

BIRDS OF THE GAINSBOROUGH- LYLETON REGION (SASKATCHEWAN AND MANITOBA)

RICHARD W. KNAPTON. 1979.
Saskatchewan Natural History Society
Special Publication No. 10. Regina. 72
pp. \$3.00.

This is the seventh regional bird report in the special publication series, and the first to cover an area not exclusively within the boundaries of Saskatchewan: extreme southeastern Saskatchewan and southwestern Manitoba. As such, it is an important addition to Saskatchewan's bird literature, but even more important to Manitoba, which has only one other comparable regional report (covering Churchill).

Although readily accessible to observers from southern prairie cities, this sparsely settled area has lacked ornithological work of significance. The present report is a "spin-off" of Knapton's Ph.D. work on Clay-colored Sparrows in the area. Introductory sections cover previous work, describe the area and bird work in surrounding areas, and define terms. Tables include Christmas counts from 1971 to 1978, species proved and suspected of breeding in the area, and occupancy of bluebird houses from 1970 to 1978. One map depicts localities within the study area and another shows it in relation to adjacent parts of the two provinces and North Dakota.

The bulk of the book consists of the species accounts. These, of course, emphasize records of occurrence and abundance, and chronological events, but also include some detail on behaviour and ecology. The late John Lane often emphasized the problem of House Sparrows at bluebird houses in southern Manitoba. Data here support Lane's concern, and indicate that House Sparrows may also be important

aggressors to Cliff Swallow. Aggression between Tree Swallow and Mountain Bluebirds competing for a nestbox is also documented. Similar interesting notes are scattered throughout the text.

In general, the book has been prepared well and is remarkably free of technical errors. Kestrel should read American Kestrel; the species name of the American Avocet is misprinted "*maericana*"; and *Zenaidura* has been merged in *Zenaida*. I was pleased to see recognizable races discussed as such, although the commoner race of the Dark-eyed Junco is not named, and the author does not say whether races were distinguished for the White-crowned Sparrow.

I found the discussion somewhat lacking for some uncommon species or races. The Spotted race of the Rufous-sided Towhee was caught in mist net. This is documented, but with no comment that this is the rarer race in Manitoba. Reference is made to several uncommon species without mention of papers summarizing their occurrence on the prairies: Red Kingbird (summarized by McNicholl, *Blue Jay* 27:28-35, 1969), Northern Mockingbird (Brazier, *Blue Jay* 22:67-75, 1964), Orchard Oriole (Hatch, *Blue Jay* 23:161-162, 1965), and Dickcissel (Sealy, *Blue Jay* 29:12-14, 1971). These summary reports are now out-dated and this is probably not the place to up-date them, but they should have been used as references to the general status of these species in the prairie province. In one case (Black-headed Grosbeak) Knapton did update the record elsewhere (*Blue Jay* 33:181, 1975). The discussion of problems of Greater Partridge survival on the prairies is also incomplete without reference to the work of Westerskov (*Proc. New Zealand Ecol. Soc.* 12:23-30, 1965) in Alberta. Somewhere Knapton should have pointed out that the "wild turkeys" in the historical reference at the beginning of the book were like Sandhill cranes.



Yellow-colored Sparrow

Gary W. Seib

These few criticisms are minor and do not detract from the overall high quality of the book. All serious ornithologists and naturalists in the prairie provinces and adjacent states should have a copy of this important addition to the avifaunal literature of the Northern Great Plains. Knapton and the Saskatchewan Natural History Society are to be congratulated on an excellent piece of work. — Reviewed by *Martin K. McMicholl*, c/o Beak Consultants Ltd., 530 11A St. N.E., Calgary, Alberta, T2E 6M7.

RIGHT WINGS OF SUMMER

AVID G. MEASURES. 1976. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Eaglewood Cliffs, N.J. 160 pp. \$12.95.

This is an ideal book for the novice, for the person just becoming interested in butterflies. It presents a fairly extensive, general background of butterflies without becoming too technically involved in scientific names, etc. For the experienced professional or amateur, it is an enjoyable book to read, bringing back memories and events as the author's and one's own experiences coincide. The book is filled with excerpts from his diaries, including field notes, delightful watercolors of butterflies in action, drawings and charts. The field notes, however, are somewhat illegible. There are also some very fine color photographs of live butterflies.

In Part One: "Beginnings", the author tells how, upon growing up in southern England, he discovered the natural world on his own. Today he is an artist, and he became interested in butterflies through their pleasing, colorful appearance.