

SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT (1964) OF THE PRAIRIE NEST RECORDS SCHEME

by **Robert R. Taylor**, Regina

The seventh year of the Prairie Nest Records Scheme yielded some very exciting results. Not only did we get some records of unusually hard to find species, we also received some fine series of records of some of the more common species which many people often do not bother to record. Most pleasing was the fact that many of the contributors filled their cards in more completely and more accurately than ever before. In 1964, 38 participants contributed a total of 622 nest record cards representing 140 species of birds. This was an increase in number of cards of 151 over the 1963 total, and an increase of 18 observers. Alberta led the field with a total contribution of 265 cards. There were 179 cards from Saskatchewan, 95 from Manitoba and 83 from the Northwest Territories. The largest individual contributions were made by Ernie Kuyt, Canadian Wildlife Service biologist, working in the Thelon River district in the Northwest Territories, and A. J. Erskine, also a C.W.S. biologist, who spent the summer in Alberta. Each contributed 83 cards. They were followed by Bohdan Pylypec, one of our youngest co-operators, who contributed 45 cards, all of which were filled out in great detail with numerous visits to each nest and a final visit to check the success of the nest after the anticipated date of departure of the fledglings.

One of the most interesting contributions was a report from David R.M. Hatch of a nest of a Gray Partridge containing 21 eggs, all of which hatched. H. W. Burns, of Leduc, Alberta, reported seven nests of Bohemian Waxwings found in a muskeg bog on the Jasper Highway near Carrot Creek, on June 9. Mr. Burns also reported a Mockingbird nest near Cadogan, Alberta, with five eggs on July 12. Jack Lane, of Brandon, Manitoba, found a nest of Le Conte's Sparrow near the Douglas Marsh. Members of the Calgary Bir Club

discovered three nests of Greater Yellowlegs in southwestern Alberta as reported by Murray Christman. Mr. Christman also reported a Gray Jay nest west of Calgary, containing two young on July 15. From eastern Saskatchewan, William Anaka reported a colony of Great Blue Herons consisting of 20 nests. Several colonies were reported by Jack Shier, of Calgary. Two of them were Double-crested Cormorant (50 nests at Lake Newell), Black-crowned Night Heron (four nests at Stobart Lake). Mr. Shier also found a Long-billed Curlew nest containing four eggs at Cayley, Alberta, on May 27. Ernie Kuyt's 83 cards from the Northwest Territories contained records for such species as Sandhill Crane, Red-throated Loon, Parasitic Jaeger, Semipalmated Plover, Stilt Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, White-fronted Goose, and Rock Ptarmigan. From Alberta, A. J. Erskine's records included Red-necked Grebes, a series on American Coots, Bonaparte's Gull, and Solitary Sandpiper. Mr. Erskine's friend, Wayne P. McCrory, reports eight young Spruce Grouse near Gift Lake, Alberta, on July 18.

Bohdan Pylypec made observations in great detail on 16 Cedar Waxwing nests near Yellow Creek, Saskatchewan. Working in the Wollaston Lake area of northern Saskatchewan for Dr. R. W. Nero, Rick Sanderson and Ross Lein filled in 26 cards which included three colonies of Common Terns (a total of 76 nests), two nests of Mew Gulls, and a small colony (four nests) of Herring Gulls. Once again, the largest number of cards turned in for a single species was the 37 cards reporting Robin's nests. This was followed by American Coot (28), Red-winged Blackbird (24), Mourning Dove (19), Cedar Waxwing (18), Chestnut-collared Longspur (15), Red-necked Grebe (14), and House Sparrow (12). The remaining 131 species all had 10 or less cards sub-

mitted. Mr. George M. Fairfield again spent three weeks in the Moose Jaw area in 1964, studying the Chestnut-collared Longspur which he is writing up for the Bent's Life History series. He turned all his nest records of this species in to our scheme.

Our thanks are extended to the following people for supporting the co-operative Prairie Nest Records Scheme in 1964: W. Anaka, J. Baugh, H. W. Burns, M. Christman, Mrs. E. A. Dodd, A. J. Erskine, G. M. Fairfield, David R. M. Hatch, B. Irving, E. Kuyt, J. Lane, R. Lein, N. Lindquist, L. Lohr, K. MacRae, W. McCrory, M. McNicholl, W. J. Merilees, L. Morgotch, Miss D. Myers, M. T. Myres, R. W. Nero, Mr. and Mrs. K. D. Paton, B. Pylypec, T. Sadler, R. Sanderson, J. Shier, J. Slimmon, G. J. Smith, R. Taylor, K. Van Tighem, D. Wade, D. Walsh, E. J. White, Florence A. White, G. Windsor and S. Zazelenchuk.

In preparation for the 1965 season, a new nest record card has been designed. It is hoped that the new card will give contributors an opportunity to obtain and report more detailed and precise information. It has more space for such information as: exact location, nearest town, habitat, nest site, height above ground, visits to nest, and nest materials. There are some innovations such as: condition of nest when found, apparent cause and evidence of nest failure, and stage of development of eggs which failed to hatch.

One of the problems which we have encountered in the past has been inadequate space for some types of information. This has led contributors to use abbreviations in many cases and this has often led to confusion in analysing data. One of the worst places in which this has occurred is in the space provided for name and address of observer. Many cards come in with as little as two initials in that space. It is very important to fill each and every card out fully. The cards are filed by species so that the series from one contributor is soon broken up and the contributor's initials become insufficient to identify him. Another problem which arises regularly is connected with the exact loca-

tion of the nest. Observers sometimes use such expressions as: "2½ miles north of Jones' farm." Of course it is impossible for anyone to locate the nest without a great deal of investigation and correspondence with the observer. In order to avoid this problem in future, the new card has a separate space for: "Nearest Town."

For your supply of the new cards, write to: Robert R. Taylor, Chairman, Prairie Nest Records Scheme, Box 1121, Regina, Sask.

Species recorded in 1964: Common Loon, Red-throated Loon, Red-necked Grebe, Horned Grebe, Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Whistling Swan, Canada Goose, White-fronted Goose, Mallard, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal, American Widgeon, Shoveler, Redhead, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Oldsquaw, White-winged Scoter, Ruddy Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Gyrfalcon, Prairie Falcon, Peregrine Falcon, Sparrow Hawk, Spruce Grouse, Ruffed Grouse, Willow Ptarmigan, Rock Ptarmigan, Gray Partridge, Sandhill Crane, Sora, American Coot, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Common Snipe, Long-billed Curlew, Upland Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Willet, Greater Yellowlegs, Baird's Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, American Avocet, Wilson's Phalarope, Parasitic Jaeger, Herring Gull, California Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Mew Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Forster's Tern, Common Tern, Arctic Tern, Black Tern, Mourning Dove, Black-billed Cuckoo, Great Horned Owl, Burrowing Owl, Long-eared Owl, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, Western Kingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, Traill's Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Western Wood Pewee, Tree Swallow, Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Purple Martin, Gray Jay, Black-billed Magpie, Common Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, House Wren, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Short-billed Marsh Wren, Mockingbird, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Hermit Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Eastern Bluebird, Mountain Bluebird, Bohemian Waxwing, Cedar Waxwing, Loggerhead Shrike, Starling, Red-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Ovenbird, Yellowthroat, House Sparrow, Bobolink, Western Meadowlark, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Red-winged Blackbird, Baltimore Oriole, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Hoary Redpoll, American Goldfinch, Lark Bunting, Savannah Sparrow, Le Conte's Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Slate-colored Junco, Tree Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Harris' Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lapland Longspur, Chestnut-collared Longspur.