

parable to the Lapland, and I have no records of resident birds for this area. I have seen McCown's on April 7, 1947, April 16, 1948, May 1, 1955.

I believe that the Smith's is only a rare migrant here, but may be more plentiful than I know, because of the difficulty in identifying flying migrating birds.

Note: To my amazement, the day I wrote this, yesterday March 28, I thought I heard flocks of longspurs passing over. I didn't believe my ears. Today I heard another flock pass over, and the birds weren't Snow Buntings. So that's an early date for me—March 28 and 29, 1958.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Since Lawrence Beckie was surprised to record Lapland Longspur flights on March 28 this year, we think that

he would be interested in some observations of Boswell Belcher at Dilke. He distinguishes between his first spring observations of one or more individual birds, usually noted on the ground early in the season (e.g. March 15, 1953, March 9, 1954), and the large flocks seen later. His dates for the first mass flights observed are April 10, 1954, April 1, 1955, April 12, 1956, April 4, 1957, March 28, 1958. I am interested in the early records of individual birds because we noted one stray Lapland Longspur on February 12 this year (apparently with Horned Larks) in a field just north of Regina. It appears that some Lapland Longspurs remain in southwestern Saskatchewan all winter. The Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History has on record a statement made by C. F. Holmes of Dollard (March 9, 1937) to the effect that Lapland Longspurs are seen about all winter. This seems to be borne out by the remarks of S. A. Mann at Skull Creek who told us this spring that he has the impression that Lapland Longspurs may be seen in that area in every month of the year, with the exception possibly of December. "I think," Mr. Mann adds, "that would also go for Smith's Longspurs as well, for they nearly always appeared to feed together."

Resident Longspurs in Lucky Lake Area

by Frank Roy, Saskatoon

What has happened to our resident longspurs? The Chestnut-collared Longspur was an abundant bird in the Lucky Lake-Birsay region from the year 1937 to 1944. As many as 15 pairs used to nest in a fifty-acre pasture on our farm. By 1945, not more than seven or eight pairs nested in the same area. In 1946 five pairs remained. In 1947, not a single bird nested in the pasture (which, by the way, had been reduced to 20 acres in extent). Since that date, the Chestnut-collared Longspur has become progressively more scarce, even in the extensive tracts of pasture west and south of Lucky Lake and Beechy.

Last summer I did not record a single longspur on the trip from Saskatoon to Cypress Hills Provincial Park, June 14-16, even though we passed through miles of suitable prairie habitat. The Chestnut-collared Longspur was not recorded by any member of the Natural History Society in the course of our summer meeting, although, W. Earl Godfrey (1950, *Birds of the Cypress Hills and Flotten Lake Regions, Saskatchewan*. Bulletin No. 120. Nat Mus. of Can.) termed it "abundant on the plains surrounding the Cypress Hills," in June, 1948. Godfrey, it must be noted, did not see the bird in the

higher hills, but members' observations were taken from the town of Maple Creek south to the Park Taverner, in 1921 recorded the bird as "very common" on the prairie south of Cypress Lake; we failed to uncover a single bird in the same area.

The McCown's Longspur was never a common bird in the Birsay-Lucky Lake area. It seemed to frequent cultivated fields more than its chestnut-collared cousin, and it was inclined to be colonial. In the area south and west of Beechy, much of which is grazing land, the McCown's was quite common as recently as 1948. In the Matador Ranch country it outnumbered the Chestnut-collared Longspur; eight to ten singing males could be noted on a mile's walk across the prairie.

In recent years, the McCown's Longspur seems to have suffered a fate similar to that of the Chestnut-collared. On a trip through the Matador country, August 5, 1955, only one bird was noted. Admittedly, longspurs nest early and have already begun to flock by the first of August. Again, last June, while travelling on Number 4 Highway from Rose town to Swift Current, a careful check of suitable habitat north and

west of the Beechy region where they were once common, revealed not a single longspur.

Cultivation has made inroads upon prairie bird populations. The decline in numbers of the Long-billed Curlew and the Upland Plover is at least partially due to intensive farming within much of their range. Has cultivation brought about this rather sudden decline in the longspur population? Do newer methods of cultivation, and more frequent tilling to eradicate weeds, make it impossible for longspurs to rear their young in regions where they were abundant as recently as fifteen years ago? Per-

haps the Beechy-Lucky Lake-Birsay area is near the northern limit of the longspur range, and therefore subject to marked fluctuation in numbers.

