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In This Number . . .

President's Page, N. R. Whitney	35
Summer Records in the Black Hills, Dennis L. Carter	36
Shore Birds, Some Impressions, Alfred Peterson	37
Five-Year Winter Records in the Black Hills N. R. Whitney and Richard M. Hurd	38
Birding at Pearl Creek, J. W. Johnson	39
Blue Grosbeaks, Elice Jenney, Dennis L. Carter	40
Blue Grosbeaks, a poem, Ethel Jacobson	44
S. Pearl Hutchinson	44
The Cover, J. O. Johnson	44
General Notes of Special Interest	45
Townsend's Solitaire, Notes from Pickerel Lake, Carolina Wren, Fox Sparrow, Redpolls, Young Martins, Ovenbird, Whooper in Missouri, Bluebirds in Douglas County, A Tribute.	

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President's Page

ONE OF my greatest pleasures at the annual meetings is the opportunity of exchanging ideas on bird study with the other members. One comment I have frequently recalled is one Alfred Peterson made as we started the field trip last May in Sioux Falls. He mentioned that one facet of his interest in birds is the collecting of books on various aspects of bird study, and he wondered how many SDOU members have their own ornithological libraries.



His remark started me thinking because I know that reading has enriched my own knowledge and enjoyment of bird study. In case some SDOU members are not aware of the vast literature of ornithology, I want to mention some of the material that is available to us. We all receive, and presumably read from cover to cover, *SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES*. This is our own journal and includes observations which we have made across the state. Then I am sure we all know Roger Tory Peterson's and Richard Pough's field guides, and have access to them if we do not actually own them. They differ in viewpoint to the extent that the Peterson guides are strictly identification manuals, while Pough's books contain some information on habits. For the Black Hills, Peterson's *Guide to the Western Birds* is the easiest to use, since it covers all species found here without referring to the eastern guide at all.

Most of us eventually reach the point where we want to know more about a bird than its name and field marks, and then the field guides are no longer sufficient. An excellent book at this point is *A GUIDE TO BIRD WATCHING* by Joseph J. Hickey (Oxford University Press, 1943), with fascinating chapters on migration watching, bird counting, bird distribution, and bird banding. The three national journals—*The Auk*, *The Wilson Bulletin*, and *The Condor*—are all good sources of information on nesting, feeding, and migration habits. Recent articles of interest to South Dakotans include *Nesting of the Canada Goose* (*Wilson Bulletin*, June, 1958), *Morning and evening song of Robins* (*Condor*, March, 1958), and *Incubation behavior of the Common Nighthawk* (*Auk*, January, 1958). These journals can be obtained by joining the groups which publish them. Membership dues are about \$4.00 for each society. Reading the journals is undoubtedly the best way to keep up to date unless you happen to have a professor of ornithology living next door. Finally, many books of various degrees of technicality, are available. The series of *Life Histories of North American Birds* by A. C. Bent began in 1919 with a volume on diving birds (Loon, Grebe, and Auk families), and has covered all the birds on the AOU checklist through the tanagers. The last volume, on blackbirds and tanagers, was published in 1958, and copies are probably still available through the Government Printing Office in Washington. A card to the Office, requesting lists of available publications on birds and wildlife, should bring interesting results. Many other books on birds of a limited region or on a single species have been publish-

(Continued on page 44)

Summer Records From the Black Hills

Dennis L. Carter

DURING the summer of 1958, I worked at Jewel Cave National Monument, and on my days off I visited other localities in the Black Hills region in search of birds. Some of the more interesting records that I obtained are listed below.

Butte County: On July 20 I saw three Long-billed Curlews and one Forster's Tern at the Belle Fourche National Wildlife Refuge. Dale Birkenholz and I found 10 Avocets in the same locality August 4.

Custer County: Along the road between highway No. 16 and Dewey, I saw a flock of 36 Mountain Bluebirds July 27. On August 18 Dr. N. R. Whitney and I found 10 Pinon Jays, five Rock Wrens, a flock of about 30 Mountain Bluebirds, five Loggerhead Shrikes, and two Lark Buntings along this road.

Fall River County: A birding trip along the Cheyenne River east of Edgemont and in the vicinity of Gull Hill Roadside Park on July 14 yielded 35 species in about three hours. It was interesting to find birds of both eastern and western affinities in this area. Along a gully north of highway No. 85, I flushed a Black-billed Cuckoo from a nest in a sage bush. The nest was about one foot above the ground and of rather flimsy construction. It contained four eggs. Both Eastern and Western Kingbirds were numerous and I found a nest of the former species about 30 feet above the ground in a cottonwood on the flats along the river. Adults were bringing food to young in this nest. In the river valley I also heard and saw an Eastern Phoebe, saw two Brown Thrashers, and found a family group of Eastern Bluebirds consisting of a male, a female, and an immature. Bullock's Orioles were surprisingly abundant in stands of cottonwoods along the river, and I counted 23 of these birds including some imma-

tures. On the "rim" above the river near Gull Hill Park, I found two Say's Phoebes, a Mountain Bluebird, and an Audubon's Warbler. I found a Western Wood Pewee nest in a Ponderosa Pine on the side of a cliff below the roadside park. The nest was located near the end of a horizontal branch about 30 feet above the ground and contained three young birds. The parent birds were bringing food to the young. Some of the other records that I obtained in the Cheyenne River-Gull Hill area on July 14 were: one Turkey Vulture, 24 Mourning Doves, 75 Cliff Swallows, 8 Rock Wrens, and 2 Black-headed Grosbeaks.

