

Birds of the Mixed Woods

By STUART and MARY HOUSTON

Mr. Breitung's map of "Saskatchewan Plant Formations" in the April-June "Blue Jay" is both interesting and valuable. It not only indicates the type of plants to be found in each section of the province, but because of the interdependence of living things, is equally accurate for bird life as well.

When one is travelling from the "parkland" or "Aspen Grove Section" (which is incidentally the northern part of what biologists call the Transition Life Zone), the first clumps of coniferous trees indicate that one is entering the "Mixed Wood Section" or Canadian Life Zone. And what a difference just a few miles can make! For instance, in a short drive between Kelvington and Greenwater Lake, or between Kamsack and Madge Lake, the bird life changes remarkably. Instead of two resident species of warbler (Yellow Warbler and Yellowthroat), there are suddenly over a dozen species to differentiate between—over a dozen new songs to confuse the unmusical ear!

As an example, birding at Hudson Bay Junction on June 10 and 11 yielded the following definitely identified species of warblers: Black and White, Nashville, Myrtle, Chestnut-side, Ovenbird, Connecticut, Mourning, Yellowthroat and Wilson's Warblers. Though the conifers indicate the southern edge of the "Mixed Wood Section," the new species are not by any means confined to the coniferous woods. Instead, stands of poplar and willow that look the same as those many miles to the south, now harbor an interesting new selection of birds. In addition to the warblers already mentioned, these include the Olive-sided Flycatcher, Canada Jay, Raven, Hermit and Olive-backed Thrushes, and the Purple Finch. Last but not least, the clear whistle of the White-throated Sparrow is heard everywhere.

As well as the new species encoun-

tered, others that occur only sparingly in the "Aspen Grove Section" are much commoner to the north. The Red-eyed Vireo becomes very common in the Mixed Woods Section, and one hears and sees much more of the Alder Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Blue Jay, Sparrow Hawk and American Goldeneye. A Turkey Vulture was noted between Hudson Bay and Armit on June 11. All in all our two days of birding yielded 68 species of birds in the vicinity of Hudson Bay Junction.

BIRD MUSIC

By CLARISSA STEWART,
Fairly Hill, Sask.

They've never studied Harmony;
Their Time is all awry
To connoisseurs of music,
But to mortals, such as I
No philharmonic orchestra
With fiddles soaring high
And woodwinds trumpets, cymbals,
too
Can with their music vie.
The lark begins at dawning light
His early joyous lay;
"There's nothing here to kick about,"
Is what he seems to say.
The thrush prolongs at eventide
The day's orchestral grace
With vespers so articulate
"Come here," is what he says.
One after one, the whole day through
Takes up his solo: how
The Catbird, "Canada's Mocking
Bird"
Can sing or harshly "Meow"!
The tiny Yellow Warbler
"At his door in the sun"
Shrills "Seek me! Seek me! Seek me!"
His song is never done.
The Yellow-breasted Chat puts in
His kettledrum effect.
Such volume from the Jenny Wren
You scarcely would expect.
Even the Black-capped Chickadee
No more does say "chick-a-dee"
But pipes a whistle sweet and clear
From out a leafy tree.
Go plant trees, Prairie Dweller,
If you would hear this band:
They'll glorify your country home
And beautify the land.
They ask you for so little,
No box office have they,
They're on the springtime air "for
free,"
Enchanting each new day.

Plan to attend our
Annual Meeting, Oct. 24

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