

SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

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South Dakota Ornithologists' Union

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President's Page



WE HAVE made some progress on our various projects this year but the principal one, increasing our membership, seems to be lagging. We made a substantial gain in 1954 but very few have been added this

year. We should double the number by a little effort on the part of each of us. We need more income to carry on the present limited program.

Our largest item of expense is the printing and mailing of Bird Notes. Only a small balance is left after the bills for the four issues are paid. To pay for the Index to Bird Notes it was necessary to solicit donations from our members. Funds will be needed to publish the revised check-list of South Dakota birds on which a committee is now working. An annotated check-list, or a revised edition of South Dakota Birds, should follow the completion of the check-list. These are important projects which should not be delayed by lack of funds. More members is the answer to this problem.

Dr. Whitney reports the check-list will be completed by the end of the year. It should be available to the members by March.

A reference to action taken on conservation by the directors at the annual meeting last May, is in order as it establishes policy. It was suggested that S. D. O. U. take an active

part in the projects of Nature Conservancy, an organization devoted to the preservation of natural areas, and to locate all established protected natural areas. The directors decided not to join in the activity as it was not directly connected with the aims and objections of S. D. O. U. In view of the action of the directors on this matter the report of the committee on conservation of the American Ornithologists' Union will be of interest to our members. It recommended:

1. That the A. O. U. recognizes that bird protection is only a part of the whole conservation problem; that the conservation of soil, water, and vegetation are fundamentally important for the preservation of birds; and, in fact, the preservation of suitable habitat in many cases far outranks in importance the protection of the birds themselves.

2. That the A. O. U. take no direct action in conservation matters but that it encourages its members to continue to supply information to conservation groups and to participate locally, nationally, and internationally in the organizations that are promoting the conservation of basic natural resources.

3. That the A. O. U. encourage its members to exert all possible effort to teach conservation and to encourage conservation thinking in their own communities.

4. That the A. O. U. maintain a committee on bird protection whose primary function shall be to provide to the members information on critical conservation problems in which participation by A. O. U. members is important.

—J. O. Johnson

A Few Birds To Look For

Carl M. Johnson

IT MAY BE well to keep in mind a few birds in addition to those we usually see because at any time we may find one of the uncommon birds, or even a new bird in our neighborhood. It does not happen often but one should be prepared and not like the hunter who sees the game when he doesn't have his gun.

There are valid reasons for expecting to find new birds from time to time. Our State probably lies in the fringe of the ranges of several species. Some people think the climate is gradually getting warmer. We know that potholes are being drained, the prairie is vanishing under the plow, there are more and more shelter belts and stock dams, and the Missouri River is becoming a series of open lakes. These changes may bring changes in our bird species and populations.

Dr. O. S. Pettingill, Jr., called attention to the fact that so little is known about the prairie species (Bird Notes I, 11, "Opportunity—Challenge".) and to our opportunity to make contributions to the knowledge about them.

We will mention a few of the species that we may be fortunate enough to see in South Dakota some day, and so we look for them and hope.

The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher is on the Nebraska list and it has been recorded in Manitoba, and so it may be logical to see it in South Dakota some day.

The Carolina Wren has been reported in South Dakota a very few times and some ornithologists think it may be extending its range. One was banded at Winner, S. D., recently by Dr. H. W. Wagar. (Bird Notes, VII, 45)

It might behoove bird-watchers to check Western Kingbirds carefully, especially when in the southwestern part of the State. Some of them might turn out to be Cassin's Kingbirds.

Cassin's Sparrows are known to come near to the State in northeastern Nebraska, and in the West-River we might look for Sage and Brewer's Sparrows, too.

Stellar's Jay is found in Colorado, but many of the Rocky Mountain birds are found in the Black Hills also, and so this western jay may appear in South Dakota some day.

Poor-wills are found in several sections of Nebraska and have been reported near Pine Ridge and in Rapid Canyon, South Dakota. It is also probable that they are in Fall River County, and perhaps other places. A few Whip-poor-wills summer in Newton Hills, Lincoln County.

The Cattle Egret is a new comer to this country and apparently it is extending its range so rapidly that it may be only a question of time until it reaches South Dakota.

The European Widgeon and the European Teal also have been reported in this country several times recently.

It is entirely possible that we have an occasional California Gull and so we should not dismiss our gills too quickly as only Franklin's, Ring-billed or Herring.

W. R. Felton, Jr. took a specimen of Yellow-crowned Night Heron at McCook Lake. There may be others in the State.

A Black Phoebe was banded a few years ago at Madison, Minnesota. It possibly crossed South Dakota to get there.

(Continued on page 56)

SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

The Blue Grosbeak In South Dakota

J. S. Findley

THE BLUE GROSBEAK is described as a "southern bird" and a "quiet and retiring bird of the thickets and weeds, of meadows and old clearings", and "not generally well known" with ranges extending up to Maryland, southern Illinois and Nebraska, southern Colorado and central California. Nowhere are they very abundant.

Yet, although the described ranges do not include South Dakota, there is much evidence to show that it is not uncommon and is a regular summer resident and breeding bird of the State.

