

SOUTH DAKOTA  
ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION



SOUTH  
BIRD



DAKOTA  
NOTES



## PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Greetings from Kadoka this Christmas season! Although I am writing this page in early October, the signs of winter are already here. Snow has already fallen on Kadoka. Winter is coming soon. But winter birding is special, with Christmas bird counts and major winter finch invasions. I hope you all will participate in a Christmas count. I plan to attend South Dakota's newest count, in the Badlands National Park, on 15 December.

Thanks to Byron and Joyce Harrell and Steve Van Sickle, the SDOU had a good fall meeting at Vermillion. We saw a slide presentation by a new birder from Ne-

braska, Loren Blake. About five years ago, Loren started birding and taking bird photos. By using blinds and being blessed with a bit of luck, he has taken many excellent pictures. I especially enjoyed the photograph of a Brown-headed Cowbird sitting on the head of a White-tailed Deer.

Let me plug our attempt to put together a slide series of South Dakota birds. Several people have told me that they are going through their slides and will be sending me a list of birds for which they have slides. Erika Tallman is developing an environmental education resource center at Northern State University and would like to purchase a set of slides from the SDOU. If you haven't looked yet, go through your slides and see which ones you would like to donate to us. Send me a list of the slides you can share and I will let you know which ones we can use.

Another long-awaited piece of business was also transacted at the fall meeting. The book, *The Birds of South Dakota*, is about ready to go to the publisher. We are hopeful that the book will be ready for sale by the spring meeting in Brookings. So you may get more than just good birding at Brookings on May 24th to the 26th. The next issue of *Bird Notes* should contain information on prepublication sales specials for SDOU members.

Wishing you good birding this winter and a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Ken Graupmann, Box 111, Kadoka, SD 57543.



# A BIRDER'S GUIDE TO CHARLES MIX COUNTY

by Dennis Skadsen  
RR Box 113, Grenville, SD 57239

Charles Mix County's 1,134 square miles have seen many changes since Lewis and Clark first journeyed up the Missouri River in the early 1800's. Today the county is comprised mainly of agricultural land, except along its western edge, which borders the impounded Missouri River's Lake Francis Case. Along this western edge, the flat irrigated farmland gives way to rolling hills and bluffs, which drop approximately 300 feet to the lake's shoreline. Much of this land has been grazed, but several areas of interesting native prairie and wooded draws remain unspoiled and easily accessible to birders. Most of the county's wetlands have been drained for agricultural purposes, but several man-made lakes attract waterfowl during migration. The largest natural lake in the county, Lake Andes, supports the Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge.

A review of published literature and observations shows the lack of any consistent reporting in the county, other than from Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge, Platte Creek State Recreation Area, and the Fort Randall Dam tailwaters. Of interest are the number of documented historical journeys taken through the area. Most notable was Lewis and Clark's expedition between 1804 and 1806, and John James Audubon's in 1843. Both expeditions traveled the river by boat. More recent studies in the area have dealt with the reservoir's impact on wildlife and with identifying and protecting nesting habitat of the endangered Piping Plover and Least Tern.

The ranges of several eastern and western species overlap in the area. For example, both Rose-breasted and Black-headed Grosbeaks may be found, as well as hybrids of the species. Black-billed Magpie, Say's Phoebe, Wood Thrush, Indigo Bunting, and American Redstart occur here and have been observed in one or more of the areas described below. Wintering birds are attracted to the open waters below Fort Randall Dam and the sometimes ample supply of food, especially cedar berries, found in the many wooded draws along the river. The latter attracts large numbers of Robins, Cedar Waxwings, and occasionally Eastern Bluebirds. These same elements also attract some of the earliest migrating birds in spring and help retain late fall migrants.

A map of Charles Mix County, Figure 1, shows locations of the areas described in the following text. The areas described have been picked because of some special geographical or natural feature that attracts birds.

While birding in these areas, look for other wildlife and plant species. Many of the sites listed contain unspoiled native prairie that is quite spectacular, especially when the native cactuses are in bloom. Be cautious when hiking these areas. Prairie Rattlesnakes are found most often in areas bordering the river and can be confused with several nonvenomous species, such as the Bull Snake and Western Hognose Snake. You may also come across the strikingly colored Milk Snake and Yellow-bellied Racers. If canoeing the river below Fort Randall Dam, look for large Paddlefish rolling in the current along sandbars during the spring spawn and softshell turtles laying their eggs in the sand. You might also observe the Bullfrog, North America's largest native frog found in the southern half of the county.

### 1. Snake Creek State Recreation Area

Located on the eastern shore of Lake Francis Case next to the Platte-Winner bridge, this area provides a possible base camp for birders. Facilities include a campground with electrical hookups, comfort stations with showers, a restaurant, and a convenience store. An entrance fee is required for most of the year. A marked hiking trail winds through upland prairie and riparian woods and offers a scenic view of the reservoir. Species the birder may encounter include Bell's Vireo, Blue Grosbeak, Dickcissel, and Rufous-sided Towhee. A large Cliff Swallow colony is established under the Platte-Winner bridge. For the more adventurous birder, several large Game Production Areas border the park to the north and south. Approximately 1500 acres in size, these areas are mainly upland prairie, but contain heavily wooded draws of Eastern Red Cedar and Bur Oak. Look for Sharp-tailed Grouse and Greater Prairie Chickens on these prairies.

### 2. Lake Platte

This man-made reservoir is a good area to observe migrating waterfowl, especially puddle ducks, which do not normally feed on Lake Francis Case, due to the lack of emergent vegetation. The area also attracts good numbers of warblers during spring migration. A small colony of nesting Great Blue Herons and Double-crested Cormorants was active in 1983, in trees along the northeast lake shore and north of the lake along Platte Creek.

### 3. Platte Creek Heron Colony.

South of Snake Creek along Highway 1804 is one of the last remaining heron colonies on the reservoir. In 1985, the colony contained 25 to 30 active nests built in trees killed by the rising water of the reservoir 36 years ago. The colony size has been declining for several years as these inundated trees decay and fall into the water. Herons can be observed in this area from late March to early August.

### 4. Gray Game Production Area

A mile east of the heron colony is this interesting area of 1130 acres of upland prairie and riparian woods winding along Platte Creek. Here birders can observe migrating White-crowned, White-throated, and Harris' Sparrows, as well as Bald and Golden Eagles. Several warm water springs and a small Prairie Dog town are also of interest.

