

# **SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES**

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## President's Page



IT MAY be in order to review the past year and to outline some of the plans for the year ahead, even though it may involve some repetition of comments made in earlier issues of Bird Notes.

The past year was a fairly active one but not all of our program was completed. There were three important projects; an index of the first five volumes of Bird Notes, a revised check-list of South Dakota birds, and a drive for new members.

The index was completed and mailed to members. When it is advisable supplements can be added. The indexing was a long, tedious task ably done by Prof. Krause. About half the cost of printing was donated by interested members.

Much material for the check-list has been gathered, but much work remains to be done. The check list should be completed during the current year and it can be finished by the cooperation of the committees with Dr. N. R. Whitney, chairman.

The membership has been increased substantially through the efforts of that committee under the energetic and resourceful chairman, Herman Chapman.

Our finances are not the least of our problems. Expense is incurred in any project we undertake. The largest expense item is for printing Bird

Notes. The cost of the Index, aside from the donations, was the equivalent of the annual dues of forty members. The drive for new members entailed expense for postage and stationery. Now we are looking forward to the publication of a revised edition of Birds of South Dakota. It will call for considerable outlay and we should accumulate a reserve to cover the original cost although as the books are sold most of the cost will be recovered. A report from the treasurer shows a balance on hand of \$475. This is a reasonable balance but it should be increased since that is what we have to carry us through the rest of the year. At present we have only one class of members. We might consider establishing a class for sustaining members on a voluntary basis at a rate of \$5.

We have had real help from Mrs. J. S. Findley who has sold birder's supplies, stationery, and Christmas cards at our meetings. At the close of the recent Sioux City meeting she gave the treasurer \$100 to bring the total sent to the treasurer during the year to over \$200. She is doing her share to keep SDOU a going concern.

The progress of the past year was due entirely to the loyal support of the officers, committeemen and members who sent in notes of their observations. Bird Notes is the only source of current information on bird life in South Dakota. Here we divert to emphasize the importance of recording your observations of anything unusual in the habits of birds and of sending the record to our painstaking and able editor, Scott Findley, who has kept Bird Notes on the high level set by his predecessor.

—J. O. Johnson, Watertown, S. D.

# Social Behavior of Waterfowl

Donald A. Jenni

**S**Ocial behavior of waterfowl can be described as the manner in which the birds react to one another. The behavior patterns differ among the species, and they also vary with the seasons and even with their daily requirements.

When the ducks are on their wintering grounds along the Gulf and in California and Mexico, they are very gregarious and generally are found in mixed flocks of males and females, juveniles and adults, of several species. Pair formation often starts on the wintering areas.

Duck courtship is a specific characteristic that has been well described for many species. However, certain behavior patterns are common to more than one species. From one to several drakes may court a single female. It is usually done on the water where the drakes may display and go through particular movements such as the head throw which is typical of the diving ducks. In it the drake brings his neck to lie along the back and then "throws" it forward,—all in one rapid movement (Hochbaum).

Courtship flights are a spectacular, common sight. A number of drakes will pursue a hen, each drake trying to maneuver into the favored position immediately behind her. In certain species the drakes may grab the tail feathers of the hen and pull them out, or both may plummet to the ground. The feather pulling is one of the most spectacular phases of courtship. The courtship flights of the species vary in rapidity and the amount of maneuvering, and an experienced observer often can identify courting parties at considerable distances by their flight patterns.

Pair formation that has not taken

place on the wintering grounds usually occurs along the migration routes, and not on the breeding grounds. An aerial form of territorial defense, a common breeding ground sight, may be mistaken for courtship.

Sowl's work in Manitoba indicates that the hens return to their ancestral breeding marsh to locate their home ranges. After the pairs arrive on the breeding ground they begin to lose their gregarious habit, and the drakes lose their tolerance for other drakes. This intolerance occurs within the species, while other species usually are ignored. The drake is responsible for the area of intolerance and the hen benefits by being near the drake.

The waterfowl territory is unique in a number of ways. What some writers have called the territory actually may be more like the mammalian home range. In a typical avian territory the entire area is defended, whereas in the waterfowl home range the only area defended is around the drake at any place he happens to be within the home range. Also there is one place within the home range that is favored by the pair. It may be a bare shore, a floating log, a muskrat house, or any bare, dry area. It is called the loaf spot, which as the name implies, is a place for loafing, preening and sunning. Probably the most important function of the loaf spot is that it provides a place where the hen can find her mate when she returns from egg-laying.

As nesting progresses the drake loses interest in his hen and eventually abandons her. The desertion occurs at different stages of the incubation with different species; for in-

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# A Catalog of Eggs

N. R. Whitney, Jr.

**A** COLLECTION of eggs housed in the Biology Department of the School of Mines, Rapid City, S. D., includes the sets from South Dakota listed below with data. There are also about 40 sets of eggs without data, of which some have specific identification and others have nests. Five collectors gathered most of the sets and in the list they are identified by the initial D for Fred M. Dille, L for Henry E. Lee, M for A. C. McIntosh, O for W. H. Over, and P for F. A. Patton.

Dr. Morton Green, head of the Department of Biology of the School of Mines, generously gave a lot of time showing the collection and going through it with me.

