

THE

Blue Jay

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December, 1956



Lesser Snow Goose

Photo by F. W. Lahrman

Published quarterly by
THE SASKATCHEWAN NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
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Blue Jay Chatter

In early September the American Ornithologists' Union held its seventy-third annual meeting in Denver and Boulder, Colorado. Saskatchewan was represented by Dr. S. Houston, who gave a paper, Mrs. Houston, Dr. R. W. Nero, J. B. Gollop, and your editor. After three days of interesting papers the whole group went on a field trip to the top of Mount Evans. Dr. W. A. Weber, Botanist of the University of Colorado, gave us personal guidance and showed us the rare alpine flora as well as the birds of the tundra. It was truly a wonderful day. The meetings were pleasant and worthwhile but what we valued most were the new friendships and associations formed. Hardly a week later one of our new acquaintances telephoned me on his way to the Qu'Appelle Valley, but I'll let Mr. Kent tell you the story himself. See page 120.

* * *

The 1956 annual meeting of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society was held in the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History during the evening of October 26 and all day Saturday, October 27. Snow fell heavily during the day and reduced our registration, but many people came from widely scattered points at considerable personal expense. One enthusiast came from Manitoba. The reports of the meeting and the names of those registered are given on pages 134-136.

The annual meeting is a time for looking back over the past year and thinking of the future. With this in mind I would like to restate a few of the points mentioned in the editor's report. Thanks to the help and co-operation and contributions of many people, my task has been a pleasant one indeed. May I first of all express my appreciation to these people who have made the BLUE JAY a success in 1956. I have not been able to print all of the items which have come in nor have I, though I hate to admit it, even been able to reply to all of the letters. In spite of this, may I ask you to please send anything which you think might be of interest to members of our society. Remember the BLUE JAY is printed to publish the contributions of the members. Items sent in need not be long but all reports should be accurate and complete. To give some guidance to contributors we are reprinting the article of Mr. H. H. Axtell on page 122.

The discussions at the annual meeting this year gave ample proof of the need for certain changes in our society to keep up with the times and to give better value to our growing membership. The constitution and the membership fee remain the same for 1957 but committees have been appointed and instructed to bring in recommendations regarding possible changes next year. Not only are costs rising so that it is difficult to make ends meet with our one dollar fee, but because our magazine is becoming better known and goes far beyond the boundaries of Saskatchewan, we should like to improve the size and quality of the BLUE JAY. You can help by gaining new members for the society, by supporting the society's projects, or by giving the BLUE JAY as a Christmas Gift. With this issue we are running a trial advertisement, page 128, on a commission basis and we urge you to buy some of these booklets for Christmas or for your local school.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR READERS

The Blue Jay

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Founded in 1942 by Isabel M. Priestly

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A Message from the President

By FRANK BRAZIER, Regina

Let us face the new season with some positive thoughts about conservation of natural resources. Today we take for granted government participation in conservation; we expect our governments to preach and legislate in the realm of soil conservation, game management, the wise use of water, etc. We all know, however, that these government programmes did not spring up overnight from suddenly enlightened legislatures. No indeed. The lawmakers first had to be made conscious of the need for conservation.

Ordinary people like ourselves first raised the cry—to stop this sickening slaughter or to rescue that threatened forest. They were, of course, sneered at as starry-eyed idealists; but in the end they prevailed. As soon as they could show that poor conservation practices, or none at all, acted against the best interests of all of us, action began. It took time, patience, and endless trouble before the idea took hold, and groups such as ours need to be reminded of this. It is not enough to sit back and expect that trained government personnel will by some magic right all wrongs. The conservation staffs need to hear the voices of ordinary people. They need our commendation when merited (which is often), and they need criticism and expressions of concern when necessary. Anyone who feels that some phase of conservation needs attention has the right, and the duty, to try and direct efforts towards it. He may be wrong. On the other hand, the observations of the intelligent countryman can be of the utmost value to conservation scientists when properly presented.

Let us also think about the mysterious interdependence of life. Albert Einstein recognized the relationship between mass, energy, and the speed of light. Some physical scientists feel that all physical laws are related and can be expressed as a mathematical equation. Perhaps the laws governing all life are equally interdependent. We can see the immediate effect of large-scale



Photo by R. W. Fyle

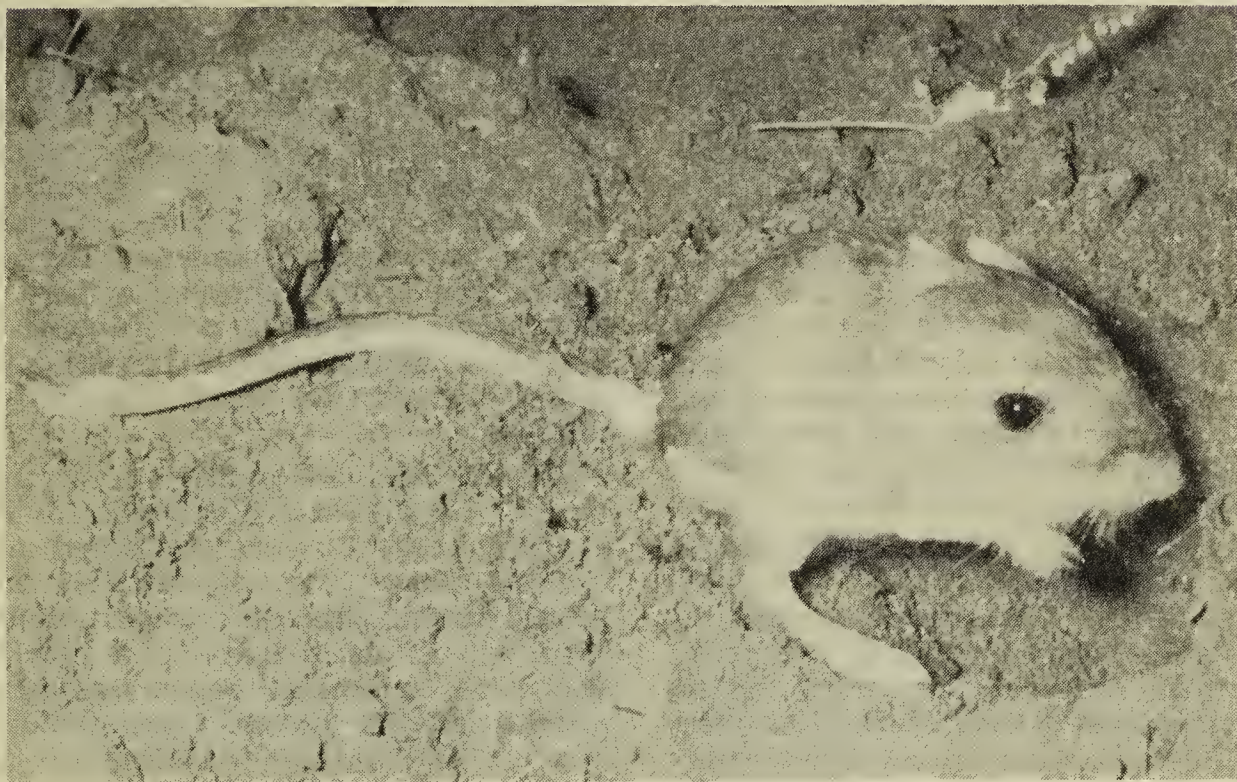
erosion, for example, on fertility, on stream and river life, on hydroelectric plants, etc. The effects spread out like the concentric ripples from a pebble tossed into a pond. Because of the dependence of one form of life upon another, we sense dimly that all life forms must thrive equally in a healthy environment for the whole to be healthy.

Finally, let us realize how little we know of Saskatchewan wildlife, even of many of our commonest birds. Any person who will really study a particular species, who will systematically and regularly observe, and meticulously record, the doings, no matter how trivial, of one bird species, can hardly help adding to our knowledge if he publishes his observations. As for the mammals of Saskatchewan, much is pure speculation. Ever see a Mountain *Phenacomys* (*Phenacomys intermedius*), for example? They ought to be here in the forest areas. The Saskatchewan Museum would be glad to have its first specimen. Prolonged observation of its habits, accurately reported, would add a great deal to science's knowledge. The gaps in our knowledge are so great, and professional workers so few, that there is room for any amateur who has the qualities implied in the word "worker".

MUSEUM NOTES

Kangaroo Rat Colonies Found

By ROBERT W. NERO and RICHARD W. FYFE, Regina



Kangaroo Rat in captivity

The Kangaroo Rat (*Dipodomys ordii*) has been known to occur in Saskatchewan since 1933 when the first specimen was found at Shackleton. Two additional specimens taken in 1934 (Tomkins) and in 1955 (Portreeve) established their occurrence over a wider area (Nero, 1955). The location of actual densites, however, has not been previously reported. In September, 1956 we examined several colony sites of this interesting rodent in the vicinity of the previous records. The objective of this report is to describe the location and nature of the den sites and other findings. The photographs were taken by Fyfe. Dr. George F. Ledingham kindly identified three species of plants which we collected.

Following newspaper publication of an article on Kangaroo Rats in July, 1955, correspondence was opened with the museum by Mr. Frank Buscholl of Sceptre, Sask., who reported that "for quite a few years" he had observed unknown animals in the sand hills south of Sceptre. His remarks were very apt . . . "They are hard to see as they are very shy. I have seen two which were run

over by cars but there are quite a number of them . . . You can see them at night when you drive through with lights . . . seemed to be out most of all around midnight and after. It is only a small area in which I have noticed them and for about four or five months of the season there is no water around this area." Mr. Buscholl added: ". . . I believe they fit the description of the Kangaroo Rat quite well . . ." In a letter in November, 1955 he reported: "I couldn't find them where I had so often seen them at night on the road. But I think I've found them now . . . I didn't see any of them . . . but the sign looks like theirs—fresh mounds, with open burrows on the side of a sand dune and trails dragged between their tracks by the 'tail.'" At a later date he mentioned that he had first seen these animals as a child, 15 to 20 years ago.

We were unable to check Buscholl's highly suggestive reports until September of this year. In the afternoon of September 18 we contacted him and following his directions drove into an area frequently referred to

as the Great Sand Hills, some 10 miles south of Sceptre. These bare hills of sand stand out prominently from the surrounding vegetation: Sage (*Artemisia* sp.), Buckbrush or Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* sp.), Rose (*Rosa* sp.), Creeping Juniper (*Juniperus* sp.), Thorny Buffalo Berry (*Sherperdia argenticia* Nutt.), Willow (*Salix* sp.), and Aspen (*Populus* sp.) (Fig. 1). The sand hills or dunes tend to be oval in shape, with a steep-sided, deep depression or "blow-out" in their centre. The long axis of each hill usually lies in a southeast-northwest direction, the fresh slope frequently being on the southeast side. At least one of the hills was more than 50 feet high (estimated), but some low, much eroded hills were also found.

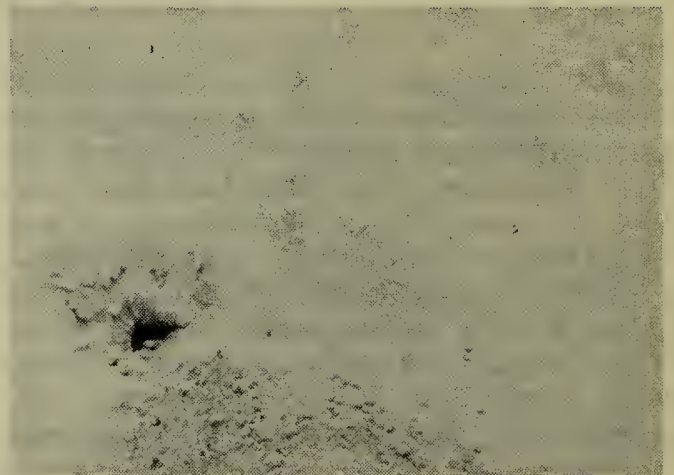
Kangaroo Rat signs were found exactly where Buscholl had indicated their presence. The most conspicuous signs were small mounds of fresh damp sand heaped up beside closed burrows about 3 inches in diameter. Such "dens" were most frequently right out on the open sand. Dens were

not "large mounds of earth pierced by numerous openings" as we had expected, but were simply burrows in the ground. As Cahalene pointed out: "some kangaroo rats, principally the smaller species, build their homes entirely below the original ground level and without the benefit of a mound." (1947:444). Occasionally we found 2 or 3 openings close together but frequently only a single opening was observed (see Fig. 2 and 3). Footprints were visible in many places and snake-like markings between the tracks showed where the tail had dragged. A number of bleached skulls found nearby were readily identified as Kangaroo Rat skulls.