### 5. Platte Creek State Recreation Area.

Located at the mouth of Platte Creek on Lake Francis Case, this area also requires an entrance fee and has the same facilities as Snake Creek. Two small Prairie Chicken leks were active in the park during the spring of 1985. Males were observed on the lek from late April into May. A complete list of birds observed in this area was published in SDBN 40(4):84-93.

### 6. Cedar Creek

A very interesting canyon runs approximately 3 miles southwest toward Lake Francis Case. This large wooded area is comprised of Eastern Red Cedar, Bur Oak, Green Ash, and some of the largest chokecherry trees I have ever seen. All of this area appears to have escaped heavy grazing due

to the steep slopes. This site is on private land and permission should be obtained before entering. Unfortunately the author spent too little time in this area where the potential for finding nesting Whip-poor-wills, Wood Thrush, Black-and-white Warbler, Ovenbird, and Yellow-breasted Chat exists.

#### 7. North Wheeler Game Production Area.

This easily accessible area is where birders can also observe many of the species previously mentioned. This is the first area in which I observed a Black-headed Grosbeak.

#### 8. Lake Geddes

This man-made lake attracts good numbers of migrating waterfowl. I observed two Common Loons here during the summer of 1985. Lake Geddes is also an excellent area to observe spring and fall migrants such as warblers and thrushes.

#### 9. Pease Creek Game Production Area.

This interesting area along Lake Francis Case adjoins a Corp. of Engineers campground.

#### 10. Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge.

This area with a checklist of 213 species, will provide interesting birding any season of the year. During the breeding season, it is one of the few places in the state you can expect to find Little Blue Heron and White-faced Ibis. It is noted for its breeding colonies of grebes. During the winter, Bald Eagles soar above the refuge. A marked hiking trail is located south of the refuge headquarters and winds through several different habitat types.

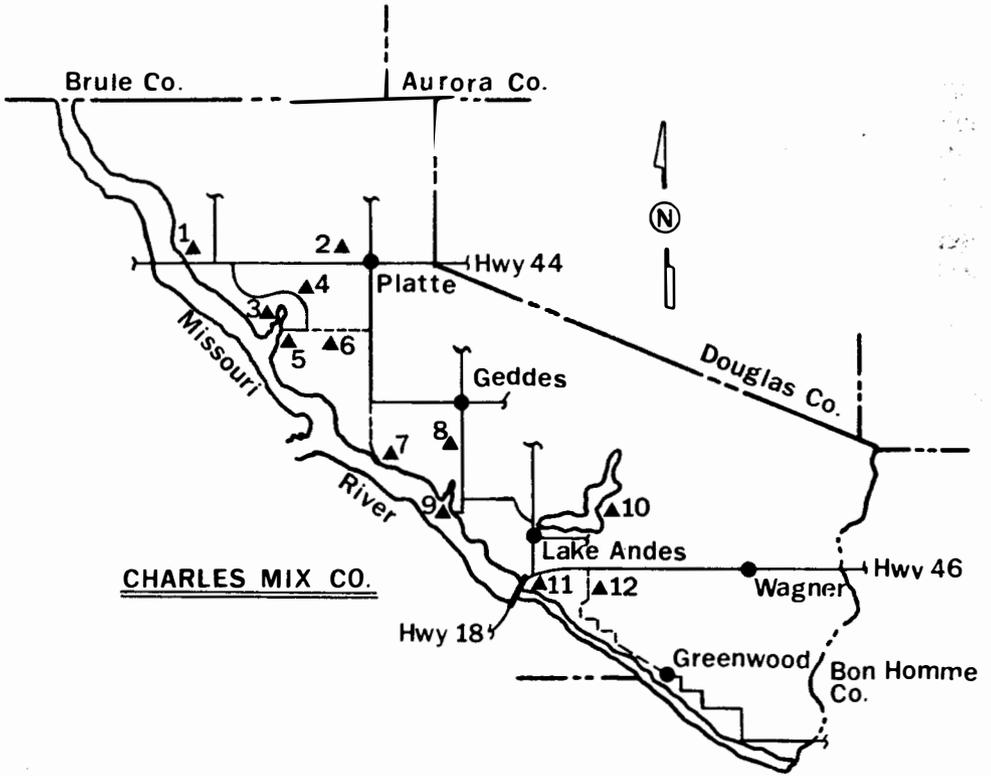
#### 11. Fort Randall Dam Tailwaters.

The best time to visit this area is from October until February in hopes of finding rare or uncommon gulls and waterfowl species. Black-legged Kittiwakes have been observed here several times and Glaucous Gulls are found almost every year. There are several species that could turn up in this area, including Sabine's, or Laughing Gulls as well as jaegers or other seabirds blown inland. Uncommon or rare waterfowl found in this area include Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers, scoters, Black Ducks, and Greater Scaup. The adjoining Karl F. Mundt National Wildlife Refuge attracts a large number of wintering Bald Eagles easily observed as they feed along the open waters of the Missouri River.

#### 12. Greenwood Bottoms.

Following this road will take you along one of the last stretches of natural Missouri River bottom left in the state. Although many of the native cottonwood stands, (some containing trees big enough for three or four people to stretch their arms around), have been cleared for irrigated cropland several native stands remain for birders to explore. An even better way to enjoy this area is to leave the car at Fort Randall Dam and canoe the river to Running Water. Look for Piping Plovers and Least Terns along sandy beaches and sandbars, nesting Red-tailed Hawks and Barn Owls on the bluffs that overlook the river, and colonies of Great Blue Herons in the large cottonwoods along the rivers edge.

Figure 1. Charles Mix County. The numbers refer to areas mentioned in the text.



# BANDING RECOVERIES OF SOUTH DAKOTA BIRDS

Part 4. Swallows, waxwings, shrikes, vireos, and warblers  
by Dan Tallman  
Northern State University  
Aberdeen 57401

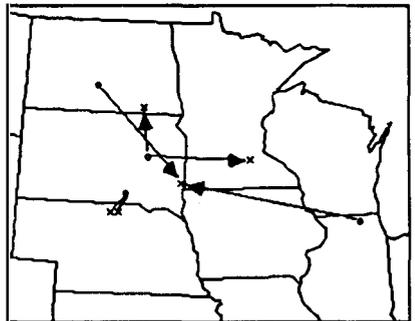
**INTRODUCTION.** This article is the fourth of a series summarizing bird banding recoveries of South Dakota birds. I have included both birds banded in South Dakota and recovered outside the state and birds banded elsewhere but recovered in South Dakota. The banding records include many interesting local recaptures but, for the most part, I have ignored these data. In this survey, the taxonomic sequence is by AOU numbers, and, therefore, is somewhat archaic.

