

# SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

Official Publication  
of  
SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION  
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*Madison  
Bird List Page 22*



—Cut Courtesy Iowa Bird Life

## Pied-billed Grebe

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*"The purposes for which this corporation is formed are to encourage study of birds in South Dakota and to promote the study of Ornithology by more closely uniting students of this branch of natural science."  
Articles of Incorporation, South Dakota Ornithologists Union.*

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### SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION

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## President's Page

GERALD B. SPAWN

BROOKINGS, S. D.

**I**N this busy old world of ours another springtime is about to take its last curtain call and let summer have the stage. With the fields, groves, ponds and lakes as backdrops of that stage, many thousands of feathered actors have kept up an almost steady procession in the panorama which is migration.

Spring came late this year to the South Dakota prairies, but the wedges of geese and flocks of ducks, giving their calls as they flew over at night, assured us Spring was on its way, even though tardy. Waves of warblers and sparrows brought fields, wood-lots, parks and lawns to life with their activity and their dashes of color. Shorebirds dozed or probed in the mud at the edges of ponds for a meal as they rested between flights.

Some birds, like some people, made mistakes. Many of the Martins returned to the North too early. Insects were not yet flying here in early or mid-April, and Martins feed while on the wing. Many of them were unable to find enough food and numbers of the earliest arrivals of this species were lost by starvation.

Why all this impelling force, this "do or die" drive, behind migration?

Migration has been defined as the periodical departure from and return to a region at particular seasons of the year. The causes of migration may be several. Three main causes are usually recognized.

The failure of a food supply in the home territory often causes a tempor-

ary movement into an area where food is plentiful. This is usually followed by a return to the home territory and is called alimantal migration. The movement of Snowy Owls into South Dakota may be an example, as is the influx of certain species of hawks into an area where meadow mice have become more than usually abundant.

Severe climatic conditions may cause a species to move in search of temporarily more suitable surroundings and temperatures. The semi-migratory Prairie Chicken may make such climatic migration.

However, the majority of our transient birds are driven on their northward journeys by the instincts and physiological conditions which cause what is called 'gametic migration.' These are the inborn forces and the desires created in part, at least, by the endocrine glands or glands of internal secretion, which cause birds to seek suitable surroundings in which to build nests and raise broods.

The return from the breeding grounds to the South is sometimes considered to be brought about by climatic conditions, but many species start their southward flight long before adverse weather conditions become common in the regions in which the birds have nested. Many species start south weeks before their food supplies become exhausted, so the cause cannot be completely alimantal. In the final analysis, the return to the wintering grounds is probably the result of a combination of several influences or conditions which cause birds to act

in a way not entirely understood by human beings. We often call it instinct, intuition or sixth sense; but, call it what we may, there is still at least a slight amount of mystery or lack of understanding on our part as to why birds do some of the things they do.

We need more information about birds, careful observations on their nesting activities, migration, and habits. We need more bird banding work, a type of bird study which, if done at all, must be done carefully and conscientiously. These observations, to be of value, must be published so the records will be available to anyone who may be interested in problems dealing with certain species. Even though the records as they are gathered may be scattered, they will, when brought together, form a picture which may add greatly to our knowledge of these creatures which play such an interesting and often important part in the scheme of Nature. We might compare these records with the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle which, when taken separately, mean little, but,

when properly set together, make the picture complete.

The members of SDOU can help gather the pieces of the puzzle. True, the picture will probably not be completed as the result of observations made only in South Dakota, but our records will aid materially in its completion.

Especially important are records from the areas adjacent to the Missouri River which will be flooded when the dams are completed. We should learn what birds now use these areas so we may know what changes in the bird-life of South Dakota are brought about by the change in habitat, and in order that we may properly evaluate any management practices which may be proposed or carried on in the future.

SDOU has record report forms available for use by members. They serve both to standardize and to simplify the records submitted. If you are interested in using them, write to W. B. Mallory, Secretary, SDOU, Canton, S. D., for a supply. Remember, good records are important!

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## BACKYARD BIRD BIOLOGY

IT is startling to realize there are many gaps in our knowledge of common birds which can be pretty well filled by observations made by amateur ornithologists right at home.

On the President's Page in The Wilson Bulletin for September, 1949, and for March, 1950, Dr. Pettingill has pointed out some of the ways we all can contribute to the knowledge of the biology of birds. The problems suggested in the two articles are as follows:

**"Length of incubation period.** The exact length of the incubation period is definitely known in relatively few species. By noting when incubation starts and when eggs hatch, the period can be measured by counting the intervening hours .

**"Length of nestling life.** In only a small number of altricial species do we know the exact number of days spent by young birds in the nest from the day of hatching (usually called O day). The time involved can be determined simply by marking each nestling at hatching and visiting the nest at frequent intervals as the estimated day of nest-leaving approaches.

**"Daily activity rhythms.** We have only scattered data concerning the minute to minute activities of wild diurnal birds from break of day to dusk. When opportunity permits, the movements of individual birds can be followed and recorded in detail with special attention paid to periods of feeding and sleeping.



"Size of clutch. Much information is desired on the number of eggs in clutches of different species and the external factors which cause variation within species. For example, it is believed that smaller clutches are laid at the end of the season and that cold weather reduces the size of the clutch. Upon finding nests with eggs, a record can be kept of the number finally laid, the time of the year, and the average weather conditions that occurred during the egg-laying period.

