

through the winter and use the Swallows' nests in that season as roosting places. As spring comes they build in them and so have possession when the Swallows return from the south. As they then, naturally enough, decline to turn out, the Swallows have to seek elsewhere for a home; the result being that we lose a valuable, purely insectivorous bird and get in the place of it one whose value is questionable. Continually shooting off the Sparrows as they appear seems to be the only remedy, and I think eternal vigilance would be required to make it successful in any place where the Sparrows are well established.

That Sparrows are rather quarrelsome amongst themselves in the season of love-making is evident to everyone, but so far I have not seen them interfere with any other species whose nesting interests do not conflict with theirs. In my own neighborhood, House Wrens, Orioles, Vireos, Cat birds, Wilson's Thrushes, Robins, Chipping Sparrows, Song Sparrows, the American Goldfinch, and the Yellow Warblers have all bred in close proximity to many pairs of Sparrows and have not been interfered with by them; but if I had not kept a pretty close watch over the nests, and taken out the eggs of the Cow birds which were deposited therein, but few broods would have been successfully raised.

The Sparrow has one particularly good trait which should not be overlooked; that is, its fondness for the seed of the knot grass or knot weed. This pernicious plant frequently appears on our boulevards and lawns and destroys the grass completely. The Sparrows soon find it out, and small parties constantly visit it and feed upon it, so that it is kept down and in some cases is quite cleared out.

SWALLOWS.

Of this family we have five species, viz: the Purple Martin, the Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, White-breasted Swallow and Sand Martin, all regular summer residents. Another one, the Rough-winged Swallow, occasionally occurs here, but as it closely resembles the Sand Martin its appearance is not readily noticed.

The economic importance of these birds is very great; without them the smaller winged insects would multiply to such an extent as to become an unbearable nuisance to men and animals; for it is, I believe, to these birds chiefly that we are indebted for our freedom in the cleared and cultivated parts of the country from the swarms of midges, black flies and gnats of various kinds that so abound in the woods.

These birds seem to have a great predilection for the society of men, partly because the clearing he makes in a forest country opens up to them the necessary space for feeding grounds, and partly because the buildings he erects affords them convenient nesting places, of which the House Sparrow unfortunately is dispossessing them.

Except in very stormy weather the Swallows usually capture their food while they are on the wing, but in the cold windy days that frequently occur in early spring the insects on which they depend are too chilled to fly, and then the Swallows seek them in open places on the ground. The sandy shores of our lakes are particularly resorted to at such times.

In the latter part of July and the beginning of August the large female ants swarm from their nests, each one prepared to found a colony for herself were she