

Letters and Notes

DRAINAGE OF WETLANDS

Last winter the provincial government advised the SNHS that a Wetlands Project Advisory Committee was being formed which would consist of four representatives of agricultural interests and four from wildlife organizations and invited it to name a representative. The Committee considers proposals about which there are conflicts of interest, and advises the Wetlands Project Committee which consists of the deputy ministers of Natural Resources, Environment and Agriculture. In turn, the latter group make recommendations to the government.

The wetlands projects so far to come before the Committee are schemes to completely or partially drain sloughs, marshes and lakes for agricultural purposes. Seventy-five per cent of the work is paid for out of ARDA (federal) funds, and 25 per cent by the local ratepayers. Over 100 projects have been mentioned, but only those involving conflict of interest come to the Committee. So far 14 projects have been considered in five meetings, two of which involved public hearings. One drainage project was recommended not to go ahead, one to receive further study, and the other 12 to proceed (six of these on somewhat reduced scale).

Three schemes involve the draining of only one body of water. Others, however, are quite large: one has 157 miles of drainage and lateral ditches; another drains an area encompassing over 100 potholes.

To farmers able to place more land into production and to operate more efficiently there can be a financial gain from the drainage of wetlands. That other farmers have reservations for a variety of reasons is also evident.

A number of features about the program are of concern to me. That one federal program is paying to drain potholes while another is paying to preserve wetlands seems patently inconsistent. The information provided

to the Committee about the wildlife and other natural values has been meagre. There has been no input regarding environmental factors. As there are many proposed projects (some involving several townships), questions about the total, mass effects of drainage are of considerable concern. What will be the effect on downstream flooding in the spring? What will be the effect, if any, on ground water levels? What, if any, will be the effect on micro-climates? What will the resultant countryside be like? Why are ARDA funds being used in a quite different way in Saskatchewan than in Ontario? Should there not be overall guidelines to achieve a balance? These questions were asked but no sound answers were received.

These reservations were pointed out to Mr. G. R. Bowerman, Minister of Natural Resources, in a recent meeting with him. A moratorium on further drainage projects was recommended while the broad implications are determined and policy recognizing all factors is established.—*J. A. Wedgwood, Saskatoon.*

Annual Report on the Indian Head Bluebird Trail

(Continued from page 227)

were raised in the successful nests. Seventy-five adult female Mountain Bluebirds were caught on nests and banded. Also 18 females that had been banded in previous years were caught again this year. Some of these females were banded three years ago in 1969. Three of the females recaptured this year were banded as young birds in the houses in earlier years. A total of 625 young Mountain Bluebirds were banded this season.

Tree Swallows occupied over 500 houses and raised well over 2,000 young. Two hundred adult female Tree Swallows were caught while incubating their eggs and banded. An additional 50 adult females were captured already wearing bands put on

them during the three previous years. Nine of these females were banded as young birds in the houses and the remaining 41 were banded as adults.

Since I began making bird houses in 1963, there has been a grand total of about 800 Mountain Bluebird nests producing over 3,000 young, and some 1,800 Tree Swallow nests producing over 8,000 young.—*Lorne Scott*, Indian Head, Saskatchewan.

A REPORT ON THE BROADVIEW BLUEBIRD TRAIL

An additional 75 nest boxes were set out last fall, increasing the number of houses on our trail to 175. This bluebird trail project was started in 1969.

Mountain Bluebirds occupied 32 of the 75 new houses, and Tree Swallows also nested in 32 of the new houses. About 370 young Mountain Bluebirds were raised from approximately 74 nests last spring. This is an increase of about 54 nests over last year. Tree Swallows occupied about 68 nest boxes, an increase of nine nests over last year. Some 367 young were fledged.

The houses are situated south of Broadview, forming a triangle with boundaries of the area extending from two miles west of Broadview, east to Percival, and 10 miles south of Broadview.—*David Chaskavich* and *Don Weidl*, Broadview, Saskatchewan.

HOUSE WREN AND TREE SWALLOW

On June 11, when checking bird house No. 27, which was being used by Tree Swallows, I was very surprised to find three House Wren eggs in the nest with five Tree Swallow eggs.

On June 22, I again checked the nest, and found the three House Wren eggs on top of the five Tree Swallow eggs.

On July 2, the nest contained one young House Wren and five young Tree Swallows.