During the following three nights (Sept. 18-20) we obtained 15 Rats in this area; 8 were collected alive in box-traps (Fig. 4) and by hand in the headlights of our car; 6 were captured in snap-traps and one was shot. The bait in all cases was wheat, peanut-butter having produced no results. We failed to visit the area in the early part of the night, but



Edge of a sand hill or dune; rose briars in foreground. Note wind ripple marks. (Fig. 1)



Partly closed burrow and recently excavated sand. *Psoralea* stems present. (Fig. 2)



Burrows in nearly vertical wall of bank. Note claw marks and fresh sand. (Fig. 3)



Live trap set beside den. Rose briar and *Psoralea* plants. (Fig. 4)



(Fig. 5) *Psoralea* on edge of dune

saw Rats from 10:30 p.m. until 4:00 a.m. during this period. We also took some in our traps between 4:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. They were found to be quite active one night even though it was quite windy.

Rat signs were profuse during the night and on some mornings, but if the day was dry and windy most tracks, burrow signs, etc., would be erased by noon. On quiet days Rat signs were visible all day long. The burrow openings were usually blocked by the Rats after they retired. Thus each night saw fresh digging. Seton wrote in regard to their tracks: "These are fresh every night, for the winds of noontime commonly sweep the plains again and leave the surface smooth for a new inscription." (1953:424).

Numerous insect tracks, Porcupine, Mule Deer, Coyote and Sharp-tailed Grouse tracks were common on the open sand. We also trapped Deer Mice on the dunes and a Red-backed Mouse in the bottom-land. Pocket mice (*Perognathus*), 18 were collected, and Pocket Gophers were common in the vicinity. Three kinds of hares occur: the Snowshoe Hare, Jackrabbit and Cottontail Rabbit (one was collected). Mule Deer and Prong-horned Antelope were reported to be common.

Most "colonies" or major groups of Kangaroo Rat burrows were located in or near tracts of *Psoralea lanceolata* Pursh, a legume which grew abundantly in certain places on almost every dune we examined. *Psoralea* appeared from a distance as a pale green patch on the "front" of a dune, usually on the down-wind slope (Fig. 5). We soon found that we could quickly ascertain the presence of Rats by first looking for these plants. Where the plants were



(Fig. 6) Kangaroo Rat signs

present we invariably found Rat signs. *Psoralea* was found in nearly pure stands, although on at least one dune, Sand Dock (*Rumex venosus* Pursh) was also present. Both of these plants spread by conspicuous underground rootstocks. The extent to which *Psoralea* figures as a food item in the diet of the Rats is unknown. Possibly the relationship is the result of the ground conditions selected by both plant and animal.

Rat trails often ran through the vegetation on the dunes for 50 to 100 feet (estimated), indicating a considerable movement from the den, presumably for food. Rats were also seen at some distance from the dunes, on the road in areas of sage as well as Buckbrush. One was caught on the road at least one mile from the dunes along a stubble and an alfalfa field.

A few burrows were found in nearly vertical walls on the dunes and in a road cut (Fig. 3). In one case a Rat, startled by our car lights, ran across the road and into a bank burrow about 18 inches above the ground. It peered out several times while the headlights were shining on the opening.

The number of Rats in the Sceptre sand hill area seemingly is quite high. Dens were found on nine hills within a 2 mile radius. Two hills which were carefully examined each held 24 and 34 dens (see Fig. 7). If Rats occur over as wide an area as the records suggest they do, it seems probable that the Saskatchewan Rat population numbers well in the thousands. We were able to check one large dune 6 miles west of Mendham on September 21, where, in spite of a pouring rain, Rat tracks were seen - again, in the vicinity of *Psoralea*. This extends the Saskat-

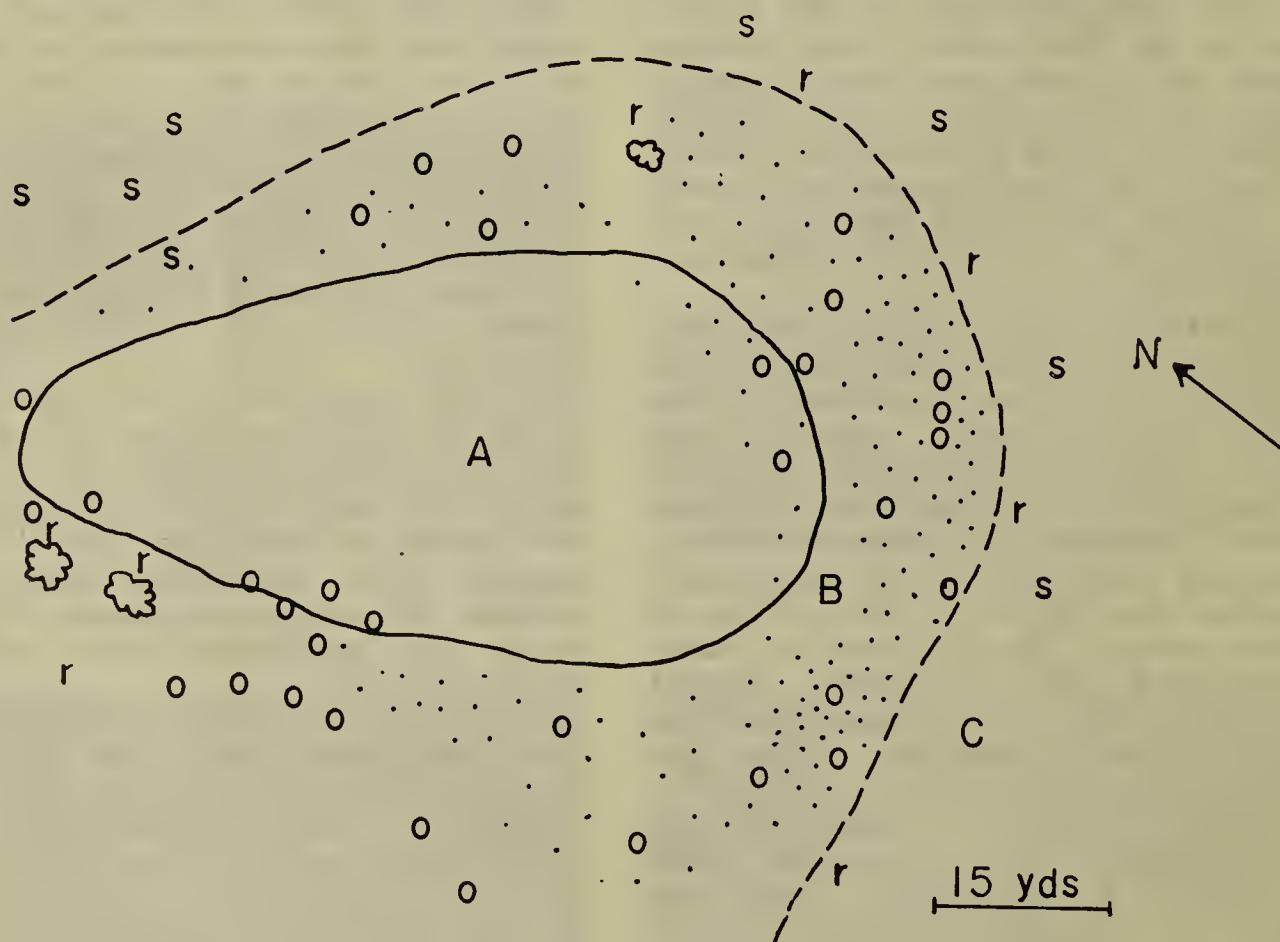
chewan range of the Kangaroo Rat to within 8 miles of the Alberta border. A single specimen taken at Medicine Hat, Alberta, in 1931 represents Canadian records outside of Saskatchewan.

The Ord Kangaroo Rat (our subspecies, *Dipodomys ordii terrosus*, is also called the Montana Kangaroo Rat (Anderson, 1946:131) is one of the most widely distributed of all the Kangaroo Rats, ranging from Saskatchewan to central Mexico and from Nebraska to California (Burt

and Grossenheider, 1952:97). It is found on a variety of soil types but generally prefers loose sandy soil in arid or semi-arid country. Its total distribution in Saskatchewan still remains to be determined. It may possibly be limited to sand dune areas but it should also occur in intervening places. The distinctive signs noted above should make it relatively easy to determine the presence of Rats at new points. It would be particularly interesting, e.g., to know if Rats occur north of the Saskatchewan River.

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0 FIG 7

Field sketch of a single sand blow-out showing location of 34 open Kangaroo Rat burrows (circles), presumably separate dens (September 19, 1956). Solid line indicates edge of actual blow-out; dashed line, extent of open sand and bottom of sand-hill. Maximum height of dune along solid line -about 35 feet. Sage plants - s; rose bushes - r; *Psoralea* indicated by stippling. Area A - clean, open sand, bare of vegetation; Area B surrounding A - sparsely vegetated; area C, heavily vegetated.

The Whooping Crane Problem

Mr. Fred Bard has just returned from Washington, D.C. where he was one of a score of migratory bird and wildlife experts who met to discuss the precarious position of the Whooping Crane. It was agreed that some substantial management plans must be made and that an international committee would be appointed by the United States and Canadian wildlife officials to explore the problem fully.

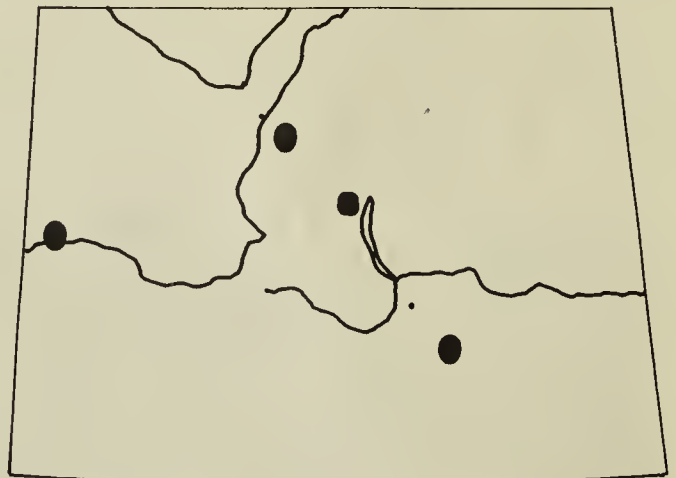
In the accompanying sketch maps of Southern Saskatchewan prepared by Mr. Bard the black ovals show places where the birds were positively identified and photographed using telephoto lens. The white ovals are positive identifications but they are not substantiated by photographs.

These records all fall within the rather narrow migration pathway which was described by Mr. Bard in the BLUE JAY, Volume XIV, No. 2, page 41, June 1956. The number of records prove that the Saskatchewan plains are extremely important to the Whooping Cranes during both the spring and fall migration. The fact that the Cranes need our area for food and rest during their long migration places a heavy responsibility on Saskatchewan people for the survival of these rare birds. First, we can refrain from shooting whenever there are white birds in the neighborhood. The October 30 News Release from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service tells of hunters refraining from shooting at hundreds of White-fronted Geese at Harlan County Reservoir because there were two Whooping Cranes resting in the area. Second, we can refrain from molesting the birds while they are feeding in our fields. They are extremely wary and are easily disturbed. If you wish a closer look borrow fieldglasses or telescope and look at them from the roadway.

On October 26 there were 13 Cranes back in the Aransas Refuge in Texas. The first five to return, including one young-of-the-year, were described by observers to be so tired that "for a long while they huddled in the marsh, wings drooping and heads down, apparently



Spring Migration 1956



Summer Wanderers 1956



Fall Migration 1956

exhausted from the long flight which started days and days ago from the Canadian northland near Great Slave Lake." At the same time there were still Cranes in Saskatchewan.

