COMMUNICATIONS

Editor, WILSON BULLETIN: Owing to the widespread popular interest in the westward advance of the European Starling in America, as shown by the frequent news items in the daily papers, the suggestion has been made that an up-to-date map, prepared from information supplied by members of the Wilson Ornithological Club, should be published in the BULLETIN. From time to time this map may be revised and re-published as new information is sent in. Present information indicates that a rapid movement of these birds to the westward and southwestward across the Mississippi River is being exhibited. Reports of the appearance of these birds in new localities should be sent promptly to the Editor.

E. C. HOFFMAN.

Lakewood, Ohio, February 5, 1929.

[We will be glad to receive such reports, and will count on Mr. Hoffman's draughtsmanship in preparing the map.—Ed.]

Editor, WILSON BULLETIN: Referring back to the WILSON BULLETIN for September, 1928 (page 207), and to a short note on "Catbirds Remain Mated," by Mr. Perkins, I notice that Mr. Perkins' authority for the expression "remain mated" seems to be based on the fact that the birds were no doubt mated in June and July, 1926, and that both were taken together nesting nearby on June 24, 1927. But why "remain mated"? Really so able a lawyer as Mr. Perkins can hardly claim that as good evidence that they have been mated during the entire year intervening.

Sometimes my House Wrens come back to the same spot, and have the same mate a second season; but does it mean any more than that the male having come back to the same box and territory and taken possession of it, is discovered there by the female upon her return, and both being fit and ready they become *re-mated.*

The same question arises in the note of Dr. Hayes on the previous page (206) in the case of his Towhees taken together again after a period of two years. Why assume that they have been together all of the two years? The fact is very interesting and we need far more actual observation, but must not attribute to the birds an idealism in love, which does not even prevail so very well in the human family.

We know that a considerable proportion of adult birds of these species return to the same place at the same time of year, so the chances are very good that the same two birds will re-mate.

We are not even sure what is good morals for the bird, as good morals means for them what is best for the race; and we are not sure that it is best for their health and self preservation and best for the race that the mates try to keep near each other all the year.

S. PRENTISS BALDWIN.

Gates Mills, Ohio, January 10, 1929.

Editor, WILSON BULLETIN: The comment of my good friend, Mr. Baldwin, on the Catbird item is at hand. It is the raising of pertinent questions, such as this one, so characteristic of Mr. Baldwin, that opens a continually enlarging field of research.

Of course, birds may not stay in the same balewick during the winter. Each may have a different winter resort, learned of before either was old enough to think of mating. Each would naturally return there for succeeding winters. There would be no demonstrations of love by these or other birds during the winter even if together in the south on migration. There would be difficulty in producing proof that they were paired between breeding seasons. Such facts do not militate against their remaining mated for they surely are not taking another mate. We may be able to produce evidence, Mr. Hayes and myself and others interested in this question, that these mated birds start south at the same time in the fall and return together in the spring, or that they even keep in each others' company after the brood is able to look after itself.

As bits of additional evidence come to hand let us write of them so as to fortify the presumption with proof.

SAMUEL E. PERKINS, III.

Indianapolis, Ind., January 14, 1929.

To the Editor: It is only fair that the original Heath Hen Committee should be given a chance to correct some unfortunate and incorrect impressions which are likely to be circulated among ornithologists through your review of Dr. Gross's monograph on the Heath Hen, published in the December, 1928, WILSON BULLETIN.

The State Division of Fisheries and Game long ago realized the great hazards surrounding this bird, and in spite of some adverse pressure has expended a very large sum of money on its welfare over a period of nearly thirty years. After the great fire in 1916, there was a loss of birds followed by a rapid recovery. This, again, was followed by a steady decline, as Dr. Gross's tables will show, which continues, until today we find the species at the vanishing point.

A special warden was placed on the island in the late spring of 1925, largely through the efforts of the Federation of the Bird Clubs of New England, with various other conservation bodies and many individuals contributing. This warden was kept on duty for two years. The State then felt able to place a regular warden, Mr. Karl A. Eckert, on the island, who, with Mr. Allan Keniston, long in charge of the Heath Hen Reservation, made two wardens for this small island. It was the best policed area in Massachusetts, so far as fish and game matters were concerned.

By this time (spring of 1927) the birds, as revealed by our census, were at such a low ebb that we decided to drop the services of our special warden. We felt that we were no longer justified in asking our contributors to give to a cause which was hopeless. Also, we felt that the State had the situation well in hand, and that our special warden could render no further aid to the cause we had so deeply at heart.

At this moment a local committee was formed on the island, which continued to finance our special warden, with the help later of the journal, *National Sports-*

man. The Heath Hen, as has happened before, became an innocent football of local jealousies of the bitterest sort, and some very extravagant articles appeared in the *Martha's Vineyard Gazette* and the *National Sportsman*, and also in Boston newspapers. The special warden was discontinued by the new committee in the summer of 1928.

It is not true that our special warden was hindered in the performance of his duty by lack of permits for the killing of predatory birds and mammals, either while under our orders or afterwards. He was given adequate authority from the State covering all species of hawks and owls which could by any stretch of the imagination be considered a source of danger to the Heath Hen. But long before this warden ended his period of duty with this committee we felt certain that the decline of the Heath Hen had not been caused primarily by predatory birds or mammals. All these were under good control.

We shall never know for certain the exact cause or causes which have brought about the decline of this interesting species. The factors involved are too many and too subtle to yield to our present crude methods of approaching a complex ecological problem. But, no matter how the decline was brought about, we feel that the State, the conservation organizations, and the many individuals who contributed have all done their part in this attempt to save the Heath Hen from extinction.

HEATH HEN COMMITTEE,

Charles B. Floyd.
Francis H. Allen.
John C. Phillips.
William C. Adams.
Robert Walcott.

Boston, Mass., January 31, 1929.

NECROLOGY

Many members of the Wilson Ornithological Club will regret to hear of the death of Rev. W. F. Henninger, for many years a resident of Ohio, an active student of birds, and a loyal member of the W. O. C.

Walther F. Henninger was born at Herman, Mo., on December 2, 1873. He died at Manchester, Mich., on February 2, 1929, being a little over fifty-five years of age. When eleven years old his father died, and his mother took him to Europe, where he was placed in a school for boys maintained by the Moravian Church. It was here that his interest in nature was first developed. After graduation from this school he returned to America and prepared to become a minister in the Evangelical Synod, serving chiefly in Ohio. From 1922-1927 he represented his Church in Brazil, but impaired health compelled him to relinquish this work. After spending nearly a year at the health resorts of Germany he returned to Ohio, and later took up pastoral work in Michigan. Interment was at Tiffin, Ohio. For some years Mr. Henninger was active in the W. O. C., and held the offices of Treasurer and President.