

*Winner S.D.
Spring dates
1958 23*

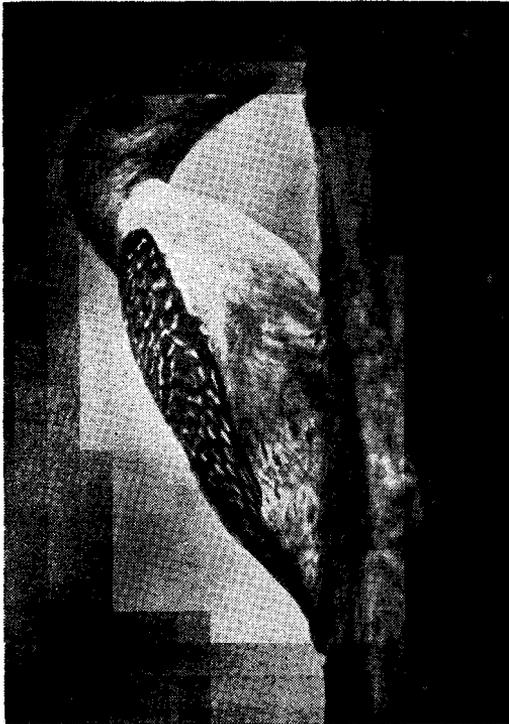
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President's Page

THE HONOR of being elected president of the South Dakota Ornithologist's Union is one which I appreciate very much. I certainly will do my best to maintain the standards set by all of the past presidents, who have contributed



so much to the success of SDOU projects. For those who missed the annual meeting in Sioux Falls, I want to call attention to the other officers, whose positions are as vital as the presidency to the success of our group. Our vice-president, who will be in charge of arrangements for the next annual meeting, is Willis Hall. The directors decided to combine the offices of secretary and treasurer, and Dr. Moriarty is continuing as both. Scott Findley continues as editor of BIRD NOTES, and Herman Chapman as chairman of the membership committee. The new check-list committee will consist of Herbert Krause, Sven Froiland, and Willard Rosine, who have already begun working on the species file at Augustana College. They will probably call on other members for help.

The papers presented at the program gave us many ideas of the problems of bird-study facing us in South Dakota.

I hope that all the papers can be published in BIRD NOTES within the next year. The species file at Augustana will be the next step in the preparation of a book on the birds of South Dakota, and will help us locate the gaps in our knowledge. In order to be prepared with some definite information, I suggest that each member of SDOU now begin, if you have not already begun to compile a list of the species of birds breeding in your county or similar area. By breeding, I mean those found either on nests or with non-flying young. Even a careful listing of nests noted in your own yard would be of value. I think that when all of the currently published information has been gathered into the species file, we will find that the greatest gap in our knowledge will be locating the breeding limits of species which do not breed throughout the state. Carefully prepared local lists will be of great value in defining such breeding limits.

Finally I want to urge every member of SDOU to help Professor Krause in his new position as editor of the Northern Great Plains Region for Audubon Field Notes. Send all observations of possible interest to him at the close of each season. He should have winter reports by March 31, Spring migration by May 31, breeding records by August 15, and fall migration by November 30. Bird-study in this state is a wide-open field, and we all can contribute to it if we wish.

—N. R. Whitney

How Fast Can A Great Horned Owl Run?

C. P. Crutchett

ON THE afternoon of February 16, 1958, as I entered one of my favorite groves I heard crows scolding, hinting that a Great Horned Owl was present.

The grove is about 20 rods square, with most of the trees along the edges. The center is rather open with only scattered trees.

In the snow were the large tracks of two birds which apparently were walking across the open area. My first thought was "horned owls" for I knew that a pair had been wintering in the grove. But I remembered that occasionally I had flushed a pheasant there although none had been seen this winter. Crows were another possibility,—there are always 2 or 3 about the place. But the tracks were too large for crows, and I never knew them or pheasants to stroll so deliberately across open snow.

These birds had kept from 15 to 30 feet apart and traversed a stretch of at least 75 yards when the tracks came together beneath a big white spruce tree. A cottontail rabbit had hopped under the same tree to rest and then had hopped away again. Just one week before I had flushed two Great Horned Owls from this same spruce. I was convinced the bird tracks were made by owls.

From the base of the spruce the two tracks led back in nearly the same direction as they had come, some times converging and then meeting at another big tree. Then they set out again and finally diverged as each bird went about its business. I cut across to a side of the grove to a gravel road and there found tracks of one bird only.

We had got about 2 inches of snow on the night of February 13 and the tracks in the open had not been very distinct. The foot prints were connect-

ed by long dragging lines. On the road which was sheltered by trees the snow was not more than an inch deep and the tracks were very plain.

I got a one-foot rule to make some accurate measurements and found each foot print was 4 inches long from the end of the middle toe to the tip of the hind toe, and the spread of the side toes was 3 inches. Close beside each foot print was a long mark in the snow varying from 6 to 10 inches long and about an inch inside its corresponding footprint. At first I thought they might be made by the wings dragging, but the lines were not outside the footprint as would have been the case if they were made by the wings. I concluded they were made by long abdominal feathers or the tail. The distance between prints was exactly 1 foot.

The owl had walked down this road for at least 100 yards. Occasionally he would step up on the grassy roadside for a few feet.

I cut across the open ground, passing more owl trails and several cottontail tracks, and came upon marks in the snow where an owl had dropped from the air. As he skidded to a landing, the tail feathers had engraved in the snow 7 lines 3 feet long. Where the tail first struck the spread was 9 inches wide. As he closed his tail at the farther end the spread was 6 inches. One foot farther on was the first footprint and 1 foot from it was the second.

