

# SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

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*In This Number . . .*

President's Page .....	39
Bird Names—James T. Tanner .....	40
Notes on the Pine Siskin in South Dakota—Herbert Krause .....	41
Bird Finding Near Madison—Miss Ruth Habeger .....	43
With the Banders .....	44
Open Season on Snipe .....	45
New Members .....	45
A. O. U. Meeting .....	47
General Notes .....	49-51
Delta Redheads to LaCreek, Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker, Plumbeous Vireo, Eastern Meadowlark Song Recorded, White-throated Swift, Brewer's Blackbird, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch, Lazuli Bunting.	
Christmas Bird Census .....	51

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## President's Page



**J**AMES HALL was an early resident of Volga, South Dakota, who did something for the community that should be long remembered. The first step was building a large house for Purple Martins and erecting it on

a vacant lot across the street from his lumber yard. The next step was taken twenty or more years ago when he made a bird refuge of the lot. He set our American Elm trees around the lot, and planted shrubs and bushes that would bear fruit and seeds for bird food. Next, to teach the young folks to enjoy his hobby, he built a house for the Boy Scouts. It is still in use.

Mr. Hall belonged to no bird clubs. He was just interested in birds and young people. He provided places for the birds to nest and feed. He gave the boys a chance to acquire an interest in the birds. At the same time he made a place where he could watch the birds from the windows of his office and his home.

\* \* \*

We have heard of Lewis and Clark's report of an eagle's nest on a Missouri River island near Great Falls and how it was still in use a hundred years later. That has made me wonder how long Ospreys use a nest. There is an osprey nest near Torrey Lake, Dubois, Wyoming. When

found it was in a dead tree near its present location, but it is not known how long it had been there. About thirty years ago that dead tree blew down and the nest was rebuilt in the top of a large tree on the bank of the lake. A few years ago some fishermen who could not compete with the birds for fish, climbed the tree and riddled the nest. The birds were not discouraged but rebuilt and the nest was still in use this past season.

At Grebe Lake, Yellowstone Park, we saw an Osprey plunge into the lake, go clear under water and come up with a fish that, compared to the size of the osprey, must have been fifteen inches long. We had a good side view and the Osprey carried the fish away headforemost.

\* \* \*

The editor of Bird Notes has an assignment that involves much time and work. He appreciates the notes that members send to him, but, like all editors, always needs copy. At the same time, we members want to make permanent record of our worthwhile observations and to add to what is known of our South Dakota birds.

The membership chairman reports new members and renewals coming in steadily but too slowly to assure sufficient funds for our present program,—publishing an index of the first five years of Bird Notes, and a new check-list, in addition to continuing Bird Notes. Our membership is scattered. South Dakota is large. No committee can cover it. We need the help of every member if we are to grow and prosper. Each member should get at least one new member.

—J. O. Johnson, Watertown

# Bird Names

By JAMES T. TANNER

**B**IRDS have two kinds of names, the common and the scientific. The latter name is established by rules so that each species is known by it throughout the World and it means only that one species. At the present we are concerned with the common names, which are governed by no rules except those of usage and are a part of our language. But even the common names should have definite meanings.

Some desirable standardization of names resulted from the work of a standing committee of the American Ornithologist's Union which has published a Check-List of North American Birds. The names used in the fourth edition of the check-list published in 1931 have been standard for several years among ornithologists and bird students, but some changes in these names are now desirable and a fifth edition is being prepared. It is a matter of everyone's opinion which changes and how many should be made, and so the matter is up for discussion.

One desirable change concerns the naming of species and sub-species.

In certain species the members in one geographical area differ slightly from those in other areas, but the differences usually are intergrading because the members of the species can interbreed. If there were complete interbreeding and mixing, the differences would disappear; but they persist because the birds of one area are more likely to mate with other birds raised in the same general area than with those of an area perhaps hundreds of miles away. When differences of this kind can be recognized, the species is divided into subspecies. As an example, the Juncos of eastern

United States are all members of one species, *Junco hyemalis*, but the Juncos found in the mountains of East Tennessee are slightly larger and grayer than those in the northern states and Canada. The differences are recognized by placing the northern Juncos in the subspecies *Junco hyemalis hyemalis* and the southern Juncos in the subspecies *Junco hyemalis carolinensis*. Going northward from Tennessee along the Appalachians, the nesting Juncos gradually get slightly smaller and browner; there is no sharp change and so it is impossible, except arbitrarily, to draw a line separating the two subspecies.