Holboell's Grebe. 14972. Set of 4 eggs. Lake Thompson, Kingsbury Co. June 9, 1922. Floating nest, resembling Pied-billed Grebe's except larger and flatter, in rushes  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from land and one rod from open deep water. Eggs covered. Incubation slight. Bird also collected. P.

Horned Grebe. 732. Set of 4 eggs. Miner Co. June 14, 1889. Nest in decayed rushes heaped in shallow water, well concealed. Incubation slight. Bird trapped. P.

Eared Grebe. 419. Set of 6 eggs. Hamlin Co. June 8, 1902.

Pied-billed Grebe. 431. Set of 5 eggs. Hamlin Co. June 8, 1902. Collector not given, probably L.

Double-crested Cormorant. Set of 2 eggs. Cormorant Island, South Waubay Lake, Day Co. June 15, 1927. Nest of coarse reeds on ground. Many nesting. Incubation slight. A. Lundquist.

Black-crowned Night Heron. 201|3, 202|4, 238, 255|3, 311|4, 312|4, 313|3, 314|3, 315|4, 316|3, 318|3, 321|3, 322|3, 330, 337, 338, 339, 340|3, 341|3, 342|4,

348|3, 415, 421, 422, 425. All from Lake John, Hamlin Co. June 1, 1902. Nests on top of masses of bullrushes flattened by snows of previous winter, 1 to 2 feet above water. Nests built of coarse grass and rushes, flat and 12-16 inches wide. Water 3-10 inches deep. Incubation begun. L.

202-3-4. Platte lake, Aurora Co., May 22, 1924. Nests on top of rushes in shallow water, built of bullrushes and lined with same. Small colony. L.

American Bittern. 13454. Set of 4 eggs. Sanborn Co. June 1, 1921. Bird flushed from nest which was on ground and built of dried grass. O.

Least Bittern. 15101. Set of 2 eggs. Miller's Slough, Sanborn Co. June 3, 1923. Nest of dead reeds, fastened to cattails above water. Nest and female collected. O.

Mallard. 0-417. Hamlin Co. June 30, 1902.

Pintail. 15245. Set of 7 eggs. Bitter Lake, Day Co. May 23, 1923. Nest of dry grass lined with down, on ground among boulders, stony hillside, east shore. O.

605. Set of 8 eggs. Sanborn Co. May 20, 1899. Nest on high ground  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from water, in grass. Incubation fresh. P.

Blue-winged Teal. O-418. Hamlin Co.

Shoveller. 608. Set of 8 eggs. Miner Co. May 25, 1891. Nest of grass and feathers well concealed in matted bunch of buffalo grass some distance from water. Eggs fresh. P.

Redhead. 0-416. Hamlin Co. June 10, 1902. No.— Platte Lake, June, 1924.

Canvasback. 0-415. Hamlin Co.

Ruddy Duck. 14993. Set of 10 eggs. Lake Thompson, Kingsbury Co June 10, 1922. A floating nest in

tall swamp grass. Incubation started. P. No. — Hamlin Co.

Cooper's Hawk. 431. Set of 3 eggs. Sanborn Co. May 1889. Fresh. Nest of sticks lined with bark, placed 15 feet up in a tree. P.

Red-tailed Hawk. No.— Set of 4 eggs. Antelope Preserve, Harding Co. May 20, 1933. Nest of coarse sticks, lined with cottonwood bark and dung, about 25 feet up in a cottonwood tree. About 3 feet by 1 foot. M. Parent collected by D.

Broad-winged Hawk. No. — "Big Coulee", Roberts Co. May 28, 1924. Nest of sticks lined with bark, about 20 up in basswood tree. The light egg in the nest on the evening of the 26th. The heavily marked egg was deposited on the 27th. Fresh. O.

Swainson's Hawk. 52b. Jump Off, 13 miles southwest of Buffalo May 19, 1933. Large nest of cottonwood twigs and leaves, lined with sand reed grass, 10 feet up on horizontal limb and 5 feet from trunk in lone cottonwood tree. Two old nests in same tree. 2 fresh eggs. L. and M. O-432 and O-433, Hughes Co., No dates.

Ferruginous Hawk. 50b. Southwest side of Antelope Preserve, Harding Co. May 18, 1933. Large bulky nest 4 feet in diameter, of large sticks and sage brush, lined with cottonwood bark and dry horse dung, 20 feet up in living cottonwood snag. 4 eggs, incubation well advanced. Adult birds relatively shy. L and M.

53b. Butte 1 mile northeast of Hett's Ranch 12 miles southwest of Buffalo. May 18, 1933. Large nest of sticks lined with bark, on shelf near top on north side of Lance Mud Buttes. 4 eggs. Incubation advanced. L and M.

1/3. Comparatively low butte in Jump Off west of Hett's Ranch. May 19, 1933. Nest about 3 feet in diam-

eter and 12 inches deep composed of coarse sage branches, lined with twigs and dung. Heavily incubated. L and M.

Marsh Hawk. No. — Nest found May 12 with 1 egg, but broken up by May 16. Another nest about 10 rods away with 2 eggs on May 16, but broken up by May 20, when a third nest with 1 egg was found about 10 rods away. Collected set of 6 eggs found June 2 on prairie among clump of sweet clover, made of clover stems lined with grass. Inside diameter 7 inches, outside 12 inches. No locality given.

