

BLUE JAY CHATTER

This issue of the **Blue Jay** coincides with a very important event for naturalists in Western Canada—the coming of the A. O. U. convention to Regina. We welcome members of the American Ornithologists' Union from all parts of the continent and hope that the 1959 meeting will be worthwhile in every way. The programme of papers sessions and field trips will occupy the best part of a week (August 25-30). In conjunction with these activities there will be many opportunities for informal association among amateur and professional birdmen whose common pursuit of a fascinating study brings them together for this meeting.

We shall look forward to seeing at the A. O. U. meeting in Regina some of the members of the S.N.H.S. who recently gathered at Moose Mountain Provincial Park for the society's annual weekend of field trips. The summer meeting, it always seems to us, proves that the Saskatchewan Natural History Society is more than the **Blue Jay** magazine—it is a happy association of people with common interests who come together to share them. The idea of the summer gathering was born in 1954, and although the first meeting was "rained out" at Greenwater, we have since had five very successful get-togethers. It is a real pleasure to look back upon those June weekends at Fort Qu'Appelle, Madge Lake, the Cypress Hills, Emma Lake and Moose Mountain.

At the recent summer meeting we had the pleasure of getting to know Bill Gunn, Field Secretary of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. Dr. Gunn has been here on the prairies recording prairie bird song. Knowing his recordings in the "Sounds of Nature" series, we are looking forward to hearing our own familiar birds similarly presented. One of Dr. Gunn's records that we like best, presenting the voices of forest, marsh and lake through a summer's day in Algonquin Park, was brought to mind by the wild call of the loon heard frequently at Moose Mountain.

Also at the Moose Mountain meeting was Francis R. Cook, a young member of the staff of the National Museum of Canada now in Saskatchewan collecting amphibians and reptiles. Having these serious students of wildlife among us at our summer meeting helped to give us an appreciation of the extensive and continuous study programmes being carried on by trained research men. The paths of the layman and the scientist do not cross often enough; for that reason, the informal contacts made at Moose Mountain seem to us especially important. For the same reason, we feel that it will be through such associations that the A.O.U. meeting in Regina will have its most lasting influence. The young people in the group, especially, cannot help being inspired by this opportunity to associate with serious "birdmen". Many of us feel that we ourselves missed such inspiration and direction during formative years. A little encouragement from trained and enthusiastic naturalists at that point can be really helpful. We feel that the nesting study of the horned lark in this issue shows such a happy indebtedness on the part of an enthusiastic young naturalist to guidance received from persons of training and experience.