s contrasted strongly against the dark Spruce foliage. Many of the cones showed evident marks of their attacks being riddled & hollow bottomed.

Loxia leucoptera.

1890 Mass.

- Feb. 11 Waverley. "This morning twenty *Loxia leucoptera* visited our spruces. Most of them were in red-and-black dress. How do your impressions of this bird's notes compare with mine? The *Notes* ordinary note resembles that of the Redpolls, but is differently distinct. It has almost a tremulous movement - at times it might be termed rattling. Then it has a musical call - ute-tweet, tweet. (with a rising inflection) Chadbourn well compares this to the spring note of *Hyla pickeringii*. C. says that Chambalain & others ~~say~~ that this bird ~~cuts~~ cutting off cuts off spruce cones and holds them in its claws cones while extracting the seeds. They certainly do nothing of the sort in my yard." (W. Payson, letter Feb. 11-1890)
- " 12 Payson brings me a pair shot on his place this morning, the ♂ a superb fellow, finer colored than *High pl.* any in my collection. There were only two *leucoptera* this morning but eight *minor*. Both species, Payson says, are getting older & more restless perhaps because the supply of spruce seeds is running short. For the same reason, possibly, they have begun to feed on the seeds of the larch cones on his ~~Eating~~ land place. The stomachs of the specimens he brought to me to-day contained only a little gravel and a few fragments of spruce seeds.
- Payson confirms my impression that *leucoptera* more often is a more alert and animated bird than *minor*.

Loxia Conceptus.

1897 Conn.

Saybrook

[S. J. Clark Jan. 26, 1897]
I had noticed a small flock of crossbills flying over this winter several times but had not seen them alight so as to identify till my boy told of finding them — later the boys found them in a cedar grove (Whit) and captured one—a red one—by hitting it with a whip when feeding on the ground—that was on the 9th of Jan. and told me there were 8 of them in the flock and three with white wing patches—I loaded a few cartridges and asked them to get the best white winged one for me—they did so with one female or young on the 11th of January.
These are the first of that species I have ever identified here. ~~I met Dr. L. M. Jones of Stamford Conn. Jan.~~
^{L. N. Clark}

1896-7 Cambridge, Mass.

Dec 10 Jan? "Have you heard of the White-winged Crossbill which one of Mrs. Boles' chickens picked up on Berkeley Street from time this winter" (R. Hoffmann, letter Jan. 26, 1897)

1900.

January 21 Ipswich. "Common, flying about over the sand dunes where one was seen to alight in a pine" C. W. Townsend.

Connecticut

Portland. — "I never saw anything like the numbers that have been here this winter. They fairly swarmed in the hemlock woods. A small flock was in my yard this morning [Mar. 26] but the bulk disappeared sometime ago. I have never seen the White winged Crossbill here — the winter of 1874-5 until this season." (J. H. Sage in letter Mar. 26, 1900 to W. A. Purdie)

Loxia leucoptera.

Concord, Mass.

1899. I have never before known these Crossbills to be anything like so numerous in any part of Massachusetts as they were at Concord, Mass. during the present month. They appeared there on the 6th when I saw two flocks, one containing two, the other about thirty birds. After this I saw or heard them every morning when the weather was favorable and often at short intervals during the entire day although they seemed to be most active and noisy - and hence most conspicuous - at about sunrise or shortly afterwards when flocks containing from fifteen to thirty birds each were almost continually passing or repassing over Ball's Hill. Whether I saw on such occasions a dozen or fifteen flocks or the same flock a dozen or fifteen times it was impossible to tell but although I usually kept within safe bounds by noting only one or two flocks in my field list at the end of each day I have little doubt that the wooded region lying between Ball's Hill and the Barrett farm was visited daily between Nov. 6th and 23rd by at least six or eight different flocks of White-winged Crossbills containing in the aggregate over one hundred birds.

On several occasions at Ball's Hill and once in the Barrett woods I saw a flock alight for a moment, always in the tops of pitch pines. These trees had few cones this year but the white pines were loaded with green cones which, however, did not appear to attract the Crossbills. What these birds

Loxia leucoptera.

Concord, Mass.

1899. found to eat in the Concord woods I was unable to ascertain but in the region about Cambridge (where they were present in considerable but by no means unprecedented numbers during most of November and the first half of December) they fed chiefly on the seeds of the Norway spruces which bore an abundant crop of ripe cones. The hemlocks also fruited heavily and the Crossbills were seen eating their seeds on several occasions.

I learned nothing new about the habits of these Crossbills. Indeed their restless and erratic movements made it practically impossible to study them at all closely. As far as I was able to ascertain they were never accompanied by Red Crossbills nor did they appear to associate with any other species of birds. I heard them utter only the regulation flight notes but Mr. Glover Allen tells me that during the past summer (in August, I think it was) when he found them very numerous on the upper slopes of some of the White Mountains the males were singing freely.

::::----_"------::::

Wellesley, Cambridge and vicinity, Mass.

1899. On the afternoon of the 25th I found 5 of these Crossbills feeding on the seeds of a Norway spruce in the Wellesley College grounds. One bird was a rosy-red male; all the others being either females or young males in yellowish green plumage.

Loxia leucoptera.

Wellesley, Cambridge and vicinity, Mass.

1899. The flock worked busily and for the most part silently, each November. bird clinging to the upper end of a cone and bending forward (2). and downward as it pried out the scales which contained the seeds.

On the 30th I heard the flight call of White-winged Crossbills near Payson Park and on the 29th at Fresh Pond Grove where Faxon also saw seven birds on the 25th in the arbor vitae hedge along the driveway.

Cambridge, Mass.

1899. Heard this forenoon at the hemlock grove by Fresh Pond Nov. 29. a flock of White-wings which were apparently flying. On the 25th Mr. Faxon found seven Crossbills of this species feeding in arbor vitae trees along the driveway that leads to the grove.

On the morning of the 9th I heard the flight call of December. this species as I was walking in the garden over which the bird or birds were apparently flying. At about the same time Walter Deane saw a flock of six in a white pine on the Lawrence place, Brattle Street. Other flocks were reported in the neighborhood of Cambridge but the consensus of opinion seems to be that the species was less numerously represented here this month than last (A flock of from 50 to 100 was seen in W. Roxbury by Dr. A. L. Reagh on Dec. 20).

Soxia lencoptera

1896 Penobscot Bay, Maine.

July 14 Stinson's Neck, Deer Island. — Heard the chink-chink & the chattering flight call very distinctly & a number of times in the woods near the Emerson's this morning. As nearly as I could judge several birds were calling at once

Loxia leucoptera

During a visit to the Magdalen Isds., Gulf St. Law., in June and July 1882, Mr. M. A. Fraser found these Crossbills abundant. They were met with in flocks of from three or four to fifty. In some of the large flocks there would be only one or two adult ♂; in others none. Several males, always single ones, were heard singing. The song was low & sweet and of about half-a-dozen notes. Many young in first plumage were taken in June. With the adults they were

Birds of Magdalen Islands. Dr. L.B. Bishop.

38. *Loxia leucoptera*. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—Common on Grindstone and Entry, and probably on the other islands. A pair of fully fledged young were taken on July 12.

Auk, VI. April, 1889. p. 148

Birds within Ten Miles of Point de Monts, Can., Comeau & Merriam

30. *Loxia leucoptera*. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—Tolerably common, but somewhat irregular in appearance. I found this species to be very abundant here in July, 1881, while in July, 1882, I did not see any.

Bull. N.O.C., 7, Oct, 1882, p. 235

Dwight, Summer Birds of Prince Edward Island.

Loxia leucoptera. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—Rather numerous. The remarks made under the preceding species apply also to this. Neither can be seen every day, for both are great wanderers.

Auk X, Jan, 1893. p. 11

General Notes.

Notes on Cape Breton Summer Birds. Francis H. Allen.

Loxia leucoptera. One at Ingonish.

Auk XII. Jan. 1895 p. 90

Birds from Port Churchill, Hudson's Bay, W. Eagle Clark. AUK, VII, Oct, 1890, p. 322

Loxia leucoptera. — a, b, c, adult males; d, e, adult females.

inevitably found among spruces
upon the sides of which come
they were feeding. They were
often seen to ~~the~~^{the} ground on the
ground during the fall
comes.

Judging by the very
uniform development of all
young taken in from the
off-shore must be land, in
this locality early in May.

Birds of Magdalen Islands.
Dr. L.B. Bishop.

38. *Loxia leucoptera*. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—Common on Grindstone and Entry, and probably on the other islands. A pair of fully fledged young were taken on July 12.

Auk, VI, April, 1889, p. 148

Birds within Ten Miles of Point
de Monts, Can., Comeau & Merriam

30. *Loxia leucoptera*. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—Tolerably common, but somewhat irregular in appearance. I found this species to be very abundant here in July, 1881, while in July, 1882, I did not see any.

Bull. N.O.C., 7, Oct, 1882, p. 235

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Auk X, Jan, 1893, p. 11

General Notes.

Notes on Cape Breton Summer Birds.
Francis H. Allen.

Loxia leucoptera. One at Ingonish.

Auk XII, Jan, 1895 p. 90

Birds from Fort Churchill, Hudson's Bay, W. Eagle Clark. AUK, VII, Oct, 1890, p. 322

Loxia leucoptera. — a, b, c, adult males; d, e, adult females.

Some Winter Birds of Nova Scotia. By C. H. Correll.

20. *Loxia leucoptera*. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—Seen at the same time and under same conditions as the preceding, but was more abundant. The species were often associated. *Auk*, XVI, July, 1899, p. 252.

The Winter Fringillidae of New Brunswick
W. W. Moore, Fredericton, N.B.

Loxia leucoptera. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—This species may be termed a rare winter visitor in the vicinity of Fredericton, yet they are known to live in summer in the northern highlands of this province. They feed upon the seeds of spruce, black alder and hirch. The song, which is much like the song of the Purple Finch, is poured forth while the bird is on the wing, and also while the bird is at rest. During the winter of 1899-1900 this species was common here.

Auk, XIX, April., 1902, p. 201.

Notes on the Birds of Cape Breton Island
by Charles W. Townsend, M.D.

Loxia leucoptera. See under

L. curvirostra minor

Auk, XXIII, Apr. 1906, p. 176-178.

Nesting of Crossbills in Nova Scotia.

Harold F. Tupper, Wolfville, N.S.

Auk, XXIII, July, 1906, p. 339-340

Loxia leucoptera

See under *Loxia c. minor*.

Birds of Toronto, Canada,

by James S. Fleming.

Part II, Land Birds.

Auk, XXIV, Jan., 1907, p. 79.

192. *Loxia leucoptera*. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—Irregular winter resident, never very common, January 4 to April 14.

Maine (Bangor)

Soxia leucotis

1889

Abundant in ~~Jan.~~ Dec. & Jan.

Jan'y 1

"We have lately had an influx of
Red-polls, White winged Crossbill & Pine
Grosbeaks" (M. Hardy Let. Jan 1. 1889)

Winter Birds of Webster, N. H. by Falco.

White-winged Crossbill, (*Loxia leucoptera*). Rare
Winter visitor.

O. & O. X. Jan. 1885. p. 14

Bds. Obs. in Franconia, N. H. June 11-21
'86, and June 4-Aug. 1, '87. W. Faxon

30. *Loxia leucoptera*. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—A few seen, June,
1886.

Auk, V. April, 1888. p. 152

Breezy Point, Warren, N.H.

1894.

White-winged Crossbills and Brünnich's Murres in Central New Hampshire.—Central New Hampshire has recently been visited by some rare birds for the locality. White-winged Crossbills (*Loxia leucoptera*) have previously been watched for in vain for thirty years by one of our best bird students, but he found them in comparative abundance this year and they have been seen by many other observers. Doubtless there have been stray individuals of this species here before, but their numbers at this time are particularly worthy of note.

A stranger visitation, however, has been a flock of Arctic sea birds. The last of November, 1899, a friend brought me a bird for identification that had been caught alive on land several miles from water, but it lived only a few days in captivity. I found it to be a Brünnich's Murre (*Uria lomvia*). Soon I learned that three others had been shot on one of the bays of Lake Winnipesaukee. The finest specimen was mounted, but the other two were used for the purpose of testing Gen. Greeley's statement that their flesh was excellent—the best flavored of any of the Arctic sea fowl. The report of the New Hampshire sportsmen was that roasted Murre tasted about as much like fowl as a smoked herring tastes like fish.

Still another Brünnich's Murre was seen to fly into a brush heap at Franklin Falls, where it was easily captured, uninjured. The captors, supposing they had a young Loon, took the bird to Webster Lake, three or four miles away, and, tying a string to the bird's leg, they hoped to observe some interesting feats in diving. In this they were disappointed, but the bird swam so vigorously that the string was broken and the bird's liberty was almost gained when, I am sorry to add, a shot from a gun ended its career.

Several other Brünnich's Murres have been reported and, so far as I can learn, it is the first time they have been taken here.

It has been said that if, by mischance, this bird should alight on land, it cannot always rise on wing to make its way by flight back to water. Is this statement correct?—ELLEN E. WEBSTER, Franklin Falls, N. H.
Auk, XVII, April, 1900, pp. 175-176.

A flock
of about thirty White-winged Crossbills, (*Loxia leucoptera*),
settled upon the ground near me, but were soon startled by
the drumming of a Ruffed Grouse. A Brown Creeper,
(*Certhia familiaris rufa*), was eagerly searching the trunk
of a large tree near me, Pine and American Goldfinches,
(*Chrysomitis pinus*, and *Astragalinus tristis*)—the latter
species still in winter plumage—were, as they have been for
many weeks, very abundant. Chickadees, Robins, Song
and Tree Sparrows, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, were
among the lively throng. Crows were lazily passing high
overhead, while at frequent intervals the loud notes of a
Pileated Woodpecker, (*Hylotomus pileatus*), although uttered
nearly one half mile away, were distinctly heard.—
C. O. T. *Tufts Hill, Vt.*

O. & O. IX. May. 1884. p. 61-62

White Winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*)
although not as common as its near relative of
the crossed bill, yet it has made its way from
the north to help enliven the monotony which
the bird fancier feels during a long cold winter
when a greater per centage of his feathered
friends are absent in their southern homes. I
collected a ♂ of this species Jan. 3, 1890.

1888 furnishes a note of a pair of these
birds, the ♀ being collected Feb. 27.

Cornwall, Vt. *C. H. Parkhill*
O + O. XV. March. 1890. p. 43.

Loxia leucoptera

In Mass.

Messrs. Spelman and Chadbourne
killed a flock of eight of these Crossbill
at the "Point of Pines" to-day and killed
every bird. They were on the ground
beneath a pitch pine when first seen
but after being fired at took to the
trees and were seen to feed on the cones.
They were very tame. Their notes were
at first mistaken for those of the
English Sparrow.

Two of these Crossbills were sent

Loxia leucoptera

Three were killed at Point of
Pines to-day by Messrs. Chadbourne and
Spelman. They were accompanied by a
pair of *Lo. curv. americana*.

(Cambridge).

and

extra.

River Beach, Mass.
March 31, 1883

River Beach, Mass.
Nov. 30 - 1882

Loxia leucoptera

In Mass.

Renne Beach, Mass.
Nov. 30 - 1882

Mrs. Spelman and Chadburn
shot a flock of eight of these Crossbills
at the "Point of Pines" to-day and killed
every bird. They were on the ground
beneath a pitch pine when first seen
but after being fired at took to the
trees and were seen to feed on the cones.
They were very tame. Their notes were
at first mistaken for those of the
English Sparrow.

Two of these Crossbills were sent

Loxia leucoptera

Three were killed at Point of
Pines to-day by Mrs. Chadburn and
Lamb. They were accompanied by a
pair of *Lo. curv. americana*.

Mass. (near Cambridge).

1887
Nov. 1st 6 head

1888
Feb. 2nd

Loxia leucoptera.

Loxia leucoptera ✓

Belmont, Arlington & Waltham (mostly Waverley)

1890.

(Notes by W. Payson)

Jan. 18, 25, 28.

Feb. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 19, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28.

Mar. 2, 5, 6, 12, 13, 22, 24.

* 8 + 8 about half & half

From Eastern Mass. M. A. Frazer.

But the white-winged crossbills were also here, and in apparently as great abundance as the red, although they seemed to desert us by March 1. They are quite a rare bird in these parts and it may be years before we shall see them in any numbers again.

För. & Strm, April 24, 1890. p. 268

Winter Birds of Eastern Mass.... H. K. Job.

Crossbills of both species arrived November 4th and were found sparingly until late in February. It was my good fortune a short time ago (May 12) to meet a flock of five or six Crossbills in a grove of tall pines in Brookline, from which I secured two White-wings (*leucoptera*), adult male and female. Upon dissection it was evident that they were not breeding. What could have brought them here at this time?

* 1881

Bull. N. O. O., 3, July, 1888, p. 148.

Winter Notes from Wellerley Mass
S. W. Denton.

A flock of
White-winged Crossbills (*Loxia leucoptera*),
about fifty in number, were seen Feb. 4.

O. & O. XIII, July, 1888 p. 104

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS.—Thanksgiving Day there was a flock of about 100 White-winged Crossbills feeding on seeds of weeds in the fields that had been planted last year, and were so fearless that I could get quite near them. I took a few specimens of both sexes.—E. E. Rogers,
Rockport, Mass. O & O VIII, Feb. 1883. p. 16.

+ + +

Here is what seems to me a truly charming bird story, sent to me by Mrs. B. C. V— of Hyde Park: "I have had the 'American' as well as white-winged variety of crossbills close to my house and in my pine grove during the past four weeks, the latter in greater numbers. I am not satisfied with merely seeing a bird, but like, if possible, to have it in my hand to examine. I was very desirous to see the crossed bill, and wished it might be possible to get one of the birds. Three weeks ago there was a large flock of them in my pine grove, and I went out and seemed to be surrounded by them, and they came so near to me I could almost pick them up. After walking about among them a short time and patiently trying, my efforts were at last rewarded by my becoming the delighted possessor of a beautiful 'red white-wings.' I will not divulge the manner in which I secured it, as the idea was entirely original with myself, but it was not by means of a snare or net. I had prepared a cage in anticipation of my being so fortunate as to get one, and I had it brought to me from the house, and having trimmed it with pine branches and furnished it with cones, I marched triumphantly into the house with my prize.

+ + +

"Having supposed it would be very much frightened at being placed in confinement, I intended to keep it only long enough to examine it and satisfy my curiosity, but much to my surprise, it seemed very contented and happy and was much less easily startled by having people around it and by sudden noises than my pet canary, which I have had almost six years. It would eat canary seed from my lips and fingers when first offered to it without coaxing, and would perch on my finger, which I put in the cage. I took it in my hand and examined it thoroughly, and it made no resistance. The longer I kept it the more astonished I was at its gentleness. It was very interesting to see it get the seeds from the cones, as it would spread its mandibles to press the sections open, and with its red tongue would draw the seeds out by their wings. I found upon examination that many of the seeds were dry, and that it would not eat them, so I filled the cup in the cage with canary seed, of which it ate a great quantity, and was fully satisfied.

+ + +

"I was advised by my friends to keep it as it was so interesting, but as I had no intention of depriving a wild bird of its liberty, the advice was not heeded, although I had become so much attached to it that I found it very hard to part with it. On the morning of the fourth day of its visit to me, soon after eight o'clock, the usual time for its companions to appear, I took the cage, with the door tied back, and placed it in a flower-bed near a window, where I could watch it. I supposed the bird would leave the cage as soon as I put it out, but it did not seem in any hurry to go. In a very short time one of the olive-green birds (its own mate probably) alighted on top of the cage, then went round to the door and put its head in and began eating the seeds, and finally it went into the cage, when, after remaining a short time, it flew out, followed by my dear pet, saying as it went, 'weet, weet, weet, weet,' as if bidding me good-by, and possibly thanking me for my love and hospitality. Sorry, indeed, was I to part with it, but glad for it that it had rejoined its companions.

+ + +

"In a pine tree close by my front door one or two pairs of 'red-breasted nuthatches' have had their abode for some weeks, and every morning before seven o'clock and many times during the day they come to get their meals from the pieces of fat which I have hung upon the tree for them. I often see a 'brown creeper' on the same tree, but as it is naturally satisfied with the grubs which it finds underneath the bark, it does not partake of the other fare. How much of the pleasure of life is lost to those who take no interest in the wonders of the birds and flowers, and of nature in all its beautiful phases!"

Boston Transcript

SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 1900

Some Southern New Hampshire and Western Massachusetts Notes.

Vol. XIX] 1902

General Notes.

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The White-winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*) does not seem to have been recorded from any part of Massachusetts in summer. In the wonderful spring of 1900, when, amid an unusually copious migration of birds from the south, the Lesser Red-poll Linnets lingered about the lower Hudson River till the last days of April, and White-winged Crossbills at least till May 29, and almost certainly later, the stay of the latter birds in Berkshire, Mass., lapsed over into June. On the 3d and 4th of that month I saw a flock of five or six in the town of Lanesboro, and there is little doubt that they might have been found still later on Mt. Greylock; especially as they seem to be rarely wholly absent at any season from the spruce woods of Mt. Monadnock, only 56 miles to the east-northeast.—GERALD H. THAYER, *Monadnock, N. H. Auk*, XIX, July, 1902, p. 297.

Loxia leucoptera [Leavenworth, Mass.]
Jan 6
1907
These birds flying over Mr. Shermans
place on Speaks St. at 9 a.m. coming
from the direction of our garden over
which I think they won't be.
I heard them from W. B.
Leverett

Winter Birds at Newton Highlands, Mass.

Dec 4

1916 Crossbills (*Loxia leucoptera*)

Mrs George St. Mellen

Auk xxxiv. Jan. 1917. p. 92-93.

White-winged Crossbills in Rhode Island.—It may be of interest to Rhode Island ornithologists to record the taking of White-winged Crossbills (*Loxia leucoptera*) at Neutaconkanut Hill, Johnston, R. I., Jan. 14 and 30, and at Pawtuxet on the 1st, 2d and 24th of February.—EDWARD H. ARMSTRONG, *Providence, R. I. Auk*, XVII, April, 1900, p. 175.

Loxia leucoptera

1900 Portland, Conn.

April 15, 16.

"Mine Loxia leucoptera
was 'flocky around' but
far from very common
this morning. Many were
flockingly distributed.

The flock was seen

at Standish."

(J. H. Sage in letter
Apr. 16, 1900 to W. A. Purdon)

Some Birds of Lewis Co., N.Y.,
C. Hart Merriam

In the Eastern (Adirondack) region
Loxia leucoptera, is found breeding.

Bull. N.O.C. 3, April, 1878, p. 53

Birds of the Adirondack Region.
C. H. Merriam,

57. *Loxia leucoptera*, Gmelin. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—Resident, but not nearly so common as the last.

Bull. N.O.C. 6, Oct, 1881, p. 229

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS here in November. Mr. Worthington mounted one of them.—*Moses B. Griffing, Shelter Island, N.Y.* O. & O. VIII. Apr. 1883. p. 31

Dutcher, Rare Long Island Birds.

Loxia leucoptera. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—“The White-winged Crossbills in the collection were killed by me in Lotts Woods, Flatlands, in 1848. This year there seemed to be quite a flight of these birds, as many were killed. I have seen them but once since, in 1864, when I killed two near ‘Cypress Hill Cemetery.’”—(Nicolas Pike, MS. notes.)

Auk X. July, 1893 p. 276.

Some Birds of Unusual Occurrence
in Orleans Co., N.Y.

Loxia leucoptera. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—A mounted female of this species is in my collection taken at Holley in February, 1888, by Mr. Jesse Craven. Other occurrences of this bird in our county are also reported to me. Auk, XVI, April, 1899, pp. 193-6.

Neil F. Posson, Medina, N.Y.

Notes concerning certain Birds of Long Island.
by William C. Brewster, M.D.

Loxia leucoptera. During the extensive migratory excursions of crossbills down to, and south of, this latitude in January, 1900, White-winged Crossbills were observed at several stations on Long Island. They were seen by the writer in Prospect Park between and including the dates Jan. 11 and Jan. 18. They chiefly frequented the hemlocks. Both dull and brightly colored birds of this species, and also mixed with them some individuals of *Loxia curvirostra minor*, were seen.

Auk, XIX, April, 1902, p. 147

Large Flight of White-winged Crossbills on Long Island, N. Y. — The Red Crossbills, *Loxia curvirostra minor*, are more or less regular in their appearance on Long Island each year and occasionally breed there, but the presence of the White-winged Crossbill, *Loxia leucoptera*, is of such rare occurrence, that I consider their appearance in such large numbers during the past fall and winter worthy of note.

Capt. James G. Scott presented me with a fine adult male of this species that he shot on the 7th of November from a flock of seven or eight at Montauk Point, L. I. The next evidence of their presence that came to my notice was on the 20th of November, when I met with them in large numbers. Between Mount Sinai Harbor and Dong Island is a long strip of beach and low sand ridges; on the harbor side these are covered with a scattering growth of bushes and dwarfed red cedars. The hills on the eastern side of the harbor are covered with a thick growth of red cedars, and it was in this vicinity that most of the birds were noticed. There was a strong northwest wind blowing at the time and the birds were flying very low, many of them just clearing the tops of the trees and bushes. Most of the birds were noticed between 9 A. M. and 12 M. During this time thousands of Pine Finches, Goldfinches and White-winged Crossbills were passing westward, occasionally in mixed flocks, but each species appearing to keep in groups by themselves. Between the hours men-

tioned there was an almost continuous succession of flocks containing from three or four to as many as one hundred and fifty or two hundred birds in a flock. Their notes, quite unlike those of their red cousins, remind one more of the twittering notes which the Pine Finch utters when feeding. Two or three flocks of Red Crossbills were also noted.

