

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

Visitors welcome!

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MARCH MEETING

Monday, March 3, 1969, at 8.15 p.m.
 at the
 ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Speaker: MR. JOHN GRIFFITHS

Subject: YOUR FORESTS AND YOU (illustrated with colour slides)

Mr. Griffiths, a forester on the staff of the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, will discuss the York County Forest, in connection with which he is a specialist. (This reforestation area is known to a number of our members as the 'Vivian Forest.') His address will provide pertinent and up-to-date facts relative to private land forestry and the advice available to private individuals, and will also touch upon forestry in relation to recreation.

AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS Tuesday, March 11, 8.15 p.m., Eaton Auditorium, Harry Pederson: 'The Bahamas - Top to Bottom.' 'An interesting tour of the delectable Bahama Islands...a film-story of undersea life...an unforgettable film, presented with an informative and humorous narrative.'

MARCH OUTINGS

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| Sunday
March 2
10 a.m. | <u>REAR OF BOYD CONSERVATION AREA - Birds</u> Leader - Mr. Paul Catling
From the intersection of Highways 400 and 7 go west on 7 about 1 1/2 miles to Pine Valley Drive, go north on this road about 2 miles and park on the roadside where the road turns right at a dead end. Drivers with space and passengers requiring transportation please call Walt or Lil Hutton at 782-5955. |
| Sunday
March 30
8 a.m. &
10.30 a.m. | <u>LONG POINT - Birds</u> Leaders - Mr. & Mrs. Earl & Eve Damude
This is the whistling swan regional field gathering weekend of the F.O.N. A bus will be chartered for the members of the T.F.N.C. The fare will be \$5. The bus will leave the terminal at Bay & Dundas at 8 A.M. with no further stops for pick-ups and will arrive back in Toronto around 5.30 P.M. Members wishing to travel by bus may purchase tickets at the regular March meeting or by phoning Mr. & Mrs. Earl Damude at 694-9007 for reservations. Those driving should go west from Port Rowan to Highway 59 and south on the causeway to the bridge. The bus should arrive at approximately 10.30 A.M. Bring lunch. |

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Again, to anyone interested, the next two meetings of the Michigan Entomology Club will be held on Saturday, March 1, and Saturday, March 29, at 2 p.m. in Room #4 of the ROM.

Outings Chm: Mr. Walter Hutton, 782-5955

*** Please note: No meeting of Botany Group in March.

President - Mr. John A. Gingrich

Secretary - Mrs. H. C. Robson
49 Craighurst Ave.
Toronto 12 (481-1260)

481-0260



NEWSLETTER

Number 242

Authorized as 2nd Class Mail by
The Post Office Department, Ottawa
and for payment of postage in cash

March, 1969

Mailed from 1164 Broadview Avenue, Toronto 6

MOCKINGBIRDS - HERE AND THERE

Years ago, I made a month long birdwatching trip to Florida, disguising it as a holiday. I took along two small children, a tired wife, a tired VW, a very large immensely unwieldy tent, and a broken back. It was a memorable trip.

One of my most persistent and mostly pleasant memories was of the mockingbirds. They were forever in my consciousness, both visually and vocally. Looking back through the little journal that I kept of the trip, I find that they were forever in my notes as well. For example:

Washington: I was impressed by the mockingbirds singing outside the Capitol.

Delaware: I made a mad scurry into the bushes to discover who the singer was.
It was a mockingbird and it sang continuously all the time we were eating.

Curles Neck Farm: The bushes along the lane were teeming with mockingbirds.

Amelia River marshes: Mockingbirds were now so common that they were almost a pest
(later I crossed out the 'almost.')

St. Augustine (AIA): Finally after many false stops to look at mockingbirds I discovered two scrub jays on the wires.

Sanibel Island: All the wires were covered with mockingbirds which I scarcely bothered to look at. (Next day) I discovered that the mockingbirds I scarcely looked at were really all migrant shrikes.

Since that wonderful trip my observations of mockingbirds have been few and far between: a few at Point Pelee and once on Elmcrest Rd. on the last day of the year (along with a Harris's sparrow.)