"Where diurnal birds spend the night. Our knowledge of where day birds roost at night is very meager. By watching the movements of individual birds as darkness approaches, it is often possible to discover their roosting sites.

"Water requirements. Apparently some species of birds drink and bathe, while others drink but do not bathe, and vice versa. Amateur ornithologists who maintain bird baths have an excellent chance to find out how different birds use water. At present we are not certain of the water requirements of the majority of species."

"Predation upon birds. Our ornithological literature contains abundant suppositions as to the kinds of predators that destroy nests and adult birds, but relatively few observations of the 'predator in the act.'

"Nest building. In the case of many of our commonest birds, we do not know the actual mechanics of the process, the role of the sexes, and the length of time involved.

"Mating displays. The mating displays of most small birds, especially passerine birds, have been ignored. Because the mating display of a bird such as the Blue Jay is not as showy as that of a peafowl, no attention has been paid to it.

"Parental defense. Although an extraordinary number of observations have been made on the 'injury-feigning' of parent birds, we have few published descriptions of threat-displays, direct attacks, and warning sounds.

"Multiple-broodedness. We need to know what species regularly rear two or more broods in a season. Determinations should be based on birds which have been marked (e.g., color-banded) so as to be individually recognized."

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## Hungry Robins

F. L. Bennett

*Spearfish, S. D.*

OVERLOOKING lawn and shrubbery at the rear of the houseyard stands an old plum tree. Around the trunk, limbs and branches twines bittersweet, richly covered with scarlet berries. This vine was first observed as a small shoot some twenty years ago and the housewife trained *Celastrus* in the way it should grow. Today the plum tree and the twisting vine with its colorful fruit add beauty to the lawn and extend a hanging invitation to the birds.

This late April (the 29th) found the landscape covered with snow. How could a Robin (multiplied by 20) find food? Those scarlet berries solved the problem. The branches of a small spruce closely adjacent offered resting and observation perches for those waiting a turn at a table so plentifully supplied. The Robins were well-behaved toward one another. One could see the head raised and then thrust forward as a berry went down a throat. Some berries had fallen and were scattered about on the snow. A few of the Robins went down to pick them up—crumbs under the table, if one may use imagination.

Another vine bearing these scarlet berries climbs a trellis against the house corner, so berries are on the east and some on the north side. We have Robins feeding there, migrants of early spring. On the east and south sides of the house trails woodbine, the berries of which offer birds much food, enough to make another story. Across the lawn from the bittersweet on the plum stands the wild grape arbor. Fruit left there after we have had our share satisfies many a bird.

# Spring Observations at Madison, South Dakota

(Note: The following tabulation of earliest spring records was made by students at General Beadle State Teachers College during four spring terms. The period covered is approximately March 15th to May 25th, each year. These records were collected under the guidance of Ruth Habeger, a member of the faculty at General Beadle, (a director of SDOTU), and every reasonable effort was made to keep the lists correct. The observers were amateurs, who occasionally operated alone, and error may have crept in. These records have distinct value as contributions to the ornithological records of South Dakota.—Ed.)

SPECIES	1950	1949	1948	1947
Common Loon.....	May 21	May 25	May 9	
Holboell's Grebe.....	May 3	May 17		
Eared Grebe.....	May 14	May 25	May 12	
Pied-billed Grebe.....	April 26	April 12	April 21	April 23
White Pelican.....	April 23	April 11	April 21	April 26
Double-crested Cormorant.....	May 8	April 17	April 30	April 30
Great Blue Heron.....	May 10	April 13	April 20	April 26
Black-crowned Night Heron.....	May 3	April 12	May 12	May 1
American Bittern.....	April 5	April 19	May 1	April 26
Least Bittern.....		May 16		
Whistling Swan.....		April 18		
Canada Goose.....	March 23	March 20	March 25	March 21
Lesser Snow Goose.....	April 19	March 23	March 23	March 23
Blue Goose.....	April 19	May 24		
Mallard.....	March 26	March 24	March 21	March 22
Baldpate.....	May 21			
Pintail.....	March 26	March 20	March 21	March 23
Green-winged Teal.....	April 19	May 4	May 27	May 27
Blue-winged Teal.....	March 12	April 16	April 21	April 27
Wood Duck.....	April 19			
Redhead.....	May 10	April 12		
Canvas-back.....	April 5			
Lesser Scaup Duck.....	April 15	March 29	March 30	March 26
Ruddy Duck.....	April 19	May 12		
Hooded Merganser.....		April 28		
American Merganser.....		April 6	April 28	
Shoveller.....	April 19	April 6	April 20	April 26
Sharp-shinned Hawk.....			May 27	
Red-tailed Hawk.....		April 5		May 11
Broad-winged Hawk.....		March 24		
Rough-legged Hawk.....	May 10	April 18		
Marsh Hawk.....	March 24	March 29	March 28	March 19
Osprey.....	May 3			March 30
Duck Hawk.....		April 27		
Sparrow Hawk.....	March 20	April 6	April 16	May 28
Hungarian Partridge.....	March 12	April 6	March 27	
Bob-white.....		April 9		
Ring-necked Pheasant.....	March 12	March 19	March 13	March 13
King Rail.....				May 14
Sora.....	May 24	May 4		
Coot.....	April 10	April 9	April 10	April 12
Semipalmated Plover.....		May 4		
Killdeer.....	May 25	March 19	March 24	March 30
Wilson's Snipe.....	May 12	April 18	April 21	April 30
Spotted Sandpiper.....	May 19	May 25		May 7
Solitary Sandpiper.....	May 10	May 25	May 19	
Western Willet.....	May 3			
Greater Yellow-legs.....	May 3	April 30		April 30

