

# **SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES**

**Official Publication  
of  
SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION  
(Organized 1949)**

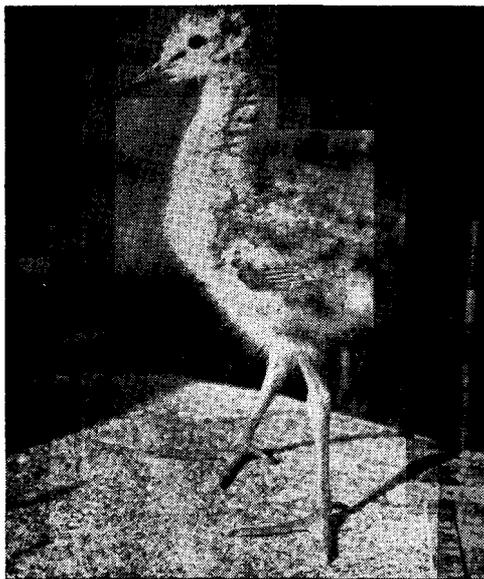
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## President's Page



**S**DOU, in addition to publishing *Bird Notes* and printing the newly completed checklist of South Dakota birds, does many other things for its members.

Any bird-watcher who has trouble making

identifications will find help when he goes on a SDOU field trip. Some one in the group can always come up quickly with the correct name for the unusual bird.

Another important feature is the friendship to be found in SDOU with folks of kindred tastes. The bird-watcher who has let his interest cool for lack of suitable friends, will find those interests thoroughly revitalized in the companionship of SDOU members.

What is the fascination of bird study?

A hunter will tell you he goes out to get a nice bag of game. If the day's limit is reduced to only two birds, he still goes hunting. In closed seasons the necessity for training his bird dog, or other plausible excuse, still takes him afield.

The fisherman says he goes to get a good string of fish. When he knows the fish aren't biting he still spends hours casting, though the results may be negligible.

Is it really a lot of game that the hunter wants? Does the fisherman really require a big string of fish?

Could it be the deep, underlying

motive of both hunter and angler is the desire to get into the open, with blue sky above, with wind in his face, and sun on his cheek?

Do not hunter and angler, in the last analysis, have the same burning passion as the bird-watchers,—a desire to commune directly with Nature?

A few years ago the author of an article in a sports magazine bitterly insinuated that the "lookers" (bird-watchers, etc.) were out to deprive the hunter of his sport. When we consider the efforts of bird-study and conservation groups to preserve the lakes and natural habitats of game-birds, it would seem that instead of destroying the hunter's sport we are trying to help him preserve it.

With the enormous yearly increase of human population and the steady destruction of bird breeding grounds, it seems inevitable that game bags will be reduced repeatedly and open seasons continually shortened.

Millions of boys growing up today will never know the feel of a shotgun nor have access to public shooting grounds.

Will these boys be devoid of interest in the great outdoors? No, the fascinating study of Nature's ways will always appeal to human beings. The time approaches when more and more people must satisfy such interest by hunting with field glass and shooting with a camera.

With the relentless approach of these changes in outdoor life, bird study groups are bound to receive as members more of these lovers of the outdoors.

The growth of such groups of  
(Continued on page 43)

# Lake Andes Birdlife 40 Years Ago

B. T. Boylan, Jr.

**M**R. BOYLAN is a native of Douglas County and lived there for many years. When he could not be present at the regional meeting of SDOU at Armour on August 12 he wrote this letter to C. P. Crutchett who presented it at the meeting with a few interesting comments which are printed here with the letter.

Mr. Leo Kirsch presented a paper which also appears in this Bird Notes. The two papers present an interesting comparison.—Editor.

Dear C. P. C.:

After going through some old pictures and hunting records, I will try to give you some information about the birdlife (mostly game birds) of Lake Andes forty years ago. I am not sure of the dates and so will have to allow a little spread—say from 1910 to 1925.

Some years hunting was good, others not so good. It usually varied according to whether we had good rains in the fall. However, Lake Andes, when in good water, was always good hunting. Sometimes we had more birds in the spring when there was no hunting season, because apparently, the northward migration follows a little different route than the fall flight.

Canada Goose was nearly always plentiful.

White-fronted Goose (we called them "speckled bellies"), plentiful but more in the spring.

Snow Geese, more of the Greater Snows than of the Lesser, and more of the geese in the spring, sometimes extremely large flocks.

Blue Goose frequently mixed with the White-fronts.

Hutchin's Goose, not too common. White-cheeked Goose, rare but I

have shot it.

Brant, never shot it but have seen specimens.

I have mounted specimens of most of these geese.

Common ducks at Lake Andes were the Mallard, Pintail, Shoveler, Gadwall, Baldpate, Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Greater and Lesser Scaup (big and little bluebill), Redhead, Canvasback, Buffle-head, Ruddy Duck. All of these were plentiful and nearly all, at times, nested around Lake Andes.