The Toronto area often has its wintering mockingbird but apparently not this winter. However things seem to be much different elsewhere. Gus Yaki, writing in the Niagara Falls Nature Club Bulletin says that 'it is now routine to observe casually 5/6 individuals on an outing.' In fact, he is planning a 'Peninsula Mockingbird Outing, to see mockingbirds, their habitats and locations.' (Held February 23.) Last winter Gus personally saw over 20 different mockingbirds. In the February Wood Duck of the Hamilton Naturalists' Club he writes, 'almost all wintering reports of this bird occurred in proximity of a sizeable hedge of Multiflora Rose and open water, either a natural stream or a heated bird bath. The small rose 'hip' is apparently prized for food by this species, and at the same time the plant offers almost predator-proof protection. Other foods reportedly eaten locally by this species are the berries of juniper, apple, pear, mountain ash, flowering crab, flowering dogwood, cranberry viburnum, European spindle-tree (Euonymus), asparagus and fire-thorn (Pyracantha).'

So there you have it from an expert. A rose hip a day makes the mockers stay - and don't forget the warm baths.

Then maybe we'll increase our Toronto Christmas numbers from zero to something like Niagara Falls (12) or maybe just Hamilton's (2).

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Since writing the above lines, I was pleased to receive a letter from Mrs. Margaret Winnett of 56 Otter Crescent. She has some interesting things to say about bird feeders, mockingbirds, Harris's sparrow, and many other visitors. Here is her letter:

In spite of house sparrows, starlings, squirrels, and a city environment, we maintain a feeding station. Discouraging at times! But interesting things do turn up.

One winter it was a mockingbird. He arrived on December 10, found a high bush cranberry, nightshade berries, wild rose hips, and bits of cut-up fruit, so decided to stay. One day he tried our mixture of dripping and seeds, and from then on it became part of his regular diet. He quickly established feeding precedence over the starlings. To rest after feeding he found a spot on the fence sheltered by a neighbour's garage where he was almost invisible in the patterned shadows of dense leafless shrubbery. He stayed with us until April. On the 16th he was missing. But on the morning of the 25th, there he was again, spick and span and handsome in his new Spring plumage. We knew it was the same bird, because he was obviously well acquainted with the possibilities of our garden, and went through his well-established routine of feeding and perching. In the afternoon I saw him poised on the fence. He paused, looked around, and flew off. That was the last we saw of him. But what a delightful winter's entertainment he had given us.

Our special visitor in the winter of '64-'65 was a brown thrasher. When he arrived on November 28 the ground was still bare, and he enjoyed scratching among the leaves of the flower border. But after a heavy snowfall would he stay? One interesting feature of a feeding station is watching the way birds adapt to unusual food, and new feeding procedures. Our thrasher learned to eat sunflower seeds. He would fly up to the feeder, stretch himself to his full height, then bring his beak down with a hammer blow on a sunflower seed. We were amazed that his neck, head and beak could stand it, for I am sure they were never intended for hammering like a woodpecker.

One day he discovered a treat. Ripe raspberries had fallen to the ground in a neighbour's garden, and were now under the snow. The thrasher probed through the snow with his long beak and had a feast, leaving the snow tinted pink and rose.

On December 21 I noted that his right wing was a little droopy, and that he had lost the greater part of his tail feathers. He was left with just a thin long spike. But he could still fly. To our delight he survived to be counted on the Christmas census. Gradually new tail feathers grew in and he seemed to be quite recovered. But if he had a weakness, it did seem to be in his tail.

February 24 he appeared, this time with a shortened tail, and what was left of it had a thin combed appearance. Was this the beginning of a moult? He stayed on till the 28th of March. Then he too disappeared for a spell. On April 17 he showed himself again, now a well-feathered normal thrasher with a respectable tail. On April 27 I watched him go through a long process of grooming himself, shaking his wings, fluffing his feathers, preening. I guess he was getting ready for a journey because that was the last we saw of him.

That same winter we watched a brown squirrel. Naturalists tell me it must have been of the grey-black variety, and I believe them. But it was unique! Brown from his nose, down his back and sides to the end of his tail, a white spot behind each ear, and his tail edged with white. He was a big fellow, well furred, a beauty, and we didn't begrudge him a share of the bird food.

Redpolls are sheer delight when they come to visit. They like the birch seeds, and always come for them in a little flock. In the tree, down to the ground for fallen seeds, back among the branches. And when they leave, the snow is patterned in the most delicate designs, like broken strands of a chain necklace loosely thrown around the tree.

During migration, many other birds visit us. One I can never forget is an indigo bunting. It spent three days with us. The exquisite beauty of this unbelievable bit of living blue!

Perhaps our rarest bird has been a male Harris's sparrow. It fed in our garden on October 3, 1967. We reported it to Jim Baillie, and four ornithologists arrived to verify it.

