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A RECOUNT OF THE BALTIMORE ORIOLES NESTING
IN MOUNT PLEASANT, IOWA

H. E. JAQUES

During the winter of 1920 and 1921 a count was made of the Baltimore oriole nests to be found in the trees within the city limits of Mount Pleasant as published in the proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science.¹ A recount was made during February of 1927 for comparison with the first census taken six years earlier.

After the trees have shed their leaves nests of the Baltimore oriole are readily visible and may be accurately identified, so that a much more reliable census of bird population of a community, as far as this particular species is concerned, may be made during the winter than could be had by the more general plan of hunting out active homes during the nesting season. The only problem seriously involving the accuracy of the count is the question of the age of the nests found. Careful observation indicated that while some nests of the second and occasionally one of the third year are to be found, about one-half of the nests remaining in the trees in February were built during the preceding summer. The count of 1927 was made as before by students who had been trained in the identification of trees. Note was made of the location of each nest and the species of tree supporting it. Uncertain cases were given further consideration.

The figures of the two counts together with the numbers of trees of the species involved to be found within the town according to the count of 1925² are tabulated below. In the tree count all trees over 4 inches in diameter were enumerated.

| KIND OF TREE | NUMBER OF NESTS 1921 | NUMBER OF NESTS 1927 | NUMBER OF TREES IN TOWN | RATIO |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Soft maple | 60 | 70 | 1846 | 26.3 |
| White elm | 40 | 43 | 2137 | 49.7 |
| Box elder | 10 | 9 | 706 | 78.5 |
| Hickory | 5 | 1 | 178 | 178.0 |
| Cottonwood | 3 | 2 | 180 | 90.0 |
| Hard maple | 2 | 0 | 863 | |
| Hackberry | 1 | 1 | 45 | 45.0 |
| Apple | 1 | 5 | 3369 | 673.0 |
| Black walnut | 1 | 0 | 292 | |
| Basswood | 0 | 1 | 53 | 53.0 |
| Totals | 123 | 132 | | |

¹ Gilmore, Katherine, and Jaques, H. E. A Baltimore oriole census. Proc. Ia. Acad. Sci., vol. XXVIII, pp. 131-134. 1921.

² Jaques, H. E. A tree census of Mount Pleasant, Iowa. Proc. Ia. Acad. Sci. vol. XXXII, pp. 201-203. 1925.

These new figures seem to indicate that there has been little change in the Baltimore oriole population of the town; that just about sixty pairs of these beautiful, beneficial birds annually contribute their setting of color to the trees and lend cheer with their joyful songs.

Doubtless many factors other than the species of tree are involved in the selection of a nest. When the ratio of nests to trees is considered it becomes apparent that for this town at least about two pairs of these birds will select a soft maple to one pair that chooses an elm. The common association of the elm and the oriole in literature seems to be poorly supported.

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