

Stuart lists many birds that he has observed during the summer and fall, at Moose Jaw, Regina, Katepwa and Saskatoon. He was particularly interested in Nuthatches which he saw at Saskatoon from October 2 to October 21. There were ten of them, at least four being Red-breasted. One little fellow was so tame that he almost was able to touch him with outstretched hand.

TORCH RIVER NOTES  
WHISTLING SWANS IN MIGRATION

C. Stuart Francis

I would like to comment on my observations relating to the migration southward of Whistling Swans and the close proximity to freeze-up. I have noted that within a week at the most, after swans have been migrating south, freeze-up usually occurs. As a rule they migrate over this area early in November, but this fall several flocks were seen within a few hours on October 15th which was followed by a general heavy frost as if winter had set in. But the weather now (November 6) is unusually mild again and temperatures have risen to sixty degrees. It is quite apparent, then, that the Whistling Swan likes his far northern home so well that he is loath to leave until forced to do so by the advent of real wintry weather.

The only summer bird resident still with us at this time on my farm are the Juncos, although Robins were observed a couple of days ago, and may possibly yet be seen again this fall. Quite a number of these appear to hang on in the dense Jackpine forests, just north of here.

WINTER FEED SCARCE

Mr. Francis believes that many of the winter birds, in his section of the province, will have difficulty finding a sufficient supply of their usual winter foods. The White Spruce and the native Maples especially have practically no seed. The upland game birds, however, will have a break, for Rose Hips are very plentiful. Unless the winter snows are unusually deep these birds will fare quite well.

BLUEBIRDS AT SCOTT

Mr. F. Rouse, of the Experimental Station, was quite interested to find a Mountain Bluebird's nest with six eggs in it on May 15. It was cleverly concealed under a circular saw bench, in a small box attached under the table. When he visited the nest again on May 29 the eggs had hatched and all was well. He had sincerely hoped that the young could be reared without mishap, as this was the parents' second attempt at home building.

Their first nest was built in the twine can on a binder, in part of a ball of twine. Apparently someone needed twine, and felt that it could be put to better use than serving as a foundation of a mere Bluebird's nest. However that may be, it was thrown out and the twine taken. Unfortunately the second attempt was no more successful than the first. Apparently some children found the nest as it also was taken and the birds disappeared while they were still in the pin-feather stage. Mr. Rouse was very sorry that the birds were not successful as they are not common in the Scott district. As far as he knows that was their first attempt at nesting on the Farm. The old birds disappeared after their unfortunate experience and no Bluebirds were seen again until this fall.

CATS AND ROBINS

"We had proof," writes Mr. F. Rouse, of Scott, "that cats rob nests at night. Robins had built a nest in a Manitoba Maple, ten feet from the ground and two feet from our window. During the night of June 24 we heard a stray cat quite close to the house and a little later were startled by something coming down the window, scratching its claws on the glass. On going out the next morning I was sorry to find two of the four young robins lying dead on the ground. Each had been bitten and the nest was empty.

The season was ruined for this pair of robins, as a first nest on the electric wires near the house, had been robbed by grackles."

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

On September 20, four Mountain Bluebirds stopped for a rest at Mr. Rouse's home, followed by three more a week later. Hundreds of crows were seen migrating south-east with a north-west wind behind them (September 20). The Brown Thrashers were still in the vicinity, but the last of the Flickers passed through a couple of days before. Barn Swallows were then quite common, but the last were seen two days later.

Red-breasted Nuthatches and thrushes were seen on October 2. The last crow was seen October 8. On the 9th and 10th, Song Sparrows, Meadowlarks, Cowbirds and Blackbirds were still around while at the same time Juncos, Snowbirds and Black-capped Chickadees put in an appearance. Starlings staying during the greater part of October. The last Robin was seen on the 18th. Twenty-five Snowbirds arrived on the 23rd followed by a female Evening Grosbeak on the 28th and a Bohemian Waxwing on November 6.

At the time of writing (November 7) hundreds of geese and ducks were reported west of Scott.

- - - - -  
IT WAS RETURNED

A leg-band, thin with age and broken with wear, was found by Len Dieger, July 11, while on a field trip from the Museum to a small island off the beach of Long Lake, near Imperial. The fact that it was found near the shore and was not covered, indicates that it was lost this summer. The number of the band proves that it was put on a young Pelican at Kandahar, Saskatchewan, on July 1, 1937, by Fred Bard, Director of our Provincial Museum.

- - - - -

WANTED

We are very desirous of obtaining every issue of the BLUE JAY in order to complete our file. It is quite necessary that we should have these for reference purposes. If any of our readers can spare copies, we would like to procure:

- Volume I, Numbers 1, 3 and 4
- Volume II, Numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4
- Volume III, Numbers 2 and 4.

- - - - -