In the field we identify birds as to their species and only exceptionally can we identify the subspecies without collecting, examining and measuring them carefully. The fourth edition of the check list names the two subspecies "Slate-colored Junco" and "Carolina Junco"; but no name represented the whole species. Just *Junco* would not be accurate, for there are such other species as the White-winged Junco and the Oregon Junco which you see in South Dakota, which are distinct species. So we need a name that will apply to all members of our species.

Perhaps someone will argue that there would be no problem in the summer for we would know that the Juncos in our mountains would be Carolina Juncos. But we do not really know that, because it is very possible for a northern raised bird to spend the summer with us. Also, while we ourselves identified the species, we would be taking the word of someone else that the birds of this area belong to a certain subspecies. We would be guilty of what is called

(Continued on page 46)

# Preliminary Notes on the Pine Siskin in S. D.

BY HERBERT KRAUSE

THE literature on the status of the Pine Siskin as a breeding bird in South Dakota is meagre indeed. Until comparatively recently this species was not listed for the state. Audubon on the Missouri in 1843 does not mention it, nor was it taken on Lieut. Warren's expedition into the Dakotas (1856-57). Neither was it seen by Baird on the 1856 survey to the Pacific. Coues (1874) did not find it in South Dakota. McChesney (1879) does not include it in the Fort Sisseton listing. Agersborg (1885), whose list is the first important published record for the state by a resident, did not observe it in the southeastern area.

The earliest published mention of the Pine Siskin in South Dakota seems to be in Visher's (1908) "Birds of Western South Dakota," published in THE AUK (1909). Visher observed "two large flocks in the pines in the Hills". Early in September, 1910, he saw "a small flock" in Harding county in the extreme northwestern corner of the state. In midsummer, 1911, he noted "a large flock in the pines at Edgemont in Fall River county in southwestern South Dakota". And in 1913 he published his Sanborn county list, based on fifteen years of observation in south-central South Dakota. He writes that the Pine Siskin is a "tolerably common migrant, and occasionally common in winter," but gives no exact dates.

There have been occasional sight records since then, notably in the Black Hills region and in Clay, Union and Yankton counties in the extreme southeastern portion of the state. The Eastern border seems to have only one sight record, that of Mallory (1914) in Lincoln county. It is inter-

esting to notice that Larson's "Birds of Sioux Falls and Vicinity" (1925), based on a ten-year study (1906-16) in Minnehaha county, does not list a sight record of this species, although Minnehaha county lies just north of Lincoln. Over and Thoms (1946. "Birds of South Dakota", revised) report it as "a winter resident."

No mention of nidification is made in any of these reports. Published records of nesting seem to be confined to Youngworth (1936) who noted a pair meeting in Yankton and Larabee (1937) who reported a nest in Yankton county.

Although I have checked the available items in Stephens' "An Annotated Bibliography of South Dakota Ornithology" (1945), I have found no published records of the hatching and rearing to juvenile state of the young of the Pine Siskin in South Dakota. Letters from Dr. Walter J. Breckenridge of the Minnesota Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, and Dr. Olin S. Pettingill, Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota, investigators in the state, seem to bear this out. They report sight and collection but no breeding records.

The following observation therefore has to do with the nesting of the Pine Siskin on the eastern edge of South Dakota as far north as Minnehaha county. It is a first occurrence for that county and probably is a first record of juvenile Pine Siskins in the state.

I have been collecting data on this species at Sioux Falls in Minnehaha county since 1948, and have sight records for this six-year period for the months of the year excepting June, July and August. The areas of investigation were limited to McKen-

nan Park and Woodlawn Cemetery, both of which abound in conifers, mostly blue spruce and western yellow pine, introduced as ornamental trees. I am a graveyard watcher. The dead do not disturb me though the living sometimes do.

Early in April, 1948, I saw and identified flocks of small, dark, streaked, gold-finch-sized birds in Woodlawn Cemetery as the Pine Siskin. I observed the birds carefully. The curious wheeling flight and the loud songs, including the characteristically buzzy *shree*, of certain individuals, uttered on the wing, made me wonder whether this was a courtship display and whether this species nested here. During April and May I saw and noted by actual counts some 25 individuals. The numbers decreased later in April. Few were seen during early May. I am quite certain now that this is the nesting period when females are incubating and males apparently become less vocal. This may account for the scarcity of records for this period.

During 1949 I noted individuals in January, February and March, their numbers seeming to increase in early April. Again I saw the intriguing behavior of certain individuals, the wide circling flights and heard the loud incessant songs. I concluded also that this was a mating display, although I found no nests.