We have endeavored to collect some of the records of the bird in South Dakota and have found they go back more than 50 years; sight records are supported by specimens collected in the State; observations were made by many competent and experienced observers. More of the records have been in recent years, which might be explained as the peak of a cycle, or, with more reason, by more observers.

There are three specimens in the collection, now in Rapid City, of Henry Behrens made on his Spring Creek ranch 18 miles southeast of Rapid City. The specimens are two males taken in September, 1899 and one taken in August, 1900.

A specimen in the Over Museum, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, was taken by Dr. S. S. Visher in Tripp County in 1910 and was determined by H. C. Oberholser, Fish and Wildlife Service, as a Western Blue Grosbeak.

Other specimens in the University Museum were taken by Dr. W. H. Over in Stanley County near the Missouri River and F. A. Patton north

of Fort Bennett.

The comment of Over and Thoms in South Dakota Geological and Natural History Survey (series XXI, No. 9, March 1920) is, "Western Blue Grosbeak, known to nest along the Missouri River as far north as Pierre." The same comment is repeated by Over and Thoms in *Birds of South Dakota*, 1946. Dr. Over has also remarked that he has "seen them frequently in the Black Hills."

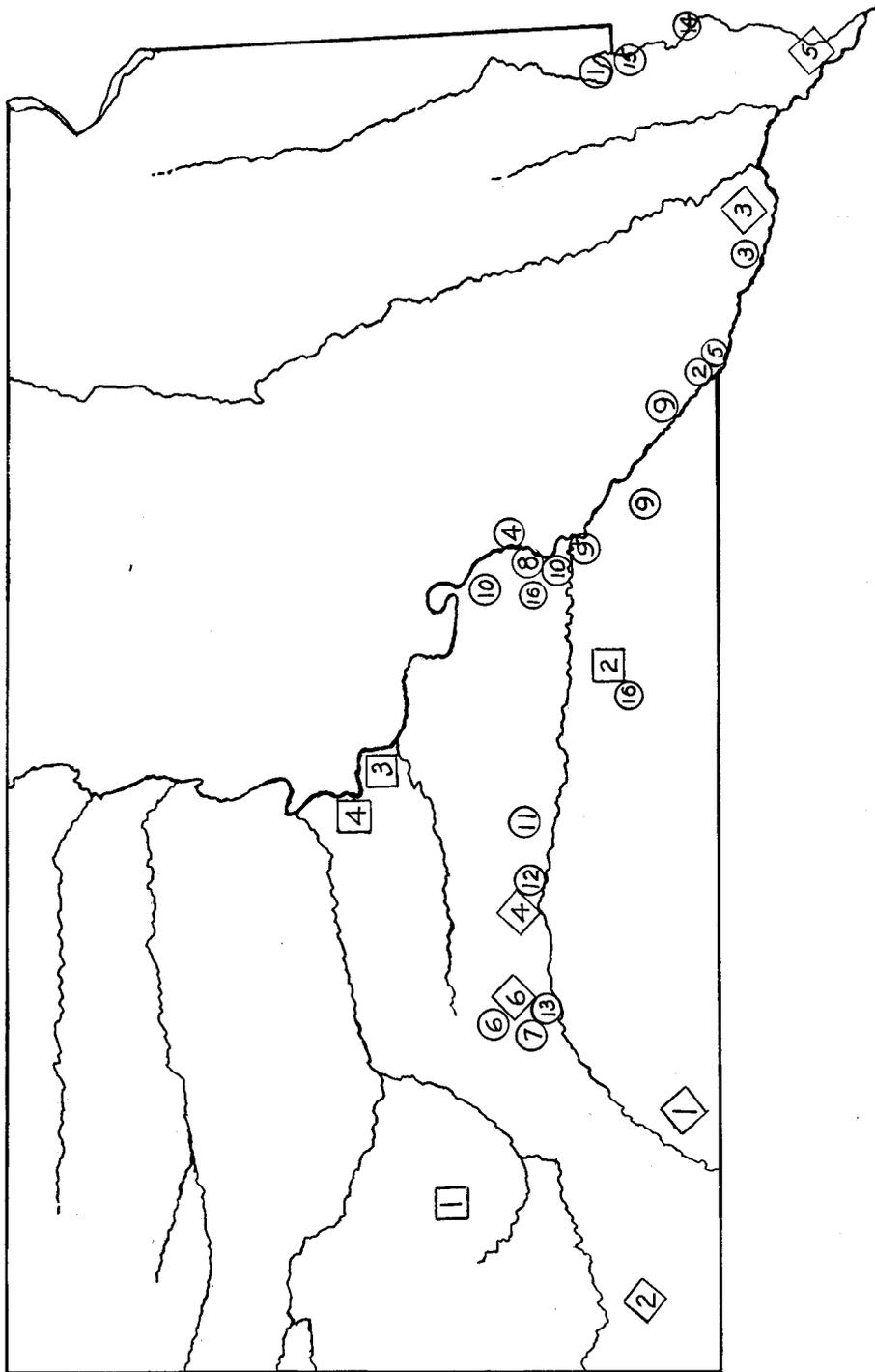
The *Geography, Geology and Biology of South Central South Dakota* by E. C. Perisho and S. S. Visher (State Geological Survey, Bulletin No. 5, 1912) contains "A List of the Birds of the Pine Ridge Reservation" which includes,

"Western Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca caerulea lazula*), nests rarely along the wooded valleys. We collected young of the year, even sixty miles east of these counties; east of the 100° meridian."

