



PATRON
Hon. Dr. J.W. Grant MacEwan

HONORARY MEMBERS

Dr. J. Dewey Soper
Dr. Kerry Wood

CORPORATE MEMBERS

Alberta Natural History Society
Bow Valley Naturalists
Calgary Field Naturalists' Society
Edmonton Bird Club
Edmonton Natural History Club
Lethbridge Natural History Society

ALBERTA NATURALIST

Box 308, Spruce Grove, Alberta.

NEWSLETTER

April - June 1972 (issued May 1972)

Vol. 2

No. 2

pages 15-30

Edited by David A.E. Spalding

CONTENTS

Editorial : The Role of the Individual		15
Letters :		
Bird boxes for Starlings?	by Helen Harris	16
Do naturalists threaten birds?	by Ed Baldwin	16
FAN NEWS		
Have you paid your subscription?		17
Advance notice of fall meeting		17
Spring Meet, June 17-18		18
CLUB NEWS		
Alberta Natural History Society, Red Deer		19
Calgary field naturalists' Society		19
Edmonton Natural History Club		20
PROVINCIAL NEWS		
Environment Conservation Authority hearings		20
Report on ECA Public Advisory Committee	by David A.E. Spalding	21
The Dinosaur field Trip		21
IUCN meeting, Banff		21
NATIONAL NEWS		
Canadian nature federation Progress		22
Man and Resources Conference		22
Conference on the human Environment		22
FAN PROJECTS		
Blooming Times of Alberta Flowering Plants(1)	by Charles D. Bird	23
breeding Bird Surveys in Alberta (1)	by Jack L. Park	24
A provincial bird (3)	by Doris H. Ramsay	24
Alberta Naturalist (5)	by Stephen Woodman Eaton	25
What's Going On (1) The Canadian Wolf Defenders	by Robert C. Guest	26
Recent Publications on Alberta's Natural history(2)		27
The Naturalist's Bookshelf (2) Silent Spring	by David A.E. Spalding	28
Conservation Comment (2) Village Lake Louise again	by Aileen Harmon	29
Club Corner (2) Guidelines for the establishment of Natural History Clubs	by Frances Schultz & Helen Schuler	30
Overheard (7-9)		15, 22, 26

Your subscription is still due if this space is marked with an X

To receive the Alberta Naturalist regularly, send a subscribing membership fee of 2 dollars to the Treasurer, 2630-22nd Avenue, Lethbridge, Alberta.

The next Alberta Naturalist, for July-September, is aiming at July publication.

Contributions to the editor by beginning of June, please.

Information from this newsletter may be reproduced with acknowledgement, providing the permission of the author has been obtained.

EDITORIAL : The Role of the Individual

"The role of the individual in environmental decisions" is the theme of the forthcoming Canadian Nature Federation conference in Edmonton. At this meeting naturalists and concerned individuals from across the country will be gathering to discuss a number of issues related to this theme. Naturally, a good attendance from Alberta is expected, so to start the ball rolling here are a few thoughts (questions, not answers), from the editorial chair.

An individual plays many roles in life - just think of the variety of individual involvements as consumer, planner, worker, publicist, polluter, gardener, voter, thinker, facilitator, organiser, educator, stimulator.....and naturalist. Each of these roles has its own impact on the environment, sometimes small, sometimes large. The housewife who looks for a non-phosphate detergent in the supermarket has a role as well as the oil magnate who selects the route of a pipeline through wilderness; the gardener checking sprays for DDT as well as the highway planner.

How important are these roles and decisions? Can you put all your daily effort into controlling pollution, then return home in one of your three cars to your family of ten? How many housewives buying phosphate rich detergents equals a village Lake Louise?

How far should the individual be concerned? Is it enough to leave it to "them"? If not, what should be done to make "them" more responsive to what you want? At the same time, consider whether what you want is what everyone wants. In a democracy, what is the role of a pressure group? Can people be saved from a degenerating environment while earnestly seeking to increase their standard of living?

Does the naturalist have a special role? According to the current jargon, he is 'sensitised' to environmental problems - that is to say, he has been telling people about them for fifty years, but no-one took any notice until people started to drop dead as well as birds, until the recreation space disappeared as well as the rare flowers. Should he now sit back and say 'I told you so'? Should he forget he is a naturalist and leap headlong into the battle wherever the fight is thickest? Does he have a special role in 'sensitising' other people? Do the pollution-park-population citizens need to understand better what they are trying to save?

In all, a pretty good bunch of questions, some of them no doubt as loaded as John Wayne's six-shooter. But my answers are not necessarily yours, and today's answers are not necessarily any good tomorrow. Why don't you think about the problems, and ask some of your own questions. But don't tell me - bring them to the conference.

OVERHEARD (7)

Environmentalism - a man with a beard on television

Environmental Crisis - a lot of men with beards on television

(Private Eye)

LETTERS

Bird Boxes for Starlings ?

Dear Dave Spalding,

I am most concerned about the bird boxes some people build. It seems such a pity that so many people build a nice neat bird box then make the hole too large, thus encouraging the starlings. We have had quite good luck with Bluebirds and Tree Swallows. Recommended dimensions for Bluebird and Tree Swallow boxes are :-

Back 14½" x 4½" x 1"

Front 9½" x 4½" x 1"

Bottom 4½" x 4½" x 1"

Sides 10" x 6" x 1"

Roof 8½" x 7½" x 1"

Hole should be 2" down from top of box, and 15/8 " diameter .

