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Volume 1

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William H. Over *Dean of South Dakota Naturalists*

By E. P. Churchill

University of South Dakota, Vermillion, S. D.



W. H. OVER
birds and mammals and an old cannon, which was the bone of contention between the students and certain gentlemen of Elk Point.

By his untiring efforts in earlier days, in travelling over the state on foot or by horse and wagon and camping and sleeping on the ground; by the exercise of his unfailing friendly persistence and his bright smile, and by everlastingly keeping at it, Dr. Over brought the museum to its present fine condition and high rank as preeminent in the state, comparing favorably with those in many larger institutions. In fact, his collection of Arikara material is the largest and finest in the world. (And, by the way, the old cannon is still in the Museum).

But that is not all. In his studies and explorations in the state, Dr. Over has become acquainted with all the plants in South Dakota and with all the animals above microscopic size. He has had the honor of having several

species of plants named for him. He knows every mammal, every fish big enough to deserve the name of fish, all the turtles, snakes, frogs and toads; and especially he knows the birds. He knows where to find them, when they come in the spring and go in the fall, what they eat, and their habits. The phone rings and when he answers, someone says, "Oh, Dr. Over, there's a little gray bird out in my tree; what is it?". Patiently, he asks, "Is it flitting around or crawling on the trunk of the tree or on the big branches?". "Oh, crawling on the trunk of the big branches." "Is it crawling up or down?" "Why, er—wait a minute, hold the phone." Then in a moment, "It's crawling down." "Then it's a nut-hatch." "Oh, thank you so much, Dr. Over."

This is but an example of his unfailing patience and kindness. The author of this sketch had the great pleasure of accompanying Dr. Over on one summer trip in a study of the lakes of the state and can speak from first-hand knowledge of his industry, thoughtful consideration and unfailing cheerfulness, amid the trials of camp life, including rain, cold, heat, mosquitoes, flat tires, etc.

He answers letters, dozens of them, letters asking about flowers, animals, eggs, Indians; letters from everyone—professors, game wardens, archaeologists, teachers, and high school pupils

wanting to write essays for those same teachers, on frogs, heredity, birds, snakes—on almost everything.

Often he sends them copies of his papers on birds, fishes, etc. Among Dr. Over's publications are: *The Wild Flowers of South Dakota*; *Archaeology in South Dakota*; *the Mollusca of South Dakota*; *the Amphibia and Reptiles of South Dakota*; *The Flora of South Dakota*; *The Birds of South Dakota* (with Craig S. Thoms); *the Mammals of South Dakota* (with E. P. Churchill); *The Fish of South Dakota* (with E. P. Churchill).

Dr. Over's contributions to our knowledge of the biology of South Dakota have been great and invaluable. He is a true naturalist, all too rare now. His life has been devoted to the acquisition

and dissemination of information concerning all forms of life of the state. Furthermore, he does something about it. He is always on the side of conservation of the wildlife of South Dakota. He has often been consulted by state authorities as to recommendations for closed seasons for game and fish and on bag limits and various methods of conservation.

In all these fields and activities have lain his interests and his happiness during more than a third of a century. The State of South Dakota owes him a great debt. He is truly the Dean of South Dakota Naturalists.

(Note: Dr. Over is the first and only Honorary Member of South Dakota Ornithologists' Union.—Ed.)

Bird Study in South Dakota

By Prof. Stephen S. Visher

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

For more than fifty years, bird study has afforded me so much wholesome recreation and continued enjoyment that I am glad to do whatever I can to encourage others to observe birds. Wherever I have gone, even in large cities, in deserts, and in the middle of the ocean, I have enjoyed at least an occasional bird. The diversion or relief from mental strain that the birds have afforded me over the decades has helped me to do my work better. The recalling of the innumerable observations and songs of birds have given me pleasure during illness. The joy that even an invalid can have from birds has helped recovery.

My love of birds commenced when I was young, and by the time that I was ten years old, I knew many kinds and their songs and nests. Bird study for me was given a big boost when in 1898 my parents moved to Sanborn County (and lived on land that they had homesteaded in 1881.) Our home was on a

hill-top overlooking the James River Valley, with its scattered groves and the village of Forestburg. A quarter mile east, was Visher's lake, the nesting or resting site of many water birds. Within walking distance of our home, there was much environmental variety, and hence many kinds of birds. During the 15 years that this was my home, I found more than 150 kinds of birds in Sanborn County.

My enthusiasm, increased by the encouragement given me by my mother and by various others, led me to share my bird pleasures. This was done partly by talking about birds to groups of people and partly by publication. In 1902, while still 14, one county newspaper published three articles on the common birds of Sanborn County. These articles had a profound influence on my subsequent life, as they opened the way for me to attend high school.

My enthusiasm about birds helped prepare the way for work for the S. D.

Geological and Natural History Survey, commencing with the summer of 1908. My appointment as an instructor at the University of South Dakota came in 1910. I was in the field for the Survey during the summers of 1908, 1910, 1911, and 1912, working in all parts of the State. Throughout 1911-1913 I had a motorcycle, on which I went to good bird sites nearly every morning in spring and fall. More than a dozen articles were contributed to *Bird Lore*, *Wilson Bulletin* and *The Auk*. In 1913 a special bulletin "Arbor and Bird Day" was issued by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, containing "A Dozen Abundant Birds of South Dakota." The State Survey published three bulletins with extended accounts of my bird studies, in south-central South Dakota (The Badlands etc.), in northwestern S. D. (Harding County especially), and for the State as a whole. These publications helped to make our birds more widely known to special students in other states as well as in South Dakota. However, the greatest contribution which I made to bird study was to "discover" W. H. Over, on a homestead claim near the northwestern corner of the State, and to persuade the University authorities in 1912 to make it possible for him to devote himself to the study of the natural history of the State, and to make nature study more widely appreciated. All members of the S. D. O. U. know of his "Birds of South Dakota," and of the educational museum news letters which he has contributed for many years, most of them including notes on birds.

