

The

BLUE JAY



BULLETIN
of the
SASKATCHEWAN NATURAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

In Co-operation with
The Saskatchewan Provincial Museum

THE BLUE JAY

Official publication of the

SASKATCHEWAN NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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The aim of this society is to continue and extend the work and ideas of the Founder of the "Blue Jay", the late Mrs. Isabel M. Priestly, in forming a medium for the exchange of nature observations of mutual interest, and in working together for the protection and conservation of the wild life of Saskatchewan.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

The BLUE JAY is published quarterly at a yearly subscription rate of \$1.00. Anyone interested in any phase of nature will be a welcome member of this organization. All subscriptions will start and terminate on the first day of January. Those who have paid their subscriptions at the old rate will be credited with this amount as part payment on this year's subscription.

Will members please make special note that all material for the BLUE JAY should be sent to the Editor, at 1077 Garnet Street, Regina, and all subscriptions and business letters to Mr. William Whitehead, 2624 Angus Blvd., Regina.

Material for the next issue should
be submitted not later than Aug.15

THE EDITOR'S DESK

To naturalists in particular the spring and summer months are the most pleasant and interesting of all. We hope that you have and will enjoy these days to the full and record for us those interesting observations you make about the home, down by the lake, out on the open prairie, or along the shady path. There is no dirth of material, for plants and animals never tell the same story a second time.

We wish to thank our readers for the many helpful and encouraging letters which have reached this Desk. With your continued help we hope to maintain and, if possible, increase the value of this bulletin, as a medium of exchange for our opinions, nature observations, unusual records and discoveries.

We need also your financial support and the support of your friends. The printing of the last issue was financed entirely by the government through the co-operation of the provincial museum; but we are on our own now for the rest of the year and must sink or swim by our efforts alone. At the time of writing our paid-up subscriptions were only two hundred, less than half the number of copies mailed out. We had hoped by this date it would have been five hundred at least. There are still plenty of new subscription forms on the back page of the last issue, for only about thirty of these have been returned to the secretary. Please make an effort to pass some along to friends whom you know are really interested in the wild life of the province and its conservation. We feel that many will welcome the opportunity of membership in the Saskatchewan Natural History Society.

Money, at times, seems a necessary evil. Would that the BLUE JAY could be like Henry Thoreau, who had no desire for it. His ambition was only to study Nature, meditate on it and write so as to tell others what Nature said to him. We could then, like him, be free without restraint to see the Bluebird as a creature "carrying the sky on his back" and to hear the "faint, flitting, lisping notes" of the chickadee in winter, "like the tinkling of icicles in the grass."

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We take the liberty of quoting from "The Best out of Life" an article written for the Regina Leader Post by Ruth and Peter McLintock, members of the Regina Natural History Society:

"And these days when after six bleak months of Saskatchewan winter 'all suddenly the wind comes soft and spring is here again', there rises in all of us, even the most citified, the urge to get out of doors again; to hear the first robin; to find the first purple crocus; to explore for the first time the simple, varied joys that nature offers her followers. Like Donald Culross Peattie, they will discover that:

'A man need not know how to name all the oaks or the moths, or be able to recognize a synclinal fault, or to tell time by the stars, in order to possess nature. He may have his mind solely on growing larkspurs, or he may love a boat and a sail and a blue-eyed day at sea. He may have a bent for making paths, or banding birds, or he may be only an inveterate and curious walker.

But such a fellow has the best out of life."

BIRD SECTION

Mr. Fred Bard, Director of the Provincial Museum, is of the opinion that in spite of the early spring, the arrival of birds is on the average very little earlier than other years. Several of our correspondents verify this idea; others, however, have reported that several species appeared a week or ten days earlier than usual.



In spite of, or perhaps because of, the long dry spell it has been an ideal spring for the bird enthusiast and the letters that we have received reflect the keen interest which has been shown. Following are excerpts from some of these:

YORKTON -- Cliff Shaw

Ten Cedar Waxwings were seen April 11 on a crabapple tree in the C.P.R. station. These are, no doubt, the same group of birds that have been around during the winter. Five Cedar Waxwings were observed near the muskeg west of the city at the time of the Christmas census. During January a further ten birds were noted on four occasions in the down-town section and were last seen January 13. Normally the average spring arrival date for these birds in the Yorkton district is June 1, with the earliest date recorded as May 26, 1939.

A lone purple martin was seen inspecting one of the bird houses at the city hall, April 23. This was one day earlier than any previous record here. The species arrived in full force five days later, April 28. The average date has been May 4.

A Brown Creeper was seen investigating the bark of an elm tree on a Yorkton street, April 26. This species is only occasionally seen here during migration and the date is about two days earlier than other years.

TISDALE -- K.E. Baines

Mr. Baines has sent us some very interesting notes on a trip he made this spring to Hudson Bay and Leaf Lake. Here are some of his bird observations: "We left Hudson Bay at 9 p.m., April 2, by truck for the Lake, a trip of some 30 miles, two-thirds of which was through uninhabited country and the final five miles on the ice of the lake. Some Mountain Bluebirds were seen on the trip. These have nested in telephone poles along the railroad, four miles north of the town for several years now. The first Canada Goose, and a lone one at that, arrived that evening.

The next day, at the far end of the lake a newly-built Bald Eagle's nest was located. The eagles were there but seemed rather shy. The nest was in a large white poplar 300 yards from the lake shore and near the spillway on the dam where fish are always available. The nest was about 80 feet from the ground and the only branches on the tree supported it. It was about six feet in diameter and the only way to get at it would be either to fell the tree or hover over it with a helicopter.

SKULL CREEK -- S.A. Mann

"It may be of interest to some of the members to know that we had three tree sparrows and two robins which wintered on our ranch. There were

also two more robins at a neighbor's. A Brewer's Blackbird remained at another place about six miles distant. All the birds seemed quite perky, even on cold days. There was a great quantity of dry fruit left on the trees, which was a blessing, for those staying over as well as those which usually winter here. Bohemian Waxwings were very plentiful along the creek this winter, being in flocks of from fifty to two or three hundred. Snowbirds were very plentiful periodically. Sometimes one would see thousands and the next time at the same place there might be only very small flocks or possibly none at all. One of my neighbors said that for over a week actually acres of them were seen on a hillside.

SHEHO -- William Niven

"All through the winter there were few storms and little snowfall, but a long spell during part of January and February saw temperatures down to 30 and 40 degrees below zero. Plenty of their natural food was available for the birds owing to a good crop of wild seeds and berries last season and the light snowfall. However some of the species were entirely absent here such as the Bohemian Waxwings and Evening Grosbeaks. Most of the common winter birds were present in fair numbers all winter.

The first Horned Lark arrived March 1, which is nearly a week later than usual. A crow was seen March 3, but this is very unusual for this district."

For purposes of comparison for others who keep winter bird records and for those who might start doing so next winter, Mr. Niven has named the following as usual winter birds at Sheho: American Goshawk, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Ruffed Grouse, European Partridge, Horned Owl, Snowy Owl, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Chickadee, Magpie, Bohemian Waxwing, Northern Shrike, Pine Grosbeak, Evening Grosbeak, Common Redpole and Snow Bunting.

Of these, both species of the woodpecker as well as Chickadees visited his feeding station in the yard nearly every day.

GIROUX, Man.

CHICKADEE FEEDING

Miss Frances Baird believes that there is no food more appreciated by chickadees than peanuts. For many years they have been enticed to her doorstep by these tasty morsels during the winter months. Their preference for nuts makes her wonder if worms and grubs have a nut-like flavor. I am sorry we can not answer that question.

In order to attract them she ties a bone to a tree, and then makes personal pals by feeding them nuts out of her hand.

"It was eighteen years ago," writes Miss Baird, "that the first chickadee picked my thumb-nail. Since then they have come to my hand, head, lips and even tongue to snatch a shelled nut. They disdain crumbs, currants, raisins, cocoanut and even pork rinds when it is possible to get peanuts. They are strong enough to carry a whole walnut or Brazil nut when shelled. Every spring on their departure they sing a song of gratitude."

MELFORT -- L.T. McKim

According to Judge McKim's bird record, which he has kept for 25 years, this year's arrival of the House Wren was the earliest. He saw the first one on May 9, ten days ahead of the usual time.

"On May 15," he reports, "I saw my first Ruby-crowned Kinglet. I wonder why I had never seen it before. I have often seen the Golden-crowned.

This is the country of the Red-tailed Hawk. Swainson's, so common in the south, is rarely seen in the Melfort district."

Speaking of Hawks, Mr. Cliff Shaw states that the heaviest migration of hawks he has ever noticed occurred at Yorkton, April 10. Twenty-five Buteos were seen between 9:30 and 10:30 a.m. All except five were observed during the first half hour and none were seen during the next two hours. With the exception of one Roughleg all appeared to be Red-tails. He believes these may have been scouting hawks as they came over in ones and twos. The most seen in the sky at one time was five.

White-winged Crossbills

Miss Summers has asked us to make the following correction:

With reference to the four White-winged Crossbills seen by Miss Pauline Summers at Yorkton, Feb. 6, 1949 and the notation that this was believed to be the only record other than that of a female found dead two years ago by Ronald Coghill, an earlier record was listed by the late Mrs. Priestly. In the July 1942 list of birds identified in the Yorkton district for recent years, Mrs. Priestly recorded a White-winged Crossbill was picked up dead in Yorkton, April 3, 1938.