November 21, I again visited the same locality and several hundred 'White-wings' were seen, but very few compared to the numbers seen on the previous day, and all were flying very high. On both days they appeared to be very restless, and when called down would alight in the tops of the cedars. After picking for a moment or two as if in search of food and finding none they would at once resume their journey westward across the harbor. Sixteen specimens were examined and all were in good flesh; their stomachs contained only a little sand and traces of vegetable matter. All of those seen appeared to be adults except one female taken, whose skull indicated immaturity. The red males appeared to be the more numerous.

November 22 again found me in the same locality, but only a single 'White-wing' was seen, this was in company with a flock of Goldfinches. On several occasions from this time on until the 20th of February, when I left Millers Place, single birds or a small flock would be seen, but I think very few spent the winter on the island.

The Red Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra minor*) were also more numerous than usual during the past winter, and I think a few remained and bred on the island. May 6, two small flocks were noticed among the pitch pines south of Millers Place, one flock of six containing five red males and one female. The following day I procured a female in worn plumage, whose ovaries indicated that they had recently been in an active state. — ARTHUR H. HELME, *Brooklyn, N. Y.*

Auk, XVII, July, 1900, pp. 295-296.

Birds and Eggs from Magdalen Ids.
Gulf of St. Lawrence ... Wm Brewster.

3. *Loxia leucoptera*. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—Mr. Frazar met with these Crossbills on all the islands of the Magdalen group, where they were among the most abundant of the land birds. At the time of his arrival (June 6) they had already collected in large flocks which were composed chiefly of young birds and females, a company of fifty or more often containing only one or two males in red plumage. The latter were also found singly, and from the fact that such individuals were often in full song Mr. Frazar inferred that they might still be in attendance on sitting mates, or unfledged young. The average development of the numerous young birds collected would indicate, however, that the regular breeding-season was somewhat earlier, although none of them could have been hatched much before the middle of May. Assuming, then, that the past season was not an exceptionally late one, the proper time to look for fresh eggs in this locality would be not far from May 1.

As I can find no detailed description of the first plumage of this species I append the following:—

Fuv., first plumage (♀ , Magdalen Islands, June 14, 1882. M. A. Frazar). Entire plumage of head and body thickly streaked with dull black on an ochraceous ground; greater and middle wing-coverts, with the tertials, broadly tipped with fulvous-white; primaries and rectrices black, edged with pale fulvous.

A male (June 26) somewhat older, but still in first plumage, differs from the specimen just described in having the dark streaks broader and blacker, the wing-bands nearly pure white, and the under parts less strongly ochraceous.

Bull. N.O.C., 7, Oct. 1882, p. 254-255.

Maine Bird Notes.

Song

While at the island of Southport, on the Maine coast, this summer from July 20 to August 17, we heard the White-winged Cross-bills (*Loxia leucoptera*) singing in a manner to which the bird books we have so far consulted do not give due credit. The song of one on the west side from the top of a spruce tree excited our admiration, but at the cape where coniferous trees abound, the chorus from a number made us think of a bird store let loose. The song seemed much richer, louder and more prolonged than that of the Goldfinch,—more like a Canary's outpour with all the calls, trills, warbles and choppings. It was given on the wing as well as from the tree-tops, and the birds were very tame, alighting on the ground near us. We heard the bird also from the steamer singing at Christmas Cove and at Pemaquid. A number of bird lovers were agreed in calling it a rarely beautiful song, and that the bird should be placed high up in the list of sweet singers.—ABBY F. C. BATES, *Waterville, Maine*.

Auk, XVIII, Oct., 1901, pp. 400, 401.

Maine (Vt. via Hor. Weeks.)

Loxia leucocephala

1886 Breeding

March 8

Three eggs were about hatching recorded
in the field from Bowler. They all
have the tinge of cinnamon brown.

Rare Birds in Nova Scotia.

, I may add that the White-winged Crossbill (*C. leucoptera*) is known to hatch in February, the female setting upon her eggs, with the snow all around her, were seen in the pine woods of the Dutch village near Halifax in February. Chief Justice Sir William Ritchie assured me that he had seen them in his own woods, near St. John, breeding in February, our coldest month.

J. Bernard Gilpin, Halifax, N. S.
O. & O. VII. May 15, 1882. p. 122-123.

Nesting of the White-winged Crossbill.

A pair of White-winged Crossbills (*Loxia leucoptera*) have lately built their nest near our city. The nest, which contained, on the sixteenth of March of this year, three eggs, was built on a spruce tree about twenty feet from the ground. The outer part of the nest is constructed of small twigs woven together, the inner part of moss and fine dead grass; there was no clay or feathers used in building the nest. The eggs were white with brown spots. The female was on the nest and allowed a visitor to come within a few feet before leaving it, when she joined the cock bird, a fine red fellow who was singing on the top of a neighboring tree. The Crossbills had been unusually plentiful this winter near Halifax, but I have never known before of an instance of their breeding here. I do not know of any other bird except the Raven that nests at this season in this climate. Thomas I. Egan.

Halifax, Nova Scotia. O & O. XIV. Apr. 1889 p. 57

Notes from Millbury, Mass.

Red Crossbills, in small flocks, have been about here most of the winter. ✓ White-winged Crossbills have also been seen several times, nearly always feeding on the ground, and five have been taken. ✓ Redpolls have been very numerous all winter in flocks containing from two to three hundred. They often came into the gardens, and fed on small seeds; and twice I have seen them in the middle of the street with European Sparrows, ✓ Bluebirds, ✓ Rusty Blackbirds, ✓ Red-headed Wood-peckers; and Winter Wrens were seen February 24th ✓ the 25th, Song Sparrows could be heard along the Blackstone river.

H. T. V. O.

O. & O. XV. Apr. 1890 p 56

Winter Birds of Western Ontario.
J. Mc Ilwraith.

On the 17th of March I made a similar excursion north of the city^t into the townships of East and West Flamboro', having for company, as before, the same male member of my family, aged fifteen. These townships are much broken up by cedar swamps and rough, uncleared land. Even at this advanced date the roads leading north and south were blocked with snow as high as the fences, and the farmers had taken down the rails and were traveling for miles through the fields parallel with the road to avoid the drifts. On a bare spot under a low-growing pine which stood in a cleared field, some dark colored little birds were observed hopping about among the fallen cones. A closer inspection showed them to be White-winged Crossbills; and so little did they seem to understand the effects of the gun that we got them all, seven in number, without leaving the tree. The males had partially assumed the red plumage, and the females were, as usual, green with white bars.

* 1883. Bull. N. O. C., 8, July. 1883, p. 146.

+ Mr. Mc Il. does not state what city is meant.

A Feathered Stranger.

Within the past week, writes R. from Newton, Mass., there has been in this vicinity quite a number of birds known as the white-winged cross-bill. The birds have their home much to the north of us, rarely nesting south of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The cross-bill derives its name from the peculiar formation of its beak, the upper part of which is hooked and longer than the lower, and crosses it in such a manner that the points do not meet.

In appearance this bird is somewhat larger and heavier than the English sparrow, and its distinguishing marks are head and body plumage of red, and two spots of clear white on each brown wing.

The female differs from its mate in the color of the body plumage, which is canary yellow in place of the other's red.

Their note is rather a plaintive chirp, and not unpleasant. Natural history states that they can be tamed and that they become very affectionate house birds.

In their wild state they feed on the buds and seeds of trees and grasses, and they climb up branches something after parrot fashion, by means of their peculiarly shaped claws.

Their presence here would seem to indicate either an approaching spell of severe weather or else their customary feeding grounds are buried by snow, and they are obliged to seek their food farther south from that cause.

Boston paper
126.1890

288. *Ornithological Notes from St. John [N. B.]*. By M. Chamberlain.
Ibid., VI, pp. 23, 24.—On the nesting of the White-winged Crossbill,

Solitary Sandpiper, Winter Wren, etc.
371. *Ornithological Notes from the Magdalen Islands*. By C. J. Maynard
Ibid., I, pp. 52, 53.—Interesting notes on 8 species, from observations by "A. M. Frazer" [= Frazer]. *Curvirostra leucoptera* in nestling plumage taken June 18-26, 1882.

THE WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL IN CAPTIVITY.

BY JAMES HAYNES HILL.

THE ornithologists of Connecticut will long remember the winter of 1899-1900, that brought to them the rare avian visitors from the North, the Red Crossbills and, rarer still, the White-winged Crossbills (*Loxia leucoptera*).

While many of the Red Crossbills extended their wanderings as far south as Washington, the White-wings were content to abide in the old Nutmeg State, and were frequently reported, feeding and otherwise, in company with the Red Crossbills, staying as late as February 27, according to Mr. H. W. Beers's field notes taken at Bridgeport (and to whom I am greatly indebted for the use of the fine series of Crossbills loaned me for comparison and examination), and later still, to March 1, at which date the captives, the subject of my sketch, were taken.

It was a few days after their capture that a lady friend, Mrs. Albert Beebe, of New London, Conn., sent word that she had a pair of strange, red colored, wild birds, with criss-cross bills and white patches on the wings. They were indeed the *rara avis*, the White-winged Crossbill and in perfect plumage—male and female birds.

Upon inquiry I learned that several had been easily enticed into a bird cage, baited with bird seed, this pair selected, and the others liberated. She also said at least fifteen or twenty birds (some without the white-wing patches, evidently the Red Crossbills), were often seen, during the winter, feeding on the spruce and Scotch larch cones in the groves, growing in the vicinity, that they had become quite tame, but were not seen after March 1.

The captives were quite tame, in fact tamer than some of her pet canaries, and they were daily allowed their liberty and would fly about the room, the male at times singing his queer little song. They are now very fond of their mistress, who has taken great pains to make their captivity as light as possible.

They bathe, drink, and are fed on the same food as the canaries, and take kindly to the little dainties provided—chickweed and bits of fruit or vegetables, and I write with truth that "Mi-lord"

Crossbill is always ungallant and "wants the first serving and the second joint."

They can pick up bird seed as deftly as any canary, though if the seed is on the bottom of the cage, they turn their heads a little on one side, seemingly to give their bills a better chance, but if the seed cup is full they have no trouble and always get their full share, being quicker than the other birds in their movements. But it is when a handful of larch or pine cones are given them that the crossed mandibles come into play; if the cones are small they fly to their perches with them, and holding them under their feet deftly extract the seeds. Should the cones be too large, they will roll them over and over until every seed is extracted, cheeping the while; if the cones are left on the branch they will hang head downward, if need be, in order that they may the more easily get at the seeds, of which they are very fond.

I was particularly interested in noting closely the moult of the birds—especially the male—to again verify, if possible, the observations of Mr. Ora W. Knight of Bangor, Maine, who has so minutely described the moult of the Pine Grosbeak in captivity, in 'The Auk' (Vol. XIII, p. 21-24), viz.: "the red plumage changing to orange yellow—at the first moult."

Observations on the Crossbills show that in the last week of August the male ceases singing, and by the middle of September he has lost most of his large flight feathers, which are replaced by the first week of November; then the smaller body feathers are gradually replaced by orange hued feathers, slightly marked with dusky on the head and body, the rump being bright canary instead of the rich, rosy red hues that adorn them in their wild state; thus showing that not only the Pine Grosbeak but the White-winged Crossbill also loses the characteristic bright colors in the first moult in captivity, rose turning to orange yellow. The bills and feet are also light colored, viz.: the olive green in the female is less pronounced. By December the moult is complete, but the male bird does not find voice till January to sing his low, sweet song, so much resembling the Goldfinch's, and with which our pet Crossbill ushers in the day and repeats at intervals.

These birds at this writing (Nov. 11, 1901) are in perfect health, and the only annoyance is that the bill and feet grow so hooked

that they have to be trimmed to avoid accidental hanging while climbing the wires of their cage, like diminutive parrots.

The mysteries of nest building, housekeeping and the cares of nidification, are mysteries still. In the spring of 1900 the birds showed no signs of mating, and it was ascribed to their new surroundings. But during the last week of February, 1901, the female wished to go to housekeeping and materials were given them, fine twigs, fine birch bark and a little *Usnea* moss. But the male bird treated his mate with disdain, quarreling with her and driving her from perch to perch. Whether he resented the matchmaking because it was 'Hobson's choice,' or remembered the soft, sweet voice of the former partner of his joys and sorrows, the only "Mrs. Leucoptera" whom he had sworn to love and cherish till death part, and was loyal, I know not. Perhaps it was in grief, a memory of the blissful days in that far off northern home, among "The murmuring pines and the hemlocks, bearded with moss." Perhaps his tale of love was ended, "in Acadie, home of the happy."

Auk, XIX, Jan., 1902, pp. 13-15.

Carpodacus
purpureus

Carpodacus purpureus

1889

April10¹₂ - 12¹₂ - 22¹₂ - 23¹₂ - 25¹₂ - 26¹₂ - 30¹₂ - 1889. 12¹₂ - 13¹₂ - 14¹₂ - 25¹₂ - 28¹₂ - 30¹₂ - 1890May3¹₂ - 4¹₂ - 5¹₂ - 8¹₂ - 10¹₂ - 12¹₂ - 14¹₂ - 19¹₂ - 23¹₂ - 25¹₂ - 28¹₂ - 29¹₂ - 30¹₂ - 1889.June6¹₂ - 7¹₂ - 8¹₂ - 10¹₂ - 12¹₂ - 16¹₂ - 20¹₂ - 26¹₂ - 28¹₂ - 21¹₂ - 23¹₂ - 24¹₂ - 1889.July6¹₂ - 7¹₂ - 8¹₂ - 10¹₂ - 12¹₂ - 13¹₂ - 14¹₂ - 15¹₂ - 16¹₂ - 17¹₂ - 1890Aug.3¹₂ - 4¹₂ - 5¹₂ - 6¹₂ - 7¹₂ - 8¹₂ - 9¹₂ - 10¹₂ - 11¹₂ - 12¹₂ - 13¹₂ - 14¹₂ - 15¹₂ - 16¹₂ - 17¹₂ - 1890May6¹₂ - 7¹₂ - 8¹₂ - 9¹₂ - 10¹₂ - 11¹₂ - 12¹₂ - 13¹₂ - 14¹₂ - 15¹₂ - 16¹₂ - 17¹₂ - 18¹₂ - 19¹₂ - 20¹₂ - 21¹₂ - 22¹₂ - 23¹₂ - 24¹₂ - 25¹₂ - 26¹₂ - 27¹₂ - 1890June7¹₂ - 8¹₂ - 9¹₂ - 10¹₂ - 11¹₂ - 12¹₂ - 13¹₂ - 14¹₂ - 15¹₂ - 16¹₂ - 17¹₂ - 18¹₂ - 19¹₂ - 20¹₂ - 21¹₂ - 22¹₂ - 23¹₂ - 24¹₂ - 25¹₂ - 26¹₂ - 27¹₂ - 1890 4¹₂ - 6¹₂ - 7¹₂ - 1891May6¹₂ - 7¹₂ - 8¹₂ - 9¹₂ - 10¹₂ - 11¹₂ - 12¹₂ - 13¹₂ - 14¹₂ - 15¹₂ - 16¹₂ - 17¹₂ - 18¹₂ - 19¹₂ - 20¹₂ - 21¹₂ - 22¹₂ - 23¹₂ - 24¹₂ - 25¹₂ - 26¹₂ - 27¹₂ - 1891June2¹₂ - 7¹₂ - 15¹₂ - 16¹₂ - 18¹₂ - 19¹₂ - 20¹₂ - 29¹₂ - Concord 1892April4²₂ - 5²₂ - 6²₂ - 8²₂ - 13¹₂ - 14¹₂ - 15¹₂ - 17¹₂ - 18¹₂ - 19¹₂ - 21¹₂ - 22¹₂ - 23¹₂ - 24¹₂ - 25¹₂ - 26¹₂ - 28¹₂ - 29¹₂ - 30¹₂ - Concord, 1892Aug.3¹₂ - 22¹₂ - 23¹₂ - Concord 1892Sept.6¹₂ - 10¹₂ - 11¹₂ - 12¹₂ - ¹³_{brown} cedar berries - 16¹₂ - cedar - 1890 ^{cedar} Concord 1892July1¹₂ - 2¹₂ - 3¹₂ - 4¹₂ - 6¹₂ - 7¹₂ - 8¹₂ - 9¹₂ - 10¹₂ - 11¹₂ - 12¹₂ - 13¹₂ - 21¹₂ - 25¹₂ - Concord 1892Oct.7¹₂ - 8¹₂ - 11¹₂ - 12¹₂ - 13¹₂ - 14¹₂ - 15¹₂ - 16¹₂ - Concord 1891"4¹₂ - 6¹₂ - 7¹₂ - 8¹₂ - 10¹₂ - 12¹₂ - 13¹₂ - 14¹₂ - 15¹₂ - 18¹₂ - 19¹₂ - 21¹₂ - 25¹₂ - 27¹₂ - Concord 1892Nov.5¹₂ - 6¹₂ - 8¹₂ - 12¹₂ - 24¹₂ - Concord 1891April14¹₂ - 16¹₂ - 18¹₂ - 21¹₂ - 22¹₂ - 26¹₂ - 27¹₂ - 1891May1² - 2² - 3² - 4¹₂ - 5¹₂ - 6¹₂ - 7¹₂ - 8¹₂ - 9¹₂ - 10¹₂ - 11¹₂ - 12¹₂ - 13¹₂ - 14¹₂ - 20¹₂ - 21¹₂ - 24¹₂ - 25¹₂ - 26¹₂ - Concord 1892Feb.9¹₂ - 10¹₂ - 11¹₂ - 12¹₂ - Concord 1892March28¹₂ - 29¹₂ - 30¹₂ - 20¹₂ - 20¹₂ - 1892*C. purpureus*Dec.11¹₂ - 15¹₂ - 1890?

Carpodacus purpureus

1893

January

February

March

April

18^g 12^{ad} - 22^g - 25^g - 26^g - 28^g - 29^g - 30^g Concord

May

1^g 2^g 3^g 5^g 6⁽³⁾ 8^g - 10^g - 11^g - 15^g - 17^g - 18^g - 20^g - 21^g - 22^g - 23^g - 24^g - 25^g [8.4 ad.] 26^g - 27^g - 28^g - 29^g - 30^g - 31^g Concord

June

Concord
(26^g - 27^g - 28^g - 29^g - 30^g)

July

1^g - 2^g - 3^g - 4^g - 5^g - 6^g - 7^g - 11^g - 12^g - 13^g - 16^g - 18^g - Concord.

August 16^g ad. (elders on river bank) Concord

September

October

November 1^g ad.

December

1894.

1894.

January.

February.

March

" brevior and thereafter continually" (Fay).

April

cd. 2^g g. 9^g 16^g 17^g 22^g 30^g

May

1^g 8^g 9^g 16^g 17^g 22^g 30^g

June

7^g 9^g 25^{max} 10^g 11^g max 3 spp.
5 spp.

July

4^g 5^g 9^g 30^g 31^g

Aug.

3^g

Sept.

October 6^g few popl.

November 4^g 12^g

Concord
20^g 26^g 27^g

C. purpureus

B.F. - Barn farm
B.H. - Baileys Hill

Carpodacus purpureus.

Our garden, Cambridge caters toads & flowering apple.

January 17^② pay 19^② 20^② 21^② 22¹ 1897. 24^③ 27^③ ~~7 a.m.~~ - 1891.

February Longwood (R. H. Brown)
Flock seen frequently 1898

	Cd.	Cg.	<u>Concord</u>	a.	<u>first obs.</u>	
April	19 th	24 th	28 th 1/2	29 th 2/2	29 th (7 of)	1895

12¹/₂ 14¹/₂ 15¹/₂ 17¹/₂ 19^(full) 21² 23² [24⁽³⁾] 25² * 26^{*} 27² 28² Concord 29^{se} 30² 1896
 Cg. ^{Cg.} ^{Cg.} ^{Cg.} ^{Cg.} ^{main} ^{old}
 4^(W.D.) 17¹/₂ 21¹/₂ 26¹/₂ 29¹/₂ Concord 1897 17¹/₂ 19¹/₂ 20¹/₂ 21¹/₂ 22¹/₂ 23¹/₂ basic life Our garden Cambridge 1898

May concord
1st 2nd 3rd 4th 6th 7th 12th 23rd
Our garden Cambridge

1896

1896

1897

1898

1895 ^{mi.} ^{auburn} ^G 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ * 30 $\frac{1}{2}$ * 1898

June 6^{g.} 8^{g.} 9^{g.} 9^{g.} 9^{g.} 9^{g.} 9^{g.} 9^{g.} 9^{g.}
10^{*} 11^{*} 15^{*} 21^{*} 22^{*} 23^{*} 26^{*} 29^{*}

July G₁ G₂ G₃ G₄ G₅ G₆ G₇
2 * 3 * 4 * 6 * 7 *

1895 ✓

August

September

October 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 15^(5th) Concord
14th 22nd 23rd 24th

1895 Bells Ho, Concord 2 24 bel 1897 Heard several times between 15th May 30th 1898 from Bell's Hill Concord.

1896 12th. 22nd. Concord.

November - 3⁽⁸⁾ 23rd 1961

1895 12 - aa area:
Cds. Cy. Bennett Moran, Cds.
1895 11 bb 1897 3 ^{2 3/4 in.} 3 W.D. 12 area 1898

C. purpureus

December W. R. Gray
6² (T. H. Allen) 1896

Carpodacus purpureus

Eastern Massachusetts.

1889 Mass.

May 8 Cambridge. - Purple Finches are among the few birds that have not sensibly decreased on and near my place since the advent of the English Sparrows. I hear the males singing in my garden every day and there must be several pairs preparing to breed in the neighborhood. I have not heard one sing the full song this season, either here or at Concord. All have cut it short at about the middle. Several pairs about my garden Singing at its height.

" 9 Wellesley. - Mr. S. W. Denton observed a ♂ eating the fruit buds of a pear tree which was about to blossom. It would first pick off the entire bud, then by turning it rapidly in its bill remove the outer envelope the pieces of which fell to the ground and finally swallow the interior. On shooting and dissecting the bird he found its stomach filled with these fruit buds. Eating fruit buds of the pear.

" 16 Cambridge. - The singing of the Purple Finch seems to be on the decline. At least I have heard them about our garden with decreasing frequency than last few days. Singing less frequently.

" 22 Still singing in the garden but not with fervor or frequency.

" 29 Watertown. - A fine red ♂, flying over a cluster of cedars where its mate was doubtless sitting on her eggs, suddenly paused and letting his wings came floating down slowly looking nearly twice the usual size, his feathers doubtless ruffled, his wings and tail certainly spread to their fullest extent, his throat pouring out a perfect flood of music which, however, save for its unusual length and a rare tenderness of tone, did not differ appreciably from the usual song. Just as it ended he reached the slender spine of a cedar & alighted. He seemed to float downward as lightly as thistle down. Singing on wings

Carpodacus purpureus

1889 Mass.

June 16 Wayland - A young bird in orchard calling incessantly every second or so) tree. This note I mistook at first for a young very similar note of Chrysomitra.

" 20 Cambridge. A young bird calling tree in the grass in my garden. The parents both near, the ♂ in full song.

For the past few days I have heard him singing at all hours & with nearly as much vigor as in early Spring. I suspect the species of rearing two broods. I heard three other ♂♂ this afternoon in Watertown. As they have been nearly silent for about two weeks I suspect that this is a period of second singing & that they may rear two broods.

July 2 Returning to Cambridge after a week's absence I find the Purple Finch in my garden in full song.

1890

April 12 Cambridge. Heard singing in my garden & noted by Faxon at Waverley Late arrived
Torrey heard it at Melton on the 13th. Neither Torrey nor Faxon Absent during
found it prior to these dates although both were out constantly during Jan Feb. 7 Mel.
Jan. Feb. & March. After the 12th Faxon observed it daily in the usual
numbers at Waverley & Belmont. I have seen or heard one nearly every day
to date (May 16) in my garden

June 4 Singing almost daily in my garden since Apr. 12 but heard less often singing declines
of late.

Sept. 12 Since Aug 18 I have an occasional bird about the garden and
since Sept. 3 two birds have been frequently seen in a red cedar
where I think they were after the berries although I did not
actually see them eat any until this morning when I
found a flock of 13, all brown birds, busily engaged.

They would alight on the top of a spray, bend forward and downward, pull off a berry, roll it rapidly & smoothly between the mandibles and then fling the husk far from them with an impetuous upward jerk of the head.

Carpodacus purpureus.

1898. Cambridge, Mass.

March 1. At about 11 A.M. I heard a Purple Finch singing in the garden and soon afterwards caught sight of the bird, a fine, rosy male sitting in the top of a willow near the Museum. It did not give the full song but warbled in low, somewhat broken tones at intervals of a minute or two for ten or twelve minutes at the end of which it flew into the top of a cedar where it joined five other birds of the same species but all in the gray plumage. The flock continued in this tree for some time feeding on the juniper berries. A little later I saw the rosy male bathing in a puddle of melted snow near the garden walk. It must have been a chilly bath but the bird performed its ablutions very thoroughly not ceasing until its plumage was completely drenched. R.H. Howe, jr. has seen Purple Finches at intervals through January and February in Brookline but these are the first that have appeared in Cambridge.

March 12. Purple Finches have been in our garden every day since March 1st in numbers varying from one or two to five or six.