President Chapman has asked me to contribute to this first issue of *Bird Notes*. This is being done solely because of my earnest desire to encourage others in their bird observations. It is hoped that several of you who read this will see how you can contribute something worthwhile to this little magazine, sharing your pleasure of discovery, and making the birds somewhat better known. Of course, as plea-

sure is shared, it grows.

South Dakota's birds are especially interesting, even from the viewpoint of one who, like myself, has observed birds in each of the 48 American States, in 12 Canadian Provinces, and in more than a score of foreign countries on five continents.

South Dakota extends east and west from the western margin of the forested East, across the prairies and short grass plains to the forested Black Hills, one of the Rocky Mountain ranges. This great east-west extent helps give South Dakota numerous kinds of birds, a considerable number of kinds characteristic of the East and, in the western part of the State, numerous species characteristic of the West. Its position near the middle of the Great Mississippi Basin has resulted in its being visited by many northern birds as well as by some southern ones.

The diversity within the state as to vegetation, water bodies, soil and topography help to increase the variety of bird life. The many more kinds of birds that may be found if one studies various habitats encourages field studies. The variation in rainfall and in the use made of the land are other factors adding zest to field studies. The seasonal variation in bird life is greater also in South Dakota than in most of the world, because South Dakota has exceptionally large contrasts in temperature between summer and winter.

Hence South Dakota's birdlife is conspicuously different in summer than in winter, and is notably enriched during the spring and fall by many migrants. It is also conspicuously different in dry years than in wet, and in exceptionally cold winters as compared with mild ones. Other important differences are due, as all bird lovers know, to the local environment: various birds are found about groves that are almost lacking in the open; otherwise bodies of water, especially lakes and ponds, have their characteristic birdlife. As most of South Dakota is a grassy plain, how-

ever, some comments on the birds characteristic of that large part of the State will close these notes. They are selected from the "Geography of South Dakota," Bulletin 8 of the S. D. Geological and Natural History Survey (1918) (out of print). (This bulletin was my Ph. D. thesis at the University of Chicago). The chapter dealing with the birds was largely reprinted, partly in the Bulletin of the American Geographical Society or in the Geographical Review, and part of it appeared also in Naturalists Guide to the Americas (1926).

Conspicuous Birds of the Short Grass

The only permanent resident represented by many individuals is the desert horned lark. Longspurs of some species are found in all seasons, the chestnut-collared and McCown's longspurs nesting here abundantly and the Lapland longspur wintering. The lark bunting and the western vesper sparrow are numerous; the bunting and desert horned lark are characteristic. Other prominent nesting birds are the Brewer blackbird, burrowing owl, Sennett's nighthawk and upland plover. Formerly the long-billed curlew and the prairie sharp-tailed grouse were common. Several kinds of birds nest in the groves of scattered trees along the streams, but often feed on the steppe. Examples are: the ferruginous rough-legged, Swainson's and the sparrow hawks. The cliff and barn swallows, nesting on cliffs or about buildings, are also seen often.

Some "Adaptations"

The birds of the grassland possess two or more of the following characteristics:

1. Nests are necessarily built on the ground.
2. Many kinds sing while on the wing. Examples are the lark bunting, longspur, Sprague's pipit, and frequently the western meadowlark and horned lark.
3. The songs and calls are loud compared with those of woodland birds.

Because of the climatic conditions of the grassland, representatives of species in many cases are farther apart than in most other areas. Calls and songs fulfill their chief purpose only when they are heard by other individuals of the species, and therefore need to be relatively loud in the steppe.

4. Social flocking is less prominent than among the birds of the woods, water, or prairies, where not only do various species migrate in large flocks, but troops wander socially about in other seasons, especially in winter, and several abundant species nest in colonies. The grackle, crow, swift, swallows, night herons, blackbirds, marsh wrens, numerous water-birds, and the bobolink and dickcissel are examples. If the cliff swallow, which nests here and there in the badlands, be excepted, none of the abundant birds of the steppe nest in colonies. The scattered distribution of life on the steppe, noted in the preceding paragraph, is exemplified in the distribution of the nests of the steppe birds. The lark bunting and longspurs, and occasionally the Swainson's hawk migrate in flocks which, however, soon break up. Flocking in the winter is largely accidental. Birds gather where food is available, in areas swept by the wind or in patches of taller vegetation which are not snow-covered. Weedy fields, where seeds are abundant, often are the site of such gatherings.

5. Many have the ability to withstand strong wind. For example, seed-eaters feed during the winter in apparent comfort on wind-swept hills.

6. Females and nestlings are almost all protectively colored. This seems required by the exposure of the nesting sites.

7. Most species are highly migratory. Few individuals remain during winter, and these are of species different from those of summer, except the desert horned lark. The aridity and the inactivity of other life combine with the cold to encourage the desertion of the steppe during the winter season.

8. Most steppe birds have the ability to withstand the intense heat of the sun. This is especially notable in the nestlings, which are often on dark ground.

9. The steppe birds of necessity require little drinking water. Heavy dew is rare.

10. The power of acute long-range

vision appears to be possessed by a much larger number of birds of the steppe than by those inhabiting woodlands. Clearness of atmosphere, slightness of relief over large areas, and the widely scattered distribution of life all probably have encouraged the development of acute long-range vision.

Stephen Sargent Visser was born in Chicago, Ill., Dec. 15, 1887. He received his B.S. in 1909, M.S. in 1910 and Ph. D. in 1914, all from the University of Chicago. The University of South Dakota conferred the degree of M.A. in 1912. He has been Professor of Geography at the Indiana University continuously since 1919.

He has participated in and written about many scientific investigations in Alaska, West Indies, Spain, Italy, Britain, the South Seas, Australia and the Far East.

