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COTTON GROWERS SHOULD
PROTECT THE BIRDS

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During the past few years the boll weevil has appreciably decreased the yield of cotton in the American cotton belt. At the same time, an irresponsible element of the cotton belt population is allowed to range the fields and woods, gun in hand, slaughtering at will some of the most important natural enemies of the boll weevil, the birds. Sixty-six kinds of birds of the Southeastern States have been discovered by the Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture to feed upon boll weevils. The most active of these enemies are the orioles, which actually take the insects from the squares of the cotton plant, and the swallows, which feed upon the weevils when they are in flight and extending their range. No fewer than 41 boll weevils have been found in a single stomach of the Bullock oriole, and large numbers of the weevils are habitually taken by all species of swallows. Every one of a series of 35 eaves swallows examined had eaten boll weevils, the largest number in any stomach being 48, and the average 19. In winter the most important destroyers of these cotton pests are blackbirds, meadowlarks, titlarks, and Carolina wrens.

All of these birds, in fact birds in general, should receive all the protection the southern planter can extend. They not only help him by feeding upon the boll weevil, the bollworm, the leafworm, and other pests of cotton, but destroy important insect enemies of all his crops.

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