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ALBERTA NATURALIST

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NEWSLETTER

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Edited by David A.E. Spalding

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To receive the Alberta Naturalist regularly, send a subscribing membership fee of 2 (yes, only two - just think how much more it would cost if you paid the editor) dollars to the treasurer, 2630-22nd. Avenue, Lethbridge, Alberta. Copy for the next Alberta Naturalist should be with the editor by the beginning of September, please. News items, reports of interesting sightings of trips, or contributions to any of our regular series (yes, thats what the little numbers are, folks), by then, or if later, will be in good time for the Christmas issue. Remember, if they are typed in a form ready for inclusion, it simplifies life for the editor.

EDITORIAL : Nature Canada and the Canadian Nature Federation

Over the May long weekend, despite a hectic schedule that involved visits to both neighbouring provinces, I read a magazine from cover to cover. The magazine was, of course, the eagerly awaited first issue of 'Nature Canada', which is a landmark in the Canadian natural history movement.

It was only last fall that I attended the first annual conference of the Canadian Nature Federation. This exciting meeting has been reported on, together with some of the developments since, in these pages. At the meeting, I met for the first time the President of C.N.F., Ted Mosquin, who had already made a reputation by the improvements he made to the Canadian Field-Naturalist when he took over as editor. As the new President, he enthused over the potential for C.N.F., and the things it would be able to do. Many who heard must, like myself, have thought to themselves 'Fine words and noble sentiments, but can it be done?'

The time for caution is now past. If it is possible to create a major magazine from scratch then C.N.F. really can do the other things it plans to tackle. Nature Canada lives up to its name, in terms of both content and appearance. There are articles on the new national park in the Nahanni, the James Bay power project, and the B.C. Ecological Reserves Act. There is an account of Saskatchewan's Prairie Dogs, and of the work of the Ontario artist Robert Bateman (featured recently by CBC). There is an extensive news section, and letters, reviews and notices occur as expected. The writing is generally of high quality, and the tone factual and reasonable. The real delight is in the illustrations and layout. It has been possible to include six pages of colour in addition to the cover, and these, together with good black and white illustration, and careful attention to layout and typography, give an overall appearance that allows Nature Canada to rank immediately among Canada's best periodicals, and perhaps as one of the world's best natural history magazines.

Through Nature Canada, and the forthcoming conference in Edmonton, C.N.F. is doing its best to attract the sort of wide support that is needed for a worthwhile Canadian Nature organisation. It is going to make many new friends in the public at large, but it still needs as much support as possible from those already committed to conservation. If you are not already a member, join now, and get Nature Canada from the beginning. The subscription is only \$6 from the Canadian Nature Federation, 46 Elgin Street, Ottawa, Canada K1P5K6

See you at the conference.....

FAN NEWS

Fall Meeting

The second annual general meeting will be in Calgary on the weekend of September 30th-October 1st. There will be a directors meeting on the morning of September 30th., with the AGM in the evening. Sunday October 1st. will be a field trip. Please note this meeting in your diaries now, and plan to attend. Full details will be announced in the next Alberta Naturalist.

Highlights of Directors Meeting, Banff

A meeting of the directors was held in Banff on Saturday June 17. Representatives of each club were present, as well as appointed directors C.D.Bird and J.M.Powell. Grant McNabb, president of the Alberta Wilderness Association also was present as an observer, and was invited to participate in several of the discussions.

A broad discussion on policy resulted in a series of major areas being defined on which a detailed policy should be worked out, and individual directors took on the task of producing a draft for discussion on specific areas. These areas included our relationships with member clubs, other organisations and governments in and out of province, and the fields of publications, natural areas, environmental education, field meetings, species conservation, outdoor recreation, finance, research, and others. Members with specific suggestions on policy can send in suggestions to the president or secretary, who will refer items to the appropriate director.

Several members of member clubs have volunteered to assist the chairmen of committees, and further nominations would be welcome. Progress with new clubs and the provincial bird is reported on under FAN projects.

Various publication matters were then discussed, including matters relating to the Alberta Naturalist, our relations with Blue Jay and the Alberta Conservationist, and the possibility of a further Government publication to replace the defunct Alberta Lands Forests Parks Wildlife.