His articles dealing with ornithology include: A List of the Birds of Western South Dakota, *The Auk*, April, 1919; The Avifauna of Harding County, South Dakota, *The Auk*, Jan. 1911, Jan. 1912, and April, 1913; Annotated List of Birds of Sanborn County, South Dakota, *The Auk*, Oct. 1913; Birds of Fall River County, South Dakota, *Wilson Bull.* March, 1912, and March, 1913; The Birds of the Vicinity of the State University, Clay County, South Dakota, *Wilson Bull.* June, 1915; Adaptations to the Environment, as illustrated by the Sandhill Crane and the Sage Hen, *Wilson Bull.* June, 1910 and June, 1913; South Dakota records of 15 Western Birds, *The Auk*, April, 1911, and April, 1913; Northern eider in South Dakota, a new record for the interior of North America, *The Auk*, Oct. 1912; Waterfowl Migration in South Dakota, *Bird-Lore* May-June, 1912; Bird Migration in the Dakota Valley, *Wilson Bull.* Sept. 1916; Common Flowers and Birds of South Dakota, *Publ. Dept. Geol. Univ. of S. D.* May, 1913—Editor.

Local Activities

Several members of SDOU at Huron have organized a local bird club, and as part of its program of activities will sponsor Audubon Screen Tours this winter. We do not have the details, but understand the lecturers will be the same as will appear at Sioux Falls. Claude Van Epps, in the Huron Boy Scout office, will answer your inquiries. Rev. Paul Mallory, son of SDOU secretary, has given some radio addresses on "bird subjects" under the sponsorship of the Huron Club.

The Audubon Screen Tours, sponsored by Sioux Falls Bird Club for the third year, includes "tops" of American Ornithology. Here is the schedule: Cruickshank, Oct. 28; Maslowski, Jan. 17; Sutton, Feb. 14; Tom and Arlene Hadley, March 23; Roger Tory Peterson, April 24. The Sioux Falls meeting, July, 1949

ings are at the High School, at 8 p. m., and are open to the public at a remarkably low admission charge for such splendid entertainment. W. A. Behringer is Secretary of this fast-growing, aggressive Club. J. S. Findley is the newly-elected President.

M. E. Burgi, has been active in the organization of a new Bird Study Club at Springfield, S. D. He planned to teach a course on Elementary Ornithology at the Normal this summer. We hope other institutions will provide similar courses this fall.

At Madison Mrs. D. S. Baughman and Miss Ruth Habeger organized an active Bird Club. Miss Habeger also taught a course at General Beadle State Teachers College, in "Bird Identification for Teachers."

The Waubay Lake Colonies of Double-Crested Cormorants

By Arthur R. Lundquist
Webster, South Dakota



*D. C. Cormorant Nests and Young on Island in
South Waubay Lake, in Day County, S. D.*
(Cut courtesy U. of S. D. Museum)

Double-crested cormorants (*phalacrocorax auritus auritus*) were nesting in the lake region of northeastern South Dakota when the white settlers arrived. They were reported by Dr. Charles McChesney, an officer at old Fort Sisseton, as nesting near the fort in 1878, and in more recent times the Waubay Lake colony was listed by Harrison F. Lewis, (*The Natural History of the Double-crested Cormorant*, Ru-Mi-Lou Books, Ottawa, Canada, 1929) as the largest in the United States in 1927. Lewis credited South Dakota with four of the fourteen known colonies in the United States.

Colonies have been reported by others or observed by the author at Waubay

Lake, Day County; Dry Lake, Hamlin County; Lake Albert, Kingsbury County; Sand Lake, Brown County; Roy Lake and Two Mile Lake, Marshall County; LaCreek Refuge, Bennett County; a lake near Tulare, Spink County; and the boundary waters of Mud Lake, Lake Traverse and Big Stone Lake. There have been others and new sites may be reported from time to time because cormorants change their nesting sites with changes of water level and availability of food.

South Waubay Lake is nearly oval, about four miles by one mile. North Waubay Lake is very irregular, with long arms and bays, extending about six miles northward from the north-

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eastern side of South Waubay Lake. When the water is high, as at present, a narrow channel joins the two lakes. Two islands in South Waubay Lake have been used as nesting grounds by cormorants and other birds.

The east island is the larger and is about an acre in size. The west island is less than half as large. The cormorants share the east island with ring-billed gulls and common terns which usually have from four to six hundred nests. Occasionally white pelicans build nests on east island but I have never noted that they raised young. The west island is not used for nesting until all available space on east island is taken, or when there is only six inches or a foot of distance between nests.

There have been cormorant colonies on the islands continuously for many years, except for three years during the drouth of the '30s. Farmers who live nearby report nesting as early as 1910 and the birds probably nested there many years before that.

The population in the nesting colonies has varied from year to year. Many years there have been nests on both islands and one summer a third colony was observed on a rocky peninsula of North Waubay Lake about three miles north of the east island. The nests are built on the rocky ground. (There are no trees on the islands.) In 1929, 740 nests had been used by the middle of August and there were new nests with eggs.

The first nests are built at the highest part of the rocky portion of the island and later nests are built closer and closer to the water. This is the reason that often there are new nests with or without eggs on the lower ground when the early settings have hatched in nests on higher ground.

The adult birds feed in lakes nearby or sometimes in lakes at some distance. I have seen them at Pierpont and other Lakes twenty miles or more from the colony. Perch and bullheads seem to

be their main diet, and in the nesting season I have seen the cormorants in large numbers at Antelope Lake where probably the only food was "mud-puppies." I think that the cormorants take a great many "mud-puppies" to their young.

When the parent bird returns from feeding waters it lands near the nests and advances to the nest's edge. The adult begins a gulping-like movement to regurgitate and then bends forward opening its mouth. One of the fledglings then thrusts its head into the old bird's throat so far that often the head and all of the neck of the young bird disappears. The adult then withdraws, often shaking the young gently to help remove the meal.

I banded 1472 juveniles at these colonies. W. H. Over and W. F. Kubicek each banded a few hundred more. The reports of these banded birds seem to indicate clearly that the migration route follows the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico. Most of the returns have been from the states bordering the Mississippi, and from Alabama and Texas. There has been one return from Florida and one from Cuba which was probably a casual as Cuba is not listed in the winter range of this bird.

When I started banding I thought perhaps some of the Waubay Lake birds would join others from the east down south, and that then some of the South Dakota birds would "go eastern," but as yet there are no reports of any birds wearing my bands being taken in the eastern states.

Apparently a large portion of the birds from this colony return to South Dakota. Birds have been shot within a mile of the island six years after being banded. A nestling banded in 1929 was killed thirteen years later at Lake Traverse, about fifty miles from the colony.

