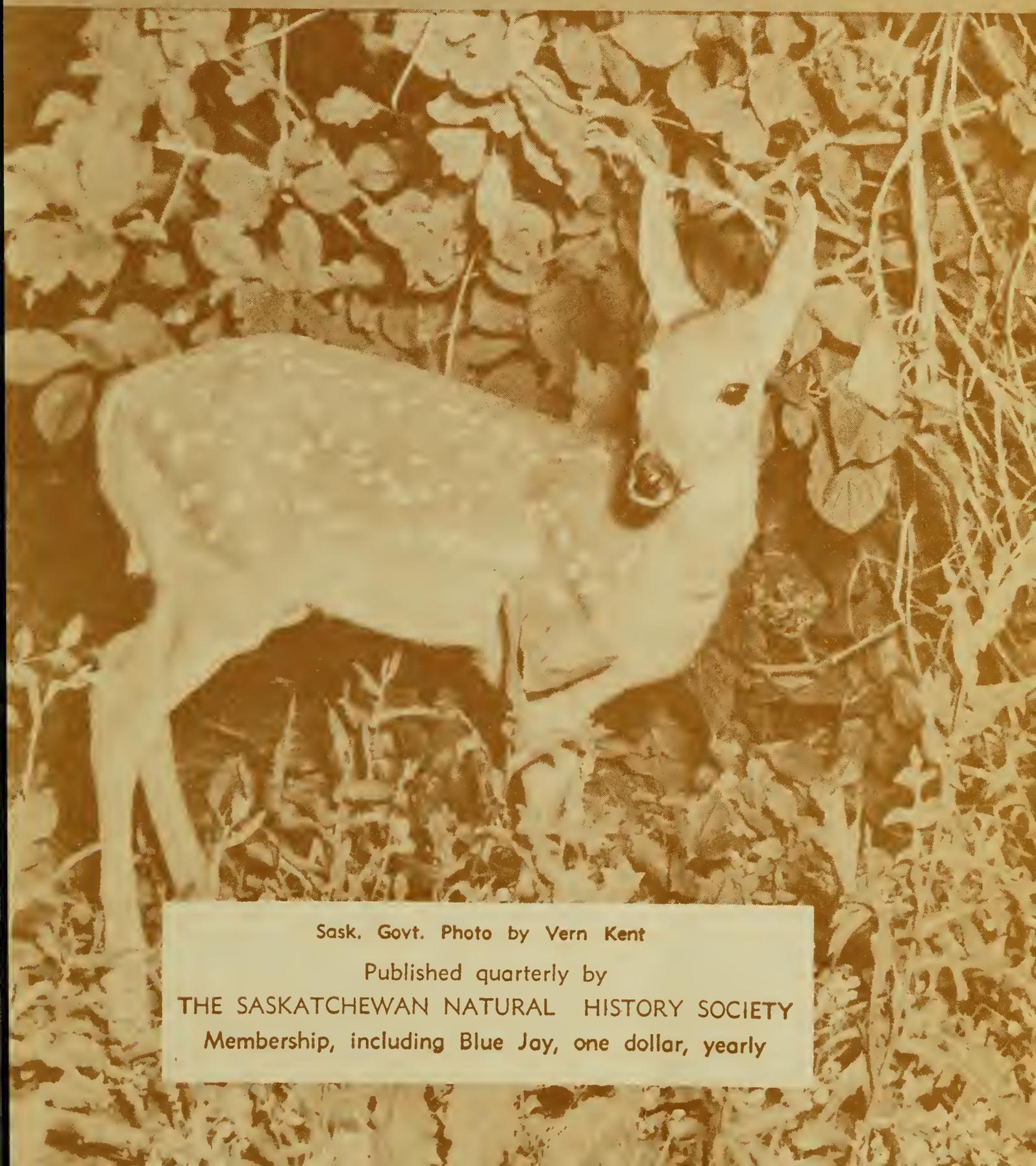


THE

Blue Jay

Vol. XIV, No. 3

September, 1956



Sask. Govt. Photo by Vern Kent

Published quarterly by
THE SASKATCHEWAN NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
Membership, including Blue Jay, one dollar, yearly

Blue Jay Chatter

In a Dominion Day message printed June 30, 1956, in the Leader-Post, our Governor General, Mr. Vincent Massey, describes "Canadianism". In his discussion of some of the less attractive features of our natural life, he says, "Everywhere, or nearly everywhere, we see an erosion of natural beauty. How strangely have we shown our love of our wilderness." Saskatchewan Natural History Society members will realize that this criticism is deserved. How often have we passed some spot where natural beauty has been needlessly marred and the home of wildlife destroyed. Let's all try to do something constructive about these "erosions of natural beauty." Oftentimes a society or organized group of people has many times the influence of a single person. This was demonstrated when the Prince Albert Natural History Society protested the trapping of beaver along the Little Red and North Saskatchewan Rivers in the city of Prince Albert. The beaver add to the attractiveness of this beautiful area, and through the efforts of the society they have not been trapped in 1956. The success of such ventures gives us another good reason for asking others to join our society. It is also a very good reason for organizing a natural history society in your community.

Our society was formed for the purpose of printing the **Blue Jay**. Approximately one fifth of our members live in Manitoba and Alberta. These people have no representation on our executive or on our list of directors. Previous discussions on this subject at our Annual Meeting two years ago stressed only the difficulties of further dispersal of officers; it is hard to get the executive and directors together for meetings now. There were no representatives from either Manitoba or Alberta at this meeting. If there are advantages to be gained by the formation of a Prairie Natural History Society then perhaps societies in each of the provinces could select representatives to consider this question.

In addition to printing the **Blue Jay**, the Saskatchewan Natural History Society has only two recognized activities: the Annual Meeting and the Summer Meeting. To both of these we welcome Manitoba and Alberta naturalists. Each October we hold our Annual Meeting, usually in Regina. Last year our guest speaker was Mr. Dick Sutton, Director of the Provincial Museum in Manitoba; this year, October 27, in our Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History our guest speaker will be Dr. D. Leechman of Alberta. The Summer Meeting has been held only twice, but it has already proved itself extremely successful. This year our meet was held at Madge Lake on the very border of Manitoba, and several Manitoba members attended. During the brief business meeting it was unanimously agreed that our next Summer Meeting should be held in June, 1957 in the Cypress Hills so that Alberta members may join us. Summer Meetings are important because they give us the opportunity to learn new natural history facts in the field and because they allow us to meet together, to form friendships, and to share mutual problems.

This issue of the **Blue Jay** records a considerable number of important observations; many of them are "firsts" for the province of Saskatchewan. We are pleased that we have so many good observers, and that the **Blue Jay** is available to record these observations. Saskatchewan is young and there are still many things that are unknown or unrecorded. While at Madge Lake I took an early morning hike with the warbler experts. F. Brazier drew our attention to a toad that was unusually red. M. Callin, W. Anaka and I looked at it and wondered what kind it was. When we returned to Regina, Mr. W. A. Benson told us that we must have seen the Northern Red Toad which has never been collected in Saskatchewan. This would have been another "first" if we had only brought it home with us or taken a colour photograph. But even when we know all of our birds, mammals, other vertebrates, invertebrates, and all of our plants, there will still be changes. As conditions change, wildlife change. Let's try to prevent the extinction of any living thing in our time. If you have noticed a decrease in any form of life in your district, please write in; we can make inquiries as to whether the condition is widespread and take appropriate action.

The Blue Jay

Published quarterly by the Saskatchewan Natural History Society
Founded in 1942 by Isabel M. Priestly

SASKATCHEWAN NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY OFFICERS

<i>Honorary President</i>	FRED BARD, Regina
<i>Past President</i>	JACK SHAVER, Regina
<i>President</i>	W. YANCHINSKI, Naicam
<i>1st Vice-President</i>	FRANK BRAZIER, Regina
<i>2nd Vice-President</i>	E. M. CALLIN, Fort San
<i>Business Manager and Treasurer</i>	ELMER FOX, Regina
<i>Blue Jay Editor</i>	GEORGE LEDINGHAM, Regina
<i>Corresponding Secretary</i>	MARGARET BELCHER, Regina
<i>Recording Secretary</i>	ELIZABETH CRUICKSHANK, Regina

DIRECTORS: 3-year Term—J. F. Roy, Saskatoon; S. A. Mann, Skull Creek; Maurice Street, Nipawin; Mrs. Rose McLaughlin, Indian Head; R. Willems, Edenwold.

2-year Term—K. E. Baines, Tisdale; A. C. Budd, Swift Current; Dr. D. S. Rawson, Saskatoon; E. Symons, Rocanville; A. Capusten, Prince Albert.

1-year Term—J. O. Turnquist, Wallwort; Stuart Francis, Torch River; Mrs. J. Hubbard, Grenfell; Ronald Hooper, Somme; Cliff Shaw, Yorkton.

PRESIDENTS OF LOCAL BRANCHES—G. W. Stewart, Regina; Paul Welgan, Yorkton; Ross Homer, Prince Albert; Dr. R. M. Bremner, Saskatoon; F. Baines, Saltcoats.

Vol. XIV, No. 3

September, 1956

Pages 73-104

PRIESTLY ISLAND	74
BLUE JAY BOOKSHELF	74
Planting your Garden for Wild Birds, J. R. Mackintosh (Mary Houston)	
MUSEUM NOTES	75
In Memoriam of Fred Bradshaw, by F. G. Bard.	
The Home of the Whooping Crane, by Fred Bradshaw.	
Golden-crowned Sparrow found in Saskatchewan, by R. W. Nero.	
Bonaparte's Gull, by F. G. Bard.	
Whooping Cranes in Southern Saskatchewan, by F. G. Bard.	
Black Brant Specimen, by R. W. Nero.	
BIRD NOTES	83
Co-operative Spring Migration Study, compiled by Dr. S. Houston.	
A Visit to a British Nature Reserve, by M. Belcher.	
Enemies in Nature, by I. R. Barnes.	
Notes on Hawks and Owls, by D. Gilroy, W. Anaka and P. L. Beckie	
Sask's First Nesting Record of the Whip-poor-will, by M. G. Street.	
Myrtle Warbler, E. M. Callin and Miss J. Gunn	
The Snowy Egret, by W. Anaka and F. W. Lahrman.	
Saskatchewan's First Parula Warbler, by E. M. Callin.	
Say's Phoebe in Sask., by F. H. Brazier.	
PLANT NOTES	93
Additions to the Floral List of the Cypress Hills, by J. H. Hudson.	
Some Cypress Hills Rarities, by A. C. Budd.	
Familiar Wild Flowers, No. 3, by B. de Vries.	
Two Orchids, by R. Willems.	
ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT	97
NATURE'S SCHOOLHOUSE	98
MORELS FOR DINNER, by Ray Peterson	99
MAMMAL NOTES	100
PEACEFUL ACRES, by E. Cruickshank	101
MADGE LAKE MEETING, June 9-10, 1956	102
SPADE AND SCREEN, by F. Robinson	104
NOTES OF INTEREST	Back Cover

Any material printed for the first time in the **Blue Jay** may be reproduced without permission. Credit lines will be appreciated.

Membership: \$1.00

Priestley Island

Priestly Island, near the south end of Reindeer Lake, has been named, effective July 5th, 1956, by the Canadian Board of Geographical Names at Ottawa to commemorate the outstanding work of the late Mrs. Isabel M. Priestly in creating interest in Saskatchewan natural history. When the Saskatchewan Natural History Society was invited to nominate an outstanding Saskatchewan naturalist to be honoured in this way, the executive chose the name of Mrs. Priestly because the **Blue Jay** magazine, the Yorkton Natural History Society, and the Saskatchewan Natural History Society all owe their existence to her.

The first issue of the **Blue Jay** was published in 1942 when Mrs. Priestly took the lead in organizing the Yorkton Natural History Society. It was Mrs. Priestly who compiled the material for the **Blue Jay** and did much of the actual work involved in mimeographing the bulletin. In addition, she wrote hundreds of letters

and answered innumerable inquiries about natural history.

When Mrs. Priestly died in 1946, the Yorkton Natural History Society continued the **Blue Jay** as a memorial to her. Then a provincial society was formed to publish the magazine. Thus Mrs. Priestly's inspiration can be considered responsible for the organization of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society which brought naturalists together in a manner that had always been the cherished dream of the first editor.

All our members will feel that Mrs. Priestly's service to the cause of natural history in the province justifies perpetuating her name as a Saskatchewan place name. Not only was she responsible for organizing the Yorkton Natural History Society, which is still active, and for beginning the publication of the **Blue Jay** which now has a circulation of over two thousand; she stimulated by her keen personal enthusiasm a wide interest in the study of natural history during the years of her residence in Saskatchewan.

The Blue Jay Bookshelf

"PLANTING YOUR GARDEN FOR WILD BIRDS"

By James R. Mackintosh

Audubon Society of Canada, 1956—\$1.00 — Reviewed by Mary Houston, Yorkton

In this little book, written for the Audubon Society of Canada, James R. Mackintosh attempts to give practical guidance to anyone wishing to derive more pleasure both from his garden and from the wild birds it might attract. Sketches by such artists as Roger Tory Peterson and T. M. Shortt add to the booklet's attractiveness.

Since the essentials for sustaining birdlife (particularly in winter) include food, water, and shelter, the author suggests that much more can be done than simply putting out food trays — though these are valuable. Different shrubs and trees will attract a larger variety of birds and thus add to the birdwatcher's pleasure and knowledge while they increase the comfort of the birds.

Mr. Mackintosh has prepared a detailed chart of trees, shrubs, and other plants in which he describes

each and explains its specific value to the birds as food, shelter, or nesting habitat. Because the guide is intended for all Canada, the author also gives zones in which each plant will grow and tells which birds are attracted to it. He suggests plans for small, large, and wild gardens to give the reader ideas on how to make the garden attractive to himself and to the birds. Where feeding stations are set up, they supplement natural food.

Mr. Mackintosh has been superintendent of Glendon Hall—over 100 acres in the heart of Toronto, now the property of the University of Toronto's Department of Biology—for over twenty years. He is also a keen naturalist and a professional horticulturist, so he is well qualified to guide the interested amateur to hours of greater pleasure in "Planting Your Garden for Wild Birds."

MUSEUM NOTES

In Memoriam of Mr. Fred Bradshaw

By FRED BARD

Director, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, Regina

With the passing of Fred Bradshaw on July 27th, the Museum has lost a very dear friend. I never met a man more devoted to his work than was our friend "Brad." He spoke of coming to this country as a "green Englishman." He was one of the Barr Colonists, who faced many obstacles in settling a new land. The high cost of equipment, adverse weather and privation caused many to give up and try something else. I believe he was a Court stenographer for a time. Yearly reports of the Department of Agriculture refer to the various responsibilities this young man had in that Department and of his interest in natural history in association with Prof. T. N. Willing. Reports carry the account of lectures given on the "Better Farming Train."

Mr. Bradshaw was deeply interested in the wildlife of Saskatchewan, and was one of its first conservationists. He photographed, studied and lectured about the natural history of the Province. I accompanied him on many occasions. His interest took him to the rural schools where he met the children and would tell them of the adventures to be had in the realm of natural history.

In 1906 an exhibit of fur-bearing game animals and game birds was sent to a fair in Halifax to illustrate the wealth of wildlife in the west. From time to time this collection was added to. Quite a collection was on hand when the cyclone of 1912 struck, destroying most of the specimens. Mr. Bradshaw went east and talked with Museum people before he selected Mr. Mitchell as the man most capable of rebuilding these specimens so that a museum could be established. Mr. Mitchell commenced his duties in 1913.

Reliable observers were established across the Province as a result of Mr. Bradshaw's encouragement, and these contacts submitted material which was of great value to the Game Branch in its early management program. Several of these reliable observers assisted in compiling material for the Saskatchewan check list of birds. The check list was

published by Mitchell in the "Canadian Field-Naturalist," 1924.

