

SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

Official Publication

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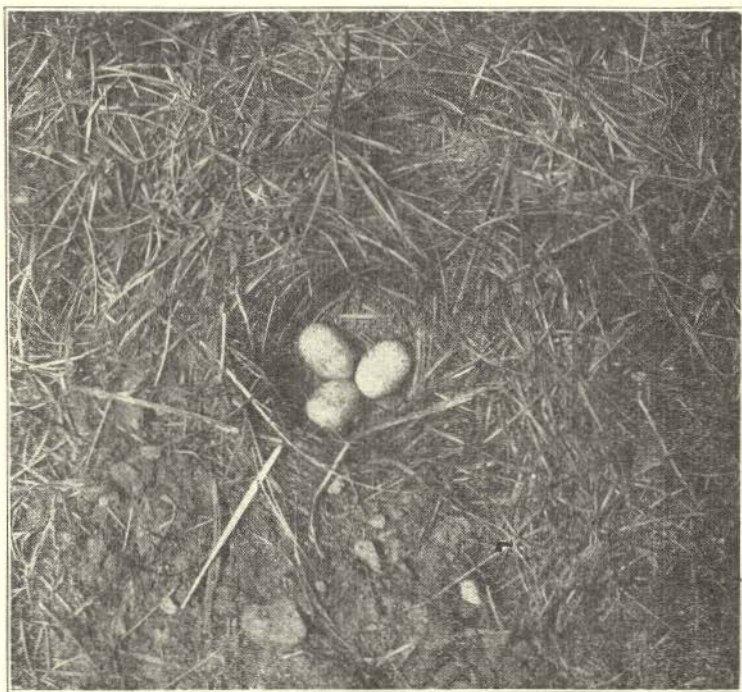
SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

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—CUT COURTESY WILSON BULLETIN

Prairie Horned Lark Nest

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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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President's Page

GERALD B. SPAWN
BROOKINGS, S. D.

DEAR FRIENDS: Spring is just around "the corner," and it won't be long until the "Spring Tourists" and the summer residents of the bird world will be here.

Many species nest far north of South Dakota; others stay in our own localities and may be induced to nest near our homes. The best way of giving such encouragement is by providing nesting cover and aids.

Robins need little coaxing to nest in our dooryard, if nesting facilities are available. They like expanses of lawn near their nests. If you have never made a "robin rack" try making some for use this spring! You will be pleasantly surprised when a pair of Robins selects one of your racks as their nesting site. A robin rack is made by fastening several willow branches together in a cone about five inches deep, with opening about six in diameter. A rack, substantially fastened in a tree, gives the effect of a safe crotch for nest construction. Shelves for nest building may be fastened in sheltered places, as under eaves of buildings. Catbirds and Brown Thrashers sometimes use racks placed in thick clumps of bushes.

Several species of birds will accept nest boxes. An excellent source of information on bird house construction is Fish & Wildlife Service, Conservation Bulletin 14, entitled "Homes for Birds." Another good publication is Conservation Bulletin 1, "Attracting Birds." Both are available from Supt. of Documents, Washington 25, D. C., 10¢ each.

Another good method of encouraging birds to stay in your locality is to pro-

vide water. Construction of a bird bath is easy and may help the Boy Scout in the family to earn a Merit Badge. A bath may be made by placing a shallow flat-bottomed pan on an orange box or similar crate fastened securely to a stake to keep the box from falling over. The bath may be placed in shade, but far enough from bushes, etc., so cats and dogs cannot use the cover for concealment for capturing the birds.

Tree guards effectively protect nests from cats. These are made of tin or galvanized iron, fastened around the trunk four or five feet from the ground. One style is merely a collar of smooth metal, 15-20 inches long. Another type is fastened around the tree like a skirt, the open end extending downward and out from the tree four or five inches. These devices will also effectively squirrel-proof isolated trees.

The annual meeting of SDOU will be held in Vermillion on May 5 and 6. Miss Habeger, Chairman of the Program Committee reports we will have a most interesting and educational meeting and a thrilling bird-hike. Let's all plan now to attend the Vermillion meetings.

The "President's Page" in the June issue will be written by my successor. Let me, then, take this opportunity to tell you I have enjoyed working with a group of officers who are very much interested in the birds of our State. I wish to express my thanks to Messrs. Findley, Mallory, and Rames and to the other members of the Board of Directors, with special thanks to Mr. Chapman, Editor of Bird Notes and Librarian. All have been most cooperative.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 1950

BY CLAUDE A. VAN EPPS

HURON, S. D.

FOR the past half century the National Audubon Society has sponsored the annual Christmas Bird Census over the United States. These counts are held on one day between Dec. 24 and New Year's and are usually dawn-to-dusk events. In the first count, held in 1900, 27 observers took part. This number has grown each year until at the present nearly 5,000 observers participate. It is the greatest cooperative ornithological project in North America. During these fifty years many facts about the winter habits of birds have been learned and many bird watchers have discovered a new and interesting phase of their hobby.

