

PROTECTION FOR THE RED LILY

"There is no more gorgeous sight in nature than a field of Red Lilies in bloom in early July. Even the chance glimpse of one or two along a roadside or among trees in open woods is a picture to enjoy.

"There was a time when the Red Lily bloomed in vast numbers everywhere. Then it began to decrease, partly due to the increased cultivation of the land. That was inevitable as people surged west. The inexcusable procedure of people, professing to love wild flowers, actually tearing up every lily in sight, is another matter. Red flowers are not very common and the very showiness of our lily has all but proved its undoing. When flowers decrease as the population increases, the smaller number of flowers must be left for a larger number of people to enjoy. Only through education and public sentiment can the Red Lily be saved."- From "Wild Flowers of the Prairie Provinces" by Elizabeth Burnett Flock.

Dick Bird also made a strong appeal for the preservation of the Red Lily, Saskatchewan's Floral Emblem, when he was speaking in Yorkton in February. (And incidentally his "stills" of this lovely blossom are among some of the most beautiful examples of color photography we have ever seen.) We ask all members of our Natural History Society to take an active interest in the question of Wild Flower Protection and to spread the slogan of "Enjoy but do not Pick", both for the Red Lily and many other prairie flowers. Even the little "crocus" is becoming less abundant every year.

A SPARROW HAWK PET -by LeRoy Simmons, Maymont.

Last spring I discovered a Sparrow Hawk's nest in what was evidently an abandoned flicker hole. It was about ten feet from the ground, in a tall stub, set well back among a group of poplars, but so placed that the entrance hole faced a large open meadow bordering on a wheat field.

When I found the nest it contained five eggs. Later one more was laid. I had always thought that the Sparrow Hawk did not incubate until a full clutch of eggs had been laid but evidently I was wrong as several days elapsed between the hatchings. Only three of the eggs hatched and two of the young were so much larger that they smothered the third nestling. I watched the mother bird feeding them by the hour - her mate never assisted her in the task of feeding the young ones. Grasshoppers formed the main item of their diet but mice, large moths, and quite a number of yellow warblers, wrens and chipping sparrows were also brought to them.

The two young were male and female and even at this early stage, the difference in plumage was well marked. Finally I picked out the young male bird and brought him home. After hand feeding him for some time on grasshoppers and sparrow meat he soon became very tame. He would fly about the yard all day and sleep in the elevator office at night. During the day he would come to see me at any time. With the approach of Fall he showed no desire to migrate so when the days began to get really cold I shipped him to my friend, C.T. Ridley, well-known bird fancier of Winnipeg, and the last time I heard he was still chattering happily at all and everybody.

The two wintering Meadowlarks, reported in the Christmas Bird Census, both failed to survive. F. Roy of Tullis tells us that the one around his yard was picked up dead on the morning of Jan. 22 when the temperature had gone down to 54 below zero. Up to that time the bird had appeared perfectly normal and survived 35 and 40 below all the previous week. The Sheho bird also disappeared around New Year, possibly destroyed by a cat.