On July 12, the young Wren was flying around, accompanied by both

adult Tree Swallows. The five young Tree Swallows were still in the nest.

When the nest was vacant, I cleaned the box, and examined the contents. The lower section of the nest had been built by House Sparrows, and contained a dead adult Tree Swallow. Over this the Wrens had built their nest of twigs. The Tree Swallows then took over and added more feathers.

The House Wren and the Tree Swallow must have laid their eggs when the other was out of the nest. I did not see the adult Wrens.

I have to report that no bluebirds used the houses again this year.—*John L. Murray*, Lyleton, Manitoba.

BIRD BOXES HELPED BLUEBIRD SPREAD TOWARD THE EAST

The Mountain Bluebird, once a western Canadian species, has been gradually extending its range eastward over the past number of years. This range expansion has no doubt been helped along by the efforts of clubs and individuals in setting out nest boxes.

The Birds Hill Park Bluebird Lane, which has put up a sizeable number of boxes in various parts of Manitoba, had two pairs of Mountain Bluebirds nesting on the east side of Birds Hill Provincial Park last summer. One pair nested at the junction of roads No. 206 and No. 212 in box No. L-16 and the other pair nested half a mile north of that in box No. L-26.

The first pair of Mountain Bluebirds were spotted on April 14 by me while I was inspecting some boxes two miles south of the junction of highway No. 44 and road No. 206. On April 21, the same pair (presumably) were seen inspecting some more boxes at the junction of roads No. 206 and No. 212. This time they were seen by George Grzybowski as well as myself. On April 28, I found a nest belonging to this pair in box No. L-16. At that time no eggs had been laid. On May 5, one egg was present and on May 12, six had been laid. This was unchanged on May 20 when my brother Eric saw the

pair. Unfortunately, the box was not inspected again until June 4, when Herb Copland, Eric and I found the nest empty. The adults were not seen again.

On April 28, the second pair of Mountain Bluebirds were spotted by me half a mile north of box No. L-16. On May 5, I found the nest in box No. L-26, but with no eggs. On May 12, three eggs were present. This nest was found destroyed on May 20 by Eric. These adults, too, were not seen again.

Dr. John Lane of Brandon, upon reviewing the data mentioned, claims that the nest in box No. L-16 was vandalized. "The date of the final egg was May 10. Add 14 to 15 days incubation till hatching date, May 24-25. Then add 17-18 days till the young vacated the nest, would make vacating date around June 12. Therefore, it is clear that this nest was vandalized in some manner."

It is a pity that neither one of the two nests was successful. If anybody has any breeding record or sightings of this bird east of the Red River, I should be pleased to hear about them. —Norman Lee, RR No. 3, Selkirk, Manitoba.

BIRD HOUSES

I now have 130 bird houses in position and 14 in the basement awaiting erection. The houses are occupied by Eastern Bluebirds, House Wrens or Tree Swallows. My best area is 60 miles northwest of Toronto.

Dennis Barry has over 600 boxes in the area north and northeast of Oshawa. Mrs. Hazel Bird of Harwood has 440 boxes up and reckons on 214 units housing successful broods.

Mrs. Bird's boxes are always seven feet off the ground. My boxes are doing well at 9, 10 or even 15 feet. Mrs. Bird uses tin cans up the 2 x 2 post and reports no losses to cats for three seasons. Her houses are made from the wood from old barns. I have adopted her ideas but I use new western red cedar, a front door that battens down securely and a galvanised

tube called a three-inch down pipe in the plumbing trade. She gets no vandalism but the stupid acts of destruction in some of my areas would make your hair curl if I related them to you.—L. A. Smith, 133 Madison Ave., Toronto 5.



Photo by L. A. Smith

Mrs. L. Kaye, Toronto Field Naturalist club, and bird house erected in Mono Township, June, 1972.

GOSHAWK

While visiting the Spruce Woods Park area on May 7, 1972, I spotted a large nest. On closer inspection, I found it to be occupied and the bird sitting well down in the nest. I approached the base of the tree in order to get a better look at it. The bird rose to a standing position and expressed its annoyance by uttering harsh screams. It was at this point that I discovered its identity—it was a Goshawk. It showed no inclination to fly from the nest. I read all available references to Goshawks in various bird books and also Bent's *Life histories of North American birds of prey*, and decided that this bird was not living

up to its reputation. On June 4, however, when I paid another visit, the Goshawk dive-bombed me three times before I made my escape.