Mr. Bradshaw became the Museum's first Director in 1928 — it owes its existence to his planning. His dream of a building just for the Museum was finally realized when he was invited to the official opening of our new building on May 16th, 1955. At the close of the ceremonies Brad's eyes were filled with tears as he said, "I thought I would never live to see the day when a building would be provided." Mr. Bradshaw retired from the Museum in 1935.

I had the opportunity of seeing Brad in Vancouver when the 21st Federal-Provincial Wildlife Conference was held on June 4th-9th, 1956. He was at the meeting when "Whooping Crane Mortality and Management" was being discussed. Mr. John H. Lynch, Flyway Biologist, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, presented an exceptionally fine paper containing a proposal to manage the Whooping Crane. Following the unanimous approval of the conference for a management program, Mr. Bradshaw and I had tea together and talked over the happy days of "birding" in Saskatchewan. Brad said, "There is no place like Saskatchewan for birdlife and I shall never forget my happy experiences on the prairies." During this conversation I asked him to write us an article on his discovery of the first Whooping Crane nest found in Saskatchewan. You will find this interesting article on the following pages.

I often think of the trials and tribulations during the 30's when it was so very difficult to keep the Museum alive and of the hundreds of experiences we had together in our desire to build a Museum of Natural History.

One cannot help but realize with the passing of friends like Brad that we never quite recover from these losses, and on each occasion die a little ourselves.

Our sympathy goes out to Mr. Bradshaw's wife, Carol, who resides in Vancouver; and to his daughter, Mrs. McMath of Regina.



Mr. and Mrs. Fred Bradshaw are shown at the extreme right in this photo taken at the opening of the new Museum of Natural History on May 16, 1955. Mr. and Mrs. Fred Bard are being presented to the Governor General, Mr. Massey by the Hon. Mr. Brockelbank.

The Home of the Whooping Crane

By FRED BRADSHAW

To visit the home of the finest, tallest, and beyond question the most majestic bird of the American continent is a privilege that has fallen to the lot of few living persons. So far as I am aware, at this writing, I am the only living person who has had the good fortune to enjoy this most unusual experience. By a stroke of good fortune it was my pleasure to find, in 1922, the summer home of the Whooping Crane, *Grus americana*.

For many years, as Game Commissioner for the Province of Saskatchewan, I was charged with the administration of the Game Act.

While this work does not lend itself to an intensive study of birds and mammals, nevertheless, one who occupies such a position is compelled as a matter of course, to take more than a passing interest in wildlife conditions generally if he desires to deal intelligently with the various problems that from time to time confront him. It was in this way that I first became interested in the Whooping Crane; but it was not until January, 1922, upon learning that Dr. T. Gilbert Pearson, President of the National Association of Audubon Societies, Washington, D.C., had reported the finding of the winter

feeding grounds of four of these birds in South Texas, and passed on the task of locating their summer home and safe keeping to Canada, that any serious attempt was made to carry out the line of work suggested.

Questionnaires sent out to over 400 correspondents in the early part of 1922 brought a few replies that warranted further investigation. Finally, our hopes of locating the breeding grounds of the Whooping Crane were centred around the area between the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers in the south western part of the province. I instructed Mr. Neil Gilmour, one of our Game Guardians, to investigate the lake a few miles south of Kerrobert. Here reports claimed that 12 Whooping Cranes lived in 1911 but these had dwindled to 2 in 1921. This pair had raised one young that year but two birds had been shot during the fall only 15 miles south of the breeding grounds. In spite of grave doubts, one pair made their appearance in 1922, built their home, and raised two young; our observer reported that so far as he was aware they all departed for the south unimpaired.

No sportman ever started out on a shooting trip with greater expectancy of thrills than I did on Saturday, May 28, 1922, when I set out to investigate the other prospect. A shot at these rare birds with my trusty old 5 by 7 cartridge camera, antiquated though it be, would send the red blood tingling through my veins at a far greater velocity than would a shot from a death-dealing instrument of destruction, and there would be no twinge of remorse at having sent into oblivion one of the choicest of the Creator's handiworks.

It was about 10 a.m. Sunday, May 29, 1922, when I arrived at a small farmhouse close to a little lake southwest of the village of Plenty. The kind occupants, at considerable inconvenience to themselves, agreed to tolerate my presence for a few days. I refused their kind invitation to accompany them to church, for I had just seen my first Whooping Cranes — three of them sailing over the marsh at no great distance from the house. Under the circumstances, I knew I could not concentrate on any man-made sermon, and without the slightest qualms of conscience I decided to commune with God and Nature under the canopy of the

Heavens on that beautiful Sabbath morn.

Donning my field apparel while a lunch of bulky proportions was prepared for me, I straightway headed for the north-east end of the large marsh where I had first seen the cranes flying. Imagine my chagrin when I could not find the birds! These long-legged, snow-white birds with fifty-inch perpendicular expansion should not be difficult to find with the aid of binoculars. I discovered about two hours later that my method of approach was altogether wrong. I was aimlessly walking around the marsh on the top of the bank above the horizon, thus exposing myself in full view and nary a glint did I get of the wary object of my search until I countered their hiding manoeuvres by dropping below the sky line. In bird hunting, it is often good policy to sit down and let the birds disclose themselves. This would be a good time to appease my hunger and dispose of the ample lunch I was carrying.

As I was finishing the delicious apple pie I caught sight of a white object in the brown-coloured marsh about one half mile straight in front of me. My binoculars were now focused on this Whooping Crane, for it was too far distant to observe clearly with the naked eye. Where was its mate? In all probability the birds were nesting, but where was one to look in all this expanse of marsh? Perhaps their nest was on the surrounding dry land. After I had watched the bird feeding for forty minutes, it rose and flew east a distance of about a hundred yards. Here it alighted and recommenced its feeding. Imagine my delight when, while watching these manoeuvres, I saw another white object close by which I instantly made out to be the neck of bird number two.

After a few minutes delay the feeding bird approached its mate; there was an occasional spreading of wings which made the bird in action very conspicuous, then one of the birds flew to where I had first noticed the feeding bird. I concluded that at last these wary birds had betrayed their regal home and that the antics I had witnessed were, perhaps, performed in the process of relieving the sitting bird. I adopted

a slow but sure policy, waited about thirty minutes longer, and was treated to a recurrence of the events just related. Then I felt sure I was on the right track.

The next problem that confronted me was to find the nest, for it would be difficult to see far once I went down into the marsh. Fortunately there was a building on the other side of the marsh which I lined up with what I presumed to be the nesting site. By another stroke of luck there was a huge pile of bleached bones nearby. I placed one pile on the top of the bank of the marsh in line with the nest and the building. Half way down the bank I placed another pile that now gave me a four point line which, if my calculations were right, would lead me to the nest. All I had to do was to keep looking back to see that the bone piles were in line.

On the way out the monotony of the trudge through shallow water was relieved by the discovery of a grebe colony of twenty or more nests. Some of the eggs were recently laid, chalky white, while others were dirty-looking and stained from the damp vegetation. The eggs were all covered, but I did not have the inclination to examine the colony any further just then. As I continued my unswerving progress the Whooping Cranes became a trifle uneasy and soon they separated going in opposite directions. I did not detour after either bird but continued my tiresome journey by the Bone Pile Route. I finally reached my destination without having to waver one iota from the line I had projected.

The nest was a huge structure similar in shape to that of a muskrat house made of a coarse three-sided sedge. It was from four to five feet in diameter at the base and stood about three feet above water level. It was dry on top and lined with a covering of finer grasses. Lying on this slightly hollowed hillock were three large eggs. Generally these birds lay only two eggs.

When the Whooping Cranes realized that I had discovered their nest they came closer and closer and with spread wings pretended many times, according to my interpretation, to be busily engaged at another nest. One bird circled twice within a hundred yards while I was taking a photograph of the nest. Not wishing

to disturb the birds unduly and knowing the danger of arresting incubation if the eggs remained uncovered too long, I decided to call it a day.

The next day, bright and early, I started back by a shorter route. I had almost despaired of finding the nest when I was attracted by a pair of Pintail Ducks straining their necks to see what I was doing. I went toward them and to my great surprise I found them sunning themselves on the very nest I was looking for. As I was setting up the camera a sharp thunderstorm interrupted me. Later I noticed a strange piping whistle. This noise mystified me until I discovered that it came from a young crane who was just breaking through the shell. Fearing that the young bird might suffer if it did not receive immediate attention from its parents, which were now greatly perturbed, I ceased operations for the day. I was happy to have been in attendance at the Whooper's birth and to have taken photographs of this most unusual incident.

On the third day I approached the nest with caution. It was well that I did so, for scarcely had I come within sight of it when the young bird, which had hatched out by this time, scampered off the nest into the open water and had almost reached the margin of the dense marsh grasses when I caught it. Returning it to the nest I covered it with my hat until I was ready to take photographs. It was with difficulty that I got a photograph for it would insist upon stretching itself flat on the nest in a limp lifeless-looking form. Eventually it manifested a lively concern in its new world and the shutter clicked making a photographic record of Whooper Junior as he appeared on his birthday.

Because I had this thrilling experience with Whoopers in 1922 I have always been intensely interested in these huge birds. I was glad to read that six Whoopers, including young, were observed in the Wood Buffalo Park near the border of Northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories in 1955. I feel sure that the protective measures being put into effect by those interested in this crane will save it so that in the future many others may have the experience of seeing this magnificent bird.

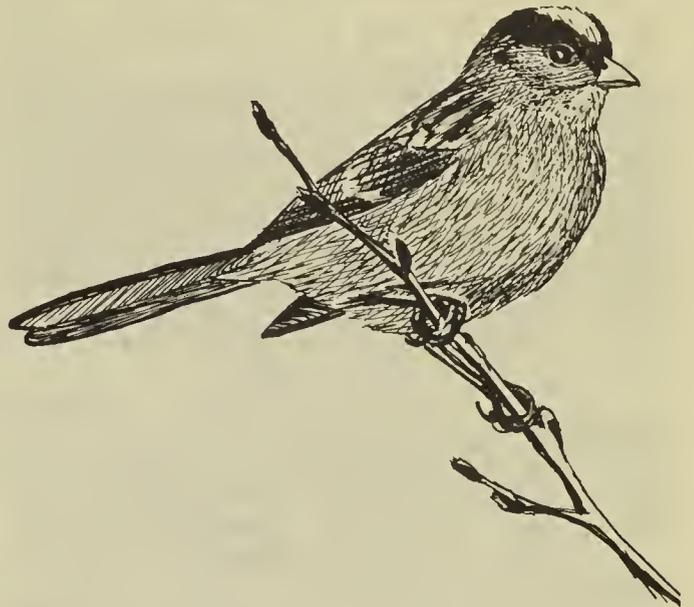
Golden-Crowned Sparrow Found in Saskatchewan

By R. W. NERO, Regina

A Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia coronata*) was obtained by us on May 19, 1956, approximately five miles east of Regina. This is evidently the first report of this western species in Saskatchewan. The bird was spotted on this date together with 5 White-crowned Sparrows (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) at 10:00 a.m. by Mr. Elmer Fox who gave it this identification after checking a book. At 12:00 Mr. Fox returned to the area with Mr. Frank Brazier. The bird was located and examined by both observers. Mr. Fox visited the same area again at 6:00 p.m. with me and after both had observed it, I collected it for positive identification. A study skin has been prepared and is now in the collections of the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History.

The Golden-crowned Sparrow winters in California, migrating through Washington and Oregon to its breeding grounds on the alpine meadows of British Columbia and Alaska. According to Taverner (1928: 290) it is also found in the adjoining foothills of the Rockies in southwestern Alberta. Brooks and Swarth (1925: 94) mention a breeding record "... from the Alberta side of Moose Pass ... the southernmost in the Rocky Mountain region." Rand (1948: 6) did not find the species in southern Alberta but he indicated their probable occurrence in the mountainous areas: "The alpine grassland above timber-line harbours at least white-tailed ptarmigan and the leucosticte probably belongs here. Other species such as the golden-crowned sparrow and the timberline sparrow will probably be found here."

The Golden-crowned Sparrow has occurred widely as an accidental species. According to Peterson (1947: 255) it has been found in Louisiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, New Jersey and Massachusetts. So far as we were able to determine it has not been reported in Canada east of Saskatchewan, in Montana or in North Dakota. The Wisconsin records, based on four specimens date back from 1853 to 1858 (Kumlien and Hollister, 1903: 86.)



— Sketch by F. W. Lahrman

The situation in which the Saskatchewan specimen was found seems significant enough to warrant description. King's Park lies five miles east of Regina on a small body of water which is part of Boggy Creek. This general area consists of rolling hills and is a bit more rugged than the surrounding terrain. The main area is grassland but in the bottoms of the valleys and along the edge of the lake one finds Willow (*Salix* sp.), Dogwood (*Cornus* sp.), and Poplar (*Populus* sp.). On the south side of this pond a steep bank rises abruptly about 15 feet. On May 19 a few mounds of snow as much as 3 feet deep still remained beneath the trees along the bottom of this northfacing slope. The White-crowned Sparrows and the Golden-crowned Sparrow were found along the edge of the lake frequenting these snow-banks. Several times when the birds were flushed they were seen to fly from one snow bank across bare woods to alight in the trees above the next snow bank. Our observations of the rare sparrow were mainly made while it was moving about on top of the snow.

This new addition to the fauna of the province means that observers will need to pay closer attention to White-crowned Sparrows. With this in mind we wish to point out that the main feature of identification of our sparrow was the broad black line on the side of its head. In the few glimpses we had before it was collected it appeared to us to be a

black-capped bird of about the same size as the accompanying White-crowns.

As the number of field observers increases we can expect an increased number of reports of rare or unusual species. Mr. Fox's success in adding a new species to the list can be partly attributed to a deliberate effort to check individuals of even the common species. This is the kind of activity that pays off in excitement, but nevertheless it is not the most significant. Far more important is

the need for additional data on the status of our common species. Few can expect to find a new species, but everyone can help to bridge the gaps in our knowledge of distribution, nesting periods, migration, etc. The non-professional birder is in a better position than ever before to contribute to our knowledge of birds. As ornithological information accumulates the values of each observation becomes more apparent. A rich field of exploration lies before us.

LITERATURE CITED

BROOKS, A., and H. S. SWARTH

1925 A distributional list of the birds of British Columbia.

Pacific Coast Avifauna No. 17. Contribution No. 423, Mus. Vert. Zool., U. Calif.

KUMLIEN, L. and N. HOLLISTER

1903 The Birds of Wisconsin. (Revised by A. W. Schorger, 1951. Madison, Wisconsin).

PETERSON, R. T.

1947 A field guide to the birds. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co. 290 pp.

RAND, A. L.

1948 Birds of Southern Alberta.. *Nat'l. Mus. Can. Bull. No. 111.* (Biol. Series No. 37).

TAVERNER, P. A.

1928 Birds of Western Canada. *Nat'l Mus. Can. Bull. No. 41.* (2nd ed. revised).

Bonaparte's Gull

by FRED G. BARD, Regina.



— Sketch by F. W. Lahrman

In Saskatchewan nesting reports of Bonaparte's Gull are still something of a rarity. In 1955 and 1956 I had the opportunity of field checking the birds in Lamotte's Swamp about 10 miles south-west of Glaslyn. The swamp is situated west of No. 4 and south of No. 55 Highway. Mr. R. D. Symons, Field officer for the Department of Natural Resources, had first shown me this interesting swamp in 1935. At that time I photographed two nests with three eggs in each. A single pair of Sandhill Cranes was seen and was no doubt nesting in the area.

In July, 1955, I saw one young Bonaparte's Gull flying with adults in a small slough about one mile south of the swamp. In 1956 I found only one nest containing three eggs. In the accompanying sketch Fred Lahrman shows the elevated nest of the gull. The nest is built on bulrushes of the previous year that have been somewhat flattened by the winter snow. Five adults were seen in 1956. While the area is small its unusual habitat is sufficient to encourage these interesting birds as well as Short-billed Marsh Wrens, Yellow Rails, Wilson's Snipe, Swamp Sparrows, and Juncos.

