

SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

Official Publication

of

SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

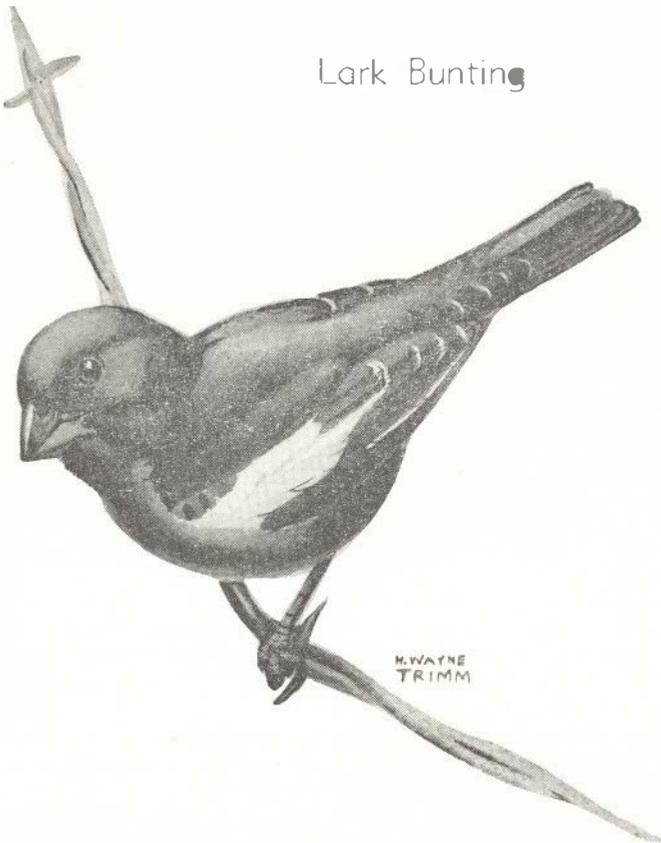
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Lark Bunting



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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.

AS I sit down to write this page, school has started for all our junior members and vacations are over for the majority of the other members of SDOU. I hope each of you had a very pleasant summer!

This would be a good time for you to send to the Editor a few notes on your recent observations of birds in South Dakota. Since *Bird Notes* is your journal, you should use it as a publication outlet for any unusual or otherwise noteworthy observations which you have recorded.

Another suggestion, which I feel is timely, is that you watch for birds which pass through South Dakota as fall migrants. Most species are now, or in the near future will be, in their way south to their wintering areas. We need fall migration records - species, number, locality, date, and name of observer. Just a word of caution: in making identification, remember that the coloration of birds of the year is not always like that of the adults. If you are not sure of the differences between juvenile and adult plumages, you will find them described in almost any good field guide to the birds.

Christmas is only about three months away. For most people the problem of gifts is always more or less perplexing. How about letting SDOU help you with that difficulty? To give a year's membership in SDOU, which includes a year's subscription to *South Dakota Bird Notes*, is to make an impression which will last much longer than just through the Holiday Season! Your friend will treasure such a gift long

afterward! If you send in your check (\$3.00) by November 15th, with the name and address of the person to whom the gift is being made, then that person will be sent the December, 1950, issue of *Bird Notes*, in addition to all issues for 1951. If you desire a statement made that the membership is a gift from you, please so indicate when you send in your check. Remittances and membership data should be sent to J. S. Findley, Membership Chairman, 1201 South Center Ave., Sioux Falls, S. D.

In the meantime you can help our organization grow if you will "talk up" SDOU to other people who may or should be interested. The Union is state-wide in scope, but there are some sizeable areas in the state where there are no SDOU memberships at present. Anyone who joins for the current year will receive all of the 1950 issues of *Bird Notes*.

Mr. Claude A. Van Epps, a Director of S.D.O.U., has consented to act as Chairman of a Committee which will supervise the 1950 Christmas Bird Census by SDOU. During recent years these counts of winter birds have been made at but a few points in the state. It is now proposed to have the study made in all parts of the state where there are members of SDOU. In this way a great deal of information about the state-wide winter bird population will be accumulated.

Bird students who are willing to cooperate in this interesting project should promptly advise Mr. Van Epps at 780 Utah S. E., Huron, S. D.

Summer Residents at Spearfish, South Dakota

CECIL P. HAIGHT

SPEARFISH, S. D.

(Note: The observer, Cecil P. Haight, is Instructor of Biology at Black Hills Teachers College, Spearfish, S.D. Despite his duties in connection with two sessions of summer school, notes were made of about fifty birds seen by him this year. He states that with only a few exceptions the observations were made on the College campus and around his home. Unless otherwise noted these birds were all seen in Lawrence County, in the immediate vicinity of Spearfish. The dates given are not earliest dates for the community but rather the first time Mr. Haight observed the species without making great effort to get early dates. For the benefit of those who are not familiar with South Dakota geography, Spearfish is located midway between the north and south boundaries of the state, only a few miles from the western border. It is at the northern edge of the Black Hills, on Spearfish Creek, and 10-15 miles from Orman Dam, which impounds a large irrigation reservoir.—HFC.)