D/6. June 1, 1933. In Rapid Valley 4 miles east of Rapid City, in pasture with adjacent farms. Nest on ground on dry knoll in a marsh, with wet ground on both sides. Surrounded by dry reeds or cattails of last season, and constructed of flat cattails and dead grass. Incubation about one-third. Nest was removed intact and taken to School of Mines. D and M.

Prairie Chicken. 15242. Set of 12 eggs. Near Bullhead Lake, Roberts Co. May 21, 1923. Nest on ground near clump of old grass, and built of dead weed stems and grass. Incubation fresh. O.

Sharp-tailed Grouse. 3086/12. 5 miles northwest of Chamberlain, May 10, 1925. Nest on ground in patch of brush. Nest 6 inches in diameter and 3 inches deep, lined with dry grass and a few feathers. Incubation slight. L.

Sage Grouse. 1/8. May 18, (no year given). Under Russian Thistle in stubble field, Antelope Park. Nest depression lined with grass. Well incubated. No collector mentioned. (Probably L. and M.)

54b. Plains 10 miles east of Buffalo. May 21, 1933. Nest scantily

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# Cooperative Study of Bird Migration

James H. Zimmerman, 2114 Van Hise Avenue, Madison 5, Wisc.

**I**N 1952 we dreamed of plotting on maps the arrival dates of certain migrants in all the counties of the states east of the Rockies for 6 years. Our aim was to study the effects of changing weather on the timing extent, speed, and direction of flights. Thousands of observations demonstrated everyone's willingness to help and to share their notes. The data were punched on IBM cards and were available to us and other bird students. The response in 1954 was triple, and 1955 offers hope of enough reports to insure success. To be absolutely sure that certain species, for instance really move north only on certain dates a week or more apart and that they jump such long distances, we still need more cooperators everywhere. There just are not enough ornithologists to go around; hence we must depend on every backyard bird watcher.

**How to Make and Report Observations:** Our ideal cooperator does not make special trips to find all the species listed. Rather, he spends a few minutes nearly every day in the same area, such as his own yard or on his way to work. Observations on occasional visits to other areas should be reported separately. He reports on only those species which he is sure he can identify. For species that winter nearby he reports on migrants only when they can be distinguished from wintering individuals. He reports his own first dates, even if his neighbor "scoops" him with earlier ones. He urges his friends to send in their observations, even if they saw only a few of the species on the list. After the spring migration is over he sends his report with his name and address (including county) to Mr. Chandler S. Robbins, Patux-

et Research Refuge, Laurel, Maryland. Forms can be supplied on request, but a post card will do if only a few species were observed.

37 species were chosen for the study, but no one is expected to report on all of them. They are:

Canada Goose, Marsh Hawk, Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe, Mourning Dove, Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Eastern Kingbird, Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Wood Pewee, Barn Swallow, Purple Martin, Common Crow, House Wren, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Wood Thrush, Eastern Bluebird (male, female), Red-eyed Vireo, Black and White Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Oven-bird, American Redstart, Red-wing Blackbird, Baltimore Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, American Goldfinch, Slate-colored Junco, Chipping Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow.

**What to Report:** Most persons can supply only the date when a species was first seen. One way to increase the value is to note the number seen. Another way is to have enough observers so that in each locality we can determine when the majority of persons saw their first birds. We do not want dates of birds whose arrival was missed during a week's absence by the observer; nor more than one report on an individual bird seen by several people on a field trip. But we can use every date if many persons in a single city record the return of their martins or wrens.

If you have not reported before, we should appreciate your notes for 1954 and 1953 also.

## Behavior of Waterfowl

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stance, the Mallard drake may desert his hen very late in egg-laying but usually early in incubation. The Blue-winged Teal drake often stays on the home range until just before the hen hatches her clutch.

After they desert their hens the drakes become gregarious again, gather in large groups, and go through the mid-summer molt when for a time the birds are flightless.

As Fall approaches and the ducks start their southward migration, their seasonal gregarious nature is evident. Sportsmen take advantage of it by using decoys to attract the birds. The Teal are especially susceptible to decoys.

When the birds again are on their wintering grounds the annual cycle of their social behavior begins once more.

Here in South Dakota we are fortunate in being able to see the more interesting aspects of waterfowl behavior. Although most pair formation has taken place on the wintering grounds, some occurs along the migration routes, and courtship can be seen early in the season along such routes as the Missouri and James River valleys.

Those forms of behavior associated with the nesting phase can be seen almost any place in the State. Intolerance between males, use of the loaf spot, and spacing of birds over an area can all be readily observed. The Blue-winged Teal, because of its abundance and small home range, is a particularly rewarding species to watch.

The most common defense behavior seen is the head-bob. When a pair approaches a pair on its loaf spot (or anywhere within its home range), the defending drake swims toward the intruder and vigorously bobs its

head up and down. If this fails to repel the unwelcome birds, the mated drake flies at the hen of the intruding pair. That hen starts to fly and a short aerial chase follows. This is the form of territorial defense mentioned earlier as resembling courtship, and care must be exercised not to confuse them.