**METHODS AND MATERIALS.** The information upon which these maps are made comes from a printout run on 5 January 1990 by the Banding Office of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The maps were computer generated on MapMaker for the Macintosh by Select Micro Systems, Inc.

**EXPLANATION OF THE MAPS.** On these maps, "O" is the approximate point of banding and "X" is the approximate point of recovery. Because the Banding Office does not record exact locality data and because computer mapping is imprecise, the location points on the maps should only be considered as approximate. When discrete banding or recovery points are close together, they are represented by a single "O" or "X". The arrows also reflect points of origin and recovery. Birds recovered well after the year of banding may have enjoyed wide migratory patterns in the interval between banding and recovery. Identical records are not indicated on the maps. Some records that do not add to the informational content of the maps have also been ignored.

**A WORD ON THE TEXT.** The maps tend to be self explanatory. However, I have included a short text that identifies the species for which the map is drawn and includes some noteworthy records.

**Map 32. Purple Martin.** All martin recoveries are from years subsequent to years of banding. These recoveries indicate that martins do not always show colony fidelity. One very old bird was banded in North Dakota on 13 July 1974 and recovered in in Sioux Falls area on 23 August 1984.



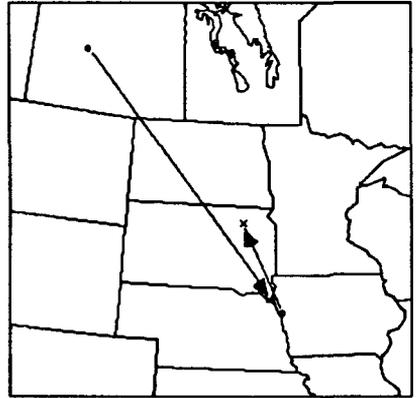
Purple Martin

**Map 33. Cliff Swallow.** This swallow was banded in South Dakota on 14 June 1937 and was recovered in West Virginia on 16 July 1937. Do Cliff Swallows migrate east before heading to southern South America?



Cliff Swallow

**Map 34. Barn Swallow.** The Iowa bird was banded on 29 September 1963 and recovered in South Dakota on 3 June 1966. The Canadian bird was banded on 16 August 1942 and was recovered on 27 September 1942.

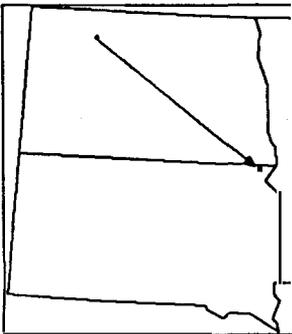


Barn Swallow

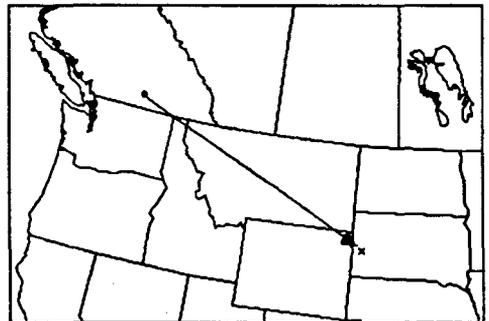
**Map 35. Tree Swallow.** Our only interstate tree swallow recovery was banded in North Dakota on 2 July 1954 and recovered in South Dakota on 23 July 1966.

**Map 36. Bohemian Waxwing.** Our single interstate Bohemian Waxwing was banded on 15 February 1933 and recovered on 20 March 1934.

**Map 37. Cedar Waxwing.** None of these birds was recovered during the year of banding.



Tree Swallow



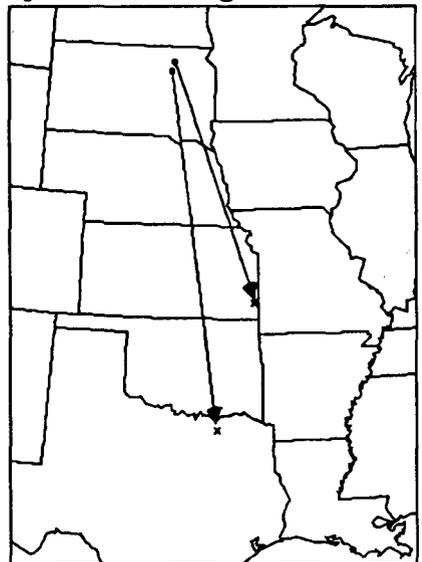
Bohemian Waxwing



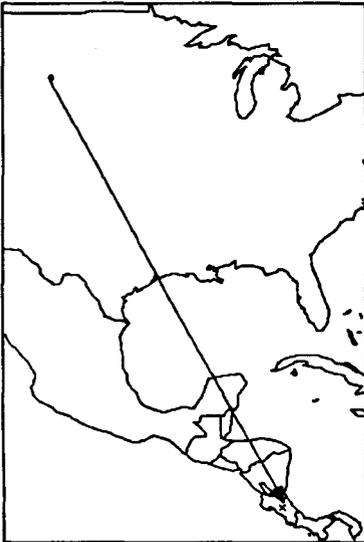
Cedar Waxwing

**Map 38. Loggerhead Shrike.** Both of these shrikes were banded in the 1930's and recovered from 1 to 3 years subsequent to banding.

**Map 39. Red-eyed Vireo.** The exact Costa Rican recovery location for this bird, banded on 10 August 1974 and found in November 1975, is unknown.



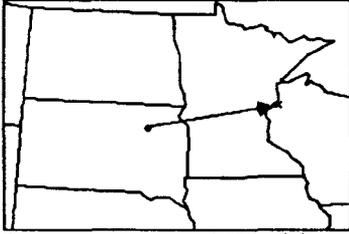
Loggerhead Shrike



Red-eyed Vireo

**Map 40. Warbling Vireo.** This recovery, a bird banded in Sioux Falls on 3 August 1981 and recovered in El Salvador on 2 September 1982, has been reported by the Rogge's in *Bird Notes*.

**Map 41. Orange-crowned Warbler.** With one of the more curious routes reported in this series, this bird was banded in South Dakota on 21 September 1939 and recovered in Wisconsin on 13 December 1940, well north of its expected wintering range.

