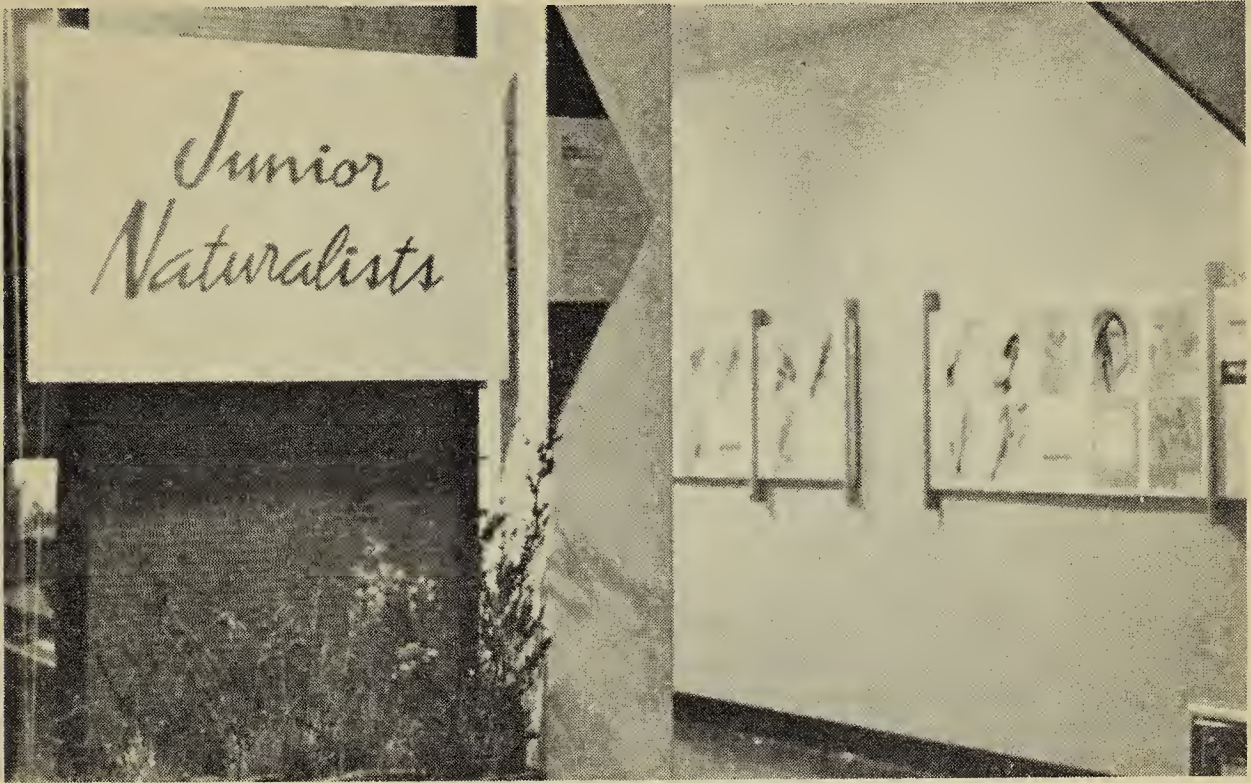


JUNIOR NATURALISTS

Edited by **Joyce Deutscher**, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History



ENTRANCE WAY TO THE JUNIOR NATURALISTS' EXHIBIT AT THE SASKATCHEWAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY.

The exhibit shows "Life in a Marsh" and was planned and prepared by a group of Regina children under the supervision of Museum staff.

JUNIOR NATURALISTS' EXHIBIT

by **Joyce Deutscher**, Regina

Visitors to the museum this summer will have noticed a special exhibit that has been up for the past few months. This exhibit was done by a group of boys and girls, ages 10-15, who explored a marsh in Regina and made a display entitled "Life in a Marsh" to illustrate what they had learned.

The group met for weekly field trips to a local marsh throughout the summer. There were several interest groups, the two main ones being insects and plants. Those interested in insects collected, mounted and displayed their insects while the plant group pressed, mounted, and identified plants. Additional art work was done for the exhibit by some of the artists in the group who drew birds, mammals and amphibians which had been observed in the area.