There are no hard and fast rules for these forms of defense because the birds, after all, are individuals and no two sets of circumstances are exactly alike in all details. Actual physical combat between drakes is rare. The head-bob and aerial chase generally are enough to repel intruding birds. The ducks seem to try to avoid physical contact and may actually be lost as to what to do if these usual forms of behavior are unsuccessful in repelling intruders. Variations from these general forms probably are most interesting, but are biologically unimportant.

By watching closely a few pairs of ducks throughout the breeding season, one can see how persistently the little Teal drake stays near his hen during her egg-laying and incubation duties; and how the Mallard drake quickly loses interest when his hen begins to stay away from him for increasingly longer periods.

The study of behavior is one of the most interesting and rewarding phases of bird watching. Although many people have been observing and writing about behavior for many years, we still do not know the whole story and additional information is valuable. One of the important behavior aspects of which little is known is where South Dakota drakes pass their summer molt.

The observer who persistently watches a few pairs will be impressed by their individuality of behavior and appearance, and that he can learn to identify the individuals.



## Annual Meeting

The 1955 meeting of SDOU was held on May 14 in the Mayfair Hotel, Sioux City, Iowa, in connection with the Tri-State Convention of the South Dakota, Iowa and Nebraska Ornithologists' Unions. Each of the states was represented on the excellent program after which the state organizations held their separate business meetings. At the SDOU business meeting the principle items were the election of directors and the reports. The election resulted in the reelection of C. P. Crutchett, W. R. Felton, Mrs. H. B. Stevens and J. S. Findley and the election of L. J. Moriarity, Watertown, N. R. Whitney, Rapid City, and Herbert Krause, Sioux Falls, to fill vacancies.

After the business meeting the directors met and chose J. O. Johnson, C. P. Crutchett and G. B. Spawn to succeed themselves as president, vice-president and secretary. Miss Ruth Habeger had asked to be relieved as treasurer and L. J. Moriarty was elected to the position. J. S. Findley was reelected editor.

154 attended the dinner meeting at which Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson was speaker and discussed some of the dangers threatening our national parks and monuments. His speech was illustrated by reference to pertinent, specific cases.

The second day of the meeting was given over to field trips in the three states. Then all the groups met at one o'clock for a fine lunch in one of the parks and to report the results of the field trips. The total species found were 122. The South Dakota group then held a separate meeting to make up its list of birds seen by South Dakotans in South Dakota alone. That list was 91 species.

## An Open Letter

Dear Judge Mallory:

The Directors of SDOU appointed a committee to draw up a resolution to tell you how sorry we all are that you do not feel able to serve any longer as a director, but the committee is not able to tell how very sorry it is and so cannot do its job well. Also, it does not want to try to write a document full of whereas's, wherefore's, and be-it-resolved's that might look formal but in which any sham would be detected by your acute perception.

So, we want to tell simply that we are genuinely sorry because we value your experience as an ornithologist, bird watcher and bander; and above all, we value your friendship and we want you to continue with us as much as you can.

Very sincerely,

The Committee for the Directors,  
Officers and Members of SDOU.

\* \* \* \*

## Committees Appointed

President J. O. Johnson has announced the following appointments on committees:

Membership: Chairman, H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, M. M. Staley, Watertown, Miss Ruth Habeger, Madison, Chas. P. Crutchett, Armour, A. R. Lundquist, Webster, W. A. Rose, Clear Lake, Mrs. G. W. Robertson, Rapid City, Willis Hall, Yankton, Lowry Elliott, Milbank, Mrs. Adelen Siljenberg, Vermillion, Mrs. Melvin Wheeler, Sioux Falls.

Check List: Chairman, Dr. N. R. Whitney, Jr., Rapid City, William Youngworth, Sioux City, Iowa, W. R. Felton, Jr., McCook Lake, Herbert Krause, Sioux Falls, J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, Harry R. Behrens, Rapid City, G. B. Spawn, Brookings.

## A Catalog of Eggs

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lined with grasses in mouth of deserted burrow just beneath grassy margin of a wash bank 4 feet high. Bird sat close and broke 1 egg in bomb-like departure. Set of 9 eggs (1 broken). Incubation advanced. L and M.

Ring-necked pheasant. No. — American Island, Chamberlain. May 9, 1932. Nest on ground in slight depression lined with dry grass. In rather open situation among thin brush. Deserted by owner. Incubation slight. L. No. — American Island, Chamberlain. May 20, 1932. Nest on ground in open timber, in slight depression lined with grass. Deserted by parent. Incubation fresh. L.

Virginia Rail. 14989. Set of 8 eggs. Sanborn Co. June 4, 1922. Nest of fine rushes, in tuft of grass in marsh. Incubation slight. P.

Sora. 15100. Set of 10 eggs. Miner Co. June, 1889. Nest of grass, concealed in rushes in shallow water. Incubation fresh. P.

Coot. 15095. Set of 7 eggs. Miller's Slough. June 1, 1921. Nest of reeds and moss floating in 2 feet of water. Adult seen on nest. Incubation one-half. O.

Killdeer. 13447. Set of 4 eggs. Sanborn Co. May, 1905. Nest on ground near pond. Incubation slight. P. No. — N. Chamberlain. June 28, 1928. Nest in cornfield in shallow depression lined with bits of old corn stalks, 20 rods from water hole. Nest 5½ inches in diameter and 1 inch deep. L. 51b. West side of Jump Off, 15 miles southwest of Buffalo. May 19, 1933. Nest in shallow depression in the ground, scantily lined with grasses, on a rocky knoll near a school house. 4 eggs (1 broken). Incubation advanced. L. and M.

