

Blue Jay Chatter

WHOOPING CRANES

In 1956 the Whooping Cranes raised two young, but the total wild population dropped to 24. During the year there was much talk of helping the Whooping Cranes increase their numbers. This began at the Canadian Wildlife Conference in Vancouver in June when Johnny Lynch of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service made definite management proposals. All organizations continue to express grave concern for the future of the Whooping Crane, but as yet no agreement on a management program has been reached.

Mr. J. A. Livingston (*Canadian Nature*, Sept.-Oct., 1956) tells us how "with the disappearance of the ponds and water generally from the prairies, it (the Whooping Crane) was forced to either take new food or move on. It 'chose' — or was forced — to move on." Mr. Livingston reasons that the Whooper cannot adapt itself to eating anything but marsh food or to living with man. But we know that the Whooping Crane often stays for three weeks during both spring and fall migration feeding in the grain fields and sometimes paying little attention to the farmer or his tractor.

We think that almost everything possible is now being done to protect the Cranes along the migration route, and that it would be impractical to try to re-establish marshes (as suitable nesting and wintering habitat) in what are essentially agricultural areas. Even were such changes feasible they would be slow and the cranes are likely to become extinct before any important changes are made. At our Annual Meeting, October 27, 1956, we passed a motion backing any management program proposed by the International Whooping Crane Advisory Group. We are sure that man has the knowledge and ability to raise healthy cranes from fertile eggs more successfully than the cranes can in the wild. We are therefore most anxious to see an active management program begun immediately. This program can begin with birds now captive, but it should also consider rescuing some of the eggs from which young are not being raised in the wild.

We think the article on Greater Sandhill Cranes by Dayton O. Hyde (page 19) gives some indication of what can be done with the Whooping Crane. In support of Mr. Hyde's ideas it is interesting to note that Mr. F. Bradshaw in the report of the Game Commissioner, Saskatchewan, 192 says, "It is noteworthy that, while the Whooping Crane lays two, and more rarely, three eggs at a setting, yet within the last five years no report has reached us of more than one young bird to a pair of adults having been observed."

LARGER BLUE JAY

With this issue we are beginning an enlarged **Blue Jay** and a more active program. The executive of the society hopes that the membership can be increased sufficiently that fees can be kept at one dollar per year. You can help by selling the **Blue Jay** to your friends. The Regina Natural History Society has mentioned the **Blue Jay** at its Sunday shows. Doug Gilroy, author of **Prairie Wildlife**, a nature column in the **Western Produce** has brought in 50 new members. We appreciate, too, the many renewals that have brought at least one new membership in with them.

Miss Joyce Dew, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, has been persuaded to take over the Boys' and Girls' Section. There are going to be lots of changes in this section and lots of prizes too, so send in your entries and join the fun. The articles in the Museum Section which we placed near the front of each issue during 1956 will now be scattered through the magazine so that we can follow an arrangement of birds, plants, etc. In this issue we are happy to present two special articles: "Pairing Display and Spring and Summer Aerial Flights of the Mallard," by Alex Dzubin of the Canadian Wildlife Service, and "Soil and Water Conservation in Prairie Agriculture" by D. W. Kirk, P.F.R.A., Regina. If our finances permit to continue to print a larger magazine, we shall have further conservation inserts.

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