

SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

Official Publication

of

SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

(Organized 1949)

VOL. 1

●OCTOBER, 1949

No. 2



The Chestnut-Collared Longspur

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

Contents

	PAGE
CHARLES S. HILLS	23
WINTER VISITORS By Mary Aberdeen Ketelle	24
THE CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR	25
INLAND GULLS By Ethel Doblár	26
IT'S BARTER By Mrs. Irma G. Weyler	27
PIONEER PRAIRIE ORNITHOLOGISTS	28
Frank A. Patton	
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT	29
WESTERN HAWKS	30 and 31
SANCTUARY! SANCTUARY! West River Federal Refuges By Kenneth Krumm	32
BIRD NOTES OF SPECIAL INTEREST Chipping Sparrows in Mud Bath; Blue Grosbeaks at Spring- field; Union County Notes; Black-necked Stilt; Feeding by Marsh Hawk; Black-throated Gray Warbler; White Pelican Migration; Fulvous Tree Duck	34
I REMEMBER By W. B. Mallory	37
ADDITIONAL SDOU MEMBERS	38
SDOU NEWS	39

SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION

OFFICERS 1949

President	Herman F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. D.
Vice President	Dr. Gerald B. Spawn, Brookings, S. D.
Secretary	W. B. Mallory, Canton, S. D.
Treasurer	S. H. Rames, Mitchell, S. D.
Editor-Librarian	E. R. Lamster, Pierre, S. D.
Executive Members, Ruth Habeger, Madison; H. C. Behrens, Rapid City; J. O. Johnson, Watertown	
Chairman Membership Committee	J. S. Findley, 1201 S. Center Ave., Sioux Falls, S. D.

SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

Volume 1

October, 1949

Number 2

Charles S. Hills

Charles S. Hills was born July 29, 1877, at Sioux City, Iowa. He married Gretchen Marie Hill in 1919; in 1923 they moved to Sioux Falls where she still lives. A son, Robert, is in the employ of the Curtis Publishing Company.

During his residence in Sioux Falls Mr. Hills was engaged in insurance and newspaper work, his last years being spent with the civil service commission of the city.

"Charley" was an ardent bird student. In his boyhood days he spent much time with E. J. Anderson, an ornithologist of some note in the Sioux City area, and assisted him in making the collection which was finally acquired for the Pettigrew Natural History Museum in Sioux Falls. For many years he was active in the Boy Scout work in Sioux Falls, and his troop always took a lively interest in all out-door activities, including bird study. Whenever a strange bird was seen, found or heard, the problem of identification was usually presented to Charley Hills. It was only after careful consideration that he gave his conclusion. In the field he was an equally careful, dependable observer.

Many groups in Sioux Falls and surrounding territory enjoyed his talks on birds. He spoke plainly, interestingly and instructively, on the basis of years of careful, intelligent observation and study. He wrote a series of short articles "Birds of Sioux Falls" which appeared in the Sunday Argus Leader.

Mr. Hills was one of the organizers of the Sioux Falls Bird Club. His choice as one of the members of the Executive Committee of SDOU was logical and only ill health kept him from being a strong factor in the shaping of the organization and its policies.

Death came at Sioux Falls, S. D. August 13, 1949, and interment was at Sioux City, Iowa.

WINTER VISITORS

By

Mary Aberdeen Ketelle

Huron, South Dakota



Cut courtesy Wilson Bulletin

Not far from our home there is quite a thicket of which the birds are very fond, and usually some interesting birds are there singing in the trees or feeding on the ground. Last April I went there to see what I might find.

I heard a bird call and thought maybe it was the goldfinch which stays here all winter, dressed in its modest olive green suit; but upon investigation I saw a rosy breast, a crown of deep poppy red, and black chin. This was a bird I had never seen before, the red-poll. Soon appeared the female with a gray breast, but the same crown marking. Then I discovered another pair. If I didn't move around too much they would light in a tree just above me, not the least bit afraid. As they flitted about in the sun, their head markings were bright as jewels. A friend, who is an ardent bird lover, says there is a flock of several hundred red polls at the cemetery.

As I walked on a loud call rang out. It was the cardinal, but I couldn't locate him; still he sang, though I was coming closer. Finally I caught a glimpse of the female as she flew into the thick cedar hedge and out of sight. It wasn't long before the male appeared,

and what a beautiful sight that red coat was in the bright sun!

This winter we have cardinals feeding in the yard, a new experience for us. They first appeared in November. Having read they are especially fond of squash seed, I dried some and tried to cater to them. Often after that they would be found feeding in the window box. One morning I watched the male cracking squash seed on the snow, and that red bird in mid-winter was a gorgeous sight. Though they are spoken of as 'ten o'clock scholars,' we found them in the Catony Aster bushes much earlier than that, waiting for more squash seed. One morning starlings joined the cardinal breakfast, but they didn't push him around, as they do some birds; instead they all ate from the same "table," the cardinal being the aristocrat, by far.

In the fall we put chunks of suet on the trees in various places near the house and it wasn't long before the downy and hairy woodpeckers found this was a good place to board. We made window boxes out of peach crates and fastened them where they were protected from the wind and the sun shone upon them. Birds, especially

chickadees, like to feed in the sun. In these I scattered a mixture of millet, cracked corn and wheat. I put in a little pile of sand because the birds need grit to help digest their food, and when the ground is snow-covered it is hard to find. I always make my own peanut butter mixtures using fat, sometimes molasses or cornmeal, peanut butter and some cracklings left from rendering lard. This is spread on the window boxes and the chickadees are especially fond of it. When the snow is gone, the birds don't come to the boxes so much, but find more of their natural food.