From then on the footprints were 1½ feet apart, indicating to me that the owl was running. He ran for about 70 feet, came to a road, jumped most of the road, landed 5 feet farther on beside a spirea bush, ran in a 6-foot half circle around the bush and close inside a second spirea.

(Continued on page 27)

Say's Phoebe In Davison County

L. M. Baylor

ON 2 MAY 1958 a single adult Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya saya*) was identified in the area of abandoned Air Force buildings on the west side of the Mitchell, South Dakota airport. The identification was confirmed on 4 May 1958 by Herbert Krause and Dr. Willard Rosine, Department of Biology, Augustana College. On both occasions the bird was first heard giving its typical, plaintive call, pee-ur. The bird was then observed at close range, revealing the black tail, rusty breast and brownish back of Say's Phoebe. The bird was observed in the same area by the writer on 8, 10 and 15 May 1958.

A piece of road construction equipment, owned by the Lindekugel Company, was stored along the north side of abandoned building T67, in the vicinity frequented by the Say's Phoebe. Two mud nests were noted in the understructure of this equipment, one nest containing an infertile English Sparrow's egg. The old mud nests appeared to have been originally Barn Swallows' nests.

On 15 May 1958 I flushed the Say's Phoebe from the nest that had not contained the English Sparrow's egg and found that a compact new nest of fine weed straws had been constructed on top of the old mud nest. There were no eggs in the nest, and only a single Say's Phoebe was observed in the area.

Returning to the area on 20 May 1958, I found that the piece of construction equipment containing the nest had been removed. The Say's Phoebe was not seen again, though searching for it continued through 1 June 1958. Students of birds may have another reason to lament the inroads of civilization, but this nesting interest probably would not have been consummated because a mate for the Say's Phoebe was never observed in the territory.

A. C. Bent in the *Life Histories of North American Flycatchers, Larks, Swallows, and Their Allies*, 1942, indicates that *Sayornis saya saya* "Is a wide-ranging species, breeding as far north as central Alaska and as far south as northern Mexico." More specifically, for the Great Plains area the *A. O. U. Check List*, fifth edition, 1957, notes "Central North Dakota (Minot, Bismarck,) central South Dakota (Tuttle, White River), east-central Nebraska (Rock County, Red Cloud)" as the breeding range of *S. s. saya*.

William H. Over and Craig S. Thoms, *Birds of South Dakota*, revised edition, 1946, speak of the Say's Phoebe as "A summer resident west of the Missouri River." Elliott (*Auk*, 63, 1946:211-215) writes of Say's Phoebe and Eastern Phoebe as common nesters during 1942 and 1943 in central Nebraska with a ratio of 4.6 Say's Phoebes to one Eastern Phoebe. The article does not specifically identify the territory referred to as central Nebraska, but Elliott gives his address as Ord, Nebraska, which is very nearly due south of Chamberlain, South Dakota and northwest of Grand Island, Nebraska.

The *A. O. U. Check List*, 1957, notes *S. s. saya* as "Accidental in Wisconsin (Racine), Illinois (Cook County), Indiana (Wilson), New York (Brooklyn), Connecticut (Gaylordsville), Massachusetts (North Truora, Ipswich), and Quebec (Godbout)." While it is not surprising then to have Say's Phoebe occur in Davison County, South Dakota, there seem to be no records to indicate that the species has been recorded east of the Missouri River in South Dakota. From an extensive experience in working with the data on birds of South Dakota, Herbert Krause believes this to be the first such record.

Blue Grosbeaks Near Huron

J. W. Johnson

Almost as interesting as the fact of Blue Grosbeaks nesting near us has been their behavior. Not at all shy, in spite of the literature, at least one of the males was seen each time we looked for them. They repeatedly came close enough for naked eye identification.

We first saw these birds on the afternoon of July 27, 1958. The flock, when identified, consisted of two males and a female, but other birds in close company had left a moment before we realized what we were seeing. They may have included others of the species.

The habitat was a narrow slough well grown with willow thickets and typical swamp vegetation. It had been dry for some weeks, at least, and the swamp grass was dying though the willows still were green. It ends against the grade of a gravel road. Opposite was a small area of low sun flowers and the end of a strip of large trees. Tall trees also line the edge of the slough for a hundred yards.

We next visited the spot on August 18 and found the birds still present, so we rated them residents instead of stragglers.

In the late afternoon of August 19, with Rev. Jackson, Carthage, we again visited the location. This time a male Blue Grosbeak appeared promptly and sang from various perches, some as close as twenty feet and in good light. All marks, even individual feathers, were clearly seen. Only one male appeared at a time and only after an hour did we catch a brief glimpse of a female.

On August 21, accompanied by Dr. and Mrs. Hubert Kettle and Miss Mary Aberdeen Kettle, we found a different situation. The male had no time for singing. He was busy every mo-

ment feeding a pair of young birds. They were moving about in a willow thicket just off the right of way of the road. We could hear their single notes frequently repeated from well separated locations in the willows, showing they were out of the nest.

I worked my way into the willows and one young bird allowed me within a couple of yards as it sat head high in a young tree. It still had yellow along the back edge of its mouth and was well feathered in brown, with no blue showing. The large beak was clearly seen as it opened to give a call note. Some yellow down was still on the feathers. Plainly it was not long out of the nest.

While I was examining this bird I could hear the changing notes of another youngster as it was fed some twenty feet away. The rest of our party, still on the road, could see the male bird drop into the willows with food.