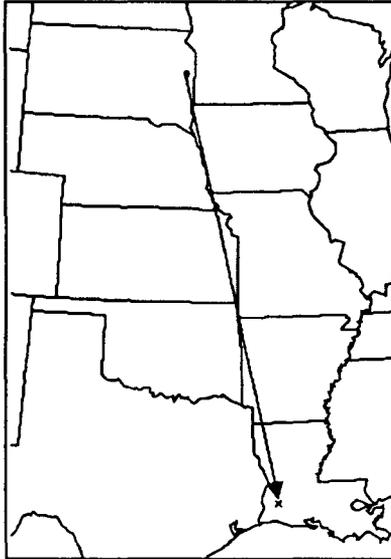


Orange-crowned Warbler



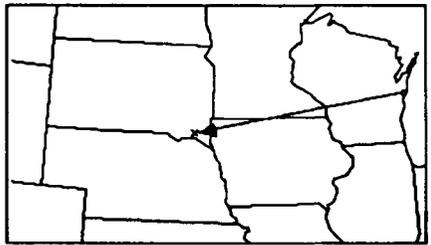
Warbling Vireo

**Map 42. Myrtle Warbler.** Our single Myrtle Warbler was banded in South Dakota on 29 September 1970 and recovered on 20 August 1971.



Myrtle Warbler

**Map 43 . Ovenbird.** Our single ovenbird was banded in Wisconsin on 25 September 1965 and recovered the next spring in South Dakota, on 18 May 1966. Most ovenbirds winter in Central America.



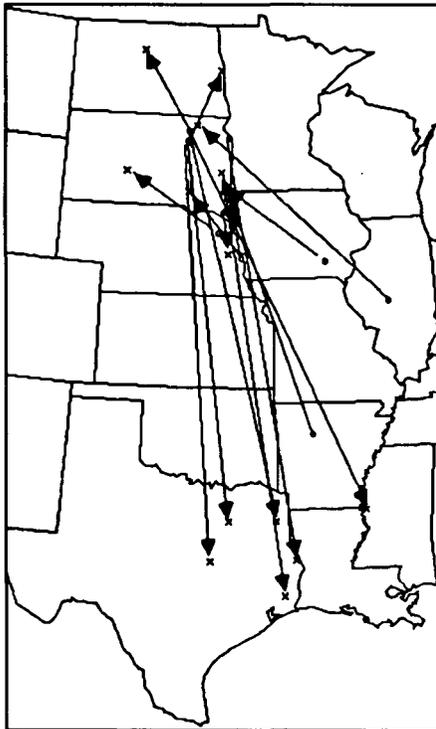
Ovenbird



Catbird

**Map 44. Northern Catbird.** The bird banded in North Dakota was banded on 8 September 1934 and recovered the same month in our state. The other recoveries were made in migrations subsequent to the year of banding.

**Map 45. Brown Thrasher.** Of these records, the Illinois bird is of particular interest, banded on 27 April 1976 and recovered on 29 June of the same year. A couple of the Texas birds were banded in the summer in South Dakota and recovered the winter following banding.



Brown Thrasher

# CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

## ARTICLE I. Name-Object

Section 1. This association shall be known as the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union.

Section 2. Its aim shall be to encourage the study of birds in South Dakota and to promote the study of ornithology by more closely uniting the students of this branch of natural science.

## ARTICLE II. Membership

Section 1. Any person age 16 or older and sympathetic with the Union's objectives may become an active member of this Union.

Section 2. Any person at least 10 years old but less than 16 years of age is eligible to become a junior member of this Union.

Section 3. Honorary members may be elected for their eminence in ornithology or from among the members of the Union for distinguished service in furthering the aims of the Union.

Section 4. Honorary membership shall commence in the calendar year following approval by a two-thirds vote of the members present at an annual business meeting and shall continue until the honorary member's death or resignation. Life membership shall commence from the payment of the specified dues and shall continue until death or resignation. All other categories of active membership shall comprise a calendar year upon payment of the specified dues. The categories of active membership shall include honorary member, life member, sustaining member, family members (husband and wife), and regular member.

Section 5. Active members may vote at annual meetings, hold office, and serve on committees.

Section 6. All members shall receive gratis one copy of periodicals which this Union publishes for distribution to its members.

Section 7. Except for the categories of honorary and life memberships, active membership shall terminate for nonpayment of annual dues.

## ARTICLE III. Officers-directors

Section 1. The officers of this Union shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, an Editor, and a Librarian, chosen from among the Directors. At the discretion of the Board of Directors, one person may hold the offices of Secretary and Treasurer, and one person may hold the offices of Editor and Librarian.

Section 2. The duties of the President shall be to preside at meetings of the Union and of the Board of Directors, to appoint committees, to call necessary meeting of the Directors, and to perform such other duties as customarily pertain to the office.

Section 3. The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President in the President's absence or incapacity, assist the President, and perform such other duties as are delegated by the President.

Section 4. The Secretary shall keep a record of the meetings of the Union and of the Board of Directors, conduct the general correspondence of

the Union, and perform such other duties as customarily pertain to the office.

Section 5. The Treasurer shall collect dues, receive and have charge of all moneys of the Union, pay all bills that are the Union's legal obligation, and perform such other duties as customarily pertain to the office.

Section 6. The Editor shall edit and superintend the printing of the Union's periodical publications.

Section 7. The Librarian shall preserve the books, other publications, and unpublished documents possessed by the Union.

Section 8. The duties of the Directors shall be to establish general policies of the Union, determine the place and date of the annual business meeting, provide for periodic audits of the Treasurer's records, fulfill other duties given to them by the Constitution and Bylaws, and perform such other duties as may be necessary for the furtherance of the Union's objectives. The Directors may act by correspondence upon any matters that properly come to their attention.

#### ARTICLE IV. Meetings

Section 1. The annual business meeting of the Union shall be at such time and place as is selected by the Directors.

Section 2. Such special meetings of the Union or of the Board of Directors as are necessary may be called by the President with the approval of a majority of the Directors.

Section 3. The quorum for transaction of business at an annual business meeting of the Union shall be nine active members.

Section 4. The quorum for transaction of business at a meeting of the Board of Directors shall be five Directors.

#### ARTICLE V. Elections

Section 1. Directors shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Union by a majority vote of the active members present.

