

¹GODFREY, W. E. 1966. The birds of Canada. National Museum of Canada. Bull. 203. Ottawa. 428 pp.

²SALT, W. R. and J. R. SALT. 1976. The birds of Alberta. Hurtig, Edmonton. 498 pp.

LAZULI BUNTING AND ROCK WREN AT SYLVAN LAKE, ALBERTA

HELGE S. ABRAHAMSON, Box 268,
Sylvan Lake, Alberta, T0M 1Z0.

Living at Sylvan Lake on NE 39-2-W5, I have for more than 40 years been active with bird observations. In July 1967 I sighted a blue bird that was much different from the Mountain Bluebird. I looked it up in my bird book and concluded it was a male Lazuli Bunting. Three days went by before the bird left the deciduous, scrubby growth which surrounded my house. Then in 1971 I saw one by my house in the same area as the first sighting. This same day another Lazuli Bunting was seen at the Scout Camp, a mile and a half from my house. This indicated that there were more than one of these birds in the area. No sighting of the female was made.

The *Blue Jay* of September 1979 contained an article "The Rock Wren in Saskatchewan" which was quite interesting. This is also an unusual bird of my area according to my bird book, "Birds of North America" by Robbins, Bruun and Zim. In 1972, along a rocky shoreline with sandstone cliffs on a stretch of Sylvan Lake beach, I observed a pair of these birds and found their nest in early July. I haven't been back to this particular area. Where I live on the southern edge of this lake, I have never observed any Rock Wrens.

MOCKINGBIRDS AT RESTON, MANITOBA

DAVID L. BRADDELL, Box 304
Reston, Manitoba, R0M 1X0.

On 1 August, 1979, in response to a phone call from Bob Moore, local building contractor, I checked out a bird of unusual imitative ability and a long tail.

At Third Avenue and Eighth Street in Reston, I observed a bird perched on the top of Bryon Jago's TV antenna. Its flicking, long, dark tail, slender gray and whitish body, and its imitation of the songs or calls of four species of other birds suggested it could be a Mockingbird. While I was observing the bird, using 10X binoculars, it flew down from its perch and displayed a prominent white patch on each wing. In landing on a nearby lawn, the bird raised its wings and tail briefly, revealing white wingbars and patch, and lateral white edging to the tail. A slightly downward curving bill and pale eyes were evident.

Later the same day, Mr. Moore reported having seen two such birds simultaneously, one on a hydro line the other on a TV antenna two blocks away. They were imitating other birds but differently from one another, he said.

On 31 July, one of these birds was heard by Evan Ellis and Mrs. W. A. Elliott, and was seen 1 August by Mr. Moore, myself and several other persons. Mr. Ellis stated he had seen the bird fly down more than once to get raspberries from the garden next door.

On 3 August, Bryon Jago reported two mockers, having heard and seen one on a TV antenna, and then only a moment later, heard another

one a block away, mimicking other birds.

Checking later the same day, I heard the bird sing its own melodies with up to five repetitions, and imitations of more species than had been previously heard. Around 1700 my wife and I and Mrs. Iris McMurchy checked the area again, and heard and saw one bird, its imitations including yet other species of birds. Next day, about 0800, Mrs. W. A. Elliott heard mimicking and saw two birds of the same general colour and slenderness on a TV antenna. They were close together, she said. Since then, no one has seen or heard anything here of the visitors.

Reports of at least four persons show that the mockingbird mimicked the song or call of the following animals: Yellow-shafted Flicker, Eastern Kingbird, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, American Robin, House Wren, Black-billed Magpie, Blue Jay, Common Nighthawk, Black-capped Chickadee, Western Meadowlark, House Sparrow, Purple Martin, American Goldfinch, frog and dog.

PURPLE MARTINS NEAR WHYTEWOLD, MANITOBA

JEAN BANCROFT, 306 - 200 Tuxedo Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3P 0R3.

During the past few years I have been able to observe several colonies of these delightful members of the swallow family in and around Whytefold, in the southwest corner of Lake Winnipeg.

I was delighted, therefore, in the spring of 1979, to notice two new colony houses had been erected,

enabling me to keep a record of 12 colonies (two of which were not in compartment houses).

The prevalence of martins in this area could be due to the fact that there is always an abundance of insects, particularly mosquitoes, fishflies and dragonflies. To my knowledge, during the past 25 years, there has never been any spraying for mosquito abatement.

In general, the colony houses contained from 12 to 18 compartments and stood on poles ranging from approximately 3 m to 7 m high. However, this summer I discovered a unique colony house, situated in a beautiful garden just off a main highway near Gimli (which is approx. 24 km north of Whytefold). This colony house contained 56 compartments and stood on a pole a little less than 3 m in height. As I thought it was very interesting I approached the owner of the property and she told me her husband had built it 15 years ago, erecting the circular bottom part one year and adding the top part the following year. Every year the colony house apparently has been full. Each compartment comes apart and is cleaned out every fall. When the house was first erected there was a very large open lawn area but, even though there are many small trees in the garden now, the birds' flight to the house is not obstructed in any way.

Martins, as Godfrey states in his *Birds of Canada* prefer "open places . . . forage both high and low over open water, marshes, and open terrain." Open terrain seems to be very important. For instance, for four years I have observed another colony house of 14 compartments, close to a busy roadway but the number of occupants decreased this summer, presumably due to poor accessibility to the entrances. The house was