SPECIES	DATES	NOTES
Blue-winged Teal	June 13	Apparently nesting pair on farm pond 5 mi. E Orman Dam, Butte County.
Mallard	June 11	Male feeding in farm pond. Numerous others since seen in same area.
Red-tailed Hawk	June 23	Hunting over pasture 5 mi. E Spearfish.
Sparrow Hawk	April 10 July 1	First seen in Spfish during heavy snow-storm; next seen feeding over open pasture.
Sharp-tld. Grouse	June 18 July 1	In open, hilly grassland 1 mi. SE Orman Dam, Butte County. Female & 6 young in open pine timber 2 mi. NE Iron Creek Lake.
Prairie Chicken	June 11	One seen in rolling farm and pasture land with brushy draws north of Red-water Creek, Butte County.
Hun. Partridge	June 4	Two (pair?) in grass and wheat land on high hills 5 mi. W Spfish.
R-N Pheasant		Many residents in Spearfish Valley. Cocks had harems well established by April 22.
Killdeer	April 15	Male singing in open pasture just W Spfish. Summer resident.
Snipe, Wilson's	April 22	One near brushy swamp 3 mi. N Spfish.
Mourning Dove	April 22	Three singles in open farmland N of Spfish. By 1st week May some pairs.
Y-B Cuckoo	July 21	One seen in tall cottonwoods in Spfish. Song heard by mid-May.
Nighthawk	June 20	Feeding above trees in Spfish, generally in pairs.
Belted Kingfisher	July 22	Calling and feeding from pines at edge of Iron Creek Lake.
Red-shft. Flicker	April 6	Calling from tall trees in Spfish.
R-HWoodpecker	June 10	In cottonwoods along Spfish Creek. By July 25 numerous around town.
Lewis's Woodpecker	May 16	Flying across BHTC campus to timber.
Downy Woodpecker	July 8	Feeding in oak in Spfish.
Eastern Kingbird	June 4	Five singles feeding over pasture.
Wn. Wood Pewee	July 8	One singing and feeding in Spfish, apparently feeding nestlings in tree.
Horned Lark	June 11	Feeding on roadside through open grassland 4 mi. N Spfish.
Barn Swallow	June 11	Two feeding awing above grassland and creek in Spfish.
Cliff Swallow	July 1	Flock (75?) feeding along stream at Mirror Lake 9 mi. W Spfish.
Crow	April 22	Two on farm N Spfish—summer resid.
Am. Magpie	April 22	Yr-round resident, moderate numbers.

Blue Jay	March 26	Calling from trees, feeding at station in snow in Spfish.
Water Ouzel	June 10	Two seen feeding in Spfish Canyon.
House Wren	July 8	One feeding young in birdhouse in tree. Apparently fairly numerous.
Catbird	May 20	Feeding on ground under trees, Spfish.
Mt. Bluebird	March 27	15 males feeding on Virginia Creeper berries and sheltering in vines during snowstorm, at BHTC.
	July 22	Pair & 3 young in pines, Iron Creek.
Robin	March 26	Male in town; occasional songs.
	March 27	30 males feeding on Va. Creeper berries during snowstorm.
	April 22	20 females in group, feeding along creek 5mi. N Spfish.
	June 28	2 young feeding in yard in town.
Western Robin	May 7	Singing in timber at edge of Hills.
Townsend's Solitaire	June 25	One in open pine woods with undergrowth 2mi. S Mt. Rushmore, Pennington County.
Starling	April 15	Feeding in trees in Spfish.
	July 15	Feeding in trees on BHTC campus.
Red-eyed Vireo	June 5	Singing, feeding, in cottonwoods.
	July 8	Young hatched; adults feeding them; male sings constantly.
Or.-cr. Warbler	May 2	Three males singing in tree in Spfish.
Yellow Warbler	May 13	Two males singing, lilacs.
	June 26	Actions indicate nesting under way.
	July 8	One adult & 3 young flying around lilac hedge, feeding.
Myrtle Warbler	May 5	Two males in boxelder tree in yard.
Audubon's Warbler	May 2	Two males, singing-feeding, Spfish.
Yellow-throat	May 17	Male singing-feeding, lilac hedge.
	July 1	Male singing in waste area, Spfish.
Redstart	May 24	Male singing-feeding, Spfish.
	July 1	Male, female, 2 young almost flightless on ground. Young cry constantly and are well fed.
	July 7	Male singing and feeding. Last day redstarts seen in the yard.
Wn. Meadowlark	April 3	Singing just after 15 in. snow; observed constantly since then.
Y-H Blackbird	June 18	Five males, (2 females) singing in cattail marsh, along ditch, 1 mi. E Orman Dam, Butte County.
R-W Blackbird	April 22	Twenty males, scattered, singing in willows, cattails, along stream, 2-7 mi. N Spfish.
	June 24	Fifty, both sexes, cattail swamp at Orman Dam. Males singing.
Rusty Blackbird	June 13	Male singing in open cropland 3 mi. E Orman Dam, Butte County.
Br. Grackle	April 17	Male, calling, tall trees, BHTC campus.
	June 30	Pair appear to be nesting on vine on College bldg.- 15 feeding.
Wn. Tanager	May 23	Male in trees along stream, Spfish.
	July 8	Male seen in mountains 3 mi. S Spfish in oak shrubs along stream.
	July 14	Male seen in Spfish. Head losing all over red; only face appears red.
Lazuli Bunting	July 8	Male singing from tree near town; one singing from low shrub in Spfish.
Goldfinch	May 28	Two males singing from topmost branch of cottonwood in Spfish. Frequent since.

