

THE *Blue Jay*

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Blue Jay Chatter



Lloyd T. Carmichael, Editor



Spring is always a season of rejoicing, particularly among those who are interested in nature. The grass and the trees once more bedeck the landscape in fresh and numerous shades of green; the birds arrive from the south and fill the morning air with song; insects and other animals, large and small, appear from hibernation or seclusion as if by magic; the flowering plants awake from their long winter's sleep, and burst into fragrant bloom.



Such is the annual recurrence of vibrant life, springing from a cold and dormant world, reminding us that resurrection, one of the most common gifts of natural phenomena, is an exhilarating and established fact.

The photographs on this page, the Crocus by Cliff Shaw; the Robin by Doug Gilroy; the Spring Beauty by Hugh M. Halliday, and the Moss Phlox by myself, are among the first harbingers of spring, that never fail to gladden the hearts of boys and girls, men and women everywhere. But why include the Spring Beauty? Is its presence here a mere reminiscent token for those of us who spent our younger days in the East—down by the sea? Not so—the Spring Beauty is a Saskatchewan flower of the Cypress Hills. Mr. Budd tells us all about it, on page 23.

Not only do we rejoice, this spring, because of the fascinating gifts which Nature has to bestow, but in the knowledge that the "Blue Jay" seems to be on the brink of a success, only dreamed about a few short years ago. Over three hundred nature enthusiasts have joined with us since the beginning of the year, and our total circulation will reach a new high of eleven hundred or more, before this issue is off the press.

The enthusiasm of our president, Dr. Stuart Houston, has increased by leaps and bounds. Wherever he is—whatever he is doing—he continues to solicit support for the Natural History Society. Not only has he signed up 47 new members as well as many renewals, but, assisted by our business manager, Cliff Shaw, he has sent out hundreds of letters to prospective members, the results of which show in the bundle of mail which daily reaches the editor's desk.

This unbounded enthusiasm is shared by our vice-president, Jack Shaver, of Yorkton, who has established a record which will be difficult to equal. He has solicited and obtained 54 new members since the beginning of the year.

Space forbids my enumerating the similar excellent missionary work done on our behalf by members throughout the province. On the back inside cover are listed the patrons for the year, who in generous cash donations and gifts subscriptions have increased our bank account by a hundred dollars.

Besides these, I would like to mention in particular the names of: Dr. George Ledingham of Regina; G. B. Gollop of Saskatoon; Mrs. O. L. Wolters of Tolland, Alberta; J. V. Harper of Saskatoon; H. L. Paine of Moose Jaw; Mrs. Arthur Ward of Swift Current; Doug Gilroy of Regina; Cliff Shaw of Yorkton; May Shaw of Rocanville; Frank Baines of Saltcoats; Mrs. Harry Bray of McLean and T. H. Mack of Lumsden. To these men and women must be given the credit for swelling our membership to such proportions, the the future welfare of the "Blue Jay" now seems assured.

Go Then and Plant a Tree

C. STUART FRANCIS, Torch River.



Apple-blossom time at Sprucedale Farm.

This has been a mild winter all the way through, with the exception of three or four cold days in January when the mercury dropped on one occasion to a low of forty-two degrees below zero. But for the most part it has been an easy winter for the native birds and animals.

The deers are to be noted with sleek coats and well covered bodies, as they have had lots of good feed found around threshing sets, sheaf stacks, etc. However, one large buck with a very fine set of antlers met a tragic fate over on our west place during December, by trying to cross several yards of ice which had seeped through a beaver dam. The way he was lying on the ice gave us the impression that he had slipped, and the legs had spread so far apart as to have paralyzed the spine, so that it had been unable to move at all. We came upon it when we observed an unusual number of fox, coyote, and an occasional Timber Wolf track, all leading to the spot where the tragedy had occurred.

Bohemian Waxwings and Evening Grosbeaks have been quite numerous all winter and have not had any difficulty finding a square meal, with lots of leaves and maple seeds to dine on.

The usual early and late daily parade of our barnyard friends, the Ruffed Grouse, has been carried on as usual, for the fourth winter now, while Sharptails are to be seen feeding at the pigs' trough every morning.

The boys trapped a coyote in late November and hung the very fat carcass up about seven feet off the ground. It has provided a continuous meal ticket for several Black-capped Chickadees, a pair of Hudsonian Chickadees, Hairy Woodpeckers, Downy Woodpeckers, and Canada Jays. Sometimes as many as three species could be seen feeding, all at the same time, until now, all that is left is an almost bare skeleton.

Before the second-quarter of the "Blue Jay" appears, most of us will have been busy seeding and planting for this year's crops, so while we are at it, let all of us that live on a farm, with all its wide spaces and often unused fence cover or slough borders, do a bit of planting that will endure for many decades in the future. Plant a few trees, or quite a nice big lot of them, if you like, for there is nothing more attractive than a stately pine or spruce, or a spreading maple or elm or oak. So early in the spring do as the poet says, in the following lines, by Marion Couthouy Smith:

"Go, then, and plant a tree, lovely in sun and shadow,
Gracious in every kind, maple and oak and pine
Peace of the forest glade, wealth of the fruitful meadow,
Blessing of dew and shade, hereafter shall be thine."

JANUARY-1953

Mrs. John Hubbard, Grenfell, Sask.

It was a beautiful day, New Year's, when we went out to take our bird census, clear sky and hoar frost.

Birds were noticeable by their absence, but we found the usual flock of 100-odd Redpolls on the roadside weeds past the school. On to the Tiree road and turning north we notice the absence of bush rabbit tracks around sloughs and bush tho there hadn't been snow for a long time. In opener country we noticed one field where Jack Rabbits had made well-packed trails.

Down the Tiree hill into the Qu'Appelle Valley. Something new in colours there, a symphony of greys; the usual winter purples masked by hoar frost and mist away in the distance. Just before ascending the hill on the north side I got out of the car. An almost summer medley of voices confused me. I called on John for aid. Before he got there a Ruffed Grouse let out a characteristic call and rustled away in the bush. A Blue Jay, also unseen, squawked and disappeared around a small hill. Some Redpolls drifted off ahead with friendly cheerful notes. Some other small birds with a call unfamiliar to me departed hurriedly and remained unidentified. In the distance Chickadees called.

John and I rejoined the noisy crew in the car and ascended the Tiree hill. On the road north to Neudorf John's eagle-like eyes picked out an Eagle coming our way. We stopped and eventually with glasses I was able to spot him—and adult Bald Eagle with white head and tail—the first adult Bald Eagle I've ever seen.

On north thru quite thickly bluffed country the odd Magpie but not as plentiful as last year, an odd Sharp-tailed Grouse and large flocks of Redpolls. We counted some of Neudorf's Sparrows, and returned across the Qu'Appelle Valley by the Hyde hill. Springs were frozen in cascades on the north bank but in the Valley one was running and the river was partly open.

Home we counted our long-with-us flock of Pine Grosbeaks, our usually

troublesome Hairy Woodpeckers, our own House Sparrows, and a Horned Owl that turned up late that afternoon after I had remarked that they were getting scarce.

On the 5th of January we saw a Vesper Sparrow, very much alive and perky although it was around zero.

Bohemian Waxwings pay us the odd visit but they don't stay long. They evidently think the Pine Grosbeaks have priority on the dried crabapple crop in the orchard. The Grosbeaks have been here since November and varied in number from 12 to the present flock of around 25, and only one brightly coloured bird in the lot. The pup, always a bit crazy, also eats crabapples that he digs up, chews, and spits out the remains. The Grosbeaks eat large quantities of snow—John figures the fruit is pretty well dehydrated by now. They also feed on the honeysuckles and snowberries.

P.S. February 1, 1953: The Waxwings returned, 150 strong. They fluttered and rattled and denuded the trees of fruit. The ground beneath the trees was red with fallen fruit, which is now covered with snow. They left. I'm afraid the Grosbeaks have gone too—there's nothing left to eat.

— ★ ★ —

A Winter Canvas

By Ray Peterson,

R.R.2, Tofield, Alberta.

When the gay, riotous, color-splashed handiwork of autumn fades to the lonely, leaf-bare landscape of late fall, one is tempted to think that beauty has packed her luggage and departed for the winter. But Mother Nature, fortunately, is an artist at heart. She paints out the drab, dead remains of summer's luxuriant living with a bold, generous brush of snow. Then, in moments of sheer ecstasy

and inspiration, calls in her co-worker, Jack Frost, and creates a masterpiece of beauty and ingenuity.

Such was a morning, one day this winter. The entire countryside was touched with the magic of heavy hoar frost.

The nude poplar trees were transformed in new, sparkling gowns. A beautiful, exotic jungle of white fronds, tufts, and lacy foliage shimmered and glistened where, only the evening before, had been an uninteresting tangle of willow bushes and underbrush. Grass and small shrubs flourished in sprays of tinsel. Strangely pronged and nubbed as the frost collected on their spines, rose bushes offered their red haws like a display of deliciously frosted bon-bons. Paralleling the road ran a line of jewell-encrusted staffs strung with delicately wrought garlands, a series of intricate knots masking the sharp barbs of the wire fence. A big granite boulder stood up proudly, its weather-scarred sides softened and scintillating, like a throne for some snow queen to hold court from.

Lithe, graceful, a weasel poked inquisitively about a group of small, gem-studded pyramids, pocket gopher mounds. From a clump of frost-plumed pigweed a flock of Redpolls twittered, patterning the snow with myriads of tiny tracks. Dee! Dee! a Chickadee sang cheerfully, and as he flitted among the branches of a birch tree he loosened showers of twinkling diamonds. A coyote's trail along the edge of a meadow was filled in with shiny particles, and from an open sidehill, the dark mouth of an old groundhog den showed a throat fringed and whiskered in white.

The sun heightened, a slight breeze trembled through the fairyland of diamond and crystal and sparkling white. Soon, this glistening, jewell-hung tapestry of fragile lace and exquisite carvings would vanish. But the beauty of it would be a thing to remember, to marvel at, and to be looked forward to, again.

The March of Days

Elizabeth Cruickshank, Regina

*"There is no greater eloquence I know
Than sun and frost setting the day
aglow."*

So many of these eloquent days this mild winter. On one we drove to Lumsden to find "a silent loveliness, on hill and wood and field." Ridges in the stubble fields made rhythmic patterns of gold and white, the fields made merry by flocks of snow buntings rising and falling like waves. We saw no other birds. Tracks and tunnels led from the stooks, some short leaps, as if made with dancing feet, but the fan-shaped impressions where tails were used as brakes, were mute evidence of sudden changes in direction. How dangerously deermice live.

Cactus spines were soft now so the dogs walked in comfort on the hill. Judy showed us the very cactus that kept her wee bantam chick impaled a whole July day.

On how many days has our yard been a fairyland, when even Sparrows made a charming picture in the maple, frost petals falling at their feet as they flew down for breakfast; days when everywhere was gleaming crystals or glistening frost; when, by the creek, dock made "silver candles straight;" when grass crunched underfoot; when frost filagree transformed every humble weed.

Kingsley has urged us to "treat beauty wherever we see it as a way-side sacrament." A clump of lovely pale green western dock, with its dense fruiting heads, provided the "charmed draught, the cup of blessing" on one silver and gold and blue day.

How many times muskrat burrow entrances have been unbelievably beautiful, wreathed exquisitely with diamonds and stars.

The one surprise for us this winter on the golf course was a Ring-necked Pheasant's arrow track on fresh shallow snow.

In this small territory we have stored treasurable memories of the beauty and mystery of the varied dramas of life in all seasons.

CANADA JAY

By Doug Gilroy, Regina



For two months this winter we had, as our guest, a Canada Jay. Although the odd Canada Jay has been reported on occasion from the Regina area, he is a comparatively rare visitor. In fact this was the first that I have seen since back in the thirties.

I first sighted him down at the creek, November 17, and again the following day. On December 3, we hung up lumps of suet in the trees around the yard hoping to attract some Chickadees or Woodpeckers. We had no sooner finished when the Jay suddenly appeared out of nowhere. All that afternoon he fed from it almost steadily—never leaving it any longer than five minutes at a time.