We have a swinging grain feeder which looks like a little house. I often spread peanut butter on it, too. When I first hung it up on the clothes line post, I wondered if any of the birds would care for it. The sparrows didn't come there at first for they much prefer to feed on the ground. After a few weeks they learned how to negotiate the feeder too. When the chickadees want some peanut butter the sparrows, in true bully fashion, will chase them away. The chickadees seem to have no

fight in them; instead they look some place else for food. They will flit from window box to suet and then to grain feeder—never still a minute. Their pulse is 480, so is it any wonder?

The white breasted nuthatch feeds at the suet, the peanut butter spreads and grain feeder. It was very interesting and amusing to watch it try to negotiate the feeder, as it is accustomed to obtaining food by coming down a tree trunk. It flew at the feeder several times, not knowing how to land. Finally it flew back to the clothes line post, then used the roof of the feeder as a ladder to get to the tray beneath. Before the day was over the nuthatch would fly onto the house just like a chickadee. If the table is spread with something the bird really wants, it can learn a way to obtain it.

Soon the sky will be full of many interesting little song birds, and each day there will be a new and fascinating group to study. Then the nuthatches, chickadees and woodpeckers, these winter friends, will leave us for their nesting spots—where I do not know—but I always look forward to their return when the first snowflakes fall.

THE CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR

(Note: The bird portrait on the front cover originally illustrated an article in *The Wilson Bulletin*, December, 1938. The photo was by A. M. Bailey and R. J. Niedrach, authors of the article, which is here quoted only in part. According to F. A. Patton, *Calcarius ornatus* was extremely plentiful over much of South Dakota in the early 1890's. It is still a summer resident of parts of the state. Hence, the report is of direct interest to members of SDOU.—Ed.)

"The summer was well advanced before we had an opportunity to visit the breeding grounds on June 19. The prairie was covered with wild flowers—the prairie primrose, penstemon, and wall-flowers making a natural garden; and black-breasted male chestnut-collared longspurs were dotted about the valley. They rested upon song perches or hovered in the air upon outstretched wings as they poured forth their satisfaction with the world in general, and

then, at the conclusion of their songs, drifted downward to their weedstalks...

"The song of the chestnut-collared longspur reminds us of that of the western meadowlark, and time and again we were deceived as we heard their clear calls. The nuptial flight of the males of the two longspurs differs somewhat; the McCown's mounts high in the air, singing all the while, and then floats downward with outspread wings making a definite 'V'. The chestnut-collared tends to circle more, dropping less abruptly, and seems to quiver the wings while descending to earth, the dark underparts black against the light blue of the sky.

"It is an easy matter to locate nests

of both species of longspurs after the song perches have been discovered, for the females are almost sure to be tucked away in the near vicinity, and it is only a matter of walking about until they flush from underfoot. We found many nests of both species with contents ranging from fresh eggs to half-grown young, and imagined we could distinguish a choice of nesting sites in that the majority of those of the chestnut-collared were in rolling country, on the slopes and along the valley floor, while the McCown's were more abundant on the level prairie. The McCown's were found adjacent to the chestnut-collared, but the latter were not observed nesting on the flat areas. In other words, the flat expanses were typical nesting areas of the McCown's longspurs and the valleys of the chestnut-collared, but the former extended their nesting range into that of the latter. There was no place, however, where we could draw a line between nesting areas.

"The nests of both species were cup-like affairs tucked in depressions excavated by the female, lined with grasses,

hair and feathers. They were usually concealed between some bit of prairie vegetation and oftentimes were beautifully placed near prairie asters, phlox or flowering cactus. Even when in the open, however, cut by only a few blades of wiry grass, they were difficult to see. They had from three to five eggs of various markings, no two sets that we found being alike.

"Whenever we found a nest of chestnut-collared young, the male was extremely solicitous. Frequently he would alight within a few feet of us, voicing protest, without losing the small insects which crammed his beak. We erected our photographic blinds to observe the birds better, and to secure our film record for our picture library. Hardly had we concealed ourselves until the male was back, chucking insects down cooperative young, but the female would not come to the nest, although she sat some distance away with food-filled beak. When only eggs were in the nest, however, conditions were reversed, for then it was the female that returned to the nest and the male remained in the distance . . ."

INLAND GULLS



Cut courtesy Wilson Bulletin

"Upon the cloudless sky they drift along,
Tireless and free, a countless throng.
Soaring and drifting, like sails on a summer sea,
Over fresh-turned earth, their wild cries come to me.
My spirit soars beside them, care-free and high,
On earth-bound feet I stand and gaze at a poem in the sky."

—ETHEL DOBLAR, in "Pasque Petals."

"Gracefully they swoop to earth
To gulp the fat grubworms;
Then, up and over the trees,
With the effortless ease
Of wind-blown thistle-down."

—THE ●●LOGIST.

Some one said a long time ago, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." The truth of that statement depends on what kind of a bird you have in the hand. If it is a live heron, bittern or similar bird, beware of it! It may make a lightning-fast thrust at your eye with its spear-like bill and puncture an eyeball. These birds center their attacks on the eyes because the eyes shine brightly.

The heaviest flying bird in America, says the National Wildlife Federation, is the trumpeter swan with a maximum weight of forty pounds.

IT'S BARTER

By Mrs. Irma G. Weyler

in *Belle Fourche Post* (Early Spring 1949)



Cut courtesy Wilson Bulletin

Wildlife in Belle Fourche has not been without food in the past six blizzarding weeks. Not only have the birds been fed, but the squirrels as well. Some wildlife feeders have concentrated on one, some on the other and a few on both.