SPECIES	1950	1949	1948	1947
Pectoral Sandpiper.....	April 21	May 25	May 12	May 7
White-rumped Sandpiper.....	May 11	May 25		
Dowitcher.....	May 7			
Stilt Sandpiper.....	May 21			
Semipalmated Sandpiper.....	May 10	May 17		
Marbled Godwit.....	May 3			
Sanderling.....	May 21			
Avocet.....	May 10			
Wilson's Phalarope.....	May 10	May 12		April 30
Herring Gull.....	April 19	April 6	April 2	March 26
Ring-billed Gull.....	May 8			
Franklin's Gull.....	March 26	March 23	March 24	April 16
Common Tern.....	May 3	April 27	May 8	May 7
Black Tern.....	May 17	May 11	May 17	May 14
Mourning Dove.....	May 5	April 7	April 10	April 14
Screech Owl.....		March 24	March 30	March 26
Great Horned Owl.....		March 26		
Short-eared Owl.....	March 24	April 3		
Nighthawk.....	May 19	May 17	May 18	May 21
Chimney Swift.....	May 12	May 1	May 12	May 5
Belted Kingfisher.....	April 30	April 6	April 21	April 10
Northern Flicker.....	March 22	March 29	March 30	March 21
Red-headed Woodpecker.....	April 20	April 16	April 20	April 20
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.....	April 15	April 11	April 29	April 19
Hairy Woodpecker.....	March 31	March 27	March 19	March 19
Downy Woodpecker.....	April 3	March 13	March 24	March 26
Eastern Kingbird.....	May 12	May 8	May 9	May 8
Western Kingbird.....	May 13	May 9	May 10	May 11
Say's Phoebe.....	May 17		May 19	May 14
Prairie Horned Lark.....	April 30	April 5		
Tree Swallow.....	May 24	May 5	May 17	May 7
Bank Swallow.....	May 21	May 17	May 18	May 17
Rough-winged Swallow.....	May 17	May 11	May 3	May 14
Barn Swallow.....	May 6	April 24		April 26
Purple Martin.....	April 17	April 20	April 25	April 26
Blue Jay.....	March 22	March 13	March 24	March 16
Crow.....	March 12	March 19	March 21	March 15
Black-capped Chickadee.....	March 22	March 22	March 20	March 17
White-breasted Nuthatch.....	May 6	April 28	April 30	May 20
Brown Creeper.....	April 5			April 19
House Wren.....	April 17	May 11	May 3	May 17
Long-billed Marsh Wren.....		May 4		
Catbird.....	May 17	May 15	May 19	May 20
Brown Thrasher.....	May 8	April 28	April 30	April 30
Robin.....	March 24	March 19	March 21	March 22
Wood Thrush.....	April 30	May 1		
Hermit Thrush.....	April 26	May 2		May 7
Olive-backed Thrush.....	May 17	May 3		May 7
Grey-cheeked Thrush.....	May 6	May 8	May 12	May 7
Veery.....	May 14			
Eastern Bluebird.....	April 4	May 2	April 28	April 13
Golden-crowned Kinglet.....	April 10			April 22
Ruby-crowned Kinglet.....	May 6	April 29	May 5	April 22
Bohemian Waxwing.....		April 5		
Cedar Waxwing.....		April 10	April 28	
Migrant Shrike.....	May 10	April 6		
Starling.....	March 13	March 15	March 17	March 17
Red-eyed Vireo.....		May 11		
Philadelphia Vireo.....	May 23			
Warbling Vireo.....	May 13	May 19		
Prothonotary Warbler.....	May 24			

SPECIES	1950	1949	1948	1947
Black and White Warbler.....	May 2	May 3		
Tennessee Warbler.....	May 13	May 12		
Orange-crowned Warbler.....	March 24			
Nashville Warbler.....		May 11		May 7
Yellow Warbler.....	May 12	May 1	May 5	May 4
Myrtle Warbler.....	April 26	April 27	April 26	April 17
Black-poll Warbler.....	May 10	May 27		May 21
Pine Warbler.....	May 21			
Oven-bird.....	May 6	May 12		May 7
Grinnell's Water Thrush.....	May 17	May 11	May 3	
Connecticut Warbler.....		May 12		May 7
Mourning Warbler.....		May 1		
Yellow-throat.....	May 16	May 3		May 24
Wilson's Warbler.....		May 11	May 19	May 14
Canada Warbler.....	May 14			
Redstart.....	May 17	May 11		May 10
Blackburnian Warbler.....	May 17			
Cerulean Warbler.....	May 14			
Bobolink.....	May 21	May 10	May 19	May 21
Western Meadowlark.....	March 22	March 19	March 21	March 23
Yellow-headed Blackbird.....	April 16	April 20	April 21	April 16
Red-wing Blackbird.....	March 26	March 26	March 20	March 21
Orchard Oriole.....	May 17			May 18
Baltimore Oriole.....	May 15	May 10	May 12	
Brewer's Blackbird.....	May 5			
Bronzed Grackle.....	March 20	March 26	March 24	March 23
Cowbird.....	April 26	April 16	April 24	April 30
Cardinal.....	March 22	April 26		
Rose-breasted Grosbeak.....	May 19	May 11		
Purple Finch.....	May 6	May 9		May 3
Redpoll.....				March 17
Pine Siskin.....		May 10		March 17
Goldfinch.....	May 13	April 6	April 9	March 26
Grasshopper Sparrow.....	May 13	April 1		
Vesper Sparrow.....	April 19	April 20		April 24
Lark Sparrow.....		May 5		May 14
Slate-colored Junco.....	March 20	April 12	April 13	April 17
Tree Sparrow.....	April 26	March 25	March 28	March 26
Chipping Sparrow.....	April 30	April 4	April 21	April 16
Clay-colored Sparrow.....	May 20			
Field Sparrow.....	April 26	April 11		
Harris's Sparrow.....		April 4	May 5	
White-crowned Sparrow.....	May 11		May 9	
Fox Sparrow.....	April 30	April 13	April 8	April 28
White-throated Sparrow.....	April 30	May 2	May 3	April 30
Swamp Sparrow.....	May 3	May 17		
Song Sparrow.....	April 30	April 13	April 14	April 20