Two small diorama groups were made. The materials needed here consisted of a glass-fronted box, some sod, dried plants and mounted insects. The sod can be dug up in squares by any boy. The plants were

collected in the fall when they were already dried and were then stuck down into the sod. Accent notes were added by an array of insects. In the cattail diorama, dragon flies and water bugs were added. In the marsh edge, butterflies, crickets and grasshoppers provided the insect life.

The pressed plants were made more attractive by being mounted on colored cardboard and covered with



Some of the mounted plants in the exhibit.

clear plastic. The plastic made it possible to exhibit them without fear of damage. They were arranged in a sequence from water plants to emergent plants to those which grow along the marsh's edge.

Some of the insects were arranged in family groups—for example, beetles, bugs, butterflies and moths, etc.—and pinned on a cut paper background, depicting habitat. In this way the children were able to see the relationship between different insects as well as their habitat preferences.

The birds were arranged according to their nesting habitat. Those which nested over water were displayed on a blue card while those which nested on, or over, land were mounted on cream colored cards.

The work was done by the children themselves but some assistance was given in identifying plants and insects. Some of the insects were identified only to family. Through-

out this enterprise, the concept of a marsh and its complex inter-relationships was gradually developed.

Perhaps the classroom teacher can not work on as grand a scale as we did, but the idea is a sound one and can be modified to suit a classroom situation. Other habitat studies would prove equally interesting. If you want assistance with such a project please let me know. You will find that the project gives a deeper appreciation and understanding of nature.

Helpful reference materials:

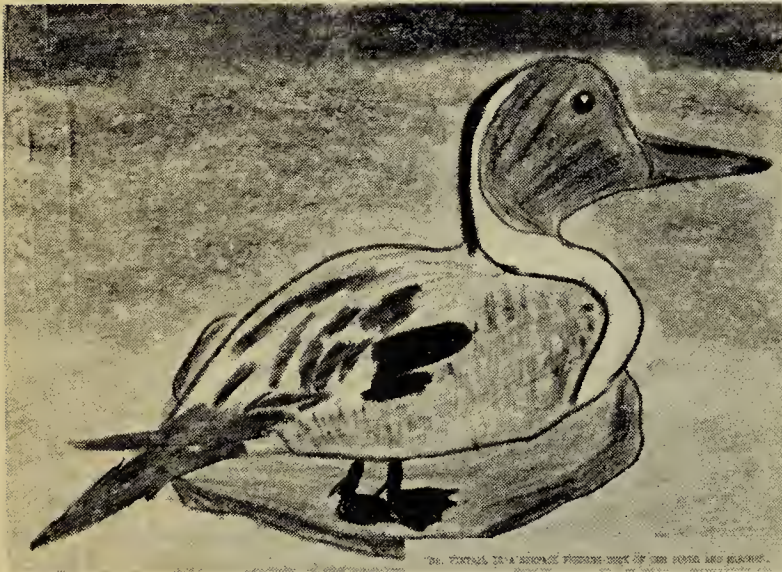
GUIDE TO SASKATCHEWAN MARSH PLANTS by J. R. Caldwell, published by Ducks Unlimited, Winnipeg.

WILD FLOWERS OF THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES by A. C. Budd, Queen's Printer, Ottawa.

PETERSON'S FIELD GUIDE TO THE WESTERN BIRDS, revised edition, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

INTRODUCING THE INSECT, by F. A. Urquhart, Clarke, Irwin & Co. Ltd., Toronto.

INSECTS, a Golden Nature Guide by Herbert S. Zim, Simon and Schuster, New York.



The Pintail is a surface feeding duck of our ponds and marshes.

PINTAIL DRAKE—one of the 24 drawings of birds included in the Museum's Junior Naturalists' exhibit "Life in a Marsh."

A list of some of the plants and animals used in this exhibit are included here to assist teachers and others who wish to carry out a similar activity.

Animals:

Mammals: meadow vole, muskrat, beaver.

Birds: (1) floating nests over water—Black Tern, American Coot, Eared Grebe.

(2) nests in cattails over water—Redwinged Blackbird, Yellow-headed Blackbird.

(3) nest on or over land—American Bittern, Shoveler, Mallard, Willet, Killdeer, Short-eared Owl, Marsh Hawk.

Insects: dragonfly, damselfly, mayfly, mosquito, midge, predacious diving beetle, whirlygig beetle, giant water bug, water strider.

