

Toronto Field Naturalists's Club

138

MARCH MEETING

Monday, March 6th, 1956, at 8.15 p.m.

at the

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Speaker: T.W.M.Cameron, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.S.C.,
Macdonald College of McGill University.

Subject: "The Tropical Seas", illustrated with coloured slides and a colour-sound motion picture entitled "Australia's Coral Wonderland".

The tropic seas, their deeps, islands and amazing plant and animal life will be the subject of Dr. Cameron's talk. The Sargasso Sea, the Galapagos Islands, coral islands and atolls of the Pacific and the Great Barrier Reef of Australia will be described. The strange and fascinating life of these regions - flying fish, giant clams, tortioses, sea lions, flamingos - will be discussed and illustrated.

MARCH OUTING

Saturday, March 17th, Cedarvale Ravine. Meet at the Boulton Drive entrance to the ravine at 2.00 p.m. (Boulton Drive is one short block west of Poplar Plains Road, north of Dupont Street). - Leader - George Francis.

The week-end of March 31--April 1 is the best time to see the swans at Long Point on Lake Erie. While the T.F.N.C. is not sponsoring any formal outing for this event, any of our members who are considering making the trip will be sure to meet other members of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists there.

BOTANY GROUP

The March meeting of the Botany group will be held in Eglinton School, Mt.Pleasant Rd., and Eglinton Ave. on Thursday, March 15th at 8.00 p.m. President - Dr. Fletcher Sharp. Speaker - Mr. L.Owens. Subject "Trees and winter buds with specimens". Tree pictures by Club members. Chairman - Mr. George Myland.

JUNIORS

The March meeting of the Junior Field Naturalists will be held on Saturday, March 3rd, at 10.00 a.m. in the Museum Theatre. The meeting will be in charge of the Bird Group. Two films will be shown "Birds are Interesting" and "Birds of the Dooryard".

NATURE STUDY CAMP

The 18th Nature Study Camp of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists will be held from June 30 to July 14, at Camp Billie Bear, near Huntsville. Anyone interested may obtain additional information either from the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, 187 Highbourne Road, Toronto, or from our own Secretary.

President - Mr. John Mitchele

Secretary - Mrs. J.B.Stewart,
21 Millwood Road.

Yearly fee \$2.00

Toronto Field Naturalists' Club.



Number 138

February 1956

A CROSS-COUNTRY BIRD CHRONICLE*

Katherine D. Ketchum

Early in 1955 my husband was invited to lecture at the U.B.C. Summer School in Vancouver. He had done this in 1946, and taken his family with him by train. All were eager to go west again, and this time by car, so as to see more of the country and the birds. Having planned our general itinerary, we studied Pettin-gill's Guides to Bird-Finding, East and West. Where he recommen-ded an area along our route we marked it by a red dot on the high-way map, with a page reference to the text.

On June 14 our family of four (parents and two teen-agers, Margaret and Ted) started ahead of the traffic in a well-loaded station wagon with extra luggage on top. We planned to sleep in motels and cabins, but took food, utensils, and a small refrigera-tor for daily lunchtime picnics. The day was cool, the grass green, the robins singing, and who knew what myriads of birds we should see before our journey's end?

We stopped for breakfast at Aldershot, and for lunch at Sarnia with relatives (passing judgment on a new one); then crossed into

* Ed. Note: We are very pleased to be able to present to the readers of the Newsletter this journal account of a trip to the Pacific coast made last summer by Mr. K.D. Ketchum. It is not only of great interest in itself, but should be of very real help to any of our members who may be contemplating a similar trip this summer, or in the future.

Michigan by the fine International Bridge, and swung northwest to Bay City, where we spent the night in cabins by Saginaw Bay. The day produced 26 well-known species, including Meadowlarks, Orioles, Swallows, Terns, and 200 Purple Martins -- cheerful tenants of two large birdhouses by the bay.

