

Diary of a Bird Watcher



Monday, June 2

The first thing in the morning I bought some nicotiana plants and set them out. I got them for their wonderful evening fragrance and also because they are attractive to hummingbirds. We should have a paradise for hummingbirds here after awhile because I planted the nicotiana just in front of a big bed of gladiolus.

Later in the morning I went out in the car. Instead of making a bird list as I usually do I just cruised around the valley looking for one thing, the nesting area of tricolored blackbirds. On Memorial Day we found that they were not nesting where I had thought they were, near Gregory road. Finally, as it was time for me to come home, I found a place where they were nesting, not far from Scenic ave. north of Central Point. This later proved to be just a small section of the main nesting colony.

After lunch I picked R. B. and took him out with me to explore the nesting colony of the tricolored blackbirds. We found that they were nesting mainly on the east side of Bear creek, just west and a little north of Mon Desir. We estimated about 1,500 birds in the area. They are very gregarious. Nests were sometimes within four feet of each other. All the nests we found were in dense blackberry tangles very difficult to penetrate. We didn't find any nests with young in them, but found a good many young birds apparently just out of the nests.

The colony was pretty noisy, as the parent birds resented our intrusion. Many of them had caterpillars or worms in their beaks, which might indicate that they are economically beneficial although they undoubtedly do damage at times, too, because of their habit of feeding close together in dense flocks. The males with their bright red and white shoulder patches were very pretty.

Tuesday, June 3

When we had the more natural part of our property mowed I managed to get the man to leave a couple of areas where there were a good many bachelor button plants growing wild, like them for two reasons. The blue flowers are very pretty. Then, when they go to seed they attract the equally pretty lesser (green-backed) goldfinches. Today I saw the first of these beginning to feed on them. There will be more as the seeds ripen.

Another plant the lesser goldfinches like is Michaelmas daisies. One of my bird loving friends gave us some plants a couple of years ago and they have multiplied so that now I would be glad to share them with others. They flower and ripen their seeds toward the end of the summer.

Charlie Hoover was kind enough to call me and say that some unusual, large, white birds were on the lake. I couldn't go over right away but did later in the afternoon, and then the big white birds had gone. But Hoover lake didn't disappoint me. There were a good many swallows flying and feeding just above the surface of the water and among them were at least four purple martins. These handsome blue-black swallows are not nearly as common in the west as back east. They seldom if ever occupy the apartment type bird houses that are often put up for them. I have not seen them on the floor of our valley before. Last June I saw them apparently nesting up at Hiatt lake.

I finally finished tabulating our Memorial Day bird count. We ended up with 91 species. We did well on valley birds, but could probably have found more mountain species with more observers taking more time. Two of the commonest valley species we missed were Lewis' woodpecker and common snipe. The observers taking part were: Richard Brown (ranger naturalist at Crater Lake), Ralph Browning, Mrs. Howard Bush, Betty Jo Hicks, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Hubbard, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas McCamant (that's us), Mr. and Mrs. Carl Richardson, Dr. John Reynolds, Mrs. W. D. Pearson and Tom Turpin.

The species we listed in the greatest numbers was the Brewer's blackbird with 285. The only other one that we counted more than a hundred of was the meadowlark with 132. Too bad we hadn't yet found the nesting colony of tricolored blackbirds at that time.

Friday, June 6

Today I saw the first of the new crop of baby pheasants out in our field with a hen. They didn't look tiny enough to be just out of the egg. They usually keep hidden in the tall grass for quite a while before I get a glimpse of them.—T.M.

Court Upholds Decision Against Reynolds Firm

San Francisco — (UPI) — The U.S. Court of Appeals has upheld a \$30,000 decision against the Reynolds Aluminum Co. over the protests of America's eight largest aluminum producers.

The appeal tribunal voted 5-1 to uphold the award to the Paul Martin family of Troutdale, Ore., for alleged fluoride poisoning.

It was the first case in history in which aluminum companies were charged with such injuries. It was also the first case in which it was alleged fluoride compounds could be harmful to humans.

