
JUNIOR NATURALISTS

BIRD-WATCHING IN REGINA

This month, we have a letter from one of our young readers from Regina. I hope it will familiarize a lot of readers with the bird-watching opportunities of our city.

Wascana Waterfowl Park

The Wascana Waterfowl Park is one of Regina's best birding spots. It is located east of Broad Street and runs to the city limits along the Wascana Lake and Creek water system. Throughout the year many different species of birds can be seen in their natural habitats and at close range.

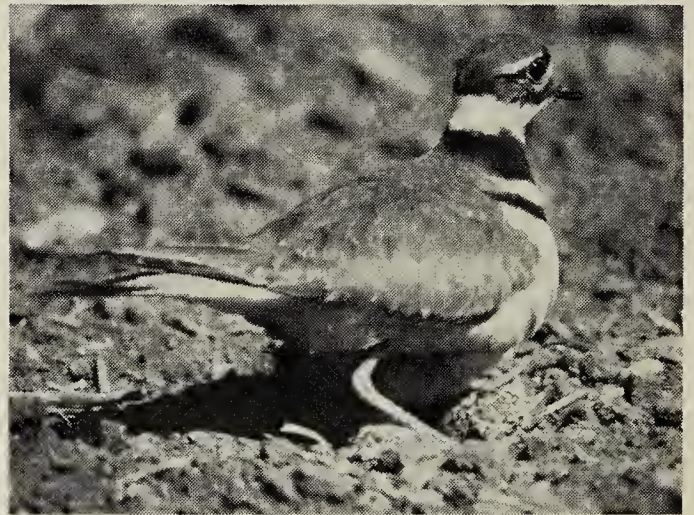
Waterfowl such as the large Canada Goose to the smaller Mallard, Lesser Scaup, Redhead and American Wigeon can be seen throughout the park, but they aren't the only birds in the park. The ever common Rock Dove (pigeon), House Sparrow, and Black-billed Magpie live in the park all year round, while the Common Crow likes to get out of the cold and migrates to the warmth of the south during the long, cold winter.

The enthused bird watcher who likes "a little more action" can walk over to a group of small willows to observe a Myrtle and Yellow Warbler, and Song Sparrow. Is that a Common Yellowthroat at the back?

You notice a group of sturdy elms further on and continue your pleasant journey. You're almost there when you hear a sonorous tapping and eight metres up a half-dead elm is the black-"moustached" Common Flicker searching for minute insects which bore

under the coarse bark. You watch this magnificent bird and continue your trek when oddly you catch a glimpse of a smaller relative of the flicker, the petite Downy Woodpecker.

If you walk about another hundred metres you are in the midst of a vast marsh. Roosting on the numerous cattails are the abundant Red-winged and Yellow-headed Blackbirds summoning their mates. Aren't those the familiar Killdeer and Lesser Yellowlegs on the opposite shore?



Killdeer.

Lorne Scott

The songs of the birds and the peacefulness of the tranquil water urges you to continue but you must head back. But wait — what was that; you listen intently, you hear a dim but near ker-whee. You listen again. In front of you shoots up the very shy Sora, a rare sight! You stand stunned; you shake your head to clear it, let the ol' heart regain its once unified rhythm and stand in amazement.

Turning back is the hard part but still there are ample chances ahead to see many more species of birds which live throughout the park. Ahead you hear the nattering of terns. Flying overhead is a group of about ten Common Terns. They are in search of small fish which lurk in the water below. Following the terns are a pair of Tree Swallows which will have no part of the tern's feeding frenzy.

Farther on you see some American Coots awkwardly lifting off the rippleless water. Just behind the coots is a small group of Ring-billed Gulls resting in the warmth of the sun.

You can see your car now and turn for a last look at this natural habitat park — well, until tomorrow!

If this is just a little more than you bargained for you can always go for a leisurely walk around the display ponds or just sit on one of the benches and enjoy the view. The display ponds, lo-

cated on Lakeshore Drive across from the Centre of the Arts, are open to the public from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. A display panel at the ponds assists visitors in identifying and studying waterfowl such as Snow and White-fronted Geese, Whistling swans, Pintails and many more. But please remember the birds of Wascana Waterfowl Park are wild. Please respect this, because it's their park too!

BELCHER, M. 1980. Birds of Regina. Sask. Nat. History Soc. Spec. Publ. No. 12. 151 pages.

ROBBINS, C. et al. 1966. Birds of North America. Golden Press. New York, N.Y. 340 pages.

— *Paul Chytyk*, 115 Rink Ave., Regina, Saskatchewan (grade 9).

Do you have a favorite nature spot? Why don't you write us about it and what you see there? — *Paule B. Hjertaas*, 919 Cook Crescent, Regina, Saskatchewan. S4X 2L9



American Coot.

Fred Lahrman