The wildlife feeders are of all ages from toddlers up through grandfathers. And the feeding stations range all the way from a bare spot on the ground where food is tossed regularly to the most complicated of commercial stations that revolve in the wind so that the door to the protected food tray is always away from the wind.

After hearing the variety of feeding experiences, one wonders who has received the greater benefit from the activity—the hungry bird and squirrel or the storm-locked human being.

Stories like this will show what we mean.

There's the four-year-old boy who has not been well all winter. Early last fall his older brother built him a win-

dowsill feeding tray. A flock of chickadees found it before the first storm, and every day since have provided a merry round of interest for the little boy—better than a tonic, his mother says. The boy swears that some of the birds even know the names he has given them.

There's the woman who declares that the Belle Fourche birds have been so well fed that they have become choosy, and eat what they like at each station—shop around and know where the suet is best, the seeds are best and the crumbs are tastiest, like human diners. "I've seen them look around as if saying, 'What's good on the menu today?'"

There's one squirrel feeder who has been amusing her friends with stories of the little fellows who feed at her windowsill tray. Her practice is to put pieces of apple on the tray and leave a few whole apples on the sill inside where they may be seen and serve as an invitation to come again tomorrow. She declares (and nobody disputes a

bird or squirrel story these days) that the little smarties double up their fists and knock on the windows when the cut apple is gone.

As the roads open, stories are coming in of wildlife feeding projects on the various ranches. One ranch to the north has been feeding a flock of grouse. The birds have become so tame

that they set up a cry for their feed if it is not out at the usual time.

There are any number of stories of antelope feeding, and from the wooded areas, stories of deer feeding.

Clearly wildlife care has proved a two-way benefit—the man has given food; the wildlife has brought peace of mind. Thus, it's barter—food for perspective.

Pioneer Prairie Ornithologists

Frank A. Patton

Frank A. Patton was born at Lake City, Minnesota, in 1870, and was buried there in 1927. During practically all of that life-span the love of Nature was a dominant factor in his experience.

His boyhood was spent in the wooded hills of eastern Minnesota, along the main stem of a great avian highway. There the foundation for his career as a field ornithologist was laid. In the late 1880's his parents moved to Vilas, South Dakota. Here were no hills and no woods. The few and shallow streams wound slowly through sparse growths of brush and low trees. But there were wide prairies and many a marshy slough with varied species of flora and fauna.

Life and the years moved on and the inquisitive boy became a busy man. In 1895 he married Loretta Van House, a girl of the Dakota prairies. A son, Norman, and a daughter, Glenda, were born. The construction and operation of a telephone exchange with its sprawling farm lines took much of Patton's time and attention, but when he went out onto the country roads along the rural 'phone lines he was in the habitat of many interesting species. And there were many visits to the marshy spots and dry prairies of his



community. Often one or both of his children accompanied him. The daughter writes lovingly of her pleasure in acting as the 'official photographer' of

the nests they found in the rushes.

Eventually he disposed of the telephone property, and subsequent events showed where his interest was strongest. For a short time he was associated with W. H. Over, Curator of the U. of S. D. Museum, in the exploration of aboriginal burial sites in the state. Then he obtained employment with the State Game Department as a Field Warden, which continued to the time of his death. Under the direction of State Game Warden H. S. Hedrick, Mr. Patton was connected with the development of ring-necked pheasants on the prairies where there were few native game birds. His fine skill in taxidermy was called into play and he collected and mounted the numerous pheasants which were displayed in the dining room of the State Game Lodge in the Black Hills, the Summer White House for President Coolidge. Later, on duty at the State Game Park in the Hills he was in a different environment, but he was still the happy lover of the things out under the sky, and his letters show his deep interest in the wild animals which he was guarding, some of which he developed into pets.

During all of these years of South Dakota activity he was developing as a field ornithologist. His notes on such

matters were published frequently, as evidenced by the listings in Stephens' "Bibliography of South Dakota Ornithology." And he was building up his private collection of birds and their eggs, and furnishing items to others. One old clipping tells of his gift to the Museum at the State University of a collection of 250 birds eggs. Many of his mounted specimens are there; others are in the exhibition cases of the State Game, Fish and Parks Department at Pierre, S. D.; still other items went to out-of-state institutions. Mr. Over, with whom Mr. Patton spent many happy hours on collection trips, credits him with being a most careful and dependable field ornithologist.

The men of the Artesian community with whom he hunted still speak appreciatively of him as a friend and a sportsman.

"Blessed is the man who, having got his eyes and ears open to the wonders of the earth and sky, walks daily amid things transformed to symbols of things eternal. The leaf and the flower, the rosy fruit and golden grain, the sun-painted plumage and the sky-inspired songs of the birds, all—all make life worth the living and Heaven worth the hoping."—H. C. Munson, *The Warbler*.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

National Audubon Society's nationwide 50th Annual Bird Count will be made in the period December 25 to January 1. It may not be wholly scientific but it will furnish facts not otherwise disclosed. Also it is an excellent way to build interest, enthusiasm and companionship among bird-watchers, and there are many tangible and intangible benefits for every organization that participates.

Last winter only four communities in our state participated but we believe that a count will be made this winter in nearly every community where there are SDOU members.

We urge members to get copies of the rules which were last published in Audubon Field Notes for November,

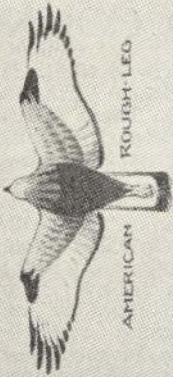
1948. (Send 40c to National Audubon Society, 1000 Fifth Ave., New York 28, N. Y.). These instructions include a sample report, rules for arranging and spelling names, estimating large numbers, etc.

