

SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

Official Publication
of

SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION
(Organized 1949)

Vol. VI, No. 2

JUNE, 1954

Whole No. 21



FIELD SPARROW

South Dakota Bird Notes, the Organ of South Dakota Ornithologists' Union, is sent to all members whose dues are paid for the current year. Adults, \$3.00; Juniors (12-16) \$1.00 per year. Subscription rate (for non-members) \$4.00 per year, single copies \$1.00. Published Quarterly.

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President's Page



THE program for this year outlined in May at the annual meeting in Spearfish added two activities that will make the year an active, interesting one for members and officers. The projects are publications of an index of the first five years of Bird Notes and of a new check-list of South Dakota Birds.

The first of these projects is well underway thanks to the initiative and work of Herman Chapman and Herbert Krause who merit our thanks and commendation. It is a big job and they have done a lot of work so that it soon can be ready for the printer.

The check-list also will require a lot of work. It is still possible to get Over and Thoms' Birds of South Dakota, but since its last revision in 1946 there have been several additions to our list.

A start has been made in the selection of the form best suited to us, and in collection of data for a complete, accurate list. This requires the cooperation of our members.

After the check-list the next step will be an annotated list to serve as a revision and enlargement of Birds of South Dakota.

Each member should remember the need of the editor of Bird Notes for copy and should record and send in his observations. We often fail to note unusual actions of birds; or to

record definite identifications in out-of-season appearances, which are fully as important as dates first seen in Spring or Fall migrations; or to realize the significance of many seemingly common observations.

In the first number of Bird Notes there was a letter by Dr. O. S. Pettingill who said that we know surprisingly little about the distribution of our prairie species in relation to seasons, terrain, vegetation and climate. Other subjects on which research is needed are listed in extracts from another article by Dr. Pettingill printed in the June, 1950, number. These articles are well worth rereading. There is no doubt that members of SDOU can add much to the sum of knowledge of birds by submitting notes of their observations.

This program calls for extra work and also extra funds. The index will cost about the same as an issue of Bird Notes, but after paying the printer and buying the postage for the four regular issues of Bird Notes, little is left in the treasury. Over half the money needed for the index has been donated. A few more contributions will make it possible to mail it to the members without extra charge. The index is needed.

SDOU'S great need is for more members. There must be at least 300 bird lovers in South Dakota. Our membership committee needs the help of every member to find these interested people and to add them to our roll. The last list of SDOU members had 138 names. We should add at least 100 and we can with the cooperation of the 138.

—J. O. Johnson, Watertown

Prehistoric Birds

J. R. MACDONALD, Rapid City, S. D.

(Dr. J. R. Macdonald is Curator of the Museum of Geology, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, Rapid City. His lecture on Prehistoric Birds to SDOU members at the Spearfish meeting May 29th, 1954 was so interesting we are glad to print it for those who could not go to Spearfish.—Ed.)

When a fossil hunter finds a single bone of a fossil bird, it is really a red letter day, but when he is one of the very few who has found part of all of a skeleton, he has had an experience that happens but once in a lifetime. Among the vertebrates, birds are the rarest of finds in the fossil record.

The oldest record of a prehistoric bird comes from Bavaria where in deposits of Jurassic lithographic limestone, two skeletons were recovered. If it had not been for the preservation of these skeletons in extremely fine grained material, the paleontologists would probably have classed these animals as small bipedal dinosaurs. The distinguishing feature was the presence of feathers, the impressions of which were miraculously preserved. In spite of these feathers, *Archaeopteryx* and *Archaeornis* were as reptilian as one of the great dinosaurs that were their contemporaries. They had toothed jaws, clawed forearms, and long reptilian tails. The bones did not have the pneumaticity of modern birds and the only truly birdlike feature, other than the feathers, was an enlargement of the organs of sight and balance. They could not have been very powerful flyers as their wings were smaller than those of such poor modern flyers as the Galliformes.

These Jurassic forms give us no clue as to the origin of flight. We still do not know whether this mode of transportation in birds was developed by reptiles who jumped from branch to branch like flying squirrels or whether it was developed by bi-

pedal runners who ran and jumped. Accompanying this was the development of feathers from scales on the trailing edge of the forelimbs.