Not until 1951 did I discover the first nest. It was in Woodlawn on the extreme tip of a branch of a western yellow pine. It was well hidden, being partially under a cluster of cones and covered by long needles. Mr. and Mrs. Herman Chapman corroborated my observation. Circumstances however did not permit further investigation to determine whether eggs were or had been laid or young hatched. For that year, 1951, I have 63 sight records. The

smallest number of individuals noted was one on January 14, the largest an estimated 40 on October 6.

In April, 1952, I found six nests in Woodlawn Cemetery and two in McKennan Park. All nests were in conifers, five of them in blue spruce and three of them in yellow pines. Six were about 20 to 25 feet from the ground. Two were only about 10 or 12 feet up. Three nests were examined. One held three eggs, another two, and the third one. And in one of them was the egg of the Cow-



bird. Nests in pines were at the extreme ends of branches among the cones. Nests in spruce were built farther in where overhanging sprays of needles concealed them. These three nests and eggs were photographed. Regrettably circumstances again made it impossible to determine whether eggs hatched or young were raised.

Not until May 9, 1953, did I discover the young of the Pine Siskin. I was in Woodlawn again, listening to the call of the adult Pine Siskin, which is a loud, fairly sharply defined "clee-ip". I saw an adult Pine Siskin fly from a nearby blue spruce. After a little search, I found a young Pine Siskin perched on the lower bare branches of the tree, near the trunk. It continued its plaintive "chap-ip" even after I pushed the branches aside. It was more than half grown, was completely feather-

(Continued on page 48)

# Bird Finding Near Madison

MISS RUTH HABEGER

(Pettingill's Guide to Bird Finding is used regularly and found accurate and valuable, but there are more good bird finding spots than Dr. Pettingill could mention. From time to time we may call attention to some of those in South Dakota, as Miss Habeger has done on this page.—Ed).

**M**ADISON, an attractive little city in the southeastern part of the state, is the center of a lake district that offers much for the bird watcher, hunter, and fisherman. The bird watcher should call at General Beadle State Teachers College which has a library of over 100 books on birds and a collection of 84 study skins and 18 bird mounts.

Five easily accessible lakes and many sloughs make the region a fine area for bird finding, and a tour of some of the spots is easy, but the time required will depend on the bird finder and the cooperation of the birds.

For such a tour start at the south edge of Madison and go west on a graveled road. (Refer to the enclosed map.) In 3 miles the road reaches Lake Herman. There turn left and follow along the shore of the lake through Lake Herman State Park, a favorite place of bird watchers and picnickers. There is a variety of habitats, lake marsh, deciduous growth and upland prairie with the corresponding varieties of birds. Before the opening of the fishing season, May 1, many geese, ducks and White Pelicans rest on the lake, and during migration there usually are many warblers along the shore. Osprey, loon, Double-crested Cormorant and grebe (except Pied-billed) are less common.

During the summer Pied-billed Grebe, Franklin's Gull, Coot, Black-crowned Night Heron, Common and Black Terns, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-headed and Red-winged Blackbirds, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles,

Western and Eastern Kingbirds are common breeding birds.

Continue by following the east shore drive northerly to the Izaak Walton club house which will be on the left at the north end of the lake. Watch for warblers, orioles and Goldfinch.

Near the club house the road joins paved highway U. S. 81 and S. D. 34, on which go east about 1¼ miles and at the intersection with a graveled road turn left and go north about ½ mile. At the railroad track turn off the road and follow the dirt trail along the southerly side of the railroad (in dry weather). In about a quarter of a mile a slough will be seen on the left. To reach it the bird finder will have to climb some fences and walk another quarter mile, but usually it is worth the effort because of the probability of finding nesting Avocets that dislike intrusion and put on quite a show.

Return to Madison and take highway S. D. 19 south. In 4½ miles it will pass the west end of Lake Madison where there is good birding most of the year and during migration there often are American Merganser and American Golden-eye and northern ducks in addition to the native, Ring-billed and Herring Gulls, American Egret, Double-crested Cormorant and many shore birds.

Continue south on S. D. 19 for a little more than a mile and then turn left on a graveled road. Go east and look for upland birds. Soon the road will turn southeast and Lake Madison will appear on the left and Long

(Continued on page 48)

## With The Banders

**K**ENNETH KRUMM, LaCreek Refuge, Martin, South Dakota, banded 100 flightless immature White Pelicans at the Refuge island nesting colony on July 20, 1953, and has had two interesting recoveries. One was in a letter saying the bird had been found dead, apparently shot, on September 29, 1953, near Hays, Kansas; the other was reported killed on May 16, 1954, at Marte R. Gomez Dam, Nuevo Leon, Mexico.