Peterborough, New Hampshire.

1898. Apparently uncommon. An old male in full song July 6th
July 5 and one or two females or young seen at the same place (near
to
Aug. 15. the house on Ben Mere farm) July 8, 10, 12 & 18 and Aug. 9,
being all that were met with.

Carpodacus purpureus

1896. Penobscot Bay, Maine.

Deer Island. June 21 & 24.

Birds within Ten Miles of Point
de Monts, Can., Comeau & Merriam

29. *Carpodacus purpureus*. PURPLE FINCH.—Not very common.
First seen April 26, 1882.

Bull. N.O.C., 7, Oct., 1882, p. 285

Birds of Upper St. John,
Batchelder.

41. *Carpodacus purpureus* (Gm.) Bd. PURPLE FINCH.—Common.

Bull. N.O.C., 7, July, 1882, p. 147

Last Days Migratory Birds observed by
E. D. Wintle, Fall 1885, Montreal, Can.

Summer Birds of Bras D'Or Region
Cape Breton Id., N.S. J. Dwight, Jr.

Oct. 18. Purple Finch,

32. *Carpodacus purpureus*.

O. & O. XI, Mar. 1886, p. 244.

Auk, 4, Jan., 1887, p. 16

Halifax Correspondence
May 30, 1887. I
took a Purple Finch with six eggs just by the
Kinglet's nest.

O. & O. XIV, June, 1889, p. 93

Harry Austin

Birds of Magdalen Islands.
Dr. L. B. Bishop.

36. *Carpodacus purpureus*. PURPLE FINCH.—Rather rare. A male
seen on Grindstone, June 23, and others heard singing on different
occasions.

Auk, VI, April, 1889, p. 147 - 148

Dwight. Summer Birds of
Prince Edward Island.

Carpodacus purpureus. PURPLE FINCH.—Sparingly distributed, a
restless and roving species, and seen singly or in pairs.

Auk X, Jan., 1893, p. 10

Summer Bds. Restigouche Valley, N. B.
July, '88. J. Brittain and P. Cox, Jr.

Carpodacus purpureus. PURPLE FINCH.—Common; often met in
company with the preceding species in the localities mentioned.

Auk, VI, April, 1889, p. 118

Preceding Species is *Pinicola Enucleator*.

Summer Birds of Sudbury, Ont.
A. H. Abberger.

517. Purple Finch. Saw one ♂.

O. & O. XV, June, 1890, p. 87

Some Winter Birds of Nova Scotia. By C. H. Morrell.
18. *Carpodacus purpureus*. PURPLE FINCH.—A pair seen at Shulee
January 2.

Auk, XVI, July, 1899, p. 252.

New Brunswick Notes. Three ♂ *Carpodacus*
purpureus were observed at Scotch Lake on
Feb. 4, 1901. W^m H. Moore. Scotch Lake, York Co., N.B.
Auk, XVIII, Apr. 1901, p. 201.

The Winter Tringillidae of New Brunswick
W. H. Moore, Fredericton, N.B.

Carpodacus purpureus. PURPLE FINCH.—This species is in appearance a small edition of the Pine Grosbeak. The males very much resemble each other in color, but the females and young of the Purple Finch lack the yellowish breast and rump of the Pine Grosbeak. The earliest record the writer has for the arrival of this species from the south is February 5, 1901, which is fully seven weeks earlier than is usual for the spring migrants to arrive. Even at this early date they were singing, but the song lacked the energy that is given it during the nuptial season. The song of the young male is not so rich as that of the adult, consisting of a few short notes in place of the long flowing song of the full plumaged adult male.

Their food, after arriving in spring, is buds of various trees, the favorite being the poplar and the balsam bud of the fir; later insects are added to the bill of fare. Although arriving early from the south the nesting season is deferred till after the middle of June.

Auk, XIX, April, 1902, p. 201.

Summer Bird of the Cobalt Mining Region,
Nipissing District, Ontario
by Frederick C. Hubel. Auk, XXIV, 1907, p. 57.

38. *Carpodacus purpureus*. PURPLE FINCH.—One pair met with in Cobalt, July 15.

Birds of Toronto, Canada,
by James H. Thunberg.
Part II. Land Birds.
Auk, XXIV, Jan., 1907, p. 79.

190. *Carpodacus purpureus*. PURPLE FINCH.—Resident, sometimes abundant in winter; not common in summer; breeds (July 13, 1895).

Wintering in 1886-7

Bruna, Maine.

"Have seen only one Purple Finch
this winter - last month." (M. Hardy
in letter of March 3-1887.)

Carpodacus purpureus

Wintering in Maine

Carpodacus purpureus

Maurly Hardy has sent me the
skin of a ♀ Purple Finch which was
killed near Bangor, late in February.
He writes that he has never heard
of the wintering of the species there
before.

Wintering in Maine

Carpodacus purpureus

Bangor, Maine

Feb. 1887

Maurly Hardy writes (under date
Dec. 26) "the Purple Finches which I
never saw here later than November
have been here until this date. They are
scattered everywhere in small numbers.

Last Saturday (Dec. 22) though extremely
cold with north wind (ther. - 22 at
sunrise) they were feeding on my
mountain ash trees. The majority are
adult ♂."

January 2, 1884. "Purple Finches still here in

Wintering in 1886-7

Breast, Maine.

"Have seen only one Purple Finch
this winter - last month." (Mr. Hardy
in letter of March 3-1887.)

Carpodacus purpureus

Wintering in Maine

Carpodacus purpureus

Manly Hardy has sent me the
skin of a ♀ Purple Finch which was
killed near Bangor, late in February.
He writes that he has never heard
of the wintering of the species there
before.

1887 Feb
anatopt. notatus

increasing numbers. I counted
twelve on the mountain ash
tree near my window in
the snow storm to-day. They
have not wind a day for
weeks. It is certainly remarkable
for them to be here as late as
Dec. 1, to say nothing of
January [Ex spist. Jan. 2, 1884]
Brown, Mr. Jan'y 2, 1884 "The 12
Purple Finches are still here."
(Ex spist. Jan. 2, 1884)

Maine (Brewer)

Carpodacus purpureus

1886

Arrival in Spring

"My mountain ash trees have attracted many Purple Finches this spring. Three were seen March 22 and since then many. The first were all ad. ♂; latterly not more than one in ten has been a red bird." (Hansy Hardy in letter Apr. 6-1886)

Carpodacus purpureus at Portland, Maine, in Winter. — Last Autumn (1887) I saw Purple Finches (*Carpodacus purpureus*) in the outskirts of the city up to November 11,—later than they had ever been seen in this vicinity. Having no suspicion that they would remain through the winter, and being very busy, I then ceased to look for them. During the last of January, however, I frequently heard bird notes I could not ascribe to any resident species, or to any species known to winter about Portland, and I was told by friends living in the suburbs that the mountain ash berries there were being eaten by a strange bird. On January 26 and 27, Portland was visited by the severest storm that has occurred here for nearly twenty years. One might think that such weather (there was now over three feet of snow) would have discouraged a bird unused to our winter season; but such was not the case, for, early in the morning of February 1, I saw a Purple Finch (a female or immature male) feeding on the berries of a mountain ash which grows in front of my study window. That afternoon I noticed three birds, an adult male and two females or immature males, in the same tree. On February 8, I saw three adult males feeding in a crab-apple tree from which the fruit was not gathered in the fall. For the succeeding twelve days, besides seeing individuals in mountain ash trees, I never passed this crab-apple tree without noticing these birds there. The largest number seen was seven,—five males and two females or immature males. During these twelve days* five inches of snow fell and the thermometer averaged 18.5° Fahrenheit. For the next two weeks I was out of town and unable to take notes. On March 10 I found at least eight Purple Finches in a large flock of *Spinus pinus*; it was impossible to count them accurately. For the next three days they fed in the same place (under a mountain ash where the snow had blown off) in about the same numbers. On March 13, came a terrific snow-storm which will hardly need to be recalled to Eastern readers of 'The Auk.' Nevertheless, on the following day, Purple Finches were still here, and I have seen them every day since up to the present time (March 20). It may here be stated that their earliest recorded arrival at Portland is March 23 (*N. C. Brown*, Proc. Port. Soc. Nat. Hist., 1882, p. 12). Of late they have grown shyer and do not associate so much with the Pine Finches. The largest number I have seen together is twelve, and that only once.

When it is remembered that that part of the winter during which I saw no specimens was by far the mildest, I think no one will doubt that Purple Finches have been resident here this year. There seems to be no previous record of their occurrence at all in winter so far north in New England as Portland; and it is remarkable that they should have chosen an unusually severe winter for what may be a first experiment.—JOHN C. BROWN, *Portland, Maine.*

*At this time a notice of their occurrence up to February 20, which was published in the Portland 'Daily Advertiser' for March 20, was handed in to the Portland Society of Natural History.

Auk, V. April 1888. p. 209.

Birds of Dead River Region, Me. F. H. C.

44. *Carpodacus purpureus*, (Purple Finch). The Linnett breeds in the southern portions of the counties, and a few were seen in the immediate vicinity of Dead River, but could not detect them nesting in the forests. Their nidification about New Portland and Kingfield was in no wise different from the well known habits of this species.

O. & O. XI. Oct. 1886. p. 146

Summer Residents on Southwest Coast of Maine. T. H. Montgomery, Jr.

517. Purple Finch. Common at Boothbay, and at Seal Harbor, Mt. Desert.

O. & O. Nov. 1890. p. 162

Notes from Maine.
John L. Goodale, Saco, Me.

On June 10 I collected a fine set of five eggs of the Purple Finch. This bird is not very rare, but its nests are not often found, as they hide them very nicely in the top of some thick tree in the woods. I found this one, however, in an apple tree, while looking for something else. It was utterly impossible to see the nest farther off than two or three feet, so well was it hidden.

O. & O. Vol. 18, Sept. 1893 p. 129

Many Purple Finches at Portland, Maine, in February.—The mountain ash trees in the Western Promenade section of Portland attracted no Robins,¹ under my observation, during the very cold winter of 1911–1912; but they nourished an extraordinary number of Purple Finches (*Carpodacus purpureus purpureus*) in the month of February. On Feb. 2 I saw four birds together, at least one of them being in rosy plumage. On Feb. 28, about 9.30 A. M., I counted fourteen birds in one tree, most of which were in rosy plumage. On Feb. 29, about 2.30 P. M., I counted fifty-five birds in and about seven mountain ash trees, twenty-two of them being at one tree and a majority of the total number, apparently, in rosy plumage. On each one of these occasions all the birds were sluggish and rather silent.

Since the first announcement,² of the wintering of this species at Portland, twenty-four years ago, it has been seen by several observers, and there are winter records which need not here be cited, for other localities in Maine; but I believe it has not hitherto been noted except in small numbers.—

NATHAN CLIFFORD BROWN, *Portland, Me.*

Anh. xxix. Apr. 1912. Jr. 245.

Shelburne, N. H.

Carpodacus purpureus

1884

July

A common bird throughout the valley. First young on wing seen July 12. The adults were rarely heard singing after July 18th and not at all frequently before that date. An adult ♂ shot July 10th was in fine plumage; one taken July 28 in the midst of the mount. A young bird, bob-tailed, in fact barely large or strong enough to fly came daily to a cherry tree in front of our house and picked away at the ripe fruit, hanging head downward very like a Pine Grosbeak. He was tame & unsuspecting, letting

Display of the Purple Finch.—On May 20, while at the path between the Flume House and the Flume, Crawford Notch, White Mts., N. H., I watched an interesting display of a male Purple Finch. There were two pairs of these birds. Close by me were two males and a female feeding on the ground, and perhaps twenty-five yards away a single female, also hopping about on the ground. Very suddenly one of the males jumped up and after a short rapid flight lit about six inches from the lone female, and stood bolt upright, and facing her with extended wings. He then began to vibrate his wings rapidly, but kept them extended all the while. The motion was so fast that the wings were blurred to the eye. I have seen a cock silver pheasant display in a somewhat similar way, sitting on a perch, only the vibration of the wings did not extend over so wide an arc.

The male finch kept this up for ten seconds, with perhaps only one or two brief intervals of arrested motion. Then the second male bird charged him and put him to flight. Evidently it was a case of trespass.—JOHN C. PHILLIPS, Wenham, Mass. *Auk.* xxxii. Jan. 1916. p. 77.

one approach within eight or ten feet.

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No

Shelburne, N. H. Aug. 8-29-1865. R. D.

Carpodacus purpureus. - Saw more ♀, than ♂'s.
My Beach, N. H. July 23-24 1885.

18. *Carpodacus purpureus*. - Common in full song.

5. *Carpodacus purpureus*. - Seen
Wolfeboro, N. H. June 17-1887.

Carpodacus 2♂ singing in town

Winter Birds of Webster, N. H. by Falco.

Purple Finch, (*Carpodacus purpureus*).

O. & O. X. Jan. 1885. p. 14

Summer Birds of Presidential Range,
White Mts. A. P. Chabourne

19. *Carpodacus purpureus*. PURPLE FINCH.—Extremely abundant at the base of the mountain, and found in all but the thickest woods as high as the timber line.

Auk, 4, April 1887. p. 105

Birds Obsvd. near Holderness, N. H.
June 4-12, '85, and 4-11, '86. W. Faxon

24. *Carpodacus purpureus*. PURPLE FINCH.—Not common.

Auk, V. April, 1888. p. 150

Bds. Obs. at Franconia and Bethlehem
N. H. July-August, 1874. J. A. Allen

20. *Carpodacus purpureus*. Common.

Auk, V. April, 1888. p. 154

Bds. Obs. in Franconia, N. H. June 11-21
'86, and June 4-Aug. 1, '87. W. Faxon

28. *Carpodacus purpureus*. PURPLE FINCH.—Common.

Auk, V. April, 1888. p. 152

Birds Obs. at Bridgewater, N.H.
July 12 - Sept. 4, 1883. F. H. Allen

Carpodacus purpureus.—Common.

Auk, VI. Jan., 1889. p. 77

Birds Obs. at Moultonboro, N.H.
July 21 - Aug. 11, 1883. F. H. Allen

Carpodacus purpureus.—Not common.

Auk, VI. Jan., 1889. p. 78

Bird Notes, Central N.H. Winter '91-92
J. H. Johnson

Purple Finch, very scarce.

O. & O. Vol. 17, May 1892 p. 72

V
Breezy Point, Warren, N.H.

1894.

~~Carpodacus Purpureus~~
June 15th 16th 18th 20th 22nd 25th
* * * * *

Breezy Point, Warren, N.H.

1895.

May
29th 30th 31st
* * * * *

notes from Taftsville Vt.

Purple Finches, Goldfinches and Pine Linnets have been very abundant nearly all Winter. Their food has been, principally, the seeds of the yellow birch, of which there is an abundant supply here.

C. C. S(racy)

O. & O. IX. Apr. 1884. p. 46.

Summer Bds, Mt. Mansfield, Vt

34. *Carpodacus purpureus*. PURPLE FINCH.—Not very common, though I saw them several times at the foot of the mountain, and also part way up.
by Arthur H. Howell. Auk, XVIII, Oct., 1901, p. 342.

Caypodacus Purpureus

Concord Park
Bethany 1880

However there are birds of
willows (Salix alba) by the roadside
I daily see large flocks of Purple
Finches & see them nowhere else.

That the attraction is I have never
doubted, but for fear I have mislead
that through September October & well into
November they find almost exclusively in
these willow hedges. There is surely more
than one adult ♀ in the little company
but her dress is the better shown in contrast

with his dull plumaged companions & even
brighter in the spring.

Occasionally one of these males warbles
in a soft & modulating. At first part
they are remarkably silent at this season.

Carpodacus Purpureus.

New Boston, N.H.
Dec. 5, 1881-2

Immense numbers have remarked on the great abundance of this species this winter. Mr. H. K. Job has found them more abundant than any other birds. I have also seen them in Watertown & Cambridge. Mr. Chamberlain also heard a male singing in the woods near St. John P. B. in either January or February.

Carpodacus purpureus

Wintering in Mass.

Cambridge & Belmont, Mass.
Jan. 17, 1884

During a shooting trip to-day I saw at least 200 Purple Finches. There were over 100 in one flock feeding on the bare ground on the edge of oak woods. Others were among pines & cedars. About ten per cent were ad. ♂. I never saw so many in one day before at any season. Jewell writes they are abundant at Providence (R.I.) & Stanley Hardy that they are common

65. *Carpodacus purpureus*. June 16 Nov. 30¹ E. Mass. 1885.

Princeton & Rutland, Mass. Aug. 2¹ 1885⁰ 1

14. *Carpodacus pur.* - Linnæus - silent. Princeton & No. Rutland, Mass. June, 181⁸⁸ 18, 1886

27. *Carpodacus purpureus*, Scopoli.

9 *Carpodacus pur.* Nov. 8² E. Mass. 1886.

Carpodacus 12²-13⁶-15²-16⁴
Winchendon, Mass. June, 1888.

Carpodacus Purpureus.

Immature specimens have remarked on the great abundance of this species this winter. Mr. D. K. Job has found them more abundant than any other birds. I have also seen them in Watertown & Cambridge. Mr. Chamberlain also heard a male singing in the woods near St. John St. B. in either January or February.

Dear Doctor. Ward.
Dec. 5th 1882

in numbers at Bremen, etc.
Funk also writes (Jan., '17)
we have received nothing
the flotsam from Langley
Socorro, etc.

65. *Carpodacus herminieri*. June 16 Nov. 30th
Princeton & Rutland, Mass. Aug. 2/1880

14. *Carpodacus her.* - *leucostoma* - *leucomelas*
Princeton & No. Rutland, Mass. June, 181880 18, 1886

27. *Carpodacus purpureus*, *leucostoma*.

9 *Carpodacus pur.* Nov. 8² E. Mass. 1886.

Carpodacus 12²-13⁶-15²-16⁴
Winchendon, Mass. June, 1888.

Carpodacus purpureus Mass. - near Cambridge.
near Cambridge, Mass.

1886 Feb. 9²-10³⁰
March 9¹²ing-17¹
April 9⁴-19¹⁰-23²-27⁴

Mass. (near Concord).

1887
April 7⁴-12¹
May 8²-10¹-11¹-16²-17²-23²
June 2¹-4²-5⁵—13¹⁸-16⁵-17¹
July 2²-10⁴-15⁶
Aug. 14³-15²-17²

* singing
Carpodacus purpureus.
Mass. (Winchendon)

1887
June 25¹²-26¹⁰—⁶

Carpodacus purpureus.
Mass. (near Cambridge).

1887
Nov. 9⁴

1888
March 12³⁰*-24¹⁰⁰ April 17¹-18²

* singing in long tones
Carpodacus purpureus

W. Middlesex Co. Mass.

June 25-30, 1889.

Carpodacus purpureus

Not observed at West Townsend, but very common and generally distributed in the region about Ashby where it ranged from the lowest valleys to the top of Mt. Watatic. It was in full song during our stay.

1888

Purple Finch S. W. Denton.

- May 4. Saw first one today.
" 11 " one this a.m. in our orchard singing
" 13 One seen
" 16 Several seen this a.m.
" 20 Saw & building nest on Durants Hill.
" 26 Saw one building nest this morning in evergreen tree in front of house.

March 17. | Purple Finch

Spring arrivals at Dartmouth Mass.
H. J. Dexter.

O. & O. XI. Apr. 1886. p. 52.

Birds Known to Pass Breeding Season
nr. Winchendon, Mass. Wm. Brewster

34. *Carpodacus purpureus*.

Auk, V, Oct., 1888. p. 389

Bds. Obs. near Graylock Mt. Berkshire
Co. Mass. June 28-July 16. W. Faxon

25. *Carpodacus purpureus*. PURPLE FINCH.—Common. Found on the Saddle-Back Mountains from the base to the summit of Graylock Peak.

Auk, VI. April, 1889. p. 100

Winter Birds in South-eastern Mass.
Harry G. White

16. *Purple Finch*. Frequently present in winter. One bird was noted at Taunton, on January 6th.

O. & O. Vol. 17, June, 1892 p. 85

A Purple Finch was taken at Falmouth, Mass., Feb. 8th,
by F. J. C. Swift.

O. & O. IX. Mar. 1884. p. 36

Birds of Bristol County, Mass.
F. W. Andros.

Carpodacus purpureus (Gmel.), Purple Finch.
Summer resident, common. Breeds. Occasionally seen during the open winter.

O. & O. XII. Sept. 1887 p. 140

Bds. Obs. near Sheffield, Berkshire
Co., Mass. June 17-26, '88. W. Faxon

30. *Carpodacus purpureus*. PURPLE FINCH.—Common.

Auk, VI. Jan., 1889. p. 44

Notes.

A set of three eggs of the Purple Finch was taken at Dorchester, Mass., September 10th, by Charles Ward.

O & O. XIV. Sept. 1889 p. 148

PURPLE FINCH, (*Carpodacus purpureus.*)
Also very common. The largest set of
eggs I have taken was six. They have a
decided preference for pear trees, and can
be seen at almost any time in the day pour-
ing forth their gay songs. The nest and
eggs are the same as the familiar Chippy,
on a larger scale.

Notes from Warren's Neck, R. I.
H. A. Talbot, Jackson Banks, Providence R. I.
O. & O. IX, May 1884. p. 58.

PURPLE FINCH.—How early in the season does the Purple Finch begin to sing? This morning (Feb. 25th) we heard one in our door yard in nearly full song. Our earliest date previously is March 15th.—*Jno. H. Sage, Portland, Conn.* O. & O. VII, May. 1882. p. 119.

PURPLE FINCH.—A friend of mine living in this place has a vine covered piazza where the Chipping Sparrows build their nests every year. Last Summer some birds, which from my friend's description I should unhesitatingly pronounce Purple Finches, destroyed several of these Chipping-birds' nests with their entire contents. I wish to enquire if any of our scientific observers have ever known the highly-musical Purple Finch to do so disreputable an act? Mr. Editor, why is this bird (so generally known as the "Red Linnet") called by ornithologists and in ornithological works a ^{bird}? "Purple Finch?"—*Chas. Edw. Prior, Jewett City, Conn.* O. & O. VII, Nov. 1882. p. 1

PURPLE FINCHES. C. C. Richards, Norwich, Conn., reports eight pairs of Purple Finches feeding on the seeds of the tulip poplar, eating only the base or the part containing the seed. He noticed them frequently and, at times, feeding with House Sparrows. O. & O. VIII, June. 1883. p. 48

Connecticut, June, 1893.

Carduelis purpurea

June 4 th	Tairfield
" 5 th 6 th 7 th 8 th 9 th 10 th 11 th 12 th	Saybrook
" 13 th 16 th 17 th 18 th 19 th 20 th	
" 22 nd 23 rd 24 th 25 th	Andover

Quite as common as in E. Mass.
frequenting similar places, viz.
ornamental grounds in villages or about
houses where spruces, red cedars &
other evergreens are cultivated and
billy pastures sprinkled about
with red cedar. An occasional
bird was also found frequenting
high grounds, bony moraine,
in new towns.

Birds observed in Naval Hospital
Grounds, Brooklyn, G. H. Coues

36. *Carpodacus purpureus*. PURPLE FINCH.—Quite common.

Bull. N.O.C. 4, Jan., 1879, p. 32

Notes on Some Winter Residents of
Hudson Valley. E. A. Mearns.

7. *Carpodacus purpureus*. PURPLE FINCH.—These beautiful birds and sweet songsters are regular winter residents. In winter there is always a great preponderance of females,—almost as marked as was noted in the case of *Pinicola enucleator* and *Aegithus linaria*, in the early part of the winter of 1874. Even the females are heard singing during the coldest weather; this is of common occurrence in early winter. They are gregarious, often assembling in very large flocks. On such occasions they are quite wild, and, on being approached, all rise at once on wing, with a loud, rushing noise, accompanied by certain peculiar wild notes, which produces quite a startling effect. They feed upon seeds, chiefly those of the iron-wood (*Ostrya virginica*), and red cedar berries.

Bull. N.O.C. 4, Jan., 1879, p. 35

Birds of the Adirondack Region.
C. H. Merriam.

55. *Carpodacus purpureus* (Gmelin) Baird. PURPLE FINCH.—Always here from before the snow goes off in spring till late in October, and sometimes throughout the winter.

Bull. N.O.C. 6, Oct., 1881, p. 220

Newfoundland Notes
Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*).
Found singing in the Balsam Poplars
about the Government House, April 18th.
C. H. Merriam's *Locust Grove*, N. Y.
O. & O. VIII, June, 1883, p. 42.

Notes on the Spring Migration of Birds in the
Northern Adirondacks [L叙述], New York [1901].
April 30 to May 5.

Purple Finch. Not common.

E. A. Sterling, Brooklyn, Pa.

Auk, XIX, July, 1902, p. 299.

Birds Tioga Co., N. Y. Alden Loring

168. Purple Finch or Linnet. Common in
the spring and fall but does not breed.

O. & O. XV, June, 1890, p. 83

Notes on the Birds of Madison County, New York,
with especial reference to Emboddy's recent list.

12. *Carpodacus purpureus*. PURPLE FINCH.—Given as "very uncommon during the breeding season," which is far from true for northern Madison County. As a migrant it is tolerably abundant, but only a comparatively small number remain through the summer. I have never discovered a nest.¹

¹ At Thousand Island Park, Jefferson County, last summer, the Purple Finches were very common and were observed to sing freely during the first two weeks of July, the length of a visit.

By William R. Maxon. Auk, XX, July, 1903, p. 264.

**Descriptions of First Plumage of Cer-
tain North Am. Bbs.** Wm. Brewster.

54. *Carpodacus purpureus*.