Other ducks that were not so common but were seen and shot every fall were the American Golden-eye which came quite late, and dozens of flocks might whistle into the lake when you heard them before you saw them and not too many were shot; the Red-breasted, American and Hooded Mergansers which we called fish ducks and rarely tried to take; Black Ducks were usually strays driven off course by storms, but I remember of seeing several flocks and of shooting 4 of them one morning, one of which I mounted; Ring-necked Duck was not common; the American, Surf and White-winged Scoters were also called fish ducks and were not common although a few were seen every fall; Wood Duck was not common but more plentiful in southeast South Dakota, but I remember of seeing a nest in a cavity in a tree near water east of Vermillion. (My brother, Harold Chutchett, shot one at Andes. C. P. C.); Cinnamon Teal, I have several specimens but I never shot one, (Harold shot one at Lake Andes. C. P. C.); Eider Duck, I never identified one but had heard several times of them being obtained on Lake Andes.

Swans were shot occasionally by green hunters thinking them to be slow geese, or perhaps by wanton killers who had no regard for bird life. Swans were quite rare even then. They were usually Whistlers but I am sure I have seen both species on Lake Andes. My specimen is a Whistling, a real large male, that Gus Berquist picked up about 1917 dead on the shore near his place on Lake Andes.

White Pelicans came in flocks of thousands that made acres of water white. Once we rowed a boat into a flock of them and roped one. My brother, Lawrence, and Howard Cline were at the oars while I steered. The pelicans were slow to take flight and at the time we thought they were so full of fish they could hardly get off the water. Anyway, we got near enough to get ropes around a bird. The battle it put up was terrific. We couldn't get it into the boat and finally had to release it.

Occasionally we saw a smaller brown pelican and at the time thought it was a young white pelican, but now I believe it was a stray of the brown species.

Sandhill Cranes were quite common and I can remember seeing several small flocks of big Whooping Cranes.

The Whooping Crane which I had mounted was found by Mr. Bass, a farmer who lived about 3 miles southwest of Armour. It had been hurt. He thought it had struck a telephone wire when flying over his farm. A veterinary (I don't recall who) and I doctored the bird to health and I had it alive for some time in my pens with other birds (wild ducks, geese, pheasants, etc.) but it finally died and I had it mounted.

I gave it to the Natural History Museum, Balboa Park, San Diego, Calif. They were very happy to receive it, their first specimen of a

Whooping Crane and one they had wanted for many years.

Back in those days (1910-1925) Lake Andes was rich in bird life of many kinds that may be getting scarce. It was the home of countless coots, grebes, rails, herons, an occasional loon, cormorants, bitterns (we called them thunder-pumpers).

A few of the other game birds were: Wilson Snipe (the only snipe I hunted), Yellow-legs, Sandpipers, Black-bellied Plover, Golden Plover, Upland Plover, Curlew, Killdeer, Avocet, Phalarope.

My first few years of hunting near Armour gave me a chance at Prairie Chickens and, late in the fall, some Sharp-tailed Grouse which would come in from west of the Missouri River. I remember vividly the Prairie Chickens in the spring, the strutting, dancing and booming of the cocks. At the same season there was also the dancing of the Sandhill Cranes on a school section a mile north of Armour which was one of our first hunting spots and a good one for many years,—ducks, geese, snipe, and even Prairie Chickens. Incidentally, it was the locale for my first goose. Your brother Harold, was with me at the time.

We had a few bobwhites in various places, but they were quite rare except down on the Missouri bottoms. I never shot any and can't remember whether there was a legal season in my time, although I do remember that before that they, as well as prairie chickens, were trapped for the market. (Harold shot a quail or two in the early 1900's before the 5-year closed season was enacted. In my memory, the closed season has never been lifted in the past half century. C. P. C.)

The Mourning Dove is one of the main game birds in southern Califor-

(Continued on page 43)

# Water, Marsh and Upland Birds of Lake Andes In Recent Years

Leo Kirsch

**L**AKE ANDES is a natural glacial lake covering approximately 5000 surface acres and having a maximum depth of about 10 feet when full. It is fed by a number of intermittent streams and has always fluctuated widely because of the uncertainty of its water supply.

The lake is divided into 3 units by road dikes crossing it in the Bass Beach and the Anderson Resort areas. The north and south units are refuge areas under the jurisdiction of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The center lake is used as a public hunting area. In addition to the main lake a dam on the Owens Bay arm of the lake forms a pool covering approximately 350 acres when full. This pool depends on artesian water and is presently almost dry. A new well is to be put in on this area this fall and we hope the bay will be filled in time to accommodate migrating waterfowl.

The Lake Andes Refuge was established primarily to protect the diving ducks, however it has proved valuable, not only for diving ducks but also for migrants of nearly all duck and goose species and as a wintering area for Mallard Ducks and Canada Geese. Our bird records for Lake Andes are not complete since the area has been actively managed for only the past four years. I believe the best way to discuss present day conditions will be to start at the beginning of the bird list with the loons and go on up the list through the terns. To indicate the status and abundance I will use the following symbols:

PR—Permanent Resident  
SR—Summer Resident, usually nesting

WV—Winter Visitor  
SV—Summer Visitor  
TV—Transient Visitor, usually migrants  
AV—Accidental Visitor  
a—abundant  
c—common  
u—uncommon  
o—occasional  
r—rare