A report was given on various activities of the Environment Conservation Authority and the Environmental Research Trust. It was noted with some concern that the Federation brief on surface mining had not been included in the final report on the hearings

Various conservation matters were then discussed, including Suffield, Village Lake Louise, the Milk River prairie park proposal, Wood Buffalo National Park, and Wild Kakwa. Grant McNabb gave information about the AWA wilderness proposals currently being made, and letters of support or commendation are being sent by FAN in support of some of the AWA's stands.

Details of the pre conference field trips for the Canadian Nature Federation conference were discussed, as well as the first issue of Nature Canada. Other conferences were discussed, including the Outdoor education conference and the forthcoming IUCN meeting in Banff.

The role of FAN in local problems was discussed, and it was agreed that FAN should work through the local clubs where these existed. Member clubs could call in FAN in any problem where there seemed to be a need for provincial involvement, and FAN would in turn consult members when an apparently local situation was brought to its attention.

Other matters discussed included correspondence from the city of Vernon, the Yukon, and the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee. Suggestions were made for the production of Christmas Cards and membership cards which were tabled for further discussion at the next meeting.

Late News from the ECA

As this issue was nearing completion, news was received from the Environment Conservation Authority of a change in the schedule of public hearings. Instead of detailed hearings on specific matters relating to the foothills area, it has been decided to discuss the whole area of land use and resources in the eastern rockies and foothills. There will be a broad hearing on the principles of land use in the area, and a series of hearings on specific areas, probably including the south, Bow valley, Bighorn, Athabasca, and Bighorn areas. Specific hearings on individual proposals may also follow. Previously planned hearings on the Canmore corridor and other specific issues will be dropped in favour of the broader approach.

This seems to be an excellent approach to a critical area in Alberta's conservation planning, and will be welcomed by most of those concerned. Perhaps there will even be an opportunity for the first realistic discussion of the inter-relations of the mountain national parks and the surrounding areas.

OVERHEARD (10)

"Pray what is there to be found in horse-pond except mud, dead dogs and cats, and duck-weed? the reader may ask.-- Pray what is there to be found in that trumpery ball they call the earth? the 'Man in the Moon' may demand of his neighbour Saturn as they both come out for their evening stroll. The answer to such questions is simply, 'Life'; Life in all diversity of form, beautifully and wonderfully arranged, each individual deriving benefit from the well-being of the mass; the mass itself prospering in ratio with the individual.

"To the inhabitants of the pond, the pond is the world; to the inhabitants of the world, the world, as compared to space, is but a pond; and when the adventurous lizard has made a voyage of discovery round his pond, he has as much right, comparatively speaking, to boast of his performance to his fellow lizards, as Captain Cook had, when he first sailed round the world, to write two thick volumes for the information of his fellow men."

Frank Buckland, the victorian naturalist, fisheries biologist and populariser, in his 'Curiosities of Natural History' 1857.

BOTANY OF THE FAN FIELD TRIP TO THE BASE OF MT. YAMNUSKA - C.D. Bird

June 18, the second day of the Federation of Alberta Naturalists (FAN) 1972 Spring Meeting, was devoted to a number of field trips under the very capable leadership of Bob Smith of Seebe. The most extensive of these trips was to an area of relatively undisturbed lodgepole pine - aspen woods with scattered grassy slopes at the base of Mt. Yamnuska, a mountain composed almost entirely of limestone, some 4 miles NW of Seebe. The elevation range covered was from 4350 to 4500 ft. In this area Bob led a group of 22 hikers on an extensive hike of about 5 miles, while his wife took the remaining 20 or so people on a less energetic tour of about 2 miles.

The area proved to be most interesting botanically. It was right at the peak of bloom as evidenced by the 75 species of plants found in flower. While some of the early spring flowers, like Crocus (Anemone patens var. wolfgangiana) and Golden Bean (Thermopsis rhombifolia) were all in fruit; others, like the Three-flowered Avens (Geum triflorum), Saskatoon (Amelanchier alnifolia) and Early Blue Violet (Viola adunca), were still in bloom. At the same time, many summer flowers like the Tiger Lily (Lilium philadelphicum var. andinum), Cow Parsnip (Heracleum lanatum), Wild Rose (Rosa woodsii) and White Camas (Zygadenus elegans) were just starting to come into bloom.