The winter season, December, January, February, is nearly over. It has not been a particularly good one for birds in our garden. This may be partly due to a rather persistent northern shrike. We have had three goldfinches, a tree sparrow, two mourning doves, a grackle, a flicker, male and female downy woodpecker, white breasted nuthatch, cardinals, chickadees, juncos and bluejays.

Our shrike gave me an interesting spectacle one afternoon. He was eating a sparrow. His probing, pulling and devouring were not pleasant, but still part of nature. He was on one of the lowest branches of the cranberry, a few inches above the ground. His prey kept slipping and had to be constantly hauled back up. I wondered why he didn't find a substantial branch crotch in a tree, or hook it in the hawthorn, or simply let it go the few inches to firm earth.

Perhaps we may still see some of our varieties of other winters: pine siskin, purple finch, white-throated sparrow, song sparrow, evening grosbeak, towhee, cowbird, robin, cedar waxwing, red-winged blackbird, sparrow hawk, hairy woodpecker, robin. It was thrilling one morning to look out and see six flickers all at one time, on the ground, at the feeder, and in the trees, feeding or awaiting their turns.

And, of course, there is always the possibility that a new variety might appear!

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COMING EVENTS

ROYAL CANADIAN INSTITUTE: Free Saturday evening lectures, Convocation Hall, University of Toronto, at 8.15 p.m. Further information: 922-2804.

- March 1 - 'Around the world in 90 days, Botanically speaking,' by Richard A. Howard, Director of Arnold Arboretum, Professor of Dendrology, Harvard University. Some important and interesting botanical and horticultural features of Africa, Maritius, Australia, New Guinea and Polynesia will be discussed. Illustrated with slides.
- March 8 - 'Hibernation, a case of suspended animation,' by Kenneth C. Fisher. Illustrated with colour movies and specimens.
- March 15 - 'The Evolution of Man' by Prof. W. E. Swinton. Illustrated with slides.

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM: Free Sunday films at 2 p.m.

March 2 - SOS Galapagos; The River Must Live; Henry Moore.

March 16 - World Without Sun (Jacques-Yves Cousteau's under-sea film).

F.O.N. ANNUAL MEETING - April 25-27, 1969

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TORONTO ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB - MID-WINTER WATERFOWL INVENTORY

Mr. Clive Goodwin has sent me the following results of the Toronto Ornithological Club's Mid-winter Waterfowl Inventory, taken January 12, 1969.

Route Number	1	2	4	5	6	7	Totals
Mute Swan						1	1
Canada Goose			129	100			229
Mallard		3	1284	103	581	130	2101
Black Duck	3	55	76	26	145	42	347
Gadwall			1			1	2
Pintail			1		1		2
Wood Duck				1			1
Redhead						6	6
Canvasback				6			6
Greater Scaup		925	877	1975		1532	5309
Common Goldeneye	370	5	3	89		241	708
Bufflehead	14	10	16	76		84	200
Oldsquaw	14	2450	1950	265		9	4688
Harlequin Duck			1				1
Common Merganser		61	9	1	1	16	88
 Totals	401	3509	4347	2642	728	2062	13689

Routes and Observers

1. Woodbine to Whitby
2. Don River to Bloor St., Ashbridge's
4. Toronto Island, Eastern Gap
5. Parliament St. to Humber R., W. Gap
6. Humber R., N. to Weston, Grenadier
7. Humber R. W., to Bronte

- G. Norris
 - G. Lambert
 - C. E. Goodwin, D. Corbridge, A. Dawe, P. Iden, P. Middleton, E. Tull
 - J. Jarvis
 - D. E. Perks, J. Lamey
 - J. L. Baillie, D. Fidler, N. Fidler
 - 6 -
- Compiled by C.E. Goodwin

Other Bird Notes from Clive Goodwin:

Great Blue heron - seen over the Western Gap (J. Baillie)
Green winged teal - hanging around Riverdale Zoo (Herb Southam)
Bald eagle - around the waterfront (several observers)
Roughleg and Redtailed hawks - smaller numbers than last year
Snowy owls - a few near Malton (Baillie, Mason)
Short-eared owls - on Island Airport (Goodwin et. al.)
Red-bellied woodpecker - four in Southern Ontario
Northern shrikes - very good numbers around this winter
Pine and Evening grosbeak - scattered flocks
Bohemian waxwing - several at Thistletown Hospital (David Simpson)
Other birds being reported: Red-headed woodpecker, kingfisher, flicker, red-breasted nuthatch, thrasher, robin, cedar waxwing, grackle, cowbird, mourning dove, redwings, towhees.