We see no more of the birds in the record until the late Cretaceous of Kansas and South Dakota. Here we find only the remains of two types of marine birds, both toothed but both highly adapted for a particular way of life. The smaller of these was a tern-like form, *Ichthyornis*, with many similarities of structure to its modern counterpart, although still primitive in many respects and still showing strong resemblances to its reptilian ancestors. The second form is a much larger bird, *Hesperornis*, about three feet in length, which had lost its wings with the exception of a mere splint of a bone representing the humerus. Its hind legs were long and powerful and used as efficient oars or paddles. It could not stand upright, but when ashore, probably pushed itself along with its hind legs like a seal. Indeed, seal-like might be a good way to describe this bird. It has been found in the Niobrara chalk in Kansas, a formation which also outcrops in many places in South Dakota. In recent years, scattered bones and partial skeletons have been found in the Pierre shale near Buffalo Gap, South Dakota. Both of these formations are sea bottom deposits and in the Pierre shale the bones are always found in association with a great many fish bones; a suggestion that these birds may have followed schools of fish and lived

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Holboell's Grebe In South Dakota

WM. YOUNG WORTH, Sioux City, Iowa

THE Holboell's Grebe nests over most of the area of the northern prairie states and the prairie provinces, Northern Canada, Alaska, even eastern Siberia, and some scattered areas in the western mountains.

In South Dakota, Holboell's Grebe nests on the Waubay National Wildlife Refuge near the town of Waubay. Careful search might establish that it nests sparingly on other suitable

nests often found close together. Holboell's Grebe likes to build on a floating mass of rotten marsh plants loosely anchored among green stems a few feet from shore. In the picture the nearness of the nest to the shore is shown by the foam along the water's edge.

I was working with Prof. W. F. Kubicek, Coe College, when he was making studies and taking bird pic-



Cut by Courtesy The Wilson Bulletin

marshes in northeastern South Dakota. This has been called its southernmost breeding ground which completely overlooks the fact that for years it nested on Heron Lake, Minnesota, only a few miles north of the Iowa boundary.

While the Western Grebe nests in colonies, often of many dozens of nests usually in the thickest growth of cane and rushes, the nest of Holboell's Grebe seldom is found in thick growth nor are even two or three

tures on some of the South Dakota lakes and sloughs. We found Holboell's Grebe a very timid bird and much harder to photograph and study than the Western Grebe. Mr. Kubicek first set up a temporary blind a little farther from a completed nest than we would work later. From this blind we watched a second pair of Holboell's Grebes start building a nest several yards from the nest we were preparing to study. This pair was busy dragging long pieces of

reed to the chosen spot to deposit with a loud call, and then swimming away for another piece of reed. The female worked steadily, but the male took a lot of time to preen and stretch. The first pair of grebes appeared and apparently decided that things had gone far enough and chased the other pair which would drop the nesting material, silently sink into the water and come up several hundred feet away. On two occasions the nest-building pair did not sink out of sight when chased but laid their heads straight out in front and rapidly swam off, looking very much like two snakes. After about an hour, the pair attempting to build a nest gave up and we did not see them again in that vicinity. Our conclusion was that the Holboell's Grebe discourages colony nesting by its own species.

Five days after the temporary blind was set up it was replaced with the regular blind and we were ready to visit this grebe at its home on Hildebrant's Pass. We went to the blind at 2:30 p. m. when the light was about right for photography. The blind was on dry ground, with the nest just a few feet away and barely in the water. We wore high hip boots, as this was about the best way to discourage the numerous woodticks.

When we were about 100 yards away, the female covered her eggs and slipped away. Both birds swam around, perhaps 50 yards from the nest, and called to each other. In this manner they slowly approached the nest. When about 15 feet out they became silent. The approach and retreat kept up for about half an hour, then the female dived some distance out and came up beside the nest. For the next 20 minutes she swam back and forth near the nest, silent all the while. Not yet satisfied she swam off and joined her mate 50 or 75 yards

from the nest. The whole procedure of swimming side by side, diving and calling was repeated for several minutes. After nearly an hour of waiting, the female suddenly appeared beside the nest and started to climb up, but the click of the camera sent her off in frantic haste. But her nesting instinct was calling and almost immediately she again appeared beside the nest, lunged up onto it and settled on her five eggs. She faced the camera, ignored the whir and click of three cameras and gave a very good performance.

The approach to the nest by this grebe was much like that of the Western Grebe, in that after making the rather clumsy-looking lunge from the water, this female stood well up on her toes and moved easily above the eggs, then spread the breast feathers and carefully settled on the clutch. She arranged the nesting material around her and sat there with her head held high. Holboell's Grebe almost always covers its eggs as it leaves the nest, and by making some small noise we could get this bird to perform that act. But Mr. Kubichek wanted something with a little more dashing action, so we decided to stand up in the blind together and he was to yell. The plan of action was all right, but his Sisseton Sioux war-whoop completely unnerved the old bird and she did practically a back somersault without stopping to cover her precious eggs. She hit the water and disappeared. This poor grebe was so frightened that she did not come back to the nest although we waited until the light was failing. Next morning as we drove near the nest, we saw this grebe busily covering her nest, apparently in preparation for anything that might happen.

