

INDIGO BUNTING AT GOOD SPIRIT PROVINCIAL PARK, SASKATCHEWAN

RON JENSEN, 1828 - 8th Avenue North, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and
DON WEIDL, 337 Avenue D South, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

In 1977 the Saskatchewan Natural History Society held its annual summer field meet at Yorkton. As usual the event was successful and enjoyed by all. One of the highlights of the outing for us was the sighting of an Indigo Bunting at Good Spirit Provincial Park.

Wayne Harris and Sheila Lamont told us that on the morning of June 11, they had heard and seen a bird that resembled a bunting near the first overflow campground. They were unable to get a good look at it because of poor light, thus only a silhouette was observed. The four of us returned to the area late that afternoon to try and find the bird, but were unsuccessful. At approximately 0700 on June 12, the authors again returned to the area to find Bob Godwin with whom we spent about 10 minutes listening for the bird but, again, we were disappointed. The authors then left to look at an Eastern Wood Pewee that was recorded near the park entrance the previous day. At approximately 0745, we observed a male Indigo Bunting, perched on a dead branch at the top of a trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*). We studied the bunting for about five minutes during which it sang several times. Ron Jensen photographed the bird, using a 35mm camera and

telephoto lens. At 0805 we told Bob Godwin and Moray Lewis of the sighting, and they came with us to the area. The bird was again heard and seen several times. At 0815 the Indigo Bunting stopped singing and flew into the bush. Bob Godwin returned to the area later in the day and flushed a male and female from the shrubs along the roadside. In later correspondence with Wayne Harris, he states that because of the distance between the sighting he had on June 11 and the sighting we had on June 12, these are probably different birds.

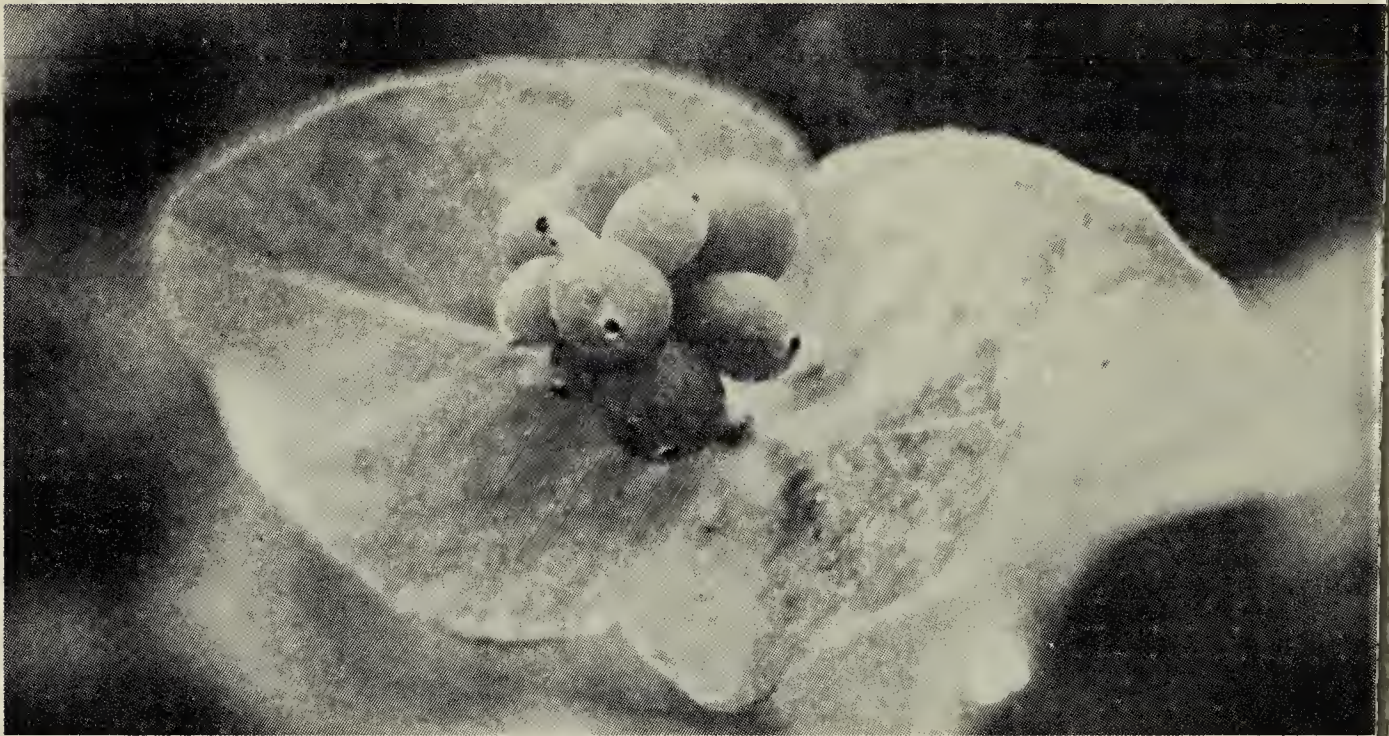
Godfrey describes the immature male (first breeding plumage) as similar to adult male in breeding plumage but blues less pure; coverts with some brown.¹ The distinguishing feature of the male Indigo Bunting we saw on June 12, besides the blue color, was the brown wing coverts.