SDOU has stimulated new interest in the project in this state. The writer was appointed chairman for the 1950 count and in early December instruction sheets and letters were sent out over the state to key members, encouraging them to conduct or organize counts in their communities. The results have been gratifying. Several individuals, finding it impossible to participate this year, responded with letters. Others, from ten different communities, either conducted trips or organized groups for making cooperative counts. All reports were carefully edited according to suggestions of the Audubon Society and sent in for publication in the spring issue of Audubon Field Notes.

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The average person is amazed at the numbers of birds and species that may be observed during our cold winters. We usually think of ducks and geese as migrants which spend the winter in the Sunny South. Yet thousands of them remain in this state all winter, providing there is sufficient food and water. Clair Rollings, Manager of Sand Lake Refuge near Columbia, S. D., reported

5,000 Mallards, 1 Pintail and 40 Canada Geese on December 30th. Kenneth Krumm, Manager at LaCreek Refuge near Martin, reported over 12,000 Mallards and 42 American Golden-eyes on December 24th. The writer has observed several hundred Mallards and smaller numbers of Canada Geese at Lake Andes and at Capitol Lake at Pierre during the winter. A Christmas count helps to reveal the number of each species that may be found in a given locality.

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Some of our common summer residents, such as Robins, Bluebirds, Meadowlarks, Blackbirds and Grackles, find sheltered areas and remain all winter. In fact, in 1950, the 70 observers in eleven localities scattered over the state reported a total of 61 species and 22,882 individuals.

There are a number of species which are either permanent residents or winter residents in South Dakota. In the first classification are Pheasants, Grouse, Quail, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Nuthatches and Cardinals. Of winter residents, Tree Sparrows, Juncos, Longspurs and Snow Buntings are good examples.

Our state seems to be quite rich in birds of prey. On a trip across the state from the Minnesota line to the Black Hills many hawks and a few eagles may be observed. On a trip to Pierre in December, I counted 15 Rough-legged Hawks and one Golden Eagle. In the Christmas count, seven species of hawks and eagles, with 42 individuals, were listed. Of the owls five species and 35 individuals were observed. Three of these were Snowy Owls from the Far North.

The observers who participated in the 1950 count in their respective communities were: SAND LAKE, Clair Rollings, Jerry Podoll, Elmer Podoll, Harvey Nelson, Einer Kaastad; SPRINGFIELD, M. E. Burgi, W. W. Ludeman and ten Boy Scouts; LACREEK REFUGE, Kenneth Krumm; BROOKINGS, two parties, Rev. Harold Wagar and Wesley Wagar in one, and Dr. Gerald Spawn and Marvin Boussu in the second; SPEARFISH, Cecil Haight; HURON, C. A., Martha, Dorothy, and Bob Van Epps, Dr. Hubert and Mary A. Ketelle, J. W. and Nancy Johnson, Mrs. S. W. Keck and Mrs. O. E. Wright; JEFFERSON, W. R. Felton and Judy Dailey; HOT SPRINGS, Mrs. H. R.

Woodward; SIOUX FALLS (Bird Club): Wesley and Kennie Halbritter; Dr. and Mrs. J. D. Donahoe, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Wilson, David Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Wheeler, Steve Sugrue, Ronald Vosacek, Kennie Palmer, Roger Slocum, Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Chapman, Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Findley, Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Rogge, Janet Rogge, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Frederickson, Lois Frederickson, Mrs. S. A. Keller, Elizabeth Keller, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Goebel, Bill Goebel, Mr. and Mrs. A. N. Schaffer, Charles Stringham, Mrs. Lyman Fort; and CANTON, W. B. Mallory, Secy. of SDOU.

A tabulation of the 1950 Christmas Census is as follows:

Species	Localities Observed	Numbers
Canada Goose	Sand Lake	40
Mallard	6	17,790
Pintail	Sand Lake	1
Am. Golden-eye	LaCreek	42
Hood. Merganser	LaCreek	1
Am. Merganser	LaCreek	13
Cooper's Hawk	2	2
Red-tailed Hawk	1	1
Rough-leg. Hawk	5	24
Golden Eagle	3	4
Bald Eagle	LaCreek	1
Marsh Hawk	LaCreek	9
Prairie Falcon	LaCreek	1
Sharp-t. Grouse	LaCreek	5
Hun. Partridge	Brookings	14
Bob-white	Jefferson	15
Pheasant	9	175
Wilson's Snipe	2	8
Mourning Dove	3	7
Screech Owl	2	4
Horned Owl	5	14
Snowy Owl	2	3
Long-eared Owl	1	1
Short-eared Owl	4	6
Kingfisher	Spearfish	3
Y.-shafted Flicker	5	29
Red-b. Woodpecker	2	9
Hairy Woodpecker	8	43
Downy Woodpecker	8	38
Lewis's Woodpecker	Black Hills (2)	2
Horned Lark	5	565
Blue Jay	5	34