Lark Bunting	June 4	Male on fence across open grassland 6 mi. W Spfish.
	June 17	Twenty scattered males on Irrigation project, Butte County.
Evening Grosbeak	May 1	Singing from top elm tree, Spfish.
Chip. Sparrow	March 28	Two eating at feed stn, snowstorm.
	July 10	Young just hatched in nest in boxelder 6 ft. from child's swing.
Vesper Sparrow	April 22	Five feeding in weeds along road 5 mi. N Spfish. Seen regularly since.
Slate-cld. Junco	March 26	Ten singing in lilac in Spfish.
	March 28	Twenty at feed stn. during snowstorm.

NOTES ABOUT INDIVIDUAL BIRDS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: This bird gave its stuttering call from the tops of tall cottonwood trees for several weeks before I was able to see it. It is shy, seldom coming into the open, but the song is unmistakable.

Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Chickadees: Winter residents in Spearfish last winter. Few days would pass without all three being seen, although there were virtually in feeding stations available.

Western Wood Pewee: These inconspicuous little birds nested high in cottonwood trees in front of our house in town. Adults were neither friendly nor shy and could often be seen searching for green caterpillars in the low trees close to the house.

Water Ouzel: The local Forest Ranger reports this bird to be a resident of Spearfish Canyon. Early in spring and late in fall it can be observed bobbing its way down the stream-bed. With some caution one can approach within 25 feet before it is startled and flies away a short distance.

Mountain Bluebird: This seems to be by far the commonest Bluebird in the northern Hills. An Eastern Bluebird was observed in Spearfish during fall of 1949.

Western Robin: Rather easily distinguished from the Robin by absence of white spots on corners of tail and the generally more timid nature. It is commonly seen in the timber in the edge of the Hills and around town early in spring. Both can be observed in Spearfish during summer.

Red-eyed Vireo: Arrives late in spring. One of the first to begin singing in morning and one of the last to stop at night. It nests rather high in trees; apparently leaves shortly after the young can fly.

Yellow Warbler: Demands of territory for each pair are not great, as two nests were in one yard and the males appeared quite amiable. One male fed himself and his young for at least a week on insects found in one tree—boxelder bugs were known to be there but they never became abundant on the ground, perhaps Yellow Warblers took most of them.

Redstart: The male was a very bold little fellow, sitting on the fence a scant three feet from a busy gardner, and singing his loudest. Time and again he would slip down almost under the hoe to get some insect. The whole family disappeared about a week after the young left the nest.

Western Meadowlark: It is not difficult to recognize this bird by its song. Yet one or two birds I heard during the summer had a variation almost exactly like that of the Eastern Meadowlark, except that the pitch was slightly lower. What is the westernmost limit of the range of the Eastern Meadowlark?

Lazuli Bunting: Whenever observed, this little fellow was singing his heart out from the topmost dead limb of a tall tree or from a rather open dead tree about 15 feet high—never was he seen in the foliage.

Pioneer Prairie Ornithologists

HENRY E. LEE was born July 2, 1875, at Faribault, Minn., and died at Rapid City, S.D., February 28, 1947. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. M. A. Lee, moved to Brookings, S.D., while Henry was a child, and later removed to Bryant, S.D. In November, 1897, Henry married Miss Minerva E. Fish. The young couple continued to make their home at Bryant until 1903, but subsequently lived in Chamberlain, Pierre, Huron, and finally Rapid City. These moves were in connection with Henry's employment in the railway mail service, from which he eventually retired in 1936. There were five children, of whom the survivors are Harold G., Lansing, Mich.; Gerald F., Rapid City, S.D.; and Vernita, now Mrs. Warren Stickler, Arlington, Va.

A life-long interest in the out-of-doors had its origin in Henry Lee's boyhood experiences in Brookings County. His father was Deputy Sheriff there for a time, and man and boy took many a horse-and-buggy ride together out over the Dakota prairies. There was much wildlife to be seen. Nearby Hamlin County, where Henry spent his youthful years, with its wealth of lakes, marshes and sloughs (true even today!) furnished ample opportunity for the young man to hunt game birds, to study the numerous marsh and shore birds, and to collect the eggs of many species of both. Taxidermy was a logical development of this fact-seeking young field naturalist. Examples of his skill in all these phases of natural history are in various collections in South Dakota.

The high quality of his ability and the scope of his information in ornithology were attested by the scientist, S. S. Visser, in *The Auk*, April, 1909, wherein he gave credit for information

upon which Visser based his "List of Birds of Western South Dakota." Of our subject he said: "H. E. Lee, now of Pierre, has done much good work, particularly upon the water birds of Bryant (Hamlin County) in the northeastern part of the state." A notebook of Lee's, now in the Library of SDOU, supports that impartial appraisal.

While details are not available, it is well known that Henry Lee wrote many short articles dealing with various phases of wildlife, some of which were published in local newspapers, others appearing in scientific publications.

Henry Lee's mind was open to the appeal of many types of knowledge. W. H. Over, Curator of the Museum at the State University, writes: "In the early days he (Lee) and I travelled much over the Black Hills and surrounding region, collecting natural history material. I remember we camped a week in the Hills in 1913."

