

SASKATCHEWAN NATURE COLUMN

"Nature", by Marion Nixon, is the title of a delightful nature column which appears every two weeks in the Saskatchewan Farmer. From her farm home at Wauchope, Mrs. Nixon writes of a wide variety of subjects- the beauty of the fresh green of the young poplars, salamanders in the cellar, butterflies, or meadow mice; in fact, anything that comes before her observant eyes. Her first column appeared April 1st, 1939, and we send her our very best wishes as she commences her fifth year as nature reporter for the Saskatchewan Farmer.

PREDATORS.

Several records in this issue of the "Blue Jay" refer to the status of various predatory birds and animals. It is heartening to realize what a much more intelligent approach is now made to this question. The whole problem of predation is most complex and needs to be made the subject of extensive scientific research. So many of the predatory creatures are unsuspected links in the chains which preserve the balance of nature, and too often in the past, wholesale destruction of a so-called "undesirable" species has brought about disastrous results.

We agree that in some extreme cases, where a species has increased out of all proportions and become an economic pest, as have the crow and magpie, wholesale methods of destruction seem advisable. But in many instances, particularly in the case of hawks and weasels, it is often quite sufficient to destroy the individual offender rather than wreck vengeance on the species as a whole. We have seen too much of the destruction of wild creatures, on hearsay or circumstantial evidence, and we ask all our members, particularly the country members, to make a most careful study of any instances of predation that may come their way.

FIFTY YEARS OF BIRD RECORDING.

We are proud to include as a member of our society Mrs. C.W. Cates of McLean, Sask. For fifty years Mrs. Cates has been forwarding bird migration dates to the U.S. Biological Survey (now part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.) As Miss C. Ester Wemyss she sent in her first reports in 1893 from the family home at Reaburn, Manitoba, and later from Neepawa and Qu'Appelle. Since 1915 her observations have come from McLean. In 1896 a sister, Margaret (now Mrs. D.C. Dickson), sent records from Neepawa and still reports regularly from Wisetown, Sask. We hope to give a fuller account of the remarkable record of these two ladies in the next issue of the "Blue Jay."

NEW BIRD BOOK.

An outstanding new book dealing with wild life is the recently published "Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America", by F.K. Kortwright and illustrated by T.M. Shortt, a native son of Winnipeg and former member of the Manitoba Natural History Society. We have not yet seen a copy of this book, but it is evidently the most comprehensive and at the same time readable book yet published on these species. "Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America" may be obtained in Canada through MacMillan Company, St. Martin's House, Toronto at \$5.50. It was published in the United States by the American Wildlife Institute, price \$4.50 U.S. funds. B. W. Cartwright, Chief Naturalist for Ducks Unlimited, in reviewing it in the Winnipeg Tribune, said that "Every naturalist and bird lover will find it an essential addition to his library."

There is far greater beauty in a wild flower growing in its natural setting than in any wild flower plucked. Let us remember Nature's garden is one we share with others.