

It looked like. Sometimes with some of these rarer birds I wasn't sure until years later."

How does this top-flight Saskatchewan ornithologist go about identifying a bird in the field? "I think one of the first things to have noticed is the way the bird flew, and if it alighted on a branch, its posture. Birds are quite different in flight. You can pretty well tell the difference between warblers and kinglets, for instance, just in their flight. If the bird was a small bird and the head appeared large, I'd think first that it would have been a vireo. If the bird was slim and held its body horizontal to the branch I'd say it was a warbler. And if it sat quite straight I'd say it was a flycatcher. Then the colour pattern. The first thing I'd look for would be the wing bars. About half of the birds have them and half of them haven't. Then the colour. And the song, as I have mentioned."

What about good power binoculars for bird watching? "Yes, but not too strong a binocular. I think about a 6x50 or 8x50 is plenty strong enough. Small-power glasses have a large field of vision and you don't have to hold them as steady, and with birds it's hard to get them in focus with the more powerful glass."

In summing up, Maurice pointed out an old truth about bird watching and every other form of nature study: "If you like watching birds, it doesn't matter where you go or what time of day it is, or whether it's raining or the sun is shining . . . there's always something of interest."

Thirty-four years of "something of interest" have made Maurice Street a leader in his field, and a man richly deserving of the reputation of one of Saskatchewan's top ornithologists!

## BIRD NOTES

### More Starling Records

Wm. Niven reports that the first starlings were seen at **SHEHO**, Sask. April 16, 1944. Although they arrive early in the spring (sometimes even ahead of Crows) and leave late in fall, Mr. Niven believes they are not year-round residents. Never numerous, the Starlings have decreased in the last few years. For several years, large flocks gathered in the fall—500 or 600; but in the last few years, fall flocks have been small. First seen dates: April 16, 1944; March 18, 1945; March 15, 1946; March 24, 1947; March 27, 1948; March 31, 1949; April 5, 1950; April 8, 1951; March 30, 1952; April 6, 1953; April 5, 1954, March 31, 1955; April 9, 1956; March 16, 1957.

Mrs. J. Hubbard, **GRENPELL**, saw the first Starling in their district April 3, 1943 near the town of Grenfell. Small flocks were seen in Grenfell summer and winter for several years after their first appearance. Then, after an interval of a few years with no Starlings, 4-6 were seen March 9, 1957 at a garbage dump

along No. 47 Highway near Grenfell.

Miss E. Barker, Regina, has records of Starlings at **MILESTONE** (May-June, 1945), at **LORLIE** (flock of ca. 15 seen June-Oct., 1945, and described to her as wintering 1944-5), at **GIBBS** (where she came into possession of a female bird Dec. 31, 1948 which is now in her collection of mounted birds), and at **REGINA** (1949-1956). Interesting Regina dates Feb. 13, 1955, Dec. 12 1955, Dec., 1956 suggest wintering birds.

Mrs. Clem Osborne reports that Starlings have nested at **WROXTON**, Sask. every year since she moved there in 1951. Every spring, two, four or six birds nest in holes (probably made by woodpeckers) in the overhanging roof. Early spring arrival dates: March 27, 1953; April 5, 1954; March 30, 1955; March 22, 1956; March 25, 1957.

Dora Bardal has seen Starlings only twice at **WYNYARD**: a small flock several years ago, probably passing through; and a single bird on March 31, 1957, with a flock of grosbeaks.

Henry McArton reports a Starling nesting in a hole drilled earlier this spring by a flicker in the wall of a recently vacated house on his farm at **DILKE**, Sask. The Starling took up residence in the cavity between the walls. Three young were raised and two of them, just able to fly, were scared out into a butterfly net held across the opening and banded by Stuart Houston on July 10, 1957.

Other records have gone directly to M. T. Myres who will summarize all material received from Saskatchewan for a later issue of the **BLUE JAY**.

### May Bird Count Made by Saskatoon Natural History Society

Sunday, May 26, 1957. Area lying within circle centred approximately 2 miles south of Saskatoon—with a radius of 7½ miles—Including the airport, Forestry Farm, both banks of the South Saskatchewan River, the city, three golf courses, the banks of Beaver Creek for one mile, adjoining fields and pasture. 24 observers in 4 parties. Total party hours, 34 (from 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.); total miles by car, 85; total miles on foot, 13½. Morning sunny, no wind, maximum temp. 65°, occasional light showers in the afternoon.