Common Loon	TV-u
Red-necked Grebe	TV
Horned Grebe	SR? TV
Eared Grebe	SR? TV
Western Grebe	TV
Pied-billed Grebe	SR-c
White Pelican	SR
Double-crested Cormorant	SR
Great Blue Heron	SR
American Egret	SV-u
Snowy Egret	SV-u
Little Blue Heron	SV-u
Black-crowned Night Heron	SR
American Bittern	SR
Least Bittern	SR-u
Whistling Swan	TV-r
Canada Goose (3 subspecies)	TV-c
White-fronted Goose	WV TV
Snow Goose	TV-a
Blue Goose	TV-a
Mallard	PR-c
Gadwall	SR
Baldpate	SR
Green-winged Teal	PR-1
Blue-winged Teal	SR-c
Shoveller	SR-c
Wood Duck	TV-r
Redhead	TV-c SR-r
Canvasback	TV-c SR-r
Ring-necked Duck	TV-c
Greater Scaup	TV-?
Lesser Scaup	SR TV-c
American Goldeneye	TV-c
Bufflehead	TV-c
White-winged Scoter	TV-r
American & Surf Scoter	not seen recently
Ruddy Duck	SR-r TV
Hooded Merganser	TV-u
American Merganser	TV-c
Red-breasted Merganser	TV-u
Prairie Chicken	SV-r
Sharp-tailed Grouse	not on refuge

Bob-white .....	PR-c
Hungarian Partridge .....	PR-u
Ring-necked Pheasant .....	PR-c
Virginia Rail .....	SR-u
Sora .....	SR-c
Coot .....	SR-c
Piping Plover .....	TV
Semipalmated Plover .....	TV
Killdeer .....	SR-c
Golden Plover .....	TV
Black-bellied Plover .....	TV
Ruddy Turnstone .....	TV
Wilson's Snipe .....	TV
Upland Plover .....	SR
Spotted Sandpiper .....	TV
Solitary Sandpiper .....	TV
Willet .....	SR
Greater Yellowlegs .....	TV-c
Lesser Yellowlegs .....	TV-c
Knot .....	TV-r
Pectoral Sandpiper .....	TV-c
White-rumped Sandpiper .....	TV
Baird's Sandpiper .....	TV
Least Sandpiper .....	TV
Red-backed Sandpiper .....	TV
Dowitcher .....	TV
Stilt Sandpiper .....	TV
Buff-breasted Sandpiper .....	TV
Marbled Godwit .....	TV
Hudsonian Godwit .....	TV
Sanderling .....	TV
Avocet .....	SR
Wilson's Phalarope .....	TV
Northern Phalarope .....	TV
Herring Gull .....	TV
California Gull .....	TV
Ring-billed Gull .....	TV
Franklin's Gull .....	TV
Bonaparte's Gull .....	TV
Forster's Tern .....	TV
Common Tern .....	TV
Least Tern .....	TV
Black Tern .....	SR-c

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### PRESIDENT

(Continued from page 39)

"lookers", as our own SDOU, may be slow but such growth is bound to come. Within a few years SDOU should have at least 300 members.

Let us try to speed that increase right now! Let each member come to the aid of the membership committee by endeavoring to secure on his own initiative at least one new member for SDOU!

The work of SDOU is not done! It is just beginning!

—Charles P. Crutchett

### 40 YEARS AGO

(Continued from page 41)

nia but we never thought of shooting them in South Dakota. Perhaps some people did and it may have been legal, but eventually they were put on the song bird list.

As a hunter, I am glad I had the opportunity to experience the wonderful hunting we had in South Dakota during those years and also the pheasant hunting that came later. I have a personal interest in the pheasants because of the part I took in starting them in South Dakota.

As a bird lover, I'm glad I never violated the game laws nor the code of the decent hunter. We did not violate the property owner's rights. We did not waste birds nor leave cripples, which were done too often by too many and are still done even with the present scarcity of game.

California hunting is not very exciting in comparison with what we had in South Dakota. It is beyond my time off and money and so my guns have been hanging on the wall for many years.

Possibly conditions have changed in South Dakota too so that it is in about the same condition. (The duck and goose hunting is nothing like as wonderful as the days Mr. Boylan remembers. There is still pretty fair pheasant hunting. C. P. C.)

I have been able to do a little of the Bird watching type of hunting at a nearby sanctuary at a brackish bay occasionally connected to the Pacific at high tide. It is a wonderful resting place for migratory birds. Over a period of years I have built up quite a list of birds seen at this place. Peterson's Field Guide gives me a lot of help.

I hope this is interesting to you and is information you wanted. Pardon my reminiscences. I can't help it when I think back to those days.

Sincerely, B. T. Boylan, Jr.

# Notes on Nesting of a Warbling Vireo

C. P. Crutchett

**JUNE 8, 1956.** For a week I've been hearing a bird warbling in a big elm beside the cemetery road but can get only occasional glimpses of him. Found nest near end of branch about 15 feet from the ground about in the place where the bird usually sang. Think it belongs to my elusive warbler.

At noon today my singer was in plain sight in a cottonwood about 75 feet to the west and was soon joined by his mate but in half a minute both flew. In 2 or 3 minutes the male returned to the cottonwood. He must have had a bath because he preened and stretched his wings and body. He kept singing from 5 to 7 times a minute. He was in plain sight and I confirmed my identification as a Warbling Vireo. A grackle almost lit in a nearby elm but as the vireo dashed at it the grackle kept going.