Mrs. C. E. Peterson, Madison, Minnesota, is so close to the South Dakota line, only 12 miles, that her birds probably have visited us. She reports a very poor year and that she has banded only 247 birds from May 1 to September 25. (Not bad for a backyard project.)

The big item was her addition to the Minnesota list of a bird often seen in our state, the Spotted Towhee. She caught them in her drop trap. Perhaps it has been only an unknown Minnesota bird because in her banding at Madison she has caught 14 of them and only 8 Red-eyed Towhees.

She put her bands on other birds this summer that included; of the Warblers, Black and White, Black-poll, Chestnut-sided, Mourning, Orange-crowned, Magnolia, Nashville, Tennessee, Yellow, Wilson's, Canada, Ovenbird, Redstart, and Yellow-throat; of the Sparrows, White-crowned, White-throated, Harris's, Lincoln's, Clay-colored, Purple Finch, Slate-colored Junco; of the Thrushes, Olive-backed, Gray-cheeked, Veery, Robin; and such others as, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Baltimore Oriole, Brown Thrasher, Catbird, Wood Pewee, Red-eyed Vireo, Chickadee, Cowbird, Grackle, Flicker, Blue Jay, Mourning Dove and a Blue Goose that was brought to her.

Recoveries of her bands this year

have been principally on Grackles in Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas. Two of them were 6 years old. The most interesting report was on a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak that she banded on June 1, 1947. It was recovered at Milbank, South Dakota, on May 14, 1954.

From Madison, South Dakota, Miss Ruth Habager reports that about all she can say is that she got started with her banding. (See Problems of Becoming a Bird Bander. Bird Notes No. 20, VI-1.) Yet now she has her bands on 9 species and includes a Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow the identification of which might have been missed had she been unable to see it close-up.

Lowry Elliot, Milbank, is the latest SDOU member to get a banders permit. He should have an excellent place for his traps on his farm with a shelter belt of many trees and shrubs that produce seeds enjoyed by birds.

Carl M. Johnson is a SDOU member just over the line at Worthington, Minnesota. He had not caught a Mourning Dove and was anxious to get his band on at least one. The Vesper Sparrows, too, had evaded his traps. He noticed Doves regularly in considerable numbers on top of a high pile of gravel and so set a trap there, and caught Vesper and Savannah Sparrows.

He also got Henslow's and Lincoln's Sparrows this year. Other good birds for him were the nestfull of Least Bitterns that he found in a small slough where he had never before seen the species.

Mr. Johnson lives in town and has a small yard in which he had seen few birds and that he had not considered good bird habitat, but he set

(Continued on page 45)



## OPEN SEASON ON SNIPE

The season was opened in South Dakota for shooting Jacksnipe this year. The hunter's Jacksnipe is the ornithologist's Wilson's Snipe, or by the revised nomenclature, Common Snipe.

However, the reports of ornithologists and bird watchers would indicate that the bird certainly is not common enough in this area to warrant an open season without again endangering survival of the species. And certainly there are not enough to induce hunters to go after them.

Few hunters recognize the species and they often call all short birds "snipe", and an open season on Jacksnipe can be rough on Dowitchers, Yellowlegs, Upland Plover and others.

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## With the Banders

(Continued from page 44)

several traps in it and by early September had caught several warblers including Magnolia, Mourning, Tennessee, Wilson's, Canada, Black and White, Bay-breasted, and Water-thrush. He also watched a Black-throated Green Warbler carefully stay out of the traps. He feels sure the reason he is able to get the birds in his yard is the dripping water.

Harold and Wesley Wagar, Milbank, say there is not much to add to their report last summer. (See Bird Notes No. 21, VI-2, pg. 33). By October 1 they had banded 118 individuals of 18 species. September 28 was Orange-crowned Warbler day with 6 of them coming for their bracelets with a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. A Golden-crowned Kinglet evaded the trap. Aside from the banding they report another American Egret on a slough in Southern Grant County on September 18, rather a late date.

## NEW MEMBERS

Among the new members of SDOU are two men who have been added to the staffs at the University of South Dakota, Vermillion, and at South Dakota State College, Brookings, and who include ornithology in their fields.

