

Special thanks go to John Worthington, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, for assistance during several aerial surveys. We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Cliff Matthews, Canadian Wildlife Service, Ross Hanson, U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, and Wayne Renaud who were instrumental in our discovery of the Trumpeter breeding area in west-central Saskatchewan.

¹BANKO, W. E. 1960. *The Trumpeter Swan*. North American fauna, 63, U.S. Dept. Interior, Washington. 214 pp.

²BANKO, W. E. and R. H. MacKAY. 1964. *Our native swans*. In *Waterfowl Tomorrow*. U.S. Dept. of Interior, Washington. 770 pp.

³BARD, F. C. 1953. *The Trumpeter Swan*. *Blue Jay*, 11:26-27.

⁴DELACOUR, J. 1954. *The waterfowl of the world*. Vol. 1. Country Life Ltd., London. 284 pp.

⁵EVENDEN, F. G. 1969. *Report of Committee on Conservation, 1969*. *Auk*, 86:738-744.

⁶LAHRMAN, F. W. 1961. *A second pair of Trumpeter Swans nesting in Saskatchewan*. *Blue Jay*, 19:18-19.

⁷LISTER, R. 1951. *Trumpeter Swans breeding in the Cypress Hills of Alberta*. *Can. Field-Nat.*, 65:157-158.

⁸MORRIS, W. A. 1971. *Birds of British Columbia*. In *Canadian Wildlife Service '71*. Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa. 88 pp.

⁹MUNRO, D. A. 1962. *Trumpeter Swans*. *Canadian Audubon*, 24:65-69.

¹⁰NIEMAN, D. J. 1971. *A proposed plan for management of the Cypress Hills Trumpeter Swans*. Unpublished report, Canadian Wildlife Service. 8 pp.

¹¹NIEMAN, D. J. 1972. *Cypress Hills, Saskatchewan, Trumpeter Swans*. Proceedings Second Trumpeter Swan Society Conference, Grande Prairie, Alberta. pp. 27-28.

¹²NIEMAN, D. J. 1972. *Trumpeter Swans in the Cypress Hills*. *Blue Jay*, Vol. XXX No. 2.

¹³SYMONS, R. D. 1967. *Hours and the birds*. Univ. of Toronto Press, Toronto. 224 pp.

¹⁴TAVERNER, P. A. 1949. *Birds of Canada*. The Musson Book Co. Ltd., Toronto. 447 pp.

MORE HUDSONIAN GODWITS IN SASKATCHEWAN

by WAYNE C. HARRIS*

The Hudsonian Godwit has been considered an uncommon migrant in Saskatchewan. Until 1969 it was listed in the Red Data Book as being a rare species.³ Even before they were removed from the rare and endangered species list, Hudsonian Godwits migrated through Saskatchewan, but always in small numbers and infrequently. Most previous dates are of

spring migrants. Fall migrants were considered rare. In fact, until 1970 numbers of Hudsonian Godwits over a flock of 15 had not been reported during fall migration. In 1970 and 1971 Gollop reported concentrations of Hudsonian Godwits for July and August and summarized all previous fall records from the Prairie Provinces to central Texas.¹ The following note reports more recent fall observations of Hudsonian Godwits in Saskatchewan.

Box 93,
Raymore, Sask.
S0A 3J0



Hudsonian Godwits

Fred W. Lahrma

In 1972 concentrations were not so spectacular as in 1971. On July 20, J. B. Gollop counted 89 Hudsonian Godwits with 122 Marbled Godwits on Porter Lake (11 miles east-northeast of Saskatoon) and on August 20, Wayne Renaud counted 67 Hudsonian Godwits with 176 Marbled at the same locality.

In 1973, numbers reached the highest ever on Porter Lake. The author and V. J. Lieffers counted $850 \pm$ Hudsonian Godwits with about 200 Marbled Godwits, on July 6. By July 9 their numbers had increased to $1,150 \pm$ individuals. On July 14, in the early morning, Gollop counted 133 Hudsonian with 36 Marbled, but by mid-afternoon of the same day numbers had jumped to more than 600 when counted by S. J. Shadick. Shadick visited Porter Lake again on July 18 and estimated 300 remaining Hudsonian Godwits. On July 22, Gollop counted $120 \pm$ with $45 \pm$ Marbled Godwits. By this time the lake was almost-dry. The godwits were last seen here on July 24 when the author, D. G. Hjertaas and J. E. Polson counted 111 Hudsonian with 30 Marbled. On July 28, Porter Lake was completely dry and no godwits remained.

Until 1973, Porter Lake was the only area in the entire Great Plains region (Saskatchewan to Texas) where

over 50 Hudsonian Godwits had been seen and reported. This concentration on a single area is amazing; did all of the godwits migrating from the arctic breeding grounds via the "plain route" find this area? Only an occasional bird or more infrequently a flock of 20 was recorded anywhere else on the Great Plains. In 1973, for the first time, numbers of Hudsonian Godwits were reported elsewhere than at Porter Lake.

At Foam Lake (approximately 12 miles east of Porter Lake), on the evening of July 17, a flock of 135 Hudsonian Godwits, associated with 30 Marbled, were counted by the author and V. J. Lieffers while employed by the Canadian Wildlife Service. Just a few hours earlier this particular flat had not a single godwit. By mid-morning of the next day their number had risen to 394 with about 70 Marbled.² They then left the area and no further observations were made.