The area was also interesting because of the diversity in habitats that were present. At lower elevations, and on the steep south-facing slopes of ridges, prairie species like Common Groundsel (Senecio canus), Three-flowered Avens, Cut-leaved Anemone (Anemone multifida) and Graceful Cinquefoil (Potentilla gracilis) were in evidence. The Poplar Community was well represented by species such as Chokecherry (Prunus virginiana var. melanocarpa), Saskatoon, Twining Honeysuckle (Lonicera dioica var. involucrata), American Vetch (Vicia americana) and Heart-leaved Alexanders (Zizia aptera). Species characteristic of the Lodgepole pine woods were Bear Berry (Arctostaphylos uva-ursi), Red Paintbrush (Castilleja miniata), Yellow Hedysarum (Hedysarum sulphurescens) and Black Twin-berry (Lonicera involucrata). A number of rather unique plants, like Seaside Arrow-grass (Triglochin maritima), Butterwort (Pinguicula vulgaris) and Buttercup (Ranunculus flammula), were found restricted to the shores of the shallow lime-rich lakes in the area. Wet woods had their own special group of characteristic species, including Yellow Lady-slipper (Cypripedium calceolus var. pubescens), Swamp Violet (Viola nephrophila), Fly-spotted Orchid (Orchis rotundifolia), and Bracted Green Orchid (Habenaria viridis var. bracteata). Finally, the group was interested in observing Sweet Androsace (Androsace chamaejasme), Mountain Avens (Dryas hookeriana), and Alpine Bistort (Polygonum viviparum), species which are normally associated with more alpine areas.

CLUB NEWS

Alberta Natural History Society, Red Deer

Mrs. E.N.Scoular

May 25th included a short field trip to a wooded marshy area, alive with bird songs. Red-winged blackbirds, orioles, yellow warblers, goldfinches, white-throated sparrow and marsh birds were seen.

On June 8th. a very interesting field trip and picnic was held at a member's bird farm near Lacombe. Trips to the bird houses along the fence lines found 50 bluebirds nesting, and scores of tree swallows were utilizing the bird houses and showed only friendly interest in their benefactor. He put out a few white feathers at each stop which were quickly picked up in mid-air by the tree swallows.

Over 200 bird boxes have been built and placed for bluebirds, tree swallows and martins, and are watched over by this great friend of the birds. He told of a mother bluebird killed by house sparrows and six young birds still alive in the nest. He took three to each of two other bluebird nests and they were accepted by the other birds.

An Upland plover was reported from Pine Lake by Jim Vincent (no date, Ed.)

Edmonton Natural History Club

The June and July newsletters, edited by Kay Ewing, are as usual full of information. Meetings have been held on 'engineers of the insect world' by Dr. Bruce Heming and the 'fish of the Edmonton area' to complete the indoor program for the season. The latter was given in the University Zoology Museum by Dr. Joe Nelson, one of the authors of 'Fishes of Alberta'.

Field trips have been held to the University Botanical Garden, and Elk Island Park, and a more unusual one investigated ways of assessing natural areas in a central ravine, where educational programs are being undertaken by the provincial museum. A weekend field meeting in Dinosaur park attracted relatively few people for a most enjoyable meeting - this would be a good place for a FAN meeting next year.

Sightings include several occupied boxes on the bluebird trail, a Harris' Sparrow in an urban yard and 9 Whooping Cranes flying north over Camrose on April 9th. A Great gray owl nest in the Miquelon Lake area had 3 eggs on May 10th., and at least two young were seen on June 4th.

Longer features include the completion of a series on evolution by Dave Nash, now in Seattle on sabbatical from the genetics department, and the start of a series on carnivorous plants by Margaret Francis, and enthusiastic young member of the club.

