

Another film which shows the wonderful results obtained by Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Middleton in the winter feeding of birds at London, Ontario, is completed and others are in contemplation.

There are a multitude of subjects to choose from in planning such pictures, but it is quite possible that the reader of this article knows of good material for Canadian bird pictures which has not been called to the attention of the Branch. If this should be the case valuable bird protection work can be done by acquainting the Dominion Parks Branch of any discoveries made of nesting grounds, feeding stations and the like, so that motion pictures may be taken where possible. HOYES LLOYD.

HUDSONIAN CHICADEE.—Several Hudsonian Chickadees spent last winter with us here in Red Deer, feeding with the common Black-capped ones and making themselves very much at home. I have fed the birds every winter for many years and while numbers of our common Chickadees, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers and latterly Blue-jays, fed daily on the food provided for them. This is the first time the little Brownies have put in an appearance at our feeding place. A friend reported having seen one near here several years ago. Winter caught us early in October, and my attention was drawn to a new bird note, which on investigation, proved to be the Hudsonian Chickadee, and in a very short time they were feeding with the other birds within a few feet of a window where I observed them at close range. All the birds were tame, the Chickadees absurdly so—and would settle on my hands when putting out food for them. It was rather amusing to watch the Hudsonians “bossing” the Black-caps, the latter having to give way to the strangers at all times. During the very cold weather their only note was a drawling plaintive de-de-de, very unlike our common Black-cap’s clear notes; but with warmer weather and bright sunshine they sing two different songs—one a lovely bubbling note with a canary-like quality to it and the other beyond my powers to describe. Several people came to see these birds, and Mr. F. C. Whitehouse, Dr. Henry George and Mr. C. H. Snell have identified them. We hope they will stay and nest with us. We have a lot of spruce trees here where they could spend most of their time.

Description: Head dark brown, darker on forehead and over eyes; small white spot on cheek; back grey, washed with brown; wings dark grey; tail very dark grey; throat black; breast greyish white; sides cinnamon. One bird, which I presume was an adult male, had the breast pure white and the other colours correspondingly richer.

(MRS.) ELSIE CASSELS, RED DEER, ALTA.

THE STARLING IN CANADA.—We all realize what a mistake it was to introduce the English or House Sparrow into America. However, even the lamentable results of naturalizing this alien was not a sufficiently awful example and the experiment had to be tried with other species. Most such introductions have been failures. The European Gold Finch survived in limited numbers for a while, but quickly died out. The success with other species, such as the Skylark was equally futile, except in the case of the Starling. It has succeeded and multiplied near New York and adjoining coastal localities and like most of such successful introductions we wish it had been otherwise. Whilst not promising to be such an arrant pest as the English Sparrow, its effect has not been good and, flocking to city parks, orchards and such semi-wild places, has still further displaced native species with whom we are in closer sympathy. It has shown all its bad habits and few redeeming good ones.

So far, in Canada, we have congratulated ourselves that our climate would prevent the intrusion of the Starling into our country and while we felt commiseration for our neighbors across the border we took little more than an academic interest in the matter. But it now looks as if our complacency was to be rudely shattered. The Starling has been reported from Canada.

Mrs. R. W. Leonard, of St. Catharines, Ont., writes that she saw a small flock about her place last winter. Further inquiries bring forth the following information from her in substantiation. The birds were observed at a distance of about twenty-five feet through field glasses and were identified by means of comparison with descriptions and plates in Chapman’s Birds of Eastern North America, Reed’s Bird Guide and the National Geographic Magazine. They are described as follows: “Their heads were dark and something like a blackbird’s, the wings were a very dark shade of brown, speckled all over with light spots.” This last detail seems to be conclusive and to quiet any doubts that might otherwise arise as to the identification.

There have not been any published reports of the birds occurrence anything like so far from the place of original introduction and it is surprising that they should have made this great jump in distribution without being reported from intermediate localities. Any other appearance of this species should be immediately reported that we may keep track of its spread and perhaps initiate methods of prevention.

P. A. TAVERNER.



Taverner, P. A. 1920. "The Starling in Canada." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 34(5), 99–99. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.337969>.

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