Early next morning he was back and fed continually all day. He just ate and ate. Where he put it all I'll never know. This gorging lasted for three days. After that he still ate greedily but would work it off with flights down to the creek and back.

The following week he was either getting tired of his fatty diet or was finally filled up, as he would only pay short visits to the farm two or three times a day.

One thing that puzzled me was that whenever I went for a hike along the creek, no matter in what direction I went, I always ran into Mr. Jay—sometimes at quite a distance from home. At times I almost believed that there were more than one Jay in the neighborhood.

After the first of January his visits to our yard became less and less. His last visit was January 17. Where he is now, I do not know, but as they are early nesters he has doubtless migrated back to his northern home.

I obtained some very fine kodochromes of him for souvenirs and shall always remember him as an old friend who did much to make a pleasant winter just that much more pleasant.

Blue Jay Briefs

BIG RIVER, January 30.—Each year the number of birds seems to increase. They are a never-ending source of interest and, sometimes, amusement. There are three Canada Jays here every day (only one last winter) and they are quite tame. A few days ago, three Pine Grosbeaks appeared at the feeding station and now their number has increased to eight. They are such beautiful birds and their colorful plumage brightens the drab winter scene.

—Mrs. S. Olson

* * * *

SANFORD, Man.—I have a bird box and many birds feed here all winter. There are four or five different kinds. Each night a Flying Squirrel comes and eats at the box. Last year I was caught out in the rain and as I neared the house I looked up to see how our old Robin was doing, as she was nesting on a low elm just behind the house. She was sitting on her nest and Mr. Robin was sitting on the edge with his wings spread out over her, just like an umbrella. She was nice and dry but he looked pretty bedraggled and sat blinking the rain from his eyes. What is home without the daddy!

—Mrs. Clara Parker

* * * *

TULLIS.—In the last issue of the "Blue Jay," Mr. Ward asked about the Black-billed Cuckoo. I have only one record of them, in 1939. They nested in July in one of the poorest nests I've ever seen. I think they raised only one of the two eggs they laid. Once you have heard their call—it certainly is no song—you can never forget it. Where can I get information about bird-banding?

Write Fred G. Bard, Director of the Provincial Museum, Regina, Sask.

—Mrs. C. E. Boon

* * * *

PONOKA, Alta.—Was in a house at Red Deer when the first snow fell, and a Hummingbird came up to the nasturtiums in the window box. The hum was like that of a motor running, and not until it moved to the next window was I sure it was the bird.

—C. H. Grant

* * * *

BLADWORTH.—On October 26 I watched about twenty swans on the Arm River. This body of water is in the community pasture—so there is no shooting there. It's really surprising how the ducks and swans take advantage of it. As these were the first Swans I've ever watched, I didn't know what to look for to distinguish them as a Trumpeter or Whistler. They were magnificent birds. (*The Trumpeter Swan is no longer found in Saskatchewan. Now only a few small flocks are known in British Columbia and Alberta. Strenuous efforts are now being made to preserve the last remaining individuals of this beautiful species. Ed.*)

—P. Lawrence Becky

* * * *

SKULL CREEK.—This is the first year since 1913 that I have not seen at least a few Horned Larks staying with with us for the winter. There haven't been any since late November; nor have I seen or heard Great Horned Owls, but a neighbour six miles south of here told me that he had seen one several times during December. There were a great number of Bohemian Waxwings around during the winter, seen in flocks of from ten to fifteen to the large one I saw around Christmas of from 450 to 500. Earlier in the season I saw several fairly large flocks of Pine Grosbeaks, but no Evening Grosbeaks which usually appear with them.

—S. A. Mann

WINTER WREN

P. Lawrence Becky, Bladworth



Yesterday, December 6, we had a rare visitor in our yard. And what a small bundle of feathers it was! I identified it (and I think correctly) as a Winter Wren. It was an unusual day, 36 degrees above at the time, with a clear sky and not even a slight breeze. Perhaps this Wren had overstayed its summer, being that the weather was so agreeable.

This little Wren is quite a shy and retiring fellow—but not unsociable. I was able to get within ten feet of it while it remained safely in the depths of a clump of willows. Its nervous bobbing habit is what I first noticed. It is a compact little bird—with a stubby little tail.

This was my first encounter with the visitor. Taverner says it is an exceptionally fine songster—and that it nests in the woods of our northland.

Yorkton Bird Notes

On November 22, Cedar Waxwings were noted in the maples in Dr. Stuart Houston's front yard, whilst Bohemian Waxwings visited a crab-apple tree in his back yard. Although Cedar Waxwings have twice remained in Yorkton until shortly after New Year's, and the Bohemians often arrive from the north in late October, this is the first time that both species have been observed in the same locality at the same time.

An interesting visitor from the coniferous belt was a little Brown-capped or Hudsonian Chickadee, constituting the second record for the Yorkton district. First seen on November 11, it was an intermittent visitor to the Houston's feeding tray and was banded on February 4th.

THE BLUE HERON

Arthur Ward, Swift Current

The most outstanding of many varieties of shore birds that stayed around here during the late summer was the Blue Heron. Three of these immature birds, finding conditions favorable for their nests, could be seen in the creek on the south side of the city well within the fringe of the residential quarters. They provided a pleasant and unusual sight.

Shallow waters, much more preferable than those of the much deeper bird sanctuary further south, provided good feeding grounds for the largest member of the Heron family. They are wary and suspicious, rising from the water with a squawk—head drawn in with folded neck, and legs outstretched to seek a change upstream. Following them, I took a photograph of one standing upright in the water.

Whether one of the remaining Herons got safely away in migration is not known, but one was mercilessly shot and it is feared that the other may have suffered the same fate. On looking over the sanctuary, trespassing signs were observed to have been shot down and the posts studded with bullet holes.

It is becoming apparent that with the easy means of transportation at the disposal of the so-called sportsmen, the only place we will be able to see our vanishing species is behind the protective wires of the zoo.

A Note of Appreciation

*D. P. Robinson, Extension Dept.,
University of Saskatchewan*

Each issue of the "Blue Jay" appears to be a little better than the previous one. Four times a year—when the "Blue Jay" arrives—I stop thinking about the cares of the world for an hour or so and wander afield with the nature lovers who contribute to this excellent publication. In memory I am back again in my boyhood days among the birds, animals, flowers and trees of Saskatchewan's Parklands. I was raised west of Wadena.

CUCKOO AND FOX SPARROW

William Niven, Sheho

Birds of most species were more plentiful in mid-winter than they were last year. After the count was taken last year, I found out why the Pine Grosbeaks were so scarce. Large flocks of them, in the hundreds, were feeding on fields of flax-seed left standing in some places owing to the early approach of winter. Also still larger numbers of Common Redpolls were on the same fields in thousands. This was something new as the Pine Grosbeaks generally feed on the Snowberries and Redpolls on different field weed seeds. It proves they are adaptable to change of diet, when such is available. This winter no grain of any kind is left standing in the fields, so they are on their usual fare.

Arthur Ward, of Swift Current, wishes information on the Black-billed Cuckoo and the Fox Sparrow—the former which has disappeared from his district, and the Fox Sparrow which has never been seen there. Both of these birds seem to have their cycles of abundance and times when they are entirely absent here.

The Cuckoo was for years quite plentiful here nesting in summer, though they are very late arriving. Then for years they disappeared altogether. The last three or four years they have returned again, but in much smaller numbers. I believe only one was heard last summer. According to Taverner, they feed on hairy caterpillars and their numbers increase with the insects, but I cannot say whether this is the case or not.

The Fox Sparrow, I believe, only nests in the northern forests. Many years ago it used to be seen in fairly large numbers in spring, staying for a week or two along with Juncoes and Tree Sparrows. For many weeks none passed through here. The last couple of years a very few have been noted. One was seen and heard singing from the top of a willow. The male has a beautiful song, loud and clear—better than any of the sparrows—more like the warble of the Purple Finch or Robin. In spring they are a fine foxy red on the back. They have a white breast with large dark spots.

A Bird in the Bush

By Marianne E. Clark,
Woodcock, B.C.

*A little Wilson Warbler
Comes to my lilac bush.
His cap could not be blacker
And his coat is greenish plush.
His breast is lemon yellow,
And he's really quite a fellow
As he flits and goes aflutter
In the lilac bush.*

*Oh! he's up and down and over,
Then on another tack
Where he scans a plant of clover
Then round again, and back,
And he pries the leave asunder—
Always searching for his plunder,
Every fold and crack.*

*In the early, early morning
When everything's a'hush,
When spring time is a'borning
And the eastern sky's a'flush,
Then you see him hopping - seaching
Skipping - flying - perching
In the lilac bush.*

22 Whooping Cranes Return to Arkansas

Twenty-two whooping cranes returned to their wintering grounds in Texas, the National Audubon Society has reported. The present count, which was determined by an aerial survey conducted by the Fish and Wildlife Service, is one less than last year's total of 23 cranes. Only two young of the year have been indentified, though further surveys may reveal that some of the others are young.

All that remains of the original wild population, these stately white birds migrate from their breeding range in the far north to the Aransas Wildlife Refuge on the Texas coast.

At least two cranes fell to guns of law-violating gunners, as they made their annual flight toward Texas this fall, the co-operating conservation agencies reported.

One of the cranes was shot south of Regina, Saskatchewan. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sent a plane from La Crosse, Wisconsin, hoping that the injured bird could be flown to San Antonio, Texas, where it would receive expert attention at the San Antonio Zoo. Despite forced feeding of barley and milk and doses of penicillin, the crane died en route to Texas.

A day or two after the Saskatchewan incident, school children near Olathe, Kansas, found an injured whooping crane in a field and brought it to their school. The bird had been seriously wounded by illegal gunfire and died not long after being found.

John H. Baker, president of the National Audubon Society, said, "Each year it becomes more apparent that illegal hunting is the major factor in the reduction of the numbers of whooping cranes and in increasing the threat of their extinction."

The continental whooping crane population now stands at 24, which figure includes two crippled captives at the Audubon Park Zoo in New Orleans. These are the birds that attempted unsuccessfully to raise young at the Arkansas Refuge. So far they have not nested at the zoo, though officials reported that the birds performed some courtship dances.



Mural, Whooping Cranes
F. W. Lahrman, Provincial Museum.

He Fed Whooping Cranes

On reading in the press the story of the wounded Whooping Crane being taken to the United States, Mr. W. W. Cunningham, Telkua, B.C., wrote the following interesting letter to Mr. Bard, at the Provincial Museum.

"Over 60 years ago in the northern part of North Dakota and southern Manitoba, east of the Turtle Mountains where I was a boy, it was practically open prairie and lots of sloughs, mostly full of water and these birds were not plentiful like the Blue or Sandhill Cranes but still there were quite a few of them—at least not uncommon, and I was lucky enough to get one when it was quite young, I also had two Blues which I raised, and I think their nesting habits are the same as I have seen them in their nests and seen the young when they were hatched. But it is the feeding question that I would like to bring to your attention; I know they eat frogs and worms, etc., but I do not think it is enough, for the ones I raised did not do well until I started feeding them fresh meat. I used to keep several traps set for gophers and I used a hatchet on a block of wood to cut the gophers up in small pieces, bones and all. Each Crane would eat from 3 to 4 gophers in a day — no more frogs or worms and did they ever grow! They also liked a good piece of cheese. I wintered these birds on wheat and meat and they did well. I never penned them up, only on cold days, and when I saddled my horse and called them they would follow me for miles—I had them until the next fall when the call was too great they went south.

"I trust this will be of interest to you."

Greetings to the Blue Jay Members

Eleanor Denlinger,
Lemon Grove, California.



Having enjoyed this little magazine for two years now I thought I'd better tell you how much I appreciate it.

You see I am an Ex-Canadian, and I started reading this magazine through the kindness of a very old and dear friend of mine, Doug Gilroy, whom I lived near for several years—many years ago.