The same hole size is good for Purple Martins, and the Starlings can't get in.

Sincerely,

Helen Harris

B.R.1 , Penhold.

(Any comments from starling lovers ? I have heard many comments from bird box makers about competition between starlings and native hole nesting birds. Any first hand observations would be welcome) (Ed.)

Do Naturalists threaten birds ?

Dear Sirs,

I have very much enjoyed your newsletter, and hope the Alberta Naturalist continues to grow..... You also mentioned " A naturalists guide to Alberta", which I suppose would give the best locations for birds etc., and I would like to see something like this.

As more people are becoming interested in wildlife, and as more guides etc. are put out, there will likely be more and more people visiying the nesting grounds. It seems to me that guides, and naturalist's clubs newsletters too perhaps, should try and advise people as much as possible on how to study, or photograph or visit nesting birds without causing the nests to be damaged or deserted.

Even though I have been reading articles and books on birds and wild-life photography for years, I wouldn't know how to set up a blind near a hawks nests while being sure it wouldn't cause the hawks to desert.

Several ornithologists who have studied birds of prey seem to think examining the nests during the egg period, often causes desertions, as mentioned in Auk, Jan '71,p.80, and Blue Jay Sept.'70, p.123.

I used to walk past a Swainson's Hawk nest several times a season, and I don't think they raised a single young one during these years. In the last few years I have stayed clear until I could see the young standing in the nests, and they have usually raised from 2 to 4 each season.

I was told of a person trying to photograph Marsh Hawk's nests who had 3 or 4 desert. I read that an ornithologist used a flash to photograph a Gannet colony on the east coast, and that the whole flock took off, sweeping eggs and young over the cliff as they went. I have also read that a person going through a gull colony while the chicks are small, can sometimes cause up to half the chicks to be lost, as they scatter out of their small territories and are killed by the other gulls,

and that the gulls will even break some of their own eggs while excited. The farm papers and magazines which I subscribe to sometimes have articles by agricultural experts, some of whom seem to think that chemicals such as DDT should still be used, even though environmentalists do blame them for the near extinction of some falcons. One wondered about falconers who pay several thousand dollars each for birds in the Middle East and though this was a major reason for falcon decrease.

Some naturalists seem to examine quite a few nests and colonies during a season (Calgary Field Naturalist vol 1 no.5, p.3 for example) , and could perhaps be causing quite a few desertions and losses, even though their intentions are good.

I wish a Government branch such as the Canadian Wildlife Service would put out a booklet for naturalists and others. In order to set a good example, we need to know what we can and can't do, while we are out studying our wildlife.

Another example would be the white pelican colony at Lake Newell. I heard that hardly any young have been raised there during the last few years, and it was thought that people going through the colony have been the reason.

Yours truly,

R.R.2, Vulcan

Ed. Baldwin

(Ed. Note: Mr. Baldwin has raised some very pertinent points, which from time to time cause widespread concern. They will certainly be borne in mind in the planning of the the 'Naturalists Guide'. Many areas now produce codes of recommended conduct' in various areas of concern, to provide wide publicity for desirable practices. The only Alberta one I know of is the useful one prepared by Edmonton City Parks, and will seek permission to reprint it in these pages. Copies of any others of relevance to the Alberta situation, and suggestion for things to be included in such a code would be welcomed.)

FAN NEWS

Have you paid your subscription ?

If your subscription has not yet been paid, you face dire consequences, i.e. the cutting of your regular supply of this invaluable periodical. Those who have still not paid will find a red X on the contents page, and the treasurer, at 2630-22 Avenue South, Lethbridge, Alberta. If you wish to atone for late renewal, you could of course become a supporting member at 10 dollars. Otherwise , the subscribing membership fee is 2 dollars.

Advance Notice of Fall meeting

This meeting will be in Calgary, at an early weekend in October. Exact date will be fixed and details will appear in the next Alberta Naturalist. With this meeting, we will have had one meeting hosted by each of our member clubs, and will than start going round again - unless, of course, we have some new clubs formed before then. It would be nice to meet, for instance, in Medicine Hat, or Drumheller, or Grande Prairie.

FEDERATION OF ALBERTA NATURALISTS

SPRING MEET - JUNE 17-18, 1972.

