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Wild Life at Pine Valley

By Morris L. Parrish

As a rule few members of a golf club have learned to appreciate the beauty of the wild life that loves to linger in the seclusion of the out-of-bounds or water hazards that the players like to avoid. The appeal of native vegetation is perhaps felt by more individuals than is the appeal of wild bird life, since it seems to be the particular care of the feathered tribe to shun the visitations of the curious. Most golf courses, with their combination of wooded areas, open spaces, and water hazards, afford what is apparently an ideal setting for the attraction of a wide variety of bird life. I have come to take a particular interest in the native birds that visit or make their homes on the property of the Pine Valley Golf Club. Doubtless all of our



On the Pine Valley golf course. Here the combination of tall trees, dense underbrush, open spaces, and abundance of water provides an ideal natural setting for a bird sanctuary

players are familiar with the robins that stalk around over putting greens and fairways in their search for earthworms, or the noisy and conspicuous blue jay, or the crows that occasionally drop down to forage on the turf, or the flocks of purple martins that fly into and around the box near the fourth hole. But how many of them are aware that within the confines of our course may also be found the catbird, the brown thrasher, song sparrows, chewinks, crested flycatchers, the tufted titmouse, wrens, kingfishers, buzzards, and hawks? Bluebirds have this year made their reappearance for the first time since they were driven out by the starlings several years ago. There are also a few quail. On our water hazards there are swans and mallard ducks which breed annually, and Canadian geese. Certainly a greater abundance and variety of this wild life would make its home with us were efforts made to provide food for the birds, especially over the winter, and to establish a bird sanctuary.

There are a number of cottages built on or adjacent to the golf course, and most of these have martin houses. There are also other bird houses near the cottages, but none in the distant parts of the grounds.

The quantities of insects and weed seeds disposed of by birds on a golf course is not appreciated by many, and greenkeepers, for their own good, would do well to harbor these beneficial and interesting creatures.

With the desirable birds there are, of course, also those that are not wanted, particularly the starlings and English sparrows. These I endeavor to destroy as much as possible around my own residence on the course, where I live the year round. This season at my place we were entirely free of starlings, my gardener having shot them during the winter whenever they appeared, and this fall, after the departure of the martins he will again shoot them should they come. The effect of shooting upon the abundance of English sparrows, however, seems to be wholly negative, as they quickly reappear in as great numbers as ever. There are a number of evergreen trees near our club house and the fifth tee, where the sparrows gather in large numbers. I arranged with a company which specializes in exterminating rats and other vermin with poison gas, to come down and try to rid this grove of evergreens of the sparrows. We selected a night in winter and had the club house vacated for the occasion; the men were on hand with their apparatus, but not a sparrow could be found in the neighborhood; this happened on two occasions.

In concluding, I want to say that if golf clubs wish to attract desirable birds to their golf courses, and place martin houses and other bird boxes around for that purpose, a certain amount of attention should be given to keep sparrows and starlings from inhabiting them.

The Golf Club as a Bird Sanctuary

By Arthur A. Allen

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The majority of golfers may not realize that their clubs are ideally situated for giving sanctuary to birds without the slightest inconvenience to the game. It is a mistaken notion that a bird sanctuary must be a large area covered with a tangle of bushes and vines—a real jungle. The places in this country which are richest in bird life are those that combine open areas with clumps of shrubbery or single bushes. The edges of woodlands shelter far more birds than the center of the woods, and pasture lots dotted with thorn apples, dogwoods, and mulberries support still greater numbers. The golf club that has a small wood lot or group of trees where elderberries and dogwoods are encouraged to grow, or permits a few thorn apples or flowering crabs to remain at appropriate places, or has a few mulberry or hackberry trees about the borders, can be an ideal bird sanctuary provided there is water within flying distance for the birds and either dead trees or bird houses for species of birds that naturally nest in cavities. Clubs lacking in any of these features can, with comparatively little expense, provide substitutes that will be equally attractive, and thus in a fairly short time build up a bird population that rivals that of any bird sanctuary in the country.

There are many kinds of birds that frequent golf courses. Some range from coast to coast and from Maine to Florida. Others are