Whooping Cranes in Southern Saskatchewan in 1956

by FRED G. BARD, Regina

Thanks to the interest and co-operation of farmers, sportsmen, and the public generally we know that four Whooping Cranes stayed in Southern Saskatchewan this summer. We took photographs of two at Haultain and two at Alsask for our Museum records. These pictures were taken with a telophoto lens and the birds were left undisturbed.

Pictures of the two Whooping Cranes at Alsask were taken by Gordon Duane, traveller with General Films on April 18, 1956, while he was shooting a sequence with Snow Geese. These birds were not reported till July and now they seem to have left the district. Reports of Whooping Crane should be made to the Game Branch of the Department of Natural Resources, Regina, or to the Museum; otherwise the whereabouts of these birds should be kept as quiet as possible. The public is interested in this bird and in its over enthusiasm people approach the birds too closely usually because they do not carry binoculars or want to take pictures with ordinary cameras.

Field checks in the Wood Buffalo Park by the Canadian Wildlife Service have indicated that to date (July 31, 1956) only one pair has been found nesting. There was no evidence of young. Our late spring may have caused conditions which have prevented the successful rearing of young Whooping Cranes in the far north and 1956, like 1954, may bring no addition to the Whooping Crane flock. It is for this reason that we are very anxious that birds remain undisturbed in Southern Saskatchewan. Alsask is only fifty miles from the site where Mr. Bradshaw saw the Whooping Crane nest in 1922. Chances of rearing young



— Photo by F. G. Bard, June 25, 1956
Two Whooping Cranes at Haultain, Sask. Negative made from 16mm. kodachrome movie frame.

in this area should be much higher than in the far north where springs are late and often severe.

If you think you see Whooping Cranes observe them closely with binoculars. Study the flight pattern and listen to their voice. See whether or not the head is haunched back on the shoulders and whether or not the feet project beyond the length of the tail. If the birds are seen feeding, notice whether they are swimming or not. These points are important for identifying purposes. The Whooping Crane does not flock or group together in large numbers; six is the limit for a flock size.

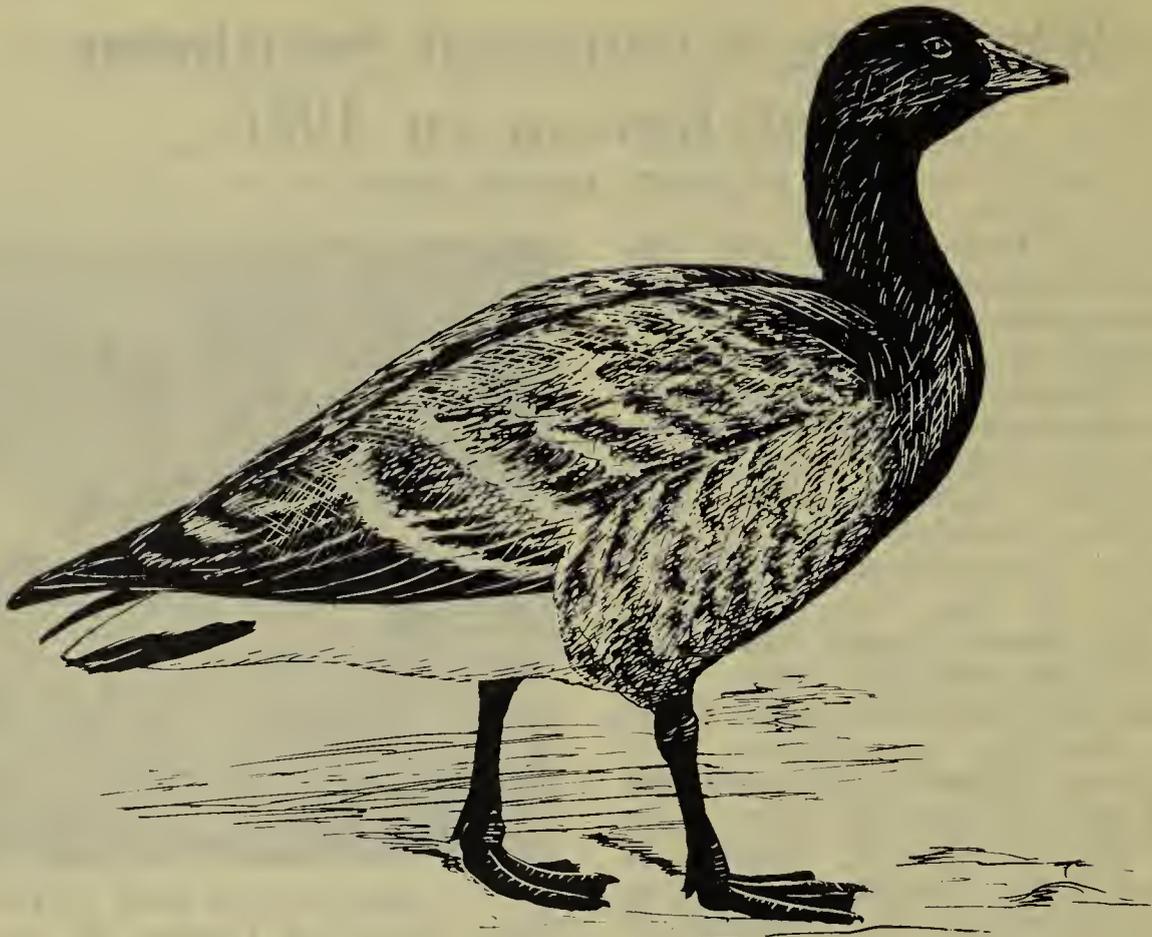
The prairie region is the home of the Whooping Crane and we should protect them from disturbance. As we have said before they can nest earlier in our south country and the danger of their extinction is thus reduced.

Black Brant Specimen

by R. W. NERO, Regina

A Black Brant (*Branta nigricans*) taken some twenty years ago near Swift Current, Saskatchewan, seems to have been unrecorded and appears to constitute the first specimen for

the province. Until quite recently a mounted specimen has been on display in the Swift Current Collegiate Museum where I first noticed it in September, 1955. Through the cour-



— Sketch by F. W. Lahrman

tesy of Mr. Howard E. Couch, Principal and Curator, the specimen has been placed in the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History.

Mr. George Warren, Swift Current taxidermist, states that he mounted the Brant: “. . . around twenty years ago . . .” (Pers. Corres.). He states further, “. . . Mr. Lars Hendrickson was the man who shot it. I was talking to him the other day and he said it was a lone bird in a flock of Honkers and he thought he would bring it down to see what it was.” Mr. Couch writes that the bird was shot “. . . in the district around Stewart Valley . . .”

Two species of Brant are recognized on the North American continent; both are coastal species. *Branta bernicla*, the American Brant, is the eastern form; *Branta nigricans*, the Black Brant, occurs on the west coast. Their status as distinct species

has recently been re-established (Handley, 1950; 26th supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union Check List of North American Birds, 1951. *Auk*, 68: 367). According to Taverner, the Brant is found “. . . breeding across the Arctic coast and islands and migrating down the sea-coasts. It appears inland or on fresh water only as a rare straggler. One record for Manitoba is the only authenticated one in western Canada away from the immediate vicinity of the sea.” (1928: 109-110).

What is presumably the Manitoba record cited above is listed by Bent (1951:249) as an American Brant. Wood states that he examined a Black Brant shot in North Dakota, “. . . an immature bird . . . taken at Dakota, Nelson County, October 26, 1917.” (1923: 22). The Saskatchewan specimen is also an immature bird, having notched tail feathers and lacking the white collar.

LITERATURE CITED

- BENT, A. C.
1951 Life histories of North American wild fowl, ducks, geese and swans. Vol. 2. Dover Pub., N.Y. 316 pp.
- HANDLEY, C. O., JR.
1950 The Brant of Prince Patrick Island, Northwest Territories. *Wilson Bull.*, 62: 128-132.
- TAVERNER, P. A.
1928 Birds of Western Canada. *Nat'l Mus. Can. Bull. No. DV.* (2nd ed. revised).
- WOOD, N. A.
1923 A preliminary survey of the bird life of North Dakota. *Univ. Mich. Mus. Zool., Misc. Pub. No. 10.* Ann Arbor, Michigan. 92 pp.

Co-operative Spring Migration Study 1956

Compiled by DR. STUART HOUSTON, Yorkton

	SKULL CREEK (S. A. Mann)	DILKE (J. B. Belcher)	GRENFELL (Mrs. J. Hubbard)	FORT SAN (E. M. Callin)	BLADWORTH (P. L. Beckie)	SPIRIT LAKE (W. Anaka)	SHEHO (W. Niven)	KINLOCH (Mrs. Rodenberg)	PRINCE ALBERT (T. Capusten)	NIPAWIN (Street & Matthews)
Whistling Swan		Ap22		Ap12	Ap21	My 5	My 5	My 8		
Canada Goose	Mr21	Ap14	Mr26	Ap 8	Ap19	Ap12	Ap 4	Ap18	My 8	Ap20
Mallard	Mr22	Ap13	Ap10	Ap12	Ap 9	Ap12	Ap12	Ap19		
Pintail	Mr25	Ap 9	Ap10	Ap10	Ap 9	Ap18	Ap12	Ap19		
Marsh Hawk	Mr22	Mr24	Ap 5	Mr24	Mr30	Ap18	Ap 9		Ap28	Ap12
Killdeer	Mr26	Ap14	Ap17	Ap13	Ap16	Ap18	Ap13	Ap14		Ap20
Wilson's Snipe	Ap30		My 1	Ap27		Ap30		Ap14		My 5
Mourning Dove	Ap15	My 9	My12	Ap19	My14	My 3	My 3	My 2		My 6
Nighthawk				My26	My25	My30	My22		My27	My21
Rubi-throated Hummingbird				My27			Je 5	My25	Je 4	Je 1
Flicker	Ap14	Ap21	Ap24	Ap29	Ap19	Ap24	Ap24		My 6	My 5
Eastern Kingbird	My21	My13	My19	My19	My20	My20	My21			My21
Eastern Phoebe				My 5		Ap20	My17	Ap30	My19	My 9
Barn Swallow	My9	My 7	My10	My12	My14	My 9	My 9			My18
Purple Martin			My12			My19		My 1		
Crow	Mr22	Mr17	Mr23	Mr24	Mr24	Mr25	Mr25	Mr20		Ap 1
Catbird	My29		My23	My19	My24	My19	My21			My17
Housewren	My20	My21	My22	My15	My16	My21	My21	My24		My18
Brown Thrasher	Je 6	My20	My20	My13	My19	My15	My20			My26
Red-eyed Vireo	My27			My27		Je 3	My21			My28
Black and White Warbler ..				My20		Je 3		My 4		Je 3
Yellow Warbler	My18	My19	My18	My13	My20	My16	My19	My23	My13	My26
Myrtle Warbler	My 7	Ap29		My 1		Ap27	Ap29	My23	My13	Ap20
Ovenbird						My18				My27
Redstart		My27		My26						My28
Red-winged Blackbird	Ap20	Ap14	Ap19	Ap13	Ap15	Ap19	Ap19	Ap19		My 4
Baltimore Oriole	My21	My20	My20	My19	My20	My20	My21	My28		My20
Rose-breasted Grosbeak				My20		My22	My23	My21	My19	My24
Goldfinch	My23	My23	My25	My24	My24	My27	My22	My24		My21
Slate-colored Junco	Ap 9	Mr18	Ap 4	Ap 1	Ap 3	Ap 9	Ap13	Ap12	My 6	Ap14
Chipping Sparrow	My 9	My19		My10	My22	My28		Ap12		My12
White-crowned Sparrow	My 6	My 8	My 3	My 6	Ap26	My10	My18			My12
White-throated Sparrow		My 8	My11	My 8		My 8	My10	My 8	My 9	My11

The Co-operative Migration Study is carried out each spring all across the United States and Canada. The reports are studied in an effort to learn something of the effect of weather on migration. Last year there were reports from 20 Saskatchewan observers (Blue Jay XIII: No. 3, pp. 34-35, 1955); this year with its exceptionally late spring there were only about half that number. Perhaps this gives some measure of the effect of the weather on the bird watcher.

A Visit to the British Nature Reserve on the Farne Islands

by MARGARET BELCHER, Regina

The visitor to Great Britain is indebted to the National Trust which does a splendid work in preserving historic sites and "nature reserves." Lucy Murray and I had a fine demonstration of the Trust's work this summer when we spent a few hours on the Farne Islands off the coast of Northumberland. The Farne Islands were purchased some years ago by the Farne Island Association to prevent commercial exploitation of an area where great colonies of seabirds nest each year. In 1925, the islands were formally handed over to the National Trust and bird watchers are now posted on the islands by the Trust.

We visited the Farnes on June 14 in the nesting season, and were consequently allowed to land on only two of the islands. The twenty minutes on the first island, the Inner Farne, were all too short as we were trying to see what birds were there and to take some photographs of them. We actually overstayed our time and had to be rowed out to the fishing launch that had brought us to the island. Although we knew that our shore leave should have been cancelled, we were allowed to land again on Staple Island!

St. Cuthbert's Cove on the Inner Farne where we first landed had a large breeding colony of Arctic Tern. The birds screamed over our heads as they left their nests on the rocky shore and in the grassy meadows above us. Sandwich, Common and Roseate Terns, the watcher told us, also nest on the Farne Islands; but the Arctic Tern that we saw on the Inner Farne is the most abundant species.

On the Inner Farne we saw Shag, Kittiwakes, a few Razorbills, and our first Puffins—the Puffins perched on the rocks or swimming in great numbers on the sea below. Then, on the open ground, sheltered only by short grass, sea campion and thrift, were the nests of the famous Eider Ducks known locally as St. Cuthbert's ducks because St. Cuthbert fed them when he lived as a hermit on the Inner Farne.

Off Staple Island, the stacks known as the Pinnacles were unbelievably crowded with Guillemots. On those rocks and on the rocky ledges of Staple Island itself, the great numbers of nesting Kittiwake, Shag and Guillemot would have delighted any photographer interested in birds. Among these birds, the "bridled" form of the Common Guillemot was pointed out to us by a National Trust watcher.

The grassy hilltop of Staple Island was riddled with Puffins' burrows, and we stopped briefly to watch the birds enter and leave them. Where grass gave way to bare rocks, little Rock Pipits could be seen rising into the air and one of our party came upon a nest.

On the Wamses where we did not land, we could see the Herring and Black-billed Gulls and the Cormorants that nest there. In order to protect other seabirds from the predations of the Herring Gull, the watchers comb the islands and collect their eggs.

As we passed the Longstone, the island from which Grace Darling and her father made their heroic rescue of survivors of the shipwrecked "Forfarshire," Oyster-catchers were hunting food in the sand. These black and white waders are as conspicuous in appearance as our Avocets. We didn't see Ring-billed Plovers here (they are supposedly rather rare on the Farnes) but I had noted one previously on the Inner Farne. It was on the Longstone, too, that we saw adult and young Grey Seal sunning on the rocks and then slipping into the water at our approach.

This brief visit to the Farnes gave us the opportunity to see nesting colonies of seabirds for the most part quite unknown to us of the Canadian prairies. It was really a surprise to us to be allowed to land on the islands in nesting season. Landing permits were required, it is true, but it seemed that small parties could easily obtain them provided they respected the Trust's regulations.

Enemies in Nature

by IRSTON R. BARNES

Many natural history books, in discussing predator-prey, or food-chain relations, sometimes use a verbal shorthand, referring to predators on a species as its natural enemies. The word enemy suggests the need for a continuing critical scrutiny of our nature vocabulary, for words carry false connotations from other fields and influence both our own thinking and our ability to communicate with other people.

If the prey species is a desirable song bird or game bird, as the Bob-white, and the Cooper's Hawk is its "enemy," then those who are for the Bob-white are likely to be against the Cooper's Hawk. Thus a semantics barrier is created to a popular understanding that both the Bob-white and the Cooper's Hawk are equally good citizens of the woods-margin community.