Accompanied by Cleveland P. Grant of Mineral Point, Wisconsin, I visited the nest again on June 7. He confirmed my identification saying this was his best observation ever of a Goshawk. While watching from the car, we saw the Goshawk bring a green branch to the nest. Subsequently it flew away and returned three or four times. On June 25 and 26, July 1 and September 17, I paid further visits to the nest but did not see the Goshawk again. At no time did I see more than one bird nor did I see any fledglings. The nest was placed in the crotch of a trembling aspen at a height of 25 feet. The habitat was mixed deciduous and coniferous forest.—*Mrs. Barbara Robinson, Brandon.*

PIGEON HAWK CATCHES BAT

Opposite our house in a residential district of Edmonton is a grassy park of about three city blocks in extent. There is a man-made hill in the centre near the base of which several dozen small spruce and birch trees have been planted. On our side of the park is the remnant of a farm windbreak, an L-shaped row of large poplars.

During early August of 1972 I twice saw a Merlin or Pigeon Hawk (*Falco columbarius*) fly toward these trees, carrying a House Sparrow. The little falcon perched to eat its prey on the dead top branches of the outer poplar. At about 3:00 p.m. on the warm and sunny afternoon of August 16, 1972, after a brief thundershower had passed over the area, I happened to see the merlin leave the tree at hunting speed. One hundred yards away it skimmed the top of the hill, disappeared momentarily from my view, and swooped up beyond it, turning back to the trees. It carried a small object, which I assumed to be another sparrow. I went into the house to get my scope, and set it up on the front steps, as I had done on previous occasions. It afforded

me a first-rate view of the feeding falcon. But this time little plucking was done and the merlin finished rather quickly. Through the scope I had seen a small object fall. I searched for it below the tree. It proved to be part of the wing of a bat.

The wing part was tentatively identified by H. C. Smith, Curator of Zoology at the Provincial Museum in Edmonton, as that of a little brown myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*). Dr. M. B. Fenton of Carleton University confirmed the identification.—*Dick Dekker, 3819 - 112A Street, Edmonton, Alberta.*

THE ROYAL FALCON

When I was in Paris this past summer, a friend sent me an article by Fred Bruemmer that had been widely circulated through Canada in June in the *Weekend Magazine*. Bruemmer's story and photographs warned emphatically that extinction now threatens "the pride of princes," the falcon. He was of course writing especially about Gyrfalcon and the Peregrine, the two birds so highly prized for centuries by falconers. These birds constituted kings' ransoms in the Middle Ages, and they are unfortunately still being sought by oil-rich Middle East sheikhs who will pay as much as \$30,000 for a white Gyrfalcon.

Shortly after reading Bruemmer's article, I happened to be visiting the Egyptian antiquities gallery at the Louvre, where I was reminded of a much earlier chapter in the history of the falcon. There, in steles painted more than 2000 years before Christ, appear recognizable Peregrine Falcons with their characteristic beak and moustaches. The representation of the falcon in early Egyptian art took many forms, and I was fascinated to find the motif repeated over and over in little statuettes, medals and amulets in the collection. Like other animals, birds in Egyptian art usually represented gods, and hawk- or falcon-deities were sky-gods. The falcon represented the royal god Horus. One of



the typical steles in the collection in the Louvre, dating from about 1000 B.C., depicts the god with human body and characteristic falcon head, listening to his praises being celebrated on the harp by a court musician (see figure).

It is unthinkable that a bird that has been associated for so long with human civilization should be nearing the end of its life as a species. What can be done to save this ancient link with our cultural past? The first step must be to make people recognize the seriousness of the situation, and a magazine like the *Blue Jay* can play a role in this by publishing articles which draw attention to the threat to the falcons and seek out ways of meeting it.—Margaret Belcher, Regina.

WHO SHOT GOLDIE?

It was a fine fall day in the Eagle Hills near Biggar, Saskatchewan. A Golden Eagle, hunting for his dinner, had just captured a field mouse which was promptly swallowed whole. Airborne again he was anxiously scanning the ground for the sight of some small animal when a volley of lead pellets

peppered his body. One wing and one leg fell useless. He went into a tail spin before the boom of the shotgun reached his ears. The earth seemed to move up toward him and they met with a jarring impact. The noble bird was a helpless cripple—it was not a fine day any more.