In 1929, birds banded at the east island in June and July had left the nest and were flying when birds were still

being banded in the nest in August at the west island. This late nesting on the west island may have an explanation in a story that I heard later. A group of fishermen had raided the Roy Lake island near Lake City to drive the cormorants from the fishing lakes of that region. Perhaps those birds whose nesting was disturbed sought sites at other nesting colonies.

The 1929 banding also showed that the late-hatched birds had the highest mortality rate during the ensuing hunting season. Of the June and July birds 10.8% and 14.8%, respectively, were killed that fall. The August birds had the high rate of 33.6%. The June and

July birds were distributed quite evenly from South Dakota to the Gulf. The August birds had to run the gauntlet of hunters in South Dakota while learning to fly. Five out of six of the birds reported from this group were killed on South Dakota waters between September 16 and November 28.

The oldest banded bird was shot in Louisiana fourteen years after banding, and the one farthest from the colony was the two-year old bird reported from Cuba.

(Note: Members are urged to report to Mr. Lundquist their observations of resting of cormorants this season anywhere in South Dakota.—Ed.)

A Query on the Song of the Slate-colored Junco

By Herbert Krause

Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

I have been wondering how often the spring song of the slate-colored junco is heard in South Dakota. Perhaps my query reveals my ignorance but in defense I admit whole-heartedly that I am the lowest among the beginners in the study of bird-lore.

The usual voice of the junco as recorded by the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University is "a loose quavering trill suggestive of Chipping Sparrow's song but slower and more musical," to quote Roger Tory Peterson. Thoreau calls this song a "thick, shuffling twitter . . . a jingle with also a shorter and drier crackling chip (or) chill chill"—the "chew, chew, chew" of John Burroughs. Chester Reed describes it as "a sweet simple trill which has a beautiful effect when given by a whole flock in unison." I have been stopped in my tracks at hearing a plum-thicket full of juncos trilling up an April morning; the effect was truly melodious. I have yet to hear them "in unison," which means, I take it, the singing of the same series of tones by all the voice parts at the same time.

To hear that in a flock of Juncos might be an ornithological discovery of major importance.

This "simple trill" is the one the bird-watcher is accustomed to hear. But in spring there is another song, one described by Roberts as "a much more pretentious effort very different from the simple Chippy-like trill commonly heard on the nesting grounds." I first noticed this song on April 6, 1948, in a park in Sioux Falls. It was not repeated and I was left wondering whether this was indeed different from the ordinary, or a mis-hearing on my part. In my notes for that day, I wrote, "A courting or migrational ditty," with a question mark.

On April 6 of this year I heard it again, this time in the bushes along a road near Sioux Falls. The song was a series of runs and trills, interspersed with quavering notes and clear but short whistle-like phrases, here and there punctuated with single sharp notes which sounded like "sup, sup" and which Peterson calls a "smack" or "click." The whole strongly resembled

a Lark Sparrow's performance muted or muffled, except for the "smacks" or "sups," which are absent in that bird's song. In fact, at first I thought the sounds came from an early Lark Sparrow—one that was "ventriloquizing" his voice, as thrushes sometimes do. Later that morning I came on this migrational or courting lay, if such it be, in different places in a park. Each time it was uttered from the ground or on the lowest branches of a bush.

Next day through my window, slightly raised, I caught the song again, this time from a hedge. I lifted the sash and brought the singer up with my glasses. Two males and a female were on the ground among the winter's snow-pressed leaves. I heard distinctly

the Lark Sparrow-like singing of one of the males. It resembled what Peterson says of the Lark Sparrow's voice, "buzzing and churring passages interspersed here and there." In addition to buzzes and churrs, to my ear at least, there were quavering notes and clear ones mingled with the characteristic "sups" or "clicks." And again the sound, while cleanly enunciated, was muffled, as if coming from a distance further than the twenty feet between my window and the hedge.

Perhaps this spring ditty is commonly heard, here and elsewhere, and like the Junco's white tail-feathers, my ignorance is showing. Except for Robert's not too explicit description, however, I have not in my limited reading found a good account of the song.

Opportunity — Challenge

CARLETON COLLEGE
Northfield, Minnesota

March 9, 1949

Mr. E. R. Lamster, Editor
South Dakota Bird Notes
Pierre, South Dakota

Dear Mr. Lamster:

I deeply regretted that I could not be in Sioux Falls on January 15 and thus be able to witness personally the founding of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union. For a long time I have hoped to see the creation of such an organization in South Dakota because in no other prairie state, except Nebraska, are the resident ornithologists sufficiently well organized to promote the study of birds on a broad, regional basis.

Prairie birds, as a separate fauna, have been sadly neglected. True, we have a general understanding of life cycles and behavior, but we know surprisingly little about distribution in relation to seasons, terrain, vegetation, and climatic conditions. We have only meager information on the size of breeding populations in tall grass prairies, short grass prairies, and fringing

forests—regions all of which are well represented in South Dakota. Then, too, we have little first-hand knowledge of the effects on bird life of grazing, crop production, and water impoundment. In fact, only in the case of game birds and a few other prairie species of special concern to man's economic interests have we any data that can be called significant.

The prairie forms natural limits to the ranges of many birds inhabiting eastern and western United States. But exactly where are these limits? For example, how far west in South Dakota does the Ruby-throated Hummingbird extend? And how far east, the Black-chinned Hummingbird? Frankly we have only the vaguest notions! The Eastern Grasshopper Sparrow is supposed to nest in eastern South Dakota and the Western Grasshopper Sparrow in western South Dakota. If true, where do these subspecies meet, or overlap?

Although the Great Plains extend through the interior of North America from the prairie provinces of Canada to Texas, certain birds are apparently limited in their north-south distribu-

tion by ecological factors, air temperature probably being one. Although the determination of these factors is difficult, it is nevertheless possible by direct field observations to find where the limits of distribution occur. The Sprague's Pipit and the McCowan's Longspur seem confined in the breeding season to the northern parts of the Great Plains and are sometimes observed in northern South Dakota. Just how far south in South Dakota do they nest? As yet, we do not know. The Blue Grosbeak, though not a true prairie bird, breeds in shrubby areas along the White River in southern South Dakota. Does it range farther north in shrubby areas along the Missouri River from Chamberlain and Pierre to Mobridge? There is a strong possibility that it does, though we have no evidence.