Some of the rules to follow in making a report that will be accepted and printed in Field Notes are: study your home community well in advance; select an area not over 15 miles in diameter which includes the best or most varied bird population; allot definite parts of the area to groups or individuals; all counts are to be made on the same day and no part of the area is to be covered more than once; set an early date so postponement by storm or other unavoidable events will not cause you to

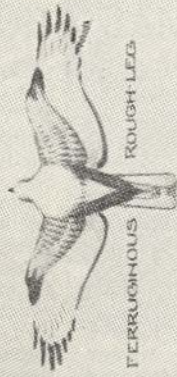
(Continued on page 36)

WESTERN HAWKS

BROAD-WINGED - RODENT HAWKS



AMERICAN
ROUGH-LEG



FERRUGINOUS
ROUGH-LEG

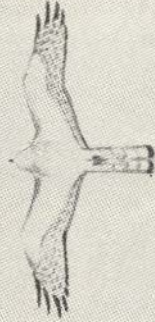


WESTERN
RED TAIL



SWAINSON'S
HAWK

MARSH
HAWK



SHORT-WINGED BIRD HAWKS



GOSHAWK



COOPER'S
HAWK



SHARP-SHINNED
HAWK



DUCK
HAWK



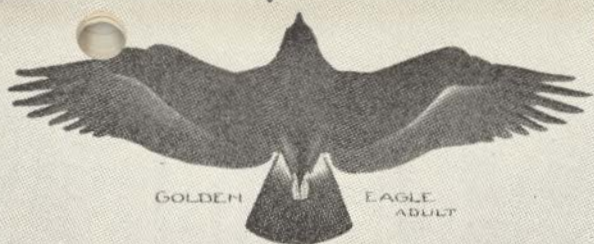
PRAIRIE
FALCON



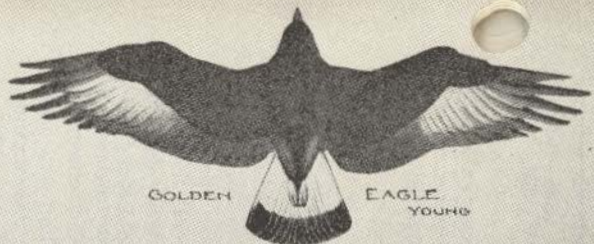
PIGEON
HAWK

POINTED-WINGED FALCONS

KING TAILED MOUNTAIN EAGLE

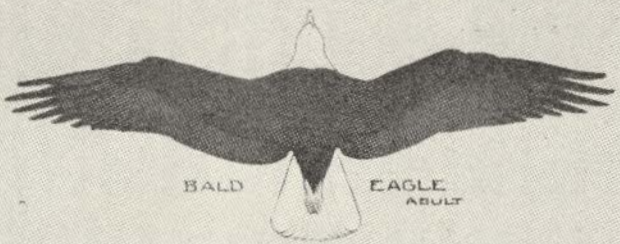


GOLDEN EAGLE ADULT



GOLDEN EAGLE YOUNG

WHITE-HEADED-FISH-EATING EAGLE



BALD EAGLE ADULT



BALD EAGLE YOUNG

WHITE-HEADED-FISHING HAWK



OSPREY

SMALL-HEADED-CARRION BIRD



H. PETERSCH

TURKEY VULTURE

(Cut Courtesy S. D. Conservation Digest)

Sanctuary! Sanctuary!

(Note: Under this heading there will appear a series of articles concerning both state and

federal wild-life refuges in South Dakota. Eventually, private "bird-havens" may be included.—Ed.)

WEST RIVER FEDERAL REFUGES

By Kenneth Krumm

Refuge Manager, Lacreek Refuge, Martin, S. D.

Among the National Wildlife Refuges administered in South Dakota by the U. S. Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service are, the Lacreek, Belle Fourche, and Bear Butte areas, located in the "west river" section of the state.

Members of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union interested in visiting these Refuges may follow principal state highways to the towns of Martin, Belle Fourche, and Sturgis where directions may be obtained for reaching the respective areas.

Lacreek Refuge

The Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge is a 9,915-acre area in Bennett County near the town of Martin, in the southwestern section of the state. This Refuge was established in 1935, primarily for protection of migratory waterfowl, pheasants, sharp-tailed grouse and shorebirds. The Lacreek marshes situated in a valley bordering the sandhills which extend along the South Dakota-Nebraska line in this region, have long been a favorite concentration point for hosts of migratory birds which stop to feed and rest here before resuming flight over the arid prairies and badlands toward northern nesting grounds, or moving southward over the sandhills in autumn.

The visiting ornithologist will find this area of special interest because of overlapping of the ranges of eastern and western species which occurs here; and extensive bird lists may be com-

plied by the interested observer. During the nesting season, a mixed nesting colony of cormorants and pelicans may be observed on an island in one of the Refuge lakes. Eight to ten species of ducks nest here; and several thousand mallards and a few goldeneyes and mergansers winter at the Refuge annually, resting in open water below the spillways or in spring-fed channels. Other marsh dwellers to be found here during the summer months include western and pied-billed grebes, black-crowned night herons, American bitterns, rails, Forster's and black terns, marsh wrens, yellow throats, and countless red-wings and yellow-headed blackbirds. A solitary American egret reached the area during the northward flight of this species in the summer of 1948.

Other bird groups which may be of interest to the observer include the birds of prey, represented by Swainson's hawk, red-tailed, rough-legged, sparrow and marsh hawks. An occasional prairie falcon may be observed in flight over the meadows. Several golden eagles winter annually at the Refuge, and a few bald eagles appear during the winter and spring months.