It looked like the end of the line for the eagle but a member of the Department of Natural Resources found the pitiful bundle of feathers and took it to the Small Animal Clinic in the Western College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan at Saskatoon. The record reads: "Date admitted: October 31, 1971; name: Goldie; weight: 10 pounds approximately; age and sex: not determined; ailment: fracture of the right wing and fracture of the radius and ulna of the left leg." Under the care of Dr. R. T. Dueland Goldie was found to be a cheerful and uncomplaining patient; in fact, he soon became quite friendly with his nurse. The menu listed such things as mice, white rats and an occasional bush rabbit.

On December 6, 1971 he was pronounced cured and released into the custody of the Department of Natural Resources who took him to Regina where a flying range was available for practice.



Goldie

Photo by V. J. Harper

I hope that by spring he was able to fly back up into the sky where he belongs. If you see him up there, please remember how easy it is to bring him down and how hard it is to put him back up.—(Mrs.) *Theresa Heuchert*, Box 21, Clavet.

PILEATED WOODPECKER

I was interested in the item appearing on page 97 of the June, 1972, *Blue Jay*, concerning Pileated Woodpeckers. The authors speculated on the possibility of a range extension for the Pileated Woodpecker down the Red Deer River.

A Pileated Woodpecker nest was reported to me in June of 1972 by Mr. Tim Greenlee of Botha, Alberta. The nest was located in the Department of Highways campground along the Red Deer River, about 10 miles west of Big Valley, Alberta. Tim, Miss Carole Greenlee of Stettler, my wife Patricia and I drove to the campground on June 10, 1972, to observe the nest.

The nest was located in a large cottonwood tree about 25 feet above the ground in a mature stream-bank stand. The baby woodpeckers were heard chirping inside the nest-hole, and both the male and female adult Pileated Woodpeckers were seen entering and leaving the nest-hole on numerous occasions. Several photographs of the adult female were obtained.

This nesting record supports speculation of a range extension for the Pileated Woodpecker. — *Graeme M. Greenlee*, Edmonton.

LAZULI BUNTING

On June 11, 1972, my husband and I observed through the kitchen window a bird we believed to be a male Lazuli Bunting. We do not consider ourselves bird watchers though we are interested observers. Upon sighting this bird I recalled reading of the Lazuli Bunting in the March issue of the *Blue Jay*, and immediately afterwards looked it up.

The bird was seen in our garden lilac bushes in Estevan. It was, we estimated, about four or four and one-half inches long with the stubby bill of a seed eater. It was a lovely bright blue, rather like a baby blue with white wing bars plainly seen. Its breast was a light pinkish brown. It hopped easily from branch to branch in the lilac bushes, possibly feeding on the new seeds, and was only in our full view about two minutes. Looking through the window we were only about 12 feet away.

At the time of the sighting, 9:45 a.m. that Sunday morning, the temperature was 71 degrees with scattered cloud and a south wind at five miles an hour.

I hope we will see the bird or possibly its mate again for more detailed observation, but by comparison with the black and white picture in the March *Blue Jay*, we felt there was a good chance that this was a Lazuli Bunting.—*Mrs. Gillian Sernich*, Estevan, Saskatchewan.

OWL BANDING 1972

On the morning of May 14, 1972, Dr. S. Houston, with his three assistants, accompanied my father and me to our Great Horned Owl nest sites. Eleven young were banded out of eight nests and one infertile egg taken for analysis.

At one particular nest site a Red-tailed Hawk nest was situated 45 yards from the owl's nest. Finding two different species nesting so close together was very unusual. On June 27, Wayne Harris came out to band Red-tailed Hawk young. Upon visiting the site we saw that the nest had fallen down, the hawk nest had apparently been unsuccessful.

This spring my father and I found it very difficult to locate Great Horned Owl nests. We'd find a nest but there would be no evidence of young, although the parent owls were always found in the vicinity of the nest. When we climbed these trees, we found the nests to be empty. Dr. Houston said this was due to the cold weather we

had this spring. The change in temperature froze many eggs.

The decline of young owls is also due to the lack of rabbits. Rabbits make up a large part of the owl's diet. Once there is a decline in the population of the most important food of any animal, the species of animal gets just as scarce as its prey. From 1967 to 1970 there was an average of four young to a nest. In the past two years, there has been a decline in young, averaging two young to a nest.

