

in the same apparent blissful state. One brought indoors was found several days later not to have wakened. Why? Mr. A. C. Budd has suggested they partook of the poison present in the crocus cup.

Summer may have been delayed in reaching here, but has it not brought a "world full of abandon of colour?" For every walk, beauty has been at our side.

One early evening, late in June, I felt nothing could be more beautiful than the prairie this night. Blue heavens above -- groundsel, asters, mustard and cinquefoil placing gifts of gold at our feet -- late pentstemon and flax bring the blue of the sky within reach. Every garden needs a touch of white -- here were daisies and yarrow to supply the contrast. Sergeant always had a bit of red to make his paintings complete -- before us nodded the loveliest three-flowered avens I had ever seen -- rose-madder in the shade, but red enough to supply the needed warmth -- a perfect picture.

What indeed is so rare as a day in June!

SIGNS OF FALL

E. Barker, Regina.

Once again signs of fall are everywhere -- crickets are singing; hoppers are hopping; berries colouring; grass patches generously donating their quota of spears for your clothing as you walk by; gophers storing; seeds falling or floating everywhere and last, but not least, birds assembling.

During a walk on August 13, in the vicinity of the Legislative Buildings I saw the following birds in half an hour:

Eared Grebe, Ring-billed Gulls, Spotted and Least Sandpipers, Brewer Blackbirds, Kingbirds, Cedar Waxwings, Catbird, Goldfinches, Yellow Warbler, Pine Siskin and Barn Swallows.

BLUEBIRDS COMMON AT GREENFELL

Mrs. John Hubbard, Jr., informs us that Bluebirds were quite common around her district this spring and nested on many farms. A pair about their home won the battle with the sparrows and nested for a considerable time but no young were seen. A box inside a knot-hole in a bin put up for Bluebirds was used by Tree Swallows.

HUMMING BIRDS AT TOLLAND, ALBERTA

Mrs. O.L. Walters

Quite a few around here have seen humming birds in their gardens lately. I saw one August 2 among my delphiniums and scarlet lychnis. The next day a neighbor said she had seen one among her flowers the day before also, and while talking about it two more made their appearance in the garden. Still another neighbor saw one a few days ago and about the same time my young son watched one among the scarlet runners of his garden.

SPARROWS IN THE BACK YARD

E Barker, Regina.

During the period from May 16 to 27, when each day I fed up to 30 Clay-coloured Sparrows along with other species, the House Sparrow played quite an important rôle. Every new bird which arrived was either led or followed to my yard by one of these birds. He always proved quite a helper in grinding down the hard pieces of bread for the Clay-coloured Sparrows who were unable to do this type of work. The wee sparrows would first draw back in alarm as their helpers would barge onto the table and snatch the largest pieces of bread. However their fear was soon overcome when they saw fine crumbs scattered around as a result of the larger sparrow's efforts to dispose of the morsels.

On May 16, the following kinds of sparrows fed on crumbs in my yard in one square yard of space: 2 House Sparrows, 8 or 10 White-crowned, 1 White-throat, 1 Lincoln, 1 Savanna, 8 Clay-coloured, and 2 Vesper. For a few minutes all except the Vespers were feeding together.

Of great interest in my district this summer are a pair of Purple Martins, which frequently appear on a hunting spree around my yard. Lark Buntings started singing near the house this year on June 5, and continued each day until July 27. Since that time a depressing silence seems to brood over the place - their rollicking, tinkling, soaring song is greatly missed.

A GOOD YEAR

W. Yanchinski

The birds, like the red lilies, roses and berries, appear to have had a good year. Among the species observed nesting for the first time in recent years were the Brown Thrasher, Horned Grebe, and Hermit Thrush. Among others who have successfully raised families are Ruffed Grouse, Hungarian Partridge, Mountain Bluebird, Barn Swallows, Sparrows (Song, Vesper, White-throated, Clay-coloured), Least Flycatcher, Baltimore Oriole and large numbers of Red-tailed Hawks, Swainson Hawks, Eastern Kingbirds, Flickers, Killdeer Plovers and, of course, the Robins.