Species	Localities Observed	Numbers
Am. Magpie	LaCreek	1
Crow	6	246
B-cap. Chickadee	7	224
White-br. Nuthatch	5	57
Red-br. Nuthatch	2	6
Brown Creeper	3	4
Robin	4	54
Eastern Bluebird	1	9
Golden-cr. Kinglet	Sioux Falls	4
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	Jefferson	15
Common Starling	7	513
House Sparrow	7	1,335
Wn. Meadowlark	6	46
Red-w. Blackbird	3	21
Rusty Blackbird	Sand Lake	5
Brewer's Blackbird	Sand Lake	50
Purple Grackle	Jefferson	3
Cowbird	Sioux Falls	15
Cardinal	5	45
Redpoll	2	160
Pine Siskin	2	60
Goldfinch	5	112
Slate-Col. Junco	6	339
Am. Tree Sparrow	8	309
Chipping Sparrow	Spearfish	10
Harris Sparrow	Sioux Falls	29
Song Sparrow	2	8
Lapland Longspur	2	100
Snow Bunting	Sand Lake	200
Totals—61 Species		Individuals.....22882

An interesting report was received lately from Mrs. H. R. Woodward of Hot Springs, S. D., of a Christmas census made by her party. It included Hairy Woodpecker 3; Downy Woodpecker 4; Canada Jay 4; B-C Chickadee 12; White-breasted Nuthatch 3; Brown Creeper 1; Townsend's Solitaire 2; White-winged Crossbill 8; Slate-colored Junco 18.

Spencer Fullerton Baird was born February 3, 1823, and died January 19, 1888. While still a youth he discovered the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and the Least Flycatcher. Audubon took much interest in the young man and would have taken him on the Missouri River Expedition in 1843 but for Baird's poor health and lack of funds. In 1850 he became Assistant Secretary of Smithsonian Institution and Secretary in 1878; and he was one of the founders of the National Museum. This great naturalist and zoologist was one of the ablest teachers of natural history. A biography of Baird by William H. Dall was published in 1915. Two species bearing his name are seen in South Dakota: Baird's Sandpiper; Baird's Sparrow.

Nesting of the White-Winged Junco in the Black Hills

W. H. OVER AND G. M. CLEMENT

DURING July and August of 1924, while collecting plants along the highway (No. 83) above Pactola in the Black Hills of South Dakota, Mr. Over observed numerous young and adults of the White-winged Junco (*Junco aikenii*). These birds were particularly abundant near a sawmill, and around a barn where horses were kept, feeding on wasted grain, etc. Upon inquiry he learned that they were reared earlier in the season in the immediate vicinity. Search also revealed several old nests, one on a horizontal 2 x 4 piece of timber bracing the wall and not six feet from the man who took the boards from the saw. Another nest rested on a timber under the floor and just beneath the saw. The band that ran the sawdust-carrier passed day after day within six inches of this nest. Several employees at the mill bore testimony to the fact that young birds were reared in each of these nests. Two other old nests were found, one in the mill, and another on a rafter plate of the roof of the blacksmith shop, nine feet above the ground and in almost the exact spot where in two succeeding seasons Mr. Clement found occupied nests of this species.

During the holiday season of 1924-25 Mr. Over spent a few days in the locality, and found many of these Juncos present and feeding daily around the buildings. They readily responded to an invitation to visit a hastily improvised feed box where crumbs and cracked nut-kernels were put for their convenience. Again during the last week of March, 1926, a visit to the locality found the birds abundant, and visiting the food box. At this time the mill employees informed the writer that the Juncos were not so plentiful in the summer of 1925 as in the preceding summer.

Mr. F. A. Patton reported this species as common at the State Game Lodge during the first ten days of March, but found no nests.

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These facts gave evidence that the White-winged Junco was a breeding resident of the Black Hills. Consequently, about May 25, 1926, Mr. George M. Clement, later a student at the University of South Dakota, made a trip to the Black Hills under the direction of Mr. Over for the purpose of collecting.

On June 3 he found the first nest in an old gallon syrup can in a thicket of small pine trees. The location was near an old road made by first observing the male approach the can with a worm. The nest contained four eggs well advanced in incubation. Both birds were taken in order to determine the species.

On June 5 the second nest was found on the ground under a board in a pine thicket near the sawmill. It contained four eggs, too far advanced to save. On the same day another nest was found under the end of an old log, and contained four young which "distinctly showed the white wing bars."

On June 6 a nest was found on a roof plate in the blacksmith shop, about nine feet from the ground. The bird had approached the nest from under the eaves. The nest contained four young birds a few days old, in whose plumage the white wing bars were apparent. This was almost the exact location of the old nest taken by Mr. Over in 1924.

