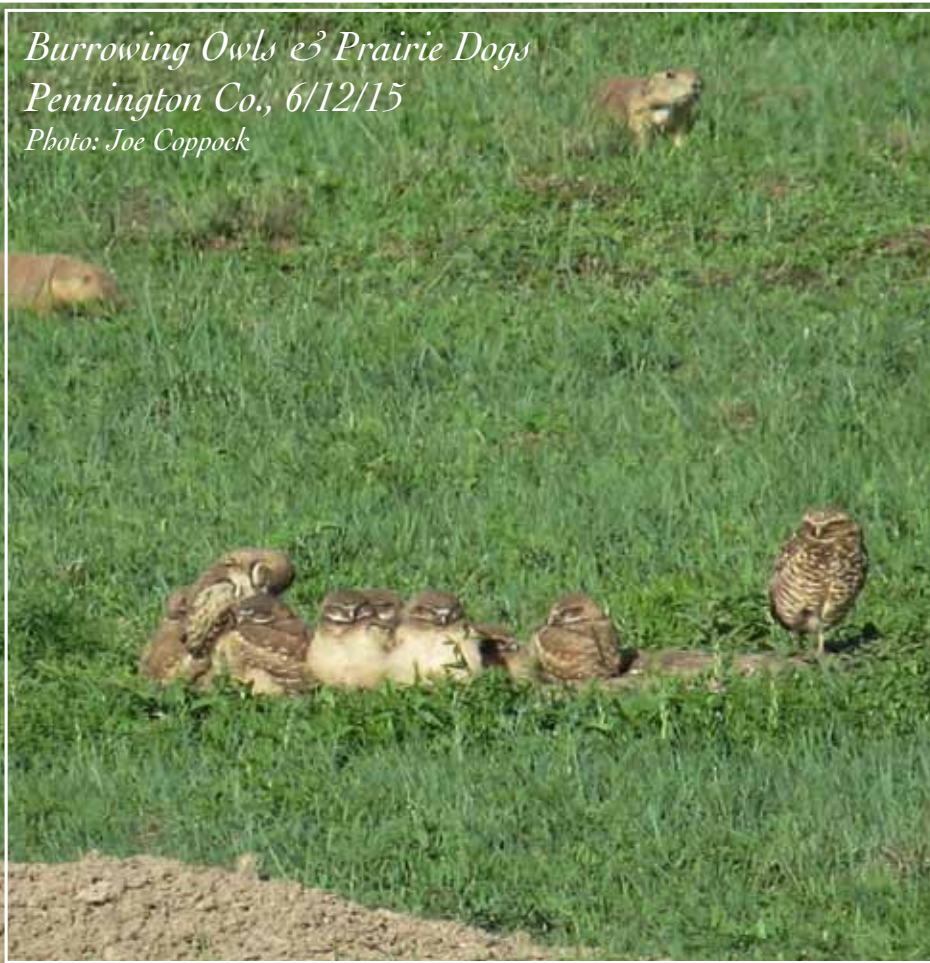


# SOUTH DAKOTA Ornithologists' Union

*Burrowing Owls & Prairie Dogs*

*Pennington Co., 6/12/15*

*Photo: Joe Coppock*



SOUTH



DAKOTA

BIRD

NOTES

**SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES**, the official publication of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union, is published quarterly in March, June, August and December. One copy is sent to all members whose dues are paid for the current year. Life membership: \$400; Family Life membership (one subscription to *SD Bird Notes*): \$500; Sustaining membership: \$40; Regular membership: \$20; Family membership (one household; one subscription to *SD Bird Notes*): \$25; Junior/Student membership: \$10; Library Subscription: \$30. Single and back copies: Members, \$5; non-members, \$6. Manuscripts for publication and change of address notices should be sent to the editor, Douglas Chapman, by e-mail: [sfbirdclub@sio.midco.net](mailto:sfbirdclub@sio.midco.net) or mailed to 3108 S. Holly Ave., Sioux Falls, SD, 57105. All dues, contributions, and orders for back copies should be sent to the SDOU Treasurer: Rosemary Draeger, 2520 E. Whisper Trail, Sioux Falls, SD, 57108. SDOU website: [sdou.org](http://sdou.org).

©2015 South Dakota Ornithologists' Union. All Rights Reserved.

Editor..... Douglas E. Chapman, Sioux Falls  
 Youth Birding Editor..... Jason Thiele, Cassville, WI  
 Seasonal Reports Editor ..... Jeffrey S. Palmer, Madison  
 Book Reviews ..... Dan A. Tallman, Northfield, MN  
 Notable Sightings (Hot Spots) ..... Ricky D. Olson, Ft. Pierre  
 Associate Editors/Proofreaders: ..... Bill Draeger, Sioux Falls  
    Nancy Drilling, Rapid City  
    Linda Johnson, Sioux Falls

Vol. 67

SEPTEMBER 2015

NO. 3

SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION  
 Officers 2014 - 2015

President .....Ricky D. Olson..... PO BOX 622, Fort Pierre, SD 57532  
 Vice President .....Roger Dietrich..... 506 Applewood Drive, Yankton, SD 57078  
 Secretary .....David Swanson ..... USD, Vermillion, SD 57069  
 Treasurer .....Rosemary Draeger ..... 2520 E. Whisper Trail, Sioux Falls, SD 57108  
 Editor .....Douglas E. Chapman .... 3108 S. Holly Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57105  
 Librarian.....Jeffrey S. Palmer ..... DSU, Madison, SD 57042

Elected Directors

For Term expiring 2015: Bill Bossman, Pierre; Roger Dietrich, Yankton; Linda Johnson, Sioux Falls; Ricky Olson, Ft. Pierre; and Mark Otnes, Fargo, ND.  
 For Term expiring 2016: Douglas Chapman, Sioux Falls; Gene K. Hess, Rapid City; Kelly Preheim, Armour; and Scott Stolz, Pierre.  
 For Term expiring 2017: Kent Jensen, Brookings; Gary Olson, Aberdeen; Ron Mabie, Pickstown; Duane Weber, Custer; and Mick Zerr, Sioux Falls.

Past President Directors

Jocelyn L. Baker, Addison Ball, L.M. Baylor, Gilbert Blankespoor, Rosemary Draeger, Nancy Drilling, Bruce Harris, Nelda Holden, Todd M. Jensen, Jeffrey S. Palmer, Rex Riis, Robb Schenck, Dennis Skadsen, David Swanson, Dan A. Tallman, J. David Williams.

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF SDOU:**

- Membership Committee:** Bob Bork, Linda Johnson (chair), Mark Schmidtbauer.
- Nathaniel R. Whitney, Jr. Memorial Research Grants:** Gene K. Hess (chair), Linda Johnson, Duane Weber.
- Rare Bird Records:** Todd M. Jensen, Ricky D. Olson, Jeffrey S. Palmer, David Swanson (chair), J. David Williams.
- Scholarships and Awards:** Jocelyn L. Baker (chair), Nelda Holden, Galen Steffen.

# PRESIDENT'S PAGE

As SDOU moves forward into the digital age, I hope we do not lose our purpose. SDOU was never meant to be just South Dakota's biggest "bird club", hence, our name: South Dakota Ornithologists' Union.

Our Statement of Purpose is "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".

Founded in 1949, SDOU has been South Dakota's primary statewide organization to promote the study of wild birds, to encourage ornithological research, and to preserve the state's avian records. Birders, environmentally-concerned individuals, ornithologists and other natural scientists all contribute to these efforts.



Some people say we don't do anything. In my opinion we do the following and we need to continue to do them.

- ✓ The *Birds of South Dakota* is a comprehensive reference for the distribution and occurrence of birds in South Dakota. Three editions have already been published and I hope the fourth edition is published in the not too distant future.
- ✓ *South Dakota Bird Notes* is the official quarterly publication of SDOU. It provides a place to publish notes, articles, seasonal reports, Christmas Bird Count Data, SDOU Rare Bird Records Committee proceedings etc. I hope soon we will be publishing peer reviewed articles as we have a peer review board in place presently.
- ✓ SDOU awards grants and scholarships to qualified applicants contributing towards our greater understanding of ornithology.
- ✓ SDOU Fall meeting paper session provides a venue for students and other contributors to share the information of their research or observations.
- ✓ SDOU database provides a place to enter, store and compile bird observation data for avian research.
- ✓ SDOU Rare Bird Records Committee. As a basis for the scientific method, observations and data have to be accurate and precise. If the basic identifications are wrong, then there will be bad science. That's why a Rare Bird Records Committee is so important. Our knowledge of the state's birds is built on a pyramid and it needs a strong base.

By no means am I saying birders aren't welcome or that we can't have some fun. The spring meeting is almost totally dedicated to field trips. The fall meeting does have short field trips. The SDOU Librarian keeps birding list records (county, state, big day) which many people do for enjoyment. We socialize Friday and Saturday evenings at our meetings. SDOU also supports a birding listserv so birders can share their sightings.

Bird clubs bring people together who enjoy birds and are a place to socialize with other people and that is great. I am in full support of bird clubs.

I just wanted to remind people that SDOU was formed to be a more of a scientific organization than a social birding organization.

*Rickey D. Olson*

## 2014 REPORT OF THE RARE BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

David L. Swanson. Department of Biology. University of South Dakota. Vermillion 57069.  
E-mail: david.swanson@usd.edu.

The SDOU Rare Bird Records Committee (RBRC) met on 25 May 2014 at Milbank and 5 October 2014 at Vermillion. The members of the committee were David Swanson (secretary), Ricky Olson, Todd Jensen, J. David Williams, and Jeffrey Palmer. All members attended both meetings or voted *in absentia*.

Springer (1988. *South Dakota Bird Notes* 40:67-70) outlined the purpose and voting procedures of the RBRC. The RBRC strongly encourages observers of rare or unusual birds in South Dakota to report their observations to the secretary of the RBRC (David Swanson of Vermillion, SD), preferably via e-mail at david.swanson@usd.edu. A *Rare Bird Report Form* is available in electronic format for this purpose from David Swanson, or a form can be downloaded from <http://sdou.org/Birds/BRC.aspx> and then selecting one of the tools for documentation. A summary of the type of information desired by the RBRC in a rare bird report can be found in Swanson (2004. *South Dakota Bird Notes* 56:88-95).

The RBRC requests rare bird reports for species listed as hypothetical or accidental in the state, including species reported from a portion of the state or time of year where that species is listed as accidental. A listing of birds belonging to these categories in South Dakota is provided in the latest version of the checklist of South Dakota birds, accessible at <http://sdou.org/Birds/Checklist.aspx>. Information regarding species listed as accidental for only a portion of the state can be found in Tallman et al. (2002. *Birds of South Dakota*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, SDOU, Aberdeen, SD). The RBRC regularly adds or removes species from the review list, based on current data, and these changes to the review list are reported in the annual reports of the RBRC in *South Dakota Bird Notes*. In addition, reports are requested for observations listed in the "Species Requiring Acceptance by the Rare Bird Records Committee" section in the Seasonal Reports of *South Dakota Bird Notes*. Observers whose records are accepted (Classes 1 and 2) are encouraged to publish these records in *South Dakota Bird Notes*, so that details of the observation may be communicated to a wider audience.

Following are the results of the committee's action since the last report in the June 2014 issue of *South Dakota Bird Notes* (Swanson 2014). The numbers included in parentheses along with some reports indicate the committee's vote. If no numbers are listed, the vote was unanimous (5-0) or 4-0 if a committee member submitted the report. The committee wishes to emphasize that a rating of Class 3 or 4 (non-accepted record) does not imply any personal criticism of the observer. Such a rating only means that the information provided in the report, in the opinion of the committee, did not conclusively eliminate other similar species.

### **CLASS 1 (Accepted - Specimen, photograph, or recording).**

Long-tailed Duck. 19-26 November 2013. Four female/immatures at Sheridan Lake, Pennington Co. Photographed. Jocelyn Baker and Lynn Barber. Casual West River.

Snowy Egret. 24 April 2014. One adult at Rapid City, Pennington Co. Photographed. Nancy Drilling and Lynn Barber. Casual West River.

Great Black-backed Gull. 2 November 2013-18 April 2014. One adult at Pierre, Hughes Co. and Oahe Dam, Stanley Co. Photographed. Ricky Olson. 8<sup>th</sup> state record.

Great Black-backed Gull. 23 November 2013. One adult at Big Bend Dam, Lyman Co. Photographed. Jeffrey Palmer, Ricky Olson and Doug Backlund. 9<sup>th</sup> state record.

Great Black-backed Gull. 5 April 2014. One adult at Clear Lake, Minnehaha Co. Photographed. Jeffrey Palmer. 10<sup>th</sup> state record.

White-winged Dove. 29 April-16 May 2014. One adult at Rapid City, Pennington Co. Photographed. Ingrid Arlton and Larry Putnam. Casual migrant and summer visitor.

Anna's Hummingbird. 1 August-14 October 2013. One female/immature at Sturgis, Meade Co. Photographed. Randy Podoll. 3<sup>rd</sup> state record. (4 Class 1P, 1 Class 3)

Anna's Hummingbird. 22 October 2013. One probable adult female at Pickstown, Charles Mix Co. Photographed. Ron Mabie and Roger Dietrich. 4<sup>th</sup> state record.

Eastern Wood-Pewee. 13 August 2014. One singing adult at Custer State Park, Custer Co. Sound recording. Jennifer Fowler and Julie Brazell. Accidental Black Hills.

Yellow-throated Vireo. 17-18 May 2014. One adult at Rapid City, Pennington Co. Photographed. Jocelyn Baker and Lynn Barber. Accidental West River.

Common Raven. 14 December 2013. One near Lake Andes, Charles Mix Co. Photographed. Kelly Preheim. Casual visitor.

Varied Thrush. 31 October 2013. One adult near Arlington, Kingsbury Co. Photographed. Donnell and Natalie Iverson. Rare fall visitor.

Prairie Warbler. 7-10 May 2014. One female at Rapid City, Pennington Co. Photographed. Nancy Drilling and Lynn Barber. Accidental migrant.

Cerulean Warbler. 7 May 2014. One adult male at Vermillion, Clay Co. Photographed. Gary and Jan Small. Casual spring migrant. (SDBN 66:33).

Hermit Warbler. 8 May 2014. One adult male near Sisseton, Roberts Co. Photographed. Cheryl Vellenga. 1<sup>st</sup> state record. (SDBN 66:65-67, 80).

Louisiana Waterthrush. 6 May 2014. One adult at Echo Point, Stanley Co. Photographed. Ricky Olson. Casual spring migrant.

Painted Bunting. 10 May 2014. One adult male east of Madison, Lake Co. Photographed. Don and Glenda Wiken and Jeffrey and Deanna Palmer. 4<sup>th</sup> state record.