One should not expect the Holboell's Grebe to be a bird of spectacular action like its cousin, the West-

ern Grebe. This bird is timid at the nest but very noisy out on the water and its raucous calls often sound much like a horse's whinny. Only once did we see anything similar to the water dance of the Western Grebe and this was when a female Holboell's pecked at the male and they both stood up and went off for about 25 yards, paddling and flopping over the water. The birds spent a lot of time floating on their sides in the water, preening. When they did this their white wing-patches showed beautifully. We noticed that this grebe circled slowly around before coming to the nest, using the foot merely as a sort of flipper and not using the full stroke of the leg. The upper leg and tarsus were held above the level of the tail.

Holboell's Grebe certainly was an interesting bird to study and photograph and to compare with other members of its family.

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Prehistoric Birds

(Continued from page 24)

most of their lives in the open sea, returning to shore only to lay their eggs.

With the beginning of the age of mammals, or the Cenozoic era, we begin to find modern types of birds and, of course, a few strange sidelines mostly in the form of giant ground-living forms with reduced wings and powerful legs and jaws. It is possible that there was a time after the end of the age of dinosaurs when the birds instead of the mammals, could have become the dominant animals.

The record of the later birds is very poor since the bones of birds are rarely preserved as they are thin and brittle. In addition, a great deal cannot be told from them as the greatest difference among birds is in their

plumage. The skeletal structural differences are slight as compared with the mammals or reptiles.

We know just a few hundred fossil forms among the birds, while among the mammals there are many more species among the extinct forms of the past than there are modern types; in fact, one could almost say that the mammals are more dead than alive.

A few interesting tidbits about the extinct birds are:—

Penguins at one time included species as large as a man;

Some bones are known from the Cretaceous which may belong to a pelican;

The waterloving types are most commonly found as fossils;

The largest fossil bird is a vulture from the Rancho La Brea tar pits in southern California, with a wing spread of 9 feet;

The parrots, now confined to South America, were originally found in North America and Europe;

In South Dakota, we have fossil birds known from the Cretaceous, Oligocene, Miocene and Pliocene epochs.

Those of you who might dream of recording an albatross or a penguin along the Missouri River, would have no more of a rarity than if you were to find the complete skeleton or even half of the skeleton of a fossil bird.

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On November 15, 1953, Joe Gunn, Sioux Falls, shot a Mallard on White-wood Lake in Kingsbury County. The duck bore a band that he sent to the Fish & Wildlife Service which reported that the band had been put on an immature male Mallard exactly five years before at the Pumatuning Refuge in Pennsylvania.

Species Reported at Annual Meeting

The lists of birds seen in the Black Hills May 30-June 1, 1954 by members at the Spearfish meeting of SDOU were combined. Another complication was made of the birds seen en route to and from the Hills from various parts of the State. The lists are of interest both for what they include and what was missed.

	In Hills	En route		In Hills	En route
Western Grebe		x	Violet-green Swallow	x	
Pied-billed Grebe		x	Tree Swallow		x
Black-crown. Night Heron		x	Bank Swallow	x	x
American Bittern		x	Rough-wing. Swallow	x	x
Mallard	x	x	Barn Swallow	x	x
Gadwall		x	Cliff Swallow	x	x
Baldpate		x	Purple Martin		x
Pintail		x	Canada Jay	x	
Shoveler		x	Blue Jay	x	x
Blue-wing. Teal		x	Magpie	x	x
Green-wing. Teal		x	Crow	x	x
Cinnamon Teal		x	Black-cap. Chickadee	x	x
Redhead	x	x	White-brst. Nuthatch	x	
Canvasback		x	Red-brst. Nuthatch	x	
Lesser Scaup		x	Water Ouzel	x	
Ruddy Duck		x	House Wren	x	x
Turkey Vulture	x	x	Rock Wren		x
Cooper's Hawk	x	x	Catbird	x	x
Red-tail. Hawk	x	x	Brown Thrasher	x	x
Swainson's Hawk		x	Robin	x	x
Rough-leg. Hawk	x		Olive-back. Thrush		x
Golden Eagle	x		Russet-back. Thrush		x
Bald Eagle		x	Gray-cheek. Thrush	x	
Marsh Hawk		x	East. Bluebird	x	
Prairie Falcon	x	x	Mountain Bluebird	x	
Sparrow Hawk	x	x	Townsend's Solitaire	x	
Sharp-tail. Grouse	x	x	Sprague's Pipit		x
Ruffed Grouse	x		Loggerhead Shrike		x
Sage Hen		x	Starling	x	x
Pheasant	x	x	Red-eyed Vireo	x	
Wild Turkey	x		Philadelphia Vireo	x	
Sora		x	Warbling Vireo	x	
Coot		x	Yellow Warbler	x	x
Killdeer	x	x	Black-poll Warbler	x	
Wilson's Snipe		x	Chest-side. Warbler	x	
Upland Sandpiper		x	Ovenbird	x	
Spotted Sandpiper		x	Macmillan Warbler		