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Tom Lincoln was born March 27, 1812, near Eastport, Maine. While associated with Audubon on a trip to Labrador he secured a sparrow on June 27, 1833, which apparently had not been identified or classified before. Audubon determined that it represented a new species and named it "Lincoln's Sparrow" or *Melospiza lincolni lincolni*. It is a summer resident of South Dakota.

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Sixteen members of SDOU Pres. Spawn's class in ornithology at State College made a field trip to Waubay Federal Wildlife Refuge on May 27th. Tours were made to various parts of the big Refuge and lectures on wildlife management were given by three members of the Refuge staff.

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## General Notes of Special Interest

BLACK HILLS NOTES.—Weather conditions were not favorable to birds here in the Hills during the winter of 1949-50. There was no rain in late summer and the fall was very dry. Winter came with strong winds and zero temperatures prevailed. March, April and most of May brought wet snow and blizzard conditions, with low temperatures. Many trees have not leafed out by the first of June.

American Rough-legged Hawks were not as common as they were a year ago. A few Golden Eagles were seen, probably the usual number. The usual number of Northern Shrikes was seen. Each bird seems to have an area of its own and it is usually found in that immediate vicinity, perched on a high tree branch or a telegraph wire.

Horned Larks suffered many losses because snow covered their nesting and feeding grounds. Several times during the late winter when they flocked onto the cleared highway to feed hundreds were killed by automobiles. I saw two Sparrow Hawks flying off the highway carrying a dead Horned Lark. They fell into the snow once or twice, rising from the ground only a foot or so. Finally one gave up and went to find a Lark of its own. There were many flocks containing 10 to 100 birds.

Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers must have wintered in the higher Hills, as only three or four were seen in Rapid City during the winter. No Lewis Woodpeckers have been reported here for three or four years. They stay in the foothills the year around, usually in colonies. Northern Flickers may be seen here during the winter. Pinion Jays came into Rapid City nearly every day from December until late March, in flocks ranging from 10 to 80 birds. They come readily to feeding trays; they are quite noisy, and can be heard for several blocks.

The Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-winged Junco, Slate-colored Junco, Brown Creeper, Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Canada Jay and Pinon Jay can always be found at any feeding station in the Hills, and the number seldom varies except in case of storm, and then they increase for a few days. At the Rockerville station, the White-winged Junco will tap on the window when the tray is empty. The other birds sit in nearby trees noisily voicing their opinions about the poor feeding service. They will fly down and start feeding before the window is closed. The Blue Jay insists on having the whole tray to itself, at least until it can carry away the largest piece of food and try to eat it before one of the other Jays akes it. The White-breasted Nuthatch is ill-mannered. He will rap his relatives and friends on the head with his sharp bill without even missing a pick at the food. Quite a trick, as no doubt it hurts, and no other bird of its size will stay for more. The other birds usually sit in the trees and apparently talk about the White-breasted Nuthatch until it leaves and then they all fly down to feed in a more peaceful atmosphere.

A few Starlings are here every winter, but not during the summer. They roost in buildings along the creeks in the foothills during the winter months. Four were seen in Buffalo, S. D. in January, 1950.

Again this winter approximately 2000 ducks were seen at Canyon Lake. They were fairly well fed, as people often drove to the Lake to fed the ducks and take pictures. While Mallards were the most common, there were about 50 Blue-winged Teal, 30 Baldpates, and 30 American Golden Eyes. The latter always

stayed away out in the center of the Lake. There were 2 or 3 pairs of Wood Ducks that were tame and came ashore with the others to feed. Ducks that would not come near enough to be fed usually left the Lake around 4 p. m. to feed in suitable fields as far as 15 miles away.

I found the Plumbeous Vireo at Rockerville June 4, 1950—saw 5 birds. Noted it last in this area in 1947, although it may have been elsewhere in the Hills. I was hunting for the nests of the Slate-colored and the White-winged Junco, but had no luck. Have seen their young in this area nearly every year but have never found nests.—Harry C. Behrens, Rapid City, S. D.

**SOUTHERN BLACK HILLS NOTES.**—We had a little tragedy at our feeding station a while back, perpetrated by a Sparrow Hawk. I was going to make a little write-up of it and send it in, but just didn't get it done. A few Starlings are here again. We seemed to be fairly well rid of Grackles for a time, but now they have found us again. They are certainly not desirable. Two White-crowned Sparrows were in the yard yesterday, April 24, 1950. I have seen several Bluebirds so far this spring, but none in our yard or neighborhood. There doesn't seem to be as many as used to be about here.—Mrs. H. B. Stevens, Hot Springs, S. D.

