

An Evenings Experience

By ANNE MATTHEWS, Age 14, Grade 10, Nipawin Composite High School

One evening my mother, dad, brother and I packed our 35 mm. camera and equipment in the car and headed for a slough northeast of Nipawin. What were we going to do? Why, look for birds' nests, of course!

Soon we arrived at the slough. Rubber boots were on. The first problem was to get across the ditch which was almost full of water. Finally we found a narrow place and all jumped across safely.

The first few minutes were uneventful except for getting our feet wet. You see, the water was soon deep enough to go over our rubber boots. By this time we had scattered and were all looking in different places.

Red-winged Blackbirds were singing their "o-kee-ree" from all over the marsh. Quite often we would stop to look for a nest when a striped female Red-wing would fly up.

Suddenly we saw a bird fly up from among the bullrushes. At first sight it looked to be a female Red-wing. We looked for a nest nearby and soon we came upon a floating structure. In it were thirteen buff eggs speckled with brown. This was something different from any nest we had seen before. We set up the camera and tripod and soon had the picture taken. If only it should turn out well.

We were still not satisfied because we had not identified the resident of this elevated platform.

Walking on through the slough we came upon a Red-winged Blackbird's nest. In it were four blue eggs, spotted, blotched and scrawled with brown. The nest was made of grasses which were woven in among the reeds to form a basket-like nest. Soon we had a picture of it. More wading brought us upon two more Red-wing's nests containing eggs and one with four young birds. They were too young to band, however.

Farther on up the marsh another bird flew up. It was soon identified

as a Sora Rail. Was it of the same species as the other had been? It was! There was its nest which was the same as the other. This nest contained eleven eggs. Well, that mystery was solved.

Dusk was coming on, so we decided that it was time to go home. Back at the car, off came rubber boots and on went shoes. What if we did have wet feet? It was worth it!

Saskatchewan Forests

Kathleen O'Drowski, Age 13
Moose Run School, Torch River, Sask

Saskatchewan's forests are rich and green,

*As green as green can be.
Forest fires make them black—
A dreadful sight to see.*

I love to walk through spruce and pine

*And tamarac straight and tall.
They are so nice alive and green
But fire destroys them all.*

Saskatchewan's timber makes our homes,

*Our homes so snug and warm
Fire leaves animals no homes at all
No shelter in a storm.*

Saskatchewan's forests are nice and green

*Let's keep them all that way!
Be careful of a match and fires
Safety will always pay!*

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,

Skimming about on the breezy sea,
Cresting the billows like silvery foam,
Then wheeling away to its cliff-built home!

What joy it must be to sail, upborne
By a strong, free wing, through the rosy morn!

To meet the young sun, face to face,
And pierce, like a shaft, the boundless space!

—Mary Howitt.