

An observation of Barn Swallow—Starling commensalism — On August 14, 1957, between 9:30 and 9:45 A. M., on a strip of four to eight-inch high grass recently cut along the Mohawk airport runway NE of Ithaca, I observed about 30-40 Starlings foraging. Just above them, perhaps six inches to two feet in the air, 25 Barn Swallows were circling and catching insects which the Starlings stirred up. This entire activity, involving over 50 individuals, took place in an area no larger than 20 x 20 feet. When I approached and frightened the Starlings so that they moved a short distance, the Swallows moved with them. They were definitely taking advantage of the insects raised by the Starlings, although I could not see that the Starlings benefitted in any way. — Randolph Little, 111 Crest Lane, Ithaca.

REGIONAL REPORTS

THE BREEDING SEASON: June 1 - August 15

When I returned from Indiana in mid-August it was to a parched landscape. A trip west along the Lake Ontario shore from Rochester showed marshes and even ponds completely dried up with grass often completely defacing their original identity and cracks cutting deep into the hard clay earth. East of Rochester in the sandy sections, even in areas where a good deal of artificial watering done, lawns were completely parched and brown. The only New York areas which have escaped this drought seem to be the Finger Lakes and some parts of the Adirondacks.

Although there are the usual reports of little coverage from many regions, much interesting field work has been done this summer. Of special note is the coverage in Region 5 of the interesting Tug Hill breeding area by Fritz Scheider and a number of other birders. There are also reports — from Long Island this time — of continuing changes in bird populations due to changing land use.

In the Region 4 report is recounted an interesting incident which all interested in bird protection should read. This is an account of publicity leading to enforcement of our present hawk protection laws. It is to be hoped that these present laws will be strengthened by legislation within a short time. All birders should keep abreast of such developments.

As usual some interesting birds turned up. A mid-June flight of peep along Lake Ontario included — according to Walt Listman — *mostly* Western Sandpipers. This is an interesting observation and should be worth checking in other years, possibly even by collecting. Short-billed Marsh Wrens, observed in a number of regions, may be showing a welcome upswing in numbers. Saw-whet Owls gave evidence of breeding in the Albany area. It is interesting also to note in that region the status of the Cardinal. This interesting southerner is just now establishing itself here, as contrasted to its complete establishment in the western part of the state. In this one aspect the west is some 15 years ahead of the east.

There are three other interesting finch records. A Pine Grosbeak was recorded near Watertown August 16 and the Blue Grosbeak was noted in two parts of the Hudson Valley, the farthest north near Albany. At Etna Sally Hoyt had Rose-breasted Grosbeaks bringing young to her feeding stations. GRR.