

Nature's School House

juice which he finally begged at mealtime as he went from one person to another.

In the fall, when storage time came, he hid almost every kind of food in his large bed (a box 6'x3'x3', with a nest in one corner). We even picked wild hazelnuts to help him out. The funniest part of all was that there would be two or three nuts in every space and corner of the house, including everybody's hair **and** pockets. The majority of the stuff, however, went into his bed.

We kept him loose in the verandah for the whole summer and fall, only letting him into the kitchen at feeding time. About this time he started chewing holes in the wall, so we figured it was time to let him out, as none of us had the heart to kill him. This we did, and he thoroughly enjoyed his freedom.

Since we live on the very banks of the Cutarm Valley, he would spend most of his time there, only coming home in the morning and at noon to get his nuts and fruit juice, and then in the evening to sleep in his nest in the house. Then one day, for some reason or other, he failed to come for his meal. We never saw "Chipper" again.

He was a very tame fellow. We could play with him and pat him anywhere. What he liked best was for somebody to stretch out a bare arm and let him slide down it—like on a fire-escape. He wasn't afraid of anything. He would tease the dog, and cats endlessly by jumping on them very agilely or biting their tails. Perhaps one of these pranks led to his downfall.

A Feeding Block

Geo. M. Hruska, Gerald, Sask.

The accompanying photograph shows a Chickadee sitting on one of my feeding blocks which has holes plugged with lard and tallow. Since I have up to twenty Chickadees at my feeding station there are always one or two birds who are brave enough to eat from my hand, so a close-up picture isn't hard to get.

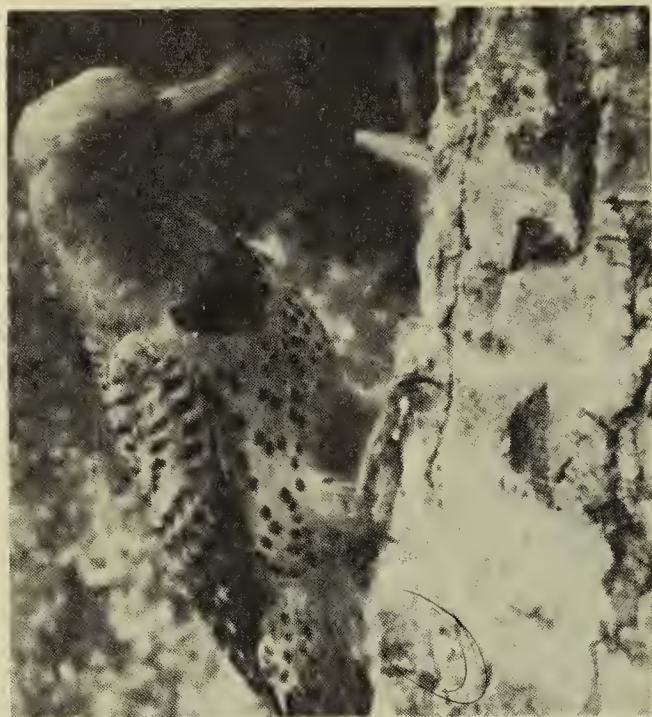


A Flicker's Charm

Donald Hooper, Somme, Sask.

To me, the Yellow-shafted Flicker is a very interesting bird. Although he can't sing like a Red-eyed Vireo, there is something charming about the way he emphasizes the words, "flicker, flicker, flicker," as if he were announcing his presence. He is not arrayed in brilliant orange like the Baltimore Oriole, still it is a thrill to see his polka-dot breast, black neck-piece, the brown black-barred back, the red triangle at the back of his head, the white rump, the black V at the base of the tail, and Oh! what a beautiful yellow he shows under his wings and tail as he flies by.

In the summertime as I walked through the pasture I was startled by the rustle of wings. Then I saw a Flicker fly up from an ant hill and glide along, as only woodpeckers can, and land on a distant fence post. He was a majestic silhouette as he made his flicker-call. The event leaves a



Flicker at Nesting Hole

charm with me that I shall not soon forget.

I took the picture by remote control with a Portra 2 lens at 19 inches, at f/11 and speed at 1/100 of a second.

My Little Nature World

Madeline B. Runyan, Punnichy, Sask.

During the summer of 1953 I found a poor bird breathing its last under my clothesline. Evidently the unfortunate little thing had flown into the wire. It was an entirely new bird to me—and I have lived here all my life. Not having Peterson's Field Guide (I now have one), I did not identify it closely enough, but it was either an Olive-backed Thrush, or a Gray - checked Thrush. Peterson shows that there is a very slight difference between them, of which I was not aware at the time.

During the very severe weather of the past January, we found a tiny owl which had perished in the straw stack. I suppose even the mice were not out in such weather. The little owl measures only 6½ inches from beak to tail. Because of its black bill and other markings, we have identified it as a Saw-Whet Owl.

Our lunch counter in an elm near our kitchen window is constantly visited by the little Chickadees, who have to move off whenever the Downy Woodpecker arrives. He, in turn, makes himself scarce, when his big cousin, the Hairy Woodpecker comes.

A Survey of Birds Nesting in a Given Area

By E. H. Brooman, Prince Albert

This survey grew out of a class discussion on environment and adaptation. At the time we had been discussing the fact that some birds and animals favor environments near man while others prefer environments as far removed from man as possible.

It was decided to attempt to discover how many and what kind of birds nested in our own school district.

The Prince Edward School district is composed of some forty city blocks. Most of this is residential and there are few vacant areas. In addition to this there is an unimproved area which for the most part is cleared.

In much of the district the boulevard is well established. In some sections the trees are several decades old. Many of the homes are reasonably well landscaped. All-in-all, the district is excellent for this type of survey.

The purpose, then, was to make a count of all visible birds' nests. Only nests which could be seen from the sidewalk area were included. Each student was supplied with a mimeographed sheet and allotted a certain area to survey. So that there would be a minimum of errors, instructions were simplified and few.

The survey showed:

Total number of nests, 189.

Total in Boulevards, 64; those high, 24; medium, 35; low, 5.

Private Trees and Shrubs, 92; those high 30; medium, 34; low, 28.

Total in Hedges, 20. Others, 13.

It should be noted that no consideration was given to birds nesting in boxes nor was any consideration given to areas other than adjacent to sidewalks.

Considering the number of nests that had probably been destroyed we see that the bird population would be considerable. Assuming three young were raised in each nest, and two adult birds attended each nest, we would have a population of almost 1000 birds. Indeed, it is quite possible that there were at least twice this number.