

# Junior Naturalists

Edited by **Joyce Deutscher**, Regina

## COMMENTS, PRIZE WINNER AND CONTEST

Most of the material used in this issue arrived just too late for publication in the last issue. Juniors are reminded that the deadline for the next issue is April 15. Send your entries well ahead of time to Mrs. Joyce Deutscher, 1332 Edward St., Regina. Do keep up the good work. We have more material than we have room for which is a good position for an editor to be in.

Teachers are reminded to encourage students to contribute to this section of the *Blue Jay*. Mrs. Irene Shaw who sent in entries from her students put it very well when she said, "The boys and all of us will get a thrill if you can use their letters, but if you can't we still learned a lot putting down what we saw and asking questions. So we thank you for your contest and your corner in the *Blue Jay*. I thought the last one on "what can be done about the weather, etc." very apt. "So much in our back yards if we just learn to see it."

The most difficult part of editing this section is as usual deciding on the prize winner. Patricia Johnson, age 10, won the prize (a year's subscription to the *Blue Jay* with her account of her experiences raising fish.

Answers to the crossword puzzle in the last issue are as follows: Across—oak, fir, lodgepole, coniferous, ash. Down—pine, aspen, larch, poles, birch, sap.

## TWO LYNX AND A RED FOX AT YELLOW CREEK

by **Bohdan Pylypec**, age 14,  
Yellow Creek

This past summer while I was chasing our cows to the pasture in the evening I saw two lynx. At first they looked like a couple of coyotes, but as I got close, I found to my surprise they were lynx. I went to call my father and we went to observe the lynx more carefully. Meanwhile they

had gone away from where I had first seen them but they came back again.

From a distance we heard them making cat-like noises to each other as if they were quarrelling. As we got nearer we saw their grayish-buff, lightly spotted coats and their slender long bodies. Their feet were big and their ear tufts noticeable. Their tails were bobbed and had completely black tips. The lynx appeared to be unafraid of us and just stood staring. After a while they went off slowly towards a dense bush still making their cat-like noises.

While I was walking along the fence line this fall I came upon a red fox very unexpectedly. I didn't see the fox because he was hidden under a bush on the other side of the fence. Suddenly, the fox sprang out of his hiding place and swiftly ran over the field to the nearest bush. During those few moments I saw the fox's coat was reddish above and whitish below. He had a large bushy tail with a white tip, big ears, and black feet. When the fox was out of sight I found a dead Mallard with several shot gun pellets in its body. There were no teeth marks in it but I wondered if the fox was going to eat it because of his hunger.

## THE ANT MOVES A DRAGONFLY

by **Rita Mursell**, age 11, Parkman

During my summer holidays I saw a small black ant trying to pull a dead dragonfly down the road.

The dragonfly must have been at least three times as big as the ant. This small ant would pull the dragonfly about half an inch and then run all over it. The ant kept repeating this process.

What hard work it must have been!

My friend and I ran to tell our teacher, but when we returned a while later, there was no sign of ant or dragonfly and no sign of where they had gone.

## WASP NEST FOUND IN GROUND

by **Joyce Smith**, age 11, Parkman

I found a wasp hive in the ground. I dug a hole into their home and found wasps in big clusters sleeping. I took a wasp out and took it home and it didn't move at all. It must have been sleeping. I think they are going to spend the winter in the ground.

The little wasps are about half an inch long. Their bodies are yellow with black stripes. Their head is mostly black with about six stripes. The wasp has six legs. Its feelers are about as long as the wasp itself. It has wings as long as from its head to its tail and the color of these is bright brown. It looked like a hornet but smaller.

Their home is in the ground and they have many little holes in the ground. There is a plant growing in the main hole. I saw about fifty wasps in it.

I have caught a wasp and I'm taking it to school to study it.

## A RARITY IN EASTERN BLUEBIRD EGGS

by **Gordon Rourke**, age 16,  
Brandon, Manitoba

Nest #960 of our local bird box project is located several miles south and east of Alexander.

While helping in the work of checking nests in that area, on July 7, Mrs. J. Lane found that nest #960 contained a full set of rosy-white eggs. The eggs were actually white, but being quite fresh the reflection from the yolks shone through the shells, giving a rosy hue. There were five eggs in the set.

White Bluebird eggs are mentioned in a reference guide by Oliver Davie's *Nests and Eggs of North American Birds*. Oliver Davie says: "The normal color of the eggs is pale blue and rarely pure white." We shall be on the lookout next summer to see if this pair of bluebirds come back to the same area.

The nest was not visited again until early August, when it was found that the nesting had not been successful, the grass nest still contained three eggs and there was no sign of the adults. Two eggs were salvaged for future reference.

## GIANT WATER BUG

by **Oli Oleksyn**, age 9, Yellow Creek

Garry found a big insect near the porch light. It was black in color. It is about two inches long. It has wings to fly and legs to crawl or swim. Its body is protected by a hard shell.

We used *Insects* by Zim to identify it. The insect is a Giant Water Bug.

## OUR WOOLLY BEAR

by **Lionel Meszaros**, grade 4,  
Hazel Valley School

One day we found a woolly bear caterpillar so we put him in a jar with a screen on top. The next day when we came to school it was making its cocoon so we watched it. At night it crawled out of its cocoon and it lost its hair and went to sleep. It had crawled out of its skin and turned yellow-orange. Then it turned orange-brown and then brownish-black. When our woolly bear wakes up it will be a moth.

## A FISH TRAGEDY

by **Patricia Johnson**, age 10, Parkman

About the first of June Brenda Poitras and I went down to the creek with a couple of jars and things to get snails and things for experiments at school. We were looking at the water when we saw a school of fish going by. We sat down on a rock and tried catching them. We were disappointed when we caught only four. That meant two for Brenda and two for me. When I got home Mom was surprised to see the minnows and told me to go back and get a couple more fish and we could make an aquarium. Rod my brother, Rita and Kevein Morsell and I walked down to the creek armed to the teeth with jars and cups. We caught about forty-five or fifty fish.

At the same time we gathered three kinds of plants for our aquarium.

Note: This delightful narrative will be continued in the next issue of the *Blue Jay*.