Of the upland game birds, the ring-necked pheasant and sharp-tailed grouse are most numerous and large flocks of these two species may be noted during an average season. A few pin-nated grouse or prairie chickens may also be found. Small straggling flocks of Hungarian partridges may also be

found, although this species apparently does not thrive here.

The extensive mud flats preferred by most of the shore birds group are lacking here but most of the species migrant through the western prairies may be noted in season and killdeers, long-billed curlews, upland plovers, and avocets remain to nest in the marshes or on the nearby uplands.

It would appear that the woodpeckers should be almost absent from this relatively treeless, arid region, but red-shafted flickers and red-headed woodpeckers are noted occasionally and the hairy and downy species are fairly common in the small thickets and groves along the water courses.

Great flocks of swallows congregate at the Refuge in late July and August and rest on buildings, telephone wires and fences. Barn swallows, cliff swallows, and bank swallows predominate among these migrants.

Most of the common species of song birds are represented during migration or as summer residents about the Refuge buildings or in the thickets along water courses. Small waves of warblers may occasionally be observed drifting through the shrubbery and trees at the headquarters in late April and May. The lark bunting is a common summer resident over the adjacent prairies and the sparrows are well represented by resident and migrant species of this group.

The Refuge marshes and pools have an excellent water supply provided by several spring-fed creeks which emerge from the sandhills border. A system of dikes and control structures impound water in a series of ten lakes and ponds which can be maintained at relatively constant levels. Botulism, scourge of some of the northern prairie lakes, is virtually unknown here. Approximately 4,600 acres of marsh and water area and several thousand acres of upland meadow are included within the boundaries of this Refuge.

Belle Fourche Refuge

The Belle Fourche Refuge includes the well-known western South Dakota reservoir and adjacent shorelines, comprising some 13,680 acres which were designated as a bird sanctuary by an executive order issued February 25, 1909 by the late President Theodore Roosevelt. This large reservoir was developed by the Reclamation Service through diversion of the Belle Fourche River to an adjacent valley which serves as a water storage site, and constructing the Orman dam forming a lake some eleven miles long and varying from one-fourth of a mile to three miles in width. Waters from this reservoir are distributed over an irrigation district including approximately 73,000 acres.

This Refuge provides a sanctuary for migratory waterfowl, herons, gulls, terns, and shorebirds. Sage grouse may be found along the borders of this area, and a herd of antelope ranges through the hills along the western shore of the reservoir. The administration and maintenance of the reservoir are controlled by the Reclamation Service, with the Fish and Wildlife Service assuming responsibility for the protection and management of wildlife inhabiting the area. The shores of the reservoir are posted with refuge boundary markers which designate the boundaries of the preserve. This area has served as a wildlife sanctuary for forty years.

Bear Butte Refuge

Bear Butte Refuge in Meade County is a 436-acre area adjacent to the historic butte of the same name near the northern Black Hills border, six miles northeast of the city of Sturgis. This area was established in 1939, chiefly for migratory waterfowl. A small lake and marsh of approximately 100 acres were developed at this site through construction of water control structures

(Continued on page 36)

Bird Notes of Special Interest

CHIPPING SPARROWS IN MUD BATH. I got a lot of amusement a couple of weeks ago from watching a pair of chipping sparrows in a spot we were sprinkling in the garden. They literally wallowed in the mud and after that washed themselves in the spray and then went right back in the mud. It was a very hot day and they were certainly keeping cool. We now (Aug. 15th) have a family of five of these birds on the grounds nearly all the time.

—W. B. Mallory, Canton, S. D.

BLUE GROSBEAKS AT SPRINGFIELD. I believe that we observed the blue grosbeak several times this past summer. The first time was on June 21, 1949. These were observed in a valley near a small creek. There was a nest in a plum tree.—M. E. Burgi, Springfield, S. D.

UNION COUNTY NOTES. The first field trip of the year was made on May 8, 1949, along the banks of the Big Sioux River, and the following birds were listed (many of the more common species are not listed for either this trip or the following one): ruby-throated hummingbird, least flycatcher, warbling vireo, and a few Tennessee warblers. The next trip was made for a couple of hours on May 12. During the interval of four days many species of migrants had arrived: yellow-billed cuckoo, red-bellied woodpecker (a permanent resident), Arkansas kingbird, crested flycatcher, olive-sided flycatcher, orchard oriole, Harris's sparrow, white-throated sparrow, chipping sparrow, clay-colored sparrow, towhee, indigo bunting, dickcissel, red-eyed vireo, Tennessee warbler (the main flight of this species was on and we saw and heard dozens of them,—it has always been very common along the Big Sioux River Valley in the spring), magnolia warbler, black-poll warbler, ovenbird, wood thrush, willow thrush and red-tailed hawk.

—Wm. Youngworth, Sioux City, Ia.

BLACK-NECKED STILT. On the morning of July 3, 1949, my husband and I were driving north from Florence, S. D. toward Waubay. We were in the alkaline lake area and hoped to see avocets again. As we neared Bitter Lake we came to a small slough at the side of the road. Through an opening in the rushes we saw a single black-necked stilt feeding near three marbled godwits. It was standing in very shallow water, less than 100 feet from us. As we examined the bird carefully with glasses it gave us a fine opportunity to study it. It walked slowly along in the shallow water, showing its long, coral-pink legs and three-toed feet, feeding with its long straight bill. It then flew across the little puddle, displaying its black under-wing surfaces and trailing those long highly-colored legs, finally alighting nearer us where, with the sun at our backs, every characteristic down to the detail of eye color was clearly observable. There is no reference to the black-necked stilt in Dr. Over's "Birds of South Dakota." In Roberts' "Birds of Minnesota" it is rated as a very rare straggler in North Dakota and Iowa but seldom if ever noted in that state. We seem to have a first recorded sight record.