June 15 took us north through unfamiliar country, flat, uncultivated, and covered with Jack Pine. This was Kirtland's Warbler territory, and how we searched for that bird! Miles out of our way by narrow forest roads, stopping, looking, and listening wherever the pines were the favoured size (5 to 18 ft.), and all in vain. We did find a Prairie Warbler, flushed a Nighthawk from the two eggs in her nest, and heard Brown Thrashers and Red-eyed Vireos in full song. For lunch we stopped at beautiful Otsego Lake State Park, where giant pines and some hardwoods stood by a sandy shore. Two of the birders ate only intermittently, distracted by an elusive songster. A chase proved it to be a Rose-breasted Grosbeak in feminine brown and white, but its song was that of the mature male. Back at the picnic table, we noticed a largish warbler in a tall white pine, high up, but fluttering down towards us. It wasn't -- it couldn't be -- it was -- a Kirtland's Warbler, with characteristic yellow breast and grey side stripes. It was miles from its known nesting ground and its low Jack Pines, but we had been studying its likeness all morning in Peterson and could not be mistaken. That was a "lifer", the first for 1955, and an augury of things to come. To add to our excitement, two Bald Eagles then came soaring over the lake -- birds not to be ignored even on a Kirtland's Warbler day.

On to Mackinac, where we crossed the straits by ferry and drove west through Upper Michigan. Early evening found us at Germfask, centre of the Seney Migratory Waterfowl Refuge, in flat marshland laced with creeks. Near the manager's house Canada Geese waddled about with their downy young, coming to one's very feet for grain. Protection has made them tame, and they breed successfully here. Sandhill Cranes were nesting across the marsh, but did not show themselves at this season. A conducted tour earlier in the day had produced little, as can happen even around Toronto! We were warmly invited to return in August when ducks might be congregating, but time for that was lacking. At 9 p.m., all starving, we made for the highway and hamburgers, and slept well content with our day.

June 16 was again fine and warm as we drove west on U.S. 2 through country whose industry is marked by iron place-names -- "Iron Mountain", "Iron River", etc. Broke our journey with a swim and picnic in a pleasant park, where Downies kept us company and a Chipping Sparrow, which had built in a bush nearby, baffled all our efforts to locate her nest. We left Michigan, full of admiration for its generous provision of attractive state parks, crossed part of Wisconsin, and got a glimpse of Lake Superior near Ashland. Here a red dot on the map took us down to the shore, where Dunlin and some small peeps ran over the mud, oblivious of the ominous sign "Quicksand", which kept us from following them. At Superior, Wis.,

we left U.S. 2 and rolled until late at night across Minnesota, through endless bush with hardly a light to be seen. Finally, after covering 413 miles, we found a motel at a minute place called Tamarack, and morning showed it to be beside a small pond over which our first Cliff Swallows were flying. Further west they were to be numerous, but here they were an event.

June 17 brought frequent rainstorms, during one of which a dunnage bag leaped from the car roof to the highway, fortunately not without our noticing it. Buying an extra strap and a much needed bug-screen for the radiator caused delay, and that, with the rain, prevented our visiting the Detroit Lakes refuge. Along Route 10 to Fargo (disappointingly dull) and into North Dakota, where we made our supper in cabins at Valley City, and were then lured out by a fine evening. Up on the prairie among plowed fields we saw our first true western birds: Prairie Horned Larks, Western Meadowlarks giving a new and thrilling song, and a surprisingly dark-backed, yellow-breasted flycatcher, the Western Kingbird. We had earlier seen our first Yellow-headed Blackbird among some rushes, and saw many more next day, though they never quite replaced the Redwings. A Loggerhead Shrike, an Indigo Bunting, a Pintail and a Red-tailed Hawk added variety to our list, and the flat plains, rolling thunderheads, and a rainbow in the east made a noteworthy backdrop to our birds.

Next day, June 18, was all North Dakota, and gave us 46 species, the longest day's list of the trip. We detoured to the Arrowhead Wildlife Refuge to look for White Pelicans, and unmistakable pelicans we saw, though at some distance. Many kinds of ducks swam in the large lake, and on the grassy hills above it wandered antelope, surprisingly unafraid of humans with cameras. Later we began to pass sloughs and had our first look at Avocets. What satisfactory birds they are, beautiful in shape and colour, easy to approach as they probe the mud with their long bills, and so simple to identify. The sloughs also produced Wilson's Phalaropes and Franklin's Gulls; I could have stayed for days in this prairie country, but time and the mountains were urging us on. While I remember this day for its birds, the highlight for certain others was the thick, tender, and amazingly cheap steak at Hebron, a tiny whistle-stop in flat cattle country.