When predators-prey or other natural interspecific relations are seen in true perspective, the enemy concept is clearly inaccurate and inappropriate. Naturalists using the enemy figure of speech mean only some other form of life which dependent in a particular way on the species in question. A robin may die of old age, starvation, disease or the strike of a hawk; yet only the last is causally designated as an enemy. Surely it is not reasonable to prefer the parasite, the maggot or the vulture to the hawk. The robin, if capable of a choice, might prefer the hawk. Nature knows no such preference, but finds opportunities in every form of life to support other life. From such interspecific relations, or food chains, come much of the infinite variety of life which we know.

The robin that eats the worm, the hawk that takes the robin, and the bobcat that sometimes surprises the hawk are not severally the enemies of their respective food supplies. Neither the robin, the hawk nor the bobcat, although it takes the life of

an individual, poses any threat to the species. The hunter takes what is readily available, and when the abundance of one food diminishes, it turns to another food or moves to other hunting grounds. In general, man is the only predator so relentless in his hunting that he extirpates or extinguishes a species.

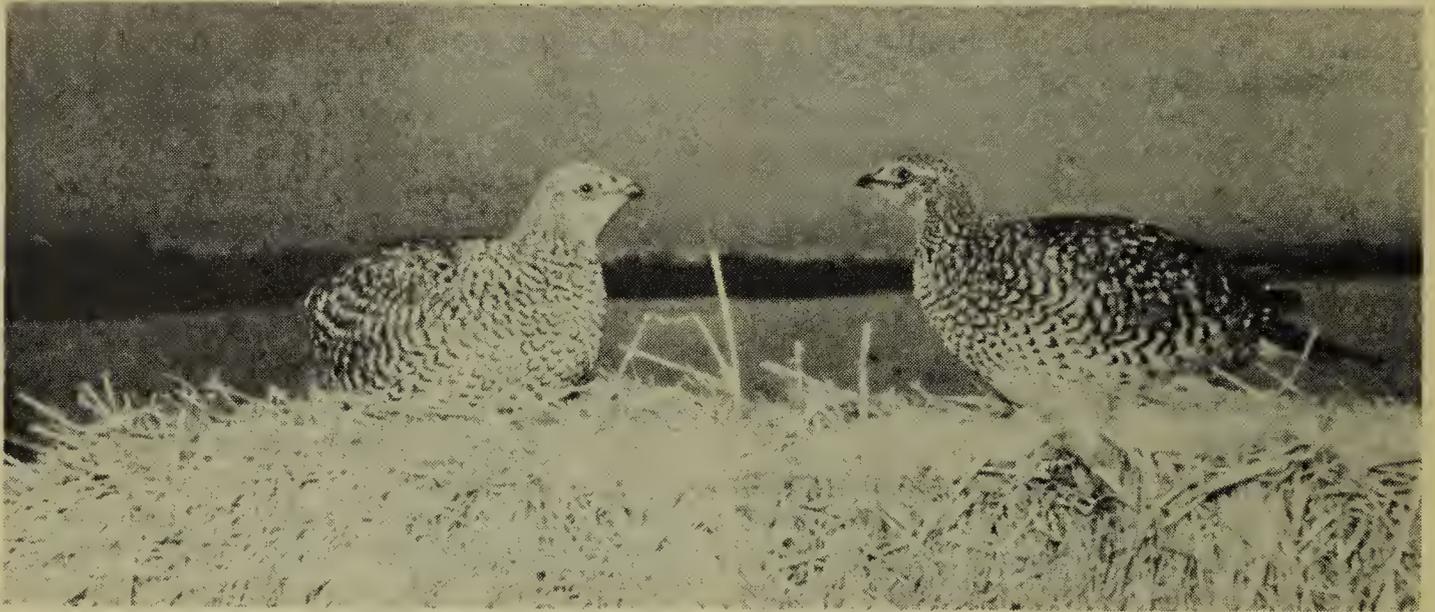
The true enemies of a species are those life forms, or inanimate forces, which destroy the essential elements of its environment or that by competition drive it from its habitat or from access to food and shelter. Sometimes an introduced species, such as the rabbit in Australia, destroys plant life and alters the nature of a habitat. Sometimes an introduced predator, the mongoose in the Caribbean Islands, finds native species that are unprepared, by powers of escape or by reproductive capacity, to withstand its attack. Sometimes introduced competitors usurp the place of the native species, as has happened with the Hawaiian birds. More often, however, it is the unchecked multiplication of a species in the absence of normal predation that creates the disastrous competition. The deer of the Kaibab Plateau were a prosperous population so long as the mountain lion and wolf preyed on them, but when the predation was removed, the explosion of numbers destroyed the food resources and wholesale starvation resulted. Robins, if unchecked, could be their own destroyers; the hawk is their protector.

Man is the great destroyer of habitats, the great force which by changing the patterns of land use, has brought some species of wildlife to extinction and opened the way for explosive expansions by others. Man is the nearly omnipotent enemy of wildlife; yet even here the word is misleading. Much of the harm that man does is unnecessary, unintentional and unwanted, but this is another subject.

(Dr. Barnes is president of the Audubon Society of the District of Columbia. This article appeared first in the November-December 1955 issue of the *Atlantic Naturalist*. We copied it from it from the June 1956 issue of the *Flicker* published by the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union. "Enemies in Nature" may be reproduced in any way so long as credit is given to the author and to the *Atlantic Naturalist*, Box 202, Benjamin Franklin Station, Washington 4, D.C.)

Notes on Hawks and Owls

by DOUG GILROY, Regina



F. W. Lahrman

Recently I was asked if we have lost much poultry to winged predators. I can truthfully reply that as far as we know we have not lost one during the past fifteen years. I am not trying to say that hawks will not take poultry and I know that the Great Horned Owl is capable of killing a full grown turkey, but I do believe that our birds of prey are only about half as black as they are painted. Game birds and poultry are taken sometimes during nesting time when the birds are slaves to the appetites of growing young.

My illustration shows two Sharp-tailed Grouse. These are part of a flock of 21 that every morning from January 1 to the end of March came to feed in a field directly beside the house. At night and during rest hours in the day they sought shelter in a strip of woods along the creek to the south and to the west. This area was also the habitat of two Great Horned Owls whose hoots and calls could be heard on almost any calm night during the winter. The point of interest is that when spring came 21 Sharp-tailed Grouse were still feeding—not one had provided a meal for *Bubo virginianus*, the Great Horned Owl.

* * *

William Anaka, Spirit Lake, Sask., in a letter to the **Blue Jay** editor tells much the same story. "This year I have located within a mile of home: two Great Horned Owl nests, and one nest of each of Cooper's Hawk,

Red-tailed Hawk and Marsh Hawk. Despite the fact that our yard is heavily wooded we have not lost one bird this year to any feathered predator."

* * *

P. L. Beckie, Bladworth, Sask. reports some predation on birds by the Swainson Hawk. While one-waying a 100-acre piece of stubble, which was close to many quarters of short-grass, hilly prairie he found many Baird, Savannah, Vesper and Clay-coloured Sparrow nests. There were also some half-grown Meadowlarks, Horned Larks and sparrows that were flying just well enough to escape the path of the machinery. While he was working this field a Swainson Hawk took the following six young birds: one Meadowlark, two Vesper Sparrows, two Savannah Sparrows and one Horned Lark. Mr. Beckie admits that there was some shortage of mice and that these young birds could not fly well. If the birds had not been disturbed just at this stage of their development the hawk would not likely have taken any.

FRONT COVER — Mr. V. Kent's picture shows a baby deer that was picked up and turned over to the Department of Natural Resources. We would like to join with wildlife management officers in urging people to refrain from touching or adopting young deer.

Saskatchewan's First Nesting Record of the Whip-Poor-Will

by MAURICE G. STREET, Nipawin, Sask.

Any person who has heard the song of the Whip-poor-will, throughout its wide breeding range, could hardly fail to recognize the oft repeated phrase, resembling its name, Whip-poor-will. However, its being a bird of the evening shadows and the darkened glades has resulted in the Whip-poor-will being more often heard than seen.

There are, in Saskatchewan, a number of reports of the Whip-poor-will being heard, but reports of its being seen seem almost entirely lacking. Mitchell (1) records a specimen collected at Winton, east of Prince Albert, July 21, 1919, and tells of others being heard at Kamsack, ley. Houston (2) states "The Whip-poor-will is now only a rare straggler." He reports the Whip-poor-will as being heard calling near Rousay Lake, 1889; at Crescent Lake, three times prior to 1900 and in the Assiniboine Valley in 1938; another was at Yorkton during the same year, and it was heard calling at Good Spirit Lake in July 1943. Ronald and Donald Hooper report one as being heard near Somme, Sask., in 1924 (3).

On or about June 11, 1956, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Nevins heard a Whip-poor-will calling near their farm home, 7 miles east and 5 miles north of Nipawin. Mrs. Nivens, being familiar with the call of the Whip-poor-will in Eastern Manitoba some years before, recognized the call at once. The bird continued to call the next few evenings, and this was reported to Billy and Walter Matthews. On the evening of June 18, the Matthews visited the area and were rewarded with hearing the Whip-poor-will, apparently at its best, calling continuously for several hours with only brief pauses.

Together with the Matthews, this writer visited the same area the next evening, June 19, arriving there shortly after 8:00 p.m. (Mountain Standard). From the Nevins' yard we heard the Whip-poor-will's first call at 8:40, which appeared to come from a Jackpine ridge some 200

yards south. We drove to this ridge, and the bird was again heard calling a short distance to the west. Walking in the direction of its call we flushed the Whip-poor-will after proceeding some 40 yards. This was the first sight (and sound) of the bird for the writer who has been a bird watcher for thirty-four years; it was a "lifetime first" also for Mr. Matthews who has watched birds for forty years in the Carrot River Valley. The distinct white areas on either side of the tail as it flew silently away in the gathering dusk proved the bird to be a male. The bird alighted a short distance away, and by walking in the direction of its call we again flushed it. This act was repeated several times, until at last we had followed the bird in almost a complete circle to the place where we had originally flushed the Whip-poor-will. After being pestered with hordes of misquitoes, we left the area at 9:45 p.m. with the bird still calling.

On June 27, Mr. Roy G. Lanz and I again visited the area. Arriving at 6:00 p.m. we walked directly to the spot where we had flushed the Whip-poor-will on June 19. We paused, then walked a few yards to the highest point of the ridge. Pausing there, we surveyed the area from our vantage point. Here seemed an ideal place for a nesting site, according to what I had read of nests found in the Eastern United States. I had taken only a few steps when a female Whip-poor-will flushed almost beneath my feet, she had been brooding two eggs, laid on a few dead leaves and pine needles. I was amazed at the ease with which the eggs could be seen on this lightly treed, gently sloping, well drained hillside. Lanz, standing fifty feet farther up the ridge, saw the female flush and could see the eggs at that distance.

The two eggs, creamy white, sparsely spotted with tawny brown, smaller than those of the Nighthawk. This nest, I believe, is the first nesting of the Whip-poor-will to be reported from Saskatchewan.

The following day photographs



were taken of the eggs and the nest-site itself. As we approached the nest on this occasion, the male was perched lengthwise on a dead fallen branch six feet from the sitting female, in plain view; but we could not see the sitting bird until she flushed—so well did she blend with the dead leaves and the shadows cast by the surrounding trees. The male left his perch exactly when the female left her nest. The female uttered low, growling notes as she left her nest, and on each occasion

left the immediate vicinity. The exact location of this Whip-poor-will nest was the extreme south east corner of 33-51-13 W2nd.

The first young hatched July 15th and the second probably hatched shortly after. The young were cinnamon in color. They were last seen July 27th at the age of 12 days about 100 feet from the original nest. At this time, well grown and almost able to fly, the fledglings were banded with U.S. Wildlife Service bird bands.

LITERATURE CITED

- H. H. MITCHELL — Catalogue of Saskatchewan Birds. *Canadian Field-Naturalist* Vol. 38; sp. No. 6, pp. 101-118, 1924.
- C. STUART HOUSTON — Birds of the Yorkton District. *Canadian Field-Naturalist*. Vol. 63; No. 6, pp. 215-241, 1949.
- RONALD and DONALD HOOPER — A preliminary list of the Birds of the Somme District, Saskatchewan. Contribution No. 3, Yorkton Natural History Society, April 1954.

Myrtle Warbler

Mr. E. M. Callin who locates each new bird first by its song writes that he has heard a Myrtle Warbler singing on the grounds of the Fort Qu'Appelle Sanatorium since late May. On June 17 he set out with two others to find its nest. The nest was found 12 feet up in a Spruce. The female was sitting very close and they watched the male carry food to her as she sat on her nest. She had five eggs. Mr. Callin thinks now that a pair of Myrtles nested on the Sanatorium grounds in 1955 and he

is interested in knowing if there are any other nesting records south of the Canadian Zone in Saskatchewan.

Miss Joyce Gunn, Spirit Lake, Saskatchewan writes that there are always lots of Myrtle Warblers seen in migration but this is the year that one pair has stayed to nest in the area. They nested in a Spruce close to the house and raised two young warblers and one Cowbird. They were still in the neighborhood on July 20, 1956.



— Sketch by F. W. Lahrman

The Snowy Egret

by WILLIAM ANAKA, Spirit Lake, Sask.

Extensive flood conditions prevail in the Spirit Lake district, covering many acres of meadow and cultivated land with shallow sloughs and meandering creeks, creating miles of shoreline which provide excellent feeding grounds for many species of shorebirds and larger waders.

On May 26, Miss Joyce Gunn reported seeing a small white heron in her yard, near the mouth of the creek draining Spirit Lake. I walked out into the nearby flooded meadow and located the bird about one hundred yards away. It flew off on my approach but landed about one quarter mile away, along the creek near a popular bluff. By a long and

careful stalk I managed to get behind the bluff and walked to within 25 yards of the bird without being seen. I had an excellent opportunity to observe its markings and habits.

The most outstanding characteristic was its pure white plumage. The long breeding plumes on neck and back were noted. The bill and legs were black. In size and general appearance it resembled a Great Blue Heron, scaled down to one third size. It was walking along in shallow water; occasionally it went into a fast shuffle with its feet. Finally spotting me it froze, giving me additional opportunity to check its markings. When it flew off it headed directly away from

me. As it stretched its legs backwards the yellow feet contrasted sharply with the dark legs, positively identifying it as a Snowy Egret.

Editor's Note: Miss Joyce Gunn writes that this bird was seen for a week (May 23-29) near their buildings. She claims that it was not as much afraid of people as the four birds which came in to feed May 24. These four varied from patchy blue to a very dark blue but they

flew at the first sight of man. Miss Gunn is positive that these were the Little Blue Heron.

These reports are confirmed, for the Snowy Egret was also seen in the Qu'Appelle Valley east of Craven. Mr. E. Fox and Mrs. A. Swanston saw its yellow feet clearly on July 9 as it stood on the roadway crossing the flooded valley. The Snowy Egret was seen several times near where the American Egret nests.

Saskatchewan's First Parula Warbler

By E. MANLEY CALLIN, Fort San, Sask.

On May 31, 1956, I was astounded to discover and have a long visit with a male Parula Warbler as it was feeding and singing steadily in a small grove of trees on the grounds of the Fort Qu'Appelle Sanatorium.

At about 11 a.m. I was walking by the grove and heard an unfamiliar song. The songster was easy to find



Photo from a Kodachrome by F. W. Lahrman



— Sketch by F. W. Lahrman

but was moving very briskly among the higher branches of the poplars and conifers, making observation very difficult. Even when it moved to the lower branches it was so active that it took some time to identify the bird. I watched the bird most of the time from 11 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. and it sang and fed steadily, working its way from one end of the grove to the other a number of times. At 1:45 it became silent and disappeared and was not seen or heard again although I returned three times to listen. I thought that it might have moved on but at 10:30 a.m. on June 1 it was heard again. I, therefore, contacted Mr. Fred Bard, Director of the Provincial Museum at Regina, and he arranged for two of his staff to come out and take a series of color pictures. The bird behaved admirably and a number of pictures verify my identification, a black and white reproduction of one of these is shown below.

