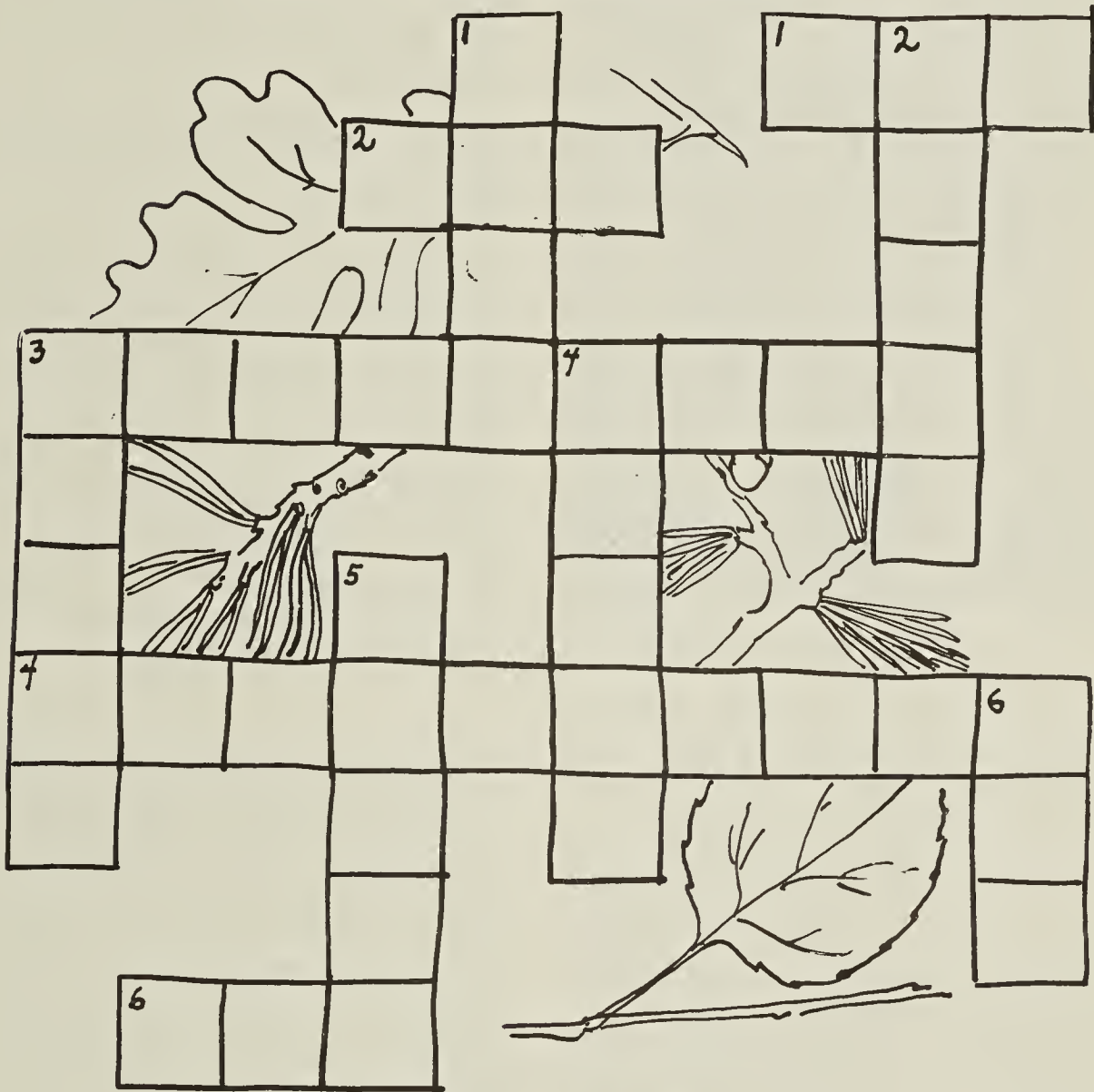


Junior Naturalists

Edited by **Joyce Deutscher**, Regina



CROSSWORD PUZZLE

(Theme - Saskatchewan trees)

Across

- 1. Grows in eastern part of province
- 2. A coniferous tree
- 3. One of our pines
- 4. Adjective describing a cone bearing tree
- 6. Has good wood for making baseball bats

Down

- 1. Has long needles
- 2. A poplar tree
- 3. Another name for tamarack
- 4. Made from tall straight trees
- 5. Has white papery bark
- 6. All trees have this

CONTESTS AND PRIZE WINNERS

In the junior section of the plant study contest the prize is awarded to Elisabeth Wagner of Regina who sent in a collection of flowers beautifully mounted on black paper and protected with plastic. Brian Irving wins the prize for his entry in the senior section of the plant study contest.

