

Junior Naturalists

Edited by **Joyce Deutscher**, 7200 6th Ave., Regina



Copy of drawing by Jonathan Davis, age 8, Winnipeg

COMMENTS

Once again the Brandon Junior Bird Club is to be congratulated on its work and the excellent report sent in by Wayne Miller. You will also notice that a large number of contributions for this issue come from the students of one school. Many thanks to Mr. Isinger for encouraging his students to write and for sending in the material.

Just a word about sending in sketches. For purposes of reproduction the lines should be clear and dark, preferably done with India ink or a pencil capable of making a dark line. The drawings should be done on unlined white paper. You will notice that we did a copy of Jonathan's drawings because his original drawings were done on lined paper.

Juniors are reminded to get their contributions in for the next issue by January 15. Send them to Mrs. Joyce Deutscher, 7200 - 6th Ave., Regina.

POLYPHEMUS LARVA

by **Jonathan Davis**, age 8, Winnipeg

While on holiday at Falcon Lake, Manitoba, I nearly trod on a large

green caterpillar. I took it to our cottage and identified it in The Insect Book as being the larva of the polyphemus moth. I put it in a jar with oak leaves and a twig from an oak tree. It straightaway made itself a cocoon in one of the leaves attached to the twig.

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BRANDON JUNIOR BIRD CLUB'S NEST PROJECT

by **Wayne Miller**, age 15, Brandon, Manitoba

The efforts of the Junior Birders once again resulted in another successful season for the nest project.

Due to a very late return of Eastern Bluebirds last spring, they only managed to raise one brood. Both species of bluebirds, however, continue to expand their territories.

The nest project scored several firsts this summer, such as a duck occupying one of our larger boxes. Also for the first time, a Brown-headed Cowbird went into one of our nests and laid two eggs on top of a Tree Swallow's clutch. A nest near Rackham, Manitoba, contained a litter of Minnesota Grey Squirrels.

Late in the season a farmer reported an albino Mountain Bluebird near Douglas, Manitoba, but we did not see the bird.

With continued aid from Mr. Ray Collins, we now have over 150 more of the new, deeper nests to set out. Our aim is to replace many of the older boxes. One other project for the future is to concentrate on a major line east to Macgregor, Manitoba. Perhaps sometime we may try and set out nests west of Broadview, Saskatchewan, to link up with the nest-line started by Lorne Scott of Indian Head.

At present, we have over 1500 boxes set out, although only 1200 are under our field check. The totals for 1966 are as follows:

Mountain Bluebird	79
Eastern Bluebird	47
Tree Swallow	628
House Wren	14
House Sparrow	20
Goldeneye Duck	1
Grey Squirrel	1 (litter of 3)
White-footed mouse	12

The balance were either not used, not checked, or the results are uncertain.

NATURE OBSERVATIONS

by **Brian Maluta**, Hudson Bay

While tracking through a swamp in the thickest part of a spruce bluff I came upon a nest of the Long-Eared Owl. She had five white eggs and she sure took after me, dive bombing me constantly until I left.

In the April newsletter I read of the nesting of Mourning Doves. We have a dove nesting in an unfinished magpie's nest. The magpie started the nest last spring and left it unfinished. The doves finished it and nested in it this spring. There are two very white little eggs very much like the pigeon's egg but smaller and rounder.

Watched a pair of Sandhill Cranes from a parked car. We were quite close to them. We could see their eyes, beaks, and a funny eye patch quite plainly.

We saw a mother moose give birth to twins in an open field by a stone pile on the thirteenth of May. They were quite tame. The elder of the twins would follow us around and crawl over the stone pile after us. We ran away so as not to touch it or have it touch us for fear the mother would reject it.

We have a Pileated Woodpecker in our wood bluff but I have been unable to find its nest. I have found the nest of the Hairy Woodpecker. It was full of noisy babies.