After retiring from the mail service, and while he lived at Rapid City, Mr. Lee made an excellent collection of the flora of the Black Hills which was eventually acquired by the Museum at the State School of Mines. Mr. Lee was employed there for a time, and this disposition of his collection was appropriate. Then, too, there are many specimens of various types of Indian material, collected by him, in the W. H. Over Museum at the University.

Henry Lee frequently said, during his later years, that he felt sorry for the South Dakotans who had missed the experiences of early pioneer days which he had enjoyed, when the country was young; and that he and his parents found life in a sod shanty in Hamlin County a rare and interesting way of life.

Books and Articles About Birds

A CHECK-LIST OF THE BIRDS OF OHIO. By Donald J. Borrer. The Jan. 1950 issue of Ohio Journal of Science, Columbus, 10, Ohio. 44 pages. \$1.00

In view of the very serious need for a new check-list of South Dakota birds this excellent Ohio list may well be studied by members of SDOU. It is one of the very best of the recently published lists. The reason for its issuance is stated this way: "The field identification of birds is greatly facilitated if the observer knows what birds are apt to occur at any given time and place. Since previous check-lists have been in such demand, and since a number of new species have been added to both the state list and the central Ohio list, in the past several years, it has seemed advisable to bring these lists up to date."

The main list is based on specimens; supplemented by a hypothetical list, a list of extirpated species, a tabulation of escapees or local introductions, and a group of hybrids, etc.

The methods of handling data in this publication are worth careful study and application to our own notes of observations. The residential status is indicated thus: PR—a nonmigratory permanent resident throughout the year; PMR—a migratory species, some individuals occurring throughout the year, but common throughout the year; M—a migrant or transient, occasionally breeding locally; SR—a summer resident, breeding, with increased numbers during migrations; SV—a summer visitor, occasionally breeding; WR—winter resident or visitor, more common during migrations. For arrival dates, the earliest and average are shown; while for departure, we find average and latest dates. Then, too, there are three pages of "literature cited."—H.F.C.

ATLANTIC NATURALIST. Published by Audubon Society of District of Columbia, 202 Benj. Franklin Stn. Washington, D. C. Annual subscription (5 issues, beginning Sept. 1) \$1.75.

Formerly *The Wood Thrush*, official organ of the D. of C. Society, this splendid publication with a new title takes on a distinctly regional aspect. The technical information and literary

ability available in Washington amply justify the increased scope, and enhance the value to bird-students generally. Each issue contains 48 pages of material both interesting and valuable and the illustrations are splendid.

—H.F.C.

Many fine publications come to our desk by way of exchange. One is *Iowa Bird Life*, official magazine of Iowa Ornithologists' Union. The Editor is Fred J. Pierce, of Winthrop, Iowa (a member of SDOU) who is a dealer in books of interest to bird students. Annual subscription, or regular membership including subscription, is \$1.00.

The high quality and broad scope of the material in the 32-page issue for March, 1950, appear from this list of its contents: Notes on Scientific Research on Bob-White Nesting Behavior, with chart, a good photo, and a bibliography; a narrative of a field trip at Davenport in May, with 3 illustrations; a brief statement as to the Davenport Museum collections; a 2-page article on the Davenport Academy of Science and its contributions to Iowa Ornithology; details of the 1949 Christmas Census in Iowa, recorded at 19 stations, with 2 pages of tabulation; a story of the Christmas Census on Long Island, N.Y., in which two Iowans participated; 9 pages of General Notes; news of local bird clubs; 2 good book reviews. We still do not understand how they can give so much for so little!—H.F.C.

"What is the best book for one to use in the study of South Dakota Birds?" That's a common question. Perhaps the best answer is: *Birds of South Dakota* by Over and Thoms, obtainable from Museum, U. of S. D., Vermillion, S.D., 50c; *How To Know the Birds*, by Peterson, 35c; and *Field Guide to the Birds*, by Peterson, \$3.50. If the last two are not available locally, try either I. C. Adams, Columbia, Mo., or Fred J. Pierce, Winthrop, Iowa, both of whom are members of SDOU and book-dealers. West-river folks also need *Field Guide to Western Birds*, by Peterson.

General Notes of Special Interest

LARK BUNTINGS AND BLUE GROSBEAK IN CENT. S.D.—“I went due west from Forestburg to the Missouri River and then south to Chamberlain. Lark Buntings were first seen on the plateau west of Wessington Hills. This suggests a westward retreat, as they nested in 1898 close to my central Sanborn County home. The most unusual bird seen was the Blue Grosbeak, in a grove by the Missouri River, a few miles north of Chamberlain, on June 12th.” (Extract from a letter)—S. S. Visser, Bloomington, Ind.

LARK BUNTINGS, LAZULI BUNTINGS, AND BLUE GROSBEAK IN CENT. S.D.—On June 18, 1950, we drove from Sioux Falls to Chamberlain, then north through Fort Thompson and west from Stephan over new SD 34 (Wonderful! Drive it soon!) through De Grey to Pierre. Between Plankinton and White Lake we observed a male Lark Bunting. A few miles north of Chamberlain Mrs. C. got a good look at what she thought was a Blue Grosbeak. It flew across the road ahead of us into a wild plum thicket, but we couldn't flush it. Presently we saw pairs of Lark Sparrows on the highway fences. In the brushy bottom of the Missouri River southeast of Fort Thompson we repeatedly heard and eventually saw plainly male Lazuli Buntings. As we left the River at the Fort and went out onto the high prairies we began to see both male and female Lark Buntings, 8-10-12 to the mile. Often the male was singing. At and near the Mission at Stephan we saw Chestnut-collared Longspurs, males and females, drinking at the shallow water spots. As we approached the wooded breaks which lead down into the Missouri Valley we saw American Magpies, singly and in pairs. Then in the DeGrey area we again saw Lazuli Buntings, and Towhees. On the way home, via same route, we identified both female and male Lazuli Buntings.

—Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S.D.

LARK BUNTINGS IN SOUTHEASTERN S. D.—I have two records of Lark Buntings this summer. The first was of two males seen just south of Swan Lake in Turner County; and the second was of one male five miles south of Worthing, in Lincoln County. I was unable to find the female or nest in either instance, but as it was in the nesting season I surmised that the females were on the nests.

—W. B. Mallory, Canton, S.D.

ANOTHER LARK BUNTING IN SE. S.D.—On June 4 we saw a male Lark Bunting at the edge of a field 1 mile south of SD 38, a short distance east of the Big Sioux River, in eastern Minnehaha County. It flew out into the sweet clover field here it alighted. We did not see it again, although we waited some time that day, and passed the spot frequently afterwards.

—Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S.D.

LARK BUNTINGS IN LAKE COUNTY—On June 10, 1950, with Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Dunlop, Dell Rapids, we saw 3 Lark Buntings in a group near Ramona in northwestern Lake County.—Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, S.D.

LARK BUNTINGS NEAR BROOKINGS—Lark Buntings were observed in the areas southwest of Brookings, S.D., at various times during the spring and early summer of 1950. Definite dates of these observations were not recorded, since this species is not uncommonly seen at this season.—G. R. Spawn, Brookings, S. D.

LARK BUNTINGS NEAR MITCHELL.—In a detailed report of a long trip from Jefferson, S.D. to Alaska and return, Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Felton, Jr. report: "Our first Lark Buntings were seen before we got to Mitchell, and they were soon the common bird. Out from Sturgis we identified the Vesper Sparrow and both of the Pipits. Early next morning we saw about 30 Sage Hens in a group feeding across a flat."

RAILS—A small slough by a side-road near Wall Lake, Minnehaha County, was found to be a good place to observe Rails this summer. Both Sora and Virginia Rails were so numerous that four or five might be in sight at one time. On August 26, 1950, at the same slough, a Yellow Rail was observed for several minutes with 8X glasses at a distance of about 15 feet. After feeding it retreated into the rushes.

—Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, S.D.

NOTES FROM VERMILLION—I paid particular attention to references to Juncos in the June issue of BIRD NOTES, as I've made comments on that subject in my own notes from which I quote: "Feb. 23, 1950. A large flock of sparrow-like birds settled in the ash trees across the street, where large clusters of last year's seed still clung. They sat a long time, quietly and busily feeding, some staying for an hour or longer. Their backs were brown and striped, heads had brown caps, the eyes with white streaks above, the breasts streaked, the bird about 6 inches long. One had rosy feathers on the upper breast, without streaks. Could it have been a pink-sided Junco which are occasionally rosy on the breast, traveling with these to whom it is kin? The others may have been Chipping or Tree Sparrows as their markings were like those attributed to those species. The call was a shrill tsip, tsip, tsip."

July 14, 1950, I spied a Downy Woodpecker in a peach tree. On August 2, I caught sight of a Hairy Woodpecker travelling up an elm where I hung suet last winter. Could this mean earlier frost this year? (Frost came there on August 20th, this year, earliest in 60 years! Ed.) Mourning Doves and Eastern Kingbirds are gathering by dozens on telephone wire these days, congregating in preparation for migration.—Adelene M. Siljberg, Vermillion, S. D.

LATE AUGUST NOTES FROM UNION COUNTY.—On August 23, 1950, we made a half day trip by auto to the lake region of Union County and returned along the Big Sioux River. Birding is not good at this season, but we did see one Blue Grosbeak near the Big Sioux River and found the plum thickets alive with Bell's Vireos. To our minds this little songster is the friendliest of the vireos, and we always stop when we hear his quaint little song. Baltimore Orioles were moving in some numbers. We saw one Orchard Oriole, which is our latest fall date for it nearly 30 years of record keeping. The most interesting observation of the trip was the flocking of the Least Terns. Dozens of these dainty birds were seen feeding around the lakes and along the Missouri River. Many of them were juveniles awing and already diving for food, just as their parents were. From the number of young which we saw, it seems the hatch was favorable this year. With the building of dams on the Missouri River and a stabilized channel, sandbars may be a thing of the past and these Terns may then have to seek other nesting sites.

—Wm. Youngworth, Sioux City, Iowa.

WHITE PELICANS.—In numbers comparable to the concentration of 3,750 (est.) seen last year, White Pelicans have been congregating on Milwaukee Slough near Wentworth, S.D. this fall. However, Mr. E. V. Gibson, Sioux Falls, estimated them

as "many more than last year." On September 9, 1950, we observed 600 at dusk. There was also a concentration of Franklin's Gulls there that may have numbered 5,000.—Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, S.D.

