

Blue Jay Chatter

In our March, 1956, issue of the **Blue Jay** we mentioned the controversy in Alberta regarding the protection of hawks and owls. In this issue (p. 47) we are pleased to announce that Ontario is working toward similar protection. Perhaps Saskatchewan can be the third province to give protection to all hawks and owls. Mr. W. Anaka of Spirit Lake has already written to urge us to act on this important question. We discussed the matter at the April meeting of the executive and decided to write to the Game Branch of the Saskatchewan Government asking if the laws which do **not** protect the Snowy Owl, Great Horned Owl, Goshawk, Pigeon Hawk, Duck Hawk, Cooper's Hawk and Sharp-shinned Hawk might be modified. Letters from all of our members would be very greatly appreciated so that we could make a strong appeal for protection for all hawks and owls except when they are actually doing damage.

Our present stand of this question is consistent with that of Mrs. I. M. Priestly, the founder of the **Blue Jay**, for in Volume 1, No. 3, page 24, 1943 she wrote: "We agree that in some extreme cases, where a species has increased out of all proportions and become an economic pest, as have the crow and magpie, wholesale methods of destruction seem advisable. But in many instances, particularly in the case of hawks and weasels, it is often quite sufficient to destroy the individual offender rather than wreck vengeance on the species as a whole. We have seen too much of the destruction of wild creatures, on hearsay or circumstantial evidence, and we ask all our members, particularly the country members, to make a most careful study of any instances of predation that may come their way."

Another wildlife project in which we are greatly interested at the moment is the proposed Regina Waterfowl Park. A committee including representatives from the Regina Parks Department, the Power House, Game Branch, Museum, Fish and Game League, Wildlife Conservation League and the Natural History Societies has been set up to control and publicize this area. Mr. Henry Martz of the Regina Fish and Game League is the chairman. The park will extend from the Regina Powerhouse east to the Transcontinental Highway Bypass. To protect birds there, certain restrictions must be imposed. For example, motor boats will not be allowed in the area nor will people be allowed to fish from the islands. In spite of the expansion of the city, the marsh still provides a home for some 70 different species of birds. Mr. Bard, our Honorary President, reports that 7 Canada Geese wintered here in 1953, 12 in 1954 and 21 in 1955. There are six pairs preparing to nest there now. The young are free to come and go, so they will probably nest elsewhere; perhaps they will return during migration. In the fall of 1954, a wounded Snow Goose rested here for several days. We hope that Mr. Bard's dreams of the development and preservation of this marsh will come true.

The Boy Scout theme for 1956 is **Conservation Goodturn**. The study is subdivided to stress soil, water, forest and wildlife conservation. Let us all follow their example and try to understand the importance of all these factors in the overall picture of conservation. By condemning the indiscriminate destruction of food and shelter plants and by providing more suitable habitat areas for wildlife we can show the Boy Scouts that we, too, realize that Conservation is a "Good turn" not only for today but for years to come.

Congratulations to the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation for its fine publicity on our Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History. The cover of the last **Bulletin** printed by the Federation shows in color the museum's fine habitat cases of the Whooping Cranes. Future Bulletins will illustrate other habitat cases. Perhaps the Natural History Society could make colored pictures of calendars, showing these habitat cases, available to everybody and thus continue the good work begun by the Teachers' Federation. What do you think?

We shall have an excellent opportunity of becoming better acquainted with the Museum staff at the Madge Lake Summer Meeting which they are helping to plan. We also hope to learn more about the wildlife of that interesting area. This year with our meeting place almost on the Manitoba boundary we wish to extend a special invitation to our Manitoba members. Let us meet at Madge Lake and discuss our mutual problems.