

HEADING UP NORTH FOR THE SUMMER

by Sue Stephenson

By the time you read this article, sitting in the warm spring sun of June, I will be snowshoeing my way over the tundra of the sub-Arctic, where the evenings are long and it often remains light through the whole night.

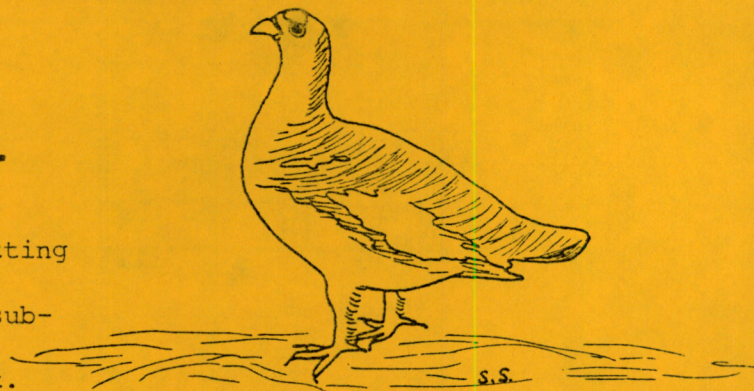
For those of you who attended the January meeting of the Natural History Society, you will remember Kathy Martin's talk on her study of Willow Ptarmigan, the arctic grouse with feathery 'snowshoe' feet. On hearing her talk, and seeing slides of the work she was doing, I became intrigued with the idea of working up North. After talking with Kathy, phone calls and writing letters, I was given the opportunity to head up North and work with her this summer.

'Up North' is a northern studies camp, called Camp Finney, approximately 40 km east of Churchill, Northern Manitoba, on LaParouse Bay. The camp is run by Queen's University Biology Department, where Kathy is working on her doctoral degree. Most of the work done at the camp is banding geese, but other work such as shorebird studies and Kathy's work on Ptarmigan are also being done.

I leave Kingston, Ontario, on May 3rd, with two dogs and a few co-workers, for a four-day train ride to Churchill. Upon arriving, the day is spent gathering supplies, then we are flown by a light plane to a landing strip about 3 km from camp. The supplies are loaded on a track vehicle and taken to camp, while we walk in on snowshoes.

On arriving at Camp Finney on May 8th, it's a four month 'isolation' that consists mostly of working and sleeping, and the camp's favorite pastime, eating. The days will be long and the work hard, but it is worth it for the chance to go to a place such as Camp Finney to learn for four months.

I am now in the middle of getting ready to leave for Churchill, and will write another article for the September/October issue of the newsletter to tell you how I fared and what I learned up North this summer.



MAMMAL SIGHTINGS

Mink - 1 in Indian River on June 7 (TC).

Varying Hare - 4 in Dalvay and 7 in Stanhope on Apr. 25 (WEC); 1 in Grandview on May 19 (JW).

Red Squirrel - 1 in Dalvay on Apr. 25 and 1 in St. Mary's Road on May 7 (WEC).

Chipmunk - 1 taking food up to a 3 m high double decker birdhouse in Indian River on May 9 (TC).

Little Brown Bat - 1 at Springvale on May 7 (GGH).

Seal sp. - 1 by Hillsborough Bridge on Mar. 28 (JDM).

Muskrat - 2 at Donagh on Apr. 15 (JDM).

Weasel - 1 road-killed individual near Murray River on June 6 (CH).