After the second day the bird expanded its territory and became even more vocal. It moved through the other groves and among the private residences where it climbed over the vines and trellises, singing and affording almost arm's length views of its beautiful coloring. All day long it could be seen flitting about, examining minutely every part of the territory from the ground to the top of the tallest trees: flower beds, vines, trellises, ledges, telephone poles, telephone wires.

And all day long it would sing its unmusical but pleasing and distinctive songs. What we might call its No. 1 song: The one it rendered the most—was a dry trill rising—in pitch and increasing in tempo, then ending very suddenly in a very emphatic and buzzy note. It might

be described as follows: Chewee-chewee - chi - chi - chi - chi - zh. Song No. 2 was rendered sparingly: only once did I hear it used more than a dozen times in succession. This song was usually three buzzy notes followed by the same dry trill as in song No. 1. Song No. 2 might be described as follows: Zwee-zwee-chi - chi - chi - chi - chi.

It is difficult to imagine what brought this eastern warbler so far out of its normal range. It is a new addition to the Saskatchewan check list but on the present evidence it must be placed in the accidental category. No female was seen and nesting did not occur in this area. For eight days this beautiful male Parula Warbler graced our premises. We heard it last at 8:30 p.m. on June 7, 1956.

Say's Phoebe in Saskatchewan

By FRANK H. BRAZIER, Regina

According to P. A. Taverner (*Birds of Canada*, 1934) Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) is found in "Western North America from central Alaska and Mackenzie south to New Mexico. In Canada, east to southwestern Manitoba, where it seems to be a comparatively recent arrival." This is a bird of the arid areas of the West; hot, dry gulches, desolate mountain sides, as well as barns and outbuildings are typical haunts. One would expect it to be generally distributed throughout southern Saskatchewan prairies, but so far as I can find there is no published record of the bird's occurrence in Saskatchewan farther east than Regina, although southwestern Manitoba (Turtle Mountains) is within its range (Taverner, op. cit.).

Say's Phoebe is a 7½ inch flycatcher, with grey-brown back, slightly darker head, and dark brick or rusty ochre underparts. Look for a bird a little larger than a House Sparrow, with a black tail and yellowish or reddish belly, grey breast, and the typical habits of a flycatcher. It occurs quite commonly in Regina, and seems to be increasing here. Between the years 1947-1953 I recollect only the one pair which nested annually in our neighborhood. One arrived each April 17th for

1953, 1954 and 1955 but as it was cold and snowy that date in 1956 it did not show up until noon, April 19. In 1955 I observed 10 birds in Regina including the pair with its four young in the backyard. This year (1956) I have seen 15 individuals in widely separated areas in the south half of Regina, including the home pair with three young. Mrs. H. F. Tempel reports a pair nesting for six years in the porch at 17 Ingersoll Crescent, Regina, in spite of the four busy boys of the house. Mrs. Tempel also reports a pair nesting in the 2600 block Atkinson Street. These birds avoid the trees and rest on posts, wires or house tops.

In a recent survey Mr. and Mrs. Harry Flock (Regina), Mr. P. Laurence Beckie (Bladworth), Mr. Steve Mann (Skull Creek), and Mr. John Walker (Moose Jaw), all record *Sayornis saya*. Mr. Mann adds that while the bird still breeds commonly in his area, its numbers have gone down in recent years. Mr. Frank Baines (Saltcoats), Mrs. Ann Olson (Big River), Mr. Stuart Francis (Torch River), Mr. Maurice Street (Nipawin), Messrs. Ronald and Donald Hooper (Somme), Mr. William Niven (Sheho), Messrs. A. Wilson and W. Jasper (Struan), and W. Yanchinski (Naicam) do not re-

port *Sayornis saya* in their respective areas. These negative reports are to be expected as the latter eight points are in park and forest areas.

Mr. John Walker, in his report, adds an exciting observation: "Say's Phoebe has always been prevalent at North Portal." This is the most easterly report of a population of Say's Phoebe in Saskatchewan.

Mr. E. Manley Callin, of Fort San, writes: "My 30 years of bird watching include: 4 years at Punnichy, 4 years at Kipling, 13 years at Fort Qu'Appelle and you might say 30 years at Whitewood as I have always covered that territory to some extent even when residing elsewhere — and I do not have one record of this species." Mr. J. F. Roy (Saskatoon) advises that Say's Phoebe nests at the railway stations and houses of nearly every village of the Beechy line, the birds occurring regularly as far north as Hanley. Lucky Lake had nine breeding pairs in 1940. Mr. Ed Brooman (Prince Albert) gives an interesting report of the occurrence of Say's Phoebe at Round Lake (west of Prince Albert).

I have examined the reports of the Hooper Brothers (Birds of the Somme District), Houston (Birds of the Yorkton District), Street (Birds of Nipawin), Todd (Birds of Southern Saskatchewan), and the two reports of Godfrey (Birds of the Cypress Hills and Flotten Lake Regions) and Mitchell (Catalogue of the Birds of Saskatchewan). Say's Phoebe were not mentioned in the reports from the forest belt [Hooper, Houston, Street, Godfrey (Flotten Lake)] nor was it seen by Todd who collected with Lloyd in 1932 in the region surrounding Davidson, Last Mountain Lake east of Imperial and Elbow, Quill Lake, Touchwood Hills, and Quinn's Lake. Godfrey observed Say's Phoebe only three times in the Cypress Hills and reported it uncommon. Mitchell states that Say's Phoebe is a fairly common summer visitant in the southern part of the prairie region, "found breeding mostly in Cypress Hills district, more sparingly eastward to Regina district." Evidently Mitchell had no record of anything east of Regina.

The records of the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History contain the following: female skin, Regina; nest and eggs, Sandfly Lake; 5 eggs,

Bigstick Lake; mounted female, Regina; nest and eggs, Ravenscrag; mounted male, Old Wives Lake; and male skin, Cypress Hills. The first two records were taken by Buchanan and the last five by Mitchell. These items date between 1913 and 1921. In addition there are eleven other recorded occurrences in the Museum's books made by Bard and Mitchell from Regina, Eastend, Ravenscrag, Val Marie and Harptree. I am indebted to Dr. R. W. Nero of the Museum staff for the foregoing information as well as for a note on this bird by Wood (Preliminary Survey of the Bird Life of North Dakota, 1923) "... found only in the extreme west portions of North Dakota." This accords well with our own records.

The Say's Phoebe seems to be the replacement species for the Eastern Phoebe in western North America. During spring migration we see both birds for a short time in Regina, but the Eastern Phoebe moves on to forested areas. Readers are asked to tell us if they know of the two birds nesting in the same area. We are interested in any report of the distribution or abundance of the Say's Phoebe. We are especially interested in receiving reports from the area covered by Todd north-west of Regina and in the area east of Regina to the Manitoba border. Please report any sightings to the Editor, with description and other particulars, so that the published record may be complete.

Dr. G. F. Ledingham and Mr. J. H. Hudson noted a nesting of the Say's Phoebe at Lodge Creek (22-1-29-W3) on May 31, 1956, in a dry gully typical of the natural habitat. Such habitat, bare of cover, would be more open to predation than nests set high under the eaves of houses such as are seen in Regina. Phoebes, like other birds which nest in company with man, find increased nesting sites and more food around our homes. Under these conditions we would expect Say's Phoebe to prosper as have the Robin and the House Sparrow. During the last two years we have enjoyed the sight of 4 and 3 bob-tailed phoebes sitting in a row on the fence being fed by attentive parents. Look for these birds, and listen for the plaintive "pee-urr"; I'm sure you'll enjoy their company.

Additions to the Floral List of the Cypress Hills in Saskatchewan

By JOHN HOWARD HUDSON, Regina

During a trip to the Cypress Hills made by Dr. G. F. Ledingham and myself from May 30 to June 2, three species not earlier listed for the Hills were turned up. (Later — June 26 to 29 — I came back alone for older material.) The standard list is of course that of Breitung (1); it gives one an excellent notion of the plants one is likely to see in this region.

The new plants are:

(1) *Woodsia oregana* D. C. Eaton. Found May 31, 1956, on a dry juniper-covered slope just below the edge of the bench in the West Block, location probably S.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ 36-7-29 W 3rd. Also on June 27, on N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ 25-7-29 W 3rd. To get here, take the Fort Walsh trail south-west from Maple Creek, turn off through the Six-Mile Ranch, and climb the mountain trail up from the ranch to the edge of the bench. This *Woodsia* is a small tufted fern, when young having a most deceptive resemblance to ferns with the frond edges reflexed to cover the marginal sori. Elsewhere in Saskatchewan it occurs in the Precambrian, and has been reported from there by Fraser and Russell (4).

This *Woodsia oregana* was later seen in the Center Block on June 2, on N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ 5-8-26 W 3rd, growing with *Saxifraga rhomboidea* in and around cobblestone strips in the valley of Weaver Creek just south of the Park.

(2) *Lithophragma bulbifera* Rydb. Found in bottoms of moist springy

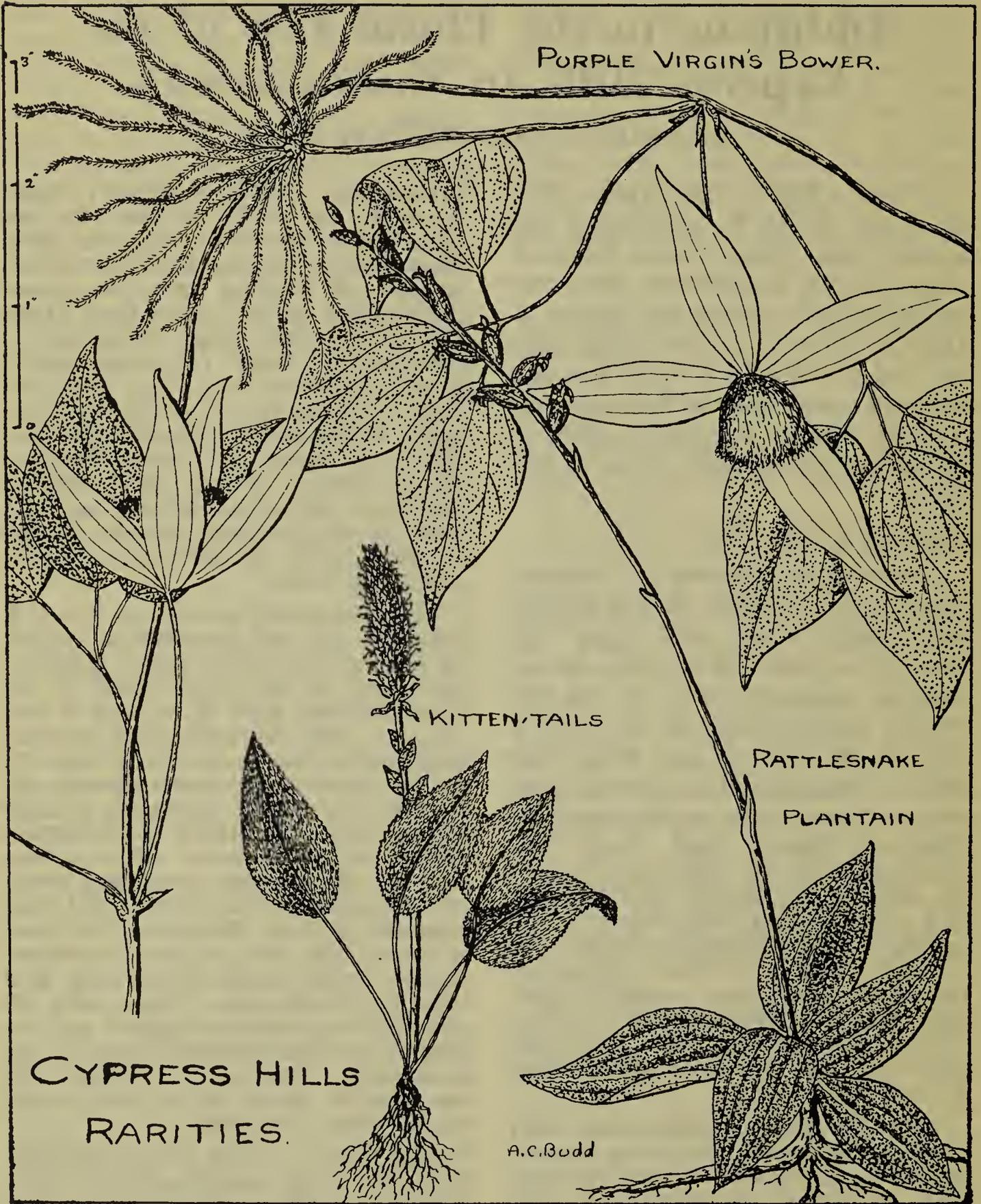
draws, side ravines of Weaver Creek in N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ 5-8-26 W 3rd. To get here, take the road from the Park Headquarters to the golf course, but instead of turning into the latter place, drive on out of the Park about $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles. This small saxifrage is described in Budd (2), who reports it as occurring on "dry hills but very uncommon . . . in the extreme south of the area." Fraser and Russell (4) report it from Robsart. These reports, which may well be based on the same collections, may refer to the southern margin of the Cypress Hills, but Breitung did not report the plant.

(3) *Lomatium montanum* Coult & Rose. Found on submontane prairie on slopes (not on the bench proper), east face of the West Block of the Cypress Hills, S.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ 36-7-29 W 3rd, May 31, 1956. Altitude 4,300 ft. Fruit collected in the same place June 27. Quite common on moist prairie. In flower this plant resembles closely our common *Musineon divaricatum*, as a dwarf carrot with yellow flowers. The celery taste and smell of all parts of our plant will distinguish it from *Musineon*. Its fruit is much like that of other members of the genus. With lateral ribs well winged, 8-10 mm. long, oval in shape. No previous reports of this plant exist for Saskatchewan to my knowledge. Davis (3) gives the range as W. Mont. to N. Idaho, south to W. Wyo. and Oreg.

Specimens will be sent to the herbarium of the Department of Agriculture in Ottawa, and to that of Dr. R. C. Russell at the Dominion Laboratory of Plant Pathology in Saskatoon. This distribution will not occur till fall, when one works over the collections of the summer.

LITERATURE CITED

- A. J. BREITUNG — A Botanical Survey of the Cypress Hills. *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*, Vol. 68, No. 2, pp. 55-92, April-June 1954.
- A. C. BUDD — Plants of the Farming and Ranching Areas of the Canadian Prairies. p. 130. Experimental Farms Service, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, 1952.
- R. J. DAVIS — Flora of Idaho. p. 515. Wm. C. Brown & Co., Dubuque, Iowa, 1952.
- W. P. FRASER and R. C. RUSSELL — An annotated List of the Plants of Saskatchewan. 3rd edition. University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1954.



Some Cypress Hills Floral Rarities

ARCHIE BUDD, Swift Current, Sask.

In view of the suggestion that next year's summer meeting be in the Cypress Hills, probably Saskatchewan's outstanding botanical area, a few articles on exceptional plants of that district may not be out of place. There are at least twenty plants found in the Cypress Hills which are not reported else-

where in the Province and this short series of articles will deal with some of these.

Shaded areas in the pine woods are the locations where we find the Rattlesnake Plantain, *Goodyera decipiens* (Hook.) Hubbard, an orchid, not a plantain, easily distinguished by its basal rosette of fleshy, dark

green leaves, generally of a pinkish tinge below, and bearing a whitish line down the mid-rib above or mottled with white. The greenish-white flowers are borne on a scape from 8 to 15 inches high and are about five sixteenths of an inch in length. This orchid is plentiful in the mountains and foothills region and also ranges right across the continent, but apparently its only location in Saskatchewan is our Cypress Hills. Other scientific names for this species are *Goodyera oblongifolia* Raf., *Goodyera Menziesii* Lindl. and *Paramium decipiens* Piper.

