

open ground for nesting purposes, it is not uncommon to find such nests situated within a few feet of low trees or bushes upon which the males sometimes perch while singing.

The Prairie Horned Lark is the first of all migrants to return from the south and in consequence its arrival is heralded as the first harbinger of spring, a forerunner of the glories to come when animated nature awakens once more from its long winter's sleep. Even Manitobans admit that the winters, while invigorating, are, at times, a trifle long, hence the reappearance of the horned larks is a welcome one. They frequently return to us while the country is still under a mantle of snow but we feel, nevertheless, that their northward movements are impelled by Old Sol's persuasion and that it will not be long before this is demonstrated.

From an examination of records covering 20 years, we find that the first spring arrival reaches us, on an average, about February 22. At times they have been seen much earlier, at others, later. In autumn, the last to leave averages November 16. There are winters when odd individuals may be seen throughout the season, but these are exceptions.

The male horned larks, like so many other birds, arrive well ahead of the females, and until the latter appear remain comparatively quiet, contenting themselves with the daily search for food and with uttering, from time to time, that cheery little song with which we are all familiar. In a little more than two weeks the females appear, altering in a moment the peaceful existence of their mates to be. Individual combats are now of frequent occurrence and continue until both mates and nesting sites have been won. The males now exercise all their powers of song, rising high in the air during the day and at twilight making the whole countryside resound with their characteristic songs. In these efforts they continue as long as there is light and commence again in the morning at the first indication of dawn. To us there are few more cheerful songsters and as they frequently choose a singing perch within a few feet of the house we have every opportunity to judge of their merits.

Nests are invariably sunk into the ground so that their upper edge is little above its surface. At times some beautiful clump of anemones may hide the young from view, at others there is practically no shelter, the birds apparently depending wholly upon their dull colours to hide them from their enemies. We have found nests with eggs in them about the middle of March and young birds able to fly on April 14. How they manage to survive the snow storms and cold, not uncommon at this time of year, is a mystery. That they do so there is no doubt. As a rule, however, the percentage of young reared in the early season is low and in the first brood one seldom meets with more than a single fully developed nestling, though in later broods three or four are often