

# SASKATCHEWAN BIRD BANDERS\*

## JUDGE J. A. M. PATRICK (1873-1943)

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John Alexander Macdonald Patrick was born at Ilderton, Ontario, June 28, 1873. He came west in 1890 to attend normal school in Regina. After eight years of teaching in rural schools near Yorkton and at Victoria school in Yorkton, he entered the profession of law and was admitted to the Saskatchewan bar in 1924. The *Yorkton Enterprise* reported at the time of his death that only one barrister in Canada had equalled his record, in the number of murder cases in which he was counsel for the accused: fifty-two people had placed the defence of their lives in his keeping and not one went to the gallows. He was appointed district court judge at Moosomin in 1935 and retired from this position due to ill health in 1941. He died in May, 1943.

A public-spirited citizen, he was for four years mayor of Yorkton and for a similar period he was president

of the Yorkton Board of Trade. Although once president of the Saskatchewan Conservative Association, he failed to secure election when he contested seats in the provincial legislature and the House of Commons. Service was ever his motto. Tolerance, kindness, and unfailing courtesy were the keynotes of his life.

He enjoyed hunting, but his fellow judge and fellow naturalist, L. T. McKim of Melville, remarked that he cared little for the size of the bag. Judge Patrick took his chief enjoyment from being out of doors and watching the wild life around him. He was a true conservationist and a great believer in sanctuaries. He developed his own sanctuary, known as Deer Park, in the ravine forming the western boundary of Yorkton and here he kept 30 native deer, 35 fallow deer, six elk and many Canada Geese. Maintained entirely at his own expense, this park was one of the points of interest in the district, visited each summer by many tourists. When he left Yorkton in 1935, no one came for-

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\* This is Number 8 in a series of biographies of Saskatchewan bird banders begun some time ago for the *Blue Jay* by Dr. Stuart Houston (cf. *Blue Jay*, vols. 3 and 4).

ward to take over the park and the animals were disposed of. Part of this area is today the Deer Park Golf Course, and the pond was the southern part of the "Muskeg" where Mrs. Priestly did most of her birdwatching. His sanctuary and banding activities locally earned Judge Patrick the title of "Saskatchewan's Jack Miner."

Ducks, chiefly Mallards, Shoveler and teal, were banded near Yorkton. Recovery records of these ducks banded in 1926 and 1927 were published in the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*. In 1928, he banded 68 Black-crowned Night Herons at Foam Lake, with two recoveries (*Blue Jay* 25:112-113, Sept. 1967). From 1929 to 1931 he visited the Quill Lakes in early July

to band a total of 1388 colonial birds. From the 1930 banding, there were 44 recoveries of Double-crested Cormorants and 13 of White Pelicans; from the 1931 banding, there were recoveries of 31 cormorants and 26 pelicans; from 1932, six cormorants and 34 pelicans. These valuable recovery data have never been published and therefore it has been plotted on the accompanying maps (figs. 1 and 2). Based on approximately 450 cormorants and 940 pelicans handed, the respective recovery percentages are 18% for cormorants and 7.5% for pelicans. These recovery rates are roughly double those I have obtained in recent years and suggest that shooting was more indiscriminate in the 1930's and that

