

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

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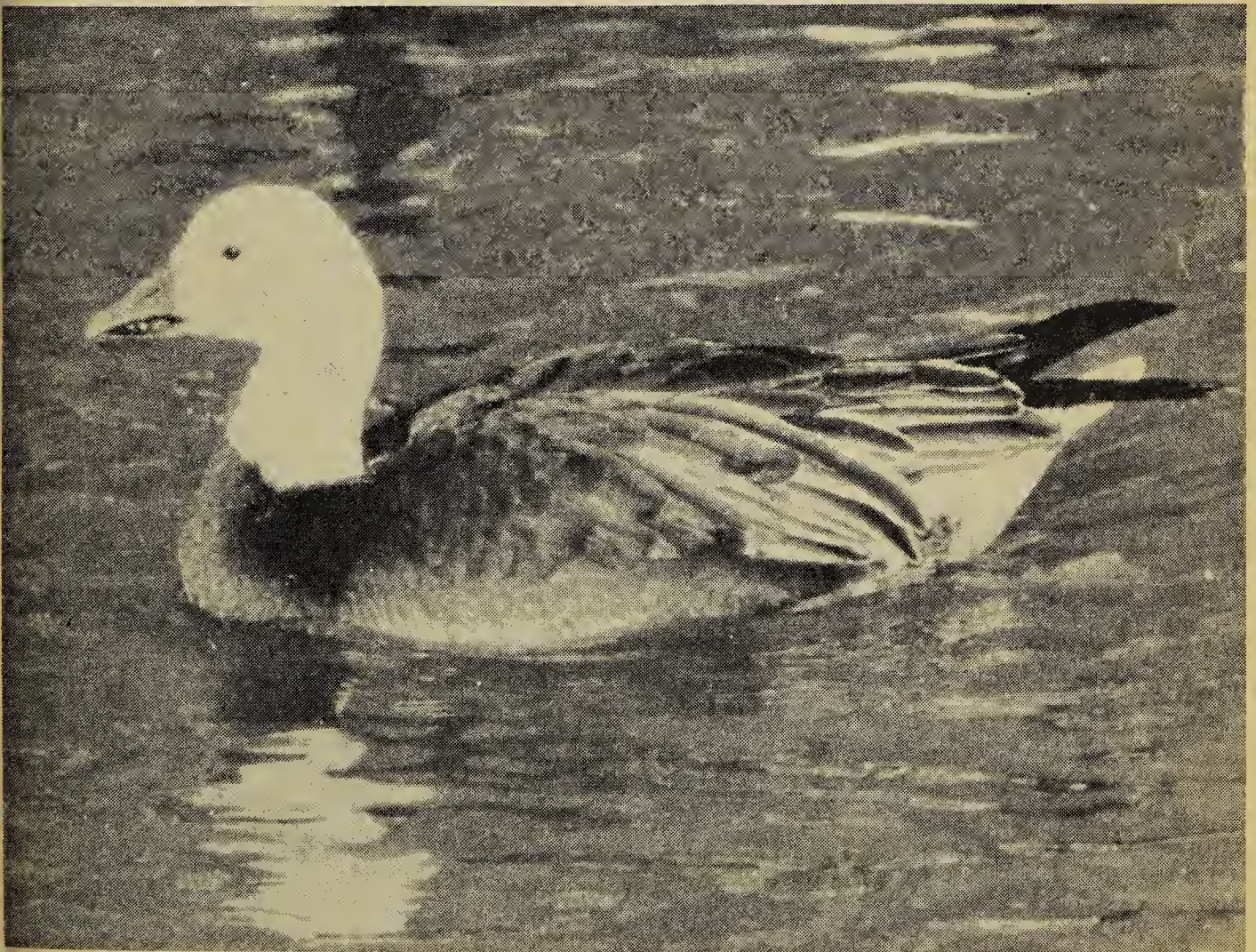


Photo by F. W. Lahrman

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*).

To my knowledge, prior to 1953 the Blue Goose was a rare visitor to our province, its usual spring migration route being through Manitoba. I saw my first Blue Goose on May 4, 1948, when four were observed migrating northward with a flock of Snows. On September 23, 1949, another one was seen on the north end of Last Mountain Lake, northeast of Imperial, with a small flock of Snows and White-fronts.

The spring of 1953 showed a sudden increase in the number of Blues as on April 23 and 24 approximately 700 were observed in the company of thousands of Snows. The peak year of abundance for geese in this area was during the spring of 1954 when approximately 20,000 geese were observed resting in the Kronau area. This included a majority of Blues and Snows. On May 10, 1954, approximately 1,000 Blues and Snows were still seen in this area but by the 12th they had all left. During this spring large numbers of geese (probably the same flock) had also appeared at Duval and the north end of Last Mountain Lake.

Since 1954 the Blue Goose has dwindled in numbers in Saskatchewan. During the spring of 1955 I noted only about 3,000 Blues and Snows, marking a sudden decrease in their number since the peak year of 1954. During the spring of 1956 there were approximately 1,000 of these geese and during each of the

springs of 1957 and 1958 there have been about 2,000. These figures, of course, only give a picture of general trends for one observer on occasional trips cannot hope to give this area complete coverage.

The areas which were particularly favored by the geese included Francis, Kornau, Richardson, Edenwood, Corinne, Gray, Rowatt, Duval and the north end of Last Mountain Lake north of Imperial and Govan. Here on the flat "Regina Plains," large areas of cultivated farm land became flooded. This provided ideal feeding and resting areas for water fowl.

During the fall the goose migration in this area is generally very poor. The Blue Goose is very rarely, if ever seen.

One specimen of the Blue Goose (juvenile) was received at the Museum on Oct. 11, 1955, from Mr. Ralph Keenan from Regina. The bird was found wounded approximately 10 miles east of Regina on Wasca Creek.

The museum's first specimens were received from Dr. J. R. Hoag, Regina; he had collected them knowing them to be "firsts." These were taken April 27, 1931, at Rock Lake, 12 miles northwest of Stoughton, Saskatchewan. A flock and a wounded bird were seen by Mr. G. Bard and M. F. Bradshaw, shortly afterward at Rock Lake.



Photo by F. W. Lahrman
ONE WHITE-FRONTED AND TWO CANADA GEESE