

INFORMATION PLEASE

In "Wild Wings", in the Winnipeg Tribune, of Aug 31, 1946, B.W. Cartwright expresses concern for the future of the large Sandhill Crane of the prairies. A smaller subspecies, the Little Brown Crane, which nests in the far north, still passes through in migration in fair numbers, but Mr. Cartwright states that any specimens of birds brought to him as Sandhill Cranes in the past thirty years have turned out to be of the smaller, northern subspecies. The larger prairie bird, present in large numbers at the beginning of the century, seems virtually to have disappeared, and may possibly soon be as rare as its even larger and more showy relative, the Whooping Crane.

Any Sandhill Cranes nesting on the prairies are almost certain to be the larger subspecies, the true "Sandhill"; however, the finding of a nest, or of young not yet able to fly, is necessary to prove their presence, as non-breeding Little Brown Cranes occasionally summer on prairie marshes. The two subspecies are almost impossible to differentiate in the field, the only differences being in size, the true Sandhill being $3\frac{1}{2}$ or 4 feet in length, as compared with about 3 feet for the Little Brown Crane.

Mr. Cartwright states, "The only nesting location that I have heard of in many years is along Mosquito Creek, near Stavely, south-western Alberta. A few are known to nest in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, north-eastern California, Oregon and Washington, but over most of its former range it has disappeared. The bird books say it still breeds in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, but it is surprising that we never hear of any nests being found in these three provinces".

We know that the Sandhill has disappeared from most of its former nesting haunts. The drought of ten years ago pretty well completed driving them from the few areas where they were still relatively unmolested by man. Dr. C.J. Houston reports that Sandhill Cranes nests were found about five miles north of Tyvan, Sask., about 1914, and that thousands of cranes (of either or both subspecies) stopped in migration each year. Now Cranes seldom even stop there in migration.

We know of two localities within forty miles of Yorkton where Sandhill Cranes have been found nesting in recent years. We should like to hear of any other records of their nests being found, especially recent records, although we are also interested in learning the extent of their range in the early days.

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Marion Nixon of Wauchope, Sask., who writes the interesting nature column in the Saskatchewan Farmer, makes the following inquiry: "We have been told of three dens of coyote pups dug out this spring within a few miles of our farm. All five pups in one den had white chest markings, and either the front paws or all four also showing white. The suggestion was made that it might show Collie blood in the young coyotes. Have white-breasted coyotes been dug out elsewhere?"

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Charles. F. Holmes of Dollard asks- "Has anyone noted how robins dispense with the plastering of their nests when mud is scarce? Last spring before rains came I found four nests with eggs minus the usual mud lining, but with the rain later nests were mudded?"

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We are very anxious to have reports from members as to whether they have noticed a decrease in numbers of warblers since the unfavorable weather in the spring of 1945, when thousands of the tiny songsters perished.