NOTES FROM SOUTH CENTRAL S.D.—In compiling notes from Douglas County I am at a loss as to where to begin and where to stop. As a boy, back in the early 1900's, I kept a "bird diary" or "Nature Journal." The notes were few and brief and had to do mostly with migration and nesting. Of late I have kept only sketchy diaries, mainly notes of special bird experiences which I thought worth recording.

I note that you recently saw a fish hawk near Sioux Falls. Several years ago I saw one on our Lake Onahpe, an artificial lake of two or three acres. This hawk circled the lake a few times and made several dives for fish. Small crappies and bass were plentiful but each time the bird dived it missed. It seemed unafraid of several fishermen. This fearlessness, with its lack of skill, persuaded me it was a young bird. That is the only Osprey I have heard of appearing in this county.

This Lake Onahpe is fed by artesian wells and is retained by a dam well planted to cottonwoods and willows. In the fall of 1942 I was making a daily walk to the pond and around the dam. I discovered quite a flock of warblers which I could not identify. As I walked along they flitted from willow to willow ahead of me. I endeavored to get an accurate description of their markings. On searching my bird guides I was unable to make a definite identification. On October 15th, I wrote in my diary: "Several Audubon (?) Warblers at the lake;" On October 16: "No Warblers;" and on October 17: "No Warblers—came about Oct. 4, but seem to have gone south." Not many months after this I read in Audubon Magazine of the discovery of a warbler which was at once named "Sutton's Warbler" in honor of our great bird artist, George Miksch Sutton. I think it quite likely that my warblers of October, 1942, were Sutton's Warblers. In the succeeding eight years I have never seen another bird which resembled those warblers.

An interesting incident took place in our martin colony last summer. The martin house stood about forty feet from our kitchen and electric wires which ran close to the martin house served as perches. As Mrs. Crutchett and I sat at breakfast we heard a terrific ado among the martins; we both rushed out to learn the cause. Martins were flying around in a frenzy. One was hanging head downward from the light wire and fluttering feebly. The tip of one of its claws was caught in the fabric insulation of the wire. As I rushed back into the kitchen to get a stepladder, one of the circling birds flew directly against its unhappy brother and knocked it loose from the wire. The near-tragic victim at once joined its circling fellows, and life in the martin colony returned to normal.

—Chas. P. Crutchett, Armour, S.D.

LONG-BILLED MARSH WRENS: These were seen at Tepeetonka, YMCA Island, Big Stone Lake, on June 12, 1949 and June 4, 1950.—I. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, S. D.

FEEDING STARVING PURPLE MARTINS—A flock of nearly thirty Martins which returned April 18th, had dwindled to about twelve because of starvation. On April 28th we took nine such birds, found in the bird house too weak to fly, into the house and for a few days fed them with a mixture of ground beef liver and heart, hard cooked eggs, dry bread crumbs, mashed potatoes and grated carrot. I pre-

pared the mixture in a liquidizer. The Martins liked it and after a few feedings took it from the tweezers. In three days they were chirping and getting lively. Perches were placed in the box and the Martins would fly from one perch to another. This kept them from fluttering and hitting the screen on the top of the box. Art Lundquist came over, banded the birds and took pictures of them. After eight days Martins which had been pecked by sparrows had died. May 7th we released six lively birds. They took off like they would never return - but after two days five were back in the martin house and are nesting there. Altogether there are six pairs there. The book in which I found the formula "Methods of Attracting Birds, By Gilbert H. Trafton" was published about 1910 by Houghton Mifflin Company.—Mrs. L. V. Knott, Webster, S.D.

AVIAN ALBINISM—On September 17, 1950, while Mrs. Chapman and I were studying birds in a slough adjacent to US Highway 81 a few miles north of US 16, we saw on a fence in the water a bird which at first appeared all white. Examination soon disclosed that the head, neck and upper breast were very light dull yellow. The bill and legs were pink. The eyes were dark. In size and shape it was similar to a Yellow-headed Blackbird. The bird presently dropped into the rushes, moved some distance back into the slough, and finally flew to a nearby shelterbelt. There it joined a flock of Grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds and we lost sight of it. The flight was somewhat similar to that of a blackbird.

Avian albinism is not extremely rare, the authorities state, and may occur in any species. Instances of it among English Sparrows and Robins are reported rather frequently, possibly because these species are frequently and easily observed. Albinism is seldom complete; and, like molt, affects corresponding feather or areas on each side of the bird. It is caused by a lack of pigment, while melanism, or unusual darkness, results from an over-supply of pigment.

H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. D.

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Cardinals in South Dakota

It is the concensus among the officers of SDOU that there should be a study of the advance of Cardinal population into the state and a survey of present density. If such a project is to be carried out in a manner which will entitle the results to respect as dependable records, there will need to be a considerable amount of member participation. The matter is not yet well enough advanced to permit definite statement, but for preliminary study these questions have been suggested:

1. To what extent were Cardinals present in your community during the winter of 1949-50?
2. Were they fed during that period, and, if so, by whom?
3. In what approximate numbers were they present last spring, 1950?
4. What are your personal sight records of Cardinals in your community during

the summer and fall of 1950- (Include facts indicating whether nesting).

5. Please give names and addresses of others in South Dakota whom you know have observed Cardinals in the state during 1950, or who can contribute other facts.
6. Summarize cardinal records for your community prior to last winter, being careful to report facts which are reasonably well known—not mere guesses by uninformed folks.

