

INFORMATION PLEASE.

We should like to have any reports of the Cliff or Eave Swallow, (the swallow which builds a mud nest on the smooth face of a barn or farmhouse). As stated in the second number of the "Blue Jay", this is one bird which has greatly decreased in numbers in the last thirty years.

Having asked for information regarding the Great Blue Heron, we should now like some reports on the Black-crowned Night Heron. The latter is not as well known as its larger relative, but seems to be generally distributed over the province. The Black-crowned Night Heron stands about twenty inches high and is a handsome bird with greenish-black back, grey wings and white underparts, and in the breeding season two long plumes extend from the back of the head down over the back. Young birds are brown in color, striped with cream, and closely resemble the Bittern but have trace of yellow in their feathering. Like other herons the Black-crowned nest in colonies, apparently always on the ground (in marshes) in western Canada, although in the east they are found nesting in trees.

It is rather interesting to note that the first record of the Night Heron for Western Canada was made by Donald Gunn in 1868 when collecting birds' eggs for the Smithsonian Institute in the Shoal Lake district, north-west of Winnipeg. Donald Gunn was the grandfather of J. Gunn, well-known resident of Devil's Lake (Good Spirit Lake), some thirty miles north-west of Yorkton, and himself a keen naturalist and member of our society.

How far north does the breeding range of the Chestnut-collared Longspur extend? We have only once seen this bird near Yorkton and Mr. McKim has but two records for Melville. However, last summer W. Niven came across two nesting colonies of these small birds, so typical of the open prairie, on his farmland near Sheho. "Their song", he writes, "is a sweet tinkling melody. The bird rises from the ground with undulating flight, typical of the longspurs, to a height of from ten to fifteen feet. It then spreads its wings and glides down to earth, singing as it drops." (The male chestnut-collared Longspur has a black breast, and brown back, with chestnut collar and white outer tail feathers.)

How many members know the Chimney Swift? It is not a common bird in Saskatchewan, in fact no definite record had been made for this species until F.G. Bard secured two specimens for the Provincial Museum from the Pasquia Hills in 1939. Last winter M.G. Street forwarded us a swift's nest taken from the chimney of a house in Nipawin. This nest was most interesting - a frail half-saucer shaped structure, built of small twigs all cemented together with saliva so that the whole thing looked as if it were varnished. It has long been a problem to naturalists how the swift - a bird entirely aerial in habit - collects the twigs for its nest. Does it break them off dead branches with its feet or beak? Young swifts are said to be some of the ugliest youngsters in the bird world.

In answer to our query on Starlings, letters received show that this newcomer has now spread all over the settled parts of the province, but so far no one has mentioned seeing a large winter flock turning and twisting with the remarkable coordination displayed by these birds when in flocks. "Lovely birds, but so dirty and noisy in their habits" is one correspondent's comment on the starlings.

"Nature has a place for every predatory animal and bird of prey. All are a part of our wild life, and each performs an essential duty in regulating the abundance of the species on which they prey." - Tony Lascelles.

INFORMATION PLEASE (continued)

BATS. We have received some more notes on Bats. Last June 15, while cutting pulpwood on the Saskatchewan River, N. Carvell of Nipawin felled a thick-topped spruce. As the tree struck the ground a bat fell out of the branches. On examination of this bat, which was in a semi-stunned condition, Mr. Carvell discovered that there were two naked young ones clinging tightly to its breast. The bat was lying on its back and when turned over with a stick quickly turned over onto its back again. After about $\frac{3}{4}$ hour it flew into the top of a nearby spruce, apparently fully recovered from its fall. This bat was said to be about six inches long and gray in color.

As was stated in the last number of the "Blue Jay", very little is known about the habits of bats but apparently all female bats carry their young round with them for some time after they are born. When they are a little older the mother bat may leave them on some roof or branch while she goes on foraging flights, so any tree or building frequently visited by a bat during the course of an evening is worth examining to see if there is a young bat hanging there. And another interesting point is that in many species of bats, the females congregate in nurseries in hollow trees, barns or vacant houses to give birth to their young and from these colonies male bats are excluded. The colony of bats which F. Roy of Tullis described was probably one of these bat nurseries.

And with regard to the fact that so far, apparently, no hibernating bat has ever been reported from the prairies. When Dick Bird was giving a talk in the basement of the Zion Church, Moose Jaw, early in May, "a bat put on an aerial display, complete with power-dives, loops, flips and rolls, so that it almost stole the show." We are wondering if this was possibly a hibernating bat just waking up; in Eastern Canada the basements of city churches are often a favorite winter slumbering place for certain species.

Evidently our previous notes on bats were of interest to outsiders as we have received from Dr. A. L. Rand of the National Museum of Canada a short sketch of the Bats recorded from Saskatchewan based on specimens and records in the Museum at Ottawa. Dr. Rand points out that so little work has been done on these animals in the west that anyone interested could probably collect several species that so far have never been found in the province. The National Museum is anxious to receive both notes on the habits of bats, as well as actual specimens. We will be glad to furnish further details on collecting specimens for museum purposes, or if anyone comes across any bats this summer and will send them to us, we will forward them to Ottawa. On the back page of this number of the bulletin, we are printing Dr. Rand's list of Saskatchewan Bats (from records in the National Museum).

We quote the following notes from Marion Nixon's column, "Nature", in the Saskatchewan Farmer - "Speaking of mice, I wonder how many people have come upon what is in one way, our most remarkable mouse. I mean that little yellowish-brown fellow with white underparts and the extraordinarily long tail and hind legs like a miniature kangaroo - the jumping mouse.

In summer it feeds and nests in the long grass, but no runnels show the way to its home, for our jumping mouse makes three foot leaps with ease, clearing six feet or more on occasion. They are mostly nocturnal, which may account for their apparent rarity; but often the men will find one when they are haying or harvesting. The sleeping mouse is disturbed and leaps frantically for the haven afforded by the uncut grass. In the fall the Jumping Mice get very fat and unlike the majority of our native mice, hibernate underground."

As we have said before, we want to get more reports on our animals. Perhaps some members when away at a summer cottage may come across a Flying Squirrel. These little creatures, although nocturnal in habit, are said to show no fear when investigated with a flashlight.