Other invertebrates: wheel snail, pond snail, crayfish, fairy shrimps, hairworms, leech.

Plants: (1) growing in the water — pondweed, duckweed, water milfoil.

(2) emergent (part in and part out of the water)—arrowhead, cattail, bulrush.

(3) marsh edge—bur-reed, persicaria, dock, spike rush, arrow-grass, cinquefoil, water parsnip, horsetail, mint, nettle.

**SUMMER CONTEST—PRIZE WINNING ENTRY
SUMMER OBSERVATIONS, SALT
RIVER, NORTH WEST
TERRITORIES**

by **Tom Bryant**, age 8,
Box 176, Fort Smith, N.W.T.

Note: Tom tells us that the following observations were made on June 20, between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. along the Salt River, 20 miles out of Fort Smith.

Animals:

1. Reptiles—snakes— all killed by other boys and strung on a tree.
2. Invertebrates—snail at edge of water.
3. Birds—1. night-hawk (flew up, 1 egg on ground). The bird swooped at us.
2. Four killdeer, running on road, flying and crying—"killdeer, killdeer."
3. Cliff-swallow, about 100 with mud nest on cliffs.
4. Insects—1 mosquitoes— everywhere, biting everyone.
2. Sandflies—chewing in hair.
3. lots of tiger swallow-tails, everywhere.
4. hornet—long-tailed—one on log cabin window.
5. tabanid flies—near water and cabin.

Plants: 1. golden corydalis; 2. sweet-flowering coltsfoot; 3. lily-of-the-valley; 4. silver leaf; 5. wild geranium; 6. blue-grass; 7. chick weed; 8. violet; 9. crocus—seeding; 10. sweetgrass; 11. plantain; 12. shooting star—by river.

Fossils: (Seen in limestone cliffs and free on rocky shores, very numerous). 1. Sea-snails; 2. Clams; 3. Trilobite—small one; 4. corals; 5. sponges; 6. nautiloids.

YELLOW CREEK REPORT

by **Irene and Bohdan Pylypec**

Note: Irene and Bohdan made observations from June 10 to July 11 which included 29 items some of the most interesting of which are included here:

- June 29—Flowers of fireweed, by a road by our field.
- July 3—Ruffed Grouse charged me among the trees, by our field, she probably had young.
- July 3—Young Ruffed Grouse, flying from tree to tree.
- July 4—Ripe Saskatoon berries, by our house, by a road.
- July 5—Garter Snake, about one and one-half feet long, wriggling through a wild strawberry patch, seen in Spring by a slough.

July 6—Moulted skin of grasshopper, lying on the grass.

July 6—Bank Swallows, nesting in an unused gravel pit—first colony I ever saw.

July 6—Dead bank swallow, by a nest.

KELVINGTON REPORT

by **Brian Irving**, age 12,
Box 580, Kelvington, Sask.

Note: Brian sent in a list of 36 birds seen at the summer meet of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society as well as a list of 11 items seen from June 16 to July 10. Some of his observations are as follows:

June 27 One Robin nest was found but contained nothing. A Coot nest was found which contained 7 eggs, 1 baby. Two Black Tern nests were found (a and b) each containing 3 eggs. Other nests presumed to be there on account of 10 adult birds being seen.

June 28—Tern nest (a) still contained 3 eggs. Nest (b) was found destroyed.

June 29—Tern nest (a) contained 1 egg and two babies.

July 3—The remaining Tern nest still contained 3 eggs. The Robin nest contained one egg.

KELVINGTON REPORT

by **Jackie Lowndes**, Kelvington, Sask.

Note: Jackie reports the following nest:

I found a pheasant's nest along highway 49 near Kelvington. The nest was 5½ inches in diameter and had 20 eggs in it. The eggs were brownish and speckled.

**COMMENTS AND CONTEST
WINNER**

We are pleased with the entries to the Summer Observations Contest but would like to see even more come in for the Fall Observations Contest. We would also like to see some boys and girls sending in sketches as well as notes.

The prize this time goes to one of our younger members, Tom Bryant. Congratulations, Tom! You have sent in an interesting list made lively by comments such as, 'mosquitoes — everywhere, biting everyone.'

Keep up the good work, Junior Naturalists! If you are 16, or under, send your observations, and sketches, in to Mrs. Joyce Deutscher, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History before October 15, 1962.