

at the edge of the road, under a shady tree.

I walked by there twice more that month, seeing the bird the last time on 30 October, in a border under a window, apparently finding something to eat. Two days later came ice and snow and the bird was seen no more — did it fly south?

A week or two later someone else a couple of blocks away came home from work and found a grey bird dead on the top step having flown into a nearby window, leaving grey feathers. It was thought to be a Gray Jay who had, perhaps, gorged on the nearby rowan berries. It was put out in the garbage. I wonder?

I subsequently heard CBC Regina ask people to take part in the bird count starting 1st December and, in particular to watch for a late migrant, maybe a robin, a nuthatch, or even a mockingbird from the eastern United States. Presumably they have been seen around Regina from time to time. Nobody seems to have seen a mockingbird in these parts and many ask what it looks like. Any ideas as to how far they may spread?

Referring to the March 1995 edition of *Blue Jay*, I too saw a House Finch at a bird feeder about 5 miles south of Prince Albert in April 1992 — I had seen them at the coast. I have also seen a Ruby-Crowned Kinglet and a common Yellowthroat once on migration. Not too common, it seems.

Additionally, a group of us at Emma Lake in June 1991 spotted an American Avocet. We had seen this species between Prince Albert and Saskatoon earlier the same month. People here don't seem familiar with this.

- Maureen Wright, #518 — 24th Street E.,
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NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FROM CROOKED LAKE, 1995

In early June I returned briefly to my boyhood haunts at Crooked Lake in the Qu'Appelle Valley. On 12 July at Cedar Cove Resort I saw a tomato-red male House Finch in full song (a cross between a Vesper Sparrow and a domestic canary). There are two previous sightings for the Qu'Appelle Valley by Callin at Fort Qu'Appelle in 1979 (*Birds of the Qu'Appelle 1857-1979*) and in 1980 (Houston and Houston, *Blue Jay* 44:69-84). I am familiar with this species from my years on the B.C. Coast, where I found a nest in the English ivy covering the side of a lodge on Gabriola Island, and once saw a lovely male in full song on a shop sign in one of the grubbier downtown areas of Vancouver, with no vegetation in sight.

Even more exciting to me was the behaviour of an Eastern Phoebe. I was operating a blacklight trap for moths at Melville Beach. In the mornings an Eastern Phoebe was perched by the gauze cage, intently watching the moths flying about inside. One morning I released a few tent caterpillar moths while it was perched nearby, and it quickly took them on the wing. I soon found that three or four was its limit; it would then disappear for an hour or so. By the third day, it would take the fluttering moths directly from my fingers. At one point, while I was lying in the lounge chair nearby reading, it used my knee briefly as a perch. I took the opportunity to offer it a selection of arctid moths (*Hypoprepia*; *Spilosoma*; *Grammia*; & *Hyphantria*) whose showy red, orange or white colouration supposedly protects them by warning predators of their unpalatability. The phoebe wolfed them all down with no discrimination, wings and all.



Bobcat

Wayne Lynch

During this same period, while lying on the same lawn chair, I was attracted by soft “kruk” calls coming at a slow, regular beat from the grass some distance away. Upon investigating I discovered a large Wood Frog grasped crosswise in the jaws of a medium-sized Plains Garter Snake. As frogs are not all that common here, I sided with the snake, which had managed to find and obtain such a fine one. I watched for the approximately half hour it took the snake to work its way up the front of and then engulf the hapless frog, a morbid but fascinating sight that must be seen to be believed.

This was the first year I was unable to find any Northern Leopard Frogs at Crooked Lake. During the 1950s they were abundant, and as recently as 1992 I was still able to find a few along the waterline after dark. This year only a dozen or so Wood Frogs were seen, which I do not recall finding in the past except for the odd individual.

The smallest of the little predators

that I observed was one of the common orb-weaving spiders that have webs under each light or lighted cabin window. While brushing my teeth outside the back door of the cabin one evening I noted a Small-eyed Sphinx (*Paonias myops*), a medium-sized but nevertheless powerful sphinx moth, blunder into a web which I assumed would not hold him for more than a few seconds. The spider dashed out and mounted the moth, bringing to mind the story of the mouse on a date with the giraffe. Hope springs eternal thought I. To my surprise and admiration, within moments the spider had the upper hand, and the moth went limp. In the morning all that remained was the carcass with wings attached.

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BARNYARD BOBCAT

A hot sunny mid-morning in June 1994 found me working in the barn on our ranch in the South Saskatchewan River Valley. Suddenly the