

*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*. ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW.—Not very common in April, 1887, in the vicinity of Tarpon Springs, which is the only point where I have observed the species.

*Ampelis cedrorum*. CEDAR WAXWING.—Observed in flocks feeding on mulberries in early April, 1887, at Tarpon Springs. At Hog Island, five miles south of Anclote Keys and four miles from the main land, I took four from a large flock that were feeding among the mangroves on May 2, 1888. Mr. Atkins has no records of the species at Punta Rassa or at Key West.

(To be continued.)

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## RECENT LITERATURE.

Barrows's Report on the English Sparrow in North America.\*—This 'Report,' of about 400 pages, exhaustively treats the subject under consideration, presenting the evidence, pro and con, at great length, and with evident fairness. The work is based primarily on the replies of over three thousand observers to circulars of inquiry sent out by the Division of Economic Ornithology of the Department of Agriculture, and secondarily on previously published evidence, the whole carefully elaborated and thoroughly systematized. Part I, entitled 'Summaries of Evidence—Recommendations—Special Reports,' occupies pp. 17-194, and treats (1) of the importation, spread, and increase of the species, and the checks upon its increase; (2) of the injuries it inflicts in various ways upon fruits, grains, and garden vegetables; (3) its relation to other birds; (4) its relation to insects; and contains (5) recommendations for legislation, and suggestions to the people at large; (6) a paper by Dr. A. K. Fisher, Assistant Ornithologist of the Division, on the destruction of the Sparrow by poisons; (7) a paper on trapping Sparrows (illustrated), by Mr. W. T. Hill; and (8) a history of the English Sparrow and European Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*) at Saint Louis, Mo., by Mr. Otto Widmann. This Part also includes a paper of 20 pages by Prof. C. V. Riley, Entomologist of the Department of Agriculture, on the 'Relation of the Sparrow to Insects,' based on the examination of the contents of over 500 Sparrow stomachs, followed by tabular statements of food, as shown by dissection of Sparrows' stomachs made at the Department of Agriculture.

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\* U. S. Department of Agriculture. | Division of Economic Ornithology and Mammalogy. | Bulletin I. | — | The | English Sparrow | (*Passer domesticus*) | in North America, | especially in its Relation to Agriculture. | — | Prepared under the direction of | Dr. C. Hart Merriam, Ornithologist, | by | Walter B. Barrows, | Assistant Ornithologist. | — | Washington : | Government Printing Office. | 1889.—8vo, pp. 405, with map.

Part II (pp. 197-357) gives 160 pages of previously unpublished evidence bearing on its distribution, rate of increase, and its injurious relations to agriculture, through its destruction of fruit buds, foliage, fruits, garden seeds, garden vegetables, and grain, and through its antagonism to native birds and its relation to insects. This is followed by 57 pages of previously published testimony, about one half of which relates to its American history, while about 20 pages are devoted to its record and status in Europe (relating mainly to England), and ten to its history and status in Australia.

The evidence presented is overwhelming against the 'eligibility' of the Sparrow in America. Its injuries to various kinds of fruits and vegetables are classified under appropriate headings, and the evidence presented is given in the language of the reports of correspondents, alphabetically arranged by States and towns. Of the reports received (owing to their number and volume only a part are given), about one to five per cent, in respect to injuries to small fruits, vegetables, and grains, are favorable to the Sparrow; about three to eight per cent are indecisive; while upward of ninety per cent are classified as wholly unfavorable. The evidence bearing upon its relation to other birds is hardly more favorable, specific statements of its persecution of our native birds being abundant and related with convincing detail. Respecting the food of the Sparrow, as determined by actual dissections of stomachs, the testimony is not encouraging to those who believe in his efficiency as a destroyer of noxious insects. Thus of 522 stomachs examined only about one in six contained any insect remains, and of these remains two thirds were of beneficial insects or of insects of no economic importance, reducing the proportion of noxious insect remains, compared with the total contents of the stomach, to an almost infinitesimal amount.

Various suggestions are made for the eradication of the pest, but none of them seem to offer much hope of success, in view of its great abundance, wide distribution, and rapidity of increase, since only general and concerted action at all points where it has appeared would give reasonable hope of its extirpation; and this, in the nature of things, is hardly to be expected. Much can be done, however, to check the rate of increase and more or less energetic and general measures will doubtless soon be resorted to on the part of those whose interests are most directly attacked.

The information given in this admirable report can not fail to arouse general interest in the subject, and lead to important economic results and more intelligent legislative action, the House Sparrow being still a 'protected' bird in two thirds of the States and Territories which have laws for the protection of harmless or beneficial birds. In only seven is the Sparrow left an outlaw, and in only three is there any aggressive legislation against it, Michigan and Ohio offering a bounty for its destruction. Mr. Barrows, however, argues at length, and very justly and conclusively against the expediency of offering bounties, as such a policy would not only prove inefficient but enormously expensive. He urges, however, the

formation of Sparrow Clubs, whose object shall be the destruction of these birds by concerted action, the offering of prizes, etc. Shooting in winter time of flocks decoyed by food advantageously spread for the purpose, and the destruction of nests, and disturbing their roosting places, are among the suggestions for their decrease. Directions for the preparation and use of poisoned food are also given, which, if used with proper care, might yield very satisfactory results.

With all the light now thrown upon the subject, it would seem that the Sparrow can have few friends among intelligent people. Those who still believe in him as a desirable addition to our fauna must be of the class Mr. Barrows so happily characterizes in his 'Introduction' as "persons whose minds are so constituted that nothing is evidence to them except what is derived from their own observation, and as this unfortunate mental infirmity is commonly correlated with the total inability to observe anything which interferes with their theories, it makes little difference whether their opportunities have been good or bad, their position is unassailable. . . . No amount of evidence will change their opinion, and fortunately for the good of mankind it makes little difference what that opinion may be."

'Bulletin I' of the Division of Economic Ornithology is a most thoroughly creditable and utilitarian piece of work, vindicating effectively the need and wisdom of establishing such a department of research as a part of the legitimate work of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. 'Bulletin I' also admirably completes an investigation originally started by a Committee of the American Ornithologists' Union.—J. A. A.

**Davie's Nests and Eggs of North American Birds.**—Under a new title,\* the words 'Check-List and Key' being very properly omitted, the third edition of this popular book appears as practically a new work, containing six additional engravings and more than twice the matter of previous editions. The nomenclature and classification of the A. O. U. Check-List is adopted and the habitats allotted to each species and subspecies are for the most part taken with little or no change from the same authority. The text, which in previous editions was limited to mere descriptions of nests and eggs with brief notes on distribution or habits, is now greatly extended, a page or more frequently being devoted to a single species, and in many cases the remarks form nearly complete biographies. The author appears to be well informed on his subject and he has freely availed himself of existing oölogical literature, the work abounding in valuable references, and he also includes much new material derived by him through correspondence with other observers. He presents (p. 120) strong evidence of the breeding of *Totanus flavipes* in Ohio, "a well-formed egg"

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\*Nests and Eggs | of | North American Birds | by | Oliver Davie | Third Edition, Revised and Augmented | Introduction by J. Parker Norris. | Illustrations | by | Theodore Jasper, A.M., M.D., and W. Otto Emerson | — | Columbus | Hann and Adair | 1889.—8vo pp. [1-8], 1-455, i-xii, pl., i-xiii.