

THE BLUE JAY

The official organ of the Yorkton Natural History Society
Editor - Isabel M. Priestly

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We feel that in this spring issue of the "Blue Jay", first place should be given to the Whooping Crane (White Crane) whose survival now lies in the balance. This spectacular bird, tallest of all North American birds, winters around the Gulf of Mexico and formerly nested extensively in marshes of the prairies and the northwest. Now its former haunts know it no more - it made too attractive a target for the thoughtless gunner in the early days, and the unscrupulous collector in more recent years. One of the early American naturalists, writing in 1811 of the spring migration of these birds, stated that the clangor of the endless legions of Whooping Cranes passing high in the air was almost deafening and "filled the mind with wonder". Today it is doubtful if as many as 50 of these mighty birds remain in existence, and it will be a miracle if, as a species, they can be saved for posterity.

As most members know a special effort was made last year to protect the Whooping Crane and to obtain information as to the locality of any last remaining nesting grounds. The survey, sponsored by the National Audubon Society and the Fish and Wildlife Service of the United States in co-operation with Canadian Government authorities, is being continued this year, and Fred Bard, Curator of the Saskatchewan Museum has been appointed as Canadian Collaborator. Dr. Olin S. Pettingill, Jr., of Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota will be in charge of field investigations.

Meanwhile, all members can help by seeing that information regarding the Whooping Crane situation is generally known. And, IF by chance any of the birds are observed standing in a slough resting after their long migration, make every effort to see that they are unmolested and report their occurrence at once to the Provincial Museum, Regina. In case of a flight observation, note carefully the direction in which the birds are going and report.

Isabel M. Priestly,
President.

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- 25 -