

# Junior Naturalists

Edited by **Joyce Dew**, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History



*Photo by Joyce Dew*

Two young naturalists examine a beaver-cut log in Regina Waterfowl Park.

## Name the Mammal Contest Winners

We had a much better response to this contest than to the last with 40 entries sent in. The prize winners were as follows:

Junior Section—

**Tom Bryant**, Fort Smith, N.W.T., tied with **Dale Robinson**, 1441-8th St., Manitoba, for first prize.

Senior Section—

**Shirley Anderson**, Rocanville, Sask., whose prize winning paragraph read as follows: "The Grasshopper Mouse lives in the open grasslands. They are rather uncommon and unevenly distributed. They are very useful to us as they feed extensively on insects and upon other mice which are a nuisance to us."

The correct answers to the questions were:

1. Elk or Wapiti
2. Black-tailed Prairie Dog
3. Ord's Kangaroo Rat
4. Northern Grasshopper Mouse
5. Muskrat
6. Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel

## LETTER WRITING CONTEST

Any boy or girl 16 years old and under may enter. Entries must be first hand observation and not something copied from a book or other source. All entries must be accompanied by the name, age and address of the sender. Send entries to Miss Joyce Dew, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, Regina, to arrive not later than April 15. Prizes, which are awarded according to age, include field guides and subscriptions to nature magazines.

## PRIZE WINNER

It appears that the country children must have been hibernating with the bears this winter. How else can one explain the almost complete lack of letters from them about nature out of doors during the winter? **Ron Austin**, who incidentally is a city dweller, is the only one who wrote about outdoor activities this winter. We are pleased to hear that he ventured out "birding."

The prize winner for this issue is **Tamera Nero** for her life-like sketch of rabbits and her entertaining comments about them.



## OUR PET RABBITS

by **Tamera Nero**, age 11, Regina



My sister and I each got a pet rabbit last spring. Mine is a black and white Angora rabbit with a white stripe down its face, and curly hairs on both sides. He has long silky Angora hair which must be combed quite often or he gets little lumps of snarled fur.

Some people say that if you let your rabbits out they will run away. We kept letting our rabbits out and if they ran away we'd put them in the pen. Lorry, my sister, had a harder time for her rabbit used to be very wild and he'd bite, but now he is tame and gentle. In the summer time we could let the rabbits out and they would stay in the yard. If anyone tries to catch them but us they will scoot into the pen. They get lots of food and have a nice yard with trees, grass and clover so they have no reason to run away. It is lots of fun to watch them run around and frolic in our back yard.

When Tippy, our cat, pounces on the rabbits she hits them with her paw and runs away with the rabbits chasing her. One day when my rabbit was chasing Tippy she ran up a tree and got caught between two branches. I shook the tree so she'd fall down and she landed on my rabbit.

## PET PIGEONS

by **Bob Kerr**, age 14, Regina

My pets are chiefly show birds. In my collection of pigeons I have a total of eighteen birds, seven of which are show birds. I have two king pigeons which are the size of bantam roosters but all white with feathers on their feet. I have three roller, two black and white, and one red and white pigeon. When the rollers fly they go high in the air and then do

about ten to fifteen somersaults in the air. My most prized possessions are trumpeters. They are about the size of the king but they are grey. Some odd characteristics of these birds are that the feathers on their feet are about six to eight inches long. They also have a crown of raised feathers and have feathers covering their eyes. The rest of my flock consists of checkered birds and bluebars.

## OUR PET GUINEA PIG

by **Lorrel Nero**, age 9, Regina

My sister's guinea pig, Tooney, is gold and white and squeaks a lot. Mine, Looney, is black and white and does not squeak a lot. We got these "pigs" a month ago. They are both males. When Major, our dog, chases them he whines a lot. They are the cutest little things I've seen. They eat just as much as we give them. We give them some lettuce and go outside for about ten minutes. When we come back in the lettuce is gone.

Tamera's "pig" was born without hair on one ear and we don't know why. If we put newspaper in their cage they will get it into pieces. We put three carrots in the pen. Tamera's "pig" went and got two for himself and mine stole the one the rabbit had. (The rabbit's name is Snowflake and belongs to a friend of ours.) Then Snowflake did not have a carrot to eat.



## BRIEF NOTES

**Bryan Lyster** of Abernethy, reports having seen and identified 102 birds last year while **Larry Rasmussen** of High River, Alberta, wonders if the contests couldn't be more general in nature instead of being based on Saskatchewan wildlife. **Roberta Forsaith** of Carmichael, reports having seen a Rufous-sided Towhee and wonders if they are uncommon in that part of the province.





Photo by F. W. Lahrman, SMNH  
Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History.

Junior Naturalists examine contents of nest boxes.

## SWALLOW NESTING PROJECT

by Trevor Apperley, age 9, Regina

One day in late fall several members of the Junior Naturalists Club met at the Museum for the purpose of going to the Waterfowl Park to take down birdhouses.