(Wonder if Mrs. S. means Eastern or Mountain Bluebirds? Western, mebbe. I dunno!—Ed.)

**ROBINS ARRIVE.**—The spring flight of male robins arrived here on the 15th of March in good weather.—Cecil P. Haight, Spearfish, S. D.

#### **COMPOSITE LIST, SDOU 1950 SPRING FIELD TRIP, BROOKINGS, S. D.**

Common Loon, Western Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, American Bittern, Mallard, Gadwall, Baldpate, Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Redhead, Lesser Scaup Duck, Ruddy Duck, American Merganser, Shoveller, Marsh Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, Coot, Killdeer, Upland Plover, Lesser Yellow-legs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Dowitcher, Stilt Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Sanderling, Franklin's Gull, Common Tern, Black Tern, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, Arkansas (Western) Kingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Wood Pewee, Prairie Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Bank Swallow, Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Purple Martin, Blue Jay, Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, House Wren, Short-billed Marsh Wren, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Olive-backed Thrush, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Northern Shrike, Starling, Warbling Vireo, Tennessee Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Palm Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Black-poll Warbler, Pine Warbler, Yellow-throat, Wilson's Warbler, Redstart, Prothonotary Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Palm Warbler, House Sparrow, Bobolink, Western Meadowlark, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Red-winged Blackbird, Baltimore Oriole, Brewer's Blackbird, Bronzed Grackle, Cowbird, Goldfinch, Clay-colored Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow.

**STORM-BOUND IN NORTHWESTERN SOUTH DAKOTA.**—May 8, 1950; temp. 30; snowfall 8 in. Seeking shelter in our grove this morning; 2 Yellow-headed Blackbirds; 1 Oven-bird; several Slate-colored Juncos; many White-crowned Sparrows: some 50 Grackles; 1 Brown Thrasher; 2 pairs of Baltimore Orioles; and Western Meadowlarks and Robins galore.—Robert R. Saul, Faith, Meade County, South Dakota.

MIGRATING SHOREBIRDS.—On April 26, 1950, we (Gerry Lofgren, Miss Doris Sampson, Augustana College Seniors, and I) came on 4 Marbled Godwits and 3 Western Willets in a flooded field just off Highway 16, about 12 miles west of Sioux Falls. They were feeding among other shore birds. When flushed the black-and-white wing pattern of the Willets and the rich cinnamon-brown pattern of the Godwits were clearly seen. On April 30 we (Mr. and Mrs. Chapman and I) saw 6 Marbled Godwits feeding in a wet grassy place in the Big Sioux Valley near Brandon, S. D. With them was a Hudsonian Godwit, the dark reddish breast and the suggestion of black and white in the tail differentiating it from the Godwits. Immediately south of Wall Lake we counted 14 more Marbled Godwits, all feeding in the short grass of a dry open space, wholly unafraid. Earlier we saw 3 other Willets northwest of Sioux Falls; and west of Wall Lake 6 Dowitchers needing the shallow water of a slough edge. On May 6, we (Herman Chapman and I) saw 9 migration-tired Willets, drowsing on the edge of a roadside slough, looking as droopy as chickens with the pip. This slough is about 5 miles S. W. of Sioux Falls. Nearby we saw another Dowitcher, and a few miles west of Wall Lake we encountered 2 more.—Herbert Krause, Sioux Falls, S. D.

HERMIT THRUSH AT HURON, S. D.—On May 3, 1950, I observed a single bird on the ground and in low bushes at my home in Huron which I was unable to identify positively. It was smaller than a Robin; the prevailing color was brown; and it had a speckled breast and a reddish tail. Its movements were quick and after lingering but a few minutes it suddenly disappeared. I could find no bird in my Bird Guide which answered this description except the Hermit Thrush, and I believe it to have been of that species. Over and Thoms list this thrush as a straggler in migration in eastern South Dakota.—Paul W. Mallory, Huron, S. D.

WINTER IN THE WEBSTER AREA.—Thought a note in regard to birdlife under adverse weather conditions might be of interest.

First, the Martins have had a terrific time of it, and at some houses there is close to a hundred per cent loss. Sparrow Hawks are taking a heavy toll of the weakened remaining birds. Fred Staunton, Manager of the Waubay Federal Wildlife Refuge says all the Martins at his house have perished. Jake Rommel at Enemy Swim reported nearly all Martins gone about the first of May, and we have since had the snowstorm of the fifth. Mrs. Lester Knott of Webster noted the birds becoming weak and often falling to the ground. Her husband collected a number of these and fixed up a cage and took them into the house. The Knotts found a formula somewhere, which had been used successfully in rearing Martins. Mrs. Knott has hand-fed these birds, using a small tweezer. Today she had nine lively birds and will release them as soon as weather is warm enough to produce winged insect life.

The coots also found the prolonged cold, late snow, and ice on lakes long after normal break-up hard on them. There are large numbers of birds dead on highways, hit by cars, etc. A dead coot carcass on the highway attracted other coots which gathered to eat the meat. Along would come a speeding car and kill as high as six birds at once. Dead coots are found at a considerable distance from water or ice, apparently having been unsuccessfully looking for food.

By the way, Ray Murdy, Webster, S. D. mentioned the other day noting a pair of Red-breasted Mergansers. The Hooded and American are common enough, but I have never recognized a Red-breasted here.—A. R. Lundquist, Webster, S. D.