And here is another record:

An immature male White-winged Crossbill was found dead six miles north of Langenburg, May 8, by Darcy Wershler of Yorkton. Darcy is one of the Junior members of the Simpson Public School Naturalists' Club. He brought the specimen to Mr. Shaw and after having the identification verified, he and his friends performed a burial service.

HIGH HILL -- Steve Waycheshen

"Sharp-tailed Grouse are increasing here and are seen in quite large flocks. No nests have been found up to May 7, but it is evident they are mating.

Ruffed Grouse are seen quite commonly now and are heard drumming every day. Usually they are heard drumming more commonly in the evening, but lately they have been keeping it up throughout the day."

FORT SAN -- E.M. Callin

A Wise Mallard

The following interesting observations have been made by Mr. Callin. A keen observer often sees so much that most of us miss. Nature has many stories to tell; we have only to look for them. He writes:

Last year, while wandering through one of my favorite haunts by Echo Lake at Fort San, I came upon what appeared to be a Crow's nest in a fair-sized maple tree. Upon closer investigation a female Mallard flew from the nest. The nest contained a full set of eggs and of course was an old Crow's nest relined. The tree was on the bank of a creek which contained a few feet of somewhat stagnant water (the creek bed is low enough and near enough to the Lake

that it is always full of water, though there is no flow). Water had washed away some of the roots of the tree and, though the tree was still healthy, it leaned out over the water so that the nest was directly above the middle of the stream and only several feet above it. Here was one mother duck who had recognized a perfect site for a home - no ground-prowling varmints could rob her nest and when the ducklings were ready to leave the nest they could drop safely into the water a few feet below!

I am not able to testify as to the ultimate success which this duck had last year; however, one might assume that the unorthodox venture was successful as I have the pleasure to report that the nest is again occupied by a Mallard this year. I would suppose that by long odds it is the same bird - at any rate I hope so. I had been keeping a hopeful eye on the nest during the last few weeks and it was on May 8th that I first found the duck on the nest. She was evidently incubating too, as she sat very close on the nest even though I moved about only a few feet from her. I was tempted to take a peek in the nest but that old black devil, Mr. Crow, was watching the proceedings with more than passing interest from a tree not many yards away, and I was afraid that if I disturbed the duck the Crow would be at the nest before the mother duck got back to it.

I had heard the male Mallard as I walked along the bank of the creek and finally flushed him from the stream a hundred yards or so past the nest.

THE PAS -- Rev. Rural Dean Ray Horsefield

So interesting is the Dean's account of this rarely observed courtship, illustrating again a keenness of observation, a trait common to true naturalists only, that we have taken the liberty of clipping it from the "Chickadee Notes" of the Winnipeg Free Press. We feel sure that the editor will not mind.

"This morning I watched two (male?) Ravens pursuing a third, presumably a female. I was attracted by their crying, which had been going on for an hour, and I went out and watched them high in the air over the main mine shaft. The two pursued the one with splendid sailing acrobatics and sudden dives, while she eluded them gracefully, slipping to and fro like a figure skater. Once in a while, the two I took to be males would haul off and peck at one another, but mostly they concentrated on showing off before the female.

One of them was eventually elected: the female swerved towards him and they came diving down from different points, then swooped together and shot up breast to breast for a moment as if kissing. They repeated this two or three times and then the female started off home towards Channing, with the male in attendance. The discarded suitor hung around for a few moments and then I saw a fourth bird appear from nowhere alongside him. They began to sport together but presently one of them vanished but I could not tell which as they kept disappearing behind the plume of smoke of the smelter. The remaining one went spiralling up over my head as if searching for someone, calling, calling as he went."

Dean Horsefield continues: "It was a pleasant scene to watch: I had not realized so ugly a bird could behave so gracefully under the influence of the tender passion! There have been Ravens around here summer and winter for the past three or four years, at first a single pair, now apparently more. The original pair nested at Channing: we rarely saw them in Flin Flon but this past winter I have seen Ravens in town almost every day, scavenging. Apparently they haven't read what Taverner says about their fleeing human advance!"

REGINA -- Ruth and Peter McLintock (Regina Leader)

"Bird watching," said our friend across the table, "is an anemic occupation for any man."

We didn't contradict him, but we thought, "Brother, you've never tried it."

We have. And it is our firm conviction that people who look down their noses at other people, just because they watch birds, collect flowers or Indian arrow heads, study the stars, or do any of the hundred-and-one things which take them out-of-doors, just don't know what the score is.

You can study nature by yourself or with a group of kindred spirits. The knowledge you pick up, no matter in what field, you will always carry with you, and it can be put to good advantage anywhere.

HAWKSDEN -- Harold Kvinge

"I have observed three Western Grebes on our pond, May 3. The Long-billed Curlews seem to be more numerous this spring. I have noticed them on several occasions. I attribute the large varieties of ducks on our pond this spring to the scarcity of water in the sloughs.

A pair of avocets, also a pair of burrowing owls are nesting near the pond. The McCown's Longspurs are quite numerous around here, although they are rare in many parts of Saskatchewan. Redwing Blackbirds have not been so numerous in our trees for many years. They sing almost continually. Two pelicans stayed on our pond on May 10 for several hours."

YORKTON -- Miss Pauline Summers

Miss Summers was not quite close enough to identify this sparrow on May 2, but its song was very musical - one she states that would be very difficult to forget, once having heard it. It sang, "O ... tse-tse - tse - tsee. Doh - la - la - la - la." Perhaps some of our readers can identify it for her.

PUNNICHY - Madeline B. Runyan

Mrs. Runyan reports having been unable to identify a new bird very similar to a slate-colored junco, but it has bright orange-colored legs. Two of these also were seen during the summer of 1948.

LEASK - Guy C. Coates

Mr. Coates writes that on April 24 a bird alighted near where he was working. It was a little larger than a Say's Phoebe and its coloring and actions were much like those of a Phoebe, but it had a long forked tail, quite as much out of proportion to its size as is the Magpie's. He had two calls, a questioning "Chee-ip" repeated once or twice, then answered by himself with a "Chip-pur".

Last year a Whip-poor-will made his home near us, arriving May 25. We were somewhat disappointed in his call.

NOTE: Museum authorities and others that we talked with were unable to identify these birds from the descriptions given. Can you?

REGINA -- R.R.2 -- Doug Gilroy

We always expect at least one little nature story from Mr. Gilroy and we are not to be disappointed. Here it is:

"Apparently it is not considered bad mannered in White-crowned Sparrow circles to sing with one's mouth full. Last Sunday, May 1, I was photographing them. They would come to the little pile of seeds I put out for bait and while

they were shelling them between their mandibles they would sing their sweet spring song - a lovely sight and sound indeed when one is only at arm's length."

On March 26 Doug found a Great Horned Owl nest in an ash tree about 25 feet from the ground. During the last half of March he noticed that magpies became very noisy and began to fly hither and thither in an excited manner. Evidently they were making wedding plans, for on March 29, to his surprise, he found the nest well on its way to completion. He believes they must have started to build March 24 or earlier.

Mr. Gilroy saw a Cooper's Hawk on April 26. It was the day after this that Mr. Fred Bard saw one at Craven. They are not common in this section of the province.

KEEWATIN, Ontario -- M.A. Kittle

We are pleased to hear from subscribers outside of Saskatchewan and to know that they are interested in our activities. Mr. Kittle, writing April 9, reports that Geese are nesting in the Whiteshell district. A friend of his, Mr. Ed. Nanson, took a picture of one of their nests with three eggs in it. An old gander resented his intrusion and drove him out of the area in a hurry. Believing that there is a possibility of Whooping Cranes in his district, Mr. Kittle has requested information. We have sent him a series of bulletins on the subject.

BURNHAM -- Arthur Ward

BIRD BANDING

The only regret that Mr. and Mrs. Ward had in connection with their trip last summer to England was that during the period from April 28 to September 8 they temporarily had to close down bird banding operations. In spite of this, however, Mr. Ward banded 108 birds during the period that he was home. Early again this spring he has continued with the hobby and up to May 14, 77 birds, of 12 species have been banded. There were 17 repeated trappings of White-crowned Sparrows. One Robin, banded July 31, 1947, returned and was banded May 14, 1949. Following is the list:

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Tree Sparrows (3) | White-throated Sparrows (3) |
| Slate-colored Juncos (4) | Vesper Sparrow |
| White-crowned Sparrows (43) | Song Sparrow |
| Olive-backed Thrush (2) | Clay-colored Sparrows (4) |
| Lincoln Sparrows (8) | Redwing Blackbirds (2) |
| Robins (4) | Harris Sparrow |

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HYAS -- John A. Klepack

It is encouraging to know that there is an Audubon Bird Club in Mr. Klepack's district and that the members are very keen on bird study and bird migrations. More Pine and Evening Grosbeaks and more flocks of Redpoles than usual were seen early this spring. Prairie Chicken are present in large numbers and it looks as if they are staging a real come-back.

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Mr. and Mrs. Dick Bird, of Regina, are this summer making a series of films of the wildlife of the Prince Albert National Park area for the Dominion government.

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PRAIRIE CHICKEN DANCING GROUNDS

Two more reports have come in about these, one from K.E. Baines, of Tisdale and the other from Guy C. Coates, Leask.

Mr. Baines writes that there is one on the north-east corner of the north west quarter of T 23, R 3, W 2nd. This is on a quarter he farmed and is about ten miles S.W. of Saltcoats. "We also had a dancing ground of the pinnated grouse five miles west of Saltcoats on either side of the road as well as right on it. These birds are much more showy when courting, but they are very scarce there and I have never seen one in Tisdale."