A forthcoming meeting will be along parts of the Waskahegan Trail, a 200 mile hiking trail being developed around Edmonton.

PROVINCIAL NEWS

Lethbridge Course on Wildland Recreation and Outdoor Recreation

A leaflet available from Lethbridge Community College, gives details of courses on Wildland recreation, Outdoor Education and related topics, based in Westcastle near Waterton Lakes National Park. Two of the courses will have been completed at the time this newsletter is being compiled, but the third is still to come, and presumably similar courses will be run in future years.

Environment Conservation Authority News

Recent legislation has modified the Authority somewhat by making it directly responsible to the Minister of the Environment instead of to cabinet. This has caused concern in some quarters, and it is not yet clear how this will affect the Authority. The members are now increased to four, and as Paul Babey has now left there are two appointments to be made to join Dr. Trost and Dr. Smith, the other two members.

The second report of the hearings of the the ECA is now out, covering the strip mining. It is somewhat annoying to find that the FAN brief is not included in the final report, despite a written assurance that it had arrived in time. Detailed information for the next hearing, on Environmental effects of Sulphur Extraction Gas Plants, has now been issued, and the hearings are set for October 2-19th.- Red Deer 5th., Calgary 16th and Edmonton 19th are among the five hearing localities. Members should be able to get information, if not already received, by writing to the ECA at 9912-107 St., Edmonton.

The Public Advisory Committee is gradually finding its feet, and many problems are being discussed by its four study groups. The Environment Protection group, shared by your representative at the moment, has under discussion problems relating to lakeshore development, lake drainage, snowmobiles, and the specific problem of Big Lake, near Edmonton. The annual meeting of the PAC, set for November, will discuss as part of the meeting the problems involved in an optimum population for Alberta.

Edmonton Transportation Planning

Brief announcement was recently made of the new plan for the development of transportation in Edmonton. It was published on July 24th., and is available at 2 bucks. The public is invited to submit briefs, but since advertising has been pretty minimal, notice of intent has to be filed by August 9th., and 25 copies of the brief filed by August 25th., before the hearings in mid September, it seems that nobody actually wants the citizens to participate. Since this will probably decide the future of the much argued McKinnon ravine freeway, as well as setting the pattern for good or ill in Alberta's cities for the rest of the century, this seems rather hasty, to say the least.

Go Down the Mine, Daddy

A novel tourist attraction this year is a tour of the Atlas mine, at East Coulee, near Drumheller. One of the few underground mines still working coal in Canada, it has started taking tourists down for the slack summer period when orders run short. A most enjoyable tour, by bus from the mine office to prairie level, then down a 400' shaft in comfort to view sections of the mine. Highly recommended, especially since the shortage of oil reserves will put them back to full scale working in about thirty (?) years.

Alberta Wilderness Association

One of the enjoyable features of the Banff meeting in June was the presence of Grant McNabb, lively president of the Alberta Wilderness Association. He was able to talk both to the Directors and to members at the evening meeting, and give some idea of the activities of the group. FAN and AWA are exchanging newsletters, and will try and report regularly on the activities of this group whose interests lie close to our own.

As might be expected the group was active in opposing the Lake Louise development, but it is also working in many other areas. Recent projects from newsletters include the active promotion of a wilderness in the Milk River-Lost River area in southeastern Alberta, and another in the Elbow region. They have also been active in watching the status of the White Goat Wilderness and other former 'wilderness' areas that looked like being dismembered to fit the procrustean 144 square miles.

Not content with talking about wilderness areas, members of the AWA take regular walks into the areas they are interested in, and not only do they pack out their own garbage, they bring out other people's, too. Wonder if they would consider a field trip down Jasper Avenue.....

Environment News

This newsletter is available free from the Department of the Environment, 10040-104th. St., Edmonton 14. It appears monthly, and is printed quite attractively on recycled paper. Various news items up to the may issue cover the Bighorn Reservoir and its ecological impact, courses in pesticide use, the consequences of growth, and paper recycling, among other topics. Articles are anonymous, unless lifted from elsewhere, and give quite a lot of background information on current activities and problems.

NATIONAL NEWS

Lake Louise Village Bites the Dust !