(Note: The writer of the above letter is one of the most prominent ornithologists of this period. He is President of the Wilson Ornithological Club and the Secretary of the American Ornithologists' Union.—Ed.)

Bird Notes of Special Interest

YELLOW RAIL IN SOUTH CENTRAL SOUTH DAKOTA—A General Note with that heading was published in the July-Dec. 1948 issue of *The Nebraska Bird Review*, published by Nebraska Ornithologists Union. The Note read: "On June 24, 1948, one yellow rail (*Coturnicops n. noveboracebus*) was seen at Pukwana, South Dakota. We had stopped to look at some birds in a wayside slough when this little rail flew up right at my feet. It alighted about 100 feet away in fairly good sight, and I studied it for some time. I clearly saw both the white wing patch and the yellow color.—Fred M. Packard, National Parks Association, 1214 Sixteenth St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C." Since this seems to be a first South Dakota sight record Mr. Packard was asked to give any further available details, as to location, etc., and he replied in part: "To the best of my recollection, we were driving west on U. S. 16 toward Pukwana from Kimball, although it is possible I am in error and that we were west of Pukwana. The pond was rather distinctive, however. It was on the north side of the road and right against it, only a wet ditch separating the marsh from the highway. At this point the ditch was well filled with tall grasses, which broadened out into a slough that covered two or three acres; toward the eastern end of the slough was an open pond on which a shoveller and another duck were resting. I believe redwings were nesting there. Beyond was open prairie. The rail flew up from right at my feet and showed the white wing patches plainly. It alighted not far off in the grass, but fortunately there was a little open space filled with water between me and the bird, so that the bird was exposed to view. I watched it for several moments before it ran for better cover, and could check the various characteristics with Peterson's Field Guide. I had seen the species before in Massachusetts, but I always use Peterson in such a case to be sure to check all features."

I have cited merely a few of the fascinating problems that are available to South Dakota ornithologists. Without delay I urge you to formulate plans for several investigations which can be pursued by all members working in co-operation. The plans need not be elaborate and the time and effort demanded of each member need not seriously infringe upon his regular occupation. Important contributions to knowledge can, by careful planning, be obtained by a group with a small amount of time and effort expended per individual.

My best wishes to the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union in its first year of life. May you become one of our strongest regional organizations devoted to the study of birds!

Yours sincerely,

OLIN SEWALL PETTINGILL, JR.
Associate Professor of Zoology

WHITE PELICANS NESTING IN LaCREEK REFUGE—A letter from Kenneth Krumm, manager of the LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge, Martin, South Dakota, includes the following:

“As you have expressed interest in the nesting of white pelicans at this area, I will advise that these birds are common summer residents at LaCreek Refuge, 150 to 200 usually remaining at the area throughout the nesting season. A considerable number of double-crested cormorants also remain here and virtually all nesting by both species takes place on a small island of about one half acre area in one of the lakes. A closely associated nesting colony of pelicans and cormorants may be observed here from May to July. Inspections of the colony during previous years has revealed that the proportion of pelican nests to resident birds is much less than among the cormorants. On one visit to the colony during a recent nesting season, 22 pelican nests were counted as compared to 205 cormorants nests. A few of the pelican nests were situated among the closely grouped cormorant nests and the remainder about the margin of the cormorant colony. Occasional abandoned pelican eggs were noted throughout the nesting area and as the young cormorants which apparently hatched and matured earlier were occasionally noted scrambling clumsily through the pelican nests, rolling the eggs from the brooding site, one might speculate as to whether the small nesting success among the pelicans was due to interference by the scrambling flock of cormorants, or presence of non-breeding birds.”

BLUE GROSBEAK NESTS—Iowa Bird Life, published by Iowa Ornithologists Union always carries a substantial number of General Notes of particular interest. In the March, 1949, issue appeared the following: “About two miles east of Pickstown, South Dakota, in the Lake Andes region, a pair of blue grosbeaks built a nest in a plum thicket approximately 4 rods from a frequently traveled dirt highway. This nest, about 4 feet above the ground, had been skillfully woven of rootlets, dried grasses, fine weed stems and a frayed paper napkin. On August 8, 1948, there were two dead fledglings in the nest and two babies in early feathering stage on branches a foot away from the nest. The parents flitted from thicket to telephone wires where they nervously watched the observers at close range for half an hour. On the other side of this thicket was a nest of the same construction which contained an old cowbird egg. Apparently the grosbeaks became wise to the intruder and built another nest. Another male blue grosbeak was seen about two miles east of the above nest site as the observers were traveling along the highway.—Gertrude Weaver, Sioux City, Iowa.”

CLIFF NESTING OF ROCK DOVES—A rock quarry near Weber Avenue, Sioux Falls, was abandoned in the '30's and its walls were immediately taken over by pigeons which deserted nearby buildings. Now there is a large colony of rock doves living on the quarry walls the year around.

The quarry hole is very roughly an ellipse, with the approximately 600 feet long axis running east and west. The short axis is about 450 feet. The hole being filled with water and a factory fence enclosing the quarry make it difficult to observe the doves except across the quarry from the north.

A casual glance might reveal little except a few doves in the air, but if the wall is studied through glasses doves can be seen crowding on nearly every ledge and projection. Several recent independent estimates of the number of doves have been in close agreement and have placed the total population of the colony at more than 250.

Most observers have seen very few light colored doves and some think that perhaps as the birds revert to natural conditions they tend toward their ancestral color and so we see "blue rock" doves which have replaced pigeons "gone native."—J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, S. D.

WOOD DUCKS ALONG BIG SIOUX RIVER—Field Warden F. H. Sundling, of Canton, S. D. reports seeing, on a trip along the Big Sioux River between Canton and Hudson, 14 pairs of Wood ducks, and one pair already had 12 young in the river with them. Evidently they are moving into this territory and likely are increasing.—W. B. Mallory, Secy., S. D. O. U., Canton, S. D.

