

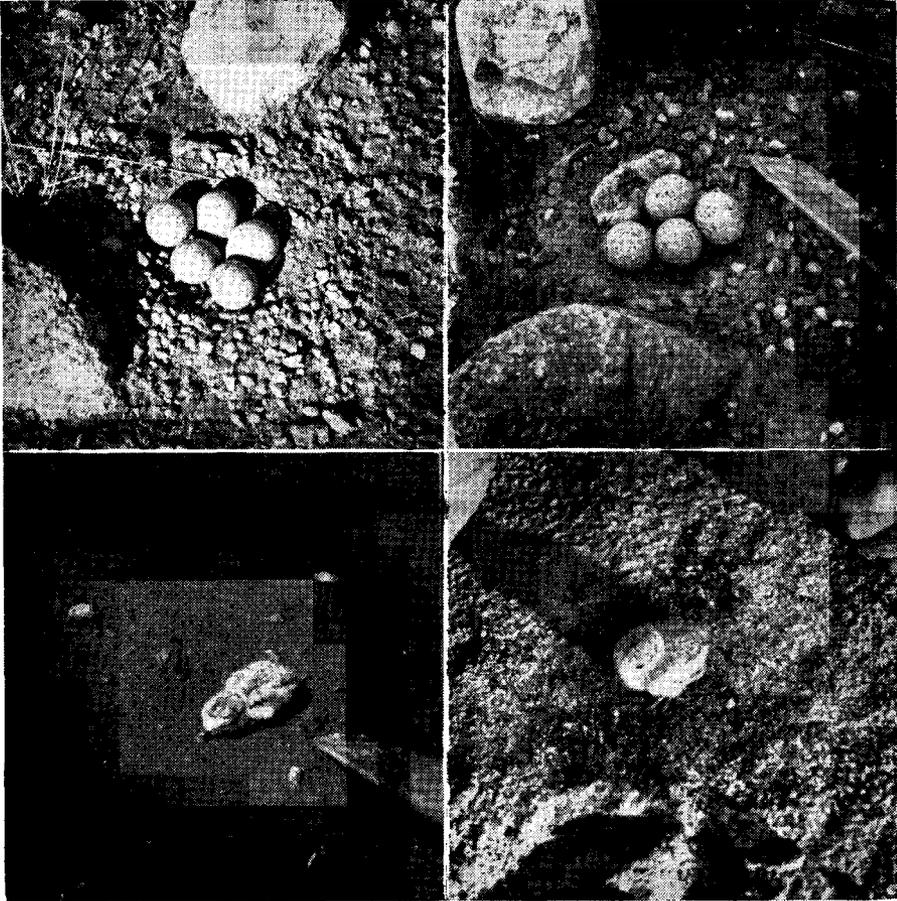
SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

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SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION
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Whole No. 24



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President's Page



WE SHALL call this our swan song, an appropriate title for the message of the retiring president of an ornithologists' society. It has been a privilege, although I cannot say it was ever earned, to serve as president of

SDOU.

It was an active year,—part of our program was completed although much remains to be done, particularly on the check-list of South Dakota birds. The index to the first five volumes of Bird Notes is in the printer's hands and probably will go out with this issue of Bird Notes. The Union owes much to the compiler, Herbert Krause, who gave freely of his time in the painstaking task of indexing.

The membership has increased through the indefatigable efforts of Herman Chapman, chairman of the committee. The interests of SDOU seem to come first with him, even before his law practice.

Another who has given much time is Scott Findley who has worked to make Bird Notes interesting and instructive. Our appreciation also goes to those members who have contributed notes and articles about their observations.

The Spring migration is now giving us another opportunity to record dates of arrival and when last seen, then of mating displays and of nest-

ing activities. With the membership well distributed over the State, our active participation can add to our knowledge of birds. Progress in collecting data is not rapid. Observers have spent years studying a single species only to realize that there were still many things still unknown. Notes of our observations sent to the editor allows Bird Notes to record the information and make it available to other students. There are not enough trained ornithologists to discover all the secrets of bird life and they welcome the cooperating amateurs.

* * * *

A project deserving the attention of our members is organization of bird clubs. Every member of a local bird club is a prospect for membership in SDOU. A bird club can arrange bird walks, showings of wildlife pictures, and similar interesting programs, promote Audubon Screen Tours which bring the best in color motion pictures of wildlife by outstanding authorities and are well worth the work and expense. The community that can secure these Tours is fortunate because the demand for them is so great not all communities can be scheduled.

* * * *

The annual meeting of SDOU will be at the joint meeting with the Nebraska and Iowa Unions at Sioux City, Iowa, May 14-15, 1955. The members who once attend such a meeting usually repeat,—an indication of the pleasure and satisfaction enjoyed. The Sioux City Bird Club expects at least 50 of us to attend. Those that do not are missing an enjoyable experience.

—J. O. Johnson, Watertown, S. D.

Lewis's Woodpecker . . .

Harry G. Behrens, Rapid City, S. D.

AT THE 1954 meeting of SDOU in Spearfish several members got their first sights of Lewis's Woodpecker, *Asyndesmus lewis*, on one of the field trips. They were very much interested in it, and certainly the bird is one that attracts attention. The Black Hills are the eastern limit of its breeding range, but it has been seen near all the towns in the Hills.

It is a bird that is easily identified and should not be confused with any other woodpecker. It is nearly as large as a Flicker. It has a black back, wings and tail which may show a greenish sheen when the sun strikes them. There are rich dark crimson and bristle-like breast feathers and a gray throat that continues as a gray band around the neck. The dark red face can be seen through good glasses, or if the observer is fortunate enough to get close to the bird.