Long billed Curlew. No. — South-

west side of Grassy Butte, on very slight slope to southwest, about 10 miles east of Buffalo. May 2, (year-?). Heavily incubated.

No. — May 1, 1934. Shallow cup-like nest slightly lined with dry weeds and bits of horse dung, near a pile of dry horse dung on a grassy slope running down from the ridge or tableland 1 mile west of Elk Creek and ½ mile southeast of Bend Post-office, Meade Co. Set of 4 eggs. Bird flushed and ran away with lowered wings, after remaining on nest until collector was 10 feet away. Other bird approached on wing some 200 yards away, giving plaintive cry. Both birds remained within several hundred yards, picking up insects (?) during time we were there.

Other nearby birds included Prairie Horned Lark, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Meadowlarks and Killdeers. Curlews in neighborhood for 2 or 3 weeks.

Spotted Sandpiper. No. — Gravely knoll above Rapid Creek near Rapid City Municipal Tourist Park. June 13, 1930. Eggs fresh.

Wilson's Phalarope. 15253. Set of 3 eggs. West of Bitter Lake, Day Co. May 24, (year-?). Bird seen flying from nest, which was on ground in a slight depression lined with fine dry grass. Incubation fresh. O.

Ring-billed Gull. 17387. Gull Island (east), South Waubay Lake, Day Co. June 6, 1927. Set of 3 eggs. Nest on ground, built of rushes of last year's growth. Many pairs in colony. Incubation about complete. O.

Franklin's Gull. 0-419 (59 7/3). Lake John, Hamlin Co., June 1, 1902. Nest built on top of masses of broken down or bent over bullrushes (*Scirpus*). Built of pieces of rushes and a few flags. About 6x14 inches. Flat, unlined. Water 12 inches deep. Parents flushed and flying around. L.

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## General Notes of Special Interest

**BROWN PELICAN AT LACREEK REFUGE**—On the morning of April 16, 1955, Forrest W. Brook of the refuge staff phoned me that a brownish colored pelican had just flown over his house situated about one half mile northeast of the LaCreek pelican colony in Pool No. 9. I immediately took 7x35 binoculars and we went to a vantage point on a dike from which we could observe the rookery some 250 yards off shore. A solitary Brown Pelican, presumably the same bird, was spotted immediately on the nesting island. The dark pouch, reddish brown neck, brown breast and silvery upper parts were readily distinguishable through the glasses and the specimen could be discerned readily without the aid of binoculars against the snowy mass of White Pelicans.

Over and Thoms list only two previous records of the Brown Pelican for South Dakota, one of these also at LaCreek Refuge on April 28, 1941. The station records indicate that this 1941 bird remained at the refuge nearly two months, disappearing in June. The bird we observed this spring remained only a short time after we first saw it, disappearing by the 18th of April.

It lounged on the edge of the flock of White Pelicans, and on one occasion was seen to strike savagely at another bird though the other Pelicans seemed more or less indifferent to its presence.

Although this species is considered strictly coastal in range, solitary specimens, apparently straggle inland with migrating White Pelicans to provide such rare records in the interior of the continent.—**Kenneth Krumm, LaCreek Refuge, Martin, S. Dak.**

**EASTERN KINGBIRD**—I have been told that Kingbirds nest "almost anywhere." On August 8, 1954, I found two young, nearly ready to fly, in a nest that was perched on the crossarm connecting two posts bound one to the other, with wire, from top to bottom. The nest was clasped in a loop of wire where it spread to encircle the post. Height from ground was 4 feet; distance from a much travelled highway, 22 feet. And, since it stood clear of all obstruction passengers on cars moving by could look directly into the nest. But I presume few noticed it there beside them.—**Alfred Peterson, Brandt, S. D.**

\* \* \* \*

**REPORT FROM A NEW BLACK HILLS MEMBER**—My "records" are not recorded but each year I have noticed many interesting things concerned with birds and lately have been reminded by Bird Notes of some of my observations.

One Spring about 11 years ago we saw a few Red Crossbills west of Nemo along highway 85A. Then one morning 2 years ago the school yard was covered with them. It didn't occur to me to count them but it was a large flock and stayed until noon. I walked very slowly to get within six feet of them and they paid no attention to me, but were busy picking up and eating pine seeds. They stayed all day but we have not seen any since.

I see Pine Siskins each summer. They light on the top of dandelion stems and eat the seeds.

Recently an item in the Rapid City paper told of bird watchers counting 35 species (the Christmas Census, perhaps) but they saw no nuthatch-

es. I saw 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches in a big pine this morning (Jan. 13, 1955) and a pair of White-breasted Nuthatches nests across the road from us each summer.

A White-winged Junco built a nest just over our fence last summer and we watched the family until it flew away.—Mrs. Georgia Feldhausen, Nemo, S. D.