Soon after this Mrs. Kettle found a dead bird at the side of the road. It was obviously a young male Blue Grosbeak. It had some blue on head, back and bend of the wing. Just as certainly, it was considerably older than the young one I had seen in the thicket. We assumed it had been hit by a passing car.

Soon we saw a male bird stop in the middle of the road to beat up a worm it had just brought from the sunflower patch before going to the youngsters. Possibly the dead bird had been doing the same thing when hit.

This pounding of a worm on the gravel surface of the road was done only occasionally, though all food we saw collected came from the sunflower patch and was carried across the road to the young in the willows.

We saw the birds again on August

25. This time also with the Ketelles and Mrs. Carrie Pierce. The actions were the same as on the 21st except that we got a view of a female for a moment in the top of the willow thick-
et.

All of the hour or more we were present each of the two evenings the male was busy carrying worms across the road to the youngsters. At no time did we see the female do any feeding, —or anything else. She was as shy as advertised.

Again, on August 27, we saw the birds. This time the young were flying about quite at home in the air. Their notes, however, told that they still expected to be fed. Presumably they were fed with some regularity as they showed no interest in getting food for themselves.

Although we did not see them being fed, and the male seemed to have time for leisurely flying about much of the hour, we did see him in the early dusk beating a worm in the middle of the road.

Besides the people already named, these birds were seen at close range and identified by Miss Blanche Battin, M. S. H. A. Hill and Mrs. Lucille Johnson, of Huron, and Mrs. Richard Jackson, Carthage.

The exact location is one mile west of highway 37 and 6 miles north of Huron. The gravel road is along the line between sections 1 and 2, T111 N, R 62 W, and the slough and tree strip are about a quarter mile south of the north lines of these sections.

The dead bird was sent to J. S. Findley who confirmed our identification of an immature male Blue Grosbeak.

As a final note, an earlier sighting of the species now becomes pertinent. In the summer of 1956 Mrs. Lucille Johnson identified a Blue Grosbeak near Sand Creek on the west Beadle County line about 8½ miles due south of Wessington. Mrs. O. E. Wright and I also saw the bird but only as a brief flash of blue.

25 Years Of Spring Dates

H. W. Wagar

The tabulation on pages 24 and 25 are the dates over 25 years on which Rev. Dr. H. W. Wagar, Winner, S. D., saw 70 species as they returned in the Spring to the several places in eastern South Dakota or to Minot, North Dakota, where he has been located.

A study of the tabulation will show many very interesting things as: the regularity of the return of the Baltimore Oriole, something of the distribution of the Grosbeaks when the Black-headed replaced the Rose-breasted at Pierre, some eastern records of Lark Buntings at Dell Rapids and Brookings, Say's Phoebe at Pierre.

Mr. Wagar has a bird banding permit and many of the dates are actually banding dates and deserving of particular attention. This is true of most of the dates for warblers at Winner where one does not expect such warblers as the Parula and Water-thrush.

* * *

The tabulation omits a few species of Warblers for which Mr. Wagar had only one or two observations, as:

Parula	Winner	5-24-57
Magnolia	Milbank	5-22-54
	Winner	5-21-57
Blackburnian ...	Milbank	5-25-54
Wilson's	Milbank	5-9-54
Canada	Milbank	5-22-54
Redstart	Milbank	5-22-54
	Winner	5-15-57

THE COVER

The photograph by Willis Hall of a Red-bellied Woodpecker shows one of the residents of southeastern South Dakota in a characteristic pose.