Henslow's Sparrow. 12 July 2014. One adult at Ft. Pierre National Grasslands, Jones Co. Photographed. Dan Svingen and Ricky Olson. Rare migrant and summer visitor.

Eastern Meadowlark. Summer 2014 – no precise date given. One singing adult at Pine Ridge, Oglala Lakota Co. Video and sound recording. Peter Hill. Casual visitor away from Lacreek NWR.

**CLASS 2 (Accepted – Satisfactory written description).**

Swan species. 12 January 2014. One adult near Sisseton, Roberts Co. Jarrod Lee. The report did not allow distinction between Tundra and Trumpeter swans, but both are accidental in winter, so the committee accepted the report as swan ssp. (4 Class 2, 1 Class 3)

Long-tailed Duck. 16 November 2013. One female in basic plumage and one immature at Belle Fourche Reservoir, Butte Co. Jocelyn Baker and Nancy Drilling. Casual West River.

Red-shouldered Hawk. 18 October 2013. One adult at Lake Andes NWR, Charles Mix Co. Ron Mabie. Casual migrant and winter visitor.

Snowy Egret. 6 May 2014. One adults at Veith's Pond, Meade County. Nancy Drilling. Casual West River.

Snowy Egret. 10 May 2014. One adult at Wall Sewage Lagoons, Pennington Co. Jocelyn Baker and Jennifer Fowler. Casual West River.

Snowy Plover. 17 April 2014. Five adults in alternate plumage at Lewis and Clark Lake, Yankton Co. Shawn Sullivan. Casual summer visitor along Missouri River in southeast South Dakota (Hunt et al. 2013).

Black-backed Woodpecker. 12 September 2014. One female near Sisseton, Roberts Co. Cheryl Vellenga. Accidental East River.

Common Yellowthroat. 4 December 2013. One female/immature at Outdoor Campus West, Rapid City, Pennington Co. Michael Melius. 2<sup>nd</sup> winter record for South Dakota.

**CLASS 3 (Not accepted – Identification possibly correct but description not completely convincing).**

Hybrid Common X Barrow's Goldeneye. 1 May 2013. One adult male below Fort Randall Dam, Gregory Co. The report was suggestive of a Common X Barrow's hybrid, but the dissenting committee members did not feel that the report conclusively eliminated a first-year Barrow's Goldeneye. (3 Class 2, 2 Class 3)

Laughing Gull. 13 May 2014. One adult at Cow Creek Recreation Area, Sully Co. The report was an auditory detection only and did not describe how the call delivered by the reported bird differed from the long call of the more abundant Franklin's Gull.

Yellow Rail. 6 June 2014. One adult at Enemy Swim Lake, Roberts/Day Co. The report supported identification of the bird as a Yellow Rail, but the view was relatively brief and without binoculars. Dissenting committee members desired a more complete description of the bird including more details of the plumage. (3 Class 2, 2 Class 3)

Blue-headed Vireo. 11 May 2014. One adult at Rapid City, Pennington Co. The report did not eliminate a Cassin's Vireo, which is also possible in the Black Hills during migration. (3 Class 3, 2 Class 2)

Snow Bunting. 22 April 2014. Twenty birds in flight south of Summit, Grant Co. The report provided a very incomplete description that did not eliminate several other species. (3 Class 3, 2 Class 2)

Eastern Meadowlark. 6-8 July 2014. One adult male at Ft. Meade Recreation Area, Meade Co. The photos submitted along with this report showed a meadowlark with yellow extending well up onto the malar streak and relatively pale crown stripes. In addition, the song snippets recorded had elements that seemed to fit Western better than Eastern meadowlark. (3 Class 3, 2 Class 4)

**CLASS 4 (Not accepted – Identification probably or certainly incorrect).**

Common Shelduck. 3 October 2013. One adult at White Lake, Aurora Co. Photographed. The photo supplied with the report confirmed the identification as Common Shelduck, but because no accepted records for North America exist outside of the northeast, and the species is often kept in captivity (Howell et al. 2014), the committee believed that the bird originated as an escaped captive rather than as a wild bird, so the Class 4 rating was for the origin of the bird, not an incorrect identification.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

The committee voted to remove Great Black-backed Gull from the review list for East River and Snowy Egret from the review list for West River.

**LITERATURE CITED**

Howell, S.N.G., I. Lewington, and W. Russell. 2014. Rare birds of North America. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

Hunt, K.L., N. Taygani, D.H. Catlin, J.H. Felio, and J.D. Fraser. 2013. Demography of Snowy Plovers (*Charadrius nivosus*) on the Missouri River. *Waterbirds* 36:220-224.

Swanson, D.L. 2014. 2013 Report of the Rare Bird Records Committee. SDBN 66:36-40.

# SAW-WHET OWLS AND FOREST FIRES IN THE SLIM BUTTES

by Charlie Miller, Buffalo SD

I have to admit it was a sickening feeling when I looked to the east the afternoon of 1 April 2015 and saw a large plume of smoke rising from the north end of the Slim Buttes, an area with the largest number of Saw-Whet Owl nest boxes (48) and Long-eared Owl nesting platforms (9). To make matters worse there was a 25-30 mph wind blowing from the northwest. The fire burned for about four days and the area was closed for another 2 1/2 weeks while the Forest Service finished up fire rehabilitation work.

When I was finally able to get "in" for a walk about, my worst fears fortunately weren't realized. The fire had burned very unevenly, crowning and getting quite hot in places but mostly staying low, burning out the understory without killing the larger trees.

There were 44 nest boxes and seven platforms within the perimeter of the fire. At the time of the fire nineteen of the nest boxes were occupied, eighteen by Saw-Whets and one by an Eastern Screech Owl. Two of the long-eared platforms were also occupied. I ended up losing four nest boxes and three Long-eared platforms. One of the four boxes lost had an owl incubating at the time of the fire. Most of the remaining boxes had the fire burn through underneath or nearby, in some cases scorching the trunk of the nest tree almost to the bottom of the box.

Of the remaining eighteen occupied boxes three were abandoned, but the rest toughed it out and successfully fledged young as did the Eastern Screech Owl and both Long-eareds. For several of these, including both Long-eared nests, judging from the amount of fire damage to the tree and surrounding area, the smoke and heat would have been intense. The adults would almost have been forced from the nest box, returning only after the fire burned through. Also, there are five nest boxes within the burn that have had owls move in since the fire; three of these are incubating eggs and the other two have small young.

The following information for Saw-whet Owls is a breakdown with partial numbers for what has turned out to be a very big and interesting year.

NESTING ATTEMPTS 47; NATURAL CAVITY NESTS 2; EGGS LAID 270; EGGS HATCHED 209; NUMBER FLEDGED 193

Prey numbers in the nest box have been high with more voles than normal. Also clutch size is above normal with several of 7 and 8 and a first, a clutch of 9 all of which hatched. This continues the pattern of every four years being a big year (2007, 2011 and 2015).

The following are the results of the banding undertaken in the Slim Buttes. First, a documented case of double brooding. We recaptured a banded female from nest box 061 on 28 June 2015; she was on a clutch of four eggs. She had been banded 18 April 2015 from nest box 065 where she fledged a clutch of five around 20 May 2015. Both boxes are in the North Slim Buttes less than one-half mile apart and inside the perimeter of the fire.

The next instance has even more twists. Keep in mind that all the following nest boxes and fall banding sites are all in the North Slim Buttes within less than one-half mile of each other. We banded a hatch year bird in the fall of 2011. She was recaptured in June 2013 from NB042 where she fledged two young. We were able to band both on 12 July 2013 just before they fledged. Both young were recaptured that fall. One north of Medora, North Dakota and the other at the same site its mother had been banded. In the spring of 2014 the same female was recaptured again from NB039 where she fledged six young. In 2015 she was recaptured again from NB021 where she is presently brooding on a clutch of six young around a week old. Here's where it got interesting. We recaptured another banded female from NB042 June 28th. When we checked the band number she had been banded 12 July 2013 as a fledgling from NB042 the same box she was now incubating a clutch of five eggs in. As it presently stands, mother and daughter are both sitting on nests around 500 yards apart.

Table 1: Saw Whet Owl Nesting Success 2004-2015

Year	Available Nest Boxes	Nesting Attempts	Successful Attempts	Eggs Laid	Eggs Hatched	Owlets Fledged
2004	36	10	7	43	38	33
2005	56	9	6	32	24	21
2006	57	2	2	8	8	8
2007	66	30	24	155	135	116
2008	74	12	7	49	29	22
2009	74	5	2	20	8	2
2010	84	9	5	41	28	22
2011	93	52	43	271	238	213
2012	99	10	7	37	30	24
2013	99	2	1	4	2	2
2014	100	16	13	79	60	56
2015	122	49	41	270	238	222*
TOTAL	—	206**	158	1009	838	742

\* As of Aug 9 two nests with young still present, one with 4 the other with 3. They should be fledging any day now.

\*\* Number includes boxes which had an owl present early but no eggs were laid. This has happened on 8 occasions. Also includes four natural cavity nests. Average clutch size 5.2 eggs. 83.3% of eggs laid have hatched. 88.5% of hatchlings have fledged and 73.5% of eggs laid have resulted in a fledged owlet.

## PREPARATION AND EVALUATION OF RARE BIRD REPORTS

David L. Swanson, Secretary, South Dakota Rare Bird Records Committee. Department of Biology, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD 57069-2390.

This article is a revised and updated version of a paper originally published in *South Dakota Bird Notes* in 1994 (Swanson 1994) and reprinted again in 2004 (SDBN 56:88-95). Rare bird reporting has changed dramatically since the initial publication of this article, and even since the 2004 reprint. The recent proliferation of information and resources for bird identification (see Kaufman 2011), including online resources, the availability of online listing and reporting applications, such as eBird (Wood et al. 2011, Sullivan et al. 2014), and the easy availability of inexpensive, yet high-quality digital cameras with zoom lenses (e.g., Barber 2012) and/or digiscoping with a digital camera and spotting scope (<http://birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/gear/Digiscoping/>) have revolutionized birding and bird reporting. These resources are helpful in providing information to assist with the preparation of rare bird reports, but they don't substitute for careful attention to detail in the field. In the remainder of this article, I will review the charge and procedures of the Rare Bird Records Committee of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union (hereafter RBRC) and the type of information that the committee desires in rare bird reports to facilitate their review.

### INTRODUCTION

The RBRC is charged with monitoring the status and distribution of rare and vagrant birds within the state. The RBRC maintains a review list of rare and vagrant birds for which



reports are solicited. These review species are marked as Casual, Accidental or Hypothetical on the official Checklist of South Dakota Birds (available under the *State Checklist* tab at <http://sdou.org>). Of course, any bird observed in South Dakota that is not listed on the official Checklist of South Dakota Birds also requires a rare bird report, as do birds that are substantially out of range (e.g., Yellow-throated Vireo in Rapid City and Eastern Wood-Pewee in Custer State Park in the 2014 Report of the RBRC in this issue of *Bird Notes*; Swanson 2015). The main mechanism by which the responsibility of the RBRC is carried out is by reviewing reports on rare bird observations submitted to the committee by birders (Springer 1988). The RBRC evaluates all submitted reports to determine whether the description and details in the report provide an unquestionable identification of the species being reported or whether the information provided in the report is inconclusive. After review, the RBRC assigns the report a rating based upon the information contained in the report. The rating system includes the following categories: 1S, 1P, 1R, 2, 3, and 4 (Springer 1988). The class 1 rankings apply to reports that are accompanied by supporting evidence (S for specimen, P for photograph, R for sound recording) that verifies the species claimed in the report. The class 2 ranking indicates that a satisfactory and convincing written description of the bird was provided in the report. Classes 1 and 2 comprise reports that are accepted into the official bird records for the state. Class 3 rankings indicate that the details and description presented in the report are not sufficient for positive identification and the record is not accepted on this basis. A rating of class 3 does not necessarily imply that an identification was incorrect; it simply means that the committee did not believe that the submitted materials provided an unquestionable identification. A rating of class 4 is reserved for reports that the committee believes contain probable or certain misidentifications, and these records are not accepted on this basis. The committee has also used a rating of class 4 for birds for which the report unquestionably provides a correct identification, but for which the origin of the bird (wild or escaped captive) is likely not from wild populations. Reports accepted into the official bird records for South Dakota are summarized periodically, along with the status and distribution of all birds within the state, in books published by the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union, the latest of which is Tallman et al. (2002).

Since the RBRC is charged with maintaining the official records on the status and distribution of rare birds within the state, the standards for evaluation employed by the committee must be rigorous to ensure scientific accuracy (see Baker 1986a, 1986b). This is particularly true for "sight" records that are not accompanied by supporting evidence. For these reports, the committee requires *very complete* details to classify the report as class 2 and accept it into the official bird records for the state. Oftentimes, reports are submitted that lack sufficient details for the committee to rule out all other similar species. The committee must rate these reports as class 3 or 4, even though the observer submitting the report may very well have been correct in the identification. The purpose of this paper is to inform birders submitting rare bird reports to the South Dakota RBRC about the type of information and degree of detail necessary for the committee to make valid scientific judgments on submitted reports.

### **PREPARATION OF A RARE BIRD REPORT**

One of the major problems faced by the RBRC is evaluation of reports with scanty or incomplete details and descriptions. These reports often consist of a brief listing of one or two prominent field marks and nothing else. These reports usually fail to properly treat how the reported bird differs from other similar species. For this type of report, the RBRC is left with no recourse but to reject the report, even if the observation is valid. Acceptable reports include careful and complete details and descriptions of the bird observed. Preferably, this

description should be made *at the time of observation* while in the field and *before* consulting a field guide, rather than later from memory. If not in the field, notes should be prepared as soon after return from the field as possible, again preferably without first referring to a field guide, before memory has a chance to fade (or enhance) details.

Birders observing a species on the review list are asked to file a report with the RBRC in a timely manner. In this way the RBRC can initiate the process of reviewing reports without incurring the delay of waiting and then requesting the observer to submit a complete report. This is especially critical in terms of unconfirmed reports of rare birds that are cited elsewhere, such as in the Seasonal Reports section of *South Dakota Bird Notes* or in the Regional Reports sections of *North American Birds*. Without review by the RBRC, readers of these reports will not know if they have been reviewed and rated as to their acceptability.

On the South Dakota “Rare Bird Report Form” (available under the *Seasonal Reporting & Rare Bird Form* tab at <http://sdou.org>), under the “description of bird” section are listed the following characters: size, shape, colors, bill, feet, eyes, plumage, etc. A complete report will deal with most or all of these features and will describe the *whole bird*, rather than just one or two field marks. I will briefly deal with each of these characters to provide some idea of the desires of the RBRC regarding details on rare birds.