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Spotted Sandpiper	x	x	Macgillivray Warbler	x	
Willet		x	Yellowthroat	x	
Lesser Yellowlegs		x	Chat	x	
Pectoral Sandpiper		x	Redstart	x	x
White-rump. Sandpiper		x	Blackburn. Warbler	x	
Baird's Sandpiper		x	Bobolink		x
Stilt Sandpiper		x	West. Meadowlark	x	x
Semi-palmat. Sandpiper		x	Yellow-head. Blackbird		x
Western Sandpiper		x	Redwing	x	x
Avocet		x	Orchard Oriole		x
Wilson's Phalarope	x		Baltimore Oriole		x
Northern Phalarope		x	Bullock's Oriole	x	
Ring-bill. Gull		x	Rusty Blackbird	x	
Franklin's Gull		x	Brewer's Blackbird	x	x
Forster's Tern		x	Grackle		x
Black Tern		x	Cowbird		x
Mourning Dove	x	x	Western Tanager	x	
Black-bill. Cuckoo		x	Cardinal		x
Burrowing Owl		x	Rose-breast. Grosbeak		x
Nighthawk		x	Black-Headed Grosbeak	x	x
Chimney Swift		x	Blue Grosbeak		x
White-throated Swift	x		Evening Grosbeak	x	
Belted Kingfisher	x	x	Lazuli Bunting	x	
Flicker	x	x	Dickcissel		x
Red-shaft. Flicker	x	x	Pine Siskin	x	
Red-head. Woodpecker	x	x	Goldfinch	x	x
Lewis's Woodpecker	x		Spotted Towhee	x	
Hairy Woodpecker	x		Lark Bunting	x	x
Downy Woodpecker	x	x	Vesper Sparrow	x	
East. Kingbird	x	x	Song Sparrow	x	x
West. Kingbird	x	x	Lark Sparrow	x	x
Crested Flycatcher		x	Brewer's Sparrow		x
Say's Phoebe		x	Chipping Sparrow	x	x
Western Flycatcher	x		Tree Sparrow	x	
Least Flycatcher		x	Slate-colored Junco	x	
West. Wood Pewee	x		White-winged Junco	x	
Prairie Horned Lark		x	Chestnut-collared Lonspur		x
Desert Horned Lark		x			

Mid-West Hawk Flight

IT IS OF particular interest to the many SDOU members who visit Duluth, Minnesota, in the summer and fall, and to those who are anxious to see great flights of hawks that there is a hawk flyway directly over Duluth where the numbers and species of hawks seen are comparable to those at more widely known hawk flyways.

The full magnitude of the flights was not realized until 1951 when the Duluth Bird Club participated in the Fish and Wildlife Service's hawk survey. 8977 hawks were counted in 4 days when using only 2 observation points. The next year the count was 13,123 on 4 days of 2 week-ends in September, and 5646 of them were seen in 1 day. The days for watching were selected somewhat at random and it is not known whether they were the top days of the season.

A very conservative estimate would seem to be 2000 hawks a day, and of course, they don't pick only week-ends to migrate, so if the 10 days including those week-ends were considered the season, it would mean 20,000 hawks a year. That is a lot of hawks! The figures are arbitrary but still the only conclusion is that the Duluth flight is tremendous.

There has been little publicity of this flyway but many birders from Minnesota and nearby states go to Duluth to see it. Some members of SDOU have been there and doubtless more will go. Any time in September seems to be a good time but perhaps the middle of the month is favored. Information about observation points and how to reach them can be got from the Duluth Bird Club, the Chamber of Commerce, or the University of Minnesota, Duluth Branch, Dr. P. B. Hoflund.

THE COVER

We are grateful for permission to print this portrait of a Field Sparrow, which was used in the June, 1936, issue of The Wilson Bulletin to illustrate Notes On The Field Sparrow In Michigan by Dr. Lawrence H. Walkinshaw, also a member of SDOU.

YOUNG CITIZENS AND BIRDS

The Young Citizens League is an organization of boys and girls of elementary school age primarily for the study of citizenship, but each year they have a major project. For the coming school year the project is study of the birds of South Dakota. The state department of Public Instruction is working up outlines for the study which will be sent to all elementary schools of the state.

