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OGDEN, IOWA Nov 21 1930

Phil Du Mont

Tananarive, Madagascar.

Dear Phil:-

Your letter of Oct 12th arrived to day and that was the fastest traveller of them all as most of your letters required just two months to make the trip.

I was mighty glad to hear from you again and to know that you are alright. I had expected you home this winter so thought there would be no use in writing you any more but now I see that you are planning to get home in time for our great all day hike about May 15th.

Believe me, I will be looking for you about that time and then we will get Dr (?) Nelson from Rush Medical and we will surely locate 125 or 150 birds. What do you say? Will you confirm this date?

I spent one day with Kenney when he was home last spring. We were down to the Ledges but found nothing startling. Had a fine nest of the Red Eyed Vireo near the ground and got some pictures of this fine nest with Cowbirds eggs mixed in with her own.

How I would like to be down with you with my trusty old camera.

I would shoot film until I would bankrupt myself but would have something different anyway. Better bring back one of those native blow guns that you spoke about. We are all anxious to see one.

I am going to tell Thyra about it. Perhaps some of the young "natives" in her school are using them to shoot paper wads with. She is teaching English in the Paton, Iowa High School.

Junior is in his Sophmore year at Ames and belongs to the Phi Delta Theta house which seems to be a nice bunch of boys.

Dr Roberts is still publishing the Bulletin. He is now located at Iowa City where he is also studying medicine and Mrs Roberts who now has her Masters Degree is a member of the Child Welfare faculty.

Don't know how the check lists are going. A note in the last Bulletin stated that there were more for sale and urged members to send in their orders.

Walter Bennett and I had a wonderful trip to the Nebraska sandhills this year and had better luck. It did not rain as much this year and we secured the final pictures for his life history of the Prairie Chicken. We got the hatching complete. I think Bennett now has the most complete set of Prairie Chicken pictures in existence. He has three complete reels and believe me they cost something too. While he watched her brooding a large bull snake approached the nest and she attacked him at once and gave him a lively battle and finally the snake decided to retreat. All this was recorded on his movies. Bennett then emerged from his blind and chased the snake on down the hill thinking he would never return. The hen then went away to feed and while she was gone the snake returned and like a flash he struck into the nest and had an egg in its mouth and started to swallow it. Meanwhile the camera kept on clicking away. Bennett grabbed his ax and placing it against the back of the neck on the snake forced him to disgorge the egg which was not broken.



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He then killed the snake with the ax and that was the end of the excitement for that day. Three eggs disappeared from the nest however and we never did know where they went. One each day for three successive days. The snake might have sneaked up during the night and grabbed one and escaped in the darkness. We never knew. A few days later a terrific hail storm came up and he got a movie showing the mother bird taking this severe punishment without flinching while the hail stones rattled off her back. Another time some grazing cattle came almost stepping on her as she sat brooding under this little tuft of grass. But such is the hectic life of the Prairie Chicken in the sandhills. I got some good pictures of the male Wilson Phalarope brooding his (or her) eggs beside the pond. I found three of these nests and secured all the pictures that I wanted of him at close range. He surely is the "hen pecked" husband of the bird world. I also got some pictures of the American Bittern on her nest and a good one of the Grasshopper Sparrow near her nest. The nest of the Grasshopper Sparrow was the hardest one to find that I have ever tackled. But finally I found one with five fine eggs in it way up on one of the hill tops. The strong Nebraska winds almost blew my canvas blind away but I stuck to the job and finally got a picture. The most interesting thing of all however was the Long Billed Curlews. We saw several of them and also found the young in two places. They had been hatched several days and were running around in the grass but we caught them and looked them over. I am sorry that we were too late for their nesting because we did not get any close up pictures. We know where they are however and also know about what time that they nest so we can go after them later (if there are any remnants remaining) They certainly are wonderful birds and that long curved bill makes them look so curious. We saw six or eight of the old birds and once you see and hear them you will never forget them. They are typical of the plains country of U.S. and I hope they never will be exterminated. We also saw a nice pair of Avocets feeding in a pond right by the trail as we started home. I thought surely we were in one of the real rare places of our country when we were among the Avocets and Curlews. This letter may not reach you by Christmas but although it may be late I hope that you have a Merry Christmas, that you keep well and that we will see you back in the good old U.S.A. next spring in time for the spring migration. Mrs Rosen joins me in these greetings. She intends to spend some time in California this winter with her mother again. Lots of luck, good health and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from,
Your old pal,

I understood that Bennett went to the A.O.U. meeting this fall but I haven't heard from him since.

I'll bet those eastern Yankees opened their eyes when they saw those Prairie Chicken pictures.

Walter