### **SIZE**

The size of a bird is often notoriously difficult to judge in the field, but a general indication of the size of the bird (“warbler-sized,” “robin-sized,” etc.) is appropriate. If possible it is even better to report *relative size*, if another bird or other object of known size is nearby. For example, suppose you observe a juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (which would be a first state record for South Dakota) foraging on the shore of a pond near a couple of Killdeer and some Least Sandpipers with some Blue-winged Teal swimming just beyond the shore. For context, North Dakota now has three fall records of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers (Martin 2000). A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper is about the size of a Pectoral Sandpiper, but this judgement may be tough to make with no Pectorals around. However, you can say that the bird was slightly smaller than nearby Killdeer, substantially larger than nearby Least Sandpipers, and about half the size of Blue-winged Teal swimming just behind it. This description of relative size, using species observed in the same area as the reported bird, functionally establishes the size of the reported bird within a narrow range appropriate for the species claimed.

### **SHAPE**

A good place to start in describing shape is to include a general statement regarding the overall appearance of the bird (“warbler-shaped,” “duck-shaped,” etc.). From there, features such as plumpness of the body, lengths (or relative lengths) of bill, neck, legs, wings, and tail, posture (e.g., perched upright like a flycatcher or horizontally like a thrush or vireo), or additional physical characteristics (crest, webbing on feet, primary extension [the distance that the primary flight feathers extend beyond the secondaries and tertiaries on the folded wing], etc.) should be treated. Of course, all of these features need not be included for every bird reported, but they are often of great help in arriving at a positive identification. For example, *Empidonax* flycatchers are a difficult identification challenge, but the relative length of the tail and bill to the remainder of the body gives some species (Least, Yellow-bellied, Hammond’s) a “large-headed look” that is a useful field mark (Kaufman 2011). Furthermore, primary extension is an important field mark in *Empid* identification (Kaufman 2011).

## **COLORS**

This feature is fairly self-explanatory, but care should be taken to denote subtleties in coloration and shading, especially between various parts of the body or between possibly confusing species. For example, female Common and Red-breasted Mergansers both have reddish-brown heads and necks, whitish breasts and grayish flanks. However, in Common Mergansers the reddish of the neck is sharply demarcated from the whitish breast, whereas in the Red-breasted the reddish of the neck rather gradually fades into the whitish breast. Another helpful aspect of describing color is to provide precise descriptions of the *shade* of color. As an example, both Long-billed Dowitchers and Red Knots are reddish on the face and underparts in breeding plumage. However, the duller “brownish-red” of the dowitcher is quite different from the brighter red of the knot.

## **BILL AND FEET**

General characteristics such as length, color, webbing or partial-webbing on the feet, droop or upturn to the bill, and feathering around the base of legs or bill can be important identification factors. A useful method of reporting bill length is to report it in terms of multiples of head width. For example, both Whimbrels and Long-billed Curlews have long, down-curved bills, but in the Whimbrel the bill is about 2 1/2 times the width of the head, while in Long-billed Curlews the bill is about 4-5 head widths.

## **EYES**

If possible, eye color should be noted as this is important in some cases (e.g., White-eyed Vireo, juvenile vs. adult Red-eyed Vireos, female Rusty vs. female Brewer’s blackbirds). Another factor important in the identification of some species (e.g., Black-billed Cuckoo, certain gulls) is the color of the skin immediately surrounding the eye.

## **PLUMAGE**

A careful description of the plumage is, arguably, the single most important feature in most rare bird reports, and yet it is often one of the most incomplete portions of the report. Great care should be taken in describing the various parts of the plumage in reported birds. These descriptions should be as complete as possible, which means the *entire body* should be described. A “bright yellow warbler-shaped bird” could be a Yellow, Prothonotary, Blue-winged, Wilson’s, or possibly some other warbler, or even an American Goldfinch. Careful descriptions of the plumage color, shading and appearance on the entire body when viewed in good light are of great benefit to the Committee in reaching appropriate decisions on acceptance or rejection. A good place to start is by reviewing the bird topography section in the front of your favorite field guide. Here you will find terms for various portions of bird anatomy that are very useful in providing complete plumage descriptions. In addition, when describing plumage, be sure to note color changes and even subtle differences in shade between various parts of the body (head and nape, wings and back, throat and breast, belly and undertail coverts, etc.).

Furthermore, the *pattern* of coloration is often of great importance to proper identification and features such as facial pattern (superciliary stripe, eye lines, eye ring, crown stripes, etc.), wing pattern (plain, wing bars, wing tip pattern, scapular pattern, etc.), tail pattern (tail spots, bars across tail, outer retrix pattern, etc.), breast, flank or back streaking or lack of it, should always be searched for and noted if present. A complete and detailed plumage description taking into account as many of these factors as possible is integral to a good (and acceptable) rare bird report.

A final factor worth noting relating to plumage is the state of molt, which can provide important context not only for the appearance of the plumage, but can also help determine the age of the bird, which can have important implications for vagrancy (Howell et al. 2014). An in-depth treatment of molt patterns in birds is beyond the scope of this article, but helpful references are available (e.g., Howell 2010).

## OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

So far, I have dealt primarily with physical (or morphological) characteristics in describing rare birds. However, there are a number of other factors, such as behavior, voice, habitat or microhabitat and overall impression (or “*giss*”) that can be as important (or even more important) than a careful description of morphological characters. Indeed, a number of the more recent field guides to birds or bird groups (e.g., O’Brien et al. 2006, Karlson and Rosselet 2015) concentrate on overall impression as an identification aid (see Kaufman 2011 for a discussion).

While on its own, behavior is not sufficient for identification of rare birds, it can be very helpful in supplementing and supporting descriptions of rare birds. For instance, Cerulean Warblers tend to stay near the tops of trees, while *Oporornis* warblers are typically observed on or near the ground. Behaviors such as wing and tail flicking can be important supplementary information in the identification of *Empidonax* flycatchers. Also, a tendency for flocking or solitude can be useful in identification of some birds. Consequently, the behavior that a rare bird exhibits should be carefully noted and included in any rare bird report submitted to the RBRC.

Another very important aspect of rare bird identification is the careful documentation of voice or other sounds, if the reported bird happens to be singing, calling, or making a noise by its actions (e.g., the drumming of a woodpecker). In fact, for identification of some similar species, such as Alder and Willow Flycatchers and Eastern and Western Meadowlarks, voice is the only reliable method for separation. In describing the voice of a bird, particular attention should be paid to the number of syllables uttered and on which syllable the accent (if it occurs) is placed. It is also useful to describe the call or song phonetically and to document the character of the notes given (clear, musical, buzzy, raspy, nasal, insect-like, etc.). In most birds, especially passerines, voice is as species-specific as plumage, and this makes voice a very important component of rare bird reports. In all cases, the voice or other sound that a bird makes should be described in one’s own terms, rather than stating that it is like the description given in a field guide.

The habitat or microhabitat in which a rare bird is found can also contribute to its identification (e.g., Pine Warblers are often associated with pines). Thus, careful documentation of the habitat where the reported bird was located (open deciduous forest, mixed forest, shortgrass prairie, cattail marsh, etc.) should be included in the report. If possible, mention the particular species of vegetation present, especially those species that the reported bird was using. Microhabitat differences can also be useful as supporting details (e.g., did the bird stay in the understory, was it restricted to the tops of trees, or did it forage at a number of different levels in the canopy?).

A final piece of supporting information that can be useful in identification of rare birds is the “*giss*” (sometimes referred to as “*jizz*”) that a bird exhibits (Karlson and Rosselet 2015). *GISS* (“general impression of size and shape”) is a somewhat nebulous character that can be expanded to include the actions, behavior and general appearance of a bird and gives the observer an impression of the overall character of the bird (e.g., active, buoyant,

energetic, powerful, shy, swift). Oftentimes, a rare bird acts or appears somehow different in overall character from regularly observed birds, and this impression (or *giss*) alerts the observer to look more closely. Since *giss* is an abstract character, it becomes most useful for identification purposes only after considerable time is spent in the field. A good way to develop the ability to utilize *giss* as an aid to recognizing rare birds is to pay attention to the actions, behavior and general appearance of the more common birds. Then when a bird appears that doesn't quite match the *giss* of the common birds, this should alert the observer to make a more careful observation.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS**

While the verbal description and details of the rare bird form the foundation of the rare bird report, the clinching factors in acceptance or rejection of a report often are supplementary materials provided along with the report. These supplementary materials include physical evidence (specimens, photographs or vocal recordings), sketches prepared *while in the field* and verification by other observers. I will briefly treat each of these types of supplementary materials.

### **PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

Of the types of supplementary materials mentioned above, physical evidence is the most useful to the RBRC. For some state records committees (e.g., Texas, Lockwood and Freeman 2014), new state records are not accepted without some form of physical supporting evidence. For South Dakota, documentation of first state records ordinarily requires some form of physical evidence along with the report, but the RBRC currently also may accept first state records when reports lack supporting physical evidence, but are well-described sight records corroborated by two or more experienced birders. A specimen is the best possible evidence supporting a rare bird report, but since the shotgun is no longer a generally acceptable ornithological tool, specimen records are now quite rare. However, if a rare bird is found recently dead, the observer should notify appropriate authorities (South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks) or the RBRC so that a specimen may be prepared from the dead bird. Such a scenario, for example, resulted in the first South Dakota record for Ancient Murrelet (Williams 1994).

Photographic documentation can be almost as good as a specimen if the photos are of decent quality, and even poorer quality or long-range photos can assist identification. With the advent of inexpensive digital cameras with good zoom lenses, diagnostic, or at least supportive photographs are much easier to come by than in the past (e.g., Barber 2012). Thus, anyone observing a rare bird, especially an extremely rare bird, should try to get photos of the bird to accompany the rare bird report. If you don't have a camera with you at the time of observation, take careful field notes, then try to come back later for a photograph. If you don't have a camera (and preferably a telephoto or zoom lens), try to get someone who does to accompany you to relocate the rarity. A good photograph can make the job of the RBRC much easier.

For species difficult to distinguish by sight, an audio recording of its vocalizations can be very helpful in verifying the reported bird if it is singing or calling. This is particularly true for nocturnal or secretive rarities such as Yellow Rails, Chuck-Will's-widow or various owls or difficult-to-distinguish species such as Eastern/Western Wood-Pewee, Willow/Alder or Dusky/Hammond's flycatchers, and Eastern/Western Meadowlark. In such cases, an audio recording of the bird's vocalization is of utmost value as a supplement to the rare bird report.

## **SKETCHES**

If you observe a rare bird but lack a camera and are in a situation where you cannot gain access to one before the bird is likely to leave, another helpful addition to a careful description is a sketch of the bird produced while in the field. This does not require that the observer have any artistic ability, as crude sketches can still illustrate important field marks (I speak from experience here as anyone viewing any of my sketches will immediately recognize my lack of artistic ability!). Sketches do not even need to include the entire bird to be beneficial in assisting identification, as sketches of important features (i.e., tail pattern, wing tip pattern, facial pattern, etc.) can be very useful as well. One way to get around a complete lack of artistic ability and to allow rapid sketching of a bird is to carry a small field notebook with outlines of bird bodies traced from a field guide (Dittmann and Lasley 1992). When a rare bird is observed, it is then a simple matter of filling in the blank spaces with the plumage pattern of the observed bird. You need not carry outlines for every possible bird family into the field with you, only those you are likely to encounter in the habitat you are birding. For instance, if you are going to visit Oahe Dam in mid-October to mid-November, you might carry outlines of gulls, but not of vireos. Likewise, if you are going to Sica Hollow State Park in mid-May, you would want to carry warbler outlines in your field notebook. Simple sketches like these can greatly improve or add to a description and are of great benefit to the RBRC.

## **VERIFICATION BY OTHER BIRDERS**

Another important aspect of documenting rare birds, especially for “sight records,” is verification by other observers, especially by experienced birders. This verification may involve independent reporting of the rare bird or additional signatures from birders observing the bird but not reporting separately. Single observer sight records of rare birds always require especially careful scrutiny. Therefore, if you are alone and have seen an especially rare bird, after carefully describing it and photographing or sketching it, proceed to the nearest phone and call a nearby experienced birder. This is not only a good practice for verification of the rare bird, but it is a favor to other birders who would also appreciate seeing the rare bird. Thus, not only will you be strengthening your rare bird report, you will be providing a valued service to the birding community.

I should mention here that inexperienced birders or birders unfamiliar to the RBRC should make an effort to get to know other birders in their area. This does not imply that sight records submitted to the RBRC from unfamiliar birders will be rejected out-of-hand, as familiarity to the RBRC is not a prerequisite for observing rare birds and the RBRC must act objectively on all submitted material. However, reports from birders with established reputations for careful documentation often proceed through RBRC action with greater rapidity than reports from unknown observers. This may be interpreted by some as favoritism or exclusivity, but in reality the RBRC is simply making an effort to ensure accuracy of accepted reports. For an interesting discussion of this rather delicate matter, see Contreras (1994). A good way for inexperienced or new birders within the state to become familiar to the RBRC is to attend the Spring and Fall meetings of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union, as most experienced birders within the state attend these meetings regularly. However, if you are a new or unfamiliar observer within the state, do not let this dissuade you from submitting rare bird reports; just carefully describe the rare bird and try the best you can to provide supplementary materials. In addition, if your records are not accepted by the RBRC, do not take this personally or let it prevent you from submitting future reports, as even members of the RBRC have had reports rejected for lack of sufficient details.

Hopefully, this review of the type of information desired in rare bird reports by the RBRC will allow persons observing birds in South Dakota to more carefully document records of rare species. This, in turn, will ensure the greatest scientific accuracy in monitoring the status and distribution of such birds within the state. One final note, in order to make information on the occurrence of rare species in South Dakota more widely known, persons whose records are accepted (Classes 1 and 2) are encouraged to publish them as notes in *South Dakota Bird Notes*.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Kurt Dean and members of the RBRC in the early 1990s (the late Paul Springer, the late Nathaniel Whitney, Bruce Harris and Jeff Palmer) provided valuable comments on the initial version of this manuscript. Doug Chapman, current Editor of *South Dakota Bird Notes*, encouraged me to revise and update the manuscript to again publish it in *SD Bird Notes*.

In addition, I would like to thank all those observers who have submitted rare bird reports to the RBRC in the past and those who will in the future. It is through your efforts that we will gain an ever improving knowledge of the status and distribution of birds within the state of South Dakota.