The dancing grounds Mr. Coates refers to are on his own farm, on the north edge of T 46, R 5, W. of 3rd. In fact there are two such places utilized by Sharp-tailed Grouse. He has seen thirty-odd birds "dancing" at one time.

HIGH HILL -- Anton and Steve Waycheshen

From these brothers we have received a most comprehensive list of 1948 Fall Migration dates, Nesting Records of 1948 and also the First Seen Dates of winter birds for the winter of 1948-49. Included in the seven-page report are some splendid observations and some unusual date records.

We are very sorry that we will not be able to report these records in this issue, but feel that they should be published in the fall as a most valuable guide to others who are compiling similar ones.

In the meantime the list have been turned over to the Provincial Museum and copies are being made for its records.

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Mr. Bard wishes us to announce that such lists are of great value to the Museum and he would like to obtain as many as possible. He is hoping to distribute a series of nature bulletins and all information of this nature is invaluable.

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DUCKS UNLIMITED

Among the delegates from Western Canada to attend the convention of "Ducks Unlimited" at Reno, Nevada, this spring was Judge L.T. McKim of Melfort, one of our Directors.

In reply to a letter suggesting that he might pass on to us some items of general interest in connection with the convention, Judge McKim stated that no particularly new issue was brought up at the meetings. He was pleased to report, however, that the proposed budget of \$350,000 was approved.

"Ducks Unlimited" he writes, "is always on the lookout for new projects and would welcome suggestions. These projects should, if possible, be not too near towns. We cannot put water into a lake unless there is a source available but are interested in any place that can be made a good breeding ground for ducks by diverting water or building a dam."

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BIRD NESTING RECORDS

- Mar. 26 Great Horned Owl (2 eggs) -- Doug Gilroy, Regina
 29 Magpie -- Doug Gilroy
- Apr. 2 Mallard (5 eggs) -- S. Waycheshen, High Hill
 3 Bald Eagle -- K.E. Baines, Leaf Lake
 3 Mountain Bluebird -- W. Yanchinski, Naicam
 4 Horned Lark)
 Starling, in Flicker hole) Doug Gilroy
 5 Magpie (7 eggs))
 Mallard (11 eggs)) Pauline Summers, Yorkton
 5 Crows (eggs) -- Craven)
 Magpie (eggs) -- Craven)
 White Pelican (3 nests with eggs) -- Imperial Beach)
 California Gull (eggs) -- Imperial Beach -- Fred Bard, Regina
 6 Killdeer -- W. Yanchinski
 7 Robin (1 egg) -- S. Waycheshen
 10 Loggerhead Shrike -- W. Yanchinski
 Eastern Phoebe (1 egg) - In old Barn Swallow's nest -
 S. Waycheshen
- 12 Avocet)
 Owl -- H. Evinge, Hawarden

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BIRD BANDING

A. McPherson, 503 Ave. F, North, Saskatoon, has made some interesting observations about bird banding in general and the Townsend's Solitaire and Sparrow Hawk in particular. He writes:

"Trapping birds this spring for banding was poor; they did not seem to care for food in the traps, so for a change I started using more water in them, and got better results.

I have found that water for Thrushes is really good. This year I have banded more Thrushes than I have done before, and the trap I catch them in is just one for water. I had an unusual bird around my place this spring - Townsend's Solitaire. It stayed around my bird traps from April 10 to April 13. I was looking up Catalogue of the birds of Saskatchewan by H.H. Mitchell and I find one or two records of this species, one from Lake Johnston and the other at Regina on Sept. 30, 1923.

During the time it stayed around my place we had a good inspection of the bird. It was not the least bit afraid of people. We got quite close to it and did not need our field glasses to identify its field marks. It stayed around my bird trap all day. It would perch on top of a post, sit there and watch for insects. On seeing one it would fly down, catch the insect, then back to the same perch again. I was keen to trap this bird for banding, but my efforts were unsuccessful. I even tried putting trout flies in my traps, suspended from the top but with no luck.

So far this year I have had only one Robin return which I banded last year. Last year I had six returns. We have a bigger Duck, Grebe, and Coot population in the Hudson Bay Slough this year owing to pot holes and small sloughs being dried up.

I would like to mention about our Sparrow Hawk population. Around Saskatoon here where they used to be plentiful, they seem now to be about a

bird of the past. I have recorded one this year, and I am sure it is caused by the birds being shot by people with .22 rifles, it is a great pity that this sort of thing is allowed to go on."

There are several records of the Townsend's Solitaire having been seen in Saskatchewan, although its presence so far away from the mountains is rare. C.G. Harold reports one taken May 10, 1922 at Lake Johnson. In Regina one was seen by H.H. Mitchell, Sept. 30, 1923, and one by F. Bradshaw in 1931. Mr. C.F. Holmes reports a male taken April 21, 1931 and a second bird, Sept. 10, 1933, six miles south of Dollard. Mrs. H. Flock, of Regina, saw one, April 17, 1934. Mrs. J.R. Priestly saw a single bird, just outside Yorkton, Oct. 24, 1940.

-- Editor

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SPRING MIGRATION RECORDS

We had prepared for publication a full list of "first seen" records of birds for almost every day from March 1 to May 15. Since this took up seven pages of closely typed material, our committee felt that it should be deleted.

The information is of considerable value and has been turned over to the Museum to be filed with similar records.

Of greater interest to the majority of readers it was thought, are little stories about the antics, nesting habits, etc., of particular individuals.

For all the letters and information we have received for these records, our sincere thanks goes to: Mrs. John Hubbard, Grenfell; H. Kvinge, Hawarden; Wm. Niven, Sheho; Jack Taylor, Regina; S. Waychesen, High Hill; R.A. Nevard, Fort San; C. Shaw, Yorkton; A. Ward, Burnham; E.M. Collin, Fort San; Mrs. E.B. Flock, Regina; Pauline Summers, Yorkton; W. Yanchinski, Naicam; Mrs. Carl Runyan, Punnichy; K.E. Baines, Tisdale; Pa vey Beck, Cumberland House; D. Lightbody, York Lake; Doug Gilroy, Regina; F.G. Bard, Regina; F.W. Lahrman, Regina; and A. Swanston, Regina.

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---And then there were 32

It is most unfortunate that another Whooping Crane has been wantonly destroyed. Early in May the body of one was found in the Wilkie district, and it is thought that it was shot last fall while migrating to wintering grounds in Texas.

As our readers know, this species is the rarest of North American birds. Thousands of dollars have been spent in an effort to save it from extinction. Careful counts have been made of the number left. Last winter there were only 33.

E.L. Paynter, provincial game commissioner is gravely concerned over the incident. "It was evidence," he said, "of the lack of consideration some individuals have for our wild life resources." He makes a plea for the co-operation of public-minded citizens in preventing occurrences such as this.

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MAMMAL SECTION

PORCUPINES



Doug Gilroy, of Regina, has made the following observations:

"On March 2, while snowshoeing through the bush about two miles west of home, I came upon quite a large area where almost every willow clump was well peeled of its bark. A porky must have fed here all winter but a thorough search did not reveal him.

On April 20, about half a mile north of Bredin I came across a large porcupine posing beautifully in the topmost branches of a high elm tree. I climbed up after him and got pictures. Old Porky just slowly walked out to the very tip of a long slender branch and there curled up into a ball of yellow hair and quills."

"Porcupines are quite plentiful around here," reports S.A. Mann, of Skull Creek, "and are very destructive to young trees. I usually get out a few times during the winter and hunt down all those near our buildings, both to protect our fruit trees and stock. I have seen stock that had become too inquisitive with a real dose of quills both in their noses and on their legs."

Harold Kvinge found a dead porcupine about two miles west of Hawarden, March 2.

RATS

There seems no doubt that the rat is becoming a dangerous pest in Saskatchewan and that every effort should be made to stamp out the invasion which threatens not only our property but our general health.

Mrs. Hubbard, Grenfell, feels that unless constant vigilance is kept rats will continue to become more numerous in all sections. Buildings with poor floors and foundations, she believes, lead to a rat invasion. Cats are very effective in keeping them in check.

S.A. Mann says that these pests are becoming very numerous in the Skull Creek area. He caught six or eight during the fall and early winter. One was a very large male measuring 16 3/4 inches from tip to tip. It was of a brownish tint. Most of the others were much darker and much smaller, and he thinks that these were only half grown. They were all caught in a No. 0 gopher trap, which proved very effective.

The Sanitation Bulletin No. 5, of the Saskatchewan Department of Public Health gives us both useful information and a timely warning. It would be well to obtain a copy.

SKUNKS

Five skunks were responsible for the loss of 23 chicks on Mr. Ward's farm, at Burnam, on April 12. They were trapped and disposed of.

JACK RABBITS

Since reporting in our last issue that Jack Rabbits had disappeared from the Grenfell district, Mrs. Hubbard writes that a pair were seen in February. A neighbor of hers also saw one - the first in two years.

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DEER

White-tails seem to be able to hold their own in the Tisdale area in spite of settlers is Mr. K.E. Baines opinion. Five years ago there were more Mule Deer than White-tails, but none of these have been shot to his knowledge during the past two years. Coyotes have never killed many deer in this district.

Mrs. Buceuk, of Kamsack, also reports that deer are fairly plentiful in that district. Last fall, all through the hunting season, the snow had a hard crust and walking was so noisy that many hunters got no deer.