	Dell Rapids		Alexandria					Pierre				
	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943
American Bittern												
Sparrow Hawk		3-26	4-1	4-1	3-26	4-15	3-14		5-10	5-13		5
Killdeer			3-15	3-28	3-25	3-23	4-19	3-17	3-30	4-16	4-3	3
Upland Plover		5-5	6-4							5-4	4-30	
Mourning Dove		4-7	4-12	4-15		4-19	4-10	4-21	4-24	5-4		4
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	5-7		6-2									
Night Hawk	5-14	5-21	5-20	5-23		5-17	5-28		5-26	5-25	5-25	
Chimney Swift	5-3	5-13		5-1	5-13	5-8	5-6	5-10	5-18	5-18	5-18	5-18
Belted Kingfisher		4-6	4-26	4-25	4-4							4
Yellow-shafted Flicker		3-29	4-7	3-25		4-13	3-21	3-30	4-11	4-7	4-3	
Red-headed Woodpecker		5-15	5-5	5-20		5-18	5-17	5-18	5-21	5-10	5-14	5
Eastern Kingbird	5-10	5-14	5-11	5-14		5-15	5-15	5-12	5-13	5-10	5-13	5
Western Kingbird	5-12	5-15	5-7	5-16	5-9	5-8	5-10	5-8	5-7	5-2	5-7	5
Say's Phoebe									4-15	4-15	4-12	
Bank Swallow			4-24	5-20				5-15		5-13	5-12	5
Barn Swallow	5-1	5-6	5-4	5-6		5-4	5-10			5-13	5-12	5
Purple Martin		4-5	4-28	4-25	4-27	4-20	4-15				4-27	
House Wren	5-7	5-2	4-29	5-6	5-1	5-8	4-27		5-11	5-11	5-7	4
Catbird		5-15	5-21	5-22		5-18	5-20		5-21	5-19	5-18	5
Brown Thrasher	4-28	5-2	4-29	5-9	5-4	4-27		5-11	5-10	4-16	4-27	4
Robin		3-4	3-15	3-15	3-8	3-7	3-4	2-9	3-28	3-8	2-8	
Hermit Thrush		4-18		4-27								
Swainson's Thrush	5-7	5-10	5-11	5-2	5-5	5-14	5-25	5-17	5-10		5-6	5
Eastern Bluebird		4-2	4-3	3-29	3-27			4-10			2-25	
Golden-crowned Kinglet												
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	4-30	4-19		5-1		5-1	3-28		4-29			
Cedar Waxwing	6-2	3-29	4-7			4-10	4-11			4-21		
Loggerhead Shrike		4-2	4-9	3-29	3-26	4-18	3-22	4-22	4-19	3-16	4-6	
Warbling Vireo	5-19	5-24	5-18	6-8		5-19	5-20		5-20			5
Black and White Warbler	5-7	5-11		5-12	5-11	5-18					5-18	
Worm-eating Warbler												
Tennessee Warbler												
Orange-crowned Warbler												5
Nashville Warbler				5-26								
Yellow Warbler	5-7	5-14	5-11	5-18		5-18	5-15	5-13	5-11	5-10	5-8	5
Myrtle Warbler	5-11	5-2	4-28	4-7	4-23	4-29	4-30	4-27		4-24	4-29	
Blackpoll Warbler												
Ovenbird	5-12		5-13		5-18							
Northern Water-thrush	5-10		5-2									
Mourning Warbler												
Yellowthroat			5-12	5-19					5-37	5-16		5
Yellow-breasted Chat				5-29							5-22	
Bobolink	5-5	5-15	5-11	5-9	5-10	5-15		5-16				
Western Meadowlark		3-12	3-25	3-10	3-8	3-18	3-6	3-19		3-16	3-22	3
Yellow-headed Blackbird				5-5	5-2		4-24					
Redwing Blackbird		4-2	3-19	3-22	3-26	4-15	3-24		4-14	4-16	4-3	3
Orchard Oriole		5-22	6-8									
Baltimore Oriole	5-11	5-11	5-10	5-11	5-11	5-15	5-15	5-18	5-16	5-13	5-22	5
Grackle		3-29	3-28	3-25	3-28	4-9	3-20	4-13	4-15		4-12	
Brown-headed Cowbird	5-13		4-17	5-17		5-5		5-14	5-2	4-27		
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	5-1	5-12	5-16	5-16		5-24	5-20					
Black-headed Grosbeak									5-20	5-11		
Dickcissel		5-30	5-26									
Ruou-sided Towhee		5-2	4-30	5-5	5-2	5-7	5-6	4-29	4-28	4-25	4-27	
Lark Bunting		5-11	5-8		5-24			5-16	5-11	5-11	5-11	
Vesper Sparrow		4-24	4-26	4-22				5-14				
Lark Sparrow												
Slate-colored Junco		1-9	3-13	3-28	3-12				4-1			
Chipping Sparrow	5-7	5-3	5-2	5-6	5-5	5-10	5-6	5-6	4-25	5-1	5-10	
Harris's Sparrow	5-7	5-2	4-28	5-6	5-1	5-8	4-27		5-14	5-2	4-28	
White-crowned & Gambel's Sparrows		5-1							4-21	5-2	4-28	
White-Throated Sparrow	4-30	4-30		4-26		5-2	5-2					5-5
Lincoln's Sparrow		4-30	4-30	5-3	5-1	5-1	5-1	5-12	5-4	5-1	5-6	
Song Sparrow		4-3							5-4	5-2		

Pierre				Brookings							Minot,		Milbank		Winner	
1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	
	5-18			5-21	5-8	5-15	5-4	5-16		5-16		5-8		5-10		
4-3	3-29	4-1				3-21		3-28	3-26		4-1	4-6	3-18			
4-7	4-3	4-7	4-4	3-27	4-2	3-30	4-5	4-16	4-20	4-16	4-19	4-5	4-1	3-22	3-22	
4-30			5-6		5-17					5-28		5-15			5-5	
	4-17	5-15	4-9	4-3	4-24	3-29	4-1	4-3	4-6	4-14	4-29	4-4	4-1	4-15	4-14	
												6-6				
5-25				5-2	5-10	5-1	4-30	5-11	5-2	5-28		5-31		5-18	5-20	
5-4		5-16	5-15	3-31	4-1	4-2		4-1		5-20		5-11	5-1			
4-3	4-5			3-20	2-18		4-3	4-5	4-2	4-17	4-2	4-16				
5-14	5-23	5-14	5-16	5-16	5-21	5-12	5-15	5-16	5-14	5-21		4-6	4-6		4-14	
5-13	5-13	5-14	5-15	5-19	5-21	5-13	5-15	5-16	5-14	5-20		5-28	5-16	5-23	5-22	
5-7	5-10	5-5	5-10	5-14	5-15	5-15	5-15	5-16	5-12	5-20	5-21	5-15	5-15	5-17	5-21	
4-12	4-6	5-8		5-14	5-15	5-15	5-15	5-16	5-12	5-14	5-21	5-13		5-8	5-6	
	5-13	5-14	5-14	5-19	5-2	5-13		5-14		5-4	5-16	5-15	5-7	5-16	5-14	
5-12	5-23	5-14	5-9	5-1	5-12	5-4	5-10	5-1	5-13	5-14	5-8	5-1	5-5	5-5	5-11	
4-27				4-27	4-21	4-12	4-20		4-20			4-19	4-17	5-5		
5-7	4-29	5-10	5-10	5-4	5-10	4-27	4-30	5-12	5-2	5-2		5-16	5-5	5-8	5-6	
5-18	5-22	5-16	5-18	5-17	5-29	5-19	5-15			5-16	5-18	5-22		5-20	5-20	
4-27	4-30	5-1	5-8	4-26	4-28	4-25	4-21	5-11	5-2	3-12	3-29	5-11	5-5	5-5	5-4	
2-8		3-1	2-15	3-3	2-24	3-1	3-15	3-7	3-26	3-12	3-29	3-14	3-14	3-1	2-13	
	5-6	5-13	5-7	5-9	5-5	5-10	5-11	5-6	5-10	5-8	5-11	4-30	5-10	5-9	5-4	
2-25	4-5		3-20			5-13	5-11					5-1	5-5			
					4-29			4-15	5-6			5-2				
	4-6	4-5	4-15	3-19	4-3	5-13				4-30	5-4	5-6	4-23	5-13	5-18	
			4-1	4-7	3-30	3-30	4-2	5-1	5-16			3-29		4-9		
	5-21		5-23		5-29	5-19	5-15			5-16		5-21		5-24		
5-18				5-10			5-11	5-6		5-15	5-21	5-6		5-17		
				5-16				5-21				5-22				
	5-11			5-17		5-13		5-15				5-8	5-15	5-14	5-15	
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4-28		5-6	5-12	5-17	5-4	5-8	5-6	5-10	5-1	5-3	5-11	5-15	5-5	4-13	5-21	
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				5-15		5-3	5-5	5-8	5-5	5-12	5-9	5-7	5-8	5-9	5-18	
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Judge W. B. Mallory