I heard that it takes seven years for the rabbits to become as numerous as they once were. If this is true, I think there will be a decline in the production of young Great Horned Owls for the coming years.

Next year I hope the Great Horned Owls will be more successful in producing their young. — *Rosemary Nemeth* (age 16), Yellow Creek, Saskatchewan.

CATBIRD

I took this photograph of a Catbird on July 14, 1972. The bird, one of an almost identical pair, fitted the des-

cription of a Catbird exactly according to *A Field Guide to Western Birds* by Roger Tory Peterson. I noticed, as did my father, the chestnut under-tail coverts (seldom seen). Not seen in the photograph are the four blue-green eggs which the bird is sitting on.

The Catbirds built their nest about five feet off the ground in a *Caragana* hedge in a quiet corner of the garden. I think this is unusual because I have been told that the Catbird rarely comes into town.

The photograph was taken at approximately 10:30 p.m. in the dark using an electronic flash unit.—*Rupert C. James*, Unity, Saskatchewan.

MOCKINGBIRD

A pair of mockingbirds are with us this summer, nesting in a spruce tree in our evergreen grove. We have been highly entertained by the male and his beautiful mimicking song. Several nights we have heard him singing all night long. One early morning we taped part of his vocabulary and my husband decided to play it back to him. This proved to be very puzzling



Photo by Rupert C. James

Catbird, 10:30 p.m., July 14, 1972

to the mocker, and his antics in trying to solve the source of the sound were interesting to observe.

At this time [July 22, 1972], the male bird has stopped singing as he is busy feeding the nestlings. We see both parent birds flying in and out of the spruce tree. (We happen to have a heavy infestation of grasshoppers and apparently the birds are feeding them to their young.)

Incidentally, this summer we have seen 35 species of birds in our farm yard.—*Mrs. Vern Nordal, Bulyea.*

INDIAN PIPE

Every year in late July or early August I visit a certain spruce grove along the shore of Loon Lake to see the flowering of the Indian Pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*). It is well worth the rough tramp through the woods to see the delicate beauty of these flowers in their natural setting.

The Indian Pipe is found in damp spruce or poplar woods. It is a saprophyte, feeding on decaying vegetation. The whole plant is waxy white, almost transparent. The only color is the yellow of the stamens. It looks quite fragile, but really is tough. There may be as many as 20 flowers in a cluster.

When the flowers first open, they are nodding and look like tiny pipes. Later they straighten up and the whole plant becomes dark brown or almost black. The stiff stems and seed capsules may still be found the following year.—*Mrs. H. D. Bobier, Rapid View, Saskatchewan.*

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER

I have been told that the Red-headed Woodpecker was not often seen in Saskatchewan but on June 4 I observed one for a whole afternoon. It stayed between four telephone poles the nearest one being about 50 yards from the house. It was feeding the whole time so I presumed it was migrating and, sure enough, it was not there the next day. I could see its markings really well and in some lights its color showed blue black. It clung to the pole, swooped down to catch insects and then flew right back to the pole.—*Mrs. Ivy Schwartz, Melfort.*

BIRDS AND MAMMALS

On June 11, 1972, at 11 a.m. I watched from about 10 feet away how a common flicker on a brick patio cleaned out each ant hole as it came to it. It was not nearly so nervous as the sparrows and I even managed to get outside to observe its work.

Also, a neighbor on a nearby farm is praising the work of the birds this year. He has observed a flock of magpies as well as a Great Blue Heron feeding on grasshoppers.

I should also like to report that in this area we have had a large increase in red fox and raccoons, an increase which we think is due to the killing of too many coyotes.—*W. Keith Kenderdine, Scarth, Manitoba.*



Indian Pipe

WOLVERINE

Ten days ago [about July 12, 1972], while in the half-ton I noticed an animal about one-quarter mile away on hayland that had been swathed. At first I thought it was a dog and then I realized it was not. It was 2 o'clock in the afternoon and I said to myself that it was either a beaver or a wolverine. I finally decided it must be a wolverine as it travelled quite fast and as soon as I made toward it, it headed for a large slough full of cattails but little water. I am completely familiar with beaver and am practically sure that the animal was not a beaver but as I have lived here for 53 years of my grown life and have never seen or heard of a wolverine in the vicinity, I didn't tell many people of my sighting.