TENTATIVE PROGRAM

Somehow it is difficult to believe at this moment that the flowers will be blooming and the birds will be singing, and the animals that made it through this devilish winter will be doing their thing, but anyway here's the story:

17th JUNE

- 8.30 A.M. DIRECTOR'S MEETING, Banff Centre (School Fine Arts) Room C.S. 15.
- 12.30 to 1.30 P.M. REGISTRATION FOR SPRING MEET at the FIREHALL MEETING ROOM located on Caribou Street across from the Bus Station.
- 1.30 P.M. FIELD TRIP - starting from the above noted FIREHALL MEETING ROOM. We will inspect the Rocky Mountain Spring as it happens around the Vermilion Lakes and below the Cave and Basin, just west of Banff town. A Park Naturalist will assist on this trip. This area is probably the richest biologically, that may be found in the Park. It is possible to see moose, deer, Rocky Mountain Sheep, black bear, muskrat, beaver, even mink if you're unusually lucky, and coyote and of course lots of Columbian Ground Squirrels. Bird Life is rich: Osprey, Marsh Hawks and others, even Great Horned Owls, Pileated and Northern Three Toed Woodpeckers, Red-shafted Flickers, Eastern Kingbirds, Sora Rails, Bittern, Barrow's Goldeneye, Red-necked Grebe, various Teal, Common Mergansers, Mallards of course, Kinglets, chickadees (3 kinds), Warblers (Yellow, Yellowthroat, Audubon, Myrtle... and often surprises - Lewis's Woodpecker, Lazuli Bunting..... Plant life is interesting for a mixture of forest and water plants, a considerable variety of shrubs including some Tree Juniper which must have drifted in from B.C. Anyone owning a canoe could have an interesting time investigating the aquatic life - canoes may also be rented.
- 5.30 P.M. Weather Permitting - A Box Lunch picnic supper - coffee supplied by your hosts, Bow Valley Naturalists - at the 5 mile Picnic Area west of Town. If it rains you're on your own until:
- 8.00 P.M. GENERAL MEETING at the Firehall Meeting Room, Caribou Street. Executive Reports. Program of slides, films, talks, exhibits - you BRING IT. Anyone with something interesting to contribute to our knowledge of the Natural History of Alberta, please write me: Aileen Harmon, Box 656, Banff, Alberta. I would appreciate it if each club could contribute to this program. Refreshments.

18th JUNE

6.30 A.M. SUNDAY FIELD TRIP. We will meet at the Firchall Parking Lot and travel eastward, taking the old highway east of Camasere (north side of the valley, to visit Indian Cliff Paintings in Grotto Canyon, birding at Gap Lake and Lac des Arcs, en route to meet Bob Smith and his family who will conduct a field trip in the area at the base of Yamnuska (Mt. John Lawrie). This is the fan shaped cliff just outside the main range. The Smiths live at Seebe and know this interesting area very well. It has small lakes, rock ridges, meadows and wooded areas for a variety of bird and plant life. Bring your lunch for an interesting field trip before you head for home on either 1-A or the Trans-Canada (connecting route near Seebe).

ACCOMMODATION INFORMATION:

CAMPGROUNDS at Tunnel Mountain and Two Jack Lake are the nearest.

BANFF CENTRE - write for reservations before June 1st. Rates are:

Private room, bath/shower	\$18 incl. meals
Twin beds " "	\$14 " "
3-4 persons " "	\$11 " "
Dormitory without bath	\$7.50 " "

If meals are not taken the charges are deducted.

If you want information on motels, write me for a folder: Aileen Harmon, box 656, Banff, Alta. There are rooms in private houses - write the Traveller's Digest Bureau.

That's about it, so start planning for a visit to Banff to enjoy the Federation of Alberta Naturalists' Spring Meet, June 17-18, 1972.

CLUB NEWS

Alberta Natural History Society, Red Deer

New officers were recently elected. Mrs. H. Harris is now president (a letter from Mrs. Harris appears on p.16). The secretary is Mr. G. Keast, and former President Mrs. Scouler is now corresponding secretary (address 4145-40 St.). The treasurer is Mrs. K. Stronehan.

Recent meetings have included a talk by Gary Fabris on the ecology of the mountains, followed by films (Feb 24th.)

The club has taken an active part in protest against Lake Louise, and found wide support . A local concern is the effectiveness of posting land against careless hunters, and the club is supporting a local farmers plea for more adequate protection.

Birds reported include Pine Grosbeaks, Evening Grosbeaks, and a very few Bohemian Waxwings, perhaps because Starlings ate the local berry supply in the fall. There are also two reports of Redpolls.

Calgary Field Naturalists' Society

The April Calgary Field Naturalist (vol 3 no. 10) contains as usual much of interest. Anyone in the Calgary area should regard this as a must, and it contains much of interest to the wider area of southern Alberta.

Future meetings include a talk on May 17th. on wolves of Jasper and Prinee Albert by L. Carbyn of the Canadian Wildlife Service. Field meetings coming include evening trips to Glenmore Park (June 7), Nose Hill (July 5), and the Pearce Estate (August 2).

There are also weekly field trips throughout the summer on Sundays, starting at 10 a.m. from the Chimook Shopping Centre. Other trips are being arranged, and the annual bus trip will be to Dinosaur Provincial Park (date unspecified).

A most interesting item is the report of the Natural Areas Committee, by FAN Director Charles Bird. This club has an active committee surveying a variety of areas in the Calgary area, with the idea of gathering basic data on which to base future planning. Are any other clubs undertaking this, apart from the Edmonton Natural History Club on the Wedgewood Ravine? Fuller reports on these projects are of value to other clubs, and we hope to include some in later issues of the Alberta Naturalist.

Other items are the first part of a series summarising migration and occurrences of birds in the Calgary area, covering Loons to Ducks, by Chip Weseloh. Calgary should be coming up towards enough data for a full account of the local birds soon. Any other clubs following suit?