June 9. At noon had a man with a truck take me with a step-ladder and a fish-pole with a mirror on the end to the vireo's nest. Nest opening is about an inch in diameter. Could not see contents. Hope we did not disturb nest. Vireo kept singing just a few feet from the nest. Starling scolded from the other side of the tree. It had a nest in abandoned woodpecker hole at base of the branch on which was the vireo nest. 8:00 p. m. Went out to the elm. The vireo sat on a fence 50 feet away singing—as usual.

June 10. 3:30 p. m. Vireo nest looked ragged. Don't think I damaged it yesterday. A hole in bottom of nest. Half an eggshell on the ground. Shell matched picture of egg of Warbling Vireo in "Birds of America". No singing today. Did the Starlings destroy the nest?? Was I too rough

yesterday and drove the vireos frantic so they wrecked their home?

June 11. 12:30 p. m. Nest 2/3 gone with only thick ring left. No singing. 6:45 p. m. I stood near the cottonwood where I saw the two vireos the other day. No singing. A shadow shot into the tree at about the place the two vireos were the other day. Stopped an instant and flashed toward the elm. The male was singing to the west of me; it was the female I had just seen. Soon the shadow shot into the cottonwood again, and then I saw a nearly completed nest. The female went back toward the old nest in the elm. I went to the elm and as I looked the female came, took a few strands of the old nest and returned to the cottonwood. In half a minute she was back for more material.

After a few minutes she flew to a pasture 200 feet away, then up onto the fence, and then back to the ground. In a minute she returned to the nest. The outside of the nest was decorated with some fuzzy gray material. Possibly it was this final garnish she was getting from the pasture. The male was still singing 100 feet away.

June 12. Noon. No sign of male or female. No singing. 6:30 p. m. Male singing in willow 25 feet from new nest. Female not in sight. A thin ring of old nest is still visible in the elm but I think new nest is finished. It is nicely decorated with gray fuzz. (The female may have been on the nest. I learned later that when she was on the nest only a small triangular gray-green tip of her tail would be visible. For some time I thought it was a cottonwood leaf.)

June 13. Noon. I saw the male.

He was not singing much. 6:30 p. m. He was singing.

June 14. 1:30 p. m. Vireo singing steadily about 3 or 4 times a minute. Located him on the nest with his tail sticking over. He twisted about uneasily. Temperature was 97 degrees in the shade. Perhaps he was shading the eggs. 2:00 p. m. Still there. Still singing 4 or 5 times a minute.

June 15. Rain last night. Cool today. 12:45 p. m. Male on nest singing. 1:00 He quit; 1:05 started again. 1:15 Grackle flew through tree. Vireo dashed after it and followed for about 25 feet. Lit in another tree and preened for 7 minutes, then disappeared. I don't think he returned to the nest as there was no singing.

June 16. Not very hot. Male sang in willow from 11:50 a. m. to 12:50 p. m.

June 17. 12:30 p. m. Male not on nest. 2:45 p. m. Nearby he sang 35 songs in 6 minutes.

June 18. 12:30. Singing in the elm.

June 19. 12:50 to 12:55. 92 degrees. No sign of the male. 1:30 to 1:45. He sang in the willow. Timed him for 5 minutes, 5 to 6 times a minute. 6:30. Singing in the elm.

June 20. Temperature 92 degrees. 12:45. No singing. 12:50. 2 Redwings lit above Vireo's nest. Vireo sprang from nest and took one Redwing out of the tree in a hurry. 12:55. Had not returned to nest. Could not tell sex but since there was no singing, I presume it was the female that chased the blackbird.

June 21. Noon. Near 100 degrees in the shade. No singing.

June 22. 12:50. Not so hot. Vireo singing in elm 100 feet from nest. Timed him 6 songs a minute for 3 minutes. Approached the tree but not the nest. 100 feet west of the nest is another cottonwood where a Baltimore Oriole sings every day. Male

vireo flew there singing, ending the song just as he lit. He hardly touched the branch when the male Oriole, which was singing at the time, took him out of there, stopping his song on the last note.

June 23. 12:40 - 12:55. Singing 5 or 6 a minute 50 feet east of nest. 6:30. Singing 70 feet west of nest. This is the 12th day and there should be young in the nest.

June 25. 12:50 p. m. 99 degrees. Male in willow west of nest. 6:30 P. M. 94 degrees. Singing west of nest.

June 26. 12:45. Singing in willows east of nest. 8:45. No singing.

June 27. 12:45. No sign of male. 4:30 Male singing 60 feet east.

June 28. 8:00 A. M. No sign of male. 12:40. Singing in elm of old nest. 1:05 Came to willow near nest. 1:10. Lit 8 feet from nest, then back to willow. Sang 2 or 3 times. I saw a vireo leave the nest tree. Think he relieved mate on nest at instant my attention was diverted. Did not see him enter nest.

June 29. 12:45 to 1:00. No vireos. 4:30 to 4:45. No vireos.

June 30. Strong N. E. wind. No vireos at noon or night.

July 1. 9:10 a. m. Vireo sang in willow a few feet from nest.