It is probable this project will eventually be assigned to a committee for development somewhat along the line of the study of Mockingbirds in South Dakota which was handled so effectively by J. S. Findley in the December, 1950 issue of *South Dakota Bird Notes*. Pending such appointment, preliminary reports may be sent to the Editor.

THE GOLDEN PLOVER

On May 6, 1934, while driving about twelve miles southeast of this city, we came across a flock of over 50 American Golden Plovers which brought a thrill to us, as it did on May 4, 1929, when we encountered a flock of about 50 of these birds 26 miles north of here. These are the only ones I ever saw. The birds seen on May 6, 1934, were in a clay plowed field, where their gold and black mottled backs blended in with the newly plowed soil when they were at rest. I had stopped to look for birds along a small stream which flowed through the field when the plovers were startled and rose in a body, flying in close formation, swinging high and then low, piping their pleasing notes as they went. They circled and came back, then were away again, doing this for three times when they alighted again in a hollow. We stayed on to get a better view of them, for at first we could not tell whether they were the Golden or the Black-bellied species. Alert they settled in the hollow and did not move about, depending upon their color to protect them. I crept through the fence and went as close as they would allow, to get a better view. They sat still for some time, then as I approached stood at attention, seeming to depend upon the one leader to tell them when it was time to go. I had a fine look at them in their beautiful spring plumage of jet black below and mottled gold and black above, with a white "question mark" on either side of the head running down the sides. The face was black, as was the throat joining the black underparts. But a few of the birds were not so marked. The backs were as the others, but they had no black about the face, neck or breast, although the belly was blackish, which made me think they were not yet in full breeding plumage. The markings about the face were gray and white instead of white and black as in the most of them. I noticed as the birds waited in the field a few would venture about slyly and seemingly not intending to attract attention. As they sat on the ground they faced me and I could hardly get a good view of their backs. Some of the birds hopped their heads occasionally as I watched them. I approached to within 100 or 150 feet before they suddenly arose and disappeared over the brow of the hill. The plovers were near a little traveled side road.—Mrs. Horace P. Cole, Anderson, Ind. (General Note, Wilson Bulletin, June 1935, p. 163.)

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Audubon Screen Tours

In cooperation with National Audubon Society, various local organizations will provide another series of entertaining and instructive Nature programs during the coming winter. Audubon Screen Tours will be presented by Sioux Falls Bird Club as follows: Oct. 26, Pettingill; Dec. 11, A. and H. Allen; Jan. 11, Ferguson; March 14, Work; and April 16, Hall. All programs will be given at High School, 8:15 P.M. The cost is \$2.50 for the series, single admissions at 75 cents. At Brookings the Wildlife Conservation Club of State

College will sponsor a series at the High School, 8 P.M., including the following: Oct. 23, Cruickshank; Dec. 13, A. and H. Allen; Jan. 8, Ferguson; March 12, Work; and May 9, Bert Harwell. Huron: Oct. 27, Pettingill; Dec. 12, The Allens; Jan. 9, Ferguson; March 13, Work; May 10, Harwell. Claude A. Van Epps, 780 Utah, Huron, S. D., is Tours Chairman. All programs at Senior High School, 8:15 P.M. Huron Bird Club is sponsor. Sioux City program will be held on Oct. 24, Nov. 13, Jan. 11, Feb. 5, and March 15.

Christmas Bird Count

In view of President Spawn's announcement that a census of winter birds will be made this year, and anticipating more definite instructions by Chairman Van Epps, the following extract from directions printed in the October, 1949, issue of *Bird Notes* may be helpful:

"We urge members to get copies of the rules which were last published in *Audubon Field Notes* for November, 1948. (Send 40c to National Audubon Society, 1000 Fifth Ave., New York 28, N. Y.). These instructions include a sample report, rules for arranging and spelling names, estimating large numbers, etc.

Some of the rules to follow in making a report that will be accepted and printed in *Field Notes* are: study your home community well in advance; select an area not over 15 miles in diameter which includes the best or most varied bird population; allot definite parts of the area to groups or individuals; all counts are to be made on the same day and no part of the area is to be covered

more than once; set an early date so postponement by storm or other unavoidable events will not cause you to lose the chance to make the count by January 1; dawn to dusk counts are preferred, and less than 7 hours of field observation is not considered adequate; however, the time is not controlling if the area is covered carefully. At least one experienced observer should be with each group to insure nothing but certain identifications. The contest spirit should be eliminated or limited to matters of accuracy and thoroughness. Identification by sound is permissible if duplication is guarded against. All birds should be listed in the order found in the A.O.U. Check List, Peterson's *Field Guide*, or other good bird book published since 1931. Numbers of individuals and species should be totaled and verified carefully.

The final report should include information about the terrain, temperature, wind, snow, open water, etc.; and the names and addresses of all who participate and of the reporter.

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S.D. Highway Commission, Pierre, S.D. will furnish a fine state map on postcard request.

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The Turkey and the Muscovy Duck are the only birds brought under domestication in the settlement of the New World, reports the National Wildlife Federation.

Mayor E. A. Crockett of Yankton, S. D. advises that a large colony of Cliff Swallows which nests under the approach to the Missouri River Bridge there is afforded protection by the Bridge Supervisor. These birds and nests are considered assets of the City and community.