First plumage: female. Above dark brown, shading to lighter on the rump, each feather edged with light reddish-brown. The forehead and supra-loral line streaked with grayish. Under parts dull white, thickly streaked everywhere, except on crissum and anal region, with very dark brown. From a specimen in my collection taken at Cambridge, July 9, 1873. Although this bird is in strictly first plumage, it differs scarcely appreciably in coloring from autumnal specimens.

Bull. N.O.C. 3, July, 1878. p. 116.

The Singing of Birds. E.P. Bicknell.

Carpodacus purpureus. PURPLE FINCH.

There is much irregularity in the occurrence with us of the Purple Finch, particularly in the winter season. In some winters it is constantly present in numbers; in others it is absent. From this arises an irregularity in the time of the beginning of spring song. When the bird has been common through the winter its song is to be heard usually much earlier in the spring than when it is brought by migrants. The time of arrival of the spring migrants is also variable, and their songs are first heard sometime between the fourth week of March and the corresponding week of April. The latest date that I have record of for the beginning of spring song is April 23.

Purple Finches were present through the winter of 1877-78, and the exceptionally early spring which followed enticed them into song as early as the 3d of March. This is my earliest record for the actual beginning of song. Impatient birds sometimes try their pipes on bright days of mid-winter, but, so far as I have observed, always with poor results. When once regularly begun, singing continues until about the middle of July — 2d to 20th.

In the autumn the song is weak and desultory, although I have occasionally at that season heard a near approach to the full song of spring. Singing is also somewhat uncertain in the fall, and though in some seasons quite general with the species, in others it is not heard at all. Dates for song are down in my books from September 22 to October 31.

I have elsewhere (Trans. Linnæan Society of New York, Vol. I, pp. 43-44) referred to the song of the Purple Finch in the Catskill Mountains in connection with its song in the Hudson Valley, and alluded to variations to which it is subject.

Auk, I, Oct., 1884. p. 327-328.

NOTES ON THE PURPLE FINCH.—It has been a matter of remark that several of our once rare birds have largely increased in numbers within a few years, and I think in no case is this so apparent as in that of the Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*). At the same time its distribution extends over a much larger range. It was formerly considered a strictly northern migrant, but has recently become resident in Massachusetts, where it breeds quite plentifully in certain sections, and from the following instance would seem inclined to remain even farther south. Among some notes taken at Bayside, L. I., I find under date of April 21, of this year: "Saw a Purple Finch (male) in full song and plumage and apparently resident." In the early part of June I visited the same locality and again saw both male and female. Feeling sure they must have nested there, after diligent search I discovered the nest, located, as usual, some forty feet from the ground, near the top of a large spruce-tree, and contained only two eggs, well advanced in incubation. This was June 15, and I am at a loss to explain the reason of their late domestic arrangements, except with the surmise that their first nest was destroyed, or that they felt out of their latitude, as indeed their actions seemed to indicate. They remained in the vicinity but a short time after, and, I think, did not attempt another nest. The construction of the nest, its situation, and the eggs, except in number, were almost identical with a set procured just previously at Grand Menan. This is, I believe, the most southern point at which the species has been found breeding.—R. F. PEARSALL, *New York City.*

Bull. N.O.C. 4, April, 1879, p. 122.

SUSCEPTIBILITY OF A BIRD TO COLOR.—A curious case of this affection is reported to me by Mr. George F. Crook, of Cambridge, Mass. “I have a caged Red Linnet (*Carpodacus purpureus*), now about two years old—a cheerful fellow, unless anything *blue* should be presented to him or placed near him. Should either my wife or daughter—with whom he is on the best of terms—come near him with a blue dress, ribbon, or handkerchief, he becomes terribly excited and utters painful cries. No other color affects him in this way. About a year ago he escaped from his cage and was away nine days; his cage hung outside, and he returned to it in a very dilapidated condition. Had he been frightened by some Blue Jay? If not, what can be the cause of his ‘blue-craze’?”

While we cannot explain the facts, we have no doubt the cause is farther to seek than any such accident. The effect of colors upon animals—as red upon a bull or turkey-cock—is a perfectly well-known fact, though one not satisfactorily accounted for.

This recalls a very curious case once brought to my professional notice, of a little child with some obscure nervous affection of the eyes, which rendered him painfully sensitive to light. This child delighted in anything blue, and the mental impressibility was so great that it was transferred from color to sound. There is a very strange connection, as musicians well know, between the two kinds of impressions derived from light-vibrations and sound-waves. The mother of the child could always soothe and please it by singing or playing “blue music,” as it is called; while a few notes of “red music” sufficed to make the child cry out as if in great distress, and if continued, almost threw it into convulsions.

As if the bird’s case were not already sufficiently curious and obscure, Mr. Crook later informed me that when his *blue-crazed* Red Linnet moulted, as it did last fall, not a single *red* feather showed itself; the former red feathers all came out *yellow*, as is so frequently the case with these red birds when moulting in confinement. If *Carpodacus* could only tell us, now, all he knows about the three primary colors, and express it in the music of his song!—ELLIOTT COUES, Washington, D. C.

Bull. N. O. O., 8, July, 1883, p. 181.

Auk, XIII, Oct., 1896, p. 342.

Feeding-habits of Purple Finches.—The following interesting observations on the manner in which Purple Finches (*Carpodacus purpureus*) feed their young are communicated by Mrs. A. C. Davenport, of Brattleboro, Vt. She writes: “During the time the young were in the nest the parents came continually to my window for hemp seed, eating rapidly for ten minutes at a time. They then usually sipped a little water, flew away, and returned in a few moments.

“As soon as the young left the nest, they were brought to my window, and until they could care for themselves, or until a new brood was raised, were still fed by the food being ejected from the crops of the parent birds.

“I never saw any live food given them, though I watched closely, but of course I cannot say decidedly of this. Neither did I see the old birds ‘budding’ any during this period.”—FRANK M. CHAPMAN, American Museum of Natural History, New York City.

Correspondence.

PURPLE FINCH.—(*Carpodacus purpureus*), C. E. Prior asks us why the Purple Finch is so called. The origin of the misnomer is probably correctly given by Stearns, (New England Bird Life, part 1, p. 216). “There is little, if any ‘purple’ tinge, the name ‘Purple’ Finch, and the use of the word in old descriptions, having been due to the very faulty coloring of Catesby’s plate.” O. & O. IX, July, 1884, p. 90.

1824. A Question of Taste... By Fannie Pearson Hardy... On Food Habits of *Sphyrapicus varius*, *Carpodacus purpureus*, etc. For, & Stream. Vol. 33, Nov. 14. p. 323. File under *C. purpureus*.

1291. Midwinter Appearance of the Linnet (*Carpodacus purpureus*) at Halifax, N. S. By J. Matthew Jones. Ibid., No. 2, Feb. 3, p. 24. For, & Stream. Vol. XXVIII.

653. The Purple Finch and his Cousins. I. *Carpodacus purpureus*. By Dr. Elliott Coues. Ibid., No. 20, pp. 385, 386.—Biography of the species. For, & Stream. Vol. XXI.

Passer
domesticus

Massachusetts.

Passer domesticus.

1892.

Sept. 9. Concord. For the past week I have noticed English Sparrows in considerable numbers flying to and from a field of Indian corn on the river bank just below Flint's bridge, and seeing them there this morning I ran the canoe ashore and watched them with my glasses. Each bird as I soon discovered, had selected an ear and perching on its upright top was hard at work tearing off the husk nearest the grain. The former operation was evidently slow and difficult. The stout little bird would seize the husk in its bill and tug and tugged with all his might bending forward and down the while and often pausing to rest. In no instance did I see more than one bird on the same ear, landing firmly and walking through a portion of the field I found that fully one half of the ears had been attacked by the Sparrows. As a rule the husk had been stripped down for a distance of about two inches from the upper (small) end of the cob and from six to a dozen (rarely more) kernels taken. This is apparently as far as the bird can go without excessive effort for the resistance increases as the husk is forced downward. Mr. Buttrick tells me that the Sparrows have treated his corn in this manner regularly for at least eight years. He thinks the loss is about one bushel per acre but the grain takers are the poorest. The Sparrows, he says, do not work on the corn after it has ripened or passed wholly from the milky stage.

Passer domesticus.

1898 Mass.

July 2-4 Stockbridge, Berkshire Co. Few. [Journ.].

H. H.

July 5 ¹⁶ Peterborough. Confined to the village where it was not
Aug. 15 numerous. The greatest number seen by me on any
one visit being less than a dozen. [Journ.].

Passer domesticus.

Cambridge, Mass.

January birds in The Garden.

1899. The canny English Sparrows, bountifully supplied with January bread crumbs from the kitchen in addition to such grain as they could pilfer from the Pigeons (they not only entered a wire-enclosed yard for this purpose but a few of the bolder ones even ventured into the pigeon loft over my study) regarded the suet at first with a mixture of indifference and suspicion but when the native birds began to partake of it freely they gathered close about and watched them with grave attention. At length - on January 22nd - having satisfied themselves by repeated observations that the suet was neither poisoned nor the bait of some hidden snare they attacked the piece in the elm coming to it singly or in small parties the members of which, clustering over it like bees, feasted greedily. Although they often quarrelled with one another I could not discover that they ever molested or even threatened the native birds. Nevertheless the Creepers and Woodpeckers either disliked or distrusted them for neither species would approach the suet when a Sparrow was on it nor would either continue eating when one came very near.

Passer domesticus.

Cambridge, Mass.

February birds in the Garden.

1899. The cold and snow of the 12th and 13th banished nearly February. all the Sparrows from our neighborhood. The half dozen or so that remained were evidently sore pressed. Two came down the chimney of the Museum on the night of the 13th and were found next morning in the large room. The others spent the larger part of both days in the pigeon loft. This led me to hope that the bulk of those which had departed would perish. But when the weather moderated on the 15th they began to return and by the next day they were apparently as numerous as ever. During the first ten days of February they swarmed about the suet in the elm at all hours of the day and evidently kept away the native birds (even the Chickadees) but after the middle of the month they neglected the suet and the native birds returned to it. On the 9th they attacked the suet at the Museum for the first time and in considerable numbers but we drove them off and they did not return.

Passer domesticus.

Lobster Lake, Piscataquis Co., Maine.

Fly-catching

1899. A peculiar observation which I made in the city streets
Sept. of Bangor has bothered me a good deal, as I have never heard
of its occurrence elsewhere. In that city I noticed English
Sparrows in considerable numbers engaged in flycatching!
Perhaps there is nothing unusual in this; and perhaps I was
mistaken either in the identity of the birds or in their oc-
cupation. But, if the fact is of usual occurrence, I have
failed to hear of it or to see it. And I occupied ten or
fifteen minutes (all that remained before train-time) in try-
ing to be perfectly certain both of the bird and of its occu-
pation. Of course the English Sparrow in fall plumage or
female feathering is much like a number of other birds es-
pecially small flycatchers. And I heard but failed to see,
one Pewee in a nearby street. But, nevertheless, though the
day was dull, I obtained such exact and close sight of the
birds in question that I would not hesitate to call them
Passer domesticus and to stand by it until proved wrong by a
competent observer. And as to the birds' occupation, it cer-
tainly was an exact reproduction of the flycatchers' foraging.
The perches used were twigs of shrubs or trees and also tele-
graph wires; the sallies were made swiftly and with a leap;
the chick of the bill was marked; and the return to the same
or a nearby perch immediate. These "sparrows" were in flocks,

Passer domesticus.

Lobster Lake, Piscataquis Co., Maine.

1899. and varied their fly-catching with picking from among pieces
Sept. 8. of litter and horse-dung in the streets. I think I can say
(2). that I saw individual identical birds alternately fly-catching
and picking-up. Now can you suggest some closely similar
bird which I might have mistaken for the English Sparrow? Or
do you regard flycatching (or catching small prey after the
manner of flycatchers) as an ordinary occupation of English
Sparrows? The date of this observation was Sept. 8.

Copied from a letter to Wm. Brewster ~~from~~

Reginald C. Robbins, dated

Boston, Mass., Sept. 23, 1899.

Some Acc. Eds. South. Greenland, mass.
A. Hagerup, ed. by M. Chamberlain.

Passer domesticus. EUROPEAN HOUSE SPARROW.—This species was introduced from Denmark several years ago. It has been known to hatch its young in nests built outside of the houses, but it does not thrive in this climate and the number is diminishing, five old males being all that are left of the colony, and these do not move five hundred feet from the houses. Mr. Hagerup considers that the cold has less effect upon them—is less destructive—than the severe and long-continued storms of snow and sleet.

Auk, VI. Oct., 1899, p. 197

I had almost neglected to note another occurrence for which the past winter will remain remarkable—the advent of *Passer domesticus*. Somewhere about New-Year's day a small detachment of English Sparrows—the first that are known to have visited this Province—arrived at St. John in a car of grain shipped from some western city; and, somewhat in the style of other 'cheeky' visitors, these pests act as if they intended to 'stay all summer.'—MONTAGUE CHAMBERLAIN, St. John, N. B.

Auk, I, July, 1884, p. 294-295.

Addendum to list of Birds known to Occur within
Ten miles of L'île des Monts, Quebec, Canada
Notes of H. A. Comstock, Taken at Godbout.

160. *Passer domesticus*. Shot May 27, 1884.

C. Hart Merriam
Auk, I, July, 1884. p. 295. Locust Grove, N. Y.

Passer domesticus in Cape Breton.—It seems noteworthy that the House Sparrow made its first appearance in Cape Breton coincidently with the completion of the Cape Breton Railroad, during the month of November last. It is probable that the Sparrow followed up the line of the road under construction, attracted by the grain and other supplies transported.—W. P. Coues, Cambridge, Mass.

Auk, VII. April, 1890, p. 212.

Some Winter Birds of Nova Scotia. By C. H. Torrell.
23. *Passer domesticus*. ENGLISH SPARROW.—Common everywhere, even in the lumbering towns some distance from railroads.

Auk, XVI, July, 1899, p. 253.

The Winter Fringillidae of New Brunswick.
W. H. Moore—Fredericton, N.B.

Passer domesticus. ENGLISH SPARROW.—This species lives in winter in towns and villages, the families which are raised throughout the country in summer flocking to their winter quarters during October.

Auk, XIX, April., 1902, p. 201.

Notes on the birds of Cape Breton Island
by Charles M. Townsend, Jr. D.
Auk, XXIII, April, 1896, p. 173-174.

Passer domesticus. ENGLISH SPARROW.—W. P. Coues¹ reports that this species "made its first appearance in Cape Breton coincidentally with the completion of the Cape Breton Railroad, during the month of November last [1889]". I found it abundant at towns along the railroad, as at Hawkesburg, St. Peters, and Sydney. It was also abundant at Baddeck, Englishtown, and at Sandy MacDonald's at the mouth of French River. Fortunately it did not seem to have extended north of that point, and may Smoky long block its way!

There were eighteen species recorded by Dwight, Bolles or Allen which I did not see, namely: *Clangula clangula americana*, *Harelda hyemalis*, *Oidemia deglandi* (the entire absence of Scoters along

¹ Auk, Vol. VII, 1890, p. 212.

the coast even during the latter part of my visit in September seemed to me strange), *Rallus virginianus*, *Philohela minor*, *Coccyzus* sp.?, *Picoides arcticus*, *Sphyrapicus varius*, *Antrostomus vociferus*, *Trochilus colubris*, *Empidonax minimus*, *Pooecetes grammurus*, *Melospiza georgiana*, *Zamelodia ludoviciana*, *Dendroica castanea*, *Sciurus noveboracensis*, *Wilsonia pusilla*, *Hylocichla guttata pallasii*.

Summer Birds of the Cobalt Mining Region,
Nipissing District, Ontario.
by Frederick C. Stubel. Auk, XXIV, Jan., 1907, p. 52.

76. **Passer domesticus.** ENGLISH SPARROW.—Very common at Haileybury.

Birds of Toronto, Canada
by James H. Fleming.
Part II. Land Birds,
Auk, XXIV, Jan., 1907, p. 80.

200. **Passer domesticus.** HOUSE SPARROW.—The "Avian Rat," of Tegetmeier, was introduced about 1870, it increases and decreases according to the severity of the winter, but on the whole is still on the increase.

(*To Passer domesticus seen*)
Wolfeboro, N.H. June 17-1887.
Passer domes. ^{Wolfeboro, N.H. June 18-1889.} Then in village

Bds. Obs. in Franconia, N.H. June 11-21
'86, and June 4-Aug. 1, '87. W. Faxon

41. *Passer domesticus.* HOUSE SPARROW.—One pair nesting in girder
of the lowest bridge over the Gale River in the village, 1887. None seen
in 1886.

Auk, V. April, 1888. p. 152

Crawford Notch N. Hampshire.

4. *Passer domesticus.* ENGLISH SPARROW.—Up to the season of 1909
I had noted only one individual of this species—in August, 1905.² In
1909, however, several birds occurred and at least one pair nested.

Auk 26, Oct-1909, p. 432

Princeton & No. Rutland, Mass. June 23, 1888.
23. *Passer domesticus*, a few in Princeton.

Winchendon, Mass. June, 1888. Saw only a single bird (a ♂) in
Winchendon (last year they
were abundant there. This season
the town was alive with native
birds.)

19. *Passer domesticus*. July, 1889. 4²-28⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

Bds. Obs. near Sheffield, Berkshire
Co., Mass. June 17-26, '88. W. Faxon

41. *Passer domesticus*. HOUSE SPARROW.—Common in the village of
Sheffield.

Auk, VI. Jan., 1889. p. 45

Bds. Obs. near Graylock Mt. Berkshire
Co. Mass. June 28-July 18. W. Faxon

36. *Passer domesticus*. HOUSE SPARROW.—Only found in populous
villages like North Adams and Williamstown.

Auk, VI. April, 1889. p. 101

N. Middlesex Co., Mass.
June 25-30, 1889.

Passer domesticus

Apparently there were only about five individuals in
this species in the town of Ashby. These we saw frequently hop-
ping about in the main streets. The species was not observed at
West Townsend. It is abundant, however, at Framingham. Fitchburg.

Passer domesticus

1895. Falmouth, Mass.

July 12² 13² 14⁵ 15³ 16² 18 19
" 20^{so + insipid, 21 - 31⁽²⁰⁰⁾ grain, stubble}

Connecticut, June, 1893.

Passer domesticus

June 3 2 4 15 Fairfield
" 5 15 } Saybrook
" 13 }
" 2, 4 1, 24 2 Andover

Father Sparrows in Fairfield and
Saybrook; only a few at Saybrook today;
but two pairs at Andover. In the
not-named village House Wrens
were as numerous as they were
at the same time, Mass.)
It was told that the English Sparrow
differs much from the cold & more
active Starling, & that they were more &
less common than were the
Starlings. I found them more
abundant than the English Sparrow.

English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) Feeding on the Larva of the Elm Tree Beetle.—Here in West Haven we have a great many elm trees, which, if not sprayed, are badly infested with the elm tree beetle, the larvae of which eat holes in the leaves causing them to turn yellow and fall to the ground. In July and August the larvae having matured descend to the trunk of the tree where they crawl under the loose bark and form pupae. For the last three years I have noticed English Sparrows working on the trunks of badly infested trees, but this year they were especially active, I having observed from one to four working on the trunk of a tree at a time. They would creep around the tree in Nuthatch fashion up as high as the first limbs for the descending larvae. I stopped to watch a pair of sparrows working on a tree to be sure that they were feeding on the larvae, I was only five feet away so I could positively see that they were taking the larvae and as they flew away with their beaks full they evidently were feeding young. As I have never observed them taking the pupae or imagoes so I could not say whether or not they take them, although I have seen them working on the ground at the bottom of the tree amongst the pupae which became dislodged and fell to the ground. I believe the English Sparrow is becoming more insectivorous each year, as I have on several occasions observed them catching small moths on the wing, also breaking May beetles by pounding them on the sidewalk. Still, I believe the English Sparrow is decreasing in West Haven owing to the fact that the Starling, which is abundant at all times and occupies all available cavities, has forced the Sparrow to resort to the backs of blinds, where the nests are thrown out as soon as discovered. So, under the prevailing conditions I do not think that two pairs out of ten successfully rear a brood in a season. But nevertheless, let us hope that the English Sparrow will continue to be insectivorous, especially in July and August when the larvae of the Elm tree beetle are at their height.—NELSON E. WILMOT, 24 New Street, West Haven, Conn.

Birds observed in Naval Hospital
Grounds, Brooklyn, G. H. Coues

35. *Passer domesticus*. ENGLISH SPARROW.—Very abundant.

Bull N.O.C. 4, Jan., 1879, p. 32

Birds of Adirondack Region — Merriam.

187. *Passer domesticus*. HOUSE SPARROW.—Common in the vil-
lages along the outskirts of the wilderness, on both sides of the Adirondacks.

Bull, N.O.C., 7, Oct., 1882, p. 256

Melanistic Plumages. R. Deane.

1. *Passer domestica*. ENGLISH SPARROW.—In Naumann's work (Vol. IV, p. 458), he says: "Finally there is still a black variety, *Fringilla domestica nigra*, which is wholly coal-black or brownish-black." Three specimens in this dark phase are in the Museum at Munich, Germany (Merrill).

Bull. N.O.C. 5, Jan., 1880, p. 30

Notes.

A Black English Sparrow reported in the vicinity of Lynn. A. M. Tufts.

O. & O. XIV. Apr. 1889 p. 63

On Feb. 26, 1892, a black English Sparrow was taken by C. E. Brown at Beverly, Mass. It was all black except a small buff spot on each cheek. The specimen goes to the Peabody Academy of Science, Salem, Mass.

O. & O. Vol. 17, April 1892 p. 62

Passer domesticus

1900. Massachusetts
Dec. 26 & 27. Cambridge, Brewster Garden.

I saw an English Sparrow with one primary and a feather in the wing covert, both in the right wing, white.

Walter Deane.

Albinism and Melanism in North American Birds. Ruthven Deane.

Doubtless the *Fringillidae* are represented more largely than any family, though but eleven species have come under my notice, *Passer domesticus* being the only one pure white.

Bull. N.O.C. I, April, 1876, p. 21

ALBINO HOUSE SPARROW, was captured recently in the streets of Philadelphia. It was evidently a young bird and pure white, while its nest mates were of the ordinary color. It was captured alive by a street car conductor after a short chase.

O. & O. V11. Oct. 1882. p. 168.

—ALBINO ENGLISH SPARROW.

Dec. 12th I saw an Albino English Sparrow. Saw him again several times loafing in front of a feed store with a dozen or so companions. They did not seem to regard him as anything of a curiosity. He was perfectly white, or as nearly so as a bird could be in this city. I left instructions at the feed store for his capture, but he shortly afterward disappeared.—T. L. Hazzard, M. D., Allegheny, Pa.

O. & O. IX. Feb. 1884. p. 23

Winter Notes from Wellesley Mass
S. W. Denton.

Dec. 27, while passing through Watertown, Mass., in the horse-car, I saw an albino English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), alight for a few moments in the street. So far as I could see it was pure white, with the exception of a slight reddish tinge on the back.

O. & O. XIII. July. 1888 p. 104

Notes on the Breeding of the English Sparrow
in
Brookline, Mass.

June 1, 1884. set of five eggs in a hole in an apple tree.

May 25. 1884. five young birds and six fresh eggs in nests in hole
in apple tree. May ²⁵ ~~25~~, 1885, half grown birds in nests in hole
in apple tree. April 25, 1886, found nest with fresh eggs today.

May 1, 1886, nest with five fresh eggs.

Note:

I am not certain as to whether when breeding about
not
houses, particularly in towns, they may ^A breed earlier than as
before.

J.H.K.

J.H. Remond.

Nesting Dates English Sparrow. ^{Ap. 12 - May 12}

April 30. 1896. set 5 eggs. Sarah. Dorchester Mass.

" 30 1896.	4	5	"	"	"	"
" 30 1896	"	5	"	"	"	"

May 30 1896.	"	4	"	"	Milton	"
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" 7. 1897.	"	5	slightly incubated.	Dorchester.	"	"
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" 14. 1896.	"	6	eggs.	Sarah.	"	"
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" 7. 1897.	"	5	" slightly inc.	"	"	"
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" 7. 1897.	"	5	" Sarah.	"	"	"
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" 7. 1897.	"	5	" "	"	"	"
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J.B. McReechie.

*S. H. Northington
Notes from Jewett City, Conn.
O. & O. IX. Feb. 1884. p. 24*

A very prolific English sparrow inhabited one of my bird boxes last Spring. Her first set was six eggs, the last one laid being rather light colored. I took these, and she immediately begun and laid another set of six, the last egg being very pale. I took these, and she laid one almost pure white egg and gave up the contest. *O. & O. VII. Jul. 1882. p. 141.*

Last year I found a House Sparrow's nest with four eggs, two of which were speckled all over; the third was almost destitute of spots, and the fourth was pure white. This is the second with white eggs.

