

Second Annual May Day Count Saskatoon Natural History Society May 25, 1958

This year 14 observers in four groups covered the same area that was done last May and on previous Christmas Bird Counts. After 11 o'clock a strong wind somewhat spoiled the day, making it impossible to distinguish sounds. Total party hours afield, 28; total miles covered, approximately 85. The total species for this year was 88 comparing to 104 last year when the count was made one day later.

The two most interesting records were of the Mockingbird sighted by Dr. Gerrard, and the Lark sparrow discovered by Jim Hogg, Helen Mann and John Shadick. These records will be dealt with more fully in a special note (which see).

The list of birds seen follows. Last year's totals are given in brackets.

Horned Grebe, 12 (26); Western Grebe, 1 (4); Mallard, 130 (120); Gadwall, 8 (2); American Widgeon, 50 (55); Pintail, 73 (61); Shoveler, 33 (58); Green-winged Teal, 6 (3); Blue-winged Teal, 85 (97); Canvasback, 23 (6); Lesser Scaup, 32 (79); Ruddy Duck, 1 (0); Red-tailed Hawk, 7 (4); Ferruginous Hawk (Hogg), 1 (0); Marsh Hawk, 11 (6); Pigeon Hawk, 1 (0); Sparrow Hawk, 2 (1); Gray Partridge, 4 (2); Sora, 5 (2); Coot, 32 (24); Killdeer, 54 (25); Black-bellied Plover, 7 (31); Willet, 12 (2); Spotted Sandpiper, 2 (12); Pectoral Sandpiper, 22 (14); White-rumped Sandpiper, 17 (25); Baird's Sandpiper, 20 (12); Least Sandpiper, 8 (24); Stilt Sandpiper, 51 (0); Semipalmated Sandpiper, 86 (0); Marbled Godwit, 12 (3); Avocet, 6 (0); Wilson's Phalarope, 39 (25); California Gull, 3 (2); Ring-billed Gull, 43 (1); Franklin's Gull, 332 (2); Common Tern (Roy), 1 (4); Black Tern, 126 (98); Mourning Dove, 25 (30); Belted Kingfisher, 1 (2); Flicker, 15 (11); Hairy Woodpecker, 1 (5); Eastern Kingbird, 39 (30); Least Flycatcher, 82 (12); Horned Lark, 6 (5); Tree Swallow, 51 (27); Barn Swallow, 53 (15); Cliff Swallow, 10 (12); Magpie, 48 (18); Crow, 123 (57); Black-capped Chickadee, 6 (1); House Wren, 44 (16); Mockingbird (Gerrard), 1 (0); Catbird, 9 (1); Brown Thrasher, 17 (18); Robin, 95 (72); Swainson's Thrush, 2 (7); Gray-cheeked Thrush (Jonathan Gerrard), 2 (1); Mountain Bluebird, 14 (4); Loggerhead Shrike, 4 (4); Starling, 27 (15); Red-eyed Vireo, 5 (7); Warbling Vireo, 7 (2); Tennessee Warbler, 1 (3); Yellow Warbler, 170 (51); Myrtle Warbler, 1 (1); Yellowthroat (Jonathan Gerrard), 1 (0); House Sparrow, 310 (530); Meadowlark, 51 (68); Yellow-headed Blackbird, 47 (15); Redwinged Blackbird, 113 (120); Brewer's Blackbird, 40 (60); Baltimore Oriole, 37 (10); Bronzed Grackle, 22 (25); Cowbird, 67 (77); Goldfinch, 36 (5); Rufous-sided Towhee, 7 (10); Savannah Sparrow, 15 (10); Baird's Sparrow (Hogg), 4 (0); Vesper Sparrow, 70 (75); Lark Sparrow (Hogg, Mann, Shadick); 6 (0); Chipping Sparrow, 18 (19); Clay-colored Sparrow, 170 (131); Harris' Sparrow, 1 (0); White-crowned Sparrow,

1 (0); White-throated Sparrow, 1 (0); Lincoln's Sparrow (Hogg—a doubt expressed here), 2 (0); Song Sparrow, 19 (31).

Total individuals, 3,255 (2,701). Species 88 (104).

Rather surprising omissions from this year's list that one would normally expect in the region on May 25 include the following: Pied-billed Grebe, American Bittern, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Ring-necked Pheasant, Lesser Yellowlegs, Nighthawk, Downy Woodpecker, Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, Bank Swallow, Veery, Cedar Waxwing, Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

OBSERVERS: Bob Pravda, R. Gerrity, Ron Bremner, Bob Folker, Dr. J. Gerrard, Mrs. Gerrard, Jonathan Gerrard, Harvey Beck, Resi Wakonig, Jim Hogg, Mrs. Hogg, John Shadick, Helen Mann, Frank Roy (recorder).

Lark Sparrows at Saskatoon — Northerly Record for Province?

In the course of the May 25 Bird count organized by the Saskatoon Natural History Society, Jim and Grace Hogg, Helen Mann and John Shadick discovered a small colony of Lark Sparrows in the vicinity of the Haultain elevator about ten miles south-east of Saskatoon. The region is sandy, much of it in pasture, and aspen groves dot the landscape. Since the birds were first observed, several members of the Natural History Society have been out to see them. The maximum number seen at any one time has been 6. Dr. Bremner and I noted a pair mating on the evening of June 11, but as yet we have not located a nest. All birds have been seen within a quarter of a mile of the elevator. Is this a northerly record for the province of Saskatchewan?—Frank Roy, Saskatoon.

Mockingbird at Saskatoon

On May 25 the Gerrards spotted what they believe was a Mockingbird at the top of a tall tree along the river bank just north of the Nineteenth Street Bridge. They had a good view of the bird which was about 5 yards distant. They did not hear it sing, nor did they see it when it flew from the top of the tree. Dr. Gerrard is familiar with the bird in Eastern United States and in its winter quarters on the island of Jamaica. The principal distinguishing marks were its grey coloration and its bill. When they first noted its outline against the sky they had expected it to be a Thrasher—Frank Roy, Saskatoon.