

PROVINCIAL NOTES

Arthur Ward has sent us particulars of the bird banding trap he uses at Burnham, "right on the bare prairie apart from any bush area." Last year he banded 51 birds but this year has only taken 24 as with an abundance of water in the vicinity the birds were less attracted to that within the trap. Two robins retaken this year, had bands dated 1940 and 1941 and a Barn Swallow banded in 1941 returned to the same nesting place. His list includes Says Phoebe, Lark Sparrow and Spotted Towhee, species we never, or else rarely see in the north-eastern part of Saskatchewan.

From Wolseley comes the story of a wren, tame enough to perch on the head or hands of members of the Garden family. J. R. Garden writes: "This past summer we had wrens nesting at the back of our house. The parent birds would often fly in the porch to catch flies and got so friendly that one day my daughter, when watching them feed their young, held out her hand and the male bird jumped on it and started to peck it. I too held out my hand and he did the same thing and then I offered him a green caterpillar which he ate from my fingers. He would often perch on my head and peck it or he would sit on a bough about a foot from my face as though he had a notion to go for my eyes. Sometimes he would sing but most often he seemed in a fighting attitude. The female bird could not be persuaded to come near us and as soon as the young left the nest her mate too would have nothing more to do with us.

Although hunting big game near Arborfield last November, Dr. R. W. Kirkby of Prince Albert brought back a tiny animal trophy which is now mounted and on view in the Provincial Museum.

According to the doctor it happened like this: one evening a suspicious noise was heard coming from the bread box suspended from the limb of a tree just outside the cabin door. The irate hunters, suspecting a rat, failed to capture the intruder in a first attempt but later on that night got it with a well-aimed blow and found to their dismay the visitor was a Flying Squirrel.

The point of interest to Dr. Kirkby was the nocturnal habit of this animal, as he had previously believed "that all squirrels went to bed with the light" and he thinks that perhaps some of our readers may be under the same impression.

Flying Squirrels are apparently more common than is usually supposed. They are distinctly nocturnal in habit and are to be found throughout the wooded parts of western Canada. Quite recently in "Chickadee Notes" in the Winnipeg Free Press, there was an account of a Flying Squirrel which had occupied a bird house for two years at a Manitoba lakeside cottage. The editor of this column, A. G. Lawrence, points out that "this tiny animal has large lustrous eyes, as becomes a night prowler, tiny ears and thick velvety fur in buff-brown tones above and pure white below. Wide membranes join the fore and hind limbs and on these with legs outstretched the little glider 'flies' from tree to tree."