W. B. Fonda. Morristown, N. J.

O. & O. VIII. July. 1883. p. 55.

As for House Sparrows, there is no accounting for the places they choose or number of eggs laid. A pair took possession this season of a hole where a Downy Woodpecker had a nest last year and have raised a brood there.—*Snowdon Howland.*

O. & O. VIII. Jan. 1883. p. 8

ENGLISH SPARROWS BUILDING IN TREES, &c.—During the past season the English Sparrows in this vicinity have built in trees to a limited extent. I saw two very bulky nests in the upper branches of a young elm, and while out early one morning in June watching a pair of these birds as they were constructing their nest, I was accosted by a good-natured Irishman, who, after he had learned what I was about, said: "Do ye know where the *Jabbers* build?" I was puzzled to know what he meant by "*Jabbers*," and so intimated. He explained by saying, "Did ye never mind the birds with the long *bakes* (beaks) that they be all the time *jabbin'* into the trees?" I suggested that he might have seen a Woodpecker, and he said, "Is that the name of 'em? I call 'em the *Jabbers*." I think we could forgive the "*Jabbers*" if they would jab their beaks into a few English Sparrows, just for diversion. This last word reminds me of a remark recently made in my presence by an old lady who lives on a farm not many miles away. While scolding about a reckless son, she said, "I can't get him to shoot the pesky Hen Hawks, but he'll go out any time and shoot Chimney Swallows for *devotion*."—*C. E. P.*

O. & O. IX. Oct. 1884. p. 128.

PASSER DOMESTICUS. May 23, I saw a nest of the English Sparrow between a window sash and the blind. It was in the window of a chamber that was not used and the birds had entered through the shutters, made their bulky nest, and reared their young unmolested.—*Chas. Edward Prior.*

Notes from Jewett City, Conn.

O. & O. IX. Aug. 1884. p. 101.

SPARROW BUILDING IN AN ORIOLE'S NEST. *E. M. Hasbrouck, Syracuse, N. Y.*, gives a description of a find he made a few years since and asks if any one else has met with a similar occurrence. He also refers to "A Non-descript," but as he says the nest and eggs "have disappeared from all collections" we fear it is too late to find out whether the bird was "a species hitherto unobserved" or not.

O. & O. IX. Feb. 1884. p. 24

CURIOS NESTING PLACE.—It was recently found necessary to repair the chimney of the Osborn Mill, at Fall River, Mass., which is 125 feet high. In removing the casting and loose bricks Mr. Crow, the contractor, found a Sparrow's nest, (*Passer domesticus*), which contained one egg.—*Jos. M. Wade, Boston, Mass. O. & O. X. Aug. 1885. p. 127.*

The strangest nesting place of a bird that I have ever seen was one of an English Sparrow, noticed last June. On a crossbar on a telegraph post hangs an old oil can, in the bottom of which is a rust-eaten hole, and through this the Sparrows found an entrance, made their nest, and raised their young without molestation, and undiscovered by any other person, though it was on the side of the railway and near the main street.—*W. L. K.*

O. & O. Vol. 18, June, 1893 p. 85

A New Trait of the English Sparrow.

Last summer I was told by a young clergyman that when he was in college he used to watch a pair of Robins that had a nest in a bush below his window. There were two eggs in the nest. One day he looked out of the window and saw in place of the eggs two downy young birds. A day or two after he was again at the window with a companion, when they perceived that there was only one young bird in the nest. While they were wondering why one should have disappeared, the old Robin flew away to get food, when a flock of English Sparrows came to the nest, and pecked and scratched the remaining young one until it was dead, finally lifting it bodily and dropping it to the ground below. The young men hurried down below the nest, but the young Robin was dead and very much mutilated, while the Sparrows had disappeared.

I have always thought the English Sparrow a miserable scamp, but the above trait is a surprise, and a new source of indignation against this pest.

*Henry L. Beadel.
New Brighton, Staten Island, N. Y.*

O. & O. XV. Dec. 1890. p. 184.

CURIOS NESTING PLACE. This day, June 11, while on a visit to the mills at Lawrence, Mass., we noticed a nest inside of the depot gong. The gong is about twelve inches in diameter and about an inch and a quarter from the wall. Three years ago a pair of House Sparrows built two or three nests in this gong, but they were pulled out by the baggage master, as they deadened the sound of the gong. This year they have built four nests. The third one filled the entire gong except an entrance hole, and the female laid a full set of eggs and had commenced sitting, and would not leave her nest on the inside of the gong when it was struck for departing trains. That nest and eggs was pulled out and would fill a peck measure. After this the gong was covered with a wire netting, except a place for the hammer to lift up, and through this small hole they have built their fourth nest this year. Now that the gong is covered with netting they are content with a small nest, seeming to know that it is a protection.

O. & O. VIII, July, 1862, p. 56.

Birds Breeding in District of Columbia. C. W. Richmond.

49. *Passer domesticus*. EUROPEAN HOUSE SPARROW.—This little renegade is excessively abundant. They are frequently seen building nests during mild days in winter, and rear four or five broods a year, probably more. In June, large numbers, mostly young birds, congregate about grain fields and along country roads, where they remain until harvest time is over. Eggs generally five or six; nest lavishly lined with feathers.

Auk, V. Jan, 1888. p. 22

Auk, XV, April, 1898, p. 193.

The Use of Hornets' Nests by Birds.—Miss Elizabeth A. Simons of East Clifton, Delaware Co., Penn., has in her possession a large hornet's nest, which was taken from a pear tree, in the vicinity, by her brother. A neat hole had been excavated in its side, directly under the comb, about two and one half inches in diameter, with quite a good-sized cavity inside, which was bedded with slender fall-grasses and lined with body feathers from fowls. Upon inquiry they were not certain of its true occupants, but from a careful examination I would judge it to be a freshly built nest of the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*). It is to be regretted that it had not been found by a more careful observer.

This is the second occurrence of the use of hornets' nests by birds, which has come under the writer's notice, the other instance being a House Wren (Auk, Vol. VI, p. 339).—J. HARRIS REED, Beverly, N. J.

Auk, XV, April, 1898, p. 193.

Birds Nesting under Electric Arc-light Hoods.—The fact of the arc-light hoods being utilized for nesting purposes is common to most every city or town where this type of lamp is used. The House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) was no doubt the first bird to adopt them, and subsequently the Purple Martin (*Progne subis*); this is quite a common occurrence through southern New Jersey. But there yet remains another species, the fact of which may be new to ornithologists, which I observed at Atlantic City, N. J., about July, 1892. J. Harris Reed, Beverly, N. J.

Passer domesticus
English Sparrow
Catering -

The American Field
Vol. XXIX
No. 2, 1888
pp. 31 ~ 32.

ster up to and into the boat, the gaff getting in its deadly hook just in time.

"I reckon he'll weigh twenty-five pounds," said Hiram, as he stowed it away in the stern locker.

"What's become of Jug," Joe queried.

"Oh, Jug's all right, I'll bet," replied Hiram, at the same time scanning the west bank of the river. "There he is, stanch as any setter on a point."

We both looked in the direction indicated and espied Jug below a clump of scrub trees, looking betimes in our direction and then toward the remaining jugs, patiently waiting our return. We pulled toward him, which movement he no sooner discovered than out he jumped into the stream, swimming toward jug No. 1, which was bobbing around in a most animated manner.

"There," said Hiram, "talk about your trained bird dogs, why, Jug'll knock the spots off any one of them. You see that jug on land? Well, Jug'd no more leave that jug alone before he knew we were after it than he would to eat it. His eye has all this time been on the jug he's after now, but he knew a jug in his paw was worth a dozen in the water."

By this time we had the jug on land in hand and pulled up a ten or twelve-pound catfish, which was stowed away with its congener in the stern locker.

Jug was having a big chase after jug No. 1, and as the prospects seemed in favor of the jug we pulled out again and made all possible speed to overtake it.

"By the great hornspoons but there's a whopper on that jug," exclaimed Hiram between pulls, and so it proved to be for the dog could not catch it and we had a good fifteen minutes' row to overtake the eccentric bobber. When we did get a good hold of the line it took the three of us to haul it in and steady the boat at the same time.

"Sixty pounds will be a small weight for this slicker," said Hiram, as he struck it a terrific blow with the heavy gaff handle, effectually quieting its frantic struggles and lashings.

We had now been out about three hours, having acquired ferocious appetites in the meantime, and when Hiram suggested we had better pull home for breakfast no razor ever acquired a keener edge by honing than did our appetites at this intimation. As Jug came alongside the boat Joe remarked, "Well, I swan, this is the first time I ever saw a dog fish catfish."

"But I have seen cat fish dogfish," I ventured to say, well remembering a pond in a certain Chicago park where the keeper's cat was wont to go a fishing every other morning, occasionally landing a six to ten-inch dogfish.

Before taking Jug in he was sent after the jugs still floating, which, together with himself, were hauled into the boat and our catfishing in the Mississippi was brought to an end.

Chicago, Ill.

NOTES.

WHITEFISH HATCHERY AT CHICAGO.—At a meeting of the West Chicago Park Board of Commissioners this week, Mr. S. P. Bartlett, secretary of the Illinois State Fish Commission, also representing the Fish Commission at Washington, made a proposition to the Board to establish a whitefish hatchery in connection with well laid out fish ponds at one of the West Chicago parks. Mr. Bartlett said that although the details as to the size and cost of the buildings, ponds, etc., had not been completed, it had been fully decided by both the Washington and State Fish Commissions to establish a hatchery at Chicago. Mr. Bartlett's proposition was favorably received, and a committee was appointed to meet him and go over the ground and select a site for the buildings and ponds for the fish. The commissioners are inclined to make Mr. Bartlett a liberal offer in order to prevent any of the other Chicago parks securing the hatchery, which, if at all similar to the one at St. Louis, according to Mr. Bartlett, will be one of the chief objects of interest at the West Side parks. Mr. Bartlett said that a whitefish hatchery would be a useful thing for Chicago, inasmuch as Lake Michigan has been disastrously depleted of whitefish in the last dozen years.

NEW YORK, January 5.—The New York State Fish Commission have sent a report to the legislature at Albany in which it claims that commercially speaking no such return is had from any investment as from the \$26,000 appropriation for the propagation of fish. The commissioners claim that several varieties of fish would suffer great depletion except for the work done. Several kinds of fresh water fish, they say, would become extinct except for such efforts. Over 200,000 more shad were caught last year than the preceding year. The hatchery stations through the state have done good work, and brook trout and frost fish have increased in quality and number to an astonishing degree. The appointment of a board of game protectors is recommended. The repeal of the so-called lobster law is condemned. By it young lobsters could not be placed in the market; now they can.

W. A.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., January 7.—At a largely attended meeting January 3, called by the National Fishery Association, vigorous speeches were made and resolutions of sympathy with the fishermen of New England adopted, declaring that the existing fishery troubles could have been avoided by a proper administration of governmental power;

that Canadian fishing vessels should be denied in our ports any rights which Canada denies to our fishermen; calling upon the president to exercise the retaliatory powers vested in him by the Forty-ninth Congress; protesting against "any re-establishment of the one-sided reciprocity with Canada, such as existed in the years 1854 and 1867, and against the proposal to admit Canadian fish or other products free of duty;" and that the import duty on Canadian fish should be raised.

JUSTICE.

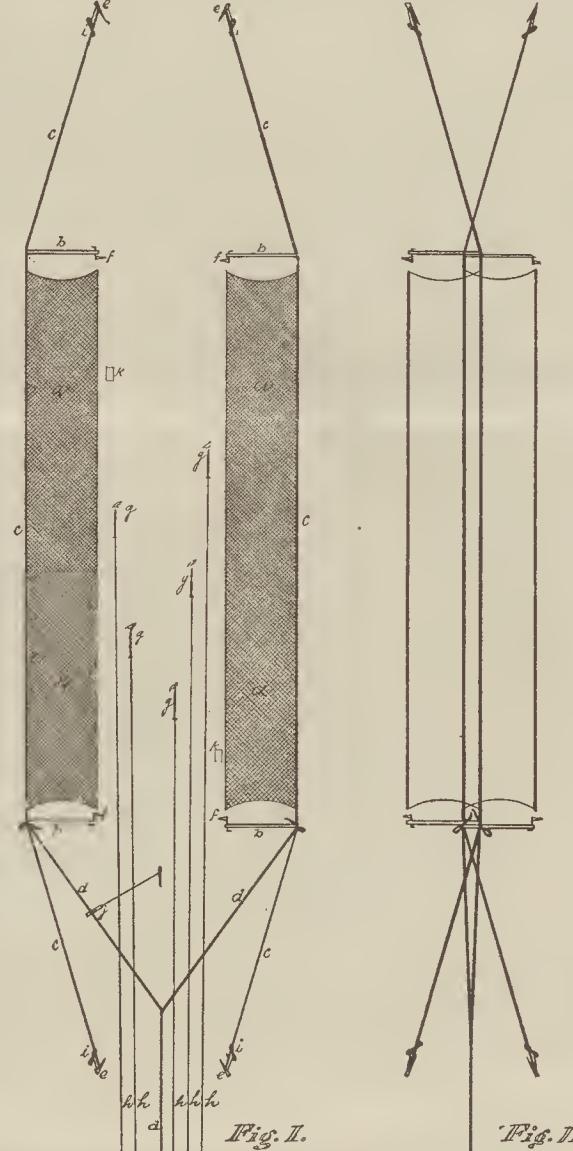
We will esteem it a favor if some of our correspondents will send us the dates of the opening of the trout season in Colorado, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Arizona and New Mexico.

Natural History.

ENGLISH SPARROW CATCHING.

Amer. Field. XXIX., No. 2. BY W. T. HILL. *Jan. 14, 1888.* pp. 31, 32.

If we wish to catch a bird we must first acquaint ourselves with its nature and habits that we may intelligently bring to bear upon it the proper means to insure success. Many birds, at certain seasons of the year, are readily caught with simple devices carelessly applied, but the English sparrow, at all times, is the same cunning, wary little fellow, not to be caught with chaff alone, and great care is necessary in any approach upon it. Considering, however, that we have a vantage ground in its gregarious, nomadic habits, and following in this direction we produce something that appeals directly to its extreme greediness and curiosity, which



shall be life-like and real, and realizing that it is quick to take alarm, we so apply it as to cause the bird to act impulsively, and to enable us to take it by surprise as much as possible.

The method used so successfully and almost exclusively by me is nets, decoy and braced birds, placed in the line of flight of the birds to and from their sleeping and feeding places. The wild birds are influenced by the decoy birds and then directed into the nets by means of the braced birds, and are invariably caught while on the wing or in the act of settling. The nets can also be used to great advantage in places where the birds are known to harbor, in which case decoy birds are not necessary; but there should be no building, tree, or other object for the bird to alight upon inside of fifty yards from the nets, it being best to attract its attention while it is on the wing, as well as to prevent it from discerning anything unusual. The skillful operation of the nets, in the main, consists in properly judging the flight of the bird in connection with the movements of the nets, and to so pull and control the force of pulling in closing them as to cause the net to strike the bird when the radius of the semi-circle of either wing is at a vertical point. The irregularity of the flight of the sparrow makes it difficult to catch many at one time.

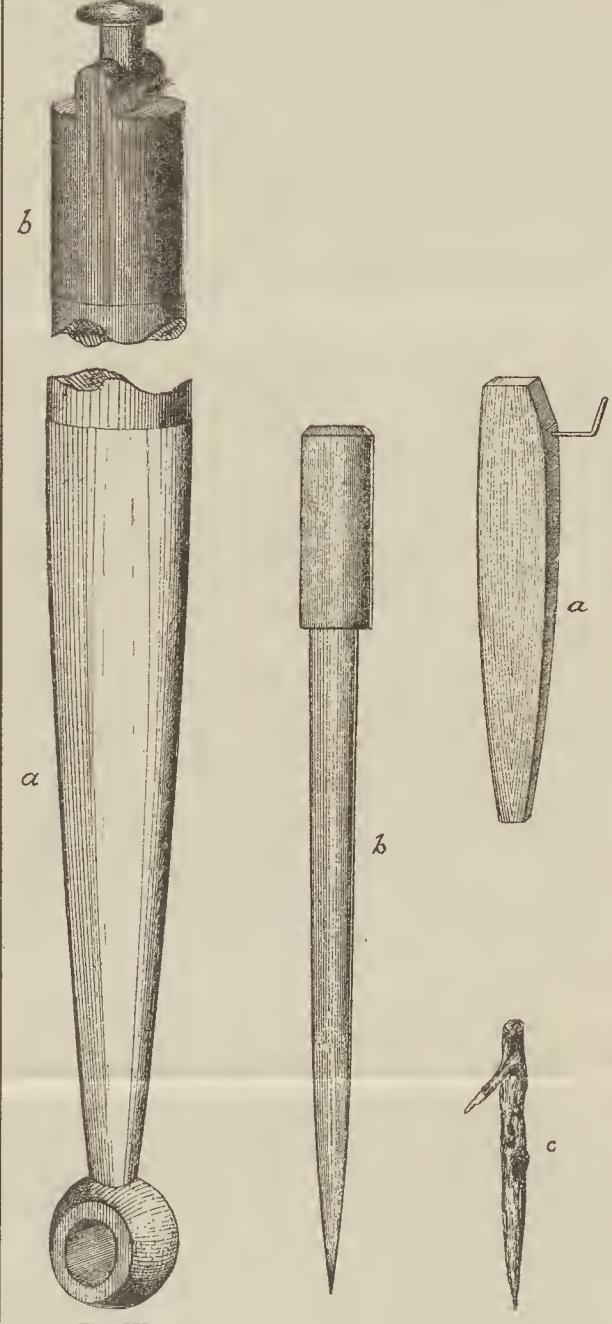
The mechanical operation of these nets is shown in Figs. I and II. Fig. I shows nets open—lying flat upon the ground. By pulling pull-line (*d*) each net is caused to move upward and inward to the completion of a half circle, one net slightly overlapping the other when closed, as shown in Fig. II. The four points of each net formed by the two cheeks (*f*) and two heel-pins (*e*) are on a straight line. The nets are stretched tight over tops of staffs (*b*) which have socket attachment and work on wire in cheek as a pivot or hinge. The tension on pull-line will keep the nets straight and even, except when a strong wind blows across them, in which case the arm of pull-line is shortened or a pulley (*j*) attached.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTS.

The Nets should be made of linen material, about the size of No. 35 gilling thread, of a dark, dirty green color, the size of mesh being 13-16 of an inch from knot to knot or fifteen knots to foot. A convenient and serviceable size of net would be thirty feet long by seven feet deep, to use with four-foot staffs. They should be provided with an arming of heavier cord at the top and bottom edges, which the top-line (*c*, Fig. 1) should be threaded through at top, and to form a stout edging to permit of pegging to the ground at bottom.

The Top-line of net should be a fine linen cord, about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thick, provided at ends with a small wooden clamp (*i*, Fig. 1) similar to those used upon tents, and at the place where the net ends on the top-line one or more loops or eyes should be spliced there, to admit the button on top of staff, and also to fasten the arms of pull-line into.

The Pull-line should be of same material as top-line, with diverging arms at end next the net. It should be about forty yards long, which is the average distance to stand from the middle of net while operating it. A round piece of wood, about four inches long is temporarily fastened to permit of taking of good grip in pulling.



The Staff (*b*, Fig. III) should be about four feet long, and three-quarter-inch in diameter of some light, strong wood, with brass socket and eye (*a*, Fig. III) at bottom, and button and ridge (*b*, Fig. III), also of brass, at top.

The Cheeks (*a*, Fig. IV) are wedge-shaped stakes averaging nine inches long, with wire (No. 10) driven in about an inch from top, which at a projection of an inch is bent upward for about an inch. They should be made of hickory or other hardwood, and the wire should fit in the wood so snugly as to barely permit of being moved with the fingers.

The Heel-pins (*b*, Fig. IV) should also be made of hard-wood, about eighteen inches long, and one inch in diameter at thickest part, tapering to a point, with projection at top to prevent cord from slipping off.

The Crooks (c, Fig. IV), which are used for staking the bottom edge of net to the ground, are cut from the branches of some hardwood tree, the long end being about six inches in length.

The above represents braced-bird, and the appliances for using it: 1 bobber; 2, fly stick; 3, braced-bird; 4, brace-line; 5, water-cup.

The Bobber (1, Fig. V), which is used in connection with fly-stick for raising and flying braced-bird, is constructed as follows: *a* is a piece of hardwood two and a half inches long, half an inch thick and five-eighths of an inch wide; *b* is a piece of No. 10 wire that when bent so as to form an eye at top is nine inches long, and passes through *a*, leaving a space of half an inch between wires, in which the fly-stick moves up and down; *c* is also of No. 10 wire, bent as shown, passing through *a* horizontally outside of perpendicular wire *b*, the ends being pointed and bent downward, are, together with the long ends of *b*, forced into the ground, which keeps it firmly in position; *d* is also a piece of wood pivoted on wire *c*, with tapering hole in end, into which the fly-stick is inserted. The wires should fit snugly in *a*, so as to permit only of being moved to suit the conditions of hard and soft ground, and to regulate the height of raising bird, *d* should work more easily on wire *c* yet not loosely. To raise fly-stick pass brace-line through eye in top of wire *b*, and fasten to stick.

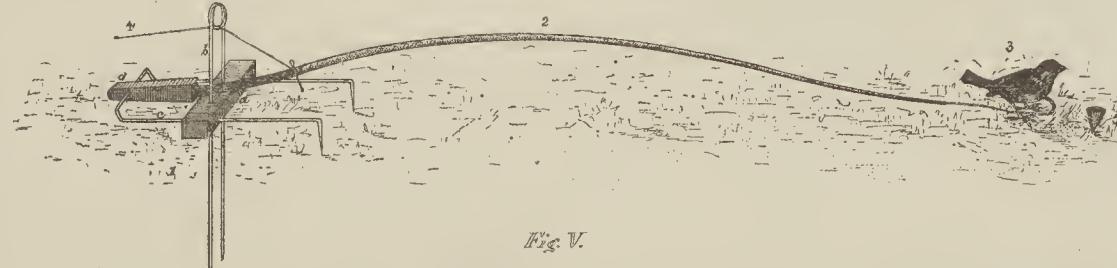


Fig. V.

The Fly-stick (2, Fig. V), to which the braced-bird is attached, and caused to sit upon, is a stiff willow switch, about two feet long, with loop, about four and a half inches long, made of fishing line, wrapped on the small end by means of waxed thread.



Fig. VI.

The Brace (Fig. VI) is composed of four cords and swivel, to be placed upon bird as a means of fastening it without injury, and to leave every movement of the bird free and natural. The ring should be of German silver wire, formed over a lead pencil, a common pin completing the swivel. The cords should be of soft cotton, which when stretched in a straight line should measure about one and three-quarter inches. To put it on the bird pass it over its head so as to appear like two cords encircling its body, with swivel at breastbone, and the knot of cords in center of the back of bird, when it will only be necessary to put each wing and leg of the bird (in the order named) between the cords on each side of brace.

The Brace-lines should be of mattress twine, fifty yards long, and wound upon reel to prevent twisting.

Blind Cages are also necessary to receive the birds after they are caught, which are a light frame of wood about one foot square by five inches high, covered with cloth—a stocking leg at top in the middle forming the door. These, together with a receptacle for carrying them called a pack (Fig. VII), which is a light rigid frame, also covered with cloth (the nets and other appliances being rolled up on top), and a small hatchet, a sickle and a camp stool the outfit is complete.

HOW TO SET THE NETS.

Having described each part separately, we will now consider how to put them together. Taking for granted that the place which we have selected to put the nets down is perfectly level and clean, and that the end of the pull-line will reach a fence or other slight relief or cover, the pack is placed upon the ground in the middle of where the nets are intended to be set, and the nets laid in a line on each side of it. We now take two staffs and lapping them about nine inches, lay them on the ground at ends of top-lines of nets, nearest where we intend to stand. Taking the hatchet we drive two heel-pins in at the extremes of the staffs, when the distance between the two pins will be the length of both staffs less the nine inches we lapped them. Having taken

each top-line and allowed about a foot of slack by means of clamps and placed them over heel-pins, taking also an extra turn, we go to the other end and taking with us two more heel-pins, repeat what we have just done, but taking care that the lines are stretched perfectly straight and tight, and that these pins, upon which so much strain comes, are secure. The top-lines of nets now form two straight, parallel lines, and care should be taken not to move them in any way until after the cheeks are driven in. These should now be driven in at the points along top-line where the eyes appear at ends of nets, inclining slightly outward so that the wire will project on outside of line sufficient to cause the net when stretched on staff and held perpendicularly to have a tendency to fall inwards. We will now pass the socket of staffs over wires in the cheeks, and let out sufficient of the slack of top-lines to permit of their being stretched over and attached to button on top of staffs. This being done we will proceed to stake down the bottom edge of nets—first the four corners, and then the hollow places between them. The bobbers and fly-sticks come next, and if five are used should be placed as shown in Fig. I, the lines attached, some food for birds placed at ends of fly-sticks and their water cups put down and filled, when we can put on the pull-line, the ends of the arms entering into the same eyes of top-lines the buttons of staffs have, as

In handling the bird avoid pressure on its body; hold it firmly, and without tremor, between the forefinger and thumb around its neck—thumb across its throat, back of bird next the palm of hand, and when it is necessary to change its position in the hand, always keep the hands moving when doing so or it may escape.