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THE FOOD BOX

GROSBEAKS will come to a food box in summer for sunflower seeds, of which they are very fond, but in the bird world the food box is a winter institution. The attractive foods are suet, nuts and sunflower seeds. Chickadees and Nuthatches are especially fond of the seeds and nuts, while the Downy and the Hairy Woodpeckers are especially fond of suet. Grain of any kind should never be put in the box, as the birds mentioned do not care for it and the grain-eating English Sparrows will flock to it, driving all other birds away.

It is always desirable to have the box just outside the dining room window for then the family can watch the birds while sitting at table. With a well supplied box one will eat few meals in daylight during winter without enjoying the sight of bird neighbors feasting on his bounty.

To get birds to come to the box at one's window is a simple matter. The natural place for the birds mentioned to search for food in winter is on the trunks and larger branches of trees. There, in bark crevices, they find insects in their various forms of winter preservation. If the food box is first placed beside some tree the birds will soon find it. Then it may be moved by gradual stages to any desired place and the birds will follow.

The writer likes a box about two feet long and eight inches wide, with a standard about two feet high at each end, and these spanned by a crosspiece at the top. Nuts or sunflower seeds may be placed in the box and suet tied to the standards or crosspiece. This gives room for more than one bird to light at a time, and furnishes many exhibitions of bird ways in outwitting their fellows, at times even providing occasion for a passage at arms. Woodpeckers prefer to eat perched on the standards head upward and the Nu-

thatches head downward, while Chickadees are most at home on the box itself.

One should also have a storm food box, the sort that will let the birds in but keep the storm out. An ordinary box with one side open to the window will answer but it is much more interesting to exercise one's ingenuity in making a special box for the purpose and to notice what kind of box the birds like best.

The Brown Creeper is not apt to come to the food box except in excessively cold weather. But if one will place just outside of his window an old tree trunk in which he has bored a hole for the reception of suet this interesting bird will not be long in searching it out and will visit it repeatedly.

—W. H. Over, Birds of South Dakota.

The Cover . . .

The Lark Bunting on the front cover of this issue is by H. Wayne Trimm, formerly of Sioux Falls, S.D., now living at Slocum Heights, East Colvin St., Syracuse, N.Y. The cut is furnished by courtesy of Audubon Magazine, published by National Audubon Society. The picture appeared originally in the July-August, 1950 number of that magazine, as one of several illustrations for "Animal Portraits of Western Kansas" with text by Lynn Trimm, wife of the artist. Members of SDOU will recall that the first issue of South Dakota Bird Notes carried on the front cover another drawing of a Lark Bunting by Mr. Trimm. It was suggested at that time by various members of SDOU that this lovely little prairie songster be adopted as the emblem of this organization, but such action has not yet been taken.

I Remember

BY MARY E. MALLORY

CANTON, S. D.

MANY people appear to be particularly interested in the unusual activities of birds, and, with that in mind, I shall relate some experiences of Mr. Mallory and myself in bird-study.

Hummingbirds are always intriguing. We remember several incidents where they sipped nectar from gladiolus blooms held in someone's mouth. I do not recommend this practice, as this species, like some others, is attracted by bright objects such as a person's eyes. An example of this is the case of a wounded Bittern which a hunter was carrying and which but narrowly missed the man's eyes in a quick dart with its bill. Although I have never heard that a Hummingbird has caused damage to a person's eyes, one might do so, and such danger should be avoided.

The most unusual incident involving a Hummingbird of which I have heard is related by Miss Frances Mallory, of Ellendale, North Dakota. She was carrying a bouquet of gladiolus, and wearing a dress of gaily flowered material. A Hummingbird sipped nectar from the flowers and then alighted on her sleeve and, after examining the flowers on the dress, touched them with its bill.

Many birds are reluctant to leave the nest when the eggs are hatching. We have several instances where a bird-watcher placed a hand on a brooding Brown Thrasher which refused to leave the nest and soundly picked the intruder. Again, an observer was searching for the nest of a Black-billed Cuckoo which was known to be in a certain small tree. He finally found it within six inches of his knee. The female was on the nest but left the instant the observer looked directly at it.

Red-breasted Nuthatches appear to have but little fear of humans. I remember on several occasions seeing them eat from between the fingers of a person who was engaged in fastening suet to a tree. They will readily allow a person to bring his face within a few inches of them. Chickadees and Goldfinches are also fearless, occasionally alighting on a hand holding food for them. However, they do appear to take flight more quickly than the red-breasted Nuthatches.

I remember an unusual incident of another sort. My son, Paul Mallory, found what was either a female Goldfinch or a Yellow Warbler, tangled in a hairnet hanging in a tree. To release the bird without harming it was very difficult, but this was done and, after resting a few minutes on the ground, it flew away apparently unharmed.

During the past summer a number of Mourning Doves nested in the trees at our home. The young birds were quite tame, two of them spending almost all of their first two weeks out of the nest on our front porch.

THE BIRDS OF FORT SISSETON, SOUTH DAKOTA, A SIXTY YEAR COMPARISON. By Wm. Youngworth. Reprint of an authoritative, illustrated 27-page article, by a competent observer. Send 25c in stamps to SDOU, Supply limited.

SDOU sight record sheets, 8½ x 11, 3-ring punched, free to members (but a little postage will help!!) Write Secy. Mallory, Canton, S.D.