AMERICAN EGRET AT LaCREEK.—A record which may interest the members of SDOU is that of an American egret noted at LaCreek during the late summer of 1948. A solitary bird was in one of our marshes for about a week (Aug. 25-Sept. 1), a new Refuge record. We had quite an excellent waterfowl flight out here this spring (1949) particularly among geese, Canada and smaller Subsp. About 10,000 birds appeared this year.—Kenneth Krumm, Refuge Manager, Martin, S. D.

(Note: The publication of notes of the character of the foregoing is one of the important functions of our organization. Members will be rendering real service if they report all such matters to any of the officers of the Union.—Ed.)

Dr. T. C. Stephens

By H. F. Chapman

Dr. T. C. Stephens, retired professor of biology at Morningside College, died at Sioux City, Iowa, November 24, 1948. He was a distinguished scientist, and took particular interest in the ornithology of Iowa, and of neighboring states, including South Dakota. Among his many papers was a Bibliography of South Dakota Ornithology, of 30 pages, which he published privately in 1945.

We first met Dr. Stephens at the joint meeting of Iowa and Nebraska Ornithologists' Unions at Sioux City, Iowa,

in May, 1948. Tentative arrangements were then made for him to visit South Dakota and speak to the newly-formed Sioux Falls Bird Club, but conflicting dates deferred too long the carrying out of that plan.

Dr. Stephens seriously urged that some younger folks, in South Dakota, should carry on the compilation of our state bibliographic material. Dr. and Mrs. Spawn, of Brookings, have volunteered to assume that assignment, and will continue the unselfish service which Dr. Stephens rendered so long and so well.

I Remember

By W. B. Mallory

Canton, S. D.

Any person who has studied birds over a long period has many memories of never-to-be-forgotten incidents of bird life which it has been his good fortune to observe. Two such incidents in my own bird study I pass on to readers of "Bird Notes."

A few miles north of Lennox in western Lincoln County, South Dakota, there is a pasture on the west side of Highway 17 through which a small creek flows. On the highway to the north of this pasture is a hill. One day many years ago I was driving south on

this road and on topping the hill I saw in this pasture a fox and about ten pheasants. I immediately drew off to the side of the road and watched for about 20 minutes an incident which undoubtedly happens often, but which is seldom seen by human eyes.

The fox was going through all sorts of antics while the pheasants with necks stretched out to the full length watched him with absorbed attention. The fox jumped high in the air, chased his tail rapidly round and round and ran in circles. One thing was clear however. Each circle brought him nearer and nearer to the unsuspecting and motionless pheasants. Toward the last I expected at each circle to see him make a dash for a good pheasant feed as he was as near as 20 feet to them several times and they did not move during the whole time. In fact they seemed to be completely absorbed spectators at a drama which would have ordinarily resulted in the death of one of them.

I regret to say that this particular drama was never completed. Another car came up behind me over the hill and on seeing me the driver honked his horn. Immediately the fox stopped and then ran at top speed away from there leaving the pheasants still intently watching him.

The annual meeting of The Wilson Ornithological Club was held at Madison, Wis. this spring. President O. S. Pettingill stated that it was the largest meeting of that kind ever held in this country. SDOU members in attendance were: Dr. and Mrs. J. D. Donahoe, Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Findley, and Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Chapman, all of Sioux Falls. The 1950 meeting will be held in West Virginia.

Biographies of those who have contributed to South Dakota Ornithology in the past will appear in subsequent issues of this publication. Members are urged to send to Secretary Mallory all available facts and references to possible sources of information about these pioneers. Data relative to F. A. Patton, formerly of Artesian, S. D. is especially desired now.

July, 1949

Another incident occurred about 10 years ago at my former home in Lennox. It was fall and there were several bushels of apples under a Virginia crab apple tree. The robins soon discovered them and gathered in large numbers to feed on this fruit. One morning when making my usual rounds of the place to see what was going on in Birdland I discovered a white bird eating with the Robins. I was puzzled as to the identification of this bird until I viewed it through a bird glass when I found that it was an albino Robin without a single colored feather. Actually if it had not been for the fact that it was feeding with other Robins and had the distinctive Robin contour I might have had some difficulty in identifying it. We watched it under this tree each day for about two weeks when a sudden cold snap sent all of the Robins out of the country.

This albino was not a clear glistening white. I would call it a dingy white, but the entire absence of colored feathers made it an exceptional albino. I have been asked many time why I did not collect it as a specimen and have it mounted. The answer to that is that I prefer a live bird to a dead one. There are exceptions to this rule, but they did not apply in this case.

Additional copies of the Sight Record Sheets may be obtained from W. B. Mallory, Secy. SDOU, Canton, S. D.

The combined figures of 49th Christmas Bird Count, published in April, 1949, issue of Audubon Field Notes, show a total of 35 species for eastern South Dakota (3 areas) and 17 species (6 of which were not reported elsewhere) at LaCreek Refuge in the southwestern part of the state—a total of 41 species seen in South Dakota in mid-winter.

The 67th stated meeting of The American Ornithologists' Union will be held at Buffalo this year from October 10 to 14.

CONSTITUTION OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

Article I—Name - Object

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

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

Article II—Membership

Section 1. Any student of ornithology who is 16 years of age or older is eligible for membership as an active member of this Union.

Section 2. Any person less than 16 years of age is eligible for membership as a junior member of this Union.

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

Section 4. Membership shall date from the approval of the application for membership by a majority of the Executive Committee and the payment of dues. Honorary memberships shall date from their approval by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee.

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

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

Section 7. Members may be dismissed from membership for cause by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee, or for non-payment of dues.

Article III—Officers - Committees

Section 1. The officers of this Union shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Editor-Librarian.

Section 2. The duties of the President shall be to preside at meetings of the Union, to appoint committees as provided by this constitution, to call necessary meetings of the Executive Committee, and to perform such other duties as customarily pertain to the office.

Section 3. The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President in his absence or incapacity, and shall assist the President and perform such duties as are delegated to him by the President.