Thank you, Clive!

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WELCOME to the following New Members (31 January, 1969)

Mr. & Mrs. L. E. Argent, 80 Stuart Ave., W'dale; Mr. & Mrs. H. L. Bean, 129 Ashbourne Dr., Islington; Mr. & Mrs. J. S. Harris, 39 Canary Cr., Bayview Village, W'dale; Mr. R. G. Heard, 495 Spadina Rd., Tor. 10; Mr. B. L. Lapin, 5035 Hampton Ave., Montreal, P.Q.; Miss Doreen Livingstone, 49 Thorncliffe Pk. Dr., Apt. 1411, Tor. 17; Mrs. Eileen Macdonald, 241 Gainsborough Rd., Tor. 8; Dr. Joan A. Mayerle, 105 Rowena Dr., Apt. 514, Don Mills; Mr. & Mrs. G. Miljons, 19 Nuffield Dr., Scarboro; Mrs. Edith G. White, 465 Balliol St., Tor. 7.

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CONFERENCE ON CONSERVATION

The Conservation Council of Ontario announces an important Conference on Conservation in a Changing World scheduled for the Park Plaza Hotel on March 13-14, 1969. Its purpose: 'To present conservation in the context of the environment of today. To review the challenges facing conservation in the late 1960's, to examine the processes through which conservation action must develop, and to develop new perspectives for the conservationists of today.' Papers will be presented on: (1) The Technological Revolution and our Environment (2) The Impact of New Chemicals (3) The Implications of an Urban World (4) The Effluent Society - Pollution (5) Planning for the Future: Panel discussion - Implementing the Plan (6) Telling the Story - The Communication Process: Panel Discussion - Commentary from the Public of Today and Tomorrow (7) The Way We See Our World - Conservation and Attitudes (8) Dollars and Cents - Conservation and Economics (9) One World - Conservation and Ecology. You will hear leading speakers in the conservation field as well as several panel discussions. Mr. John Robarts will also speak on 'Provincial Programmes in Conservation.' For further information call Mr. Clive Goodwin, Conservation Council of Ontario, 86 King St. E. (366-1387; 366-1344).

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ALGONQUIN PARK - WHAT KIND OF PARK DO YOU WANT?

(From Toronto Globe & Mail, February 8, 1969)

'In terms of the future of Algonquin Park it is the owners of the land - the people of

Ontario who will decide...' (Prof. K. A. Armson, President, Ontario Professional Foresters Association, The Globe & Mail, Dec. 3 '68). Your Provincial Government is looking for the answer. In recent representations, from organizations and individuals, the Government was presented with two fundamentally opposed points of view: (1) That a large area of the park should be set aside primarily as wilderness, solely for the use and benefit of the public. (Mechanized equipment of all kinds would be excluded, except for park administration purposes, or in case of emergency.) (2) That logging as it is currently practiced under Department of Lands and Forests regulations should be permitted the year round throughout virtually the entire park. The Government must make an important decision on the future of Algonquin Park. It is imperative that it hear from the people now on this question. If you have any views on how the park should be managed, write to: Hon. John P. Robarts, Prime Minister of Ontario, Queen's Park, Toronto 5; Hon. Rene Brunelle, Minister of Lands and Forests, Queen's Park, Toronto 5; Your M.P.P., Queen's Park, Toronto 5. This public notice is endorsed by: Canadian Audubon Society, Canadian Youth Hostels Association; Federation of Ontario Naturalists; National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada; Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters; National Campers and Hikers Association; The Algonquin Woodlands League; Tourist Resorts of Ontario Association.

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ROSEMARY'S TRAVELS (Part III)
by Rosemary Gaymer