Another article in the same bulletin is "A Preliminary List of the Summer Birds of Fall River County, Southwestern South Dakota" by Stephen Sargent Visher. It includes

"Note. The following is copied from the *Wilson Bulletin* for March, 1912, (pp. 1-6. Vol. xxiv, No. 1).

A field party of the South Dakota State Survey spent from July 22 to August 8, 1911, in this county. We entered along the Cheyenne River from the northeast. The wagon passed through Hot Springs, Minnekahta and Edgemont, and then proceeded to the extreme southwest corner. From there it swung east along Indian Creek to Ardmore, north along Hat Creek almost to the Cheyenne River, thence east to Oelrichs and southeast into Pine Ridge Reservation. By means of saddle horses most of the county was visited. The following list of 76 species of birds were



observed. It probably includes the commoner summer birds of the area. Forty odd species were collected for the state museum.

"... Western Blue Grosbeak. Certainly a common summer resident. Broods were seen in practically all favorable locations."

Another record was found in a note in the Wilson Bulletin from SDOU-member William Youngworth, Sioux City, Iowa.

"On July 7, 1931, the writer had occasion to spend the day in Yankton County, South Dakota, a distance of about 65 miles northwest of Sioux City. The following notes taken there are thought worthy of mention... The Western Blue Grosbeak (*Guraca caerulea inter-fusa*) was not uncommon in suitable habitats."

The notes of Dr. John J. Donahoe tell of one seen on May 19, 1933 by the Doctor and Mrs. Donahoe at Co-vell Lake in Sioux Falls.

In South Dakota Bird Notes there are reports of a pair seen by Gertrude Weaver, Sioux City, Iowa, nesting in August, 1948, in a plum thicket

about 2 miles east of Pickstown, South Dakota and of a male seen about 2 miles farther east. M. E. Burgi found them nesting in a plum thicket near Springfield on June 21, 1949. S. S. Visher and H. F. Chapman saw Blue Grosbeaks north of Chamberlain on two different dates in June, 1950, and Miss Katherine Kaufman, Freeman, saw one near Pickstown in the summer of 1951.

In The Birds of Union County, South Dakota, T. C. Stephens, Wm. G. Youngworth and Wm. R. Felton, Jr., have reported 3 Blue Grosbeaks in the extreme southeastern part of the State in 1931, 1934 and 1938.

Other interesting and valuable reports includes Pettingill and Dana's report in The Auk of 3 males near Stamford on June 3, 1942; Harvey B. Lovell's account in The Condor of 1 at Cedar Pass on July 20, 1950; Mr. Whitney Eastman, Minneapolis, observed a pair near Cottonwood on July 22, 1951; Dr. Robert D. Coghill, Lake Bluff, Illinois, saw a full plumaged male in the Badlands in August, 1951; Dr. Clarence Cottam and Forrest Carpenter of the Fish and Wildlife Service, reported a male and a female near the Missouri River just south of Chamberlain on July 28, 1952.

Still more reports are an apparent pair and 2 males near the mouth of the White River, another pair near Iona, and still another pair at Wheeler on July 4, 1951. Four were seen by a party at the SDOU field trip near the mouth of the White River on May 31, 1952 and 2 more later the same day near Lower Brule. Charles E. Price, Jr., Moylan, Pa., reported a pair near Murdo in June, 1952. Hurt and Farrell reported 2 in June, 1951, near the Scalp Creek archaeological project. Audubon Field Notes said

(Continued on page 56)

SPECIMENS □

- 1-Henry Behrens Collection . Rapid City
- 2-Visher Over Museum, Vermillion
- 3-Over Over Museum, Vermillion
- 4-Patton Over Museum, Vermillion

RECORDS ◆

- 1-Perisho and Visher Pine Ridge
- 2-Visher Fall River County
- 3-Youngworth Yankton County
- 4-Pettingill and Dana Stamford
- 5-Stephens, Youngworth, Felton Union County
- 6-Lovell Cedar Pass

SIGHT RECORDS ○

- 1-Donahoe Sioux Falls
- 2-Weaver Pickstown
- 3-Burgi Springfield
- 4-Visher, Chapman Chamberlain
- 5-Kaufman Pickstown
- 6-Eastman Cottonwood
- 7-Coghill Badlands
- 8-Cottam, Carpenter Chamberlain
- 9-Findley White River, Iona, Wheeler
- 10-SDOU Field Trip White River, Lower Brule
- 11-Price Murdo
- 12-Findley Stamford
- 13-Pratt Interior
- 14-Findley Fairview
- 15-Findley, Wheeler Sioux Falls
- 16-Lundquist Dallas

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The dates for the National Audubon Society's 56th annual bird count are December 24 - January 2. This year, as usual, several groups in many parts of South Dakota will participate and will make reports of the species and numbers of individuals seen on one day within the period.

