

# Observations of Some Unusual Birds at Lake Kipabiskau

by James A. Slimmon, Saskatoon

During a 12-day stay this past summer (1963) at Lake Kipabiskau, southeast of Melfort, some interesting observations were made on the southwest shore where our cottage is located. These may be of interest to others inasmuch as the species concerned are recorded as rare or uncommon summer residents at Nipawin (C. Stuart Houston and Maurice G. Street, 1959. *The Birds of the Saskatchewan River, Carlton to Cumberland*. Spec. Publ. No. 2, Sask. Nat. Hist. Soc., Regina).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** A pair was noted on July 12, and a nest was located about 20 yards from the shore and about two-thirds of the way up in an old poplar tree. From the newly-developed cottage service road, which was almost on the same level as the nest, three downy, well-developed young could be seen. They were large enough to be able to feed themselves, and were seen pulling off food in the nest. These young all vanished during the night of July 17.

No marks were on the tree and no twigs were broken on the tree trunk; the only evidence was the finding of a few pin feathers on the ground. The adults flew around for the rest of that day, at times whistling excitedly.

**Whip-poor-will:** It had been reported to me during the summer of 1962 that its call had been heard on several occasions. During our stay, one was heard just a few times late in the evening of July 15. One was heard (and only seen briefly in the dusk) many times during the late evening of July 18. Both evenings the call originated from the same spot near the clearing. The last time the call rose above the trees as the bird flew back and forth down the shore.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** One was seen on July 16. Two were observed closely for some time on July 18.

**Swainson's Thrush:** Many were seen and heard during our stay. A nest was found about 18 inches above the ground, containing two young, on July 16. The young flew on July 19.

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## Watch for Eastern Bluebirds

Soon after you receive this **Blue Jay**, the first Mountain Bluebirds will be returning to the prairies. Throughout the spring migration, watch for Eastern Bluebirds as well. There is the possibility that we may see more of them in the 1964 migration. In Manitoba, where the Eastern Bluebird is a regular summer resident, the Brandon Junior Birders' nest box project for 1963 revealed a "significant increase in the Eastern Bluebird population" (**Blue Jay**, 21:150), and reports of bluebirds of this species seen in Saskatchewan last fall suggest that there may also have been an increase in the numbers in this province, where the Eastern species is no longer commonly seen. **Mrs. John Hubbard** of Grenfell, Saskatchewan, reported seeing six on the Hubbard farm on October 14, 1963, the first she had seen since May, 1953. On September 29, 1963, **Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Hooper** had a good look at an Eastern Bluebird on Gordon's Indian

Reserve about eight miles south of Punnichy. There were many flocks of Mountain Bluebirds at the time, but the Eastern Bluebird did not appear to be with any of them. The only other time Ronald Hooper has seen Eastern Bluebirds was on September 25, 1962 when he saw a flock of about a dozen on a farm six miles north of Avonhurst, northeast of Regina.

Fall migration dates for, 1963 for Manitoba, as established by records submitted to Harold Hosford for Newsletter No. 6 of the Natural History Society of Manitoba, provide an interesting frame of reference for the Saskatchewan records: "First movement of this species through Winnipeg about Sept. 25/29 with 8 observed on the 29th. Three were noted at Baldur on Sept. 27. In early October, 5 were at La Broquerie on the 1st, 22 at Pine Falls on the 6th and 7 at Margaret on the 9th. Last seen at Winnipeg on October 26 (2)."