

INFORMATION PLEASE

Purple Martins have taken so readily to nesting boxes in the West that we almost forget that holes and hollows in forest trees are the original nesting habitat of this species. In July, 1941, L. T. McKim discovered a colony of Martins nesting in a gully at Melville Beach on Crooked Lake. The birds were using old flicker holes in dead poplars.

This year, on Aug. 19, Mrs. Priestly and Miss Lloyd saw a tremendous gathering of Purple Martins on wires and buildings at the Yorkton Fair Grounds. Local birds nesting in bird boxes could not have accounted for more than a few of the number seen, so this huge congregation must either have collected from a very large area, or else there must exist many more "wild" nesting places such as Mr. McKim describes than we have previously suspected. Has anyone else come across a colony of Martins in the wild?

What is the Magpie situation in other parts of the province? In the Yorkton district we have noted a marked increase of these handsome but nevertheless rather undesirable birds.

One evening early in August a bat was discovered hanging from a branch of one of the boulevard elms on Wallace Ave., and was thoughtlessly destroyed before an irate junior member of our society arrived on the scene. This bat, with silver tips to its black fur, was apparently a specimen of the Silver-haired Bat. A few years ago Jack Culver, now with the United States Air Force, caught a Red Bat in one of the local elevators and that is the extent of our knowledge of bats in this area. Perhaps someone can provide a few notes on the distribution of these little known creatures.

We should be glad to receive any nature items from local newspapers for our files and for use in "The Blue Jay."

Do Bitterns vary their diet in early summer by adding the eggs or young of smaller marsh birds to their menu? On June 8 some of the younger members of our society were searching for a Black Tern's nest at the "Muskeg" when a Bittern suddenly rose out of the reeds closely pursued by two infuriated Red-winged Blackbirds. One bird, apparently the female, soon fell out but the other bird kept up the chase till both were out of sight behind some trees.

Incidentally, it might be mentioned that after reducing all the Terns in the marsh to a state of absolute frenzy and disturbing every nesting duck, a Tern's nest with one egg was finally discovered by Vernon Barnes. The nest was on a hummock of mud, just near the extreme edge of the reed bed close to open water.

With reference to Mr. Ward's letter on Page 5, it would be interesting to have a complete list of bird banders in the province. We should like to hear from anyone doing this work