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# LETTERS

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## OBSERVATIONS OF NATURE

On the afternoon of August 5, 1984 while visiting in the garden of Lee and Lola McMiller of Tyner, we were entertained by a Ruby-throated Hummingbird which was feeding on nearby flowers; occasionally it would alight on a fence and as it would turn its head from side to side, the sun would shine on its feathers, which at times looked black then would sparkle from deep orange to a brilliant red.

We noticed a family of Loggerhead Shrikes feeding on hoppers on the far side of the garden, using a power line as an observation perch. Suddenly a shrike flew directly towards the hummingbird, which immediately took flight at approximately a 35° angle upward; having binoculars in hand, I focused on the two birds. When they had travelled some 200 m with the shrike making some gain, but still not close, the hummingbird dived at a 90° angle into some trees, with the shrike following in long swoops. I saw neither bird again, so do not know the outcome, but the shrike definitely considered the hummingbird as prey.

When I was combining in late August, a Great Horned Owl flew out of a nearby shelterbelt, across an open field toward another shelterbelt. A Swainson's Hawk circling high above moved quickly to position itself above the owl, then folding its wings dropped like a rock and struck the owl to the ground; the owl quickly regained its flight and as the trees were close at hand, gained their safety before the hawk could strike again.

A neighbor, Mrs. Selma Dyrland and her daughter Myrna reported seeing a cougar last June. The Dyrland farm is near the South Saskatchewan River, southwest of White Bear. — *Sig Jordheim*, White Bear, Saskatchewan. SOL 3L0

## ELM AT READER LAKE, MANITOBA

On 12 February 1983, Phillip Reader, Fred Maderigga and I went on an 8 mile snowmobile trip across Reader Lake past the historic lime kiln built by the Rev. Reader a hundred years ago. It is still in reasonable repair! (This area is about 13 miles northwest of The Pas, Manitoba.) Opposite this site is Rounded Island covered with spruce and birch. It rises strongly out of the lake on sheer Dolomite walls heavily encrusted with many lichen species but dominated by an orange species — visible from a long distance off from the moving snowmobiles.

On our return trip a large solitary tree was seen in the distance which we thought might be the rare Delta cottonwood. It soon proved to be an American Elm (*Ulmus americana*) — a very vigorous tree to 30 feet with semi-twining trunks and the characteristic vase-shaped outline. It was the only live one seen during the outing. Two other dead elms were found with trunks under a half foot in diameter. They had evidently been dead many years.

An interesting bracket fungus was collected from one of the dead but still standing elms. There are four specimens. One has been sent to Ottawa for identification.

Elm may reach its northern range in the province here in the flood plain of the Saskatchewan River. It's evident scarcity may be indicative of this.

A small grove of Manitoba maples were seen near the elm. — *Walter Krivda*, Box 864, The Pas, Manitoba.

# UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR GRIDS

F.J.H. Fredeen's article, "Universal Transverse Mercator Grids for recording collecting sites", in the December 1984 *Blue Jay*, is deserving of comment. I quite agree that the system is a good one for that purpose, and like many of my colleagues, have been using it for years.

Fredeen observes that "biological, archaeological or other scientific specimens" are routinely treated by means of other systems, all of them cumbersome and problematic. The specification of archaeological remains is indeed a surprise, because Canadian archaeologists have used the UTM System widely in site inventories for more than a quarter of a century! I first learned the system as a student in an Introductory Archaeology lab in 1965 at the University of Calgary. The Archaeological Survey of Alberta (and other provincial surveys, including that of Saskatchewan) require the UTM coordinates

on all submitted inventory forms, and have done so for more than a decade.

I now teach in a Geology department and our first-year students all learn the UTM system and apply it in laboratory exercises, a requirement that was in place before I took charge of the labs. Our graduate students routinely use UTM designations in field mapping projects, just as our professors use them for locality designation. The vertebrate palaeontologists at the Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology in Drumheller routinely use the UTM system as well, and again have done so (while it was a part of the Provincial Museum of Alberta, in Edmonton) for a long time.

In conclusion, I can readily understand why Crosskey, "expressed surprise that apparently no one in North America was using the system yet." Many of our amateur archaeologists in Alberta know and use the system as well. I heartily endorse it. — *Michael C. Wilson*, Department of Geology and Geophysics, The University of Calgary, 2500 University Drive N.W., Calgary, Alberta. T2N 1N4

## ERRATA FOR VOLUME 42, 1984

**March, No. 1, p. 9** *The new bird identification books.* J.B. Gollop

The line in bold face was missing from Table 1.

Table 1. PICTURE AND TEXT COMPARISONS

<i>Guide</i>	<i>Peterson (Revised)</i>	<i>Robbins (Revised)</i>	<i>National Geographic</i>	<i>Master Guide</i>
<i>Coverage</i>	E. N. Am.	N. Am.	N. Am.	N. Am.

***Prairie Province Species Covered/No. of Illustrations***  
*Species Group*

**March, No. 1, p. 49** *Western Grebe — one species or two?* Mary Gilliland

The **second paragraph** under **Discussion** should be under the heading **Behaviour**.

**December, No. 4, p. 229**

The photograph is incorrectly labelled as ducklings, they are **goslings**.

## PRAIRIE NEST RECORD CARD SCHEME

An increase of participants interested in locating and recording information on the progress of nesting birds from many more areas of Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories are needed.

Information obtained is of benefit to graduate students, government biologists, and other researchers in their studies of birds. For example: at the present, nest record cards for Saskatchewan from the Prairie Nest Record Card Scheme files are being checked by a group of people in Saskatchewan who are compiling information on distribution and breeding of Saskatchewan bird species. Therefore during the next two years it would be very helpful to have many more people contributing information on the nesting birds from all areas of Saskatchewan.

Blank nest record cards, instructions and a copy of the 1984 nesting season report can be obtained by writing:

H.W.R. Copland  
Prairie Nest Record Card Scheme  
Manitoba Museum of Man & Nature  
190 Rupert Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba. R3B 0N2

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