Three years ago, May, I visited Regina and Condie after a fourteen year absence. While there I renewed many friendships among the people as well as the wild life and botanical life of my old birthplace. It was really thrilling to poke about here and there down by the creek where I once had spent many happy hours. I relived many a happy experience over that two-week visit, and also enjoyed many of the pictures that Doug had taken on his tours of prairie, valley and farm.

Here in California, we have many pretty birds, wild deer in the mountains and also tamed ones in our protected parks. Even the little Chipmunks at Yosemite National Park will feed from your hand. At first I was a bit skeptical, but my fears took wing and soon he was sitting with his paws in my hand, contentedly nibbling raisin nut bread.

The Duck with One Foot

Mrs. W. J. Bobier,
Rapid View

One day in the spring of 1950, the boys brought home a Mallard Duck that they had found caught in a muskrat trap. They wanted to keep it for a pet. The duck was healthy and strong but one foot was nearly severed just below the small back toe. There was little chance of the leg

healing as nearly half an inch of bone protruded beyond the flesh.

If the boys wanted to keep it, something had to be done. As I had before mended hens' broken legs, I decided to do what I could for the duck. With the hacksaw I cut off a piece of the bone and sewed the loose flesh over the end. I bound wooden splints securely in place so that the stump was protected.

We put our duck in an unused chicken-run, she seemed quite satisfied and ate the barley that the boys provided. On the fourth morning she was gone.

I often wondered if she had survived. If so, how did she manage to swim—handicapped like that? If she could swim, would it always be in a circle?

Last October I had my first question answered. One day the boys brought in some ducks they had shot. There was my one-footed duck! There could be no doubt about it as the skin was healed over the end of the bone, just as I remembered having sewn it. Our duck had lived alright, but I am still wondering if she had to swim in circles.

A Noticeable Change

Mrs. Arthur Thompson,
R.R. 1, Bangor

There has been quite a change in the bird life around this district during the forty years I have lived here. Blue Jays, Canada Jays, Snipes, Bobolinks, Mourning Doves and Partridges used to be numerous, and now are rarely seen. I saw a Blue Jay on the south hill of the Qu'Appelle, at No. 9 highway this fall, the first I have seen in 16 years.

In the last few years Blue Birds have become very numerous and now nest in our bird houses. I saw the first pair 14 years ago. Magpies have moved in and are plentiful. I saw my first Blue Heron last fall, and the first Burrowing Owl, last summer. Their nest was near the road, and the comical little birds would perch on the mound of earth at the entrance to their burrow, or fly to the nearby fence post and stare solemnly at us as we drove slowly by.

Several times last summer a doe had been seen on our fields with three little fawns—even when crossing wide open fields. We are sure they are triplets.

The Baltimore Oriole

Arthur Ward, Swift Current

There is scarcely a season that we do not observe the ingenuity of the Yellow Warbler in dealing with the persistent intrusion of the Cowbird. Other birds, too, have demonstrated the ability to cope with interference in this respect. Usually in the spring, before the migratory birds appear House Sparrows take possession of the choice nest building sites adjacent to the traps. Wishing to reserve these for the ones we hope to trap and band, the Sparrows have to be discouraged. Later on they seek the close proximity of other birds further away and will even chum up close to the Kingbird.

Later in the incubation season, whilst working in the garden, my attention was drawn to the presence of a pair of Baltimore Orioles. Entering the grove raised a clamor of protests—every species seemed to be there piping notes of distress, such as one would hear if an owl were present. Looking up into the branches I could see the delicately woven gourd-like structure—the masterpiece of Lady Baltimore. Hanging by the neck over the side of the nest, hidden by binder twine was a dead young sparrow. So securely was it fastened that when I reached up and pulled, its head was left hanging by the string. On the other side was another dead sparrow and still another one lying dead in the nest. The only occupant was a sprightly Baltimore fledgling.

Both the Baltimore parents and the sparrows vied in hauling goods to feed the lively youngster. Failing to acquire total possession of the nest, the sparrows had jointly aided incubation. Strange as it may seem, sparrows never attempt to take possession of Oriole nests which sometimes are finished and then abandoned.

A flashing gem of orange and black, flitting from tree to tree, intoning intermittingly in rich contralto "Peter Pan" — easily trapped for banding purposes—the Baltimore Oriole is a most useful and ornamental tenant of one's Grove. •

"Waterfowl Banding 1939-1950 by Ducks Unlimited"

Winnipeg, Man., Oct. 1952

Dr. Stuart Houston

This 53-page booklet summarizes results from the banding of 63,826 waterfowl by Ducks Unlimited between 1939 and 1950. 22,270 birds were banded in Saskatchewan, many of them near Yorkton (6,710 by J. H. Wilson, 5,011 by Stuart Houston). Fred Bard banded 3,093 near Regina.

Somewhat more than 10% of these birds were subsequently heard from. Maps and tables show the travels of these birds, subdivided to show such facts as age, species, province of origin, state recovered from, etc. Some species seem to have a greater "hunting pressure" than others—e.g. 18.6% of the Redheads, 15.6% of the Mallards and only 3.9% of the Blue-winged Teal were recovered. Other information includes a list of birds trapped at the same locality in subsequent years, a list of recoveries indicating an eastern migration route through Ontario, and evidence of a post-breeding northward movement. Of 6,855 recoveries, only 114 reached the age of five years or more.

Appropriately, the cover photograph depicts the late Mrs. Priestly releasing a banded duck at Rousay Lake.

A Hint from the President

To identify birds, one needs a good book—and the BEST book of the many available is Peterson's "FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS." Lavishly illustrated, it makes identification simple. Every member should own one. (Do not be trapped into buying the guide to the Western birds—it is for the Rockies and the Pacific Coast). The book is \$4.25 at any bookstore—e.g.—Logan's Drug & Book, Yorkton; Canada Drug & Book, Regina; or T. Eaton Co.

THE QU'APPELLE VALLEY

Clarissa Stewart and M. W. Lawson, Fairy Hill

THE QU'APPELLE VALLEY, which runs like a large crooked flat-bottomed ditch from where it begins near the South Saskatchewan, passes about twenty-five miles north of Regina on its easterly way to where its little winding river empties into the Assiniboine.

Its flora and fauna contrast sharply with the prairie. Many kinds of trees clothe the wooded ravines that climb through the sharply rising hills to the plain above. Many varieties are not found on the parklands of the north. Elms with their waving plumes, clumps of Manitoba Maples, Black Ash both in ravines and on the slopes, abound in many districts. White and Black Poplar or Balm o' Gilead and White Birch may be found where they have not been cut for domestic uses.

Lesser shrubs of many varieties are to be seen: Dogwood, Red Willow, and Golden Willow fringing the river, many sorts of wild fruits, Saskatoons, Chokecherries, Pincherries, High Bush Cranberries with their exquisite white blossoms, Black Currants and Gooseberries which put forth their tiny green leaves and pale yellow blossoms, the first harbingers of spring, and even Raspberries in favorable seasons, all add to the charm of "the Valley" in blossom and fruitage.

Both ravines and hills are flower-decked from early spring when the tiny White Phlox appears among the dray grass and the Mauve Anemone, popularly known as the Crocus, appears like a shimmering veil of purple on hillsides, till the Michaelmas Daisy and the Sunflowers are nipped by October frost. Blue, purple, white and yellow Violets suddenly make themselves known, the blue one in damp spots, yellow on sunny hillside and white Johnny-jump-ups in woody ravines. In spring also bloom the gay Yellow Vetches or Wild Sweet Peas, and rarer, Wild Valley Lilies. Later white, cream, and purple Vetches and the dainty three-flowered Aven brighten the hillsides. In secluded bluffs may be found blue Pea-Vine, another Vetch, and the fluffy Wild Clematis. Wild Roses spring up everywhere, and

Wild Honeysuckle twines around the fruit trees. With midsummer appears our emblem flower the Orange Lily, the Coneflower, yellow or maroon like short-skirted dancers, Black-eyed Susans, Blue Bells, Blue-eyed Grass, and Gentians. Then Wild Flax and Meadow Rue, Yarrow, and the gay Willow Herb mark summer's passing. Various kinds of Daisies and Sunflowers appear in late summer with graceful pink-blossomed Wild Buckwheat and occasionally a bank of Wild Blue Hyacinths turning purplish as they fade. Many years ago I picked and pressed over one hundred varieties of wild flowers in the Fairy Hill neighborhood. My co-worker on this effort had a most beautiful garden of tame and wild blooms.

The valley bottom is absolutely flat and covered with Thatch Grass, and often in spring from bank to bank with the flooded river. The hillsides are dotted with stones of many colors; among these grow and bloom varieties of cacti, one kind with magenta blossoms, which later bears edible berries, the other with waxy yellow rose-like blooms. The flooded meadows are a paradise for waterfowl: Geese, Ducks, Plovers, Bitterns, Swans, Herons, Coats and Pelicans frequent the meadows.

Land birds are more numerous than we can name. From the Redpolls, Chickadees, Blue Jays, Canada Jays, Woodpeckers, Grosbeaks, Ravens, Waxwings, etc., in winter, to the long procession of spring and summer denizens; the early Mountain Blue Bird and Crows which divide the honours of early arrival, the cheery Robin, the Baltimore Oriole, the Meadow Lark, to the little Yellow Warbler, the Goldfinch, Catbird, Bobolink, Brown Thresher, Yellow-breasted Chat, Vireos, Wrens, all the numerous family of Sparrows whose most charming members, the White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows appear with the last traces of snow. It would be impossible to name them all. In rainy seasons the Cuckoo may be heard calling from thick bluffs. Hawks and Owls of

(Continued on Page 13)

MAURICE G. STREET

One of the Continent's Outstanding Bird Banders

Cliff Shaw, Yorkton

REGINA LEADER POST.—A feathered visitor to Saskatchewan this past summer has ended up as dinner for a cat in Tennessee. The bird was a Tennessee Warbler, so perhaps the cat figured such was legal prey for a Tennessee cat.

In any event pussy's action added to the records of science for the bird wore a small metal band on its leg showing that had been banded Aug. 23, 1952 at Nipawin Sask., by Maurice G. Street.

The bands each bear a number and are used to trace the migration routes and life habits of birds. While the vast majority of the bands are never recovered the odd one, such as in this case, is forwarded to the United States fish and wild life service which acts as a clearing house for the bird banders.

The department advised Mr. Street that the band had been sent to them by Lee R. Herndon of Elizabethton, Tennessee, after a cat had caught the warbler at Fish Springs on Watauga lake, Garter county, Tennessee, Oct. 4, 1952. The Tennessee Warbler breeds chiefly north of the United States and winters in southern Mexico to Colombia and Venezuela.

Mr. Street is one of the continent's outstanding bird banders. This past year he banded 462 warblers of this one particular species, a figure more than double the yearly average of all banders combined. Bird banding is his hobby and in the past seven years he has banded over 6,000 birds. He has also discovered the nesting sites of 120 different kinds of birds, a record with few parallels in Canada.

BIRDS BANDED AT NIPAWIN, SASK.

JAN. 1/52 to DEC. 31/52

M.G.S. B.M.