At the State College is Assistant Professor Thomas B. Thorson in the Department of Entomology and Zoology. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree at St. Olaf's and took his M. S. and Ph. D. at the University of Washington, and served for two years as Curator of the Museum at the University of Nebraska. He is teaching physiology and also will have the class in birds that has been handled by SDOU member Dr. G. B. Spawn.

James S. Findley has come to the University as a professor in the Zoology Department and Curator of Natural History of the W. H. Over Museum. His training in mammalogy and ornithology well fits him for the position. At present he is designing a series of projects which encompass a distribution study of mammals and birds of South Dakota, and the large collection of ornithological specimens in the W. H. Over Museum will be analyzed and cataloged.

This is good news for SDOU which especially welcomes these new members.

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When a shipment of walnut meats was condemned and confiscated in Sioux Falls, the nuts had to be removed from human food channels but the court felt that it was not necessary to deprive the birds of a windfall. So the nuts were distributed to a few bird feeders who could be relied upon to keep them in bird food channels. Some birds are living high as a result of this "nuts to the birds."

## Bird Names

(Continued from page 40)

"false accuracy" by Dr. George M. Sutton who has visited South Dakota many times and many of you know especially for his Audubon Screen Tour lectures.

There was another illustration of the same point when the observers in a certain area reported the subspecies Eastern Song Sparrow. Finally a series of Song Sparrows was collected in the area and found to be Mississippi Song Sparrows. The species was identified correctly, but the attempt to be more accurate led into an error.

The desirability of a single common name for an entire species has been accepted in recent years and Roger Tory Peterson has used one name for a species in his Field Guide to the Birds. The forthcoming edition of the A. O. U. check-list is expected to do so also. But choosing the best names is difficult and pleasing everyone is more difficult, and so the choices are not unanimous.

Several individuals have made lists of the common names they prefer. The A. O. U.'s committee has drawn up a tentative list which has been used in Murray's Check-List (1952) of Virginia Birds. Preferences have been expressed in a few other states, and I understand that the South Dakota Ornithologist's Union has a project underway for the revision of their check-list. I have expressed my opinion on certain names, especially those of our Tennessee birds.

Three principles have been my guides in suggesting or opposing changes: (1) Names should be changed when it is necessary to provide a name for an entire species; (2) Names should be changed when it would eliminate confusion among the names of species in this country (but not

necessarily in the world, for scientific names will do that better); (3) Names should **not** be changed when they are well-established and in wide usage, not only among bird students but also among hunters, farmers and the public, which have the same interest in these names as do the bird students. Point (3) frequently will be in conflict with the other two; this is where we need discussion and compromise.

Some of the names of species which have more than one subspecies in Tennessee, and perhaps in South Dakota, or for which we have been using names for subspecies rather than for the full species, are: Great Blue Heron, Horned Lark, Blue Jay, Loggerhead Shrike, Blue-headed Vireo, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Yellowthroat, Common Grackle, Eastern Towhee, Slate-colored Junco.

The following names have been changed from the familiar names by the addition of an adjective to distinguish them from similar species, usually one of your western species: Common Nighthawk, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Eastern Kingbird, Common Raven, American Crow, Common Cowbird, American Goldfinch.

The next list consists of substitutions to make the common names more accurate, more descriptive, or less confusing. There will be differences of opinion as to the desirability of some of these. Common, instead of American, Merganser; Peregrine or Peregrine Falcon for Duck Hawk; Common, instead of Florida, Gallinule; Ringed, instead of Semipalmated, Plover; Upland Sandpiper for Upland Plover; Dunlin for Red-backed Sandpiper; Traill's, instead of Alder, Flycatcher; Eastern Pewee, eliminating an unnecessary word; Marsh Wren, eliminating "Long-billed"; Sedge, instead of Short-billed

Marsh, Wren; House, instead of English, Sparrow; Red-winged Blackbird for Red-wing.

There remains a group of birds for which new names are suggested that to me are undesirable for one reason or another.

American Widgeon has been suggested to replace Baldpate, but the latter is well established among hunters as well as bird students.

Great-crested Flycatcher has been proposed to differentiate our Crested Flycatcher from the Mexican Crested Flycatcher, but the new name is clumsy and inaccurate, the crest not being great. Common names do not need to separate all species.

The American Pipit has been named Water Pipit. This name so far misses indicating the usual habitat of Pipits that it is very misleading. It is not strictly American, but is also found in the Old-World Arctic. The name I suggest is Arctic Pipit or Northern Pipit, either of which would separate the species from Sprague's Pipit, the other Pipit of our country which is not uncommon in South Dakota.