The letter writing contest was difficult to judge owing to the variety of entries—some class projects, some reports of group activity and others in-

dividual efforts. However we feel Bohdan Pylypec deserves special recognition for the work he did checking nests for the nest record scheme and his interesting report about his activities.

Comments and letter writing contest entries are to be sent to Mrs. Joyce Deutscher, 1332 Edward St., Regina, to arrive not later than January 15 to be in time for the next issue.

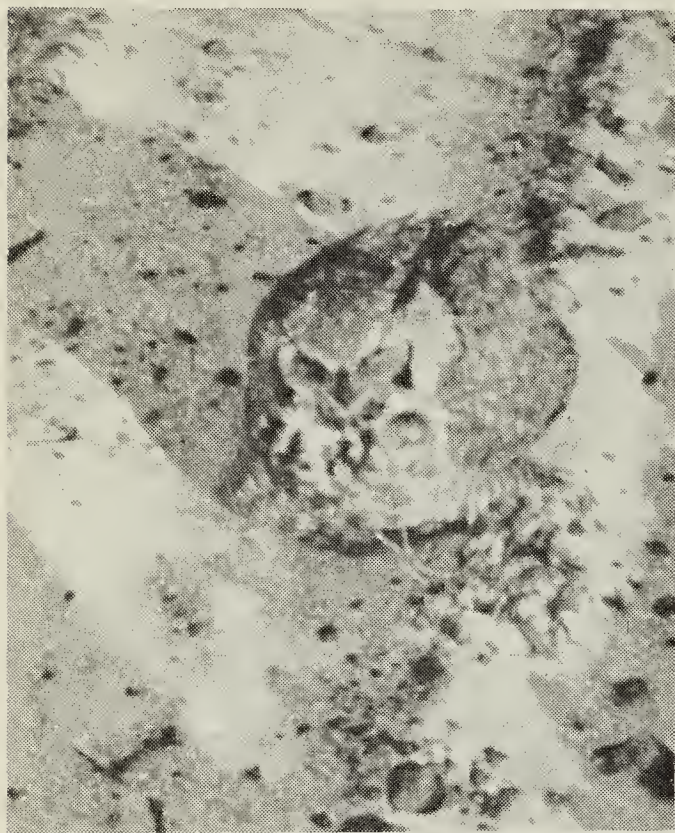


Photo by Marian Clark
GREAT HORNED OWL

GREAT HORNED OWL

by **Marian Clark**, Flaxcombe

The picture of the Great Horned Owl was taken in March, 1963. We saw it sitting out in the field on a really warm Sunday afternoon. It seemed unconcerned and contented so I went closer with my camera to see if I could get a picture of it. I was surprised to get so near, but it didn't seem to be afraid. The picture was taken with a 127 Baby Brownie camera.

(Continued from last issue)

WINTER IN THE TREGARVA DISTRICT

by **Kenneth Dickson**, Tregarva

We walked a few more feet and a big Horned Owl flew off into the snowy sky. We also saw a lot of squirrel nests but no squirrels.

It was time for us to leave. As we left the dense belt of trees it was like leaving a bird sanctuary with everything alive with song.

Then you jump into your car and make your way up to the farm yard. As you look across the fields you see Mr. Red Fox hunting for mice, a very

smart fellow, for if you were to chase him he would suddenly disappear by making a quick turn and lying flat in the tall snow-filled stubble. There he would go unseen for a long time while a Snowy Owl watches from a near-by telephone pole.

We now approach the trees of the farmyard where a small flock of partridge take wing and fly to another bush.

Once inside the house we look out the window towards the apple trees in the garden only to find them loaded with waxwings feeding on last year's apples, with an odd magpie flying overhead looking for meat of some kind.

If you were to look at the cattle in the feed lot you would see a pair of Brewer's Blackbirds sitting on the bales of straw.

Thus I find winter on the prairies not so dead after all.