—Mrs. H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. D.

FEEDING BY MARSH HAWK. On August 21, 1949, Mrs. Chapman and I observed a female marsh hawk on a mud bank some distance out in a shallow slough southwest of Humboldt, S. D. When first seen it was plucking small feathers from something which it held with its talons. Presently it began to cut, pull and eat

from this object. While this was occurring there were several other birds near by in the air and on the water, including teal, coots and yellow-legs. These showed no apparent concern over the presence of this hawk in their midst. This seeming indifference made us wonder if the object the hawk was feeding on was prey it had killed or something already dead when discovered. We later read with interest in John B. May's "Hawks of North America" that a scientist had observed a similar feeding by a marsh hawk and on investigation found that the buffle-head which was being devoured was definitely "carrion." Such might have been the case at the Humboldt Slough. In commenting on the fact that some hawks feed on both killed prey and carrion, Errington and Breckenridge (Food Habits of Buteo Hawks in Nor. Cent. U. S., Wilson Bull. June 1938, p. 113) say: " 'Carrion' can mean animal matter which has been dead for some time before being eaten, though not necessarily putrid," and conclude, "What a redbill or any other Buteo eats is largely a matter of what is to be had without too much trouble; what is conspicuous enough to be readily seen by a hungry bird; what is within the bird's power to capture and handle; or what is already in the form of a carcass beside a highway, along a lake shore or in a field or wood-lot." Perhaps the same may be said of marsh hawks!—H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. D.

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER. It was a beautiful spring morning, May 22, 1948. Accompanied by Chas. S. Hills, an experienced bird student, we observed a new and unusual warbler in Sherman Park, Sioux Falls, S. D., along the Sioux River. We first heard the voice and then saw the bird in the tall tree just above us. After we had studied the stranger for several minutes I jokingly remarked that it looked like a black-throated blue warbler, which I had never seen. Charley took it seriously and we began searching through the Audubon Bird Guide and Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds, and, sure enough, there in the Appendix, under "accidentals" was this very bird, a male black-throated gray warbler. For about fifteen minutes we studied the stranger with a 7x50 binocular. We also recorded in this area Bell's vireo, a pair of crested flycatchers, western wood pewee and Acadian or alder flycatcher, but could not identify a warbler with a face somewhat similar to that of a barn owl. My 1948 record book, up to this May 22nd, listed 127 species I had observed and studied.—Dr. John D. Donahoe, Sioux Falls, S. D.

WHITE PELICAN MIGRATION. On the late afternoon of September 18, 1949, a party of four SDOU members, including the writer, investigated a report by E. V. Gibson of a heavy concentration of white pelicans at Milwaukee Slough, immediately north of Wentworth, S. D. Many of the birds were moving about, apparently seeking roosting places. This afforded a continuing opportunity to check the number in the various segments of the congregation. Careful estimates placed the number of birds in sight at one time at between 3,500 and 4,000. It looked as though the whole population of white pelicans of Canada and the U. S. floated on that slough! Dr. John D. Donahoe took a substantial footage of movies of these "big whites" a couple of days later and conservatively estimated the number there at that time at "about 2000." —J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, S. D.

FULVOUS TREE DUCK. Late in October, 1948, a party of Sioux Falls, S. D. hunters were on a slough about three miles southeast of Salem, McCook County, S. D. The group included C. J. McDermott, Joe Bechtold and U. I. Bechtold. Fairly early in the morning a flock of what appeared to be redheads came over U. I. Bechtold and he shot one of the birds. He could not identify it nor could his companions. It was brought to the Polar Cold Storage Plant in Sioux Falls

and given to Mr. Bert Veenker. It was carefully examined there by Charles S. Hills, now deceased, and identified by him as a fulvous tree duck. It is known that Mr. Hills confirmed his judgment by consulting reliable reference books. The specimen was later taken to the taxidermy shop of W. A. Heldt, there held in storage, and about Sept. 1, 1949, it was mounted by Mr. Heldt. Field Warden W. E. Ritter cooperated in having the body of bird submitted to Dr. Gerald Spawn, of Brookings, S. D., Vice Pres. of SDOU for further examination. The mounted specimen will probably be placed by Mr. Veenker in the Pettigrew Natural History Museum at Sioux Falls. (Note: this report should be credited to Mr. Charles S. Hills, now deceased.—Ed.)

(Note: The publication of notes of the character of the foregoing is one of the important functions of SDOU. Members will be helping themselves and serving others if they report such matters to any officer.—Ed.)

Sanctuary! Sanctuary!

(Continued from page 33)

and utilization of a water supply developed through unusual circumstances some years earlier. About 1920 an oil prospecting company was organized in the district and drilling of a test well began that year on a formation a short distance west of the Butte, in an attempt to discover petroleum. A tremendous artesian flow of water was encountered at about 800 feet, which disrupted further effort at drilling and forced the suspension of additional prospecting at the site.

This well served only as a source of water for livestock for several years until interest developed in utilizing the flow, estimated at many hundreds of thousands of gallons daily, for development of an artificial lake.

Easements were secured by the Biological Survey (the federal conservation agency preceding the present Fish and Wildlife Service) which authorized perpetual rights to flood this area and develop a lake for migratory birds and wildlife conservation purposes. The flow from the artesian well was diverted to the lake site by a mile-long pipe line and has provided sufficient water to maintain a lake and small marsh at relatively constant levels. The City of Sturgis maintains a small park and public recreational area at the western end of the lake.