Death came on July 3, 1958 to Judge William B. Mallory, a charter member of S. D. O. U., its first secretary and for years an officer and director, and had been elected an honorary member.

His vocation was the practice of law at Lennox, S. D. for 36 years and then Lincoln County judge for 17 years at Canton, S. D. Bird study was his avocation over the years.

He was active in the organization of SDOU and the contributor of many interesting and informative articles for South Dakota Bird Notes. He also has contributed to the Wilson Bulletin, Audubon Magazine and its predecessor, Bird Lore, The Seasons and Audubon Field Notes.

Although he had had more than the average boy's interest in birds, he became actively interested in 1910 when he found the nest of a Brown Thrasher in a brush pile near his house in Lennox. From then on he kept a brush pile, nest boxes and other nesting sites, water and food available for the birds. He held a banding permit

for many years and banded several thousand birds. He made a special study of Harris's Sparrows and contributed articles about them to Bird Notes. One banding experience which be considered especially rewarding was to have one of his female Brown Thrashers nest on his place 5 consecutive years and to have for her mate for three of them a banded male.

Mr. Mallory first participated in the Christmas Bird Census of the National Audubon Society in 1913 and his report was published in Bird Lore. He also made Christmas counts for SDOU in recent years although the last two could list only the birds that he had seen from his window.

The Judge had to give up his office with the first of January, 1957, because of his failing health, and he retired to his home in Canton and had many more than the average birds at his feeding station where it was a joy to watch them and to listen to his comments.

(See also Bird Notes IV:52. Cover, photo).

Dr. J. F. Brenckle

J. Frederick Brenckle's very active life came to an end in the early summer, 1958, at his home of many years in Mellette, S. D. He was a charter member of SDOU, an active bird bander, busy physician, an interesting and a kind man.

His interests were not limited to his profession nor to his bird banding. His inquiring mind led him to study the prairie plants and animals. The various fungi came to his attention and he made a collection of them. His collection of prairie plants and grasses was one of the best and even the envy of museums. But above all he was

generous in sharing his interests and information with others.

Among the ornithologists, and especially the banders, he is well known as the inventor of the Brenckle warbler trap and for the thousands of warblers that he banded in a part of South Dakota that was not known to lie in the migration routes of warblers. They seemed to flock to his traps in unbelievable numbers, as also did other species.

While his warbler studies were probably outstanding, he also contributed much on Harris's Sparrows, Burrowing Owls, and Orchard Orioles.

He was born in Milwaukee and after graduating from medical college first practiced in Webster, S. D. Later he went to North Dakota and was there when the First World War broke out. He enlisted in the Army Medical Corp and returned to Kulm, N. D., after the armistice. In 1923 he came back to South Dakota and practiced at Northville and removed to Mellette a little later.

In recent years he was not as active in either his medical practice or his bird banding, but the last time we called on him he was treating a patient and he had a Brenckle warbler trap set in the yard beside his house.

(See also photo cover and Bird Notes IV:8,9.)

* * *

Horned Owl

(Continued from page 20)

There his tracks were beside those of a cottontail. I back-tracked the rabbit and found he had been sitting under a big spruce tree about 25 feet to the right and 25 feet beyond where the owl had lit. When the owl started running the rabbit took off down the road. She had taken a few 4-foot jumps when the owl arrived at the road close beside her. The rabbit left the road, as the owl jumped over the road and landed almost upon her. Dodging around the spirea, Cottontail continued for 100 feet to a big Russian olive tree where I think she stopped as she knew by then she was not being followed.

Old *Bubo virginianus*, after the dash around the bush, found the rabbit had outdistanced him, and turned abruptly and marched off in almost the opposite direction to that taken by the rabbit. I followed his track for 75 yards.

"Bunny" could have taken her dash in any direction but the owl seemed to know that by coming in and lighting behind her she would take the easily travelled road and meet his appointment. He had the game planned to a

split second and almost won.

As I pondered the matter the crows continued scolding. I went to a corner of the grove and flushed from a tree a small, brownish horned owl, with 3 crows in hot pursuit. I did not see the other owl, a large one distinguished by beautiful pearl-gray plumage.

In going about the grove I found many trails showing where one and sometimes two owls had walked for long distances,—50, 75, or 100 yards, stopped eventually at some tree, then taking off again, still on foot.