		M.G.S.	B.M.		
<i>(The figures in the first column represent the number of birds banded by M. G. Street and in the second column those banded by Billy Matthews.)</i>				American Crow	3
American Bittern	1	.....		Black-capped Chickadee ...	14 4
Mallard .....	.....	10	.....	Hudsonian Chickadee	1
Canvas-back .....	.....	1	.....	Red-breasted Nuthatch	4
Lesser Scaup .....	.....	1	.....	Brown Creeper	1
American Merganser .....	.....	1	.....	House Wren	11 4
Red-tailed Hawk .....	.....	3	.....	Catbird	7
Marsh Hawk .....	.....	5	.....	Eastern Robin	39 19
Ruffed Grouse	1	.....	.....	Hermit Thrush	4 1
Coot	1	.....	.....	Olive-backed Thrush	8
Black Tern .....	.....	2	.....	Gray-cheeked Thrush	10
Long-eared Owl	8	.....	.....	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Short-eared Owl .....	.....	1	.....	Bohemian Waxwing	2 1
Nighthawk	1	2	.....	Cedar Waxwing	44 1
Yellow-shafted Flicker	1	.....	.....	White-rumped Shrike .....	..... 7
Hairy Woodpecker	1	.....	.....	Blue-headed Vireo	2
Downy Woodpecker	1	.....	.....	Red-eyed Vireo	2
Eastern Kingbird .....	.....	5	.....	Black and White Warbler	3
Least Flycatcher	2	.....	.....	Tennessee Warbler	462 3
Barn Swallow .....	.....	13	.....	Orange-crowned Warbler..	5
Canada Jay	3	5	.....	Nashville Warbler	4 3
Blue Jay	2	.....	.....	Yellow Warbler	1
American Magpie .....	.....	4	.....	Magnolia Warbler	3
				Cape May Warbler	45
				Myrtle Warbler	248 19
				Chestnut-sided Warbler	1
				Bay-breasted Warbler	23
				Black-poll Warbler	5

	M.G.S.	B.M.		M.G.S.	B.M.
Palm Warbler	15	25	Common Redpoll	313	563
Water-thrush	1	.....	Pine Siskin	17	99
Connecticut Warbler	1	.....	American Goldfinch	3	6
Mourning Warbler	3	1	Savannah Sparrow .....	.....	36
Wilson's Warbler	2	.....	Vesper Sparrow .....	.....	32
Redstart	6	.....	Slate-colored Junco	338	335
Brewer's Blackbird .....	.....	4	Tree Sparrow	8	65
Red-winged Blackbird .....	.....	4	Chipping Sparrow	33	23
Baltimore Oriole	5	.....	Clay-colored Sparrow	11	106
Cowbird .....	.....	1	Harris's Sparrow	11	5
Evening Grosbeak	13	.....	Gambel's Sparrow	6	16
Purple Finch	6	1	White-throated Sparrow.....	49	40
Hoary Redpoll	3	.....	Fox Sparrow	5	.....
			Lincoln Sparrow	9	53
			Swamp Sparrow .....	.....	16
			Song Sparrow	7	79

Mrs. Edith Orman

We are pleased to have received again from Mrs. Edith Orman, teacher at Walton School, gift renewals to twelve of her students in the Stoughton district. This is the third successive year that Mrs. Orman has done this in order that each family in her district may have the "Blue Jay" in the home. It has been for this reason that her daughter, Constance Orman, has been listed among the Patrons for 1953.

QU'APPELLE VALLEY

(Continued from Page 11)

different kinds make their home here and many Woodpeckers, and the tiny Hummingbird.

Many animals may still be seen by the observant. Herds of Deer in some seasons, at times single graceful Whitetails bound across the meadow. Lynx have rarely been seen, also Red Foxes, Porcupines, Woodchucks, badgers and coyotes in deep dens in the ravines. Buffalo wallows still show where those noble animals frequented the many springs.

Turtles are found near the river, and the small Newts and colorful Garter Snakes have not all been exterminated. Gophers, plain and stripped, red and grey Squirrels and tiny Chipmunks still make their homes here.

We have made *our* homes here for over forty years, and have noted these things and many others in our beloved valley, once a place where bands of horses were herded, now more given over to cattle raising.

Total Individuals1837 1628

Total Species 60 45

Grand Total Species 79

Grand Total Individuals3465

VISITORS

By Dora Bardal, Wynyard

There is a lot of bush around here and consequently some of the birds that do not linger on the bald prairie are quite common. We haven't seen Blue Jays for several years, but they used to nest here. Perhaps that is because the Magpies are so numerous now!

Two years ago in the fall, just before the Bluebirds left us and after the snow came, we saw a solitary Bluebird with a rust colored breast. Would that be the Arkansas Bluebird? (It probably was an Eastern Bluebird, which appear in Manitoba, and rarely in Saskatchewan. "A famous writer has described the Eastern Bluebird as 'The sky above, the earth beneath' referring to blue back and red breast. Following this figure of speech, the Mountain Bluebird is purely celestial with no earthly contamination." — Taverner. Ed.)

We have seen flocks of Golden Plovers, and once, several years ago, a flock of Starlings. During the past winter Grosbeaks were common, feeding on the dried-up Saskatoon and Chokecherry berries. We recently have had a Canada Jay with us. Some winters we do not see them at all.

SUMMARY of 11th ANNUAL SASKATCHEWAN

DR. STUART I.

WITH a record 27 localities reporting, a total of 49 species were noted during the Christmas season (Dec. 20 to Jan. 2). This represents 9 more than last year's all-time high of 40 species, and includes 3 species never before recorded in a Saskatchewan Christmas bird count:—A Bald Eagle noted 2 miles north of the Qu'Appelle Valley by the Hubbards of Grenfell; a Richardson's Owl noted at Nipawin on January 1; and a Vesper Sparrow with an injured wing noted by Baines and Wiley near a grain bin on John Trowel's farm east of Saltcoats. The eleven year list now totals 65 species noted in the Christmas season!

The sixteen species most commonly reported were, respectively, Magpie, Black-capped Chickadee, English Sparrow, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Redpoll, Snow Bunting, Pine Grosbeak, Ruffed Grouse, Bohemian Waxwing, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Canada Jay, Blue Jay, Great Horned Owl, Hungarian Partridge and Snowy Owl. Pine Grosbeaks, Waxwings and Redpolls appeared more frequently than last year. Sharp-tailed Grouse and Ruffed Grouse remained plentiful. Hungarian Partridge appear to have decreased.

Because of the mild weather, a number of summer birds remained: Mallards

- Big River** (wooded); Dec. 31, 1952, 1 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. Clear, 3 inches snow. 4 miles on foot. 9 plus 3 species.—**Anne and Sam Olson.**
- Bladworth** (rolling cultivated land, many low spots rimmed with willow and poplar); Dec. 26, 1952, 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Clear, ½ inch snow. 6 miles on foot. 6 plus species.—**P. Lawrence Beckie.**
- Bredenbury** (parkland); Jan. 2, 1953. Clear, 20 above. 23 miles by car. 4 species.—**Stuart and W. A. Baines.**
- Broadview** (parkland plus Qu'Appelle Valley); Dec. 28, 1952; noon to 5 p.m. Clear, 1 inch snow. 66 miles by car, 1 mile on foot. 9 plus 1 species.—**Audrey and Charles Thacker.**
- Brora** (wooded banks of Boggy Creek); Dec. 29, 1952; 1 to 3:30 p.m. Clear, 2 inches snow. 3 miles on foot. 5 plus 4 species.—**Doug Gilroy.**
- Craven** (Regina to Hungry Hollow and to the valley near Craven); Dec. 30, 1952; 2 to 5 p.m. Clear, 1 inch snow. 37 miles by car, 3 on foot. 4 species plus an unidentified owl.—**S. P. Jordan.**
- Dilke** (rolling prairie with sparsely scattered "bluffs"); Dec. 25, 1952; 8 to 11 a.m. and 2 to 4.15 p.m. Cloudy, partly covered with snow. Three observers in two parties. 19 miles by car, 5 on foot. 8 plus 4 species. —**J. B., Margaret and S. R. Belcher.**
- Grenfell** (parkland and across Qu'Appelle Valley); Jan. 1, 1953; 2.30 to 5 p.m. Clear, 3 inches snow. 47 miles by car, 1 on foot. 11 plus 1 species.—**Mr. and Mrs. John Hubbard.**
- Hawarden** (prairie and fields); Jan. 1, 1953; 3 to 5 p.m. 3 miles by car, 1 mile on foot. 3 species. — **Harold Kvinge.**
- McLean** (pastureland, partly treed); Dec. 30, 1952; 1 to 5 p.m. Clear, 1½ inches snow. 4 miles on foot. 3 plus 3 species.—**Mrs. T. H. Bray, Mrs. P. L. Newton.**
- Naicam** (partially wooded); Jan. 2, 1953; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Clear, 5 inches snow, 20 above. One hour by car, 5 hours on foot. 9 plus 6 species. — **W. Yanchinski.**
- Nipawin** (Nipawin to Fishing Lake; also farm area east of Codette); Dec. 26, 1952; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Cloudy, 2½ inches snow. 4 observers in 2 parties. 9 party hours by car, 1½ on foot; 112 party miles by car, 3 on foot. 24 plus 3 species.—**Ralph E. Street, M. G. Street, Walter and Billy Matthews.**
- Pathlow** (roads, open fields, some woodland); Jan. 1, 1953; 2½ hours between 8.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. Cloudy, 5 inches snow. 1½ hours by car, 1 on foot. 32 miles by car, 3 on foot. 8 plus 3 species.—**Rev. T. M. Beveridge.**
- Regina** (residential and Wascana Park); Dec. 22, 1952, 2 to 4 p.m. Clear, 1 inch snow. 2 species.—**E. Barker.**

SWAN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT-1952

YORKTON, YORKTON

and Goldeneyes on open water below the power plant at Saskatoon, and a Mallard at Kvinge's flowing well near Hawarden; a Flicker, Robin and Red-winged Blackbird at Skull Creek; a Robin at Yorkton (where the City disposal water flows into Little Whitesand Creek); a Brewer's Blackbird near an open spring west of Yorkton; and a Meadowlark at Dilke.

An interesting feature was the number of unidentified hawks reported. These were omitted from the count, but were as follows: Lawrence Beckie saw either a Golden Eagle or American Roughleg Hawk at Bladworth on Dec. 22nd; a Hawk or Eagle was seen by George T. Wiley at Saltcoats, Dec. 21st; a hawk, likely a goshawk, was noted at Naicam Dec. 20th by W. Yanchinski; a falcon (duck hawk) was observed by Margaret Belcher at Dilke, Dec. 23rd; and Cliff Shaw saw a small falcon flying over Yorkton on Dec. 24th.

The coniferous areas have a greater variety of bird life in winter than the open prairie, and the Nipawin group led the list for the sixth time in eleven years, with an amazing total of 27 species (24 species and 17,794 individuals during the one day outing).

Rose Valley (Nut Lake Indian Reserve); Dec. 28, 1952. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Clear, 7 inches snow. 4 hours and 18 miles by car, 3 hours and 1½ miles on foot. 14 species.—**W. A. Brownlee.**

Round Lake (Saltcoats to Round Lake via Bangor and Stockholm); Dec. 21, 1952; 10.20 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fog, then clear, 25 above. 47 miles by car. 7 species.—**Lawrence and George T. Wiley.**

Saltcoats (parkland); Dec. 27, 1952, 2 to 5.15 p.m. Clear, 3 inches snow, calm, 20 above. 50 miles by car. 9 species.—**Frank Baines, George Wiley.**

Saskatoon (10 mile radius); Dec. 24, 1952; 8.15 a.m. to 2 p.m. Partly cloudy, calm, 1 to 2 inches snow, 5 above. Hoar frost. 71 miles by car, 3 miles on foot. 15 plus 2 species.—**F. J. H. Fredeen, Bernard Gollop.**

Sheho (parkland); Dec. 25, 1952; 9 to 11 a.m. and 2 to 5 p.m. Partly cloudy, 2 to 3 inches snow. 3 mile walk in afternoon. 12 plus 1 species. — **Wm. Niven.**

Skull Creek (ranchland). Birds noted during work around ranch. 20 species between Dec. 20 and Jan. 2. — **S. A. Mann.**

Somme (spruce, poplar and birch forest; open fields and poplar bluffs); Dec. 27, 1952, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Clear, 3 inches snow. Total party hours, 18, while doing bushwork. 14 plus 10 species.—**Ronald, Donald and Edna Hooper.**

Spirit Lake (woods, brush and meadows); Dec. 25, 1952, 1 to 4 p.m. Clear, 2 inches snow. 5 miles on foot. 8 plus 6 species.—**William Anaka.**

Swan River, Man. (10 miles from Sask. border); Dec. 31, 1952; 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. 9 plus 8 species.—**Mrs. J. H. McDonald.**

Tisdale (feeding station and one mile south to disposal grounds); Dec. 26, 1952; 2 to 5 p.m. Clear, 2 inches snow. 9 plus 1 species.—**E. W. Van Blaricom, Q.C.**

Torch River (open fields, mixed forest, muskeg); Dec. 24, 1952; 1 to 4 p.m. Cloudy, 2 inches snow, 15 above. 4 miles by car, 3 on foot. 6 plus 18 species.—**Stanley, *Stuart Jr., and C. Stuart Francis.**

Wallwort (side road and highway, part in spruce timber). Cloudy, 4 inches snow. 3 hours and 4 miles by team, 2 hours and 3 miles on foot. 6 plus 3 species.—**J. Turnquist.**

Yorkton (parkland); Dec. 26, 1952; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Overcast, 2 inches snow. 11 to 22 above, wind E. 10 mph. 24 observers in 6 parties. 10 party hours and 104 miles by car; 17 party hours and 29 miles on foot. 18 plus 2 species.—**Norma Beck, Henry Chilman, Jr., Brother Clarence, Lionel and Ronald Coleman, Dr. C. J. Houston, Dr. and Mrs. Stuart Houston, Professor and Mrs. C. W. Lightbody, Allan Nurse, Jack Park, Tony Pawluck, Gordon Greg, Irving and Wayne Pearce, Ray Riesz, Cliff Shaw, Jeff Smith, Frank and Gillean Switzer, Darcy and Merrill Wershler.**

Distribution and Totals by Species

(Species in brackets were seen between Dec. 20 and Jan. 2, but not on the day of the count reported above.)