This refuge serves as a resting and feeding area for waterfowl migrating

through the northern Black Hills area; and herons, bitterns, terns, and other marsh or water birds may also be observed here. Several thousand ducks and some Canada geese concentrate at the lake during the seasonal migrations; and two or three thousand mallards usually winter at this pool, resting in the open water where the artesian flow enters the lake.

Christmas Bird Count

(Continued from page 29)

lose the chance to make the count by January 1; dawn to dusk counts are preferred, and less than 7 hours of field observation is not considered adequate; however, the time is not controlling if the area is covered carefully. At least one experienced observer should be with each group to insure nothing but certain identifications. The contest spirit should be eliminated or limited to matters of accuracy and thoroughness. Identification by sound is permissible if duplication is guarded against. All birds should be listed in the order found in the A.O.U. Check List, Peterson's Field Guide, or other good bird book published since 1931. Numbers of individuals and species should be totaled and verified carefully.

The final report should include information about the terrain, temperature, wind, snow, open water, etc.; and the names and addresses of all who participate and of the reporter.

Secretary W. B. Mallory, Canton, has made many of these counts and reports. You may avoid having your report rejected and your efforts wasted if you submit your original report to him for a quick check. At any rate, please be sure to send him a copy. Remember, January 16 is the deadline for receipt of the report in New York!

I Remember

BY W. B. MALLORY

CANTON, S. D.

Back in the "horse and buggy days" when in addition to that method of travel there were trains which were not only slow but also infrequent, I had occasion to travel by train to and from Canton quite often, and frequently had long waits at that city. When these were long enough I usually crossed the Sioux River to a pasture on the Iowa side which was well covered with grass and interspersed with trees and large wild gooseberry bushes which were favorite nesting places for various wild birds. In this pasture was a very large American elm. Many times I sat with my back to its trunk waiting quietly to see what might happen around me, and thus saw many interesting sights. One incident involved a mother Bob-white and her brood.

On this occasion I had sat by the elm about ten minutes when I noticed a movement in a gooseberry bush about forty feet away and out walked a female quail. She stood listening and watching for perhaps five minutes. She then gave a low signal or call and out from the bush behind her scurried her ten fluffy nestlings. She spread her tail to the fullest extent and the young birds came up behind her and bunched closely under her widely-spread tail. She then walked very slowly to the next gooseberry bush about ten feet away, disappearing with her brood on the far side of the bush. Her advance was very cautious. She evidently hoped to avoid attracting the attention of hawks, crows or other predators.

For some time I expected to see them emerge on the far side of the bush, but finally investigated and found no sign of them. Evidently the mother bird had known of my presence and, as soon as she was behind the bush, went quick-

ly away, keeping the bush between her brood and me. In any event the few minutes I watched her and her nestlings have always remained in my memory as one of the high spots of my bird observations. I realized afterwards that I should have examined the bush from which she came as it is possible I witnessed the first venture of her brood from the nest. The young birds were so small they could not have been long out of the eggs.

A remembrance of quite a different sort comes to me from about thirty years ago. I had secured about a dozen of the Berlepsch nest boxes which originated in Germany and which were considered so advantageous that the Audubon Society persuaded a manufacturer to make some of them for sale in the United States. They were made from large pieces of tree limbs or, in case of the larger ones, from trunks of small trees. These were hollowed out with an entrance about as a woodpecker makes its nest and a removable top was fastened on with a bolt and nut. They were by far the most successful nesting boxes I ever used for such birds as woodpeckers and were readily used by bluebirds, chickadees, wrens and other cavity-nesting birds.

One year a pair of screech owls took possession of one box that was placed quite high and while I was somewhat dubious about it I let them raise their young there. I have since learned by experiences that screech owls should not be tolerated among birds you have invited to make their homes on your place, but I was uninformed then.

When I thought there should be nearly full-grown young birds in the box I climbed up, intending to open it, take out one of the young and photograph

it. My oldest son, Paul, then about 12 years old, insisted on following me up the ladder. He got only about halfway up when he yelled: "Dad, you dropped that wrench on me." As I still held the wrench in my hand I was puzzled until I heard the typical clicking of an owl's bill, saw one of the parent birds on a nearby limb and realized that it was this owl and not my wrench which

had hit the ladder-climber. On investigating we found that the owl had hit my son's head with her sharp clams, inflicting a small scratch on his scalp, and carried his light cap away about fifteen feet. There was no real harm done, but here was another incident to remember. We did not get a young bird out that evening, but the next day in broad daylight we secured one and took its picture.

Peterson Says

P. O. Box 7,
Glen Echo, Md.
Aug. 22, 1949.

Mr. Herman F. Chapman,
504 Security Bank Bldg.,
Sioux Falls, So. Dakota.

Dear Mr. Chapman:

It was a pleasure to receive a copy of the first issue of South Dakota Bird Notes, the official publication of the newly formed South Dakota Ornithologists' Union. The article about the Cormorants is most interesting. This species certainly has spread enormously in the past twenty or thirty years. Mr. Lundquist states that in 1927 Harrison Lewis credited South Dakota with four of the fourteen colonies in the United States. There are now more than fourteen colonies on the coast of Maine alone where in 1927 none were positively known to exist. Harrison Lewis must have been thinking only in terms of the race found in the northeastern and central states, for colonies of the species represented by its other races have long been numerous on the west coast and in the southeastern states.

South Dakota Bird Notes should serve an extremely important function in stimulating field work in the state and particularly in drawing attention to some of the problems of bird distribution that remain to be solved in the state.