Section 2. The term of office for elected Directors shall be three years and shall commence at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected. Five directors shall be elected annually for a term of three years. In addition to the 15 elected directors, there shall be a category of directors composed of the past presidents of this Union. The term of office for the Past-President Directors shall commence upon completion of their terms as President and upon expiration of their three-year terms as elected directors. The term of office for a Past-President Director shall continue until death, resignation from the position, or resignation from the Union by nonpayment of dues. The Past-President Directors shall have full voting privileges on the Board of Directors and may be elected to offices of this Union.

Section 3. Immediately following each annual meeting and election of Directors, the Directors shall meet and select the officers of the Union for the ensuing year from among the Directors as provided in Article III, Section 1.

Section 4. Nominations for elected Directors shall be made by a Nominating Committee of three members appointed by the President. Nominations for a Director may be made from the floor at the annual business meeting after the Nominating Committee has presented its slate of

nominees. If there are more than five nominees for Directors, the voting shall be by secret ballot.

#### ARTICLE VI. Dues

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall determine the annual dues for the various categories of membership and the dues for life membership.

Section 2. Annual memberships shall be on the basis of a calendar year, with renewal memberships due on the first day of January.

#### ARTICLE VII. Amendment

Section 1. This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of active members present at an annual business meeting, provided that all members have been given at least 30 days' notice of the proposed amendment.

#### BYLAWS

Section 1. The officers and directors may be reimbursed for the actual amount expended by them in carrying out their necessary official duties.

Section 2. The Union encourages any person presenting a paper at a meeting to submit the paper to the Editor for possible publication or to submit a copy to the Librarian for the Union's archives.

Section 3. The order of business at the annual meeting shall be as follows: (1) reading of minutes for the previous meeting, (2) reports by officers, (3) reports by committees, (4) old business, (5) new business, (6) any other appropriate special business, (7) adjournment. Generally accepted parliamentary procedure shall prevail for all meetings.

Section 4. The Board of Directors shall determine the place of an annual meeting approximately twelve months in advance. The Directors, in concurrence with the host committee, shall determine the precise date of the annual meeting approximately six months in advance.

Section 5. Upon at least 30 days' notice to the members, special meetings of the Union as are necessary may be called by the President with the approval of a majority of the Board of Directors.

Section 6. The President shall appoint the Nominating Committee approximately six months in advance of the annual meeting at which the Nominating Committee shall submit its slate of nominees for Directors. An incumbent elected Director who has not attended at least three director's meetings during his or her previous three-year term of office shall not be eligible for reelection as a Director unless a majority of the Board of Directors identifies acceptable extenuating circumstances for the nonattendance.

Section 7. The Bylaws of the Union may be amended by vote of a majority of the members present at an annual business meeting, provided that the members have been given at least 30 days' notice of the proposed amendment.

Section 8. At the time of offering an amendment to the Constitution or Bylaws of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union, the member proposing the amendment must submit to the Secretary a written copy of the proposed amendment with appropriate reference to the Article and/or Section and with appropriate wording for the proposed amendment.

*This revised Constitution and Bylaws of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union was adopted at the Union's annual business meeting, 27 September 1980, at Brookings, South Dakota. Section 8 was adopted as an amendment to the Bylaws at the Union's annual business meeting, 12 October 1985, at Pierre, South Dakota. - L. M. Baylor, Secretary.*

## GENERAL NOTES

**CANADA AND MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLERS AND DUSKY FLYCATCHER IN BLACK HILLS.** My birding experience in the Black Hills is comparatively limited, but I have tried to get to that unique area at least once each breeding season. On 28 July 1988, I accompanied Richard Peterson who several times in June and July saw a Black-throated Blue Warbler along Iron Creek in southern Custer Co. We searched the area along the creek. After five or ten minutes we heard a bird in the heavy cover. We were both amazed to find it was not the Black-throated Blue but a well-marked Canada Warbler! Dick had satisfactory views of the bird, thereby verifying the first record for the Canada Warbler west of the Missouri River in South Dakota. The Black-throated Blue Warbler had been recorded by Dick on 29 September 1983 in Fall River County, making his 1988 sighting the second for the Black Hills.

Until the spring of 1989, I had seen MacGillivray's Warblers only two times in South Dakota. On a trip on 22 May 1989, I was birding along Savoy Canyon and had a fine male singing loudly for some time. On 29 June 1989, I heard other MacGillivray's Warblers singing at three different locations: Rod and Gun Campground, 0.5 miles north of the same campground, and at Cheyenne Crossing. The species is considered uncommon in the Black Hills and is seldom reported.

A bird that I was quite familiar with in California and the southwest is the Dusky Flycatcher, but, except for an unsatisfactory sighting in 1968, the species eluded me in South Dakota. On a birding trip on 22 May 1989, I made a special search for this species, and I was happy to find two singing males in Lawrence Co. near the junction of roads 227 and 195. I studied one of the birds closely, for more than 45 minutes, noting particularly the shading on the breast and the pale throat. The song was three-noted (sometimes four-noted, with the last note almost inaudible). The second note was lower than the first, and the third note was higher than the first. The Dusky Flycatcher is also considered uncommon in the Black Hills and is seldom reported. *Bruce Harris, Box 605, Clear Lake, SD 57226.*

**THE CASPIAN TERN IN NORTHEASTERN SOUTH DAKOTA.** At least in the east and possibly along the Missouri River, this tern is probably a regular migrant in South Dakota. Ranging from 26 May through 27 September, I have had 17 sightings of the species in our state. Others have found it as early as 6 May and as late as 10 October (Strum, in lit.). In 23 years, I have three spring, four summer, and 10 fall sightings. Most of these records are from Big Stone Lake, but, on 15 September 1976, I found a flock of 23 birds at Clear Lake, in Deuel Co. Although I only see this species every third year, I am sure that, if people looked for the Caspian Tern along Big Stone Lake during September, they would see the species every year.

The large size, larger than a Ring-billed Gull, the huge, orange-red bill, and the loud, harsh call immediately distinguish the Caspian Tern from any other tern or gull found in South Dakota. Nevertheless, quite possibly we have had this bird breed in South Dakota and have overlooked it. In the interior of the US, this species has a disjointed and localized breeding range. Caspian Terns have bred in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, North Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin. They are often solitary nesters, or in small colonies of two to three pairs, nesting on sandy islands or peninsulas, much like Common Terns. One of the two North Dakota nest sites was on an alkali lake 30 miles north of Bismark (Gordon Berkey, corr.).