The accompanying photo of three Whooping Cranes taken at Osage on



Photo by F. W. Lahrman

Whooping Cranes in flight at Milestone, Sask., October 18, 1956



Photo by F. W. Lahrman

Pair with young at Osage, Sask., October 24, 1956

October 24 is remarkable in that it is the first photo of a young-of-the-year taken during fall migration. This young bird is surprisingly dark. Actually very little is known about young Whooping Cranes so perhaps this is the normal color for birds of this age. These birds have caused the museum officials considerable concern because they stayed on in this area during the heavy snowfall of October 27. Food was then hard to find and the temperature dropped to nearly zero.

The Whooping Crane problem seems to spring from the fact that settlement of the Saskatchewan plains

has driven these shy birds northward. There the nesting season is from 30 to 60 days shorter than normal and the severe weather is too great a handicap for the small population to overcome. Some years no young are raised. Last year eight young reached Aransas safely. This year there are at least two young birds. The picture is gloomy but the few individual Whoopers left seem to have lots of vitality.

Saskatchewan people are "Whooper conscious" and they will back to the limit any program which might give the Whooping Crane a better chance to climb to a higher and safer population level.

The Wascana Waterfowl Park

FRED LAHRMAN, Regina

The Wascana Waterfowl Park established in the Wascana Marsh on the eastern outskirts of Regina city has recently been officially designated a bird sanctuary under the name of the "Wascana Lake Bird Sanctuary." This status allows the exercise of some control, and the Department of Natural Resources provided an enforcement officer to protect the area for the first week of the hunting season in order to inform the public of the project and the boundaries of the preserve. The marsh was also posted, signs like the one pictured on the next page being provided by the Regina Fish and Game League to identify the Wascana Waterfowl Park. Other temporary signs were put up prohibiting motor boats throughout the area and prohibiting fishing near the island's nesting sites. The park still needs a fence and a granary for storing feed.

A marsh is a very specialized type of park, and Regina deserves credit for its effort to utilize and preserve this natural area.

GEESE IN THE WASCANA MARSH

On April 7, 1953 the first pair of Canada Geese were given Fred Bard by "Hiawatha", Ralph Stueck of Abernethy. The pair, named Hiawatha and Queenie, soon settled down to nesting duties and hatched five young, but owing to our inexperience and to other causes, they succeeded in raising only one.

During the summer this first pair were joined by the "city" geese which had wandered away from Rotary Park. Late in the fall another bird was added to the flock. This bird had been confiscated by a Game Warden who had no place but a R.C.M.P. cell to keep him in for the night. After his night in jail the goose was known as the "Outlaw".

A flock of seven geese were taken to the Perry sanctuary at Govan to spend the winter. On April 12, 1954 the geese were returned to Mr. Bard's sanctuary along with another pair, "Charlie" and "Martha", from the Last Mountain Lake Game Preserve

Goose project. Nine goslings were hatched from two nests that spring, but again misfortune struck. A muskrat robbed a nest of three eggs, a mink killed three goslings, a dog killed another, and two simply disappeared. Three young only were raised to maturity.

On November 14, a Snow Goose with a slightly injured wing was found in the sanctuary with the Canada Geese. It could fly very well but its right wing tip drooped a little while the bird was at rest. It was wary and would fly away when I brought out the feed, but as the days passed it soon swam up to eat along with the Canadas. On December 12 the Snow Goose was missing. Apparently it had resumed its southward migration. Our twelve Canadas, however, spent the winter in the open water near the Power House.

During the spring of 1955 ten goslings were hatched from three nests and nine were raised to maturity. Four more geese were received from the Perry sanctuary. The young goose which was raised in the summer of 1953 had been killed when it flew into a power line.

Twenty-four geese began the winter of 1955. Walter Sweet, Bill Leitch and other Power House employees went out daily during the winter to feed the geese and the hundreds of ducks which regularly spend the winter on the open water there. During December three geese were found to be missing. Two others, which were found injured, died later. Charlie was one of these.

The spring of 1956 was a hazardous one for the geese. The first nests (with the exception of one) were lost in the spring flood. We salvaged some eggs, but only five of these hatched. The hen that hatched them lost one soon after hatching, but raised the other four to maturity. They are now flying as adults over the Wascana Marsh. The one pair of geese which brought off their young in spite of the flood were lost to vandals who killed the pair and destroyed all the young

(continued on page 116)

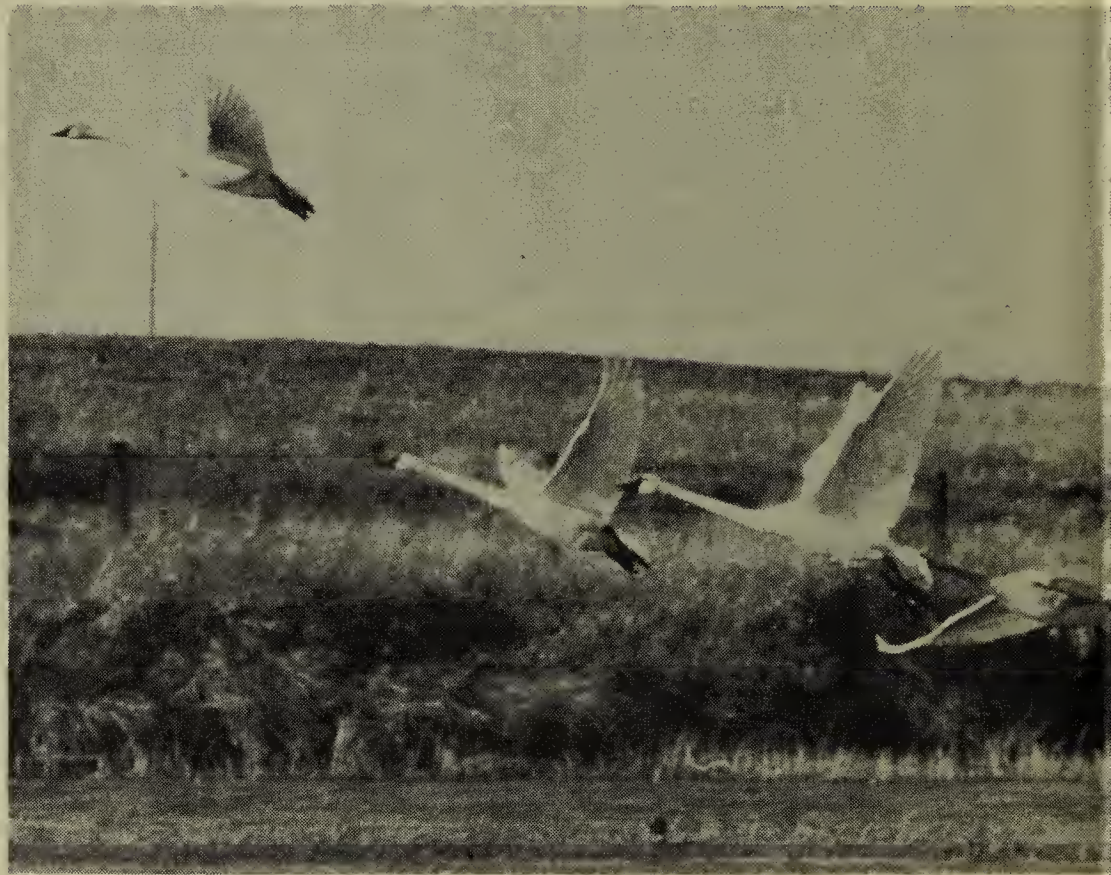
WASCANA LAKE

Photographs by

In the summer of 1956 the Wascana Marsh was posted with signs provided by the Regina Fish and Game League.



Four Whistling Swans rise in graceful flight from the Wascana Marsh.



The Waterfowl Park really owes its beginnings to "Hiawatha" & "Queenie", who came to the sanctuary in '53



BIRD SANCTUARY

F. W. Lahrman

Four Canada Geese were raised in 1956 with a hen. They were hatched from eggs salvaged from flooded nests.



Whistling Swans have wintered at the sanctuary the last two years.

One pair of Geese ("Outlaw" and mate) brought off their young in spite of the 1956 flooding.



(continued from page 113)
 with the exception of one. This gosling joined a gander standing guard near another nest, and he took care of it! The other geese re-nested and in time we had a total of 20 goslings. Since then, we have had no losses. One additional bird was brought in from Lac La Ronge where it had been found wounded. It has been wing-clipped so that it will remain in the sanctuary until it has mated with one of our young birds. Then it will regain its power of flight after next seasons moult. One other bird was brought in by Mr. McLeod, Manager of the Exhibition Board, and was mated within a week of its release in the Wascana Marsh. It was successful in raising a brood. The total population of Canada Geese at the Wascana Lake Bird Sanctuary in early September was 31. In addition there were seven geese (the young of last year) at large. Interestingly enough, five of these returned on September 19, making a total of 36.

The majority of the geese at the sanctuary are flying daily for short periods over the marsh area. We operate a rather heavy feeding programme during the hunting season in order to keep them from moving out into the grain fields where they might be shot.

WHISTLING SWANS AT THE SANCTUARY

On April 26, 1954 two Whistling Swans were found wounded at Lang. Apparently, they had flown into a power line, as each had a broken wing which had to be amputated. These birds were placed in the sanctuary with the geese where they completely regained their health.

On October 15, 1954 another wounded Swan was found in a stubble field eighteen miles south of Regina. This swan was banded and it regained its power of flight during the following summer. It would fly away for the day and return to the sanctuary in the evening, but on September 7, 1955 it flew away and did not return. During December of the same year, one of the Lang swans died from unknown causes.

Since then three more wounded swans have been added to the sanctuary, making a total of four Whistling Swans. One of these is banded and, though able to fly, it has so far chosen to remain with its friends.

At times during the spring and fall migration small flocks of Whistling Swans stop for a day or more on the marsh to join the wounded swans. They and the injured swans that remain all year add a note of interest and of beauty to the quiet waters of this protected area.

The Caspian Tern in Saskatchewan— with First Nesting Record

By DR. STUART HOUSTON, Yorkton

The North American range of the Caspian Tern was given by Bent as "widely scattered localities, mainly on the coasts or large lakes." These localities ranged from Louisiana and Texas on the south, Oregon and California on the west, Virginia on the east and Labrador and the North West Territories on the north. Although known to occur at Lake Winnipeg and Lake Winnipegosis in Manitoba and the Athabaska Delta in Alberta, it was not listed by Mitchell in his "Birds of Saskatchewan" in 1924. However, three years later Mitchell was able to collect a female Caspian Tern at Old Wives Lake (Lake Johnstone) on

June 28, 1927, and this formed the only known published record of this species for Saskatchewan.

On July 13, 1956, we had the good fortune to locate the first known nesting colony in Saskatchewan, while banding cormorants and pelicans on Rock Island in Dore Lake, 60 miles north of Big River. Our hosts, Zig Kondzielowski and Trigve Larson of the fisheries research unit, called our attention to the large and striking adults overhead and located the small group of 11 young Caspian Terns which we then banded. The tarsi of these young birds barely accommodated the size 5 bands, whereas the Common Tern requires only a much smaller size 3 band.



Photo by Dr. Stuart Houston

Young Caspian Terns, Dore Lake, July 13, 1956

Richardson did not record this species when he was second-in-command to the first and second expeditions of Sir John Franklin in 1820 and 1827. However, I have recently come into possession of an account of Richardson's expedition in search of the missing ships of Franklin's final and ill-fated expedition. On his way to the Arctic, Richardson again passed through Saskatchewan. With him, as second-in-command, he had Dr. John Rae. They left Cumberland House on June 14, 1848, passed through the southern end of Amisk (Beaver) Lake on June 16, and passed up the Sturgeon-Weir

River to Lake Mirond on June 17. On that day, Dr. Rae shot a Cayenne Tern, *Sterna cayana*. (In those days, even Audubon still grouped the Royal and Caspian Terns under this name.) Their record of the Caspian Tern in what was to become the province of Saskatchewan, thus antedates that of Mitchell by 79 years.

This was not far south-east of what is now Pelican Narrows. Other birds noted by Richardson that day included the Bald Eagle ("a nest may be looked for every twenty or thirty miles"), Raven, Pelican, Sandhill Crane, and Black Tern.

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15th Annual Sask. Christmas Bird Count, 1956

Send in your report for the ONE BEST DAY between December 22nd and January 1st. (Note these dates carefully; they correspond with the dates chosen by the Audubon Society for the rest of the continent.)

