

THE STARLING.

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On December 16, 1926, Mr. Lester Corrie of Joliet, Illinois, killed, what he thought to be a flicker, at the eastern outskirts of the city. Upon closer examination he realized that it was not a flicker and, as he had never seen a bird like it before, he took it to the Joliet Township High School for identification. He showed it to Mr. C. E. Spicer, Assistant Superintendent of the high school and he, being an ardent bird student, at once recognized it as a starling (*Sturnus vulgaris* Linn.) Mr. Corrie presented the bird to Mr. Spicer who had it mounted, and it is now a valued specimen in the High School Museum.

At that time we believed this bird to be the only starling to have been found in Illinois. Recently, however, Mr. O. M. Schantz, President of the Illinois Audubon Society, informed me that Mr. Wm. Lyon, President of the Inland Bird Banding Association, had trapped two starlings. Mr. Lyon confirmed this, saying that the two birds were caught in his traps at Waukegan, Illinois, in December, 1925. He banded both birds and released them, but to date neither of them has been heard from. Neither Mr. Schantz nor Mr. Lyon knew of any other starlings having been found in this state. Mr. Lyon tells me that at least one has been killed in Wisconsin, the specimen now being in the Milwaukee Museum. Mr. Spicer told me that he had heard that the bird had been reported in Iowa but I have not been able to verify this report. In December, 1926, Mr. Amos W. Butler, President of the Indiana Audubon Society reported to the Indiana Academy of Science that three starlings had been killed in that state during that and the preceding year.

These few birds found recently in our neighborhood are probably the forerunners of what bids fair to be the greatest bird invasion of our time.

The Starling is a European bird. At least three attempts have been made to introduce the species into the United States. The first attempt at Cincinnati, Ohio, and the second at Portland, Oregon, were failures; but the third

attempt at New York City was highly successful. Approximately one hundred starlings were released there in 1890 and 1891. From these the species has multiplied and spread until it has become as common in the eastern states as its fellow countryman, the English Sparrow. It has been spreading in all directions from New York but especially to the west in states of the same latitude. At present its western breeding limit is probably in western Ohio. In the field reports for Bird Lore for December, 1926, we find the following: Observers in New York reported 7079 starlings; observers in New Jersey reported 3999; Mass., 1590; Pa., 1122; R. I., 488; Va., 375; Ohio, 341; Vt., 78; Me., 46; N. H., 26; Md., 25; Mich., 4. In no other states were any reported. These are the numbers of birds seen by a few observers during trips of a few hours each. One observer in New York estimated one flock at 3500. Another noted that there were more starlings than there were English Sparrows. These figures give an idea of the numbers of starlings in the east.

Up to the present time the economic status of the starling has not been determined, but the weight of eastern opinion seems to be against him.

Two conclusions are warranted. The first is that the starling has become firmly established as a member of our bird fauna. The second is that the species is spreading westward at rather a rapid rate. We may reasonably expect to hear of other starlings being found in Illinois during the present year. And we should study them carefully from their earliest appearance in order to determine what their coming will mean to us biologically and economically.