

RUFFED GROUSE

By DOUG GILROY, Regina



Photo by Doug Gilroy

When Dr. Walter J. Breckenridge, Audubon lecturer, spoke in Regina September 26, 1956, he mentioned the fact that every now and then a naturalist was liable to come across a wild bird or animal that, for some reason or other, had little or no fear of a human being. To back up his statement Dr. Breckenridge's movie film showed a Ruffed Grouse that certainly had no fear whatever of man.

As soon as the camera man and his friend entered the Grouse's territory in the woods, out came Mr. Grouse—tailed fanned, feathers bristling and full of fight. He would peck at the men's feet and was perfectly willing to box whenever one of the men made passes at him with his mitt. When the men left, the Grouse escorted them to the very edge of the clearing.

The nearest to this Grouse experience we have had was during the summer meeting of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society at Madge Lake this year. Only our Ruffed Grouse was a setting one and had a little more reason to be pugnacious. Our party, led by Conservation Officer Merv Baker, was first shown this Grouse as she sat on her nest at the base of a poplar tree. Not once, while 20 or 30 people

came and looked at her, did she twitch a muscle. Then suddenly as if she were fed up with being rudely stared at, she jumped off the nest; but instead of flying away she put on a wonderful display of Grouse courage. With drooping wings, raised ruffs and spread tail she strutted around like a turkey gobbler and every time a shoe came a little too close she would make a rush and peck at it defiantly.

This was a wonderful opportunity for camera fans like Ralph Stueck and myself. When we finally left, the little Grouse ran along behind our heels doubtless thinking she had won the battle and was chasing us away.

GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROWS AT GAINSBOROUGH, SASK.

Joseph D. Carruthers writes that Golden-crowned Sparrows have migrated through his part of the country for years (1930 on), usually with, or within a day of, White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows. Last year he saw them in April, this year on May 8. For a report on the first specimen record of the Golden-crowned Sparrow taken in Saskatchewan see the **Blue Jay** Vol. XIV, No. 3, September 1956.

SUMMER RECORDS of the SCARLET TANAGER in EASTERN SASK.

—Mrs. D. Sutton reports seeing a male Scarlet Tanager near Rocanville (southwest quarter of Section 13, Twp. 17, Range 32, west of the First) in June of this year. Her eleven year-old daughter, who called Mrs. Sutton's attention to the bird in the bushes near the house, had reported a Scarlet Tanager in the same bluff two years ago. At that time, in spite of Dene's good description, Mrs. Sutton had dismissed the idea of the bird being a Tanager, telling her daughter that Scarlet Tanagers weren't known in their district. This time both Dene and her mother got a very close look at the bird which Mrs. Sutton describes as follows: "The bright even red head and body contrasted sharply with the clear-cut, wholly black wings and tail. Complete absence of any yellow assured me it wasn't a Western Tanager and the red head eliminated any chance of his being an Oriole. In size he was between a sparrow and a robin."

A second Scarlet Tanager record comes from Moose Mountain Park where George Blanchard reported seeing two males and one female on July 19, 1956.

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET AT SPIRIT LAKE—On October 31, 1956 William Anaka of Spirit Lake identified a Golden-crowned Kinglet in his yard. He mentions that this is a new species for his life list, and notes that it is not recorded in C. Stuart Houston's **Birds of the Yorkton District**.

NATURAL FEEDING STATION FOR SUMMER BIRDS: Joyce Gunn of Spirit Lake, Sask. writes, "We had Sapsuckers around in mid-July; they probably nested not too far away as there were juveniles seen later. Starting the end of July they bored a series of holes in the willow near the store, and the sap ran freely. From then until about the end of August the tree was a virtual feeding station! There were four Sapsuckers, seven Hummingbirds and any number of hornets and wasps. As soon as dusk fell the birds left and the night moths took over - the ones with the orange and black

markings on the wings - until daylight and the birds returned. The Hummingbirds had not a ruby throat among the seven; they must have all been females or juveniles. The tree is rather the worse for wear, but it made an interesting study at any time for there wasn't an interval of five minutes in any day that the tree was free of birds."

MALLARD LONGEVITY: Dr. Stuart Houston reports that most birds have a short life expectancy, and that the recoveries of banded birds usually occur in the first year after banding. Nevertheless, a few survive to an older age, and reports of these older birds are a special thrill for the bander. A Mallard, banded at Rousay Lake near Yorkton on August 25, 1945, was killed near Wynne, Arkansas, late in 1954. It was thus over nine years old. Another Mallard, banded as an adult male at Rousay Lake on August 4, 1945, was shot near Augusta, Montana in November, 1955. It was at least one year old when banded, and so was at least eleven years old when shot.



This unusual photograph, taken at Saskatchewan Beach, June 3, 1956 by Mrs. F. Langford of Regina shows a nest with five Mallard and thirteen Hungarian Partridge eggs.

BLACK BRANT: Mr. George Warren, taxidermist, Swift Current sends further information to the Museum on the Black Brant specimen which was reported in the **Blue Jay** (Vol. XIV, No. 3, p. 81-82). It is entered in his records as "Shot by Mr. Lars Hendrickson on November 2, 1938 at Eston, Sask."