### LITERATURE CITED

- Baker, J.L. 1986a. President's page. SDBN 38:3-4.
- Baker, J.L. 1986b. President's page. SDBN 38:31-32.
- Barber, L. 2012. Birder with camera – documenting bird findings. ABA Blog, <http://blog.aba.org/2012/10/birder-with-camera-documenting-bird-findings.html>
- Contreras, A. 1994. Observer reputation and rare bird records. *Birding* 26:200-202.
- Dittmann, D.L., and G.W. Lasley. 1992. How to document rare birds. *Birding* 24:145-159.
- Howell, S.N.G. 2010. Peterson reference guide to molt in North American birds. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York, NY.
- Howell, S.N.G., I. Lewington, and W. Russell. 2014. Rare birds of North America. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Karlson, K. and D. Rosselet. 2015. Peterson Reference Guides: Birding by impression: A different approach to knowing and identifying birds. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York, NY.
- Kaufman, K. 2011. Field guide to advanced birding: Understanding what you see and hear. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York, NY.
- Lockwood, M.W. and B. Freeman. 2014. The Texas Ornithological Society handbook of Texas birds. Texas A&M University Press, College Station, TX.
- Martin, R. 2000. Fall 1999 regional report for Northern Great Plains. *North American Birds* 54:67-68.
- O'Brien, M., R. Crossley and K. Karlson. 2006. The shorebird guide. Houghton-Mifflin, Boston, MA.
- Springer, P.F. 1988. Report of the Rare Bird Records Committee. SDBN 40:67-70.
- Sullivan, B.L. et al. 2014. The eBird enterprise: an integrated approach to development and application of citizen science. *Biological Conservation* 169:31-40.
- Swanson, D. 1994. Preparation and evaluation of rare bird reports. SDBN 46:64-71.
- Swanson, D. 2015. 2014 report of the Rare Bird Records Committee. SDBN 67:In press.
- Tallman, D.T., D.L. Swanson, and J.S. Palmer. 2002. Birds of South Dakota, Third Edition. South Dakota Ornithologists' Union, Aberdeen, SD.
- Williams, J.D. 1994. Ancient Murrelet - a new South Dakota record. SDBN 46:34.
- Wood, C., B. Sullivan, M. Iliff, D. Fink, and S. Kelling. 2011. eBird: engaging birders in science and conservation. *PLoS Biology* 9:e1001220.

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE SDOU 2015  
SPRING MEETING IN SPEARFISH  
by Linda Johnson

An SDOU spring meeting brings with it the excitement of seeing birding friends, birding with regional experts, and finding greater numbers of species than I could find on my own. This year's trip to Spearfish in the Black Hills did not disappoint. When I travel West River, my number one target bird is always the American Dipper. One of the few reliable places to spot dippers is at Roughlock Falls in Spearfish Canyon, and sure enough, among the water plants was a dipper feeding young, both doing their classic bob/dip. And at another spot in the canyon, Bridal Veil Falls, dippers were flying in and out of a mossy nest halfway up the cliff. How many tourists ever realize that dippers nest there?

Another delight was a Canyon Wren flitting from crevice to crevice on the cliff, calling its melodic, descending song. Above, we could see White-throated Swifts and the most beautiful of swallows – the Violet-Green.



*"White-winged" Junco • Photo: Douglas Chapman*

In the Hanna area we all had great looks at Red Crossbills, Black-headed Grosbeaks, a Cordilleran Flycatcher and Pine Siskins. Unfortunately, I managed to miss the Northern Parula that many others saw. A non-birder might have chuckled at our conversation as other birders tried to help me (and a few others) find the elusive warbler: "Look in the tallest pine on the right about 10 feet from the top. Now he's in the third pine over about 100 feet up – oh! there he flies again." I never did see the bird. But that's what keeps birding interesting – the challenge and sometimes a missed sighting.

At other spots in the canyon we saw Golden-crowned Kinglets and the "White-winged" subspecies of the Dark-eyed Junco. I typically see the kinglet and only the Slate-colored subspecies of the junco more often in the winter.

The second day's field trip took us east on the prairie and ponds and out to Orman Dam. That trek yielded a Caspian Tern, Blue-winged, Green-winged and Cinnamon teal, several Lark Buntings along the dam entry road doing their aerial display, a Blue Grosbeak pair, and a Swainson's Hawk (at the nest). While these were great sightings, my favorite was watching eight Short-eared Owls alternately flying up from the grass, nearly always chased by Red-winged Blackbirds. That scene framed by prairie grasses and sky made for a magnificent experience, one that will always remain in my mind.

When all the species everyone has seen are tallied for the countdown, inevitably, I have missed some. This time I missed several species I do often see when I travel West River: Mountain Bluebird, Lazuli Bunting, Western Tanager, Golden



Eagle, Black-backed, Three-toed and Lewis's woodpecker and Pinyon Jay. But that's birding, and there's always the next trip. So, missed species aside, thanks to our able trip leaders, Todd Jensen, Scott Weins, and Ricky Olson, our field trips were a fine time.

Added to the fun of birding, we also enjoyed great evening programs, orchestrated by Doug Chapman. Ann Johnson shared her work with the Iowa, Denver and Colorado Ornithologist's Union websites. She showed us how she has created dynamic, powerful websites for non-profits and answered our questions about possibilities for SDOU. As a result, Board members voted to hire her to create our new SDOU website, complete with *SD Bird Notes* archives, a pay online option, and other features. [See article by Roger Dietrich, *Web Committee Chair page 76.*]

Friday evening for the social hour, SDOU member Ingrid Arlton and her singing group, Bella Voce, serenaded us with oldies tunes such as "Bye, Bye Blackbird" and "Singing in the Rain". Nathan Pieplow from Boulder, CO, presented a fascinating keynote program by sharing some of his research on bird sounds. The audio recordings of several bird vocalists amazed and entertained us.

Nathan is the author of the forthcoming *Peterson Guide to Bird Sounds*. Nathan was born in Sioux Falls.

So, when dates for the spring meeting are set, I schedule it on my calendar. It's an experience not to be missed.

---

---

## THE AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION 2015 SPEARFISH RALLY, 17-21 JULY 2015

by Douglas Chapman

"In the Black Hills, East (Ovenbird and Red-eyed Vireo) meets West (Plumbeous Vireo and Western Tanager) meets South (Lesser Goldfinch and Virginia's Warbler) meets North (Black-backed Woodpecker and Gray Jay)." ~ Michael Retter

**S**pearfish SD was not only the location of the SDOU Spring 2015 Meeting, but was followed immediately by the American Birding Association (ABA) Bird Rally. The 75 participants from around the United States were – to a person – much taken with our state and its bird diversity. ABA President Jeff Gordon and his wife Liz graciously served as the Hosts. I was honored to be the Local Host. I also had the opportunity to guide with Jeff on two of the three field trips. The ABA donated a stipend to the Sioux Falls Bird Club for help in completing the loop trail that will surround the Dewey Gevik Nature Learning Center near Sioux Falls.

The participants had a marvelous time sampling the sights, sounds, and even smells of the area. Seriously, stepping through the two year-old Kinney burn, the wafting scents of both fire and regeneration are better than a fine wine. And the science of forest regeneration and how it affects bird life became very clear. I was honored to be the Local Host and to lead ABA President Jeff Gordon and his wife through our glorious Hills. The total species seen was 177.

# FLEDGLING TRACTS

JASON THIELE

## *A Beginner's Guide to Birdspeak: Part II*

### **Birding**

There was a time when if you saw a group of people walking through the woods with binoculars around their necks, you would probably assume that they were “birdwatchers”. “Birdwatching” was a fine term that left little doubt about what activity was taking place. In recent years, however, the term “birdwatching” has fallen out of common use among many people who spend time observing birds. Instead, the activity has become widely known as “birding”. It is an admittedly vague term that could be pretty perplexing to a person who had never heard it before. I’ve often wondered myself who came up with it. We’ve had the word “fishing” in the English language for many years, and almost everyone knows that fishing is the act of catching finned vertebrates with gills from the water, often for the purpose of eating them. It seems that it would logically follow that birding would involve catching winged and feathered vertebrates from their habitats, whether to snap a photo and let them go or to put them in a pot. But, of course, nowadays when I tell someone that I am going birding, they generally know that I’m not going to be bringing home supper.



A 2011 US Fish & Wildlife Service report (“Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis,” USFWS Report 2011-1) claimed that 47 million people 16 years of age or older in the US are birders. The report defined a birder as a person who had traveled at least one mile from home with the primary intent being to observe birds and/or who had closely observed and attempted to identify birds around the home. Clearly, this is a pretty broad definition. If you interviewed a random sample of the people the Fish & Wildlife Service calls birders, you would find a very heterogeneous group. No two birders are exactly alike. I’ve met several birders who travel all over the world in search of new species and even families to see. I know others who almost never venture more than a few miles from home on their birding trips. In the last couple of years, I’ve encountered some people who never carry binoculars when they are birding. Instead, they carry cameras. Nevertheless, they consider themselves birders first and photographers second. And I’ve read about a subculture of birders who use no type of optical aids at all in their birding, relying instead on their “naked” eyes and their ears to identify birds. I could fill pages describing the differences among birders, but the fact remains that a birder is someone who finds enjoyment in searching for birds.

### **Life Bird**

This is a very commonly used birding term. Birders often keep track of the species of birds that they have found during their adventures. Naturally, any given species that a birder has seen was once a species that he/she had not seen. When a species is encountered by a birder for the first time, it is referred to as a “life bird” (or, sometimes, simply a “lifer”). Many life birds come with interesting stories, as you’ll find out if you ask seasoned birders to tell you about their most memorable lifers. Some life birds are found after much hard work

and dedication—perhaps a hike into a remote wilderness or a long day braving gale-force winds and pounding rain. One of my most memorable life birds, however, is memorable for how easy it was to find. During my last summer in South Dakota, I had heard that a pair of Black-neck Stilts had been seen near Huron. That was as much as I knew, so I prepared for a long and likely unproductive search. But I pulled out my South Dakota gazetteer, looked for a wetland complex near Huron that was accessible by road, and made the short drive from Highmore, where I was staying at the time. I hadn't even grabbed my binoculars or switched off my car at my first stop when I spotted the boldly marked, super-long-legged birds I had come looking for picking through the mud about 50 yards away from me. With the search over before it had even started, I had lots of time to admire them.

As you spend more time around birders, you may also hear several related terms, such as “year bird” (a species seen in a particular year), “county bird” (a species seen in a particular county), or “state bird” (a species seen in a particular state—are you picking up a trend here?).

## **Lister/Listing**

A lister is a term used for a birder who is motivated to go birding by the prospect of adding new species to a checklist. Adding new species to a life list, county list, etc. may not be the only motivation (in fact, it's not likely to be the sole motivation), but it provides this type of birder with a purpose for his/her hobby.

There are various degrees of listers. At one extreme are those who make checklists of virtually all birds that they encounter. In the past few years, a website called eBird has made it possible for birders to easily keep track of bird observations for personal and public use. A quick look at eBird data from this decade reveals that some US birders submit thousands of checklists in a single year! Near the other end of the spectrum are those who keep a notebook by the window to jot down the species visiting their bird feeders or those who note the arrival dates of favorite migrant birds in the spring. For some birders, their lists may remain in their heads and never make it onto paper. Almost certainly, the most common list kept by birders is the life list. I update my life list whenever I see a new species (unfortunately, it's been a while), and while I couldn't tell you off the top of my head how many species are on that list, I could easily answer the question, “Have you ever seen a/n [insert any bird species name here]?” I suspect that is the case for most birders, regardless of how serious they are about listing. Once you see a new species, the memory tends to stick with you.

Hard-core listers will sometimes say funny things. While I would consider myself a lister since I am pretty diligent about keeping track of birds seen in my home county, for example, I still get a chuckle when I hear a birder say something like, “I still need a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher for the fall season,” or “I'm hoping to crack 300 species for my South Dakota year list. I need to get Black-backed Woodpecker and a rare gull or two if I'm going to make it”. Sometimes these birders' “needs” sound so urgent, it makes me wonder what happens if those species don't get recorded by the deadline.

I'll be talking more about listers in the third installment of this series.

## WEB SITE COMMITTEE REPORT: WEB SITE UPDATE FOR SDOU

by Roger Dietrich

The SDOU Board first authorized the Web Site Committee at the Spring 2011 meeting. The committee presently consists of Doug Chapman, Roger Dietrich (chair), Rosemary Draeger, Richard Latuchie, and Mick Zerr. The committee was charged with reviewing the current web site and evaluating what other possibilities were available at this time in web site technology.

The Board of Directors asked Ann Johnson, who was the Friday evening speaker at the 2015 SDOU Spring Meeting, to present SDOU a proposal for developing a new web site. For those of you unfamiliar with Ann Johnson and her company AJEndeavors, she is located in Iowa and specializes in natural history organization web applications. She developed and maintains the Iowa Ornithologists' Union web site, and web sites for the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union, the Audubon Society of Missouri, and several others.

The current web site has been operated by Jeff Palmer single-handedly for over twenty years on the Dakota State University (DSU) computer system and has served the needs of SDOU well. Few major changes have been made to the web site over the years. The need for a modern user-friendly interface, the desire for compatibility with the growing number of mobile devices, plus the ability to accept payments over the web site were a few of the reasons to look at a new web site. Also, we cannot expect Jeff to continue operating the site forever.

The committee reviewed the proposal from AJEndeavors, asked questions, discussed the proposal and options, and then recommended to the Board that SDOU accept the proposal from AJEndeavors. The Board vote to accept the proposal on the new web site was overwhelming and AJEndeavors was given the go ahead to proceed with the development work.

We now have a new web site in the testing phase by the committee members and soon to be released to the entire community. The new graphical interface will be easier to navigate; will allow for use on all mobile devices; allow people to use PayPal for online payment for membership dues, meeting registration, and to sell merchandise such as license plate stickers, T-shirts, etc.; incorporate a photo gallery; a calendar of SDOU events and other bird related events around the state; add a moderated blog for discussions of birds; enhance general communication amongst members; provide additional functionality for Board business; make all issues of *SD Bird Notes* available and searchable on the site; plus it will maintain all the features currently on the web site. The seasonal reporting system will be maintained on the DSU computer system for the present but may be moved to the new web site in the future. SDOU will accept electronic payments ONLY through PayPal which means we will not be keeping any financial information on our system so we do not need to worry about any security breach on our part. Of course, payment may still be made by check in the time honored way.

The domain name, SDOU.org, is presently being transferred from Jeff Palmer's ownership to a permanent SDOU account so it will be easier to maintain in the future. The site is hosted by a company called Hostek, Inc. for a modest fee per year. The web site can be accessed at either <http://sdoubirds.org>, or <http://sdou.org>.