Lawrence County: During a visit to Roughlock Falls on July 20, I found the expected Dippers, three of them, including one sitting on a log fence above the falls. In this locality I also saw one Canyon Wren, two Swainson's Thrushes, one Veery (also heard singing), five American Redstarts including adults feeding young, and one Song Sparrow. In a stand of aspens about 4 miles west of Savoy, I saw 2 Dusky Flycatchers and identified them by their distinctive "clip, whee, zee" calls. Although I found Western Flycatchers several places in the Black Hills, this is the only locality where I observed the Dusky Flycatcher. On August 4 Dale Birkenholz and I visited Roughlock Falls and saw 2 Swainson's Thrushes and 2 Song Sparrows. We found MacGillivray's Warblers both at Roughlock Falls and in Spearfish Canyon, but they seemed especially numerous along a stream near the Timon Campground where we counted 5.

Pennington County: During a hike to the top of Harney Peak on July 6, I saw and heard 2 Warbling Vireos in brushy deciduous growth at an elevation of about 6500 feet. The most numerous species along the trail were Red-

(Continued on page 40)

Shore Birds Of Northeastern South Dakota; Some Impressions

Alfred Peterson

THE identification of Shore Birds is not an easy undertaking. Many of them are so similar in appearance that, barring a close approach, one cannot see the definite characters and marks that serve to distinguish them. Therein lies the main difficulty—getting near them.

However, good luck sometimes prevails. Should you find yourself on a roadway passing through a swamp of moderate depth, or at mud flats which can be easily approached, do not fail to take a good look for Shore Birds. If their chosen food is there the birds will be there. Many attractive looking spots do not attract them because the necessary food is lacking.

Having brought your binocular to bear on the nearby waders it will be seen that the birds of a mixed flock do not resemble each other too closely. Take, for example, the two Godwits: Size, and length of bill, yellow at the base, mark them as Godwits, of which the Marbled shows no pattern in coloration, but is rusty in color as it takes to flight; whereas the Hudsonian shows a white bar across rump, very clearly seen when in the air. The voice of the larger bird is sharp.

Each species has some point of character which sets it apart from others of its group. Continued observation and an attentive reading of Roger Tory Peterson's Guide to the Birds will set one right in field study. By a process of elimination one after another will be rejected, until at least identification is complete. Keep a copy of this book in your car's glove compartment. Then you will not be "caught short" at a critical time.

My working career ended Nov. 21, 1950. Since that time my days have been devoted to "the life of Riley", and they have been most enjoyable, espec-

ially during the past five years, when bird study has again been followed strenuously.

In such matters as nesting behavior, actions of the young, identification of food, I have been less than diligent. (Greater Yellowlegs eat small minnows in the shallows). An automobile is a good blind from which to spy on Shore Birds, as they remain in the open, at times showing little concern for safety. In most cases where necessity requires a walk at shore line a binocular solves the problem satisfactorily.

Records of occurrence, dates, numbers seen, etc., have appeared in back numbers of "Bird Notes", and the reading which follows is chiefly a series of impressions left by experiences of the past.

The Dowitcher and the Stilt Sandpiper both probe in soft mud when feeding; both have long bills (Stilt Sandpiper not so prominent); both keep rather closely grouped. But the Dowitcher is marked by a white stripe up the back and the other by a white rump.

The two small sandpipers, Least and Semipalmated, are not so difficult as they at first seem to be. There is a difference in size, which by experience is readily noted. The Least has greenish legs, instead of black, and is reddish-backed.

The Semipalmated Plover can be admired for its neat and dainty appearance as it runs about in its search for food. Not at all shy, and a plover, this one is an easy entry in the note book. It will be found spring and fall, chiefly in spring, but not in numbers to be called common. Two or three would be a satisfactory count; ten, exceptional.

The Piping Plover, much scarcer but a summer resident, is very light in hue,

(Continued on page 41)

A Five-Year Summary Of Christmas Counts In The Rapid City Area

Nathaniel R. Whitney and Richard M. Hurd

IN HIS discussion of the Black Hills (A Guide to Bird Finding, West of the Mississippi, Oxford University Press, 1953), Dr. O. S. Pettingill states that very little is known of winter bird life here. For this reason, we think there is a definite interest in a summary of the first five Christmas counts taken in Rapid City. The area covered is within a radius of 7½ miles of Dinosaur Park, in the center of Rapid City, and thus about half of the area is prairie and the rest is pine forest. This restriction of area does not permit observations in the higher Black Hills.