My observations of Caspian Terns in 1988 indicate that the bird might have bred in South Dakota that year. On 26 July 1988, I found a single adult on the sand bar at the Stone Bridge, the outlet from Lake Poinsett on the north end of the lake in Hamlin Co. On 11 September, two Caspian Terns were at this locations. Most interesting was an Immature bird, obviously not long fledged. It sat on the bar for the entire half hour that I watched the birds. It begged continually from its parent, which fed the young bird several times. I believe the immature bird was very young, because the bill was pinkish (not orange-yellow as described for older immatures) and the back was *strongly* marked with wavy dark barring characteristic of fledglings. Lake Poinsett has no suitable habitat for breeding terns, but adjacent Dry Lake does. We should be alert to possible nests in the future. *Bruce Harris, Box 605, Clear Lake, SD 57226.*

**FIRST NEST RECORDS FOR SOUTH DAKOTA FOR EASTERN MEADOWLARK AND CASSIN'S KINGBIRD.** The first South Dakota nest record for the Eastern Meadowlark was documented during 1990 atlasing fieldwork in Atlas Block 5S10, among the sandhills of extreme SE Shannon County. The first nest in the state of the Cassin's Kingbird was found in Block 5R5 on a pine-covered ridge in NW Bennett County.

The Eastern Meadowlark's nest was in a wet meadow, where the only meadowlarks present and singing, on 24 May 1990, were Eastern. Their whistled, 3-note song and buzzy call note were heard. Also, the yellow of the throat did not extend up into the malar region as the color generally does in the Western Meadowlark. With identification of the singing birds certain, we have little doubt that the bird flushed from the nest was an Eastern Meadowlark.

The nest contained five eggs, three meadowlark and two cowbird. The eggs were not noticeably different from Western Meadowlark eggs that we have seen. The small, dark spots and splotches were sparsely scattered, with a few more on the eggs' large ends. The nest was also similar to a Western Meadowlark's nest, a grass-lined depression covered by a dome of bent grass.

We estimated 100 pairs of Eastern Meadowlarks in this atlas block. An Upland Sandpiper nest, containing four eggs was found in the same meadow and many agitated Long-billed Curlews also were present.

The Cassin's Kingbirds were found on 1 June 1990 in 5R5. While we waited for darkness so we could hear the poor-wills and owls, we found a kingbird in a small clump of Ponderosa Pine, about a quarter mile from the road. The bird's relatively sluggish movements and loud, hoarse "cherr" and "chi-beck" calls prompted us to take a closer look. The bird was much darker gray on the head, back, and breast than is a Western

Kingbird. The bird had a distinctly white throat patch and no white edges on the tail.

We searched for a nest but, because of darkness, did not find it until we returned on 15 June 1990. The nest was situated in the fork of several branches about 10 feet from the ground. It contained four creamy white eggs, with sparse reddish-brown spots on the large ends. The nest was woven of various materials, including a cottony looking substance and it was lined with a few feathers of undetermined origin. The only time these kingbirds became agitated was when we climbed up to the nest. From the calls we heard, we suspect at least three pair were in the area. *Richard and Juanita Peterson, Oelrichs, SD 57763.*

**THE VALUE OF LISTING BIRDS; RARE WATERFOWL SPECIES LOCATED IN 1989.** I have been working diligently for the past four years, trying to record a list of 300 birds for South Dakota during a single year. Several other birders have shared that desire, and we have decided that for one to achieve the 300 goal, one would have to be *very lucky*, spend a great deal of time traveling around the state, and seriously strain one's relationship with one's spouse, family, and banker. My best effort was in 1986, when I found 276 birds; in 1989 I had only 272 birds on my list.

Being lucky is closely tied in with persistence; but you must also know when, where, and what to look for when in the field. Basically, if you are out looking for birds often enough, you will sooner or later come up with one of the rare birds that are necessary to build up a good list. To get that good list, you need to locate *all* of the common species, *most* of the uncommon birds, and a large percentage of the rare birds. In South Dakota, for East River birders, this endeavor means that you must make at least two trips to the Black Hills during the breeding season, and one or more trips to the hills during the late fall or winter. One might think that it should be an easy task to find all of the uncommon birds--yet each year I find that I have missed 8-10 of the uncommon birds, while listing at least that many rare species.

For those of you who are wondering about listers, I hasten to say that it's only during the last five years that I have been such an enthusiastic lister. But throughout my rather long experience with birding, I have always kept careful notes to document rare or unusual birds; and I have kept daily lists going back to 1940. Prior to that time, I still have my annual lists beginning with 1938. In defense of listing, I can offer one firm belief: listing keeps you always alert and looking for birds. In this way you are more likely to find the unusual or rare vagrant. I must admit that I am firmly hooked with the game. The competitive birding enjoyed by some members of the American Birding Association does not get me very fired up, mainly because it takes even more time and *money* to compete. I prefer my birding as a pleasure rather than as a sport.

I was off to a good start on 7 January 1989, finding a Black Duck among the hundreds of Mallards at Gavin's Point, Yankton Co. The day before at Gavin's Point, I had found two male Greater Scaup swimming with several Lesser Scaup. The Ross' Goose was found after several days of scanning thousands of Snow Geese while hunting in Marshall Co. Most of the birds were flying overhead and out of gunshot range (100-300 feet). I watched closely for that one bird that would be obviously smaller, hardly larger than a large Mallard drake. Finally, on 7 November, I saw the bird

and was convinced that it was a Ross' Goose. As the geese were directly overhead, I could not verify that the bill was "warted" and lacked the grinning patch. But the bill was distinctly short, as was the goose's neck compared with Snow Geese. This area is about 20 miles east of Sand Lake, where Ross' Geese were reported regularly from hunter bag checks in the late 1960's.

Todd Maby picked up a dead immature or female-plumaged Oldsquaw on 11 November 1989 under a TV tower in Britton, Marshall Co. Maby, a biologist working on bird surveys for an Alaskan research company, was not sure of the identification and brought the bird to me for verification. It was apparently a fresh kill, probably within the last two days. Oldsquaws are rare but regular migrants along the Missouri River and larger lakes in South Dakota. *Bruce Harris, Box 605, Clear Lake, SD 57226.*

## BOOK REVIEWS

**WESTERN BIRDS** by Roger Tory Peterson. 1990, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. 432 pp. Softbound. \$15.95.