We can expect inquiries from our young friends, and we think the schools should have memberships in S. D. O. U.

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We belatedly pass on the report of Mrs. C. W. McNeil, Britton, who had two Townsend's Solitaires at her feeding station. They were first seen about Christmas time, 1953, and then fed regularly with the birds and squirrels.

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Mr. and Mrs. C. P. Crutchett, Armour, report that a male Scarlet Tanager visited them on May 21, 1954, a "first" for Mrs. Crutchett and a "second" for Mr. C. The description was simply "gorgeous".

Fifth Annual Meeting

SDOU's fifth annual meeting was held at Spearfish, S. D., May 28-29, 1954. President Cecil P. Haight and his local committee had arranged a program loaded with field trips to give the East-River members a chance to see many of the western species that are common in the Black Hills. The indoor program was in the attractive Student Center of Black Hills Teachers College, and the banquet at the Valley Cafe.

Immediately after registration the members started on the first field trip in the lower valley of Spearfish Creek not far from the college. The surprise on the list was several Evening Grosbeaks which were feeding on the seeds of elm trees. Another important role was held by Redstarts, and all the East-River people were looking for Red-shafted Flickers.

Although "its cold in them thar Hills", the rugged individuals were up with the dawn Sunday morning for another trip and reported that the head-liners were Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeaks and Macgillivray's Warblers. The next trip was out of the Hills and the lists included Chats, Lazuli Buntings and, of course, the ubiquitous Mountain Bluebirds.

Perhaps the most exciting trip was up beautiful Spearfish Canyon where the birds were unusually cooperative. The Water Ouzels (Dippers) which had intrigued Dr. F. N. Matteson on many fishing trips helped him put on a perfect show with the Dippers doing their calisthenics, walking under water, flying through spray, and with nests empty and with young. Every person on the trip could add this interesting bird to his life list.

Crowding the Ouzels for attention were the White-throated Swifts and the Violet-green Swallows. The most

photographed bird was the White-throated Swift that Cecil Haight produced and that Carl M. Johnson banded.

The event on the Canyon trip that no one overlooked was the picnic lunch at Roughlock Falls.

There were two outstanding numbers on the more formal program; in *Birding With a Camera*, Willis Hall, Yankton, brought the birds to us with his artistic slides that were the result of pains-taking skill, patience and an appreciation of beauty; and *Prehistoric Birds* by Dr. J. R. Macdonald, School of Mines, Rapid City. His paper is printed in this number of *Bird Notes* for all to enjoy.

43 members attended the banquet. All were glad that the number included Dr. and Mrs. L. B. Nice, Chicago, and Miss Nice who had arranged their trip west so that they could attend our meeting and share some of the Black Hills avifauna.

At the business session all the directors whose terms expired were re-elected; H. C. Behrens, Rapid City; Ruth Habeger, Madison; C. P. Haight, Spearfish; J. O. Johnson, Watertown; Kenneth Krumm, Martin. At their meeting the board of directors chose J. O. Johnson for president this year, C. P. Crutchett, Armour, vice-president; G. B. Spawn, Brookings, secretary; Ruth Habeger, treasurer; J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, editor. President Johnson's first appointment was of H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, to head the membership committee.

All present were grateful to Prof. Haight for the very interesting meeting.

The next annual meeting will be a joint session with the Iowa and Nebraska Unions at Sioux City, Iowa, on May 14-15, 1955.

General Notes of Special Interest

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON—The identification of a yellow-crowned Night Heron in Union County was confirmed by the specimen, which was collected after considerable difficulty and some good luck on April 24, 1954.

W. R. Felton, Jr. flushed the large bird from some big trees about 4 miles west of his home at McCook Lake. It flew about 100 yards and lit again in a large tree where he could see it easily through his binocular to identify it.

We believe this is a "first" for South Dakota and the confirmation of its identity so far from its normal range increases the satisfaction in adding a bird to the state list.

* * *

NOTE ON NIGHT MIGRATION—On May 8, 1954, Mr. Butts had to go to Custer very early in the morning. When he was at the telegraph office in the hotel, Mr. Harold Haecker, Mitchell, S. D., came in with a dead bird he had picked up on the street. They did not know what it was but, while examining it, a cab driver came in. He told them that after midnight the air was full of small birds. He claimed there must have been 2000 or more flying over Custer. Many flew against lighted store windows.

The cab driver went outside and picked up one of the small birds but Mr. Haecker had found only one of the larger birds.

