

ten birds were observed but were generally inactive. The morning was calm, clear and warm and early enough in the season for a more active booming display.

Reports have been received of a resident flock of Prairie Chickens 4 miles north and 1 mile west of LeRoy, Minnesota. These birds were reported booming in this area in the spring of 1939. Another resident flock has been reported in an undrained area 2 miles south and 1 mile east of Grand Meadow, Minnesota. Although several visits were made to the areas by the writer, the reports have not been verified by actual observations.

Analysis of available information indicate that the Prairie Chicken in south-eastern Minnesota is slowly declining in numbers and that their existence is largely dependent on the maintenance of large undisturbed breeding grounds in the undrained prairie lands. It is doubtful whether the Prairie Chicken have even maintained their populations during the past three years. A shift in farming from cultivated crops to grass crops may retard this decline.

General observations on these Prairie Chicken while booming, flushing or cruising indicate the birds are unusually timid, probably the result of direct disturbance or the harmful changes in their environment by man. The flushing distance was usually more than 100 yards and the flight limit beyond the human vision.—
URBAN C. NELSON, *Soil Conservation Service, Chillicothe, Missouri.*

Food of the Short-eared Owl During Migration Through Pennsylvania.—Since July 1, 1938, the food habits of all raptors on the 1,675-acre Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus torquatus*) study area in Lower Macungie Township, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, have been investigated by the Pennsylvania Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit for the purpose of determining the effects of birds of prey upon the pheasant population. The Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus flammeus*) rarely breeds in Pennsylvania, but it is often observed during migrations. At least four times during the course of the pheasant investigation, groups of migrating Short-eared Owls hunted and rested on the study area for several days at a time.

The owls usually roosted in weedy grain stubble fields during both spring and fall migrations. Seventy-two pellets, from at least 14 different owls, were collected from roosting sites on the study area. Eighteen pellets were collected in November 1938; 42, in March and April 1939; and 12, in September 1939.

The analysis of the bony contents of the pellets yielded the following items of prey: meadow mice (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*), 98; deer mice (*Peromyscus* sp.), 26; house mice (*Mus musculus*), 3; short-tailed shrew (*Blarina brevicauda*), 2; Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), 1; unidentified small birds, 3; and frogs (*Rana* sp.), 4.

Although the data were meager, there was no significant variation between spring and fall food habits. During both migrations mice appeared to be the staple food, while other items of prey were merely incidental.—PIERCE E. RANDALL, *Department of Zoology and Entomology, The Pennsylvania State College.*

Unusual Behavior in the Chimney Swift.—Birds, as well as many other animals, have been observed to behave very differently in large groups than when alone. Under the influence of the social situation they may lose their accustomed fear and caution as is well shown by the following incident. In the late afternoon of Sept. 1, 1936 in Waldoboro, Maine, I observed Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*) circling overhead in large numbers. They flew lower and lower until one side of their circle was barely skimming the ground. A tennis backstop of chicken-wire now stood directly in their path and into this they crashed blindly. At first they tried to pass between the meshes with their wings flapping. They would neither turn around nor fly over the obstruction. They seemed imbued with a mob psychology, a feeling that they must follow their companions regardless