Central Time had gained us an hour, and the elders had morning insomnia on June 19, and roused the others at 6.00 a.m. for one of our pleasantest days. Leaving Dickinson, N.D., we headed for Roosevelt Memorial Park in the Badlands of North Dakota. This country, fantastic and beautiful, was evolved from a plateau eroded into deep canyons and gullies with steep-sided, many-coloured walls; much of it was created by the wanderings of the Little Missouri river. The Warden at the gate told us of a birding trip soon to start from headquarters, so we drove there, found a party from the Bismarck, N.D. Bird Club, and were warmly welcomed to their hike. The first pause was in a little wooded river valley, where a Lazuli Bunting sang and showed itself to everyone. It is like our Indigo

in habits, but has a pale blue back and a wide rusty band across its white breast. Our guides then took us up a precipitous canyon, and showed us a pair of Horned Owls and three young. The latter were full-grown but pale in colour; they could not fly far, but did a deal of flapping on the ledges. Here, too, a Prairie Falcon cut the narrow space overhead. Then we drove to a deserted house where Say's Phoebes were expected, and Say's Phoebes were duly found. They were like our Eastern Phoebe, but appeared more dusky. Prickly Pear Cactus, Yuccas, and many other flowers bloomed about us in the Badlands, and Sagebrush grew abundantly. Rattlesnakes were not in evidence, but were said to be common in August.

We left the group as they searched for a Rock Wren, which no doubt they found. It is pleasant to identify one's own birds for a time, but such an excursion with people who know the country is always rewarding. On our own in the park we saw Magpies, Spotted Towhees and a Yellow-breasted Chat, and driving on west we also saw multitudes of birds from the car, flying up in clouds in front of us. Sudden stops on main highways are hazardous, and many small and sparrowy birds went unidentified. Lark Buntings, however, could be recognized in a flash by their solid black plumage and striking white wing-patches, while Western Meadowlarks sang from many a fence and telephone pole. Once we had to stop and view a whole city, a Metropolitan Area, of Prairie Dogs, sitting and whistling by their innumerable burrows.

By noon it was so hot that it was impossible to picnic in the sun, and in this country the sun was everywhere; only the towns grew any trees. In a waterless, beachless town named Beach we almost begged leave to eat on someone's shady lawn, but then found a little park which had trees, though no drinking fountain. In the afternoon we covered 269 miles to Billings, Montana, where we stayed in a posh motel near the spectacular butte that overlooks the city. We enjoyed the deluxe motels, but found the cheaper cabins often had better housekeeping facilities, plus a most useful clothesline in the rear. Using either, as convenience dictated, we kept our expenses to \$30 a day for the four of us, including gasoline and meals.

At Billings we left U.S. 10 and struck southwest towards Yellowstone Park. It was a day of glorious scenery, with its "high point" the crossing of Beartooth Pass at 10,942 feet elevation. The driver approached it with some apprehension, for in 1952, in the Alps, our car had boiled dry at much lower heights, and needed constant refilling from springs or small thermos bottles. Here, however, we had no trouble; the road was wonderfully engineered, with a grade of only 5%, and the car (a different one) took it all in high. Climbing the broad, zigzagging highway we covered the whole range of flora from arid Sagebrush country to Alpines above the tree lines. How I wished that some of my botanical friends were there to share our pleasure and name the plants that went unnamed by us. As Sagebrush gave place to Lodgepole and then Ponderosa Pine, the forest floor was a sheet of Glacier lilies, like

Dog-tooth Violets, but with petals turned back like Tiger Lilies. Lupines and Larkspur were abundant, Gentians later, and finally Pasque Flowers in the melting snow.

We lunched on the bare top of everything, the elders noticeably breathless, but the juniors running about and watching conies and marmots scuttling among the rockpiles. We all saw our first Mountain Bluebird going into a hole in a dead tree -- a true "heavenly blue" all over -- and I glimpsed what may have been a Black Rosy Finch, which Pettingill reports in these bleak regions. Then down, down we went to Yellowstone Park and found cabins at Canyon -- a huge city of them with a central lodge. Near our door was a good-sized bear, systematically turning over refuse barrels; someone threw a piece of cordwood at it and it ambled off.