# SEASONAL REPORTS

## The 2015 Spring Season

Compiled By: Jeffrey S. Palmer

01 March 2015 to 31 May 2015

College of Arts & Sciences

Dakota State University • Madison, SD 57042

**T**here were 314 species, including 5 rarities, reported during the season. The ten-year (2005-2014) average is 323. Below, I have tried to highlight the more significant sightings (dates that are among the earliest/latest included in the online database and species that are out of range). For early/late migration dates, I have listed the three earliest/latest dates (by county); however, if these did not include a sighting East River, West River, and along the Missouri River, I have given the earliest/latest reported date in the missing region also. Finally, included at the end is a list of species (24) that were not reported this year and might be expected during the Spring Season. A species is placed on the list if it was not reported this year but had been reported during spring in at least 2 of the previous 5 years. Numbers in parentheses indicates the number of consecutive years (up to 4) that the species has appeared on the list during the season.

**Greater White-fronted Goose** Early: 01 Mar Charles Mix KP; 08 Mar Brookings KCJ; 08 Mar Douglas KP; 08 Mar Hughes KM ... Late: 26 Apr Edmunds BP; 16 Apr Brookings KCJ; 13 Apr Brown BP; 30 Mar Hyde BP

**Snow Goose** Early: 01 Mar Charles Mix KP; 06 Mar Brule BP; 07 Mar Custer JY; 07 Mar Stanley RDO; 08 Mar Brookings KCJ; 08 Mar Douglas KP

**Ross's Goose** Early: 06 Mar Brule BP; 08 Mar Brookings KCJ; 10 Mar Brown and Codington BP; 10 Mar Minnehaha JC ... Late: 09 May Minnehaha MKZ; 08 May Day BP; 22 Apr Brown BP; 04 Apr Charles Mix RM

**Cackling Goose** Late: 16 Apr Custer JY; 04 Apr Spink GO; 30 Mar Pennington CLG; 30 Mar Hyde BP

**Canada Goose** Confirmed Breeding: 05 Apr Meade (ON) ND

**Trumpeter Swan** reported 13 Apr Brown BP; 08 May Hamlin CA

**Tundra Swan** All Reports: 20 Mar Roberts CV; 21 Mar Roberts WV; 08 Apr Marshall GO; **24 Apr Roberts WV**

**Wood Duck** Early: 02 Mar Pennington CLG; 08 Mar Hughes KM; 08 Mar Yankton RND; 19 Mar Brookings KCJ

**Gadwall** Early: 07 Mar Pennington JLB; 08 Mar Yankton RND; 09 Mar Codington BP

**American Wigeon** Early: 02 Mar Pennington CLG; 08 Mar Yankton RND; 10 Mar Charles Mix KP; 10 Mar Minnehaha MKZ

**American Black Duck** Only Report: 10 Apr Grant BP

**Blue-winged Teal** Early: 11 Mar Brookings KCJ; 20 Mar Charles Mix RM; 20 Mar Minnehaha KP; 28 Mar Custer JY

**Cinnamon Teal** Early: 04 Apr Brown BP; 06 Apr Codington BP; 09 Apr Charles Mix RM; 29 Apr Pennington OCW

**Northern Shoveler** Early: 02 Mar Pennington JLB; 08 Mar Brown BP; 10 Mar Charles Mix KP, RM; 10 Mar Minnehaha MKZ

**Northern Pintail** Early: 05 Mar Charles Mix RM; 06 Mar Brule BP; 06 Mar Stanley SS; 07 Mar McPherson BP; 09 Mar Meade EEM

**Green-winged Teal** Early: 01 Mar Pennington JLB; 07 Mar Charles Mix KP; 11 Mar Brown GO  
**Canvasback** Early: 02 Mar Charles Mix RM; 08 Mar Yankton RND; 09 Mar Hughes RDO; 09 Mar Meade EEM; 10 Mar Minnehaha MKZ

**Redhead** Early: 01 Mar Charles Mix KP; 02 Mar Pennington JLB; 08 Mar Brown BP; 08 Mar Yankton RND

**Ring-necked Duck** Early: 08 Mar Yankton RND; 10 Mar Codington BP; 11 Mar Brookings KCJ; 13 Mar Pennington JY

**Greater Scaup** Early: 07 Mar Charles Mix KP; 12 Mar Day BP; 15 Mar Brown and Marshall BP ...  
Late: 11 Apr Lake CA; 04 Apr Edmunds GO; 01 Apr Marshall GO

**Lesser Scaup** Early: 01 Mar Charles Mix KP; 02 Mar Brown GO; 04 Mar Gregory RM; 29 Mar Meade JLB, RSL

**Surf Scoter** Only Report: **18 Apr Minnehaha CA, JC**

**White-winged Scoter** All Reports: 14 Apr Charles Mix KP; **17 Apr Charles Mix RM**

**Long-tailed Duck** All Reports: 02 Mar Charles Mix RM; 05 Mar Charles Mix RM; 10 Mar Charles Mix RM; 16 Mar Charles Mix RM

**Bufflehead** Early: 01 Mar Charles Mix and Gregory KP; 01 Mar Pennington JLB; 18 Mar Douglas KP ... Late: 22 May Codington BP; 13 May Day BP; 08 May Walworth KM; 02 May Pennington JLB

**Common Goldeneye** Late: 14 May Day BP; 20 Apr Yankton RND; 20 Apr Gregory RM; 12 Apr Butte ND

**Hooded Merganser** Early: 08 Mar Yankton RND; 13 Mar Shannon ND; 16 Mar Brown and Codington BP ... Late: 27 May Clark BP; 26 May Brown BP; 23 May Codington CA; 16 May Custer MMM; 02 May Charles Mix RM et al

**Common Merganser** Late: 25 May Pennington CLG; 08 May Stanley RDO, KM; 03 May Gregory RM; 24 Apr Codington BP

**Red-breasted Merganser** Early: 01 Mar Charles Mix KP; 14 Mar Douglas KP; 16 Mar Gregory RM; 15 Apr Shannon PH ... Late: 27 May Yankton RND; 07 May Stanley RDO; 03 May Gregory RM; 03 May Charles Mix JY; 24 Apr Douglas KP

**Ruddy Duck** Early: 19 Mar Brookings KCJ; 19 Mar Hutchinson KP; 19 Mar Minnehaha MKZ; 22 Mar Charles Mix RM; 25 Apr Meade JLB, ND

**Ruffed Grouse** All Reports: 02 Mar Lawrence DGP; 06 Mar Lawrence DGP; 29 Mar Lawrence DGP, EK

**Greater Sage-Grouse** All Reports: 27 Mar Harding CEM; 28 Mar Butte ND

**Northern Bobwhite** All Reports: 28 Mar Gregory RM; 11 Apr Gregory RM; 02 May Charles Mix JY, SS; 06 May Clay DS

**Common Loon** Early: 27 Mar Gregory RM; 01 Apr Charles Mix RM; 06 Apr Stanley RDO; 09 Apr Brookings KCJ; 13 Apr Shannon PH ... Late: 27 May Yankton RND; 25 May Hughes RSL; 20 May Stanley DB; 09 May Marshall GO, BP

**Pied-billed Grebe** Early: 02 Mar Pennington CLG; 19 Mar Lincoln and Minnehaha MKZ; 05 Apr Yankton GJS

**Horned Grebe** Early: 28 Mar Gregory KP, RM; 02 Apr Douglas KP; 04 Apr Edmunds GO; 04 Apr Meade RSL; 04 Apr Yankton DS ... Late: 23 May Brown CV; 03 May Hutchinson CA; 02 May Charles Mix RM et al; 26 Apr Bennett RSL

**Eared Grebe** Early: 05 Apr Butte JY; 11 Apr Sully KM, RDO; 11 Apr Yankton RND; 13 Apr Brown BP; 13 Apr Marshall GO; 13 Apr Minnehaha JC

**Western Grebe** Early: 08 Apr Day GO; 10 Apr Lyman JSP; 10 Apr Meade ND; 10 Apr Minnehaha MKZ

**Clark's Grebe** All Reports: 29 Apr Jones SS; 26 May Brown BP

**American White Pelican** Early: 31 Mar Charles Mix KP; 31 Mar Hughes KM; 01 Apr Brown GO; 01 Apr Stanley RDO; 17 Apr Shannon JY

**Double-crested Cormorant** Early: 22 Mar Brookings KCJ; 30 Mar Buffalo BP; 30 Mar Minnehaha MKZ; 31 Mar Shannon PH

**American Bittern** All Reports: 23 Apr Roberts CV; 11 May Pennington MMM; 14 May Brown MO; 28 May Pennington JLB

**Great Blue Heron** Early: 02 Mar Pennington CLG; 21 Mar Minnehaha CA, JC, MKZ; 22 Mar Custer JLB; 24 Mar Charles Mix RM; 24 Mar Stanley RDO

**Great Egret** Early: 04 Apr Douglas KP; 09 Apr Lincoln MKZ; 10 Apr Hutchinson KP; 12 Apr Stanley KM, RDO

**Snowy Egret** Early: 15 Apr Brown GO; 26 Apr Bennett RSL; 02 May Charles Mix RM

**Little Blue Heron** Only Report: 14 May Brown MO

**Cattle Egret** Early: **06 Apr Stanley RDO**; 24 Apr Brown GO; 25 Apr Hanson KP

**Green Heron** Early: 12 May Minnehaha JC; 13 May Lake JSP; 15 May Brown BP

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** Early: 23 Apr Day BP; 26 Apr Brown BP; 02 May Charles Mix CV et al; 02 May Douglas CA, JC, MKZ

**Glossy Ibis** All Reports: **05 May Marshall GO**; 14 May Brown MO

**White-faced Ibis** Early: 18 Apr Minnehaha CA, JC; 24 Apr Brown GO; 25 Apr Meade JLB; 10 May Stanley KM, RDO

**Turkey Vulture** Early: 28 Mar Hughes KM; 29 Mar Charles Mix RM; 29 Mar Minnehaha JC; 30 Mar Pennington CLG

**Osprey** Early: **22 Mar Brookings KCJ**; 02 Apr Lawrence DGP; 02 Apr Meade EEM; 10 Apr Charles Mix RM

**Northern Harrier** Early: 01 Mar Charles Mix KP; 04 Mar Custer JY; 05 Mar Pennington JLB; 06 Mar Faulk BP

**Sharp-shinned Hawk** Late: 08 May Stanley KM; 07 May Brown BP; 30 Apr Brookings KCJ

**Northern Goshawk** All Reports: 02 Mar Brown GO; 06 Mar Brown GO

**Broad-winged Hawk** Early: **11 Apr Yankton RND**; 17 Apr Union DS; 23 Apr Day BP; 23 Apr Minnehaha JC; 02 May Harding CEM, ND ... Late: 31 May Lawrence RSL; 22 May Lincoln JC; 22 May Douglas KP; 17 May Stanley KM

**Swainson's Hawk** Early: 05 Apr Brookings JSP; 06 Apr Brown GO; 10 Apr Charles Mix RM; 18 Apr Meade RSL

**Ferruginous Hawk** Early: 07 Mar Meade JLB; 11 Mar Harding CEM; 14 Mar Butte ND; 12 Apr Stanley KM; 01 May Hand RDO, SS

**Rough-legged Hawk** Late: **28 May Harding CEM**; 01 May Meade ND; 26 Apr Butte ND; 11 Apr Sully RDO, KM; 30 Mar Faulk BP

**Golden Eagle** Late: 11 Apr Sully RDO, KM; 22 Mar Charles Mix RM; 14 Mar Stanley RDO; 14 Mar Day GO

**Virginia Rail** Early: 28 Apr Day BP; 03 May Minnehaha CA; 04 May Brown GO

**Sora** Early: 27 Apr Minnehaha JC; 28 Apr Day BP; 29 Apr Brown GO; 02 May Perkins ND; 09 May Hyde SS

**Common Gallinule** Only Report: **30 May Brookings JC**

**American Coot** Early: 01 Mar Pennington JLB; 10 Mar Charles Mix KP; 19 Mar Minnehaha MKZ

**Sandhill Crane** Early: 14 Mar Custer MMM; 15 Mar Charles Mix RM; 21 Mar Minnehaha CA, JC, MKZ ... Late: 18 Apr Meade RSL; 14 Apr Brown BP; 11 Apr Sully RDO, KM

**Whooping Crane** Only Report: 04 Apr Charles Mix RM

**Black-bellied Plover** Early: 02 May Charles Mix CA et al; 09 May Clay GJS, RND; 16 May Kingsbury CA ... Late: 27 May Brown GO; 20 May Union DS; 19 May Marshall RDO, KP

**American Golden-Plover** Early: 18 Apr Minnehaha CA, JC; 24 Apr Brown GO; 28 Apr Day BP ... Late: 18 May Day BP; 17 May Spink and Brown BP

**Semipalmated Plover** Early: 18 Apr Minnehaha CA, JC; 22 Apr Brown BP; 23 Apr Day BP; 25 Apr Charles Mix RM; 01 May Meade ND ... Late: 27 May Day BP; 26 May Charles Mix KP; 26 May Brown BP; 02 May Butte ND

**Piping Plover** Early: 02 May Gregory CA, JC; 04 May Stanley RDO

**Killdeer** Early: 13 Mar Custer MMM; 13 Mar Lincoln AH; 13 Mar Pennington JY; 14 Mar Charles Mix KP, RM

**Black-necked Stilt** All Reports: 23 Apr Minnehaha CA; 24 Apr Brown GO; 02 May Brule RDO, SS

**American Avocet** Early: 10 Apr Minnehaha MKZ; 13 Apr Brown BP; 14 Apr Yankton RND; 26 Apr Pennington RSL

**Spotted Sandpiper** Early: 17 Apr Charles Mix RM; 23 Apr Stanley RDO; 27 Apr Day BP; 27 Apr Pennington CLG

**Solitary Sandpiper** Early: 01 May Brown MO; 01 May Day BP; 01 May Douglas SS; 01 May Meade ND, RSL; 01 May Minnehaha JC; 02 May Charles Mix CA et al ... Late: 23 May Meade RSL; 20 May Yankton RND; 19 May Stanley KM; 15 May Douglas KP

**Greater Yellowlegs** Early: 19 Mar Davison KP; 25 Mar Meade RSL; 26 Mar Brookings KCJ; 28 Mar Charles Mix KP ... Late: 26 May Charles Mix KP; 16 May Minnehaha GO; 16 May Lincoln GO; 16 May Brown BP; 11 May Custer JY

**Willet** Early: 21 Apr Davison RM; 22 Apr Brown BP; 24 Apr Roberts MO; 26 Apr Bennett and Jackson RSL; 26 Apr Stanley KM, RDO

**Lesser Yellowlegs** Early: 01 Apr Brown and Marshall GO; 04 Apr Charles Mix RM; 04 Apr Minnehaha JC; 04 Apr Spink GO; 05 Apr Meade JY, RSL ... Late: 28 May Charles Mix RM; 19 May Marshall KP; 16 May Minnehaha MKZ, JC, CA; 11 May Custer JY

