

**THE GOPHER**

by Herbert Mimrichter,  
Age 11, Barthel, Sask.

The gopher dug his little hole  
Right beside the telephone pole  
He dug and dug with his little claws  
They are much smaller than a bear's  
or a dog's.

I tried to catch him but I could not  
He ran so fast—I'm sure he was hot,  
It took him a while to dig his hole,  
Why he almost dug out that tele-  
phone pole!

He has nice matching colors—yellow  
and black,  
And little dark stripes upon his back,  
Then in his hole he was at last  
I watched this fellow until the day  
passed.

Oh! When in the morning—guess  
what I found?  
Not a thing but many holes in the  
ground,  
Where had he gone? This little  
friend  
Could he still be digging, digging,  
without end?

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NOTE: The "thing" in the following poem turns out to be a salamander. Persons interested in salamanders and lizards should obtain the following publication now available upon request: "Check-list of the Amphibians and Reptiles of Canada and Alaska" by E. B. S. Logier and G. C. Toner, 1955, Contributions of the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology and Paleontology No. 41.

**THE THING**

By Edward Hennon, age 10,  
Goodwater, Sask.—Prize winner

I was digging one morning  
I think in July  
When I dug up a lizard  
And, "Oh my!" said I.

What is this thing  
With the great big head?  
I really was scared  
And I had to dread  
The thought of holding it  
Near my head.

So I hit it a good one  
With the stick I was holding  
The lizard went squirming  
And a little bit rolling.

I went to the house  
To ask what it was  
And when I came back  
It was, it was,

A little old salamander  
With a great big head,  
And a few little beatings  
And then it was dead.

I shouldn't have done it,  
I know now it was bad,  
To kill just a lizard,  
My gosh what a lad  
I was.

**CROW OBSERVATIONS**

By James Liggett, age 10,  
Moreland, Sask.—Prize winner

One day last summer my friend and I spent the afternoon at a small grove of trees about a quarter of a mile from our house.

The plan for the afternoon was to climb a tree and see if there were eggs in the crow's nest. After trying for some time we resolved to climb a neighboring tree and then swing back to the tree where the nest was. After reaching the tree we were confronted with the problem of getting past a thick growth of branches. Finally, bruised and scratched, I reached the nest.

In the nest there was a newly

hatched bird and four eggs. We watched them and then went home. For weeks we watched the bird. First the birds got their plumage which was rather scraggly, and then they got their eyes open. Finally, three weeks after the crows were hatched, I went over one night and found the birds flying, all except the oldest one—he had a deformed leg.

I took him home where we put him in with a lame chicken named Charlie. The crow was never really named, but we just fell in with Blackie. His staple food was bread.

and milk, and he showed a dislike for eggs. When he began flying he had the rule of the yard.

He would tease the cats, eat the chicken's feed and scare them, and when Dad milked he would sit on the cows' necks.

One day we built a tin tray where he placed his food. When the chickens took his food, he ruffed up his feathers and flew—cawing after the chickens, although he shared his food with the sparrows.

When strangers came he would fly at them and their car and because this never succeeded in scaring them, he flew away and stayed out of sight until they left.

In August, his mother came and tried to persuade him to go away from humans, but he solemnly refused. Then one night he got locked in with the chickens and got squeezed and ruffed up. I've never seen a bird show his feelings or converse so plainly as he did.

Shortly after this accident he left, although he visited us regularly. Before he went south he came back and cawed until Mom went out and when he circled around the pole and left. I'm sure he'll come back in the spring.

### STRIPED SQUIRREL

By Bonnie Frew, age 15, Pense, Sask.

My personal experience with wild life was with a striped squirrel more commonly known as a striped gopher. Although these animals are destructive they can sometimes be tamed with a lot of patience.

My first experience with a striped gopher happened at my aunt's. She had several striped gophers on her place. One became so used to me that he would not even run; that is, if I did not frighten him by a sudden move. One day I decided to try an experiment. I put a marshmallow on a long stick and held it out to the striped gopher. At first the striped gopher was very cautious but then he began to nibble at the marshmallow and then finally to eat it. I did not have any more experiences with this particular striped gopher because I had to leave for home the next day.

A few years later on our farm we had another striped gopher that got too tame as far as the chickens were concerned. One day our pet red rooster took after the striped gopher

and chased him to the gopher hole. It was really funny looking at the rooster with his neck stuck down the gopher hole trying to get the gopher and the way that rooster strutted across the yard when it found out it could not get the striped gopher.

So you see, you can have fun with wild life even though they are supposed to be so destructive.

### TWO DETERMINED TREE SWALLOWS

By Janice Bradshaw, age 11, Saltcoats, Sask.

Last spring we noticed two tree swallows sitting on the muffler of the little tractor which stood near the barn. My dad didn't use this tractor very often because he had a larger one. One day he wanted to go harrowing so he started the little tractor and out of the muffler flew twigs and grass. The tree swallows had started to make their nest in the muffler.

Just as my dad finished harrowing, the tractor ran out of gas so he walked home, leaving the tractor in the field about three quarters of a mile away. About three days later when he went for the tractor, twigs and grass flew out of the muffler again when he started it. He then noticed the swallows around. They must have followed the tractor out to the field.

When the tractor was back in the yard, we noticed the swallows began their work of building their nest in the muffler again. They were so determined to make their home in the muffler that my dad took off the muffler and placed it on the combine nearby. The nest was soon completed and eggs laid in it.

For the rest of the spring season the tractor was used without the muffler.

### AN ADVENTURE WITH A GARTER SNAKE

by Ed Andres, age 9, Rosithern, Sask.

One time in a town close to Swift Current a friend of mine and myself found some garter snakes. We played with them for a while. I had one in my hand. My friend put the snake he had around his neck. After we played with them we put them where we found them. They were very friendly.