Almost no birder needs to be introduced to Peterson's field guides to birds. Having grown up with the Peterson eastern field guide, I feel partial to his art and system of identification. In a previous issue of *Bird Notes*, I reviewed the latest edition of the eastern guide. This edition of the western guide brings the caliber of art to conformity with the eastern version.

The Peterson guides belong in every birder's bookshelf. Few birders own just one bird book. I think the beginning birder would do well to start with the Peterson books. The portraiture of the birds is relatively large and arrows point to salient field marks (the famous, copy-righted "Peterson system"). The western guide also includes plates of bird silhouettes (hawks and shorebirds) that instruct the learner on how to identify birds.

I am unsure if it is desirable to break the United States into eastern and western field guides. Dr. Peterson's competitors, the Robbin's Golden Guide and the National Geographic book, contain all the birds in one volume. Although I would like to see a single Peterson volume for the whole country, I suspect it is better for a beginner not to worry about birds he or she is really unlikely to encounter. Unfortunately, we on the 100th meridian, the dividing line between east and west, are obliged to carry two books instead of one.

This edition omits the birds of Hawaii but includes many species that stray to western Alaska. I don't think that the inclusion of the Hawaiian birds would have unduly added to the book's bulk. Its too bad that those of us who are lucky enough to vacation in Hawaii must purchase a separate bird book.

Finally, should the birder who already owns the second edition buy the third? The answer is a definite "YES." The quality of the illustrations is a big improvement over the last edition. Also new are the range maps at the book's end, similar in style to the eastern text. *Dan Tallman, Northern State University, Aberdeen, SD 57401.*

Richard Peterson has written a long-needed book on the birds of the Black Hills from an ecological perspective, and has included a wealth of information in an 80-page volume. Twenty-five years have passed since Dr. Pettingill and I wrote a book that attempted to summarize our knowledge of Black Hills birds, and our emphasis was on the life history perspective. Since then, many of us, and particularly Peterson himself, have made extensive observations of bird life in the Black Hills, and this volume is an attempt to bring this information together.

The book consists of three chapters, plus the preface, the bibliography, the alphabetical index, and two appendices, one a list of Black Hills birds in taxonomic order, and the other a list of the scientific names of plants mentioned in the text. In Chapter 1, "The Black Hills Region," Peterson describes the biotic communities. He divides the Black Hills region into Adjacent Plains, the Lower Hills, and the Higher Hills, and then subdivided each one based on physiography and vegetation. He then discusses each subdivision and lists characteristic bird species. In Chapter 2, "Black Hills birds and their Habitats," he discusses bird distribution ecologically and seasonally. Nineteen of the 23 pages in this chapter comprise Table 5, which looks at bird distribution in 12 terrestrial, six aquatic, and two man-made habitat types. As Peterson points out on page 23, this table contains much information in a compact form, but, in order to use it, the reader must first understand the symbols and abbreviations as explained in pages 23, 24, and 25. Chapter 3, "Finding and Watching Birds in the Black Hills," begins with a six-page discussion of factors to consider for optimal bird-finding, and then lists 30 specific locations, from Devil's Tower National Monument in the northwest to Angostora Reservoir in the southeast, giving the precise directions to reach each one, and briefly describing the vegetation and bird specialties. Each locality is numbered, and is cross-referenced to a map (Figure 5, on page 52).

In his preface, Peterson states that his primary reason for writing the book is to share his knowledge of bird distribution in the Black Hills, and his secondary reason is to bring together the wealth of information currently scattered through many published and unpublished sources. How well has he achieved his purposes? I think he has succeeded very well, and, as I stated above, I think that a publication of this sort has long been needed. I find the arrangement in Table 5 to be especially good. It conveys much information quickly, although as mentioned above, the reader will need to become familiar with the codes. Personally, I find maps very helpful in visualizing concepts, and so I am very much impressed with Peterson's use of four maps to illustrate features (prominent landscape features, major biotic communities, locations of natural areas referred to in the text, and precise locations of the 30 recommended birding localities). I also found the inset map of Figure 2, Ponderosa Pine in the Great Plains, most interesting. Finally, although this book is not intended to be an identification guide, the inclusion of the black and white drawings by Ross

Burden add aesthetically to the book and help to emphasize the ecological information.

While I applaud and have no criticism of the book's underlying plan, I was a little confused at the non-checklist order arrangement of the species in the nesting bird list on pages 18 and 19, and especially in Table 5. Under several habitat types, specifically 1, 2, 6, and 11-17, at least some species are not listed in taxonomic sequence. Peterson may have had a good reason for this, but, if so, he does not make it clear. Finally, I did not note any errors of fact, but did find several typographical errors, plus two repeated misspellings: MacGillivray's (Warbler) on pages 34, 59, 64, 74, and 78; and schist (a German word for a form of metamorphic rock) on pages 5 and 6.

In summary, everyone interested in the birds and other natural history of the Black Hills should own and study this book. *Nathaniel R. Whitney, 633 S. Berry Pines Road, Rapid City, SD 57702.*

## THE 1990 SUMMER SEASON

by Dennis Skadsen  
RR Box 113  
Grenville, SD 57239

Worries of another summer of drought were drowned out by unusually heavy rains throughout eastern South Dakota. In northeastern SD one to two inch weekly rains were common throughout July until the last week. In the east central and southeastern portions, six to eight inch downpours occurred on several occasions. The entire state received normal or above normal precipitation, many times during large damaging thunderstorms. Only one hot spell occurred during the last week of June through the first week of July, when several records from 104 to 108 degrees were reached in the state. On the whole, however, temperatures were below normal.

The most exciting observation of the season was a Pomarine Jaeger in breeding plumage photographed on the Missouri River west of Yankton, SD. This is the state's second record of the species.

Unusual is the number of out of season species observed such as the Bufflehead, Winter Wren, Tennessee, Nashville, and Cerulean Warblers. Note the number of Osprey records. One wonders how long will it be before a new state nesting record is obtained?

There were many observations of late waterfowl broods. Downy young are still being observed during mid-August. Most wetlands were in poor shape until mid-June.

Bluebirds in northeastern SD suffered major setbacks on the Waubay National Wildlife Trail, where only 7 out of 38 nests successfully fledged young. Late snowstorms, cool nights, and a population explosion of Raccoons, which defied several types of predator guards, were reasons for nesting failure. Other bluebird watchers in this region reported similar problems. I also observed mammalian predation of robin and dove nests. Are Raccoons increasing due to conservation reserve acreage?

