

Ed. note: Buffalo Coulee, near Superb, Saskatchewan, was thus the third last nesting site of the Whooping Crane in Canada. Another nest was found about 10 miles to the northeast in the following year, May 19, 1922, by Neil Gilmour, and another some 30 or 35 miles NNE on May 28 - June 1, 1922, at Muddy Lake, 7 miles south of Unity, with one egg and one young collected. These were the last nests recorded until the discovery by W. A. Fuller, in

1954, of the Wood Buffalo Park nesting grounds.

We should like to suggest that the government prepare a sanctuary in one of the above areas, probably Muddy Lake, where in years to come some of the captive birds now being raised at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center might be released into the wild in order to reestablish themselves in their natural environment.

EARLY WHOOPING CRANE NEST RECORDS NEAR YORKTON, SASKATCHEWAN

by **C. Stuart Houston**, 863 University Drive, Saskatoon

Whooping Crane observations from 1890 to 1942 were given in my report on the birds of the Yorkton district, Saskatchewan (*Can. Field-Nat.*, 63: 215-241, 1949), though nesting information was not cited.

R. P. Allen's comprehensive monograph on the Whooping Crane (Research Rep. No. 3, Natl. Audubon Soc., New York, 1952) listed seven Saskatchewan nest records: Moose Mountain, 1881; Battleford, 1884; Yorkton, 1900; north of Davidson, 1911; Bradwell, 1912; Baliol, 1922; and Muddy Lake near Unity, 1922.

The Yorkton record was substantiated by two eggs in the Thayer Collection, now in the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. I wrote to James C. Greenway, Jr., Curator of Birds, and his reply of April 7, 1954 stated that the label read as follows:

"From the Oological Coll. Walter Raine, Toronto, Canada, Yorkton, No. Assiniboia, 16 May 1900. 2 eggs (Fresh). Collector: Cowboy Brown.

"Nest: a mass of marsh hay on the prairie 3 feet in diameter, birds very wary, collector Cowboy Brown."

Greenway stated that these eggs could not be differentiated with certainty from eggs of the Sandhill Crane.

Enquiries to museums in eastern Canada and old-timers in the Yorkton area were made but the identity of "Cowboy Brown" was not established.

Further information concerning the probable nesting of Whooping Cranes in the Yorkton area was obtained from the Fernie brothers, both of whom farmed near Springside. About 1955, William Fernie told Cliff Shaw how he had settled first in the Wallace district northeast of Yorkton in 1883 and then moved to Springside in 1889. The last Whooping Crane Fernie had seen was a single young bird at Horseshoe Lake, "the year that Donald Gunn was flooded out." Several years prior to this, no doubt in the 1890's, Fernie had seen a Whooping Crane nest with two white eggs on top of a muskrat house on "Battersby's Lake" later known as "Scheller's Slough", between the old J. Carson ranch and Horseshoe Lake, on section 25, township 28, range 5, six miles west of Gorlitz.

In addition, William Fernie told Cliff Shaw that in the spring the "whoop" call of the Whooping Crane could "be heard for five miles on a quiet morning." He saw no more than three birds together at any time, whereas Sandhill Cranes were much commoner and the Indians often made a meal of "a pot of potatoes and a young sandhill."

In late 1958, when Cliff Shaw gave me the notes of his interview with

William Fernie, I tried to contact Mr. Fernie, only to learn that he had died in December, 1956. However, his brother, Peter E. Fernie, wrote to me on December 2, 1958 and I visited him on September 25, 1959, when he was 77 years of age. Peter Fernie settled first in the Rhein district northeast of Yorkton in 1885 and then moved to the Springside district in 1894. He told me that he had seen only four Whooping Cranes in his lifetime. They were very shy birds, but one year near 1900 a pair resided all summer in the "Fernie meadow", where a ridge runs out into a big marsh, adjacent to Cussed Creek, four miles west and one mile south of the present village of Springside. He saw the cranes dance and heard them "whoop", and they laid a single, large, dirty white egg on a muskrat house. He said that Sandhill Cranes were scattered throughout the countryside then, and that he had once found two Sandhill Crane nests in the same meadow. This locality is southwest of Springside, whereas that described by William Fernie was northeast of Springside.

Unfortunately, our most reliable

source of information for the Horseshoe Lake area, the late John A. Gunn, was too young to be out searching for crane nests in 1890. Born in August, 1883 near Fort Qu'Appelle, he was the son of the Donald Gunn mentioned above, and the grandson of the famous Donald Gunn who kept meteorological observations and who collected natural history specimens for the Smithsonian Institute, at the Red River settlement in Manitoba in the 1850's and 1860's.

The Gunns cut hay along the west side of Horseshoe Lake and John, though not quite seven years old, remembered seeing Whooping Cranes there about the spring of 1890. Sandhill Cranes remained common each summer until about 1896, and he too, found a nest of this species, but Whooping Cranes were not sighted again by the Gunns. Donald Gunn, Jr., left about 1902 and John died August 12, 1947, but John's wife and daughter Joyce (now Mrs. William Anaka), are still active members of our society and continue to live at their home which is located within a recent extension of Good Spirit Provincial Park.

SIGHTING OF BAND-TAILED PIGEON IN SOUTH-CENTRAL ALBERTA

by **A. E. Barnard**, 934 Odlin Rd., Richmond, B.C.

On July 10, 1971 the writer and Mr. Kim Hodson were conducting raptor research for the Canadian Wildlife Service in the Hanna area of south-central Alberta. While driving north on Hwy. 36, approximately 1½ miles north of the Sheerness turn-off, we observed a large pigeon-like bird flush from the shoulder of the highway and fly to a fence-post, on which it landed. Using 7 x 35 binoculars, the following physical characteristics of the bird were noted:

- a) general morphology of the domestic Pigeon (*Columba livia*).
- b) bright yellow bill with a black tip.
- c) bright yellow feet and legs.
- d) metallic - greenish nape bordered posteriorly by a white semi-collar.

- e) rosy-hued breast and sides.
- f) grey back and tail.
- g) squarish tail.

All of these are described (Peterson, 1961; Godfrey, 1966) as diagnostic characters of the Band-tailed Pigeon (*Columba fasciata*). The development of the plumage indicated that it was an adult of this species (G. L. March, personal communication).

Although I was unable to collect or photograph this specimen, there is no doubt on the part of Mr. Hodson or myself as to the validity of this sighting. Both of us normally reside in the Band-tail's recognized range, Mr. Hodson on southern Vancouver Island, and I on the outskirts of Vancouver. Consequently, both of us have the