Its flight differs from that of most woodpeckers in being steady and strong, more like a crow's or a jay's, lacking the pause every few wing beats and the undulations that characterize the other woodpeckers' flight. Its voice resembles that of the Red-shafted Flicker, but it is a quieter bird.

There are still other differences. Lewis's does not dig into wood for food to a great extent, but does eat many beetles and insects and is particularly fond of grasshoppers. It feeds on the ground frequently like the flickers, and it is also a proficient fly catcher. In 1952 two Lewis's Woodpeckers spent most of the winter southwest of Rapid City. They fed on choke cherries and thorn apples which were dead ripe but still hanging on the bushes.

Lewis's Woodpecker is partial to burned timber on the sides of canyons in isolated areas, and usually excavates its nests in the tops of tall pines or cottonwoods. They may use the same nests for several years.

This bird was discovered by the Lewis and Clark expedition and was named for Meriwether Lewis. (A nutcracker was named for Clark.) On August 2, 1856 a specimen was taken in the Black Hills by W. T. Wood and its skin is now in the United States National Museum. Two mounted specimens dated October 15, 1899 and July 1900 are in the Behrens collection at Rapid City. Stephen Visser has a 1909 date in A List of Birds of Western South Dakota. Fred Dille records it on July 8, 1932. The Wheaton College observation dates are 1936 and 1951.

On August 6, 1950 I observed a small colony with several young 8 miles northwest of Hill City on the old Redfern burn. In July 1954 Mr. and Mrs. Scott Findley saw 4 from their car in this same place and a week later Mr. and Mrs. Whitney Eastman, Minneapolis, walked over the area and saw 16.

Such old "burns" are good places to look for Lewis's Woodpeckers and one may reach the old Redfern burn by going west out of Hill City on the dirt, or gravel, road which passes the cemetery. After about 4 miles, at the Marshall Gulch sign, follow up the gulch until you reach the burned area and — good luck.

* * * *

W. A. Rose, Clear Lake, South Dakota, saw a Golden Eagle hit a cock pheasant, and the pheasant lived to walk away.

Shore Birds In '54

Alfred Peterson, Brandt, S. D.

THE Shore Bird season of 1954 in the lake section of the Prairie Hills ran much the same as in 1953, which was reported in the December, 1953, South Dakota Bird Notes. Two species, Piping Plover and Red-backed Sandpiper, were added to the list. Probably the Long-billed Curlew always will be absent. Woodcock may be hoped for. There is little doubt that the Western Sandpiper passes by, but how to identify it without the use of a gun,—there is the rub. As to the Black-necked Stilt, one sight record in recent years may be the last.

Astoria, Fox Lake and related ponds were visited frequently, with good results on species but not too many individuals. Some of the many patches of water at Altamont and Tunerville, near Brandt, can be relied on in many ways. Many of my best finds the last two years came from Tunerville, and a little mud bank at the turn off Highway 81 toward Thomas has cheered me more than once. Going farther afield, outliers of Lake Kampeska, on both the south and the north, have been good for many a note. Then without hesitation I would say that the water cut off from Bitter Lake by the highway connecting Florence and Waubay, with its "Avocet Island", has caused more tingles of excitement than any other part of my regular route. Almost in Waubay, when water level is low in the Fall, Yellowlegs and Dowitchers are sure to be in large numbers. The grade of highway 12 through Rush Lake west of Waubay is in the nature of a sandy beach that attracts Ruddy Turnstones, Sanderlings and Willets, among others.

Now that I have disclosed the secrets of my wandering, I turn to dates and numbers of Shore Birds as they have shown themselves to one observer in 1954. Reference should be to the December, 1953, Bird Notes for comments which I will not repeat although they apply here as well.

Piping Plover. May 5, 1 at highway 212 near Lake Kampeska, which, when put up, joined a single ring plover (Semi-palmated). When standing side by side, the Piping appeared slightly larger.

Semi-palmated Plover. In time a singular fact is noticed: This fine little bird strays along one or two at a time, occasionally three, but usually only one. Spring: May 4, 1; 5|9, 5 near Thomas; 5|19 and 5|20, 10 near Fox Lake (unusual); 5|25, 2 at Fox Lake. Fall: Aug. 8, 4 Bitter Lake; 9|5, 2 Bitter Lake and 3 Lake Kampeska; 9|12, 1 Lake Kampeska.

Killdeer. The most familiar of the Shore Birds. Spring: April 5, 1; 4|8, 1; and soon common. Fall: Oct. 11, several.

Golden Plover. Last Spring the Golden Plover hurried along with little delay, stopping only a day or so. In 1953, a flock of 100 remained nearly two weeks at a stubble field readied for plowing. Spring: 5|11, 23; 5|12, about 20 flying over town; 5|15, 40; 5|16, 30 and 10 near Troy; 5|18, about 150, a very fine flock circled and swept by on the way north; 5|19, 141 on the field where 100 fed so long the previous spring. They were gone the next day; 5|20, 20 near Fox Lake. Fall: None seen.

Black-bellied Plover. Its plaintive whistle is too seldom heard. Spring: 5|18, 6; 5|19 and 5|20, 2. Fall: 9|13,

3 Bitter Lake; 9|15, 1 Tunerville.

Ruddy Turnstone. Appears regularly in the Waubay region. Spring: 5|24, 5 near Thomas, 8 Rush Lake; 5|29, 2 Lake Kampeska, 96 Rush Lake. Fall: 8|22, 15 Rush Lake.

Wilson's Snipe. No longer easily found. Spring: 4|28, 1; 5|2, 1; 5|6, 2; 5|8, 1. Fall: 10|17, 1 Waubay; 10|21, 1.