July 2. Heard Vireo at noon. He did not approach nest. I could see female on nest. 7:00 p. m. Heard Vireo in willow, then in nest tree, then behind me, next in willow, then east of nest, back in nest tree, then west of nest. Stayed 3 minutes in each tree. Saw him several times. Seemed more nervous than usual. Could see female on nest.

July 3. 7:45 a. m. Could not hear Vireo. Female on nest. 12:55. She was not on nest but came into nest tree and flitted about within 10 feet of nest. 1:00. She was in willow in plain sight 25 feet from nest. By 1:10 she had not approached the nest. Sure

it was the female as there was no song.

July 4, 10:45 a. m. Male singing but did not see him. By 11:00 he had not approached the nest. 2:43 p. m. Male singing in willow 25 feet from nest. Then flew to nearby trees. Watched nest closely for 32 minutes. He sang all the time but did not approach nest. No bird visible on nest.

July 5. 12:45 to 12:55. Singing east and west of nest but did not approach.

July 6: Vireo singing in tree 25 feet east, but did not see it.

July 7. No vireo.

July 9. Watched the nest for 15 minutes at noon and 15 minutes at evening. No vireos. This is the 28th day since the nest was completed and the young should have left the nest.

July 10. No vireos.

July 11, 12, 14, 15, 16. Some singing but birds did not approach nest.

July 17. Singing. Saw only some flashes in trees. Started to leave when I heard him sing again in plain sight in the small elm. Had a big worm at least an inch long. He knocked it repeatedly on a limb and ran it through his bill several times. I expected him to feed young. He ate the worm! We stayed nearby. Vireos moved around. One sang above our head. Another came to the tree. Male flew a short distance. He came back, other followed. Male disappeared but the second bird remained, evidently a young one. Other young bird flew and was followed by still another. There were at least 3 young in the group with the male. It was the last time we saw the vireos.

There was considerable traffic along the road all day, every day. The vireos seemed not to mind. Perhaps they were bothered by us standing and silently watching. Perhaps that is why we were disappointed in not seeing them feed their young.

## Editorial Comment

**WE WANT** to tell a story to illustrate the dangers in sight identifications and to show the ease with which a mistake can creep in even when the bird is in hand.

Many of our members will recall the joint meeting of SDOU with the Iowa and Nebraska Unions at Sioux City, in May, 1955, and the three sparrow skins that were exhibited with an invitation to all those at the meeting to identify the Grasshopper, the LeConte's and the Clay-colored Sparrow. Only a few were successful, but now with the unfolding of the story the others may take heart.

When the specimens were collected one sparrow was found in an area where Grasshopper Sparrows were known to be and, when the specimen was picked up, it was examined, somewhat casually perhaps, and identified as a Grasshopper Sparrow. The skin was prepared without further checking and was exhibited at the meeting as a Grasshopper Sparrow.

Mr. and Mrs. John Lueshen of NOU were somewhat skeptical and so borrowed the skin for considerable study, which, after they had compared the skin with detailed descriptions and with other specimens, took them to the conclusion that it was a Henslow's Sparrow. They now have convinced the others that the three are a Henslow's, a LaConte's and a Clay-colored Sparrow.

This takes us back to our first paragraph and the comment on the reluctance of many ornithologists to accept sight records of unusual species. They merely know how easy it is to be mistaken in spite of the observer's care and good intentions.

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The "obituary" of Dickie Goldfinch which is on page 49 was written by Dorothy Lundquist, Webster, South

# More Spring Arrival Dates

Ruth Habeger

There are several spring arrival dates that can now be added to the list published in the June, 1956, Bird Notes. (VIII;25). Also see Corrigendum, page —. Ed.) The data upon which these additional dates are based are similar to those used for A Few Spring Arrival Dates.

SPECIES	Earliest Arrival	Average Arrival
Common Loon .....	April 27	May 9
Red-necked Grebe .....	May 8	May 9
Eared Grebe .....	April 25	May 10
Little Green Heron .....	May 10	May 16
Blue Goose .....	March 21	March 26
White-fronted Goose .....	March 19	March 23
Virginia Rail .....	April 22	April 27
Wilson's Snipe .....	March 30	May 6
Willet .....	April 29	May 10
Dowitcher .....	May 7	
Hudsonian Godwit .....	April 22	May 4
Marbled Godwit .....	April 20	May 10
Semipalmated Sandpiper .....	May 7	May 17
Avocet .....	April 22	May 10
Grey-cheeked Thrush .....	May 7	May 7
Migrant Shrike .....	April 6	April 13
Orange-crowned Warbler .....	May 1	May 5
Tennessee Warbler .....	April 22	May 2
Nashville Warbler .....	May 7	May 9
Magnolia Warbler .....	May 10	May 15
Blackburnian Warbler .....	May 21	
Pine Warbler .....	May 2	May 10
Ovenbird .....	May 4	May 13
Wilson's Warbler .....	May 11	May 14
Grasshopper Sparrow .....	May 13	May 21
Clay-colored Sparrow .....	April 11	May 2
Field Sparrow .....	April 11	April 18
Fox Sparrow .....	April 18	April 19
Lincoln's Sparrow .....	May 3	May 10
Swamp Sparrow .....	May 3	May 10

Dakota. She did not sign it, but told us she never had heard of anyone asking for credit for writing an obituary. We think she deserves credit, any way, for this "obituary."