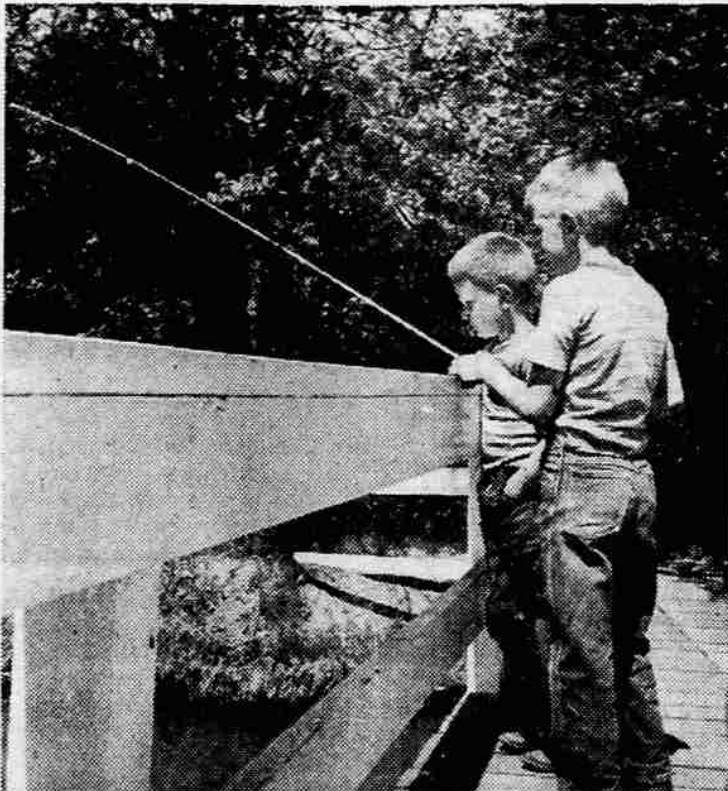
Windows Etched

Testimony revealed that as much as 3,988 pounds of fluoride a day were passed into the air — enough to etch the windows of the Martin ranch.

But Reynolds representatives, backed by the seven other firms, had asserted that it was impossible to make aluminum without emitting fluoride concentrates into the air. It was further argued that medical experts differ on how much fluoride will cause injury to humans.

The court ruled that the instructions given the jury by trial judge William G. East of Portland, Ore., were not prejudicial. It was the second time the court ruled on the case.

There are 250 religious denominations in the United States.



YOUTHFUL FISHERMEN—Skipper and Lyle Hood, 7 and 5 years old, respectively, of Phoenix, lean over a bridge railing and peer hopefully into an irrigation ditch in Phoenix hoping to catch a "big un." Nothing is better than fishing on a spring afternoon as these two boys carry on the traditions of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.

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Pacifist Crewmen Given Jail Terms

Honolulu — (UPI) — The federal government lowered the boom today on five crewmen of the Golden Rule for trying to sail their yacht into the Eniwetok atomic area to protest U.S. nuclear tests.

Three of the five were sentenced to 60 days in jail Thursday for defying a court order forbidding them to sail their vessel. A fourth was given probation.

Jury Would Close Corvallis Jail

Corvallis — (UPI) — The city of Corvallis should discontinue use of its jail, according to the Benton county grand jury.

The jurors also recommended hiring of a full-time night jailer by the county administration.

They said Corvallis officials "have been remiss in their obligations" in allowing to exist for three years a jail that was established as a temporary facility. They said the jail is a fire hazard, has no heat control and is unsanitary.

City and county officials have been considering the possibility of merging the jail facilities.

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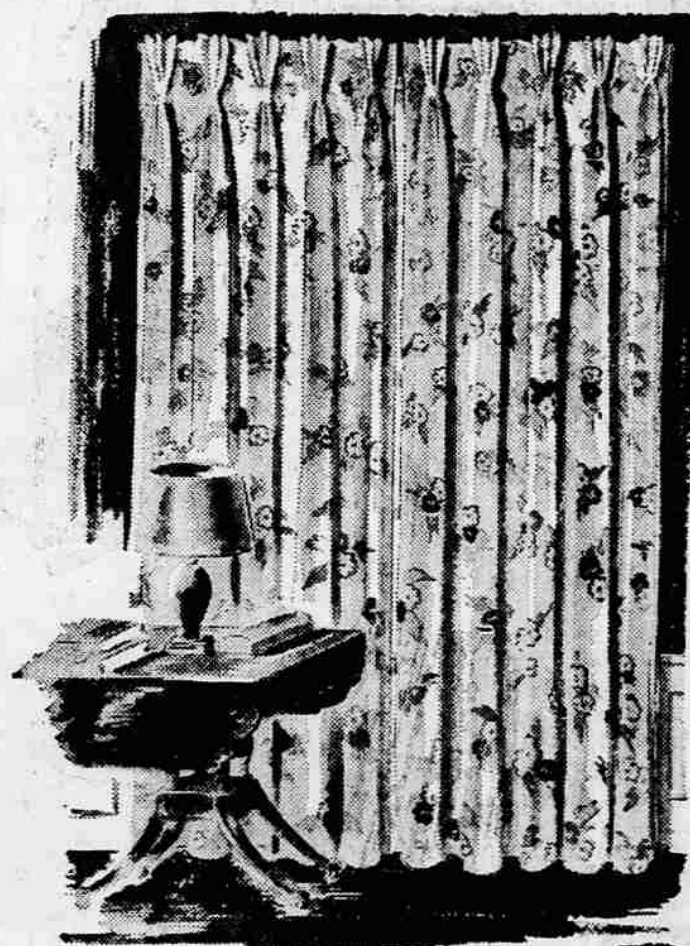
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