

we were beginning to feel mesmeric influences. Then, at a motion of my hand, it took off, with its typical exploding flight, safely exiting the house, although its stiff wing feathers clipped the porch doorway.

The next day I returned, in daylight, to put things aright and repair the broken window. The grouse, I found, might well have existed in the house for a few days, for it had tapped a food supply not usually found in a living-room. I had put out a dish of rolled oats and Warfarin, a mixture obtained from the rural municipality for combatting rats and mice. Containing nearly a capful, the dish was now completely empty, and there was no sign of any rodents who might have eaten it.

According to Bump and his associates, Ruffed Grouse may die after even minor injuries because of a disinclination to eat.<sup>1</sup> My grouse survived for several days; it not only ate readily but ingested a mixture poisonous to small mammals. The droppings throughout the living-room, even along the walls, told of its liveliness while captive in the house. In the interests of science, I counted the 134 "splats" in a room measuring 13 X 19 feet.

The bedroom, which it must have soon vacated and where there was no access to any food, had only one "splat." But in sweeping up the splinters of glass there, I counted some 160 feathers, mostly from the bird's ruff.

That a Ruffed Grouse could crash through a double window, fly up and squeeze through a narrow opening into a larger room, live on rolled oats and Warfarin for a period of time, then actively flutter about to elude a possible predator (the writer) before

making its rocket-like escape — all bespeaks the hardiness of this splendid bird.

1. BUMP, G., R.W. DARROW, F.C. ED-MINISTER, and W.F. CRISSEY. 1947. The Ruffed Grouse: life history, propagation, management. New York State Cons. Dept., Albany.
2. FRIESEN, V.C. 1971. The crazy flight phenomenon of the Ruffed Grouse. *Blue Jay* 29:121-124.
3. ——. 1978. Further observations of the Ruffed Grouse's "crazy-flight." *Blue Jay* 36:193-199.
4. ——. 1980. Crazy grouse comment. *Blue Jay* 38:135-136.
5. ——. 1985. Banging heads and taking notes. *The Drummer* 11:14.
6. ——. 1990. Ruffed Grouse: crazy-flight conclusions. *Blue Jay* 48:33-34.
7. ——. 1992. Drunken grouse theory doesn't stand up. *Saskatoon Sun*, Sept. 13.

- Victor C. Friesen, P.O. Box 65, Rosthern, SK. S0K 3R0

## **BAND-TAILED PIGEON AT MAREAN LAKE**

I saw a Band-tailed Pigeon while on summer holidays at Marean Lake, in east-central Saskatchewan, on the west side of Greenwater Provincial Park.

While picking Saskatoons in the Gaetz cottage subdivision on 1 August 1995, a male White-throated Sparrow made alarm calls. A bird, crow size, flew from above and behind me. This caused even greater excitement from the White-throated Sparrow. "Ah, a Merlin," I thought, but it did not fly like a Merlin and landed in a Saskatoon bush. I stopped picking Saskatoons to concentrate on the bird. What are you? With binoculars in hand, I walked cautiously closer. The sun was bright, high over head, near 11:00

a.m. My first thought, viewing the bird with a pair of 8 X 42 Pentax roof prism binoculars, was a pigeon. The bird resembled a Rock Dove in the grey plumage, but with yellow feet and yellow black-tipped bill. Edging closer, I viewed the bird for about 10 minutes from 10 m, noting the iridescence behind the head down on to the back, white line between iridescence and greyish-purple head, darker wings, grey body and tail with a noticeable darker grey band in the tail. I thought ...B and-tailed Pigeon?

Not sure of the field marks, I hustled back to the cabin where the bird books were waiting. I looked through: *Birds of North America*, National Geographic Society; *Birds of North America* 1st ed. by Robbins *et al.* and *Field Guide to Western Birds* 3rd ed. by Peterson. These all confirmed that what I had seen was a Band-tailed Pigeon, a lifer, a long way from home given the range maps.

I set out again with a camera. Julie and Jeffrey, wife and son, back from a round of golf, also viewed the bird, now sitting sleepily in the shade in a White Birch. They both saw the field marks of yellow bill with a black tip and yellow feet, white stripe on back of head and band in the tail and compared the bird to one of the field guides. My two photographs, with a 50 mm lens at 50 m were disappointing. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to find the Band-tailed Pigeon until 11 August 1995 when we left Marean Lake.

Don Hooper does not list Band-tailed Pigeon in the *Birds of East-Central Saskatchewan*. This sighting adds a new species to the area. There have been ten additional sightings in Saskatchewan as reported in the seventh edition, *Field*

*Checklist of Saskatchewan*, October 1990. This sighting is the most northeasterly record within Saskatchewan to date.

- Ron Jensen, 849 - 10th Avenue North East, Swift Current, SK. S9H 2T6

## PARTIAL ALBINO MAGPIE

The grey and white Black-billed Magpie pictured below became a common visitor in the vicinity of the yard of Alec and Laila Johnson, two miles south of Archerwill throughout the summer and fall of 1995.

- Elaine Hughes, Box 309, Archerwill, SK. S0E 0B0



Partial Albino Magpie Elaine Hughes

## FOXES IN SOUTH-CENTRAL SASKATCHEWAN

My father, Knut Jordheim homesteaded some 40 miles north of Swift Current, approximately 2 miles north of the South Saskatchewan River in 1908. I remember him mentioning "kit foxes" that would chew harnesses if left on the ground overnight. I presume these were actually Swift Foxes.