1964 REPORT OF THE BRANDON JUNIORS' BIRD NEST PROJECT

by **Bruce Peters**, age 14, Brandon

This year the Brandon Juniors renewed their vigor. By early summer we had 1,118 nests set out but probably not more than 1,100 were in effective condition at any one time. This total compared with the 749 which were set up in the last five years. (*Blue Jay* 21:150).

The nest line was extended north to the Rockham district and also carried into new areas in the Rounthwaite and Brandon Hills districts.

We decided this year to count only the first brood nests of the bluebirds so that there would be no chance that we might count one nesting pair twice. Several areas where we found Eastern Bluebirds last year did not have them this year but we found this species using our nests in other places where they had not been before. We also had Mountain Bluebirds in many new locations.

This year we found a large increase in the number of Tree Swallows and Mountain Bluebirds. Also there were fewer House Sparrows, House Wrens and vandalized nests this year than last year. This was encouraging. We

also moved other nests from Tree Swallow territories to new areas when we found that some of the nests were not being used where we had first put them.

About 25 trips were made during the summer to check our nests, and nearly 80% were checked. The totals for the various species were:

Tree Swallows - 605, Eastern Bluebirds - 29, Mountain Bluebirds - 50, House Wrens - 26, House Sparrows 16, Vandalized Nests - 14.

The rest of our boxes were either not used, not checked, or the results were uncertain. We intend to stop setting out new nests when we reach 1200. This will enable us to keep more accurate records. By next summer we hope to have the rest of the nests out.

REPORTS BY THE GRADE 4 AND 5 CLASS AT YELLOW CREEK

THE STARLING

We have a Starling nest in our room. It is in a part of a tree trunk. A woodpecker hollowed out the trunk. The Starling chased the woodpecker out. Our teacher cut one side of the trunk away. The Starling lined its nest with barnyard straw and chicken feathers.

The Starling has many bad habits. It likes to steal other birds' nesting places. It defaces building fronts.

PURPLE MARTINS

Martins live in colonies. Our teacher had four families of martin fledglings living in a bird house. Each family had four fledglings. The old birds were busy catching insects.

During the past summer Mr. Isinger, our teacher, was at summer school. During this time some children killed all of the martins with an air gun. Parents should not buy air guns for children who are not properly trained to use them.

EXPERIENCES IN RECORDING BIRD NESTS

by **Bohdan Pylypec**, H.N., age 14,
Yellow Creek

This last summer I recorded 45 nests for the prairie nest records scheme. There was a highly unsuccessful nest rate, for 23 of the nests were un-

successful. I found 30 nests on our farm and 15 nests by a marsh a mile away which is disturbed by humans only at haying time.

The highly unsuccessful nest rate was due to several factors. The greatest of these was cats and other predatory animals. There were many nests which had eggs or young one day and the next day they would be gone with no traces left. Rain killed several young and wind upset poorly constructed nests or slanted them until the eggs rolled out. The snowfall of September 1 also killed several young. One goldfinch nest which was built in some young willows was tilted upside down under the weight of the snow. Two fully grown young were killed and the other two left the nest. Cows upset several nests. Most of the nests which I called successful lost an egg or two or some young.

The nests were constructed out of materials which were found close at hand. This was particularly noticeable with the Cedar Waxwing nests. On our farm they made their nests out of twigs and wool which they found on the barb wire fences where the sheep lost some of their wool. The majority of the waxwings nests were near the marsh. These nests were constructed out of twigs and grasses and lined with bark shreds. The robin nests made of mud and grass also had some variations. In the spring the robin nests had much mud plastered on them but one nest built in late summer had less mud because the slough had nearly dried up. The goldfinches also had variations. Several nests were built mostly of thistle down with some plant fibers while a few nests had grass and bark shreds, too.

I was able to observe the Cedar Waxwings more than other birds because I found 15 Cedar Waxwing nests. In one nest I saw one young just emerging from the shell. When I came to the nest I saw both parents standing on the edge of it. In the nest was the young half out of the shell. Another time I saw a Cedar Waxwing just starting its nest. I was amazed to see a waxwing tugging at a piece of wool clinging to a willow. After it tugged the wool free, it flew up to the willow and packed the wool in the crotch of that willow. I was able to see the progress of the nest from that day on.