Common Meadowlark has been suggested in place of Eastern Meadowlark. This will not sit well with the residents of South Dakota and the other Prairie States. "Eastern" and "Western" are descriptive of the ranges of the two Meadowlarks, so let those names stand.

The following five changes have been proposed to replace established and familiar names with others that fail to improve the birds' names. The older names seem preferable. The substitutions are: Swainson's, instead of Olive-backed, Thrush; Wilson's Thrush for Veery; Small-billed, instead of Northern, Waterthrush; Pileolated, instead of Wilson's, Warbler; Crow-Blackbird for Grackle; the suggested changes for the Waterthrush,

Warbler and Grackle are neither attractive nor especially accurate.

After more discussion we might be able to agree on a list of common names for the birds usually found in our States, that would serve as a standard, at least until the next "Check-List" appeared. If any worthwhile discussion results from this article, I am sure your check-list committee would appreciate it, and it can be presented and summarized in the pages of South Dakota Bird Notes.

University of Tennessee,  
Knoxville, Tenn.

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#### A. O. U. MEETING

The 74th annual meeting of the American Ornithologist's Union was held September 8-12 on the campus of the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Chapman were the only South Dakotans present.

While the program consisted mainly of technical papers, exceptionally interesting movies and sound reels afforded much interest for unskilled bird-watchers.

At the banquet, Dr. O. S. Pettingill told of his experiences last winter during a five-month stay on the Falkland Islands. He showed many slides featuring Penguins.

The Nice family of Chicago, still happy over their experiences last summer when they visited SDOU at Spearfish, was there. Peterson, Orrians, Breckenridge and Pettingill, all of whom have been in South Dakota on Audubon Screen Tours, made friendly inquiry about SDOU.

Next Fall AOU will meet in Boston, and in 1956 at Denver.—H. F. C.

☆☆☆

The Cardinals "belonging" to the Melvin Wheelers, Sioux Falls, raised three families this summer, each of two young.

## Pine Siskin

(Continued from page 42)

ed except for areas on the side under the wings. The primaries were developed enough for the individual to fly from branch to branch but not for extended flight. The yellow patch in the wing was just beginning to show, the color being heaviest along the ribs of the feathers. The yellow in the tail was faint but unmistakable. The breast was streaked much like the adult, although in this individual downy tufts still indicated its immaturity. Mr. Willard Rosine, Biology Department, Augustana College, substantiated my observation. We photographed the individual and finally left it in the spruce where I had found it.

Later we saw an adult siskin fly into a neighboring spruce. Hearing more calls, we investigated and found a second young of the species. This one, better able to fly, escaped into the upper branches before we could examine or photograph it. Although we searched carefully, we were unable to find a nest or nests from which the two might have come.

Unfortunately a heavy rainstorm in the night of May 9 killed what I feel sure was the individual we photographed. I found it next morning under the downswep branches of the same spruce in which I had discovered it. The specimen is now among the collections of the Biology Department, Augustana College. I found no trace of the second individual. Further study and observation may reveal how frequently the Pine Siskin nests in South Dakota and also something about its adaptation to an environment far removed from what is regarded as its breeding grounds in more northern latitudes.

Augustana College,  
Sioux Falls, S. Dak.

## Bird Finding

(Continued from page 43)

Lake on the right. The low south shore of Long Lake can be reached if desired on other country roads that usually are passable, and it often is good for finding shore birds. Yellow-legs, Pectoral Sandpipers, and the Peeps are common, Stilt Sandpiper, Willet, Godwit are less common.

At the east end of Lake Madison there is a choice of routes. One goes south and east to Brandt Lake and Buffalo Slough, the other north past Round Lake to Wentworth Slough. While Buffalo Slough is good for finding waterfowl in the spring and summer, it is a public hunting ground and not good for bird watchers in the open season. The stream between Lakes Madison and Round may not freeze and small concentrations of Mallards and Pintails may be found there in open winters.

Wentworth Slough (sometimes called Milwaukee Lake) is a good place for water fowl, waders and shore birds. Follow S. D. 34 past Wentworth town and when the highway turns west, leave it and go a mile east on a graveled road, then turn north (left). Watch for birds in the rushes, along the shore, and on the water as the road crosses the slough on a grade. In the spring there are many pond ducks and divers, Snow and Blue Geese. In the fall there usually is a concentration of many White Pelicans. Pied-billed Grebe nest here, as do also a few Western Grebe. Eared and Horned Grebe are seen in migration. The bird finder can go around the slough on section line roads and can return to Madison on S. D. 34 or can find many other small sloughs in the vicinity for car window birding and usually some surprises.