Climbing and trailing over trees and underbrush in the pine and poplar woodlands the Purple Virgin's Bower is frequently found. Its rather untidy looking stems are shreddy barked and it bears opposite leaves, divided into three leaflets with stalks. The large, pale blue flowers are very showy, being from two to four inches across, with no petals but four, or occasionally five, petal-like sepals. The centre is a golden mass of stamens, staminodia or sterile stamens and thread-like styles, which after fertilization develop into fruit, each bearing a long hairy style and forming a dense globular grayish head. These plants climb by means of their leaf stalks. This climber is found through the Rockies and foothills regions and the dry intermountain region east of the Cascades, but the Cypress Hills appears to be its only location in Saskatchewan. Scientifically it is termed *Clematis columbiana* (Nutt) Torr. & Gray, but has also been listed as *Atragene columbiana* Nutt.

and as *Clematis verticillaris* DC. var. *columbiana* A. Gray, being by Asa Gray considered a variety of that eastern species.

The third plant in the sketch is a member of the Scrophulariaceae or the Snapdragon family, and is the Kitten-tails, *Besseya wyomingensis* (A. Nels.) Rydb. or *Besseya rubra* (Dougl.) Rydb. or *Synthyris wyomingensis* (A. Nels.) Raf. or even *Wulfenia rubra* Greene. "In a multitude of counsellors there is much wisdom" in spite of the fact that "too many cooks spoil the broth," so choose which name you like the best. This montane and foothills plant is by no means common in the Cypress Hills but may be found on the fescue prairie bench of the West Block. Its spike of fuzzy inflorescence and fruit give it the common name; the small purplish flowers have no petals but each has two protruding stamens. The flowering scapes are from four to twelve inches high with small, stalkless stem leaves, and several long-stalked basal leaves, generally reddish tinged. The West Block of the Cypress Hills appears to be our only Saskatchewan locality for this interesting plant.

It is to be hoped that this series of articles on our Cypress Hills unique flora will not lead to the despoiling of the plants but rather to a pride in the preservation of these species and their retention in our native vegetation. We, as nature lovers and students, should lead in the protection of our floral treasures especially in these days when vandalism seems so prevalent in most of the National Parks, both in Canada and the U.S.A.

Familiar Wild Flowers

By B. De Vries, Fort Qu'Appelle

No. 3 ROSES

Roses are one of our most beloved summer flowers. The large showy flowers make a colorful display along our country roads and woodland borders. Roses are cosmopolitan, seed-bearing plants whose species are difficult to distinguish.

The flower axis expands into an urn-shaped receptacle which in time becomes fleshy and encloses in its cavity the numerous fruit carpels.

From the edge of this urn or "hip" arise the five sepals and five petals and the numerous stamens. The hairy carpels, each containing one seed, are hidden within the "hip" which becomes fleshy and brightly coloured. These fruits remain attached to the bushes and add much to the beauty of our autumn and winter scenery, providing food for our winter birds.

TWO ORCHIDS—Hardly Suitable for a Corsage

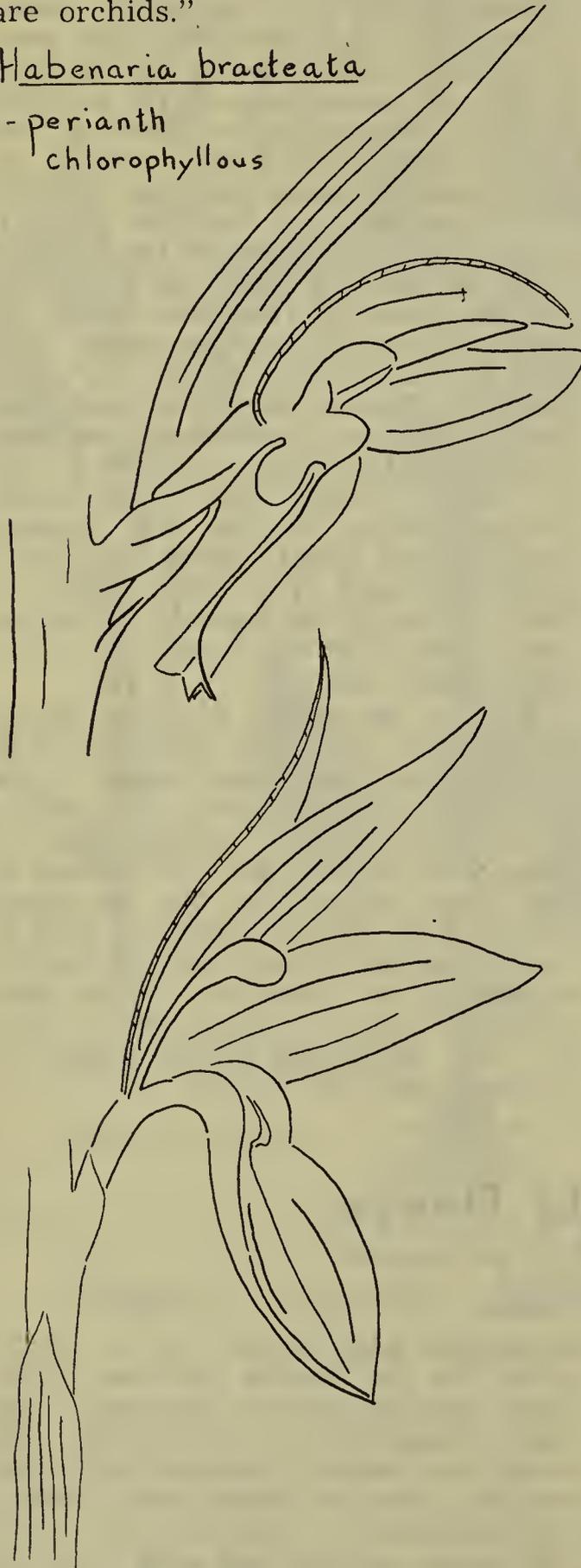
By R. B. WILLEMS, Lockwood, Sask.

"Look at the weeds he brought Mrs. Willems this time."

"Madam, those flowers in the vase are orchids."

Habenaria bracteata

- perianth
chlorophyllous



Corallorhiza striata

-destitute of chlorophyll

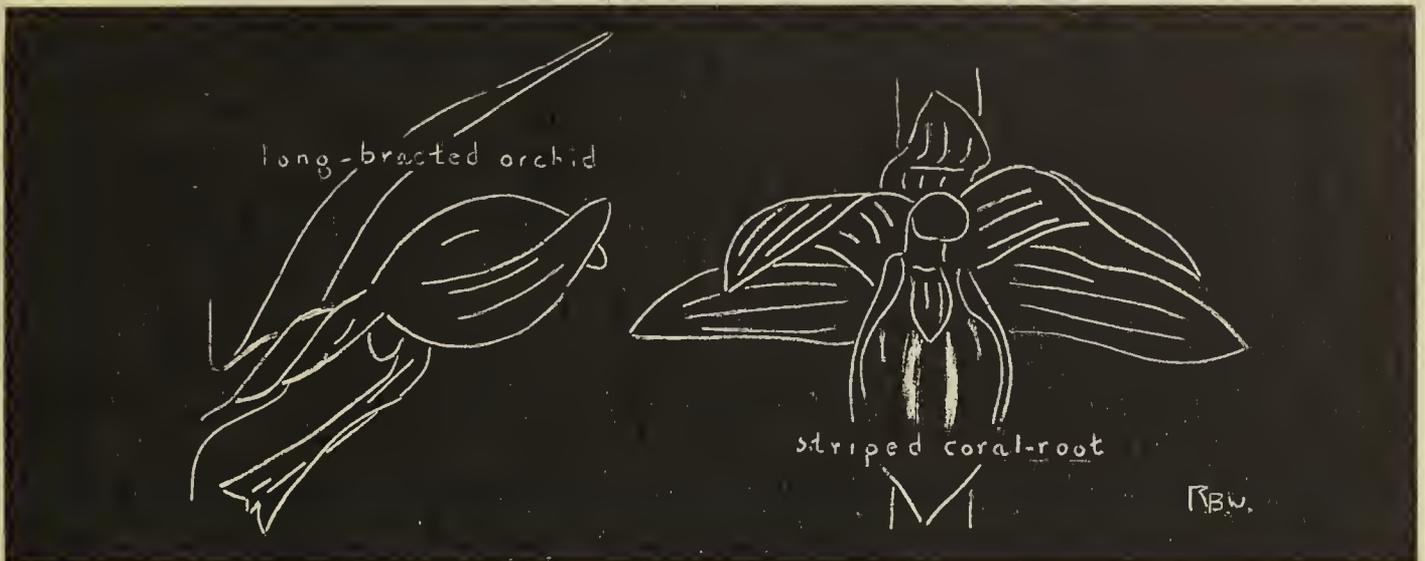
"Orchids!"

Incredulous at first, our friend who had dropped in for tea let me introduce her to the long-bracted orchids I had brought home to photograph. The word *orchid* conjures up in most minds exotic blossoms available only at florists for those special corsages. It is therefore no wonder that anyone would be surprised to learn that we have many wild orchids growing in Saskatchewan, some of them quite plain in appearance.

The long-bracted orchid, not uncommon at Edenwold, is found in open woods. It is a plant that is easily overlooked, because it may be obscured by taller neighbors, it grows from six inches to two feet tall. Early in the spring last year, I noticed the shining parallel-veined leaves that stretched upward and outward on opposite sides of the stem. When I returned in June to look for the blossoms, the top of every plant had been singled out and grazed off, presumably by deer. I finally located some plants in a different location.

The leafy plant stem bears a spike three to five inches long of light green flowers. A close look at the complex flower structure will reveal a number of interesting features. A bract subtends each flower giving this orchid its name, long-bracted orchid. In *Habenaria bracteata*, the bracts are two to four times as long as the flowers. The flower has three sepals, forming the hood, two narrow petals and a lip. The semi-transparent sac-shaped spur is the latest for nectar-seeking insects. These parts all appear to come from the top of the ovary which, as in all orchids, shows the intriguing 180 degree twist. Although it is true that the long-bracted orchid is not in the least prepossessing and is hardly suitable for a corsage, nevertheless it is an orchid — and should never be called a weed!

Once in a while you come across a plant that, generally speaking, is rather rare. I was very much surprised when I came across a coral-



root in a poplar grove. The coral-root, too, is an orchid. Except for its purplish-red color this otherwise cold and clammy plant is the ghoul of the woodlands. Green is the emblem of the plant kingdom, representing the chlorophyll in plants which enables them to make their own food. In contrast to the long-bracted orchid, the coral-root is destitute of chlorophyll. Since it has no chlorophyll with which to make its own food, it has to subsist on the humus and other organic debris of plant life found in the rich woods. Its short, thick, knobby roots in clumps like coral give the plant its common name, coral-root.

The striped coral-root, *Corallorhiza striata*, grows from eight to twenty inches high. The leaves are

greatly reduced and are in the form of small sheathing scales. Their succulent scapes or stems are yellowish, tinged with purple or magenta. You may recognize this rare and local species with its sepals and petals conspicuously striate-veined with three madder-purple veins.

It was a fitting climax to the annual summer outing at Madge Lake this year that a number of the Natural History group should have the rare luck to find the coral-root. To me this beautiful flower, belonging to one of the most highly specialized plant groups, brought to mind a quotation from one of our science textbooks:

"O Painter of the fruits and flowers,
We thank Thee for Thy wise design."

SASKATCHEWAN NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

ANNUAL MEETING

October 26 and 27, 1956

in Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, Regina

The Annual Meeting will begin at 8 Friday evening with an executive meeting. The Saturday morning session will consist of reports by various officers of the Society. The afternoon session will conclude with the resolutions and the election of officers. During both morning and afternoon, short papers will be given and kodachromes will be shown by members. The main address of the evening will be by Dr. Douglas Leechman, Director of Western Canadiana, Calgary, Alberta. He will speak on "First Trails Through the Yukon."

Suggestions for the nominations committee should go to Dr. S. Houston, Box 279, Yorkton. Resolutions must be in the hands of Dr. R. Bremner, 725 University Drive not later than October 15, 1956.

Members planning to attend the Annual Meeting are requested to bring 10 kodachromes or some other item of interest. Write to "The Blue Jay," 2335 Athol Street, Regina; for program details.

NATURE'S SCHOOLHOUSE

Editor's Note:

The judges take pleasure in awarding a prize to Miss Fay Johnsen, Grade VIII, Everton School, Archerwill, Sask. Her story plainly shows not only that she has learned her nature lessons well, but also that Everton School is in many ways a true "nature schoolhouse." Thank you, Fay, for telling us how to attract birds to the school and how to appreciate them.

In addition to the story from Fay Johnsen I have received eight other stories from students. I am very sorry that we cannot print all of them and give a prize for each. They are all good and the judges found it difficult to make a selection of one best story. Gail Bernard, age 8, Grade 3, Abbott School, wrote about Petunia. Valerie Johnson, Sturgis, tells about the nest and young of the Coot. John Evans of Vermilion, Alberta, describes Avocets and their nests. Kathleen O'Drowski, Prince George, B.C., tells of a Black Bear that prowled in the night. Joyanne Polson watches the development of a family of Barn Swallows. Sheila Mess studies tadpoles. Audrey Roberts and George Mess describe the nesting of a Robin and a House Wren.

The last four young people all go to Cut Arm School, Bredenbury. Their teacher writes that all of her pupils are interested in nature and in the **Blue Jay** and that she is extremely grateful to the Yorkton School Unit which provides each school in the unit with a subscription to the **Blue Jay**.

The student writing the best story each issue wins one of the valuable Field Guides (birds, butterflies, mammals, or flowers). The story should not contain more than 500 words. Sketches in black ink on separate pieces of paper may be sent in to illustrate your story. If you do not have a story ready for the next issue, write and tell us what you would like to see in our Nature's Schoolhouse or send us a pen and ink sketch of your favorite bird or animal. Stories for the next issue should be sent in to the Editor of the **Blue Jay**, 2335 Athol St., Regina, not later than October 15, 1956.

Prize Winning Story:

THE EVERTON SCHOOL BIRD SANCTUARY

By Fay Johnsen, Archerwill, Sask.

Quite a few years ago, the pupils and teacher of Everton School started improving the school grounds. They planted small spruce trees all around the edge of the school grounds. In front of the school we now have a nice spruce hedge with a trellis in the center. We are planning on planting vines over the trellis this summer. In each side of the hedge we have a bird bath.

All along the front fence we have bird-houses. A pair of bluebirds come and nest in one of the houses every year. Many other kinds come, too; for example, we have wrens, different kinds of sparrows, and Barn Swallows. Last summer we had a pair of Tree Swallows nest in one bird house. They were so tame that we could get up to within two and a half feet from them.

We are very proud of the little phoebes that come every year and make their nest inside the school porch. They have two sets of eggs each year and when the little birds hatch out, all the pupils like to sit in the school and watch them.

Honourable Mention:

PETUNIA

By Gail Bernard, Trossachs, Sask.

My brothers and I were driving past a granary. We saw a lot of little skunks. Then one of my brothers went and got a pail. He put the pail over a little skunk. Another one of my brothers picked up a skunk and got sprayed. Then I ran and got Mom. She got the skunk that was under the pail and took it to the house. It didn't smell a bit.

We put our skunk in a box and called him Petunia. We fed him bread soaked in milk. He drank like a cat. He was soon tame and we played with him like a kitten. He followed us all around and was glad to see us when we got home, he made a squeaky noise. At night he slept with the kittens. One night Dad put him in the cellar. In the morning he was gone.

Morels for Dinner

By RAY PETERSON, Tofield, Alberta

A bright, warm day in late May, two small, excited sons for company and time to spare for a walk in the woods — a perfect formula for an enjoyable time.

"What's the pail for, Daddy?" Michael asked, as we started off.

"Morels," I said. "Mmmmm, I can almost taste them, already."

"Look!" Colin said, pointing with excitement. "Yellow butterflies. One, two, three, six, ten," and the enthusiasm of a three year old, minus the bothersome restraints of accuracy, led him to an impressive total.

"There's four," Michael said, stoutly asserting his two-year seniority. "And they are called Yellow-tails."

"Swallow-tails," I corrected gently.