(Note: We are trying to get that formula from Mrs. Knott so it may be published for the benefit of other storm-tossed Martins.—Ed.)

**JUNCOS!!** Several SDOU observers report thus:

"What I am sure was an Oregon Junco came to the feeding tray on a Sunday morning, Feb. 12, 1950. We (Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hahn, Sr. and I) had a good view of this bird feeding in the tray, on the snow-covered ground, and at the suit cage. We saw the black hood, the rich reddish-brown back and the lighter brownish sides, distinctly—marks which suggest the adult of this species rather than an immature Slate-colored, or what Peterson calls a 'mongrel between oregonus and the Slate-colored.' What was apparently the same bird appeared again on the 13th, the 18th, the 23rd, and the 25th."—Herbert Krause, Sioux Falls, S. D.

"A Junco possessing a definite red-brown back was observed on April 8, 1950, 6 miles south of Gary, South Dakota, near Lake Cochrane. It is believed to have been a Shufeldt's Junco, which is reported as being an accidental eastern migrant. It was the sole Junco representative with a flock of about 25 Tree Sparrows."

—Robert L. Eng, Brookings, S. D.

On April 23, 1950, Dr. John Donahoe, of Sioux Falls, S. D., found a dead Junco in his yard. It had a brownish back, and pinkish sides, while the coloring on the cheeks, chin and throat were shaded, a bluish-gray, rather than solid color. Roger Tory Peterson was in Sioux Falls that day for Audubon Screen Tour and, after a hasty examination of the specimen, indicated that it might be *cis-montanus*, which seems to be the result of the cross of Slate-colored with Oregon.

Late in the afternoon of Oct. 30, 1948, Mrs. Chapman and I were watching birds in Sherman Park, Sioux Falls, S. D. Near a small flock of Juncos feeding in one of the driveways we discovered one bird which had a back much browner than any of the others. The side coloring was different, too, seeming to be lighter than the back, a reddish or rusty color, although we hesitated to call the sides 'pink.'—H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. D.

(Note: Roberts, in *Birds of Minnesota*, says that the migrating Juncos in Minnesota show variations, such as faint white wingbars, pink sides, chestnut backs, etc. He quotes Dr. Jonathan Dwight, of New York, after examining a group of Minnesota specimens, as of the opinion they originated between the ranges of the Slate-colored and of the Oregon, and "I am convinced they are intermediates between full species, hence hybrids." Over, in *Birds of South Dakota*, says of the Montana Junco: "It is slightly smaller than the Slate-colored Junco . . . and shows a dull pinkish tinge on its sides and more white on its belly." Certainly "the specific status of the Juncos" is a field where the experts may fail to agree.—HFC)

**SNOWY OWL, WINTER OF 1949-50.**—The following observations supplement the account "Snowy Owl In South Dakota" in the March, 1950, issue of *Bird Notes*. All locations are in South Dakota, and 1 bird was seen in each instance; figures are miles.

Reported by Ray Murdy, Game Technician, Webster, S. D.: In early Dec. 12 south 2 east of Clark; Dec. 19, 8 north of Ortle; Dec. 17, 15 south of Webster; Dec. 19, south of Pickerel Lake, Day County; Dec. 20, 3 east, ½ south of Ortle; Jan. 26, 1 northwest of Andover; Jan. 31, 10 east 3 north of Sisseton; Jan. 31, 9 north, 4 east of Sisseton; Feb. 2, ½ west of Butler; Feb. 2, 2 west of Crandall; Feb. 9, 2 south of Florence; and Feb. 12, 1 north of Florence.

Reported by Robert L. Eng, Brookings, S. D.: Jan. 21, 18 north of Brookings.

Reported by Reuel G. Janson, Game Technician, Mobridge, S. D.: Jan. 7, at Mina Lake, Edmunds County and Feb. 12, 1½ southwest of Selby, (Previously reported, 1 NW Selby on Jan. 15.)

Fred T. Staunton, Manager, Waubay Federal Wildlife Refuge, Waubay, S. D., reported Feb. 27, 1950: "The Snowy Owls missed us completely this winter. We have had them on several occasions in past years, but we haven't a single record on the area this winter."



Leo Kirsch, Game Technician, Aberdeen, S. D., reports: "The first owls were observed after the severe blizzard of Jan. 23-4, and no owls were seen after March 15, except 1 on April 3 at Sand Lake Refuge. Ten of the owls observed were in the vicinity of pheasant concentrations and 5 of these were chasing pheasants when observed." His observations are summarized as follows: Jan. 25-27, 8 birds, north and west of Aberdeen; Feb. 3-21, 5 owls, north and west of Aberdeen, except 1 south; March 8-15, 4 owls, being 1 northwest and 3 northeast of Aberdeen, S. D.

M. E. Anderson, stationed at Madison, S. D., stated that competent observers had reported one, early in Feb., 17 south and 3 east of Madison, S. D.

Other observations which were reported to James W. Kimball, Coordinator, Pittman-Robertson Projects, Pierre, S. D., and summarized for us by him are as follows: one, Jan. 24, 5 mi. west of Huron; one, Jan. 24, 3 mi. west of Wessington; one, Jan. 28, 2 owls, 10 mi. south of Highmore; one, Jan. 27, 3 mi. west of Woonsocket; and one, March 2, 4 north and 18 west of Gann Valley.