On June 7 another nest was discovered under the root of a tree near the highway. The four eggs were well advanced. On the same date still another nest with four young birds was found in very similar location and close by.

The season of 1927 was backward, due to late snows in the Black Hills. The first nest found this year by Mr. Clement was on June 13 and in the exact place in the blacksmith shop where one had been found in two preceding seasons. Whether the same female built here during four consecutive seasons we do not know, but Mr. Clement records the fact that the female in 1927 did not flush from the nest until touched by the hand, which may be taken as evidence that she had become accustomed to human associations. This nest contained three fresh eggs.

On June 11 two nests had been reported to the writers; one under a log with four eggs was destroyed when the log was moved, while another contained eggs well advanced.

On the 14th a nest was located in a tomato can within ten feet of the syrup can nest of 1926. It contained only two eggs, and although the nest was visited daily until the 17th no more were laid. The two, therefore, constituted a full set. About twelve feet distant an old nest was found in another tomato can, which led us to wonder if this was a territory claimed annually by the same pair of birds. On the 15th another nest was found under the exposed root of a tree near the roadside. The female was flushed by striking the tree with a stick and joined her mate in a tree a few yards from the nest. The four eggs were too far along to save. It should be stated that Mr. Clement carried a drill, and tested one egg before taking a set. During the last season of work he was able to detect the condition in some cases without the loss of a single egg.

On June 26 another nest was reported by sawmill employees but was destroyed in moving the log. As late as June 29 a nest was found containing one egg, and was visited daily until a set of five was taken.

In 1928 Mr. Clement made a third trip to the Black Hills with the following results: The first nests were found

on May 27 under old logs on a hillside; two nests contained four eggs each, but only one set was saved. On the 28th a nest under exposed roots contained four eggs far advanced; here Mr. Clement watched three young birds reared until they left the nest. On the 28th he found another nest with four fresh eggs, which were taken. On the 30th five nests were found, as follows: nest under a log with four incubated eggs; nest on the side of a steep canyon with four eggs far advanced; another nest in same locality with three fresh eggs; another nest with young which left on June 5; the last nest with eggs far advanced.

On May 31 a nest was found with three young birds just leaving the shells, while the fourth hatched on the following day. These birds were under observation until they were able to leave the nest, on June 10. On the same day another nest was found in an open field under a clump of dead grass; it contained four young. Three nests were found on June 1, one under a rock ledge with four advanced eggs, one with four fresh eggs, and one with four eggs ready to hatch. On the 2nd another nest under a rock ledge with young birds, on the 3rd a nest under exposed roots with four young, and on the 6th a nest with four fresh eggs under a rock ledge, were added to the list.

Mr. W. D. Sharwood, a resident of the Black Hills, has sent me the following notes of the White-winged Junco observed in his vicinity: Parents feeding young on June 12, 1919. Adults apparently nesting on May 8, 1924. Building nest in rear wall of an outhouse on April 13, 1925. Female incubating on May 31, 1925. Young being fed by parents on September 5, 1925.

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By way of summary it may be noted that the White-winged Junco is a more or less abundant resident species in local areas of the Black Hills, especially at an elevation of about 5300 feet. From the experience of Mr. Clement it would seem that the species was more abun-

dant in 1928 than in the other periods studied, or that Mr. Clement became more skilled in finding the nests; perhaps both factors played a part.

It is also evident that their nesting season extends over a rather long period, varying according to climatic conditions. As to the nest sites Mr. Clement's notes of 1928 state this Junco prefers "a sloping, mossy hillside, extending up from a creek of running water. The nests are on the ground, under a rock ledge, exposed root, or log." Mr. H. E. Lee reports a nest of this species which was located six inches above the ground in a shrub which thick foliage. With the nests found in the

blacksmith shop nine feet from the ground, as well as others in the sawmill, and including the old fruit cans, it is quite evident that these Juncos can adjust themselves to a variety of locations. After all, their nesting habits do not vary far from those of the genus, but are in close resemblance to those of the Oregon Junco.

While four eggs is the usual clutch, it varies from two to five, the small number probably being that of very young or very old females.

We have reports of the nesting of the Slate-colored Junco in the Black Hills, but as yet no authentic records are at hand.—Wilson Bulletin, March, 1930.

Finding Horned Lark Nests

"The best way to find the Larks' nests is by patiently watching the birds and waiting for their actions to betray the nesting site.