A page of first observations of birds in the area includes a remarkable list. Bufflehead on Feb 27, and 32 species in March, including meadowlark, robin, junco, tree sparrow, and many hawks and ducks.

The usual long list of recent records includes a fourth Glaucous Gull for the province, on an unspecified prairie slough.

Edmonton Natural History Club

This club also publishes a monthly newsletter, usually of three foolscap pages. Recent meetings included the enjoyable Member's Night on March 14, held in Molson's Edmonton House. A wide variety of exhibits and slides were on view, as well as a tape of assorted frog noises. Another meeting (February) was a talk by Professor Patching of the University of Alberta Department of Mining and Metallurgy, who gave an interesting but unfamiliar view of strip mining. Among figures given was the claim that only 7½ square miles of Alberta was disturbed by strip mining.

A feature of this club's activities is a winter field trip on snowshoes, and thirteen members once again turned out for the trip in Elk Island National Park. Little was seen compared with a summer trip, but much of interest for the time of year. (Information for March Newsletter)

PROVINCIAL NEWS

Environment Conservation Authority Hearings

Following its successful hearings on Cooking Lake and Strip Mining, the ECA are holding further hearings. The next are on conservation of Historic and Archaeological Resources in June, to be followed in due course by:

- 1) The Environmental Effects of the Operation of Sulphur Extraction Gas Plants
- 2) Land Use and Development Within the Canmore Corridor
- 3) Reclamation and Development of the Crowsnest Area
- 4) Regulated Development within the Strathcona Industrial Corridor
- 5) The Environmental Effects of the use of Insecticides, Pesticides and hard chemicals.
- 6) The impact on the environment of forest utilization
- 7) Impact on the Environment of Oil and Gas Exploration, development and transportation.

The report on the Cooking Lake Hearing is out, and will be discussed in a later issue. FAN is of course planning to make representations on all of the hearings that concern its areas of interest.

Other news from ECA is of the resignation of Mr. Paul Babey, one of its three members. His successor is not yet known.

REPORT ON PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

(This report was prepared by your president, who represents FAN on the PAC, for the February meeting of the FAN Directors.)

As a representative of the Federation of Alberta Naturalists, I was appointed to the committee in 1971, and attended the first two-day meeting in November. This was partly in plenary session, and partly split into four groups to consider problems in Renewable Resources, Non-renewable resources, Pollution and Environmental Protection. The membership is very wide ranging, and includes representatives of all kinds of organisations with provincial interests. The Environmental Protection Study Group, for instance, includes representatives of pollution, teachers, wilderness and parks organisations, universities, cities and towns, Unifarm, school trustees, Chambers of Commerce and the Indian and Metis Associations.

The first meeting took a while to settle down, not surprisingly in view of the lack of precedent, the wide diversity of people, and the range of topics available for discussion. However, an organizational framework was developed, with the study groups having a continued existence, co-ordinated by a committee of the chairmen and others. Each study group attempted to identify the most significant problems, and is proceeding in various ways to tackle them. The Environmental Protection Study Group (of which I am chairman) is looking among other things at the development of an inventory of preserved areas in the province, and at ways of developing a co-ordinated system of natural areas.

A full report of the November meeting has not yet been issued, but meanwhile I would be happy to supply any further information. As a representative of the federation, I would be equally happy to raise any questions that may arise from member clubs.

THE DINOSAUR FIELD TRIP

The Department of Extension of the University of Alberta has announced a Dinosaur field trip, May 19-22. Several similar trips have been held in the past as follow-ups to winter courses, but have not been widely advertised because course attendance has been adequate to fill them. This year wider advertising has been issued, both for this trip and a following one to the Willmore wilderness area. The trips are under the guidance of university professional staff, and promise to be very good. Details from the Department of Extension, the University of Alberta, Edmonton 7. It is unlikely that there will be places left on the Dinosaur trip, but an expression of interest is likely to ensure future trips.

IUCN MEETING, BANFF.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources is holding its 11th. General Assembly in Banff from 10 to 16 September 1972. These meetings are held every three years, and a wide variety of international names in conservation can be expected. Technical sessions will cover Environmental Quality in a Changing World, national and international Environmental Policies, Ecological multi-disciplinary approach to development planning, Conservation as a long-term development tool, Sharing depleting resources, Resource Utilization and Conservation, management of Non-Agricultural rural Lands, Dynamics of Vanishing Species and their habitats, and Conservation of Marine habitats.

FAN's official representative will be chairman of our Parks, Natural Areas and wilderness committee, Aileen Harmon, and other members hope to attend.

NATIONAL NEWS

Canadian nature rederation Progress

The CNF has now raised sufficient funds to employ a full time Executive Director. Ted Mosquin, the former President, is now working full time for CNF in this position, and the new President is Doug Pimlott, well known for his work on wolves and wilderness.

Nature Canada is at last due to be mailed as I write this, and so copies may well be out before members receive this copy of the Alberta Naturalist. Membership continues to grow steadily, and this can be expected to accelerate as the new magazine makes the organization better known. Membership is already nearly double that inherited from the former Canadian Audubon Society. All readers who are not yet members should write in now to make sure of receiving Nature Canada from the beginning, and help get our first national organisation off the ground with a bang. (46 Elgin Street, Ottawa, Canada K1P 5K6)

Details of the Edmonton conference are now being finalised, and a number of major speakers are signed up. There will be field trips and exhibits, and the exhibition of Nature Art in the Provincial Museum. Plan now to attend

Man and Resources Conference

The Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers is holding this major national conference in 1973. Part of the planning process is an extensive series of meetings at local and provincial level across the country, and these are already under way in Alberta, mainly in rural communities.