Upland Sandpiper. Occasional and a summer resident. Spring: 5|13, 2; 5|14, the same 2; 5|16, 4; 5|18, several; 5|24, 1; 5|29, 1. Fall: 7|30, 1; 8|4, 1.

Spotted Sandpiper. Another summer resident at lakes. Spring: 5|14, 1; 5|15, 2. Fall: 8|18, 2 or 3; 8|23, 1; 9|5, 1 Bitter Lake.

Solitary Sandpiper. A silky-smooth sandpiper. Spring: 5|2, 2; 5|7, 1; 5|19, 1. Fall: 7|28, 1; 7|29, 2; 8|12, 3; 9|16, 1 Tunerville.

Willet. Appears regularly as summer resident up Waubay way. Spring: 5|4, 3 at Milwaukee Lake near Wentworth; 5|5, 2 Waubay; 5|9, 4 Bristol and 2 Rush Lake; 5|12, 2 Astoria; 5|16, 2 Thomas and about 10 Waubay-Webster; 5|18, 1; 5|24, 1; 5|29, 3. Fall: 7|25, 12 Rush Lake; 8|8, 1 Kampeska and 12 Rush Lake; 8|22, 10 Rush Lake; 9|13, 1 Bitter Lake.

Greater Yellow-legs. Once rated rare, but in two years it has been prominent enough to change that concept. Spring: 4|8, 1; 4|9, 2; 4|10, 2; then almost daily but few seen at one time; 5|10 and 5|11, 1. Fall: 7|28 and 7|30, 1 Fox Lake; 9|4, 14 Tunerville; 9|10, the same; 9|15, 20 Tunerville; 9|20, 20 Tunerville; 10|8, 20 Astoria; 10|17, 20 Waubay; 10|18, 7 Dempster; 10|21, 4 near Brandt.

Lesser Yellow-legs. Common. One of the better known Shore Birds. Spring: 4|8, 8; 4|9, 6; Seen daily, sometimes 100 together, until 5|15; 5|24, 1; 6|24, 1. Fall: 7|22, 5; 7|25, many places, total about 50; 8|8, several

hundred at Bitter Lake; frequently until 10|23; the last 10|27, 1 at Astoria.

Pectoral Sandpiper. Common. A bird of distinction. Spring: 4|9, 3; 4|10, 8 Astoria; 4|28, 16; 5|11, 30; 5|24, 1. Fall: 7|22, 4; 7|25, 6; 8|22, several; 8|23, 1 Fox Lake.

White-rumped Sandpiper. Probably not rare. Identification easy. Spring: 5|11, 2; 5|15, several near Arlington and Thomas; 5|16, 20; 5|18, 10 Lake Kampeska; 5|19, 25; 5|20, same; 5|24, 20 Thomas; 5|29, 15 Thomas and 20 Bitter Lake; 6|4, 10 near Madison. Fall: 9|16, 6 Tunerville.

Baird's Sandpiper. Searched for, it will be found. Spring: 4|19, 10 Milwaukee Lake; 5|5, few Kampeska; 5|9, 10 near Thomas; 5|11, few there. Fall 10|11, two or three dozen in outlet of Lake Poinsett; 10|13, few same place.

Least Sandpiper. Outnumbered by the Semi-palmated Sandpiper. Spring: 5|11, 2 Thomas; 5|16, 1; 5|18, 7; 5|19, 1. Fall: 7|30, 2 Fox Lake; 8|12, 2; 8|18, 15 Fox Lake; 8|22, several Bitter Lake; 8|23, several Fox Lake; 9|1, 4; 9|3, several; 9|6, 12 Fox Lake; 9|13, few Bitter Lake.

Red-backed Sandpiper. Missed in 1953. Probably uncommon. Spring: 5|11, 1 Thomas; 5|17, 11 Fox Lake; 5|19, 10 Fox Lake; 5|20, same; 6|4, 1 north of Madison. Fall: none seen.

Dowitcher. Regular transient spring and fall. Spring: 5|2, 2 Fox Lake; 5|3, 6 Astoria; 5|5, 1 Florence; 5|6, 6 Fox Lake and 1 Astoria; 5|9, 23 north of Clark and 2 at Grenville; 5|19 and 5|20, about 20. Fall: 7|25, 2; 8|8, over 100 Bitter Lake; 8|22, over 200 Bitter Lake; 9|5, about 60 same place; 9|13, 17 south of Bitter Lake, 15 at Bitter Lake and 5 at Waubay; 9|19, 25 Bitter Lake; 9|22, 1 Tunerville; 10|6 and 10|7, 11 Tunerville; 10|8, 20; 10|12, 2; 10|14, 1; 10|17, 3 Waubay; 10|8, 12 Lake Whitewood.

(Continued on page 10)

Planting For Birds

Lowry Elliott, Milbank, S. D.

WE CALL our farm in Grant County, 10 miles south of Big Stone Lake and only 2 miles from the Minnesota line, Bird Haven. The buildings are set back from the road about a half mile and overlook the north fork of the Yellow Bank River which winds for about three-quarters of a mile through the farm.

The planting of our shelter belt, wind-break and orchard about 10 years ago was influenced by our interests in birds and horticulture which we combined by growing as many trees as possible that would attract birds. We have had some success both in growing trees and in attracting birds.

The planting is shaped about like a cleaver with a long handle curved down even with the blade, and the buildings are between it and the small stream.

Over the years we have planted about 10,000 trees and shrubs. We tried to plant carefully, water the young trees and cultivate them as long as it was possible to get between the rows. The trees responded by rapid growth, and the most of them lived.

In the planting are Siberian and American elms, hackberry, ash, basswood, box elder; hard, soft and Amur River maple; cottonwood, birch, thornless honey locust, black walnut, poplar, several kinds of willow, Russian olive, 5 or 6 kinds of lilac, 2 kinds of mock orange, many spiraea, flowering shrubs and hardy roses; several kinds of evergreens; fruit trees, and other trees and shrubs that please either the birds or us.