As shown of the accompanying tables, we have observed a total of sixty-five species over the past five years. Thirteen of these were seen every year, seven on four years, nine on three years, thirteen on two years, and twenty-three on one year. One species, the Wood Duck, was found to have been

introduced onto Canyon Lake, and therefore should not be considered a true wild occurrence. The thirteen species found every year can be considered to be the regular winter residents of the Rapid City region, and the species found four years are probably in this category also. On the other hand, species seen on only one year could be in any one of several categories. Some, such as the Red-shafted Flicker and Robin, are summer residents which usually go well south of the Hills in winter, but may remain. Other, like Bohemian Waxwing and Purple Finch, are more northern birds, or erratic occurrence in the Black Hills. Finally, some, like the Sharp-shinned Hawk and Great Horned Owl, are known to be permanent residents of the census area, and yet are inconspicuous enough that they are frequently overlooked.

5 Years

Mallard
Rough-Legged Hawk
Golden Eagle
Ring-necked Pheasant
Belted Kingfisher
Black-capped Chickadee
Black-billed Magpie
Townsend's Solitaire
House Sparrow
American Goldfinch
White-winged Junco
Slate-colored Junco
Tree Sparrow

4 Years

Common Goldeneye
Hairy Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Blue Jay
Pinyon Jay
Brown Creeper
Starling

3 Years

Gadwall
Redhead
Common Merganser
White-breasted Nuthatch
Dipper
Gray Shrike
Pine Siskin
Oregon Junco
Song Sparrow

2 Years

Wood Duck
Canvasback
Sparrow Hawk
Common Snipe
Gray Jay
Crow
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Loggerhead Shrike
Western Meadowlark
Evening Grosbeak
Common Redpoll
Red Crossbill

1 Year

Eared Grebe
Pied-billed Grebe
Pintail
Lesser Scaup
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Marsh Hawk
Prairie Falcon
Pigeon Hawk
Ruffed Grouse
Sharp-tailed Grouse
European Partridge
Great Horned Owl
Long-eared Owl
Red-shafted Flicker
Horned Lark
Canyon Wren
Robin
Bohemian Waxwing
Cedar Waxwing
Purple Finch
White-winged Crossbill

Birding At Pearl Creek

J. W. Johnson

IT WAS just a simple scene. The straight road crossed Pearl Creek on a modern concrete bridge 5 miles east and 7 south of Huron. The slow moving stream rippled only to the activities of a few rough fish. A huge cottonwood stood so high above the valley floor I wondered how it managed to find water in the dry years it must have known. Lush green covered the rounded hills to make a background for the only exotics, gray-leaved Russian olives. Scattered along the banks, they marked the whim of the waters that stranded the seeds.

We stopped for a few minutes, we thought, one afternoon late in June. Half a dozen swallows sailed about, annoyingly keeping their backs turned away as though to hide the buff area that would confirm our identification. They were too small for martins, not slim enough for barn swallows, did not have the collar of bank swallows, or the white breast of tree swallows. So they had to be Cliff Swallows, no doubt with their nests under the eaves of nearby farm building,—we checked to be sure they were not under the bridge.

While they were darting around, sounding their peculiar yelp, all sorts of other birds clamored for attention. Loudest was the Killdeer standing in the edge of the water shouting his name. (Birding would be a lot simpler if all would be as cooperative, and were marked as distinctly.)

But we had little time for the Killdeer because of the noise and antics of a distant pair of Flickers. The setting sun made their wing linings shining gold, flashing as they chased each other in amazing aerobatics.

Orioles were singing far up a hillside and we had the luck to glimpse them as they hopped above the top of the grass for insects. They were a pair of

Orchard Orioles dining sumptuously.

Birds sat on the wires, most of them Mourning Doves in family groups with the young well-feathered and as big as the adults. Only their awkwardness and detached air marked their youth.

Others were orioles, Orchard again, taking the late afternoon sun. Then far away a bird stood out so he could be seen with naked eye, a Red-headed Woodpecker.

Baltimore Orioles moved from a thicket into the lower branches of the cottonwood. They might have had a nest in it as it was the only tree large enough to suit the Baltimores.

A bird was singing on a bare twig in a clump of brush his head bobbing and his tail jerking in time with the song, which was that of a catbird. Only he was no catbird! Then he went away while the catbird song continued in the thicket. It must have been one of those pantomimes, where one sings out of sight and the other goes through the motions out in front. This time the front bird had sung so low I missed it under the catbird's loudness.

All the time we had been hearing the "wichity, wichity" of the yellowthroat. Luck let us look down from the bridge on Mrs. Yellowthroat. Had she been singing the family song, or had he been hidden in the brush close by?

Goldfinches in their brilliant suits were all around us, happily singing. Above their song came the dry stick rattle in slowing tempo that is the voice of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo. He was on the hill along the road where we would never find him in the dense cover. Then, as we passed, he came out to sit on a low wire calmly in the open.

That completed an hour in this wonderful spot that most people pass at around 60 miles an hour.

