

ICHNEUMON FLY

The ability of Cliff Shaw, of Yorkton, to furnish the names of insects, birds, flowers, reptiles and mammals is well known not only in his home town but throughout many parts of the province. Day after day material comes to him for identification. If he cannot do this himself, as sometimes happens, he always knows who can make the identification and immediately writes a letter to the expert in that particular line.

Among the latest specimens was a wasp-like insect, sent by Mrs. H. Roach, of Okla, Saskatchewan. In her letter she says in part: "I found this insect in the house and it looked so bright and shiny that I am sure it was newly emerged. We burn only wood and these things seem to get into the house via that source. Will you please identify it for me?"

Mr. Shaw sent the insect to Mr. A. P. Arnason at the Dominion Entomological Laboratory at Saskatoon. Early in May this reply was received from Mr. Arnason:

"The specimen sent proved to be one of the insect parasites belonging to the family Ichneumonidae. These are, generally speaking, beneficial insects since they parasitize and eventually kill other insects, most of which are injurious.

The Ichneumonid may have been brought in in a cocoon with the wood, or it may have been actually a parasite on one of the wood-boring insects; in which case it would have been in the wood itself and happened to emerge in the house. Mrs. Roach need have no fears that the insect is harmful or injurious in any way. Although it is long and slender and may have the appearance of being a wasp it actually cannot sting man or domestic animals."

THE GRASSHOPPER MOUSE

Mr. J. E. McGinnis, of Yorkton, brought two small mammals to Mr. Shaw on May 10. These he sent to Mr. Fred Bard, director of the provincial museum. Mr. Bard replied as follows:

"The mouse is the Grasshopper Mouse and pinpoints Yorkton as another location from which we have not recorded it. It is my regret that we are not in a position to determine the geographical variation of the other mammal sent, a Pocket Gopher. We apparently have three species of pocket gophers in Saskatchewan and two might be obtainable from the Yorkton area.

I suggest that Mr. McGinnis, if he is interested in small mammals, take specimens from his area and submit them to us. These in turn will be submitted to authorities for sub-specific form. It will be necessary, however, to take the stomach contents out to ensure safe passage in mail transit. We find that small mammals are very difficult to do anything with unless they have been skinned in the field. They last only a few hours and then are absolutely worthless."

BARN RATS

These rodents are now very numerous around the mink ranches on Chitek Lake and around the barns at Chitek. Meadow Lake has been free of these pests but a couple of months ago a single rat was caught here. Its mate is still on the loose.