The outer row on the north is Russian olive and caragana with about a dozen choice choke cherries. The

birds are very fond of the choke cherries, and the olives furnish food all winter and spring for many birds. Hummingbirds worked the caragana quite early last spring.

There are over 100 buffalo berry bushes, 50 Korean cherries, and a long row of bush cherries. At the southwest end of the planting, and also scattered through it, are 200 Russian mulberry trees. Other favorites with the birds are several large clumps of elderberry, high bush cranberry, Nanking cherry, grape, currant and cotoneaster. The half-dozen clumps of June or service-berry are very popular, too, and a long row of both black and yellow fruited wild currants from the Black Hills.

The mountain ash trees are beautiful in the fall with their bunches of fruit that provide food for several birds. Scattered in the rows are 5 or 6 kinds of flowering crabs, Siberian crabs, and several others that furnish bird food even when frozen.

We have some hundreds of bushes of Tartarian bush honeysuckle, marrow, Maachi and Zabellie honeysuckles. They are beautiful in flower and then there are bright red berries for the birds. The bushes are hardy, drouth resistant, and are not bothered by rodents. Berries that are not eaten in the summer and fall dry like raisins and are fine bird food when much needed in the winter and spring.

North of the orchard are 2 rows of Colorado and Black Hills spruce and a few jack pines. On the west side are some ponderosa pines, Engleman spruce and a few Douglas fir. The birds like to nest and to roost in these evergreens.

More bird food is supplied by the

wild grape vines and Virginia creeper that cover the old wood shed.

We have 15 hawthornes but none has fruited, and of the wild black cherries we set out only a few trees lived.

Because they are host for cedar rust that is very bad for apples, we did not plant any red cedar trees although they furnish both bird food and shelter.

The birds share our 4 kinds of raspberries but are not too hard on them and we have raspberries much of the season. The Durham red raspberry bears fruit on the old wood in the summer and on the new wood in the fall, even into September and October if watered. A light frost does not hurt them, and the late migrating birds like to stop for a taste of raspberry.

We do not limit ourselves to trees and shrubs but have gladioli, morning glories, perennials, and other flowers for themselves and for the Hummingbirds.

If a person with limited space wanted to set out something, I would recommend Zabellie honeysuckle. It is a beautiful, tall, hardy shrub that needs no trimming. It has bright red fragrant flowers followed by dark red berries, — food and shelter for the birds.

We think our planting has been successful. We see many birds and the number seems to be increasing from year to year. We have a variety of habitats,—the trees and shrubs, the small stream, and the open country with farm land and pasture. Within the past year the many birds from Great Blue Heron down to Ruby-throated Hummingbird have included Buff-breasted Sandpipers, a Woodcock, Pine Grosbeaks, Snowy Owls, many Warblers and lots of others.

Last fall, in nursery rows we planted seeds that I brought back after a visit to my old home in Pennsylvan-

Tri-State Meeting

The annual business meeting of SDOU with the election of directors will be held at the Joint Meeting of the South Dakota, Iowa and Nebraska Ornithologists' Union in Sioux City, Iowa, on May 14-15, 1955. The program is being arranged to allow time for the three state groups to meet separately in their business sessions.

President E. L. Kozicky of I. O. U. has appointed program and general arrangement committees with representatives from each of the three states. The Sioux City Bird Club is the host and has a fine committee attending to local arrangements. The convention will be held at the Mayfair Hotel starting at 9:00 on Saturday, the 14th. The afternoon session will be from 1:30 to 4:30 with time allotted for the separate state meetings. The banquet will be at 7:00.

Field trips will start at 4:30 and 7:00 on the 15th and will go to several of the nearby good birding localities in the three states. A report luncheon will be at the Stone Park shelter house. Then there will be more field trips for those who want them.

The Sioux City Bird Club has been host to similar joint meetings in other years and does it well. This meeting will be well worth attending with its program of papers and pictures, field trips, meeting of ornithologists and birders. We urge all SDOU members to make an effort to be there.

ia, and hope to get white flowering dogwood, red hawthorne, pokeberry, red bird berry, and wahoo bush. Also included in the plans are red elders, viburnum, silver berry, buckthorn and sumac. In fact, I plan to go on planting until I am planted.

Shooting From A Bird Blind

Mrs. E. M. Drissen, Britton, S. D.

A BIRD blind in your yard, is, first of all, a conversation piece. Semi-neighbors, whom you haven't spoken to in years, are overcome—they must know what it is. Such material for bucolic wit makes a Will Rogers of almost anyone. So put it as advantage number one, an aura of friendliness surrounds you. Albeit, this is much the friendly aura which surrounds the village half-wit, the same tolerant benignity the uninitiate bestow on the bird-watching esoteria; still—it's fun.

How do you start? First, you are a bird-watcher. Second, you want to get in close and watch. However, the birds don't want to watch you. So you get a large packing case; set it in the yard with proper attention to distance from feeder and bath, light and shade; cut a few small holes at eye level; but you don't sit in it,—not yet. The birds have to get used to it. When they are twittering and hopping on it, the time is ripe. You may now enter and sit. Sounds simple, but the birds are not so simple; they see you go in, they cease twittering and hopping; they shun the entire area. Subterfuge is necessary,—they must not know you are there. Several courses are open; sneak in in the pre-dawn, cover your head with branches for the trip, inveigle your husband to help. He goes with you into the blind. He comes out, presumably having work to do. Birds cannot count; they think the blind is empty. You are ensconced ready for the great adventure. Your bird book (Peterson) is at your side, your movie camera 'round your neck, your pencil and notebook handy; lunch perhaps, if watching strikes a new high.