"STUMP" FROGS

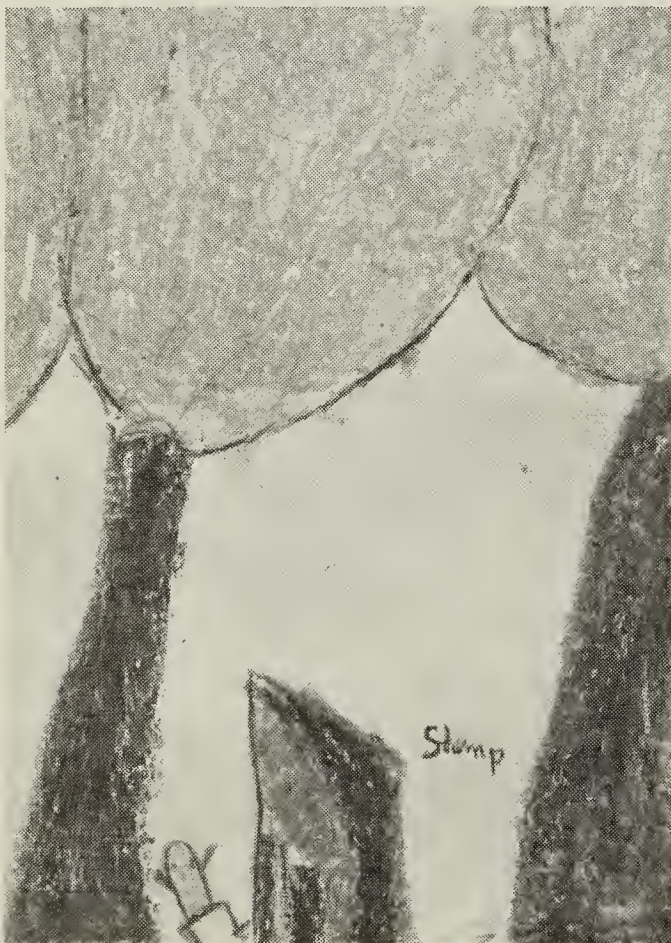
by **Douglas Cross**, age 7,
Hazel Valley School

One afternoon this fall our teacher took us on a nature science hike on September 17. We found this old tree stump that looked like an ant hill. I kicked it and it was rotten and full of ant tunnels. Then a frog hopped out. We caught it and we started to dig. We found four that day.

The next day we boys went back. We took the hatchet and chopped and dug. We found twenty-three more frogs. All told we got twenty-seven frogs. We brought them back to school and then we let them go in a muddy slough.

We wondered if these frogs were getting ready to hibernate in the tunnels of the stump. There was no water near. The stump was very wet inside. Some frogs were green and some brown. They were all the same size, about two inches long. There were only a few ants. We wondered if the frogs had eaten the rest.

Editor's Note: Douglas has raised some interesting questions. Perhaps some of our readers can enlighten him further.



"STUMP" FROG

Drawing by **Brad Lawrence**, grade 2,
Hazel Valley School

THREE-FLOWERED AVENS OBSERVATIONS 1964

Note—The following is part of Brian Irving's entry in the plant study contest.

When I found this plant it was the only green thing near. On April 28 the snow had just gone on the old road allowance and since this plant is a perennial it was green when most other plants had not come up. This particular clump was approximately two feet square and most of the leaves were about two inches long. They were still rather curled up and one was just starting to show.

By the fifth, the one that was starting on the earlier visit had grown larger and another had started. On May 10 one more had matured and one had been broken or bitten off, possibly by a Richardson's Ground Squirrel. During the following week the flowering stems had shown up. There were two of them, each having three buds, although one was farther advanced than the other. Soon the former one was almost out, then it froze on June 1. It took a few days to reveal the damage but the flowers never opened. These stems remained standing until between the 22nd and 27th of June when they finally broke off.

On the 17th of June it had eleven leaves in good condition and one dried and brownish. After this it didn't gain much foliage since old leaves died as new ones came. During this time I noticed the leaves seemed to come in twos and threes. Over a period of 44 days 16 new leaves developed.

Before I made this survey I thought that the same leaves stayed on the plant throughout the entire season but I found this is not so.

This plant was growing on the roadside. When the wind was from the west a thin layer of dust was blown on the plant. All parts of the plant were covered with sticky hairs. This hair would catch and hold the dust and I thought possibly this would hinder the breathing of the plant.

On my last visit on September 5 the foliage had decreased with only a few small leaves showing.