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Resources Minister, J.B. Brockelbank, said recently that a two-day aerial survey of wild life in the south-east corner of the province had failed to confirm reports of widespread killing of deer by coyotes in that area.

Game Commissioner E.L. Paynter reported seeing 125 deer during the flight, and most appeared in good condition. While the Qu'Appelle had an apparently smaller deer population than last year, the Pipestone Valley had a much larger number.

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ANTELOPE

The Saskatchewan Department of Natural Resources conducted an aerial census of an antelope herd, estimated to contain 30,000 animals, in the southwest corner of Saskatchewan. The survey began April 11, and continued for over two weeks. It was carried out in co-operation with Alberta and the State of Montana which also contain areas frequented by the herd. Its purpose is to provide a basis for hunting regulations and to give information which will make possible a more intelligent administration of the herd.

STORM VICTIMS

Judge McKim, of Melfort, made these interesting observations while returning from the convention of Ducks Unlimited, held at Reno, Nevada:

"For 90 miles along the north side of the railway in Wyoming we saw dead antelope. Sometimes they lay huddled together; sometimes singly. A couple were still standing up against the railroad fence where they had died. Sometimes they lay so close together near the fence that I couldn't count them. I was told 70% of the antelope died in the four-day blizzard that killed so many cattle and sheep. My theory is that the animals, sensing a storm, were for some reason going south and couldn't or wouldn't cross the railway."

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COYOTES

During the recent aerial survey of wild life, Game Commissioner Paynter reported that the largest concentration of coyotes in the area covered was in the Qu'Appelle valley eastward from Regina.

"Recently," writes Mrs. Hubbard, Grenfell, "a farmer in the Qu'Appelle valley says that two years ago dogs were killing deer in almost as large numbers as coyotes were doing this winter."

Coyotes are fairly common at Naicam, but according to Mr. W. Yanchinski, they are not considered to be a nuisance there.

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National Wildlife Week - Admonition
Editorial, Regina Leader Post

"The wild things of this earth are not ours to do with as we please. They are given to us in trust and we will be held responsible by future generations who come after us to audit our accounts. Our promissory notes to Nature are falling due and must be paid. Civilizations before us have perished because they did not recognize the cardinal principles of conservation and honor their obligations before it was too late.

We can learn to commune with Nature and to glorify the commonplace around us; to appreciate the beautiful and to conserve for future generations the privileges we have, for in so doing we will fulfil the promise and desire for a richer and more abundant life for ourselves and others."

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WOLVES

Mr. Baines of Tisdale reports that wolves are common at Leaf Lake. Two were shot on the lake ice last fall. He saw a large black one there last May.

"We have had timber-wolves for the first time within my memory," reports Mrs. W. Buceuk, of Kamsack. "Four or five were killed recently; one of them, a black one, by a truck."

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FLYING SQUIRRELS

These little rodents are quite common in the district about Tisdale according to Mr. Baines. "Few people know it, however, because of their nocturnal habits. Almost every large timber bridge has its colony. I know one boy who always has several for pets. They become tame easily," he said.

"I, myself," stated Mrs. W. Buceuk, "have never seen a flying squirrel but about a year ago we found the remains of one, brought in by our cat. The skin stretching between the legs and the very soft fur seemed quite distinctive."

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BATS

SKULL CREEK -- S.A. Mann

"I have never seen traces of bats hibernating, although as a boy. I remember my father cutting down a hollow tree from which two bats emerged when he cut into it. They were not able to fly but that could be because of injury. This happened while he was getting his winter's supply of wood out, possibly October."

REGINA, March 26 (Leader Post)

"Customers and employees in a downtown office Thursday morning were startled when a girl clerk screamed.

Everybody rushed over to where she was standing before an open filing cabinet. "What is it? A mouse?" someone asked.

But it wasn't a mouse which frightened the girl. It was a live bat, snoozing in a cabinet drawer she opened."

Hibernating ???

FISHER

The main event of Mr. Baines stay at Leaf Lake was on April 3, when he saw a large Fisher. The animal crossed five miles of open lake about midday and was first seen 150 yards from the shore. The party gave chase and managed to get within 75 yards before he disappeared into the timber. He was about the size of a large fox and tawny black in color with a long slim tail. The most distinctive point about him was his hopping, weasel gait. Apparently they do not walk or trot, but must lope along when going slowly.

ALBINOS AND MELANOS

Here is another interesting observation from Mr. Baines:

"While trapping muskrats on the ice of Leaf Lake, April 4, an albino rat was seen sitting on the ice. It was pure white with pink eyes, feet and tail. We approached within ten feet before it went down. All hands attempted to trap it but without success.

White rats are not uncommon at the Lake. Fourteen were included in a catch of 4000 in 1942, and they have since been seen in the water on several occasions."

--And then there was the cream-colored skunk which caused such a commotion in Kingston, Ontario, April 12. Farmer Ross Revell, of Collins Bay, was patrolling his fields when he shot what he thought was a stray cat. When he got within close range there was no mistake. The animal was found to be without one black hair on its body.

Harold Deighton, Yorkton game guardian, reports a black "gopher" taken on the farm of Ernest Miller, of the Waldron district, April 25. The animal was in a state of decomposition and for that reason could not be forwarded to the Museum.

Melanism is the opposite of albinism. It is the darkness of color resulting from abnormal development of melanin, a black or brown pigment in the skin, hair, feathers, etc. of animals. The species affected is known as a melano.

The silver black fox is merely a melanistic phase of the red fox. A fine specimen of a melano Franklin's Ground Squirrel (Spermophyle) or Bush Gopher was donated to the Provincial Museum by Miss Doris Thompson of Carlyle, May 14, 1925. -- Editor.

FISH

This hardly comes under the heading of "Mammals" even although many fish stories have been told about them.

Mr. Shaw reports from Yorkton that hundreds of Brook Sticklebacks were found dead in York Lake, four miles south of that city, this spring. Many suckers also were killed. This is a shallow lake and perhaps the depth of the ice was responsible for the loss.

The specimens were identified by Dr. D.S. Rawson, of the University of Saskatchewan.

Readers will be interested to know that an illustrated check list of the fishes of Saskatchewan, has been written by Dr. Rawson and was published only this spring. Copies may be obtained from the Department of Natural Resources and Industrial Development.

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BOTANY SECTION



Our wild plants got away to an early start this spring, many of them producing flowers and seeds two weeks or more earlier than usual. It was a case of "The early bird gets the worm" for many of them met the fate of some of our semi-hardy garden perennials by the devastating frosts which swept across the Province on the nights of May 22 and 23. It is to be hoped that our wild fruits are not too badly damaged, but we are keeping our fingers crossed.

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More wild-flower observations are solicited and welcomed. If we can be of any service to you in making identifications we will be glad to do so. Mr. A.C. Budd, of Swift Current Experimental Station, and Dr. R.C. Russell, of the University of Saskatchewan, will also be pleased to assist you.

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It will not be long before the Lilies are again in bloom. We request all of our members to spread among their friends the necessity for the conservation of this, our floral emblem. Perhaps it would not be too much trouble to place a small sign on a roadside post near a patch of these flowers reading, "THE WESTERN LILY IS OUR PROVINCIAL EMBLEM -- PRESERVE THEM FOR OTHERS TO ENJOY."

KAMSACK -- Mrs. W. Buceuk (May 4)

"It seems to me that our farm, section 33, T 29, R 31, W 1st, must be particularly well suited for wild flowers. This year already we have had crocuses on a sandy hill, and today I found, near the swamp, what I think are Kidney-leaved violets. The Canada Violets are also blossoming. Not many years ago I used to pick Crowfoot Violets on a hill near here, but I have not been there lately. Later on, I expect to find Lady's Slippers growing quite near the highway and Western Red Lilies in the meadow where buttercups are already blooming (May 1). I am also hoping to find some more Indian Pipes this year. Last year we found them in our raspberry patch.

I am particularly pleased to see the articles on flowers - the one on violets, for instance. There are so many flowers whose names I do not know and as yet I have been unable to obtain a really good book, giving the details I would like.

I would be interested to learn the name of a small flower that grows near the edge of a swampy muskeg near here. From a tiny rosette of leaves rises a stem about three or four inches high. This stem has, at the top, two or three flowers, like miniature primula flowers in shape and color. They bloom about the beginning of June, about the same time as the Marsh Marigolds and in some places they almost cover the ground."

(I think the plant to which you refer is the Mealy Primrose. Ed.)

"PRAIRIE FLORA"

Readers will join with us in extending congratulations to Arch C. Budd, a member of our Directorate and range botanist at the Swift Current federal experimental farm.

Recently he has finished compiling a book describing in detail the flowering wild plants of the prairies, extending from Manitoba to the foot-hills of the Rockies. This "Flora of the Farming and Ranching Areas of the Canadian Prairies" was written primarily for the Saskatchewan agricultural-representative service and about 200 copies have been printed and are now in use. A copy is available for your examination at the Provincial Museum in Regina.

Pages from this book describing our Pentstemon species and Wild Geraniums have appeared in this and the last issue of the BLUE JAY. The entire book of 280 pages is written like that and will prove a boon to western botanists.

"It has been my aim in compiling this book to set down facts about plant life that every homesteader can understand," Mr. Budd said. "I know what that will mean because I homesteaded 18 miles east of Swift Current in 1910."

Mr. Budd plans, in time, to have this book published for general circulation, and we sincerely hope that this will be done. He will also incorporate with it the section from ferns to junipers.

