

## Contest Rules

Any young person may submit material for this section of the **Blue Jay**. The entries must be first hand observations in the form of letters, stories, poems, black and white sketches or photographs. Letters should not exceed 500 words. All entries must be accompanied by the name, age, and address of the sender.

Book, prizes or magazine subscriptions will be awarded with each issue of the **Blue Jay**. Special prizes will be given from time to time to teachers who encourage their pupils to write or who sponsor nature activities about which the children write.

Send in your nature observations to Boys' and Girls' Section, **Blue Jay**, Miss Joyce Dew, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, Regina. The closing date for next issue is June 15, 1959.

## Pussy Willows in January

by Karon Brooks, age 13, Rhein, Sask.

Pussy Willows in January! It's hard to believe especially if you live in the parklands of Saskatchewan where January is still the middle of the winter. On January 21 while I was going for a walk on the crusts of snowbanks I noticed to my surprise some pussy willows. They were on the very top branches of a willow clump practically covered with snow.

In curiosity I broke a twig off and noticed that it did not bend nor twist but broke off cleanly so I knew the branch must be frozen.

Then I investigated further and observed the buds of a small poplar tree. They were large and sticky. When squeezed a sap oozed out of them. Breaking one open I noticed that tiny green leaves were already formed inside. I also noticed that these leaves have a protective covering of several layers of thin skin. The bud and leaves were both covered with plenty of sticky sap which I decided must keep them from freezing.

Later I brought some Pussy Willows and a poplar branch into the house, then I noticed that as soon as the branches became warm they would bend easily without breaking.

I learned from former observations that in the autumn after the leaves fall there are many tiny buds on the twigs and small branches. In spring they have grown much larger.

I have never noticed Pussy Willows in January and I wonder if their growth in this season is uncommon.



## Evening Grosbeaks

by Judy Dubasov, age 13, Kamsack, Sask.

This sketch is one I made after observing the antics of one perched high in a poplar tree near our house. Although there were four altogether, this was the only one that seemed to be bold enough to sit still as I stood watching him.

## The Hungarian Partridges\*

by Mildred Boon, age 11, Maryfield, Sask.

One day the teacher suddenly called us to the windows. "Shh, be quiet, see those Hungarian Partridges," she said.

Sure enough there were twelve fat Hungarian Partridges. They were only six yards from the school and we could see them very well. Some were just a slate colour on the breast, others had black horseshoe marks. We decided the ones with the horseshoe marks were the males. The face had a reddish-coloured marking. The partridges' broad tails were reddish-brown on the ends. The rest of the body was

\* The Hungarian Partridge is now called the Gray Partridge in the new check-list.