

'She's Gone to Sleep' A Moving Operation

Stuart P. Jordon, Saskatoon

By Cliff Shaw



TAVERNER WRITES, "It was very interesting to watch a captive specimen open galls on poplar leaves. Seizing the fleshy tissue with the bill tips so that the points crossed within the mass, it gave a little twist of the head that split the gall wide open and the aphids within were removed with the tongue." — What a unique piece of equipment for food getting.

As you have probably already guessed, the incident I would like to relate is about the Red Crossbill—truly an intriguing and attractive little bird.

I was sitting in my neighbour's living room, admiring the beautiful picture window, when a little bird flew straight into the pane. The impact, even for a small bird, had not seemed very hard, but feeling concerned I got up and looked out the window. A female Red Crossbill lay on the ground, her pink breast upturned to the sky. I went outside and picked her up. Her neck had been broken.

About a week ago I had seen a pair of crossbills with some young in an elm, in front of this very house. The young seemed able to fly fairly well, so I'm glad they will not likely face starvation, due to her death.

My three year old daughter and I took the broken little body to the back yard for burial. As I placed her in her grave and covered it with earth, my little girl said: "She's gone to sleep, hasn't she Dad—she'll never fly any more—not for a long, long time, will she?"

WHEN Frank Doyle, a farmer of the Leech Lake district near Yorkton, saw a duck and two drakes move a nest of eggs from one location to another he could scarcely believe his eyes. But Manitoba authorities of Ducks Unlimited have informed Mr. Doyle they have at least one other record of a duck seen carrying an egg in its bill.

Mr. Doyle said that a few weeks ago, while plowing, he disturbed a Shoveller's nest with six eggs in it and had moved the nest to safe ground. The duck was on the nest when Mr. Doyle made the next round of the field, but on his second trip he noticed two drakes and the female bird flying "in a strange formation" towards a nearby slough, and the six eggs were gone.

His curiosity aroused, Mr. Doyle watched where the birds landed and on investigation found a hollow in the ground containing six eggs. As the afternoon advanced the birds removed all the feathers from the old nest and re-lined the new one.

Appreciation

THOSE gifted contributors to the BLUE JAY gave a fine display of various nature topics in the June issue.

So interesting in expression, that all were worthy of our thanks. Interesting and revealing was the account of the birds of the Alaska Highway country by Eva Mudiman. Our attention was drawn to the vast sanctuary of that region, with the surprisingly large number of species and the inclusion of the Varied Thrush, which we seldom see. A glimpse of some of our most wonderful heritage as depicted by W. Yanchinski in his article of "Historic Sites"; the splendid descriptive work on Archaeology by Allan H. Hudson; the "Passing of the Buffalo" by A. J. Breitung—all of these are packed with enjoyment and worthy of consideration.

—Arthur Ward.