List the numbers of each species seen during that day. Following this, list other species seen between Dec. 22 and January 1, other than the day of the count. List numbers of individuals and the date seen for these birds. List species in the order of the Sask. Field Check-list, Petersons Field Guide, or Taverner's "Birds of Canada".

If possible, the area should not be more than 15 miles in diameter. Preferably, six or more hours should be spent afield. Counts covering less than two hours will not be printed.

Note the date, hour of starting and of finishing, wind, temperature, whether clear or cloudy, and how many inches of snow. List the total party miles by car and on foot and the total party hours by car and on foot.

RUFFED GROUSE

By DOUG GILROY, Regina



Photo by Doug Gilroy

When Dr. Walter J. Breckenridge, Audubon lecturer, spoke in Regina September 26, 1956, he mentioned the fact that every now and then a naturalist was liable to come across a wild bird or animal that, for some reason or other, had little or no fear of a human being. To back up his statement Dr. Breckenridge's movie film showed a Ruffed Grouse that certainly had no fear whatever of man.

As soon as the camera man and his friend entered the Grouse's territory in the woods, out came Mr. Grouse—tailed fanned, feathers bristling and full of fight. He would peck at the men's feet and was perfectly willing to box whenever one of the men made passes at him with his mitt. When the men left, the Grouse escorted them to the very edge of the clearing.

The nearest to this Grouse experience we have had was during the summer meeting of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society at Madge Lake this year. Only our Ruffed Grouse was a setting one and had a little more reason to be pugnacious. Our party, led by Conservation Officer Merv Baker, was first shown this Grouse as she sat on her nest at the base of a poplar tree. Not once, while 20 or 30 people

came and looked at her, did she twitch a muscle. Then suddenly as if she were fed up with being rudely stared at, she jumped off the nest; but instead of flying away she put on a wonderful display of Grouse courage. With drooping wings, raised ruffs and spread tail she strutted around like a turkey gobbler and every time a shoe came a little too close she would make a rush and peck at it defiantly.

This was a wonderful opportunity for camera fans like Ralph Stueck and myself. When we finally left, the little Grouse ran along behind our heels doubtless thinking she had won the battle and was chasing us away.

GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROWS AT GAINSBOROUGH, SASK.

Joseph D. Carruthers writes that Golden-crowned Sparrows have migrated through his part of the country for years (1930 on), usually with, or within a day of, White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows. Last year he saw them in April, this year on May 8. For a report on the first specimen record of the Golden-crowned Sparrow taken in Saskatchewan see the **Blue Jay** Vol. XIV, No. 3, September 1956.

SUMMER RECORDS of the SCARLET TANAGER in EASTERN SASK.

—Mrs. D. Sutton reports seeing a male Scarlet Tanager near Rocanville (southwest quarter of Section 13, Twp. 17, Range 32, west of the First) in June of this year. Her eleven year-old daughter, who called Mrs. Sutton's attention to the bird in the bushes near the house, had reported a Scarlet Tanager in the same bluff two years ago. At that time, in spite of Dene's good description, Mrs. Sutton had dismissed the idea of the bird being a Tanager, telling her daughter that Scarlet Tanagers weren't known in their district. This time both Dene and her mother got a very close look at the bird which Mrs. Sutton describes as follows: "The bright even red head and body contrasted sharply with the clear-cut, wholly black wings and tail. Complete absence of any yellow assured me it wasn't a Western Tanager and the red head eliminated any chance of his being an Oriole. In size he was between a sparrow and a robin."

A second Scarlet Tanager record comes from Moose Mountain Park where George Blanchard reported seeing two males and one female on July 19, 1956.

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET AT SPIRIT LAKE—On October 31, 1956 William Anaka of Spirit Lake identified a Golden-crowned Kinglet in his yard. He mentions that this is a new species for his life list, and notes that it is not recorded in C. Stuart Houston's **Birds of the Yorkton District**.

NATURAL FEEDING STATION FOR SUMMER BIRDS: Joyce Gunn of Spirit Lake, Sask. writes, "We had Sapsuckers around in mid-July; they probably nested not too far away as there were juveniles seen later. Starting the end of July they bored a series of holes in the willow near the store, and the sap ran freely. From then until about the end of August the tree was a virtual feeding station! There were four Sapsuckers, seven Hummingbirds and any number of hornets and wasps. As soon as dusk fell the birds left and the night moths took over - the ones with the orange and black

markings on the wings - until daylight and the birds returned. The Hummingbirds had not a ruby throat among the seven; they must have all been females or juveniles. The tree is rather the worse for wear, but it made an interesting study at any time for there wasn't an interval of five minutes in any day that the tree was free of birds."

MALLARD LONGEVITY: Dr. Stuart Houston reports that most birds have a short life expectancy, and that the recoveries of banded birds usually occur in the first year after banding. Nevertheless, a few survive to an older age, and reports of these older birds are a special thrill for the bander. A Mallard, banded at Rousay Lake near Yorkton on August 25, 1945, was killed near Wynne, Arkansas, late in 1954. It was thus over nine years old. Another Mallard, banded as an adult male at Rousay Lake on August 4, 1945, was shot near Augusta, Montana in November, 1955. It was at least one year old when banded, and so was at least eleven years old when shot.



This unusual photograph, taken at Saskatchewan Beach, June 3, 1956 by Mrs. F. Langford of Regina shows a nest with five Mallard and thirteen Hungarian Partridge eggs.

BLACK BRANT: Mr. George Warren, taxidermist, Swift Current sends further information to the Museum on the Black Brant specimen which was reported in the **Blue Jay** (Vol. XIV, No. 3, p. 81-82). It is entered in his records as "Shot by Mr. Lars Hendrickson on November 2, 1938 at Eston, Sask."

Notes on a Trip to Saskatchewan September, 1956

F. W. KENT, Iowa City, Iowa

To one interested in birds, the outdoors and photography, a natural area different from one's own is much more attractive than a commercialized resort. So, when the chance came for me to visit Saskatchewan I was delighted. I had long wanted to see the "Prairie Provinces" and I very much enjoyed my short visit to even a small part of the interesting country. The wheat fields proved more extensive, the towns more modern, and the "pot-holes" less wild than I expected, but the atmosphere of the open country, the absence of ads cluttering the highways, the heavy freight on the rails instead of on the roads, and the friendliness of the people made our trip a real treat.

After travelling through several hundred miles of perfectly flat country our group was caught by

surprise when we dropped into the Qu'Appelle Valley with its undulating ridges and brilliant fall foliage. We spent a couple of days fifteen miles up river from Fort Qu'Appelle in perfect fall weather. I spent much of the time in a canoe exploring the shores and marshes, photographing the scenery and any birds I could approach. At one place where the canoe had caught on a shallow mud bar I was soon surrounded by several hundred Dowitchers, twittering all the time in a quiet melodious way as they fed. Some tucked their long bills back under their feathers and slept, and all of them were quite unconcerned about my presence. Although commonplace here, no doubt, the large numbers of Franklin's Gulls were a new experience to me as they moved up lake in the morning and down lake at dusk in well-ordered flocks,



Photo by F. W. Kent

Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan



Photo by F. W. Kent

Franklin's Gulls in the Qu'Appelle Valley

resting on bars in mid-day. Large flocks of the same birds were seen in North Dakota feeding over the fields late in the day. This gull is a species which is seen in Iowa only in the spring in very small numbers. Of the ducks, the Blue-winged Teal is a very common migrant in Iowa, but not so common there is the Canvas-back which was the big duck that I saw most frequently in the Qu'Appelle. I expected to find a larger variety of ducks, but probably I was seeing mostly resident species. I could fancy what an interesting area this would be in the spring and nesting season.

The grebes, Western and Horned, and the Pelican are birds which we

see in Iowa only rarely or as stragglers, so it was nice to watch numbers of them. I was curious about a couple of young Westerns still being fed by an adult. It seemed late in the season for young birds, September 15.

One day spent in Regina gave us the opportunity to visit the Museum—the exterior and grounds so admirably conceived to fit that region, the habitat groups so suitable and lively, and especially well done, the ecological and educational panels.

While we sampled only a small bit of that vast area we came away admiring it and hoping to return. In fact, we discussed plans for another visit most of the 1300 miles back to Iowa.

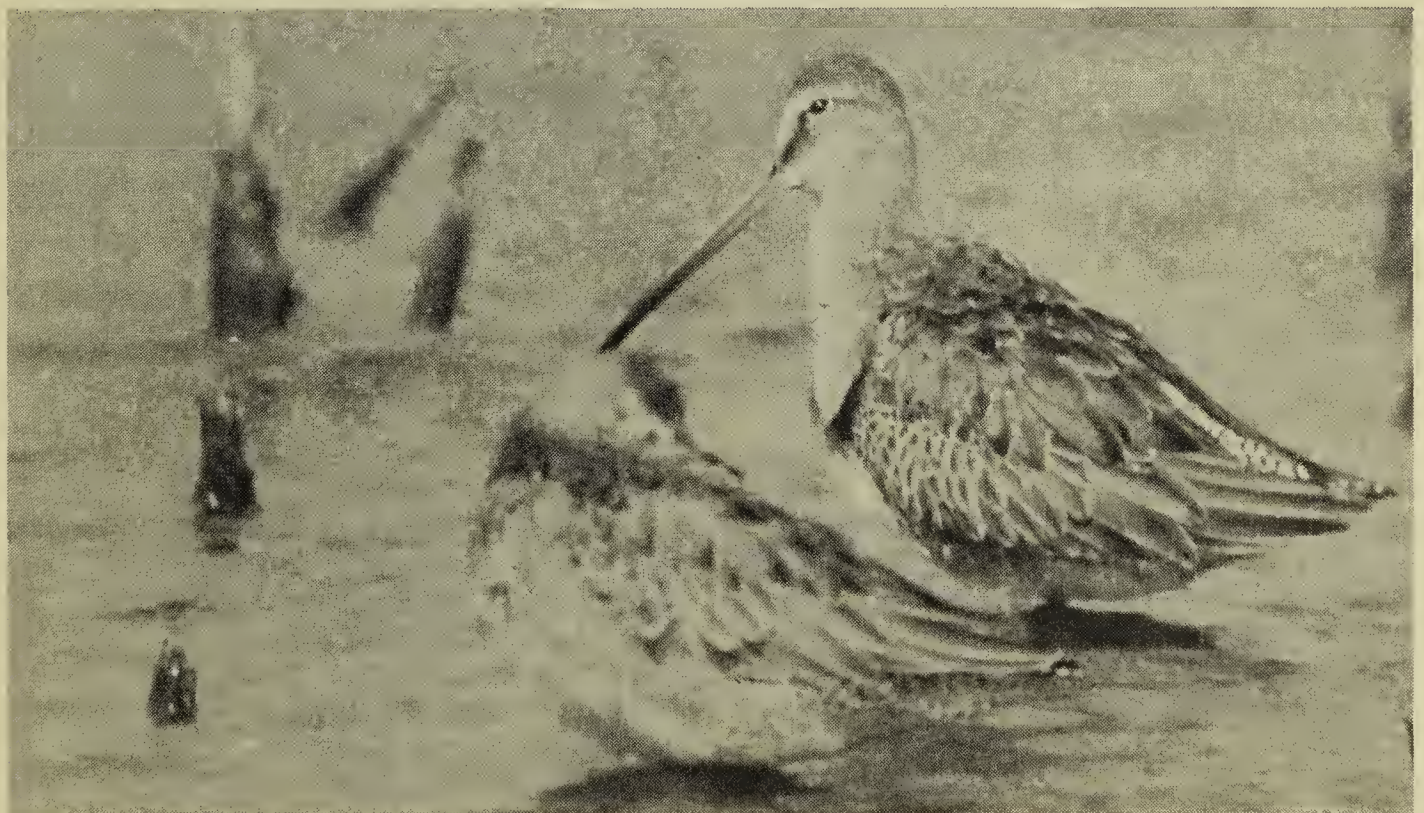


Photo by F. W. Kent

Dowitchers at rest

Authorities Make too Many Mistakes

HAROLD H. AXTELL, Buffalo Museum of Science, Buffalo, N.Y.

Reprinted from *The Kingbird*, publication of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Vol. V, No. 2, July, 1955.