- Mallard**—Hawarden, 1; Saskatoon 1; (Skull Creek, 1). (Naicam, 1); (Pathlow, 3); (Yorkton, 1).
- Amer. Goldeneye**—Saskatoon, 2.
- Goshawk**—Nipawin, 3; Saskatoon, 3; (Somme, 1); (Torch River, 1).
- Amer. Roughleg Hawk**—(Skull Creek, 2).
- Golden Eagle**—Broadview, 1; Dilke 1; (Skull Creek, 1); (Nipawin, 1).
- Bald Eagle**—Grenfell, 1.
- Prairie Falcon**—(Skull Creek, 1).
- Spruce Grouse**—(Torch River, 2).
- Ruffed Grouse**—Broadview, 3; Grenfell, 1; Naicam, 3; Nipawin, 4; Pathlow, 2; Rose Valley, 1; Saltcoats, 2; Sheho, 2; Somme, 3; Yorkton, 6. (Skull Creek, 5); (Spirit Lake, 1); (Torch River, 6); (Wallwort, 3).
- Willow Ptarmigan**—Big River, 1; Nipawin, 2.
- Sharp-tailed Grouse**—Bladworth, 3; Bredenbury, 25; Broadview, 2; Craven, 2; Dilke, 3; Grenfell, 3; McLean, 14; Naicam, 10; Nipawin, 42; Pathlow, 1; Rose Valley, 30; Saltcoats, 2; Round Lake, 32; Saskatoon, 8; Sheho, 4; Torch River, 100; Yorkton, 52. (Brora, 6); (Skull Creek, 24); (Somme, 20); (Spirit Lake, 15).
- Hungarian Partridge**—Bladworth, 23; Craven, 5; Dilke, 15; Nipawin, 7; Pathlow, 8; Rose Valley, 6; Saskatoon, 39; Yorkton, 18. (Skull Creek, 8); (Somme, 10).
- Ring-necked Pheasant**—(Brora, 2); (Saskatoon, 2); (Skull Creek, 2).
- Great Horned Owl**—Grenfell, 1; Nipawin, 2; Pathlow, 1; Saltcoats, 1; Sheho, 1; Yorkton, 2. (Brora, 1); (Naicam, 1); (Saskatoon, 1); (Somme, 1); (Spirit Lake, 1); (Torch River, 1).
- Snowy Owl**—Craven, 1; Nipawin, 3; Rose Valley, 2; Saskatoon, 4. (Bladworth, 1); (Brora, 1); (Dilke, 1); (Naicam, 1); (Pathlow, 3); (Yorkton, 1).
- Hawk Owl**—(Torch River, 1).
- Richardson's Owl**—(Nipawin, 1).
- Yellow-shafted Flicker**—(Skull Creek, 1).
- Pileated Woodpecker**—Big River, 1. (Nipawin, 2); (Torch River, 1).
- Hairy Woodpecker**—Big River, 3; Grenfell, 1; Naicam, 2; Nipawin, 5; Sheho, 1; Somme, 3; Tisdale, 1; Wallwort, 1; Yorkton, 6. (Spirit Lake, 1); (Swan River, 2); (Torch River, 1).
- Downy Woodpecker**—McLean, 2; Nipawin, 4; Rose Valley, 1; Sheho, 1; Somme, 1; Spirit Lake, 2; Tisdale, 1; Wallwort, 1; Yorkton, 6. (Naicam, 1); (Skull Creek, 1); (Swan River, 1); Torch River, 1).
- Arctic 3-Toed Woodpecker**—Nipawin, 1; Somme, 3.
- Amer. 3-Toed Woodpecker**—Somme, 7. (Swan River, 1); (Torch River, 1).
- Horned Lark**—(Bladworth, 3); (Dilke, 1).
- Canada Jay**—Big River, 3; Brora, 1; Nipawin, 10; Rose Valley, 2; Sheho, 1; Somme, 14; Swan River, 2; Tisdale, 1; Torch River, 3; Wallwort, 3; Yorkton, 1. (Naicam, 1).
- Blue Jay**—Big River, 2; Grenfell, 1; Nipawin, 5; Rose Valley, 1; Saskatoon, 2; Somme, 6; Spirit Lake, 2; Tisdale, 1; Yorkton, 1. (Swan River, 1); (Torch River, 1).
- Magpie**—Big River, 1; Bladworth, 3; Bredenbury, 5; Broadview, 1; Brora, 5; Craven, 4; Dilke, 5; Grenfell, 3; Naicam, 4; Nipawin, 16; Pathlow, 4; Rose Valley, 6; Round Lake, 1; Saltcoats, 3; Saskatoon, 11; Sheho, 5; Somme, 2; Spirit Lake, 1; Tisdale, 7; Yorkton, 30. (McLean, 1); (Skull Creek, 19); (Swan River, 1); (Torch River, 2); (Wallwort, 2).

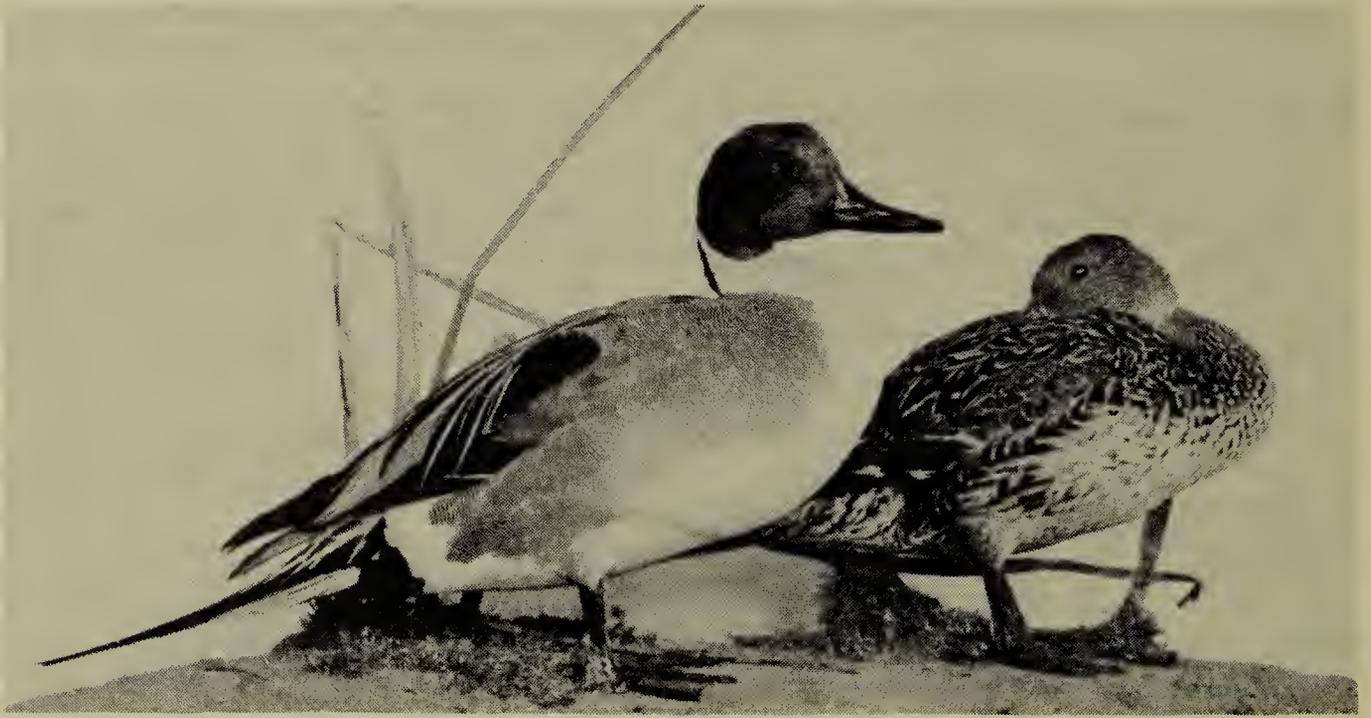
- Raven**—Big River, 5; Nipawin, 9; Rose Valley, 2; Somme, 3; Torch River, 3. (Swan River, 2); (Wallwort, 1).
- Black-capped Chickadee**—Big River, 41; Bladworth, 1; Broadview, 5; Brora, 6; Dilke, 2; Grenfell, 5; McLean, 6; Naicam, 6; Nipawin, 8; Pathlow, 2; Rose Valley, 40; Round Lake, 4; Saltcoats, 2; Saskatoon, 4; Sheho, 5; Somme, 8; Spirit Lake, 6; Swan River, 4; Tisdale, 18; Wallwort, 5; Yorkton, 63. (Skull Creek, 5); (Torch River, 5.)
- Hudsonian Chickadee**—Somme, 20; Swan River, 4; Torch River, 2. (Yorkton, 1).
- White-breasted Nuthatch**—Big River, 4; Somme, 4.
- Brown Creeper**—(Somme, 2).
- Golden-crowned Kinglet**—Somme, 1.
- Amer. Robin**—Yorkton, 1. (Skull Creek, 1).
- Bohemian Waxwing**—Broadview, 10; Nipawin, 807; Round Lake, 6; Saltcoats, 40; Saskatoon, 31; Tisdale, 80; Yorkton, 29. (McLean, 5); (Naicam, 3); (Sheho, 2); (Skull Creek, 450); (Spirit Lake, 25); (Swan River, 17); (Torch River, 20).
- Northern Shrike**—Nipawin, 1. (Bladworth, 1); (Pathlow, 1); (Torch River, 1).
- European Starling**—Nipawin, 3; Swan River, 22. (Dilke, 1).
- English Sparrow**—Bladworth, 25; Bredenbury, 6; Broadview, 24; Brora, 50; Dilke, 20; Grenfell, 138; Hawarden, 200; Naicam, 11; Nipawin, 1500; Pathlow, 50; Regina, 20; Rose Valley, 50; Round Lake, 3; Saltcoats, 9; Saskatoon, 875; Somme 1; Spirit Lake, 50; Swan River, many; Tisdale, many; Yorkton, 1030. (McLean, 26); (Skull Creek, 68); (Torch River, 25).
- Western Meadowlark**—(Dilke, 1).
- Red-winged Blackbird**—(Skull Creek, 1).
- Brewer's Blackbird**—Yorkton, 1.
- Evening Grosbeak**—Nipawin, 56; Sheho, 12; Spirit Lake, 18; Swan River, 5. (Naicam, 5); (Somme, 6); (Tisdale, 6); (Torch River, 12).
- Pine Grosbeak** — Bredenbury, 2; Broadview, 3; Grenfell, 25; Naicam, 9; Nipawin, 38; Rose Valley, 20; Round Lake, 9; Saskatoon, 4; Sheho, 16; Spirit Lake, 1; Swan River, 4; Tisdale, 4; Wallwort, 5; Yorkton, 15. (Big River, 5); (Skull Creek, 4); (Somme, 101); (Torch River, 1).
- Hoary Redpoll**—Nipawin, 50; Swan River, 15. (Somme, 10); (Torch River, 5).
- Common Redpoll** — Broadview, 2; Brora, 10; Dilke, 25; Grenfell, 446; Naicam, 3; Nipawin, 3651; Round Lake, 40; Rose Valley, 50; Saskatoon, 405; Sheho, 6; Spirit Lake, 30; Swan River, 92; Torch River, 25; Wallwort, 7; Yorkton, 96. (Big River, 42); (Bladworth, 17); (Pathlow, 35); (Somme, 12); (Skull Creek, 21).
- Vesper Sparrow**—Saltcoats, 1.
- Slate-colored Junco**—Saskatoon, 4; Yorkton, 1.
- Tree Sparrow**—(Skull Creek, 18).
- Snow Bunting**—Bladworth, 29; Dilke, 150; Hawarden, 4; Naicam, 35; Nipawin, 11,567; Pathlow, 60; Regina, 8; Rose Valley, flocks; Saltcoats, 14; Saskatoon, 250; Sheho, 100; Torch River, 400; Yorkton, 520. (Big River, 150); (Broadview, 25); (Grenfell, flock); (Skull Creek, 700); (Somme, 300); (Spirit Lake, 18); (Swan River, 36).