## The Cover

The picture is another from the fine collection which J. O. Johnson, Watertown, has made. It shows a young Marbled Godwit that he found at Bitter Lake in Day County, June 15, 1941.

**CORRIGENDUM**—In the last number of Bird Notes there was a serious error which we regret very much. Mrs. L. J. Moriarty's name was omitted as the author of the fine account of the Annual Meeting which appeared on page 27 but was inserted on the article on page 25, A Few Spring Arrival Dates, which was written by Miss Ruth Habeger whose name was left out entirely. We have already apologized to these two good contributors to Bird Notes, and now we hope our readers will mark their copies to correct our error,—Editor.

## *General Notes of Special Interest*

**BURROWING OWLS**—After a delightful two weeks of birding in the Black Hills, we headed for home following U. S. 212 across the State on July 16, 1956. About 27 miles east of Redfield, near the Clark-Spink County line, we observed an unusually large number of Burrowing Owls living in fraternity with a large flicker-tail gopher colony. There were about 50 owls scattered over the pasture area, all in plain sight from the highway. As nearly as we could determine there were 12 families of owls in the colony.

This is the largest Burrowing Owls colony we have ever observed, although we have seen a somewhat similar one on an airfield in Florida,—but minus the mammals.

It would make an interesting project for members of SDOU to study this colony over a period of years.—**Whitney and Karen Eastman, Minneapolis, Minnesota**

\* \* \*

**SCARLET Tanager AT LACREEK**—The Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) generally is regarded as a bird of the eastern woodlands and groves though ranging westward to the plains of Kansas. Consequently, a record of its appearance on the southwestern Dakota prairies is of interest.

While reviewing old refuge reports of bird life observed in the area, a note by former manager C. R. Young was found listing an observation of the Scarlet Tanager at LaCreek Refuge on May 16, 1938. The record has subsequently been discussed with Mr. Young who is a competent observer and taxidermist. It was confirmed by him as of a solitary male. The unmistakable appearance of this bril-

liantly marked species and the confirmation by the observer of the old report leaves no doubt as to the authenticity of the observation. This is the only record of this tanager at the Refuge to the best of my knowledge.—**Kenneth Krumm, LaCreek Refuge, South Dakota.**

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**MOURNING VS. CONNECTICUT WARBLER**—On September 12, 1956, warblers were in our vegetable garden and we were particularly interested in two or possibly three that kept well hidden in the broccoli with occasional excursions to the corn. They industriously searched for worms and we got our best views of the birds when they examined the broccoli heads, or perhaps when they picked a bit of food from a leaf on the outside of the row.

The warblers were small, had yellowish-gray backs and wings, no wing bars, yellow breast and belly, indistinct gray head and neck, no eye ring but a white spot above and another below the eye.

We were reminded of MacGillivray's Warbler which we have seen in the Black Hills, and then decided that we had Mourning Warblers when we found a picture on Peterson's page of "Confusing Fall Warblers."

However, when we read Peterson we found confusion compounded,—was it Mourning or Connecticut? Mourning "skulks in thickets". Okay if broccoli goes for a thicket. Connecticut female and immature "in the fall often have an eye ring, but it is broken in front of the eye, not complete." Our bird's eye ring was broken both in front and behind the eye. Pough says the Mourning differs from

the Connecticut in "the lack of an eye ring except for a more or less incomplete one in immatures."

We turned to Bent and read, "Field marks. The Mourning and MacGillivray's warblers are very much alike, but the adult male of the latter has a white spot above and another below the eye, which are lacking in the former . . . Fortunately, the ranges of the two do not overlap to any great extent." (Could we have MacGillivray's in eastern South Dakota. Probably not since there are no records.) Bent continued, "females and young males (Mourning) have an incomplete eye ring in the fall, making their recognition difficult." (Difficult, indeed. The eye ring did not help much.)

Perhaps Bent gave more help in his discussion of the migration routes. "The Connecticut Warbler is one of the few small birds that follows different migration routes in spring and fall. The spring route is through the West Indies and Florida, northwesterly across the southern Alleghenies, and then northward through the board Mississippi Valley . . . On its return to its winter quarters the Connecticut Warbler follows a partially different route from that taken in Spring. From its breeding range in central Canada, it migrates almost due east to New England, largely avoiding the Mississippi Valley south of northern Illinois and Ohio, and thence southward along the Atlantic coast through Florida and the West Indies to its winter home in South America."

Bent again, "The autumnal migration route of the Mourning Warbler is apparently a reversal of the spring route" . . . when it "enters the United States on a broad front extending from Florida to Texas . . . thence spreads out northeastward along the Alleghenies, as well as migrating

northward through the Mississippi Valley".

From all this it seems we can only be sure that our birds were not adult male Connecticut Warblers. But the fall migration routes make it seem probable they were Mourning Warblers.—Mrs. Melvin Wheeler, Sioux Falls, S. D.

