

30 Years Ago

Some excerpts from the mimeographed Oct.-Nov.-Dec., 1944 *Blue Jay*:

"As soon as gasoline becomes more plentiful, people will be flocking to the most remote corners of the dominion and, unless it can be impressed on the great mass of the public that they, and they alone, are responsible for preserving the beauty of the out of doors, the outlook is indeed a sorry one." Isabel Priestly.

The annual meeting of the Yorkton Natural History Society passed a vote of appreciation to Mrs. Priestly and Stuart Houston for their untiring efforts in the Production of the "Blue Jay".

"A conservation project which might be an example to Saskatchewan people was undertaken by an Ontario farm woman. Due to overpicking, the trilliums, those aristocrats of the woods, seemed in danger of practically dying out. So this purposeful woman decided to do something about it. She made a flower sanctuary of their woodlot and now, after her program of conservation has had a chance to show results, the woodlot is a showplace in springtime — a place of beauty and delight where visitors are welcome to look but not to pick."

"Eastern Bluebirds, the darker bluebirds with the chestnut breast, are less familiar in Saskatchewan than Mountain Bluebirds, so it was interesting to hear of two nesting records this year. One came from the farm of John Hubbard, Jr., Grenfell. Towards the end of June a pair of these birds were noticed investigating a granary in the yard, so Mr. Hubbard promptly fixed a cardboard box on the inside wall over a hole made by woodpeckers the previous winter. In the cardboard box the bluebirds raised their family . . . The other nest, also a late one, was reported by Mrs. Marion Nixon, Wauchope, in her nature column in the Saskatchewan Farmer. This nest was placed about a foot down in a hollow

post and was open to the sky which is unusual."

"Mrs. J. Meekma, Yorkton, had an unusual problem on her hands this summer. A neighbor's bees acquired the habit of congregating during the hot weather on the sides of her bird bath, even completely covering the stones in the middle as well. Her regular visitors — orioles, yellow warblers and so on — scolded long and loud so that she was obliged to place other shallow pans of water on the grass for them."

"A black 'gopher' (Richardson's Ground Squirrel) was caught by Frank Baines, Saltcoats, the end of July and forwarded to the Provincial Museum. The back of the animal was a rich glossy black and the rest of the body was darkly grizzled."

"A. O. Ascim, Love, . . . is of the opinion that an enthusiastic butterfly collector has every thrill in making his catches that the fisherman or hunter enjoys and at a cost small in comparison with other hobbies!"

"M. G. Street, Nipawin, who sent in a detailed report of his records this year, states: 'Mourning Doves this year have probably increased more in the Nipawin district than any other species with the exception of the Barn Swallow. They were quite rare less than ten years ago but now can be heard calling everywhere in spring and early summer.'"

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

In this issue of the *Blue Jay* you will have noticed a renewal form for your use for the coming year. Every year we spend a considerable amount of your money on postage and stationery in an effort to induce people to renew their memberships. If you will remove and complete this renewal form and mail to me NOW our expenses will

be reduced when it becomes necessary to invoice delinquent members next January and February.

Thank you,
George Dodd,
Treasurer.

TO THE ARCTIC BY CANOE 1819 - 1821

Stuart Houston has edited a 150-year-old manuscript of an important exploration across the northern Prairie Provinces and Northwest Territories. It has just been published under the title of "*To the Arctic by canoe, 1819-1821. The journal and paintings of Robert Hood, midshipman with Franklin.*" The story of this expedition from Hudson Bay to Bathurst Inlet by way of the Hayes, Saskatchewan, Churchill, Slave, Yellowknife and Coppermine rivers occupies 150 pages. Stuart has added 65 pages of explanatory text. There are 16 coloured and 10 black-and-white plates and 5 maps — each a full page in size. The format is large — 7-1/2" x 11" — and it is a handsome book for \$17.50. Now that you have decided to buy one for yourself or as a Christmas gift, please purchase your copy — autographed — through the *Blue Jay* Bookshop, Box 1121, Regina, Saskatchewan, S4P 3B4. In addition to several dollars profit that a store would otherwise get, SNHS also receives Stuart's royalties on all copies they sell.

1974 CLIFF SHAW AWARD

The Cliff Shaw Award for the best article in the last four issues of the *Blue Jay* is being given jointly to two people in 1974: William Niven and Robert Page.

William Niven has been a keen observer of birds around Sheho, Saskatchewan, since about 1920. In his article "The land, the birds through 50 years in aspen parkland", he gives us a rare and valuable account of changes in bird populations associated with agricultural development. To find that some species have arrived to enrich Saskatchewan's fauna during that

period is a pleasant surprise in view of the threat to other species in more recent years.

Robert Page of Winnipeg has maintained a generally thankless crusade for the cause of predators for several years. Unlike many people, whose concern for animals is too often exceeded by their lethargy, Mr. Page has used his pen extensively, at considerable expense to himself in time and money, to try to effect change. His article, "Do predators have rights" brought letters of protest to the Saskatchewan Government from both Canada and the United States.

We are grateful to these two men and hope that their efforts will prompt other members of the Society to commit their stories to writing for the benefit of all of us.

1974 CONSERVATION AWARD

The 1974 Conservation Award of SNHS was awarded to the Saskatoon Resources Study Group at the Annual Meeting. In presenting the award, Dr. Stuart Houston cited the Group's report on the Saskatchewan forest industry and their publication of a tabloid on the grassland park. The report on the Prince Albert pulp mill had a part in changing the design of the mill, thus reducing pollution of the North Saskatchewan River. The Group was formed in 1970 and all the officers have been University of Saskatchewan students from a number of colleges.



Marie Jaseniuk receiving Conservation Award from Stuart Houston.