Ferruginous Hawk - 24 July, Codington Co. (BKH). East of normal range.  
 Greater Prairie-Chicken - 29 June, Marshall Co. (WNWR).  
 Northern Bobwhite - 5 June, pair, 22 July, one heard singing, Turner Co. (LRL). 4  
 July, Union Co., 3 singing; 15 July, Lincoln Co., 3 singing (JL).  
 Virginia Rail - 6 June, Butte Co. (PFS).  
 American Avocet - 15 July, Meade Co., 30 (ECM).  
 Solitary Sandpiper - 29 June, Lawrence Co., early (BR, PV).  
 Willet - 7 July, Yankton Co. (WH).  
 Stilt Sandpiper - 1 July, Clark Co., early (BR, PV).  
 Long-billed Dowitcher - 21 June, Sully Co., **earliest ever fall** (PFS).  
**Pomarine Jaeger** - 30 June, Missouri River, Yankton Co., second state record, bird  
 in breeding plumage, photographed (MS).  
 California Gull - 5 June, Butte Co., 3 (PFS).  
 Caspian Tern - 30 May, Harding Co. (RAP, JLP). 6 July, Yankton Co. (WH).  
 Least Tern - 7-9 July, Yankton Co., 5 (WH).  
 Black-billed Cuckoo - 25 June, Camp Crook, Harding Co. (BR, PV).  
 Yellow-billed Cuckoo - 6 June, Butte Co. (PFS).  
 Barn Owl - 27 May, nest with 9 eggs and 15 July, five young banded in same nest,  
 Fall River Co. (NRW). Considered rare throughout the state.  
 Burrowing Owl - 13 July, Brown Co. (JCS). Uncommon in the eastern half of SD.  
 Northern Saw-whet Owl - 2 July, Custer Co., juvenile (DW).  
 Common Poorwill - 15 June, Bennett Co., 2 calling (RAP, JLP). 25 June, Harding  
 Co., one calling (BR, PV).  
 Whip-poor-will - 3 July, Union Co., 2 singing (JL).  
 Broad-tailed Hummingbird - 8-13 June, Pennington Co., submitted to Rare Bird  
 Records Committee (VG). Possibly a rare summer resident in the Black Hills,  
 only one recent fall record accepted.  
 Red-bellied Woodpecker - 15 July, Lincoln Co., 2 pair (JL).  
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - 2 July, Roberts Co., adult feeding young in nest (BKH).  
 Red-naped Sapsucker - 3 July, Pennington Co., nest with young; 8 July, Lawrence  
 Co., nest with young (NRW).  
 Three-toed Woodpecker - 18 June, Lawrence Co., copulating pair (PFS).  
 Pileated Woodpecker - 18 July, Sodak Park, Roberts Co. (BKH).  
 Olive-sided Flycatcher - 2 June, Brown Co. (DAT).  
 Dusky Flycatcher - 8 June, Fall River Co., several singing (RAP, JLP). 18 July,  
 Lawrence Co. (NRW).  
 Cassin's Kingbird - 1 June, several observed; 15 June, nest with 4 eggs, Bennett Co.,  
 first observed nesting of the species in the state (RAP, JLP).  
 Tree Swallow - 4 June, Butte Co. (PFS).  
 Clark's Nutcracker - 20 June, Pennington Co., 2 (PFS).  
 Winter Wren - 26 June, Lawrence Co., singing (RAP, JLP). Possibly breeding in the  
 northern Black Hills.  
 Veery - 22 June, Sica Hollow, Marshall and Roberts counties, 11 (BR, PV)  
 Northern Mockingbird - 16 July, Fall River Co. (RAP, JLP).  
 Loggerhead Shrike - 16 July, Grant Co. (BKH). 30 July, Turner Co. (LRL).  
 Tennessee Warbler - 12 June, WNWR, male singing (WNWR). 21 July, Day Co., 2  
 banded, early migrants? (DRS). Considered accidental in summer.  
 Nashville Warbler - 29 June, Custer Co., singing male (BR, PV). Very few records  
 west river, considered accidental summer.  
 Yellow-rumped Warbler - 27 June, WNWR (WNWR). **Latest ever spring migrant?**  
 Cerulean Warbler - 19, 27 June and 2 July, Roberts Co., male singing (BKH). Very  
 few summer records.  
 MacGillivray's Warbler - 29 June, Lawrence Co. (BR, PV). 3, 5 July, Pennington Co.,  
 4 males (NRW). Uncommon summer resident in the Black Hills.  
 Scarlet Tanager - 19 June, Sodak Park and 5 July, Hartford Beach State Park,  
 Roberts Co. (BKH). 22 June, Sica Hollow State Park, Roberts and Marshall  
 counties, 5 (BR, PV).  
 Blue Grosbeak - 8 July, Minnehaha Co., male observed singing (JL).

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- Rufous-sided Towhee - 22 June, Sica Hollow State Park, Roberts Co. (BR, PV).  
Field Sparrow - 22 June, Sica Hollow State Park, pair (BR, PV).  
Lark Bunting - 22 June, and 31 July Brown Co., 20+ (JCS).  
Baird's Sparrow - 22 June, Faulk Co. (PFS). 16 singing males heard and observed  
at Ordway Prairie, McPherson Co. (BR, PV).  
Le Conte's Sparrow - 16 June, Mud Lake, Lincoln Co., 2 observed, one singing (JL).  
Rare summer resident in the eastern half of SD.  
Swamp Sparrow - 14 June, Clark Co. (RB). 22 June, Faulk Co., 2 (PFS).  
Dark-eyed Junco - 22 July, Spink Co. (JCS). **Earliest ever fall migrant?**  
Eastern Meadowlark - 24 May, Shannon Co., nest with eggs possibly first con-  
firmed nesting in the state (RAP).  
Cassin's Finch - 10 July, Lawrence Co., adults with fledglings (RAP).  
House Finch - All period, Brown Co. (CB). 8 July, Madison, Lake Co., 2 males (RB).  
Red Crossbill - 12 July, Roberts Co. and 16 July, Deuel Co. (BKH). Several ob-  
servers commented that this could be an invasion year for the species.  
White-winged Crossbill - 13 June, Pennington Co., 100+ birds (RAP).