\* \* \* \* \*

SWAN—On April 7, 1955, Mrs. Moriarty and I were birding southeast of Watertown and saw lots of birds,—about 500 American, Red-breasted and Hooded Mergansers, Pintails, Mallards, Scaup, Ruddies, Baldpate, Blue-wings, Redheads and Canvasbacks; Lesser Yellowlegs; Red-tailed and Marsh Hawks. Then we came to an open pothole in a pasture of about 8 acres a half mile east of Hazel. On it was a Swan, quite near the road. We watched it for about an hour with 6x30 binoculars.

On the afternoon of April 10 we returned to see it again and took a B & L 27x scope mounted on a gun stock. Again we watched it for an hour as it fed with 6 Canvasbacks and 4 Redheads which salvaged food brought up by the Swan. The ducks even dived directly under the Swan to steal water celery that it dislodged.

We went up to the farm which belongs to Mr. Adams, who told us that the Swan had been there about a week. The three of us went down to the pasture with the sun at our backs and studied the Swan for an hour more.

It did not have the usual yellow spot on the bill of the Whistler, however, the nostrils were in the location given by Over and occasionally the yellow spot is lacking. I have watched Whistlers a number of times and thought this one might be a Trumpeter, but it made no sound in all the hours we watched and we got no

clue and of course could not examine its trachea which is the one positive identification.

Mr. Adams keeps his place tightly posted and we hope this bird will not be disturbed. It appears healthy.

It may be anti-climax but on our way home, near Clear Lake south of Thomas, we saw a 90 acre field that was covered with Blue, Snow, Hitchins and a few Canada Geese. After counting those on a small spot, we estimated there were 18,000 or 20,000 geese. 9 other watchers agreed with the estimate. It was the largest Spring concentration that I have seen in 40 years observations.—L. J. Moriarty, Watertown, S. D.

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SHORT-EARED OWLS—On February 20, 1955 a 24-inch snow drove the Short-eared Owls from their usual haunts in the marsh grass and some of them took up temporary residence in a row of ponderosa pines which make up part of our wind-break. Perhaps the boughs of the pines were a good substitute shelter. Six of them flushed from the trees on our approach.

They appeared much lighter in color than one would expect from the color charts, but their light streaked under parts, dark wing patches, and the fact that they were about the size of the crows which frequently harried them, helped identify them. They stayed in the trees for about two weeks.—Chas. A. Nash, Platte, S. D.

On December 14, 1954 we saw the first Short-eared Owls that I had seen in many years, although they used to be fairly common in Douglas County. The plowing of the prairie drove them out.

This time there were 2 sitting on fence posts beside the Parkston-Platte road near the west side of Douglas County. We stopped the car

nearly abreast of the second one and not more than 20 feet away.

The Owl kept looking at us and then at the ground where, at the base of the post, were 3 hen pheasants. When we started to move on, the pheasants picked their way through the woven-wire fence and walked into weeds in a field. As we passed the owl it flew about 20 feet and lit in the field very near where the pheasants were walking. The pheasants did not fly.

Apparently when our car approached the owl had remained on the post because it was interested in the pheasants. The pheasants may have been reluctant to fly because they thought their camouflage hid them from it and from us.

We, too, were reluctant to leave.  
—Chas. P. Crutchett, Armour, S. D.

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## THE COVER

The Cover picture shows a Gray Ruffed Grouse, *Bonasa umbellus umbelloides*, photographed in the Black Hills on July 7, 1954 by Scott Findley. The grouse was approachable because she was accompanied by her brood of very young chicks.

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**MORE BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS—**A flock of about 30 Bohemian Waxwings visited us and was in my yard on March 3 and 4. They stayed in the neighborhood for a few days and ate the Hopa crabs and the berries on the cotoneasters. They were the first Bohemians I had ever seen although the Cedar Waxwings are here frequently.—Mrs. A. M. Odland, Britton, S. Dak.

On February 23, 1955 a small flock of Bohemian Waxwings stopped here to feed on the Russian Olives and the berries of cedar trees. Then on March 12 a large flock stopped.—Mrs. C. Bohning, Herrold, S. Dak.

Our town near the Missouri River has many red cedar trees with their blue berries which attract waxwings. A group of cedars near our kitchen window has brought both Cedar and Bohemian Waxwings for close observation.—Chas. A. Nash, Platte, S. Dak.

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**CARDINAL IN THE HILLS—**One morning soon after Christmas, 1954, we heard a limpid whistle on the clear air—Could it be? "Yes", said my New Jersey friend, "it is a Cardinal!" Imagine my delight, the first I had seen since I came west from Virginia!

He stayed around consistently until I left on May 2, 1955, and fed at the tray by the kitchen window where I had a grandstand seat. He was always on the alert for the slightest movement so I put a piece of waxed paper across the bottom of the window and he shelled seeds in comparative peace although my view was a blurred outline of him through the paper.

My place is in Rapid Creek Canyon about 5 miles from town. There are lots of trees, and I have what I call a bird sanctuary along the creek back of the house. The Cardinal seemed to go to large spruce trees in my neighbors' yards for the night.

When word got around about the Cardinal, the birders began coming to see him,—Mr. Harry Behrens, a director of SDOU, Mrs. L. B. Yarger who formerly lived in New York State and is an ardent birder, Miss Gertrude Bachmann another member off SDOU, Miss Alva Smith, a teacher in the Rapid City High School.—Mrs. A. L. Hyde, Rapid City, S. D.

