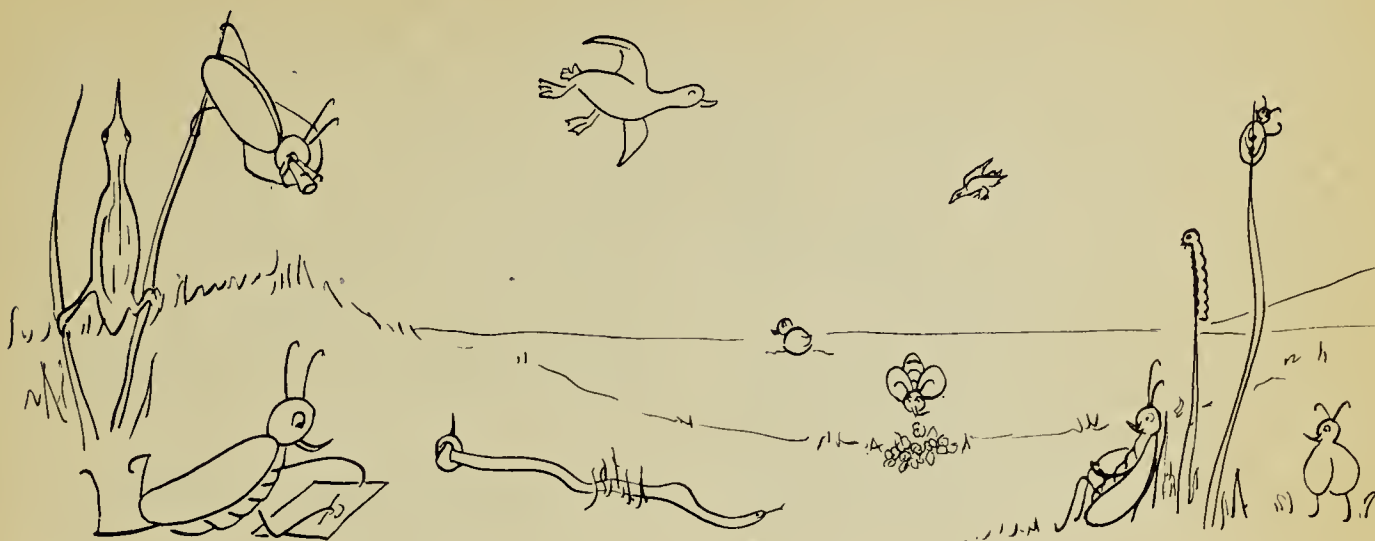


# BOYS' AND GIRLS' SECTION

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



## 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 the next issue is October 15, 1959.

## Prize Winners

Laurie Robinson is given a prize for his description of the owls and their actions. Phrases such as "eyes as round as marbles," "clicking sound" and "a screech almost like a squeal of a young pig," are quite good. Laurie has given us his impression of the owls as he saw them.

A prize goes to Alfred Lange as well for his account of a Coyote's hunt. Alfred's curiosity led him to follow the coyotes and observe their actions.

Snake hunting is an unusual occupation which Daniel Greenlaw seems to have well in hand. He apparently knows what he is doing or he wouldn't be capturing poisonous Copperheads! Daniel's contribution earns him a prize too.

Children are reminded that first-hand observations are wanted. Descriptions that sound too much like something read from a book or drawings that look copied from bird pictures in field guides or from other sources are not wanted. Write about things as you see them, not as someone else has described them. Most of you are doing this, so keep up the good work!

All letters which didn't get printed are being kept on file and we hope to use some of them at a later date.

## MEATH PARK "SEA GULLS"

A newly organized Junior Naturalists group at Meath Park sent in a report of their election of officers and the first field trip of the year. The following officers were elected: President, Louis Sach; Secretary-Treasurer, Sylvia Feschuk. On a forty-mile trip the group reports having seen 300 Horned Larks and a number of other birds—28 species in all. At present there are twenty members in the club ranging in age from 10 to 14 years. We should like to congratulate the "Sea Gulls" for their enthusiasm and wish the new club every success.

## TAME WAXWING

by Douglas Evart, Moose Jaw, Sask.

In late January my grandfather found an injured Bohemian Waxwing in his back yard.

He took him home and made a cage for him out of window screens and kept him in the cage for about ten days. The bird refused to eat anything for the first three or four days. Then my sisters and I gathered berries from a neighbor's hedge and he began to eat well.

After Grandpa gave him the freedom of the office he was still unable to fly. In a week or two he began to make short flights from the floor to the chairs. Soon he could be seen on top of Grandpa's high safe, so Grandpa thought he was on his way to recovery.

He began to wait for a nice day to let him go. Finally, such a day arrived.

Grandpa took the bird outside and felt that he was ready to go, however, he didn't want to let him go without a good meal. He took him back into the office and fed him. When he took him out again he didn't want to go. Grandpa kept him overnight.

The next day was another nice day. He took him out after dinner. In the tree across the street was another Bohemian Waxwing so he took him across the street and let him go. The waxwing flew up onto the branch where he was immediately joined by the other birds. They greeted each other with great flapping of wings. They flew off into a spruce tree.

## THE GOPHER'S UNLUCKY DAY

by Judy Dubasov, age 13, Kamsack, Sask.

In our cow pasture live many many "gophers." By the common term of "gophers," I mean the Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel and the Richardson's Ground Squirrel. Most of these little rodents are so unafraid of everyone that whenever one passes their holes, they poke their heads out as if to say, "No trespassing, Please."