**Upland Sandpiper** Early: 25 Apr Clay DS; 29 Apr Faulk MMM; 01 May Brown MO; 01 May Charles Mix KP, RND; 01 May Hand SS; 01 May Hutchinson CA; 01 May Meade ND, RSL

**Long-billed Curlew** Early: 01 Apr Shannon PH; 06 Apr Custer MMM; 12 Apr Butte and Harding ND; 25 May Lyman RSL

**Hudsonian Godwit** Early: 13 Apr Marshall GO; 13 Apr Minnehaha CA, JC; 13 Apr Turner CA; 17 Apr Charles Mix RM; 26 May Meade JLB, RSL ... Late: 22 May Day BP; 18 May Kingsbury JSP; 12 May Charles Mix KP; 12 May Brown BP

**Marbled Godwit** Early: 12 Apr Roberts CV; 13 Apr Brown BP; 13 Apr Minnehaha CA, JC; 17 Apr Charles Mix RM; 18 Apr Meade RSL

**Ruddy Turnstone** Early: **24 Apr Day BP**; 13 May Walworth RDO; 16 May Lincoln GO; 16 May Minnehaha CA et al ... Late: 28 May Charles Mix RM; 22 May Day BP; 20 May Marshall GO

**Red Knot** Only Report: **18 May Kingsbury JSP**

**Stilt Sandpiper** Early: **22 Apr Douglas KP**; 01 May Brown MO; 04 May Day BP; 09 May Hyde SS; 14 May Pennington JLB ... Late: 27 May Roberts GO; 26 May Brown BP; 25 May Custer MMM; 13 May Walworth and Potter RDO

**Sanderling** Early: 01 May Hand SS; 08 May Stanley SS; 12 May Brown BP ... Late: 26 May Brown BP; 25 May Hughes RSL; 22 May Day BP

**Dunlin** Early: **10 Apr Brown MO**; 23 Apr Day BP; 27 Apr Faulk BP; 09 May Clay GJS, RND ... Late: 28 May Charles Mix RM; 27 May Roberts, Marshall and Brown GO; 27 May Day BP; 27 May Brown CV

**Baird's Sandpiper** Early: 21 Mar Minnehaha CA, JC, MKZ; 22 Mar Brown BP; 22 Mar Stanley RDO; 26 Mar Meade ND ... Late: 28 May Charles Mix RM; 25 May Sully and Hughes RSL; 23 May Brown CV; 02 May Pennington JLB

**Least Sandpiper** Early: **28 Mar Clay DS**; 12 Apr Charles Mix KP; 18 Apr Minnehaha CA, JC; 26 Apr Bennett RSL ... Late: 25 May Hughes RSL; 23 May Brown CV; 21 May Meade RSL

**White-rumped Sandpiper** Early: 01 May Brown MO; 01 May Hutchinson and Minnehaha JC; 02 May Charles Mix CA et al

**Pectoral Sandpiper** Early: 04 Apr Charles Mix RM; 04 Apr Clay DS; 11 Apr Lake CA ... Late: 28 May Charles Mix RM; 25 May Sully RSL; 23 May Codrington CA; 23 May Brown CV

**Semipalmated Sandpiper** Early: 10 Apr Brown MO; 13 Apr Marshall GO; 13 Apr Minnehaha CA; 17 Apr Charles Mix RM; 02 May Pennington JLB ... Late: 28 May Charles Mix RM; 27 May Day BP; 26 May Brown BP; 21 May Meade RSL

**Short-billed Dowitcher** Early: 25 Apr Charles Mix RM; 01 May Meade ND; 04 May Hand BP ... Late: **28 May Charles Mix RM**; 12 May Brown BP; 09 May Marshall GO, BP; 09 May Lincoln JC

**Long-billed Dowitcher** Early: 10 Apr Charles Mix RM; 22 Apr Douglas KP; 24 Apr Clay DS; 24 Apr Day BP; 26 Apr Pennington RSL ... Late: 18 May Meade RSL; 17 May Lake JC; 16 May Minnehaha CA; 13 May Walworth and Potter RDO

**Wilson's Snipe** Early: 15 Mar Fall River PH; 02 Apr Douglas RM; 06 Apr Day BP; 10 Apr Charles Mix RM

**American Woodcock** All Reports: 23 Mar Minnehaha CA; 24 Mar Minnehaha CA; 25 Mar Minnehaha CA; 30 Mar Lincoln JC; 30 Mar Minnehaha CA

**Wilson's Phalarope** Early: **28 May Custer JY**; 13 Apr Minnehaha CA; 22 Apr Brown BP; 22 Apr Charles Mix and Douglas KP

**Red-necked Phalarope** All Reports: **02 May Butte ND**; 10 May Stanley RDO; 13 May Walworth RDO; 14 May Pennington JLB

**Bonaparte's Gull** Early: 01 Apr Charles Mix RM; 02 Apr Stanley RDO; 04 Apr Yankton DS; 06 Apr Day BP; 22 Apr Tripp SS ... Late: 18 May Stanley DB; 10 May Douglas KP; 02 May Pennington JLB

**Franklin's Gull** Early: 17 Mar Moody KCJ; 18 Mar Brookings KCJ; 19 Mar Brown BP; 25 Mar Stanley RDO; 10 Apr Fall River JY

**Ring-billed Gull** Early: 01 Mar Hughes RDO; 10 Mar Charles Mix KP, RM; 10 Mar Minnehaha JC; 11 Mar Pennington RSL



**California Gull** Early: 03 Mar Hughes RDO; 14 Mar Butte JLB; 14 Mar Stanley RDO; 20 Mar Brown BP

**Herring Gull** Early: 01 Mar Hughes RDO; 04 Mar Charles Mix RM; 14 Mar Stanley RDO; 16 Mar Codington BP; 17 Mar Meade RSL ... Late: 16 May Stanley RDO; 09 May Marshall GO, BP; 09 May Faulk SS; 09 May Clay RND, GJS; 24 Mar Pennington RSL

**Thayer's Gull** Late: **18 Apr Brule RDO**; 04 Apr Stanley RDO; 15 Mar Charles Mix KP

**Iceland Gull** Late: **04 Apr Stanley RDO**; 03 Mar Hughes RDO

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** All Reports: 18 Mar Stanley RDO; 29 Mar Stanley RDO; 11 Apr Brule DS, JSP

**Glaucous Gull** All Reports: 01 Mar Hughes RDO; 08 Mar Hughes KM; 14 Mar Stanley RDO; 25 Mar Stanley RDO

**Caspian Tern** Early: 26 Apr Stanley KM, RDO; 22 May Roberts BP; 25 May Hughes RSL ... Late: 29 May Stanley KM; 27 May Day BP

**Black Tern** Early: 08 May Douglas KP; 09 May Brown BP, GO; 09 May Clay GJS; 09 May Faulk and Hand SS; 09 May Hamlin CA; 11 May Custer MMM

**Common Tern** Early: 09 May Stanley RDO; 27 May Brown CV

**Forster's Tern** Early: 19 Apr Brookings KCJ; 19 Apr Brown GO; 19 Apr Day BP; 22 Apr Charles Mix RM; 26 Apr Bennett RSL

**Rock Pigeon** Confirmed Breeding: 20 Mar Pennington (NB) ND; 02 Apr Davison (NB) RM; 05 Apr Pennington (NB) ND

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** Confirmed Breeding: 25 May Charles Mix (CN) RM

**Mourning Dove** Early: 06 Mar Buffalo BP; 10 Mar Minnehaha JC; 17 Mar Lincoln MKZ; 17 Mar Roberts CV; 28 Mar Custer JY

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo** All Reports: 27 May Marshall GO; 28 May Charles Mix RM

**Black-billed Cuckoo** Only Report: **17 May Lincoln CA**

**Barn Owl** Only Report: 02 May Charles Mix CA et al

**Eastern Screech-Owl** Confirmed Breeding: 28 May Harding (NY) CEM

**Great Horned Owl** Confirmed Breeding: 01 Apr Charles Mix (NY) RM

**Snowy Owl** Late: 31 Mar Day BP; 22 Mar Brown BP; 14 Mar Roberts GO, CV

**Burrowing Owl** Early: 31 Mar Lyman SS; 05 Apr Pennington JLB; 10 Apr Bennett PH; 01 May Hand RDO, SS

**Long-eared Owl** Confirmed Breeding: 18 Apr Harding (NY) ND; 22 May Harding (NY) CEM

**Northern Saw-whet Owl** Confirmed Breeding: 24 Apr Harding (NY) CEM

**Common Nighthawk** Early: 15 May Clay DS; 16 May Hughes EDS; 20 May Brown BP; 28 May Custer MMM

**Common Poorwill** All Reports: **02 May Meade ND**; 21 May Custer MMM; 21 May Harding KM; 22 May Harding KM; 27 May Custer MMM

**Eastern Whip-poor-will** Early: 30 Apr Charles Mix RM; 01 May Gregory JC

**Chimney Swift** Early: 28 Apr Douglas KP; 02 May Charles Mix RM; 03 May Brown BP; 03 May Clay DS

**White-throated Swift** Early: 02 May Harding CEM, ND; 08 May Custer JY; 15 May Fall River JY

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird** Early: 06 May Clay DS; 11 May Lake JSP; 13 May Charles Mix RM; 13 May Douglas KP

**Broad-tailed Hummingbird** Only Report: 31 May Pennington JLB

**Belted Kingfisher** Early: 08 Mar Pennington RSL; 08 Mar Yankton RND; 23 Mar Lawrence DGP; 07 Apr Brookings KCJ; 07 Apr Codington BP

**Lewis's Woodpecker** All Reports: 08 Mar Lawrence JLB; 14 Mar Lawrence JLB; 15 Mar Meade EEM; 28 May Custer JF; 31 May Custer JF

**Red-headed Woodpecker** Early: 13 Apr Marshall GO; 02 May Charles Mix CA et al; 03 May Clay GJS; 03 May Gregory CA et al; 03 May Hutchinson JC; 08 May Custer JY

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** Early: 11 Apr Yankton RND; 17 Apr Minnehaha JC; 17 Apr Union DS

**Red-naped Sapsucker** Early: **04 Apr Lawrence JLB**; 03 May Pennington JLB; 30 May Custer JF

**Hairy Woodpecker** Confirmed Breeding: 26 May Lake (NY) JSP

**Black-backed Woodpecker** All Reports: 12 Mar Lawrence DGP; 18 Mar Lawrence DGP; 28 Mar Lawrence DGP; 30 May Custer JF; 31 May Custer JF

**Northern Flicker** Early: 01 Mar Charles Mix KP, RM; 01 Mar Hughes and Stanley RDO; 01 Mar Meade EEM; 08 Mar Brookings KCJ; 08 Mar Douglas KP

**Pileated Woodpecker** Only Report: 24 Apr Marshall MO

**Merlin** Late: 31 May Lawrence RSL; 28 May Harding CEM; 10 May Custer JY; 19 Apr Brookings KCJ; 15 Mar Charles Mix KP

**Peregrine Falcon** Early: 01 Apr Minnehaha CA; 04 Apr Charles Mix RM; 10 Apr Grant BP; 25 Apr Meade ND ... Late: 13 May Minnehaha CA; 11 May Stanley SS, RDO; 09 May Hamlin CA

**Prairie Falcon** All Reports: 01 Mar Pennington RSL; 11 Mar Custer JY; 11 Mar Harding CEM; 11 Apr Harding ND; 10 May Custer JY

**Olive-sided Flycatcher** Early: 15 May Stanley KM, RDO; 17 May Hughes DB; 19 May Brown GO ... Late: 31 May Stanley RDO; 28 May Hughes DB; 28 May Charles Mix RM; 27 May Roberts and Marshall GO

**Western Wood-Pewee** All Reports: 11 May Custer JY; 23 May Fall River JY; 26 May Pennington RSL; 27 May Pennington OCW; 28 May Pennington JLB; 31 May Custer JF

**Eastern Wood-Pewee** Early: 15 May Union MO; 17 May Brown BP; 17 May Lincoln CA

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** All Reports: 26 May Lake JSP; 30 May Brown GO; 30 May Hughes DB

**Alder Flycatcher** All Reports: 23 May Brookings CA; 23 May Lincoln JC; 26 May Charles Mix KP; 28 May Charles Mix RM

**Willow Flycatcher** Early: 11 May Union DS; 13 May Minnehaha CA; 15 May Stanley RDO; 25 May Jones RSL

**Least Flycatcher** Early: 02 May Edmunds BP; 02 May Lake JSP; 03 May Clay GJS; 03 May Pennington RSL; 03 May Stanley KM

**Dusky Flycatcher** Only Report: 31 May Meade RSL

**Cordilleran Flycatcher** All Reports: **13 May Pennington JLB**; 30 May Custer JF

**Eastern Phoebe** Early: 31 Mar Clay DS; 06 Apr Hughes KM; 10 Apr Charles Mix RM; 11 Apr Minnehaha CA; 02 May Pennington RSL

**Say's Phoebe** Early: 05 Apr Lawrence ND; 14 Apr Hughes RDO; 01 May Hand SS; 01 May Roberts MO

**Great Crested Flycatcher** Early: **02 May Charles Mix RM; 03 May Gregory CA et al**; 10 May Douglas KP

**Western Kingbird** Early: 01 May Charles Mix KP; 02 May Gregory CA, JC; 02 May Harding and Perkins ND; 02 May Pennington RSL; 04 May Brown GO; 04 May Douglas KP; 04 May Edmunds and Hand BP

**Eastern Kingbird** Early: **02 May Charles Mix RM**; 05 May Yankton RND; 07 May Clay DS; 08 May Douglas KP; 08 May Hamlin CA; 11 May Custer JY

**Loggerhead Shrike** Early: 31 Mar Tripp SS; 02 Apr Douglas KP; 04 Apr Clay DS

**Northern Shrike** Late: 10 Apr Brown MO; 28 Mar Meade RSL; 28 Mar Gregory RM

**Bell's Vireo** Early: 16 May Union MO; 17 May Stanley KM; 20 May Shannon PH; 21 May Douglas KP

**Yellow-throated Vireo** Early: 08 May Union DS; 09 May Lincoln JC; 09 May Marshall BP, GO

**Plumbeous Vireo** All Reports: 13 May Pennington JLB; 15 May Fall River JY

**Blue-headed Vireo** Early: 02 May Lake JSP; 08 May Union DS; 09 May Stanley RDO ... Late: 26 May Brown GO; 25 May Clay GJS; 21 May Charles Mix RM

**Warbling Vireo** Early: 29 Apr Charles Mix RM; 03 May Gregory CA et al; 05 May Yankton RND; 08 May Douglas KP; 20 May Shannon PH

**Philadelphia Vireo** Early: 09 May Minnehaha KP; 14 May Marshall MO; 16 May Stanley KM, RDO ... Late: 27 May Lake JSP; 26 May Brown GO; 25 May Hughes RSL