On a recent trip to Banff I was amazed by the large numbers of Meadowlarks encountered along the road through the open prairies. Most of them sat on the road instead of the usual perch on the fence posts

NEW BIRD ACQUAINTANCESS.P. Jordan,
Saskatoon.NOTE:

(Mr. Jordan is a young man attending the University of Saskatchewan who is keenly interested in nature. He admits the fact that the country is teeming with wildlife of which he knows very little, but is most anxious to learn. His keen observation is a definite assurance that he will not be content until his curiosity has been satisfied. He has suggested that we publish a list of reference books which could be purchased by those interested in more accurate bird, animal and plant identification. We hope that our readers will suggest any books which they think would be of help to the amateur naturalist. ED.)

I saw my first Shrike on May 15, preening himself in the rain while I stood not more than 12 feet away. Since that time I have seen many of these birds and am fairly certain that I have identified both the

White-rumped and the Northern. There were at least three or four pairs nesting along a half-mile strip of country road. I found two of their nests along this road.

On May 16 I counted between 150 and 200 geese in six flocks which flew overhead at varying intervals.

Between May 20 and May 22 I saw three large flocks of what I think were Golden Plovers. I identified them as Black-bellied Plovers at first, but after reading an article on the former changed my identification. Each flock of plovers numbered at least 50 birds.

I was quite interested in a method used by a male robin to encourage his offspring to develop his powers of flight. When the young bird had, by means of a tree, reached a high telephone wire, the parent bird then commenced to dive upon and even forcibly push the young bird off the wire.

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LARK BUNTING

C. Stuart Francis,
Torch River.

On May 28, I had the great pleasure of seeing my first Lark Bunting and listening to his beautiful and very much varied song.

When I first spotted him he was sitting on a fence post about a hundred feet from me in an open field. Just as I was about to walk towards him, he took wing and flying over my head alighted in a tall Balsam Poplar. There he commenced his beautiful song. I stood and looked and listened for at least five minutes. He then flew back to the fence again. I believe that this record is probably the farthest north record for this province, as I live in Township 54, Range 15, West 2nd.

COMMON AT HAWARDEN

Harold Kvinge

Lark Buntings are very common in this district this summer and are nesting everywhere on the prairies. They haven't been around here in such numbers since 1937.

I wonder what causes them to come in such great numbers one year and then be almost absent in other years. On a trip to Alberta this summer I noticed that they became common after leaving Medicine Hat and east until we came to Maple Creek and then down to our own town of Hawarden.

I noticed a Holboell Grebe on our pond, August 4. This is the first time this bird has been recorded in this district.

We have four ducklings that are a cross between a brown tame duck and a wild mallard drake. Is this a rare occurrence? They are almost feathered now (August 12).

NOTES FROM P.L. BECKIE

Bladworth

The Black-billed Cuckoos seem to be very numerous this year. I saw and heard a great many during July. Their song is rather mysterious in its tone and quality. I have heard them sing in the darkness of night. I have often wondered if they nest here.

I found a goldfinch nest on July 24 with one egg, and another on July 25 with five eggs. I was surprised at the skillful building of the nest and its soft feathery appearance.

On July 10 I heard an unfamiliar song from a valley side at Silver Lake (a small local lake) and by careful checking have decided that it was a Brewer's Sparrow. This is described as a bird of the dry sage brush area. At any rate that was the first and only time I have heard it (I did not see it).

I was up in the Lac Vert, Naicam district on July 22 and 23 -- in W. Yanchinski's country, and was pleasantly surprised by the change in bird life from that of our locality. Some of the common ones that do not visit us are the Black-capped Chickadee, Song Sparrow, Red-tailed Hawk, Western Pewee, Ruddy Duck, Coot, Olive-sided Flycatcher and the House Wren.

Bladworth is out of the park area so the change is to be expected.

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DUCK AND GOOSE SENSE

L.T. McKim, Melfort

One of Ducks Unlimited men saw a Pin-tail with her young brood two miles from water. He gathered up the ducklings and took them to his car. The mother followed. When the car attained a speed of 45 miles an hour she fell behind but kept up with it at 40 miles per hour. When the water was reached and the young ducks released, the mother took charge of them. I think this would not happen often.

An American, living near Boston, made a pet of a Canada Goose and took it riding with him on the front seat of his car. The goose enjoyed the ride so much it was always ready to jump into the car. Once he left the goose behind and drove through Boston. He noticed that people stopped on the streets and pointed his way. Stopping the car, he found that the goose had followed him.

