

MUSEUM NOTES
Fred G. Bard

Reports from several areas indicate upland Game Birds have been experiencing a serious winter; more especially Ring-necked Pheasant and Hungarian Partridge from unusually heavy snows in southern Saskatchewan: This snowfall is about three times average or roughly 45 inches. The long series of cold weeks for December and January, and ending with the worst blizzard conditions during the first half of February that even old timers "had never seen the like".

In conversations from farmers especially from the south it is found these blizzards were severe; Farm windbreaks did not afford the birds the shelter they needed, but rather the storms drove the snow clear through. From actual flock counts of Pheasants and Hungarians before and after the storms, estimated disappearances from the flock were as high as 70%. These figures are not to be accepted as general for storm losses, but serve to illustrate these natural reverses, and the need for information from our readers who are in a position to give before and after storm comparisons.

This information is needed to assist those who seek practical ways of helping our wildlife. Personal observations relative to types of food and shelter needed to sustain them through the winter, will also be very welcome.

In Regina these past few weeks, we are favoured with a larger winter bird population than for several years. Numerous reports have come in of Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, Bohemian Waxwings and Redpolls: as a result our ash, maple and Lilac have had a thorough going over for seeds. During the blizzards it amazed me to see these birds intent in their search for food. Lloyd Carmichael placed clusters of fall gathered chokecherries out for Waxwings and they were quickly taken. Chokecherries are a good type of winter food for Waxwings; ash and maple excellent for Grosbeaks and I fully intend planting more this spring.

Saw-whet and Richardsons Owls were sent in to the Museum in a weakened condition: The Prairie Falcon found between warehouse buildings in Regina, had been without food for some time. Howard Powell of Regina reported six Sharp-tailed Grouse and six Hungarian Partridge before the storm; Three Sharp-tailed Grouse, no Hungarian Partridge after the first blizzard, and the absence of all birds after the second blizzard.

Harvey Anticknap of Craven sends in word of fifty deer in a weakened condition with three already dead. The Game Branch has detailed a Field Officer to check this area and provide food.

Each winter in Regina ducks stop over in the open water at the power house. Mr. Stan Naden, through the Fish and Game League has provided feed for them. I have undertaken to feed these birds and find as a result of the storms, they are reduced by one third.

It is our desire to compile an accurate picture as a result of the severe storms, and suggest our readers submit their observations direct to the Provincial Museum, Regina. We would welcome another report following the hatching results; it will be remembered our upland Game Birds have had poor hatching seasons for several years.

These cold days are brightened for Roy Anticknap, Regina, on February 28th, was delighted to see and hear a Horned Lark singing. Our first report here, later than usual, but early for our heavy snowfall.

Miss E. Barker of Regina had been collecting mammals for years, and recently donated her collection to the Provincial Museum. Miss Barker had the happy experience of taking at Abernethy, Sask., the first specimen for Saskatchewan of the

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Short-tailed Shrew. In a recent letter from Dr. A.L. Rand of the National Museum of Canada, we quote as follows: "Hitherto it has been unknown west of Manitoba; The specimen thus represents a westward extension of its range". This interesting mammal is on display at the Museum.

Mr. F.A. Dunk, Director Provincial Museum, Regina, on February 1st, 1947 retired from that position which he held from 1935. Mr. Dunk was guest of honor at a banquet given by members of the Department of Reconstruction and Rehabilitation and attended by the Minister J.H. Sturdy and Deputy Minister E.E. Eisenhauer. Mr. Dunk was presented with a set of stubble duck decoys with the names of those in attendance. Mr. Dunk is well known through the Province, having lived here at various points for the past 43 years. He has a great host of friends who wish him well; and we join in extending our wishes that he may continue to enjoy the great outdoors in the years to come.