Now I find that a neighbour, Fred Gravener, was driving at night about the same date and saw an animal he took for a wolverine on the road, an animal which travelled quite fast. The animal I saw had a peculiar galloping gait and a high or arched back. These two unrelated incidents make me about 95 per cent sure that I had, indeed, seen a wolverine. If so, it is about 300 miles away from its usual haunt.

I hope that the animal may reach Moose Mountain Park (about 20 miles away), a spot where it possibly can survive.

If any other people have seen such an animal, I should be glad to hear from them.—*G. M. Hewson, Langbank.*

THIRTEEN-LINED GROUND SQUIRREL

On June 19, 1972 I observed something I had never seen before — a female thirteen-lined ground squirrel (of which we have quite a number around) moving her young. She would dash around to the back of the house and in a minute or two return carrying her baby by the neck. I watched as she brought five babies and deposited them down a hole just in front of the house. Later I went to

look at the hole and had difficulty finding it as she had filled it in and even had cleverly placed grass across it. The babies were about three to four inches long and already had the stripes in their fur. I thought it all very interesting.

I enjoyed the summer meet at the Battlefords and only wish that there were two of these outings a year.—*Mrs. Ivy Schwartz, Melfort.*

OSPREY CONFERENCE

A first conference on the status of the North American Osprey was held in mid-February at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, where Dr. Mitchell A. Byrd, head of the Biology Department, presided as host and resident chairman. The speakers were all concerned and active workers in osprey survival studies. Their ranks revealed a wide spectrum of backgrounds and occupations, reflecting governmental, scholastic, amateur and professional interest.

At the conclusions of the sessions, the participants elected an American Osprey Committee from five general regions of the United States to publish the proceedings; to implement the aims and activities of the group; to seek Federal cooperation in promotion of direct and indirect protective measures for the species; and to stand to serve in an advisory capacity to the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife with respect to future work on this species. It is expected that at a later date two representatives from Canada will be invited to serve, as well.

Individuals or institutions wishing to receive a copy of the paper-bound, published *Proceedings of the First North American Osprey Research Conference* may do so by writing to Dr. M. A. Byrd, Dept. of Biology, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va. 23185. Sale price is expected to be no more than \$2.00. Requests of copies need not be accompanied by prepayment.—*G. F. Fernandez, Box 53, Dartmouth, Mass.*

POPULATION POLICY

The following quotation from Robert Audry was printed, page 241, October, 1972, *Reader's Digest*. "If our most treasured democratic institutions are to be preserved . . . then birth control must be compulsory. As one man, poor or rich, cannot be granted the privilege of more than one vote, as one man, of whatever status, cannot be granted the privilege of driving through a red light at 70 m.p.h., as one man cannot be sent to prison for a crime for which another man is free, so one human being cannot be granted the privilege of burdening society with more than a fair share of young." This is exactly what I would like to have said at the Annual Meeting when we were debating the resolution on a Canadian population policy. Please reprint the quotation in the next *Blue Jay*.—*Hazel Paton, Oxbow, Saskatchewan.*

SNOWMOBILES

Ed. Note: The following is a copy of a letter sent November 7, 1972 to Hon. T. Bowerman, Minister of Natural Resources, Administration Building, Regina. Mr. Schondelmeier has taken a strong stand against harassment of wildlife by snowmobilers.

Dear Sir:

Last winter I wrote to the Dept. of Natural Resources regarding hunting with snowmobiles, but did not get much satisfaction. I think most people in Saskatchewan are opposed to this practice but still it continues. As it is now almost anyone can go to the R.M. and get a permit to hunt foxes and coyotes by snowmobile, the result being that during the winter wildlife just has no place to go anymore. Any land with a few bluffs on it is being criss-crossed hundreds of times during the winter driving all wildlife out into the open.

Around here there are usually three or four snowmobiles in a group and any fox or coyote they see just hasn't a chance in the world. And, of course, every fence they come to is

usually cut or put down too. Before permits were issued these people had a little respect for private property, but now armed with a permit they seem to think they have the right to go anywhere.

I've been farming here for 25 years and have yet to lose a chicken to foxes or coyotes, and we've had as many as three dens of foxes within half a mile of the yard. If they do become so numerous as to cause problems, they can always be shot, so there's no need to run them down with machines.

