

The Indigo Bunting is regarded as a "scarce summer resident" by Salt and Wilk, who list the following records: a male specimen from Lac La Nonne, June 3, 1926; a male seen near Elkwater Lake in the Cypress Hills, June 26, 1952; and specimens from Gorge Creek in the foothills west of Turner Valley, were apparently nesting along with Lazuli Buntings in 1958 and 1959.

UNUSUAL FATAL ACCIDENT INVOLVING A LAPLAND LONGSPUR

by **Spencer G. Sealy**, Department of Zoology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.

A source of winter income for some Eskimos on St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, is trapping arctic foxes (*Alopex lagopus*) (Hughes, *An Eskimo Village in the Modern World*, Cornell Univ. Press, 1960). One of the many types of bait used for this purpose is seal fat which is placed in and near the trap site, usually before the trapping season begins, and which is often left after trapping is over (Leroy Kulukhon, *pers. comm.*, 1967). This note records an incident whereby a piece of seal blubber caused or contributed to the death of a Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius lapponicus*).

On July 19, 1967, a dead and emaciated

Lapland Longspur, its age and sex undetermined, was found at the base of Sevuokuk Mountain, two miles east of Gambell. The bird's left foot was stuck solidly to a piece of seal blubber near an abandoned trap site amid dwarf willows (*Salix*) (Fig 1), common foraging areas for Lapland Longspurs at this date on St. Lawrence Island. The entanglement possibly resulted when the bird accidentally stepped on the fat while foraging or possibly it was attracted to insects on the fat. Insects constitute a large proportion of Lapland Longspur food at this time (Sealy, unpublished data).

Arctic breeding birds face many problems in the short summer; however, unique accidents like that described here probably form a negligible mortality factor. This observation was made while I was engaged in a comparative breeding biology study of the plankton-feeding alcids on St. Lawrence Island. The work was supported by a grant from the National Research Council of Canada to Dr. M. D. F. Udvardy.

AN UNUSUAL GOLDFINCH MORTALITY

by **Ken P. Morrison**, Oliver, B.C.

On August 18, 1967 while carrying out an ecology study of the Mourning Dove in the Okanagan valley of British Columbia, I discovered an unusual incidence of nest mortality in the American Goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*).

During my routine dove nest search I noticed a small, compact nest 10 feet up in a peach tree in an Oliver orchard. Closer inspection revealed a dead juvenile Goldfinch hanging from the edge of the nest with both feet securely entangled in the plant fiber of the inner lining. The bird had struggled in vain as attested by the frayed and worn feathers of the wings and tail where they had been beaten on the branches supporting the nest. The cause of death was probably due to starvation. The other nestlings appear to have fledged without diffi-



Fig. 1 — Dead and emaciated Lapland Longspur with its left leg stuck to a piece of seal blubber, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, July 19, 1967.