
IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORIAM: IAN LOCHTIE (1914-2009)

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Only upon his death did we learn the formal name of Ian Lochtie, who had been christened John Blackley Lochtie. Ian was born on 29 September 1914 on a farm south of Leross and was made a Fellow of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society in 1995.

Ian was, as his niece Dorothy Fleming said in her memorial, “a gentle man who had a special tie to the land his father homesteaded more than 100 years ago.” He had “a special bond with all the creatures who inhabited it. From the horses and cattle raised on the farm, the dogs and cats, to the wild deer and birds for which he cared each winter. He would proudly show the Red River cart trail on his virgin prairie.” Ian’s cats had a special entrance in his front door, and he kept the door open for them during cold winter nights. By leaving a large opening on one granary, he fed up to 1000 bushels of grain to the White-tailed Deer each winter.

All his life, Ian took long walks to observe nature in general and White-tailed Deer in particular. His spring walks took on a special purpose in 1967, when he learned through Doug Gilroy’s column in the weekly *Western Producer* that a doctor in Saskatoon was banding Great Horned Owls. For the next 27 years, through 1992 when he found ten active owl nests (I ran out of steam before Ian did), Ian directed his walks during late April and early May on my behalf. Before nests were hidden by leaves, he went on foot to every tree that held a Red-tailed

Hawk nest built in a previous year. On average, but varying with the position of the Snowshoe Hare cycle, Ian would visit three to ten former hawk nests to find one that was occupied by a pair of Great Horned Owls.



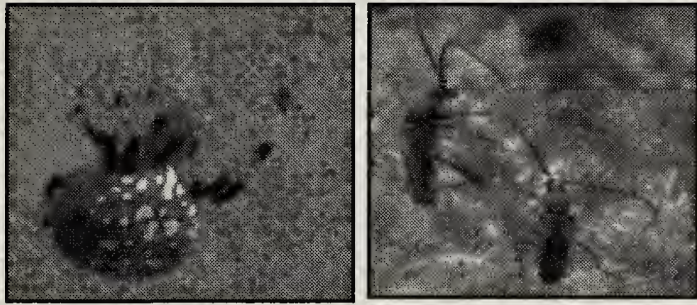
Ian Lochtie, 18 May 1991. Photo by David G. Miller

My owl climbers each year looked forward to meeting Ian. As we drove from nest to nest, we were regaled with stories of each family of deer. An Eastern Phoebe nest on a cultivator would be protected by Ian and that machine used only after the young had fledged. Ian became one of the top four owl nest finders in Saskatchewan, finding 126 successful Great Horned Owl nests where young were banded. He also recorded the number of owl nest failures.

Ian lived on his farm for 91 years, even after he became totally deaf in one ear when a poacher’s rifle bullet went through one side of his skull; he was left for dead but revived and staggered back to his farm and phoned his nephew to take him to the hospital. His little home was heated by a wood stove, appropriate for his Scottish saying “lang may yir lum reek”: long may your chimney smoke. His last three years were spent in the Balcarres Integrated Care Centre, where he died on 4 May 2009.

MYSTERY PHOTO

ANSWER TO THE SEPTEMBER 2009 MYSTERY PHOTO



Ronald Hooper of Fort Qu'Appelle, SK, was the first to respond to our beetle mystery. He wrote: "The beetles are longhorned beetles. The species name is *Crossidius coralinus* (LeConte). They are feeding at the blossoms of rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus* [Pall.]) *Crossidius coralinus* has only been confirmed as occurring in Canada at Grasslands National Park, Saskatchewan, both east and west blocks. The adults feed at the flowers of rabbitbrush. The larvae burrow into the stems of rabbitbrush in some States, so they probably do so here in Saskatchewan."

David Larson of Maple Creek, SK, had initially identified the beetles as *Batyle suturalis*, a long-horned wood-boring beetle of the family Cerambycidae. However, upon further examination, he concluded the following: "*Batyle* and *Crossidius* are best separated from each other on the basis of the shape of the mandible - which unfortunately is not visible in the photo. However, *B. suturalis* tends to have less black than

C. coralinus, where the base of the elytra are dark with the dark area extending out to the shoulders. *Batyle suturalis* has sparse, erect black setae arising from sparse deep punctures on the elytra. I couldn't make these out on the photo but assumed it was a problem of resolution. However, on closer examination it looks like denser, pale setae are present. Thus I would agree [that] the specimens best fit *Crossidius coralinus*. I was surprised to learn of two bright red longhorns on the southern prairies, and I understand from a checklist of Canadian beetles, another red species of *Crossidius* occurs in southern Alberta (and thus probably also in SK). I am regularly surprised by the diversity in the biota."

Regarding the spider, David suggested that "[t]he spider is an orb web spider. It is probably *Araneus trifolium* based on the conspicuously banded legs, the purplish color, and the angular spots. This large species builds orb webs in tall herbs and shrubs and is found across southern Canada." Other names for this species include "Shamrock Orb Weaver," "Shamrock Spider," and, appropriately enough for the Fall issue, "Pumpkin Spider."

We thank both readers for their insightful contributions.

DECEMBER 2009 MYSTERY PHOTO

Kerry Hecker (Manager, Last Mountain Lake National Wildlife Area) submitted these mystery photos (see inside back cover, bottom). An overall view of the site is shown on the left, with a close-up on the right. She writes the following: "Here are photos of the pink stuff that we discovered on May 6, 2009. The ice had just vanished completely, and this pink stuff was floating in small flat mats right near a rocky shoreline in a shallow small lake (just off [a] dam). I've not seen such stuff before, and didn't take the time to figure out what it was; likely some under-the-ice algal colony that was released when the ice melted. The colour in these photos is quite accurate. What a weird colour for something natural." Indeed, and yet we find it to be rather festive. Can anyone help solve the mystery?