I am looking forward to my visit to Sioux Falls in April and am pleased I shall have the opportunity to visit with you.

Sincerely yours,
Roger T. Peterson
s/ R. T. Peterson

(Note: Mr. Peterson is a member of SDOU)

**Additional
SDOU Membership**

(All addresses "South Dakota" unless otherwise noted)

ACTIVE

- Aitken, W. W.
- 1709 Jackson St., Omaha, Nebr.
- Culp, V. H.
- 414 9th Ave., S. E., Aberdeen
- Fox, Adrian Box 1451, Lincoln, Nebr.
- Hurt, W. R. 123 Forest, Vermillion
- Magers, Mrs. May Hoefs Selby
- Moser, R. Allyn
- R. F. D. No. 1, Omaha 4, Nebr.
- Murdy, Ray Webster
- Peterson, Roger Tory
- P. O. Box 7, Glen Echo, Md.
- Ritter, W. E.
- 307 N. Euclid Ave., Sioux Falls
- Robinson, Will G. Pierre
- Schulman, B. P. Box 441, Rapid City
- Trautman, Carl G.
- 821 8th Ave., Brookings
- Trimm, H. Wayne
- 323½ E. 5th, Scott City, Kan.
- Voss, Henry Tripp
- Whitney, Rae
- Jamestown College, Jamestown, N. D.
- Wood, Mrs. Howard
- R. R. No. 3, Sioux Falls

JUNIOR

- Click, Carrol J. Tuscor, Mont.
- Halliday, James W. Jefferson

SDOU News

Executive member J. O. Johnson, of Watertown, S. D. writing from Yellowstone National Park, reports "Two trumpeter swans have been added to our list of birds seen this summer. We saw no young with them. They were on a little slough, some distance off the highway, east of Steamboat Point, Lake Yellowstone. We had a good view of them but not close enough for a picture."

Audubon Screen Tours at Huron started on October 6th with Maslowski. Remaining numbers are Cruickshank, Oct. 29; Wm. Ferguson, Jan. 16; Link, March 20; Harwell, April 25. Write to Mrs. O. E. Wright, 708 Colorado, S. W., Huron, S. D. for further details. The schedule for the Sioux Falls series, given in the July issue, starts with Cruickshank, Oct. 28. Both series are at High School, 8:15 P. M. SDOU members in other communities who are interested in the possibility of securing this exceptionally fine series next winter (1950-51) should write to Mr. Wayne Short, National Audubon Society, 1000 Fifth Avenue, New York 28, N. Y. soon. The net cost is surprisingly low; the cultural value exceedingly high.

Mr. Wesley R. Hurt has assumed his duties as Director of the Museum at the University of South Dakota at Vermillion, S. D., which was recently officially designated the "W. H. Over Museum." Dr. Over, the beloved Curator, will remain in that capacity for a while yet, but is gradually turning over the management to the younger man.

In addition to his museum work, Dr. Hurt will do some teaching. He is from New Mexico, has had a great deal of experience at the Universities of that state, and of Chicago and Michigan, majoring in Anthropology. He spent a very interesting period on a small island in the Aleutian chain this past summer in practical isolation from all civilization. The story of his experiences there, perhaps with pictures,

should help him to make the acquaintance of many South Dakota audiences.

Dr. Hurt is interested in the ornithology of South Dakota and we are confident that department of the Museum will have continued good treatment at his hands. He is a member of SDOU.

Mr. Willis Hall, of Yankton, S. D., a charter member of SDOU carried out two winter bird population studies last winter while he was teaching in Spearfish High School. One census was of a yellow pine coniferous forest; the other included a creek bordered by deciduous trees. The reports were printed in the June, 1949, issue of Audubon Field Notes, a copy of which can be obtained from National Audubon Society, 1000 5th Ave., New York for 60c. Mr. Hall's work in South Dakota ornithology will be interrupted, at least for the present, as he is now attending seminary in Ohio.

Madison Garden Club includes a number of members of SDOU. The program book for 1949 indicates the interest of its members in bird-study, as practically every program involved some bird item. Here are some of the suggestions found in the booklet which we believe were contributed by Mrs. D. S. Baughman, president of the Club: "Save pumpkin, squash and melon seeds for winter birds. A tiny chickadee can rip the hull from a seed in seconds." "Make a pie crust with waste fats—birds love it." "Cardinals like sunflower seeds, but will eat corn, too." "Crochet a feeder out of cord string, fill it with suet and hang near your window. This is safer than a metal container for sometimes a moist little tongue or even an eye will freeze to the cold metal." "Bore holes about 1½ inches in diameter in a rough weathered board, approximately 1 x 2½ x 18. Fill the holes with peanut butter, suet, seeds, nut meats and/or chick feed and hang out of reach of squirrels." "Give the birds grit when the ground is snow-covered or frozen."

Huron Bird Club members accompanied by a number of children made a trip during the summer to a black-crowned night heron colony about 17 miles south and 6 miles west of Huron. Various other birds nests were found and identified. The flight of different species of shore birds was studied.

There will never be another Vol. 1, No. 1, of South Dakota Bird Notes, so maybe you had better be sure where your copy is. There are not many copies left in the Union files. If you

have a special need for a special gift for a special friend, we suggest a SDOU membership, to include, if possible, Nos. 1 and 2.

The selection of an appropriate emblem for the Union is "unfinished business" and will remain so until the next annual meeting. Out-of-state members are displaying some interest; resident members are disappointingly silent. Wayne Trimm has submitted another drawing of the lark bunting. What do YOU suggest?



Curt Courtesy Wilson Bulletin

Young White Pelican Walking