"They say," writes Mr. Budd, "that 'fools step in where angels fear to tread,' but I have been waiting so long for a flora of the western prairies to be written by an expert that I thought an amateur would have to fill the breach until a more technical person supplies our needs."

The BLUE JAY commends the author for the splendid work that he has turned out and wishes him every success in his venture.

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INDIAN HEAD -- T. Pelly

"Congratulations on the new BLUE JAY. It should prove of great value to all amateur nature lovers.

We were especially interested in your list of early wild flowers and made use of it to stimulate interest in our grade eight class. With it as a guide we divided our class into four parts and made a census of the birds and flowers to be seen within a radius of half a mile from our school. Besides finding seventeen species of birds we were able to identify crocus, moss phlox, early cinquefoil, dandelion, violet, blue toad-flax and golden bean. (Cymopterus and Hoary Puccoon were also found and sent in for identification).

We would like to see other group-lists for definite periods of the year."

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FLOWERS IN MAY

L.T. Carmichael

It was Sunday morning, May 15: the dead-line date for material of this issue. A few feet from the window a robin was busily at work adding new twigs, dead grass and bits of string to its nest, and shaping it with its breast as it fluttered its wings and revolved in circles. On an adjacent tree, its mate, dressed up for the occasion, was showing off his new plumage and lustily cheering it on. Not more than thirty feet away, half hidden by the leaves of a maple at the corner of the house, a Baltimore Oriole tried to steal the spotlight from this domestic scene by singing to its heart's content. A smoky haze filled the air; there was no wind; it was a dry, but otherwise ideal, day for observing the beauties of nature.

Curiosity as to how the flowers were coming along this spring prompted us to jump in the car and head for the QuAppelle Valley, some twenty-five miles north of Regina.

We soon learned that the hills of the Valley are not a pretty sight this spring. In the complete absence of rain, the grass, which earlier had shown a tinge of green, had withered and turned brown again. Yet as we descended from the wind-swept summit to the valley below, brave little flowers greeted us here and there on every side.

Peeping out from among the dead growth, were the Early Cinquefoils, some having already gone to seed, others with their yellow petals centred in orange, and small clumps of Nuttall's Yellow Violet - a flower too beautiful for such a setting. Most of the Moss Phlox had shed their white petals and the Crocuses had already gone to seed; patches of their plume-like heads showing a purple tinge. The Succulent Buffalo-bean grew in patches here and there. Some still showed their light blue pea-like blossoms, while others already exhibited clusters of luscious looking fruit, already tinged with red and as large as a marble.

The Pale Comandra, with its white star-like blossoms, seemed to enjoy its habitat and were on every side, as were numerous plants of the Common Prairie Onion. Few blossoms of the Bladder-pod remained, but here and there the small mustard-like blossoms could be seen terminating the prostrate branches, bearing the globular and swollen fruit pods.

On the steepest slopes among the Cactus leaves were the stunted shrubs of Sumac or Small Skunk Bush with yellow blossoms but no leaves as yet. The bright green patches of the Creeping Juniper relieved the bleakness of the hill. Most of the creeping branches were laden with fruit, blue-green in color.

The white-blossomed *Cymopterus* was at home in the sun and heat and dry sandy soil. Most of the flowers have now wilted away and in their place the parsnip-like umbels of fruit are almost full grown. Like other members of the carrot family its leaves are narrow and deeply cut.

Like sky-blue sentinals in the midst of the waste, the Blue Beard-tongue stood out as the most conspicuous flower of all. Its thick leaves and sturdy flower-stalk seemed unaffected by the drought. There, too, was the Reflexed Rock Cress, thriving in spite of its environment; its stems standing a foot or more in height. Its long pods droop downward, but its terminal white or pinkish blossoms with cross-shaped petals seem fresh and healthy.

Below the Sumac was a more level ledge; there we found the Bearberry, the underside of each branch being laden with the most beautiful little bell-shaped flowers imaginable.

For one who looks for it, there is true beauty on the dry hillsides of the Qu'Appelle Valley.

As we reached the highway, improved soil and moisture conditions became evident in the more luxurious growth. The Golden Pea was at its very best and the conspicuous white blossom clusters of the Narrow-leaved Milk Vetch bordered the road beyond the ditch on either side. On the bank of the recently constructed road grade, shaded by Rose and Snowberry bushes, was a large clump of Golden *Corydalis*, its yellow blossoms showing up conspicuously from a mass of dark green carrot-like leaves.

We started across the meadow towards the heavily wooded coulee; but before getting there we viewed its border from the distance. Fully ten days earlier than usual the fruit trees were laden with bloom. The Hawthorn, Pincherry, Choke-cherry and Saskatoon showed white against a green background, like an orchard in May.

The odor of the yellow flowers of the Wolf-willow hung in the still and smoky air as we crossed the meadow. At our feet silvery carpets of Pussy-toes were coming into bloom. Among the partly withered grass we saw Three-flowered Avens, Prairie Buttercups, Early Yellow Loco Weed and the dainty *Androsace*.

We approached a small poplar bluff in the centre of the meadow. Around its edge Hoary Puccoons, with their bright orange flowers, seemed to enjoy the partial shade and protection. Within, Early Blue Violets and the Western Canada Violet were blooming in profusion. There, too, were many Wild Strawberry flowers and one Cream-colored Vetchling, which had outstripped the others in its race to produce flowers and seed. Strangely enough, we saw no sign of the large and conspicuous white blossoms of the Wind Flower.

It was not long before we reached the shaded path of the densely wooded coulee that cut through the hills with a northern exposure. Very few of the flowers of the cool shade were yet in bloom, but the Sarsaparilla was there; its buds ready to burst open, and the Star-flowered Solomon's Seal was in flower along the trail. Beside the path, butterflies flitted about the Red-osier Dogwood, and the early Meadow Rue was beginning to exhibit its creamy blossoms. Beside the narrow stream which flowed towards the lower valley, Wild Gooseberries and Northern Black Currents bent over towards the water; their yellow and white flowers hidden beneath leafy stems.

Near the top of the ravine, a spring of ice-cold water gushed from under a rock. There on the moss-covered mud amidst the Scouring-rush, we came upon the prettiest scene of all - blue carpets of the Northern Bog Violet, with long stems and blossoms almost an inch in width. Near the summit was a Hawthorn tree in full bloom, and in its shade the delicate Moehringia, with its white chickweed-like blossoms winked at us as we passed.

Once more we stood on the prairie; behind us was verdant vegetation and the song of birds; in front, miles and miles of level prairie. Fields tinged green with a new crop of wheat were cut by a dusty road. Cars raced through the shimmering haze towards Regina and home.

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APRIL FLOWERS

- April 9 Crocuses showing above ground -- C. Shaw, Yorkton
 10 Crocuses, in Qu'Appelle Valley
 Pussy Willows at their best -- Mr. and Mrs. H. Flock, Regina
 17 Crocus -- Mrs. J. Hubbard, Grenfell
 20 Crocuses and Elm in blossom -- L. T. C., Regina
 23 Frenchweed -- Mrs. Hubbard, Grenfell
 26 Moss Phlox -- Mrs. Cruickshank, Regina
 27 Androsace -- Mrs. Hubbard, Grenfell
 27 Moss Phlox,
 Leafy Musineon (Prairie Parsley)
 Cous -- L. T. C., Regina
 28 Prairie Buttercup -- Mrs. Hubbard, Grenfell
 28 Prairie Buttercups - C. Shaw, Yorkton
 29 Early Blue Violet
 Western Canada Violet
 Early Yellow Loco Weed
 Bladderpod
 Early Cinquefoil -- L.T. Carmichael, Regina
 30 Golden Pea
 Dandelion, both Red-seeded and Common
 Yellow Whitlow-grass -- Mrs. Hubbard, Grenfell

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Mr. Shaw reports from Yorkton that the dry weather and prairie fires have taken a heavy toll of spring flowers along with a number of ducks' nests. Crocuses are very scarce. "In fact," he writes, "I wrote a story about them and then couldn't find a specimen to photograph for an illustration."

LEASK -- Guy C. Coates

Mr. Coates has sent us a specimen of Club Moss for identification. He found three of these plants on his farm and was naturally interested, having never seen the plant before. There are eight species of Club-moss reported growing in Saskatchewan. This particular species has been identified by Mr. A. C. Budd as Running-Pine Club Moss (*Lycopodium Clavatum*).

Mr. Coates also reports a poor display of Crocuses this spring - less than ten percent of normal. "The continued dry seasons," he said, "are having an adverse effect on many wild plants. I haven't seen an Indian Pipe since 1912. In 1925 I found a solitary small Trillium but have never seen another.

In 1939 I discovered three clumps of Calypso (Venus' Slipper) but they never bloomed again."

Mr. Coates has lived over fifty years in Saskatchewan and from childhood has always been interested in all forms of nature study.

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THINK FOR A MOMENT

"The next time you see a leaf with the sun shining on it, think for a moment. It is more than something green; it is Nature's greatest and most important factory, whose products are essential for the life, not only of the plant, but of almost all living things, including ourselves."

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BLUE JAY'S AS. PRIZES

Charles Leech, Chief Supervisor of the Youth Centre, Regina, is to be highly congratulated on the enthusiasm which he and his staff have aroused among their classes in connection with wild plant and animal life and their conservation.

Mr. Leech has sent us a three page report of recent activities and contests held before and during National Wild Life Week, April 10 to 16. We are very sorry that, because of lack of space, we will be unable to publish the report in full.

