

the evening when all the House Sparrows and doves have left, the cardinals return. I see two or three at almost every feeder, 21 in all.

January 27 - A male Red-winged Blackbird is at the feeder. He's a month ahead of schedule. I didn't expect to see him until the end of February.

February 3 - I never brought in my bluebird house. I thought it might be a welcome spot on a cold, windy day. A male House Sparrow guards the entrance, swinging another male sparrow by his head feathers for several minutes before he lets him go. They fight for possession until I have to leave for work.

February 9 - Two White-crowned Sparrows love the platform feeder. First, the im-

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*'Mourning doves  
eat between fifty to  
one-hundred pebbles  
a day to help them  
grind up the seed  
they eat.'*

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mature hops up and looks me over and then the adult takes a peek. You can always tell them

from the House Sparrows by the way they forage. They kick and shuffle in Fox Sparrow and towhee fashion.

February 20 - In the morning while filling the feeders, I hear White-crowned Sparrows, House Finches, and Red-winged Blackbirds singing. It is enough to give me spring fever. ■

*Sue Friscia, Field Trip Chairman of the Illinois Ornithological Society, welcomes your comments on feeding birds. You can write her at: 3417 West 123rd Street, Alsip, IL 60658.*

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## AVIAN ANNALS

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*by Eric Walters*

### 70 years ago:

The first European Starlings ever reported in Illinois were noted at Urbana during the months of January and February. The starling flock, which consisted of seven to eight individuals, was seen several times in a roost with cowbirds and grackles.

### 60 years ago:

A few European Starlings wintering near Barrington were considered a rare find.

Four field trips to Horseshoe Lake during late December and early January failed to yield any blackbirds, starlings, or House Sparrows.

A Mount Carroll resident wrote "about our

buildings there are several pairs of starlings, but they are very shy and you have to look sharp to see them".

### 30 years ago:

The most abundant species counted on Illinois' Christmas Bird Count was the European Starling.

### 1 year ago:

The European Starling was seen on 90 per cent of Illinois' Christmas Bird Counts and was the second most common species, only surpassed by the Canada Goose.

Participants logged 126,484 European Starlings throughout the state during the count. ■