

Red Crossbills at Yorkton

Stuart Houston

FLOCKS of Red Crossbills in adult and immature plumages were seen at Yorkton by Cliff Shaw and other observers, from June 21 to June 29th. They reached their peak numbers on June 27th. Two specimens were sent to the Provincial Museum at Regina. Judge McKim reported in the last Blue Jay that scores of these birds were present at Melfort on June 28th. What other localities were visited by Crossbills this summer? Did they settle down to nesting activities this summer, and if so, where and when?

Yorkton Records

FLOCKS of Pine Siskins were noted in Yorkton during the first three weeks in July. These birds are erratic wanderers, as are the Crossbills.

Red-breasted Nuthatches seemed commoner than ever before. They were first noted Sept. 4 by Dr. Stuart Houston and last noted Oct. 30 by Mrs. Stuart Houston.

There were several reports of Belted Kingfishers, though they are usually uncommon migrants at Yorkton. At least ten were noted by Dr. and Mrs. Stuart Houston while canoeing along two miles of York Lake shoreline on Oct. 7.

A Hooded Merganser was shot Sept. 18 at Rousay Lake by R. M. Baldwin. This constitutes the third record for the Yorkton district.

A Golden-crowned Kinglet was found dead on Tupper Ave., Yorkton, on Oct. 9, 1951, by Andrew Burant. This is the first record for the Yorkton district.

An adult female Mallard, banded by Stuart Houston at Rousay Lake, near Yorkton, on August 3, 1945, was shot by Bert Rousay, less than half a mile from where it was banded, about October 1, 1951. The bird was therefore at least seven years old when shot.

Far Travellers

A juvenile female Blue-winged Teal, banded by Stuart Houston at Leech Lake, near Yorkton, on August 15, 1948, was shot December

19, 1948 at Bogota, Colombia, South America.

An adult male Blue-winged Teal, banded by Stuart Houston at Rousay Lake on August 22, 1944, was shot 75 kilometers northwest of Maracaibo, Venezuela, on April 5, 1949.

Dr. Houston has previously had reports of Blue-winged Teal from Dominican Republic, Cuba and Porto Rico, in the West Indies.

*To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did
lie.*

*An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk; from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire
mail.*

*He dried his wings: like gauze they
grew;
Through crofts and pastures wet
with dew
A living flash of light he flew.*

—Tennyson.

Condemned to the Skin-Stretcher

Madeline B. Runyan

ONE Sunday afternoon we surprised four badgers at the edge of a grain field. To reach their holes they had to come toward us, which was a real ordeal for them. It was amusing to see them flatten themselves to the ground as they approached.

As these animals are great rodent killers we believe they ought to be protected, but one big fat fellow over-stepped himself when he dug a hole in our neighbour's henhouse and killed fifty hens. Needless to say, that badger ended up on a skin-stretcher.

The April 1951 issue of "Bird Banding" reported a Black-crowned Night Heron banded July 9, 1932 near Indian Head, Sask., by the late George H. Lang, was found in July 1942 near Weyburn, Sask. Only six other Night Herons have been known to live ten years or longer.

—Dr. Stuart Houston.