On this particular evening, June 11, the gophers were unusually noisy. All about me, I could hear their high-pitched whistles. I happened to

glance up to the sky and there I saw a Marsh Hawk, circling over the ground. "Uh-huh!" I thought. "Now the little pests will have something to think about."

Suddenly, without any warning whatsoever, the hawk swooped down. All the gophers scurried for their holes, and for the next few seconds, general confusion reigned. But then the hawk flew upward into the cloudy sky with an unfortunate little gopher in his claws.

You can be sure that the whistles of the gophers died down quickly after that little incident.

## THE OWL'S NEST

by Laurie Robinson, Maryfield, Sask.

One afternoon as my brother and I were going home from school we were watching for magpie nests. We saw one about six feet high in a large poplar tree. As we came closer we saw a bird's head rise up. When it was in plain sight, we became a little frightened. It was not a magpie nor a crow. It was an owl. It had two long black pointed "ears". It had light brown and white around its eyes. Its back was brown and the



Marsh Hawk with Ground Squirrel in his claws.

by Judy Dubasov, 13, Kamsack, Sask.



Horned Lark—sender did not include name.

tail was a very dark brown, almost black. Its breast was a lighter color with white spots.

As we moved about, the owl watched us very closely. Its eyes were as round as marbles and it kept opening and shutting them. As it opened its eyes they seemed to make a clicking sound!

We made a noise and frightened it off. As it flew away it gave a screech almost like the squeal of a young pig.

After the owl had gone, my brother climbed the tree. There were four white eggs in the nest. They were about as big as a pullet's egg. From our observations we believe this is the Long-eared Owl.

This nest was first discovered on May 28, 1959. On June 12, we looked again and there were three little white owls, one of them had fallen on the ground. It seemed very weak but we put it back in the nest.

*Editor's Note:* The clicking sound referred to here is probably "bill-clapping." Some owls clap their bills when alarmed.

## COYOTES' HUNT

by Alfred Lange, age 14, Broadview, Sask.

One evening when I was walking along the road to get the cows, I was surprised to see three coyotes running slowly along the grassy level hay flat. I didn't scare them off for I was surprised to see them suddenly crouch low to the ground, as they

started up a hill. I didn't understand the meaning of this, but I was going to find out. I walked to the other side of the hill and watched. I saw seven grouse dancing in circles at the top of the hill. Two coyotes were slowly circling to the left and the right of the third, who was just lying closer to the birds. When the coyotes were about two-thirds of the way around the hill, they stopped and started to crouch in on the grouse. The grouse didn't realize any danger was near and kept dancing. When the coyotes were approximately two yards away from them, they slowly rose and jumped. At the sight of danger five grouse flew up but two were killed by the coyotes. The coyotes having killed the grouse, started off across the flat in the same way they had come. This was the first time I saw coyotes hunt grouse but it was very interesting.

## THE COPPERHEAD

by Daniel Greenlaw, age 11, Columbia, Missouri, U.S.A.

Early each summer I always go snake hunting. This year I found more than I was hunting for. I was merely looking for Ringnecks when I turned over a rock a-n-d s-a-w a **Copperhead!** This foot-long snake was under a rock by a railroad track which runs along beside a creek. After I gathered my wits, I grabbed a dead tree limb and broke it so

that it had a fork in it. When I got close to the snake, I thrust the stick over the snake right behind the head. Then I took the plastic ice cream carton I'd brought to put the Ring-necks in, and slowly but surely slipped it under the snake's head. Then, using the stick, I pushed it in the container and snapped the lid on. After I got home I got a better box and took it over to the Biology Dept. at the University of Missouri.

## OUR NATURE HIKE

by Brenda Gudelot, Kinistino, Sask.

Last Friday we visited a Screech Owl's nest. The mother owl was 10 inches in length. The mother's "ears" were so long you could see them on the nest for a few minutes when we first came. The mother stayed close to the nest. She was so close that Mr. Isinger took a picture of her.

We also visited a family of Great Horned Owls. The mother and father Great Horned Owl were about 24 inches long. They had two "horns" on the top of their heads. They were both grey in color. The nest was about 20 feet up in a tree. Their nest was made of twigs. Garry climbed the tree and put one baby owl in a pail and lowered it down. The mother stayed quite a distance away from us. The owl made a noise that sounded like this, "hoo-hoo-hoo."

## OUR ROBIN

by Beverly Herriges, age 12, Englefeld, Sask.

One day some boys from our room caught a little robin. They brought it into the classroom and we took care of it. We fed it earthworms every few hours. It eats worms by the dozen. Day after day it learns more things. It can now pick up worms by itself. It is able to fly short distances. The little creature hasn't got his red breast yet. When he is hungry, he is a real little chatterbox. One of us just has to go and give him some worms. We tied a coat hanger to the cord of the window blind, and from there he watches us.

We will be sad to see him fly away.

## PET CROWS

by Keith Turnbull, age 14, Onoway, Alberta.

Blackie and Joe came into our lives early last June. They were ugly and scrawny, typical of all young crows. They were brought up on bread, milk and raw meat, which they would snatch from my hand. Two weeks later they were feathered out and making their first flights. They would delight in "buzzing" people or landing on their heads.

Early in July, Joe made a fatal mistake. Not having learned to fly properly, he crashed into a building and broke his neck. He died next day.

With Blackie left alone, he became more of a nuisance. One day we heard a terrific row in the hog yards. A young tabby had tried using Blackie for food for her kittens. We found him missing a number of feathers, but we noticed the cat kept her distance from then on.

He loved stealing and hiding clothespins, and my mother got fed up with him. Early in October, he flew away and never returned.



Photo by H. Dommasch  
Robin feeding young