The most competent field ornithologists can misidentify birds on occasion. In other words, man is not perfect and hence may make mistakes. To reduce these errors to a minimum, statisticians and other compilers of sight records, must demand of everyone a written report of the circumstances concerned with an unusual observation. This is necessary so that future authors can evaluate the sight record on the evidence obtained at the time of observation . . .

A frequent source of error is in misjudging size. Several times I have seen perched Starlings mistaken for Crows. Persons who have spent a great deal of time at Hawk Mountain have momentarily mistaken airplanes, butterflies and even gnats for hawks. Usually experienced observers quickly discover their error but on three or four occasions I have known a distant airplane to remain misidentified long enough for more than one person to express a serious opinion on what kind of hawk it was.

One competent authority I know misidentified a Crow because he was unaware of a size illusion even after some twenty or thirty seconds of discussion and looking at the bird. Finally one of his companions had to tell him that the bird perched in the top of an apple tree 150 yards away, which he persisted in calling a Crow, was in reality a Redpoll!

Another frequent source of error is color illusion. Two widely recognized authorities whose records are almost never doubted agreed that two birds were definitely swans, and wrote them down as such on their field record sheet. It then occurred to them to try to determine which kind of swan. They approached closer, and to their astonishment found their "swans" to be Black Ducks. Light conditions can perform apparent miracles in creating il-

lusions of many kinds, especially of color. Many birders have known a "big white bird" to turn out to be a normally colored Crow.

It is generally stated (and to some extent true) that the validity of a record is greatly increased when several observers concur in its identification. The reader will note, however, that all of the following misidentifications cited here involve several or many observers, including in each instance a number of authorities of some repute. In each instance also, there was no likelihood that the observers were not all referring to the same bird.

Fox Sparrows had been reported in early September, some weeks earlier than normal, by the local bird authority in a small community. The following day six bird birders from elsewhere, three of whom are commonly accorded the status of authorities in their home country, went to verify the report. The three leaders were pointing out several birds 15 to 40 feet away as Fox Sparrows to their three friends, who were concurring, when 2 more bird watchers came along who succeeded in convincing them that the birds were all Song Sparrows. Apparently no Fox Sparrows were present . . .

In spite of such occurrences, good observers are not likely to discover how often they may be wrong unless they break up into separate groups, see and identify some of the same birds, then get together and compare notes. This procedure is often so startlingly revealing that it might well be tried by clubs as a scientific exercise to prove the need for greater caution, skepticism, and verification. I will restrict my illustration to a single example. Three automobile-loads of us were on a field trip that was notable for the number of experts in each car. A large hawk flew low and slowly over the road while the occupants of all three cars stopped and examined it. A few minutes later we met and discovered that the occupants of one car had unanimously agreed that the hawk was a Red-tail, those of another car agreed it was a Rough-leg,

and the third a Marsh Hawk . . .

The immediate purpose of this paper is to promote a more widespread recognition of the knowledge that apparently all field students of birds make frequent errors in sight identification of which they often remain unaware. In so far as this immediate purpose is achieved, two further steps should logically follow: first, a popular recognition of the unreliability of sight records as usually compiled, and second, a desire for greater reliability, with an increased interest in adopting scientific methods of verification.

Birders would then recognize that for an important sight record, there is a lack of adequate authority in any observer's mere reputation or in his avowed feeling of absolute certainty. These fallen authorities . . . must then be replaced by the superior authority of permanently available evidence, even if it is only written evidence of the mental processes by which a person determined the identity of a bird. Lacking material evidence such as a specimen, photograph, or sound recording, the person interested in making a valid sight record of a rarity will supply evidence by making a com-

plete written record preferably on the spot, that shows all the observations, reasoning, and other factors on which he based his identification. This account should be filed permanently in some known place where it will always be available to any qualified student for reference . . . It can be examined in detail and used as the basis for a reasoned judgment as to the probable correctness of the identification.

It should be added that although an observer's birding experience, knowledge, ability, and honesty are not, by themselves alone, sufficient to make his unusual sight records acceptable to a properly informed compiler, these achievements are none-the-less of basic importance. Every competent censor-compiler learns to look for signs of these characteristics in every verifying account by "reading between the lines," if necessary . . . Adoption of these verifying procedures will not give us sight records in which the correctly identified are always distinguishable, with 100% certainty, from the misidentified. But the improvement in the ability of compilers to judge the probable validity of the records will be enormous.

Christmas Gift Suggestions

GIVE A BIRD BOOK — A bird book makes an ideal Christmas present, particularly for young people. There are many bird books on the market these days; many are good and some are not so good. However, it should be pointed out that the first essential is a field guide for identifying birds. It is almost universally agreed that by far the best book for this purpose is still R. T. Peterson's **Field Guide to the Birds**. Again we must caution you NOT to buy the **Field Guide to the Western Birds** as this covers the Rocky Mountains and beyond. Available at the Canada Drug and Book Store in Regina, at \$4.00, plus 10 cents allowance for postage.

GIVE THE BLUE JAY — Look back over the 1956 **Blue Jays** and see how many interesting articles and pictures are contained in one year's membership. Bring pleasure

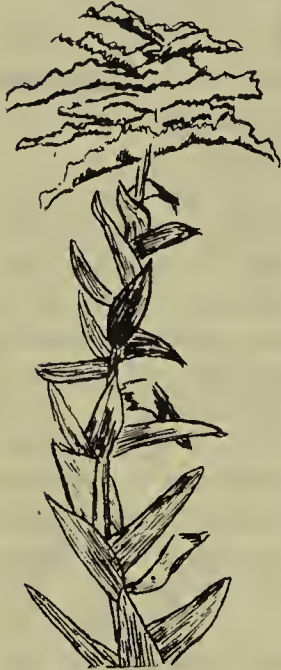
throughout 1957 by giving a membership in our society and a subscription to the **Blue Jay** to one or more of your friends. Each subscription costs you only \$1.00.

There are also a limited number of 1956 **Blue Jays** available. The four numbers of the 1956 issue are being sold for one dollar. They can be sent out together in an envelope to make an excellent gift for Christmas. The 1954 and 1955 **Blue Jays** (eight issues) are also available for one dollar; all 8 for \$1.00 or any 4 copies for 50 cents. Since the surplus which we printed in 1954 and 1955 is now considerably reduced, this is positively the last offer at half price. Following this offer, we shall keep a few sets on hand which will then be available at \$1.00 per set. Make a set of the **Blue Jay** one of YOUR Christmas gifts this year. Write to Elmer Fox, 1053, Gladmer Park, Regina.

Familiar Wild Flowers

By B. DeVRIES, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan

No. 4 THE GOLDEN-RODS



Sketch by
B. DeVries

These well known fall flowers of the genus *Solidago* belong to the large and varied Compositae, a family of the Dicotyledons. The Golden-rods are perennial herbs with thickened roots. In height they range from as low as eight inches in *Solidago mollis* Bartl. to over three feet in *Solidago dumetorum* Lunell.

Usually they are unbranched or only slightly branched, with undivided toothed or entire leaves which are alternate and varied in form. Some plants have leaf stalks, for example the basal leaves of *Solidago rigida* L., others have

stalkless leaves, for example *Solidago serotina* Ait.

The flower heads are numerous and small. They are borne in terminal panicles or in dense corymbose clusters. The individual heads bear many small flowers of two kinds. The central tubular or disc flowers have the task of producing seeds. The ligulate or ray flowers attract the insects for cross pollination. They are usually of a bright yellow color. Each fertile floret produces one seed in its inferior ovary. The fruits are distributed by means of a rough hairy pappus, which renders the achene light enough to be carried by the wind.

In the fall these Golden-rods give a colorful display along the roadsides and in wooded areas of our province. These flowering plants often grow with Asters for they both grow in a wide variety of soil types. They bloom from mid-summer until frost. Sometimes the tufted fruits are to be seen well into winter.

Some More Interesting Cypress Hills Plants

ARCH. C. BUDD, Swift Current, Sask.

In the accompanying sketch are three more plants which are peculiar in Saskatchewan to the Cypress Hills. First is the Squaw-root, Yamp or Yampa, *Perideridia Gairdneri* (H. and A.) Mathias. This is a slender stemmed erect plant of the Parsley family, from one to three feet in height with umbels of tiny white flowers. The pinnate leaves bear very narrow leaflets from two to six inches long and, except for the inflorescence, the plant is not very conspicuous. The roots are fleshy and generally bear a fascicle or cluster of small, aromatic tubers. These tubers formed one of the favourite farinaceous foods of the Indians, sometimes eaten raw for their nutty flavour but more often cooked. This plant is found plentifully from the Rocky Mountains and their foothills westward to the Pacific Coast, but

is found on the prairies only in the Cypress Hills. Other scientific names under which this plant has been listed include *Atenia montana*, *Carum Gairdneri*, and *Carum erythrorhinum*.

Occasionally, in the pine forest of the Cypress Hills one comes across a peculiar, pinkish-purple stem from one to three feet high, with small scale-like leaves. These stems are sticky and eventually bear at the top a raceme of white, urn-shaped flowers about a quarter of an inch long. These produce flattened, round capsules containing numerous seeds. This is Pine Drops, or Giant Birds' nest, *Pterospora Andromedea* Nutt, a saprophytic plant, one that derives its nutriment from decaying parts of other plants. Although found sparingly in coniferous woodlands from the Atlantic to the Pacific, it

MORE INTERESTING CYPRESS PLANTS.



Edible
Tubers

SQUAW-ROOT

PINE DROPS

SHINING-LEAVED
MEADOWSWEET

appears that the Cypress Hills remains its only location in Saskatchewan or Manitoba.

The remaining plant in the sketch is Shining-leaved Meadow-sweet, *Spiraea lucida* Dougl., an erect shrubby plant about two feet high. The leaves are short-stalked and oval, from one to three inches long, serrate margined towards the point, shiny-green above and glaucous and somewhat paler beneath. The in-

florescence is a flat-topped corymb of whitish, small flowers, thus separating this species from our other native *Spiraeas* which have pyramidal panicles. This plant is quite plentiful in the Cypress Hills but not found elsewhere until the Rocky Mountain foothills are reached. From there it is found as far west as the beginning of the Cascades. Another scientific name is *Spiraea betulifolia* on account of its birch-like leaves.

Additions to the Flora of Saskatchewan

By JOHN HOWARD HUDSON, Regina

In this note I would like to report the discovery of four plants not to my knowledge previously reported for Saskatchewan. Three species are from the extreme southeast corner of the province, one from the southwest.

1. *Hutchinsia procumbens* (L.) Desv. On the north shore of Little Ingebright Lake, 3½ miles south and 4½ miles east of Fox Valley, L. S. D. 15-4-17-25 W. 3rd, just at the foot of a cutbank where the salt deposit ends and vegetation begins; soil very alkali sand. Found May 24, 1956. More plants seen on the S.W. shore of Big Ingebright Lake, S.E. ¼ 24-16-25 W. 3rd, on the same day. This tiny mustard, 2 - 8 cm. high, grows in closely packed colonies which look like a large shaggy moss. The flowers are inconspicuous—so much so that I wonder if they aren't cleistogamous; for the pods seemed to develop directly from flower buds without the flower opening. The pods, much like those of the weed Peppergrass, are 2 - 3 mm long, oval, flattered, with the partition at right angles to the plane of the pod.

2. *Verbena urticifolia* L. (Nettle-leaved Vervain). Among coarse herbs on the south-facing slope of the bank of Antler River, N.W. ¼ 10-1-30 W. 1st. This would be 10 miles south and 1 mile east of Gainsborough; hence the spot is barely inside Saskatchewan, being 2 miles from the North Dakota boundary and 3 miles from that of Manitoba. Soil, wet silty alluvium. Found on July 22, 1956. This large nettle-shaped plant bears at the summit of the stem a panicle of small white flowers with a symmetrical 5-lobed corolla 4 m.m. across. The flowering branches are slender and tentacle-like (10 - 20 cm. long), studded every 5 or 10 mm. with these flowers. Reported by Stevens (3) as rare in woods in eastern North Dakota.