I believe this is a true story. A goose in Saskatchewan used to follow the children to school and then fly home.

ROBINS ARE NOT DUMB EITHER

Mrs. O.L. Wolters

A neighbor went to move his binder and noted a robin's nest with eggs in it. He moved it over a quarter of a mile, thinking it was too bad to have broken up the little home. After about a week he had occasion to come by and could hardly believe his eyes. There were the parent birds feeding young robins!

THEY DELAY TRACTOR SALE

Norm Ewaschuk, Danbury, refused \$250 for an old tractor that he had been trying to sell for some time. Reason? A family of robins had set up housekeeping in the tractor and mamma robin had hatched her eggs.

When the baby birds were big and strong enough to leave the nest Mr. Ewaschuk sold the tractor.

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PRAIRIE CHICKEN DANCING GROUNDSMarion Nixon,
Wauchope.

One thing I thought to be of interest is in respect to the prairie chicken dancing ground which I reported for the BLUE JAY before. This long knoll had been used for years.....perhaps as long as my husband has been interested. But this year they have deserted it. The trouble was that the poplar bluffs kept expanding until they encroached too closely. Two years ago they had left a sort of natural lane leading to it, and almost ringed it except for this opening. I suppose now they have started growing over the knoll itself.....and at least they have shut off the open view and approach to the site.

The other dancing ground in our cultivated field about 300 yards west of the house is used increasingly, though not as many congregate there as did on 15. However, I also hear them east of the house from rising ground in the sheep pasture. They may use the crest of the gentle rise, or just beyond it. I have not had time to investigate.

THE BROWN THRASHER

Arthur Ward

Even with so much food around, the Brown Thrasher has a special craving for crushed wheat and is easily taken for banding.

Usually shy, it is a very desirable bird to have around, both in song and usefulness. One pair nested in a gooseberry bush and the four young had reached the half fledged state when, for some reason, the female died.

After this event careful observation showed the male vigorously protecting and feeding the young, both before and after leaving the nest.

One female Brown Thrasher, after having been banded, returned here three years in succession. No other bird except a barn swallow has been known to do that at this station. There have, however, been one-year returns.

A robin banded June 6, 1949, was retaken on May 15, 1950. A Catbird banded June 14, 1949, was retaken August 9, 1950. One robin banded July 26, 1947 was rebanded in Oklahoma, Feb. 1, 1947. Another robin banded August 7, 1944, was killed by a cat at Kerrobert, July 24, 1946. A Brown Thrasher banded July 27, 1943, was killed during a hail storm at Lucky Lake June 3, 1944.

BIRD BATH CONSTRUCTIONW. Yanchinski,
Naicam.

I would like to pass on an idea of an easily made, inexpensive bird bath. I constructed one last spring and it appears to be just the thing to attract birds. It requires only a few cents' worth of cement and an old discarded washtub.

The space in the lower half of the tub, which is not required, may be filled with old cans or scraps of wood. The concrete is poured into the tub, then hollowed out with a trowel to form a basin-like depression, the deepest part in the centre being not more than three inches deep.

It may easily be water-proofed by a heavy application of asphalt and then another layer of cement. A water-pail equipped with a faucet and hung on the bath would not only keep it replenished but the dripping water would draw the attention of the birds to the bath. It may be painted to match the grounds scenery.

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PURPLE MARTINS

L.T. McKim

I have four boxes for Purple Martins which I can look into from the top of my house. This week (July 10) I took a peep. One contained seven young, one five, one two and the other had one egg. I have found in other years that the number of eggs varies greatly. I wonder if they lay in each others nests!

STUBBORN AND OBLIGING WARBLERS

Arthur Ward

On visiting a friend in Ashley Park, Swift Current, he proudly announced that there was a "Wild Canary" nest in the garden containing three eggs, and that the birds were in the habit of covering the eggs up during the day and sitting on them during the night. I remarked that this was something unusual for the Yellow Warbler. Well! He would show me. On looking into the nest I noted that it was empty. "Poke down," he said. I did so and discovered the egg of a Cowbird. Further poking revealed another; then under another layer was found the third Cowbird egg.

It was evident there was going to be no hatching there. The warbler had declined to do the baby sitting.