It seemed unbelievable that a horned owl could run so fast. If the owl and the rabbit started from the same line, the owl would run about 50 feet, then the rabbit, 25 feet to the right, would have to run about 56 feet. (Using old Pythagorean geometry.)

But the owl's tail touched the ground 25 feet back of where bunny sat. *Bubo* started running 5 feet farther on, or a total of 70 feet, 14 feet farther than the rabbit had to run. But he reached the apex of the triangle about the same time as the rabbit!

I was still puzzled. Was it only that the owl knew where he was going and bent all his efforts toward his goal, and the rabbit left her resting place startled and uncertain when she found her enemy close upon her? I went back to the grove with a tape to measure all distances carefully. But the snow had melted, the evidence was gone. I again estimated the distances. The original figures were about right.

The story of the tracks seems to prove that the "Tiger of the Air" is pretty swift even on foot, and that *Bubo* does a lot of hunting on foot. Perhaps he finds a system of kicking out rabbits and mice is much more efficient than the laborious method of the Marsh Hawk, in his search of fields and sloughs from the air.

This experience increased my admiration for the prowess of the, not horned owl, but Great Horned Owl.

General Notes of Special Interest

WHIMBREL (HUDSONIAN CURLEW) IN SOUTH DAKOTA—On the morning of May 15, 1958, at LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge, Bennett County, I stopped at Reservoir No. 7 to watch the hundreds of shorebirds feeding on the wet mudflats. One large shorebird, feeding by itself, caught my attention, and I watched it for several minutes through my 20-power spotting telescope. I noted the curved beak, marking it as a curlew, but saw that the bill was shorter than that of our prairie Long-billed Curlew. Checking with Peterson's Guides, I confirmed my identification of the bird as a Whimbrel.

This is not the first record for the state, since Kenneth Krumm has seen the species at Lacreek twice before. He listed it as accidental in the publication, "Birds of the LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge" (RL-180, April 1957), and on the basis of his observations the Check-list Committee listed the species as a transient visitant for the southwest region of the state in the check-list (S. D. Bird Notes, March, 1956). Confusion on the name may result from the fact that the 1957 edition of the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list uses the British name of Whimbrel instead of the former American name of Hudsonian Curlew, and that usage was followed in both of the above lists.

Bent, in his life history of the species (U. S. National Museum Bulletin 146, p. 115, 1929) comments that the species is apparently a rare migrant in the interior of the continent, but Taverner (Wilson Bulletin, vol. 54, pp. 3-11, 1942) suggests that plains migrants may represent a small population breeding on the Arctic coast of Canada east of the MacKenzie River. If this is true, Whimbrels should be rare but regular transients in S. Dak.—N. R. Whitney, Pine Hill Drive, Rapid City, S. Dak.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS IN BEADLE AND UNION COUNTIES—A single Yellow-crowned Night Heron was seen 12 miles west of Huron on July 20, 1958. The view was clear, the distance less than 100 feet, and the bird was studied for some 10 minutes by 5 people equipped with 7x50 binoculars. The identification is considered certain by all present.—J. W. Johnson, Huron, S. D.

Bob Nicholson and I together made the observation of another Yellow-crowned Night Heron. I can't find my notes on it right now, but this record was 2 or 3 weeks earlier than my other one. (April 24, 1954. See Bird Notes VI:32. June 1954).—W. F. Felton, Jr., Sioux City, Iowa

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AUDUBON WARBLERS BREEDING IN THE BLACK HILLS—On July 5, 1958, my brothers John and Julius, their families and I watched adult Audubon Warblers feeding 2 young at the campsite in a branch of Castle Canyon south of Deerfield. We heard the "cheeping" sounds of the young long before we discovered the fledglings in a spruce tree. The young were generally very gray in color with streakings of darker gray on breasts, sides and heads. Fledglings followed adults, hopping from limb to limb, begging with fluttering wings and insistent "cheep" calls. These calls became excited run-together sounds when the adults approached with food. The male was still in full song, although some authorities write that the song in male warblers diminishes as the feeding duties increase. Here, however, the male sang repeatedly. I observed the same phenomenon in the Canada Warbler, which sings in full tone far beyond the post-nesting period.—Herbert Krause, Augustana College, Sioux Falls.

AVOCETS AT BITTER LAKE—Late in the afternoon of June 12, 1958, after inspecting the highway across Rush Lake, near Waubay, S. D. and seeing the usual quota of Grebes; Western, Red-necked and Eared, with a few Ruddy Turnstones for good measure, I drove on toward Bitter Lake. At the northwest corner of the lake I "glass-ed" fields and fences for Chestnut collared Longspurs which are seen there occasionally, but without success.

Ex-game Warden Ury Dahling, Webster, came along and we discussed crow shooting (he had an old muzzle-loader which he had been trying out at a rookery down the road apiece). We watched an Upland Plover alight in a field, hold its wings aloft for a bit, fold them bobbing its head plover-wise, and watch two humans. Two Marbled Godwits gave us "open sky inspection" with loud godwitical comments. Finally, cabbages and kings disposed of, we parted, Ury towards home, I toward Watertown.

When I reached the point where the road crosses what used to be an arm of Bitter Lake (water on only one side now) there was much to see, and business could wait,—a pair of Avocets with young fed in plain view!

As soon as my car stopped one Avocet which was feeding in open water, rose and came directly toward me, circled overhead and called loudly something like "Kleep, kleep, kleep", and returned to feeding. The maneuver was repeated several times.

