

With an old Bennett wagon and a team of mules that were colts we didn't get very far from home. Our recreation depended on nature. The thirties were hard years for the red lilies. They became our emblem unconsciously. We dug up a couple of roots for our flower bed, but they didn't survive the summer heat. We found them only near the lake, and they slowly disappeared from there.

Now we are older and greater responsibilities take larger shares of our time. But though visits to nature are less frequent they are still a part of our lives. Last year we wandered along the lake in search of berries as we have always done. And last year, after years of absence, there were lilies. It was not premeditated, a scientific thought or action. It was a rebirth of our childhood. We gazed on them gloriously alive above the sunscorched grasses. Spontaneously we knelt to touch the velvet dresses and rose to leave them glowing in the sunset."

Miss Allenbrand's essay was published in the September, 1947, issue of the Country Guide.

BIRD NOTES

Blue Jay: With Blue Jays being reported as more common than usual in the east central part of Saskatchewan all during the past summer it is most interesting to note that members of the Yorkton N.H.S. noted 7 in their Christmas count at Yorkton.

Willow Ptarmigan: The lone individual noted by C. Stuart Francis at Torch River at Christmas is only the second report of this northern species received by the "Blue Jay" in the past six years. During the 1930's, Ptarmigan were regularly seen each winter in the more northern settled regions.

During 1947 Mr. Arthur Ward, Burnham, reports banding 142 individuals of 24 species, including the following species: Orange-crowned Warbler, 1; White-winged Crossbill, 3; Pine Siskin, 5; Least Sandpiper, 1. Three Brown Thrashers banded by Mr. Ward returned to the traps a total of thirteen times during the summer. Mr. Ward lives on the bare prairie and a rather remarkable number of birds are attracted to the shelter belt and lawns around his home.

Mr. Chas. F. Holmes, R. R. 3, Salmon Arm, B. C., writes: "I have changed my address after residing in S.W. Saskatchewan for 39 years. I was sorry to leave for many reasons and particularly sorry to no longer be able to keep tab on the wild life there." Mr. Holmes will be wellremembered while residing at Dollard, Sask., for his fine representative collection of birds. Mr. Holmes sends us a Christmas count taken during a walk of some 4 miles south of Shuswap Lake, B. C. Pheasant, 1; Flicker 4; American Crow, 300 (est.) Chickadee, 15; Brown Creeper, 3; Bohemian Waxwing, 25; Pine Grosbeak, 16; Magpie, 4.

THE WINTER OF 1946-47

The winter of 1946-47 was such an outstanding one from the point of depth of snow, that for reference, it should be kept in mind. After the New Year the snow piled up in the woods in a manner rarely seen. Drifts were in many cases 12 to 14 feet deep, and all around the smaller bluffs there were snowdrifts six to twelve feet deep.

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The snow was so deep that deer were confined to the centers of quite large areas of bluff and they had places in there that were almost like yards. Deer are browsers and so they gained sufficient food from the small bushes and trees that they like, to keep alive through the winter. However, they were in such poor condition that a great number died from weakness on account of a delayed spring. Some of these weakened deer also fell victims to coyotes. I would say that the loss of deer, due to the hard winter and predators, was at least twenty-five per cent. Many farmers took the trouble to make feed available, and if it were not for this, the loss would have been heavier.

Birds seem to be able to withstand any amount of cold as long as they have adequate food, and many of our winter birds came through all right. Many people took pity on the birds and placed out food for them.; that certainly helped to bring many through safely. There is no denying, however, that the heavy snow was hard on certain species. The Hungarian Partridge suffered severely as they are not used to burrowing under the snow, as is customary with the Sharp-tailed Grouse, and their food problem was a big one. Most of those that came through the winter were able to do so because they spent most of the time near a straw-stack, or near some farm yard. The Hungarians have a habit of huddling down all together in a small circle. In case of deep snow and drifting the loss in such cases could embrace the whole covey. The Sharp-tailed Grouse is so different in this regard for they burrow under the snow individually, and only rarely are they unable to break the crusted snow to escape. I have often seen them fly out of an expanse of snow that did not show a trace of where they went in, due to drifting snow after they had made the burrow. Under adverse conditions the Sharp-tail seems able to rustle food more easily than the Hungarian, and so is less subject to heavy losses. I do not think that the Ruffed Grouse suffered in any way. Living as they do in the deeper woods, and having buds that they like to eat available. Reports indicate they came through in fine shape and are increasing.

One rather strange phenomena, which may have had nothing to do with the weather, was the marked decline in the gopher population. This was probably due to some disease and not to the depth of snow or the severity of the weather, for these mammals hibernate underground. At least the farmers are not complaining because the gopher population is reduced.

H. S. Swallow.

1947 Christmas Bird Counts

BATTLEFORD. Dec. 29. Walk of six miles. Time afield: 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Weather clear and frosty. Temp. 15 degrees. Hungarian Partridge, 15; Chuker Partridge, 7 (no details, Ed.) Ring-necked Pheasant, 11; Snowy Owl, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 3; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Blue Jay, 3; American Magpie, 7; Black-capped Chickadee, 11; Evening Grosbeak, 5; Lapland Longspur, 3. Totals, 11 species, 69 individuals. C. INNES.

TULLIS Dec. 24. Fields around the hamlet of Tullis, together with a trip to the South Saskatchewan River and adjoining coulees. Weather clear. Wind, strong, N.W.; 10 inches of snow, drifts to 30 inches. Temp., 33 at start, 30 degrees at return. 3 observers in one group. Total party hours afield, 3½ (1½ by car, 2 on foot); total party miles 22 (18 by car, 4 on foot)