Other records for the Indigo Bunting in Saskatchewan are summarized in Table 1 as follows. Two hybrids between Indigo and Lazuli Bunting were collected in 1965 at Kenosee Lake.⁵ The first, collected on June 4, had predominantly Lazuli Bunting features. The second, collected on June 18, had Indigo Bunting features predominating.

Table 1: INDIGO BUNTING RECORDS FOR SASKATCHEWAN

Date	Area	Birds	Observer	Reference
1890	Indian Head	2 seen	George Lang	5
July 28, 1893	Estevan	1 specimen σ	D. L. Thorpe	9
June 23, 1927	Armley	1 pair seen	M. G. Street	3
June 27, 1941	Good Spirit Lake	1 record	W. A. Tripp	2
June 22, 1953	White Bear	1 σ seen	S. O. Jordheim	4
June 1, 1961	Saskatoon	1 banded	Florence Richards & C. S. Houston	—
June 1, 1967	Aylsham	1 σ seen	Mrs. M. Robin	7
June 1, 1976	Qu'Appelle Valley	4 seen	F. W. Lahrman	8

- ¹GODFREY, W. E., 1966. The birds of Canada. Nat. Mus. Canada Bull. 203. Queen's Printer, Ottawa.
- ²HOUSTON, C. S., 1949. The birds of the Yorkton district, Saskatchewan. Canadian Field-Nat. 63:215-241.
- ³HOUSTON, C. S., and M. G. STREET, 1959. The birds of the Saskatchewan River. Sask. Nat. Hist. Soc., Spec. Publ. 2.205 pp.
- ⁴JORDHEIM, S. O., 1953. Indigo Bunting. Blue Jay 11(3):10.
- ⁵MITCHELL, H. H., 1927. Birds of Saskatchewan. Canadian Field-Nat. 38:101-118.
- ⁶NERO, R. W., and M. R. LEIN, 1971. Birds of Moose Mountain, Saskatchewan. Sask. Nat. Hist. Soc., Spec. Publ. 7. 56 pp.
- ⁷ROBIN, M., 1967. Indigo Bunting at Aylsham. Blue Jay 25:146.
- ⁸SERR, E. M., 1976. Northern Great Plains. American Birds 30:969-971.
- ⁹SETON, E. T., 1908. Recent bird record for Manitoba. Auk 25:450-454.



Twining Honeysuckle

Bernard deVries

EUROPEAN WIGEON IN SASKATCHEWAN

F. M. BRIGHAM, P.O. Box 3240, Station C, Ottawa K1Y 4J5

On April 27, 1977, J. D. Lafontaine and I saw a male European Wigeon at the east end of Cypress Lake, Saskatchewan. The bird was studied for 5 minutes with a 20x-40x Bushnell Zoomscope at a distance of about 100 m. The bird was seen in the air and then as it fed in short grass on a wet flat. The rusty head with buffy forehead and crown, blending with an all-gray breast, sides and flanks and the white upper wing coverts were

clearly visible in the sun. American Wigeons were nearby during part of the observation period. While no field guides were available, three nights before we had studied an excellent photo of a male taken by Lafontaine in B.C.

EDITOR'S NOTE: There are previous Saskatchewan records for Cumberland House (a pair on May 7, 1971) and Moose Jaw (one on May 23, 1977).