Section 4. The Secretary shall keep a record of the meetings of the Union and of the Executive Committee, conduct the general correspondence of the Union, and shall perform such other duties as customarily pertain to the office.

Section 5. The Treasurer shall collect dues, receive and have charge of all moneys of the Union, pay such bills as are approved for payment by the President and Secretary, and perform such other duties as customarily pertain to the office.

Section 6. The Editor-Librarian shall edit and superintend the printing of publications of the Union and preserve the books, publications, and papers presented at meetings of the Union.

Section 7. The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the Union and three other members of the Union elected at the annual meeting.

Section 8. The duties of the Executive Committee shall be to select honorary members, to fix the date and place of the annual meeting, to perform such duties as are given to it by this constitution, to concur with the President in appointment of standing committees, to fill by temporary appointment offices which become vacant, to audit the books of the treasurer, and to perform such other duties as may be necessary for the furtherance of the aims of the Union.

Section 9. The Executive Committee may act by correspondence upon questions that properly come before it.

Article IV—Meetings

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

Section 2. Such special meetings of the Union as are necessary may be called by the President, with the approval of the Executive Committee.

Section 3. The quorum for transaction of business shall be nine active members.

Article V—Elections

Section 1. All officers, including the members of the Executive Committee, shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Union by a majority vote of the active members present.

Section 2. The term of office of all officers and members of committees shall extend from the close of the annual meeting at which they were elected, or from their appointment, to the close of the next annual meeting.

Section 3. Nomination for officers and members of the Executive Committee shall be made by a nominating committee of three members appointed by the President at the opening session of the annual meeting. This nominating committee shall meet immediately after the close of the opening session of the annual meeting to select candidates for offices. Active members of the Union may propose names of members to the committee as candidates for offices. The nominating committee shall report its nominations and others proposed to it for nominations to offices. Nominations may also be made from the floor before or during elections. If there is more than one candidate for any office, voting shall be by secret ballot.

Article VI—Dues

Section 1. The annual dues for active members shall be \$8.00.

Section 2. The annual dues for junior members shall be \$1.00.

Section 3. Dues are due on January 1 of each year, or at election to membership.

Article VII—Amendment

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

BY-LAWS

Section 1. The officers shall be reimbursed the actual amount expended by them in carrying on their necessary official duties.

Section 2. All papers presented at the meetings shall be the property of the Union and shall be filed with the Editor-Librarian.

Section 3. The order of business at the annual meeting shall be as follows: 1, Reports of officers; 2, Reports of committees; 3, Proposal of names and election of members; 4, New business; 5, Announcement of election of officers and committees; 6, Presentation and discussion of papers and remarks; 7, Installation of officers; 8, Reading of minutes; 9, Adjournment.

Section 4. Application for membership must be made to the Secretary and such application must have the endorsement of at least one member in good standing, which shall be expected to be a proper recommendation of the candidate.

Section 5. Any of the By-Laws may be amended or repealed by vote of a majority of the active members present at any annual meeting.

CHARTER MEMBERSHIP ROLL

of

SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION

(All addresses are "South Dakota" unless otherwise noted)

HONORARY

Over, Dr. W. H. Vermillion

ACTIVE

Abbott, Dr. Howard C.
 Sioux Falls College, Sioux Falls
Adams, I. C., Jr.
 3 N. Glenwood, Columbia, Mo.
Alseth, Mrs. Ida B. Lake Preston
Anderson, Carl K. Canton
Ayres, Chas. C. Jr.
 Langdale Bldg., Ottumwa, Iowa
Baughman, Dr. D. S. Madison
Baughman, Mrs. D. S. Madison
Behrens, Harry C. Rapid City

Behringer, W. A.
 821 W. 16th, Sioux Falls
Berdahl, James O.
 125 S. Main, Sioux Falls
Bogus, Harold Canton
Boles, Hobart Paul. Huron
Bonham, Mrs. Arthur Britton
Bosma, Rev. D. Eureka
Bosma, Mrs. D. Eureka
Bratager, Paul Madison
Brenckle, Dr. J. F. Mellette
Brigham, (Julia E.) Mrs. H. N. Provo
Brown, M. A. Chamberlain
Burgi, M. E. Springfield

