

Changing Face of Spring

(Continued from p. 171)

The growing interest of individual people in birds is also reflected in the annual Christmas Bird Count, an exciting project whereby bird lovers count all the birds they can see and hear in a certain area within the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. Managed jointly by the National Audubon Society and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of the Interior Department, the Christmas Count gives a general indication of the approximate numbers of America's birds.

This year, the 65th year since the idea started, more people than ever before put on their boots before dawn and walked through the parks to count their feathered friends. A more accurate scientific method is being devised at the Patuxent Wildlife Service in Laurel, Md., whereby the numbers of breeding birds during the months of mid-April through July will be counted and tabulated by computers.

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BOOKS ON WILDFLOWERS. Comprehensive list. LEW's, 2510 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, Calif. 94109.

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MICRO ADS

MAGNETS — Alnico-Ceramic-Flexible-Assemblies. What you need, we have. Special-Powerful pocket magnet, \$1.00. Maryland Magnet, 5412-K Gist, Baltimore, Maryland 21215.

FRESNEL ZONE PLATES bend light like lenses, but by diffraction. 2-element set, many project ideas, \$2. Metrics Laboratories, 1845 North Howe St., Chicago, Ill. 60614

PERSONALS

LEARN SHORTHAND in 2 Hours! USA, Box 234, Troy, N.Y. 12180.

FORMOSAN BUTTERFLY, moth, beetle, dragonfly, cicada for sale. NOVELTY, Box 860, Taipei, Formosa.

MEDICINE

Birds Bring Disease

➤ A SECOND attempt to clear a starling roost in the center of town by the local Park Clinic of Mason City, Iowa, and the Communicable Disease Center station of Kansas City, Kans., resulted in a second outbreak of acute pulmonary histoplasmosis, which developed in 87 persons. Acute inflammation with skin disease and inflammation of the nodes of the legs also affected 30 of Mason City's population.

As many as 500,000 new infections are estimated to occur annually in the United States, the Mason City report stated in the New England Journal of Medicine, 274:415, 1966.



Fish and Wildlife Service

BLACK STARLING—Starlings, as well as pigeons and chickens, are held responsible for the spread of an infectious disease known as pulmonary histoplasmosis. As many as 500,000 new cases occur annually in the United States.

Other locations in which starlings as well as pigeons and chickens have been blamed for soil contamination include Washington, D.C., where in the summer of 1961 two parks were reported having soil producing the fungus, *Histoplasma capsulatum*.

The fungus had previously been found in nearby Maryland and Virginia, where 85% of the population in some communities showed incidence of exposure. A survey in Frederick County, Md., reported in the fall of 1962, showed that of 1,924 school children, 35% showed positive reactions to tests.

In one instance, a three-month-old boy got histoplasmosis from sleeping on a 30-year-old pillow stuffed with chicken feathers from Hungary—a prized heirloom.

One doctor went so far as to advise rural children to leave egg-gathering to older persons, who probably are already infected from clearing the debris from chicken houses. However, wetting or

disinfecting the debris could help alleviate the problem.

A Public Health Service report from Communicable Disease Center investigators stated that an average follow-up of less than five years showed that one-third of histoplasmosis patients either have died or show progression of the disease.

Results of the infection can vary from a relatively harmless condition to incapacitation that could be fatal because of chronic lesions in various internal organs.

Treatment is possible, and doctors are advised to make skin and blood tests in cases of undiagnosed lung disease.

More than 8,000 histoplasmosis patients have been sent to tuberculosis hospitals with wrong diagnoses.

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Nature Note

Wolf Spider

➤ **KEEN-EYED**, swift-moving and brave, the wolf spiders do not build a web to catch their prey as other spiders do. They simply stalk the prey, run after them and pounce upon them in true wolf-like fashion.

Wolf spiders, also called hunting spiders, have a thick velvety coat of hair that varies in color from black to gray or brown, with dark stripes or patches. They have eight bright beady eyes arranged in three rows—four small eyes in the front row and two large eyes each in the second and third rows.

The active, strong-legged members of the family Lycosa, which comes from the Greek work for wolf, are found throughout the world in many kinds of surroundings—pasture lands, fields, edges of woods.

The spiders are usually more active at night, when the insects they feed upon are moving about, and the wasps that prey upon the spiders are asleep. By day the spiders hide under stones, wood or matted grass.

The mother wolf spider lays about 200 eggs, which she carefully encases with silk and carries with her wherever she goes, attached to the underside of her body by spinnerets. Like many animal mothers, she will fight to the death to protect this case of eggs.

When the baby spiders emerge, about several weeks later, they swarm over her back covering her completely except for her head, hanging on as best they can as she continues to run, leap and pounce in her hunting activities. After several days, they are ready to slip off her back and start hunting on their own.

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