ANIMAL TRAVELLERS

Over the silent snowfields,
 Empty of life and heat,
 See how the tracks go winding,
 Tracks of the swift small feet!
 Here in the silent snowfields,
 When there is no man near,
 Many a furry rabbit,
 Many a gentle deer
 Come on their own strange errands,
 Vanish swift as they came,
 Leaving for human travellers
 This signature of their name.

Mary Garland Coleman,
 Regina, Sask.

The Provincial Museum



Pintail Ducks—male and female.

This picture of a pair of Pintail Ducks is only one of the numerous displays which you will see when you visit the Provincial Museum, at Regina. Every bird and animal found in Saskatchewan is on display, most of them backed by natural habitat scenes and lifelike murals whose artistic excellence and beauty is unequaled anywhere in Canada.

It is expected that in the near future the museum will have a new home, and that its priceless displays will be housed in a new and suitable building, to be erected near the north-west corner of Wascana Park, where College Avenue meets Albert Street.

The New Museum

Elizabeth Cruickshank

How thrilling to know that the new museum is at last to be a reality. How fitting to commemorate Saskatchewan's Golden Anniversary to have its natural history preserved and on view in an adequate building, conveniently located.

What a force for education it can be, for native and tourist to have graphically presented the natural resources of the province, its flora and fauna, geology and minerology, as well as its history.

Here will be a monument to the faith and courage of our pioneers and to those who followed them to develop this prairie province.

Is There a Blue Jay in Your School ?

During the month of February a circular letter was sent by the Saskatchewan Department of Education to every school in the province, recommending the "Blue Jay" as a useful reference book in the field of natural science, for teachers and students.

Did you know that money from the provincial school library grant may be used for purchasing the subscription? The "Blue Jay" is already a quarterly visitor to many of our schools.

Will each member of the Society urge that the trustees of the school in their district provide a copy or two of each issue for the use of the boys and girls there.

An Invitation to Visit Your Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History

Fred G. Bard, Director

The Museum of Natural History under Conservation Education operates as a Branch of the Department of Natural Resources.

The purpose of the Museum from its beginning was to exhibit the birds and mammals of Saskatchewan. In 1912 the cyclone destroyed a considerable portion of the collection. In 1913 the first full time Preparator, Mr. H. H. Mitchell was engaged to collect and prepare the birds and mammals. Each Spring a field camp was selected to collect representative specimens, these sites varied each year to give reasonable Province wide coverage. Usually each Spring a "first" or new bird record turned up and by 1924 Mitchell published the "Catalogue of the Birds of Saskatchewan." The last new record was a Yellow-throated Vireo taken by F. W. Lahrman at Madge Lake in 1951.

Field camps are expanded from faunal collecting to include some activity in Archaeological excavations to and including the Fur Trading Post era; Paleontological excavations are carried out in the Eastend area. These last two activities are an acknowledgement of our responsibility for collecting and preserving such material to form the nucleus for future research.

Mr. Fred Bradshaw was the first Museum Director (1928-1935) and visited the country schools giving illustrated lectures. These lectures stressed the value of wildlife and the need for conservation. Mr. F. A. Dunk served the Province as Museum Director from 1935-1947. In this period our most serious drought hit, and with the great decline in the waterfowl population, conservation programs were active. These two men were active in conservation programs. For as long as I can remember the Museum has always advocated conservation of our Wildlife Resources.

Our bird collection is one of the most complete. It numbers over three hundred varieties all within our

provincial boundaries—besides the cases that house separate bird families we have habitat group cases, each includes the male, female, eggs or young. While some are small cases, for example the Yellow-throat: the newest are 12 feet long and include several species of birds and animals to illustrate those living in close association. The latter is more natural—no species lives isolated.

We are beginning seven more 12-foot habitat groups. The cases are complete, Mr. Swanston and Mr. Walker are building the portable backgrounds. These cases will depict such groups as the Whooping Crane, Otosquen Ecological group, Timber Wolves, Beaver, Pelicans of Last Mountain, Ring-billed Gulls and Coyote. Their completion will take several seasons. Seven cases were started to build an island of groups. These cases are not permanent, that is, they can be moved when suitable quarters are available. More permanent foregrounds can be made when the museum is permanently housed.

More recently we have moved into the field of motion pictures and our first film the "Pelicans of Last Mountain" is currently being distributed. We are confident the Museum will continue to play an important part in having our citizens of the Province better understand and appreciate our Wildlife resources to reserve sanctuaries for this heritage for generations yet to come.

We invite you to visit your "Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History" located at College and Broad Street in the Provincial Health Building, Regina.

The "Summer Season" open hours are 8.30-5 o'clock weekdays; 2-5 o'clock Saturdays and Sundays—May to October.

The "Winter Season" open hours are 9-5 o'clock weekdays; Saturdays 9-12 o'clock and Sundays 2-5 o'clock during November to April. The Museum is closed on all holidays. This is an invitation to visit your Museum of Natural History.

BUTTERCUPS (*Ranunculus*) OF SASKATCHEWAN



Buttercups of Saskatchewan

August J. Breitung

Seventeen species of buttercups (*Ranunculus*) occur in Saskatchewan (Plate 1, figs. 1-17). They are herbs with shiny yellow flowers, or white in nos. 15, 16, and 17. Buttercups grow in water, swamps, marshes, wet meadows and on prairie, depending upon the species. In the following brief descriptions, the 17 *Ranunculus* species are arranged in a natural sequence, the species numbers refer to the figures on plate 1. The figures show a characteristic plant, reduced, and an enlarged achene, which serve to replace lengthy descriptions.

1. **Ranunculus lapponicus** L. LAPLAND BUTTERCUP. Glabrous perennial from a stoloniferous rootstock; scape 1-flowered, naked, or with a small leaf; basal leaves 2-6 cm. broad, flowers 8-10 mm. across; achenes 5-15. (*Coptidium lapponicum* (L) Gand.). Among moss in spruce swamps. July.

2. **R. Cymbalaria** Pursh ALKALINE BUTTERCUP. Glabrous perennial, spreading by runners; flowers solitary or 2-7 together on scapes or scape-like peduncles, 5-15 cm. high; basal leaves 1-2 cm. long, on slender petioles; petals 5-12; achenes distinctly striate. (*Halerpestes Cymbalaria* (Pursh) Greene). Frequent in wet alkaline soil. June-July.

3. **R. Flamula** L., var. **ovalis** (Bigel.) Benson CREEPING BUTTERCUP. Glabrous or slightly pubescent perennial; stem trailing, rooting at the nodes; leaves in fascicles, oblanceolate, entire, 1-5 cm. long, 3-7 mm. broad; flowers solitary on slender pedicels; petals 3-5 mm. long; achenes in a spherical head, glabrous. (*R. reptans* L. var. *ovalis* (Bigel.) Torr. & Gray). Damp meadows. Saskatoon, Cypress Hills. July.

4. **R. glaberrimus** Hook. SAGEBRUSH BUTTERCUP. Glabrous perennial, 7-10 cm. high, ascending; basal leaves elliptic or oblanceolate, 3-5 cm. long, entire or 3-lobed at the apex; upper stem leaves entire or 3-cleft; petals 8-10 mm. long; achenes numerous in a large globose head. (*R. ellipticus* Greene; *R. Buddii* Boivin). Southern sagebrush plains. April-May.

5. **R. rhomboideus** Goldie PRAIRIE BUTTERCUP. Pubescent perennial, 0.5-1.5 dm. high, erect; basal leaf-blades oval, oblong or ovate-oblong, 1-3 cm. broad, crenate; flowers 10-15 mm. across; sepals pilose; achenes in a spherical head, short-beaked. (*R. ovalis* of Britt. and others, not Raf.) Our earliest and most common prairie buttercup, flowering in May-June.

6. **R. inamoenus** Greene GRACEFUL BUTTERCUP. Sparingly silky perennial, 2-3 dm. high, erect; basal leaves simple, ovate, obovate, or orbicular, 1-4 cm. long, 1-3.5 cm. broad, crenate, rarely 3-lobed or divided; stem leaves sessile, cut into 3-5 narrow divisions; sepals slightly pubescent; petals 4-6 mm. long; achenes numerous, densely canescent. Meadows. Cypress Hills. June-July.

7. **R. pedatifidus** J. E. Smith NORTHERN BUTTERCUP. Slightly silky or glabrate perennial; stem slender, 2-3 dm. high, erect; basal leaves 2-4 cm. broad, pedately divided into 5-7 linear divisions, seldom only toothed; stem leaves nearly sessile, the lobes narrow; sepals with dense ashy pubescence; petals 5 or rarely none, 8-10 mm. long; achenes finely canescent or glabrate. (*R. affinis* R. Br.; *R. apetalus* Farr). Scarce in grassland. Cypress Hills, Luseland, Saskatoon, Lloydminster. June-July.

8. **R. cardiophyllus** Hook. HEART-LEAVED BUTTERCUP. Pilose perennial; stem 3-6 dm. high, erect; basal leaves cordate or reniform, 3-4.5 cm. long, 2-4 cm. broad; stem leaves divided into linear lobes; sepals densely pilose; flowers 15-20 mm. across, showy; achenes numerous, finely canescent, in an oblong or ellipsoid head. (*R. pedatifidus*, var. *cardiophyllus* (Hook) Britt.) Prairie on Cypress Hills. June-July.

9. **R. abortivus** L. KIDNEY-LEAVED BUTTERCUP. Glabrous biennial or short-lived perennial, 2-6 dm. high, erect; lower and basal leaves simple, 1-5 cm. broad, on slender petioles; upper stem leaves sessile, deeply cleft into linear or oblong divisions; petals 1.5-4 mm. long, shorter than the reflexed sepals. (*R. micranthus* of western reports, not Nutt.) Frequent in moist woods. June-July.

10. **R. sceleratus** L. CELERY-LEAVED BUTTERCUP. Annual or short-lived perennial, fleshy, glabrous; stems 1-10 dm. high, erect, branching; lower stem

and basal leaves 3-5 lobed, 2.5-5 cm. broad, on long and broad-based petioles; upper stem leaves deeply divided; flowers numerous, 6-8 mm. broad; achenes numerous in a cylindrical head, apiculate. Common in wet ditches and swamps. June-August.

11. **R. pensylvanicus** L.f. BRISTLY BUTTERCUP. Hairy annual or perennial; stems 4-10 dm. high, erect, branching above; leaves pinnate, the lower 5-7 cm. long, leaflets petiolate, the one 3-parted and again lobed; flowers 6-8 mm. broad; achenes many in a cylindrical head, glabrous; receptacle elongated, 10-14 mm. long. Frequent on damp shores. June-August.

