

NERO TRIBUTE

It was with great interest that I read the tribute in the recent *Blue Jay* thanking Bob Nero for his many contributions to the Saskatchewan Natural History Society on the occasion of his resignation from the editorial staff of the *Blue Jay*.

While I echo the sentiments expressed in the article, I feel it missed commenting on one of his most important contributions to the fostering of natural history in the prairie region, a contribution that affected me directly. I refer to the support and encouragement that Bob has consistently given to young people who had a strong interest in natural history, but who required a certain degree of help and direction. Bob was never too busy to talk to, or correspond with, such "high-school naturalists" and provided many of them with employment and practical experience in ornithology. As a direct consequence of Bob's enthusiasm, a number of these people are currently pursuing careers in biology or other such areas of natural history, many of them on the prairies. — *M. Ross Lein*, Asst. Professor of Biology, The University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4

EVENING GROSBEAKS

We are greatly impressed with the *Blue Jay* and enjoy reading the varied articles. Being an amateur bird watcher of many years, I find the bird photographs and information especially interesting.

We have had a large flock of Evening Grosbeaks here since January 19, feeding on the sunflower heads in the back garden and a head tied to a pole in the front yard. In less than two months they have eaten 50 lbs. of purchased sunflower seeds from the two feeders set up. They have become quite tame; we can go in and out of the back door quietly and not disturb them feeding 15 feet away at the feeder. When the feeder is empty they are quite vocal in their protests!



Evening Grosbeak

J. B. Gollop

A pair of Downy Woodpeckers and a pair of chickadees have eaten suet tied to the feeder poles from January till now (March 23). The woodpeckers will feed while the grosbeaks feed at the feeders but the chickadees are not as bold; they wait until they leave.

Evening Grosbeaks have never stayed around more than two or three days before. They used to come, stay a day or so and then leave; but with ready food so available, this must be the reason for their stay. There are several other feeding places in town now for them, and they are giving a lot of enjoyment to all. — *Mrs. Arley Nickel*, Box 84, Laird, Saskatchewan S0K 2H0

NOTE: re: A. Didiuk's article "Whooping Cranes in Manitoba", condensed from *Manitoba Nature* (*Blue Jay* 34:234-236), the author is prepared to modify his statement about Whooping Cranes nesting outside the park to say that, although the possibility exists, those breeding in areas presently unknown are not contributing to the population.

PRAIRIE CHICKENS IN THE 1920's

In the week of March 1, 1977, I visited a friend in Toledo, Ohio, on the extreme west part of Lake Erie. While there I met Lee Herzberger from a nearby National Wildlife Refuge. For two years Lee had been in charge of the Greater Prairie Chicken or Pinnated Grouse project in Texas. They were on the endangered list but lately have increased to the point where they are not so considered. I was very interested because the Greater Prairie Chicken was quite common when I first came to Canada in 1919. At sunrise on a calm April or May morning I would hear their boom, boom noise on the dancing ground. By 1928 they had disappeared from our area which is about 15 miles north of the Moose Mountains.

In the *Blue Jay* there have been occasional reports of them. It would give me great pleasure to hear of breeding stock still in Saskatchewan. — G. M. Hewson, Langbank, Saskatchewan.

HIGH FLYING SNOWY OWL

I am not sure if it is generally known that Snowy Owls may migrate at a great height. Usually they are seen perched on a telephone pole on the ground or flying low.

On March 20, 1977, at approximately 1100 I noticed the Canada Geese on Wascana Lake in Regina, looking at something in the sky. I looked and looked and with some difficulty finally saw a white speck high up and almost directly overhead. With the aid of 7X binoculars, I could see it was a Snowy Owl.

It was soaring or gliding in great sweeping circles when first seen, but then it flew in a northeasterly direction, alternately gliding and flapping as it went. — Fred W. Lahrman, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, Regina.



Snowy Owl

R. J. Lo