General Beadle State Teachers College,  
Madison, S. Dak.

## General Notes of Special Interest

**DELTA REDHEAD DUCKS RELEASED AT LACREEK**—On August 16, 1954, we transferred 305 immature Redhead Ducks, *Aythya americana*, from the Delta waterfowl research station in the marshes at the southern end of Lake Manitoba to the LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge. The project is an experiment to determine whether we can build up a larger nesting population on suitable marshes at LaCreek, and to trace the migrations of the birds. It was conceived by federal biologists and details of the actual transfer were worked out with U. S. and Canadian authorities through the cooperation of Delta Director Al Hochbaum and his staff.

The ducklings had been incubator hatched and pen reared at the research station. They were flightless but sufficiently developed to sustain themselves in the wild when released. They were banded with standard Fish and Wildlife Service bands on the right legs with numbers 556-32000 to 556-32305, and with special green plastic bands on the left legs. (SDOU members and others are especially invited to report any birds marked this way.) Then they were loaded in special crates on a LaCreek Refuge truck, and after final customs clearance had been arranged by telephone at 2:00 P. M., they were started for LaCreek. Veterinary check at the International Boundary was finished at sundown. There was 7:00 A. M. breakfast at Pierre and we arrived at LaCreek at noon MST.

All 305 ducklings survived the 650 mile trip in excellent condition and were released on one of the pools. Soon they were resting and feeding in their new environment. They re-

mained rather closely rafted for a few days but by August 30 had dispersed over the Refuge pools.

Next Spring we will do special trapping and banding work to determine whether any of the birds return to LaCreek.—**Kenneth Krumm, LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge, Martin, S. D.**

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**ARCTIC THREE-TOED WOODPECKER NESTS IN HILLS**—On June 20, 1954, our attention was attracted to a dead ponderosa pine at Blue Bell Lodge in Custer State Park, South Dakota. A rasping sound came from a hole in the tree about 18 feet above the ground. Within a few minutes the hole was visited by a pair of Arctic Three-toed Woodpeckers which were apparently feeding young. The parent birds had been seen in the vicinity several days earlier, but were not positively identified until this time. The nest was under observation for the following week, and both birds were frequently seen at close range.—**Lorna R. Levi, Herbert W. Levi, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis.**

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**QUERY. PLUMBEOUS VIREO?**—We have not lived in the Black Hills very long and so I often see birds that are quite different from those we knew in New York State and Michigan. Sometimes they are hard to identify, especially for a beginner.

In February at Angostura Dam one gave me a bad time. It was a vireo, —but which one? Its only color seemed to be gray of various shades. The tail and wings were a little darker than the back, and the under parts were lighter, almost off-white. The

only marks seemed to be wing bars and very definite eye rings from which lines extended to the top of the bill to make them look like spectacles. Could the bird be a Plumbeous Vireo?—Mrs. L. B. Yarger, Rapid City, S. D.

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(Over says the Plumbeous Vireo nests in Southwestern South Dakota. This year there have been two other reports of this Vireo, one of a nest with two young in Palmer Gulch in June and July and the other of a single individual at Moon, in July, both locations not far from Angostura Dam.—Ed.)

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**EASTERN MEADOWLARK SONG RECORDED**—Wesley E. Lanyon, Department of Zoology, University of Wisconsin, visited the LaCreek Refuge in May to observe the Eastern Meadowlarks that inhabit the area and are the only known large nesting population of this species in the State. While here he made a tape recording of the songs. Mr. Lanyon is doing research on the ecology and distribution of the Meadowlarks, and just before coming to LaCreek had read a paper on them at the annual meeting of the Nebraska Ornithologist's Union.—Kenneth Krumm, LaCreek Refuge, Martin, S. D.

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**WHITE-THROATED SWIFT** —The follow-up on the White throated Swift which I had up Spearfish Canyon during our meeting last May is: Mrs. Nice and Miss Nice managed to get some hard cooked egg, some insects and some water into the Swift before the afternoon was over. With that food and some more water it survived the night. The next day Mrs. Haight and I managed to feed it more insects and bits of earthworm, and by evening it was considerably more lively than it had been. The third day we put

it outside in an open top box after we had fed it again. That morning numerous swifts were flying over town and crying as they flew. After about 15 minutes I noticed one fly close to the ground in the vicinity of our injured bird, or so I thought. On investigating I found no bird in the box and can only conclude that the low flying bird was our swift well enough to fly again.