Probably everyone interested is by now aware that Minister Chretien has given the decision against Lake Louise, following an announcement indicating lack of support for the project from the Alberta Government. He also made clear that National Parks were a Federal responsibility, and offered no hope for the provincial proposals to remove townsites or transportation corridors from the parks. It is very pleasing, therefore, to find the Federation position so ably supported by so eminent a person.

In rejecting the whole concept of the Village, no indication was given of what would be considered acceptable. To be realistic, nothing more is likely to be heard of the area until after the federal election, and big business will presumably think carefully before making any further attempts to build up the jet set business (unless Imperial Oil are still anxious to recoup a bit of the investment..... I wonder how many credit cards were returned, after all - the announcements indicating very few are rather remarkable since I must therefore know most of them personally.....)

Hopefully, there will now be a chance for the two governments to get together and look at alternatives outside the park to supply the very real needs for downhill skiing, before someone else decides to put Expo seventywhatsit in Wood Buffalo.

Canadian Nature Federation Conference

Full details of the CNF conference in Edmonton are now available, and have been mailed to all members of CNF and to the clubs and societies across the country. Anyone still needing information should write to the conference HQ at the Edmonton NHC box 1582, Edmonton.

For Alberta naturalists this is an important occasion, as this new organisation is having its second meeting in the west, and is unlikely to be out here again for a year or two. In many ways it is an exciting program - good speakers, opportunity for excellent discussions, field trips and exhibits. There are already approaching 100 registered, and with local attendance we may be up to twice that figure.

A SPECIAL DAILY REGISTRATION RATE has been announced of \$5 a day (\$10 including meals) for those who wish to attend only part of the meeting. A good chance to catch at least some of the action for those unable to attend the whole meeting. Naturalists area already booked in from almost every province, with a wide spread of interests.

Other innovative features include a junior program arranged by the youngsters themselves, and a special feature for younger children under 8. There are also pre-conference tours in southern Alberta.

Canadian Nature Art '72

The second National Exhibition of work by Canadian Nature artists is being held at the Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta in conjunction with the conference. Work is invited from all nature artists resident in Canada, and detailed information for artists is available from the PMAA at 12845-102 St., Edmonton.

The show will be opened on August 16th., and will up till about the end of September. Other items in the opening will be the PMAA's fourth habitat group (Coyote in the Middle Sandhills), and a preview of the Conservation Gallery that is in preparation.

Columbia Valley Naturalists

The formation of this new group was announced in our newsletter last year, and we are now receiving their monthly newsletter. News from the May and June issues include reports on indoor meetings and summer excursions. Two members were at the March Bow Valley meeting, and give a good report of it. Plans are being made ahead of time for the hearings on the Glacier and Revelstoke parks, and the group was active in organising a spring clean-up campaign in Golden. The group is also planning a brief on regional planning in the Golden district.

International Nature Note

The Evening Grosbeak and Franklin's Gull have been added to the long list of North American birds on the British bird list.

IUCN meets at Banff

The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources will hold its 11th. General Assembly and 12th. Technical Meeting in Banff from September 10th. to 16th., 1972. The IUCN was formed in 1948, and has a membership which includes more than 70 nations. Its main purpose is to promote or support action that will ensure the conservation of nature and natural resources on a world wide basis. Six permanent commissions are operated on survival of threatened species, education, Ecology, National Parks, Environmental Policy and Landscape planning.

Individuals interested in the conference are entitled to attend as non-participating observers. Registration forms are obtainable from Box 905, Banff, and completed forms sent to the IUCN in Switzerland, as soon as possible. Registration is free.