After considerable instruction, a contest, consisting of a quiz and dealing with the purposes of National Wild Life Week, with wild plants, with birds and with other animals, was announced. For two weeks or more the boys and girls were busy visiting the museum and obtaining information from various sources. The quiz was held, April 19, over one hundred contestants participating.

For prizes, seven yearly subscriptions of the BLUE JAY, two copies of Taverner's "Birds of Canada", fourteen copies of Taverner's "Bird Houses and their Occupants", and fourteen copies of "Game and Fur in Saskatchewan" were awarded. The Regina branch of the Fish and Game League gave \$15.00 to assist in buying these prizes.

The list of winners is as follows:

Bill Niebergall, Marilyn Durnin, Jim Scarp, Gladys Tomchuk, Jim Toth, Gavin Lahman, Johnny Duriak, Loreen Merth, Joan Livingstone, Marilyn Graham, Bill Morris, Kark McAvena, Marlene McEachern, Donny Bereskin, Beatrice Niebergall, Howard Merth.

Mr. Leech writes; "A National Wild Life Week display and quiz contest will be a permanent feature of our yearly program at the Centre, and I feel sure that if other Centres or Schools would do something along similar lines, they would be as proud and delighted as we were with the results. I am sure we would be doing a great deal of good to insure future conservationists among our younger generation."

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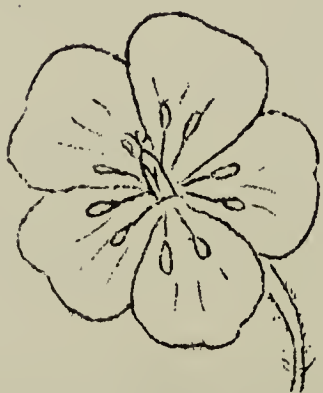
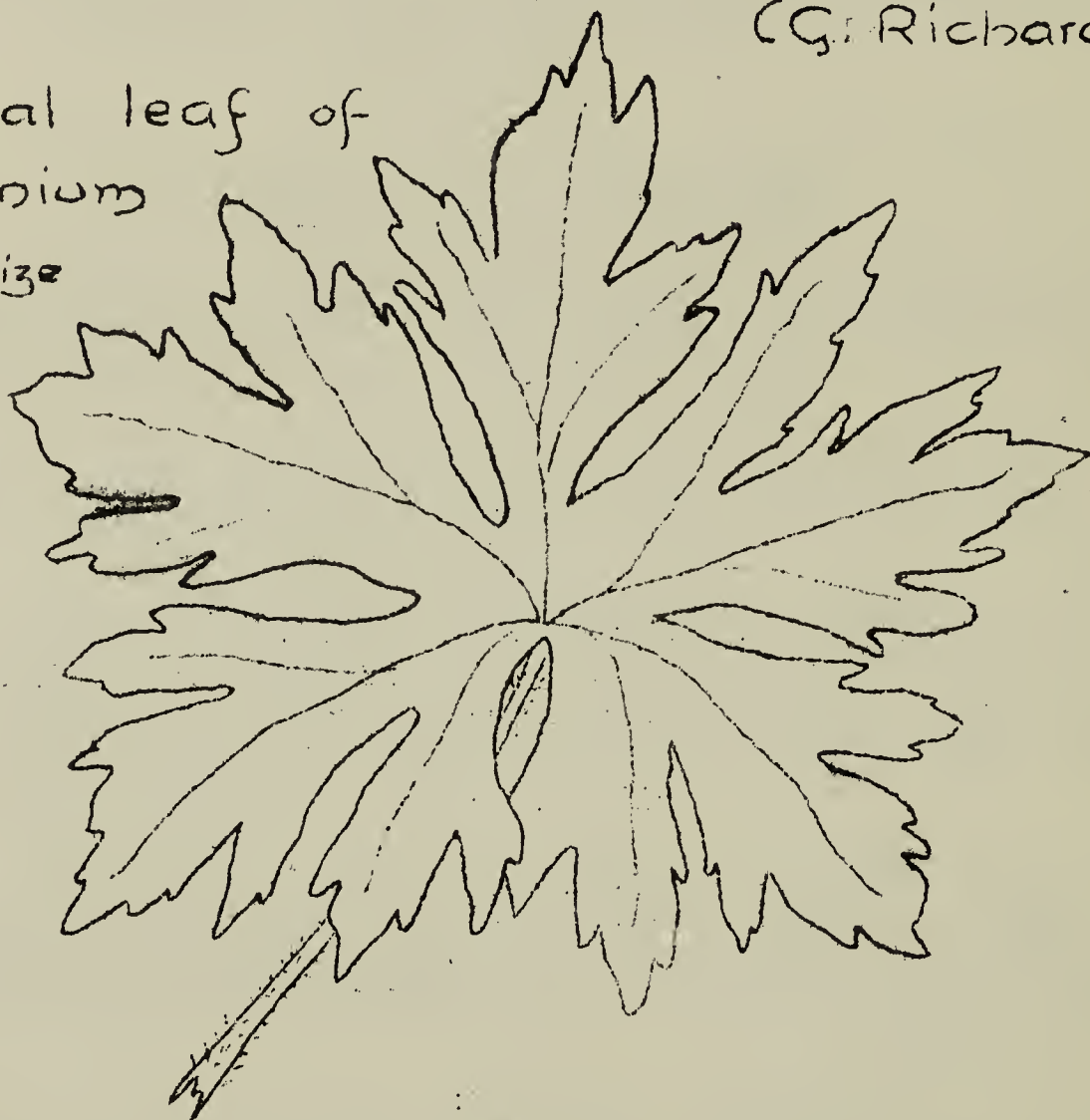
When Cliff Shaw, of Yorkton, goes strolling on Sundays, with his camera, his insect net and cyanide bottle and his plant press he nearly always just happens to run into a nest of arrowheads. This was the case on Sunday, May 15, when he and Mr. McDonald found about 40 good specimens. We think that among his paraphernalia he also carries one of those divining-rods that has a particular affinity for Indian relics.

DIAGRAMS OF GERANIUM.

(G. Richardsonii)

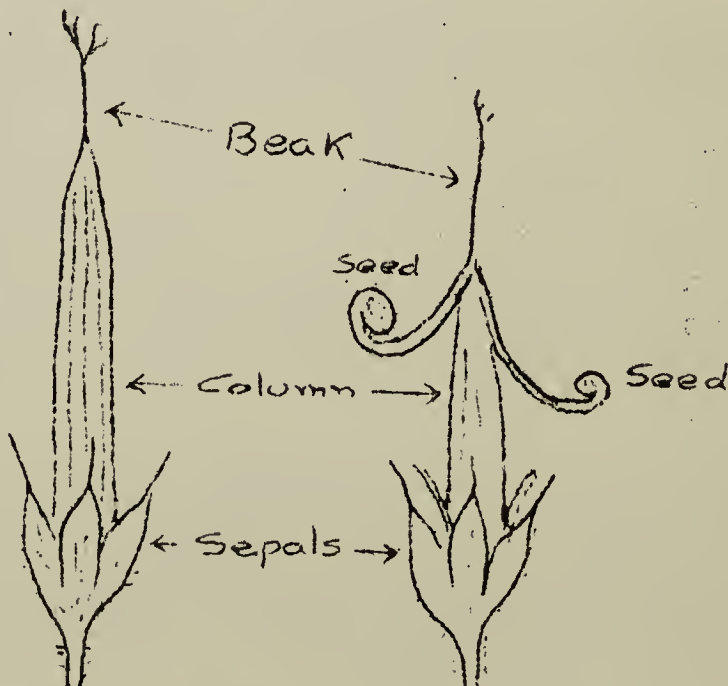
Typical leaf of
Geranium

Nat. size



Flower of
G. Richardsonii

Nat. size.



Style column
x 2

THE WILD GERANIUMS OR CRANESBILLS OF SASKATCHEWAN

Arch C. Budd

In the Province of Saskatchewan four species of Wild Geranium are found. The Geraniums or Cranesbills have opposite, palmately lobed leaves and five sepals, five petals and generally ten stamens. The style, in the centre of the flower, extends into a long beak-like column at maturity. At its tip it bears a narrow appendage or point, the length of which serves to distinguish some species. When mature, the column splits from the base into five segments which spring out, releasing the seed.

The following simple key will separate our native species.

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|----|---|-------------------|
| 1. | Flowers over half an inch across, with petals much longer than the sepals; perennial plants. | 2. |
| | Flowers not over half an inch across, with petals barely longer than the sepals; annual or biennial plants. | 3. |
| 2. | Petals white, sometimes with pinkish veins. | G. Richardsonii. |
| | Petals purple; plants with sticky glandular stems. | G. viscosissimum. |
| 3. | Beak at end of style not over one-eighth inch long; inflorescence compact. | G. carolinianum. |
| | Beak at end of style over three-sixteenths inch long; inflorescence rather open and loose. | G. Bicknellii. |

Geranium Richardsonii Fisch and TrautvWILD WHITE GERANIUM

This mountain species is very plentiful in the forested areas of the Cypress Hills but is not found elsewhere in the Province. It grows from one to three feet in height, erect, and bears numerous showy white flowers from one to one and a half inches across. The inflorescence is rather open and loose.

Geranium viscosissimum F. and M.STICKY PURPLE GERANIUM

This species is also associated with the Rocky Mountains and their foothills, but is found in our Province on the southern slopes of the Cypress Hills, but rarely elsewhere. The plant grows from one to two feet in height and is generally quite branching, with very sticky, glandular stems and leaf stalks. The showy flowers are borne in compact clusters and are from one and a quarter to one and a half inches across, pink-purple in color.