We spent two days at Canyon. Our young folk went riding while their still breathless elders walked gently about. The commonest bird seemed to be Cassin's Purple Finch, which must have half a dozen songs, or whenever we pursued an unknown songster it would prove to be another Purple Finch. Pine Siskins were common, as were lively Violet Green Swallows. Of course we viewed the canyon itself, with its varicoloured rock formations and the turbulent Yellowstone River hundreds of feet below. The inaccessible gorge walls were favourite nesting sites for Ospreys. In three separate areas we saw a soaring bird plunge and alight on a ledge which bore a nest of sticks. With glasses one could pick out the downy young, but turn one's head for a moment and nest and young seemed to vanish among the pinnacles.

The park is a Mecca for tourists, and Ted, who was collecting car licenses rather than birds, added Alaska and Hawaii to his list, almost completing the states of the Union.

On June 22 we moved to Old Faithful Lodge, stopping en route for many hot springs and mud volcanoes, and also for "bear jams", which blocked traffic whenever someone hopped out to photograph the wandering bears. One huge animal, pursued by a male photographer, thrust its head well into the right window of the man's car, to the alarm of his wife, who had been left inside for safety.

At 6 a.m. on June 23 Dave and I walked through the dewy grass along the Firehole River. On a log across the stream were Dippers -- two half-grown babies with wide-open mouths, dipping like clockwork as Mamma flew back and forth over the water. A few Red Crossbills in some spruces made a further addition to our list. After breakfast in the dining hall, already crowded at 7.15 a.m., we climbed an easy track to Observation Point, where we sat at ease and watched Old Faithful Geyser keeping his schedule far below. Margaret called "I hear a tanager" and soon found a Western Tanager, orange-yellow of body with black wings and a tanager-red face. It was strange to hear that familiar song among pines in high country, instead of in Muskoka woods.

Though the nights were cold at Yellowstone, the days were fiery hot, so after lunch and a siesta we followed a track to a secluded little lake and had an enjoyable swim. Here we saw two Barrow's Golden-eyes with their crescentic white face-spots, and Mountain Chickadees with a white eye-line and an unfamiliar note. Yellowstone had not produced great numbers of birds, but the species were interesting, and included Ravens, California Gulls, Audubon's Warblers, Red-shafted Flickers, and a colony of 500 Cliff Swallows.

On June 24 we left Yellowstone and drove south to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, looking all day for Trumpeter Swans, but finding none in many of Pettingill's locations. The scenery, however, was magnificent; the Grand Teton Range lined up its sharp snowy peaks in the west, lesser mountains made an eastern wall, and the road ran between in a flat valley or "hole", with several picturesque lakes near it. The wildlife refuge at Moran gave us a herd of cow buffalo and calves, but still no swans. We stopped for a walk along the Snake River over flats wooded with poplar and willow, and full of bushes and weeds -- rather resembling parts of the Don Valley. Such areas we often found to be choice birding spots, and this one was alive with flycatchers, warblers, thrushes, and, best of all, some Calliope Hummingbirds, their throats striped in rose and white like candy canes. Then, outside Jackson City, where the road winds down a decline, we stopped to study a river that meandered through a marsh; and there, at last, was a pair of Trumpeters. In the distance they resembled Whistlers, but we could add them to our life list.

An early morning walk on the outskirts of Jackson, on June 25, revealed frank western movie country -- level pastures grazed by bands of horses, and unreal, precipitous mesas scattered at random over the flats. An attempt to climb one the previous evening had ended with the party being driven off by steep and slippery ascents and clouds of mosquitoes. Before leaving town we paid another visit to the Trumpeters, who were still there, and also some Cinnamon Teal. Then we headed west, over the Teton Pass by narrow roads and hairpin turns, and north again through the Targhee forest into a country of endless broad dry valleys. We drove fast and made few stops, but did pause for some large brown birds in a dry field. These turned out to be four Long-billed Curlews -- not the Prairie Chickens we had supposed -- and they did wear the most exaggerated bills. They whistled and flew about in great circles, highly alarmed, but we could find neither nests nor young in the long grass, though they must have been there.

Evening brought a change of fare. A pause at Virginia City, Montana, proved so amusing that we stayed all night and also took in an old-fashioned melodrama, "No Mother to Guide Her". The town has been preserved in its old-time appearance, with shops, bars, printing press, stage coach, theatre, and even bandits' graves, all as they were in gold rush days. Piles of tailings still fill Alder Gulch, but the nuggets are gone from the creek.