On July 28, 1973, the author and Wayne Renaud found a loose flock of 78 Hudsonian Godwits with 45 Marbled, on a small lake, locally called Catherwood Lake, approximately 50 miles south of Perdue (approximately 50 miles west of Porter Lake). The next day 4 Hudsonians with 5 Marbled Godwits and 5 Long-billed Curlews were seen on Vanscoy Lake near Perdue.

Other observations of Hudsonian Godwits during 1973 included 12 with 30 Marbled counted by Gollop at Blucher (about 15 miles south-southeast of Porter Lake) on July 28 and 7 on August 3, again at Blucher. The author also saw a single bird at St. Denis (10 miles east of Porter Lake) on August 21.

The peak in godwit numbers at Porter Lake seemed to be on or around July 9. After this date a steady decrease occurred. At the same time smaller concentrations began appearing at other locations. Were the birds at Porter Lake dispersing to other locations? If this were true, several interesting questions arise: 1) Why did they disperse in several directions instead of all going approximately the same direction as they apparently had done in coming to Porter Lake? 2) Why did they not continue southward?

Another interesting point arises when considering the July 14 counts at Porter Lake; in the early morning only 133 Hudsonian Godwits were observed compared to more than 600 in the afternoon. This seems to indicate that more birds had arrived in the area presumably from the north. If this were true, then migration was still under way and flocks seen at other locations could easily have been new migrants. The fact that godwits were at the same latitude and 175 miles apart (Perdue to Foam Lake) seems to favour the theory that these birds were new migrants rather than birds dispersing from Porter Lake.

If so, then the number of birds migrating through Saskatchewan, in 1973, numbered over 2000. This probably represents approximately 1% of the estimated population of Hudsonian Godwits in North America.

A. Hagar in a letter to J. B. Gollop, dated August 10, 1971, estimated the total population of Hudsonian God-

wits at 30,000 absolute minimum, more probably 40,000 to 50,000 individuals.

The habitat used by these birds appears to be extremely variable. Gollop described Porter Lake as "an alkali flat about two miles long and averaging less than half a mile in width. It does not always have water through August . . . The lake is more than 99% devoid of emergent (and probably submergent) vegetation".¹ It is an example of an extremely alkaline lake. Catherwood Lake is much less alkaline. It is about 2 miles long and averages about 500 yards in width. The dominant vegetation was Water Milfoil (*Myriophyllum exalbescens*). The water was very shallow and the milfoil was a mat in both water and along the shore. Foam Lake, on the other hand, is entirely different. It is a large lake (approximately 15 square miles) choked with cattail (*Typha latifolia*) and bulrush (*Scirpus spp.*), with the deeper, centre portion being open water. It has a very low salinity. The site where the godwits were found was again a flat open area, the only one on the lake. It was about 1-1/2 acres in size and had been formed by a mound of dirt pushed up to form a dike between this area and the main lake in a year of low water. When water levels are normal this pond is part of the lake. This year by mid-July it contained water about 6 inches deep at its deepest point. The dominant vegetation in this small area was Needle Spike-rush (*Eleocharis acicularis*) which formed a mat both under water and on the shoreline. This diversity of habitat suggests that habitat is not likely the only factor determining where godwits stop. Why they are not seen elsewhere in fall between here and Texas is a good question. Possibly they do stop at other small lakes on the plains which are not frequented by competent observers at the appropriate time.

I would like to thank C. S. Houston and W. E. Renaud for their comments on the manuscript, the Canadian Wildlife Service for permission to use data collected during the past summer and J. B. Gollop for his assistance in obtaining data.

¹GOLLOP J. B. 1971. *Summer records of Hudsonian Godwits near Saskatoon, Saskatchewan*. Blue Jay 29(3):132-134.

²HARRIS W. C. and V. J. LIEFFERS. 1972. *Foam Lake — natural history notes and species lists*. Canadian Wildlife Service Unpublished Report. 21 pp.

³VINCENT J. 1966. *Red Data Book, Volume 1. The Aves*. International Union For Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

ROCK WREN AT SPRAGUE, MANITOBA

by DAVID R. M. HATCH and HERBERT W. R. COPLAND*

On the morning of October 11, 1972, a Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature field party consisting of Dr. Robert Wrigley, Jack Dubois, Calvin Cuthbert and the authors identified a Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) at the farmhouse of Dr. George Lammers, 9 miles north of Sprague, Manitoba. The junior author's attention was attracted by the melodious song, which was unfamiliar to him, however he did not locate the bird. Approximately one hour later Cuthbert observed the bird and called the authors. The bird was wary but reluctant to leave the immediate locale of the farm buildings. Cuthbert and the authors, using binoculars and a telescope obtained excellent observations of the wren and the following details were noted. The bird was the size of a White-breasted Nuthatch. The tail, which was finely barred with grey and brown throughout its length, had a broad terminal band of black, bordered on the

outside by orange buff. Besides the key distinguishing feature, the rump was rusty, the breast finely streaked, the crown and back grey-brown and the bill about 1/2 inch long and curved slightly downward.

The bird kept returning to a pile of scrap lumber; however, it also frequented a derelict binder and two deserted buildings. All five observers had the bird under observation and were able to verify details. The senior author was previously familiar with the species having observed Rock Wrens in Saskatchewan and the western United States. The bird, being seen so far east of its normal range and at such a late date, was collected to substantiate the presence of the species in the province and is specimen NMMN 3236 in the study skin collection of the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature. It proved to be an adult male. Godfrey in listing the extralimital records for this species in Canada gave Churchill as the most easterly record.³ Since this publication, there have been two C

*Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature,
190 Rupert Avenue,
Winnipeg, Manitoba.
R3B 0N2