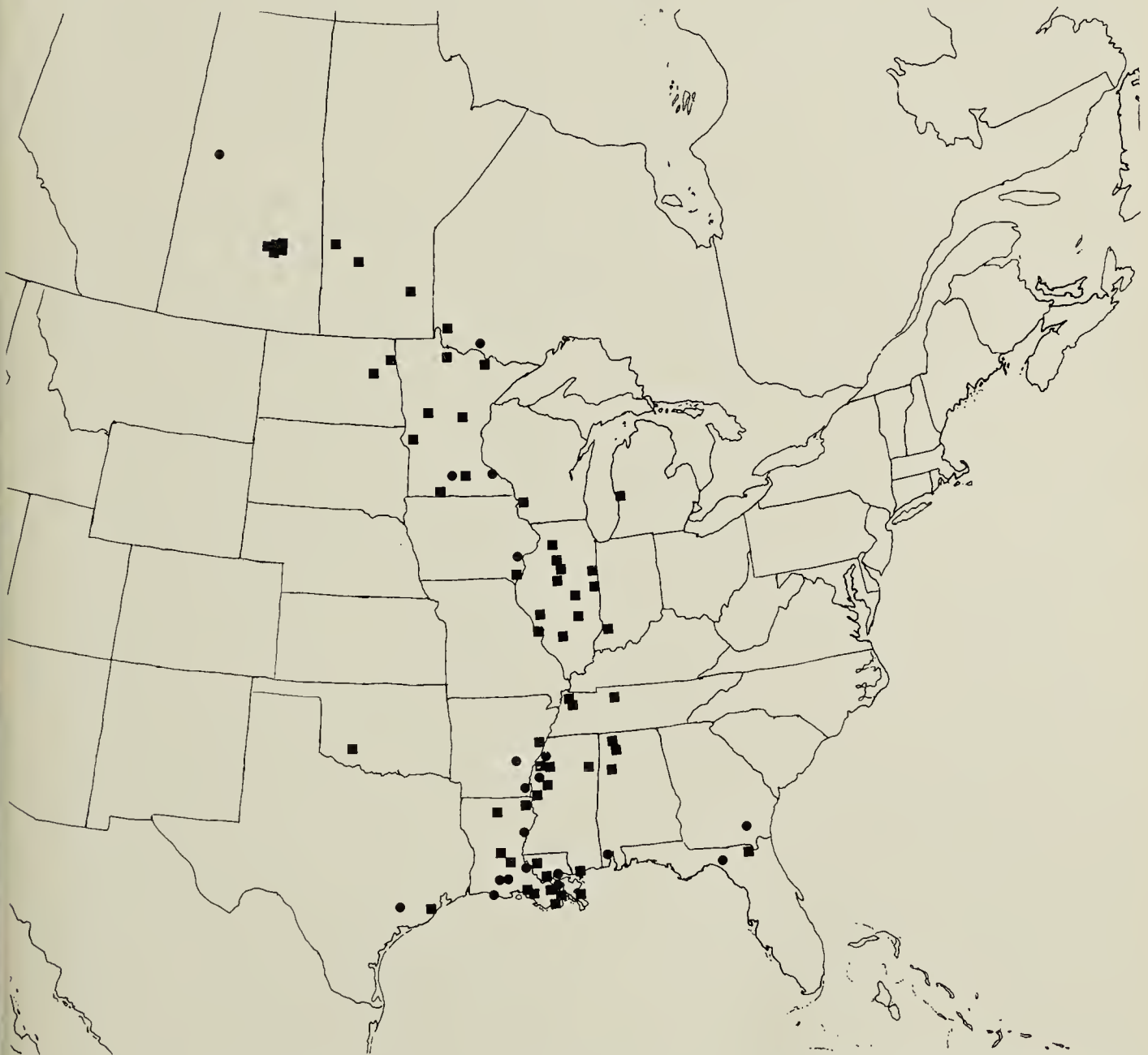


Fig. 1. Recoveries of Double-crested Cormorants banded at Quill Lake by J. A. M. Patrick. Note: Squares represent direct recoveries (same year). Circles represent indirect recoveries (later years).

a higher proportion of banded birds were reported.

Two things are of interest in the accompanying maps. The pelicans follow the commonest migration path SSE from Saskatchewan, giving a pattern much like that of the Red-tailed Hawk and Black-crowned Night Heron. The cormorants swing just a little further east, to follow the Mississippi River south. The number of direct recoveries (black squares) are disproportionately high and suggest either a short life span or band loss. The latter is the only possible explanation in these species that do not breed in their second year, and in keeping

with the latter is the report that the bands used were too small and in many cases caused the foot to be damaged — presumably these birds then died or lost the leg and the band fell off.

I wish to thank Dr. J. B. Gollop of the Canadian Wildlife Service for providing the banding print-outs, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service banding office for providing details on the numbers of birds banded, and Arthur O. Gellert of the *Yorkton Enterprise* for supplying details from Judge Patrick's obituary. Bill Patrick of Yorkton kindly loaned the photograph of his father.



Fig. 2. Recoveries of White Pelican banded at Quill Lake by J. A. M. Patrick. Note: Squares represent direct recoveries (same year). Circles represent indirect recoveries (later years).