Huron, S. D.

Blue Grosbeaks

IN DELMONT, DOUGLAS COUNTY, by Miss Elice Jenney.

I was surprised on June 23, 1958, to find a nest in a low lilac bush near the house where it could be seen from the bed room window. I had been hearing some bird sounds nearby but had not been able to trace them to their source. However, I should not have been surprised as this is the third year Blue Grosbeaks have nested on the west side of the house, either in this bush or in one by a window of the front room.

The nest this year was very well hidden, but there it was with two birds hatched and one egg. Soon three babies filled the nest and then they were soon gone. Once or twice after that I noticed them flying around. Then I missed seeing them most of the summer in their blue and brown coats.

On August 26th I heard their little cheep again and looked out the window. There were four Blue Grosbeaks. It looked like they were investigating their old home site trying to decide whether to come back to the same place next year. I hope they do.

* * * * *

BLUE GROSBEAK RECORDS IN 1958, by Dennis Carter.

During the summer of 1958 I found Blue Grosbeaks in three localities in South Dakota. Two were where it has been recorded before, while the other is from the northwest section of the State where it is not listed in the 1956 Checklist of South Dakota Birds.

In Butte County on July 20 I found a male Blue Grosbeak singing in a small stand of cottonwoods on the south side of the reservoir in the Belle Fourche National Wildlife Refuge. This individual was in breeding plumage and exhibited the characteristic large bill and brown wing-bars. I soon found a female and nest. The nest was wedged between two cottonwood sap-

lings about 1½ feet from the ground and contained 3 young birds. The adults seemed quite agitated by my presence.

Dale Birkenholz and I visited the refuge again on August 4 and saw the male bird. We also examined the empty nest which contained one infertile egg.

According to the range given in the A. O. U. Check-list (fifth edition) this would seem to be as far north as this species has been found breeding.

In Gregory County I stopped at the Fort Randall chapel on June 12 and found a male and a female Blue Grosbeak there.

In Shannon County while driving along highway 18 about 15 miles east of Pine Ridge on June 12, I was surprised to see 2 male and 1 female Blue Grosbeaks on a fence along the road. These birds were in open country with the nearest trees about one-half mile away.

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Summer Records From The Black Hills

(Continued from page 36)

breasted Nuthatch, Swainson's Thrush, Audubon's Warbler, and White-winged Junco.

Wind Cave National Park: On June 13 I found 7 Red Crossbills at the highway No. 85 entrance to the park, including an adult feeding an immature bird. I found 6 Red Crossbills feeding on American Elm seeds along Beaver Creek on June 14 and also saw a Brown Creeper in this locality. On June 30 I saw an Upland Plover on the ground along highway No. 85 south of the headquarters area and the same day I saw and heard a Canyon Wren under the highway No. 87 bridge over Beaver Creek.

Shore Birds

(Continued from page 37)

with head marking that is distinctive. Of this bird I have seen only 6; a single at Crocker's slough near Watertown in 1954, a group of 3 young and 1 adult at Bitter Lake in 1955, and an adult at the same place in 1957.

Golden Plover, an important game bird in the past, has been gaining in number since being taken off the game list. Flocks of 100 are not unduly scarce in the best years of migration, frequently smaller lots are seen and occasionally many more. But they are unpredictable. In spring they may remain ten days or so on a particularly inviting tract of land; again, they will be looked for in vain, until at last a few flocks may be seen as they rush on their way northward.

Black-bellied Plover, a close relative of the Golden, has never been really common. Shallow water or wet shores are its preference, whereas the Golden Plover ranges far out where ground cover is scanty, such as pastures, burnt-over ground, etc. Such niceties as white rump or plain escaped the notice of the general run of sportsmen, who thus disregard a sure mark of distinction between the two. Aside from this white area shown by the Black-bellied, a black patch under the wing can often be detected as the birds fly broadside to the observer.

The Ruddy Turnstone, of the variegated colors in bold design, is a late migrant. It is a shorebird in the true sense of the word, not a wader, sometimes feeding in fields away from water. A magnificent display of 300 Turnstones feeding in the backwater of heavy surf at Lake Enemy Swim, June 3, 1949, is one of the high lights in my experiences with birds.

The Common Snipe was at one time harassed by gunners to a point where complete protection by law gave it the respite it needed. This is a bird of the bogs, where the ground is wet and

cover is sparse. The long bill probes soft mud for food of its choice, much like a Dowitcher or a Stilt Sandpiper. Snipe rely on protective coloration to a great extent as they stand motionless eyeing you for minutes at a time, but when alarmed they are strong flyers. They are individualistic in feeding, not forming close ranks as Dowitchers and Stilt Sandpipers are prone to do.

Finding a Long-billed Curlew in northeastern South Dakota would be an accident, now that the days of old are gone.

The Upland Plover has come back very well since shooting it for game or for market has been outlawed. This bird can be said to have been plentiful or abundant in the days of much original prairie and marshland. I soon became familiar with its musical calls and pretty ways under such conditions some sixty-odd years ago.