3. *Leonurus cardiaca* L. (Lion's tail). Open shady woods, valley flat on the north side of Antler River in N.E. ¼ 3-1-31 W. 1st; July 22, 1956. This is 9 miles south and 2 miles west of Gainsborough. This large woodland mint has a spike of flowers in size and color not unlike those of Marsh Hedge-nettle, but may be separated therefrom by its rather shapely palmately cleft leaves and spiny calyx. This is also reported by Stevens from wooded areas in eastern North Dakota. It was introduced from Europe and is not native.

4. *Laportea canadensis* (L.) Gaud. (Sood-nettle). Shady banks under maple-ash-elm woods, on the south bank of the Souris River in N.W. ¼ 1-3-1 W. 2nd; July 22, 1956. This location is ½ mile west and 1½ miles south of Glen Ewen. The plant belongs to the Nettle Family and stings more powerfully than our common nettle. In appearance it is not much like the latter, having large serrate alternate leaves crowded at the top of the stem, from among which the few green flower clusters protrude. A drawing will be found in Stevens (3), page 118. He notes it from dense moist woods in eastern North Dakota. Lowe (2) lists it as common in rich woods in southern Manitoba.

All these three eastern species have a wide range in Eastern Canada and the eastern and southern United States. The *Hutchinsia*, on the other hand, seems to be principally western, having, according to Fernald (1) a range from Alberta and British Columbia to California, with isolated pockets in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is found also in Eurasia.

Duplicates of these specimens will be sent this winter to the herbarium of the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa and to that of the Dominion Laboratory of Plant Pathology in Saskatoon.

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Nature's Schoolhouse

Editor's Note: In each issue of the **Blue Jay** we offer a prize for the best original nature story or observation. The story should contain less than 500 words. Place your name, age, address, grade and school on your story and send it to The Editor of the **Blue Jay**, 2335 Athol Street, Regina. The winner may choose as prize one of the **Peterson's Field Guides** (birds, mammals or insects) OR a **Wherry's Flower Guide**. Entries for the next issue must be in by January 15, 1957.

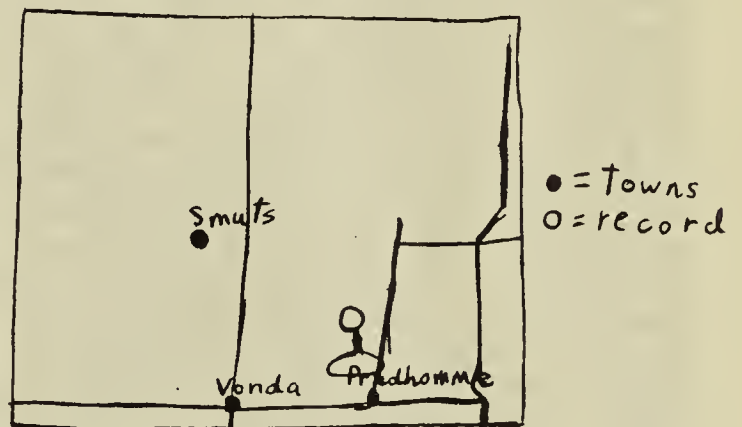
Fay Johnsen, Archerwill, Saskatchewan won a **Field Guide to the Birds** for her prize winning story, "The Everton School Bird Sanctuary" which was printed in the September issue of the **Blue Jay**. This month the prize goes to Robert Buhr of Dalmeny High School for his field observations of the Whistling Swans which stopped in his district during their 1956 spring migration.



Agnes Dobryden's Snow Goose "Hoosha," is the subject of Agnes Dobryden's story. Agnes is 15 and in Grade 10 at Sanford, Manitoba. She tells how this goose was found in the spring of 1950 with an injured wing. Since then it has lived in the farmyard. Agnes says that it is an interesting pet.

The following map was sent in by Donald Karasiuk, Prince Albert to show where he saw a pair of the rare Black-throated Blue Warbler on July 5, 1956 near Prud'homme, Sask. Donald says "the male was unmistakable." The record is, however, always more valuable if you make notes on the appearance and actions

of the bird when you see it. Donald did not apparently enter this observation with the idea of winning the prize for he did not give any of the particulars required in the contest. Donald's map and observations show originality and accuracy and we hope he will compete for our prize in 1957.



Map showing location of record

Prize-winning Story

INTERESTING GUESTS

By ROBERT BUHR, Mennon, Sask.
Age 15, Grade 10

On the sixth of May of this year, two very interesting birds were seen west of Mennon. When I was first told of two large white birds on a sizable slough west of here, I immediately went to see them. They turned out to be a pair of Whistling Swans.

They were swimming in a slough of about a half-mile or more in length and a quarter of a mile in width with the depth being about

four or five feet at the deepest. The area around the slough was quite open with only a narrow strip of low vegetation surrounding it.

It was also interesting to watch them take to the air which they did in the grand manner. They "ran" heavily on the water directly into the wind beating the air laboriously with their powerful wings; then as they slowly lifted they began flying more gracefully and in full flight flew swiftly.

The next day, May seventh, I returned. There were now two more swans making a total of four. They were rather wary but by careful stalking and imitating their call I not only got quite close but had them cautiously swimming in my direction. They were, however, soon at ease, stretching their wings, swishing water over their backs and making a lot of noise in general.

By May ninth the flock on the slough had increased to twenty birds. Also about this time individual birds and small groups of swans were appearing throughout the district. By the tenth of May, four days after the first birds were seen, the main flock west of Mennon had increased to forty-five swans and remained about that size all the time they were here. They were, by this time, fairly well spread throughout the district on various sloughs as well as the main large one west of Mennon. There was also a flock of Whistling Swans at Hepburn about six miles north of here.

About this time three swans were swimming on a slough about fifty yards from one house. They did not, however, remain more than a few hours.

One day, about three weeks later during a high wind, the entire flock left: Not only the main flock left but also all the other birds throughout the entire district because no one saw a single swan after that.

During the course of the three weeks almost every one in this district had a chance to see the swans with a few people coming from nearby Dalmeny as well. Everyone who saw these birds was impressed, and I for one certainly hope to see more of these magnificent birds in the future.

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I Like Snakes!

By JOYCE DEW, Museum Extension Services, Regina

An indignant three year old stole the show on me once when I glibly recited at a Christmas concert, "Ugh, I hate pigs, they are dirty things." A child's piping young voice exclaimed, "They are not! I like pigs." I think I know how that child felt, for when people draw back in disgust from a perfectly harmless snake and say, "How can you touch the horrible thing?" I feel like replying, "It is not horrible. I like snakes."

Perhaps if my experience with Cedric, the Bull snake and the only snake I have come to know well, had not been a pleasant one, I, too, would have the same antipathy towards snakes that is displayed by so many people. I am sure that being bit by a venomous snake is a rather disquieting experience, and it is true that a woman died recently in Ontario from snake bite. It is a rather unbelievable thought that irate citizens of that Ontario community demand that ALL snakes be killed to prevent the further destruction of human life from snake bite! Certainly more people are killed in this country by being shot as the result of hunting accidents than die from the venom of a snake. I have yet to hear someone suggest the eradication of all hunters as a way of preventing hunting accidents.

Not only are the vast majority of snakes in Saskatchewan non-poisonous, but they are beneficial to the farmer as well, killing many harmful insects and rodents. How then does one explain the general dislikes for snakes? It is expected that women should be terrified at the sight of reptiles, mice and such inhabitants of the animal kingdom, but it came as a bit of a surprise to me that men are perhaps even more squeamish about snakes than are women. This, I think, is a learned reaction and not an inborn one. I have seen very small children, who have never heard of a snake, go to one with no emotion other than curiosity. Likewise, I have seen a child reach out to touch a snake, only to have a horrified parent say, "Come away. Don't touch the horrible thing." True, since there are a few poisonous

Rattlesnakes in the southern part of our province, it is wise to warn small children to keep away from snakes until they are old enough to differentiate between the harmless and the harmful ones, but is it necessary to develop within them an unreasonable fear of all snakes?

Most cats and dogs will resist teasing and bite their tormentors, and they are perfectly justified in doing so. Herpetologists who have handled snakes all their lives declare that some snakes cannot be induced to bite. As is the case of the Bull Snake, the teeth are not used for biting and chewing, but are recurved and are used only to keep the prey, which is swallowed whole, from slipping out of the mouth. A Bull Snake, when first captured, will open its mouth and hiss loudly, at the same time vibrating its tail in the grass, thus making a rustling sound. As far as this species of snake is concerned, its behaviour is mostly bluff and is meant to intimidate the enemy. It usually succeeds, too, for that is how Cedric got himself into trouble and was brought as a result to the museum. He first attracted attention to himself by engaging in the innocent pastime of chasing a terrified dog across the lawn. Shortly after that he found himself enclosed in one of the museum's show cases, and has remained there more or less ever since, except when being shown to groups.

Another prairie snake, the Hog-nosed Snake, is an even greater bluffer than is the Bull Snake. If it finds that hissing and looking fierce fails to frighten away its tormentor, it will play dead, and since all respectable snakes are bottom side up when dead it assumes that pose. If you pick up its limp, "lifeless" body and place the snake back on the ground right side up, it will promptly roll over "dead" again, thus giving the game away by playing it too well.

On hot summer days it was refreshing to pick Cedric up if he had been in a cool spot, for he was deliciously cool to touch. If, on the other hand, he had been basking in

the hot sun, he felt warm indeed. Being cold blooded does have its disadvantages if you are a snake. Have you ever considered how inconvenient it would be if you could only digest your food when the temperature of your surroundings was within a certain limited range? Some snakes are affected that way. We could understand Cedric's not eating cold beef when he was accustomed to eating only live food, but we wondered at his vomiting it back up once it was in his stomach. Warming Cedric up to a cozy 80 degrees before feeding him solved the problem. Then the digestive juices were able to accomplish their task, and a two month's fast was broken. A fast of that length is no record for a snake; some snakes do not eat for a year after they are born.

Our native Saskatchewan snakes, including the Smooth Green Snake, Garter Snake, Red-bellied Snake, Bull Snake and Hognosed Snake, are for the most part easily tamed and make excellent pets. The only poisonous snake found in Saskatchewan, the Prairie Rattler, is confined to the southern areas and is readily distinguishable by the rattles on its tail. The Bull Snake will, by vigorously vibrating its tail in dried weeds, make a convincing enough rattle to frighten away the uninitiated. Cedric, who ordinarily is most docile and never emits a hiss from one month

to the next, reacted violently recently when he saw a dog. It was hard to believe that such a docile snake could put on such a ferocious appearance. It took him fifteen minutes to subside and resume a more harmless demeanour. It certainly was an impressive sight, even though I suspected that Cedric didn't mean a hiss of it but sincerely hoped the dog would take the warning to heart.

At present, Cedric, a live Bull Snake, is on display at the museum. Since life is an indeterminate factor with snakes, as with the human species, we cannot guarantee that Cedric will always be on display alive. However, all the snakes mentioned in this article are on display in a stuffed condition. I might add that Cedric has the habit of remaining so motionless that he too is frequently mistaken for the stuffed article. Such indignities Cedric takes unblinkingly. You would, too, if you had no eyelids.

Note: Cedric, the Bull Snake, has played an important role in the museum's educational program; some 6,000 school children having handled this snake in the past 12 months. All school groups touring the museum now enjoy the benefits of numerous tactile-aids, an activity aimed at achieving a more intimate contact between the audience and the subject.

Meteors and Meteorites

By JOHN HODGES, Regina Astronomical Society

The opportunities that remain for amateur research in astronomy are getting fewer in number each year. There are very few subjects that the amateur can investigate with the knowledge that he can be of help to the professional. Any society has therefore to select from a very narrow range of endeavours. The Regina "star gazers" have selected meteors and meteorites as their particular study because they know that the professional is always glad to hear about observations of these visitors from space. We can say that in this field the more observers the better. At any one location, an observer sees only one one hundred

thousandth of the visible sky. This leaves considerable room for more amateurs, a very happy situation.

For six years, the Regina group has watched the meteors that appear to radiate from the constellation of Perseus about the middle of August. So far we have logged about two thousand of these meteors, recording identity, brilliance, characteristics of flight, and colour. As we gained experience in this field, we were able to get some good photographs. The first Spectrogram taken by amateurs in Canada was obtained in August, 1955. A spectrogram is a picture which enables the material in a meteor to be identified, after the

meteor itself has disintegrated high in the atmosphere due to its speed and the friction with the air.

