

INSECTS AND SPIDERS



In our April to June issue, Mrs. John Hubbard of Grenfell, reported having seen an exhibition of acrobatic flying by medium sized butterflies, orange in color with black bars and white edgings on the wings. She asked if these might be Monarch Butterflies.

In this connection, Mrs. F. Bilsbuty, also of Grenfell, writes: "These were not Monarchs but a species known as Painted Lady. I would suggest that anyone seeing the caterpillars of these butterflies secure a few and put them in a box. They will eat Hollyhock leaves or Thistle. It is interesting to watch them make their crysalis. These are very beautiful. Some are gold or bronze or mother-of-pearl. Painted Lady Butterflies were plentiful this summer. I have seen very few of the Mourning Cloak, Monarch, Yellow Swallow-tail, Banded Purple, Buckeye and Clouded Blue this year."

LOUSE FLIES

During banding operations this summer Mr. Arthur Ward noticed an insect on an Olive-backed Thrush as big as a House Fly. It was persistently trying to get into the feathers of the bird. Thinking that it had just happened along, he brushed it off several times, but each time it slipped back again. Later, when banding a Chipping Sparrow, the same thing happened again. Mr. Ward caught a specimen, slightly bronze in color, and sent it to the Dominion Entomological Laboratory, Indian Head. There it was identified as belonging to the family Hippoboscidae (Louse Flies). For more definite identification it was again sent to Mr. A. R. Brooks, Entomological Laboratory, Saskatoon. He identified the species as Ornithomyia. These insects suck blood from the birds.

INSECTS DESTROY TAMARAC

C. F. Stuart

Some of my neighbors and myself at Torch River have noted that considerable damage is being done to stands of Tamarac by insect pests. The damage is caused by considerable numbers of caterpillars which eat the fine foliage during the late summer, or possibly from July 1 onwards. I feel certain that if this destruction is continued for a few more years, the many very fine stands of half-grown Tamarac to be found in the north will face destruction for the second time within the present century.

THE STRENGTH OF A SPIDER'S WEB

"Whether a spider's web could hold and retain a small bird in the open, I could not say," writes Mr. Ward, "but on two occasions have released birds of immature size; one a Chipping Sparrow and the other a Clay-coloured Sparrow, that had become enmeshed in the corner of the arbour. The web, in each case, seemed to stick around them, leaving the birds helplessly hanging there."