Back on U.S. 10 today (June 26) and made fast time through Butte, Montana, and on to Missoula. Here we picnicked in Pattee Canyon, a recommended bird spot, but found nothing of note. In the evening, at Kellogg, Idaho, I walked up an old mine track and saw a Black-headed Grosbeak singing. Around and above a nearby butte flew clouds of swallows, too high for identification in the dusk.

June 27 brought an interesting drive to Spokane, Wash., where we lost an hour in a "3-Minute Car Wash", having some North Dakota tar removed. Brightly gleaming, we followed the fine City Drive, admiring the views and the flower gardens. Then we turned aside to inspect Grand Coulee Dam on the Columbia, a most impressive structure, which forms the large Roosevelt Lake, and provides irrigation for I know not how many square miles of desert country. From here we followed the coulee south through bare rocklands, with high cliffs on one side and the old river bed, with some Dead Sea-looking lakes, on the other. Found a canyon mentioned by Pettingill and walked a long way up it. Turkey Vultures soared in the unbelievable blue, back and forth from the straight-cut edges. Just as well that we kept to the rough path, since we heard later that the canyon is infested with rattlers. At the wooded entrance we saw and heard a Bullock's Oriole, and a little later a pair of Western Grebes did a few motions of their Disneyish courting dance on a lake. Found a motel at Soap Lake -- in fact, the town is all motels -- and bathed in its thick detergent water, reputed to cure practically any ailment.

June 28 brought showers, but cleared later. A peremptory pause at Moses Lake for male haircuts was used by the girls in a vain search for the ducks promised by Pettingill; the lake is so long it would take a day to explore. However, we did see, far out, an island colony of Black-Crowned Night Herons. Drove west on U.S. 10 again to Ellensburg, Wash., crossing the Columbia at Vantage, and enjoying the fine Petrified Tree Museum there. Much of the road was cut into the lava walls of a canyon, with spectacular turns and views. Over the void below the highway I caught a glimpse of a dashing flyer, perhaps a White-throated Swift. Then south across uninhabited country to the Columbia again, here resembling the Rhine in scenery, and so into Oregon at Hood River.

Next day Mount Hood gave us some dazzling views as we drove up through blooming rhododendrons, but a wintry walk at the top of the road produced only Oregon Juncos under a clouded sky which hid the peak. We were now getting damp Pacific coast air, after the dry country. We pushed on through Portland and struck the Pacific that night near Tillamook, Oregon.

June 30, alas, was wet, lessening the enchantment of the wonderful Oregon coast. Between showers we had glimpses of Pigeon Guillemots and California Murres, and also of Cormorants, which might be any of three species here. It was a better day for an aquarium, and we found a fascinating one where the seals beat their breasts and groaned expressively to wheedle fish from the

spectators. Towards evening we crossed into Washington again by the Astoria ferry. July 1 was even wetter as we worked our way up the west side of Puget Sound. The holiday weekend had begun, accommodation was scarce, but we found cabins at last on Discovery Bay. Here eight Great Blue Herons waded together on the tidal flats, and 66 Goldfinches perched on the wires above our roof.

July 2 brought us to Vancouver at last, having driven 4,289 miles. The trip had yielded 139 species, 66 new for the year, and 29 of them "lifers".

From July 2 to August 20 we lived in a fine house at the end of Point Grey, overlooking Howe Sound. "The most beautiful view in Canada", our friends said, and we would not dispute the point. The large garden was surrounded on three sides by trees; at first I wondered what small birds were in their summits, but then realized they were robins, dwarfed by the tallness of B.C. trees. Low bushes at the cliff's edge sheltered the commonest warbler of the area, the Orange-crowned, a brush-pile often held a Bewick's Wren, and Violet-green and Cliff Swallows swirled above the lawns. On one foggy day some 80 of them lined up on our roof, verandah, and clothesline, waiting for visibility to improve. Glaucous-winged Gulls moved over the sea below, and a Northwestern Crow had a nest outside the gate. In a tree at the gate, too, appeared a Black-throated Grey Warbler, to atone for the one I missed some winters ago at Glendon Hall. Rufous Hummingbirds visited the Delphiniums at times, and now and again a Golden Pileolated Warbler (Wilson's to us) could be found. At the university farm nearby I could always see Brewer's Blackbirds; on the campus I often saw Pine Siskins, and after much searching I turned up a few House Finches. Nonetheless, birds were harder to find than they had been in 1946, no doubt because of the vast amount of building that has been done on Point Grey.

