

BLUE JAY CHATTER

One of the most interesting aspects of natural history in Saskatchewan this summer is the abundance of Lark Buntings in the prairie region. We have reports of this species from as far east as Broadview and as far north as Nipawin and Tisdale, and Manitoba's Natural History Society Newsletter, No. 2, 1964, reports "this species made a major incursion into southwestern Manitoba this spring." This seems to us to be a renewal of the pattern of some 30 years ago during the 'thirties' as reported by Margaret Belcher in *Birds of Regina*. Lark Buntings were noted as especially abundant in those years. Also, at that time the Lazuli Bunting nested in Regina; and now, 30 years later, a pair has been seen in a garden in the northwest part of the city. At least four other Lazuli Buntings (males) have been sighted in the Qu'Appelle Valley north of Regina, and we have reports of others elsewhere, e.g. in Moose Jaw, where Mrs. Taylor reports seeing her first Lazuli. In a similar way, the closely related Indigo Bunting, found as a resident in the Qu'Appelle Valley in 1934 by Manley Callin, has appeared again with at least three males being recorded, one with a female and nest north of Broadview (under observation by Charles Thacker). We urge members and readers who may have sighted either the Lazuli Bunting or Indigo Bunting to report their observations as soon as possible to Manley Callin at Fort San, Sask., since he is working up a special report on the status of these two species.

A most interesting additional species which seems to fit this pattern of recurrence of some 30 years past is the Dickcissel, also reported by Margaret Belcher as nesting in Regina in 1933-34. In an article reporting a record of the southwestern Brewer's Sparrow, Bob Nero suggested that we should look for this species to show up; just in time for this issue, Mrs. Keith Patch, of Oxbow, Sask., reports seeing a bird of this species. Baird's Sparrows, Grasshopper Sparrows, and other arid grassland species may similarly be in greater abundance and may be found farther north than usual. Perhaps some of our ornithologically-minded members would be interested in undertaking a province-wide survey of some of these species? We need some roadside transects, actual counts over a measured area, to provide a better record than is presently available of what is happening in our small corner of the world.

The summer of 1964 has been an exciting and busy time for your chief editor. There have been three main highlights. The first was the summer meeting in the Beechy area along the South Saskatchewan River where Doug Redley now at Discovery, 55 miles north of Yellowknife, N.W.T., and the people of the Beechy Community demonstrated their hospitality and their pride in their environment. The 'trail ride', a four-day trip by horse with the Chandlers into Prairie Dog country and along the Frenchman River was the second highlight. This trip gave me time to relax and really enjoy the grassy hillsides, the gumbo flats and the wide, wide skies. The enjoyment of watching the antics of the young Prairie Dogs was considerably marred by a Sunday party of "sportsmen" who shot at the animals from their slowly moving automobile. The third valuable experience this summer was really a series of trips east of Regina in search of plants, many of which are unexpected in this area; one such plant is described on page 117-118.

May I close by urging all members who possibly can to come to our annual meeting where they may learn more of our problems, take a more active part in solving them and help us to plan ways to gain members for the society. Our guest speaker, Saturday evening, October 17, 1964, in the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History auditorium in Regina is Mr. R. York Edwards. Come and bring your friends for it will be a stirring message and it is an open public meeting.

George F. Ledingham.