



THE **BLUE JAY**

Official Bulletin
of The
YORKTON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY ✓

Editor: Isabel M. Priestly

OFFICERS:

Honorary President:
L. T. McKim, K.C.—Melville

President:
Mrs. I. M. Priestly

Vice-President:
J. R. Foreman

Secretary-treasurer:
C. Stuart Houston

Directors:
Miss Pauline Summers
Miss Gladys Fraser
W. A. Brownlee
Harvey Beck

OBJECTS:

To foster an active interest
in every branch of nature study,
and to promote the conservation
of all wild life; also to act
as a connecting link
between nature lovers in

Saskatchewan

SECRETARY'S ADDRESS:

Box 642,
Yorkton, Sask.

Membership fee 50c per year

VOLUME 3, No. 1. ✓

OCT. NOV. DEC. 1944

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

1944-1948

As we start volume three of the "Blue Jay" we want to send greetings to old friends and extend a warm welcome to new members. We hope these new members will soon feel quite at home in our "Blue Jay" circle and send in reports and comments so that our bulletin may present a more and more comprehensive picture of Saskatchewan wild life.

In the Yorkton district we have had a beautiful summer with no extremes of temperature or weather - even mowquitos were not a severe worry! This last blessing was due to the fact that, owing to a lack of snow last winter and the small spring rainfall, most of the pot holes and little sloughs were dry all summer. For this reason, even though in greater numbers, duck broods had to seek the larger bodies of water and were not as much in evidence as in 1943 when every wayside ditch supported a family of mallards or blue-winged teal. In fact the general bird picture is most encouraging, larger shore birds - willets, godwits and upland plovers - are greatly increasing in numbers; all bird life seems on the upswing.

In short, the bird situation shows the result of a marked general interest in bird life during the last decade. Plant life, and the countryside as a whole, have not fared as well as the birds, and we feel that the time has come for more vigorous publicity with regard to the need for conservation. As soon as gasoline becomes more plentiful, people will be flocking to the most remote corners of the dominion and, unless it can be impressed on the great mass of the public that they, and they alone, are responsible for preserving the beauty of the out of doors, the outlook is indeed a sorry one.

This point has been stressed in several articles which have appeared in the Regina Leader-Post in recent months. H.C. Andrews, president of the Regina Natural History Society, writing about the beauties of Kenosee, states "The maintenance of our parks cannot be left to the management and the government. Their care and conservation should be regarded by every visitor as a personal obligation." One article on the need for greater protection of our native wild flowers, by Dorothy Morrison, Balcarres, was so outstanding that we are reproducing it in this issue of the "Blue Jay" for the benefit of members who may not have read it in the "Leader."

So much has been written about conservation, yet the best summing up of the whole matter was penned nearly a century ago by John Ruskin, long before anybody was troubling very much about the wastage of natural resources. "God has given us the earth for our life. It is a great entail. IT BELONGS AS MUCH TO THOSE WHO COME AFTER US AS TO US; and we have no right, by anything that we do, or neglect to do, to involve them in unnecessary penalties or to deprive them of benefits which are theirs by right."

And now to return for a minute to our "Blue Jay." As we have said our membership continues to grow. We have introduced one or two new features and we should welcome frank comments and criticism. Write and tell us what you like, or what you don't like, in our bulletin and let us have suggestions for its improvement. We are but amateurs too, and working with all of you to increase a greater knowledge of, and interest in, our native wild life. My own personal belief is that the solution of the whole problem of conservation lies in education. No one harms or is careless with, anything in which they are truly interested.

Isabel M. Priestly,
President,
Yorkton Natural History Society.