Perhaps if there is a moral to this tale it is: if we only take time to help them, we might nurse many injured or weak birds back to health.—Cecil P. Haight, Spearfish, S. D.

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**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD**—This is called a bird of the western prairies in abundance, and is mentioned as a common resident of south-eastern Minnesota. We should expect to find it frequently along the South Dakota-Minnesota state line. However, I have had the luck to find it in only one location, but in the same spot three or four years in succession, presumably individuals of a family returning to their summerhome each year. The spot is on a high bank of the Hide-wood Valley, a gulch-like cut through a range of morainic hills near Clear Lake, South Dakota, leading to the Big Sioux River bottoms. The nesting site is bisected by highway U. S. 77, hence the colony can be easily seen by anyone who cares to look.

No doubt Brewer's Blackbird has often been overlooked, but identification should not be too difficult. It frequents dry ground, whereas the Rusty Blackbird during migration is found on wet ground where the willows grow and nests much north of South Dakota. Brewer's is not as exciteable as the Red-winged Blackbird, and its smooth easy movements as it flits from place to place cannot escape notice. Its voice is also recognizable after a little study.

The only nest I found was sunken rim-level with the ground in a semi-barren pasture and contained four young ready to leave the nest in a day or two. In 1953 a pair had arrived March 10; by the 15th several more had settled and remained for the season. In 1954 four were newly arrived March 13. Thereafter about six pairs were always present until time to move out.—**Alfred Peterson, Brandt, S. D.**

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**GRAY-CROWNED ROSY FINCH**—On May 24, 1954 a flock of Purple Finches was feeding on the ground and in the grass near the ranch house. My attention was drawn to one that seemed to be different and so I gave it careful study. It was not one of the Purple Finches but was about the same size and was definitely sparrow-like. Its general color was a dark brown with a pink tinge, most evident on its rump. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature was a broad gray mark, crescent shaped, across the back of its head from eye to eye.

I looked in Peterson's Guides, (we need both out here) and found my bird in the western guide—Gray-crowned Rosy Finch. However, our part of the country was not included in the range described in the Guide. We were only close. Nevertheless, in Birds of South Dakota I found that Dr. Over says the Gray-crowned Rosy Finch is "often seen in flocks during the winter in the Black Hills."  
—**Miss Mary S. Heumphreus, 12 Mile Ranch, Custer, South Dakota.**

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One morning last Spring when E. F. Jacobson sat down to his breakfast in Sioux Falls, he was surprised to see 2 American Mergansers sitting with their webbed feet grasping the ridge of the roof of his neighbor's house.

**LAZULI BUNTING AT SIOUX FALLS**—On July 21, 1954, we were looking for Indigo Buntings along the Old Brandon Road where we often have seen them on the roadside fence wires at the foot of Cactus Hills. We had seen several and expected to see another when we noticed a small bird on a telephone wire. Its back was toward us but as we approached it flew and immediately returned to face us. We saw an inverted U of red on its breast and sides. Then as it flew toward a thicket near the Hills, the sun struck its back which reflected a beautiful turquoise blue quite different from the shade of Indigo Buntings or of Eastern Bluebirds. This was our first sight of a Lazuli Bunting in this part of the state.—**Mrs. J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls.**

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A 3-car party from the South Bend, Indiana, Audubon Society, headed by Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Meek followed the directions in Pettingill's Guide to Bird Finding to include LaCreek Refuge in their western trip and were especially interested in close range observations of Burrowing Owls and Long-billed Curlews.

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#### **CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS**

The National Audubon Society's 55th annual winter bird count will be made during the week after Christmas. The results will then be published in Audubon Field Notes.

Many members of SDOU participate in this census, and again this year we urge you to send copies of your report to the editor of Bird Notes. Even if the report does not conform to Audubon Society requirements we want all reports of all observations made this season. They will then be included in a South Dakota summary similar to that published for the last two years.

## PICTURES

We are indebted to the **South Dakota Conservation Digest**, editor G. W. Zieman, and photographer Eldon Smith for the fine picture of young Great Horned Owls that appears on the cover of this issue of *Bird Notes*.

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Mr. Willard Rozine, Biology Department, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, and Mr. Herbert Krause, took the photograph of the fledgling Pine Siskin that is used with Mr. Krause's article.