Again we expect to publish in Bird Notes the results of the South Dakota counts and so ask that all members who participate with the National Audubon Society to send us a copy of the report. There have been other South Dakotans who made bird counts which were not submitted to the Audubon Society and we would like to have copies of those, too.

The rules are simple so far as we are concerned but the Audubon Society insists upon the use of their forms in definite ways. The count is to be made during the ten days of the period and is to be made within a 15-mile diameter circle. If species not seen on the count day are seen within the official period, they should be listed separately. The Audubon Society asks for counts of 8 hours duration.

In planning to make a count it is well to pick a date early in the period so if weather or other circumstances interfere, it is still possible to make the count on another day.

* * * *

To Look For

Black-chinned Hummingbirds are suspected of being in the Black Hills. Look for Rufous and Calliope Hummers, too.

The Yellow Rail has been reported a very few times in the State, but rails are hard to find and there may be many more.

And wouldn't we be happy to see a Whooping Crane on its migration across South Dakota?

ANNUAL MEETING

The SDOU directors have picked Watertown as the place for the next annual meeting which will be held on May 26-27, 1955. Field trips are planned for nearby spots and for the Waubay area. Mark the dates and start your plans to attend this meeting.

The 1957 meeting will be held at the LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge upon the invitation of Refuge Manager and SDOU-member Kenneth Krumm.

* * * *

RAPID CITY BIRD CLUB

A bird club was organized at Rapid City on October 13, 1955 with N. R. Whitney, Jr. chosen president; Harry C. Behrens, vice president; and Mrs. Leonard Yargar, secretary.

Vice-president Behrens is in charge of field trips and began with one on October 30 and the next on November 13.

* * * *

Grosbeaks

that Blue Grosbeaks had a nationwide boom in 1951 "even in South Dakota."

Stephens, Youngworth and Felton say, "The AOU checklist reports the eastern race, *G. c. caerulea*, as 'accidental in Wisconsin' and the Western race, *G. c. interfusa*, as 'east to Colorado'; but what may be expected here between we do not know." Some of our Blue Grosbeaks have been called Eastern but others have been determined to be of the western race. More work is necessary to determine where they meet, or overlap, but it is evident that Blue Grosbeaks of one or the other, or both races, are not uncommon in southern South Dakota from the extreme east to the extreme west, and that they are found up to the center of the State along the Missouri River.

Snowy Owl Report

Mr. Bernard A. Nelson, Federal Aid Coordinator, Pierre, S. D., submitted the following tabulation of the observations of Snowy Owls made during the Winter of 1954-55 by the biologists under his supervision. This report should be compared with that for the Winter of 1953-54 which was printed in the March, 1954, number of Bird Notes. Mr. Nelson is making another compilation for this winter.

The late record from Lake County on March 29, 1955 is of special interest.

SNOWY OWL OBSERVATIONS — WINTER 1954-55

Game Biologists, S. D. Department of Game, Fish & Parks

OBSERVER	DATE	LOCATION	COUNTY
John Seubert	12-14-54	7 N & 2 W of Mitchell	Davison
	12-22-54	2 N & 2 E of Farmer	Davison
	12-23-54	5 W of Alexandria	Davison
	1-27-55	4 N & 2 E of Fulton	Davison
	1-28-55	4 N & 5 W of Fulton	Davison
	2-15-55	4 N & 3 E of Farmer	Davison
Walter Larsen	11-22-54	Central Potter County	Potter
	11-23-54	Eastern Potter County	Potter
Robert Dahlgren	1-6-55	9 N & 5 W of Huron	Beadle
	2-8-55	5 W & 1 N of Turton	Spink
	2-8-55	4 S of Brentford	Spink
	2-11-55	3 E & 4 S of Woonsocket	Sanborn
	2-24-55	3 S & 2 W of Fedora	Miner
	2-24-55	2 E of Fedora (possibly same individual as previous one)	Miner
Carl Trautman	1-25-55	5 N & 6 W of Bruce	Brookings
	1-25-55	2 N & 5 W of White	Brookings
	1-25-55	2 N & 3 W of White	Brookings
	1-27-55	1 S & 1 E of Bruce	Brookings
	2-3-55	3 W of Hayti	Hamlin
	2-15-55	2½ W of Bruce	Brookings
Maurice Anderson	12-21-54	Central Division	Davison
	12-28-54	South Central Codington	Codington
	1-4-55	South Central Charles Mix	Charles Mix
	1-18-55	Northwest McCook	McCook
	1-21-55	Northwest Lake	Lake
	1-24-55	Southwest Lake	Lake
	1-29-55	South Central Lake	Lake
	2-6-55	South Central Minnehaha	Minnehaha
	3-5-55	Southeast Lake	Lake
	3-29-55	West Central Lake	Lake
Reuel Janson	11-18-54	Blue Blanket Lake	Walworth
	11-20-54	Blue Blanket Lake	Walworth
	12-29-54	6 NW of Wakpala	Corson
Wendell Bever	2-55	3 S of Rapid City	Pennington
Erling Podoll	11-4-54	6 N & 1 W of Columbia	Brown
	11-24-54	6 E of Eagle Butte	Dewey
	11-24-54	3 E & 1½ S of Westport	Brown
	11-29-54	2 W & 2 N of Houghton	Brown
	11-29-54	5½ N of Columbia	Brown
	12-15-54	4 E & ½ N of Westport	Brown
	12-15-54	½ E of Westport	Brown
	12-15-54	5 W of Westport	Brown
	12-21-54	5 W of Westport	Brown
	12-26-54	2½ E of Westport	Brown
	12-28-54	4 E & 4 N of Westport	Brown
	1-18-55	4 E & 2¼ N of Barnard	Brown
	1-18-55	4 E & ½ S of Barnard	Brown
	2-2-55	7 W of Claremont	Brown
	2-25-55	3 S of Craven	Edmunds
	2-25-55	4 N of Warner	Brown
2-28-55	5 W & 6 S of Aberdeen	Brown	
2-28-55	5 W & 7½ S of Aberdeen	Brown	

