

Junior Naturalists

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



Robin's Nest, by Mary Gillies, age 10, Unity

COMMENTS

The plea in the last issue of the *Blue Jay* for more letters from Juniors did not go unheeded. One Junior writes, "I read your appeal for more material . . . and although the only interesting stuff I have to write would probably be too long, I decided to try to write some things down which I hope are worthy of printing."

Jackie Willerth and Rosemary Nemeth both mention adult members of the S.N.H.S. who have helped them with their interest in nature; while Rose McLaughlin adds a footnote to Peter's letter saying that she "squeezed" the story out of him when he practically had one foot on an aeroplane bound for Ireland!

It appears that a little encouragement and even some "squeezing" at the right time often does wonders in helping to create and develop a young person's interest in natural history and in giving him the incentive to write and tell others about it. And Juniors, if there isn't an interested adult around to encourage, threaten, goad or squeeze you into writing do not hesitate to try your hand at it all by yourself. Who knows your letter might appear in print in the *Blue Jay*.

LETTERS, SKETCHES, PHOTOS NEEDED

Juniors are reminded to get their contributions in for the next issue by October 15. Send them to Mrs. Joyce Deutscher, 7200 6th Ave., Regina and let us hear from more of you about your nature observations. Remember that letters about any form of wild life including birds, mammals, insects and plants are welcome. Original sketches (not ones copied from other pictures) are also wanted. Sketches should be done in black and white and should have some dark well defined lines so that they will reproduce well. Good clear photographs of plant and animal life can be used.

BANDING HORNED OWLS

by **Rosemary Nemeth**, age 10, Yellow Creek

We left at three in the afternoon on May 14, 1966. The first nest we found had three baby owls in it. For food there were three pocket gophers and one Long-eared Owl.

The second nest had two baby owls in it. In the nest there were two mud hens (American Coots) and one barn rat.

The third nest had three baby owls. Dr. Houston banded two of them. The third baby's leg was too small for the band. There were four pocket gophers for food.

FIRST AID FOR A GROSBEAK

by Jackie Willerth, age 11, Indian Head

On March 19, 1966, I came across a bird with a broken wing. My neighbor, Mrs. M. Skinner of the S.N.H.S., identified it as a female Pine Grosbeak. Our doctor put splints on it twice because "Tweet", as I called her, thought it shouldn't be there and kept pulling it out.

I only had a makeshift cage of a cardboard box with a wire screen in front fastened with four shingle nails. It had three perches. I realized afterwards a cage would have been ideal as I think she would have been more quiet if she could have seen all around her. However after ten days she became used to us.

Her diet was bird seed and raisins. Later I hung a spray of millet from the clothes line. She loved apple, celery and lettuce.

After two weeks she sang heartily with the radio, record player and even with the vacuum cleaner. After a month I let her out of the box and she began trying her wings. The first week she made flights about three feet in height, then she began making longer flights. She was very careful of window panes I noticed. Sometimes she played possum and my sister and I had fun trying to find her. She loved her daily bath in a small dish of water.

We would have liked to keep her, but on April 30 we took her to the coulee to a high tree. I can still hear that melodious "tweet" as she flitted from branch to branch. That week we still had two flocks of Evening Grosbeaks about the farm. So I hope the cousins helped Tweet out. It is indeed a worthwhile thrill to look after such a bird.

"FUGI" THE ROBIN

by Feter Carton, age 11, Indian Head

On June 14 I rescued a baby robin which was being chased by a dog. I quickly made a makeshift cage out of a box and a window screen. My brother and I fed him some worms but he didn't eat. Mother suggested pablum so I fed him pablum with an eye-dropper and he liked it. Before I went

to bed I fed him again. I thought he wouldn't live but the next morning I heard chirping so I fed him some more pablum. This went on for five days and then he began looking sick. Mom bought cat food the next day and we fed that to him. From then on it was his main food.

Dad and I built a new cage out of window screen. After another week we let him go and he is still as tame as ever in the yard.

OUTSIDE MY WINDOW

by Mary Gillies, age 10, Unity

Just outside my bedroom window there is a tree with a robin's nest in it. All spring I watched the robin family. At first there were four blue eggs in the nest. Next there were four ugly naked brown birds. It was a pleasure to watch them grow and watch them being fed.

Later on in June feathers grew on their naked bodies. Soon they flew away.

At our summer cottage I watched a wren family too.

DUCK NESTS

by Kevin Van Tighem

This spring I found three duck nests. On May 7 I found a Pintail nest about twenty-five yards off the east shore of Frank Lake. It contained two eggs and was only two feet from last year's duck nest which contained five eggs.

On May 15, returning from the area around Beaverhills Lake, Wayne Smith and I found a Mallard nest near the campground just north of Morningside. The nest was about twenty-five yards in a dense spruce bog where the trees were about two feet apart. The hen Mallard flushed from her nest at the foot of a spruce and we saw that the nest contained two eggs. The nest was more than a mile from the nearest water.

On June 4 I found the strangest nest of all. At Inglewood Bird Sanctuary in Calgary I flushed a hen Mallard from her nest in some dogwood. When I looked in the nest I saw that it contained seven eggs and a coca-cola bottle. Apparently the duck had built her nest right over the bottle.