



Model Parents

STARLINGS may be unmitigated pests from the human point of view, but they are model parents to their own families, reports Dr. H. A. Allard of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. This solicitude and efficiency in the care of their young is probably one of the main factors in the success of these invader birds in establishing themselves solidly in this country.

Dr. Allard obtained intimate insight into the domestic life of a starling family by providing a desirable nesting box in the attic of his barn. The top of the box consisted of a pane of glass, which permitted him to watch the nest closely without himself being seen.

Papa Starling was no shirker. He took turns with his mate in incubating the eggs and in brooding the young after they were hatched. When not on duty at the nest he was out foraging. First meals for the hungry young were small

caterpillars and spiders, slightly crushed and gently tucked into the tiny gaping mouths. Later, provisions were brought in larger lots and poked in with rather strenuous vigor.

Despite their reputation as dirty birds, starlings take great care to prevent the nest from becoming fouled, Dr. Allard found. They are forever removing wastes, loosening the lining for aeration, adding new lining materials.

Unlike many other small birds, starlings do not set up definitely bounded hunting grounds and fight off all intruders. They remain gregarious in their foraging. However, they are decided individualists with highly developed property sense when it comes to nesting sites. The same birds will return to a nesting box they have occupied before, and bitter fights often result from attempts at claim-jumping.

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CLIMATOLOGY

Hottest Known Place Is Death Valley, California

HOTTEST day ever recorded on earth was chalked up at the town of Azizia in Lybia, where Mussolini's legions are now slogging their weary way through the sands to attack Egypt. Azizia's pride is a temperature of 136 degrees Fahrenheit—and very little shade.

However, that does not make Azizia the hottest place on earth, declares Dr. W. Gorczynski, eminent Polish meteorologist now working at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. A single super-heated day does not constitute a simmering summer in Hades. Until Azizia can produce long-continued records of heat (and weather records there are fragmentary) the somewhat wilted palm for highest thermal honors must go to America's own Death Valley, in California.

Records kept continuously for the past 20 years at Greenland Ranch in Death Valley show average maxima of 94 de-

grees for June, 102 degrees for July and 98.9 degrees for August. Highest temperature ever recorded is 134 degrees—a close second to Azizia's lone peak of 136 degrees.

Second-hottest place, according to Dr. Gorczynski, is the oasis of In-Salah, deep in the French Sahara, where records for ten years show average maxima of 90.3 degrees in June, 99.3 degrees in July, and 97 degrees in August, with highest single record at 133 degrees. Jacobabad, in the desert of Upper India, has maxima for the three summer months of 97.7, 95 and 91.6 degrees respectively, but the highest single record was a mere 120 degrees.

Bagdad in Iraq is hard pushed for its place in the sun by its namesake, Bagdad, Calif. The Arab city shades (if that's the right word) the California town's June maxima by just 1.2 degrees: 90 flat as against 88.8. California forges two-tenths of a degree ahead in July, with 94.6 against 94.4. But the original Bagdad of the Kalifs pulls ahead in August, with averages of 94.4 as compared with 92.5. All-time honors in the contest also go to Bagdad, Iraq, with 123 degrees, over only 119 degrees achieved by Bagdad, Calif.

However, although Death Valley is thus the hottest spot on the planet so far as is definitely known, it is not the driest. Even Bagdad, Calif., as well as other places in Imperial Valley, are drier than Greenland ranch, Dr. Gorczynski states. Much drier are parts of the Sahara and the Egyptian Sudan, as well as the desert of Arabia.

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