The Spotted Sandpiper is common in summer time along lake shores and stream banks. Its manner of flight is the best field mark as, with fluttering wings in deep down stroke, it flies low over the water.

Six Solitary Sandpipers together is my top count. It is an attractive bird in a softly subdued way. One will not be apt to see a Solitary in a company of Shore Birds, its fancy turning to such places as roadside ditches or little puddles in farm yards.

A Willet on foot is of a bluish cast that blends nicely with the watery surroundings in which the bird is most often found. In flight, though, the large expanse of white in wings turn it into a spectacular sight. The Willet is one of those that protect property rights by loud screaming and much action when approached.

A further study of Greater Yellowlegs seems to have refuted the idea that it is a scarce bird. Uncommon it may be, but not scarce. It is not at all unusual to find singles here and there, sometimes staying several days where found. The finest lot that I can recall

was one of 19, present about a week. Perception of size varies so much that other points of comparison are desirable to separate the Greater from the Lesser Yellowlegs. Seen side by side not a moment's hesitation need occur, as the smaller bird appears almost puny when judged with the other. The Greater is much larger, has a larger bill, a stronger voice and a more vigorous flight.

The Lesser Yellow-legs comes in greater numbers than the last. Both feed by picking at the surface of water or mud, not ordinarily immersing head or body, and scatter as they go about the business of picking up a living.

The Pectoral Sandpiper ranges freely from water to higher land. It may stand quietly watching an intruder for several minutes, much like a Snipe. In fact, "grass snipe" is a name locally given to it, suggested by its meadow-haunting habits. Because of its dark look it has been called "brown back." The heavily marked breast, changing abruptly to white, is the best field mark, and its voice as a "krieker" also helps.

A White-rumped Sandpiper when put to flight shows a white patch on rump which is smaller than the corresponding flash of white on Yellowlegs or on Stilt Sandpiper. Another distinction to be observed is the thin clear-cut dark streaks on breast and sides, not at all smudged.

Baird's Sandpiper can be difficult. It is larger than the small ones and smaller than the large ones. To me it looks much like a Pectoral. Black legs compared with the Pectoral's greenish legs may be of the most help, and the main idea is to get near enough to see them well. Again, the Pectoral's breast is heavily marked with streaks.

Least Sandpiper. As its name implies this is the smallest of the waders. It is not so confirmed a wader as many of the others, often preferring to run about on wet flats rather than really going into the water.

Dunlin, or Red-backed Sandpiper, cannot be confused with any other Shore Bird when seen in the spring plumage of red above and black below. Thus identified one notices further that this bird is somewhat larger than the Semi-palmated and that its bill is rather long, with a slight downward turn. These last two characters are important on their return from the north, for they have then lost the red and black of spring.

The Dowitcher, common in migration, is a bird of character. Its long straight bill proclaims it a prober in mud, as also is the Stilt Sandpiper. The white streak on its back stands out clearly in flight as a mark of identification. Tameness is a characteristic that will be noticed at times. Closely ranked on a bar resting in peace, a considerable length of time, they may resist efforts to flush them by such tactics as swinging one's arms wildly, shouting, or the throwing of sticks and stones. I once came upon a group of 6 or 8 Dowitchers and a like number of Stilt Sandpipers edging up to a Lesser Yellowlegs lying dead on the water, much concerned as they seemed to be, I retrieved the Yellowlegs. Neither the Dowitchers nor the Stilt Sandpipers took flight as I neared them, merely moving aside to continue feeding. The Dowitchers particularly almost invited me to chuck them under the chin and kept up a chattering to themselves. While I sank deeply into the oozy mud struggling to avoid pulling out of my boots, they saw nothing to fear.

The Stilt Sandpiper is fairly common spring and fall. It is not as robust looking as the Dowitcher, nor does the bill measure up in size. In flight the two are unlike in contour, degree of color and the showing of white on back. Heavily barred below, and probing with a pumping motion, as does the Dowitcher, a considerable difference in color tone should be enough to distinguish them. Occasionally the two may be found feeding together, somewhat

mixed, but when alarmed they spring into the air toward a common center, where wild commotion quickly resolves into orderly mass for flight, each species at its own place in the flock.

The Semi-palmated Sandpiper is the smallest but one of the waders, the Least having the distinction of being smaller. The size of the bird first noted, then its color, lighter than the Least, and dark center of tail and rump, together with a faint streaking on breast, should be evidence of its identity.

Western Sandpiper is a form of the Semipalmated that I have been unable to identify. It is pretty well agreed that it should be found here, but the difficulty of field identification has prevented any confirmation of its presence.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper, one of the rarities. I have seen only one in the region under discussion. This bird was an attendant on a small group of Golden Plover.

Marbled Godwit one of the largest of the Shore Birds. Because of its size it was in the past persecuted by gunners to a state of scarcity. Saved by protective laws, it is now increasing and has become surprisingly tame. Lack of pattern in plumage, the whole bird showing brick red when in flight, leaves no room for doubt. The long bill with a slight upturn can hardly go unnoticed.