Although having seen three pairs of Cowbirds in my grove, I found no evidence of their parasitic schemes. I was, however, surprised to see a young Cowbird, fully fledged and well able to take care of itself, seemingly picking insects on a spruce branch, when a yellow warbler flew to it with food. At the same time another young Cowbird came within six feet of them and the three flew away together.

The warbler, though having been known to build three nests, one above the other, rather than hatch out a Cowbird, evidently, in this case, has willingly obliged the Cowbird.

Of all the warblers, the Yellow Warbler is the most useful to those living on the prairie. It is the only warbler we see at this point between migration periods. It is surprising how large a mouthful, for a small bird, the young can take soon after being hatched.

Truly this is one of the most valuable of our feathered friends.

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ANOTHER YORKTON NATURE ENTHUSIAST

D. Vivian Everard

I have been a member of the British Empire Naturalists Association for a number of years, and having been out here two years now I'm really getting down to the study of wild life in Saskatchewan.

Ornithology is the particular line I work on apart from every other phase of wild life. I observed in the BLUE JAY that Mr. Ralph Stueck of Abernethy is one of your directors. We contact each other quite frequently on matters of Natural History.

I do quite a bit of Photography and am publishing the pictures from time to time in the Yorkton Enterprise and other papers. Having a Kodak Medalist 11 with complete line of accessories I am well equipped.

I rather imagine to get photographs published in the BLUE JAY would incur too much expense on behalf of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society. But providing the photographs were excellent I imagine the BLUE JAY would have a greater circulation. Just an idea I had!! That's all!! Let me know what you think!!

NOTE:

(We are looking forward to the day when the Society can afford to have the BLUE JAY printed commercially and photographs reproduced in it. As you say, this would result in greater circulation. Such a procedure will not be possible until we can boast of a thousand or more members. At the present time our membership is about 500 and it takes over a hundred dollars to produce and deliver each issue.

In the meantime we will depend upon the enthusiasm of our present subscribers to get at least one new member each. Editor)

SCARLET TANAGERS

Stuart Houston

On Sunday, May 21, a beautiful male Scarlet Tanager was noted at the York Lake golf course, four miles south-west of Yorkton by Miss Nancy Morrison. It was also observed on the same day by Henry Beck and on the following day by myself and Henry Belcher.

It was very tame and allowed observers to approach to within ten feet of it. This is the first definite record of this species in the Yorkton district.

I noticed in "Chickadee Notes" in the Winnipeg Free Press, that there have been more reports than usual of the Scarlet Tanagers in Manitoba this year.

DUCKS PLENTIFUL AT FOAM LAKE

Mr. George Cruickshank, of Foam Lake, reports that he has never previously seen as many ducks in his district as there are this year. Although unable to identify the species, he said most of the ducks were of small size and in the spring practically all nests had twelve eggs.

Mr. Cruickshank also reported there were fewer crows, more than the average number of coyotes and a heavy increase in the magpie population.

FRIENDLY CHICKADEESMarion Nixon,
Wauchope.

Last winter I persevered until I taught two chickadees that it was safe to feed from my hand or my hat. There were several who came for suet and nutmeats, but only these two became tame. They stay together, and are so different in build I am sure they were a pair. Toward spring they became much more nervous of feeding from my hand though the little slim one always did so eventually. They left the shelterbelt twice for a period of time, but the inclement weather would drive them back I suppose. The last time they came, demanding food in no uncertain terms, was April 29th. Chickadees may be heard still, well out in the pasture, so I am hoping that "Sweetheart and Cocky" bring me a brood of young ones to feed bye and bye.

ALBINO ROBIN

Mrs. W. Buceuk,
Kamsack.

This spring, May 16, 17 and 18, we had an unusual visitor. It was an albino robin, the only one I've ever seen. It was pure white, with perhaps the faintest suggestion of pink on its breast. The fact that it sang heartily suggested that it was a male bird.

Several years ago, in the fall, I saw a Barn Swallow that appeared to be a partial albino. The other swallows in the flock chased it away whenever it came near. The robins, however, treated the white robin just as they did the others. There was a female robin present which I believe was its mate.

ROCK WRENS NEAR REGINA

Mr. Cliff Shaw, of Yorkton, informs us that Mr. Thos. M. Beveridge, Rural Route No. 1, Regina, is a keen naturalist and knows his birds so well that he can qualify with the best ornithologists in the province.