Miss Dew and Mr. Wade took us there in cars. We walked from the car to the place where the bird houses were. These bird houses were put up on fence posts in the early spring so that birds could nest in them. We took the houses down and opened each one. In one we found two eggs. A girl named Irene put them in her pocket. As we were walking back to the car one of them smashed and made such a mess.

On the way back to the cars we found a house which a muskrat had deserted and saw a tern on the water and some Canada Geese in the distance by the bridge. We also saw two cows grazing in a field.

We took the birds houses back to the Museum to store for the winter months.

## BIRDING IN WINNIPEG

Ron Austin of Regina reports having spent part of his Christmas holidays birding along the Assiniboine River. His most exciting find was a Blue Jay which he had never seen before. Ron was quite pleased that even though he was away from home there were still birds and mammals to enjoy.

## WINDOW LEDGE FAMILY

by Bryan Lyster, age 12, Abernethy, Sask.

One day in early June I was surprised to see that a pair of robins were busily building a nest right on the windowsill of our sun porch. They skilfully wove grass into mud to make a solid foundation. Then they lined the nest with horsehair.

In a few days the mother robin laid the first egg. Each day there was another egg until there

were four tiny blue eggs in the nest. Now the robins began a long wait the mother spending most of her time on the nest with the father perched nearby. At last on June 30th the eggs were hatched. The parent birds were kept busy supplying worms for the young.

The young were soon feathered and were beginning to look more like robins. Towards the end of July they left the nest. Each day one of them flew away until the nest was empty. Thus ended one of the most interesting nature study lessons I have ever had.

## NAME THE BIRD CONTEST

Photos, on following page, by F. W. Lahrman, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History.

Rules:

1. Any boy or girl 15 or under may enter.

2. Put your name, age, and address at the top of a sheet of paper and number from 1 to 8.

3. Boys and girls of 12 and over must write a paragraph of not more than 50 words about one of the birds in this contest.

4. Send entries to : Miss Joyce Dew, Blue Jay Contest, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, Regina, to arrive not later than April 15.

Clues—The correct answers are found in the following list of scrambled names. Some names may be used more than once; others not at all.

itwhe - oaetdrht wor-raps; dlab aeelg; ragy yaj; enrteaws eergb; aklcbnda - hweti rawelrb; sphra - tieald oesgru; dlaalmr; ugmnniro ovde; itehw - denworc srwrwpa; der-aditel wahk; ehsuo wraopsr.





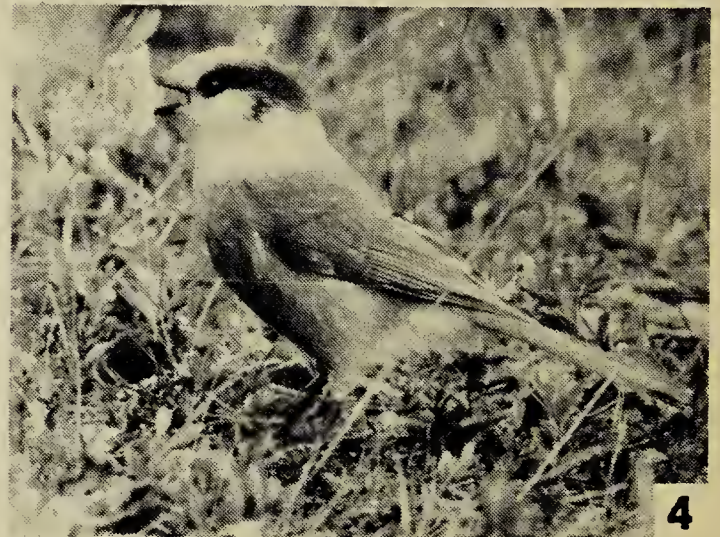
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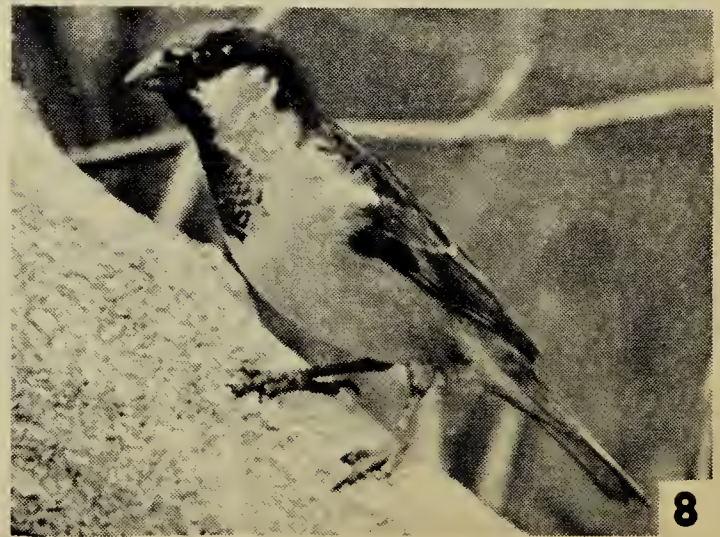
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