

Butcher-birds, both Pied and Grey, began to assist, but their numbers were not great. Crows gathered in groups of from twenty to forty birds and effected good work. Spur-winged Plovers became more active, both by day and by night, and though only about ten birds were to be seen they must have accounted for a large quantity of caterpillars. It was strange that ibises had been totally absent from the district. Several pairs of White-faced Herons were working well.

The good work continued until May 3, by which time all infested ground had been thoroughly worked and apparently cleaned of the caterpillar pest. From that date onwards neither grub nor moth were seen and the bare ground was soon under a new coat of grass, the result of good rains and an extremely mild season.

On April 28 there was a most wonderful sight to behold. Starlings, Magpies and all the other birds mentioned were diligently at work when a Goshawk came on the scene. Magpies took to the air from many places and one flock of about thirty birds flew south until out of sight. All other birds scattered and mounted into the air above the hawk, but the starlings, which had reached very large numbers, remained in one huge flock at first. There must have been two thousand or more of these birds. The whole flock kept circling above the hawk which was desperately trying to rise above them.

This action seemed to confuse the Goshawk which seemed undecided which flock to attack. Then as it dived among the birds the whole mass came together again, leaving the hawk below as they rose very rapidly and circled above it.

This remarkable performance was repeated many times until the hawk abandoned the chase and glided down to some trees by the creek. The Starlings circled in massed formation for several minutes then came earthwards with a whirlwind roar and divided into many flocks which went in groups to the shelter of trees at their feeding ground and commenced their usual chattering calls commonly used while resting—calls which in volume of sound almost equalled that of the whirlwind sound of their wings while in the air.

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**Birds Attacking Sparrow.**—We have often remarked on the absence of Sparrows on my father's farm in Yannathan, Gippsland. A small party of birds might appear, but after a day or so they are gone. Last week (February, 1956), my father saw a Sparrow moving about. As he watched it, a Noisy Miner and a Grey Butcher-bird both attacked it. They struck it repeatedly and apparently successfully, as my father found a Sparrow's wing on the drive next morning. No wonder there are no Sparrows on the farm if the Noisy Miners combine with the Butcher-birds to destroy them.—MARGARET MCKENZIE, Yarraville, Vic., 11/2/56.