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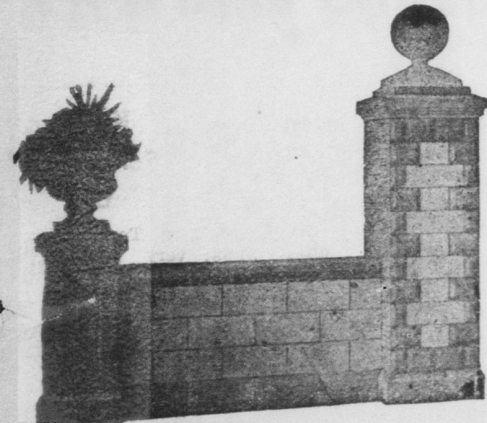
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A PLEA FOR ALL BIRDS

Only a Few Hawks That Should Be Shot Down—All Others Deserve Well of Man

An attempt is made to make all persons acquainted with fifty common birds and their usefulness to mankind in a bulletin freely distributed by the Bureau of Biological Survey at Washington. A description of the appearance and habit of each kind of bird is given that he may be appreciated for what he is doing apart from filling the air with gladness and be protected and nurtured for it. A direct appeal is made to children.

Introducing the birds, one at a time this preliminary comment is made:

Entomologists have estimated that insects yearly cause a loss upward of \$700,000,000 to the agricultural interests of the United States. Were it not for our birds the loss would be very much greater, and, indeed, it is believed with out the aid of our feathered friends successful agriculture would be impossible. A knowledge of the birds that protect crops is, therefore, as important as a knowledge of the insect pests that destroy them. Such knowledge is the more important because the relation of birds to man's interests is extremely complex. Thus, while it may be said that most of our birds are useful, there are only a few of them that are always and everywhere useful and that never do harm. Insectivorous birds, for instance, destroy, along with a vast number of harmful insects, some parasitic and predatory kinds. These latter are among nature's most effective agents for keeping destructive insects in check. To the extent, then, that birds destroy useful parasitic insects they are harmful. But, taking the year around, the good they do by the destruction of insects injurious to man's interests far outweighs the little harm they do. It may be said, too, that of the birds usually classed as noxious there are very few which do not possess redeeming traits. Thus the crow is mischievous in Spring and sorely taxes the farmer's patience and ingenuity to prevent him from pulling up the newly planted corn. Moreover, the crow destroys the eggs and young of useful insectivorous and game birds, but on the other hand, he eats many insects, especially white grubs and cutworms, and destroys many meadow mice, so that in much (altogether not all) of the region he inhabits the crow must be considered to be more useful than harmful. Most of the hawks and owls even—birds that have received so bad a name that the farmer's boy and the sportsman are even on the alert to kill them are very useful because they destroy vast numbers of insects and harmful rodents.

Justice to Hawks and Owls

violent assumption the sum saved to farmers by those birds in 1910 was \$89,260,000.

The current idea in relation to hawks and owls is erroneous. These birds are generally classed as thieves and robbers, whereas a large majority of them spend the greater part of their long lives in pursuit of injurious insects and rodents. The hawks work by day, the owls chiefly by night, so that they are useful practically throughout the twenty-four hours. As many as 100 grasshoppers have been found in the stomach of a Swainson's hawk, representing a single meal; and in the retreat of a pair of barn owls have been found more than 3,000 skulls, 97 per cent. of which were of mammals, the bulk consisting of field mice, house mice and common rats. Nearly half a bushel of the remains of pocket gophers, animals which are very destructive in certain parts of the United States, was found near a nest of this species. The notable increase of noxious rodents during the last few years in certain parts of the United States and the consequent damage to crops are due in no small part to the diminished number of birds of prey, which formerly destroyed them and aided in keeping down their numbers. A few hawks are injurious, and the bulk of the depredations on birds and chickens chargeable against hawks is committed by three species the Cooper's hawk, the sharpshinned hawk and the goshawk. The farmer's boy should learn to know these daring robbers by sight so as to kill them whenever possible.

For Making Lime-Sulphur Solution At Home

An extensive orchardist in Pennsylvania has written to Prof. H. A. Surface, State Zoologist, Harrisburg, saying that he wished to get proper apparatus for boiling his Lime-Sulphur Solution at home and asked if he was rightly informed when someone said the fire and sulphur would destroy the galvanizing of galvanized iron. He also asks for the formula and methods of making Lime-sulphur solution. The reply by Dr. Surface is timely and practical. Tens of thousands of persons in this State will make use of this information this fall. It is as follows:

"Concerning a task to boil lime-sulphur, I can say in the first place that this has been proven to be positively the best, most economical and most satisfactory spray liquid that can be used on trees; and by far the most rational thing for any horticulturist to do is to make his own. I have rows of barrels which are used for holding lime-sulphur made during the bad weather in winter and in which it is kept until we can apply it during the spring or latter part of winter. I use chiefly ordinary iron kettles, such as are used in butchering, but I also use some galvanized iron tubs. I have such a tub made of ordinary galvanized iron that has been in active and severe use for eight years and the galvanizing is not yet eaten off by the fire and sulphur, thus you see that you have been misinformed on this point.