Buss, Miss Hannah.....Aberdeen
 Butts, Mrs. Jane A.....Custer
 Campbell, Mrs. Dwight.....Aberdeen
 Case, Miss Ethel D.....Aberdeen
 Chapman Herman F.....
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 Crawford, Charlotte.....Rapid City
 Crisp, Mrs. E. E.....Chamberlain
 Dahlgren, Robt. B.....Brookings
 Davidson, Mrs. J. W.....
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 Deitz, Mrs. Lillie C.....Groton
 Dobljar, Mrs. Ethel.....Rt. 3, Madison
 Donahoe, Dr. John D.....
 335 N. Summit, Sioux Falls
 Donahoe, Mrs. John D.....
 335 N. Summit, Sioux Falls
 Donaldson, Mrs. Elaine S.....Mobridge
 Drissen, Mrs. E. M.....Britton
 Dutton, Howard.....Strool
 Dybvig, H. N.....Colton
 Ellig, LeRoy.....Webster
 Eng, Robt. L.....Gary
 Ferugen, Thor.....Madison
 Findley, J. S.....
 1201 S. Center, Sioux Falls
 Findley, Alma S.....
 1201 S. Center, Sioux Falls
 Foss, Wilbur C.....Webster
 Foster, Harold E..Ft. Meade (deceased)
 Freeman, Tom.....Mitchell
 Gammell, (Ann M.) Mrs. R. T.....
 Kenmare, N. D.
 Geyerman, Mrs. Susie A...Hot Springs
 Gill, Miss Gertrude.....Madison
 Grinager, Lars J.....Canton
 Grondahl, Carroll R.....Clear Lake
 Habeger, Miss Ruth.....Madison
 Haight, Cecil F.....Spearfish
 Hall, Willis.....Yankton
 Harris, Bruce K.....
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 Haugen, Mrs. Wm.....Madison
 Hills, Chas. S..822 W. 12th, Sioux Falls
 Hunter, Mrs. Geo. M.....Madison
 Jennerjahn, Mrs. A. D.....Spearfish
 Johnson, Agnes E.....Igloo
 Johnson, J. O.....Watertown
 Jones, Mrs. Stephen.....Madison
 Kaufman, Katherine.....Freeman
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 Keeler, Chas. E.....
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 King, Mrs. Harold W.....Britton
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 Krumm, Kenneth.....
 LaCreek Refuge, Martin
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 Lundquist, Arthur R.....Webster
 McDonald, Mrs. Ernest.....Madison
 McNeil, Mrs. Ella.....Britton
 McWayne, A...1220 S. 2nd, Sioux Falls
 Maar, Mrs. Harry.....RFD, Madison
 Mallory, Mrs. Mary E.....Canton
 Mallory, W. B.....Canton
 Mallory, Rev. Paul W.....Huron
 Mangold, Robert.....Mitchell
 Morrell (Nelle M.) Mrs. R. K...Pierre
 Muggly, Dr. J. A.....Madison
 Mumford, Mrs. Irving.....Howard
 Nelson, Bernice.....Madison
 Ne'son, Mrs. C. J.....Canton
 Nielson, Gordon F.....
 Box 89, Scobey Hall, Brookings
 Nisbet, Mrs. W. C.....Del Rapids
 Noteboom, Charlotte M....Vermillion
 Pettingill, Dr. O. S., Jr.....
 Carleton College, Northfield, Minn.
 Pierce, Fred J.....Winthrop, Ia.
 Piner, Mrs. Harry.....Pierre
 Porter, Mrs. Don.....Madison
 Rames, S. H.....Mitchell
 Rapp, Marvin.....Artesian
 Rapp, Wm. F., Jr.....
 Doane College, Crete, Nebr.
 Rauscher, Agnes.....Mitche l
 Reinartz, Albert.....Huron
 Robinson, Jack.....Highmore
 Rogge, Chas. H.....
 207 S. Euclid, Sioux Falls
 Rose, W. A.....Clear Lake
 Rothschild, Dr. W. A.....Madison
 Ruby, G. D.....Springfield
 Seeker, Burton.....
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 Siljenberg, Adelen M.....
 Box 95, Vermillion
 Skyberg, M. G.....Canton
 Smith, Eldon H.....Mitchell
 Spawn, Dr. Gerald B.....Brookings
 Specht, Luella.....Hartley, Ia.
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 Box 154, Scobey Hall, Brookings
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 Stenvens, Mrs. H. B.....Hot Springs
 Stier, Mrs. A. W.....Madison
 Stroup, Lee W.....Brookings
 Sundling, F. H.....Canton
 Szalay, Rev. Fr. Eugene W...Mission
 Thompson, Mrs. H. L.....
 750 N. 16th St. Lawton, Okla.
 Thompson, Mrs. Lee.....Hurley
 Tommeraason, Mrs. O. J....Madison
 Tout, Wilson.....North Platte, Nebr.

Tuthill, John S.
 311 E. 8th St., Sioux Falls
 Van Epps, Claude A. Huron
 Van Ornum, Leota Madison
 Vickere, (Susie T.) Mrs. Mont.
 Rt. 1, Madison
 Visher, Dr. Stephen S.
 Indiana Univ., Bloomington, Ind.
 Wadden, Mrs. N. E. Madison
 Wagar, Rev. Harold W. Brookings
 Waples, Jas. Robt. Rutland
 Watson, Helen Field. Mitchell
 Watters, Earl W. Aberdeen
 Webster, Victor S. Brookings
 Weeks, James Vermillion
 Weidensee, (Marian) Mrs. Wm. Custer
 Weidensee, Jane. Rapid City
 Weyler, Irma G. Belle Fourche
 Whitney, Abbie F. Burbank
 Whitson, Mrs. Geo. E. Madison
 Wieland, Donald E. Colman
 Wilgers, F. W. Britton

Wilson, Mrs. Asa.
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 Youngworth, Wm.
 3119 E. 2nd St., Sioux City, Ia.
 Zenk, Henry B. Eureka
 Zenk, Mrs. H. B. Eureka
 Ziegahn, Russell E. Aberdeen

JUNIOR

Anderson, Floyd L. Hermosa
 Drissen, Ed. Jr. Britton
 Drissen, Sandra Britton
 Englebert, Freddie. Hot Springs
 Goebel, Wm.
 1726 S. Grange, Sioux Falls
 Hanson, Richard J. Britton
 Lowsma, Henry B. Aberdeen
 Markey, Buddy Edgemont
 Miller, Eugene. Hill City
 Peterson, Robert G. Dell Rapids
 Regan, Geo. W. Madison
 Sautter, Dixie Lee. Hot Springs
 Stewart, Sonja Presho
 Watters, Don E. Aberdeen

An Emblem for the Union

Soon after the Union was formed there came a letter from our good friend, O. S. Pettingill, Jr., of Carleton College:

"Has the SDOU yet decided on the bird that is to serve as its emblem? Here and now I cast my vote—in case the voting is not over, for one of my favorite prairie songsters, the Lark Bunting . . . Even though the mountain state of Colorado claims the Lark Bunting as its state bird, the Lark Bunting represents as well as any bird that I know the true prairie country that is to be found in South Dakota. Whenever I think of South Dakota, I always think of the lovely Lark Bunting, and vice versa. As an emblem, the Lark Bunting has a very decided advantage: it is black and white, and thus reproduces well in a pen and ink

drawing."

On the front cover there's a cut of a Lark Bunting which Sioux Falls Bird Club has been using for a year or two, and it may be available for permanent use by SDOU. The original drawing was made by H. Wayne Trimm, the first President of Sioux Falls Bird Club. At that time "Wayne" was teaching and studying at Augustana College. Since then he has moved to Manhattan, Kansas, where he is similarly engaged at Kansas State College. His art work is increasingly important. South Dakota Conservation Digest carries a monthly article about South Dakota Birds, written and illustrated by him. More about HWT later.

Has any one a better suggestion for a Union Emblem?

