

# Letters

## *GREATER PRAIRIE CHICKEN*

The article on "Settlements of the Grasslands and the Greater Prairie Chicken" has raised some questions for me because it stated that this bird required tall, ungrazed grass. We lived on the short grass prairie, 4-1/2 miles south and west of Snipe Lake, Sask., until 1926. We were around 9 miles as the crow flies north of the South Saskatchewan River, approximately T25, R22, W3rd.

We rode broncs to school, to round up our small herd of cows and the larger herd of horses that grazed on unbroken prairie at various times of the year (the cows when there was someone to keep an eye on them and the horses in spring, fall and winter).

There is one unprepossessing characteristic of a bronc — it never goes over anything it can go around, and it can sidestep faster than a tap-dancer. So frequently the more amateurish riders found themselves preceding their bronc or clinging to its ears as it stopped, sidestepped, and went ahead again to avoid gopher and badger holes, rocks and exploding Prairie Chicken. This was rolling country and we never saw the chickens until they took off with a whirr, frequently right under our pony's nose. The grass was very short but the chickens were able to hide in the slightly longer grass (4-6 inches probably) in the hollows.

They were still there when we left the area in 1926, but the country was being broken up rapidly then. It was more than 50% cultivated when we left. Maybe these birds did not breed in our area but came in after nesting as I never saw a nest and do not remember my father mentioning one and he didn't miss too much in the way of bird life. — *Mrs. John Hubbard*, Box 453, Grenfell, Sask. S0G 2B0.



Prairie Chicken calling. Fred Lahrman

## *ALBINO EVENING GROSBEAK AND SUMMER SNOW BUNTINGS*

In late afternoon of February 9, 1976 Erling Glodes of Red Deer, Alberta, spotted an albino Evening Grosbeak at the Red Deer College Park in a flock of 75 to 80 grosbeaks. Mr. Glodes said he and his neighbours feed the grosbeaks every day but this was the first time he'd seen an albino grosbeak in the 18 years he had lived here. The bird was described as white with yellowish wings.

In July, 1975, I saw an unexpected sight: two Snow Buntings. They seemed different to me because of the white colour, black on back and dark sooty markings on the tail feathers. I got out my field guide and identified them as Snow Buntings in their summer plumage. These birds have never before been seen this far south of the Northwest Territories between April 30 and September 15. Then after the 15th of September they are plentiful until March and are gone by April 30. — *Helge S. Abrahamson*, Box 268, Sylvan Lake, Alberta. T0M 1Z0.



## HUMMINGBERRY

About August 5, 1976, my husband offered to go and pick the raspberries for me. I accepted quickly, as I was very busy with peas, beans, etc. We just have one row of raspberries and it is quite usual to see a "big one" you missed while picking on the other side. This was what happened. He saw a nice red berry; when he was going to reach his hand through, he noticed the leaves were gently moving, so he stayed quiet and tried to see why. It was a hummingbird hovering! Its beak was in a raspberry, apparently getting the juice, so my husband waited until the bird flew away. We were interested to know what it was doing so the place was marked. While the raspberry still remained on its stem, it just dried up completely. We have had quite a few hummingbirds around here but the last couple of years, haven't noticed any, until this one. Is this something dif-



Ruby-throated Hummingbird. R. J. Long

ferent? It's just that we haven't seen it before. — Mrs. Fred J. Webb, Box 7, Pangman, Saskatchewan, S0C 2C0.



## LOOKING BACK

This time it's for real! I am resigning as editor of the *Blue Jay*. In so doing, I want to thank the many people whose help over the last 4 years has resulted in 16 issues appearing. First and foremost there were more than 200 authors of articles, notes, letters and book reviews. At the same time I offer my apologies to those whose articles appeared late or not quite as they expected them. My thanks also to the many photographers who have supplied slides and photographs and for being patient through lengthy delays in my returning their material. Betty Carney of the Saskatoon Public Library kindly arranged for staff members — Muriel Dickson, Muriel Clancy, Diane Weir, Diane Sarich, Sheila Purse and Ron Jaremko — to provide annotated lists of some 400 books. Once all this material was in, it was reviewed by specialists in their respective fields, Robert Nero, Vern Harms, Ed Driver, Merv Atton, Ron Hooper, Stan Rowe and Dick Fyfe. Their conscientious work has been much appreciated. Galleys have been read by Bill Richards and Molly Denson for the 4 years; other proof readers, who always worked on short notice, have been Thelma Pepper, Jean Meston, Pat Adams, Sandie Shaver and Mark Abley. Pasteups of galleys into *Blue Jay* pages have been done by Gary Seib, Ann Jeffries and Ed Driver. Throughout my editorship Lorne Scott and his assistants in Regina have handled the mailing of each issue. Stuart Houston and Jim Wedgwood have helped in other ways. Charlie Martin, Harold Mitchelmore and John Oliver at Midwest Litho, the printers, have always been helpful and patient with us. To all of these hard-working volunteers, my thanks.

Gary Seib is the new editor and I can assure past and future authors that he will give them better treatment than they received from me. — Bernie Gollop.