Hudsonian Godwit, less in size, darker in color, and well marked as a species, is probably not in any danger of passing from existence.

The Sanderling is found only on the wave-washed shores of larger waters, where it hurries along incessantly. Its big head, light color, black bill and legs and good white stripe in wing, proclaim it a Sanderling.

The Avocet, a large bird, marked by solid areas of black and white, very showy; a long bill turned upward, and a coloring on head and neck which changes to white in fall and winter, is

conspicuous in Bitter Lake region, for it nests there and is not uncommon. A strange act in bird behavior is often shown by the Avocet. As it walks steadily forward in shallow water, the bill is moved from side to side in time with measured steps, apparently to sweep the mud bottom for organisms of some sort.

Wilson's Phalarope swims habitually and is therefore seen on deeper water than other Shore Birds, with the exception of the next, which is more of a sea bird than the Wilson's. Both bob prettily when swimming, and both spin on the water, picking at the surface as the twirling continues.

The Northern Phalarope migrates in much larger flocks than the last. It is a beautiful bird in color and in actions. A striped back, in association with small bill and brightly colored neck, define it.

American Knot. I discovered two of this species at Fox Lake, five miles east of Brandt, Sept. 11, 1957. Two days later one was found there, but no all-out attempt was made to find the second bird. A. C. Bent, in his *Life Histories of North American Shore Birds*, says: "In immature and winter plumage the best character is the absence of any conspicuous field mark. Even in flight it seems to be a plain gray bird; the rump and tail appear to be but little lighter than the rest of the upper parts, and the faint white line in the wings is hardly noticeable. Its larger size will hardly distinguish it from the smaller sandpipers except by direct comparison. Its short green legs and the prominent bill might help to recognize under favorable circumstances."

"That is what I saw. The two birds checked in every detail."

Black-necked Stilt and Woodcock have been reported for northeastern South Dakota, and though very scarce or rare they (particularly the Woodcock) may again be found here.

Blue Grosbeaks

by Ethel Jacobson

In areas where they had been almost exterminated by illegal hunters, blue grosbeaks are beginning to reappear.

Back again

To the tangle of elderberries in the far meadow

Are the blue grosbeaks.

Bluer than lupine, bluer than noon sky—

Impudent blue for which they were snared and slain! . . .

The grosbeaks are here again.

Straw-stuffed, staring with eyes of glass,

From collectors' shelves in Sudbury and Sidney

They have flown from the varnished perches,

Fled the glued boughs, and come back to the elderberries.

Bright in the lupine, bright in the noon sky,

Bluer than blossom,

Brighter, bluer than all high heaven,

The impudent, slain

Grosbeaks are back, in the home meadow again!

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THE COVER

The cover picture is another of J. O. Johnson's remarkable shots. Remarkable not so much because it is a clean, dry Coot's nest but because it held 21 eggs. The nest was on Tobey Slough, Codington County. That's about all we know about it and we can't answer your questions whether the Coot tried to incubate them, whether one coot laid them or did several use the nest to dump surplus production.

S. Pearl Hutchinson

Mrs. Hutchinson was killed in a one-car accident at Wheaton, Minnesota, as she and Mr. Hutchinson were returning to their home in Hurley, South Dakota, from a trip to Leech Lake. They had spent over a week helping their son, Charles, work on his cabin. Mr. Hutchinson was injured slightly but had to spend two weeks in the hospital and then a week recuperating at the home of his son, John, at Robbinsdale, Minnesota.

Mrs. Hutchinson lived but a short time but was conscious long enough to say to the ministering Presbyterian pastor that she was ready to go. Funeral services were held at Hurley and burial was in the Hutchinson family lot at White.

Mrs. Hutchinson was an ardent flower lover and made roses her chief hobby last summer. She delighted in watching the many birds that came to the feeders she and Mr. Hutchinson had provided. When she joined SDOU she purchased a complete file of Bird Notes and read all of them.

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President's Message

(Continued from page 35)

ed, and may be in your library if not in the local second hand book store. Outstanding among these are Studies in the life history of the Song Sparrow, by Mrs. Margaret Nice, and the research reports of the National Audubon Society. The possibilities are limitless, and I urge all members to look into them.

—N. R. Whitney, Jr.

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According to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, aerial surveys this fall indicate the U. S. trumpeter swan population is 763 birds. This includes 147 cygnets, young-of-the-year.

General Notes of Special Interest

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE IN BROOKINGS COUNTY—On April 8, 1958, Miss Cooper, Mrs. Melvin and I took a bird trip to Lake Sinai to observe ducks. When we were about a mile east of Sinai we stopped near a group of small trees to watch some juncos and while there had excellent views of Townsend's Solitaire. We observed it for 15 or 20 minutes at very close range and were able to see the white eye-ring, buffy wing patches, and white outer tail feathers which identify the species. While we watched it, it was usually perched on a low branch of a tree, occasionally flying to the ground to capture an insect and then returning to the branch.

