

## How Abundant is the Sharp-Tail?

By DONALD HOOPER, Somme, Sask.

During the last year some of the members of the Blue Jay have been concerned about the scarcity of the Sharp-tailed Grouse.

In the Somme district they seem to be fairly plentiful and so I did not realize how scarce they were until I went to work at Melville, this fall. In a month's time I only saw one although it was a typical area for them — with open fields and poplar bluffs.

I wonder if the Sharptail is plentiful enough on the prairie to stand up to the hunting seasons much longer. The time to do something about this is now. So I am asking each member of the Society to write and let me know how abundant these birds are in his district at the present time. I will then make out a report and send it to the Department of Natural Re-

sources. If the birds are found to be scarce enough we may be able to get a closed season until they are plentiful again.

I am very fond of the Sharp-tailed Grouse. They are one of my favorite birds. I like to hear them call as they dance in early morning, or to see a flock in the trees in the late fall and hear them scold and cackle. I also like to watch the Sharptail in flight as they burst up like rockets with rapid strokes of their short wings, and then glide along so gracefully.

When I think of how nice the Sharptail is I believe that we should do our best to protect it. The farmer can do his part by not lighting a fire where the Sharptails might be resting. Let's make an effort to help these birds increase, so they will be plentiful on the prairie once more.

## INTERESTING BIRDS

By ISABELLE POWELL, Swift Current

This summer there seemed to be more Blackbirds and Catbirds in our trees than usual. One evening while we were walking near a low growing tree a Catbird flew across with something in its mouth and lit on a branch — all the time scolding "Mew" at us. We drew back a few steps and to our surprise he started singing a lovely medley of bird songs, mostly Song Sparrows' and the distinct "click click" of the Blackbird fitted in so smoothly. When we moved towards him again he slid into the angry "Mew", as though he had been telling us of his little family, and also warning us to keep away.

Several pairs of birds, something like Kingbirds, nested here this year for the first time. They had yellow breasts and no white band at the end of the tail, yet their actions were much like the Kingbird. Two of the baby birds fell out of the nest and huddled in a clump of grass for three days. One morning they were on a branch near the ground and by night had got up to a branch shoulder

high where they stayed till morning, sitting close together, like Siamese twins, to keep warm.

Hawks seemed more numerous than usual. A family of four hatched near the buildings and often flew down to the clothesline posts, where we could watch them from the window.

"What does the Meadowlark say?" you ask. One vain fellow consults me in the morning with "Look! quick! Is my cravat straight?"

During my holidays at Cypress Park I had the impression that birds were scarce here, but I changed my mind one morning when I stepped out of the cabin to get the eight o'clock news on the car radio. As I sat listening, down flew a flock of sparrows and scratched busily among the pine needles. Most of them had the white outer tail feathers of the Vesper Sparrow. One little fellow had no tail feathers — except one white one. It was August so perhaps he was molting. Then a Downy

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