

## And So The Seasons Go !

MADELINE B. RUNYAN, Punnichy, Sask.

Bordering our house on the east runs the flower garden, a rendezvous for the birds which cross it on their flights from the bluffs to the north and south of it.

Before the Chickadees and Woodpeckers had left their winter feeding station there, the transients arrived, only to be overtaken by the heavy snowfall of April 25.

We were desperate to solve their feeding problem. I tried first putting out oatmeal and bread crumbs. Carl suggested oat chop. This was exactly to their taste, and proved to be a life-saver. I pass this hint along to others who pity the little feathered folk caught in the spring storms. We put out seven piles of chop on the flower garden, some of it within a yard of the kitchen window. It was a sight to see the birds there from dawn to dusk, scratching, chirping and fighting their little battles. One evening we counted seventy-five small birds, and besides that, Carl had a feeding station on the hay rack at the barn. They ate two gallons of chop a day.

Long after the snow had gone there were still stragglers scratching chop in the amusing fashion peculiar to all small birds, namely, of jumping backwards with their feet together.

Juncos comprised half the flocks with the Tree Sparrows next. In smaller numbers were White-crowned Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, Fox Sparrows, and Harris' Sparrow, with their jet black hoods and bibs.

A shy Myrtle Warbler passed through but did not venture to feed among the flock. Two disconsolate looking Sapsuckers arrived in the snow, and attached themselves morosely to the sheltered side of the elms, looking like grey growths on the trunks. Later they made a nest in a dry tree in the south bluff and reared a brood of noisy nestlings which could be heard in continuous chorus.

After the transients had made their way north, a shy Olive-backed Thrush came to the garden, together with a pair of Song Sparrows. The

latter made a nest in a small spruce. One evening I watched a Cow Bird make a second visit and laid her egg among three tiny Sparrow eggs. Needless to say, I promptly removed it.

I watched the little sparrows trying to put a chipmunk out of the garden. He was on his way to the windowsill for oatmeal when she fluttered above him like a little helicopter, at the same time calling him all the nasty names a lady sparrow allows herself. The chipmunk had no evil intentions. At any rate the young sparrows flourished without mishap.

A pair of Mountain Bluebirds occupied Michael's bird house (a Grade 2 project) on the corner post of the garden. The young birds hadn't been out of it two days before Jenny Wren took over, and reared a brood.

On July 16, we were surprised to hear an unusual call from the north bluff and to get a close look at a Black-billed Cockoo, the first we had seen, and, I believe, an uncommon visitor to these parts.

A pair of Pheasants were seen in the district, also a rarity.

Of course the Hummingbirds were back. We have three egg cups on the window "uprights". It is still a mystery why only the females come. One visitor remarked in amazement, "Are those really birds?" Another was surprised to see that they have feet! One little bird likes to perch while she drinks.

And so the seasons go! Only this morning (August 16), a Chickadee was telling me from the clothes line, that he'll be on hand again for the suet.

### NOTICE

Will the girl from Vermilion, Alberta, who wrote to (Mrs.) Marjorie Ledingham, (2335 Athol St., Regina) for a check list, please write again, giving her name.