So far it was kind of funny, but now it's serious; and, strangely, it's true. You can really see those birds and they can't see you. You lengthen your list, a few "first's", you get **some** good pictures, you have lots of time to think,—in short, you become a philosopher. You are one with the contemplative and the relaxed. You are the fisherman whose only interruption is when a fish strikes, the astronomer who observes showers of meteors, Walter Mitty in a space ship. Sounds funny? You don't know what living is.

My blind was set up eleven feet from both the bird bath and the bird feeder. When the light and distance were right, these are the birds I caught with my camera: Grackle, House Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Blue Jay, Robin, Flicker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, male and female Baltimore Orioles, Hermit Thrush, Catbird, Myrtle Warbler, Black and White Warbler, Brown Thrasher. And the ones that got away were legion.

* * * *

The Fish and Wildlife Service reports there are now 642 Trumpeter Swans.

* * * *

Both Snow Buntings and Juncos often are called Snow Birds.

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This year a slogan of the Federated Garden Clubs is "Every Garden a Bird Sanctuary." The aims are to make all members bird-conscious and to increase year-around feeding and watering and protection. The Madison Garden Club is 100%-er.

Shore Birds in '54

(Continued from page 6)

Stilt Sandpiper. Welcome and does not disappoint us. Spring: 5|11, 2 Thomas; 5|15, 10 Arlington; 5|19, 5 Fox Lake; 5|24, several. Fall: 8|8, 10 Lake Kampeska; 8|12, 5 Altamont; 8|18, 12 same place and 9|3, about 15; 9|4, 20 Tunerville; 9|5, some at Dry Lake and about 25 at Bitter Lake and Tunerville; 9|10, 48; 9|12, 42; 9|13, 42; 9|10 and 9|16, 100; 10|7, 7; 10|12, 18, all of these at Tunerville.

Semi-palmated Sandpiper. The main make-up of the "Peeps". Spring: 5|4, 10 Milwaukee Lake; 5|5, 3 Lake Kampeska; 5|9, about 40 near Thomas; 5|11, 15 Thomas; 5|29, 15; 6|4, 8 north of Madison. Fall: 7|25, many several places; 8|8, about 20 Lake Kampeska and very many Bitter Lake. 9|4, some at Tunerville; 9|5, many Bitter Lake; 9|6, 2 or 3 Fox Lake.

Marbled Godwit. Common (for a large bird) and easily approached. Spring: 5|5, 4 Waubay; 5|9, 1 Bitter Lake; 5|16, half dozen in Bitter Lake region, some in combat. Fall: 7|25, 2 Bitter Lake; 8|8, 4 and 9|5, 4 Bitter Lake.

Hudsonian Godwit. Never common. A transient but satisfactory. Spring: 4|19, 1 Milwaukee Lake; 4|20, 4 Fox Lake; 4|25, 10 Lake Preston; 5|11, 2 near Thomas; 5|17, 2 Fox Lake; 5|19, 2 and 7 Fox Lake.

Sanderling. At the right time and the right place, a few may be found, and with good luck, many. Spring: 5|24, 6 Kampeska and 10 Rush Lake; 5|29, 1 Kampeska and 14 Rush Lake. Fall: 7|25, 6 Rush Lake; 8|23, 1 Fox Lake; 9|5, 1 Kampeska; 9|6, 1 Fox Lake; 9|12, 7; 9|13, 7; 9|19, 2, all at Lake Kampeska.

Avocet. Splendid!! Nests at Bitter Lake on Island. Spring: 4|19, 4 Milwaukee Lake; 4|20, 1 Fox Lake; 5|5, 17 Rush Lake; 5|9, 1 north of Clark

THE COVER

The pictures of a Piping Plover's nest, eggs and young on the cover of this Bird Notes comes through the generosity of President J. O. Johnson who is justifiably proud of them.

The series was taken northwest of Watertown at the Lower Pass, Chain Lakes, where many shore birds nested a few years ago. In more recent years the water level has risen and covered the beaches, and most of the birds have gone elsewhere.

The first picture shows the nest on the ground with 5 eggs on June 13, 1940. The second was taken on June 24 and shows the chick hatched from one egg. In the third picture is a chick that thought it was hidden on the alkali flat, and it might have been except that rain had darkened the soil and made the chick's camouflage ineffective. The other picture shows another chick from the same hatch on July 2.

and 4 Rush Lake; 5|16, 8; 5|18, 10 Bitter Lake, their summer home; 5|24, 6; 5|29, 3 near Florence and 10 Bitter Lake. Fall: 7|25, 1 and 10 (3 young) at Bitter Lake; 8|8, same; 8|22, 6 Bitter Lake; 9|5, 4 same place; 9|19 absent.

Wilson's Phalarope. Regular summer resident, scattered. Spring: 5|5, 3 Rush Lake; 5|8, 2; 5|9, 50 and 11 near Bristol, and 20 Thomas; 5|11, 20 Thomas; 5|12, 2 pairs Astoria; 5|15, 6 near Thomas and a pair at Milwaukee Lake; 5|16, 15 near Thomas and a few elsewhere. Fall: 7|25, 3; 9|13, 1 Bitter Lake.

Northern Phalarope. A swimmer on open water. Sprightly. Gregarious in flight. Spring: 5|18, 3 Bitter Lake; 5|24, over 100 Bitter Lake; 5|29, 4 there. Fall: 8|8, about 50; 8|22, 20, and 9|5, about 25 at Bitter Lake.

