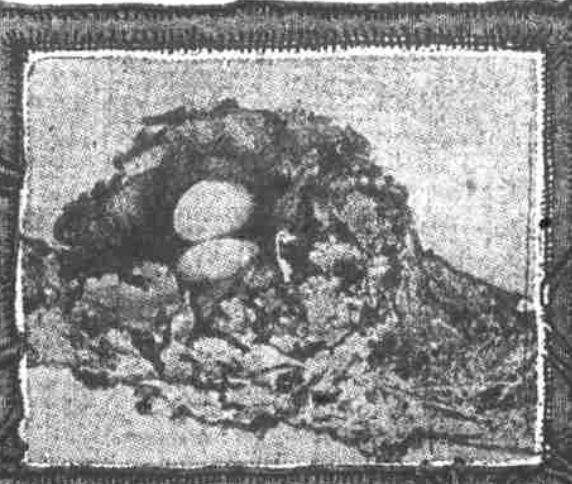




# SHALL WE PROTECT the BIRDS?



The Nest of the Flycatcher Should Be Protected.



Nest and Eggs of the Hummingbird—Actual Size.



A Winter Charity—Tying Suet in Trees.



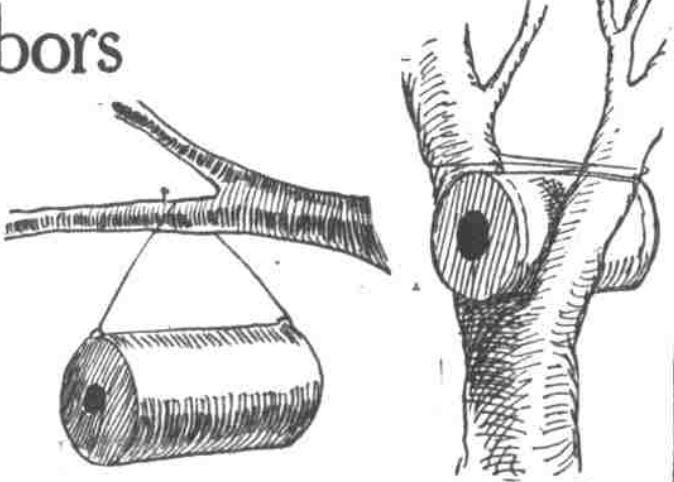
Covered Nest of the Meadow Lark.

## It is Easy to Give Shelter to Our Feathered Neighbors

A SONG of birds outside your window in the morning. A robin sitting from tree to tree, a bobolink making merry in the green meadow, a mockingbird thrilling the air nearby. Birds are called the friends of man. They greet him on sunny mornings. They would be sociable, if permitted. Yet how few people, comparatively, may be called friends of the birds!

You should love the innocent, soft-winged little creatures that call to you from the trees and make the summer lively with warble and chirp. Perhaps you sometimes regret that there are so few about your home. But have you ever invited them to come? Do you do anything to help the birds live, to assist them over hard spells, over the "financial furies" of the bird world—want of food, bad winters?

You can do much; you can build homes for them, give them food and lend them a helping hand. Grave government experts prophesy terrible things when the birds are gone, and there has been a decrease in numbers amounting to 51 per cent. within fifteen years in a single state. They do so much to help man by warring on crop-destroying insects, and are such a joy about the home, that they should be protected.



Tin Cans Turned into Nurseries.



This Can Be Made Easily.

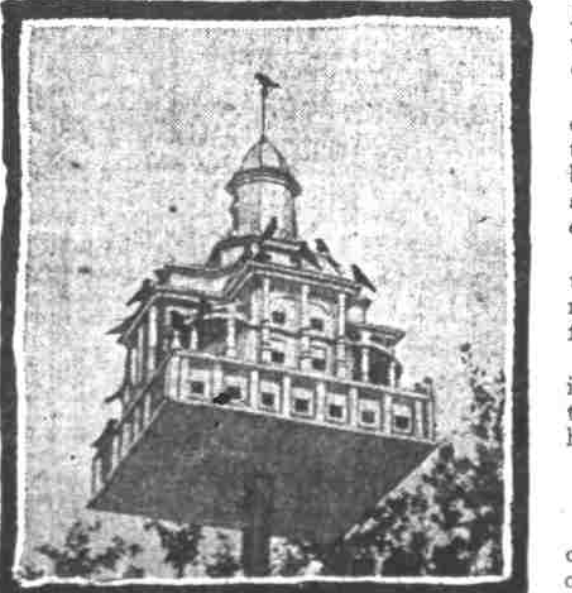
This is a time of year when you can begin to get ready for your visitors of next spring. One of the best means to protect domestic birds is to put up a number of bird boxes.

Now, when you make bird boxes you will have to bear in mind many things. While your guests will not be overparticular, various birds prefer different kinds of home accommodations. Besides, you want to attract the good-natured birds, the day laborers, who will work for you. You don't want to open a loafing house for English sparrows. Bird boxes, according to experts, should have time to age. So now is a good time to put them up for next spring's tenants.

During the fall you will find the making of bird homes an interesting occupation. Houses among the more picturesque kinds can be made with windows, which, however, should be securely fastened, so that draughts cannot blow through.

