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THE RELATION OF SPARROWS TO AGRICULTURE

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The relation of Sparrows, as a Class, to Agriculture is very little known, and people have some very erroneous ideas regarding this relationship.

In the first place, the fact that there are several species of sparrows in this country, is known by comparatively few, and thus the inroads committed by the numerous English Sparrows upon our garden and field crops condemn, to a large degree, the whole class.

Now it is evident that a group of birds so abundant, so widely distributed, and in such constant association with farms and gardens must play an important part in rural economy, and that a through investigation of their food habits would be useful. The results of such an investigation are embodied in this paper and amply demonstrate the value of the different birds to the agriculturists.—“A value”, says Judd, “greater than that of any other group of birds whose economic status has thus far been investigated.”

In order that the different kinds may be easily distinguished, and thereby to assist in preventing the reckless slaughter of beneficial species in mistake for the more injurious English Sparrows, I shall give the chief characteristics of some of the common birds which are known generally as Sparrows.

The following species are common in all parts of Ontario: the English Sparrow; the Chipping Sparrow; the Vesper Sparrow; and the Song Sparrow.

ENGLISH SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*).

The well-known English, or House Sparrow, is found in almost all parts of the United States and Canada. There is a marked difference in the appearance of the males and females but both are well known to all. The note of these birds is anything but musical.

Throughout its range, the English Sparrow abounds chiefly in towns and villages, along roadsides, and about farm buildings, it is seldom found in the open fields, except during the harvest.

The spot chosen for the nest is some hole or crevice in a wall or chimney. Sometimes it is built in tree tops. The nest is very