General Notes of Special Interest

OVENBIRD OBSERVATIONS, 1954—The Ovenbird, *Seiurus aurocapillus*, a common warbler of the deciduous forests, reaches the western extremity of its breeding range in the Black Hills. For this reason, its breeding behavior in the Hills is of particular interest. A recent report by Alice Simonin (Bird Notes, Sept. 1953, V-3, pg. 361) gives a very interesting account of an Ovenbird's nest in the Hills near Rapid City.

During the summer of 1954 I had three observations of Ovenbirds. The first was on June 5, when I found three singing near the mouth of Stagebarn Canyon, Meade County. The habitat was young deciduous trees near the stream, similar to deciduous forests of the Ohio Valley. The song was the loud "Teacher", similar to what I have heard farther east. I watched one of the singers for several minutes, but was unable to find the nest.

My two other observations were August 8 and 9. I found two individuals the first date and one the latter, all in streamside thickets just northwest of the South Canyon section of Rapid City, an area which I had often covered in July. None was singing.

A. O. Cross, describing the life history of the Ovenbird (Beal's Life Histories of North American Wood Warblers) states that the autumn migration begins early in August, with individuals beginning to appear south of their breeding range. My August observations undoubtedly were of transient individuals, which possibly had nested at higher elevations in the Black Hills.—N. R. Whitner, Jr., Rapid City, S. D.

HORNED LARK'S SONG—I presume it is common knowledge that Horned Larks sing on the wing as they seem to frolic and rejoice in snow storms. Recently, (early February) we have had frequent evening snow storms and I have heard the larks singing when I check the weather the last thing at night. Here on the edge of town, I hear them also during the day when it is snowing, but not at other times during the day. Possibly the reason I hear them only at such times is that sounds carry better when humidity is high.—Chas. A. Nash, Platte, S. D.

SOME SPRING DATES—For 8 years (1955 is the ninth) I have kept a record of the arrival of some of our birds at Vermillion, or at least it shows the date on which I first saw them. Some are very regular, like the Baltimore Oriole that has come on May 2 for its earliest and May 9 at the latest. So this year I will look for them the first week of May.

The Robin has not been so dependable or perhaps the January 6, 1953 Robin was wintering here and the spring newcomers are those that arrive about March 17 to 22.

Last year my Brown Thrasher came on April 26, but the other years they came between May 2 and 8. The Catbirds have come a few days later except in 1948 when it was on April 23. The Grackles also were early that year and I saw them on March 24.

My record is incomplete but as I add to it, it grows more valuable, and there is fun in keeping it.—Mrs. Adeline M. Silfenberg, Vermillion, S. D.

RUDDY DUCKS—The Ruddy Duck is a common summer resident in this region near the Minnesota state line and is often seen in large numbers in both spring and fall. On August 23, 1953, there were about 200 near Thomas and on September 27 many on the Waubay Refuge waters. Again on April 25, 1954 there were many at Thomas; May 13, about 50 at Lake Alice resting on a weedy "slick". On October 11, 1954, there were many ducks on Clear Lake at Thomas, scattered at ease on a calm day. They included 20 Canvasbacks, a dozen Bluebills, and a few Mallards, Pintails, Baldpates and Gadwalls, but greatly outnumbering all the other ducks were not less than a thousand Ruddies. Certainly a wonderful showing of Ruddy Ducks.—**Alfred Peterson, Brandt, S. D.**

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SWIFTS, HERONS, LOON, IN THE BLACK HILLS—I have found only one record of the Chimney Swift in this area. Grinnell reported it in the Hills on August, 1909. But on August 24, 1954, 3 dead Chimney Swifts were found on the campus of the School of Mines and Technology. The one that was brought to me was an adult. I did not see the others and they were said to be badly decomposed.

Several years ago a Chimney Swift was seen flying near the old gas plant, near the School of Mines. This old plant was razed about a year ago.

For several summers 3 Great Blue Herons, a male and 2 females, have been seen 14 miles east of Rapid City on Rapid Creek. I spent some time last summer looking for the nest but was unsuccessful.

On October 29, 1954, a hunter shot a Common Loon on a pond 4 miles southeast of Rapid City. It was reported to have been with a small flock of Mallards. It was a female

and was about 30 inches long. The state game technician took one of the wings, so I salvaged the skin with one wing missing.—**Harry Behrens, Rapid City, S. D.**

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BIRD HOSPITAL—Two badly hurt sparrows were rescued from a dog and brought to me. They were so quiet that I had little hope they would respond to my care until I hung the cage with them in it in our porch. Almost immediately there was an excited happy chattering. The mother sparrow had found her babies although they could not make a sound. She took over.

Early each morning I hung the cage on the porch. The parent birds were always waiting. One little sparrow died but the other thrived and after a while was ready to fly and was coaxed from the cage.

Misfortune in the form of a Grackle struck immediately. I picked it up, hurt again, and brought it to the house where I had still another sparrow, also hurt by a Grackle. The two became inseparable and after a time flew away together.

Before I thought them ready to leave a third sparrow was added to my patients. I saved it from drowning, but it was terrified even when I tried to feed it. Then one day, one of the larger sparrows adopted it and could not have been a better mother, going in and out of the cage to feed it.

This little sparrow did not leave with the others but remained with two Robins in my collection. It learned to sing by singing with the Robins and developed a really beautiful song. I believe it was Ernest Thompson-Seton who wrote the story of a Street Troubadour, a sparrow that had learned to sing in a similar way, when he was brought up by canaries.

Other patients in my hospital are a one-legged Robin with an unusual

sense of play and another Robin that was injured by a dog. It cried for food but rejected my medicine dropper feedings. Its mother would not answer its calls and I was much relieved one day when the first polka dot robin took over. What ever I gave to the first robin was immediately fed to the second. Earth worms were taken care of as expertly as a mature bird would have handled them, and I imagined that polka dot number one gave me a mischievous look when she saw my amazement.