LETTERS

Yellow-billed Loon at Lesser Slave Provincial Park

Dear Dave,

On June 22, 1972 my husband and I were on a brief visit to Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park, Alberta (approx. 114° 45' W, 55° 30' N). When we walked down to the lakeshore at Lily Creek, we spotted a loon swimming quite close in (within 200' *). A check with field glasses showed the bird to be an adult Yellow-billed Loon in breeding plumage. The colour and shape of the beak was as described for the species in Birds of Canada, as was the white spotting on the back and wings. In addition, I observed a noticeable difference in head profile from the Common Loon. Instead of sloping smoothly back from the beak, the forehead of the Yellow-billed Loon was abrupt and formed an angle with the crown of the head. Unfortunately I did not get a photograph as I had left my telephoto lens in the car, and, by the time I got it and returned, the bird was beginning to move away and into the sun, making the lighting poor. Altogether, we observed the loon for about 20 minutes. It was alone, and no other loons were in the vicinity. Most of the time it was swimming quietly, peering into the water and occasionally diving. It was silent, but its behavior and movements seemed normal -- i.e. it did not appear sick or injured. As we watched, it gradually moved further away from shore with each dive.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs.) G.C.D. Griffiths.

Editor's note: An attempt to provide independent verification of the observation on June 26th. was unsuccessful - several Common Loons were about, but no Yellow-bills. I was heading north on a Provincial Museum field trip, and was able to make a detour to the area. Mrs. Griffiths was until recently naturalist at Elk Island National Park, and Dr. Griffiths is an entomologist, so both are experienced observers. The Yellow-billed Loon is listed by Salt and Wilk as hypothetical (no specimen or photograph), and is not included in the PMAA Checklist. There is of course no 'official' list for the province, and no formal mechanism for accepting sight records. Should FAN attempt to establish such a committee? There have presumably been other sight records of the Yellow-billed Loon, but I am not aware that any of them have been previously published.

FAN PROJECTS

A PROVINCIAL BIRD (4)

D.A.E.Spalding

It is not surprising to learn that our current proposal for a provincial bird should not be the first. An interesting letter from our honorary member Kerry Wood includes information about his proposals for a provincial bird and mammal some twenty years ago. His choice was the mountain bluebird, with the pika as the mammal.

As members will recall, FAN is putting together a short list of ten species by vote of member clubs, and is then hoping to seek wider public support for a specific choice. Three lists from member clubs are before me, and these are given below, with a summary. The number of individual votes for each has been supplied in two instances, and these are included for the interest of readers.

Alberta Natural History Society, Red Deer

Black-capped Chickadee	13
Pileated Woodpecker	12
Great Horned Owl	10
Mountain Bluebird	9
Ruffed Grouse	9
Red-winged Blackbird	8
Evening Grosbeak	7
Tree Swallow	6
Red-tailed Hawk	5
Western Meadowlark	9

Calgary Field Naturalists Club

From a very sophisticated voting system, which provided three different lists, I have selected the last, in which votes were weighted by their place on the ballot as being perhaps the closest to the wishes of the members.

Western Meadowlark	205
Great Horned Owl	173
Black-capped Chickadee	164
Killdeer	150
Bohemian Waxwing	150
Prairie Falcon	146
Mountain Bluebird	134
Red-winged Blackbird	132
Black-billed Magpie	102
Cedar Waxwing	95

Lethbridge Natural History Society

- Pintail
- Cedar Waxwing
- Barn Swallow
- Killdeer
- Cliff Swallow
- Franklin's Gull
- Sparrow Hawk
- Red-winged Blackbird

- Black-capped Chickadee
- Marsh Hawk.

No order of priority was given, but the two swallows were indicated as having particular support.

Summary of results to date

It is notable that no less than 21 different species have been proposed by only three clubs - clearly there will be no single favourite emerging very easily. Of those voted on so far, the following appeared in all three lists

Black-capped Chickadee
Red-winged Blackbird

The following appeared on two lists:

Western Meadowlark
Great Horned Owl
Killdeer
Cedar Waxwing
Mountain Bluebird

Final selection of ten will be made when all lists are in. This will be on the basis of number of clubs supporting each species, but reference to the position of birds in the club lists may be necessary in the event of a tie, or two closely related species appearing in the final list.

Request for assistance Would one of our members like to take over co-ordination of this project, and provide reports on progress for the AN ?