We were therefore pleased to receive from Mr. Beveridge the following observations:

Bird migration has not been as spectacular as last year, but quite interesting none the less. Probably the late spring would account for the comparative fewness of water birds observed, though representatives of most species seen last year have been among them, and the persistent winds probably accounted for my not seeing many migrating warblers out here far from effective shelter. Actually I have not yet had a look around the Qu'Appelle Valley this spring, so have missed seeing some of the common resident birds. So what I have not seen may not be particularly significant. However I wonder if the Say Phoebe did arrive and starved for lack of insects. I have not seen one of them yet.

Most interesting of my observations this spring has been the appearance within several hundred yards of the Manse of a Rock Wren, a bird I had not expected to find this far north in the Province. There was one around for about four days and I had several good views of it, so am absolutely certain of the identification.

ROCK WREN'S NEST

On July 5, Mrs. Croome, of Regina, was fortunate enough to find a Rock Wren's nest in the Qu'Appelle Valley, near Highway No. 6, North of the city. With her was Mrs. James Crawford, of Regina, who made the identification.

AN UNUSUAL SITE

On June 17, Ronald Coleman, of Yorkton, reported finding a robin's nest built on the ground at the base of a poplar tree, "about the size of a stovepipe." The nest was in the centre of a bluff, edging the muskeg, on the west outskirts of the town. Ronald is one of the active members of the Simpson School Nature Club.

BIRD LIFE AT SHEHO

Wm. Niven

Our winter was very long and very cold - the coldest in history. Naturally this affected bird and animal life. However, most of the resident winter birds came through in good shape. The spring was very late and cold, the snow staying nearly all April and there were still drifts in May.

The bird migration was later than usual all through, some of them arriving two or three weeks after usual dates. The only birds to arrive here in March were the Horned Lark (March 3) and the Crow (March 29).

I might mention here that I observed the northern race of Horned Larks, which I reported last year, on May 8. The flocks were smaller in numbers than last season and only stayed about two weeks.

I had one unusual record this spring. Three large Snowy Owls paid us a visit on April 16, probably on their way north. This is a very late date for their appearance here. Only one was noted in southern migration (Dec. 11). They must have gone a long way south last winter; according to reports I have read, some went as far as the southern states.

The nesting season is now (June 22) well advanced, though later than other years.

There is one thing I must mention here and that is the great amount of grouse and duck nests taken by crows and magpies. These marauders are far too plentiful and they keep up a continual hunt for eggs. I have found many empty egg-shells and nests. At this time there should be many broods of ducks on the sloughs, but I haven't seen any so far. It seems most of the early nests are taken before the leaves come on the trees. This was very late this season so most of the ducks would have to nest again when there was better cover.

I think our commonest nesting bird here is the Vesper Sparrow. Many nests have been found and some destroyed while working the summer-fallow. Fortunately, they soon start another nest again.

One Arkansas Kingbird was observed here, June 6. They have been seen here before, but only stayed a few days and never nested, to my knowledge.

A Bobolink was noted, June 13, flying over but going south. I guess it had been further north scouting the country. They are rarely seen here now. Many years ago they were common and nested in the hay flats. None were seen last year, but in 1948, four were observed on June 12. This was the first time since 1942.

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1950 SPRING MIGRATION RECORDS

In order to have a comparative list of bird migrants this year, we published in our last issue the one compiled by P. Laurence Beckie, of Bladworth.

The remaining dates of his spring migration records appear below. The complete list should be of value to many others who have similar ones. Next year, as well as this, they will prove of value for comparative purposes. There are 96 birds in the complete list.

