

ADDITIONAL AMERICAN WOODCOCK NOTES FOR MANITOBA

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In 1977 a fairly comprehensive report of the status of the American Woodcock in Manitoba was published (Nero, *Blue Jay* 35:240-56, 1977). The present note provides data on the first known nests for the province, other breeding records, and some additional sightings.

Previous breeding information included a record of an egg laid on top of snow (Piney, 20 April 1970), a brood of young 2 to 3 days old (Reaburn, 24 May 1975), a newly hatched chick (East Braintree, June 1976), and a brood several days old (Birds Hill, 12 May 1977).

It was inevitable that sooner or later someone would find an American Woodcock nest in Manitoba, but it is a curious coincidence that the first two nests should be found on the same residential property by the same family in two separate years. A woodcock nest with a full clutch of four eggs was found on 14 May 1979, by George Monkman near his home 5 miles south and 1 mile east of Richer, about 25 miles south east of Winnipeg. The nest was studied by George's son Gary through incubation and hatching. My son Brook and Dennis Fast observed and photographed the incubating bird on 21 May



Site of first Manitoba woodcock nest. Note Jack Pine, mixed shrub and grass cover, and water at lower left of photo.

Dennis Fast

I was surprised to find that the nest was within 60 feet of the Monkman house in a most unlikely looking habitat. The nest was in a fairly open spot surrounded by Red-osier Dogwood, young aspens, and close to some Jack Pines. A small pool of water was within a foot or so of the nest. The eggs hatched about 25 May; three chicks survived and were led away by the female. One chick apparently drowned in an adjacent shallow pool and was obtained from Gary Monkman for the collections of the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature (MMMN).

A second nest with four eggs was found by Michael Monkman on 2 May 1981, about 50 feet from the first site. Once again I was surprised to see how open the nest site was; apart from a few shrubs and a nearby Jack Pine there was little cover. The eggs hatched on 5 May, but only two chicks survived. The remaining two, which appeared weak, were apparently abandoned and shortly died (specimens in MMMN).

Further breeding information is available. On 1 June 1978, about 1530 h, Doreen and Des Whellams found an adult woodcock with a chick crossing PTH 44 near Westhawk Lake, about 1 mile east of Hanson's Creek. The adult flushed off the pavement in front of their car, leaving the chick crouching in the middle of the road. The female bird followed Des along the road when he picked up the chick and carried it back to the car to show to his wife. The chick, which was well formed according to Whellmans, was presumably several days old. When released it scurried off after its parent.

Peter Taylor and Reto Zach discovered a half-grown young at their feet after an adult flushed in front of them and performed distraction display on 9 June 1978. This was on the edge of a cleared area adjacent to mature aspen with heavy undergrowth at Pinawa. Harvey Lane and Peter Taylor flushed three birds from this same spot on 14

June 1980. They presumed it was a family group.

While searching for a woodcock nest, Eugene F. Bossenmaier accidentally stepped on a flightless chick. This was on 23 June 1979, 2.5 miles south of Lewis (a hamlet on PTH 15; Sec. 19-11-10E), about 45 miles east of Winnipeg. Gene noted that the primaries were 20 mm out of the sheath, again suggesting a bird several days old. This is in an area with a fairly large number of breeding birds. (Specimen is in MMMN).

A family group of woodcock was found by Raymond Tuokko at Pinawa Bay, north of Lac du Bonnet, 1 July 1979. An adult, presumably a female, was found with at least two fledglings. The young birds were seen at close hand on the ground but they were able to fly. This was in a mixed-wood cover close to the Tuokko family residence.

Ken H. Doan reported finding a female with two chicks 4 miles west of Balmoral, some 18 miles north of Winnipeg. This was in a wet, mature aspen grove, 4 July 1979. The hen flushed and the chicks crouched, motionless.

Craig Maxwell reported a female with five chicks almost full grown, about July in 1979, at Manigotogan, 80 miles northeast of Winnipeg. The female came out and stood nearby, then led the chicks across the road. This extends the known breeding range for this species to the north.

