

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON

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On 3 September 1985 Kay and I were heading for Madge Lake in Duck Mountain Provincial Park for a few days camping. Approximately 1 km south of the Government weigh scales on Highway 10 south of Yorkton, a large dark bird crossed the highway just ahead of us. We had only a few seconds to observe it as the highway was busy and it is a bit hazardous to pull to the shoulder and stop while towing a trailer.

We had a puzzle to figure out; however, thanks to our good friend, neighbor and well known birder, Manley Callin, we have learned to look for certain aspects of birds, which served us well this time. We decided it was a heron, but which one? It was certainly not a Great Blue. We put our decisions on hold until we had set up camp.

Earlier in the year, 28 April, we had two occasions to view our first Black-crowned Night-Heron while canoeing in a creek bed off Blue Bill Bay (Echo Lake). The similarities of shape and size might indicate this bird we had seen to be the same species, however we ruled this out because of the dark grey underside. We had no view of the bird's crest as it was overhead. We did note a black mask with some white in it, the sharp, stout bill and the trailing legs. We checked our Robbins' field guide and were baffled as the map did not indicate that the bird we had selected would be this far north. We then checked Manley's contribution to *Birds of the Qu'Appelle Valley* and were encouraged that we were probably correct. We had seen a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron.

On our return to Fort Qu'Appelle 7 September, I saw the heron again from a greater distance in the same area. It land-

ed next to a dugout east of Highway 10. Since a number of dugouts are now stocked with trout, it is likely that this was a favorite feeding area.

We related our observations to Manley when we returned home. To our relief he agreed that it was a sighting of note as it is uncommon to rare in Saskatchewan and in his judgement could be none other than a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron.

GREAT GRAY OWL NAMED MANITOBA'S BIRD EMBLEM

Manitoba has become the fifth province to name a provincial bird emblem. The others are the Great Horned Owl of Alberta, the Sharp-tailed Grouse of Saskatchewan, the Black-capped Chickadee of New Brunswick and the Blue Jay of Prince Edward Island.

From 88 species nominated the Great Gray Owl was chosen. This owl is given as number 4 on the American Birding Association's list of 50 birds which birdwatchers want to see. In Manitoba more Great Gray Owls have been sighted and banded than anywhere else in the world.

Runners up included Western Meadowlark, American Robin, Common Loon, Canada Goose, Red-winged Blackbird and Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

The Wildlife Conservation Awards Committee which did much of the work towards the selection of the bird emblem consisted of outdoor writers Mel Dagg and David Hatch, Art Allen representing the Manitoba Wildlife Federation, Joyce Hart representing the Manitoba Naturalists Society, Bob Wrigley representing the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, and Ted Muir representing the Wildlife Branch — *Information Services*