

drilled side of a birch while a juvenile sapsucker was hammering out more holes on the opposite side.

From July 28, when the first Ruby-throat arrived in our garden five miles east of Regina, throughout August and until September 11 we were able to observe closely the feeding preferences of from one to three of these birds. Both our garden and our neighbour's contained extensive flower beds. The menu set before the hummers was varied and their favorite food was served from a multitude of coloured cups. Our guests were free to choose from any the following: petunias, snapdragons, hollyhocks, geraniums and gladioli. Careful day to day observations proved that the No. 1 choice was the petunia and in this species a definite colour pattern was followed.<sup>2</sup> The red flowers were always visited first, the purple ones second. In the process of working over a petunia bed, the hummers would occasionally stop at a white blossom but were never observed feeding from one. Hollyhocks appeared to be second best, with geraniums also well rated. Snapdragons and gladioli were visited intermittently.

While the weather was very warm we noted that the Ruby-throats confined most of their feeding to very early in the morning and from early evening until dark. When the weather became cooler they searched for food throughout the day.

<sup>1</sup>A. C. Bent in his *Life histories of North American woodpeckers* (1939) described the association of sapsuckers and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds which are attracted to the sap flowing from holes drilled by the sapsuckers, and P. A. Taverner in his *Birds of Canada* (1949) also refers to the fact that many small birds, including hummingbirds, are attracted to the sweet oozing sap. [Ed.]

<sup>2</sup>The question of colour preference is also raised by Bent (1940. *Life histories of North American cuckoos, goatsuckers, hummingbirds and their allies.*) He writes: "Hummingbirds have been seen so frequently hovering before the brilliant red flowers in our gardens — trumpet vines clambering over the porch, salvias gleaming scarlet in the flower beds — that it has been assumed the birds have a pref-

erence for the color red. However, the extensive investigations of Andrew L. Pickens (1930) bring out the fact that it is brightness of color — its conspicuousness against the background — that draws the hummingbird to a flower." Pickens has proposed, for example, that green flowers that are too inconspicuous among foliage should have value in certain contrasting desert backgrounds, or on the sere dry-season prairies. "While no green Hummingbird flowers are known in the East," he says, "*Nicotiana paniculata* one of the greenest large flowers I know, is much frequented in the west during the dry season at least." He concludes that "complete lists would probably show red, the sharpest contrast to green, a favorite everywhere, with orange in some favor in tree-shaded regions and a neglected color like green rising in sun-browned territory." [Ed.]

## CASPIAN TERN AGAIN SIGHTED AT REGINA

by Robert W. Nero

On July 10, 1964, while conducting a university class in field ornithology, I observed a Caspian Tern at the Regina Waterfowl Park. Members of a small colony of Common Terns were harassing the intruder which was hovering and flying about their nest sites on "tern island." On at least one occasion the Caspian Tern gave a low, harsh cry. A few minutes after sighting the bird some Ring-billed Gulls flew over the marsh heading northwest and the tern, which suddenly disappeared, was presumed to have flown off with them.

The Caspian Tern was reported seen in the same area on July 22-23, 1960, by F. Brazier (1960. Caspian Tern at Regina. *Blue Jay*, 18:161). There is, so far as I am aware, only one other published record of this tern for southern Saskatchewan; H. H. Mitchell, as pointed out by Dr. Stuart Houston (1956. The Caspian Tern in Saskatchewan — with first nesting record. *Blue Jay*, 14:116-117), took a specimen at Old Wives Lake on June 28, 1927. The nearest nesting locality is that discovered by Houston at Dore Lake, some 300 miles northwest of Regina.