The birds of the Black Hills are an exciting mixture. There were the famous White-winged juncos, specialty of the Black Hills region. Mountain bluebirds, Townsend's solitaires, several absolutely maddening little flycatchers, the glorious Western tanager, both Eastern and Western kingbirds again, Lazuli buntings - turquoise, cinnamon and white versions of the Indigo buntings which were also present; the tiny Rock wrens, greyish with fine breast streaks, and a varied vocabulary. One afternoon and early evening was spent walking up and down the trails of Harney Peak, the highest of the Black Hills. Ruffed grouse were drumming in all directions, and it seemed a good opportunity, in the extensive pine woods with little undergrowth, to try and watch a performance. It took about 20 minutes before I suddenly topped a rise in the rocks and saw a male grouse standing half-back to me, on his drumming log, about 25 feet away. We froze simultaneously. Several minutes passed...and other rival males around the woods had drummed several times; my bird began to look anxious...it became hard for him not to drum as well. A few nervous flicks of his fan tail, then he turned full-back to me as if to try and forget my presence. A beady black eye glanced over his shoulder, though, and another minute or two of inactivity went by. Once or twice there were twitches in his tail, but each time he looked round at me and just couldn't continue. I began to wish he'd get on with it, as 'freezing' was frankly beginning to make my arms rather stiff! Then compulsion won: the tail fanned, he pulled himself up to full stature, puffed out his ruff, and wallopped the air against his body with a preliminary flick of his stiffly curved wings...the wings became harder, louder and faster until the action blurred, the very air in the wood seemed to vibrate, and his effort was exhausted. After a visible deep-breath effect and resettling of his feathers, he relaxed and that beady eye once again regarded me, this time almost defiantly as if to say, 'Okay, you've seen it...now scram.' I did.

The Black Hills end so suddenly it is difficult to believe it - especially on the north side. The prairie begins instantly, high and rolling prairie, with very sparse grass covering, pure clay earth which is utterly sticky in wet weather...the real 'gumbo' country. Fascinating for the birder, though. Every so often, the dull colours are punctuated by a slough, with some bright greenery around it, and a heavy population

of birds: breeding ducks - mallard, gadwall, pintail, shoveller, both teals, baldpate, canvasback and redhead. Shorebirds, too - lots of avocets, marbled godwits, willets, Wilson's phalaropes. And sparrows of diverse types - on quick roadside stops, one could see them all over, at a distance, but there was a constant wind and listening to them was not very possible. The most constant and obvious bird along the roadsides was the lark bunting. The males' stiff-winged 'butterfly' flight which accompanied their descent to earth after their towering performance while singing is really lovely to watch, the large white wing-patches flashing in the sun, in raw contrast with their otherwise totally black plumage. From the Black Hills north through both Dakotas and east again to Minnesota, the route was lined with lark buntings, on the wing or congregating on the non-stop wire fences.

Often, while watching a slough, I would have a definite feeling of being watched myself...and usually, if I looked hard enough, there would be one or two pronghorn antelope, immovable in the grass and often half hidden by a dip in the ground, regarding me and summing up the situation. So long as I moved slowly, they usually stayed around; but any sudden movement would be too much for them, especially after a long period of stillness - and they would seem to turn and bound away in a single motion, bouncing on stiff legs with white hind patches signalling their alarm.

Never be put off by the term 'Badlands,' so far as North Dakota is concerned - the area so designated is utterly delightful and a tremendous surprise to the unsuspecting visitor. As the highway approaches the huge Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park, a sign indicates an overlook and camera stop. One wonders why - nothing seems to be of much interest...just the same rolling, high plateau country. The fairly high retaining wall along the edge of the overlook is red and white: reddish-brown 'scoria,' the local name for clinker, formed from clay burnt in the intense heat of the lignite coal fires in the area, which has one of the major and most extensive deposits of this lowest-grade coal in the States; the white is petrified juniper wood. Over the wall, the world drops away into a vastly complicated, eroded complex of rounded hills, gullies, canyons. A much smaller shock than the Grand Canyon, but an unexpected, and far more extensive...the park area is 70,000 square miles, divided into two units, and that is a small portion of the total area. The erosion comes from the Little Missouri River, carved during the ages when the silt flowing eastwards from the newly-risen Rocky Mountains completely changed the course of the river. Even now, the process continues. Because of the softer soils and rocks, all the carved-out scenery has rounded contours, rather than the hard dramatic angular formations in the Grand Canyon. All the colours are muted, with fascinatingly even layers of differing composition, many of the hills being topped with the reddish patches of scoria. Along the river, huge glades of cottonwoods, extensive patches of silvery gray sagebrush. And buffalo - a big herd ranging throughout the park. I photographed one large buffalo, standing sentinel against the sky atop a sere grass ridge, at quite a distance. Then motored a bit further into the park and encountered two of them lying down right on the road. Dilemma - did I attempt to pass, or gracefully beat a retreat? They looked fairly peaceful, but I was alone, and the car rather small. I retreated. Later, back at park headquarters, the rangers told me that those two were probably some of the very tame buffalo, hoping for handouts from visitors! And anyway, a small red car wouldn't worry them at all...apparently it is white that upsets buffalo. Drivers of white cars are so warned; and when the fall round-up takes place, they use all kinds of horses but white ones.