* Observed twice in same location
 *** Observed four times in same location
 (1) Only one observed the second time
 X Observed along 50-mile pheasant route (not the same as 1953-54)

General Notes of Special Interest

BIRDS ABOUT TOWN—There are some birds that might be called "birds of a village". Nearly all are summer residents. I do not exert myself to study nests and so take it for granted they obey the call to multiply. In fact, there is evidence enough in the number of young seen in mid-summer and in that the more cautious of the community sing at their chosen territories. The area covered is small. As an old town it has its share of open ground, mature trees more or less well tended, and thickets,—all attractive to birds that have learned to tolerate man and find an easier food supply.

The list: Goldfinch, Bronzed Grackle, Baltimore Oriole, Western Meadowlark, Bobolink, House Sparrow, Yellow-throat, Yellow Warbler, Warbling Vireo, Starling, Robin, Brown Thrasher, House Wren, Black-capped Chickadee, Crow, Blue Jay, Barn Swallow, Arkansas Kingbird, Eastern Kingbird, Downy Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Flicker, Black-billed Cuckoo, Mourning Dove.

There are several others to be looked for, but which seem to be crowded out by more aggressive species; or they may not find suitable environment with regard to water, food, nesting sites, etc. They were all familiar at Pipestone and other nearby towns. So why not here?—Chipping Sparrow, Catbird, Purple Martin, Chimney Swift, Night-hawk, Screech Owl.—**Alfred Peterson, Brandt, S. D.**

WINTER WREN AT SIOUX FALLS—On Sept. 24, 1955, John Tuthill and I identified the Winter Wren in the Country Club area along the Big Sioux River near Sioux Falls.

Over and Thoms (1946. **BIRDS OF SOUTH DAKOTA**, rev. 188) consider it to be "probably only a summer resident." However, this seems somewhat doubtful. Peterson (1941. **WESTERN GUIDE**, 133 and 1947. **EASTERN GUIDE**, rev., 168) states that it "breeds in evergreen forests from Can. s. to cent. Calif. and N. Colo." and "from s. Manitoba . . . to Minnesota". Pough (1951. **AUDUBON BIRD GUIDE**, 100) gives its range as far south as central Minnesota and Michigan. But Roberts (1936. **BIRDS OF MINNESOTA**, II:93) considers it as "breeding mainly north of the U. S.", and in Minnesota as "a summer resident in the northern evergreen forests". Available published records for South Dakota seem to agree that it is "a rare migrant" in the state.

It is not mentioned by early observers including Coues, Agersborg, McChesney, Youngworth, in the literature of South Dakota. Visher (1913. **AUK**, XXX:573) apparently has only one spring record for Sanborn County. In Clay County he (1915. **WILSON BULL.**, XXVII:334) finds it "a rare migrant." Larson (1925. **WILSON BULL.**, XXXVII:75) calls it "transient," rarely wintering in Minnehaha County, with spring arrivals near Sioux Falls as early as May 13, 1907. He found one individual on Jan. 11, 1908.

I could find no records of dates since then although I looked through all my available references.

Tuthill and I found this individual flitting among the roots and rocks on the shore of the Big Sioux River. We had more than a five-minute observation. The midget-size (smaller than a House Wren), the brownish back and dark brown bars on the belly, the whitish line over the eye, and many small flecks of white on the throat and breast, the stubby tail held at a pert, ridiculous upright angle,—all indicated this species. It bobbed its whole body rather than its head only, appearing to bend at the knees like a Dipper. While we watched, it darted in and out of sight among the rocks and debris, moving with astonishing rapidity. We saw it pull what looked like insect larvae from the rocks and swallow them. It had a way of leaping suddenly, jack-in-the-box-like, into sight and of disappearing abruptly. About every 30 seconds it popped up and surveyed us, bobbing and crying “Kip-kip, kip-kip” with a metallic quality. Finally it hopped from rock to root and vanished.

Many more records are needed before much can be said about the status of this species in South Dakota.—**Herbert Krause, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, S. D.**

* * * *

WEST RIVER—MAGPIES, PRAIRIE DOGS, BURROWING OWLS, etc.—On Sept. 4, 1955, we visited Mr. and Mrs. Leonel Jensen (former Game Commissioner) on their big ranch near Wasta, S. D. We saw many Magpies in the “breaks” leading to the Cheyenne River. On one corner of a grassy plat was a prairie-dog town which Mr. Jensen protects. We looked unsuccessfully for Burrowing Owls. A neighbor (some 20

miles away!) telephoned an invitation to come over and see the pair of Wild Turkeys and their brood which were feeding near the ranch buildings, but we had to miss that and hurry on to save our reservation at Cedar Pass.