I had seen the species before and so recognized it here as soon as I saw it.

We have made a few other interesting observations for this area. On April 29, May 1 and 5, I observed the Piping Plover at Lake Goldsmith, which is about 8 miles west of Brookings. Two of them were there again on May 11 and I got a picture of one through my telescope. On May 15 there was another at Oakwood Lakes.

May 25 Miss Cooper observed a female Western Tanager near Lake Campbell. May 29 a small group of us saw a male Hooded Merganser at Lake Campbell.—Mrs. David J. Holden, Brookings, S. D.

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SUMMER NOTES FROM PICKEREL LAKE—This summer of 1958 I had much pleasure watching the birds at my summer home, Trail's End, at Pickerel Lake. As always there were a few new birds and new experiences.

An albino Blue Jay accompanied a flock to the feeding station and bird bath. She loitered three days, May 13-15, then mated with a handsome cock and left for the backwoods.

Then a pair of Tree Swallows tried to enter the wren houses on a rainy morning, but found the openings too small. They did not return.

A Magpie arrived October 18 with a flock of crows and an assortment of blackbirds. It also lingered three days.

Orioles and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks arrived the middle of May and sang from the tops of the tallest trees near the cabin, then flew down to drink from the fountain and to bathe before scooping a few kernels of corn from the cobs tied to the tree and gobbling embryo gooseberries from bushes in the yard.

Baltimore Orioles, Cedar Waxwings, Eastern Kingbirds, Robins, Catbirds, and other came from early dawn to get the strings I hung on the caragana near the south door.

The wren houses were cleaned and re-hung with string or wire, not nailed to the trees, and the Wrens settled in them as usual.

Hummingbirds frequented the honeysuckle, caragana, columbine, lilies and petunias daily, especially about four o'clock.

Then there were vireos, phoebes, thrushes, redstarts, blackbirds of several kinds, flickers and woodpeckers except red-headed and pileated, several warblers, song sparrows; but no longspurs, purple finches, red-breasted nuthatches, towhees this year.

On November 2 a Loggerhead Shrike came near the kitchen door fighting the downies and hairies at the suet tree. It did not stay long but flew up onto the wires and rocked a while.

On November 7, a Lark Bunting rested a couple of hours in a nearby oak. It was the only one I have seen here.

When I left the lake on November 11, the downies, hairies, white-breasted nuthatches, brown creepers, chicka-

dees, blue jays and juncos were constant visitors feeding on the suet and sunflower seeds.

The first year I hung out corncobs for the birds. There were no regular guests until several days' drizzle softened the kernels. Last year the ears I offered were too dry for the birds. They couldn't dislodge the kernels until I solved the problem by soaking the cobs until the kernels swelled. Some I even parboiled. A lot of work; but it was gratifying to see as many as six pairs of grosbeaks take turns at gobbling. Orioles enjoyed the softened corn.—Mrs. R. Alice Fiksdal, Webster, S. D.

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CAROLINA WREN AT PLATTE—On May 22, 1957, I had the privilege of hearing the exquisite song of the Carolina Wren. I had never seen this bird before and was charmed by its song and its friendliness. He was in a brush pile and gave me time enough to bring my bird book and binocular from the house, and an opportunity to check on the features which distinguish him from the other wrens. I was particularly struck with his unusual size for a wren.—Charles A. Nash, Platte, S. D.

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FOX SPARROW AND WATER-THRUSH—The report of a Fox Sparrow at Freeman (Bird Notes X, 1, March 1958) prompts us to report a similar experience. We were birding on the east shore of Lake Kampeska, near Wattertown, on April 26, 1958, when we spotted our first Fox Sparrow in a thicket beside the lake.

We watched our Northern Waterthrush on May 10, 1958, near the junction of highways 19 and 38 near Humboldt, S. D. We observed it for some time near the edge of the slough east of highway 19 as it fed near the water and in the low bushes. We were close enough to observe it without the use of binoculars and to check frequently with our Peterson's Guide.—Mr. and Mrs. Charles Rogge, Sioux Falls, S. D.

NOTES FROM SOUTHEAST SODAK—I had the pleasure of watching 7 Avocets last Sunday morning (Sept. 21, 1958) on a sandbar in the Missouri southwest of Jefferson, South Dakota. I watched the large nearly white birds from the bank for a while and then went over by boat and was able to walk within 100 feet to watch them. There was quite a bit of difference in the amount of dark plumage on the wings, but as usual at this time of year no cinnamon showed on the head and neck. They were a bit nervous as I approached but did not fly. This is the third time I have seen Avocets in this locality and is the earliest date by at least two weeks.

There was a large sandpiper with them that I assumed was a Solitary Sandpiper, and there were two small sandpipers that paid no attention to me.

Cormorants can be seen most any time along the river due, I believe, to the concentration of them at the Gavin's Point dam. However, they are usually reported as geese by wishful thinkers or misinformed people.—W. R. Felton, Jr., Sioux City, Iowa.