"You can do nothing better than to construct a boiling vat shaped like a cigar box, with the bottom made of boards, and the galvanized sheeting turned up and nailed to the boards. Anything whatever will do for boiling the lime-sulphur solution excepting copper. It will dissolve or go through a copper vessel. It is one of the easiest materials to prepare that is known to mankind. All you have to do is to put together the lime and sulphur and water and boil it. One method of boiling that I have found very satisfactory is to put the lime, the sulphur and the water into barrels provided with steam pipes extending to the bottom of each, and then turn on the steam and boil it with this. The commercial lime-sulphur, such as you make inquiry about is just the same as the home-boiled in every way. In fact I have boiled it in ordinary open iron kettles with the cheapest grade of ground commercial sulphur and make it stronger than any commercial article I have ever tested. Ordinary ground sulphur or commercial sulphur will cost 1 1/2¢ per pound. Almost any good quick lime will serve the purpose for lime, but I prefer to be sure of having a calcium lime instead of a magnesium lime. For this I use the York lime.

"The formula for making lime-sulphur solution for either commercial purposes or home use is practically as follows: In each gallon of water boil two pounds of sulphur and one of lime for one hour. Let it settle and you will have a red liquid. When ready to use dilute it, using a hydrometer to test as strong as 1.03. The hydrometer is an instrument made by the Carbondale Instrument Co., Carbondale, Pa. This is nearly the whole story in regard to preparations for spraying for winter and spring."

From the foregoing it will at once appear that the practice of offering bounties indiscriminately for the heads of hawks and owls, as has been done by some States, is a serious mistake.

Field observations of the food habits of birds serve a useful purpose, but they are rarely accurate enough to be fully reliable. The presence of certain birds in a corn or wheat field or in an orchard is by no means proof, as is too often assumed, that they are devastating the grain or fruit. They may have been attracted by insects, which, unknown to the farmer or orchardist, are ruining his crop. Hence it has been found necessary to examine the stomachs and crops of birds to ascertain definitely what and how much they eat. The Biological Survey has in this way examined upward of 50,000 birds, most of which have been obtained during the last twenty-five years from scientific collectors, for our birds are too useful to be sacrificed when it can possibly be avoided, even for the sake of obtaining data upon which to base legislation for their protection.

Birds Are Great Eaters

It is interesting to observe that hungry birds, and birds are hungry most of the time, are not content to fill their stomachs with insects or seeds, but after the stomach is stuffed until it will hold no more continue to eat till the crop of gullet is crammed. It is often the case that when the stomach is open and the contents piled up the pile is two or three times as large as the stomach was when filled. Birds may truly be said to have healthy appetites. To show the astonishing capacity of birds' stomachs and to reveal the extent to which man is indebted to birds for the destruction of noxious insects, these facts are given, as learned by stomach examinations made by assistants of the Biological Survey:

A tree swallow's stomach was found to contain 40 entire clench bugs and fragments of many others, besides ten other species of insects. A bank swallow in Texas devoured 68 cotton boll weevils, and 35 cliff swallows had taken an average of 18 boll weevils each. Two stomachs of pine siskins from Haywards, Cal., contained 1,900 black olive scales and 300 plany lice. A killdeer's stomach collected in Kentucky contained 34 May-beetles. Another night hawk from New York had eaten 24 clover-leaf weevils and 375 ants. Still another night hawk had eaten 340 grasshoppers, 52 bugs, 3 beetles, 2 wasps and a spider. A boat-tailed grackle from Texas ate at one time about 100 cotton boll worms, besides a few other insects. A ring-necked pheasant's crop from Washington contained 8,000 seeds of chickweed and a dandelion head.

Few are aware of the difficulty often experienced by birds in obtaining water for drinking and bathing, and a constant supply of water near the house will materially aid in attracting birds to the neighborhood and in keeping them there, at least till the time of migration. Shallow trays of wood or metal admirably serve the purpose, especially as birds delight to bathe in them.

Considerable success has been met with in Germany and elsewhere in Europe by supplying artificial nest boxes for birds, and the same methods of increasing the number of birds and attracting them to farms and orchards where their services are most needed should be extensively employed in this country. The experiment can be more easily tried since several firms in the United States are now prepared to make and deliver boxes specially designed for martins, swallows, bluebirds, wrens, woodpeckers and other species.

One of the worst foes of our native birds is the house cat, and probably none of our native wild animals destroys as many birds on the farm as cats. The household pet is by no means blameless in this respect, for

the bird-hunting instinct is strong, even in the well-fed tabby, but much of the loss of our feathered life is attributable to the half-starved stray, which in Summer is as much at home in the groves and fields as the birds themselves. Forced to forage for their own livelihood, these animals, which are almost as wild as the ancestral wildcat, inflict an appalling loss on our feathered allies and even on the smaller game birds like the woodcock and bobwhite.

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