12. **R. Macounii** Britt. MACOUN'S BUTTERCUP. Hirsute perennial, 2-5 dm. high, erect or decumbent, branched; leaves 3-8 cm. long, ternately compound; flowers 10-12 mm. broad; achenes in a globose head, glabrous. Common in wet meadows. June-August.

13. **R. acris** L. TALL BUTTERCUP. Erect, hairy perennial, 3-9 dm. high, branched above; basal leaves deeply 3-parted and again lobed, appearing 5-parted; sepals pubescent; petals 8-12 mm. long; achenes in a globose head, glabrous. (*R. Stevenii* Andrzej.; *R. montanensis* of Sask. reports, not Rydb.). Occasional along roadsides. Natives of Europe. June-August.

14. **R. Gmelini** D.C., var. **Hookerii** (D. Don) Benson SMALL YELLOW WATER BUTTERCUP. Glabrous perennial, floating, or creeping on shores; stem 1-3 dm. long, rooting at the nodes; leaves 1.5-2.5 cm. broad, palmately divided or sometimes dissected into ribbon-like divisions; petals 4-7 mm. long; achenes in an ovoid head, smooth, glabrous. (*R. Purshii* Richards.; *R. Purshii* var. *dissectus* Lunell; *R. delpinifolius* of Sask. reports, not Torr.). Frequent in ponds or on muddy shores. June-August.

15. **R. trichophyllus** Chaix. WHITE WATER BUTTERCUP. Glabrous aquatic perennial, stem branched, 2-6 dm. long; leaves distinctly petioled, submerged, dissected into spreading filiform divisions, collapsing when withdrawn from water; pedicels not recurved in fruit; petals white or yellow at base, 4-8 mm. long; achenes transversely wrinkled, beak none. (*R. aquatilis* L. var. *cappilaceus* (Thuill.) DC.; *Batrachium trichophyllum* (Chaix.) Bosch). In brook by power house in Cypress Hills Park. June-August.

16. **R. longirostris** Godr. LONG-BEAKED WATER BUTTERCUP. Leaves sessile, stiff, not collapsing when withdrawn from water; pedicels not recurved in fruit; petals white, 5-9 mm. long; beak of achenes 1 mm. long. (*R. aquatilis*, var. *longirostris* (Godr.) Lawson; *Batrachium longirostre* (Godr.) F. Schultz). In lakes and streams. Crane Lake, Cypress Hills. June-August.

17. **R. subrigidus** Drew STIFF WATER BUTTERCUP. Leaves sessile or nearly so, divisions rather short, usually firm but sometimes collapsing when withdrawn from water; pedicels recurved in fruit; petals white, yellow at base, 5-9 mm. long, beak of achenes 0.2-0.5 mm. long. (*R. circinatus* Sibth., var. *subrigidus* (Drew) Benson; *Batrachium*). This species and nos. 15, 16 are probably better regarded as varieties of *R. aquatilis*. According to Benson, Amer. Midl. Nat. 40(1): 238, 1948, *Ranunculus divaricatus*, *R. circinatus*, *R. Drouetii*, and *R. flaccidus* are old European names used in America.



LADY'S SLIPPER

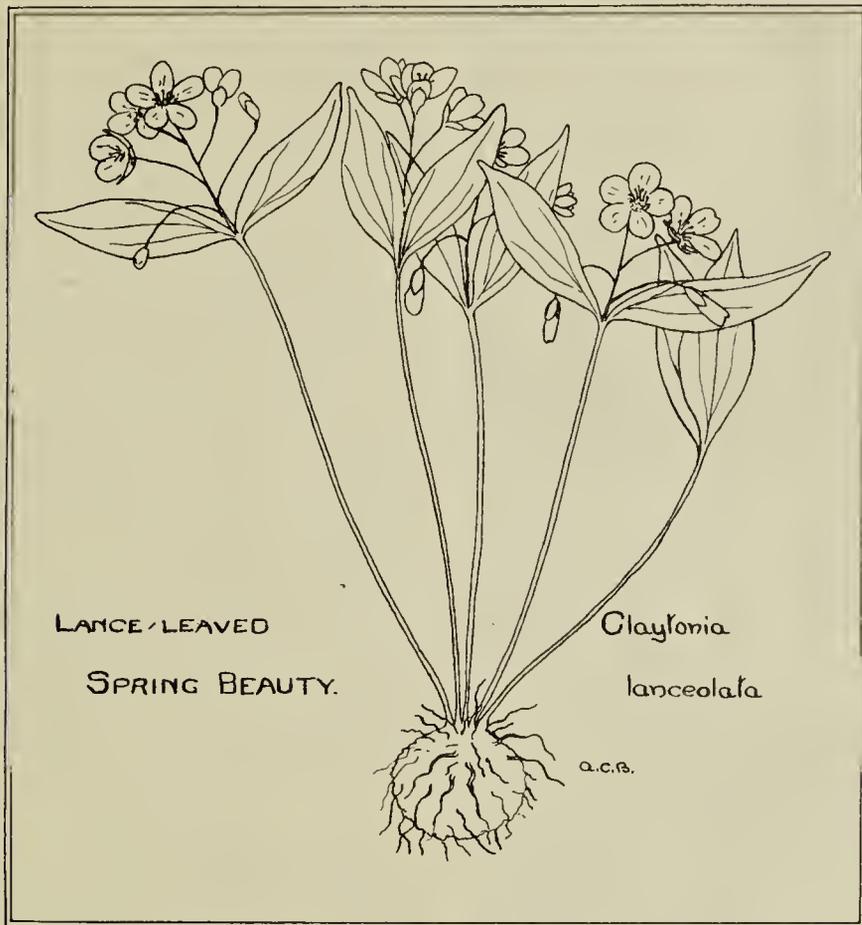
Mrs. O. L. Wolters, Tolland, Alta.

I have had a Yellow Lady's Slipper in my garden now for about four years. I wasn't able to find any growing around wild, but managed to get one from a nursery in Manitoba. I'm sure it had just one slipper the first year it bloomed. It was transplanted in the fall and bloomed in June. Next year it was the same, but last summer it had two slippers and a new stalk. This year I'm looking for more slippers.

I believe they must multiply by their bulbs and not very fast at that. Mine is planted in a shady spot with wild fern and wild blue violets. I would like to get another plant or two on a trade, but only for fall planting.

A HARBINGER OF SPRING

Arch. C. Budd, Swift Current



The Lanced-leaved Spring Beauty, *Claytonia lanceolata*, is a plant which deserves to be better known, as it is one of the earliest of our spring flowers. Unfortunately, in our Province, it is restricted to the Cypress Hills and blooms when that prairie oasis is a little difficult to reach. When the snow in the hills has almost disappeared the Spring Beauty can be found in great profusion along the margins of the woodlands and on the banks of ravines close to the remaining snowbanks. Often what appears at first sight to be a snow bank proves to be a mass of *Claytonia*, some flowers even protruding through the snow.

The plant belongs to the Portulaca family, has two stalkless, opposite leaves part way up the stem, and bears a loose raceme of white flowers, with an occasional pinkish tinge. The flowers, which are from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter, have 2 sepals, 5 petals and 5 tiny yellow stamens, and are borne in a raceme of from 4 to 15 flowers. The root is a globose corm from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter, and is generally from 3 to 5 inches below the surface, sometimes with only one, but often with 6 or 7 stems arising. These fleshy roots were dug by the

Indians and eaten either raw, boiled or roasted.

Spring Beauty is quite plentiful in the Foothills Region and in the lower levels of the Rocky Mountains from Canada to New Mexico. The scientific name is in honour of John Clayton, one of America's earliest botanists who died in 1773.

These plants seem to transplant well if taken with a good ball of soil, and are my earliest flowering garden plants, being in bloom on the north of the house on May 5 in 1951 and April 27 in 1952. In the Cypress Hills we have found them about mid-May as a rule.

Maytime

Come out, come out, the earth is green,
Behold the budding tree
And bluebirds where late snows
have been,
The robin sings with glee,
They call to all enticingly
To come where soft winds blow
The miracle of life to see—
For May days quickly go.

Ethel Eroll Boyd.
Calgary, Alberta.

LOCKED HORNS INDICATE STRUGGLE

C. C. Shaw, Yorkton



Grim evidence of one of nature's battles for survival and supremacy are these locked horns. Holding them is Jack Shaver, conservation officer at Yorkton and Vice-President of our Society.

Mr. Shaver said the two deers were found in the Beaver Hills community pasture, 35 miles west of Yorkton, by John Loeppky, pasture manager. About an acre of grass and snow, heavily tramped down by the hoofs of the deer, indicated the struggle that had waged in an endeavour to free themselves.

When found, the youngest buck had been dead for some time and the body fed on by coyotes. The other had been dead only a few hours and its body had not been touched.

Mr. Shaver said at the time the discover was made, Joe Burfitt, a coyote hunter for the Department of Natural Resources, was in the area placing coyote bait for control measures.

Weasels, Squirrels and Racoons

Ronald Hooper, Somme

One day during the winter I tried squeaking like a mouse to attract a weasel. Sure enough—he ran around my feet and looked under all the nearby sticks for the would-be mouse. Once, when I did this, he **did** come out with a mouse.

In a similar way I once imitated baby birds' peeping to attract a Red Squirrel. The frisky fellow gave a jerk of his tail and scampered to a large grass nest which had fallen from a tree, and energetically searched it again and again. Then he came a little closer and picked up a small object from the ground, nibbled at it, and then carried it to a stump, not a foot from me. He went up the stump and, leaving the object on top of it, descended and went his merry way through the forest. I looked at the object and found that it was a toadstool, which was full of insect

holes. I wonder if he was eating insects or actually eating the toadstool. If so, what a variation from his more common winter diet of spruce cones.

One time, two summers ago, I saw a Red Squirrel eating a half-grown White-throated Sparrow, while the parent birds scolded piteously. He had started with the head and had peeled the skin back as he went until it was half eaten.

Racoons occasionally occur in the Somme vicinity. A friend of mine who lives north of Carragana, shot one two years ago last fall. A man from Endeavour claims to have seen one last fall. My sister saw one about five years ago.

(Readers of the last issue of the "Blue Jay" may get the impression that Racoons are found only east of Estevan in Saskatchewan. This is an error. The sentence in question should have read: "As far as we know they are most prevalent in the Souris watershed, east of Estevan.")

THE MONARCH OF THE FOREST

Charlie W. Abra, Usherville

Some years ago, in the early part of the summer, I was following an old Indian trail through the Maloneck Hills Forest Reserve. The trail was narrow and winding up and down hill.

As I came round a bend, going up hill, a big moose came around another bend coming down hill. He slid to a stop about ten yards from me. He must have been as surprised as I was because he remained, as if frozen, with his feet pushed down hill in front of him. He did not look unfriendly—just very surprised. I stood and looked at him for probably fifteen seconds, then I began to think it was a little too close to be to a live moose—so I started to back away from him. When I was about twenty yards away, he suddenly straightened up, and made a hasty get-away to the north and into the timber.

A few years ago, moose had become very scarce in Northern Saskatchewan. It almost seemed as if they were on the way out. They are now protected by a logical and far-seeing conservation measure. They are not plentiful but are definitely making a come-back. The north woods would indeed be desolate without this monarch of the forest.

The moose does not molest the settlers' grain fields or hay. Its food is in the forest and it is abundant—the hazel bush and buck-bush on the



ridges, almost every shrub and plant that grows in the forest is relished by him. If you travel through the bush in the fall of a year when they are plentiful you will see the white blazes on the poplars where they have rubbed the velvet from their horns.

Some winters the moose become infested with wood ticks, especially in late March, but as soon as the lakes open up in the spring they get rid of the ticks. They wade in the water up to their backs and stand there until the irritating insects loosen and fall off.

NATURAL AREA PRESERVES

Submitted by M. McConnell, Director of Conservation Education, Regina.