We returned from Cedar Pass to the Pinnacles, to see the Bad Lands in the bright moonlight. (We recommend it!) On each leg of that night trip, near a spot where a rabbit lay, d. o. r., we saw a large owl, once on a low post at the edge of the road, once on the blacktop. In the bright lights of the car the bird appeared to be very light-colored, almost white. Both views were so brief we did not distinguish ear-tufts or note other details, but we assumed it was a Great Horned Owl.

The next morning we watched a shrike feeding around the cabins at the Pass, apparently on grasshoppers, and Mountain Bluebirds were there, too. As we drove south from Kadoka across the breaks and valley of the White River we saw many shrikes, often several in single mile.

At the LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge near Martin, S. D., Manager Kenneth Krumm, (past president of SDOU) took us on a tour of that wonderful place—Canada geese, various ducks, White Pelicans, D-c Cormorants, Sharp-tailed Grouse, even 3 American Egrets! Finally, we dashed down to the scene of Mr. Kingsbury's most interesting experience in saving a crippled Golden Eagle which recuperated on a diet of “sod-puppies”. There were still Prairie Dogs there, as well as a community of Burrowing Owls. Conservation-minded rancher Kingsbury carefully preserves that owl-dog colony! Too bad there isn't one on the Refuge, too!—**Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. D.**

ALBINISTIC CHICKADEE — On May 21-22, 1955, I was with a troop of Boy Scouts who spent a full day at the Area Scout camp in Newton Hills, Lincoln County. Among the discoveries of the boys was a "white" bird. They told me about it and took me to see it.

It was smaller than an English Sparrow. It was very light colored with a suggestion of brown on its head, throat and wings. Since it seemed to act much like a Black-capped Chickadee we decided that it was merely an albino, but it interested us so much we watched it and found where it seemed to have a nest in a hole in the stub of a broken branch of an elm tree.

At different times later I visited the place with Herbert Krause and with Wesley Halbritter. We found that the albino seemed to be mated with a normal Black-capped Chickadee and also saw it and the normal Chickadee carrying food into the nest hole. However, we did not see the young and so do not know whether they were normal.

Halbritter got some good 16mm pictures of the two birds carrying food into the nest hole.—**George L. Goebel, Sioux Falls, S. D.**

* * * *

BIRD HAVEN DIARY—

May 4—12 Common Terns feeding along the Creek. An Osprey near the large pool where I saw one catch a fish a few years ago.

May 6—Banded sparrows, 3 Gambel's, 4 Harris's, 2 Clay-colored, 1 Lincolns. Saw Vesper and Song Sparrows, 10 American Pipits and the first for the season of House Wrens and Cowbirds.

May 8—Cold. Froze hard.

May 9—First Warblers arrived, 2 Black-pollled. Three small flocks of Golden Plover, 5, 25, 10.

May 10—Saw a few Golden Plover and then they were gone although they usually stay 10 days or 2 weeks. Only one flock of Buff-breasted Sandpipers that usually come and leave with the Plovers.

May 17—A wave of warblers arrived last night. Palm, Yellow, Black-pollled, Yellow-throats. Also Ruby-Crowned Kinglets and Catbirds.

May 22—First of the season's Dickcissels, Night Hawk, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Green Herons.

May 25—Oven-birds, Myrtle and Mourning Warblers, and 1 Audubon Warbler. A hen pheasant with a flock of chicks.

May 26—Two American Egrets.

May 28—Black and Common Terns, Belted Kingfisher, Herons (Black-Crowned Night, Blue and Green).

July 3—Banded 25 birds of 5 species.

July 4—Saw 43 species on trip to Big Stone Lake.

July 23—2 adult and 3 young Red Crossbills visited near our house for about an hour. Were not interested in sunflower seed.

Aug. 13—Eastern Kingbird feeding on Buffalo Berries.

Aug. 22—Cardinal.

Aug. 27—Fall Warbler migration has started.

Sept. 1—Fall sparrow migration underway.

Sept. 10—Banded a Pine Warbler.

Oct. 13—The first Tree Sparrows and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Oct. 22—Snow Buntings.

Didn't see a Bittern all season. Few Coots.

Oct. 28—Redpolls.

Nov. 4—Thousands of Lapland Longspurs migrating. Watched for half hour as they flew against a S. E. wind. Have banded 645 birds of 36 species so far this year.

—**Lowry Elliott, Milbank, S. D.**

GANNETT AND GANDER—Last spring we visited Mr. Frank Gander at Escondido, California, and he graciously showed us his garden. It is only a little larger than an acre but is beautiful with trees and flowers, and it abounds in bird life. On one day he counted 41 species of birds and in four years he has identified 146 species in it.