Then still another young robin from a destroyed nest was brought in and it, too, was adopted promptly but in about two weeks it sickened and died. Immediately then the polka dot reverted to being a baby again, ignored her first foster child, and promptly ate everything I gave her.—**Esther Kranz, Watertown, S. D.**

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CHRISTMAS CENSUS AT REDFIELD—(The tabulation in the December, 1954, Bird Notes should have included this record, which we think is an interesting list from another part of the State. We print the report in full so that it can be used in conjunction with the tabulation of other South Dakota counts.—Ed)

7½ mile radius centering on the south end of Main Street, Redfield, including James River, east shore of north Twin Lake, country roads along cultivated land and prairie, and small lots of cottonwood trees. Deciduous wooded river valley 8%, lake 2%, plow land 70%, prairie 18%, cottonwood lots 2%. December 26, 1954. 10:00 AM to 5:30 PM. Mostly clear skies. Temp. 10 to 28 degrees. Wind NE 5-10 mph. Ground from bare to 2-3 inches of crusted snow. All fresh water frozen except one riffle in James River. One observer. Total party hours, 7½, 2 on foot, 5½ by car. Total miles 40, 2 on foot, 38 by car.

MARCH, 1955

Ring-necked Pheasant 74, Horned Owl 2, Snowy Owl 1, Hairy Woodpecker 5, Downy Woodpecker 12, Black-capped Chickadee 15, White-breasted Nuthatch 4, Starling 60, Northern Shrike 1, House Sparrow 150, Redpoll 19, American Goldfinch 4, Tree Sparrow 2, Harris's Sparrow 2.—**H. V. Padrnos, Redfield, S. D.**

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RAVEN IN N. E. SOUTH DAKOTA

—On November 12, 1954, some duck hunters were sitting on a pass on Dry Lake, southwest of Sisseton in Roberts County. It was a nice warm day. Few ducks were flying. A few crows were caw-ing in the trees across the lake and were flying around lazily. When one came their way, the hunters shot it. It was the largest crow they had ever seen. They took it to town and found it was a Raven.

It had shaggy throat feathers. Some measurements were: length, 25 inches; wing spread, 47; wing, 21; tail, 11; longest primary, 14.

I have the skin and was going to mount it for the Game Department's collection, but some one dropped it and broke the beak so that it will be a lot of work to fix it.—**W. A. Rose, Clear Lake, S. D.**

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SAW-WHET OWL—In early February friends living a few miles from Hot Springs found an adult Saw-Whet Owl in a haystack near the barn. They fed it, put it in a more protected place, fed it again later in the day, and had hopes of keeping it alive and around their place, but it died during the night. It did not seem to be injured.—**Mrs. H. B. Stevens, Hot Springs, S. Dak.**

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WHODUNIT?—Early in the spring of 1954 a pair of Cardinals spent some time around a spirea bush near my dinette window. Then when I had cut off the top and a few branches

of the bush, they began to build a nest on the 8th or 9th. It took them 3 days to finish their work. Then the female laid an egg a day for 5 days and began setting on them on July 16.

She did not seem to mind the hot weather that we had at that time, and on the other hand, one cool, rainy day she did not leave the nest for food until evening.

Early in the morning of the 26th I heard a peculiar call from the male and looked from the window to see the female. She was not in sight, the nest had been completely destroyed, the eggs were on the ground and each had been pecked.

I went outside for a closer view. The male looked so forlorn and came so near me that I could almost touch him. For 2 or 3 days he sat on my clothes line and called, but his mate did not show up. I have not seen him since.

The nesting of these Cardinals was the best bird experience I have ever had. The eggs would have hatched in a few more days. I was as disconsolate as the male seemed. What destroyed the nest and eggs? Squirrels and cats do not climb hedges. Was some other bird guilty? I hope some reader of Bird Notes can answer my question.—Mrs. C. J. Nelson, Canton, S. Dak.

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LONG-EARED OWL—*Asio otus wilsonianus* is called an Owl of the woodlands and is not expected in South Dakota, still Miss Ruth Habeger, Madison, reports two Long-eared Owls in January in spruces of a shelter-belt a mile west of Lake Herman.

J. O. Johnson, Watertown, tells of hearing pre-dawn "caterwauling" in spruce trees in his yard and of his inability to find the noise-maker last Spring. This Winter a Long-eared Owl found a roost in one of the

trees. He has seen the owl 6 times between January 27 and February 23. It always roosts on the same branch and apparently does not move all day. The "caterwauling" mystery is solved.

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BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS IN SIOUX FALLS—On February 16, 1955, about 15 Bohemian Waxwings dropped into the Duchess and Hopi apple trees here at the Hahn residence. They made short work of the apples left shrivelled on the twigs. 8 of the birds fed in a Hopi tree near a window, often fluttering against the pane so close I could see plainly the reddish-brown under tail coverts and the whitish blotches on the wings. The blotches on these individuals were not in a geometric pattern as in the Peterson plate, but appeared irregular in shape and size. The under tail covers seemed more reddish than brown, although this may have been an individual difference. The song was much buzzy than the Cedar's; it seemed to be lower in pitch and coarser, and lacked the Cedar's throbbing double-noted quality.

On February 19 Sven Gordon Froiland, Chairman, Biology Department, Augustana College, saw what may have been the same flock near the Veteran's Hospital. A snow storm was blowing and the birds were feeding out of the wind in low-growing cedars.

On February 27 I saw 13 perched in American Elms at Woodlawn Cemetery, possibly the same flock again.—Herbert Krause, Augustana College, Sioux Falls.