Now, this may all appear too extensive and complicated at first for some to attempt, but there are members of every club who have sufficient ingenuity and the necessary intuition that by application and study could construct and use their own nets, which would not only be a gratification of their individual pleasure, but also of profit and advantage to the members in general. With these nets, and by following the instructions given, the merest tyro could catch a great many birds in a day—frequently a hundred or more. It should always be borne in mind that the method is not

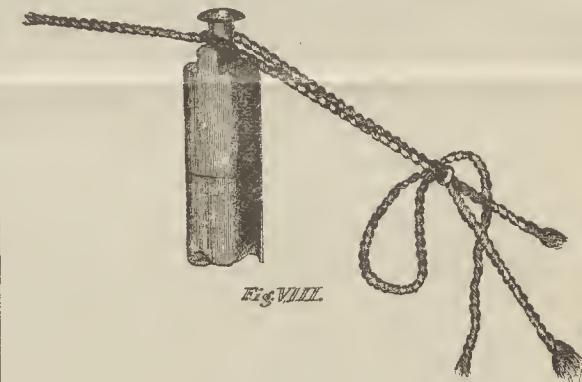


Fig. VII.

in any way to be considered as a baited trap, but that the principle involved is to take the bird unawares—to fool it—and that it is easier to fool one than ten. The number caught at the end of the day will depend largely in bagging every bird that comes within the scope of the nets. Make it a rule to be satisfied with one, if no others are in sight, for after the old adage, "a bird in the hand," etc., a sparrow in the nets is worth seventeen on the fence.

As to the when and where to go, while there are some given rules for this, still the birds are so quick to take alarm, and so communicative, that it is not possible at times to account for their movements. Their vast numbers and nomadic habits, however, will offset this, and by a little

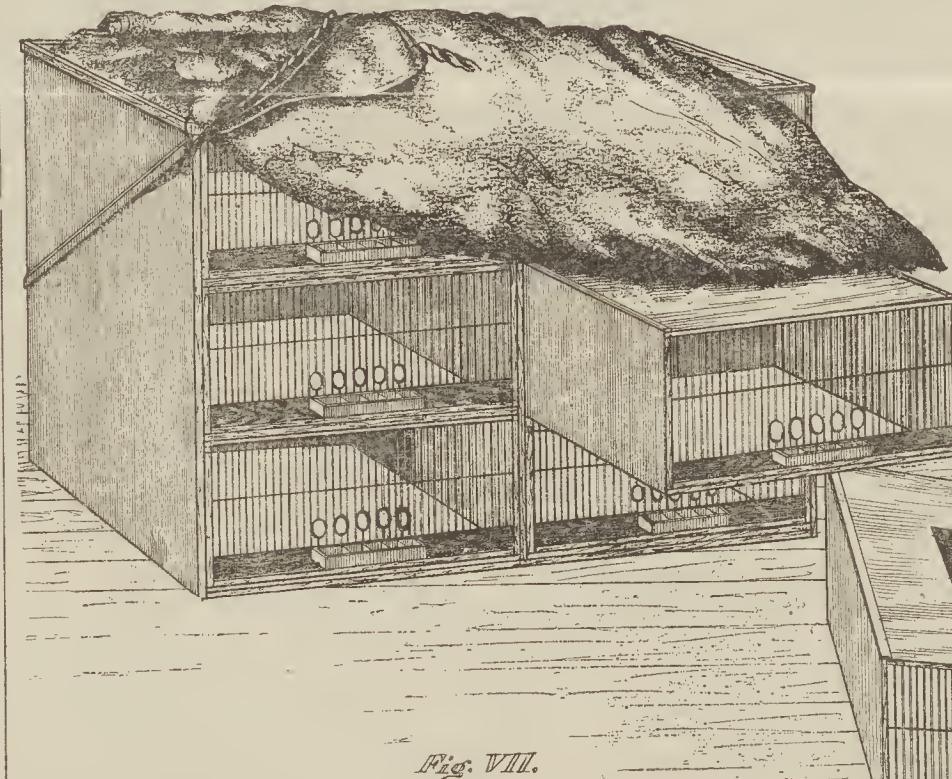


Fig. VIII.

caught is a very important feature, for if used for trap purposes it will be necessary to keep them in the most vigorous condition possible from the moment they are caught until used. They should be given a little seed in the blind cages, as also water in the dips outside, and the cage must be kept out of the sun, but the sooner they can be liberated into the ultimate place designed for keeping them the better. This can either be a room or out-building sufficiently tight to hold them, provided with ledges and perches, which would be more convenient when catching them out again if made portable. Their staple food here should be feed meal (yellow corn) and wheat, with an occasional change of some other small grain or seed, or soaked stale bread, and they should be liberally fed and watered at least once a day. Their water should be given in large flat pans, and the floor of the room should be covered with sand. If the room is not too high the birds can be caught out of it by means of a long landing net used in fishing. A flat store cage should be used to convey the birds where they are to be used, and care taken of them by seeing that they have food and water, and are kept in a quiet place out of the sun, when if there are any left they can be returned to room without injury.

study of the habits of the bird, and by a few practical lessons in the shape of successes and failures it will not be difficult to determine where a good catch can be made.

Indianapolis, Ind.

NOTES.

UTICA, MINN., has a curiosity in the person of Herman Harnes who has slept almost continuously for seven years. Powerful electric batteries or other means fail to awaken him. At the time the sleep began in 1880, he weighed one hundred and eighty pounds; now he weighs less than ninety pounds. He lies on his back, breathes naturally and suffers little pain, but is gradually wasting away. About 11 o'clock every evening he awakes for five or six minutes, during which time he hurriedly eats a soft boiled egg, a little soup, a swallow of coffee, and again falls asleep. His mind is perfectly clear. In the Summer of 1884 he awoke one morning, arose from his bed, put on his clothes, and went about his work. Told that he had slumbered four years, he grew indignant and would not believe that he had slept more than a night until led before a mirror and shown his long

The English Sparrow.

THE ENGLISH SPARROW.

Am. Field. XXX., No. 5. August 4, 1888. p. 102.
COLUMBIA, S. C.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—I have read with interest the views of your contributors, pro and con, upon the habits of the little foreigners who now constitute a large part of the population of the cities and towns in the United States; I refer to the English sparrow. He has his accusers and his defenders, the former, however, being largely in the majority, and my sympathies ever being with the undermost dog in the fight, I shall array myself among the latter.

"For you always see, if it be a free fight
(Which it very often is), this is so,
That evry other dog who joins in the row
Will pitch into the one below."

He is condemned as pugnacious; although we have a variety of birds here, both song and otherwise, I have never seen him in combat save with his own kind, and then he has shown game worthy of his native shores. These disputes are *comme il faut*, or how else could they preserve the laws necessary to a good society? I cannot confute the charge of his being predaceous upon my own knowledge, but I wish the warlike spirit complained of could be directed to the banishment, or extinction, of the most annoying and predaceous rascal in this country, *i. e.*, the blue jay. This pilferer will sleep in your trees, eat with your poultry, quench its thirst from the old oaken bucket (good enough for a king); and then return your hospitality by robbing your nests, or you of the luxury of a matutinal nap, by rending your ears with their harsh demoniacal shrieks, while perched upon a bough immediately under your window, nodding and screaming at you in derision because the city ordinance claiming \$5 a shot, makes it too expensive to bring to bear your .22 Stevens, or .32 Winchester. When a boy the negroes used to tell me, with all gravity, that the jay bird paid a visit to Hades every Friday, and I am very much inclined to believe there is ground for the charge. Pardon the digression and I will now legitimately address myself to the one count in the indictment, on which I expect to clear the little stranger, viz: that he is non-insectivorous.

While reading upon the back porch of my office one evening, my attention was drawn to the movements of an English sparrow, flitting over a cabbage bed; the cabbage leaves were riddled by worms, their ravages this season being unusually severe; I watched, closely sanguine of seeing what was developed. The little fellow extracted a worm from a stalk, flew to the top of the next building, and, on the tin roof, swallowed it plecemeal; something frightened him away, and, whether he gave the information or not, in ten minutes a dozen were at work on that cabbage bed and several worms were hoisted to the roof of the same building, but I observed that none were eaten on the ground. I cannot be in error in this statement, as the time was 6 p.m., the distance of the roof of next building, spoken of, about twenty-five feet and the sun's rays glinting upon the bird as he flew past me made the bright green worms, an inch long, gleam like an emerald. Now I consider this evidence wholly adequate in rebuttal, and upon the established rule, *Falsus in uno, etc.*, I shall expect an acquittal. One word more, and (not like the preacher) "There's an end on't, you know;" it behooves us in the city and in the country to cherish any instrument for the destruction of insects. A distinguished scholar is credited with affirming that after the utter extinction of the feathered tribe (referring to insectivorous birds), insects will destroy this mundane sphere.

CONGAREE.

THE ENGLISH SPARROW.

Am. Field. XXIX., No. 17. Apr. 28, 1888. pp. 390, 391.
ROCHESTER, N. Y.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—The following I sent to the Rochester *Herald* in reply to Professor Fish's paper entitled "The Danger of the Extinction of Our Native Birds," for there is no sure thing but that I may have some claim on him. It is what he says in relation to the English sparrow that I take some exceptions to. Now I do not know how close an observer of the habits of birds Professor Fish is, or but what he has written may have been from his own personal observation, but this much I will say, that in my opinion nine-tenths of the writers against the English sparrow, and many other things as well, base their statements on hearsay; what they have learned from books and what they suspect somebody else would have said had they been going to write on the same subject; and the consequence is that they write something which is in the main quoted or borrowed from somebody else, and of which they have no personal knowledge. The prejudice has grown so strong against the English sparrow that it has got to be almost as much as a man's life is worth to say anything in his favor; but what I shall say here I have witnessed time and again, and, as my intimate friends know, I don't believe much that I don't see. In regard to the sparrows driving away the song birds, he has been painted by his enemies much worse than he really is, and I do not believe it. If Professor Fish or any one else who believes as he does will spend a day with me in my yard in the Summer I will guarantee that I will show him that the English sparrow does not drive away other birds, and that he lives mostly on insects. I will show him martins and sparrows living in the same house. I have a basin in my yard that I keep filled with water for the birds. It is not an uncommon thing to see six or eight sparrows drinking out of the same pan at the same time, and if a robin, cat-blrd or oriole comes to drink, the sparrows leave until the last comers get through; then the sparrows come back and finish. I have wrens' and sparrows' nests in my yard; they are quite close together and if the sparrow lights near the wren's nest the wren goes for him and Mr. Sparrow gets away as fast as he can. The most fighting the sparrows do is among themselves, and I have seen them do this to the death of one or the other, but I have yet to see them kill or even get the best of other birds.

If the robins are really more scarce than formerly it must be borne in mind that great numbers of them are killed in the Fall of the year on their way South, where they are sold in the markets, and the number killed in the North by the growers of small fruits is not inconsiderable.

We are all agreed that thousands of birds have been and are killed annually for millinery purposes, and it is not the fault of the English sparrow that they fail to return. The sparrow is not so handsome as most other birds, but he is useful and better than none at all, and his salvation appears to be in that nature has not adorned him with bright feathers. If he had been thus adorned praise of his useful qualities would have been sounded by those who now seek his life. The cats are getting scarce in this country and I think the sparrows had as much to do with it as the sparrow had to do with driving away the song bird.

I am a great lover of all the birds and want to see them properly protected, the sparrows included. I know he is too useful a member of the feathered creation to be exterminated.

SETH GREEN.

The English Sparrow.

2.

An. Field. XXIX., No. 17. April 24, 1888.
P. 391. PORT ROYAL, TENN.
EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD.—The AMERICAN FIELD is a splendid educator. It has taught me to love the study of natural history as dearly as I do dogs, guns and fishing rods, and I consider it a duty I owe those who, like myself, are lovers of natural history, to make known the results of my researches and observations.

The English sparrow made his advent among us in 1886. It is proper to state, however, that these detestable little pests made their appearance in larger towns in this part of the state several years before the date given above. They came to this part of the South from the North in freight cars loaded with grain. Whether they were foraging on the grain in the cars, and were shut up in them and brought here, or whether the migratory instinct prompted them to come South, and they beat their way on the cars where there was plenty to eat, I do not know. But it is a settled fact that they came to this part of the South as mentioned above. I would like very much to learn from some of your Southern correspondents the limit of their Southern migrations. I was in the Gulf States two years ago and I neither saw nor heard of any sparrows south of Nashville, Tenn. The progress of these pests South is interesting. The place is in latitude 36° 30' N.

As is known by those conversant with the history of these birds, they were imported into New York city in 1852. As will appear from the date given of the first arrivals here, they were thirty-four years reaching this latitude. They first got a foothold in the cities, towns and villages on railroads, and then scattered to the more remote country villages. They nest there one year, and then take to the rural districts. They first appear on farms where there are houses built like those in towns. The reason for this is obvious: it is because they can find places in and about such buildings where they can make their nests. Every year they become more and more numerous.

This Southern country is destined to be overrun with them, for they increase very rapidly. In a few years they will swarm about the humble cabin of this region as thickly as about the fine country mansion. They have banished nearly all of our song birds. If something is not done to destroy them by the wholesale they will inflict great damage on crops and small fruits. As insect destroyers the English sparrow is a great humbug. If the sparrow were an insect destroyer this is the country for him to thrive and keep fat. This is a tobacco-growing country—tobacco is king, like cotton in the Gulf States. When the tobacco plants are very small and tender they are devoured by small insects. They have inflicted greater damage upon the country than the severest drought ever known. But the sparrows do not feed upon these insects. The sparrow is not the farmer's friend; he is nobody's friend; he is a robber, a vandal. The sparrows are destined to do great damage to the agricultural interests of the South. I cannot see for the life of me why farmers do not shoot down every one they see about their premises; they do not appear to realize the danger that is in store for them. They increase much faster in the South than in the North. I think they raise two broods a year with us. The streets of our cities, towns and villages are overrun with them, and when they become as numerous on our farms the question will be: What are we going to do about it?

BIRDO.

THE ENGLISH SPARROW.

An. Field. XXIX., No. 18. May 5, 1888. P. 414.
ST. PAUL, MINN.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD.—The sparrows have come to stay; the city is filled with them; every nook and crevice in the cornices of buildings are occupied by these little busy bodies, building their nests; long strings and straws are seen waving from many an ornamental rosette, the inner ends of which are woven into the nests which are the breeding places of thousands of these little pests. Fight! well, they are the most belligerant feathered rascals I ever saw. When they are building their nests they do not hesitate to attack a flock of pigeons on the wing, and pluck the feathers from their bodies for nest-making purposes. These birds were first introduced into St. Paul through three pairs imported from New York, about ten years ago. From these tens of thousands have been produced and are now found in every part of our city. Dr. Sweeny has figured out the fecundity of the three sparrows as follows: "On a moderate basis of four young birds to a sparrow, there would be in ten years 6,291,456 sparrows. But we have to deduct from that large number casualties, and the aggregate number of sparrows is reduced more than 50 per cent. They are very hard to kill. I do not think there is much damage to be apprehended from them in the country, for they hang around human habitations and cities where they are certain of getting a good meal."

While the sparrow has been persistently and maliciously attacked, through the papers, I have not yet convinced myself that they are as bad as painted in regard to driving away other birds; as for insect destroyers, however, I think they are a fraud, for they desert the rural districts for the city streets, where they feed on scattered grain and pick equine droppings. I do not think a song bird would occupy the same tree with them; there would be a fight unto death if the city life of a sparrow is any criterion.

The most disagreeable part of their presence among us is the disfigurement of our buildings by their droppings which, in some notable structures, has almost transfigured the stone facings into the appearance of streaked slate.

"There is one thing about the sparrow," said a gentleman, "which is much in his favor. He is a very good bird to eat. I know plenty of people in Western cities, where sparrows can be found by the million, who feed frequently on delicious pot-pies and broils made of house sparrows. They eat very clean food, chiefly grain and fruits, and they get very fat and plump. If sparrows increase inordinately in St. Paul I would recommend people to kill them for the table. The cats are eating a good many of the St. Paul sparrows every day. I must confess I respect their good taste. The cats should not be allowed to capture all these delicate morsels."

Now, if they won't destroy insects, if they won't sing, if they won't do anything but breed by the millions, and if they won't stop fighting and driving away our native song birds, our natural insect destroyers, what are they good for?

P.H.L.

The English Sparrow

3.

ROCHESTER, N. Y.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—Mr. Seth Green champions the English sparrow; it is natural he should. If I mistake not, he had a hand in introducing him into this country, or, at least, was among those to proclaim his innumerable virtues; this, in face of the fact that in nearly all European countries a bounty is set upon his head, and that public testimony in this country almost universally denounces him as an unmitigated nuisance. It has become known, beyond all contradiction, that he is not an insectivorous, but a granivorous bird. Yet even were he of any conceivable use, he is a loud-mouthed, obstreperous fellow, whose monotonous rasping voice alone would call for his extirpation. The crow blackbird and katydid are musical in comparison. Moreover he is nasty, and disgustingly polygamous beyond description, and is becoming more and more of a public pest and defiler. Testimony from every quarter shows he has largely driven away the song birds from about our homesteads; he is too filthy for decent birds to associate with. The lovely song birds we have, but not, as formerly about our dwellings; they have been forced to the fields and woods by this feathered ruffian. If Mr. Green chooses to house the sparrow in door-yard cots and cages, and if he likes his voice and nastiness upon his premises, this is his privilege; but it is rather a selfish way of treating his neighbors.

If I mistake not, Mr. Green proclaimed the virtues of the Rocky Mountain trout in a similar manner, and introduced him in many of our streams, tenanted by the speckled trout which anglers, with scarcely an exception, regard as the superior fish. The Rocky Mountain trout is only good, in comparison, in waters where the American or European speckled trout will not thrive.

Mr. Green could do nothing better than perch the English sparrow on the feminine hat, though I doubt if the sparrow would lend himself even to this use, or that he is possessed of a single redeeming virtue. He should be given no quarter, but followed up by two drams of powder and an ounce of dust shot. Certainly, his innumerable faults vastly outbalance any possible good quality yet to be discovered in the loathsome *Passer domesticus*. G. H. E.

Am. Field. XXIX. No. 19, May 5, 1888, p. 414.

THE ENGLISH SPARROW.

Am. Field. XXIX. No. 19. May 12, 1888. p. 438.
SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—Mr. Seth Green must have a peculiar breed of the English sparrow when he defends them so earnestly as he does. I am so used to respecting his opinions, and to finding them so largely correct, that I am somewhat surprised at the results of his observations of this bird.

It is true that in New England the sparrow associates with other birds, with but comparatively small demonstrations of battle with them. That the sparrow does decimate and drive away our native birds is true, even without the contact of battle; it is done by the destruction of the nests and eggs. The sparrow is armed with a bill like an ice-pick; he punctures the eggs of our native birds as soon as he finds them left unprotected by the parent birds, just as he punctures a ripe grape or a hundred of them, for deviltry and destruction.

I write of what I know and see. I have tried for four consecutive years to protect the nests of the little chipping sparrow, about my house, and failed. Each year I have caught these bawling, scolding English invaders in clusters about the despoiled home of the little chippie, cackling and shouting over the ruins like so many miniature Comanches. This I have seen: every egg punctured, and ultimately the nest scattered. I have seen a flock of sparrows, in reserve

like a battalion of bandits, watch the building of a nest by a pair of robins; when the robins left for more material, down would swing the invaders, upon the partly built nest, and destruction proceed until the return of the robins, which would plunge into the ranks of the robbers—a couple of red bolts of fight and fire—scattering the sparrows like dust. So the warfare went on until the robins adopted the expedient of one remaining on guard while the other brought the material, but at the end of the second day, the robins, disheartened, abandoned the unequal contest.

Concerning the food of the sparrow my observation shows that, while the young are being fed, insect food is furnished; but at all other times seeds and grains are their preference.

The sparrow has neither beauty of form nor color, an infernal voice, is certainly an industrious and persistent pursuer of our native birds, a pirate, a robber, and, altogether, a disturber of our native bird population and a nuisance. In my judgment the ultimate outcome of his advent upon this continent will be a curse, a matter of profound regret, and he will be a pest to be fought to the end, with doubtful success.

E. H. LATHROP.

Am. Field. XXIX. No. 19. May 12, 1888. p. 438.
PITTSBURGH, PA.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—Our friend, Seth Green, has a reputation as a piscatorial Solon which probably spans the civilized world, and were he engaged in the pleasant pastime of a fish controversy, I would willingly give him the entire floor; but when he assumes the role of an English sparrow defender, he can count me in every time. If the Rochester sparrow can "eat, drink and be merry" in company with the robins, et al., for two minutes, without picking a fight, he can secure a good engagement in a dime museum here as the greatest feathered prodigy of the nineteenth century. When the English sparrow landed in this city of natural gas, it was announced that his sparrowship was to dine strictly on the insectivorous plan, and his advent was hailed with delight. Alas, for the blind credulity of man! The sparrows and the insects entertained such a friendly intimacy for each other that they refused to "merge," and now we have both on our hands, in quantities and qualities to suit the most fastidious. It may be that in Rochester, the evidences of the English sparrow's destructive proclivities are but hearsay; not so here, however. Time and again have I seen the sparrows attack our robins and fight them to the death. Their intense hatred at the sight of a robin, that most welcome of all non-game birds, knows no bounds. It is an established fact, and if Seth Green believes it but hearsay, let him pay twenty-five cents for the affidavit of every eye-witness around Pittsburgh and Allegheny—those who can speak of the habits of the sparrow, and his love for the gore of other birds, from what they have "seen"—and he will soon find himself a poor man. That the sparrow is granivorous in his diet, is another strong argument against him, and lastly, with these objections to augment the "third assignment of error," he is, unhappily, a prolific breeder.

In our romantic Allegheny parks, the red breasted robin, in the early dawn of morning and amid the gathering twilight of the dying day, was wont to pour forth his carols as though his little throat would split; that was in the good old anti-sparrow days. Not so now; it is the incessant chatter, chatter, of a pest which unquestionably should, but I fear cannot be, exterminated. Occasionally the robin's clear silver note is heard, but it is for a moment, for with that sweet, pure melody, that heavenly songster has sounded his death knell. No; death to the king of feathered murderers, first, last and at all times—the English sparrow.

C. A. R.

The English Sparrow.

4.

Am. Field. XXIX, No. 19. May 1st 1888. p. 438.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—Some time ago a series of questions, by an officer of the government at Washington, D. C., relative to the habits of the English sparrow in the Southern states, appeared in the AMERICAN FIELD. I answered the questions and had the honor of receiving from the official, whose name I cannot recall, a very complimentary letter in which he stated that mine were the first "observations" received from the South on the habits of the English sparrow. Now, that the matter of his sparrowship is again to the fore, and inasmuch as my observations have been extended in point of time, it may not be unprofitable for me to condense a few facts for the readers of the AMERICAN FIELD.

I have watched closely the English sparrow from Nashville, Tenn., to the Alabama line, in all the larger and smaller towns. He is a metropolitan by birth, education and desire, though I have seen him in a hamlet where there was a large merchant mill, a store, and three or four houses. He is not a pugnacious bird only with his own folks. I have yet to see the first encounter between him and any other bird, except on one occasion when a pair of sparrows and one of blue birds contested for the same nesting place; the blue birds made short work of ousting the sparrows. Frequenting and nesting on my grounds I name the mocking bird, cat bird, oriole, king bird, native sparrow, wren, and brown thrush. Their lives and habits are precisely what they were before the English sparrow came. The sparrows eat insects on occasion, but prefer grain or food found at the kitchen doors. They do foul cornices, and so would any other bird that nested there. They don't sing worth "shucks," but they don't interfere with birds which do. They are a delicious morsel cooked almost any way, but especially so broiled and buttered. They injure nothing in my garden, and if they like berries they do not show it by eating them. They may become a pest by reason of numbers, but on no other ground. My advice is where they are too numerous kill them and eat them. N.

THE ENGLISH SPARROW.

Am. Field. XXIX, No. 22. June 2nd 1888. p. 571.

ROCHESTER, N. Y.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—A correspondent from New Jersey consumes considerable space in your issue of May 19, to say that the filthy English sparrow does not molest the robins. No one supposes that it does for a very simple reason. The robin and blackbird, fortunately are well able to take care of themselves, and the bullying sparrows have learned to leave them alone. In so far, and no further, Mr. Seth Green is right in his statements. Even if the sparrow does not drive the other birds from about our homesteads, his presence would still be obnoxious, for no song bird can be heard amid his continuous screaming and scolding.

Regarding this rapidly increasing pest, on whose head a bounty has been placed in nearly all European countries, the following appeared in the New York *Mail and Express* of May 19:

"For many years the dwellers in the neighborhood of New York have mourned the departure of birds that were familiar to them. The English sparrow, who was an imported laborer brought to these shores for the purpose of eating the worms that infested the trees, had driven off nearly all other birds. The robin and the bluebird, the wren (mighty fighter that he is), the swallow and a few others came back to us in the Spring, but a whole army of the feathered tribe seemed lost to us forever. While they emigrated for the cold months, the sparrow remained with us.

"Naturally there were people who thought that the blizzard would not work ill to everyone, but how it was to accomplish anything of good was a serious question. The people who live in the country have found out. The blizzard killed hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of sparrows, and at once the whole country about us is filled with birds who have not been seen in the vicinage for many years. Westchester is brilliant with flying color, vocal with chirpings, and the whole country is congratulating itself on the return of the birds. It is a great year for those who have gone into the country early, and the story of what the great blizzard did in adding some delights to a generally disagreeable Spring will long be told to rising generations."

In every way and under all circumstances that the sparrow has been tried he has been found wanting, and every man who owns a gun, or by any other means can reduce the sparrows' polygamous ranks should assist in his extermination.

G. H. E.

UXEDO PARK, N. Y.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—Some few years ago, when connected with a nobleman's estate in the North of England, owing to the enormous damage done to grain crops, particularly wheat and oats, I organized a club for the extermination of the sparrow in that district. The warfare was carried on two seasons, and during that time over 15,000 sparrows were killed within a radius of five miles, and I can assure you we made a very small hole in their ranks. I have seen whole fields of wheat picked clean by them and nothing but straw left. They are also death on gooseberry trees, taking both the berry and leaf when forming. The sparrow feeds its young on insects for the first five days only. The only birds they interfere with are the swallows and swifts; they will drive these out of their nests under the eaves and breed there themselves. I have seen them bundle both old and young out very quickly. I notice they are making a firm footing in this district, and they should be exterminated at once, ere too late.