Through these consultations there will be opportunities to feed in local problems to the national level, and the conference will also be planned to have follow up back to the grass roots level.

At the moment it seems that there will be two provincial workshops, in Edmonton and Calgary, about September of this year. For details write to the CCR&EM at 1170 Beaver Hall Square, Montreal 111, P.Q.

CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

In case no-one has noticed, 1972 is the year for conferences on environmental problems. The highest level one is organised by UNESCO, in Stockholm in June. We are not expecting many readers to plan to attend, but there is an opportunity to put in views on the Canadian submission at a series of hearings across the country. Interested organisations should have been informed; just as well as this notice is likely to come too late. The hearings seem to have been planned at somewhat short notice, and your submissions will hardly have much effect except at the local level. Details from P.O. Box 8036, Ottawa, K1G3P9.

OVERHEARD (8)

In the midst of all this consideration of the despoiled environment we often neglect to turn students on to the beauty and value of the natural environment. If we believe that this type of environment has fundamental value in modern life, then we should make students aware of those values.

Prof. M. McLaren (Simon Fraser University)

(Address on Environmental Education: the Exploration of the Human Environment)
1972 AIA Convention.

FAN PROJECTS

BLOOMING TIMES OF ALBERTA FLOWERING PLANTS(1) C.D. Bird

I propose that, starting this year, members of the Federation of Alberta Naturalists start recording the time of blooming of our Alberta flowering plants. Observations should include common and scientific names, place, habitat, elevation, date, and observer's name. Note should be made of whether the plant is starting to flower, is at the peak of bloom, or is almost through blooming. Observations should be sent to myself (Department of Biology, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta). A supply of special Observation Forms can be obtained on request.

It is hoped that many observations will be made so that analysis will reveal what differences occur due to latitude or elevation, e.g. last year Thermopsis rhombifolia (golden bean) was flowering at Writing-on-stone Provincial Park on April 15 but it did not start blooming in the Calgary area until May 5. It would be desirable to test the accuracy of Hopkin's Bioclimatic Law which states: "Other things being equal, the variation in the time of occurrence of a given periodic event in the life activity in temperate North America is at the general average rate of four days for each degree of latitude, five degrees of longitude, and 400 feet of altitude; later northward, eastward, and upward in spring and early summer; and the reverse in late summer and autumn."

It is desirable to have data of this sort gathered for many years so that it could be used to determine the earliness or lateness of the season of a given year, or so that correlations could be made with other seasonal events such as movements of migratory birds. The only major source of local data of this kind is a paper by the late Dr. Ezra Moss (Can. Field-Nat. 74: 113-118) in 1960 on spring blooming records at Edmonton from 1926-1958.

A program of actively gathering blooming record data was started by the Calgary Field Naturalists' Society in 1971 and the results are published in the Calgary Field Naturalist. The flowering dates in the Calgary area for 1971, of a select group of spring flowers, follows:

- Amelanchier alnifolia (saskatoon): May 15 - June 13.
- Anemone patens var. wolfgangiana (prairie crocus): April 13 - July 7.
- Arctostaphylos uva-ursi (bearberry): May 8 - June 13.
- Caragana arborescens (caragana): May 25 - June 8.
- Comandra pallida (bastard toad-flax): June 9 - July 7.
- Fragaria virginiana var. glauca (strawberry): May 8 - July 7.
- Geum triflorum (three flowered avens): May 8 - July 7.
- Lithospermum ruderales (puccoon): May 16 - July 7.
- Penstemon nitidus (smooth blue beard-tongue): May 15 - June 9.
- Phlox hoodii (moss phlox): April 22 - May 23.
- Populus balsamifera (balsam poplar): April 20 - May 9.
- P. tremuloides (aspen poplar): May 6 - May 9.
- Potentilla concinna (early cinquefoil): May 8 - May 23.
- Prunus virginiana (choke cherry): June 9.
- Ranunculus rhomboideus (prairie buttercup): May 6 - May 9.
- Rosa woodsii (common wild rose): June 9 - August 8.
- Smilacina stellata (star-flowered solomon's-seal): May 19 - July 9.
- Syringa vulgaris (lilac): May 25 - July 2.
- Thermopsis rhombifolia (golden bean): May 5 - June 13.
- Viola adunca (early blue violet): May 11 - June 13.
- Zizia aptera (heart-leaved alexanders): May 26 - July 7.

BREEDING BIRD SURVEYS IN ALBERTA (1)

Jack Park

(Jack is the enthusiastic field secretary for the Edmonton Natural History Club). He took over co-ordinating the Alberta part of the survey recently, working with Tony Erskine of the Canadian Wildlife Service and other Alberta Naturalists. This initial report on the project includes background material from the CWS circulars. We hope to include further reports on the project in the AN).