Mr. Butts brought the birds home and we identified them as a Loggerhead Shrike and a Chipping Sparrow, and we kept them in the deep freeze until our identifications were confirmed.—**Mrs. Jane A. Butts, Outlaw Ranch, Custer, S. D.**

LAWRENCE'S WARBLER On June 16, 1954 Mrs. Moriarty and I took a trip into the Waverly vicinity, and while looking at a flax field saw a yellowish bird bathing in a tiny rivulet. At first sight it looked somewhat like a Yellowthroat but we studied it through our glasses. When it finished its ablutions it flew to a fence and it was at once apparent it was not a Yellowthroat. Instead of a black mask it had black cheeks and a black bib. It had white wing bars, and as it faced us we could see the definitely yellow belly.

We looked in our books. It was not in the National Geographic Book of Birds, but among the warblers in Peterson's Field Guide to Birds there it was—Lawrence's Warbler. Our bird still sat on the wire while we compared it with the picture and description in the book.

Peterson says it is the recessive hybrid of Golden-wing and Blue-wing Warblers. Over and Thoms list the Golden-wing as a South Dakota migrant while Roberts records it as nesting in the southern half of Minnesota, and Bent also gives its range as approaching South Dakota. The Blue-wing is listed by Roberts as nesting in southeastern Minnesota and Bent records it at Sioux City.

Our sight of the Lawrence's Warbler added another first to our list and it may be a South Dakota first.—**L. J. Moriarty, Watertown, S. D.**

* * *

Mrs. R. M. Gammel, area editor, Audubon Field Notes and a member of SDOU, reports that 3 Whooping Cranes were at Kenmare, N. D. and 3 at Sherwood, N. D. over Easter, 1954.

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER — On May 15, 1954, I was in Woodlawn Cemetery observing the warbler wave, then nearing its peak. I noted 2 male Wilson's and many Yellow Warblers. Among them was a yellowish bird which, unlike the quick-moving Wilson's and Yellow Warblers, seemed to move leisurely from leaf-cluster to leaf-cluster. A black line through the eye caught my attention. It reminded me of the heavier, more mask-like line through the Cedar Waxwing's eye. Then I saw the whitish wing-bars suggesting those of the White-winged Junco. The wings themselves were darkish suggesting blue. The breast and underparts were bright yellow. The rump had a greenish-yellow tinge. I had a five-minute view of the bird and couldn't come to any other conclusion than that it was a Blue-winged Warbler. It fed slowly and seemed to examine twigs and leaves more thoroughly than the Wilson's or the Yellow Warblers. Its movements seemed to have the deliberateness of the vireos. Over says the Blue-winged Warbler is a rare migrant in the State. But Dr. Roberts found it in southern Minnesota and Dr. J. F. Brenckle banded one at Mellette, S. D. in 1931.—**Herbert Krause, Sioux Falls, S. D.**

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HORNED OWL DIARY—Christmas Bird Census, Great Horned Owl flushed in cemetery. Pursued by 3 angry crows . . . Feb. 4, heard an Owl perhaps attracted by a large piece of suet on a tree near our house . . . Feb. 5, heard it again. This time low and much like the coo-ing of a pigeon except about half as loud, "Hoot! ta-hoot! ta-hoot! hoot!" . . . Feb. 14, 6:30 a. m., heard it again . . . February 28, 6:30 a. m. It was about a block from our house. An hour later the crows were scolding. This morning the call

was "Hoo-oot! hoot! hoot!" . . . Mar. 1, 3:30 a. m. the Owl woke us . . . Mar. 20, 8:00 a. m. The Crows made a terrific fuss at a neighbor's house. We investigated and Great Horned Owl flew from a spruce tree near the door, chased by screaming Crows . . . Apr. 2, again wakened by very low Owl voice near our house, "Hoot! ta-hoo-oot! hoot!" . . . Apr. 21 4:30 a. m. An Owl across the alley. Near the same place Mourning Doves were calling in voices that seemed twice as loud as the Owl's. About 6:30 the crows found the Owl again . . . Apr. 25, 4:25 a. m. "Hoot! ta-hoot! ta-hoot! hoot!" — "Hoot! hoot!" — "Hoot! ta-hoot! ta-hoot! hoot!" The voice was loud and seemed a block away. The Owl called for only 5 minutes . . . April 26, 11:15 p. m., 2 Owls in the yard across the alley. Before one finished his 6 hoots the other chimed in, "Hoot! Hoot! Hoot!" It was Saturday night. The town was wide awake. People and cars were on the streets. A flood light was burning in the yard next to the Owls, who seemed used to city life and perhaps used the flood light. Next morning we found a piece of cottontail fur within 10 feet of our door and under the fur 6 inches of cottontail vertebrae picked clean. Finale for the cottontail and this diary.—**Mr. and Mrs. C. P. Crutchett, Armour, S. Dak.**