"A Prairie Horned Lark seldom flies directly from her nest unless advanced incubation makes the bird unusually reluctant to leave and causes her to permit a very close approach. The open nature of the chosen habitat makes it impossible for a person to approach the vicinity of the nest without the sitting bird seeing the intruder from a considerable distance. Their usual habit is to gently slip off the nest and walk along through the short, dry grass, before taking wing. By slowly following a bird one can cause her to walk just as far as she can be induced to go from the nesting site. If she has a clutch of eggs she will almost invariably lead the intruder to what she considers a safe distance and then take wing and return to some slight elevation near the nest (frequently to a nearby rock if any are scattered around near the nesting site) and if no attempt is made to follow her she will soon run directly to the nest and disappear from view as she again



—CUT COURTESY WILSON BULLETIN

Prairie Horned Lark Nestlings

covers her eggs. By quietly watching from a distance as she does so it is often possible to locate the exact situation of the nest in ten minutes after arriving at the nesting ground. Any other method usually requires a long persistent hunt."—The Oologist, May 1935.

General Notes of Special Interest

STATEMENT OF POLICY

In attempting to formulate a statement of general principles which should govern the selection of material to be presented in this department, I have been interested in what others, similarly situated, have done. In a recent issue of the Newsletter of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, there was a discussion of editorial policy. It read, in part: "One possibility is to aim at determining more exactly the status of each of our less well-known birds, such as the large number of summer residents whose range and relative abundance in New Hampshire isn't well known, especially as compared with the past conditions. Bird Notes sent in by members or at least kept so that they would be available and accumulating would be a potential reservoir of information to tap for the production of (a new book on birds of New Hampshire) at a later date . . . Since ours is the principal ornithological organization of New Hampshire, we would feel free to publish any records members see fit to send in . . . For the time being let's concentrate on relatively significant records or those of out-of-the-ordinary interest."—H. F. C.

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BALD EAGLE IN UNION COUNTY—On January 21, 1951, I watched an adult Bald Eagle for about 10 minutes as it soared along the Missouri River near Jefferson, S. D. The mild winter and open channel of the River may explain this record, which William Youngworth, an observer of wide experience in this area, says is rather rare. I have a report of a young Golden Eagle being seen at close range by Charles Wetmore at Meckling, S. D.—W. R. Felton, Jr., Jefferson, S. D.

FERRUGINOUS ROUGH-LEG IN CENTRAL S. D.—On February 17, 1951, Mr. J. Schooler, of Pierre, S. D. and I were driving on U. S. 14, between Highmore and Miller. Noting a hawk in a tree some distance from the highway we turned onto a side road for better view, and identified an American Rough-legged Hawk, dark phase. Upon returning to the highway we observed another Hawk on the ground close to the highway fence. As we stopped, the Hawk started to fly, lifting something on which it was feeding, but dropping it immediately. On investigation we found the food was the carcass of a well-frozen pheasant. Obviously the Hawk was feeding on carrion it had discovered, not on a bird it had killed. When it alighted on a fence post near by we had good light and ample opportunity to observe the almost-white underparts and to identify it as an adult Ferruginous Rough-leg, a species which Dr. Over, in *Birds of South Dakota*, rates "not abundant."—H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. D.

EAGLES NEAR PIERRE—"Once again we have a large number of Golden Eagles wintering in this area. Two large Bald Eagles have been observed along the Missouri River north of Pierre. Although the Golden is an annual visitor, it is seldom that the Bald Eagle is found in this section of the state." (*Conservation Digest*)—E. R. Lamster, Pierre, S. D.

WHITE GYRFALCON—In the March, 1950, issue of Bird Notes, there was a note about a White Gyrfalcon which had been collected near Baltic, S. D. The mounted specimen is now in a display case of the S. D. Dept. of Game, Fish and Parks at Pierre, S. D.—H. F. C.

COOPER'S HAWK AT CANTON.—January 22, 1951, I noticed a very marked lessening of the number of birds at my winter feeding station, even English Sparrows being scarce. On the 25th I found a Cooper's Hawk on the ground close to the spot where Cardinals, Chickadees and other birds usually congregate between meals at the feeding station. It flew immediately. I was unable then to find any dead birds or their remains anywhere; however, the next day I discovered a dead Downy Woodpecker at the foot of an elm tree. It showed no signs of having been attacked but may have been killed by flying against the tree while being chased by this hawk. The hawk has not been seen again and on the 29th the usual birds were back at the feeding station.—W. B. Mallory, Canton, S. D.

WINTER NOTES FROM SOUTHWESTERN S. D.—The winter has been generally mild and open in this section of the state except for occasional brief cold waves, followed by rapidly warming temperatures. Snowfall has been negligible and wintering birds which frequent the high, windswept and semi-arid west river prairie region at this season, have benefited accordingly.

Some twenty-six species of wintering birds have been noted and observations in recent years indicate that possibly thirty-five species would represent the maximum number of wintering forms to be found here at this season. Of the winter residents at LaCreek Refuge, waterfowl are most numerous, with a considerable number of Mallards, some Am. Golden-eyes, and a few Hooded and Am. Mergansers remaining throughout the season in the spring-fed creeks and open water below the spillways.