### THE WARBLER WAVE ALONG THE BIG SIOUX RIVER

UNION COUNTY SOUTH DAKOTA.—Our annual warbler hunting trip was made on May 15, 1950, to the banks of the Big Sioux River where it forms the South Dakota-Iowa boundary. Lateness of the season held the sparrows longer than usual and apparently kept many of the vireos and some of the warblers farther south. Our sparrow list included Vesper, Lark, Harris's, White-crowned, White-throated, Chipping, Clay-colored, Field, Song, Lincoln's, Swamp and Towhee. The only vireos noted were the Warbling and Bell's. Warblers seen included Black and White, Nashville, Orange-crowned, Tennessee, Yellow, Myrtle, Black-poll, Oven-bird and Northern Yellow-throat. A male Lazuli Bunting was watched for some minutes as it fed with several Indigo Buntings. (One was observed May 16, 1948, by members of the Iowa and Nebraska state groups at McCook Lake, Union County, South Dakota.) We also saw two Blue Grosbeaks on the Iowa side of the Sioux River, in Plymouth County.—Wm. Youngworth, Sioux City, Iowa

LINCOLN COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA.—The list of Warblers observed on the morning of May 19th, at Canton, S. D. is: Tennessee, Nashville, Black and White, Yellow, Blackburnian, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, and Northern Yellow-throat. The Canada was seen the evening before. There were two kinds I could not get a sufficient sight of to identify.—W. B. Mallory, Sec. SDOU, Canton, S. D.

MINNEHAHA COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA.—May 18th, 1950, seems to be the day the Warbler Wave came to Sioux Falls, S. D. On the morning of that day I saw 2 Orange-crowned, a Bay-breasted, 2 Magnolias, 5 male and 3 female Tennessees, a Wilson's, a Black-poll, 2 Black and Whites, 4 Myrtles. On the 19th I saw 2 male and 2 female Northern Yellow-throats, a Black and White, 4 male and 3 female Redstarts, 5 male and 4 female Tennessees, 4 Chestnut-sided, 2 Magnolias, a male and a female Blackpoll, an Oven-bird, 2 Blackburnians, and one Myrtle. On May 21, my next date, I saw only a Black and White, a Wilson's and 4 Tennessees.—Herbert Krause, Sioux Falls, S. D.

AMERICAN MAGPIE.—An American Magpie was observed on Feb. 6, 1950, 6 miles south of Brookings, S. D., near the Big Sioux River.—Robert L. Eng, Brookings, S. D.



OSPREY NEAR SIOUX FALLS.—On April 19, 1950, at the Wall Lake Refuge, 12 miles west of Sioux Falls, S. D., in a tree on a point extending into the lake from the south shore, we observed a large hawk feeding. The dull sky and light mist made observation difficult, even with good glasses, but we studied the bird several minutes. The upper parts were dark. We could see light underparts, including chin, with a little color across the upper breast, and light patches extending from above the eyes into the crown, separated by a dark median line. As the bird flew we were impressed by its size and the rather slow wing movement. We concluded we had observed an Osprey, which Over and Thoms rank "rather rare in South Dakota."—Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. D.

GOLDEN WINGED WARBLERS.—In the March, 1950, issue of South Dakota Bird Notes, at page 13, there was quoted in full a note "First Record of Golden-winged Warbler for South Dakota," which had appeared in The Wilson Bulletin, Dec. 1933, and which fixed the date of the first sight record as May 10, 1933. A later note in The Wilson Bulletin, March, 1935, p. 80, which fixes an earlier date, reads:

"The following are the four known records of the Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) in South Dakota: (1) A mounted specimen of an adult male is in the Henderson Natural History Museum at Redfield, S. D. The label bears no date, but the specimen was taken in South Dakota a number of years ago. (2) On September 7, 1931, Dr. Brenckle placed band No. F18828 on a female or immature at Northville, S. D. This individual returned to the water trap on September 9, 1931. (3) On May 10, 1933, the late Mr. E. C. Anderson collected a male at Dell Rapids, S. D. The specimen was identified by Dr. T. C. Stephens, of Sioux City, Iowa. The skin is now in the South Dakota State University Museum at Vermillion, S. D. (Wilson Bull. Dec. 1933, 197-198) (4) On September 11, 1933, the writer banded with band No. L21404 an adult male at Northville, S. D. Further records of this species in South Dakota will be appreciated by the writer.—Paul R. Thompson, Northville, S. D."

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## *Books and Articles About Birds*

SONGS AND OTHER SOUNDS OF BIRDS. By Alexander V. Arlton, Ph.D. Parkland, Washington. Privately printed. 200 lithoprinted, double column 8½ x 11 pages. Card Cover. Ring bound. \$5.00.

This "different" book discusses a neglected phase of ornithology. It has special interest to Dakotans because the author did much of the work on his book while he was a member of the faculty of Dakota Wesleyan University, Mitchell, S. D.

Introductory chapters contain brief discussions of a wide range of topics, such as why birds sing; their vocal organs and abilities to sing; abnormal, part and rhythmic singing; tone, pitch

and range; mocking; crowing, cackling, clucking and cooing; with hints on imitating bird songs, recording them on the musical staff, and using a whistle invented by the author.

Following the introductions are descriptions of over 630 species of birds and their voices. In numerous instances the songs are reduced to syllables or recorded on the musical scale, with comments by many noted ornithologists.

Altogether the book should be very helpful in identification of birds. It opens another field of ornithological study, but presupposes that the reader-listener has reasonably acute hearing, a sense of rhythm, and is not tone deaf.