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REPORT FROM N. E. SOUTH DAKOTA—My son, Wesley and I have had a wonderful Spring and Summer. We saw Golden Plover in three places and about 10 pairs of Avocets. Our list of Warblers was made largely at Lake Farley, just outside the city limits and included Black and White, Worm-eating, Orange-crowned, Yellow, Magnolia, Myrtle, Blackburnian (which I banded as my first), Blackpoll, Mourning, Canada, and Redstart and Yellowthroat. We saw 2

Holboell's Grebes near Clear Lake. Our Vireos were the Red-eyed, Bell's, Philadelphia and Warbling. Then there were Buff-breasted Sandpipers, Upland Plovers, Olive-sided Flycatchers, Hermit Trush, the Kinglets, the nest of a Wood Pewee, and on July 4, an American Egret.—**H. W. Wagar, Milbank, S. D.**

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BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPERS IN S. E. SO. DAK.—During the latter part of May, 1953 we watched Buff-breasted Sandpipers near Sioux Falls. They were scattered in small groups among many Golden Plovers which were feeding in a pasture where cattle were grazing and grass was short. Across the highway in a similar, but smaller, pasture, the two species were seen in about the same proportions but in lesser numbers. In the two fields the Sandpipers totalled about 25, the Plovers well over 100.

Courting by the male Sandpipers was frequent. The exhibitionist spread one, or both, wings widely along the sides and above his head and moved slowly in a small semi-circle in front of the unresponsive female. The delicate buff of the wing, shading into something just off white, was clearly apparent during the action, which lasted less than half a minute.

Another similarly mixed group was in a nearby field of sweet clover nearly tall enough to hide the Sandpipers. The numbers here were less than in the pastures but the proportions were about the same. No courting was observed in this field.

This exceedingly rare visitation continued more than a week. We observed the birds at close range several times and compared them with pictures and descriptions in various guides and texts. Identification was positive. Both species left, apparently at the same time. In repeated

visits to the locations during May, 1954, none of either species was noted.

The observers were Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Findley, Herbert Krause, and Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Chapman.

On May 16, 1954, Herbert Krause and I observed nearly 100 Golden Plovers in a short grass pasture where sheep were feeding, adjacent to U. S. Highway 77, about 10 miles north of Brookings, S. D. Scattered among the Plovers and sheep were 7 Buff-breasted Sandpipers. No display was seen during our brief observation—**H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. D.**

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MARBLED GODWITS—We were doing some birding not far from Watertown on June 16, 1954 and visited some small prairie pot-holes looking for shore birds. A large long-legged bird, with a slightly up-curved bill, larger and darker than a Willet, flushed with a rasping "Kret-Kerret". We watched it through our glasses and referred to our Field Guide.

We walked to the place the bird had alighted but it did its best to lead us away. We felt sure a nest was near and spent an hour looking for it while the bird and its mate, which had appeared, frantically tried all their tricks to lead us away, all the while crying "Kret" and then "Godwit." One would stand on bare ground about 30 or 40 feet from us and then would run noisily away trying to lead us from the place.

They made such a commotion that four Wilson Phalaropes joined them, then a Willet and two more Godwits from the other side of the slough.

Our search for the nest was unsuccessful and so we plan to take Pres. J. O. Johnson out to help us with his experience to get some pictures.—**Dr. and Mrs. L. J. Moriarty, Watertown, S. D.**

MORE NUTHATCHES—I was interested in the belief that Nuthatches are not plentiful in South Dakota and can agree with Mrs. Robertson (Bird Notes, page 18 No. 20) that we have many in the Black Hills. For many years there have been many Red-breasted Nuthatches at our feeding places and even as I write (June 1) a White-breasted Nuthatch is after food a few feet from my window.

We nail bacon and ham rinds to our Ponderosa Pine trees and the birds peck all the fat off the rinds. They must like the salt. We feed them suet, too, especially in the winter, and crumbs from the bakery, wheat, sooner milo and ground peanuts.

Other birds beside Nuthatches come for the food,—Woodpeckers, Mourning Doves, Orioles, Chickadees, White-winged Juncos, Western Tanagers, and, lately, Starlings.—Mrs. Jane A. Butts, Outlaw Ranch, Custer, S. D.

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WOODCOCK IN NORTHEAST SOUTH DAKOTA—We had a hard rain one night and I was out the next morning, June 2, 1954, to look for a bird that I heard "tuning up." (An incomplete song, possibly of a Harris's Sparrow). Near a row of Evergreens in our shelter belt I flushed another bird. It flew over a row of shrubbery and darted among some plum trees. I was not able to flush it again. It was a Woodcock.

