

most exactly like a Savannah Sparrow's; while the other egg matched the Yellowthroat eggs I had several times seen before, being rather like a Yellow Warbler's. Puzzled by this, and aware that the male Yellowthroat was still scolding, we decided to retire to a distance of some ten yards, where we sat on our heels in the wet grass and watched. What appeared to be a female Yellowthroat soon slipped through the shrubbery and flew to the hump. I asked my wife to circle around and put the bird up, which she did. The bird flew at once to the same bush as before, and at twelve feet distance proved quite certainly to be a Yellowthroat. Her spouse then re-appeared and scolded my wife, but as the Leconte's Sparrow regained the first bush and uttered its "chip" note, the Yellowthroat turned on him and drove him off.

We, and the birds, repeated this performance three times at half-hour intervals. Meantime, we made a further search and found a Yellowthroat nest about twelve yards away at the bottom of a hoary willow. This nest was thoroughly drenched and the lining was torn out, although only a portion at the bottom was actually inundated.

The only conclusion we could come to was that the Yellowthroat had built, and perhaps the female had started to lay, when their nest was rendered untenable by the recent downpours, and then subsequently gutted by magpies. The female, under the necessity of laying at once, had, with the assistance of her mate (who no doubt in any case resented the proximity of the sparrows) driven off the sparrows and usurped the nest.

Heavy rain and violent wind drove us away that afternoon, and the weather remained so wet and rough that in spite of good intentions I did not return to the spot until June 29th. Miss Belcher and I then then visited the spot, but the water was even higher, the grass had grown much longer and we were unable to flush the bird, or indeed to find any trace of the nest. Very heavy rain soon drove us off again, but not until we had located the Yellowthroat apparently busy about a hundred yards to the west; while the Leconte's Sparrows were finally run down some three hundred yards to the east,

where the water was quite shallow and on drier knolls some saskatoons and chokecherries were growing.

In common with other observers I have often before noted the extreme and wren-like pugnacity of Yellowthroats on their nesting territory. This is mentioned briefly by the late P. A. Taverner in **Birds of Western Canada**. However, this is the first case I have met with of an actual usurpation by these birds of the nest of another species. No doubt this is simply a rare case due to abnormal conditions.

GEESE MAKE LONG WALK TO WATER

by **Bob Caldwell**, Wildlife Branch,
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On Thursday, June 27, 1963, ecologists from the Wildlife Branch under the leadership of Jim Nelson and aided by Conservation Officer C. A. Reid of Maple Creek, banded a number of Canada Geese on the Martin Lakes, a series of small basins located on the edge of the Great Sandhills, northeast of Golden Prairie. Besides putting the conventional metal leg band on these birds, they were also marked with green plastic neck bands. Nine geese were captured and thus marked at this location, including three adults that were moulting.

The next day, while doing an aerial census of goose broods in the district, Nelson checked the Martin Lakes and also Bigstick Lake, situated several miles southwest. Geese were not seen on the former area, but several, including a large adult wearing a green neck band, were observed walking along the mud flats near the west end of Bigstick Lake. At that point the distance between the two areas would be approximately nine miles. As no other geese were banded in the vicinity other than those from the Martin Lakes, we can say without reservation that these birds, including both young and adults, walked not less than nine miles to reach the place where they were seen from the plane. While we think the distance is quite remarkable, so is the ability of the Canada Goose to locate another safe resting area by walking to it. Their built-in compass must work very well.