

as informed me that to his knowledge there have been no additional reports of this species in Alberta. The breeding range is northwestern British Columbia, Yukon, Alaska and probably Siberia.

It is, therefore, of interest to record that on September 2, 1973, I had good views of four tattlers accompanied by two Pectoral Sandpipers on the south shore of Beaverhill Lake, about 40 miles east of Edmonton. Observation through 10-power binoculars showed the tattler to be considerably larger than the sandpiper. They were grey above and white below though one of them still showed faint dark bars on the side of the breast. They had black beaks and greenish legs and in flight showed no wing bars or white markings on rump or tail.

These four birds not only represent the largest number of their species so far seen at one time in Alberta, but they were also observed further east, i.e., further from the main route of migration of the species, than those previously reported.

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PRAIRIE NEST RECORDS SCHEME

Cards and information for the 1974 nesting season are available from:

Prairie Nest Records Scheme,
c/o Manitoba Museum of Man
and Nature,
190 Rupert Ave., Winnipeg,
Manitoba. R3B 0N2

A summary for the 1973 season is available on request. More participants are required throughout the Prairie Provinces.

H. W. R. Copland, Coordinator.

DANCING SHARP-TAILED GROUSE AND PREDATORS

by DALE HJERTAAS*

In the spring of 1973, while censusing Sharp-tailed Grouse dancing grounds with Saskatchewan Department of Natural Resources field crews, I noted several cases of predation and attempted predation.

On May 3, at Hafford Community Pasture, 8 miles south of Hafford, George Duff and I surprised a Goshawk feeding on a dead grouse in the middle of a dancing ground. The Goshawk carried the grouse toward the nearest trees, ¼ mile away, but dropped it half way. We recovered the grouse and later photographed it to show the partly eaten right breast.

The next day at the same dancing ground we observed a male Marsh Hawk harrassing grouse. Five times, it chased all 20 or so sharp-tails off the dancing ground but did not have the speed to capture a flying sharp-tail. Each time the grouse flew 40 or 50 yards, landed and almost immediately ran back part way; most then flew the remaining distance to the dancing ground.

On May 16, near Redvers, I observed another case of apparent attempted predation on courting sharp-tails. My view of this dancing was obscured by tall grass and weeds, although I could hear grouse dancing and calling vigorously. I observed individual birds flushing, flying about 10 or 15 feet and then landing. When I approached to count them, I caught a glimpse of a mammal disappearing into the weeds on the far side of the dancing ground. Its size, shape and slow speed, as indicated by moving grass, convinced me that it was a skunk, and that the unusual flushing by single sharp-tails was caused by this skunk endeavouring to capture a bird. The individual grouse flushed when approached closely, but were not frightened enough to leave. This reac-

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tion is similar to that reported by Rogers² when a deer was seen playing with Sharp-tailed Grouse in Colorado, striking at them with head and feet. These grouse merely moved a short distance and resumed dancing.

Sharp-tailed Grouse, when absorbed in the dance, are easy prey to coyotes according to Bent³. Rogers² says that few things distract dancing Sharp-tailed Grouse. He reports six ravens, four ducks and two hawks spending an entire morning watching dancing grouse in Colorado. The hawks occasionally disrupted activity by swooping at the birds. When a coyote watched dancing sharp-tails, the grouse paid little attention to the intruder.

Predation on dancing Sharp-tailed Grouse is noted most years by DNR personnel. Wayne Pepper¹ has found remains of five banded and other unbanded grouse, apparently killed by predators, all within 300 yards of dancing grounds near Asquith. This is supporting evidence that predation at dancing grounds is not uncommon.

I wish to thank Wayne Pepper and Dr. C. Stuart Houston for their help with this article.

¹BENT, E. C. 1963. *Life histories of North American gallinaceous birds*. Dover Publications Inc., N.Y.

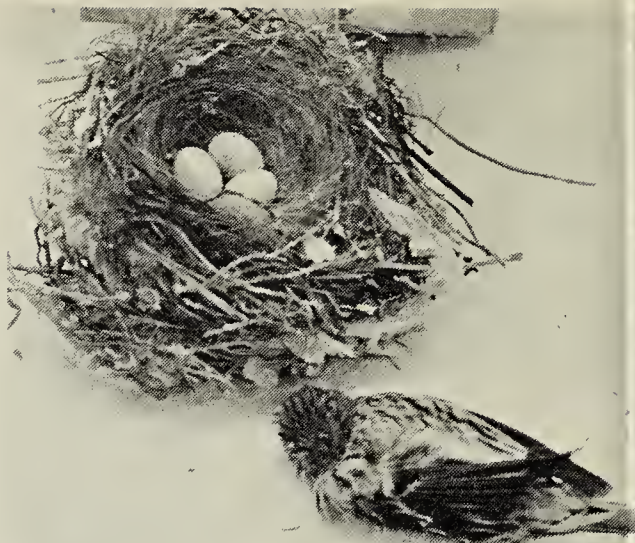
²PEPPER, G. W. 1972. *The ecology of Sharp-tailed Grouse during spring and summer in the aspen parklands of Saskatchewan*. Saskatchewan Dept. Nat. Res. Wildl. Rep. No. 1, 55 pp.

³ROGERS, G. E. 1967. *The Sharp-tailed Grouse in Colorado*. Colorado Dept. Nat. Res. Tech. Pub. 23, 94 pp.

PINE SISKINS NESTING AT MOOSE JAW

by EDITH KERN*

Bird-watchers of the Moose Jaw Natural History Society were quite excited to have found *two* known Pine Siskin nests in the city in the spring of 1973. One nest, well hidden, was



Pine Siskin and nest. Regina Leader-Pos

found about 5 or 6 feet up in a spruce tree at the Ken Bidwell home near the centre of the city. The Bidwell family had seen the birds around for 2 or 3 weeks in March and, after realizing they were probably nesting, kept close watch for about 10 days. On April 5 they decided that the nest had been deserted, and on April 6 removed the nest which had three eggs in it. On April 7 they found the dead female Pine Siskin. They then informed Leith Knight, president of MJNH, who suggested that the nest and skin be turned over to the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History. Fred Lahrman has since informed us that the eggs were "very heavily incubated."

The second nest was in a taller tree several blocks northwest of the first nest-site, and was active until about May 2, when all activity ceased and the birds disappeared. Cats are thought to be the cause. The nest was too high up to be retrieved.

As of May 12 there were numerous flocks of 8 to 15 Pine Siskins coming daily to feeders (sunflower seed) in other areas of the city but no other nests were discovered. Also, Evening Grosbeaks (adult male and female) and immature Red Crossbills (male and female) were still coming in daily to feeders (sunflower seed) in several areas of the city.

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