Birds of prey have been well represented, with the Am. Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, Marsh Hawk, and Prairie Falcon wintering or appearing occasionally at the refuge. The Rough-legged and Marsh Hawks appear to be maintaining satisfactory populations levels but other species have been scarce and fewer Golden Eagles have been observed this winter.

Of the gallinaceous birds, the Sharp-tailed Grouse is present in fair numbers although somewhat reduced since last season. The Pinnated Grouse is becoming increasingly scarce although it appears to be holding its own in parts of the Nebraska sandhills to the south of us. The Pheasant population is rapidly building up again at the refuge after the severe winter losses experienced in January 1949.

Four species of owls have been observed this winter, including three permanent residents, the Horned Owl, Burrowing Owl, and Short-eared Owl. Snowy Owls have appeared again this winter in numbers exceeding last year's migration. The first observation of the birds arrival occurred on Thanksgiving Day, November 23, following a cold wave accompanied by strong northerly winds during the previous afternoon and evening. The birds apparently moved southward across the Dakota-Nebraska line into the sandhills region in some numbers this year, as personnel at the Crescent Lake Refuge reported observing several owls, and a record was also obtained at the Valentine Refuge. Accustomed to the solitude of the Arctic, the ranks of these winter invaders must be rather sadly decimated through illegal trophy hunting, collision with obstructions such as telephone wires, or being struck by automobiles along rural roads. Two wintering birds were known to have been lost in this section of Bennett County; one being accidentally killed by an auto, and another was discovered in a badly injured condition and picked up by refuge personnel in the hope of reviving it to permit later banding and release; but this specimen later died.

A solitary Red-shafted Flicker and a small number of Downy Woodpeckers have been observed wintering in the thickets and small groves on the refuge.

Western Meadowlarks have remained through the winter in some numbers and the usual, large, restlessly wheeling flocks of Horned Larks and Longspurs have been noted along the highways during cold waves. Small flocks of Tree Sparrows are present over the countryside. Dr. Frank Roberts reported observing Pine Siskins and Goldfinches, and a flock of Robins in late January at Pine Ridge.

—Kenneth Krumm, Martin, S. D.

SONGS OF WESTERN MEADOWLARKS—In the June, 1950, issue of Bird Notes there was a review by J. S. Findley of "Songs and Other Sounds of Birds" by A. V. Arlton, formerly a member of the faculty of Dakota Wesleyan University at Mitchell, S. D.

In a long letter about many matters of common interest, dated December 15, 1950, Dr. Arlton said, in part: "In my book I have recorded two types of Western Meadowlark songs, one rhythmic and one 'jumbled' or non-rhythmic. I have heard the rhythmic type in Iowa and South Dakota. The other type I do not recall having heard there at all. In Washington I hear the non-rhythmic type but not the other type. The interesting thing (if I do not have my wires crossed) is, both are called 'Western Meadowlark.' It has often occurred to me that there may be two varieties instead of one, each variety singing its own song. Is this a scoop, or has the difference been discovered by someone else? It is easy to distinguish a number of eastern birds from their western relatives by their songs. A whole lot could be said about this. I have now ready two articles on bird sounds. The titles are: (1) The Fate of the First Sound Uttered by Birds, and (2) The Seasonal Sounds of the Red-shafted Flicker."

AMERICAN MAGPIES, CENTRAL S. D.—On January 13, 1951, Mr. R. M. Sheild, Salem, S. D., and I were driving between Pierre and DeGrey, where State Highway 34 runs close to the Missouri River. It was a clear, cold, windy afternoon. We saw a flock of 30 to 50 Magpies flying from willow thickets in the valley up a dry draw toward the prairie. The birds were weaving in and around a few scrubby trees and low brush in the draw as they moved uphill and against the strong wind. Mr. Bent says: "Kelso records Magpies in British Columbia as occurring in winter singly or in small flocks of up to 8 or 10 birds. When they were unusually numerous as many as 10, 20, or even 30 to 40 individuals made up the flock. Winter flocks in Washington contain any number of birds up to 50, according to Dice. In western Nebraska Zimmer observed Magpies to occur abundantly, but usually singly or in pairs, never in flocks. . . . In a strong wind Magpies tend to fly low, just over the tops of the bushes, and they raise and lower their flight according to variation in level of the bush tops. They probably avoid much of the force of the wind by doing this."—H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. D.

MOCKINGBIRD IN CORSON COUNTY—On May 23, 1950, at 5:30 a. m., I was making a crowing count census of pheasants about six miles south of Morrystown, Corson County, South Dakota. While standing outside my car listening for pheasant calls, I heard a scratching noise and on looking around I saw a Mockingbird perched on the hood of the car. In a moment it flew to the top of a fence post near by; after a brief look around it flew southward. This is the only Mockingbird I have seen in northern South Dakota, although I have spent a great deal of time out of doors in this area during the past four years. Since I was familiar with Western Mockingbirds in southwestern Utah, my former home, I am confident this specimen was of that species.—Renel G. Janson, Technician, Dept. Game, Fish and Parks, Moberge, S. D.