I would like to have reports from other members, particularly those who have kept records for a number of years. Perhaps my generalization about a decline in numbers is unwarranted. Further field studies in the Lucky Lake region this spring will help bring the information up to date. Meanwhile, let us hope that the decrease in longspurs is a local phenomenon rather than the province-wide decline that I suspect.

The Blue Goose in Saskatchewan

by **Fred W. Lahrman**, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History

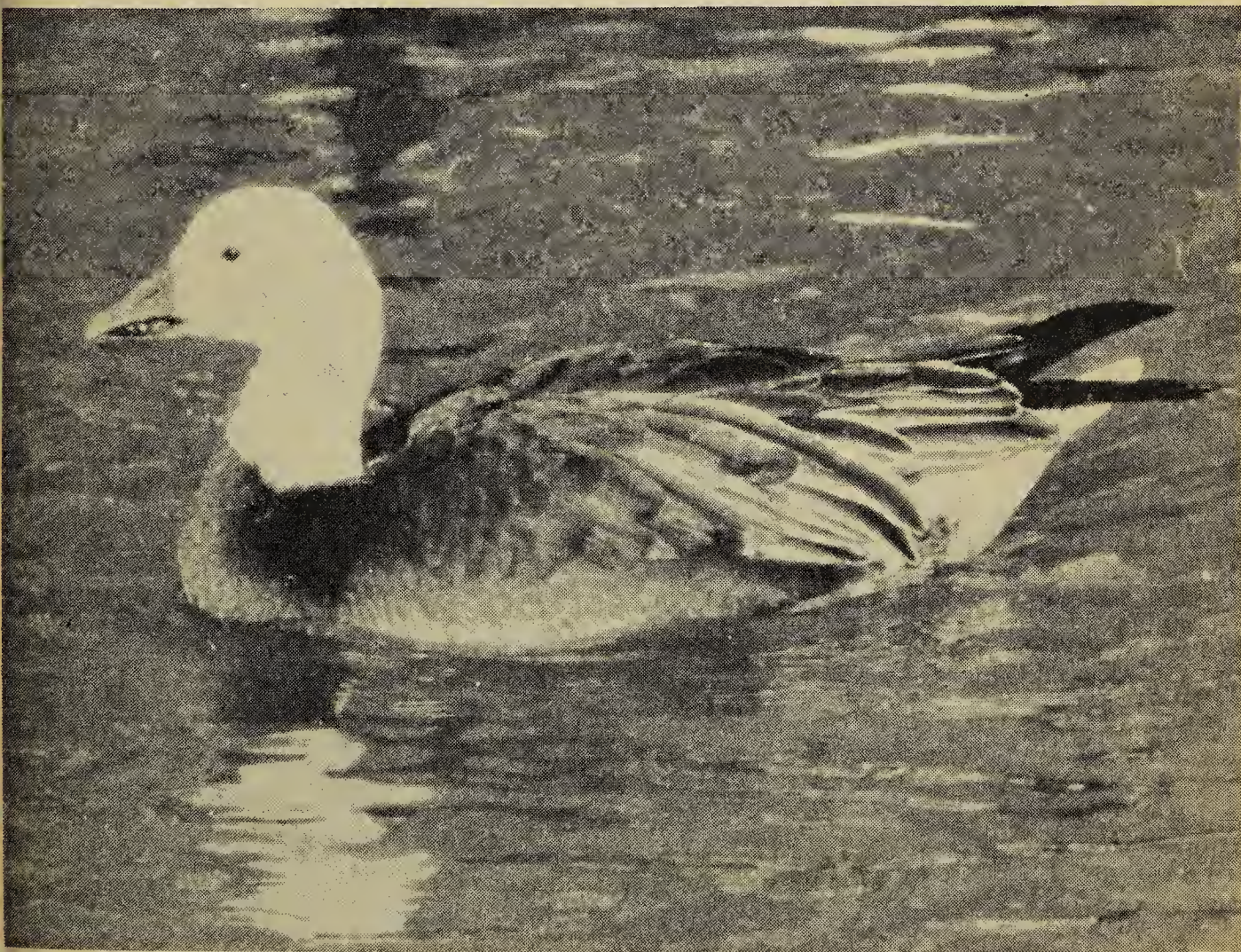


Photo by F. W. Lahrman

During recent years the Regina area has been favored with a spectacular invasion of the Blue Goose (*Chen caerulescens*) which stops to rest and feed here for a few weeks in spring during the northern migration to the barren lands of northern Hud-

son Bay and Baffin Island.

These geese are almost always seen in company with the Snow Goose (*Chen hyperborea*) and often the "Snows" and "Blues" are joined by White-fronted (*Anser albifrons*) and Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*).