

used, and to Jeff Keith (Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre) who provided historical occurrence location information. Don Weidl (Golder Associates), Adrian Sturch (Fisheries and Oceans Canada) and Tim Schowalter (University of Regina) provided 2002 poorwill location information. Robert Sissons (Parks Canada) provided the GIS file for GNP boundaries. Funding for this project was provided by Environment Canada (Habitat Stewardship Program) and the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation.

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## SASKATCHEWAN BIRD BANDERS: J.A. BRIGGS OF REGINA\*

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When J.A. Briggs applied for a banding permit, his instructions from Ottawa were forwarded to him by Fred Bradshaw, Chief Game Commissioner for Saskatchewan, on April 17, 1925. Briggs was a railwayman who traveled widely along the Canadian National Railway, radiating out from Regina in a hand-pumped "jigger" to inspect the track. Between 1925 and 1943, he banded 1075 birds of 24 species, mainly nestlings, and in 1948 added six more flickers. With the exception of Fred G. Bard, who ranged

widely during his crow and magpie campaign, Briggs banded in more localities than any other Saskatchewan bander of his era. Between Regina and Melville, Briggs banded birds at every siding and village: Victoria Plains, Zehner, Frankslake, Edenwold, Avonhurst, Edgeley, Muscow, Fort Qu'Appelle, Hugonard, Balcarres, Gillespie, Lorie, Finnie, Duff, Colmer, and Melville. Between Regina and Moose Jaw, he banded at Sidmar, Keystown, Stony Beach, Eastview, Burdick, and Moose Jaw,

omitting only the siding of Pattie. He also banded more distantly at Biggar, Millerdale, Frobisher, and Griffin.

Briggs would stop whenever he saw a Brewer's Blackbird nest along the right-of-way or a fresh flicker cavity within human reach in a telephone pole along the track. Thus he banded 147 Brewer's Blackbird nestlings and 324 Yellow-shafted Flickers, together with other cavity nesters such as Purple Martins, Tree Swallows, and House Wrens. In 1934, he caught two adult "Blue Birds" on their nests, one at Avonhurst and one at Edgeley; the Eastern Bluebird was then known in eastern North America simply as "bluebird." As Callin points out, Mountain Bluebirds were then less common than the Eastern Bluebird; they did not become regular until 1937, and became common only about 1950.<sup>1</sup>

Recoveries of birds banded by Briggs include Yellow-shafted Flicker, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, American Crow, Black-billed Magpie, and Northern Shoveler. Four adult flickers (banded at Zehner, Edenwold, Pasqua and Frankslake) were recaptured at their nest hole one year after banding and one near Avonhurst was recaptured after two years. One banded near Frankslake was shot at Seagoville, Texas, nearly two years later on February 23,<sup>2</sup> and another, banded at Zehner on June 26, 1929, was killed in a storm near Braggs, Oklahoma, on January 25, 1930.

A Brewer's Blackbird banded near Hugonard on June 25, 1930 was found dead near Fort Qu'Appelle on May 19, 1931, and one banded near Lorlie on June 24, 1938, was shot near Lake City, South Dakota on October 11, 1938. A Common Grackle, banded near Avonhurst on June 6, 1932 was shot near Hutchinson, Minnesota on April 19, 1933.

Of seven nestling crows banded in 1927 (five at Biggar and two at Stony Beach),

there were three recoveries shot during the year of banding: one a few weeks later near where it was banded, one at Anoka, Nebraska on October 11, and one east of Hutchinson, Kansas on November 13. A crow banded in 1935, one in 1936, and two in 1939, were shot locally, but a third 1939 crow was shot east of Hutchinson, Kansas on 26 February 1941, during its second winter.

Of five young Black-billed Magpies banded at Biggar on 15 July 1939, one was shot locally on New Year's day, while another was shot at Melville, SK as reported in a letter dated 12 November.

From 26 Northern Shovelers banded, Briggs had a remarkable six recoveries: three were shot locally near the banding site the same year and the others were shot during the hunting season of the same year at three locations: Tullymet, Saskatchewan; Hawley, Minnesota; and Big Bend, Louisiana.

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\* Number 22 in a series of biographies of Saskatchewan bird banders.



a sord of mallards...  
a party of jays....  
a congregation of plovers...  
an unkindness of ravens...  
a host of sparrows.

- James Lipton, *An Exaltation of Larks*, 1991.