THE RUFFED GROUSE

by **Ellen Kuz**, age 12, Yellow Creek

It was a foggy morning when we went to play by some bushes. We saw a bird flying out of the bushes and then we saw it fly against the fence. We went to look where it was and we found it jumping around without its head. We took it to our room and showed our teacher. He said it must have cut its head off with the wire. We looked in the books and found out it was a Ruffed Grouse. Later on we found its head. One of my classmates took the bird to eat, one pupil took a leg, and one pupil took the feathers to make designs.

Editor's note: We wish to thank the following students from Yellow Creek who also wrote about the Ruffed Grouse: Rosemary Neimeth, Bobby Oleksyn, Elsie Neimeth and Linda Neimeth.

NATURE NOTES FROM YELLOW CREEK

The Bat by **Deborah Shewchuk**: One day a boy in our school brought a bat in a jar. The bat was brownish black. His wings and ears were black. When the teacher touched the bat it made an awful screeching noise. The bat sat in the jar and shivered. Later that day we let the bat go.

The House Wren by **Donna Matkowsky**: One day I heard a tapping noise in our bedroom. I went to see what it was. It was a House Wren stuck in between the windows. My mother went to open the window to

let it out. The wren was so fast that it flew out of the window into the living room. Then it started to fly against the windows. I caught it and took it outside. I let it go.

A Baby Owl by **Donna Matkowsky**: One day my father came from the barn with an owl. I asked him where he found it. He said he found it in the hayloft. We put the owl in a cage. We fed him raw meat. One morning when I went to feed the owl I found that it was dead.

An Owl by **Joan Popiels**: One day my father went into the bush. He found a baby owl. When he came home we put the owl in a big box. We fed him liver and eggs. Whenever I came to feed him he would snap his beak. One day I caught him. His wing was bitten up. I washed it. The next day we let him go. He flew away.

A Downy Woodpecker by **Stella Holinaty**: One day last year when I was walking along the road I found a woodpecker. It was hurt. I picked it up and found that it had a broken wing. I took it home, washed its wing and bandaged it. The next day I took the bandage off and the bird's wing was healing. I washed the wing and put a clean bandage on.

I was painting with yellow paint and the little woodpecker got some yellow on his feathers. I let it go the next day. The woodpecker came back this year. If you are wondering how I recognized it, it had some yellow on its feathers.

A Killdeer by **Iris Simon**: One day a killdeer was making a lot of noise. I was looking around to see what was wrong. All of a sudden I found a nest. I saw a killdeer near the nest. I

looked closer and saw it was a killdeer nest. When I came back the babies were gone. I felt very sorry for them. Next day they were flying around.

Yellow Warbler's Nest by **Rosemary Nemeth**: One spring day I went on a nature hike. I saw a Yellow Warbler. I knew it might have a nest so I looked and looked until I found it. There was one egg in the nest. Then there were two, then three. The eggs were light blue with brown spots. I could hardly wait until they hatched. The nest was made of wool, lined with wool and grass. I hope they come back next spring.

Wasps by **Colleen Shewchuk**: One day my brother went to the garage and saw a wasp nest. He started poking the nest with a stick. The wasps started flying around. An hour or two later my father drove into the garage and got out of the car and a wasp stung him. A few days later I went into the garage and the wasps were gone. I looked for the nest but I couldn't find it.

Picking Mushrooms by **Debby Gingaza**: My father and I went picking mushrooms. We could not find any so we went farther into the bush. We saw a nest on the ground so we started to investigate it. There were some eggs in the nest but dad and I knew that it would be wrong to take any of the eggs. The mother partridge came up behind us. She thought that we were going to take the eggs. She was very, very, very mad at us. She started doing just about everything you can think of to us. We were lucky enough to make it back to the car.

Notes from Letters

OBSERVATIONS OF A LARK BUNTING'S NEST

Lark Buntings have been very prevalent in our area in the past few years. I notice that they return to this area much later than most birds, and fly about in large flocks for some time prior to breaking up to nest.

This past year I taught in one of the few remaining rural schools which borders the Great Sandhills south of Portreeve and Lancer. The large school yard was allowed to grow to wild grass and weeds. One day the children found a Lark Bunting's nest built neatly in a patch of