**Red-eyed Vireo** Early: 09 May Union GJS, RND; 10 May Minnehaha CA; 12 May Brookings KCJ; 12 May Roberts CV; 26 May Pennington RSL

**Pinyon Jay** All Reports: 31 Mar Custer JLB; 10 May Custer JY

**Purple Martin** Early: 17 Apr Douglas KP; 18 Apr Minnehaha CA, JC; 27 Apr Brown BP; 02 May Charles Mix RM

**Tree Swallow** Early: 31 Mar Brown BP; 04 Apr Meade RSL; 04 Apr Yankton DS

**Violet-green Swallow** Early: 20 Apr Pennington CLG; 08 May Custer JY; 15 May Fall River JY

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow** Early: 22 Apr Brown BP; 23 Apr Gregory RM; 23 Apr Roberts CV; 25 Apr Meade RSL

**Bank Swallow** Early: 26 Apr Aurora KP; 30 Apr Stanley SS; 01 May Charles Mix JC; 08 May Custer JY

**Cliff Swallow** Early: 26 Apr Bennett RSL; 26 Apr Brown BP; 29 Apr Minnehaha JC; 29 Apr Stanley KM, RDO

**Barn Swallow** Early: 16 Apr Brookings KCJ; 18 Apr Douglas KP; 18 Apr Minnehaha CA, JC, MKZ; 23 Apr Custer JY; 25 Apr Charles Mix RM; 25 Apr Hughes KM

**Red-breasted Nuthatch** Late: 15 Mar Hughes EDS; 15 Mar Edmunds GO; 06 Mar Brown GO

**Brown Creeper** Late: 30 Apr Brookings KCJ; 25 Apr Hughes KM; 18 Apr Lincoln AH

**Rock Wren** All Reports: 25 Apr Butte EK; 11 May Custer JY; 15 May Fall River JY; 22 May Custer MMM; 22 May Harding KM

**House Wren** Early: 24 Apr Charles Mix RM; 24 Apr Douglas KP; 25 Apr Minnehaha JC; 25 Apr Union DS; 02 May Pennington RSL

**Winter Wren** All Reports: 19 Apr Brown BP; 23 Apr Minnehaha JC; 24 Apr Roberts MO

**Sedge Wren** Early: 07 May Lincoln CA; 09 May Minnehaha MKZ; 14 May Brown BP, MO; 21 May Charles Mix RM

**Marsh Wren** Early: 05 Apr Meade JY; 18 Apr Hughes KM; 23 Apr Brookings KCJ

**Golden-crowned Kinglet** Late: 10 Apr Minnehaha JC; 08 Apr Brown BP; 07 Mar Stanley RDO

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** Early: 03 Apr Hughes KM; 10 Apr Minnehaha JC; 11 Apr Brookings KP; 26 Apr Lawrence EK ... Late: 23 May Brookings CA; 19 May Brown KP; 14 May Day GO; 13 May Union GJS

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** Early: **17 Apr Union DS**; 29 Apr Lake JSP; 02 May Charles Mix CA et al; 12 May Tripp RDO

**Eastern Bluebird** Early: 16 Mar Stanley RDO; 17 Mar Gregory RM; 19 Mar Charles Mix RM; 19 Mar Fall River ND; 21 Mar Minnehaha CA, JC, MKZ

**Mountain Bluebird** Early: 07 Mar Meade EEM; 14 Mar Harding CEM; 14 Mar Lawrence ND; 14 Apr Gregory RM

**Veery** Early: 10 May Stanley RDO; 11 May Roberts CV; 14 May Hughes EDS

**Gray-cheeked Thrush** Early: 09 May Marshall GO; 09 May Minnehaha KP; 10 May Brown BP, GO; 10 May Lincoln JC; 10 May Stanley KM, RDO, SS ... Late: 24 May Stanley RDO; 19 May Minnehaha CA; 17 May Hughes DB

**Swainson's Thrush** Early: 02 May Charles Mix RM, SS; 02 May Harding ND; 02 May Lake JSP; 02 May Stanley KM

**Hermit Thrush** Early: 17 Apr Minnehaha JC; 18 Apr Hughes KM; 18 Apr Marshall GO ... Late: 10 May Minnehaha MKZ; 05 May Brookings KCJ; 01 May Brown BP; 19 Apr Hughes RDO

**Wood Thrush** Early: 09 May Lincoln JC; 14 May Douglas KP; 14 May Roberts MO; 15 May Union MO

**American Robin** Confirmed Breeding: 18 Apr Charles Mix (NB) RM; 18 Apr Harding (CN) ND

**Gray Catbird** Early: 26 Apr Roberts CV; 04 May Clay DS; 05 May Yankton RND; 12 May Tripp RDO

**Brown Thrasher** Early: 19 Apr Clay GJS; 19 Apr Lincoln AH; 22 Apr Charles Mix KP; 03 May Harding CEM

**European Starling** Confirmed Breeding: 30 Mar Pennington (CN) CLG

**American Pipit** Early: 04 Apr Minnehaha JC; 04 Apr Stanley JY, RDO; 15 Apr Meade ND ... Late: 11 May Stanley RDO; 26 Apr Aurora KP; 22 Apr Brown BP

**Bohemian Waxwing** Late: **10 Apr Lawrence DGP**

**Ovenbird** Early: 03 May Gregory CV, JY; 04 May Brown GO; 07 May Minnehaha CA; 16 May Custer JF

**Worm-eating Warbler** Only Report: 16 May Union DS, MO

**Northern Waterthrush** Early: 29 Apr Faulk MMM; 01 May Clay GJS; 02 May Charles Mix CV, KP ... Late: 26 May Brown GO; 21 May Hughes EDS; 20 May Yankton RND

**Golden-winged Warbler** Early: **06 May Charles Mix RM**; 08 May Union DS; 09 May Gregory RM; 10 May Douglas KP; 10 May Minnehaha MKZ ... Late: 22 May Lincoln JC; 16 May Union MO, DS; 15 May Minnehaha JC

**Blue-winged Warbler** Early: **03 May Brown BP, GO**; 09 May Lincoln JC

**Black-and-white Warbler** Early: 02 May Brown GO; 04 May Edmunds GO; 04 May Minnehaha CA, JC; 08 May Union DS; 12 May Tripp RDO ... Late: 27 May Marshall CV; 25 May Lincoln MKZ; 23 May Brown GO; 18 May Stanley RDO, DB

**Tennessee Warbler** Early: 05 May Brookings KCJ; 07 May Clay DS; 07 May Lake JSP; 07 May Lincoln and Minnehaha CA; 25 May Jones RSL

**Orange-crowned Warbler** Early: 18 Apr Charles Mix RM; 19 Apr Hughes KM; 23 Apr Brookings KCJ; 27 Apr Pennington CLG ... Late: 28 May Harding CEM; 25 May Stanley RDO; 25 May Jones RSL; 25 May Douglas KP

**Nashville Warbler** Early: 07 May Clay DS; 07 May Lake JSP; 09 May Lincoln JC; 09 May Union GJS, RND; 25 May Jones RSL ... Late: 26 May Brown GO; 25 May Lincoln MKZ; 23 May Brookings CA

**Virginia's Warbler** Only Report: **10 May Custer JY**

**Connecticut Warbler** All Reports: **18 May Hughes DB**; 21 May Brown GO; 26 May Brown GO; 27 May Minnehaha CA

**MacGillivray's Warbler** Only Report: 26 May Hughes EDS

**Mourning Warbler** Early: 12 May Brookings KCJ; 15 May Clay DS; 15 May Lincoln MO ... Late: 27 May Marshall GO; 26 May Brown GO; 25 May Minnehaha JC; 22 May Hughes DB

**Common Yellowthroat** Early: 26 Apr Roberts CV; 02 May Stanley KM; 03 May Charles Mix KP; 11 May Custer JY

**American Redstart** Early: **03 May Gregory JY**; 09 May Lincoln JC; 09 May Union RND; 21 May Pennington OCW

**Cape May Warbler** Early: 11 May Stanley KM, RDO; 14 May Marshall MO; 19 May Brown BP, GO, RDO ... Late: 24 May Hughes DB; 21 May Brown GO; 18 May Stanley DB

**Northern Parula** Early: 10 May Minnehaha CA; 13 May Brown and Edmunds GO; 16 May Union DS, MO ... Late: 20 May Union DS; 20 May Minnehaha RND, JC; 14 May Brown MO

**Magnolia Warbler** Early: 10 May Lincoln JC; 10 May Minnehaha CA; 11 May Lake JSP; 11 May Stanley KM, RDO, SS; 26 May Jones SS ... Late: 30 May Hughes DB; 27 May Yankton RND; 27 May Marshall GO

**Bay-breasted Warbler** Early: 10 May Douglas KP; 10 May Minnehaha MKZ; 11 May Hughes SS ... Late: 29 May Brown BP; 26 May Lake JSP; 21 May Roberts CV; 18 May Stanley SS

**Blackburnian Warbler** Early: 10 May Minnehaha MKZ; 13 May Lake JSP; 14 May Day GO; 14 May Roberts MO; 16 May Union MO ... Late: 25 May Douglas KP; 19 May Brown RDO et al; 17 May Stanley KM; 17 May Hughes DB

**Yellow Warbler** Early: 02 May Charles Mix CA et al; 02 May Gregory CA, JC; 02 May Stanley KM; 05 May Marshall GO; 06 May Pennington CLG

**Chestnut-sided Warbler** Early: 13 May Lake JSP; 13 May Union GJS; 14 May Marshall GO, MO; 14 May Minnehaha GO ... Late: 27 May Marshall GO; 26 May Lake JSP; 25 May Stanley RDO; 25 May Minnehaha CA; 25 May Lincoln MKZ; 25 May Clay GJS

**Blackpoll Warbler** Early: 08 May Union DS; 09 May Hand and Hyde SS; 09 May Stanley RDO; 17 May Harding ND ... Late: 28 May Harding CEM; 26 May Hughes EDS; 25 May Stanley RDO; 25 May Pennington CLG; 25 May Clay GJS; 23 May Lincoln JC; 23 May Brown GO, CV, BP; 23 May Brookings CA

**Palm Warbler** Early: 27 Apr Brown BP; 30 Apr Brookings KCJ; 02 May Charles Mix JY, RM, SS ... Late: 20 May Minnehaha JC; 19 May Brown BP; 17 May Lincoln MO; 15 May Clay DS

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** Early: 01 Mar Stanley RDO; 05 Apr Pennington JY; 11 Apr Yankton RND; 16 Apr Brookings KCJ ... Late: 27 May Yankton RND; 26 May Lake JSP; 25 May Hughes RSL

**Black-throated Green Warbler** Early: 08 May Union DS; 12 May Brookings KCJ; 12 May Minnehaha CA ... Late: 19 May Brown GO; 16 May Union MO; 15 May Minnehaha JC

**Canada Warbler** Early: 14 May Stanley KM; 17 May Lincoln CA; 18 May Clay GJS ... Late: 27 May Marshall GO; 23 May Brown CV, BP; 20 May Minnehaha JC

**Wilson's Warbler** Early: 09 May Lincoln JC; 09 May Stanley RDO; 11 May Union DS ... Late: 26 May Hughes EDS; 23 May Brown BP; 21 May Minnehaha CA

**Yellow-breasted Chat** Early: 15 May Roberts CV; 15 May Stanley KM, RDO; 16 May Custer MMM; 16 May Pennington JLB

**Scarlet Tanager** Early: 07 May Stanley KM; 08 May Douglas KP; 09 May Union GJS, RND

**Western Tanager** All Reports: 09 May Custer MMM; 28 May Custer JF; 31 May Custer JF; 31 May Harding ND

**Spotted Towhee** Early: 13 Apr Clay DS; 17 Apr Charles Mix RM; 21 Apr Hughes EDS; 23 Apr Pennington OCW; 24 Apr Minnehaha CA

**Eastern Towhee** Early: 16 Apr Lincoln CA; 19 Apr Clay GJS; 02 May Charles Mix RM

**American Tree Sparrow** Late: 22 Apr Tripp SS; 11 Apr Hamlin KP; 11 Apr Day GO; 22 Mar Charles Mix RM

**Chipping Sparrow** Early: 14 Mar Harding CEM; 05 Apr Stanley RDO; 06 Apr Charles Mix and Douglas KP

**Clay-colored Sparrow** Early: 28 Apr Brookings KCJ; 29 Apr Pennington OCW; 01 May Aurora SS; 01 May Charles Mix KP; 01 May Custer MMM; 01 May Minnehaha CA

**Brewer's Sparrow** All Reports: 02 May Custer MMM; 02 May Pennington JLB; 16 May Custer MMM; 18 May Butte ND

**Field Sparrow** Early: 11 Apr Clay DS; 16 Apr Hughes KM; 16 Apr Lincoln CA; 29 Apr Pennington OCW

**Vesper Sparrow** Early: 06 Apr Charles Mix KP; 11 Apr Brule DS; 12 Apr Roberts CV; 12 Apr Stanley KM; 18 Apr Custer MMM

**Lark Sparrow** Early: 30 Apr Yankton RND; 01 May Charles Mix RND; 02 May Butte and Meade ND; 02 May Edmunds BP; 02 May Pennington JLB

**Lark Bunting** Early: 02 May Butte and Perkins ND; 08 May Custer MMM; 09 May Pennington JLB; 21 May Charles Mix RM; 21 May Stanley KM

**Savannah Sparrow** Early: 28 Mar Gregory RM; 11 Apr Lake CA; 13 Apr Turner CA; 23 Apr Custer JY

**Grasshopper Sparrow** Early: **17 Apr Custer MMM**; 25 Apr Charles Mix RM; 03 May Gregory CV, JY; 04 May Hand BP

**Baird's Sparrow** Only Report: **08 May Custer MMM**

**Fox Sparrow** Early: 26 Mar Brookings KCJ; 30 Mar Lincoln JC; 02 Apr Edmunds BP; 02 Apr Minnehaha CA; 05 Apr Clay GJS ... Late: 17 Apr Charles Mix RM; 14 Apr Yankton RND; 13 Apr Marshall GO

**Song Sparrow** Early: 09 Mar Custer MMM; 09 Mar Pennington CLG; 20 Mar McCook KP; 21 Mar Charles Mix KP

**Lincoln's Sparrow** Early: 06 Apr Douglas KP; 09 Apr Lincoln MKZ; 18 Apr Stanley KM; 21 Apr Custer MMM ... Late: **28 May Harding CEM**; 22 May Hughes DB; 20 May Minnehaha JC

