



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Secretary
Press Service



Release - Immediate

July 19, 1923.

A PAIR OF BIRDS PER ACRE
NEST ON MANY FARM LANDS

- - -

Bird censuses taken over a period of seven years for that section of the country lying north of Maryland and the Ohio River and east of the Great Plains show that a little more than one pair of birds to the acre is the average for farm land. About 130 pairs of birds are found to nest on 100 acres immediately surrounding buildings and including lawns and orchard, while the estimated bird population of an entire farm is about 112 pairs to 100 acres. Many more counts are needed from the Southern and Western States before it will be possible to draw any conclusions as to the bird life of these sections.

How many birds per acre breed in the different parts of the country? What is the relative abundance of the different species, and how are they distributed? Are birds most abundant where they are most needed, about farms, gardens, and orchards? How do altitude and latitude affect the numerical distribution of birds? What effect on bird life has the presence of water, as a small stream, pond, or lake? How do birds respond to changes in such environmental conditions as more intensive cultivation, changes in crops, or the clearing of woodland?

Information in regard to these and many other questions is sought through bird censuses. In a United States Department of Agriculture Bulletin, No. 1165, Report on Bird Censuses in the United States, 1916 to 1920, by May Thacher Cooke, assistant in biological investigations, the results of the work already done

have been compiled for the benefit of all who are interested in bird life, especially those voluntary cooperators who have sent in reports to the Bureau of Biological Survey. The proper method of taking a bird census is described, and detailed accounts are given of the conditions found in various places.

The robin is the most abundant species in the States north of North Carolina and east of the Mississippi. The English sparrow is second. Birds respond to protection, and on areas where they are protected they nest much more abundantly than on surrounding territory. This fact leads to the hope that the apparent increase in the number of birds per acre on many tracts in the eastern United States will continue because of protective legislation and greater interest in bird life.

- - -