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**CARDINAL AT LACREEK REFUGE—**On the morning of April 14, 1955, the writer heard a familiar bird note in the refuge headquarters yard. By

searching the trees near the residence building he found a solitary female Cardinal and observed it at close range for some time.

Although the South Dakota range of this species usually is listed as limited to the lower Missouri River Valley and southeastern South Dakota, the Cardinal may be extending its range over the high semi-arid prairies of the West-River country as I have heard one or two reports of its presence in this locality during the past year. One in particular was by Mrs. W. R. Kingsbury who reported observing a male Cardinal in the spring of 1954 at her farm home near the refuge. Her acquaintance with this unmistakable species in her native state of North Carolina should eliminate any possibility of mis-identification.

It is also said to have reached the Black Hills. No doubt the increasing number of shelter belts established in the territory has influenced the extension of range in recent years.—**Kenneth Krumm, LaCreek Refuge, Martin, S. D.**

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## Trees Attract Birds

The fiftieth annual report of the South Dakota Horticultural Society includes a list of trees and shrubs attractive to birds that supplements the article by Lowry Elliott in the March, 1955, Bird Notes.

The list is:

Saskatoon,  
Sugar Pear,  
Downy Saskatoon  
Japanese Barberry,  
Verna Barberry,  
Tatarian Dogwood,  
Red-osier Dogwood,  
Peking Cotoneaster,  
European Cotoneaster,  
Thicket Hawthorn,

Fleshy Hawthorn,  
Russian Olive,  
Silverberry,  
Burningbush,  
Russian Sandthorn,  
Winterberry,  
Honeysuckle,  
Siberian Crab,  
Cherry Prinsepia,  
Western Sandcherry,  
Chokecherry,  
Pincherry,  
Canada Plum,  
Glossy Buckthorn,  
Lemonade Sumac,  
Mountain Currant,  
Missouri Currant,  
Northern Gooseberry,  
Northern Red Currant  
Russet Buffaloberry,  
Mountain Ash,  
Snowberry,  
Wolfberry,  
High-bush Cranberry,  
Native Virginia Creeper,  
Nannyberry,           Raspberry,  
Juniper,               Elder,  
Canada Yew,           Rose,  
Salmonberry,        Indian Currant,  
Riverbank Grape.

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## A Catalog of Eggs

(Continued from Page 26)

6/3, 8/3, and set with no No. Lake John, Hamlin Co. June 1, 1902. Data as above. 9/3, and 16/3. Lake John, Hamlin Co. June 2, 1902. Data as above. 0-420 and set with no No. Hamlin Co. no date.

Common Tern. No. — 3 sets of 3 eggs each. Hamlin Co. No dates.

Black Tern. No. — Set of 3 eggs. Sanborn Co. 1905. Nest on ground, built of rushes. P.

Mourning Dove. 8. Slough ¼ mile southeast of School of Mines. May 26, 1925. Nest 10 feet up in a willow leaning over slough. Set of 2 eggs. M.

Black-billed Cuckoo. 25. Near Cheyenne 14 miles southwest of Hot Springs. June 18, 1925. Nest 3 feet from ground in low plum tree in plum thicket. Set of 5 eggs, 4 fresh (unfertilized?) and 1 incubated. M.

Burrowing Owl. 14063. Set of 6 eggs. Bear Butte Valley, 18 miles east of Sturgis, Meade Co. Nest of dry horse excrement, located at end of burrow. Female seen at entrance to burrow. Incubation fresh. O.

Kingfisher. No. — Nest at end of 4 foot tunnel in sand bank along Cheyenne River, Fall River Co., May 15, 1927.

Yellow-shafted Flicker. No.— Pierre. June 7, 1912. Set of 5 eggs.

Red-shafted Flicker. No. — Nest in hole in cottonwood along Cheyenne River, Fall River Co., May 13, 1927. 2 sets of 6 eggs each from Pennington Co. without dates.

Red-naped Sapsucker. 30. South slope above Castle Creek west of Deerfield. June 24, 1925. 5 eggs on chips at bottom of 10-inch hole in heart of live aspen, 30 feet above ground. M.

Eastern Kingbird. 21a. North bank of Cheyenne River 14 miles southwest of Hot Springs. June 14, 1925. Nest 30 feet up in crotch of cottonwood. Set of 4 eggs. M.

Arkansas Kingbird. 19. Fall River Falls. June 10, 1925. Nest (old nest of Robin?) 35 feet up in yellow pine. Set of 4 eggs. M.

Say's Phoebe. 17. Rapid City. June 3, 1925. Set of 5 eggs. Nest under eaves of house. M.

Western Wood Pewee 15052. Sanborn Co. June 1907. Set of 3 eggs. Nest of moss on horizontal limb of tree. Incubation fresh. P. 29. Cottonwood grove along the Cheyenne 12 miles southwest of Hot Springs. June 21, 1925. Nest saddled upon dead horizontal limb of cottonwood, 50 feet above ground. Set of 3 eggs.

Barn Swallow. 18. Rapid City. June 5, 1925. Nest plastered to rafter in old barn. Set of 5 eggs. M.

Cliff Swallow. 26. Cliff 25 feet above the Cheyenne 14 miles southwest of Hot Springs. June 20, 1925. Flask-shaped nest of mud pellets scantily lined with straw. Set of 6 eggs. M.