**Swamp Sparrow** Early: 16 Apr Minnehaha CA; 18 Apr Clay DS; 18 Apr Douglas KP

**White-throated Sparrow** Early: 11 Mar Minnehaha CA; 02 Apr Lincoln CA; 08 Apr Clay GJS; 10 May Custer JY ... Late: 28 May Harding CEM; 26 May Lake JSP; 21 May Brown GO; 19 May Stanley KM; 19 May Hughes EDS, DB

**Harris's Sparrow** Early: 15 Mar Charles Mix RM; 15 Mar Clay GJS; 16 Mar Brookings KCJ; 23 Apr Pennington OCW ... Late: 28 May Harding CEM; 26 May Lake JSP; 19 May Hughes DB

**White-crowned Sparrow** Early: 28 Mar Custer JY; 13 Apr Douglas KP; 23 Apr Hughes KM; 23 Apr Pennington OCW ... Late: 28 May Harding CEM; 22 May Roberts CV; 22 May Custer MMM; 20 May Stanley DB

**Dark-eyed Junco** Late: 10 May Lincoln JC; 05 May Marshall GO; 30 Apr Brookings KCJ; 29 Apr Hughes EDS

**Lapland Longspur** Late: 21 Apr Roberts CV; 11 Apr Sully RDO, KM; 10 Apr Brown MO; 01 Mar Harding CEM

**Chestnut-collared Longspur** Early: 30 Mar Hyde BP; 03 Apr Custer MMM; 10 Apr Brown MO

**Snow Bunting** Late: 31 Mar Hughes EDS; 24 Mar Day BP; 20 Mar Codington BP

**Northern Cardinal** reported 09 May Pennington JLB; 27 May Pennington OCW

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak** Early: 03 May Gregory CA et al; 04 May Clay GJS; 04 May Minnehaha CA, JC; 11 May Custer JY

**Black-headed Grosbeak** Early: 03 May Gregory RM; 05 May Stanley KM; 09 May Meade EEM

**Blue Grosbeak** All Reports: 16 May Custer MMM; 23 May Pennington RSL; 25 May Douglas KP; 29 May Stanley KM

**Lazuli Bunting** Early: 15 May Minnehaha CA; 16 May Stanley DB, RDO; 22 May Hughes DB; 28 May Harding CEM

**Indigo Bunting** Early: 06 May Charles Mix RM; 06 May Clay DS; 15 May Minnehaha JC; 15 May Roberts CV; 15 May Stanley RDO; 15 May Union MO

**Dickcissel** Early: **24 Apr Yankton RND**; 09 May Clay RND; 21 May Charles Mix RM; 25 May Jones RSL

**Bobolink** Early: 02 May Charles Mix RM; 08 May Roberts BP; 09 May Faulk and Hand SS; 09 May Hamlin CA; 09 May Minnehaha MKZ; 09 May Roberts CV; 12 May Tripp RDO  
**Red-winged Blackbird** Early: 02 Mar Brown BP; 06 Mar Buffalo BP; 10 Mar Charles Mix KP; 10 Mar Jones SS; 10 Mar Minnehaha JC, MKZ  
**Western Meadowlark** Early: 06 Mar Charles Mix RM; 06 Mar Custer MMM; 10 Mar Jones SS; 10 Mar Minnehaha JC  
**Yellow-headed Blackbird** Early: 16 Mar Day BP; 02 Apr Roberts WV; 03 Apr Shannon PH; 06 Apr Charles Mix KP  
**Rusty Blackbird** Early: 16 Mar Day BP; 18 Mar Douglas KP; 19 Mar Brookings KCJ; 19 Mar Hutchinson KP; 18 Apr Charles Mix RM ... Late: 01 May Aurora SS, RDO; 23 Apr Brookings KCJ; 13 Apr Minnehaha JC  
**Brewer's Blackbird** Early: 19 Mar Douglas and Hutchinson KP; 22 Mar Brookings KCJ; 25 Apr Meade RSL; 25 May Sully RSL  
**Common Grackle** Early: 09 Mar Lincoln AH; 11 Mar Charles Mix RM; 13 Mar Douglas KP; 28 Mar Custer JY  
**Great-tailed Grackle** All Reports: 02 Apr Shannon PH; 13 Apr Brookings KCJ; 16 Apr Brookings KCJ; 27 May Marshall GO; 28 May Harding CEM  
**Brown-headed Cowbird** Early: 08 Mar Lincoln AH; 15 Mar Charles Mix KP; 16 Mar Day BP; 25 Apr Meade ND  
**Orchard Oriole** Early: 03 May Gregory CA, JC; 06 May Clay DS; 07 May Yankton RND; 12 May Brookings KCJ; 14 May Pennington JLB  
**Bullock's Oriole** Early: 11 May Custer JY; 14 May Pennington JLB; 15 May Fall River JY  
**Baltimore Oriole** Early: 25 Apr Charles Mix RM; 02 May Stanley KM; 03 May Gregory CA et al; 04 May Douglas KP; 04 May Lake JSP; 04 May Minnehaha CA, JC; 12 May Tripp RDO  
**Pine Grosbeak** All Reports: 08 Mar Brookings KCJ; 08 Mar Harding CEM; 09 Mar Brookings RM; 15 Mar Edmunds GO  
**Purple Finch** Late: 12 May Roberts CV; 21 Apr Clay GJS; 15 Apr Stanley RDO  
**Common Redpoll** Late: 30 Mar Roberts CV; 09 Mar Pennington ND; 08 Mar Harding CEM; 08 Mar Brown BP  
**Pine Siskin** Late: 30 May Roberts CV; 28 May Hughes DB; 22 May Charles Mix RM  
**Evening Grosbeak** Only Report: 08 May Meade EEM  
**House Sparrow** Confirmed Breeding: 30 Mar Pennington (CN) CLG

**Reports Requiring Acceptance By The Rare Bird Records Committee**

**Ross's Goose** 27 May Clark BP  
**Greater Scaup** 18 May Meade RSL  
**American Golden-Plover** 20 Mar Minnehaha KP  
**Spotted Sandpiper** 23 Mar Stanley RDO  
**Solitary Sandpiper** 28 Mar Custer JY  
**Long-billed Curlew** 09 May Faulk SS  
**White-winged Dove** 25-27 May Charles Mix RM, KP  
**Northern Saw-whet Owl** 12 Mar (NY) CEM  
**White-eyed Vireo** 15 May Union MO  
**Black-billed Magpie** 06 Mar Roberts MO  
**Common Raven** 10 Mar Stanley RDO; 15 Mar Hughes EDS; 02 May Harding CEM  
**House Wren** 28 Mar Custer JY  
**Townsend's Warbler** 19 May Brown DST, GO, KP, RDO  
**McCown's Longspur** 12 Apr Harding ND  
**Eastern Meadowlark** 23-26 Apr Roberts CV

**Species Expected But Not Reported**

Black Scoter (2), Barrow's Goldeneye (2), Red-necked Grebe, Least Bittern (2), Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (4), Whimbrel, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Mew Gull, Least Tern, Barred Owl, Gyrfalcon (3), Varied Thrush (3), Sage Thrasher (3), Northern Mockingbird, Sprague's Pipit, Prothonotary Warbler (2), Hooded Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler (2), Pine Warbler (2), Summer Tanager, Le Conte's Sparrow, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch (3), White-winged Crossbill (2), Lesser Goldfinch (3)

## Contributing Observers

CA	Chris Anderson	GO	Gary Olson
DB	Doug Backlund	RDO	Ricky D. Olson
JLB	Jocelyn L. Baker	MO	Mark Otnes
JC	Joe Coppock	JSP	Jeffrey S. Palmer
RND	Roger N. Dietrich	BP	Barry Parkin
ND	Nancy Drilling	KP	Kelly M. Preheim
JF	Jennifer Fowler	DGP	D. George Prisbe
CLG	Canyon Lake Group	GJS	Gary & Jan Small
AH	Alice Hill	SS	Scott A. Stolz
PH	Peter Hill	DST	Daniel Streifel
KCJ	Kent C. Jensen	EDS	Eileen Dowd Stukel
EK	Elizabeth Krueger	OCW	Outdoor Campus West Survey
RSL	Richard S. Latuchie	DS	David Swanson
RM	Ron Mabie	CV	Cheryl Vellenga
MMM	Michael M. Melius	WV	William Vellenga
CEM	Charlie Miller	JY	Jonalyn Yancey
EEM	Ernest E. Miller	MRZ	Mick Zerr
KM	Kenny Miller		

---

---

## SDOU SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE REPORT – 2015

by Jocelyn L. Baker

The Mary E. Baylor Memorial Scholarship is awarded to a South Dakota college or university undergraduate student who is in her/his junior or senior year. A biology major with an interest in ornithology, ecology, wildlife management, biological education or medicine is a requirement. This year's recipient of the \$1200.00 scholarship is Christina Renz of Lennox, SD who is a junior studying at Northern State University. According to Dr. Alyssa M. Anderson who nominated Christina for this award, "Christiana's primary career goal is to work in the area of wildlife habitat preservation and restoration". Anderson also indicated that Christina "has a strong interest in the interaction between animal and plant species and the environment in which they live".

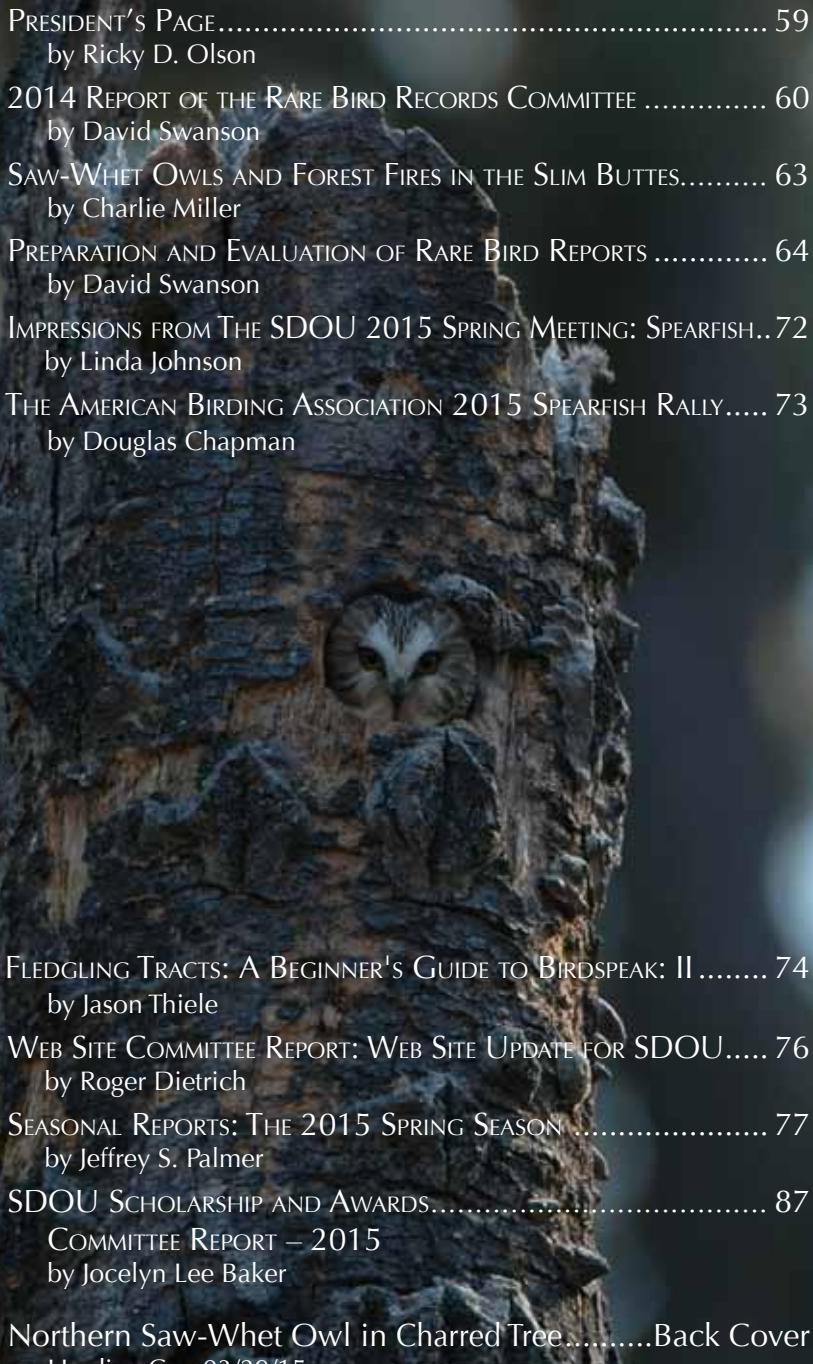
The Kenneth H. Husmann Memorial Scholarship is presented to a graduate student attending a South Dakota university. Faculty members nominate a deserving student who is majoring in ornithology, ecology or wildlife management. The 2015 recipient of the \$1,000.00 scholarship is Gretchen Newberry, a Ph.D. candidate working in the lab of Dr. David Swanson at the University of South Dakota. Gretchen's project involves research on the habitat associations and nesting ecology of the Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) in southeastern South Dakota.

These scholarships will be offered again for the 2015-2016 academic year. Students who wish to be considered should ask a professor to nominate them. Additional information and the 2016 scholarship award amounts may be obtained by referring to the SDOU website at <http://sdou.org/Grants and Scholarships>.

The Alfred E. Hinds Memorial Award for Ornithology, established in 1983, will be presented to an individual, student or organization that has made a significant contribution to the advancement of ornithology in South Dakota. This award may also be used to fund a special SDOU project which needs financial support. Nominations may be submitted at any time with the award being announced in May of 2016.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE: Jocelyn Lee Baker (Chair), Nelda Holden and Galen Steffen.

# Contents

PRESIDENT'S PAGE.....	59
by Ricky D. Olson	
2014 REPORT OF THE RARE BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE .....	60
by David Swanson	
SAW-WHET OWLS AND FOREST FIRES IN THE SLIM BUTTES.....	63
by Charlie Miller	
PREPARATION AND EVALUATION OF RARE BIRD REPORTS .....	64
by David Swanson	
IMPRESSIONS FROM THE SDOU 2015 SPRING MEETING: SPEARFISH..	72
by Linda Johnson	
THE AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION 2015 SPEARFISH RALLY.....	73
by Douglas Chapman	
	
FLEDGLING TRACTS: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO BIRDSPEAK: II .....	74
by Jason Thiele	
WEB SITE COMMITTEE REPORT: WEB SITE UPDATE FOR SDOU.....	76
by Roger Dietrich	
SEASONAL REPORTS: THE 2015 SPRING SEASON .....	77
by Jeffrey S. Palmer	
SDOU SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARDS.....	87
COMMITTEE REPORT – 2015	
by Jocelyn Lee Baker	
Northern Saw-Whet Owl in Charred Tree.....	Back Cover
Harding Co., 03/29/15	
Photo: Charlie Miller	