1950 SPRING MIGRATION RECORDS

P. Laurence Beckie

May 12	Tree Swallow	May 18	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
	Clay-coloured Sparrow		Baltimore Oriole
	White-crowned Sparrow		Brown Thrasher
	Red-headed Duck	May 20	Cliff Swallow
	Canvasback Duck		Sora Rail
	Baldpate Duck	May 21	Mourning Dove
	American Pipit	May 23	Black Tern
	Upland Plover		Purple Martin (not certain)
May 13	Barn Swallow	May 26	Common Tern
	Cowbird	May 27	Lark Bunting
	Ring-billed Gulls		Western Pewee
May 14	Yellow Warbler	May 28	Arkansas Kingbird
	Hermit Thrush	May 29	American Goldfinch
May 15	Northern Water Thrush	May 30	Burrowing Owl Nest (a hasty, uncertain observation)
	Chipping Sparrow	May 31	Northern Phalarope
	Black-poll Warbler	June 5	Connecticut Warbler (The above ident. was quite certain. I saw the mantel, the eye ring, although it was my first record of it).
	Olive-backed Thrush		
	Short-eared Owl		
	Leontes or Sharp-tailed Sparrow		
May 16	Bairds Sandpiper	June 2	Veery or Wilson Thrush
	Bank Swallows		
	Spotted Towhee		
	Harris Sparrow		
	Golden Plover		
	Eastern Kingbird		
May 17	Least Flycatcher		
May 18	Nighthawk		
	Say's Phoebe		
	June 5		Catbird
	June 6		Black-crowned Night Heron
	June 11		Cedar Waxwing
	June 17		American Bittern
	July 2		Black-billed Cuckoo

BIRD BANDING AT BURNHAM

Mr. Arthur Ward has had a very busy summer again at his banding station. In the shade of an artificial bluff, it is so close to his home that he can see some of the traps from his study window.

Twenty species and a total of 132 birds have been banded.

2	Myrtle Warbler	2	Catbird
42	Junco	3	Redwing Blackbird
2	Song Sparrow	1	Red Crossbill
2	Tree Sparrow	1	Baltimore Oriole
12	Olive-backed Thrush	6	Brown Thrasher
23	Gambel's Sparrow	11	Robin
1	White Crown Sparrow	5	Lincoln Sparrow
1	Chestnut-coloured Longspur	10	Yellow Warbler
3	Say's Phoebe	2	House Wren
1	Eastern Towhee	2	Chipping Sparrow

BLUEBIRDS

R. D. Burroughs

(Reprinted by permission of Conservation Volunteer).

Can you recall when first you saw a bluebird -- when last you saw one? The chances are that you cannot. But if you are a country man at heart, the flash of azure wings along a country road will thrill you as it did when you first saw this blithesome bird of woods and fields. One does not tire of seeing bluebirds.

In earlier years, when man was less efficient in the management of land, the bluebird was more common than it is today. It faced no housing shortage then for hedgerows bounded nearly every field; orchards grew on almost every farm, and many woodlots still remained untouched by saw or axe. Decaying snags or broken limbs and hollow trunks of lifeless trees provided cavities for bluebird nests.

Today the situation is reversed. The ancient monarchs of the woods are gone; diseased defective trees are soon removed; "wolf" trees are cut to open up the forest canopy and give the younger healthy trees the space they need for growth. In many areas steel has now replaced the cedar post, and fence rows generally are cleared of trees and brush. The use of 2-4-D and DDT gives promise of reducing weeds and insect life. All this is good considering human needs, but song birds find these changes in their habitat unfavorable.

A scarcity of natural nesting sites is known to limit the abundance of birds which lay their eggs in cavities in rotting wood. In addition to the bluebird, a partial list of them might well include the woodpecker, the nuthatch, the chickadee, the house wren, and the crested fly catcher. All these are birds of economic worth. They hold destructive insect life in check; they are important factors in maintaining Nature's balance among the varied forms of living things; their needs must not be overlooked in managing the land.

The forester, who understands the intricate relationships of all the varied forms of life, both plant and animal, will take account of the requirements of game and other animals when making plans for management of woods and open areas. The farmer or the country man, who dwells by choice upon the land, will find reward in managing his fields and timber lands in such a way that food and cover are assured for wildlife.

The bluebird will respond quite readily to any improvements in his habitat. A farmer, who erected several score of bluebird houses in the woods and orchards and along the fence-rows where bluebirds had been rarely seen, found that more than half of them were shortly occupied.

'Tis fortunate that man has learned that he can ill afford to overlook the needs of common birds as well as those which satisfy his yen for sport.

God grant that we may never see the time when bluebirds are a curiosity!

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ARE YOU AN ARTIST?

We will be glad to reproduce small and simple drawings, to illustrate your story, such as those that have appeared in the BLUE JAY.