

SKUNKS AS DESTROYERS OF POULTRY. TWO PERSONAL EXPERIENCES.

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It is well known that skunks have a fondness for eggs as well as poultry, but of the numerous accounts that are related from time to time, it is difficult to secure the authenticity necessary to make them of true scientific value.

Two instances of skunks robbing poultry houses have come under my observation recently, and as both had points of interest, they may prove worthy of relating.

The first of these occurred in October two years ago, when a young skunk dug beneath the foundation of a poultry house and killed six birds by seizing them by the back of the neck close to the head, and apparently sucking a small amount of blood from each. A most interesting feature of this attack was that the brains had been eaten from every one. The animal was trapped the next night while entering the building.

The other case which was that of egg sucking occurred here last spring.

Several hens were "sitting" upon eggs in nests about a foot from the ground. The nests consisted of boxes with only the fronts open, and then were partly closed with wooden bars some three inches apart to prevent the hens leaving the eggs excepting at special hours.

On the third of May it was noticed that nine eggs had been broken open and the contents eaten, as well as three bad eggs that were not in the nest. The hen was still sitting comfortably on the nest, and had apparently not been disturbed. There was a hole beneath the foundation of the building where the animal had entered. The next night ten more eggs went, and the following night eight more, which completed the settings of two hens. All the eggs were taken from beneath the hens and eaten in the nest without any sign of the birds having been disturbed in spite of the fact that the animal had to squeeze between the bars to get into the nest. The eggs were all opened at the large end, the top being taken off as if with a knife, without damaging the other parts of the shell. The shells were found next morning round the hens—not under them—which tends to confirm the theory that the hens had not been materially disturbed, as in that case some of the shells would have almost surely been found under them.

After the above damage had been done a thorough search