The breeding bird survey was started by the Migratory Bird Populations Station of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. In Canada, it is supervised by the Canadian Wildlife Service. Man's activities are changing his environment in ways which may be expected to affect bird numbers. The question of whether any living creature, including man, can long survive the prevalent massive and widespread pollution is of critical concern not only to ecologists but everyone. The Breeding Bird Survey is an attempt to direct some of the enthusiasm of volunteer bird observers across North America into efforts to look for and measure changes in bird populations resulting from environmental changes. Assessment of trends over wide areas can be assessed most conveniently by random sampling.

One or more routes, each $24\frac{1}{2}$ miles long, was selected within each one degree block of latitude and longitude. The number of routes surveyed in each degree block is uniform throughout a province or large section of a province. Each route is surveyed by car once a year during June in good weather. Surveys are started 30 minutes before sunrise and 50 stops are made at $\frac{1}{2}$ mile intervals. At each stop, one observer counts all birds heard and those seen within a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile during a three-minute period. The number of birds at each stop, and the weather (sky, wind, temperature) and time at start and finish of the survey are recorded on special forms.

Surveys in Alberta started in 1968 and have increased from 7 routes from that time to 17 in 1971. This year at least 24 routes will be run, covering the province from the foothills eastward to the Saskatchewan border, and from the border of the United States as far north as between 54 and 55 latitude. The mountain and Peace River areas are still not covered, although routes in these areas have been drawn up.

There is still an opportunity for enthusiastic bird watchers to take part in this scheme. For further information please write Jack L. Park, 10236-70 St., Edmonton, Alberta T6A 2T4

A PROVINCIAL BIRD (3)

(The following letter has been received from Mrs. Doris H. Ramsay on behalf of the Old Cabin Crafts Society, Calgary)

Dear Mr. Spalding,

At a meeting of the Old Cabin Crafts Society I was instructed to write to you, to tell you that the Society would like to support you in your quest to have the Government of Alberta adopt a bird as emblematic of Alberta.

We were also thinking that a tree and animal might be adopted. The reason being that having these three identified with Alberta would give our artists and craftsmen something definite to work with, over and above the Alberta Rose.

We would be glad to hear from you with regard to what we could do to help with the project.

Yours truly,

Doris H. Ramsay. (Manager of the Calgary Cabin)

We are glad to have this letter of support, which adds a new dimension to our proposal. Letters in support of the proposal are probably the best means of helping at this stage, although later there will be the opportunity for wider participation. What do members think about the additional suggestions?

(Information selected from the card index at the PMAA - additional data would be welcome).

STEPHEN WOODMAN EATON (b. 22.12.1918).

Dr. Eaton, now on the staff of the Dept. of Biological Sciences at St. Bonaventure University, New York, is one of a number of ornithologists to have made useful contributions to the Alberta literature as a result of one expedition.

In 1940, with one companion, he made a canoe trip down the Peace and Slave rivers, and on to Great Slave Lake, and returned by power boats up the Athabasca to McMurray. Although the delta area and Slave River had been visited by a number of previous expeditions, the Peace River part of the journey, below Peace River town, was then untouched ground, most of which has scarcely been studied since. The trip was made in June and July, and 89 species were recorded. No specimens were collected.

A report on the expedition was published in 1948, and contained summaries of the numbers seen, comments on the most interesting birds, and on analysis of the geographical affinities of the fauna.

Son of Dr. E.H. Eaton, who was for six years New York State Ornithologist, Dr. Eaton was clearly early interested in birds. He is a life elective member (1969) of the American Ornithologists Union and became associated with the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University. His Ph.D. thesis (1949) was a study of the Ovenbird and Waterthrushes. A paper based in part on this, describes variation in the Northern Waterthrush, and refers to some Alberta material. Recent work has been on the Wild Turkey.

References

Burtch, V. (1935) Obituaries, Dr. Elon Howard Eaton. Auk 52 : 224

Publications

1948 Bird distribution along the Peace, Slave and Little Buffalo Rivers of Canada. Auk 65 : 345-352

1957 Variation in Seiurus noveboracensis. Auk 74 : 229-239

D. A. E. Spalding 20.3.72
Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta,
Natural History Misc. Contr. No. 11.

WHAT'S GOING ON (1) The Candian Wolf Defenders by Robert C. Guest
(This new column will feature the activities of other organisations active on the conservation scene in Alberta - contributions welcome)

Canadian Wolf Defenders is a society dedicated to conservation and understanding of one of Canada's most magnificent wild animals, the wolf. The organization was formed in February, 1968 under the leadership of Robert C. Guest, a resident of the Peace River country. Initially, the main objective of the society was to help change the old wolf image: in other words to take a definite stand to see wolves given some protection in view of increased pressure from hunters, stockmen and others who could not tolerate natural predators. This was done partly by the following objectives which were introduced in late 1969:

1. To educate the public in a variety of ways.
2. To abolish the bounty system.
3. To outlaw the use of poison for wildlife.
4. To outlaw shooting from aircraft and snow vehicles.
5. To have government protection for endangered species.
6. To establish more wilderness areas.
7. To oppose the misuse of firearms.

Since that time, Canadian Wolf Defenders has built up a membership of near 2000 members, mainly in North America, but including some in Europe. Its views have been widely featured in the North American Press, including Time and Weekend magazines, and has appeared on TV. Among its activities have been an approach to provincial governments on control policy, and a publicity campaign. It has branches in Ontario and California, and others may be starting in Utah, Wisconsin, and Saskatchewan.

