

# Junior Naturalists

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



Change is in the air! Watch for letters by Juniors in the next newsletter of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society. The Junior Section of the *Blue Jay* may take a new form. It might even be published as a separate "newsletter" of its own, complete with items on nature hobbies such as the one on "Winter Activities" in this issue. This is all in the future and we want your ideas. What would you like to see printed in your newsletter? Do you think we should publish nature stories, factual information or both? Do you want contests and nature games? This section is for you; let us hear your ideas. What age group do you think a *Blue Jay* Junior Newsletter should cater to? At what age do you think you should start sending in items to the adult section? This last question concerns the older Junior members—the ones we haven't been hearing too much from lately.

Just to get things started, some of the material which ordinarily would have been published here is being saved for the newsletter. So you very wonderful children from Yellow Creek who have done more than your share in keeping this section supplied with newsy little items, will be among the first to have your letters appear in the newsletter. Perhaps you will

feel much happier about clipping your letter out of the newsletter for your own personal file than you would about cutting up the *Blue Jay*.

We are a bit disappointed in the senior Juniors who haven't been contributing much lately. Not since the prizes were discontinued. Could this be a coincidence or do you need some special incentive to work letter writing into your crowded, active lives? Speak up, now is your chance. You might even get yourselves a job writing some stories for the younger members such as the one about the time, as a tough little nine-year-old, you thought you would climb into a hawk's nest but fortunately were frightened off before you came to any harm.

One more thing, that very lovely picture of a polyphemus moth that you see in this issue was the cocoon that Jonathan Davis wrote about last December. His father took the picture.

Send comments about, suggestions for and contributions to this section to: Mrs. Joyce Deutscher, 7200 6th Ave., Regina. Send them anytime. You might as well sit down right now and send your ideas in while they are still fresh in your mind.

## A MOURNING DOVE MOVES INTO A WAXWING NEST

by **Delmer Dutka**, age 12, Yellow Creek

This summer there was a Mourning Dove's nest down at the station. The doves used an old Cedar Waxwing's nest. The nest was in a white poplar tree about ten feet from the ground.

There were three white eggs in the nest. All the eggs hatched successfully. The doves eat wheat, corn, grass, and weed seeds.

## A STRONG CRAYFISH

by **Allen Simon**, age 12, Yellow Creek

My cousin caught a crayfish. It was about one and a half inches long and three inches wide. It could pick up a piece of bark about one and a half feet long.

We went home and I put it in the dugout. I think it is still living. The crayfish is from Echo Lake on the Hanson Lake Road.

## OUR FRIEND MR. CHIPMUNK

by **Mary Gillies**, age 11, Unity

Last summer we went to Jackfish Lake for a vacation. I am in the habit of rising early so I usually had a swim before breakfast.

It was then I saw the chipmunk! It was a rather cool morning and the dew was sparkling in the sun when a little

chipmunk came up to me. He picked up a crumb and put it in his tiny mouth. I was thrilled.

Later my sisters and I made little trails of bread leading out of our hands. Our little friend actually ate out of our hands!

## WHILE OUT PICKING BLUEBERRIES

by **Rosemary Nemth**, age 12, Yellow Creek

On August 13, my parents, my brothers, and I went to pick blueberries.

When we came to the bush I started to pick. There were Canada Jays (Gray Jays) flying around. I was going to step to another bush of blueberries when I saw a wasp's nest. I got scared. I went away slowly from the nest.

After dinner when I went to pick some more berries I saw a chipmunk. It was running up and down an old stump.

Then we came to a creek. All along the creek there were trees cut down by beaver. Later we found a lodge. We didn't see any beaver in it.

On our way home we saw a flock of mudhens (coots) crossing the road. They were crossing from one slough to another.

When we were half way home we saw a coyote in a dry slough.

## FRIENDLY CHICKADEE

by **Dianne Sloan**, age 13, Kelvington

We always put up a sapling or spruce tree as a bird feeder in front of our windows in early winter for our bird friends. We use suet, corn, crushed peanuts, and sunflower seeds as a treat, and also hang a suet log. Many visitors come to our feeder: Black-capped Chickadees, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers and sometimes White-breasted Nuthatches, Blue Jays and Gray Jays.

Ever since I was little I have wanted to feed a chickadee from my hand. After three years of coaxing,



my wish has come true. One day last winter when I was putting out food, I held some on my hand to see if the chickadees would come to it when there was no more food left in the feeder. They came nearer and almost lit on my hand several times. Then to my surprise a chickadee lit on my hand and quickly took a piece of peanut. The first thing I knew, I was surrounded by chickadees, and I had about eight eating out of my hand and even from my mouth in about a week. They would follow me around the farm and demand the food I carried in my pocket. When we were in the house, they would sit on the banister of the step and "chick-a-dee" noisily. Sometimes I would put my hand out the door and feed them, and at other times I would open the door and coax them in.

The last two summers a pair of chickadees have nested and raised families at our place. While I was helping Dad build a fence in the summer of 1966 I saw a chickadee on the tree in front of me which I knew to be a young one by its yellowish beak and stubby wing and tail feathers. I went to see if I could pet it, and found that it even sat still while I kissed its head. We later saw the rest of its family near by.

This past summer my tame chickadee (as I called it because it was the only one that stayed tame all summer) had its family in the bush near the yard. It comes almost every day for the food I feed it.

## **WINTER ACTIVITIES FOR JUNIORS**

by **Joyce Deutscher, Regina**

Nature activities needn't stop when trees drop their leaves and the snow settles over the landscape. Now is the time to start a mural, a chart or a booklet, either at school or at home as a project of your own.

Why not make a mural about trees on brown paper and display it in the basement, the rumpus room, or even in the barn! I saw an excellent display of pioneer clothing and house-

hold effects this summer in an unused barn loft. Brown paper was stapled to the wall to serve as a background and the furniture was displayed in room settings in front of it. Something like this would provide a good display area for your nature collections.

Trees provide good subject matter. They are readily available summer and winter and don't move away as you approach. Start with bark rubbings and a winter twig collection both of which you can collect on a pleasant winter day. To make a bark rubbing take a piece of plain paper, paper from a writing tablet will do, and a wax crayon. Hold the paper over the bark and with the side of the crayon press lightly while rubbing back and forth to get the impression of the bark.

Next collect a twig from the same tree and keep your two specimens together, since you will want to place them together on your mural. A roll of brown paper will come in handy here. Paste your bark rubbings on the paper leaving plenty of space between them for adding other things about each tree in your study.

In the spring watch for tree flowers on wind pollinated trees — elm, ash, poplar and maple, before the leaves come out. Some of these flowers are small, green and inconspicuous and may easily go unnoticed. You may think that those first spots of green on the elm trees are leaves, but look again. They are tiny flowers. No bright showy petals here but flowers nevertheless, complete with pistil and stamen. Try forcing some twigs into early bloom by bringing them inside in the middle of winter and putting them in water. You will have more chance for success with this if you wait until the end of February and collect your buds after a warm spell.

If you don't have paper for a large mural make a smaller wall chart or a scrap book about your trees. You can add drawings and pictures of insects, birds, and mammals seen in the vicinity of your tree as well. Use your own ideas and good luck to you.