

DO YOU KNOW?

No. 3. The Canada Jay. The Canada Jay is an inhabitant of the north woods and is a familiar bird to campers at Waskesiu or Madge Lake. On the prairies it is only seen as an uncommon winter visitor - occasionally one will become a regular patron at a feeding station.

It may best be described as a fluffy grey bird with a white throat and forehead. Young Canada Jays are much darker and look "as if they had gone through a sooty chimney." During the summer months, parents and young roam through the woods in small family parties. The cheeky habits of the Canada Jay are well known to all woodsmen. Nothing around a camp which may prove edible is safe, even to soap, and hence its many popular names such as "Camp Robber", "Moose Bird", or "Meat Bird." Its most common popular name, "Whiskey Jack", has no alcoholic connection but comes from the name given it by the Indians, "Wiskedjak", meaning "meat bird".

Most interesting point about the Canada Jay is the fact that, in spite of living in the north woods, it is one of the earliest birds to nest. Often before February is out, Mrs. Canada Jay is incubating her eggs snug in a deep, thick-walled nest. Rabbit's wool, owl or grouse feathers, soft bark and moss all go into the construction of the nest to insulate it against the cold blasts of late winter. On March 17, 1944, M.G. Street, who hunts up one or more Canada Jay's nests at Nipawin each year, found a nest containing three young birds which he estimated to be about ten days old. By checking back, he discovered that they had probably hatched out on a day when the temperature skidded down to 27 degrees below zero!

- Isabel M. Priestly.

BOOKS.

The Manitoba Museum. Prepared by L.T.S. Norris-Elye, Director of the Museum. A small "brochure" giving a general description of the Manitoba Museum, its aims and achievements to date. Will be read with interest by all in Saskatchewan who wish to see our own Provincial Museum take its place as an active educational force in the province. Extremely well written and illustrated. Price 25 cents from the Manitoba Museum, Winnipeg.

Fishes of Manitoba. (By David Hinks). In addition to supplying a description of the fishes native to Manitoba, this book also gives much general information with regard to their distribution, food habits, economic value, etc. Illustrated. Will be almost equally useful for Saskatchewan. Price - postpaid - Paper cover, 60 cents; Cloth binding, \$1.00. Published by the Department of Mines & Resources, Province of Manitoba. (A tragic note in connection with this volume is that the author, a graduate of the University of Manitoba, was killed while serving with the R.C.A.F. in a night raid over Hamburg, one year before his book appeared in print.

Canadian Birds. (By L.L. Snyder and illustrated by T.M. Shortt). A booklet published recently by the magazine "Canadian Nature." Gives descriptions of 75 native birds, grouped according to the type of country in which they are most commonly found. Mr. Shortt's excellent pen and ink drawings prove that it is by no means necessary to have a colored picture to convey a realistic impression of any bird. Price 35 cents from Canadian Nature Magazine, 177 Jarvis St., Toronto.

WILD FLOWER PROTECTION. Several members expressed appreciation of Dorothy Morrison's article in the last "Blue Jay". Mrs. E.W. Cates, McLean, comments: "I am glad you re-printed this article. Some of our flowers, especially the wild gentians and shooting stars are so few now, that many people do not know there ever were such lovely things." And G.F. Ledingham, Moose Jaw, writes: "It is too bad that our Saskatchewan floral emblem, the Red Lily, is gone and forgotten from so much of our province.