Finally, another family group was observed by Ian Ward and several other people on 24 May 1980, near Vivian just 35 miles east of Winnipeg on PTH 15, about 1 mile west of the junction with PR 302. The four young birds, which were almost full grown, followed both parents, slowly walking off the shoulder of the road and into cover. This is a breeding site which has been known for several years, but without previous observation of young.

Additional sightings shown in Table 1



American Woodcock on nest, 21 May 1979, Richer, Manitoba.

Dennis Fas



Full clutch of woodcock eggs, Richer, Manitoba.

Dennis Fas

largely support previous observations, but the 1980 records from Riding Mountain National Park of an apparently single bird last seen 2 May are of special interest; only one previous record is known for that area (28 September 1933). The Ashern record, 90 miles

northwest of Winnipeg (2 August 1978) further supports the assumption that woodcock occur in the Interlake region. Note that the 17 March 1981 record is apparently the earliest for the province; Tuokko's 28 October 1979 record is apparently the latest.

Table 1. ADDITIONAL RECENT RECORDS OF WOODCOCK IN MANITOBA.*

Year	Date	Place	Observer(s)
1976	October	Whiteshell P.P., near Dorothy & Eleanor Lakes (24!)	R. D. Sopuck
1976	October	Elma	D. & C. Elliott
1977	June	Whiteshell P.P., Falcon L. village	E. Schindler
1977	July	Whiteshell P.P., PTH 44 & Star Lake turnoff	D. Fitzjohn
1977	3 September	Whiteshell P.P., Camp Lake, west shore	D. & C. Elliott
1977	12 October	Whiteshell P.P., Betula Lake	M. Gillespie
1978	25 April	Whiteshell P.P., jct. PTH 44 & PR 307	D. Fitzjohn
1978	7 June	Whiteshell P.P., S of PR 301	E. Schindler
1978	July	Whiteshell P.P., Falcon L. village	E. Schindler
1978	3 July	Selkirk, N on River Road	J. McDonald
1978	19 July	Winnipeg, Transcona	R. Larche
1978	2 August	Ashern, 3 mi E on PR 325	L. Colpitts, et al.
1978	22 August	Milner Ridge	J. Ticknor
1978	26 August	Winnipeg, near Assiniboine Forest	W. H. Koonz, et al.
1978	20 September	Wampum, 0.75 mi W	P. Krahn
1978	"Fall"	Bissett, 5 mi W (rep. by American hunters)	C. Maxwell
1979	"early" May	Winnipeg, Assiniboine Forest (2)	R. W. Nero
1979	15 June	Jct. PTH 44 & PTH 11	L. Higgens
1979	22 June	Elma, 0.5 mi N	L. Higgens
1979	19 October	Richer area, Project 13, 1 mi S PTH 1	M. Comeau
1979	28 October	Lac du Bonnet, Pinawa Bay	R. Tuokko
1979	October	Manigotogan, 4 mi N	C. Maxwell
1980	10 April	Headingley, S of Assiniboine R.	P. Laufersweiler, J. Flannigan
1980	23 April	Riding Mountain Natl. Park, 3.5 mi E Wasagaming	C. Davar
1980	26 April	Riding Mountain Natl. Park	W. J. Walley
1980	2 May	Riding Mountain Natl. Park (last seen)	C. Davar
1981	17 March	Winnipeg, 326 Winchester	Mr. & Mrs. J. Jenkins
1981	28 March	Winnipeg, Charleswood Road, S of Wilkes	P. Caldwell
1981	28 March	Prawda, 2 mi N	H. W. R. Copland R. W. Nero
1981	28 March	Lac du Bonnet area; four birds seen on PR 214, a mile west of PTH 11	P. Taylor
1981	29 March	Glen Road, E Braintree	H. W. R. Copland, R. W. Nero
1981	3 April	Stonewall, 5 mi W	D. Soprovitch
1981	5 April	3 mi N of jct. No. 1 Hy. & Proj. 13 (3)	R. R. Taylor

*Single sightings unless otherwise noted; breeding records not included.