

like a phalanx of miniature spears. Another lichen that attracted us was a light-green wonder of beauty with se-like tips of crimson.

I tossed a large, round clump of grey-green lichen to Kathryn. Here," I suggested, "A hat."

"To go to the Ladies Meeting with," Micheal put in quickly.

The afternoon passed very quickly, and all too soon it was time to leave.

A small flock of Mallards rose into

the air from near the dark pyramid of a muskrat house. As we neared home, a Blue Jay scolded from the row of dead sunflowers along the garden. And then, catching our instant attention, a small, plump bird with rose-flushed underparts and a striking grey patch on its head, hopped atop a rail fence. It was a Grey-crowned Rosy Finch.

It had been a pleasant hike, and to help us remember it we would have a few jars of spicy cranberry jelly.

## Rhapsody in June

By ELIZABETH CRUICKSHANK, Regina

The choice of the most spectacular argument of the province, the Cypress Hills, for the summer meeting of the N.H.S. was a happy one. Rain had given a fresh-washed smell of forest and rich earth to make heady atmosphere for the motorcades that converged on the park.

Pink-sided juncos were numerous, one mother leading us to her nest in a grass-curtained hollow in the roadside. A red-breasted nuthatch disclosed his home too, a tiny hollow in the tree trunk beside Mr. Budd's cabin. Over a meadow we followed an ovenbird who called "teacher, teacher, teacher" to friends so glad to see her.

An exhilarating argument about the identification of a plain little warbler must have made it feel like a prima donna, as it sang and bowed on its tree-top stage before the crowd of dedicated birders. Being a Rocky Mountain orange-crowned warbler—its crown not on display—it was quite at home in the aspen forest.

A thrilling experience was sighting a lazuli bunting, a Blue Boy picture framed in spruce wood with a cathedral of pines for a background.

On the deep sponge of humus on the forest floor we found orchids not named for their odd and beautiful blossoms but for their odd-shaped roots, — coral root. Some had spotted blossoms, others striped, but all stood in groups, their purple-madder thick stems conspicuous in the subdued light.

Shining arnica reflected the sun that found its way among the pines to make little pools of light on the burnt-orange pine needle carpet.

From the edge of the road leopard frogs hopped out of our way to the brook that trilled happily as it tumbled in and out of willow and rose



From the crisp hour of dawn birders and botanists were abroad on pages of discovery. A Maryland yellow-throat set the mood at that early hour, a melodic mood that was to accompany us through the whole visit — "witchery, witchery, witchery".



shrubby on its way to feed Loch Leven.

Although we had begun the morning in definite groups, we found ourselves by noon all mixed up, some of us even lost. But all had made new and exciting friends. The dining hall was full of excited voices: "Rose-pink pussy-toes"; "Bishop's Cap took me back to Ontario"; "Indian paint brush and larkspur" and so on and on. We had considered the lilies of the field and found them satisfyingly lovely. And the bird check lists were discussed, exchanged, argued and gloated over!

The park offered too many features to cover in one weekend. So, some members visited the nesting site of the trumpeter swans; some drove to Bald Butte; some had a stirring ride in a jeep with the fire warden to see Hidden Valley, Lonepine Creek and glorious blue hills in the distance.

The spirit of the open range was symbolized for all of us on the drive to Cypress Lake when we heard the musical, clear, carefree and prolonged call of the long-billed curlew. As it landed within our sight we wondered if it, with other large beautiful birds, would just remain in our memories, its call to become the strange sad cry of a bird nearing extinction? To complete the picture antelope cantered

free and fearless along the valley floor.

In a tiny lake, Wilson's phalarope swam in dizzy circles: clockwise then counter-clockwise. To vary their activity and menu they ran along the shore catching flies, a difficult procedure with their long narrow bills. We have seen great blue herons, too, expertly hawking insects though their long sabre bills seem poorly adapted for fly-catching.

In the evening, naturalists forgot the heat and backless benches in the crowded hall as they pried Bruce McCorquodale with questions after his engrossing address on the fossil mammals of Cypress Hills.

Coffee time allowed exchange of experiences and formulating of plans for sunrise excursions in this exceptional area.

Friends new and old said good-bye with the hope of meeting again next year at Emma Lake. Mr. Herma Chapman, our distinguished visitor, said he was keeping a list of friends instead of birds on this trip. It was such a pleasure to have him with us from South Dakota.

We had two regrets — one that all the members of the S.N.H.S. could not have been there to share the wonders of the park, and the memories; and the other that there was no time to get together in workshop sessions to discuss our new finds.

It was not just the birds and plants and pictures, nor the amazing places but the generous help of the museum directors and their staff, of expert leaders in their different fields, and of the committee members from Skull Creek and Regina who had thought of everything, the patience and consideration of the park superintendent and his staff — any one of these things but all combined made the safari to Cypress Hills an idyl long to be cherished.

Rupert Brooke knew how each of us felt:

*Still may Time hold some golden space*

*Where I'll unpack that scented store  
Of song and flower and sky and fire  
And count and touch and turn the corner.*