After our return home we wrote to Mr. Gander and in some way addressed it to Mr. Gannett. After some understandable difficulty, the letter was delivered and we got a reply, "You will note that you have mis-identified one bird,—the Gannett is a Gander".—**Charles P. Crutchett, Armour, S. D.**

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CAROLINA WREN—Dr. H. W. Wager reported banding a Carolina Wren at Winner on August 10. (Bird Notes, VII, 45). It is an unusual South Dakota record. Now he adds to the record that he banded another on October 6, saw another that did not enter the trap on October 11, and the first one he banded returned to the trap on October 21, 1955.

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GOLDEN EAGLE AT VERMILLION—On November 2, 1955, two high school boys brought an immature Golden Eagle to our house, in the trunk of their car. They had found the bird on a bridge south of town about three miles from the Missouri River. It was wounded on the side of the head and lay quietly and seemingly helpless, merely laying its head down gently and gingerly when touched.

A neighbor had a large wire cage into which the bird was placed. The next day he seemed much improved, flapping against the wire sides of the cage and turning his head to follow

our movements with his dark brown eyes.

He was more than 30 inches long with dark mellow brown back feathers, dusky golden on the back of the neck, massive yellow beak and toes with dark talons. There was considerable white in the tail which had a broad dark terminal band. There was also some white in the wings, which, with that in the tail, indicated the immature bird.

One of the boys was understandably incredulous and asked, "Will he grow still bigger?"

Sequel. When the eagle had recovered sufficiently to be released, Game Warden Sundling, Canton, freed it in Newton Hills State Park where he has seen it from time to time since.—**Adelene M. Siljeborg, Vermillion, S. D.**

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YOUNG OF WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH IN NEWTON HILLS—

While there are scattered references to the White-breasted Nuthatch in the eastern half of South Dakota, the greater number of them are winter reports. Breeding records are confined to general observations such as Visher's: "Tolerably common resident" in Clay County (1915. **WILSON BULL.**, XXVII:334). Larson's: "common resident; breeds" in Minnehaha County (1925. **WILSON BULL.** XXXVII:75), Youngworth's: "A regular resident of the region (Fort Sisseton and the Marshall County area generally)" (1935. **WILSON BULL.** XLVII:226) and the comment by the same writer (1955. Stephens, Youngworth and Felton, **BIRDS OF UNION COUNTY**, 22) that this species is a "regular resident" in Union County. In a general statement regarding the Family Sittidae, Over and Thoms (1946. **BIRDS OF SOUTH DAKOTA**, 189) note that "Nuthatch-

es are represented in South Dakota by two species, both winter residents". This seems to vary a trifle from the description of the White-breasted Nuthatch in the same work where the writers state that this species is "common in winter, frequently remains all summer and nesting." In addition to these observations, that this nuthatch nests in the eastern area may be found in Randall's note about an individual seen near Chamberlain, S. D., on May 24, 1946 (1953. S. D. BIRD NOTES V:69) and in Mallory's report of one at Canton, S. D., as late as July 18, 1951 (1951. S. D. BIRD NOTES, III:47). Randall considered it "uncommon." Adults seen as late as May and June could very well be breeding birds. Published records of nests, eggs and young, however, seem to be few. The following note therefore may be of interest.

On June 9, 1955, while we were in the Boy Scout area of Newton Hills, Lincoln County, John Tuthill and I heard the "yanhk, yanhk" of this species. In a growth of tall American Elms along a dry creek, we discovered the adults and two juveniles. The young were completely feathered and able to fly but when perched seemed to cling uncertainly to the bark and moved somewhat awkwardly. Tufts of natal down indicated their immaturity. During a fifteen-minute observation we saw them fed often, apparently by both adults. The food seemed to be worms or worm-like forms. The "yanhk" call which the adults frequently uttered was not loud and clear as one usually hears it but short and rather hoarse and guttural. The young's nasal call resembled the adult's "yanhk" but in quality was more like the thin, high-pitched "ink-yink" of the Red-breasted Nuthatch. During

the time we watched, the birds, adult and young, ranged back and forth in the trees but remained in an area about fifty feet in length along the dry wash. We saw nothing that indicated a nest, although the young presumably were raised in the immediate vicinity. It might be important to learn just how often this species nests in the eastern half of the state.—Herbert Krause, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, S. D.

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ARCTIC TOWHEE AT SIOUX FALLS—October 9, 1955, was a fine warm day and we went for a ride over an unimproved road only 4 or 5 miles from town. Weeds and grass cover the roadside with now and then a clump of willows or wild plums. It is a fine place to look for birds.

On this trip we saw a Towhee in a thicket of willows. We expected it to be a Red-eyed Towhee and we wanted another look as they are not common here, but the bird stayed in the bushes until we drove it out. Finally, it perched on a wild sunflower in good light only 10 or 12 feet from us. We could see that it had the white spots on its wings and back that mark the Spotted, or Arctic, Towhee which is seldom identified in this part of the state although it is the Towhee of the western part. The back, head and upper breast were grey, instead of black, to indicate the female and also distinguish it from the female Red-eyed, or American Towhee, which is brownish.

There is some evidence that the Arctic is much more common than it has been thought to be. Myrl Jones, one of the northwestern Iowa ranking ornithologists, thinks perhaps most of the winter Towhees in this part of the State may be Arctics.—Mrs. J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, S. D.