I am positive of the identification because I used to hunt Woodcock in Pennsylvania, where I also saw their wild mating flights and heard their strange song.—Lowry Elliott, Milbank, S. D.

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Miss Josephine Fraser, Sioux Falls, would add to the Snowy Owl report in March Bird Notes, an Owl seen near West Sioux Falls in January.

BACKYARD ADVENTURES — On May 4, 1954 an insect-like buzz penetrated my closed kitchen. I hurried outside. There in a mulberry tree were two sparrows, definitely not House Sparrows. I returned with field glasses and found that the sparrows had moved to my neighbor's backyard. One rested with its head under its wing while the other preened parting the light grey feathers of its breast showing the dark underneath. White lines over its eyes were distinct, and a light stripe over the crown, unmarked grey breast, clay-color on the wings and back mingled with grey, and a buffy-brown patch around the eyes. They were surely Clay-colored Sparrows. Later I heard a weak but musical song of four notes ending in a downward slide.

The same day I saw my first Hermit Thrush with its brown-spotted breast, dull unmarked back and slender red-brown tail. It moved on the ground robin-like in the wooded lot near our backyard and perched on a fallen branch.

Then the next day an Olive-backed Thrush sang in a low bush a few feet from me in a deserted yard near Prentis Park. It sang again a few feet above my head from a branch of a taller tree. I could study it carefully and listen to its breezy, flute-like music. The next day it was still there moving about on the road, inconspicuous against that background.—Adelene Siljberg, Vermillion, S.D.

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James M. Johnson, a Huron member of SDOU, has a weekly column in The Huronite and Daily Plainsman. He discusses the birds of the region describing the common species as the seasons change, tells about feeding winter birds and attracting birds. His articles have proved popular and have brought very favorable editorial comment.

WATER OUZEL NESTS—When we were at Spearfish for the SDOU meeting, Dr. F. M. Matteson told us of a Dipper, or Ouzel, that had nested for three seasons on the side of a large rock over a trout pool in Spearfish Canyon. This was the nest seen by a large group of SDOU'ers. The nest was empty but the bird was present.

Later as we were going back down the Canyon, Miss Ruth Habeger, Madison, flagged us. She had found another nest in a very similar location. It contained 5 young nearly old enough to leave the nest.

Many pictures of the nests were taken by members of the party and by Willis Hall, Yankton, whose excellent pictures we saw at our meeting.

The next day while trout fishing I found a third nest in Spearfish Canyon. All three nests were on the west side of large rocks overhanging pools, in plain view from the west bank or even from the road. None was placed, as described in some books, "where it is kept moist by spray of cascades or waterfalls." All were in dry locations where the sun struck them part of the day. All the nests were moist, however.

I stood about 6 feet from the nest trying to get a picture of the parent bird feeding the young. I was not successful. She was too fast. She flew up quickly and placed the food in the open-mouthed young while still on the wing. Next time I'll use a movie camera.

The National Geographic says, "The bird has been found accidentally in South Dakota." However, in 30 years of fishing in the Black Hills, I have always seen the Water Ouzel, and not infrequently.—**Dr. L. J. Moriarty, Watertown, South Dakota.**

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NEST AND YOUNG OF SAGE HEN IN N. W. SO. DAK.—On June 1, 1954 we made two observations of Sage Hen, in the southwestern corner of Harding County, along the road from Belle Fourche to Buffalo via Camp Crook. The first was a big, dark brown hen standing in a prickly-pear cactus flat about 100 feet from the highway. As we approached on foot the bird crouched lower and lower and finally blended so completely with the desert vegetation that one of us lost sight of her. The bird flushed when we were within a few feet and then put on a wonderful show of feigned injury as she flopped and zig-zagged over the cactus, squawking and squalling. We found one of her downy young which we photographed while the hen stood a short distance away watching quietly. As we left she returned to what was probably a brood, as we had heard a number of peeps. The one youngster was brownish-black with light stripes.

Within a couple of miles another Sage Hen was seen on a nest less than 40 feet from the travelled portion of the highway. She held her place until we walked within a few feet, then flew over the fence into a pasture where she remained while we took pictures of her nest. There were two young "frozen" under the edge of the nest, and six eggs. The nest structure was a scanty collection of small weed stems and coarse grass, without special lining, in a slight depression in the gumbo soil, wholly unhidden and unprotected.—**Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. D.**

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Minnesota Ornithologists' Union and the Minneapolis Bird Club included the Sand Lake Refuge, near Aberdeen, in a week-end field trip made by bus in April.