NEW CLUBS (2)

Developments in the area of new clubs have reached the stage that a further report would be useful. Existing member clubs have agreed to take on the role of contacts, and are making efforts to interest people in adjacent areas in the formation of additional groups. First sign of success comes from Stettler, where the Alberta Natural History Society have been following up contacts, and Mr. Lloyd Lohr has expressed interest in developing a club in the area. Anyone in the Stettler area, who may be interested in helping to form a local club there should contact Mr. Lohr.

More heartening news is the development of an independent Rocky Mountain House Bird Club, of which news has reached us by a roundabout route. This group will of course be approached to ask about the possibility of it joining the Federation.

We are also getting help from the Saskatchewan Natural History Society in our search for contacts in the Medicine Hat area. We now have a list of 'Blue Jay' subscribers in the area, and will be approaching them as soon as opportunity or manpower permits.

(Information selected from the card index at the Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta - additional information would be welcomed).

FRANCIS LA GRANGE FARLEY (24.2.1870 - 22.10.1949)

1970 was the centenary of the birth of one of Alberta's leading ornithologists. He was born in St. Thomas, Ontario, and came to Red Deer in March 1892. He homesteaded for a while, then moved to Camrose in 1907, where he lived for the rest of his life. An enthusiastic naturalist from his childhood, he recorded birds in the Camrose area, and made numerous trips to make observations in other areas of the province. Notable trips included Grande Prairie (1916), Lac la Biche and Clearwater River by canoe (1919), Banff and Lake Louise (1921, when he 'motored several hundred miles'). True pioneering! In later years he travelled more widely, and was for instance in South Dakota in 1929. The opening of the railway to Churchill, Manitoba in 1930 made tundra readily accessible for the first time to naturalists, and Farley (in his sixties) was one of the first and most persistent visitors, making seven trips between 1931 and 1938. In 1939, at the age of 69, he travelled to 'Carlton House on the Saskatchewan', base of many of the great expeditions across western Canada, with a number of other naturalists (including a great-nephew called Farley Mowat, now well known in other circles).

Farley's publications have an important position in the literature of Alberta birds. Thirty-six of the forty-three papers so far located (see Reference List No. 96 of the PMAA) cover many aspects of Alberta's bird life, including notes on

behaviour, rarities, and ecology. Although comments on plants and mammals reveal his wider interests, only one paper refers extensively to mammals. His major works were detailed studies of two areas, the Lac la Biche and Fort McMurray areas, and his 'Birds of Battle River', which surveyed the whole Camrose area. Neither has been superseded.

He had a wide circle of friends in Alberta and elsewhere, with whom he exchanged information. He also did much to encourage young people to take an interest in birds and many of his notes refer to his young companions.

He conducted a Christmas Bird Count at Camrose in many of the years from 1925 to 1947. A sub-species of the boreal chickadee Parus hudsonicus farleyi was named after him by Earl Godfrey (1951).

He gathered a substantial collection of books (part of which became the foundation of the Provincial Museum library), and collected extensive notes intended for a full account of the birds of the province, which was the foundation of the later work of Salt and Wilk. It is fitting that the first edition of their 'The Birds of Alberta' (1958) should be dedicated to 'the late Francis La Grange Farley, for whom it is intended to serve as a memorial and as a tribute to his great contributions to the appreciation of birds and nature in Alberta'.

Obituary

Soper J.D. (1950) in Auk 67 : 281

Salt, W.R. & A.L. Wilk (1958) The Birds of Alberta p. 51.

Publications

Reference List No. 96 of the Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta lists his known publications. The major papers were:-

- 1922 Summer birds of the Lac la Biche and Fort McMurray
region Canadian Field-Naturalist 36 : 72-75
- 1932 Birds of the Battle River Region. Institute of Applied
Arts 85 p.

References

- Godfrey, W.E. (1951). Geographical variation in the boreal
chickadee east of the Rockies.
Canadian Field-Naturalist 65 : 22-26

D. A. E. Spalding 2.2.1971
PMAA, Natural History Division
Miscellaneous Contribution No. 14.

OVERHEARD (11)

Modern camping is the definitive means of getting close to nature without
coming to grips with it.

Gilbert Millstein

OVERHEARD (12)

Most people think of nature as a place to throw beer cans on sunday

H.L.Mencken