Geranium carolinianum L.CAROLINA WILD GERANIUM

This is a low-growing, annual species with pale pink to white flowers, from one-third to one-half inch across, the petals almost hidden by the sepals. It is not often found in the Province, being an eastern species, but may be looked for in moist meadows towards our eastern border.

Geranium Bicknellii BrittonBICKNELL'S GERANIUM

This species is an annual or a biennial with pink flowers and has been found in many wooded parts of the Province, particularly on cleared or burned-over bush land. It is very plentiful on roads and pathways in the forests of the Cypress Hills. While very similar to the preceding species it may be separated by its open inflorescence and the longer narrow beak on the mature style column.

BUTTERCUPS

L.T. Carmichael

This family includes many of our most beautiful and cherished flowers. Among these are Buttercups, Pasque Flower, Canada Anemone, Marsh Marigold, and Columbines.

The family is believed to include the most primitive of seed plants now living and is considered to be the trunk of the family tree of the seed plants from which the more highly specialized groups have branched off at different times and through the ages.

Known by children the world over who study the reflection of its petals from their chins, as an indication of their fondness for butter, the plants are easy to recognize. Their yellow petals with a glistening metallic sheen and their much dissected leaves are distinguishing characteristics. They are sometimes confused with the cinquefoils, a group of the rose family which have five-petaled yellow flowers. These two groups, however, may be easily distinguished by a glance at the calyx. That of the buttercups is made up of five separate green or yellow sepals, while the sepals of the cinquefoils are united into a saucer-shaped calyx, having five main divisions and five alternating bractlets.

We have over a dozen species of buttercups in Saskatchewan but I will describe only some of the most common and conspicuous which I have collected.

PRAIRIE BUTTERCUP
(*Ranunculus ovalis*)

This is one of our earliest spring flowers coming into bloom on the moist prairie during the first week in May.

The plant is ordinarily from three to twelve inches high. Its golden petals, up to a quarter of an inch long glisten brightly among the new blades of grass.

The basal leaf-blades are from 1/4 to 1 1/4 inches wide. They are kidney-shaped to oval with round lobes. The upper stem leaves are sessile with linear divisions. When the petals drop the globular fruit-head with its short beaked achenes is still a distinguishing characteristic.

SEASIDE BUTTERCUP
(*R. Cymbalaria*)

This little buttercup is common in marshes or along the borders of sloughs and streams throughout the West. It is a low smooth plant, spreading by runners which take root at the joints. Both the flower stems and the leaf

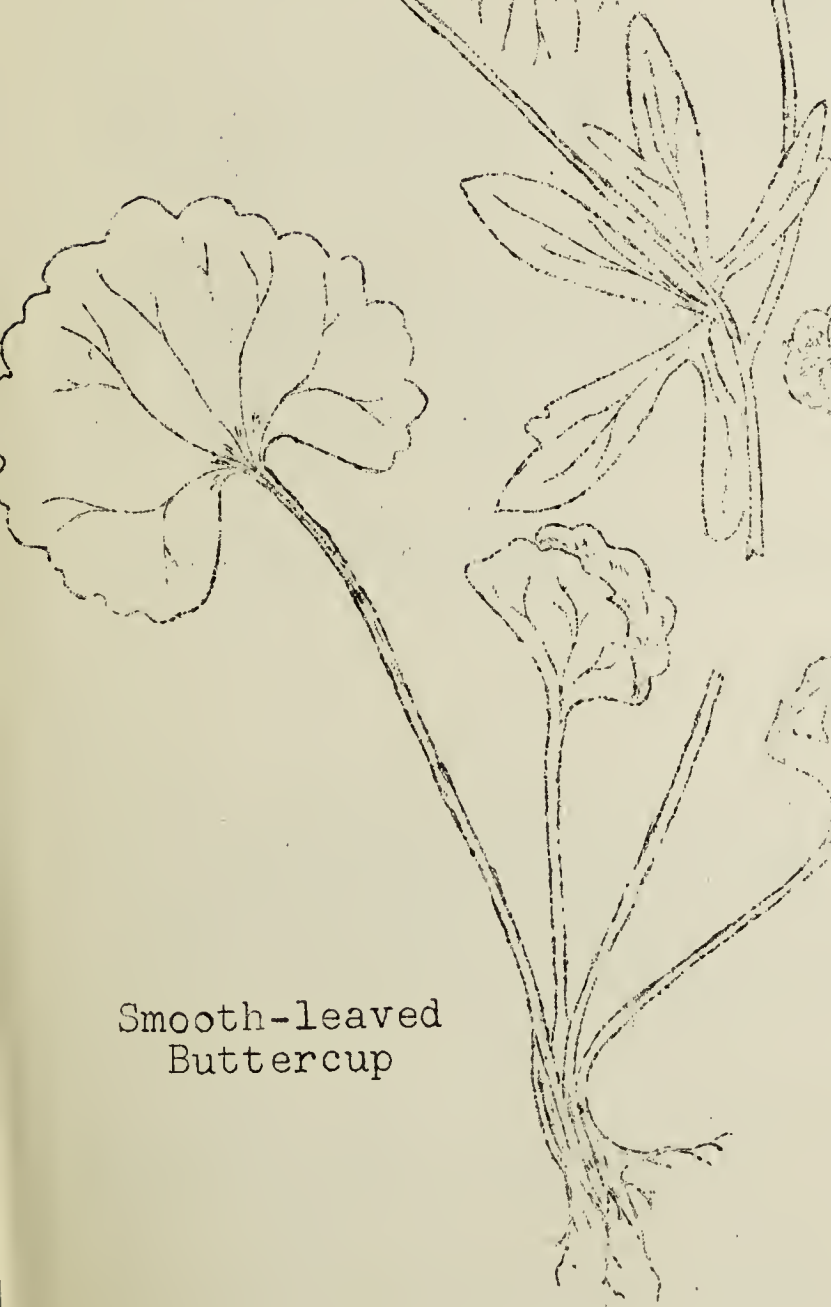
BUTTERCUPS



Seaside
Buttercup



Prairie
Buttercup



Smooth-leaved
Buttercup



Macoun's
Buttercup

petioles are long, all arising from the base. The leaves which average about three-quarters of an inch in length are roundish with heart-shaped bases and rounded teeth. The 5 to 8 petals are about the same length or perhaps a little shorter than the sepals. The centre of the flower is distinctly cone-shaped. The plant starts blooming early in May and continues to bloom throughout the season.

SMOOTH-LEAVED BUTTERCUP
(*R. abortivus*)

This is a native species with comparatively small flowers. It may be found about the first of June growing in damp woods or along the borders of shaded streams. The plant grows anywhere from six inches to two feet in height. Its distinguishing characteristics are its round heart-shaped basal leaves and pale yellow flowers with petals slightly shorter than its sepals. The sketch, which is natural size, shows some basal leaves and a portion of the upper part of the stem. As you will notice the stem leaves are quite different in shape from those at the base. They are usually 3-cleft.

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CELERY-LEAVED BUTTERCUP
(*R. sceleratus*)

Among farmers this species is called Cursed Crowfoot because of its extremely poisonous properties and its injurious effect, which is especially dangerous to cows. Any small portion of the plant, if eaten, will cause severe pain and serious inflammation.

It is found growing in the mud along banks of sluggish streams and in shaded wet places. The plant, which is an annual, is hollow-stemmed and grows from six inches to two feet high. The basal leaves are rounded or heart-shaped, but the plant may always be distinguished by the peculiar shape of its stem leaves. The drawing shows one natural size. The stem is large, fleshy and very plainly ribbed.

The flowers are pale yellow, about a quarter of an inch broad, the petals being about the same length as the sepals. The plants bloom from June to August

MACOUN'S BUTTERCUP
(*R. Macounii*)

Around the edges of lakes or sloughs or sluggish streams growing in the mud among the grasses and sedges the Macoun's Buttercup may be found almost everywhere late in June and throughout July. Its distinguishing characteristic is the thick branching stem covered with a mass of silvery hairs. The plant grows from 8 to 24 inches high. Its leaves are divided into three main segments and each segment is deeply cleft and toothed. The sketch shows a leaf in its natural size.

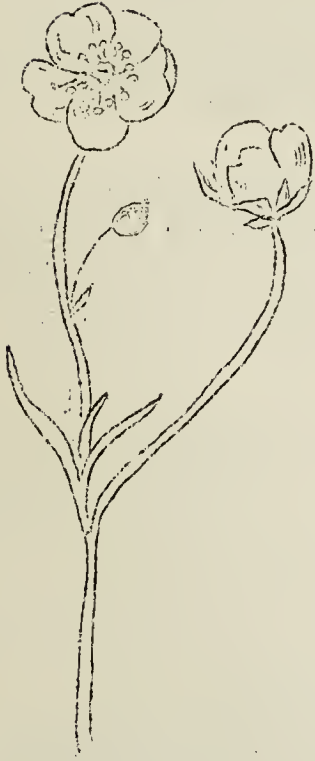
The petals are small - a quarter of an inch or less in length. The sepals are a little shorter. The fruit head is nearly spherical and about three-eighths of an inch thick.

The stems of a mature plant are very branched and leafy and bears a large number of buds, blossoms and fruiting heads at the same time.

