



Horned Larks

EARLY spring is now well in possession of pastures and fallow lands, and here the wayfarer may find the horned larks. If he walks quietly he will hear their songs—thin, reedy, sweet little pipings; not the full-throated warblings of their later-coming and larger brethren, but all the pleasanter now for being heard in a desert season.

The "horns" that give the little lark its name are really tufts of feathers, one above each ear. They are so small that normally one cannot see them with the naked eye at ranges within which the bird will permit one to approach. But a pair of opera glasses or a low-power field glass will make them easily visible. Such an optical aid will also make it possible to study the interesting black markings on brow, cheek and throat. The ground-hue of the head, aside from these black markings, is either white or yellow; the rest of the bird's body is "sparrow-colored." Both male and female have the "horns" and the head markings; immature young lack them and look a good deal like sparrows.

In some regions the horned larks hardly stay the winter through. Where the severity of the storms does drive them out they do not go far. They are not afraid of snow and cold, and can pick up a thrifty living on weed seeds and wild fruits. They are strictly ground dwellers, even perching on the bare earth at night when they sleep. This keeps them down where they can do the most good as destroyers of next year's potential weed crop.

Science News Letter, March 7, 1931

One explanation for the recent decrease in airplane production is that the life of commercial aircraft is longer than was expected a few years ago.

METEOROLOGY

February Rains Bring Temporary Drought Relief

FEBRUARY rains have relieved but not ended the unprecedented drought conditions which have prevailed over wide areas of the United States as a result of the unusual deficiency in rainfall during 1930 and January, 1931.

Reports to the United States Weather Bureau for the first 25 days of February reveal that despite the substantial heavy rains falling early in the month over large sections of the persistently dry areas of the country, there is still a moisture deficiency in many regions.

In the Ohio Valley states, the rainfall for the 25-day period was 70 to 90 per cent. of normal. The Middle Atlantic and Southern Atlantic States had less than half their normal quota of rain during this same period, while the upper Mississippi region had less than one-fourth the average precipitation for this period.

Normal to more than twice normal rainfall was enjoyed by Tennessee, southern Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas, however. Indeed, recent rains have made Arkansas and the eastern half of Texas too wet in the first week of March.

"Moderate rains in the Ohio Valley and Middle Atlantic area have improved the top soil in these sections but the subsoil is yet unsupplied," reports J.

B. Kincer, chief of the division of agricultural meteorology of the U. S. Weather Bureau.

"Recent rains in the South Atlantic states and West Virginia have put the top-soil in a good condition but the sub-soil is in need of moisture, while the upper Mississippi region needs rain."

The continuation of mild, open weather and light moderate rains over large areas recently has been unusually favorable for outside work on farms but where the depleted subsoil supplies of water have not been replenished, the drought hazard is not ended, though the immediate situation is relieved.

Science News Letter, March 7, 1931

March's Thesaurus Dictionary

Finds the word you have forgotten, and *defines* it. See full description in full page advertisement, issue of November 8, 1930.

Write for "Three Men and a Book," an entertaining little booklet showing the advantage of March.

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