We crossed a meadow that had been flooded last year and was now dry. A densely-piled carpet of bluegrass, soft and springy underfoot, was taking hold again. On a south slope above the meadow a line of white poplar trees showed tops that were bare of leaves, some of them nearly halfway down. The brown, dead buds gave stark evidence of the damage that the spring's vicious lapse into winter had done.

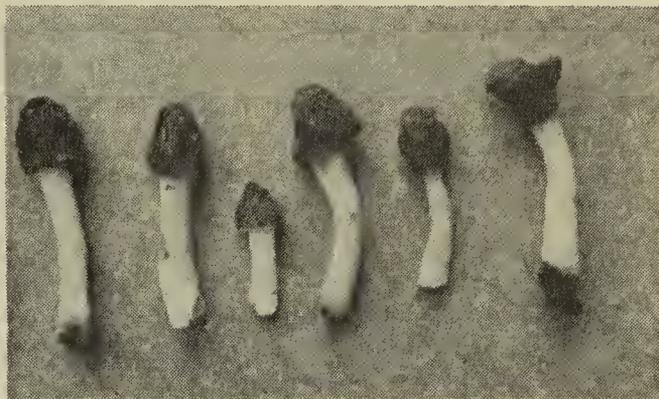
Huge, black ground beetles seemed to be scurrying everywhere. Michael jumped and yelled as an extra big fellow crawled over his shoe.

"There is not anything to be nervous about," I assured him. "See! the beetle is afraid of you and it is trying to hide under that pile of dead leaves."

"Oh!" Michael said, his fear suddenly gone.

Our search of lightly-wooded slopes which were usually good morel grounds gave us no reward. The intense dry weather that had followed the spring's sudden, dramatic runoff, was responsible. We shifted to moister ground at the base of a long, heavily-timbered slope. There, on the borderline where slough and trees met, we found our morels.

Long-stemmed morels, many of them too old to use for food, were growing around willow clumps and into the slough itself. A bit further



LONG-STEMMED MOREL

on in the woods were the pointed, grooved heads of cone-shaped morels, our favorite mushrooms. The boys, once they became accustomed to spotting the morels, were quick pickers. Soon, the pail was full. So too, at our expense, were many of the mosquitoes that zoomed up from the deep shade in humming squadrons.

We turned for home. I showed the boys a Mallard's nest. It was built in a Magpie nest, about eight feet from the ground, and was the first one that I had ever discovered in a tree.

From a tree top, a brilliantly-clad minstrel, an oriole, whistled a lilting call, and a pair of crows flew lazily by. Just back from the South, a Catbird murmured a plaintive cry; and a chipmunk shittered mischievously as he scampered over an old brushpile.

"Whoa! Daddy," Colin cried. "Michael and I want to pick some flowers for Mummy." Soon, each of them had a bouquet of dandelions, white violets, and everlastings. What matter if many of the flowers were a bit bent and bedraggled! Mummy would be thrilled with their blossoms.

We trudged up the last hill towards home, a man and two tired, but happy children, with a pail of morels and some wild flowers. This was an outing I would always remember for I had caught a glimpse of Nature as seen through the eyes of two small boys as well as through my own. And if this hike had helped to further their love for Nature, then this day had a touch of greatness, too.

Mammal Notes

KANGAROO RAT: Mr. R. R. Carleton, Ravenscrag, writing to the Museum on August 2, 1956, describes this animal. "About two weeks ago, in a big coulee about two miles southwest of Ravenscrag, I saw an animal resembling an overgrown mouse with a very long tail and large hindlegs. It leaped, as a frog does, making jumps up to four feet long. It stopped with its head buried in the grass and I had a good look at the back and tail. The tail, slim and tapering, almost white below, mouse-coloured above, was about eight or ten inches long, and quivered like a delicate instrument. The back was glossy-looking . . . and the sides were slightly lighter in colour than the back. I tried to catch it but its leaps were very erratic and well calculated for escape. The body on the animal was probably about five inches long, or a little less, the front end being much less pronounced than the rear." This description agrees well with Dr. Nero's (*Blue Jay*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, March 1956).

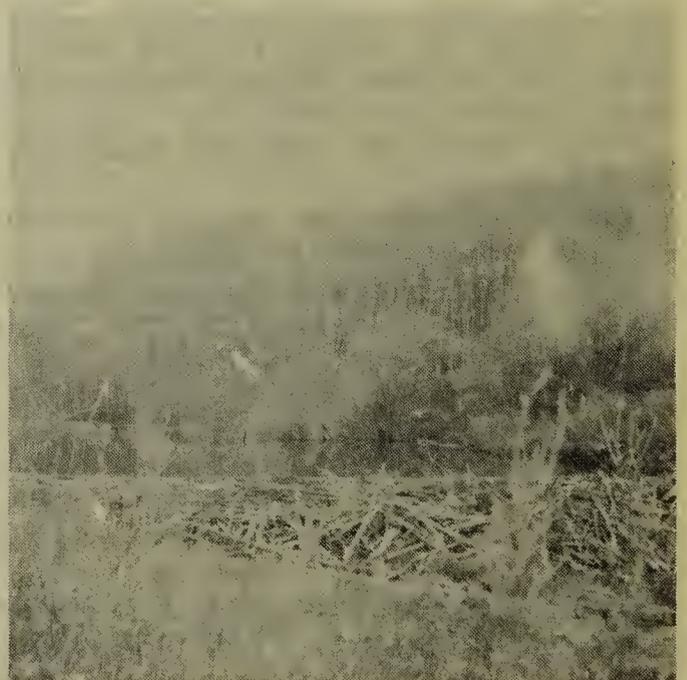
SKUNK RAKING HAY: Mr. C. T. Helstrom, Gray tells the following story: "I was considerably amused last week (May 30th) to look out of my house window and see a skunk going through the strangest motions for a skunk. It was making short runs forward through the grass where there was some dry hay from last year; then it would back up dragging its front legs like a rake, and making a small roll of hay follow along under its body. The wind was blowing strongly on that side of the house. When the skunk left the roll of hay the wind would blow it about. The skunk would go back to it and rescue it, and then go about raking feverishly for some more hay. Finally the skunk backed up to the nearby granary and pulled the rolls of hay under. It looks as if I am going to have a star boarder for the summer."

BEAVER: Mr. P. L. Beckie, Bladworth writes of the first beaver dam to be built in his area. "On Sunday May 20, 1956 we drove out to the

Community pasture to see for ourselves the beaver dam built in a creek that flows through a ravine into the Arm River. We found their winter quarters a large mound of mud, sticks, built against a bank in deep water amongst willow and badger brush. I imagine these quarters were well covered with snow during the winter, for there was still some snow on the hillside. Besides the main dam the beaver have built two smaller ones closer to the Arm River. The accompanying snaps show the dam and the surrounding country which is excellent habitat for Baird, Vesper, Lark, Clay-coloured, and Savannah Sparrows."



ARM RIVER AREA



BEAVER HOUSE

Peaceful Acres

By ELIZABETH CRUICKSHANK, Regina

We have become the proud possessors of a cabin in just the kind of situation we have always longed for: a little meadow bordered on two sides by the heavily treed river, with hills all around.

From a crack in the wood-shed, wrens flit constantly to satisfy the enormous appetites of their noisy quints. Goldfinches fly in a happy mood, taking time out to perform their gay aerial dance as they visit thistle and dandelion and slake their thirst in spoon-size pools of morning dew. Doves croon their mournful dirge to a pair of babies as they wobble around in their loose twig nest. Robins, Clay and Song Sparrows, thrushes and kingbirds share the same tangle, while Meadowlarks in the grass are neighbor to the little Spotted Sandpipers.

Screech Owls do not screech we found out; they gurgle in the early morning, after a successful hunting foray in the farmyard across the river or our meadow, where toads are plentiful. Tree, Barn and Bank Swallows, Kingbirds and Night-hawks do their duty in the mosquito war, but there always seem to be armies left.

From our kitchen window we were thrilled to see a pair of Black-billed Cuckoos gliding gracefully as they captured caterpillars, showing particular fondness for the really fuzzy ones. Their nest looks like a hit-and-miss affair, just a platform of twigs where the quill-covered twins seem very early able to take care of their own needs. Great Blue Herons always call for shouts from the children. They fly low as they visit the slough up river. Six Flickers, from a hollow tree near the road, gave us a sight to remember as the whole family dug for ants in a sandy mound by the dyke. Pelicans, ducks and hawks sail the skyways at all hours. Crows fly purposefully or perch to worry the Yellow Warblers or Catbirds who thought they had hidden their precious families from sight.

How very fortunate we are, we think, as we watch the slanting sun glinting on little blonde heads, while the wee girls examine the cradles



Sketch by M. Lawrence

PEACEFUL ACRES

in the stinkweed pods where the tiny seeds sleep until they ripen to mahogany red.

Peaceful acres, our very own!

HOW TO REMOVE PORCUPINE QUILLS

Mr. A. Baltz, Georgetown, B.C., writes that some time ago a fisherman told him that his small dog nearly died after "dequilling." The *Blue Jay* (Vol. XIII, No. 1) describes an "Adventure with a Porcupine" in which the quills are yanked from the dog with pliers. Neither of these accounts mentioned a fact which allows the quills to be removed without pain. Before using the pliers, cut off the porcupine quills with sharp scissors, leaving only enough quill to be caught by the pliers. When the quill is cut, the air is released, and the barb loses its grip. Then the quill can be pulled out easily.

BACK COVER—Mrs. M. E. Robinson's picture of the Mute Swan family on the banks of Wascana Creek in Regina won first prize in the nature photography section at Regina Exhibition.

MADGE LAKE MEETING, June 9 and 10, 1956

By MRS. MARGUERITE E. ROBINSON, Regina

Naturalists who attended the Saskatchewan Natural History Society's annual outing at Madge Lake will remember it as the highlight of 1956. Over sixty people from about twenty points in Saskatchewan and Manitoba enjoyed meeting new naturalist friends, renewing old acquaintances and sharing each other's observations.

Saturday morning the bird enthusiasts gathered at the water front for the boat tours. With heavy boots, binoculars, bird books, check lists and mosquito lotion they set off, and they returned with big appetites and long bird lists. The rest of the group dispersed to go birding on land, to seek plants, or to do some photography or painting. The flower group reported magnificent marsh marigolds, wild orchids and large ferns among their interesting discoveries. The photographers found the White Birch irresistible.

The afternoon tour in cars was led by Mr. Baker, Conservation Officer, in a jeep (by far the most suitable transportation for the park trails which were explored). Mr. Baker discussed the varieties of trees in the park and pointed out their special characteristics.

Saturday evening climaxed a satisfying day for all when Doug

Gilroy thrilled "birders" and photographers with superb colored slides of bird family life. Mr. Ralph Stueck showed his Jubilee film of Saskatchewan. Mr. Jack Shaver showed a wildlife film. Mr. Fred Bard was chairman of this meeting and we are grateful for the wonderful way these men organized our activities for us. We were pleased to have Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Lawrence with us. As editor of "Chickadee Notes" in the Winnipeg Free Press from 1921 to 1954 Mr. Lawrence has perhaps done more to popularize bird study than any other man in Western Canada. His column was recognized as one of the most interesting and widely read newspaper nature columns on the continent.

Sunday morning Doug Gilroy gave a demonstration of the photographic methods he uses in securing close-up bird pictures. Mr. Crossley from Gilbert Plains, Manitoba, exhibited a collection of Canadian stones; Mr. Fred Robinson spoke briefly on the hobby of collecting and cutting stones. After examining the beautiful ornamental pieces displayed, a number of people were observed to have a speculative gleam in the eye as they considered a fascinating new hobby.



—Photo by F. W. Lahrman

PREPARING FOR THE BOAT TRIPS AT MADGE LAKE

Anyone without a camera, light meter, binoculars or other equipment hanging from his neck appeared to be underdressed. Movie cameras clicked while self-conscious naturalists walked or smiled as directed. A nesting Ruffed Grouse was a most co-operative subject for movie and still cameras. Mrs. L. Lamont, Regina, painted a water color picture which was exhibited Saturday evening.

Memories of soft colors, bird songs, bird nests, inquisitive squirrels and good fellowship will linger with us and lure us to the summer meeting again next year in the lovely Cypress Hills.

Registration at Madge Lake

by W. YANCHINSKI,
President of S.N.H.S.

Since Madge Lake is close to the Manitoba border it was easier for people to come from that province and we were pleased to welcome the following: W. Crossley, Grandview; J. Cason and T. H. Dutton, Gilbert Plains; Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Lawrence, Winnipeg.

The following registered from Regina: F. Brazier, R. W. Nero, Mr. and Mrs. B. Knox, Mr. and Mrs. G. Ledingham, Miss M. Robertson, Miss T. Brady, Miss G. Murray, Miss A. Derby, Mrs. Willers, Mr. and Mrs. D. Gilroy, Mr. and Mrs. F. Robinson, F. Lahrman, F. Bard, Mrs. L. Lamont, Miss E. Colbeck, Miss S. Harrison, Mr. and Mrs. L. McK. Robinson, Miss P. Guest, J. Shaver, A. E. N. Swanston, B. McCorquadale.

From other Saskatchewan points came: Mr. and Mrs. C. Shaw, Dr. and Mrs. S. Houston, A. Gellert, of Yorkton; Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Hogg, Mr. and Mrs. J. Shadick, B. Pravda, F. Roy, Dr. R. Bremner, of Saskatoon; W. Anaka, Mrs. M. P. Gunn, M. Zaharia, Donna Anaka, Nena Skurat, of Spirit Lake; W. Yanchinski, of Naicam; E. M. Callin, Dr. Fyfe, of Fort San; Mr. and Mrs. W. Shevkenek, Sturgis; R. Stueck, Abernethy; Mr. and Mrs. and E. Gale, Melfort; Miss M. Floyd, Kamsack; Miss M. Krell, Stoughton; E. Baines, Mr. and Mrs. VanBlaricombe, Tisdale; R. Willems, Edenwold; Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Rankin, of Moose Jaw. Among our guests were: Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Palmer, Miss Phillips and Mrs. Rongve.

List of Birds Recorded at Madge Lake, June 9, 10, 1956

by S.N.H.S. Members

The following list of birds was recorded by observers at the summer meeting held at Madge Lake. The birds in *italics* were not included in the list found by the museum party in the area May 15-June 22, 1951 (See Blue Jay, June, 1956).

Birds recorded: Common Loon, Holboell's Grebe, *Horned Grebe*, *Double-Crested Cormorant*, Great Blue Heron, American Bittern, Mallard Duck, Baldpate, Blue-winged Teal, *Redhead Duck*, Lesser Scaup, American Gold-eye, Bufflehead, White-winged Scoter, American Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Goshawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Buteo, Marsh Harrier, Ruffed Grouse, Sora Rail (heard), Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe (heard), Spotted Sandpiper, *Solitary Sandpiper*, Ring-billed Gull, Franklin's Gull, Common Tern, Black Tern, Mourning Dove, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Pileated Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, *Western (Arkansas) Kingbird*, Eastern Phoebe, Crested Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Wood Pewee, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, Crow, Black-capped Chickadee (heard), Brown-capped Chickadee, *White-breasted Nuthatch*, House Wren, Catbird, Eastern Robin, Olive-backed Thrush, *Gray-checked Thrush*, Wilson's Thrush (heard), Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, Blue-headed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Black and White Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Ovenbird, Water-thrush, *Connecticut Warbler* (?), Mourning Warbler, Yellow-throat, Redstart, English Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Baltimore Oriole, Bronzed Grackle, *Cowbird*, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Goldfinch, Slate-colored Junco, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow (heard), Song Sparrow. A grand total of 93 birds.