NORTHERN EIDER IN SOUTH DAKOTA—"It is my privilege to announce the capture, November 4, 1911, of a Northern Eider, *Somateria mollissima borealis*, in Lake County, eastern South Dakota. The identification is by the Biological Survey. Wells W. Cooke writes 'not only the first record for South Dakota, but the first record for the whole interior of North America.' Adrian Larson of Sioux Falls, who at my suggestion sent the specimen to Washington for identification, supplies the following notes: This bird, which is either a female or an immature male, was shot about forty miles north in a lake region, locally called 'Madison Pass.' The severe cold wave of November 1 and 2, 1911, brought the ducks south almost by the millions. The Eider was shot by a Doctor Page of Sioux Falls and is now in the possession and displayed in the place of business of William Sweet of this city. S. S. Visser, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, S. D." *The Auk*, Oct., 1912: 535-536. (Note—We can't find the specimen!—Ed)

BEWICK'S WREN AT SIOUX FALLS—A wren has been a visitor at our feeding tray in Sioux Falls this winter. Our earliest sight was on December 3, 1950, our latest February 26, 1951. My record lists 12 appearances at the feeding tray and 7 in the hedges, vines and treetops. Three others were "ear" records. On February 20 it sang in a nearby pine for at least twenty minutes. We have noticed three song patterns: something like "clee-eeya, clee-eeya, clee-eeya" (uttered deliberately); "tell-reecher, tell-reecher, tell-rot" (accent on the second syllable, with the "rot" on a downward note); and "till-ya, till-ya, till-ya" (uttered rapidly). These phrases usually came in a series of three, although occasionally only two were sounded. Of the appearances recorded, 14 were accompanied with song, usually before feeding and usually from a treetop between 8 and 10 a. m. This specimen ate hugely of peanut butter, spaghetti strings, suet and scraps of meat (did it consider these worms?) but did not feed on grain or sunflower seeds. Identification of the specimen as a Bewick's Wren was almost complete. The feeding tray is at a window. We watched at a distance of about four feet. The white checks on the edge and at the end of the tail, the white mark over the eye, the very brown upper parts, the grayish breast, the lighter grayish throat, the slightly down-curved bill—all were clearly observable. The shortest visit was a couple of seconds, the longest about 1½ minutes (1/30/51). Occasionally, as it sat on the rim of the tray, it bobbed very much like a Water Ouzel. Over does not list Bewick's Wren as a South Dakota species but Roberts cites a number of appearances in southern Minnesota, although evidence of nesting there remains inconclusive. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hahn, Sr., corroborate my observations.—Herbert Krause, Sioux Falls, S. D.

RICHARDSON'S OWL IN N.E. SO. DAK.—On Aug. 16, 1949, my attention was called to a very small owl on the lower branch of a tree in my yard. Thinking it might be a Richardson's Owl, which the Eskimos call "The Blind One," because so blind or stupid or having seen man so seldom it displays no fear, I slowly lifted it from the branch. It made no struggle except to snap its bill a few times. Several features distinguish this tiny owl from the Saw-whet: length about 10 inches instead of 8; more gray or less brownish than the Saw-whet; bill yellowish, not brownish black; facial discs framed with black; and forehead spotted. This specimen had feathered feet and legs, with five white tail bars instead of the three or four of the Saw-whet. Mrs. Moriarity collaborated and we agreed it was a Richardson's, which usually comes this far south only in winters when mice are scarce in its Arctic home. But here it was in mid-August.—Dr. L. J. Moriarity, Watertown, S. D.

Books and Articles About Birds

BIRD STORIES. By Wm. T. Cox and Dietrich Lange. Published by The Webb Pub. Co., St. Paul 2, Minn. 112 double-column 6 x 9 pages, paper cover, a number of small but good illustrations. 25c.

A collection of bird-lore stories which first appeared in *The Farmer*, St. Paul. Based on the field notes of two outstanding naturalists, much of the material is devoted to a combination of narrative about and description of fifty common varieties of birds. Illustrated plans for a few types of practical bird-houses and feeders are included.

While this good little book may have a juvenile aspect and approach, many adult bird watchers would profit by reading it carefully—I did!

A companion publication, "Wild Animals of Field and Forest" by Cox, equally interesting, costs but 25c.—HFC

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Inquiry is frequently made for used sets of Roberts "Birds of Minnesota." Who has one for sale, and at what price?—HFC

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BY-LAWS OF SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

(Adopted at Huron, S. D., January 16, 1950)

Article I—Membership

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

Section 2. Any person who is 12 years of age and less than 16 years of age is eligible for membership as a Junior Member of this Union.