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REDPOLLS—The gentle, little Redpolls come down from the north and visit us frequently at Bird Haven in the winter. They were plentiful in the winter of 1957-58, but none have come so far this winter (mid-December, 1958). Last year they came November 8 and left before March 22.

I banded 199 of them a year ago. Among those was one that was smaller and very light colored which was a Hoary Redpoll. Another was large, darker and with a large heavy bill like a Song Sparrow's, which was a Greater Redpoll.

There was a wide variation in the coloring. Three birds had orange instead of red and pink. One of them had a brilliant orange poll and no black above the bill and on the chin.—Lowry Elliott, Milbank, S. D.

RESEARCH ON YOUNG MARTIN—
What is the fate of young martins that fall from the nest before they can fly? Common opinion that they die seemed hard to accept.

About noon July 27, 1958, I found a young martin on the ground under our martin house. It was well feathered but too young to be seriously afraid of me, and unable to do more than flutter along the ground. I placed an aluminum band on its right leg and returned it to the spot where I found it.

Old birds flew past several times during the next hour but were too fast for me to see whether they were feeding it. In the hour nothing else happened and I was absent the rest of the day.

The next day the bird was not found after some search. On the second day, July 29, at 7:00 a. m. the banded bird was on the wire near the house and 12 feet from the ground. The glint of the sun on the band caught my eye and the glasses showed it plainly.

The old birds were feeding it. I could see the yellow gape open to take the insects they passed to it as they flew by.

The bird was seen again July 30 and on August 1, 2, and 3. By the last two days it had acquired considerable competence in the air and showed much of the adult self-confidence.—**J. W. Johnson, Huron, S. D.**

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OVEN-BIRD IN DOUGLAS COUNTY
—The morning of October 25, 1958, I picked up a dead bird from the walk in front of a business place. It had evidently flown against the building during the night.

I thought it possibly was an Oven-bird but it had no orange crown; its back was not olive-brown but a beautiful olive-green; the legs were not pinkish but brown. The eye ring was difficult to determine as both eyes had been knocked out by the collision with the building.

Gray-checked and Olive-backed

Thrushes were considered, but the back was not gray-brown and crown was bordered by a black stripe.

I kept the bird frozen for ten days and examined it several times, and finally detected faint flecks of orange on the crown and decided it was an Oven-bird.

Mr. David McGlauchlin, manager of the Lake Andes Federal Refuge happened by and I gave him the bird. He and Mr. Merrill Hammond, biologist of the Lower Souris Refuge identified it as an Oven-bird.

Questions now in mind are: Why was the orange on the head so obscure it took many examinations before it was detected? Was the bird immature or is the orange crown always so indefinite? (If so some of the illustrations in books are quite misleading.) Also, we could not call the specimen olive-brown above, but a beautiful olive-green.

We leave the questions to the students who are familiar with the species. This was the first Oven-bird we have happened to record in Douglas County.—**C. P. Crutchett, Armour, S. D.**

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WHOOPIING CRANE AT SQUAW CREEK—SDOU member Kenneth Krumm, manager of the Squaw Creek, Missouri, National Wildlife Refuge, sent an exuberant note: "We had a Whooping Crane here Oct. 13-15, 1958. The first record for Missouri since 1894.

State Biologists first discovered it from a plane during a routine waterfowl census. They radioed us at the Refuge and we went in by car to the site and made confirming identification. The St. Joseph Museum people came out and photographed it. I have some of the photos."

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H. W. Wagar, Winner, reported a Mockingbird about 20 miles southwest of Winner on October 18, 1958.

BLUEBIRDS IN ARMOUR—One day when I was a boy I put a crude wooden nest box on a post after I had seen a pair of bluebirds in the yard. The birds took the box and nested. A few days later a friend saw a pair of bluebirds in his yard and also put up a box for a nest. His pair also nested and raised a brood.

Since that time I have never found a bluebird's nest in Douglas County until this last summer when a pair nested in an abandoned woodpecker hole in a dead willow tree on the shore of Lake Onahpe here in Armour. They raised 2 broods. The second brood left the nest on August 9.

The scarcity of Bluebirds here might be due to the lack of suitable nesting sites. Douglas County birders might do well to put up some good boxes suitable for Bluebirds. Fifty years between bluebird nests is too long a wait.
—C. P. Crutchett, Armour, S. D.

A TRIBUTE—The pupils of Merton School District No. 19 of Clark County under the direction of their teacher, Mrs. O. H. Ames, an SDOU member, constructed as their project depicting South Dakota wildlife, two dioramic models; an underwater and a land-water habitat, which was given first place at the Young Citizen's League convention at Pierre last April and again at the 1958 State Fair at Huron.

Of particular interest to SDOU members are the 57 species of birds shown. All figures are carefully modeled and realistically painted. The birds are shown on the ground, perching, flying, or in the water. The whole project with its many species of animals and fish is a work of art, but more important is the lasting impression upon the minds of the pupils when such a teacher as Mrs. Ames leads them to share her own love of the wildlings.—Mrs. Raymond Roberts, Clark, S. D.