(Bird Notes Index lists Bohemian Waxwings for the Black Hills and Aberdeen, and they were reported in the Christmas Bird Count, 1954, at Rapid City, Springfield and Yankton. The last record for Minnehaha County was February 19, 1911 when

Adrian Larson observed a small flock at Sioux Falls. (Wilson Bulletin, 37:38).)

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HORNED OWLS AT ARMOUR—

Last winter and spring one or two Horned Owls were heard one or two nights a week in our block in town. These Owls have been present again this winter from one to three nights a week. (Bird Notes, Vol. VI, 2, page 33, June 1954.)

They seem to headquarter a half mile away in the cemetery where one or two have been seen frequently in the day-time. A man who had lived right by the cemetery told of the owls and said, "I think they lived there" in 1948, '49 and '50.

Mr. and Mrs. Chas. P. Crutchett, Armour, S. D.

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LONGSPURS KILLED IN STORM—

The night of March 3-4, 1955, we got 2 or 3 inches of wet snow. It began to snow about 9:00 P. M. The temperature was about 27 degrees. On the morning of the 4th there were hundreds of dead Lapland Longspurs all over town, on nearby farms, and in Delmont, 12 miles southeast. I found a dead Horned Lark in front of my store.

About 9:00 P. M. on the 4th a blizzard struck and continued until 2:00 A. M. The temperature went down to 3 degrees below zero.

The birds got here about 24 hours ahead of the blizzard. Many were not able to fly but seemed dazed by hitting wires or buildings, or perhaps were totally exhausted by a long, hard flight.—**Mr. and Mrs. Chas. P. Crutchett, Armour, S. D.**

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NOTES FROM LACREEK REFUGE

—The wintering waterfowl at the refuge this year was an interesting variety including several thousands Mallards, many Goldeneyes, and a

few Lesser Scaup and Canvasbacks. A Whistling Swan remained most of the winter but migrated during the severe blizzard of February 18-20 when the open leads on the lakes were frozen over.

A flock of 75 Canada Geese was captured at Swan Lake Refuge, Missouri during November, 1954, and brought to LaCreek in January to re-establish the species as a nesting bird.

Among birds of prey, the Rough-legged Hawk was a common to abundant winter resident and the Marsh Hawk wintered with us in small numbers. We had daily observations of from one to three Golden Eagles, but only a few wandering Bald Eagles appeared this winter. The Prairie Falcon was noted occasionally. The Snowy Owl descended to this latitude again making its first appearance November 23, the average arrival date for the species in the extreme southwest of the central section of the state.

We were interested in watching an attack by a Prairie Falcon on a Snowy Owl on January 10. The Owl was flushed from a resting place on one of the dikes and flew to perch on the ice about 100 yards distant. The Falcon immediately appeared, swooped at the Owl repeatedly, and finally drove it from its resting place.

Among the smaller birds, there were Red-shafted Flickers wintering on the refuge. The flocks of Horned Larks and Lapland Longspurs were not as large as usual although both were present in some numbers. This was definitely a Common Redpoll year in this locality with sizeable flocks at the refuge from Christmas week until early March.—**Kenneth Krumm, LaCreek Refuge, Martin, S. D.**

Bird Finding In South Dakota

LAKE ANDES

For a brief tour of the Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge start at Ravinia, 6 miles east of the town of Lake Andes, at the junction of the main street and highway 18. Drive 1.4 miles north of the gravelled road. On the west side of the road will be Owens Bay, the largest federally owned portion of the refuge. Here large numbers of ducks can be observed during the fall, winter and early spring. The Bald Eagle, Prairie Falcon and Canada Goose are fairly common in this area.

Continuing north from Owens Bay for 1.5 miles the road comes to the shore of the center unit of Lake Andes Refuge.

It is necessary to back track to the corner immediately south of Owens Bay and 1 mile north of Ravinia. Here turn right (west) and go to Rest Haven Resort. Turn right into the Rest Haven area past numerous cottages and summer homes. On the right across a small bridge is the home of Les Nelson, State Game Warden. On up the road and on the left is the Izaak Walton League Cabin. East of it is the entrance to the Lake Andes Refuge cabin site on Owens Bay. The cabin and boat house can be seen from the Izaak Walton cabin. This general area is good for a great variety of small birds.

On leaving the Rest Haven area turn right on the gravelled road which follows the lake shore to highway 18 near the town of Lake Andes.

For additional information about Lake Andes Refuge phone the manager at 3391 or 4292 in Lakes Andes. **Leo Kirsch, Refuge Manager.**

RED LAKE

An Alternate Route along US 16 between Kimball and Chamberlain. No extra mileage.

Ten miles west of Kimball where the highway turns north (right when you are west-bound) continue west on a dirt road,—if there has been no recent rain. This road will skirt the north edge of Red Lake. During the Spring there may be ducks and geese on the lake.

There will be various Blackbirds in the cottonwood trees, and Coots and Black-crowned Night Herons along the shore. During May probably a few Western Grebes will be offshore. As the road swings away from the lake, watch for Lark Sparrows,—at times they are plentiful.

After the road has left the lake you can turn right and go north for two miles on an unimproved dirt road (if it is dry) to reach the paved highway, then turn left and proceed westward; or you can continue west on the lake road about four miles until it intersects with a good gravelled road (a small pot-hole bordered by a few trees is in the near left-hand corner). Turn right (north) toward Chamberlain. In two miles you will reach US 16 again. If there have been recent rains, muddy fields may have shore birds in quantities.

The east-bound traveler also can make the detour without extra mileage. After leaving Chamberlain and topping the long hill, when the highway turns east continue south for two miles on the gravelled road, then turn east and go past Red Lake to the highway again. And look out for that fast traffic! —**H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. D.**