HERONS AT MADISON — There were more Green Herons here last summer than ever before, then the first week of September Little Blues seemed to go through on migration. Black-crowned Night Herons were very common and foraged on the lake shore right outside my cottage every evening. There were usually eight in only a short distance. Then there were more Great Blues than I ever saw here before. (Everyone still calls them "cranes".)—**Ruth Habeger, Madison, S. D.**

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DUCKS CRASH AT HOT SPRINGS —The first snow of a storm early on October 23, 1955, melted as it fell so that the water on the runways of our airport probably looked like a lake to migrating wild fowl that tried to land in the storm. The result was that there were an estimated 200 dead and injured ducks on the field the next morning. They were mostly Mallards, Shovelers, Teal, and Coots, and there may have been a few other species as they were pretty much scattered. The injured had broken wings and legs. The manager of the airport thought many had been able to go on.—**Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Stevens, Hot Springs, S. D.**

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PYGMY NUTHATCH—From time to time there have been reports of the Pygmy Nuthatch in the Black Hills but usually it was difficult to trace them to the source. Then one day Mrs. A. L. Hyde, Rapid City, when reporting on the birds at her feeding station, mentioned "the Nuthatches, White-breasted and Pygmy." A request for details brought this reply:

"A few years ago a strange Nuthatch visited with me nearly all winter along with many of our regular White-breasted Nuthatches. With

the help of Birds of America, T. Gilbert Pearson, editor, I identified it as a Pygmy Nuthatch. At the time I was especially interested in his tininess, quickness and fearlessness, and his fondness for suet. There was only the one, while the White-breasted came to the feeding station in pairs, but that winter during walks in the woods about three miles from the house, many of these little things would fly from tree to tree ahead of us and converse throatily."

Next, on June 21, 1955, we were at an elevation of about 5300 feet in Palmer Gulch, Black Hills, when we heard a bird high in a pine tree. It sounded somewhat like a Nuthatch and still not like the Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches that we know in eastern South Dakota, but much repeated "tant-tant-tant." The bird moved from tree to tree but stayed rather high. Once it came lower and closer, although in a place where the light was poor but was enough for us to see that it had a dark cap much like a Chickadee. At first we were disappointed and thought we had been fooled by a Chickadee and some strange noise. Then this bird flew away through the woods saying, "tant-tant-tant."

The next day we heard the song in the same place but could not find the bird.

To us it was neither a White-breasted nor a Red-breasted Nuthatch, but still it acted like a Nuthatch, was shaped like a small Nuthatch, and flew like a Nuthatch. Our meager description would fit a Pygmy Nuthatch, but none of our books include the Black Hills in the range of the Pygmy.

Dr. O. S. Pettingill, Jr. has done considerable work in the Black Hills over a period of years and we asked

him whether he had seen Pygmy or knew of specimens taken in the Hills. He replied:

"I have in my collection here (University of Michigan Biological Station, Douglas Lake) three Pygmy Nuthatches taken in the Black Hills by William C. Dilger.

Two, an adult female and an immature, were taken from a family group in a pine tree on the bank of Box Elder Creek, Loveland Canyon, Pennington County, July 22, 1948. The other, an adult male, was taken on the south rim of Loveland Canyon. There were several others in the same pine where this bird was found. The date: July 30, 1948.

Certainly the Pygmy Nuthatch is not at all common in the Black Hills. I have never seen the species there myself."

Although more work is needed to determine the subspecies, on the basis of these specimens we nominate the Pygmy Nuthatch for addition to the South Dakota list as an uncommon resident in the Black Hills.—**Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, S. Dak.**

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From Several Notebooks

Pine Siskins in numbers were feeding on seeds of wild sunflowers along roadsides near Canton on October 9, 1955. On October 11, 1953 a small flock was seen eating sunflower seeds near the same place. Do the dates hint at the usual time of a migration?

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More dates from a Sioux Falls note book may supplement Herbert Krause's note on young White-breasted Nuthatches.—"July 23, 1955. W.-b Nuthatches at feeding station rather regularly. Aug. 13, ditto."

Important Note from Chairman of the Membership Committee. Please remember that dues for 1956 are now payable. Remit to H. F. Chapman, 516 Security Bank Bldg., Sioux Falls, S. D. If you do it promptly, it will save much work and will save SDOU expense. That is important.

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The Fall concentration of White Pelicans that usually is at Wentworth Slough was a few miles to the southwest at Lake Madison because the slough went dry about mid-September.

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About 2,000 Pelicans enjoyed fishing in the shallow west end of the lake. Many people parked their autos along the highway and enjoyed watching the pelicans feeding only a short distance away. Even fisherman approved because the birds seemed to be catching carp by the hundreds, perhaps thousands.

It was interesting, and surprising, to see a pelican scoop up a big fish, point its bill skyward, and let the carp's own struggles make it slide "down the hatch".

When a pelican had enough fish it flew farther from the highway, stood on the lake shore, preened and rested.

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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

THE COVER picture is used through the courtesy of South Dakota Conservation Digest. It shows 9 nests of Double-crested Cormorants in a tree at Waubay Lake.