The parent body still meets in Edmonton, and issues an occasional newsletter. Major problems are in the north, and the problems of bounties and poison, and the group needs further support. Annual membership is 2 dollars, and the address is P.O.Box 3480, Edmonton 41, Alberta.

OVERHEARD(9)

Behold the mighty dinosaur
Famous in prehistoric lore
Not only for his power and strength
But for his intellectual length.
You will observe by these remains
The creature had two sets of brains-
One in his head (the usual place),
The other at his spinal base.
Thus he could reason "A priori"
As well as "A posteriori"
No problem bothered him a bit
He made both head and tail of it
So wise was he, so wise and solemn,
Each thought just filled a spinal column.
If one brain found the pressure strong
It passed a few ideas along.
If something slipped his forward mind
'Twas rescued by the one behind
And if in error he was caught
He had a saving afterthought.
As he thought twice before he spoke
He had no judgment to revoke.
Thus he could think without congestion
Upon both sides of every question.
Oh gaze upon this model beast
Defunct ten million years at least.

Bert Taylor 1912

RECENT PUBLICATIONS ON THE NATURAL HISTORY OF ALBERTA. (2)

(Selected references from the PMAA Bibliography).

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Anon (1971) | Environment. | Alberta, a land
for living
1 (4) : 4-25. |
| Bird, C.D. (1971) | Spring flowering of plants in
the Calgary area. | Calgary Field
Naturalist
2 (8) : 85. |
| Bird, C.D. (1971) | (Nose Hill, Calgary). | Calgary Field
Naturalist
2 (9) : 89-90. |
| Bird, C.D. (1971) | George Harrison Turner, M.D.,
1877-1970. | Blue Jay
(Alberta botanist)
29 : 4-5. |
| Bird, C.D. (1971) | Brown-Lowery Field Trip. | Calgary Field
Naturalist
3 (2) : 17. |
| Bird, C.D. & Ann
Bird (1971) | The Status of the Purple Martin
in the Calgary Area. | Calgary Field
Naturalist
3 (4) : 48-49. |
| Bird, C.D. (1972) | The Snowy Owl in the Calgary
area, 1964-1972. | Calgary Field
Naturalist
3 (8) : 106-107. |
| Bird, C.D. (1972) | Report of the Natural Areas
Committee. | Calgary Field
Naturalist
3 (9) : 121. |
| Bouckhout, L.
(1971) | The Mule Deer of Alberta in
fall and winter. | Alberta Conservationist
: 4-5. |
| Bruns, E. (1971) | Pronghorn Antelope,
<i>Antilocapra americana</i> . | Dinny's Digest
1 (10) : 10-15, 18. |
| Burgess, T.E.
(1972) | 1971 Live Crop Projects.
(Beaverhill Lake, Grande Prairie). | "Defending all
Outdoors"
6 (1) : (8). |
| Calverley, D.H.
(1971) | Comments on the effects of the
Bennett Dam. | Blue Jay
29 (3) : 160-161. |
| Campbell, R.W.
(1971) | Misleading glaucous-winged
gull recovery from Iowa.
(cites Alberta recovery at
St. Paul and releases at
Calgary and Brooks) | Bird-Banding
42 : 127 |
| Cracraft, J.
(1971) | Caenagnathiformes: Cretaceous
birds convergent in jaw
mechanism to Dicynodont Reptiles. | Journal of
Paleontology
45 (5) : 805-809. |
| Cunningham, E.B.
(1971) | A Cougar kills an Elk. | Canadian Field-
85 (3) : 253-254. |

THE NATURALISTS' BOOKSHELF 2 'Silent Spring'

Only nine years ago 'Silent Spring' opened a new era in conservation. The author, a successful popular writer in the natural history field, produced a book that pin-pointed the growing dangers of careless use of pesticides and pointed the way to alternative methods of control. It had a reception astonishing in its diversity - from praise by the conservationists through to downright abuse from the makers and users of pesticides. Much of the carefully documented content was new even to those who were in close touch with the field, and a variety of legitimate and illegitimate attempts were made to discredit the author and her writings.

Now the book can be seen as the starting point of modern concern over pesticides, which have kept them in the news ever since. It has helped to rouse public opinion to permit banning or limitation of use of some pesticides, and has caused some manufacturers and users to take more responsible attitudes. As an information source it still remains a basic work in the field, supplemented now by a sequel 'Since Silent Spring' published since the author's death. As a best-seller it has kept Rachel Carson's other books widely available in paperback. As a book it should be on every naturalist's shelf and be read and re-read. As a sample, try this short passage on British Columbia problems.

"There an outbreak of the black-headed budworm had been raging for several years. Forestry officials, fearing that another season's defoliation might result in severe loss of trees, decided to carry out control operations in 1957. There were many consultations with the Game Department, whose officials were concerned about the salmon runs. The Forest Biology Division agreed to modify the spraying programme in every possible way short of destroying its effectiveness, in order to reduce risks to the fish.

Despite these precautions, and despite the fact that a sincere effort was apparently made, in at least four major streams almost 100 per cent of the salmon were killed."

