

## Boys' and Girls' Section

student may enter. Send your name, address, age, grade and school to the editor, L. T. Carmichael, 1077 Garnet St., Regina.

A choice of Peterson's Field Guides (birds, mammals or butterflies) or Wherry's "Wild Flower Guide," plus a subscription to the "Blue Jay," will be given as a prize for the best story received for each issue. When submitting your story, please indicate your choice of prize.

The deadline for the reception of material for the next issue will be July 15.

The prize winner for this issue is Darcy Wershler, of Yorkton Collegiate Institute. The prize is donated by L. T. Carmichael, Regina.

### The Flight of The Queen Ants

by Roxby Hughes, Age 10  
Grade 4, Simpson School, Yorkton

Once in the summer of 1951 I was going to the City Dairy on Laurier Ave. in Yorkton, when I saw a flight of Royal (Queen) Ants. There were about twenty-five of them with wings. They were coming out of a crack in the sidewalk. About forty-five little black ants were watching them. These ants didn't have wings. The winged ants flew up, though a large tree hid them. It was surprising, although I did not know what they were doing until this year when we took up about ants in school. I was watching them for quite a little while and was frightened because I thought they were going to fly up and bite me.

From my own observations since, I believe that black ants cannot bite. Whenever I have picked them up they have not bitten me. Red ants will bite nearly every time when I pick them up. This year I am planning to watch the flight of the royal ants again.

### Who Are They?

Mrs. John Hubbard  
Grenfell, Sask.

Among the most interesting and colorful of our Canadian birds are the Sparrows. And I don't mean the English or House Sparrow who isn't related to our American Sparrows.

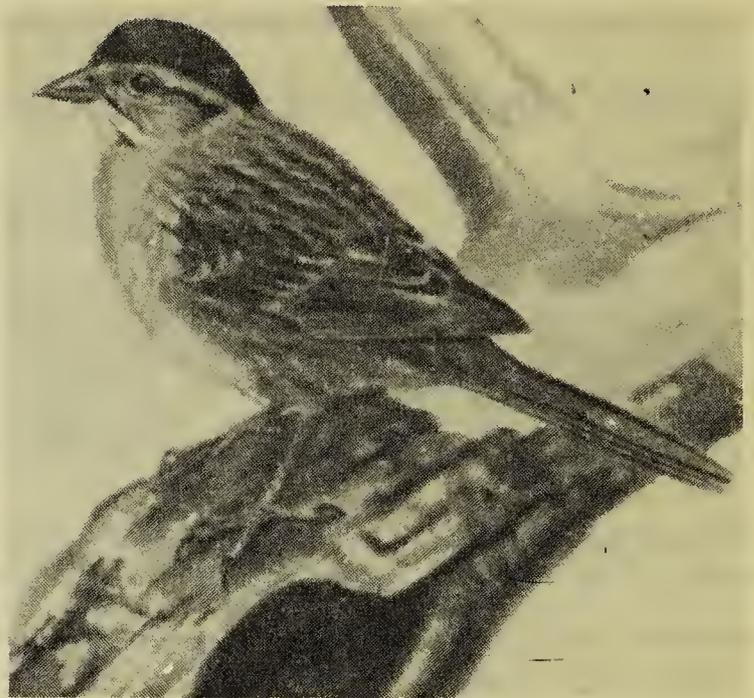


In the December issue of Blue Jay I described four of this family, the colorful little Redpoll, the larger Evening and Pine Grosbeaks and that wanderer of winter storms, the Snow Bunting.

Conical bills (cone shaped) are one of the best points in picking out sparrows.

A few can be easily recognized by their bright coloration as the brilliant gold, black and white Goldfinch, and the black Lark Bunting with its white wing patch. These are the colorations of the male; the female colours are modified in both cases, and the female Lark Bunting is a drab brown stripet creature.

But there are a myriad of sparrows all of the same "stripe", woody browns, striped on the back, some



striped on the breast and some not. The points of difference between these brown-striped quickly moving little birds are sometimes very slight.

The early arrival of the Tree Sparrow in spring is a help in knowing it. Also it has a reddish cap and small dark spot in the middle of his off-white breast.

The Song Sparrow has a spot too but it is formed by the coming together of many stripes on its breast. Its song too is very characteristic. The one we hear here year after year (and I think from its location it must be the same one) starts out with three very high notes followed by a run of notes.

The White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows can be easily confused with each other for they both have brown striped backs, greyish breasts and black and white striped heads. However, the White-throated has a definite little white throat patch and he also has a yellow spot in front of his eye which isn't too difficult to see with the bird in fair view.

All the Sparrows I have described this time have characteristics and interesting songs and these songs, once learned are an easy clue to identification.

The Goldfinch and Song Sparrow are the only two of the above mentioned that I know to nest here.

But one very common Sparrow that does nest almost everywhere on the Prairies is the Vesper Sparrow. It is a very dull brown-striped little bird, but brownish red shoulder

patches and white outer tail feathers are usually sufficient to separate it from others of its kind. It nests on the ground and does not pick a high vantage point from which to sing its cheerful song as does the Song Sparrow.

There are forty or so of the members of this family listed on the Yorkton Natural History Society's field-checking list so don't be discouraged if it takes you a little while to get them sorted out.

## The Moon

M. Brooker, Grassy Lake, Sask.

No other part of nature can rival the beauty, intrigue, and mystery of the sky. Its ever changing cloud formations, colours, bright planets, winking stars, and nearest and most dear to us, the moon.

The moon, according to our fine old-timers, rules the weather, tells us we must not do this now, and when to do that. But most fascinating to us, was when she hung shrouded under the earth's shadow on January 18th.

For those who did not see the eclipse, the moon appeared a rosy tinted globe, heavily shadowed on the north side, and rimmed with gold on the south side. Usually the moon appears flat, except for the shadowed craters, but under the earth's shadow she became a round globe, as a globe on a classroom desk.

It gives us the fresh assurance that we are not alone, and that other solid bodies share our endless ride through the universe.