Horned Grebe, 26; Eared Grebe, 4; Western Grebe, 4; Pied-billed Grebe, 1; American Bittern, 1 (Bremner); Mallard, 120; Gadwall, 2; Baldpate, 55; Pintail, 61; Shoveller, 59; Green-winged Teal, 3; Blue-winged Teal, 97; Red-head Duck, 4; Canvas-back, 6; Lesser Scaup, 79; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 3; Red-tailed Hawk, 4; Marsh Harrier, 6; Sparrow Hawk, 1; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 2; Hungarian Partridge, 2; Ring-necked Pheasant, 5; Sora Rail, 2; Coot, 24; Semipalmated Plover, 2 (Bremner); Killdeer, 25; Golden Plover, 51; Black-bellied Plover, 31; Upland Plover, 1 (Gollop); Ruddy Turnstone, 1 (Bremner); Long-billed Curlew, 1 (Hogg); Willet, 2; Lesser Yellow-legs, 33; Spotted Sandpiper, 12; Pectoral Sandpiper, 14; White-rumped Sandpiper, 25; Baird's Sandpiper, 12; Least Sandpiper, 24; Marbled Godwit, 3; Wilson's Phalarope, 25; Northern Phalarope, 20 (Mann); California Gull, 2 (Gerrard); Ring-billed Gull, 1 (Gollop) . . . at least 22 other large white gulls noted, but identity not positive . . . ; Franklin's Gull, 2; Common Tern, 4; Black Tern, 98; Mourning Dove, 30; Nighthawk, 3; Belted Kingfisher, 2; Flicker, 11; Hairy Woodpecker, 5; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Eastern Kingbird, 30; Arkansas Kingbird 1 (Gollop); Eastern Phoebe, 2; Say's Phoebe, 3; Least Flycatcher, 12; Horned Lark, 5; Tree Swallow, 27; Bank Swallow, 12;

Barn Swallow, 15; Cliff Swallow, 12; Magpie, 18; Crow, 57; Black-capped Chickadee, 1; House Wren, 16; Catbird, 1; Brown Thrasher, 18; Eastern Robin, 72; Olive-backed Thrush, 1 (Hogg); Veery, 4; Mountain Bluebird, 4; Cedar Waxwing, 2; Loggerhead Shrike, 4; Starling, 15; Red-eyed Vireo, 7; Warbling Vireo 2; Tennessee Warbler, 3; Orange-crowned Warbler, 4 (Hogg); Yellow Warbler, 51; Myrtle Warbler, 1; Black-poll Warbler, 1 (Roy); Redstart, 1 (Hogg); English Sparrow, 530; Meadowlark, 68; Yellow-headed Blackbird, 15; Red-winged Blackbird, 120; Rusty Blackbird, 5 (Gerrard); Brewer's Blackbird, 60; Baltimore Oriole, 10; Bronzed Grackle, 25; Cowbird, 77; Cardinal, 1 (Morris, Mills, Grady, Gerrity, Roy); Rose-breasted Grosbeak, 4; Goldfinch, 5; Spotted Towhee, 10; Savannah Sparrow, 10; Vesper Sparrow, 75; Chipping Sparrow, 19; Clay-colored Sparrow, 131; Swamp Sparrow, 1 (Wedge, Gerrard); Song Sparrow, 31; Lapland Longspur, 71. Total species, 104; total individuals, 2,703.

Observers: Dr. J. W. Gerrard, Mrs. Gerrard, J. Gerrard, P. Gerrard, Ted Wedge, Mrs. Wedge, Terry Wedge, Miss D. Gould, Mr. C. Scarfe, Mr. J. Hogg, Mrs. G. Hogg, Mr. J. Shadick, Miss H. Mann, Miss B. Long, Mr. B. Gollop, Mrs. Gollop, Dr. R. Bremner, Mrs. Bremner, Miss T. Conway, Miss I. Shaw, Mr. R. Pravda, Mr. A. Grady, Mr. R. Gerrity, Mr. R. Morris, Bob Mills, Frank Roy (recorder).