The young Avocets waded about in very shallow water, surface feeding, without apparent guidance from the lighter colored parent which stood guard and did not feed at any time. They were no bigger than Least Sandpipers, quite light-colored below, tan above, with the black primaries showing quite plainly.

When a female Wilson's Phalarope and a Killdeer came close to the young, the feeding parent charged and drove

them away, but a small flock of Phalaropes fed undisturbed. When a pair of Gadwalls alighted near the young, the other parent Avocet put them up at once. Another Avocet came into the area and there was a flurry of activity, but the intruder did not move far away. A Killdeer loafed on a rock in the line of advance of the feeding brood, and as they neared, the Killdeer got down into the water and crouched low until the little band had passed. A lone immature Ring-billed Gull came over but seemed to cause no disturbance. There was no apparent interest shown when a female Phalarope "pushed" a female Marsh Hawk out of the general area, and an attempt of the victorious Phalarope to "buzz" the feeding Avocet was largely wasted effort.

In the general area there were a few Marbled Godwits, some Blue-winged Teal, a Pintail drake or two, all feeding quietly. I caught a glimpse of one little killdeer-like Semi-palmated Plover.

I could hear faint peepings coming from the direction of the group, but could not identify the source. The feeding was in very short grass in exceedingly shallow water. The group moved slowly around the grassy margin of a little bay, fairly well concealed from my view until they were directly across the open water of the cove. I had repeatedly seen 3 young, but on a late count I found 4. The parent finally led the little band into grass which must have been at the very edge of the water, stood in good view for some time, and then seemed to settle down, perhaps to brood the young. The other adult was busily sweeping the water.

The sun by now had become a red ball touching the horizon, and I realized that more than an hour had passed as I watched the closing incidents of a busy day of a family of Avocets on Bitter Lake.—H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. Dak.

CEDAR WAXWINGS NEST IN SIOUX FALLS—Peterson's description of the range of the Cedar Waxwing, from central Manitoba to Kansas, would include South Dakota. Pough's in Audubon Bird Guide would also include the state. And Bent in his Life Histories is more specific and describes the breeding range as including "eastern and northern S. Dak. (Yankton, Sioux Falls, Aberdeen, and Harding County).

Although there are frequent sight records of the species in South Dakota, I believe that nesting records are infrequent, and hence, a brief account of a successful nesting in Sioux Falls may be of interest.

On July 28, 1958, 12-year old Larry Westall sent word that he knew of a Cedar Waxwing nest near his home and that the eggs had hatched within the last week. Another of our 12-year old friends, Pat Kennedy, escorted Mrs. Melvin Wheeler and me over to see the nest. (Larry and Pat are much interested in birds, photography and banding and are very helpful.)

The nest was near the top of a 12-14 foot elm tree remaining in a nursery that was abandoned when the area near 33rd Street and Van Eps Avenue was subdivided. It was in a fork of a branch about 10-11 feet above the ground. An adult bird remained on the nest until we were near the foot of the tree. It then left but perched in a nearby tree where we could see it plainly. Another adult bird flew about the neighborhood but did not come so near. Both adults were easily identified as Cedar Waxwings.

We returned on July 31. The four young would soon be ready to leave the nest. We banded them, returned them to the nest, and took a picture of the young in the nest. (Results unsatisfactory). Both adults remained only 12-14 feet from us in a nearby tree.

The young left the nest within a day or two but we did not get back to see the departure.—J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, S. D.

CEDAR WAXWINGS NEST IN DAY COUNTY—In a report August 20, 1958, on the nesting season for Audubon Field Notes, Manager John C. Carlsen, Waubay National Wildlife Refuge said, "We were pleasantly surprised to note quite a few Cedar Waxwings and Chickadees nesting in the vicinity of refuge headquarters. Several observations of Orchard Orioles have been made, too."

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MOCKINGBIRDS IN CHARLES MIX COUNTY—I saw my first Mockingbird of the season on May 2, 1957, and they were with us until November. Some say they are non-migratory but I have never seen one in the winter time and think they must migrate with the Catbirds and Brown Thrashers. Perhaps the southerners among them do not find it necessary to go farther south for the winter.

Our mockers sang for us all during May, June and early July from the gables of our buildings, from the top-most twigs of trees, and even from the tops of steel fence posts. They frequented our vegetable and flower garden just across the driveway from our house.

The mockingbird's song is said to be at its best in the sunny south, but even its Dakota song is a classic.—Charles A. Nash, Platte, S. D.

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BIRDING NEAR WATERTOWN—On June 1, 1958, I went out to Horseshoe Lake about 14 miles northwest of Watertown for an afternoon of birding. First I spotted one male common Loon which I studied at less than 100 yards with the 22x scope. It was only the second that I have seen near Watertown in many years.

Then there were two Spotted Sandpiper nests with eggs and an Avocet nest with eggs. I failed to find a Wilson's Phalarope nest but I'm sure they were there. The sandpiper nests were about 20-30 feet from water in foot-high sweet clover and were well-lined depressions about 4 inches across. The 4 dusky splotched, pointed eggs seemed

very large for the size of the bird and completely filled the nest.

On the way home I stopped at a small mud flat of about an acre with just a skim of water and no vegetation, to study a large group of sandpipers. Through the scope I saw about two dozen birds of a species I had not seen before. They were distinctive with their reddish backs, white underparts except for a very black belly, a fairly long slightly down-curved bill, and dark legs. They seemed slightly larger than sanderlings but with bills twice as long. They looked as though they had made belly landings in the mud. They were Red-backed Sandpipers or Dunlins according to the recently approved common name. Over says they are rare visitors to our state. The SDOU checklist calls them transient visitors in the eastern part of the state.