The next day, by now June 9, was total birding, in one of the major wildlife refuges of North Dakota, 'Des Lacs' - a long and narrow area stretching for about 30 miles southward from the Saskatchewan border, one of several refuges along the course of the Souris River. I had arrived in the little town of Kenmare the night before to find

messages and 'marching orders' for the next day awaiting me at the motel, from the Refuge Superintendent and from Dr. and Mrs. Gammell, local birders and very prominent in bird-banding work. I was fetched in the morning by Mrs. Gammell and we drove out in the bird-banding truck, a transport most ingeniously equipped as a travelling laboratory, to a huge prairie meadow, more or less flat, over which we bumped following tracks more or less permanently imprinted by the truck, and their car, during the course of their constant banding work. The object of the search was the colony of Baird's sparrows, elusive little birds with a narrow band of fine streaks across an otherwise clear breast, and a wide crown strip of yellow-ochre. The prairie wind was blowing constantly and it was difficult to pick up their song, but there were several singing males and we eventually had wonderful views of them and heard them clearly. The song was a blurred noise to me at first, what with Savannahs and Grasshoppers singing all around us as well, and clay-colored sparrows in bushes at the edge of the field, until it was pointed out that the Baird's three high notes and lower trill approximate the opening notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, only in the minor! After that, it was easy.

Also abundant in that meadow were chestnut-collared longspurs and several shore birds in the white-edges, alkaline sloughs. After that session we worked over the open water and marsh areas of the Refuge - full of white pelicans in stately squadrons, Western grebes (which wouldn't dance for me - too late in the season), Forster's terns, Brewer's blackbirds, yellow-headed blackbirds, orchard orioles, Say's phoebe, and many others. In the afternoon, they handed me over into the care of the Refuge Superintendent, who took me on a long trek to the further reaches of the Refuge, and higher grassland, where he showed me several dancing 'leks' of the sharp-tailed grouse, and quite a large number of the males were still hanging around their close-stamped short grassed circles, each on a high point of ground so as to command a good view of the district.

The day ended with another expedition to many of the same areas after supper, with a glorious mixture of song against the light of a long prairie sunset. Before leaving the Gammells, I was re-routed for the following day, over roads which cut off many miles for me and enabled me to visit another Refuge further to the East, known as 'Lower Souris.' At headquarters, after rapid introductions, one of the naturalists, working there for the summer on a thesis about the LeConte's sparrows, jumped into his Volkswagen and we charged over a maze of gravel roads through the Refuge to a heavily reeded area, and instant LeConte's sparrows, as well as sharp-tailed sparrows. Just had time for a thorough look and listen to both, thanked my hosts and had to hit the road for a long hard drive across North Dakota against a very strong southerly gale, and into the more sheltered forested areas of Minnesota, to Lake Itasca State Park, where the great Mississippi River begins. It was an area very much like Northern Ontario, with great stands of white pines, granite rocks, swamps, black flies and mosquitoes, loons yelling all night...and I felt very much at home in a lodge much like Limberlost. But somehow, from then on, through Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan, the adventure turned into a long and very pleasant drive home. Once I was back in moderately familiar territory, after over three weeks of constant newness, the fun was mostly over. I visited one more major wildlife refuge in Northern Michigan, which in contrast to those in North Dakota seemed to be very uninteresting. Truth to tell, I was probably spoilt thoroughly by the local birders in Colorado, South and North Dakota, and there just wasn't much enjoyment in wandering around without much direction in Michigan. Lake Michigan itself added to a certain feeling of gloom by being enveloped in deep lake fog as I drove along the shore road. But even days like that have their compensations: and after many miles, it being coffee time, I discovered an inviting roadside park, right by the Lake Michigan sand dunes, and the fog had even lifted slightly. The moment I turned the car engine off, a lovely clear note sounded from the sand...and I found that my parking spot was 10 feet away from a piping plover's nest, two eggs and two newly-hatched young; with two absolutely frantic piping parents, each doing the broken-wing trick for dear life. Got a good photograph of the nest and young...and one of the parents was back on that nest within a minute of my returning to the car. I was in a good mood for the rest of the day.

(To be concluded)

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Elmer Talvila, Editor, (231-1064)
12 Cranleigh Ct., Islington, Ontario.