### Record of Cardinal at Saskatoon, May 26, 1957

The big thrill of the May bird count at Saskatoon was the spotting of a Cardinal. I was leading a group doing a routine count of the river bank and the adjoining grounds of the Sanatorium when we heard a loud, melodious call completely foreign to all of us. The song was coming from the lower branches of a big spruce on the grounds of the Sanatorium, just a few yards from the main door. Suddenly we saw a brilliant patch of red, a crested head and we knew that we were viewing a Cardinal many hundreds of miles out of its normal range. We followed the brilliant male bird as it flew across the lawn to a small, brush ravine adjoining the grounds. It sang and whistled for half an hour while we tried to get close enough to photograph it, but we had no luck. Finally it disappeared in the bushes. It was not seen or heard again, although several return trips were made to the area. Five observers had good view of the bird through 7x binoculars, at distances of 25 to 40 yards. The

observers were **Ross Gerrity, Arthur Grady, Ralph Morris, Bob Mills** (public school and collegiate students) and myself. **Frank Roy**, Saskatoon.

### Myrtle Warblers at Spirit Lake

**Joyce Gunn** reports two pair of Myrtle Warblers nesting at Spirit Lake. The first pair had two young leave their nest in a spruce tree at her back door, June 18, 1957; the second pair were seen with one young Myrtle and a cowbird about a week later. Although the Myrtle was not listed as a resident by C. S. Houston, **Birds of the Yorkton Area**, we have Miss Gunn's report of one pair nesting at Spirit Lake last year (**Blue Jay**, vol. XIV: 88).

### Cliff Swallows Use Barn Swallow's Nest

**Joyce Gunn**, Spirit Lake, writes: "On the outside of the barn we had Barn Swallows nesting for two years . . . This year the nest was taken over by a pair of Cliff Swallows. They merely used the old nest as a foundation and then built their nest on up to the roof. The young have not hatched yet (July 10, 1957)." In southern Saskatchewan the favourite nesting site of Cliff Swallows seem to be the undersides of concrete bridges. However, as Bent points out, the Cliff Swallow is an adaptable species and in the eastern part of its range has become sufficiently associated with the eaves of houses and barns to merit the name "eaves swallow". This report of a single nest is interesting because "Cliff Swallows are gregarious in their nesting habits, and it is exceptional to find isolated nests far distant from others of the species" (A. C. Bent. 1942. **Life Histories of North American Flycatchers, Larks, Swallows, and their Allies**).

### Colour-Marked Mallards

On May 4, 1957 **Gwilym Jones**, Findlater, Sask. observed a pink-winged Mallard drake with brown

female fly up from a slough on the S.W. ¼, 28, 21, 24, W2nd. This was presumably a Mallard colour-marked by the Illinois Nat. Hist. Soc. (See **Blue Jay**, XV:8). Dr. Fred Glover (U.S.A. Fish and Wildlife Service) had two Mallards (one green-winged, one pink-winged) reported to him as seen at Mossbank.

### Brown Thrasher's Nest with Venetian Blinds

A Brown Thrasher's nest with six young in it was shown to me June 10, 1957 by **H. S. McArton** on his farm at Dilke. The nest was shielded on the east by the sloping slab of a wooden slab fence and on the west by an adjustable combine sieve leaning against the fence, shading the nest as Venetian blinds would! Hoe drill drag bars, also leaning against the fence, provided the crotch in which the nest was built. M. Belcher, Regina.

### Cinnamon Teal at Regina, May 27, 1957

A male Cinnamon Teal was observed on a slough near Rowatt on May 27, 1957 by **Elmer L. Fox** and **Frank Brazier**. It was seen again the following day by G. F. Ledingham. Elmer Fox also has a record for May 3, 1956 of a single male Cinnamon Teal observed on a slough near Richardson.

### A Flash From the Wascana Waterfowl Park re: Goose Project

On July 29, 1957 Fred Bard reported the one-hundred mark having been reached in the goose population in the Wascana Waterfowl Park, with 36 adults and 64 young. Success of the hatch this year is credited chiefly to the portable incubator used for hatching eggs brought in from the Cypress Hills and removed from the first settings of the park geese. Eight of the nine pairs from which the first clutches were removed re-nested.