Two days later, June 3, I heard a warbler in my yard with a buzzy trill, "ZeZeZe Zeeee", and finally located a beautiful, very active and very small fellow with a yellow throat and chest with a dark reddish band across it, light gray belly, blue wings and tail, and a definite green spot on the back between the wings, two white wing bars, eye ring, and orange legs. I had seen the Parula Warbler in Old Mexico and was glad to have this chance to study it at close range in my own yard.

Over says the Parula has been seen in Yankton and Minnehaha Counties and the SDOU checklist calls it a transient in the northeast and the southeast sections of the state. (Bird Notes VIII:16. Mar. 1956).—L. J. Moriarty, Watertown, S. D.

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RAILS AT LAKE MADISON—After an interesting afternoon bird-watching at Lake Madison September 7, 1958, we stopped at the edge of that western slough where the lake meets highway 19 and there saw 10 Rails, 3 Virginia and 7 Soras.

The 3 mature Virginia Rails came very close to our car and we observed

them from the car windows. Against a chartreuse ground of duck weed, their rust and white markings were strikingly beautiful. We saw them in feeding and running action as they worked back and forth in and out of the reeds.

Just a little to the right were 4 Soras feeding in like manner. We saw one in flight with legs dangling. Two were immature since they lacked the black throat patch and they were buffy brown. Peterson says the immature Sora can be confused with the smaller Yellow Rail. We were sure these were Soras because they were the same size as the two adults and because they did not have the white wing patch which characterizes the Yellow Rail.

Along the narrow road to Marrs Beach, we saw 3 more mature Soras, a Swamp Sparrow, a Little Green Heron, a Marsh Wren and many Goldfinches in all stages of summer and winter dress.

When we see one rail we are happy, but when we see 10 we are rail happy.—Habeger, Findleys, Wheelers, Madison and Sioux Falls.

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ORCHARD AND BALTIMORE ORIOLES—This year for the first time since I have been bird watching, the Orchard Oriole put in his appearance before the Baltimore showed up. Being less showy, the Orchard Oriole is more easily overlooked, but he is also the more common around our orchard. I believe they are also more tolerant of others of their species than are the Baltimores whom I often see defending their territories from others of their kind.—Chas. A. Nash, Platte, S. D.

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SHORT NOTES . . .

18 Eastern Bluebirds going south near Canton, S. D. at the South Dakota-Iowa line . . . White Pelican concentrations on Lake Madison and on Beaver Lake near Humboldt. Hundreds of birds . . . The first Harris's Sparrow of the Fall on September 22 . . .

CORMORANTS, EGRETS AND OTHERS—The dead trees along the south shore of Clear Lake, a mile or so east of Thomas, Hamlin County, usually support a colony of Double-crested Cormorants. When I passed on August 17, 1958, (a really hot day!) the trees were bare of nests and birds, but in the middle of the lake was a raft of Cormorants. Although a few birds dropped in from time to time, the group was definitely inactive and I was able to make a positive count of over 160 birds.

On August 21, 1958, at the junction of highway 28 (west) and highway 25, I observed 3 American Egrets. The birds were feeding in the shallows along the edge of a fair sized slough. I clearly saw one bird take a minnow, but could not identify the other "takings". One bird, a bit larger than the others, flew to a more remote part of the slough soon after I stopped my car, but the two continued to feed without apparent concern with the traffic on the nearby highways.

Between Sioux Falls and Aberdeen pot-holes and sloughs, favorite spots for observing shore birds, marsh birds and ducks in the past, are dry, or nearly so, but the pheasant crop seems to be better than the average of recent years.

Then on September 1, we drove to Yankton on U. S. 16 and 81, facing a strong, hot south wind. We saw practically no birds. We returned via Vermillion and then north on a country road parallel to US 77 and a few miles west of it. On one stretch of about 15 miles we counted 36 Sparrow Hawks near the road—often they were in two's.

Mourning Doves were plentiful, singles, doubles and small groups. In one flock, on wires, across the road from a large farm grove, we counted 183 birds, while in another the count was over 60.

The Sparrow Hawk migration reminded us of a similar movement of buteos which we encountered in the valley of

the Vermillion River a few miles farther west early one fall only a few years ago.—H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. D.

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RED CROSSBILLS BREEDING IN BLACK HILLS—On July 4 and 5, 1958, my brothers, Julius and John, their families and I, camped in a branch of Castle Canyon south of Deerfield in the Black Hills. On July 5 we saw adult Red Crossbills feeding young. A group of about 12 adults were busily uttering their rather sharp metallic "Kip, kip" calls and bringing in food to about 25 fledglings. All were gathered in the upper branches of ponderosa (western yellow) pine. We watched the activities of this group for 20 minutes, trying accurately to distinguish the young, which were grayish with short darker gray streaks on breasts and sides, from the adult females which were olive-gray without streaks, and the males, which still showed an undertone of reddish color or revealed patches of dull red. However, at this season, in both male and female, the plumage was so well worn that the female was very dull grayish-olive, almost dried-grass colored and the male showed a fantastic mixture of red, brick-red and faded olive, the bright colors appearing in patches. Both male and female adults were involved in feeding the young. They fed material they apparently found and gathered at the end of branches where cones grew—probably plant-lice or the larvae of weevils sometimes observed in pine seeds. I had the impression that there was a great variation in the amount of "crossing" of the mandibles of the young. Some seemed to show little if any deflection, others had a very definite "slanting" of the mandibles, as if the inception of crossing had begun but wasn't as yet very well developed.—Herbert Krause, Augustana College, Sioux Falls