I spent one very happy day on a hike with some members of the Vancouver Natural History Society. We drove part way up Grouse Mountain, and then, carrying lunch in knapsacks, climbed up to the top of the Hollyburn ski lift, where snow still lay. Botanists named the flora for us as we walked along, and birders helped in identifying songsters. Here the F.O.N. crest on my sleeve was commented on as "a useful field mark". I learned about the Nature Camp soon to be held in Garibaldi Park. These rugged field naturalists ride or hike 11 miles in from the railway, and live in tents at the foot of a glacier. The best birds of the day were Asiatic Starlings (seen in the city as we set out), Steller's Jays, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, a Varied Thrush, an Olive-sided Flycatcher, many Hermit Thrushes, and a Winter Wren in song.

One of the best days of the summer was spent with Mrs. Walker Taylor of Sidney, Vancouver Island. She lives in a dream house on a semi-circular bay, where many kinds of waterfowl can be seen from the picture window in winter. Here we swam and sunned and watched hundreds of tiny crabs scuttling among the pebbles. An evening walk

in the fields brought many familiar birds, and also the European Partridge, which is naturalized here. Next morning we joined forces with Mr. A.R. Davidson of Victoria, a most experienced bird-watcher, who knew all the productive spots of the region. He led us to a field where Skylarks soared and sang just as they do over the English earth. Three kinds of peeps appeared on a beach as if at his command; how simple it was to tell a Least from a Western Sandpiper when he pointed them out! Surfbirds dozed on rocky points for our inspection, and sombre Black Oyster-catchers and Black Turnstones kept them company. I also added to my life list a Short-billed Gull and a Heerman's Gull, a very dusky fellow.

Then we were treated to a rather awesome sight. A school of seven Killer Whales passed in front of us a few furlongs from the shore, rising and submerging rhythmically, and showing their wicked triangular dorsal fins as they went under the water. We had wished for a boat to row to the nearby islands, but were quite satisfied to be on land when these gentry were about. In 30 years of birding on that coast, said Mr. Davidson, he had never seen such a sight.

Even the longest of summers must end, and on August 20 we turned our faces towards Toronto, travelling this time by Banff, Calgary, Glacier Park, and U.S. 2. Birds were now much scarcer than on the outbound trip. No longer did the Western Meadowlark sing from the fence posts, and the former multitudes of swallows had dwindled to stragglers. However, some interesting new birds turned up: a Lewis's Woodpecker in a slashing near a flooded mallard pond in the Kootenay, Clark's Nutcrackers right in the town of Banff, and a Columbian Chickadee (a race of the Brown-headed) on a trail above Lake Louise. Here, at Lake Agnes, ground squirrels vied with Clark's Nutcrackers for peanuts, and bit my finger sharply when I tried to save some for the birds. The Nutcrackers avoided my red jacket, but took food from my navy-clad husband and son. An amusing sight at Lake Louise was a group of agitated picnickers running from a bear which had climbed on their table and was helping itself to their meal.

On August 26 we left Banff and travelled south through "Sunny Alberta" -- rolling country, with Mallards and Avocets in the sloughs, and the Rockies a proud line to the West. We paused at a memorial cairn where there lounged a photogenic old Indian, to gaze, not at him, but at two huge soaring birds. He said they were eagles, and were often there; they must have been Golden Eagles in this region.

August 27 was a day for botanists and geologists. A marvelously beautiful drive on Going-to-the-Sun Highway in Glacier Park, climbing by easy grades to the 6,654 ft. Logan Pass. Here we walked a mile further up through the "Hanging Gardens" -- limestone shelves filled with late Alpines, including Compositae, Pentstemons, and even a few Gentians at the edge of the snow. Wished we knew more botany, but even so the rapid change in flora from low to high altitudes was amazingly interesting. Then dropped 3,000 feet down the

sheer "Garden Wall" by thrilling switchbacks, circled the Park, and hurried east on U.S. 2 to Havre, Mont.