I. W. E. CLARKE.

BALTIMORE, MD.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—My observation of the English sparrow in Maryland has been that it destroys the nests of all song birds, that build near dwellings, such as wrens, blue birds, all small song birds, and also those of tame pigeons. At my country home in Baltimore County, Md., I had to kill all the English sparrows, to save my wrens, as the sparrows took full possession of the bird boxes and tumbled out eggs and nests, playing the same prank on the pigeons. I believe them to be utterly useless, a decided pest, and I kill all I can find. I know that the mocking-bird, the Baltimore oriole, and the bee martin are their masters, but these three are the only birds that they fear, so far as I know. We find them in our grain fields in flocks of thousands, and they are most certainly very destructive and a nuisance in this state.

H. MALCOLM.

EAST OAKLAND, CAL.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—Regarding the English sparrow, he, like our useful friend the mule, is a charming bird and to him I owe many thanks for hours of unalloyed sport in the close season. With a .22-caliber rifle and U. M. C. shot cartridges, I try to encourage him and his mate, in their frantic efforts to fill the air with rasping twitters and the eaves of my house with litter. On with the crusade against this foreign intruder, who does drive away our native songsters and does not destroy insects.

S. I. K., JR.

The English Sparrow.

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Am. Field. XXIX. No. 23. June 9, 1888. p. 534.
THE ENGLISH SPARROW.

White Post, Va.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—Having read a great deal, this Spring, about the English sparrow, and about their belligerency and destructiveness, I have been induced to observe them much more closely than I otherwise would have done, and am satisfied that the little fellows are much more sinned against than sinning. I, like a majority of people, was prejudiced against them, more from what I had heard than from what I knew. I imagine there were fully seventy-five to one hundred who wintered about my place, and they are here now, nesting in all kinds of places. There are a great many birds about my premises, as I have many shade trees. Such birds as the Baltimore oriole, who builds in the yard, pee wees or phœbe birds, who build in the porches, robins, some English mocking birds, wrens, etc., all of which nest in the yard and garden, close to the house. I have yet to see the first battle between one of them and the sparrow, nor can I detect any decrease in the number of the different birds which I have had around me for years; unless it be the old-time, old-fashioned red-headed wood-pecker, whose noise upon the schoohouse roof was so familiar to us years and years ago; he is gone, for I rarely see or hear one of them and I can form no idea as to what has become of them. As to the destructiveness of the English sparrow, they doubtless have to have something to eat, but I cannot see that they are any worse than other birds, except that they go in larger crowds. We have a little yellow bird and have always had him, who is much worse in a garden than I have ever noticed the sparrows to be, especially in gathering and picking the maturing seeds. It is almost an impossibility to save the beet, parsnip or salsify seeds, as these little wretches are ready with their incisive bills, to attack the bolls as soon as they commence opening, and if the salsify seed is not protected by some gauzy fabric, they get the last seed. I have never noticed the sparrow interfering in that way, so, upon the whole I shall give the little fellows a chance and act toward them as Uncle Toby did to the fly.

Our country is full of Bob Whites, the name suggested by a recent contributor to the AMERICAN FIELD as one which we would all better use, and I think the same, as it will save confusion. I have not seen and heard as many pairs, for a great many years, and as to rabbits there is no end to them and the woods are literally alive with peacocks.

OLD DOMINION.

Am. Field. XXIX. No. 23. June 9, 1888. WASHINGTON, D. C. p. 534.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—You will pardon perhaps the expression of satisfaction with which a veteran in what used to be called the "sparrow war," now contemplates the actual state of affairs. It was about fifteen years ago that I first raised my voice and handled my pen against these birds, which everybody was then lauding in a maudlin way. I was almost the first to foresee what would happen from their introduction, and for some time I had the field against the sparrows pretty much to myself—to the extent of raising the quills upon my somewhat fretful friend Dr. Brewer, and being quite roundly abused by all the sentimentalists and not a few ornithologists. Mr. Henry Bergh—the noble fanatic—God bless him, I say, for it needed a fanatic and a martyr to accomplish what he did to lessen pain in the world—singled me out for special attack, and made me appear quite a monster of cruelty, like a modern Nero.

Things went on thus for awhile, during which I was busily gathering statistics and preparing for a bibliography of the whole subject, which I published I think in 1878. And all this time people were gradually coming to see for themselves what I had foreseen, until to-day the verdict is practically unanimous, that the sparrow is a nuisance. This happening was only about ten years ago; yet it was so long that I perceive that the compiler of the Bulletin about the sparrows, recently published by the Agricultural Department, has quite forgotten that there was a long stage of the sparrow war before the question had been settled; else probably he would not have supposed he was contributing anything new in the case, or imagined that he was ignoring the humble individual who had practically settled it ten years before he took it up.

ELLIOTT COUES.

THE ENGLISH SPARROW.

Am. Field. XXIX. No. 24. June 16, 1888. LOUISVILLE, KY. p. 538.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—Under the head of Natural History, in your valuable paper, I had hoped that the subjects would be discussed upon their merits, and that the uncivilized custom of abusing those you may differ from would not prevail. When information was asked—some months since—concerning the English sparrow, I did not suppose that persons who had watched their habits and reported facts concerning them, as Mr. Seth Green did in your issue of April 28, would be spoken of as he was by G. H. E—in the AMERICAN FIELD of May 5. I do hope that under the heading of Natural History, we can treat each other fairly and as gentlemen should, if we do not always do so when speaking of guns and dogs.

Surely, Mr. Seth Green's position and character, entitles to a respectful consideration any subject upon which he writes. If writers are to be attacked personally on all topics, how are we to expect modest persons, or those inclined to controversy, to give testimony on any subject? I have desired to give a few facts concerning English sparrows in this city, but as this "sparrow has been persistently and maliciously attacked through the papers," as Phil says in your issue of May 5, I have hesitated to do so. But, now Mr. Seth Green is held to such an account for making the simple statements he did, I will, at least, divide the censure with him. I have this day seen the cat-bird, the bluebird, the orchard oriole, and several other species in the same small grove of bushes with numbers of English sparrows, and there was no evidence that they had any fear of the sparrows. I also have heard in the same yard as many song birds to-day and during this Spring, as at any other time in my recollection. If song birds sometimes appear to be in less numbers now than formerly, the fact may be attributed to other causes than to English sparrows. In the yards and groves this Spring, I have observed the song birds and the sparrows mingling as freely as any two kinds of birds, and have seen no more enmity or fear between them than exists between any two kinds of our native birds.

In this city and in our daily papers, the sparrows are as unreasonably abused as by G. H. E. The English sparrow was imported by our city authorities nearly twenty years ago, hoping they would destroy the caterpillars that ruined the foliage of all our trees every Summer, and during July, August and September made our city look desolate. The vermin were not only on the trees, but were on and in our houses in such countless numbers, as to make us realize some of the plagues of Egypt in a way we could never otherwise have done. Ladies upon entering church often

The English Sparrow

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had to wait in the vestibule, to have these pests brushed from their dresses; they were thick on the pavements and streets, and, at that time, we would gladly have paid a large sum to have been rid of them. Fifteen hundred English sparrows were liberated one Spring; they made themselves at home, and the next year our plague was perceptibly diminished, and so from year to year, until within the last five or six years we have no more caterpillars than are found at other places, and now they are no great annoyance.

Despite this fact, sparrows are abused here as elsewhere, and often I have seen it stated in our local papers, that they have never been seen eating a caterpillar; true, they have not, yet they are seen every day, in season, and hundreds of times during a day, if one will watch them, catching and eating the white moth that lays the millions of eggs from which the caterpillar is hatched; they do not kill one at a time, but by eating the moth, they destroy millions upon millions of caterpillars every day. No doubt they also eat grain and fruit, but the workman is worthy of his hire; after the season for this moth and other insects is over they must eat something else, and they do; but if all understood and appreciated the great good these energetic, little workers have done, few if any persons would begrudge them the pay they have so well earned, or object to their eating some grain and fruit until moth and insect time comes again. Let even the English sparrow have fair play; let the truth be told about him, give the little fellow his due.

JNO. H. WARD.

Am. Field. XXIX, No. 24. June 16, 1888.
p. 558 CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—In the AMERICAN FIELD of June 2, you published a number of very interesting articles on the English sparrow, especially those of I. W. E. Clark and F. Malcolm. I quite agree with everything they have written, and thought I would give my opinion of this little bird, which I consider quite a nuisance. A few days ago one of my farm hands called my attention to an attack that was being made by a lot of sparrows upon an American eagle a pair of which had been living upon my farm, near by, for a number of years. These little birds, the sparrows, would dart up under the body of the cagle, while others would strike at his eyes. After some time the larger bird seemed weary with the annoyance of his little tormentors; the persistent and long continued attack caused him to alight in a tall pine tree, when his mate, the female, came to his assistance. No sooner did she make her appearance than they attacked her with great fury, and she tried to beat a retreat. The sparrows were now reinforced by quite a number of others, and soon divided into two squads. They then simultaneously attacked both eagles with fury. The male bird began to soar higher and higher, until the sparrows were lost sight of for some minutes; finally he gradually came down nearer the earth until we could see these little birds still at work upon the body of the bird of freedom. He at last alighted in the pine tree where the attack was made at his head, and in a few minutes the poor eagle fell dead at the foot of the tree, his eyes destroyed, and the brain punctured by the bites of the sparrows. The female flew away out of sight, but we presume met with the same fate.

WILLIAM POOR PARESINGER.

A GENERAL PROTEST

Against the Herodian Decree for the Slaughter of Sparrows

To the Editor of the Transcript:

I am not in the way of getting up a counter-petition, but I wish to enter a vigorous protest against that which proposes to massacre the English sparrow.

It is urged as sufficient cause for this barbarous treachery towards a creature we ourselves brought into the country, that they do not eat all the insects they were expected to destroy.

I do not profess a complete knowledge of the subject, but some insects I know they eat, for I have seen them. I also believe that the inch-worm, the terror of my childhood in New York, has entirely disappeared since the importation of this bird.

It is urged that they foul and disfigure our public buildings and statues. So they do. So do also men and boys in various ways. Would it not be better to employ people to cleanse these things occasionally than to kill the men or the birds or the boys? It is urged that many persons are annoyed by their "harsh notes." This sounds strangely, coming through the present fad for bird-lore and bird-culture!

To those who love birds for themselves the chatter of the sparrows is a delight. It makes compulsory residence in a city more tolerable and is sweet company for the solitary and the lonely. It is urged that the English sparrow drives away other birds. That they do not always do this I know. For many years I have seen them winter on Long Island, N. Y., and except there was unusual cold and snow, the "chippies" and "chick-a-dee-dees" were there as well, followed near springtime by the bluebirds and robins.

It is proposed to destroy these too prolific little creatures "mercifully," and suggestions are made accordingly to persistently push down the nests in breeding-time, to poison in secluded places, to trap in houses ostensibly built for their pleasure.

Will some one of those prominent citizens whose names I have read on this petition say where the "mercy" comes in? The breeding season has generally been considered sacred even in regard to vermin. If the poisoning plan is adopted some of us may taste of that mercy after eating small birds on toast in a restaurant. And for the last-named suggestion of the "house-traps," it may be the best of the three, but it is so treacherous in its nature that one blushes to note the names endorsing it.

E. G. M.

A Word for the Condemned

To the Editor of the Transcript:

The announcement that the English sparrow is doomed is not hailed with universal satisfaction. There are those who insist that this despised little creature—the only bit of feathered life undaunted by frost and snow—has some redeeming traits. One can hardly help admiring the cheerful persistence with which it replaces its nest again and again, when it is ruthlessly torn down. Undoubtedly this bird is in many ways an unpleasant neighbor, especially to dwellers in city houses; but some of us dread the revival of another pest, should the hated sparrow disappear. Time was when people who frequented our shaded avenues were obliged to take to the middle of the street in order to avoid the descending canker-worms, and when no lady could walk abroad without bringing them home in her garments. An amusing instance of this is recalled when Dr. O. W. Holmes was riding in a street car and a lady who had unwittingly brushed against a fence, got into the car and sat down beside him. "Madam," cried Dr. Holmes, with an upward turn of his expressive nose, "you are covered with canker-worms." It is

said that the piazza of Craigie House in those days was so strewed with these creatures that it was almost impossible to step there. A Cambridge lady tells me that formerly her linden trees were literally stripped of leaves by canker-worms; but that since the advent of the English sparrow the foliage has been almost untouched. This lady takes great delight in June, the canker-worm season, in watching the sparrows hunt the worms. They spend many hours diligently searching for them on the under sides of the leaves, and when their beaks are full of wriggling victims they fly to their nests and feed their young.

Before the threatened blow falls, let us reflect which is the more disagreeable and harmful, the chattering sparrow or the spinning worm? Would it not be well for the city fathers to ponder these lines from Longfellow's "Birds of Killingworth":

"Devoured by worms, like Herod, was the town,

Because, like Herod, it had ruthlessly
Slaughtered the Innocents. From the trees
spun down

The canker-worms upon the passers-by,
Upon each woman's bonnet, shawl, and gown,

Who shock them off with just a little cry;

They were the terror of each favorite walk,
The endless theme of all the village talk."

M. T. H.

Sparrows Neither Attack Other Birds Nor Do They Drive Them Away

To the Editor of the Transcript:

Mr. Angell in Saturday's Transcript challenges anyone to show a single instance where sparrows have attacked or killed other birds. They have frequently been accused in your columns of driving away bluebirds, and even purple martins. I lived for many years in a country town not far from Boston, and in my garden were many bird-houses. Every winter sparrows occupied these houses. With the first advent of spring came the bluebirds. There was no fight, the sparrows simply vacated the houses, found other quarters, and the bluebirds took possession. A few weeks later and the purple martin appeared on the scene, loudly proclaiming that those houses belonged to him. Feathers flew in every direction, not the feathers of sparrows or martins, but bluebirds' feathers. The martin being much the stronger, the result was always the same, the bluebirds were driven out and the martins took possession. In the autumn after the martins went South, the sparrows took up their winter quarters in the houses previously occupied by martins and bluebirds. For fourteen years I watched them all attentively, many of the birds being so tame that I could handle them freely, and never did I see a sparrow fight a bird not of his own kind. Occasionally two male birds would peck at each other when they were both in love with the same girl, but that is not confined to sparrows. There were robins in plenty, yellow birds, and humming-birds in the same garden with the sparrows, martins and the bluebirds. The sparrows stay with us in winter when our native birds leave us; they have saved our elm trees from destruction, and they are certainly much cleaner than the caterpillars, which will certainly return if we kill them. As I read the names attached to the petition for the destruction of these cheery little friends, I was filled with indignation, and found myself devoutly wishing that if poisoned grain were used the second victims might be the pet cats and dogs of the signers of so cruel a petition. Do they think that only sparrows will be destroyed by any of the means proposed?

Concord, March 5.

The Dangers of Poison

To the Editor of the Transcript:

The clarion has sounded. The spirit of war hovers over the land. We must fight whether or no, it matters little whom. Let us fight the sparrows.

At first we invited, nay, urged them to visit us, with offers of the kindest hospitality. "Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest." It is not the first time, and perhaps will not be the last, that we encourage the immigration of foreigners with protestations of eternal friendship, and after a few decades discover that their ways are not our ways (which we might have known in the beginning had we paused to consider) and then raise a great hullabaloo to get rid of them by fair means or foul.

Poor little sparrows! Some of the accusations brought against them would fit equally the pigeons or any other birds. As to the really criminal charges, so to speak, authorities seem to be about evenly divided on the subject.

Personally I own to a sneaking fondness for the cheery, courageous little creatures. Their gossiping chatter may not be as sweet as the notes of singing birds, but to me it is infinitely more agreeable than a hundred other harsh city sounds. I have a great respect for life in all its phases, and deeply disapprove destroying wantonly what we cannot recreate.

However, if the fiat has gone forth without appeal that the sparrows must go, I should like to utter a word in protest against the manner of their taking off.

Quite recently an offender was heavily fined for poisoning a dog, and all agreed that the sentence was just, that the scattering of poison was a heinous crime, deserving severe punishment; and yet here is the scattering of poison sanctioned by law. Poison cannot be so placed as to kill one class of birds without being eaten more or less by other classes. Moreover, when the birds, having partaken of the poison and weakened by its effect become an easy prey to our pet cats and dogs, how many sad human hearts will there be in the city mourning the untimely loss of their dumb animal friends!

If we must kill the brave little sparrows, at least let us kill them only, and not use means that will, with them destroy so many other lives that to us are very dear.

M. P. L.

A Misguided Mayor

To the Editor of the Transcript:

Is it not surprising that our mayor should issue such an order as that against the life of the sparrow? If he had sought information from such persons as the "Listener," and others who know the habits of birds in general, and the sparrow in particular, he would be as anxious to protect its life as he is now to destroy it.

First, this little bird is a scavenger, and, unlike those persons hired by the city to keep her alleys, etc., clean (and whose lazy incompetency has missed our mayor's ready eye), he does work vigorously and well.

Have you never seen this "worker" on a twig covered with webs, and in a short time seen it stripped of webs and weavers?

Have you ever stopped to see what this little bird is doing, as he hops up the trunk of a tree, or flits around corners of fences and houses?

Yet the Common, where he is so much needed, and where he has done such good work, is to be the "experimental" ground of attack.

Can it be our mayor has been listening to some who know the law already on the books, and who are knowingly interested in the "Moth" Commission? Gypsy Moth Commission!

Boston Transcript
Wednesday, March 6, 1899,

Yes, after laws for the extermination of the sparrow have been passed and carried out; while robins and other birds have been allowed to be killed for years, until many species are well nigh extinct. Not a sparrow would now be living against which to make a law had he been considered beautiful, for fashion would have slaughtered him long ago. His sober black-and-brown has saved him, and he has kept at the task allotted him by Nature.

Let those who know speak. Let those who would speak from hearsay and prejudice remain quiet and be willing to learn.

It seems strange, such an order from such a mayor! Then the influence of such an attitude of mind!

C. A. B.

Unsupported by Public Sentiment

To the Editor of the Transcript:

If his honor the mayor could witness the thousands of people that are feeding sparrows in the wintry months, he might commute the death sentence, in which he would be sustained by a large majority of the people.

Doubtless the business men in a busy city are indifferent as to all pets, unless perhaps with the exception of horses and dogs, but once giving the birds a thought, they would almost unanimously disapprove of molesting them. The only fault found with the English sparrow is that they drive away birds of a finer plumage.

But, is this a fact? And if it is, very few songsters are to be found in populous cities, and surely parrots, canaries and linnets don't often fly loose in the city of Boston.

Now, aside from this charge, the swallows are a quiet and harmless bird, and do a deal of good work in destroying insects and caterpillars that do exist in our city, and which ruin trees, shrubs and vines, of which we still have quite a number and which are worth preserving. Which shall it be? Caterpillars and worms or sparrows? Let the birds live!

J. B. B.

A Poor Way to Welcome the Maytime

To the Editor of the Transcript:

I am one of those who have read the petition for civic destruction of the English sparrow and foreseen that quarrelsome and shameless little creature's doom. But can we not give him a chance to die handsomely, without superfluous murder of his own nervous system and ours? According to the printed prospectus, the very first move on our part is to be "the persistent and thorough thrusting down of the nests?" Why not poison first, or nets, or shotguns? To destroy the nests first will be to cause endless perplexity and pain, an ante-mortem torture, and to fill the air of the Common with cries and distressed wings. I submit that such a scene, in May-time, before all the small boys of the city, will be distinctly demoralizing. The sparrows, after all, are not a deliberate nuisance; their whole offence in our eyes is that they live their life. Surely if we in our fastidiousness resolve to end these tiny pert Aguinaldos, we can at least afford to spare them needless suffering.

G.

Reverence for Life

To the Editor of the Transcript:

Before signing a petition for the extermination of the English sparrow I wish each one would stop to consider which is of the most value, the lives of God's creatures or the aesthetic appearance of "temples made with hands"?

Surely this "St. Bartholomew of birds" will not take place if we believe that "one falleth not to the ground" disregarded.

"How can I teach you children gentleness, And mercy to the weak and reverence For Life, which in its weakness or excess Is still a gleam of God's omnipotence,
* * * * *

When by your laws, your action and your speech,
You contradict the very things I teach?"

M. D. H.

Newton, March 3.

Rats and the Sparrow-Poison

To the Editor of the Transcript:

Will you permit me to add what by some mistake failed to get into my letter in your Saturday's issue that there may be great danger that rats eating poisoned sparrows and running into stores or dwellings to die may make such stores and dwellings for a time almost uninhabitable.

I would like also to add that if the sparrows must be poisoned and their nests destroyed then, as your "Listener" urges,

great care should be taken not to poison or destroy the nests of robins and other birds which come in considerable numbers every year to our common, parks and other public grounds. Possibly if the sparrows were permitted to live they might, in addition to their services as scavengers, assist in protecting our city trees from gypsy moths as they did in protecting them from caterpillars.

GEORGE T. ANGELL

Boston Transcript

MONDAY, MARCH 6, 1899

General Notes.

Change of Habits in our Native Birds.—It would be as interesting, from an evolutionary point of view, to note any change in the habits of an animal, any change in the way it adjusted itself to its environment, as to note the change in its bodily form or structure. It seems to me that such a change is taking place with the English Sparrow. A dozen or more years ago when these aliens first became a feature in our fauna it seemed probable that our native birds would soon be entirely driven from the neighborhood of our cities and villages. Our Robins, Bluebirds, Catbirds, Grossbeaks, Sparrows, Martins and the like were mobbed, driven from their food and nests and generally taught to believe, with Charles Sumner, that "life is a serious business." In this section, at any rate, a change has gradually taken place. Either our native birds have unexpectedly developed powers of resistance at first unsuspected or the pugnacity of the English Sparrows has diminished, for certainly our own songsters have not been driven away but on the contrary seem as numerous as they were twenty years ago. For the past two or three years, since my attention was first called to the matter, I have seen but little if any persecution of our native birds by the foreign Sparrows; on the contrary, our own birds are now often the aggressors, and if they do not indulge in persecution themselves, are adepts at defence. Very commonly a Jay, Robin, or Catbird will from pure mischief hustle a flock of Sparrows into desperate flight. In and about Rockford, Ill., a place of 30,000 inhabitants, the native birds have not been so numerous in twenty years as in the two or three years just passed. The conditions of the adjustment between the Sparrows and our commoner birds have changed to some extent, it seems. As has been noted before, the abundance of the Sparrows may serve to explain the increase in the numbers of the smaller birds of prey, — with us notably the Screech Owl.—F. H. KIMCOLL, *Rockford, Ill.*

Auk XI. July, 1894 p. 261

Fall Migration, Bristol County, Mass.
1885. Charles H. Andros.

Sept. 24^j- I noted two instances of the weakness of the English Sparrow to-day. On one of our public streets I saw one running, now and then tumbling over after the manner of a young Robin. Again, as I was passing a brook where several of them were enjoying a bath, they took to flight save one, which jumped into the water where for some moments it swam about or rather beat the surface with its wings, and before it could reach terra firma it sank back exhausted, and by the time I rescued the body all life was extinct. Can any of the readers explain this apparent feebleness of this Sparrow? **O. & O. XI. Jan. 1886. p 2.**

Note from Norwich, Conn.

Some very queer plans for thinning the ranks of the House Sparrow army of invasion were presented to the committee of the A. O. U., the most Quixotic being recommended by a clergyman, to-wit: the use of fire-engines! Now in Winter when the Sparrows get together in great companies, if park-keepers and policemen were allowed to use double-barreled guns on the close packs, little apprehension need be had over their increase. Failing this or state outlawry, destroy all eggs and young on your own premises. Do not let your bird-boxes remain out all Winter to shelter the pests, but put them up only when White-bellied Swallows, Wrens and Martins appear, so that welcome migrants will not find *P. domesticus* already in possession. *J. M. H.*

O. & O. X. May, 1885. p. 74

English Sparrows by the Thousand.

In Philadelphia, on Chestnut street, between Eleventh and Twelfth streets, stands an old fashioned house, of ample proportions, and surrounded by gardens and greenhouses on three sides. It is the only house used as a private residence on Chestnut street between Front and Broad streets, a distance of over a mile, as all the rest of the street, on both sides, is given up to stores. It is the principal business street of Philadelphia, and thousands of people pass by this old house every day.

On the lower side of the house, just inside the brick wall that encloses the garden, stands a tree about forty feet high, with many branches; and every afternoon the English Sparrows roost here literally by thousands. Every branch is covered with them, and they are huddled together as close as they can sit.

To count them all would be impossible, but I have seen over fifty on one branch.

A long wall of an adjoining store is covered with ivy and Virginia Creeper, and this forms a convenient roosting place for those birds that cannot find places on the tree.

In walking past the tree on the way down town in the morning one sees that not a single bird is on it, but in passing by in the afternoon how different is the sight that meets our eyes! As before stated, every branch is so full that it is a wonder that some of them do not break down with the weight of the birds.

Such a chattering as they keep up, too, just at sunset time! Waves of sound are wafted to a distance of over a block, and that, too, above the clatter and din of many wagons, carriages, horse-cars and hundreds of people passing to and fro.

The curious noise makes many people stop and look up, and they are all struck with amazement at the sight of so many thousands of birds roosting over their heads in a public street.