Magpie. 1a. Set of 7 eggs. Near Hermosa Road, 1 mile southeast of Rapid City. April 28, 1925. Nest of sticks and mud, lined with rootlets; 10 feet up in large willow beside mudflat. M. 1b. Set of 5 eggs. Tributary of Rapid Creek 3½ miles southeast of Rapid City. April 28, 1925. Nest of sticks and mud, lined with rootlets; 15 feet up near top of ash. M. Set of 7 eggs. Rapid City. May 5, 1924. Set of 6 eggs. Rapid City. May 5, 1924. Set of 6 eggs. Rapid City. May 8, 1924. Set of 3 eggs. Rapid City. May 10, 1924.

Crow. Set of 5 eggs. Hughes Co. No collector or date.

Pinyon Jay. Set of 2 eggs. Black Hawk. May 18, 1924.

Dipper. No. — July 5, 1926. On Rapid Creek under wagon bridge between Hogback and Bear Gulch above Pactola. Set of 4 eggs, collected when last egg was perhaps only 1 or 2 days old. M.

701-N. Dark Canyon, Rapid City. June 15, 1928. Nest 4 feet above surface of pool 4 feet deep, on wall of overhanging rock. Incubated, parent on nest. L.

Brown Thrasher. 9. Near old smelter ½ mile southeast of School of Mines. May 26, 1925. Nest 7 feet up in dense wild cherry thicket. Set of 5 eggs. M.

American Robin. 5a. Ravine just south of School of Mines. May 24, 1925. Nest in crotch 15 feet up in a box elder. Set of 4 eggs. M. 76a. 6 miles southeast of Rapid City. May 28, 1925. Nest on plate over doorway

of abandoned building Built of mud and fine sticks, and lined with grass. Half incubated. L.

Mountain Bluebird. 31. Old shed at Deerfield. June 25, 1925. Nest on beam. Set of 7 eggs. M.

Yellow Warbler. 15a. Large Island in Rapid Creek 1½ miles southwest of Rapid City. May 31, 1925. Nest 6 feet from ground in crotch of willow. Set of 4 eggs. Small colony nesting. M. 652 a/3. May 15, 1924. Rapid City. Nest 4 feet from ground.

Yellow-breasted Chat. 1/5. American Island, Chamberlain. June 3, 1932. Nest built of grass and shreds of bark, placed in thicket 5 feet from ground. Parent flushed. L.

Yellow-headed Blackbird. 0-434. Set of 5 eggs. Hamlin Co. Set of 7 eggs. Platte Lake.

Red-winged Blackbird 12a. Slough 2 miles southwest of Rapid City. May 29, 1925. Nest suspended from cat-tails 1 foot above water. Set of 5 eggs. Colony nesting. M. 2 sets of 4 eggs each, Rapid City. 1 set of 3 eggs. Platte Lake.

Bullock's Oriole. 24. Cottonwood grove along the Cheyenne River, 12 southwest of Hot Springs, June 15, 1925. Nest pendant from small branches 35 feet up in cottonwood. Set of 5 eggs. M.

Bronzed Grackle. 4b. Bank of Rapid Creek 1 mile southeast of School of Mines. May 16, 1925. Nest 15 feet up on trunk of leaning box-elder. Set of 5 eggs. M. 511 b-N. American Island, Chamberlain. May 16, 1932. Nest under eaves of old auditorium. Incubation heavy. L. Set of 5 eggs. Auditorium, Chamberlain. May 27, 1932.

Western Tanager. 20. Cascade Springs. June 10, 1925. Nest near the tip of a horizontal branch 30 feet up in a yellow pine. Set of 4 eggs. M.

Black-headed Grosbeak. 11. North bank of Rapid Creek, 150 yards upstream from bridge on New Underwood Road. May 28, 1925. Nest saddled on horizontal branch of willow 8 feet from ground. Set of 4 eggs. M.

Lazuli Bunting. 22a. Near the Cheyenne River 14 miles southwest of Hot Springs. June 14, 1925. Nest 3 feet from ground in crotch of wild plum in a thicket. Set of 4 eggs. M.

Spotted Towhee. 588 a/4 N. Near Rapid City. May 28, 1924. Nest in thick brush on top of ground, built of coarse twigs and plant stems. Parent flushed. Eggs highly incubated. L.

White-winged Junco. a/4. May 20, 1924. Dark Canyon near Rapid City. Nest in low chokecherry bush about 1 foot from ground at edge of thicket. Incubation advanced. L. 566-N-4. Near trail to Harney Peak at 7100 foot level. July 22, 1928. Nest on ground, on steep hillside under projecting rock. Parent flushed and observed for several minutes. Eggs badly incubated. L.

Lark Sparrow. 27. Sandy flood plain of Cheyenne River 14 miles southwest of Hot Springs. June 20, 1925. Nest in depression in sand. Set of 4 eggs. M.

Chipping Sparrow. 28. Near the Cheyenne River 12 miles southwest of Hot Springs. June 21, 1925. Nest 2 feet from ground in sage bush. Set of 3 eggs. M.

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C. H. Fiscus  
Mrs. Addie B. Judy  
H. V. Padrnos