Spade and Screen

By FRED ROBINSON, Regina

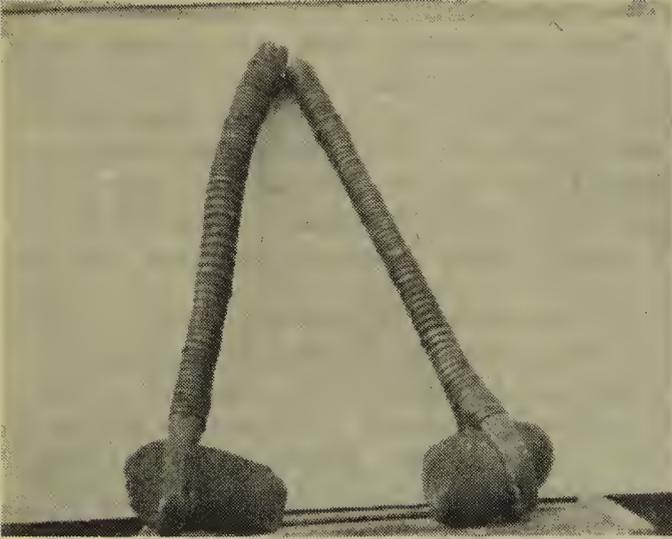


Photo by Mrs. M. E. Robinson
PEMMICAN HAMMERS

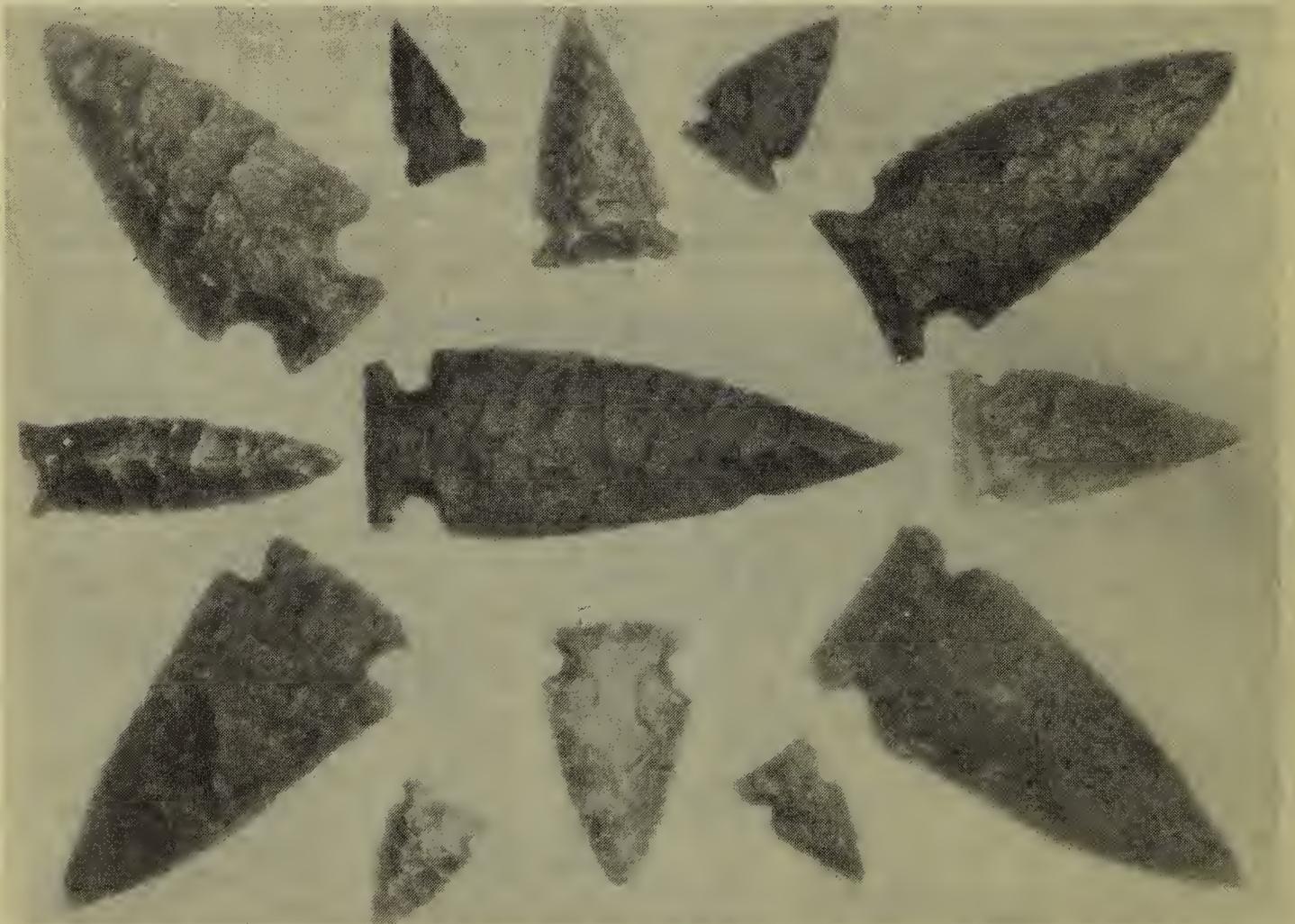
One of the most common Stone Age relics in Western Canada is the Pemmican Hammer. These have been found by almost every Farmer as the prairie lands have been brought under cultivation. Since

they are never found with any portion of wooden and rawhide handles attached, the question is often asked, "What were the handles like?" The illustration on this page, sent in by Mr. Thos. Dutton of Gilbert Plains, Manitoba, show that it was a simple matter to place handles on the stone ax or the tomahawk or any of the types of hammers. Green willow, split and bent around the stone and then wrapped with thong and sinew when dry, would shrink to become a tight and strong handle.

CONTRIBUTIONS for SPADE AND SCREEN

may be sent direct to

FRED S. ROBINSON
2100 York St., Regina



We illustrate the above fine group of arrowheads to remind each of you who is interested in Archaeology, to be sure and bring a few specimens with you when you attend our Annual meeting in October. Bring your latest find and your best material. A Collector likes to be able to say, "I've got a better one at home."

Notes of Interest

MOCKINGBIRD: Mrs. F. A. Wilson, Struan, Sask., writes: "We had what we feel sure was a Mockingbird with us for a few hours on Sunday, May 20. It delighted us with the most amazing repertoire of bird songs. It imitated robin, killdeer, duck, crow, song sparrow, meadowlark, and blackbird. It sat on the highest part of a tall poplar near the house and entertained me for quite a time. I called my husband, and he was as delighted as I at the beautiful performance. It flew away and returned in about two minutes just as an artist does when being encored. It seemed to enjoy having an audience." Mrs. E. Cruickshank and Mrs. M. Lawrence have reported seeing and hearing a Mockingbird in the grove of trees behind the Parliament Buildings on June 12, 13, 15 and 17, 1956.

1956 BIRD BANDING: Stuart and Mary Houston, Yorkton, report a very successful holiday at Quill Lake, Dore Lake, Redberry Lake and Last Mountain Lake. "Between July 1st and 16th, we banded 2,755 individuals of 16 species as follows: Ring-billed Gull, 1392; Double-crested Cormorant, 671; White Pelican, 330; Common Tern, 170; California Gull, 125; Black-crowned Night Heron, 21; Caspian Tern, 11; White-winged Scoter, 8; Barn Swallow, 4; American Bittern, 4; Cooper's Hawk, 3; Swainson's Hawk, 3; Willet, 3; Mallard, 1; Spotted Sandpiper, 1. On three occasions, we exhausted our supplies of certain sizes of bands, otherwise our total would have been higher. Our all-time total of birds banded is now over the 10,000 mark. The Caspian Terns at Dore Lake apparently constitute the first nesting record of this species for Saskatchewan, and extend its breeding range considerably westward. We hope to have pictures of the young Caspian Terns for the next issue of the **Blue Jay**."

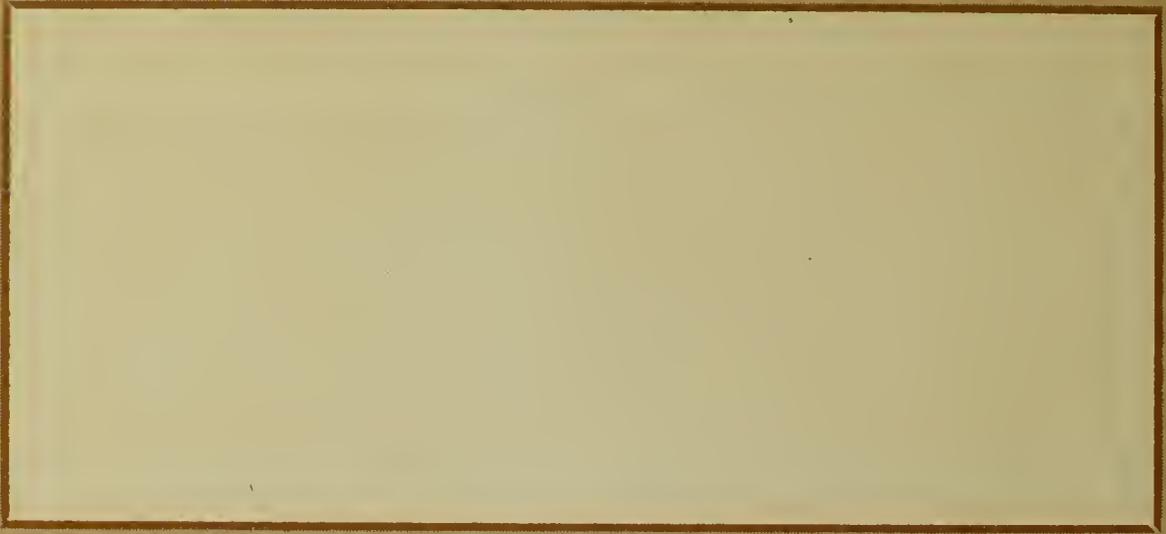
WILSON'S THRUSH: Mr. E. M. Callin, Fort San, Sask., writes: "On June 12th I saw an unusual nesting place of the Wilson's Thrush. Mr. Dunk, druggist at Fort Qu'Appelle (former director of the Museum), reported a bird nesting at his boat house on Echo Lake. Some boards had been leaned against the boat house, a man's low over-rubber had become lodged upon the boards and the Thrush chose to nest in the rubber. The nest is only about two feet above the ground with no cover at all. Unfortunately, the Thrush suffered the consequence of choosing such a vulnerable location. At 8 p.m. on June 18th the nest contained four young Thrushes and all was well. At 11 p.m. the nest was empty and all that was to be seen was one young bird lying dead on the ground below the nest."

THE FEATHERED GRASSHOPPER: Stuart Jordan, Regina, writes: "I watched a constantly beeping immature Goldfinch alight on a step railing. 'Poor little lost one!' I thought, and turned back to nasturtium insecticiding. The first light touch on my bare back was disregarded. As the sensation became that of an Arthropod gaining traction, I slapped the region viciously. Cheeping vociferously the innocent Goldfinch flew away, uninjured by Operation Grasshopper."

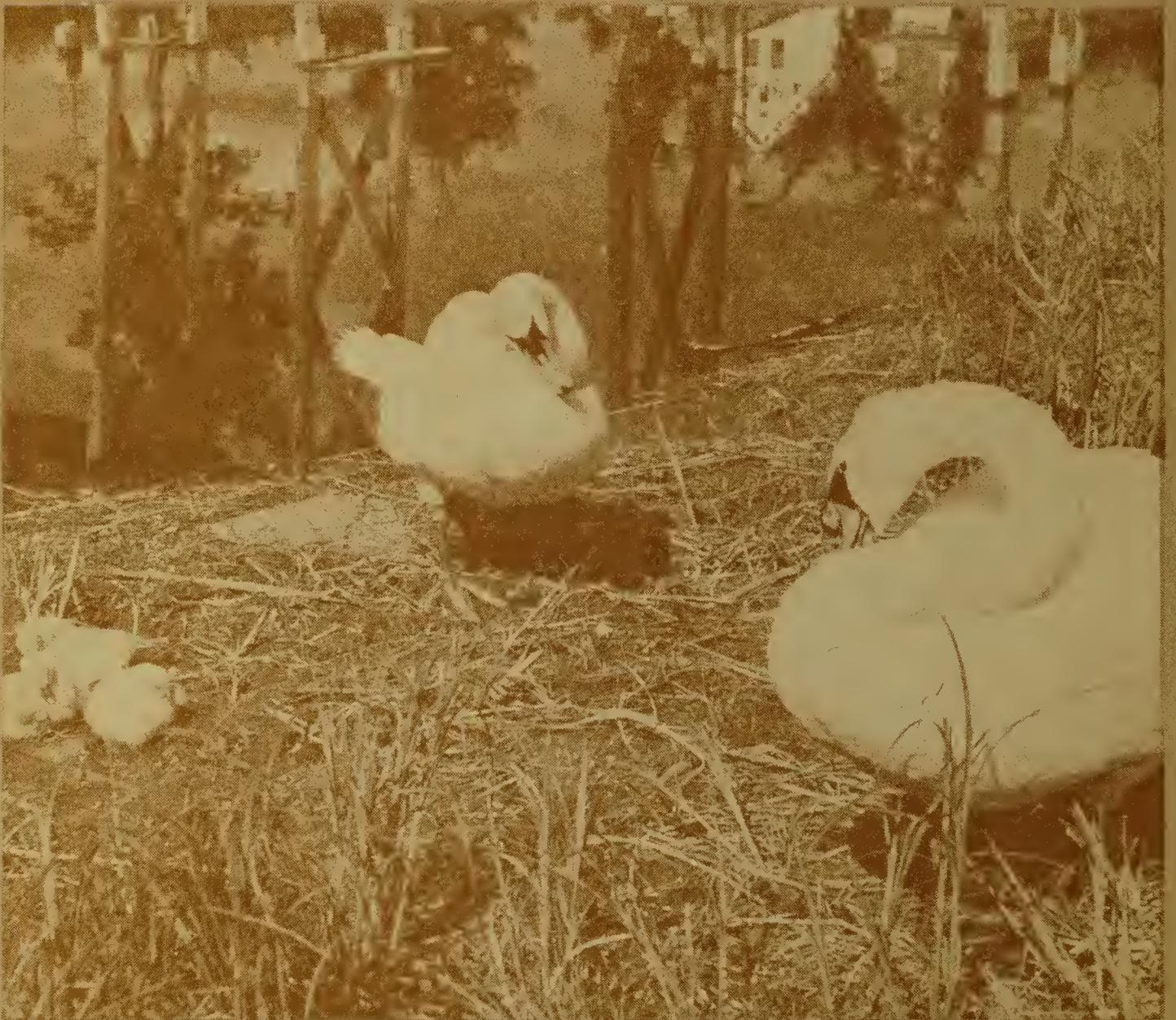
SPRING BIRDS: Mrs. John Hubbard, Grenfell, writes: "Waxwings and Grosbeaks did not clean up the crabapples last winter and on April 30th, May first and second the Robins landed in and increased in number till one snowy morning there were around a thousand moving back and forth through the orchard. When they had finished the crabs, they left! What a chorus they made especially when joined by 30 Brewer's Blackbirds, 50-60 Redwings, and the usual Song Sparrows, each trying to be heard above the din."

LEWIS'S WOODPECKER: Mrs. H. Rodenberg, Kinloch, Sask. reports that Lewis's Woodpecker has been seen twice in her neighborhood. She also writes that their Cliff Swallows are back and that seven nests have been built under the eaves of their house.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER: Mr. S. A. Mann, Skull Creek, Sask. writes: "Each day from May 22 - 25 we saw a Red-headed Woodpecker. It is not every year that we see one of this species, so we took full advantage of observing it as it clung to the side of our front gate post or perched on the telephone post within sight of the kitchen window." Mr. Mann also tells of the successful rearing of a wild Canada Goose family in their pastures. This is the first time to his knowledge that the Canada Goose has nested on his ranch. He has the area posted.



**Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Dept., Ottawa
Return Postage Guaranteed**



—Photo by Mrs. M. E. Robinson

**SEND ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS, RENEWALS AND ACCOUNTS TO
E. L. Fox, 1053 Gladmer Park, Regina
SEND MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION IN THE DECEMBER ISSUE
BY THE END OF OCTOBER TO
G. F. Ledingham, 2335 Athol Street, Regina**