Members of the Regina Astronomical Society were invited to be present at the annual picnic held by the Regina Natural History Society in Hidden Valley on September 16th of this year and to show nature lovers the heavens after the evening wiener roast. A telescope had been transported (lugged would be a more appropriate word) to the crest of a nearby hill, and the clear blue sky promised excellent "seeing" conditions. Suddenly what seemed to be a jet trail caught the group's attention. Nature, as usual without warning, had put on a display that is seldom seen. A daylight fireball had come into our atmosphere, which made a good show because of its size . . . if you knew what really had happened. Fortunately, the amateur astronomers did know and immediately told everyone present. Some doubted their statements, and the sun had actually set before they realized that a large meteor had fallen, not a jet.

Many have inquired about these rare and unusual pieces of material. Have they been known to do damage? Yes, many times. Twenty-two occasions are known when meteorites have struck buildings. Some near misses have occurred with people as targets, but as yet no official report exists of the loss of human life. However, a large herd of reindeer was completely annihilated on the June 30, 1908 fall in Siberia.

Up until 1953 only 24 meteorites had been recovered in Canada. Many of these are to be seen only in museums across the border. The difficulty lies in recognizing a meteorite should you stumble on one. A few simple rules will help. Meteorites are usually a chocolate colour and somewhat smooth, as if polished. However, the surface will have "thumb prints", making it uneven. If the meteorite has lain on or in the ground for some time, this coating will have disappeared. A close look at the texture of the stone will often reveal a mineral content of iron, and the stone itself is heavier than the more familiar rocks.

What are meteorites made of, and have new elements been found in

them? This is a frequent question. Those that have more metals than stone in them are called Irons (Siderites) and those containing more rock material are called Stones (Aerolites). The rock type often found in meteorites is olivine and pyroxene, always with traces of metal. Most of the elements have been found in meteors but no unknown or new element has been discovered or is expected. New compounds, particularly of metals, are frequently found.

Scientists have only 1400 specimens to work with. As these fragments are the only material we have from the area outside our atmosphere, they form a very valuable small sampling of matter as it exists away from our earth.

As meteors enter our gaseous envelope they are travelling at high speeds. The deeper the atmosphere penetrated, the denser it becomes, and the greater the resulting friction. Most of the "shooting stars" seen as short bright streaks in the night sky are particles the size of a grain of wheat. They are approximately 60 or 70 miles above the earth's surface. The atmosphere at this altitude is very thin indeed, but there is nevertheless sufficient present for the meteor to be consumed as a result of the friction occasioned by its passage through this air.

How many meteors are of sufficient size to land on the earth's surface? Some scientists estimate that only about three meteorites reach the earth's surface each day. You can see, therefore, that a meteorite in Saskatchewan is a rare phenomenon. No wonder excitement ran high on Sept. 16 among the amateur astronomers at Hidden Valley. Should this meteorite be recovered by the Regina group you will read much more about this spectacular fireball and we shall know a little more about matter from outer space.

CORRECTION: Doug Gilroy's photo of a Sharp-tailed Grouse on page 86 of the last BLUE JAY was incorrectly credited to F. W. Lahrman. We regret this error.

The Blue Jay Bookshelf

99 RANGE FORAGE PLANTS OF THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES

By J. B. CAMPBELL, K. F. BEST and A. C. BUDD.

Canada Department of Agriculture. Publication 964.

POISONOUS PLANTS OF THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES

By J. B. CAMPBELL, R. W. LODGE, and A. C. BUDD.

Canada Department of Agriculture. Publication 900 (Revision).

These companion publications came off the Queen's Printer's presses in June, 1956. The authors are J. B. Campbell, Officer-in-Charge, K. F. Best, Range Ecologist, R. W. Lodge, Agricultural Research Officer, and A. C. Budd, Range Botanist, all of the Pasture Division, Experimental Farm, Swift Current, Saskatchewan.

Nearly 4,000,000 cattle, half a million horses and the same number of sheep derive summer pasturage and a fifth of their winter feed supply from the fifty million acres of rangeland on the prairies.

The first publication deals with grasses, sedges, rushes, shrubs, and trees, describing their growth characters, nutritive values, palatability, reaction to grazing and drought tolerance. Grasses are the most important livestock food; there are more than 140 reported growing in the prairie area. They also serve to protect the soil against wind and water erosion.

Generally plants with poisonous characters are found in association with others of fine forage properties. They are a hazard in native grasslands. About sixty plants with poisonous properties have been reported in the prairie provinces; some are plentiful and widespread. Fifteen of these make up the second bulletin; two, according to the text, may affect adult humans and four are dangerous to children.

Both publications contain excellent line drawings to simplify identification. Each of the 63 species of grass described are illustrated by Keith Best; the other illustrations are by Archie Budd.

These bulletins are not only important to ranchers and farmers, they make valuable additions to the library of anyone who is interested in the land. They may be ordered by

number from the Canada Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, or from the Dominion Experimental Farm at Swift Current.

Reviewed by ELIZABETH CRUICKSHANK

BIRD SONG RECORDINGS

Reviewed by MRS. STUART HOUSTON

There are a number of excellent bird song recordings available which reproduce the songs of many of our local birds. With Christmas coming soon, these offer an ideal solution for the bird watcher's gift.

One series, "**Bird Songs of Door-yard, Field and Forest**," (Volumes 1 and 2) contains 275 authentic songs and calls of 96 different North American birds. Each record, 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm, plays for 45 minutes. The songs were recorded by Jerry and Norma Stillwell. Records are available at \$7.95 per volume from:

**Ficker Recording Service,
425 Arcadia Road,
Old Greenwich, Conn., U.S.A.**

Another series "**American Bird Songs**" (Volume 1 and 2) also 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm was prepared by Drs. A. A. Allen and P. P. Kellogg of Cornell University. This series presents 111 bird songs. More marsh and game birds are included in this group than in the preceding one. These are available at \$7.75 per volume from:

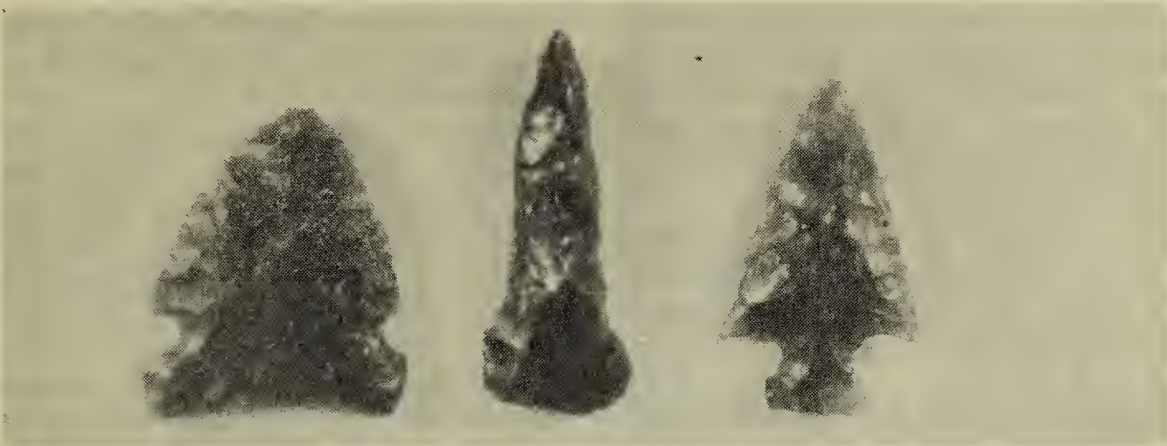
**Cornell University Records,
124 Roberts Place,
Ithaca, New York, U.S.A.**

"**Music and Bird Songs**" produced by Dr. Kellogg and James Fassett, Music Supervisor of CBS Radio, is also available from Cornell University Records. This record specializes in variations in bird songs—increasing or decreasing the speed of the sound with most interesting results.

Another series produced in Canada by a Canadian, Dr. Wm. Gunn, is "**Sounds of Nature**." Volume 1, "**Songs of Spring**", presents 25 common Ontario songbirds. This record compares very favorably with similar American records. Volume 2, "**A Day in Algonquin Park**", presents voices of forest, marsh and lake through a summer's day. These records are 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm. Vol. 1 is \$3.95 and Vol. 2 is \$4.95. They are available from

**Federation of Ontario Naturalists,
1156 Bay St., Toronto 5, Ontario**

Spade and Screen



BOOK REVIEW

THE MORTLACH SITE

1955. BOYD N. WETTLAUFER
Published 1956, Queens Printer, Regina. Department of Natural Resources, Anthropological Series No. 1.

The first published report of a scientific archaeological excavation in Saskatchewan is an attractive paper-bound book which should be made available to everyone interested in Plains archaeology. Since this is at present the **only** report available for the Northern Plains region it should receive much attention.

The study is divided into three major portions: Part 1 - the excavation; Part 2 - Physical features and soils of the Mortlach archaeological area (by H. C. Moss - Saskatchewan Soil Survey); Part 3 - Summary and conclusions. A good table of contents, 11 illustrations and 12 figures are a great help to the reader.

The report opens with a detailed description of the field techniques employed at the several points of excavation upon which the study is based. The difficulties and painstaking work essential to a serious archaeological investigation are very clearly indicated. The Mortlach Site is a particularly complicated stratified site.

The cultural material from each level has been named by Mr. Wettlaufer and is discussed separately, beginning with the topmost level and progressing downwards to the lowest and oldest level. The study embraces cultures covering a period of more than 3000 years, the earliest date of 1445 B.C. and two other dates having been established by Carbon-14 dating. Seven different cultures have been named, four of these each being divided into two or more

levels, a separation based, in part on a careful analysis of the soils by H. C. Moss.

Grit-tempered, stamped and cord-marked pottery was found in the four upper levels ("Mortlach" and "Moose Jaw" cultures). Projectile points were found in all levels and ranged from small side-notched triangulars in the topmost level through a variety of side-notched, stemmed and corner-notched kinds - all of which are well illustrated in the plates.

The projectile point types would have a greater significance if a larger number of each kind had been found. Unfortunately, only one or two points are available for some levels and comparisons with other sites on this basis will be difficult. As the author points out, future excavations will be required to describe each culture more fully.

The soils survey appears to have been handled very competently. This material is considered in a discussion of the geological significance of the Mortlach levels. Geology, climate and the activities of man are finally interrelated in the summary of the paper. A detailed and instructive review of the cultures (including a useful chart) is presented in the summary. The paper concludes with an important statement on the "potentialities of Saskatchewan archaeologically" which should be read by every interested person in the province. The author has done a fine job with a site which presented many difficulties. As an initial study in an archaeologically unknown area it will stand as a landmark of personal endeavor and governmental vision.

There is little doubt that this
(Continued on page 136)

The 1956 Annual Meeting

The eighth annual meeting of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society was held in the Museum of Natural History, October 27, 1956. Heavy snow prevented many members from coming.

In the absence of Fred Bård, Dr. R. W. Nero welcomed the delegates. He told them that they had to function as co-managers and not just as interested bystanders in the care of natural and wildlife resources. Each member's duty was to interest others, especially young people.

The president, Mr. Yanchinski, in his address also stressed the duties of the society members. "We have a wonderful heritage, we must preserve it for those who follow us as residents of this province, so wealthy in natural resources."

Dr. Nero reported on the A.O.U. meeting in Denver in September. What gratified him most was the time given—between extremely technical or popular papers—to getting and discussing kindred interests with other serious searchers after the truth in connection with all aspects of birdlife. There is a possibility that this largest and oldest of American technical ornithological organizations will meet in Regina in 1959.

R. W. Fyfe presented Kodachromes and commentary on a subject unfamiliar to most of the members—the Kangaroo Rat in Saskatchewan.

Dr. C. S. Houston took his audience back to early Saskatchewan bird history in his "Birds of Fort Carleton—In 1827, 1858, and 1956" given earlier at the A.O.U. convention. The fort is about fifty miles north of Saskatoon. He illustrated his talk with slides from the book, **Fauna Boreali Americana**, by Richardson and Swainson.

Mr. J. Hodges explained the activities of the Astronomical Society; he showed us how a study of the sky rounded out an interest in the earth and its life.

