

BONAPARTE'S GULL NESTING AT GLASLYN, SASKATCHEWAN, 1969

by **Fred W. Lahrman**, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History

While working on nature trails at The Battlefords' Provincial Park in early 1969, Lorne Scott and I had an opportunity on June 17 to check the area where the Bonaparte's Gull had been found nesting in previous years on Lamotte's Swamp near Glaslyn (see *Blue Jay*, 26:70-74.)

We soon found a pair of Bonaparte's Gulls and a nest with three eggs. As we approached the nest, the pair dived at us with screaming cries and were soon joined by a third Bonaparte's Gull from a distant part of the marsh. We believe this third bird may have been one of a second nesting pair, but the gulls were fewer in numbers than in previous years.

We noticed that only two fence posts remained this year from an old fence line which ran through the nest-

ing area. The gulls used these posts for perching on and as lookout sites while they guarded their nesting territory. We erected nine fence posts in the nesting area in the hope that they would encourage more birds to establish nesting territories in the coming years.

This beautiful and unique bay provided many other attractions, such as the Yellow Rails, Sharp-tailed Sparrows, Common Snipe in courtship displays, and nesting Canvasbacks. Shooting star flowers were blooming in profusion on the little hummocky islands.

At one time this swamp was named the Lamotte's Bird Sanctuary. For some reason it was removed from the list of sanctuaries. It is obvious that the sanctuary should be reinstated.

REPORT OF SUCCESSFUL 1969 BANDING OF BLUEBIRDS AND TREE SWALLOWS AT INDIAN HEAD

by **Lorne Scott**, Indian Head

Since 1963, I have been engaged in building and setting out bird houses to attract bluebirds in the Indian Head district.

This past spring I set out another 200 bird houses to bring the total to 750. Two new Bluebird Trails were established this spring: 100 houses were set out between Wolseley and Melville, Saskatchewan, and 50 were set out between Qu'Appelle and Lip-ton, Saskatchewan.

The two new trails proved very successful with only six out of the 150 houses unoccupied. Tree Swallows occupied most of the new houses. It seems to take two or three years before bluebirds become established in an area. There are now more bluebirds than Tree Swallows nesting in

the first houses.

Again this year there were twice as many Mountain Bluebird nests as last year, the totals being 51 nests in 1968 and 104 this year. The Tree Swallows also showed a marked increase from 178 nests in 1968 to about 275 this year.

The highlight of the year was having two pair of Eastern Bluebirds nesting in the houses. This brought back memories from 1966 when there were two pair of Eastern Bluebirds nesting. In 1967 and again in 1968 no Eastern Bluebirds nested in the boxes.

The first nest was discovered in early June near Lemberg, Saskatchewan. Unfortunately vandals destroyed their nest shortly after the eggs hatched. The adults were not seen in



Male Mountain Bluebird, Indian Head, 1969

Photo by Fred W. Lahrman



Male Eastern Bluebird, Indian Head, 1969

Photo by Fred W. Lahrman

the area again. The second nest was located south of Indian Head in July. This pair successfully raised four young.

This year I obtained a bird banding permit from the Canadian Wildlife Service. I banded 43 adult female Mountain Bluebirds which were caught on the nests in the houses. I also banded 351 young Mountain Bluebirds in the nests. Both adult female Eastern Bluebirds were banded as well as the four young in the successful nest. It will be interesting to see if these Eastern Bluebirds will come back to nest in the houses next year.

A total of 600 Tree Swallows were banded of which 125 were adults, largely females. This makes a total of 1,000 birds banded in the houses this year. As well as the records for the Canadian Wildlife Service, I have kept a list of all the band numbers with the corresponding bird houses in which each bird was banded. With these records I hope to answer several questions such as: Do the adults return to the same house to nest year after year? Do the young birds of the previous year nest when one year old and, do they return to the same area to nest? And how old do the birds live to be?

Next spring the Saskatoon Junior Natural History Society and I plan to join our Bluebird Trails around the north end of Last Mountain Lake. With the work done by Mr. Jack Lane and the Brandon Junior Bird Club we will then have a continuous trail extending from just west of Winnipeg, Manitoba, to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

A POSSIBLE SIGHTING OF THE PURPLE SANDPIPER IN SOUTHWEST MANITOBA

by David Randall, 561 - 7th Street,
Brandon, Manitoba

On May 25, 1969, while on a fishing trip to Pelican Lake in southern Manitoba, I noticed a small flock of Ruddy Turnstones (*Arenaria interpres*) feeding along the shore. I later found that this was part of a larger group, perhaps 50 birds in all. While

studying these migrants through my 7 x 35 glasses I noticed one individual with a much different appearance than the rest. This bird was much darker than the Turnstones, with a mottled brownish back and wings a purplish-grey color; the breast was well spotted with darkish spots; the legs were bright yellow, as compared to the burnt-orange legs of the Turnstones.

The stranger stayed close to the other birds in the flock and whenever they flew it went right along. Only the Purple Sandpiper (*Erolia maritima*) seems to fit this bird in Peterson's *A field guide to the birds*. Godfrey (1966. *The birds of Canada*, National Museum of Canada, Bulletin No. 203), states that this species is considered accidental in southern Manitoba.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER NESTS NEAR SASKATOON

by R. E. Gehlert, 1701 - 20th Street W.,
Saskatoon

The Orange-crowned Warbler (*Vermivora celata*) was added to Saskatoon's list of breeding birds when two nests were discovered near Pike Lake in 1969. Fred Waite and I found the first nest containing two warbler eggs and two cowbird eggs on June 23. The nest was located on the ground under a tuft of dry grass near the edge of a small clearing within a poplar bluff. The female showed little alarm while the nest was inspected but would flit nervously to the willows that bordered the clearing.

I found the second nest on June 29 about one mile away in a nearly identical situation. Both adults were seen carrying food to two large cowbirds ready to leave the nest. The nest was empty the following day.

I would like to thank Dr. Stuart Houston for pointing out the significance of these records. It appears that the only other breeding record for this species for Saskatchewan is of a nest found near Nipawin in 1936 (Houston and Street. 1959. *The birds of the Saskatchewan River, Carlton to Cumberland*).