Last winter the coyotes and foxes were hunted almost to extinction around here, the result being that this summer we had more mice and pocket gophers than ever before. Now, I'm not against hunting, but using high speed machines to run animals down is something that should be discouraged. Instead of permits being issued, heavy fines should be imposed on the offenders.

I certainly hope that something will be done to stop this senseless method of hunting.

Yours truly,
A. Schondelmeier

CORRECTION

Two errors appear on page 111 in the June 1972 *Blue Jay* in my article "Sound production in the courtships of two Lycopsid spiders." The caption for Fig. 2 should read, *Schizocosa avida*. A single strum. 10msec. per square. The caption for Fig. 3 should be *Tarentula aculeata*. Two consecutive impacts of spider's abdomen on substratum. 50 msec. per square.—*Donald J. Buckle, 2010 Lorne Ave., Saskatoon.*

NEST RECORD CARDS

Please send 1972 Prairie Nest Record Cards in to Mr. H. W. R. Copland, Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, 190 Rupert Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 0N2, as soon as possible. A report for 1972 can then be prepared.

MISSING DOCUMENTS

The Historical Branch of the City of Edmonton Parks and Recreation Department has been researching information about the Hudson's Bay Company, Fort Edmonton as it was during the 1840's, in preparation for an authentic reconstruction of the post. Much of our knowledge of this fort in the 19th century is derived from Fort Edmonton Journals of Daily Occurrences which are now in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives. Unfortunately, all of the Journals between the years 1834 and 1854 are missing, but it is possible that they still exist somewhere, perhaps in a private collection.

If any readers have information concerning the whereabouts of these missing journals, we would sincerely appreciate hearing from them.—*Doug Babcock*, The Historical Exhibits Building 10105-112 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5G 0H1.

CANVASBACK

The United States Department of the Interior News Release of August 31, 1972, explains that the complete closure of the Canvasback hunting season in the United States in 1972 is due to the precipitous population decline from about 2,000,000 in the late 1950's to fewer than 1,000,000 now.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has allotted \$200,000 to an expanded research program on Canvasbacks which will attempt to determine the reasons for the population decline. The release claims that the decline has taken place despite improved habitat conditions in the prairie pothole region of Canada where the majority of the Canvasback breed. They will, therefore, look for causes elsewhere, but under the circumstances Canadians should certainly examine the availability and health of Canvasback habitat.

Since there are fewer than 1,000,000 Canvasback and since there are nearly 3,000,000 waterfowl hunters in the United States, it is obvious that there must be strict control of hunting and that the same closure should apply in Canada.—Editor.

December, 1972

1972 CONSERVATION AWARD

At the SNHS annual meeting in Regina, October 14, 1972, the president, Mr. J. A. Wedgwood, presented the 1972 Conservation Award to Miss Christine Pike of Waseca, Saskatchewan. The society's conservation award is "presented annually to a person who has made a significant contribution to conservation in the province of Saskatchewan."

Miss Pike, since girlhood, has envisioned Big Gully Creek at its confluence with the valley of the North Saskatchewan River as a place of wild natural beauty which should be retained forever. For years she has pressed towards her goal—a sanctuary on Big Gully Creek. The society now has a lease on Big Gully Creek, but this is only the first stage, for our lease guarantees that the area will be preserved in its natural state only while we hold the lease. The final dream will be realized when Miss Pike obtains complete sanctuary status for the area.

CLIFF SHAW AWARD

Each year since the death of Cliff Shaw in 1959 the SNHS has given the Cliff Shaw Award to the person or persons contributing the best item to the *Blue Jay* since the preceding annual meeting. This year the award was presented to Harold W. Pinel and Clifford A. Wallis, University students at the University of Calgary. In the March, 1972, *Blue Jay* they had reported an "Unusual nesting record of Red-tailed Hawk in southern Alberta" and in the September issue had contributed a 26-page report—"A botanical investigation in the Drumheller area, Alberta." In presenting the award to Clifford Wallis who had attended the annual meeting the editor thanked the two recipients of the award for the excellently prepared papers which they had contributed to the *Blue Jay*. The editor praised Pinel and Wallis for their wide interest in natural history and expressed the hope that the *Blue Jay* would continue to receive the results of serious studies from them.