Mr. A. Dzubin of the Dominion Wildlife Service discussed the breeding behaviour of Mallards. He dealt too with what these birds need in way of cover, nesting sites, water and so on. He explained the change in policy in wildlife research today; the aim is not to promote study ex-

clusively of game bird needs, but to study the needs and behaviour of all birds.

Dr. Nero described, with fine kodachromes taken by F. W. Lahrman, an exciting surprise uncovered in routine field work—hundreds of Western Grebes nesting on dry land on the island in Old Wives Lake. The colony used to nest on the bullrush beds on the water around the island. They seem to have adapted themselves to dry land nesting after several years of higher water in the lake.

Mr. L. T. Carmichael showed kodachromes of our native plants that were silent poetry in colour, choice and composition. In scholarly commentary he linked up some of the specimens with the same explorers mentioned by Dr. Houston. Under most tragic and trying conditions the explorers had collected plants as well as birds. Some of these plants, such as *Phlox Hoodii*, retain the names of the explorers, to do them honour. This speaker, too, stressed the need of leadership to inspire in our young people an interest in nature.

The program item, "Saskatchewan in Colour," featuring kodachromes taken by members, produced a glorious panorama from all corners of the province and included slides illustrating almost every phase of our nature interests. Those sharing their hobbies with other members were Mrs. Skinner, Indian Head; Mr. Rankin, Moose Jaw; Mr. Budd, Swift Current; Mr. Capusten, Prince Albert; Mr. Fox, Regina; Mrs. Gerrard, Saskatoon; Dr. Ledingham, Regina, and Dr. Houston, Yorkton.

Dr. Bremmer presented the resolutions that dealt in part with: protection for Wilson's Snipe, Prairie Dogs, and all large white birds; commendation to the government for marking historic sites and to the Post Office for wildlife stamps; request that export of meteorites be prohibited without government permission; regret at the desecration of Wascana Park area; and a protest at the proposed discontinuing of conservation education work, such as that done by Mr. Arnold of Prince Albert.

"First Trails through the Yukon"

was the title of a most informative lecture on the routes of migration of the first inhabitants of Canada given by Dr. Douglas Leechman, former head of the anthropological section of the National Museum of Canada, now Director of Western Canadiana, Glenbow Foundation, Calgary. Dr. Leechman explained the three main routes of migration traced by means of what the people left behind them, illustrating his points with a large map

and by sketches on a blackboard. It proved a fascinating hour as the audience followed the passage of these people through ice-free corridors 20,000 years ago, to eastern, central and southern parts of the continent.

To close a most successful meeting Mr. Bard's film of the summer meeting at Madge Lake in June was shown.

Elizabeth Cruickshank,
Recording Secretary



Photo by R. W. Nero

Conservation Awards

At the annual meeting of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society Conservation Awards were made posthumously to Dr. L. B. Thomson, former Director of the P.F.R.A., and to E. J. Marshall, former Director of Forests with the provincial government. Seen receiving the awards in the above picture are Mrs. L. B. Thomson and Mr. Marshall's daughter, Mrs. G. Randolph.

The awards were presented by the Honorable J. H. Brocklebank, Minister of Mineral Resources, who told in a warm and moving way of what

he knew personally about work done by these two men in the interests of conservation. The Saskatchewan Natural History Society joins Mr. Brocklebank in paying tribute to these two dedicated conservationists. To an unusual degree they have discharged that great responsibility to succeeding generations which Seager Wheeler appropriately expressed in these words: "The soil is ours to make or mar and we should aim to leave it, when the time comes for us to pass it on, in as good or better condition as when it first came under our hand."

Registration at the Annual Meeting

Registered at the annual meeting of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society October 26 and 27 were 67 persons from one Manitoba and 19 Saskatchewan points. From Regina: Mrs. W. K. Cruickshank, J. H. Hudson, Pearl Guest, Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Stewart, Dr. and Mrs. G. Ledingham, Beattie Ledingham, E. L. Fox, F. H. Brazier, Edna Colbeck, Mrs. L. Lamont, L. T. Carmichael, Margaret Belcher, Mr. and Mrs. J. Hodges, G. Weighill, Mr. and Mrs. F. Robinson, Mr. and Mrs. B. Knox, Keith Knox, Marguerite Robertson, Mrs. M. Willers, Blodwen Davies, Mrs. T. Shoyama, Lucy Murray, Mr. A. Foster, Dr. R. W. Nero; from Saskatoon: J. Shadick, Mr. and Mrs. A. Dzubin, Mrs. J. W. Gerrard, R. B. Pravda, F. Roy, Helen Mann, Betty Long, Dr. R. M. Bremner; from Yorkton: Dr. and Mrs. C. S. Houston, Mr. and Mrs. C. Shaw; from Prince Albert: E. W. Brooman, E. Capusten; from Moose Jaw: Mrs. F. McLaughlin, Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Rankin; from Swift Current: A. C. Budd; from Spirit Lake: Mrs. J. A. Gunn, W. Anaka, Donna Anaka; from Canora: Nena Skurat; from Tisdale: K. E. Baines; from Naicam: W. Yanchinski; from Piapot: Mr. and Mrs. S. Mann, Robert Mann, Harry Williams; from Hazelcliffe: J. Provick; from Keatley: A. P. Pym; from Indian Head: Mrs. R. McLaughlin; from Lockwood: R. B. Willems; from Fairy Hill: Mrs. C. A. Stewart; from Rocanville: Mrs. E. D. Sutton; from McLean: Mrs. Harold Bray; from Neudorf: Ray Elmore; from Lac du Bonnet, Manitoba: L. Wojciechowski.

THE MORTLACH SITE

(Continued from page 133)

publication will increase interest in scientific archaeology. It is hoped that the issuance of this report will be met by a renewed wave of enthusiasm on all sides and will result in a further consideration of the need for a provincial archaeologist. We possess, as part of our cultural heritage, a prehistory in Saskatchewan of at least 10,000 years and possibly twice that figure. The gradual unfolding of this story will add immeasurably to the development of Canadian culture.

Note: Copies of **THE MORTLACH SITE** may be had upon request to the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History. The supply is limited.

NOTES AND REQUESTS

MRS K. H. SKINNER of Indian Head writes re: the annual meeting, "May I say how much we enjoyed the meeting on Saturday—every aspect of it." She also tells how to keep House Sparrows from eating the suet put out for Chickadees. Sparrows, she finds, eat only ground suet, so she pushes chunks of suet on three spikes driven through a piece of wood.

SMALL SANCTUARIES: Mr. and Mrs. W. Ranson of Minitonas, Man., wrote telling us how they learned of the **Blue Jay** through the Dauphin

Sportsmen's Panel on radio CKDM. The Ransons have always been conservationists. They try to keep part of their farm in its natural condition where wildlife may find shelter and might sometimes be seen and enjoyed by man. The trouble is that land is taxed in proportion to its soil fertility. The person who owns land must break it and crop it or the taxes will break him. The Ransons suggest that while our granaries are full of wheat that we cannot sell surely now is the time for us to work for the development of small tax-free sanctuaries.

SHORT-TAILED SHREW — A specimen of Short-tailed Shrew (*Blarina brenicanda*) has been received from Mr. Robert Levick. Collected by his cat at Porcupine Plains on August 6, 1956.

R. W. Nero.

REQUEST SILVER-HAIRED BAT records for coming distribution study. Write R. W. Nero, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, Regina.

REQUEST RECORDS OF EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) — In order to establish the western movement of the European Starling, M. T. Myres, Department of Zoology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, would like to have notes on the occurrence of the Starling, appearance and nest dates, and would be glad to get specimens to support these records.

TREASURER'S REPORT

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES

For the Year Ending October 22, 1956

INCOME

Sale of Blue Jays and Back Issues	\$2,049.60	
Interest	10.31	\$2,059.91
		<hr/>

EXPENSES

Printing 4 Issues of Blue Jay	\$1,544.74	
Section Reprints	126.59	
Postage	94.36	
Annual Meeting Expenses	82.36	
Stationery	101.42	
Labels and Typing	28.66	
Honoraria	300.00	
Bank Charges	3.58	\$2,281.71
		<hr/>

Excess of Expenses over Revenue		\$ 221.80
		<hr/>

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF NET WORTH

OCTOBER 31, 1955

Cash in Bank Current Account	\$ 193.61	
Cash in Bank Savings Account	412.76	
Dominion of Canada Bonds	302.25	\$ 908.62
		<hr/>

OCTOBER 22, 1956

Cash in Bank Current Account	\$ 161.50	
Cash in Bank Savings Account	223.07	
Dominion of Canada Bonds	302.25	\$ 686.82
		<hr/>

Decrease in Net Worth		\$ 221.80
		<hr/>

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

The **BLUE JAY** is not as large as we want it to be. The Society loses money each year and the size of the **BLUE JAY** is kept down accordingly. There are several courses of action we can take to remedy this. The best one seems to be for the regular members to renew promptly and to get new members to join. Prompt renewal saves us money because we do not have to print reminders and mail them. New members are always welcome and necessary. The more new members we get the bigger our circulation. A larger circulation reduces the cost of the **BLUE JAY** proportionately. We send **BLUE JAYS** to every province in Canada, most of the states in the United States, to South America, New Zealand, England and continental Europe. We should like to continue to expand. So renew your membership now and get that new member, too.

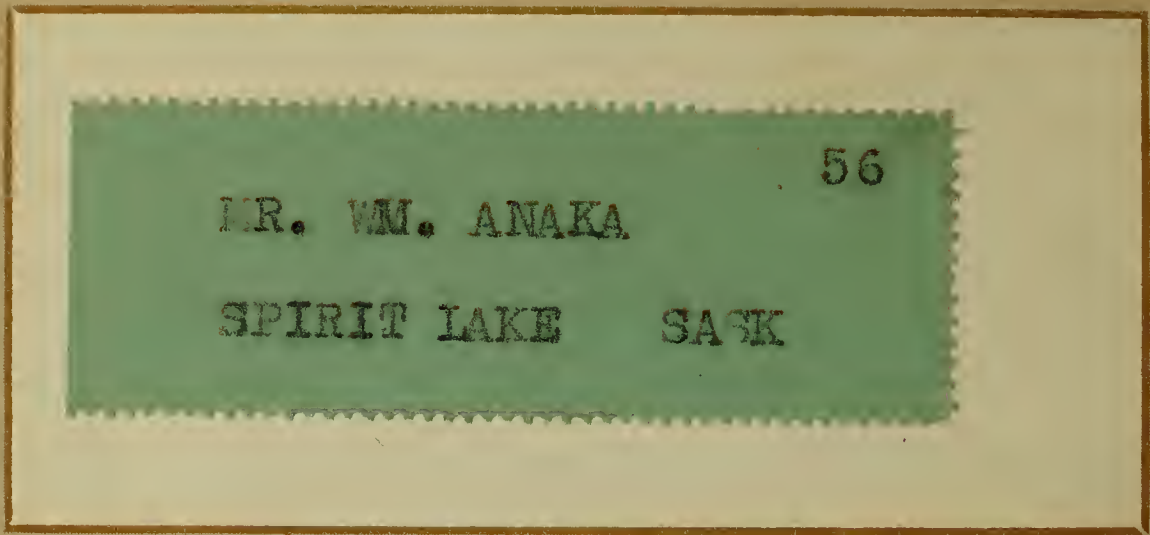
MEMBERSHIPS

All persons interested in any aspect of nature are invited to join the Saskatchewan Natural History Society. Membership dues are per calendar year and are \$1.00 per year. The **BLUE JAY** is sent without charge to all members not in arrears for dues. Application may be made to the Treasurer, Elmer L. Fox, 1053 Gladmer Park, Regina, Sask., Canada.

All dues, orders for back issues and change of address should be sent to the Treasurer. Cheques should include exchange.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If your address changes notify the Society immediately. Send your complete new address and your old one to the Treasurer, Elmer L. Fox, 1053 Gladmer Park, Regina, Sask., Canada.



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



Photo by R. W. Fyle

KANGAROO RAT

**SEND ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS, RENEWALS AND ACCOUNTS TO
E. L. Fox, 1053 Gladmer Park, Regina**

**SEND MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MARCH ISSUE
BY JANUARY 15, 1957 TO**

G. F. Ledingham, 2335 Athol Street, Regina.