—J. S. Findley

## Spring Meeting, 1950

THE warm sun, combined with rapidly greening trees and meadows, formed a perfect background for the annual spring meeting of South Dakota Ornithologists' Union at State College, Brookings, on May 20th and 21st.

The program of the first day began with a tour of the Entomology-Zoology Department bird collection. The displays were wide in range and extremely interesting. Over one hundred bird specimens, including both study skins and life mounts, are part of material used for instruction, as are the twenty-five different nest specimens with eggs which were also displayed. There was also a layout of books relating to the study of birds, many of which are used by Entomology and Zoology students at State. The group then went to the home of Rev. Harold Wagar and there observed various traps which are used in his bird-banding operations.

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After lunch the members and guests met at State College for the formal session. Dean A. M. Eberle of the Division of Agriculture, State College, welcomed the group to the campus. Mr. J. S. Findley, Vice-President of SDOU, presented a paper "Bird Watchers and Books," in which he discussed various books which are aids to both amateur and professional bird observers. A list of the books referred to, with publisher and price, may be obtained from Mr. Findley. Rev. Wagar then gave a talk based on his experiences in trapping and banding Warblers.

Mrs. Ida Alseth, of Lake Preston, told of the thousands of migrating geese which stop each year in the lake area around Lake Preston. Mr. Clair Rollings, Manager of the Sand Lake Federal Refuge, spoke briefly of the spring flight of Snow and Blue Geese, reporting estimates of 250,000 one day and 500,000 for the season at that Refuge.

President Gerald B. Spawn, speaking on "SDOU and Missouri River Development," asserted that the federal government is interested in retaining present wildlife conditions near the flooded areas of the Missouri Valley as nearly as possible. Plans are being made, President Spawn reported, for an extensive survey of birds within the Valley before and after the flooding takes place, to be carried on jointly by various federal and state agencies.

With 35 years of bird-watching experience, Mr. Claude Van Epps, of Huron, S. D., was well qualified to tell the audience that "fun in bird watching" is not limited to any group; that each type of bird has its own personality; and that these features are entertaining even to the untrained observer.

Mr. Robert Eng, student at State, then gave a report on his bird observations during two winters. He emphasized the fact that anyone may make planned observations about a species or area or both.

Following extemporaneous comments by members on their observations, a brief business meeting was held.

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The group then adjourned to meet at a banquet served by the Martha Circle of the Methodist Ladies Aid. To conclude the day's program, Mr. Ray Murdy, Waterfowl Specialist, of the State Game, Fish and Parks Dept., gave a very interesting lecture on "Methods and Objectives of Waterfowl Banding," illustrated with colored slides.

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Early Sunday morning the group assembled and started on a field trip to Lake Oakwood State Park, about 20 miles northwest from Brookings. Stops were made at the west end of Goldsmith Lake, and at East Lake in the Oakwood chain to permit study of the cormorant rookery there.

(Continued on page 32)

# I Remember

BY J. O. JOHNSON

WATERTOWN, S. D.

WILSON'S Phalarope is a most interesting bird, and one rather common in South Dakota. I remember my first experience with them was in June, 1941, on Chain Lakes, 12 miles northwest of Watertown, S. D. We were looking for nests of shorebirds on what is called 'Lower Pass,' a narrow strip of land between two small lakes, a good nesting site. We found nests of the Nighthawk, Killdeer, Piping Plover, and Avocet, but could not find a Phalarope's nest, although these dainty little birds, uttering their plaintive note, came flying over, at times quite close to us.

A few days later at Bitter Lake, south of Waubay, S. D., another good nesting site, I remember we found two

Phalarope chicks. They were in the grass some rods from the lake shore. We flushed two adults and the fuss they made kept us searching until we found the young. They are much darker than the adults and unlike any other juvenile shorebirds in appearance. A solid black stripe from the crown of the head down the back, and a similar stripe connecting the base of the wings, form a black cross. There are also black patches on the sides and the rump.

Then I recall that in June, 1942, in a meadow at Pactola, S. D. in the Black Hills, we found others of this species. After a careful search we discovered the male, wandering about alone through the grass. Two females were chasing each other about in flight; presently they alighted and one tried several times to mount the other; then they took to the air again and continued the chase.

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## SPRING MEETING

(Continued from page 31)

Late in the forenoon "hot dogs" and coffee were served through the courtesy of the Brookings Chamber of Commerce. A compilation of the species of birds which had been discovered on the trip and at the lake was then made and disclosed a total of 82 recorded for the day. (For list see General Notes.—Ed.)

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The spring meeting was a success. The enthusiasm of those present reflected the growing interest of amateur and professional bird observers throughout the state. During both days the fact that bird-study is not limited to any one group was emphasized again and again.

(Note: S●U is indebted to Mr. Douglas Ericson, a Journalism student at State College, for a detailed report of the meeting, of which the foregoing is a condensation.—Ed.)

In the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming, on August 7, 1942, I saw a mixed flock of adult and young Wilson's Phalaropes alight on Emerald Lake, in a long string extending out from the shore. They bounced on the rough water like corks, but continued swimming around the edge of the lake, feeding in true phalarope style. Finally in the late afternoon we saw them, huddled together like a flock of quail, near the center of the lake. ● On September 8, 1948, and again about the same date in 1949, I saw a flock of this species floating down the swift, rough water in the Snake River, below the Jackson Lake Dam, dabbling this side and that for food in typical phalarope manner. They would float down about three-quarters of a mile and then fly back upstream and repeat the performance.