High northwest winds followed us from Montana home, keeping the heat down but the dust up. The dust was particularly bad owing to miles of reconstruction on No. 2, and was difficult to remove at night in these hard-water areas. I wanted to pause at every slough, but we should never have got home in time. We stopped at one to count 100 Yellowlegs, and walked out the white edge of an alkali lake to watch Avocets. On Sunday, August 28, we found Lake Bowdoin Refuge deserted, but tried to drive around the lake and get closer to the waterfowl on it. This turned out to be 17 miles along a grass trail! The tall grass tore out the wires from our gas gauge, but we had distant views of thousands of Mallards, some Grebes and Teal, Pelicans, Canada Geese -- and also the rare orange-and-black Great Northern "Empire Builder"! Sharp-tailed Grouse and Pheasants were in the grass, and Marsh Hawks sailed constantly overhead. On to Fort Peck dam; the reservoir very low. Montana looking bigger and browner than ever after the drought.

We failed to get across North Dakota on August 29, owing to an exciting day at Kenmare, in the Des Lacs Refuge. Here the road passes between two shallow lakes, whose edges were literally solid with shore-birds. The best were 50 Marbled Godwits, probing the mud with their long bills -- the bills, unlike most illustrations, being flesh-pink with black tips. Fine big Willets worked over the flats, and at least three kinds of sandpipers ran about. A little too far out were large rafts of ducks; all looked like Mallards, but some might have been other species in eclipse. For once I saw about all the shorebirds I could handle in one day.

On August 30 we had to drive fast, with no bird-stops, and got to Duluth. At 6.30 next morning I was up to look for shorebirds on Minnesota Point, a long sandbar stretching south into Lake Superior, with houses giving way to beaches and sand-dunes, rather like Long Point. No shorebirds seen, but bushes at the tip held White-throats, Slate-coloured Juncos and Pipits -- all new for the trip -- and four kinds of Warblers appeared to be in migration.

August 31 gave us no birds, but a beautiful drive along the south shore of Lake Superior, with big breakers rolling on the beaches and, later, a golden sunset illuminating wooded islands and a full moon rising in the east. Next day we crossed into Ontario at the Sault, stopped in Sudbury, and rounded off our trip with two days at our Georgian Bay cottage. Back in Toronto on September 4, our speedometer had ticked off 10,183 miles, and we had seen 195 species of birds, 52 of them on the life list.

For the keen birder, of course, such a trip as ours is both rewarding and tantalizing. Although we spent 19 days going out and 14 returning -- a generous allowance -- there was a constant wish for "more time", both to spend at the good spots we found and to visit others more remote. Many of the red dots on our maps are

still just that -- red dots.

If I were doing it again, I would try to stay longer in the prairie country and in lightly wooded river valleys; the heavily treed mountain parks produced relatively few birds. On the other hand, who but a bird-fanatic would drive to the coast and ignore the unforgettable mountain scenery? The many wildlife refuges are something of a gamble, unless one can plan one's arrival and write ahead. The finest of them involve long detours over gravel roads, they are often vast in area, and casual visitors are apt to find the wardens busy or absent from headquarters. We were lucky to see as much as we did in them.

Motels on the edges of towns, or in small villages, allow one to step right out into potential birding areas early in the morning; picnics in likely-looking spots are far preferable to indoor meals; and of course walks with local naturalists, when they can be arranged, are almost sure to turn up some prizes. And finally, the saddest moments of such a trip are those when a strangely-marked bird is left behind by the speeding car, unidentified and unlisted. I would study Pettingill and Peterson until I could recognize at once every bird known in the area, even when glimpsed through the windshield at 60 miles an hour!

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BOOK REVIEW: Great Moments in Action. The Story of the Sun Life Falcons. By G. Harper Hall. (Montreal Mercury Press. pp. 37) Price .50 cents.

In this neat little brochure Mr. Hall tells the story of the famous falcon eyrie which for several years was the joy and distinction of the Sun Life Building in Montreal. The author knew these birds better than anyone else, and spent hours high on an outer ledge of the building where the birds nested, courageously taking pictures and observing their activities. Many of these photographs illustrate the pamphlet. It is a dramatic story, unique in the Canadian ornithological record, and one with which every birder and nature lover in the country ought to be familiar.

Those desiring copies should address their request to Mr. G. Harper Hall, Apt. 20, 1260 Bernard Avenue, Montreal 8, Que.

R. M. Saunders,
Editor.