"How to preserve an area" is the title of a new bulletin issued by the Nature Conservancy. It is written for the landowner and it discusses the problems he faces in attempting to assure permanent preservation of natural conditions on his property.

The bulletin commences with an analysis of the objectives a person might have in wanting to preserve an area. It goes on to discuss types of preservation, requirements for assuring perpetuation of a nature reserve, custodial agreements, buffer areas, preservation under private ownership, and management policies for natural area preserves.

The Conservancy stresses three essential requirements for assuring preservation of a nature reserve: 1) management under a stated policy of preservation, 2) assurance of continuing control by a permanent organization, and 3) assurance of continuing maintenance funds from endowment or other sources. It discusses the value of buffer areas and the need for careful planning to assure perpetual protection of a proposed nature reserve.

Copies may be obtained from the Nature Conservancy, 1840 Mintwood Place, N.W., Washington 9, D.C.

“ K I N G ”

THE MOOSE JAW Wild Animal Park has a small herd of elk. For many years the leader of this band was a stately bull elk who came to be known as “King.” He was a beautiful elk with a wonderful display of perfect antlers. Often he made a very noble picture by standing at the entrance of one of the various trails in the park with head erect. He watched the people drive by and many stopped and were able to obtain fine pictures of him. “King” finally died early in 1938 and his antlers are displayed in the Provincial Museum in Regina.

Mr. F. McRitchie of Moose Jaw tells us of one of the dangerous experiences of “King.” He was playing around in the snow when one of his huge antlers became entangled in a loose pile of barbed wire. Away he went trailing several hundred feet of wire. When the wire caught and held in a tree he went around and around the tree until he was like a fly in a spider’s web. He was very mad and pounded the ground with his feet and he did not look very inviting to approach. The largest and heaviest dray horse in Moose Jaw was brought out to the park and backed toward “King.” Although badly entangled the elk was still able to whip his body around with lightning speed and knock anything over. “King” practically lifted the back end of the horse off the ground. “King” was gradually crowded to a standstill then the wire was cut and cut until it came to the last snip that freed him. He raced like mad for about two or three hundred feet then wheeled around and stood with head erect, ready for battle. There never was a king with a prouder and more majestic bearing.

As admirers had sadly foreseen, the day eventually came when “King” was dethroned. In the fall of 1937 two young bull elk ganged up on him. “King” put up a terrible battle but the young elk fought in relays until “King” was completely worn out, battered and broken in spirit. He wandered off by himself to a lonely spot and there he stayed. He did not eat and would not accept anything that was provided for him. He became very thin; he was badly battle-



scarred and he no longer looked the “King” he had been.

Mr. J. L. Beattie of Moose Jaw completes the story of “King’s” life. Late that winter about 8 o’clock one morning “King” gave a couple of calls, a “bugle” as they term it. It is a wonderful sound and generally is heard only during the fall breeding season. An hour or so later he gave three calls. The two mature bull elk, who were probably three-quarters of a mile away came on the run. For a time they stood in a triangle, heads toward a common center, in a sort of conference but there was no display of anger. Shortly after this “King” lay down in a clump of bushes. The other two stood guard for perhaps two hours, then ambled off to the herd. When the caretaker went over, “King” was dead.

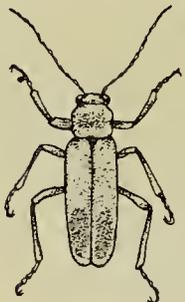
(Ed. Note: We are glad to honor “King” and put this story of his life on record in the “Blue Jay.” Since twelve years have passed since the death of “King,” we would appreciate corrections or additions if any are necessary.)

SASKATCHEWAN BEETLES

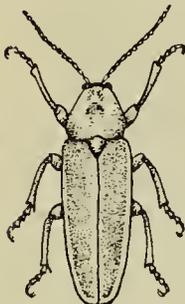
Cliff Shaw, Yorkton

(We are pleased to announce that the next issue of the "Blue Jay" will carry the first of a series of articles on Saskatchewan beetles—how to recognize the more common families and something of their habits.

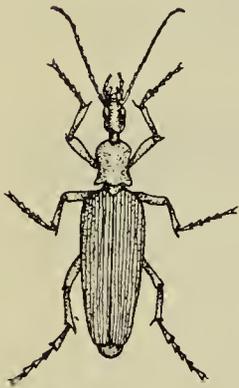
For some time the editor has felt that this phase of nature study should find a corner in the "Blue Jay," and at his suggestion, Cliff Shaw, of Yorkton, who has collected beetles for many years as a hobby has agreed to write the series. As a precautionary measure for his mailman, Mr. Shaw has suggested that if the reader desires to have specimens identified, they should be forwarded to: The Dominion Entomological Laboratory at Indian Head or Saskatoon, or to the Division of Entomology, Department of Agriculture; Ottawa. Ed.)



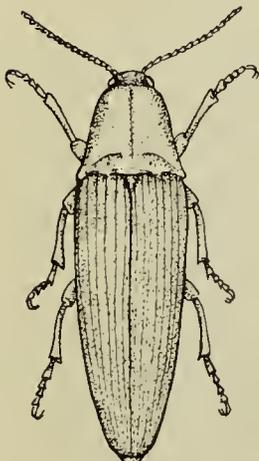
SOLDIER BEETLE



FIRE-FLY



GROUND BEETLE



CLICK BEETLE

The hopeless task of learning the names of the vast numbers of insects to be found within one's own area has perhaps been the main reason why so few amateur naturalists are not better acquainted with this interesting field of nature. To recognize all the insects within even a limited district has been compared to being able to identify all the birds in the world, approximately 9,000. Hence little wonder that the amateur naturalist has turned to narrower fields of study. Another problem is that of a text book applicable to one particular section of the country. One we can highly recommend is of the Putman pocket book series entitled "Field Guide to Insects," by the late F. E. Lutz.

The purpose of this series of articles will therefore be an attempt to assist the reader, not so much as to learn the specific name but rather to learn the general group to which the insect belongs and something of its habits. Of necessity, scientific names will in many cases have to be used for it must be remembered that while many insects have been scientifically named only a few have been nicknamed.

To get away to a proper start it might be as well to describe how beetles differ from other insects. When entomologists refer to beetles they class them as Coleoptera, a word taken from two Greek words meaning a sheath, and a wing. The reference is to the usually hard wing covers. These modified wings meet in a straight line down the back, do not overlap and with few exceptions completely cover the abdomen. The underneath or hind wings are the flight organs.

The next time you catch a beetle lift the wing covers and examine the underneath or true wings. Notice how they are folded when not in use. If you should have picked up one of the ground beetle family do not be surprised if the wing covers are grown together. They sometimes are in this family. Often these chaps are very fast runners and no longer need their wings to escape.

And here a word of warning. Make sure it is a beetle you are picking up. We have a vivid memory of the time we here hunting beetles in the sand dunes South of Shilo, Manitoba and made a grab at a colorful insect digging in the sand. We fast learned its method of protection. Never did find out whether it was a wasp or an ant. Grasp the beetle firmly on either side of the back as some can deliver quite sharp bites but they can't nip you if held properly and they don't sting.

The larvae of beetles are commonly called grubs. They have six legs on the thorax but none on the abdomen except often a single proleg at the end. If this is kept in mind then you will have no trouble distinguishing the difference between the larvae of beetles and those of other insects.

Butterflies and Birds at Somme

Donald Hooper, Somme, Sask.

Last summer my brother Ronald, and I collected 37 species of butterflies. They are as follows: Great Spangled Fritillary, Mountain Silver Spot, Northwestern Silver Spot, Silver-bordered Fritillary, Chariclea Fritillary, Meadow Fritillary, Pearl Crescent, Green Coma, Gray Coma, American Tortoise-shell, Mourning Cloak, Red Admiral, Cosmopolite, Banded Purple, Prairie Ringlet, Common Wood-nympe, Red-disked Alpine, Common Alpine, Pearly Eye, Spring Azure, Afra Blue, Checkered White, Gray-veined White, Cabbage Butterfly, Clouded Sulphur, Western Sulphur, Pink-edged Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Pale Swallowtail, Northern Dusky-wing, Sleepy Dusky-wing, Arctic Skipper, Hofomok Skipper, Accius Skipper. We also saw a Vice-

roy and a Tiger Swallowtail, but were unable to catch them. Besides these butterflies we have an interesting collection of moths.

In the last three years we have observed 173 species of birds within 15 miles of Somme. Some of the uncommon ones are: Spotted Towhee, Bohemian Waxwing, Brown Thrasher, Bald Eagle, Saw-whet Owl, Willow Ptarmigan, Hooded Merganser, and Blue Goose.

(Editor's Note: The Hooper brothers are to be highly commended on their observations. Most of us would have difficulty in correctly identifying half a dozen of our Saskatchewan butterflies. Likewise the three year record of 173 species of birds is certainly an enviable one.)

Co-operative Bird Migration Study-1953

This year the Saskatchewan Natural History Society, together with other observers across the continent, is co-operating with J. H. Zimmerman of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, in studying the migration patterns of a number of species of birds. It is hoped to enroll enough observers to make this the most intensive migration study ever undertaken. Most of the birds chosen are commonly and easily identified, so **every** "BLUE JAY" member (whether resident in Saskatchewan or not) is invited to take part.

Most important is the date first seen. If possible, also record dates of increases in numbers, dates of decreases in numbers, last date seen, and relation of migration to weather changes.

THIS STUDY IS RESTRICTED TO THE FOLLOWING SPECIES THIS YEAR:

Note: Use the following form, or if you do not wish to cut out this page make a copy of it.

	First Seen	Increase	Decrease	Last Seen
Canada Goose				
Red-winged Blackbird				
Flicker				
Myrtle Warbler				
White-throated Sparrow				
Purple Martin				
Chipping Sparrow				
Barn Swallow				
Yellow Warbler				
House Wren				
Baltimore Oriole				
Eastern Kingbird				
Nighthawk				
Ruby-throated Hummingbird.....				

Send all reports to L. T. Carmichael, 1077 Garnet St., Regina, by July 1. (Data on other species, for our own files, should be reported on separate sheets of paper). Further east, the Black-and-white Warbler, Redstart, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Chimney Swift and Wood Pewee are being studied. Data on these species would be appreciated.

Natural History and Farming

Dr. George Ledingham

The Regina Natural History Society has had an invitation to present a brief to the *Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life*. A Committee was appointed. The members of this committee felt that a worthwhile brief might be presented if notice were included in this "Blue Jay" and if a large number of the members of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society contributed ideas and facts.

The Commission is investigating the whole question of the present and future welfare of our agricultural profession in Saskatchewan. The brief from the Saskatchewan Natural History Society will try to avoid the obvious problems of home conveniences, roads, education, etc., and will deal only with problems which we feel touch closely on the aims and objects of our own Society.

We believe that the members of the Natural History Society get more enjoyment out of life than do other people. We would like you to explain why this is and, if possible, give facts supporting the idea that appreciation of natural history tends to keep people on the farm and increase their enjoyment of life. As a basis for discussion we are suggesting the following problems:

1. The development of an appreciation of the beauties of the prairies and its plants and animals, and of farming as a way of life. The solution of this problem would include development and expansion of the work of the "Blue Jay," and of the Museum and its film program.
2. The provision of recreational facilities by maintaining small free parks and natural sites for hiking, boating, camping and nature study in the summer, and by developing museums where people may see beautiful paintings and habitat groups in the winter. Such places, within easy driving distance of all the people would aid in solving problems one and three, and would also have a considerable effect on the health of the people.
3. The conservation of native plants and animals by the setting aside of many small protected zones in each of the soil and vegetation regions of the province. These areas should not be open to tourist or picnickers, but would be important primarily in preventing extinction of any more of our wild life.

Which of these problems is most important, and are there other problems which we might present? Facts are required to support our statements, so please send us facts. The value of our brief will be in direct proportion to the number of contributions so, if you feel strongly on any question touched on in this article, please write in as soon as possible to:

Dr. George Ledingham, Regina College, Regina.

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**Mail all communications to Lloyd T. Carmichael
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