Darker and darker grows the fading light, while the electric lights flash out, making a kind of garish moonlight. Fainter and fainter grow the sounds of the birds, and finally all are asleep. Rain, snow or zero weather seems to make no difference to them, for they are always to be found in their favorite positions when nightfall comes on.

I cannot think that all these thousands of birds live in the gardens surrounding that house, for although they must measure two hundred feet by three hundred they would be utterly run down with them. On the contrary I believe that this roosting place is resorted to by the sparrows from miles around.

In Philadelphia there are a number of small parks, and these are all full of these birds in the daytime. May they not resort to this tree after the manner of the robin roosts so charmingly described in a late number of *The Auk* by William Brewster?

Be that as it may, this sparrow roost is one of the "sights" of the city. It would not long remain as it is were it in France, for most certainly many of the birds would be killed and eaten. Here we content ourselves by pass-

ing off a few thousands of these birds as "Reed Birds" (A. O. U. No. 494), when the season is poor for those delicacies. Many of the people who buy them do not know enough to recognize the difference in their heads and feet, and the bodies being picked of all their feathers, they make fair "Bobolinks." Of course they are not as fat as the real article, but served upon toast they are not to be despised.

J. P. N.

Auk, XVI, Jan, 1891, p. 13.

THE REAL character of the European House Sparrow is at last attracting, at least in some quarters, the attention of legislators. While the bird has for some time been made an outlaw by legislative action in several of the States, and the offering of bounties for their wholesale destruction has been agitated in others, the Massachusetts Legislature, after an extended discussion of the matter, has passed an act entitled 'An act providing for the extermination of the English Sparrow in the Commonwealth.' The act provides as follows:

"*Sect. 1.* In all cities of the Commonwealth the officers having charge of the public buildings, and in all towns thereof such officers as the selectmen shall designate and appoint, shall take and enforce such reasonable means and use such appliances as in their judgement may be effective for the extermination of the English Sparrow therein; but in so doing poisons shall not be used.

"*Sect. 2.* Any person who shall wilfully resist the persons in any city or town charged with the execution of the provisions of this act, while engaged therein, or who shall knowingly interfere with the means used by them for said purpose, to render the same less effective, shall be punished by fine not exceeding twenty-five dollars for each such offense.

"*Sect. 3.* Nothing in this act shall be so construed as to allow an officer to enter on private property without consent of the owner or occupant thereof."

While extermination may not be effected, it seems possible to greatly lessen the numbers of the pest wherever systematic effort is made for their destruction. Even persistent removal of their nests is found not only to check their increase but to lead them to forsake favorite haunts.

Auk, VII, Oct, 1890, p. 413.

The English sparrow question bobs up serenely in one Legislature after another. The Massachusetts Commissioners have just recommended that the agricultural interests of that State demand an abatement of the sparrow plague, and we notice that a petition has been sent to the Boston State House praying for action looking to this end. The cycle of law-making with respect to the sparrow in this country has been, first, protection as a friend to man; second, removal of protection and passive endurance; third, active warfare against the bird as a pest. As things stand now, the sparrow question is quite likely to bob up in State Houses for many years to come.

Trust + Clean
Vol 34. no 3-p. 41.

1057. *The English Sparrow in the United States.* By Hon. Warner Miller. *Ibid.*, pp. 5747, 5748.—"The indications are that if the English Sparrow is allowed to go unchecked it will not be long before the annual loss of grain and fruit products due to his ravages will be in amount sufficient to pay the interest on our national debt, if not the debt itself. Few persons have any conception of the scourge he has proved wherever he has been naturalized in foreign lands, and he threatens to become a greater pest to the American farmer and horticulturist than the grasshopper, caterpillar, and Colorado beetle." *Cong. Rec.* 49 "Cong. June 11, 86.

Auk, XIII, Oct., 1896, pp. 285-9,
FEEDING HABITS OF THE ENGLISH SPARROW AND
CROW.

BY SYLVESTER D. JUDD.

IN 'The English Sparrow in America' (Bull. U. S. Department of Agriculture) Prof. W. B. Barrows has shown what a pest the Sparrow is. I wish to comment upon several of the hundreds of

at the upper end. It is in this stage of the flower cycle, that the dandelion suffers from the attacks of the English Sparrow. The bird removes several of the scales of the inner involucr by a clean cut close to the receptacle, thus exposing the plumed seeds, or, more properly speaking, achenes. He seizes a mouthful of them between the plume and seeds, and then by a cut of the bill the plumes are lopped off, while the seeds are swallowed. In many cases, especially when hunger presses, the trouble of removing plumes is not taken. The Sparrow generally drops a score of seeds in tearing open a flower, and usually leaves the few seeds that cling to the periphery of the receptacle. The mutilation caused by the Sparrow's beak can be detected until the flower stalk dries and falls.

On the 29th of last April, I picked every dandelion flower stalk from a circle six feet in diameter on the grounds of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, where the lawn had a week previous been yellow with the flowers. One hundred and thirty-five of the stalks showed the unmistakable mark of the Sparrow's bill. More than half of the dandelions that bloomed in April on the lawns of the U. S. Department of Agriculture were damaged by Sparrows.

Later in the season, Sparrows feast upon the seeds of crab grass (*Panicum sanguinale*), which grows in profusion about Washington. The seeds of another crab grass (*Eleusine*), not included in Prof. Barrow's list, were taken from a stomach in June, 1895. In early spring the Sparrow often may be seen eating the first tender blades of grass. I have also seen it eating the leaves of *Chelidonium majus*. In Cambridge and Washington the Sparrows often subsist to quite an extent upon the seeds of chickweed (*Stellaria* and *Cerastium*).

Along with hundreds of other observers I have seen Sparrows

interesting facts that Prof. Barrows has presented in such admirable form. First I shall speak about the destruction of dandelion seeds. In May, 1894, at Cambridge, Mass., and during the last two springs here in Washington, Sparrows have been observed eating dandelion seeds.

After the yellow petal-like corollas have disappeared, the flower presents an elongated, egg-shaped green body with a downy tuft at the upper end. It is in this stage of the flower cycle, that the dandelion suffers from the attacks of the English Sparrow. The bird removes several of the scales of the inner involucre by a clean cut close to the receptacle, thus exposing the plumed seeds, or, more properly speaking, achenes. He seizes a mouthful of them between the plume and seeds, and then by a cut of the bill the plumes are lopped off, while the seeds are swallowed. In many cases, especially when hunger presses, the trouble of removing plumes is not taken. The Sparrow generally drops a score of seeds in tearing open a flower, and usually leaves the few seeds that cling to the periphery of the receptacle. The mutilation caused by the Sparrow's beak can be detected until the flower stalk dries and falls.

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Along with hundreds of other observers I have seen Sparrows

causing heavy losses in oat and wheat fields, pulling elm and peach blossoms to pieces, and flocking into the horticulturists' precincts to feast upon cherries, grapes, raspberries, and other fruits. Like most of our common birds the Sparrow derives a part of its sustenance from the animal world. Prof. Barrows has shown that insects of several orders, representing dozens of families, and hundreds of species, have been eaten by the Sparrow. Insects that fly in a zigzag course are more liable to escape birds than those that fly straight away. During August, 1895, in Washington, I have seen on several occasions a Sparrow pursue, capture, and eat piecemeal a cicada, which is a swift insect that takes a beeline course. On the other hand it is only after many unsuccessful attempts that a moth or flying grasshopper is caught in its hither and thither course. Common flies and wasps dodge an enemy. The same is true of the dragonfly (*Libellula*). I remember seeing a Sparrow dart from above and then from below, and then flutter up at one of these insects on the 'College yard' in Cambridge. Finally, after five minutes of fruitless attempts, the Sparrow, more by chance than skill, struck the dodging insect which fell disabled to the ground.

The Washington Sparrow finds it more profitable to breakfast on the insects that have been killed or disabled by electric lights. In the early morning during April and May he comes to the lamps to eat May beetles, and small predaceous ground beetles (Carabidae). The entomologist, who visits the lamps after the Sparrows, finds only the hard wing covers (elytra) of the beetle he had hoped to collect. In spite of the insectivorous habits the Sparrow is branded a nuisance, because he pillages crops, disfigures buildings, and disturbs the peace by his never flagging, monotonous chirp.

Prof. Barrows, beside exposing the true character of the English Sparrow, has also dealt with the Crow in an economic manner. On page 22 of Bull. 6, U. S. Department of Agriculture, he describes a 'roost' at Arlington, Va., where every winter night over 100,000 Crows sleep. About their lodgings were found pellets which had been disgorged. These pellets consisted of seeds held together by sand. The most common of these seeds were,— dogwood, sour-gum, smilax, red-cedar, poison ivy, poison sumach,

and harmless sumach. The Crow takes a large proportion of corn during the winter, and may often be seen in large flocks visiting corn stacks. The quantity of insects eaten during the winter is small, for the Crow during the cold weather subsists principally upon vegetable matter.

Being anxious to learn how Crows glean a living when the ground is snow-covered, I went to Arlington, Va., on the 15th of last December. A flock of fifteen Crows was on the ground at the edge of the wood on the south side of a hill, where the snow had melted enough to leave bare spots as large as saucers. The dusky fellows were busily overturning leaves, and picking up something. They arose as I came quite near, and the several that cawed were Common Crows (*Corvus americanus*). The ground where the birds had been looked as though it had been raked. Beside turning over the leaves, the Crows had picked into the earth. Upon turning over some leaves that had not been disturbed, I found berries of dogwood and sour-gum, and living insects. The berries at this time of year do not hang on the trees. Although no insects were found where the Crows had searched, under several leaves that had not been disturbed I found several spiders (*Drossus*), leaf-hoppers (*Proconia*), ants (*Camponotus malleus*), a ladybird (*Coccinella 9-punctata*), a harlequin cabbage bug (*Murgantia histrionica*), and several smaller bugs. If the Crow were less wary it would be much easier to learn how it obtains insect food in winter. This same day I saw dozens of Crows in red cedar trees feeding upon the berries.

On March 15 I had another opportunity of seeing how Crows find food when the ground is covered with snow. On the southern side of the Washington 'Zoo,' which is a picturesque depression among rugged hills, was a field with several snow capped manure heaps which the crows had been making tracks about. In many places the snow, which was two inches deep, had been brushed away, and a shallow excavation dug in the frozen manure. Here apparently the only food was a large number of plump oat seeds which were filled with a soft white mass. I hope next winter to watch Crows at meal times when the ground is covered with a foot or more of snow.

There is much to be done in the study of the feeding habits

of our commonest birds. Every one knows in general what birds eat during the winter, but few can tell you whether the Junco takes any insects on the warmer days of January or not, or just what the Chickadee is eating when he hangs head downward from a lichen-grayed branch. We need more observers who go out with the spirit of the writer of 'The Brown Thrush in Eastern Massachusetts.'

Deformity of Maxilla in the House Sparrow. — The accompanying illustrations show the overgrowth of maxilla after loss of mandible in a male *Passer domesticus*. The photograph was taken by Mr. A. H. Verrill, who shot the bird in his yard in New Haven, December 10, 1900, and brought it to me in the flesh.

The culmen measures .60 inch from nostril against an average of .39 inch in five normal males of this species. The maxilla measures .16 inch in depth at tip on the right side, but had been worn off on the left where all that was left of the mandible approached it. The normal outer covering of the bill persists at the base in the form of a triangle, the apex extending .31 inch along the culmen; this portion thus showing much the shape of a normal maxilla. On the rest this outer layer has disappeared, doubtless from effort of the bird to scoop up food. Mr. Verrill said he saw it attempt to pick up pieces of cracker in this manner.

Of the mandible only a fragment .28 inch long (measured from the commissural angle) at the base of the left ramus is present, the rest having



been lost through some accident. The wound had healed, leaving the tongue exposed. Most of the feathers on the upper throat and malar region have been worn away, and the plumage in general was dirty, rumpled and matted, as the bird was of course unable to preen. The body was emaciated, but there was a little subcutaneous fat, and a partial molt was in progress. The stomach contained a little white sand, and a soft, whitish substance, probably cracker.

That this bird in its crippled condition after the loss of the mandible succeeded in living the time necessary for the great overgrowth of the maxilla seems to me very remarkable. Mr. W. H. Hoyt of Stamford has shown me a mounted Parrot (*Amazona leucocephala*) in which the mandible had grown over the maxilla and extends for more than one third of an inch upwards, but this bird lived in captivity. — Louis B. Bishop, M. D., New Haven, Conn. Auk, XVIII, April, 1901, pp. 195-6.

THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE ENGLISH SPARROW
PROBLEM IN AMERICA.

BY A. H. ESTABROOK.

THE English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), was introduced into the United States in the fall of 1850. The first few pairs were liberated at Brooklyn, N. Y. In the few years then following, many others were liberated at different cities in the United States, so that by 1875, they had spread over practically the whole area east of the Mississippi. From the time of its introduction, there was a storm of protest from the practical naturalists who foresaw the result of its introduction, from its behavior in other countries. They knew its record in countries where it had been a longer resident. The people who introduced the sparrow believed that it would be an insectivorous bird, and would take care of the canker worm which was then troubling the people very much. The canker worm is no longer a pest, but its destruction by the sparrow is not granted by the ornithologists. E. H. Forbush, in his report on the Gypsy moth states that the sparrow has been

measures to exterminate the species:

6. Please state the facts and arguments, pro and con, which decide this problem in your own mind. Please send replies as early as possible — before June 1 — to the undersigned. It is hoped to gather a consensus of opinion from all parts of this Country and Canada. The data will be published as soon as possible.

Signed,

March 5, 1906.

A. H. ESTABROOK,
Clark University, Worcester, Mass.

From this questionnaire and from letters sent out by me personally, I have received about eighty answers. I also wrote to all

seen to eat all forms of the moth, but that the bird itself is more injurious than beneficial inasmuch as the sparrow drives away the native birds which would hold the pest in check. Dr. Elliott Coues made, in 1880, an urgent appeal to the people to exterminate the English Sparrow for the following reasons.

1. They do not perform the work for which they were imported.
2. They attack, harass, fight, drive away, and kill native birds, much more insectivorous than themselves.

In 1889 the United States Department of Agriculture published a 400-page volume on the English Sparrow in America. This work takes up the economic status of the English Sparrow, its food relations, and its behavior with other birds. An amazing amount of evidence against the sparrow is gathered here and the author of the bulletin advises the extermination of the sparrow all over the United States.

In April, 1906, the following questionnaire was printed in these publications; 'The Auk,' 'Bird-Lore,' 'American Bird Magazine,' 'The Oologist,' and 'Maine Sportsman.'

Circular of Inquiry with Reference to the Present Status of the English Sparrow Problem in America.

1. Are you familiar with Bulletin No. 1, The English Sparrow in America, published by the Agricultural Department in 1889; and do you agree with the facts there presented and with its conclusions?

2. Are English Sparrows present in your locality? If so, are they increasing or decreasing in numbers?

3. What is being done with you to exterminate them? Please outline methods which you deem effective.

4. What influence have you observed the English Sparrow to have upon native birds?

5. Would public opinion in your locality favor the adoption of effective measures to exterminate the species?

6. Please state the facts and arguments, pro and con, which decide this problem in your own mind. Please send replies as early as possible — before June 1 — to the undersigned. It is hoped to gather a consensus of opinion from all parts of this Country and Canada. The data will be published as soon as possible.

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From this questionnaire and from letters sent out by me personally, I have received about eighty answers. I also wrote to all

the Experiment Stations in the United States, and to prominent ornithologists in Canada. These answers practically all agree that the English Sparrow is an obnoxious bird to have, especially to our native bird population. Several letters state that we have no right morally, to kill the English Sparrow, or any other living creature. But it must be plain to anyone that we have as much right to kill a bird that is generally considered obnoxious, as we have to kill mice, rats, fleas, mosquitoes, bedbugs, and the like. This standpoint of false humanitarianism is derided in most emphatic terms in many of my letters.

I will take up the questions in the order in which they appear in the enquiry, and will endeavor to give the main results secured by the questionnaire.

1. Are you familiar with Bulletin No. 1, etc. This was inserted in the questionnaire to see if the bulletin referred to, had, to any great extent, been circulated through the country, and also to see if it had had any marked effect on the ideas of the people in regard to the sparrow. A good portion had seen the bulletin and most of those agreed with it perfectly.

2. Is the English Sparrow present in your locality? Increasing or decreasing?

The data for the distribution of the sparrow I have secured from the Directors of the different Experiment Stations, and from the prominent ornithologists in Canada. The English Sparrow exists in enormous numbers in the whole region east of the Rocky Mountains; with the exception of Florida, where it is found in a few places, and in Texas, Oklahoma, and the northern part of Montana where it is reported absent. West of the Rockies, he is reported in Utah, Colorado, and in and about San Francisco, and Portland, Oregon. It is found throughout Canada, south of latitude 50°, and as far west as the Rockies. It does not seem to be either increasing or decreasing its numbers to any appreciable extent anywhere in this area.

3. What is being done with you to exterminate them? Outline methods.

In a great many localities, much is being done towards extermination; nearly one half of those answering were doing something to hold them in check, but as these few are scattered throughout

the country, no lasting, permanent effect is secured. The methods used are mostly that of poisoned grain, destroying nests and young, and shooting.

4. What influence have you observed the English Sparrow to have upon native birds?

The influence of the sparrow upon native birds is the crucial point in this discussion. It is not a question of how many insects it eats; it is whether our native birds would be better off without the intruder or not. There were two people, who liked to see the bird about in winter, when the other birds were away. A larger number honestly believed that the bird was doing a good service in the eating of weed seed. These few, however, admitted that the English Sparrow did attack and harass other birds. The rest of the letters were against the sparrow. Many give personal experiences of the sparrow's pugnacity and plead for a sure and certain method to get rid of the species. Others are up and doing and are killing off thousands each year, by poison and the gun. I will quote here three extracts:

"I have frequently observed that the English Sparrow chased the Robins off the State College Campus (Harrisburgh), and last year at my residence on the Penn. State College, I saw a male sparrow kill and drop from the nest four young Pewees, about a week or two old. The parents which are recognized as being among the most insectivorous birds, were entirely helpless in the presence of the intruder and destroyer of their young." — H. H. Surface, Pa.

"Have seen them rob Bluebirds' nests, drive away Robins, Wrens, and Crested Flycatchers." — H. Link, Indiana.

"The Purple Martins long disputed the possession of their boxes with the sparrows but eventually were compelled to give them at least half the compartments in each box. The Swallows and Bluebirds were driven out nearly altogether for many years, but of recent years have made increased use of the boxes. The Purple Martins are practically gone, and I doubt if the Bluebirds or Swallows would be allowed to nest, if the sparrows occupying the boxes were not turned out and their nests destroyed, as I have been in the habit of doing." — James H. Fleming, Toronto, Ontario.

5. Would public opinion in your locality favor the adoption of effective measures to exterminate the species?

Public opinion, in many localities, would favor extermination, but in many places, so-called humanitarians were, and are, still bitterly opposed to sparrow destruction, as in Boston in 1889. But the greater portion of the letters report communities to be entirely indifferent, and difficult to arouse to any definite action. As is always the case, a pest must become overwhelming, before the general public will pay the slightest heed.

6. State facts and arguments, pro and con, which decide this problem in your own mind.

Two letters used the argument that it was cruel to kill any living thing, no matter how good the reason, basing it on the point that the other animals had as much right to live as we had. It was also wrong to teach boys to kill things as it made them cruel. The great majority of writers were thinking of the great danger to our native birds, and this was a sufficient cause to demand extermination.

In Canada the consensus of opinion is the same as in the United States. But there the winters are more severe and so the bird does not attain to so great numbers but shows there, as here, the same fighting qualities that have made him most inimical to our native species.

There are several methods of extermination feasible; destroying nests and young, shooting, and by poisoning. The poisoned grain is prepared by dissolving one grain of strychnine sulphate in one half pint of boiling water. Pour this while hot over two quarts of cracked corn or wheat, stirring well until all the liquid is absorbed. Dry thoroughly, without searching, and put away labelled. One kernel of this prepared grain will kill a sparrow. Great care must be used with this, and it should be used only when our other granivorous birds are away.

The English Sparrow, or House Sparrow as it is sometimes called, has been a pest in every country in which it has been introduced. At present in New Zealand the people are obliged to take the most drastic measures to exterminate them. They had become so extremely numerous that concerted action became necessary and was demanded by the people, who are now slowly exterminating them. A special officer was appointed in each county, whose sole duty it was to carry on this work. The ex-

pense is borne by a special tax levied on each county. In Australia, the sparrow is increasing to extraordinary numbers and the people are up in arms against it. As the agricultural interests there are involved, the time seems ripe for action. The sparrow is an exotic species to America, and following the law of introduced species, has beeome a pest and the time is sure to come when the people will demand extermination. When the whole country, or a great seetion of the country, comes to a definite decision in the matter, then is the time for all to work together and to clean out the species till not one is left. For if any are left, their great ratio of reproduction, four to five broods of five eggs each, each year, would soon render the work useless and leave the people more discouraged than now. The repression of the sparrow cannot be undertaken locally with any lasting or permanent effect, for the killing of a few thousands is as a drop in the bucket, and the small vacuum would soon be filled by others swarming in from neighboring parts.

The letters I have received show that some here, some there, are doing honest work toward sparrow extermination, and while I do not want in the least to discourage them in their efforts, the results are only temporary and the work must be kept up continually. If one State or group of States set to work carefully within their borders, some lasting results will be obtained and the continuous work need only be kept up on the borders of the territory where the sparrow has been exterminated. But a far better way is to have the whole country do this extermination, now, at once, and all over the United States.

Auk, 24, Apr., 1907, p. 129-134.

A Strange Sparrow Roost.—Early in the fall of 1912 the European Sparrows in the City of Utica, N. Y., established a roost in the tops of the elms in the yard of a church in the most busy part of the City. At dusk every evening they assembled to the number of several hundred to spend the night in these unprotected trees. Early in January, Mr. James O. Roberts, a young observer called my attention to the fact that there were some strange birds among the sparrows, and after some difficulty in identification it was discovered that they consisted of a Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) — a new record for central New York — and a number of Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater ater*); as many as ten being seen at one time. These are strange birds for mid winter in this locality. The winter had been very mild up to this date and there was very little snow at the time.—
EGBERT BAGG, Utica, N. Y. **Auk** 30, April, 1913. p. 275-276.

A Note on the English Sparrow¹ (*Passer domesticus*).—There is considerable doubt as to the source of the early importations into this country of European House Sparrows, commonly known here as English Sparrows. It is probable, like many of our human emigrants, that the breed is of mixed origin, some having been brought from England, some from Germany. There are certain local differences between the birds from these two sources which need not be discussed here. Our only object is to compare specimens taken in New England between 1873 and 1886, with specimens taken here at the present day, and with specimens taken in England at the present day.

The number of specimens is too few for deductions, but we wish to put certain measurements on record, as it is possible they may some time prove of value. A great dearth of early specimens of this un-loved bird prevails. Those examined are from the collections of Mr. Wm. Brewster and Dr. Townsend, and were all from the Boston and Cambridge region. The present day specimens are all from New England, for the most part from Arlington, Mass., while the present day English specimens were sent to Mr. Hardy in the flesh from the vicinity of Liverpool, England.

The early New England specimens are striking birds, clean, with clear whites, blacks and chestnuts. The delicate wavy lines on the breasts of the females are plainly to be seen. The present day birds both from New England and old England are very dark and sooty, and in consequence lack these characteristics. The differences can be ascribed to feather soiling in their present sooty environments.

The following table gives the measurements in millimeters.

Locality, etc.	Wing.	Tail.	Bill.	Tarsus.
New England 1873-1886				
Average 7 ♂	78.00	56.00	12.64	14.42
" 3 ♀	73.00	53.00	11.66	15.00
New England 1907.				
Average 18 ♂	77.30	56.60	13.18	14.55
" 7 ♀	75.50	55.50	12.95	14.28
England 1907				
Average 8 ♂	75.50	54.70	12.56	15.25
" 17 ♀	72.00	51.80	12.32	13.94

It is seen that the early New England specimens average about the same in size as the present New England specimens, except as regards the bill which averages about 1 mm. larger in the present day bird. The present day English bird averages in wing and tail from 2 to 3 mm. smaller than the present day New England bird. The tarsus is about the same, while the bill corresponds more closely with the bill of the early American bird in being about 1 mm. smaller. In other words it would seem that in the early years of struggle only the more vigorous, larger birds survived and that under favorable conditions the larger size was continued with an added increase in the size of the bill. A larger series may invalidate these conclusions, but they are given for what they are worth.—CHARLES W. TOWNSEND, M. D., Boston, and JOHN H. HARDY, JR., Arlington, Mass.

¹ Read before the Nuttall Ornithological Club, Nov. 9, 1908.

*Fringilla
coelebs*

Sherborn Mass 3-23-'03

Mr. W. Brewster Dear Sir: Perhaps you may be interested

to know that there has been a ♂ European Chaffinch
living in the trees in my yard since Mar 4th.
It sings vigorously and seems to be perfectly at
home, and has all the appearance of a wild bird.
I don't know of course whether it is an escaped cage
bird, or whether it was purposely liberated -
Has there been any attempt anywhere to introduce
the species? Very truly yours

E. J. Smith -



BOSTON
MAR 25
7-AM
1903

CAMBRIDGE
STATION



POSTAL CARD.

THE SPACE ABOVE IS RESERVED FOR THE MARK

Mr. W^m Brewster
Cambridge,
Mass