

and out of that throat poured that awful rattle.

Three or four little ones were sitting around her and looked quite comical with their bills pointed skyward trying their best to blend in with the scenery. As I drew closer, I expected her to fly, but no sir! she wasn't going to leave that nest.

At four feet I photographed her with the greatest of ease. This was nature photography handed to you on a platter. As I moved a foot closer, she flopped down over her young, even spreading her wings out to cover the ones at the edge of the nest. Nothing was going to harm her babies if she could help it.

After taking another picture or two, I decided to try for a really close-up - say 15 inches. A portrait attachment was put over the lens. When the camera was lowered to almost the desired distance, that long neck which was pulled tightly back against the



body, suddenly shot forward with the speed of light. Ping!! her sharp javalin-like bill struck the lens and sent it sailing several feet through the air where it fell into the water. I believe she struck at the camera lens because it resembled an eye. Needless to say, I didn't try for any more close-ups.

Since then I have met many bitterns but none with the courage and defiance of that one.

Birds and Bird Banding at Nipawin

By Maurice G. Street

I had a fairly good year at bird banding, despite a very cool, wet summer that does not make trapping birds very easy. However, I did give the thousand birds expected, a fairly close run: getting 932 of 54 species. Had a fair number of "returns" of birds banded in previous years as well as several distinct recoveries.

On September 28th I trapped a White-throated Sparrow that had been banded by Mrs. John A. Thompson, at Minneapolis, October 6th, 1949. This is the second foreign banded White-throat that I have captured. The first one, trapped October 3/46, had been banded in Indiana the previous May. Incidentally, White-throated Sparrows are rarely recaptured, and their migration routes to and from their wintering grounds are still very much a puzzle.

Billy Matthews applied for and received a banding permit this past spring. Billy does his banding on the farm some 2½ miles south and east of Nipawin

Even having not received his supply bands until after spring migration had started, he did very well, trapping 492 birds of some 34 species. His banding station, bordering open fields, is reflected in his banding totals. Note his captures of Clay-colored and Savannah Sparrows.

This past summer a pair of Baltimore Orioles raised a family of five in a tall white poplar within sight of our kitchen window. After leaving the nest the young ones stayed around the house for several days. During this time one of the young found, by chance, the oatmeal porridge (cooked thick) I had placed under a drop-trap as bait for robins and catbirds and other ground feeders. Taking a liking to this food source, it stayed right on, even after the adults and other young had left the immediate vicinity. One morning I was surprised to notice that on the approach of the male robin, the young oriole crouched with quivering wings, and uttering its food call, accepted a worm

or other tid-bit offered by the robin. A few minutes later the male oriole arrived and also fed the youngster. Thinking the male robin had fed the oriole by mistake, I was again surprised a few minutes later when the robin again fed the oriole, and I soon learned this was a regular performance. Next day the robin was seen numerous times feeding the oriole, sometimes on the ground and sometimes in the trees. The male oriole had, by this time, apparently left the vicinity for good, as neither the adults or young were seen again. Towards the evening I called in David and Alex Wright and their friend Bill Bradshaw, and together we watched the male robin feed the fledgling oriole as the two birds flew to a branch in a dead tree.

The young oriole was trapped and banded the second day out of the nest on July 17. By August 1st it had attained almost full growth, but still attended by and fed by the male robin. It was not seen after August 7. The male robin remained until late September.

Northern Shrikes were quite numerous during part of November. These birds strike terror in the hearts of the hordes of English Sparrows to be seen about the grain elevators. Several shrikes will make large inroads in these flocks. However, English Sparrows are not the only small birds that fear these predators. At my banding station recently, two Black-capped Chickadees were seen to "freeze" as a Northern Shrike appeared in the neighborhood. Neither chickadee moved as much as a feather for 42 minutes, or until the shrike moved off. Their fear only can be estimated when one realizes how extremely difficult it must have been for these two busy little mites to remain still for such a long time and in 15 below zero weather.

Great destruction of our large beneficial hawks, such as the Red-tailed Hawk, by guns in the hands of thoughtless hunters and others is evident by the recovery of banded birds of this species banded at Nipawin. Of 20 Red-tails banded since 1945, I have been informed by the United States Fish and

Our Hearts are Still On the Prairie

It is a pleasure each January to receive the annual letter from one of the enthusiastic members of the Regina Natural History Society, who for the past few years has been living in Hamilton. Mrs. James Quigley writes in part;

"We greatly enjoy the BLUE JAY and pass it on to a member of the Nature Club to which we belong. She is eighty-three years young, never misses a meeting and is a real fan.

We had a delightful summer on the shore of Lake Ontario, near Trenton. The woods were beautiful from May to October and we had birds and flowers in abundance, also wild strawberries and good fishing.

But our hearts are still on the prairie. There is nothing to be compared with it -- we think so."

Wildlife Service that 7 have been shot or killed in Saskatchewan and the States of Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, and Kansas. Also a single Redtail banded by Billy Matthews this past summer was killed at Neelin, Manitoba. Eight out of 21, with others probably shot and not reported.

An adult male Connecticut Warbler banded June 12th, 1950, is a first for this district -- the first I have ever seen. This species is very difficult to see as they keep to dense tangles and thickets, besides being quite rare.

On T. H. McLellan's farm at Arcola, three coyotes were seen standing in the snow. They maintained their vigil so long that it was decided to investigate. They were frozen stiff -- the victims of 1080 poison.