Most amateur bird-house carpenters construct the simpler designs, with perches, or platforms, as shown by the small picture above. You are advised not to do this, as a platform is regarded as a special invitation by English sparrows. They generally do not visit houses at which they cannot perch before the door. English sparrows also will not nest in boxes that swing.

An easily constructed house may be made of a log with a hole bored in the center with an auger. Some of the smaller birds delight in these rustic shelters.



A Bird Apartment House—66 Rooms.

Wrens are easily pleased, and a home made of an empty tin can proves inviting to them. This is easily made by melting off the rim at one end and placing over it a circular board with a hole cut in the center just big enough to permit the wren to enter. This protects the bird from the attacks of English sparrows and jays, which are too big to get through the doorway.

In placing a bird house you must take into consideration the height preferred by birds. Martins usually select a home about thirty feet from the ground, while bluebirds prefer to nest about ten or fifteen feet from the grass. Houses at this height will also attract chickadees and titmice, but wrens prefer homes much lower.

Another thing, don't forget that most birds do not favor apartment houses. Martins will nest in colonies, but most birds prefer individual homes. These great houses for the martins, however, should not be placed in the midst of trees or shrubbery, but in an open space. These birds delight to wheel and fly about in the air.

If you have small boxes, such as cigar boxes, these can be utilized as homes for the birds. The box should be placed upright, with the lid lifted at an angle of about thirty-five degrees. This will form a roof and give the birds plenty of space.

Robins do not like confined houses, but prefer freer accommodations, such as this. Phoebe's also are partial to these rudely arranged homes. And woodpeckers, nuthatches, bluebirds and wrens just gurgle with delight when they find an old stump with holes already bored for them.

Of course, the building of homes is only one of the many favors you can do for the little creatures. The reason for the decrease in birds is because of their destruction by men, and the failure to supply means of protection, especially in the winter.

Winter feeding is one of the most important phases of bird preservation. And the birds near your home are not the only ones that need food, but those in the forests.

When the ground is covered with snow and ice, and cold winds are blowing, the poor little things suffer greatly. Each winter reaps its harvest of feathered victims.

### HOW CHILDREN MAY HELP

In many towns throughout the country societies have been formed for the winter feeding of birds. School children, after lessons, find delight in trotting off to the woods provided with snow shovels, grain, bird seed, fatty meat and suet. The meat and suet may be tied to the trunks of trees.

If there is danger of squirrels or larger birds stealing it, the meat may be fastened to the trunk under a square foot of one-half inch wire netting. The birds can get their beaks through this and get their fill.

In the center of a field a space ten feet square is cleared and the seed scattered on the ground. Were it sprinkled on the snow, it would sink in too deep for the birds to reach. In 1903 the high school boys of Stoneham, Mass., formed a feeding club, and established seventy-five feeding stations about their town. At Canton, Mass., societies have been formed and prizes given in the schools for the best essays on the results of their winter feeding. The state

Board of Education of Connecticut some time ago issued instructions for the feeding of birds during the winter on circular platforms to be erected about the school flagstaffs.

Out in the fields should also be erected shelters, made of brush, set up like a haystack. Or cornstalks piled on the sides of fences will offer a place of warmth during cold spells. There boys can take food, such as stale bread, cracked corn and buckwheat.

### WHAT TO DO NOW

Good deeds such as these you can do, if you live in or near the country, next winter. "But if you wish to attract birds about your house in the winter," writes Edward Howe Forbush, an authority, "you must begin now. Scatter a little hayseed on the bare ground about the yard. Hang some pieces of suet or beef tallow on the branches of trees beyond the reach of dogs and cats.

"If, at first, these pieces are somewhat widely scattered at points radiating from the house as a center, your success should be assured. Your lures will keep best at this season if tied on the shady side of a tree trunk; but in the winter they should be put on the sunny side."

By doing this you may retain birds about your home which would ordinarily go South. By degrees draw the feeding stations nearer your home, and the birds will come closer. During the winter suet is an excellent food for the birds. If you succeed in winning their friendship, and they stay until the spring, you may depend that they will keep your trees and plants free from destructive vermin.

Many persons who have succeeded in forming such colonies about their homes supply the birds with opportunities for food. George T. Powell, an agricultural expert, of Ghent, N. Y., advocates the raising of a species of early cherries for the birds. These are overripe by the time the other cherries ripen, and naturally the birds stick to their own tree. Many raisers of strawberries, who are friendly to the birds, plant a row of early berries for them. They assert the birds never touch the later varieties.

You can help the birds by having about your home a few fruit-bearing shrubs, such as raspberries, blackberries, elderberries, mulberries, the choke cherry or wild cherry. Let there be thickets about your grounds for shy birds, and in time of nesting prevent any disturbing and unnecessary noises. In the spring you can help the birds by placing on the ground materials for nests, and pans of mud for robins and sparrows.

Sweet is the breath of Morn, he rising sweet With the charm of earliest birds—Milton.

ACCORDING to scientists, dire conditions follow a decrease in the number of our feathered friends. Already the loss in crops by insects—caused by an insufficient number of birds—is estimated as exceeding millions of dollars a year.

The question of importance now is, Will you help to protect the birds? Will you do your individual share to prevent their decrease? Of course, if you will, your first question is, What can I do?

First thing—invite the birds to come to you. Then make friends with them. And when they have domiciled themselves about your home treat them courteously—just as though they were greatly desired guests.