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**DICKIE GOLDFINCH**  
1945, or earlier—Aug. 18, 1956

The story of Dickie, the Goldfinch, started one spring day in 1946. It was a beautiful day, the kind that inspires a male Goldfinch to perch on a tree and break into ecstatic song. For Dickie, however, there was none of this. All he could do was to flutter helpless on a farm lawn with a broken wing, a prospective meal for the farmyard cat.

Perhaps it was the luck of such a magnificent day when Dickie found not the cat but gentle hands lifting him and carrying him carefully to the shelter of the Martin and Reuben Reetz farmhouse near Webster, S. D. There Dickie was given a home in an old canary cage, and a diet of canary seed with tidbits of vegetable and fruit for variety.

Civilized life agreed with Dickie. He became tamer and tamer. He rejoiced at any attention and released melodious "bird notes" at the sizzling of frying in the kitchen and the hum of the sewing machine. He seemed to forget that he was a wild creature.

Dickie's wing healed during the winter months that first year. By spring of 1947 he could fly as well as ever and, although he was allowed his freedom, Dickie definitely preferred the home life of the Reetz farm. He begged and begged to be allowed back into the cage. He was.

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There he remained until a few weeks ago when his chirping ceased forever.

One can only guess at Dickie's age. However, he was at least eleven years old, since he was an adult bird before the nesting season of 1946. Death was probably due to old age and allied ailments.

He leaves to mourn him three ladies and two gentlemen. May he sing as sweetly in the angelic choir as he did here on earth.

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**RAPID CITY-LACREEK FIELD TRIP**—Members of the Rapid City Bird Club attended a week-end field trip to the LaCreek Refuge on August 18-19 and compiled an interesting list of birds: 100 adult and 200 young White Pelicans, Pied-billed Grebe, 10 Double-crested Cormorants, 4 Great Blue Herons, 20 Black-crowned Night Herons, 2 Snowy Egrets, 53 Canada Geese inside the fence and 22 outside, 28 Mallards, 2 Pintails, 15 Blue-winged Teal, 2 Red-tailed Hawks, 2 Marsh Hawks, 2 Sparrow Hawks, 18 Pheasants, Coots, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, 8 Willets, 90 Dowitchers, 3 Ring-billed Gulls, 12 Forster's Terns, many Black Terns, Mourning Doves (5 young in 3 nests were banded), 3 Burrowing Owls, Kingfishers, 10 Eastern and 1 Western Kingbird, 20 Bank Swallows, 100 Barn Swallows, 100 Cliff Swallows, 3 Marsh Wrens, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, 6 Shrikes, 3 Yellowthroats, 15 Bobolinks, 10 Yellowheaded Blackbirds, 250 Redwings, Goldfinches, and a nest with 2 eggs.  
—Clara Yarger, Rapid City, S. D.

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SDOU was represented at the meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union in Denver and Boulder, Colorado, September 5-9, 1956, by Dr. and Mrs. N. R. Whitney, Jr., Rapid City, and Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls.

#### **SANDERLING AT GRASS LAKE—**

That the Sanderling seems to be a fairly regular migrant in the north-eastern part of the state can be seen from the entries in Alfred Peterson's excellent summaries of shorebirds in 1953-54 in the Waubay area. (S. D. Bird Notes, 5:56-67, 62-62, 71: 7:5-6, 10). However, it apparently is a much rarer migrant in the more southerly portions of the state, if one is to judge by the scarcity of published accounts. This season, however, it was observed in Minnehaha County. On September 16, Willard Rosine, Biology Department, Augustana College, and I saw 3 individuals on the mud flats of Grass Lake where the prolonged drought has so lowered this body of water that a "beach" of mud extends at least 100 feet from the usual shoreline. The Sanderlings were feeding in soft mud, running along the ripply edge of the water, for the lake is now so shallow that even a strong northwest wind hardly stirred up what one could call waves. The plumage of the birds was in sharp contrast to the dark shore. The pure white of the underparts, the white stripe in the wings and the mottled white of the upper parts were distinctively clear, set off against the yellowish water.

On September 23, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Chapman and I found a single individual among Killdeer and a gathering of other Charadriiforms on the same shore. It was as distinctively whitish as the previous 3 had been.

Since Larson does not include the species in his "Birds of Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Vicinity" (1925. Wilson Bull., 37:18-38) and since no previous record seems to be available, these observations may be a first record for the Sanderling in Minnehaha County.—Herbert Krause, English Dept., Augustana College, Sioux Falls, S. D.

**YELLOW YELLOW - SHAFTED FLICKER**—When my neighbor, Judge Henry L. Gross, told me he saw a yellow Flicker in his yard, I could not understand the twinkle in his eye because Yellow-shafted Flickers are not uncommon. That was on June 26, 1956, and he soon convinced me that the bird was not an ordinary flicker. My curiosity was aroused. Which of the yellow birds did he mistake for a flicker?

Later the same day Judge Gross told me, "The bird is in the yard now. Hurry!" I hurried. There not more than 30 feet in front of me was the bird the size of a flicker clinging woodpecker-fashion to the side of a tree branch and looking at us.

It seemed unconcerned about its conspicuous bright lemon-yellow dress. The eyes were dark. The bill and legs were white. A slightly darker brownish yellow covered the wings and also the spot on the back of the head. There were no cheek spots. The rest of the body was an even light yellow.