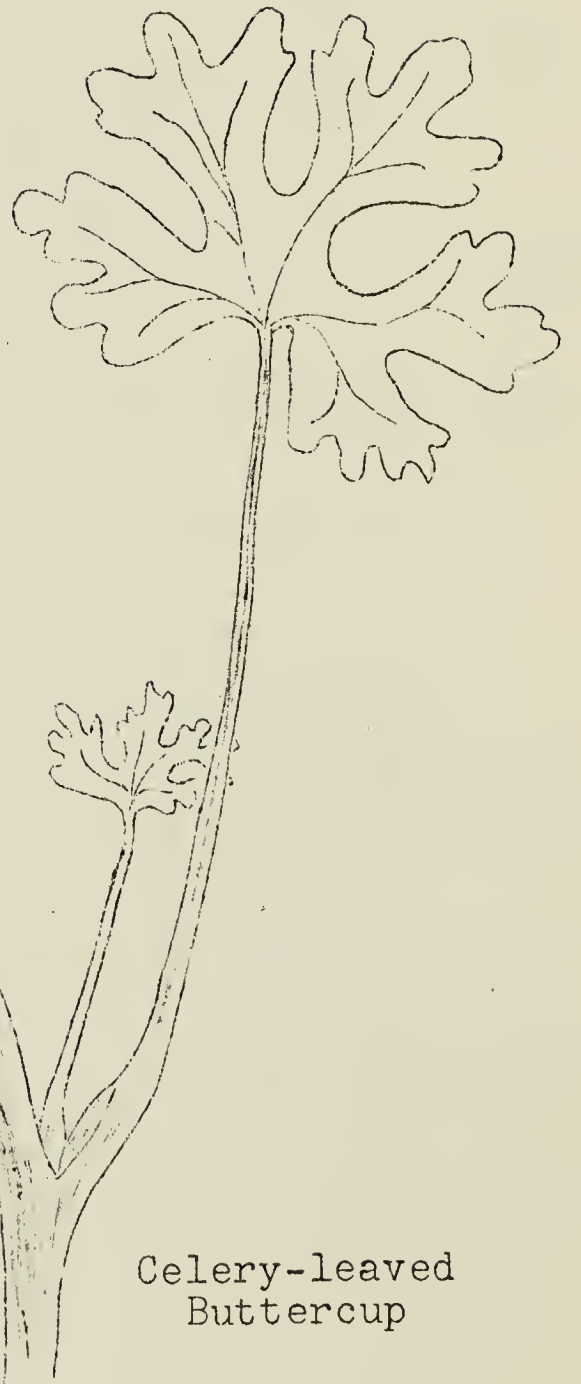
BUTTERCUPS



Purshe's Buttercup



Tall Buttercup



Celery-leaved
Buttercup



PURSH'S BUTTERCUP
(*R. Purshii*)

Here is a buttercup commonly found growing in the water with its rounded and deeply cleft leaves floating on the surface. Smaller leaves, of much the same shape as those shown in the drawing remain under the water. The bright yellow flowers are larger than those species previously described. They are borne on slender stems several inches above the water and present a pretty picture in a still mud-bottomed pond of a slow flowing stream, early in July. Note in particular the shape of the leaves which are drawn the natural size.

TALL BUTTERCUP
(*R. acris*)

We have left the description of this species until the last, even although it is the most beautiful of all, with flowers up to an inch across. It occurs from coast to coast through Canada, especially in moist lands, pastures and meadows. It is not a native plant but was originally introduced from Europe.

Unfortunately it is seldom found on the open prairie, but is quite common in the semi-wooded and wooded areas of Saskatchewan's black soil zone and farther north. It is the most familiar buttercup of Eastern Canada - is recognized by all and especially loved by the children.

It is an erect hairy plant two to three feet high. The basal leaves are long stalked and are from three to seven parted. The flowers are a bright waxy yellow with roundish petals, two or three times the length of the pointed sepals. The fruit clusters are round, one-quarter to one-third of an inch broad.

There is one odd thing about buttercups - the honey is secreted in a tiny depression at the base of each golden petal and is there protected by a little scale.

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INSECTS

Trappers in the Yorkton District reported to Mr. Cliff Shaw towards the end of March that a large water-beetle was driving muskrats out of their houses. Donald McKen of Orcadia, who brought some specimens in for identification said that there were as many as a "bucket full" in most of the muskrat houses. Foxes found them edible and were tearing the houses open to eat the beetles.

Lloyd O. Peterson, officer in charge of the Dominion Entomological laboratory at Indian Head, said that the species appears to be *Dytiscus marginalis* Linn. Mr. Peterson said that he has had no reports of these insects having been reported in such large numbers before. He recalled that years ago, when he lived on a farm, it was the custom to water stock in winter at a lake and these beetles were very common in water holes opened in the ice.

The beetles are oval in shape, brownish-black in color, shiny and approaching the size of a person's thumb.

In the spring the species leaves the water to mate and are often attracted to street lights.

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GRENFELL -- Mrs. John Hubbard, Jr.

"I saw an exhibition of flying by some medium-sized butterflies this spring. I was unable to examine one closely but they appeared to be orange with black bars and white edging on the wings. It was about May 1st and the sight was really startling. The first butterfly seen flew swiftly up and down and around the front of the house for ten or fifteen minutes. When a second one appeared it was chased away violently; the clash of their bodies could be heard twenty or thirty feet away. Eventually four or five butterflies joined in the gyrations. Just when and how the party broke up I do not know because I had to leave and it was getting dark.

Would these be Monarch Butterflies?"

We do not know. Perhaps Mr. Shaw will be able to answer that question.

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Ideal Animal Life

Biologists at the University of Saskatchewan have come up with the ideal animal life on one square mile of bushy prairie:

That calls for 1 coyote, 2 horned owls, 2 red-tailed hawks, 5 skunks, 10 jack rabbits, 15 crows, 50 hungarian partridge, 500 smaller birds, 3000 gophers, 10,000 mice and 5,000,000,000 insects.

No mention is made of Homo sapiens.

--Contributed.

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ARCHAEOLOGY SECTION

BUFFALO POUNDS

YORKTON -- Cliff Shaw

"In response to the query regarding the sites of buffalo pounds, H.N. McNaughton of Yorkton, has referred us to a ravine South-East of Ardath which may be worthy of investigation.

Mr. McNaughton's homestead was on the NW 1/4 20-30-8-W3. His interest in stone artifacts was first aroused when on the first ploughing of the land at the highest point of elevation in this area the plough uncovered charcoal and many flint chips and some finished tools.

During that summer and throughout the following years Mr. McNaughton gathered quite a collection from the site, which covered an area of approximately two square rods.

The site was about 24 rods from the south line of the quarter and 60 rods from the East line and is perhaps the highest point of land within the township.

Part of Mr. McNaughton's collection was given in care of Dr. Wilson, for the Regina museum. Dr. Wilson was a former Principal of the Normal School and later Professor of English at the Saskatchewan University.

On one occasion when Mr. A.H. Ball, a former Deputy-Minister of Education, was at Outlook he was taken to this site. Standing on this site where the artifacts were found, the two men could look north-east to a ravine four and a half miles away, and noted from the contour of the land that it was an ideal spot for the location of a buffalo pound. As the large herds of the

buffalo passed towards the Saskatchewan river for water, it would, they thought, be quite feasible for the Indians to have driven the animals north along the river in the direction of the Dundurn Forest Reserve, to where the river bends to the East. Here, it was conjectured, the Indians hidden in the wooded hills would surprise the buffalo and drive them into a ravine running to the West and North-west. This particular ravine is directly below the farm home of Frank Schraeder, and was formerly the home of Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Cleven. The Cleven family had collected many arrowheads in the neighboring area.

Mr. McNaughton said that buffalo skulls littered the woods close to the river banks in the early days but other bones were quite rare."

SKULL CREEK -- S.A. Mann

"I believe I know where there is a Buffalo Pound, about 40 miles from Skull Creek. I have visited it and picked up several hundred artifacts, mostly arrow points and scrapes. The first ones to find this location were supposed to have picked up around 700 pieces in a very short space of time. No one, to my knowledge, has done any digging in this place but just picked up what had been uncovered by the wind. The last time I was there (1938) there was about 4 acres uncovered, and was covered in practically its entirety with splinters of bones, from small slivers to parts of shin bones. I could not say how deep or far this pile of bones goes into the ground as I don't believe anyone ever dug into it to find out, nor have I heard of anyone looking around in the surrounding hills for traces of camp sites, etc."

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Indian Relic

Madeline B. Runyan, of Punnichy, writes of a stone having recently been plowed out on their farm which has apparently been drilled by primitive Indians. There are two perfectly round holes drilled to the depth of about half an inch and a third hole which has just been started. It weighs about a pound. "I was unable," she said, "to find anything like it at the provincial museum."

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BAY POST

Harvey Beck, writing from Cumberland House says:

"As yet I haven't been able to locate the site of the old Bay Post. No one I've come across knows for sure where it is. I have been told of three places and will investigate them as soon as the mud dries up. One of the places sounds hopeful. It is about half a mile from the present site (which agrees with Morton) and there are apparently ruins there. I will take my camera along and try to get pictures of it. I understand the spot is pretty well overgrown now.

I took pictures of the Cairn, but it didn't turn out well. The Boy Scouts are going to clean the bronze plate on the cairn and I will try to get a close-up photo of the inscription. At present it is practically impossible to read what is inscribed on it."

We hope that Mr. Beck will be able to give us some more interesting facts later.

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