D.A.E.S. 2.2.1971

CONSERVATION COMMENT (2) Village Lake Louise again. by Aileen Harmon
(Ed, This is a condensed summary of the Federation's brief on Village Lake Louise,
prepared by Aileen, chairman of the Parks, Natural Areas and Wilderness Committee)

This brief is a position paper from the Federation of Alberta Naturalists... FAN is interested in seeing conservation principles applied to all land use problems in Alberta... conservation in the sense of the wisest use of natural resources for the maximum benefit. We believe that a major wise use of land is to preserve adequate samples..in a natural or near natural state, for study, education and enjoyment. In this context we welcome the contribution of the National Parks system to this need, and the clarification of purpose...will make it easier to assess the value... ..Natural areas are increasingly under pressure.....Development in natural areas is rarely reversible.

...unfortunate that the principle of public involvement developed so late; otherwise the National Parks Branch would...not have made a commitment in the direction so clearly contrary to...informed opinion on National Parks planning. If this village is built, the impact..will be most serious.... there are no major ski resorts in any other national park in the world.

...Facility oriented recreation, townsite development and other undesirable features associated with the Village Lake Louise project are clearly inappropriate in a National Park. FAN is ..totally opposed to this development... Planning on a modest, purely functional scale, seems indicated near the Lake Louise junction ... Certainly a major interpretive centre is badly needed here...

Since the Lake Louise area has...been suffering from..heavy visitor use, any international advertising to increase this will only aggravate the situation. Similarly,...the recently approved twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway .. has a direct bearing on the Lake Louise planning....

As naturalists we are of course concerned with the ecology, and ...can find no documentation of any ecological studies in the planning area. Effects of over-use are clearly evident at Moraine Lake and Lake Louise, and this would intensify with ..additional numbers.

Tree clearing for ski slopes provides unsightly stumps. Native vegetation will thrive in these clearings if allowed, but stumping and slope seeding with exotic grass mixtures is ecologically undesirable. Above timberline any grading of trails or runs is disastrous, since native vegetation is very slow to reestablish here.

....
Over-use of the Ptarmigan Valley by horses is already serious.....The..valley is used by wolverine and grizzlies. Are they going to be crowded out?

The main problem at Lake Louise is currently one of bear-human relationships. Increasing garbage attracts them... last summer there were probably 30 grizzlies in the area. Camper education about food storage and upgrading of garbage collection are needed.The introduction of a major townsite cannot be handled by normal practice and incineration is hardly desirable.... only the bear can lose - a major park value would give way to an exotic resort.

The plan for Village Lake Louise creates a precedent for modern townsites... could be fatal to the National Parks in Canada.

....wish to commend ..Branch on their decision to cancel plans for visitor centres at Saskatchewan River Crossing, Pocahontas and Poboktan, and we hope that they will ..maintain controls on..Lake Louise so that a visitor service centre does not expand into another townsite. The National Parks are to be used by tourists...but they are not to be the tool of the tourist industry.

CLUB CORNER (2)

by Frances Schultz & Helen Schuler

GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NATURAL HISTORY CLUBS IN ALBERTA

I. General suggestions for getting started:

- a. The club can be started with just a few interested persons. Don't wait for a large number.
- b. Don't panic about getting an executive right away, as long as someone will arrange meetings. You may want to meet as an unorganized group for several meetings until you know one another and can choose an executive.
- c. For an initial meeting, arrange for a good film (inexpensive NFB films are available from many libraries), and get announcements in to your newspaper and radio stations. Two people arranged the first Lethbridge meeting, a film, and announcements in the paper and radio stations brought out enough people to indicate the interest to start the club.
- d. **Initially**, keep the executive simple - president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and several directors. If your club is to be a family club, try and have one junior director. Later, you may want to ~~divide~~ the secretary's job into recording and corresponding.
- e. Most clubs meet once a month. Establish a regular meeting night, such as the second Friday, so members will set that time aside. Also try for a free meeting place, at least until you're well established.
- f. Prepare a brochure explaining your organization. These can be done inexpensively with ditto or gestetner stencils. Find an office or a teacher who, supplied with the materials, will be willing to run off the copies for you. Make these available in places such as your library and other public places.
- g. Memberships should be kept low, but not so low that you can't do anything. An example, some clubs have family fees \$3.00, single \$2.00, and student 50¢. If the fees are much lower, you may not have the funds for notices or newsletters.
- h. Start a newsletter, no matter how modest. It may be a one sheet letter announcing the next meeting, program, and business agenda. If you include information about the items of business, the members will be more informed for making business decisions. Some clubs publish wildlife observations each month.
- i. Make contact with all the local educational institutions, public libraries, etc. Through them, many interested people can be contacted. The phone number of one of the organizing members should be made available for general inquiries about the club.
- j. Establish communications with other similar organizations such as local fish and game groups, hiking and mountaineering clubs, and various conservation societies both provincial and national.
- k. Make use of all your local resources: eg. biology teachers, amateur naturalists, governmental staff from departments of agriculture, forestry, fish and wildlife, etc.

CORRECTION to Club Corner (1). We omitted to mention that the principal source used in preparation of the history of the Alberta Natural History Society was the manuscript history by Mrs. Scoular.