If the bird had been white identification would have been simple, but who has ever heard of a yellow albino?

The next day I watched the bird again with Mr. and Mrs. Gross when the Yellow-shafted Flickers had a family gathering on the lawn. The yellow bird was there. They brought food for the babies and also fed the yellow bird. (The young flickers on the lawn had been hatched in one of Judge Gross' trees). The yellow bird for a time clung to the sunny side of an apple tree trunk where it was easy to see all its markings.

We also saw it several times in our yard. Even the other birds seemed to notice the difference because they chased it and fussed over it. Maybe that is why it disappeared so soon and no one has seen it after July 4.—**Katherine Kaufman, Freeman, S. D.**

#### **FIELD SPARROWS IN TOWN—**

About August 2, 1956, a flock of small sparrows were observed feeding in my garden and evidently spending the night in the lilac hedge. At first I thought them to be Chipping Sparrows but was not satisfied with this identification as I had never seen so many of that species gathered in one flock. On getting a closer look I concluded they might be Field Sparrows, but I was not satisfied with that identification either, as I understood they seldom appeared in town.

It was not until September 6 that I observed one of these birds closely when it spread itself out flat in the spray from the hose as I watered the lawn. I got a good look at the side of the head which looked so peculiar that I concluded I surely could identify it from this appearance. Sure enough Peterson had the picture and described the appearance as a "blank expression", which certainly is a good wording.

The flock stayed around until about September 13 when they apparently left all together. I also saw several of these birds during this period on the Court House grounds, Canton.—**W. B. Mallory, Canton, S. D.**

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#### **MOCKINGBIRD IN MINNEHAHA COUNTY—**

Since J. S. Findley's summary of the appearances of the Mockingbird in South Dakota was printed in 1949 (S. D. Bird Notes 1:43-44), there have been only occasional published notes on the species in the state. According to Stephens, Youngworth and Felton, it has not been found in Union County (1955. Birds of Union County, South Dakota). Jansen saw a single bird near Morristown, Corson County, in May 1950 (S. D. Bird Notes 3:12); Weyler wrote somewhat ambiguously about what seems to have been several individuals at Belle Fourche during 1950-52 (ibid., 4:54, 57); and in July,

1955, Nash noted 3 birds at Platte which he describes and about which he writes: "I am sure they were Mockingbirds as nothing else in my book resembles them" (ibid., 7:48). These 3 direct references represent widely scattered points in the state, near the North Dakota border, near the Wyoming line and near the Missouri River in the south-central part. This note relates to Minnehaha County near the Minnesota line.

On May 8, 1956, Sven G. Froiland and Willard Rosine of the Biology Department, Augustana College, 2 biology students, Joe Fenstermacher and Bob Vatne, and I were riding along a country road about 1½ miles west of Palisades Park, northeast of Sioux Falls, when we came to a farm besides a small stream. Near the road grew a hedge of bushes and beyond it lay a pasture. In the hedge was perched a bird which flew and alighted in a box elder sapling. In that flight we saw the white patches on the wings, the white in the tail, the generally grayish appearance and the Brown Thrasher-size of the bird and identified it as a Mockingbird. Froiland and Rosine were familiar with the species in Colorado. I had seen it in Nebraska and Oklahoma. The 5 of us had an uninterrupted view for perhaps 3 minutes while the bird flew to the ground, apparently searching for food, and then into a nearby bush before it disappeared. We observed it through 7x35 binoculars at a distance of not more than 50 feet.

There are scattered records for Minnehaha County but none since 1949. The 4 observations made since 1950 in 4 widely separated areas of the state can hardly be regarded as anything but sporadic. The Mockingbird still seems to be a rare visitant and a rarer resident. — **Herbert Krause, Sioux Falls, S. D.**

## Regional Meeting

**T**HE FIRST regional meeting of SDOU was held in Armour on August 12 with over 50 people from Armour, Brandt, Freeman, Harold, Hurley, Huron, Lake Andes, Platte, Sioux Falls and Yankton.

The meeting opened at 10 a. m. with a brief welcome by President Charles Crutchett after which he read a letter from John P. Williamson, Greenwood, S. D., who was unable to be present. In it Mr. Williamson gave the Indian names for a number of the common South Dakota birds.

B. T. Boylan, Jr., a native of Armour but now living in Oceanside, California had written a letter about the wildlife at Lake Andes 40 years ago. It was very interesting and was read to the meeting by Mrs. Crutchett.

Then Leo Kirsch, manager of the Lake Andes Wildlife Refuge, told of the waterfowl, marsh and shore birds at the lake today.

Willis Hall, Yankton, showed some of his excellent bird portraits with his interesting comments, and Scott Findley, Sioux Falls, showed a few of his color slides of South Dakota birds.

There were several personal experiences with birds and birding recounted informally before the meeting adjourned for lunch, which was enjoyed by many as a picnic in the city park.

In the afternoon the group was escorted from the city hall to a nearby lake where Mr. Crutchett had birded and had kept a detailed record of a nesting vireo. Then Leo Kirsch escorted the group on a tour of the Lake Andes Refuge.

Final adjournment was about 5 o'clock at Armour and everyone voted the first regional meeting was a success.

Louisa Crutchett