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

Section 4. Membership shall date from the approval of the application for membership by a majority of the Directors or by an officer of the Union designated by the Directors and the payment of dues. Honorary Memberships shall date from their approval by a two-thirds vote of the Directors.

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

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

Section 7. Any member may be dismissed from membership for cause by a two-thirds vote of the Directors.

Article II—Officers - Committees

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

Section 2. The duties of the President shall be to preside at meetings of the Union and of the Board of Directors, to appoint Committees as provided by these By-Laws, to call necessary meetings of the Directors, and to perform such other duties as customarily pertain to the office.

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

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

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

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

Section 7. The duties of the Directors shall be to select Honorary Members, to fix the date and place of the annual meeting, to perform such duties as are given to them by these By-Laws, to confirm the action of the President in appointment of standing committees, to fill by temporary appointment offices which become vacant, to audit the books of the Treasurer, and to perform such other duties as may be necessary for the furtherance of the aims of the Union.

Section 8. The Directors may act by correspondence upon questions that properly come before them.

Article III—Meetings

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

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

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

Article IV—Elections

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

Section 2. The term of office of Directors shall be three years and shall extend from the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected; except that at the first election following the adoption of these By-Laws five directors shall be elected for a term of one year, five for a term of two years, and five for a term of three years, and thereafter five shall be elected annually for a term of three years.

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

Section 4. Nominations for Directors shall be made by a Nominating Committee of three members appointed by the President at the opening session of the annual meeting. This Nominating Committee shall meet immediately after the close of the opening session of the annual meeting, to select candidates for the office of Director. Active members of the Union may propose names of members to the Committee. The Nominating Committee shall report its nominations and others proposed to it for nomination. Nominations may also be made from the floor before or during elections. If there is more than one candidate for any office, voting shall be by secret ballot.

Article V—Dues

Section 1. The annual dues for Active Members shall be \$3.00.

Section 2. The annual dues for Junior Members shall be \$1.00.

Section 3. Dues are due on January 1st of each year, or at election to membership. All memberships are due on the basis of a calendar year.

Article VI—Miscellaneous and General

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

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

Article VII—Amendment

Section 1. These By-Laws may be amended by two-thirds vote of active members present at annual meeting.

I Remember

BY F. L. BENNETT

SPEARFISH, S. D.

FIRST STORY—From a diningroom window one could look into an old, angular plum tree. One limb not far from the ground branched off at a low angle with its parent trunk and supported twigs. To tempt birds to bathe where we could see them, a rectangular dripping pan from the kitchen was fastened there. An inch or less of water was poured in and ere long Mister Robin found this pool just right for him. We watched him bathe. One could believe that he thoroughly enjoyed himself.

In his pleasure his feathers became quite wet. So he hopped upon the slanting limb to perform his toilet and there was plenty to do as he was very wet. But his toilet was interrupted. A Chickadee came down the limb to enter the water. This Chickadee came too soon. The Robin saw this little bird and immediately felt the need of more bathing. At least one might think so. The Robin jumped down into the water for a further splashing. The second bath far outdid the first one. Finally the Robin, thoroughly wetted and badly bedraggled, hopped out onto the limb. The Chickadee then had its turn, but the bathing activities of the Chickadee were meager compared with those of the Robin.

Now the query—Why did that Robin take a second bath while the Chickadee waited? One may imagine several reasons but!!! You try.

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Annual Meetings. Wilson Ornithologists' Club meets at Davenport, Iowa, April 27 and 28; SDOU at Vermillion, S. D., May 5 and 6; Nebraska O. U. at North Platte, Nebr., May 11 and 12; Iowa O. U., Spencer, May 12-13.

SECOND STORY—Just another old, angular plum tree out in the backyard with the slanting where the big branch joined the trunk so low that a large cat standing on its hind legs could reach into that angle of limb and trunk. When the clothes line was being hung up one could bend over and look into that angle. Here Mrs. Robin decided to build.

She was advised not to make her nest there but she talked back quite vociferously at times and often seemed to say, "Go away and mind your own business." This argument occurred many times during the building of the nest, also during the period of incubation. She was not so talkative after hatching the babies and did not seem to mind if one looked on as she fed them.

Young Robins are so often on the ground before they are able to fly at all well. But no such young ones were seen on the near-by lawn. When there was only one left in the nest the whereabouts of the others was discovered. The mother was seen coaxing the young ones up that slanting limb into the lower part of the tree-top where she fed them.

They all got away safely into their world. The cat missed all of them. But that coaxing of the young ones up that slanting limb—was that forethought or afterthought on the part of the mother Robin? Why was she so persistent in building the nest in that particular place? She was told many times not to build there. But she did and succeeded.

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The September, 1950, issue of Wilson Bulletin (General Notes) includes a report by J. S. Findley, V. P. of SDOU, about a Ruffed Grouse which he observed trying, fairly successfully, to devour a small garter snake.