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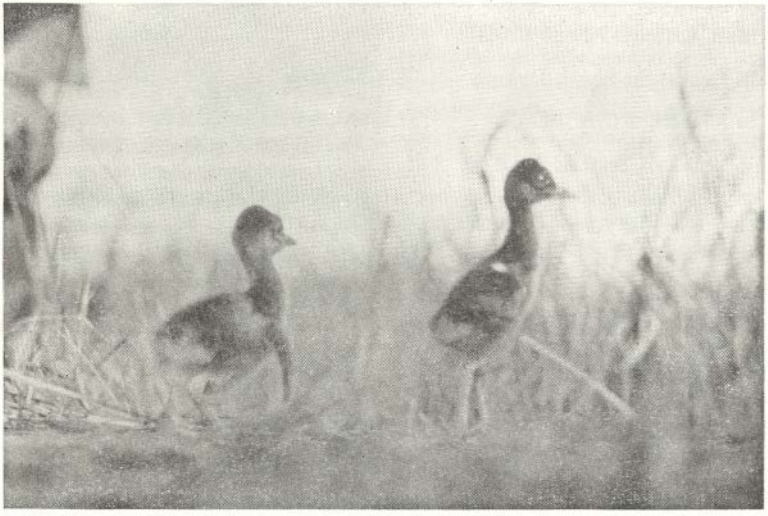

—CUT COURTESY WILSON BULLETIN

Young Sandhill Cranes

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Volume II, No. 4 South Dakota Bird Notes **Whole No. 7**

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SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION

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President's Page

GERALD B. SPAWN
BROOKINGS, S. D.

DEAR FRIENDS: What a change in the weather has occurred since the last writing for this page, and along with that change a great change in the bird population--different kinds and not quite so many of them.

Yes—the season of snows and subfreezing temperatures is really here; but we can add more fuel to the stove and put on extra warm clothes when we go outside, so we have quite an advantage over our little feathered neighbors. To be sure, many of the birds around us now have come from much farther north where weather conditions are more severe. Even so, they are still confronted with the job of getting enough food—adding fuel to their gastric furnaces—to keep warm.

Our winters are not always kind to birds. Snows may cover an otherwise adequate food supply and render that food unavailable. If such conditions last several days, it means hard times and lean days for the birds. It doesn't take many foodless days to reduce a normal bird to the point of starvation.

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As many of our members know, there is no better way to increase the numbers of birds around your home than by supplying them with food now when the supply of natural food is low or inaccessible. Many hours of enjoyment may be had in return for just a few moments spent in making and maintaining a window bird-feeder or some other type of sheltered feeder. Birds soon find food placed in a feeder for them and will visit it regularly, and you get much pleasure out of watching their antics as they take turns at the feeder.

For several years, we have maintained a window feeding station just outside our south living-room window. A south window gives added protection from cold, north winds. In the feeder we supply sunflower seeds, sorghum heads, rolled oats, bread crumbs, and a little corn meal and waste fat mixed together. Cut-up apples, popcorn screenings, etc., add to variety. A piece of suet, or other animal fat, nailed to the feeder or to a tree adds "fuel" food to the diet. Several times a day we hear a sharp little "tap-tap-tap" as a Downy Woodpecker, Nuthatch, or Chickadee comes for a lunch of suet. These, plus sparrows, Blue-jays, Flickers, Brown Creepers, Juncos, Hairy Woodpeckers, and an occasional (in Brookings) Cardinal, are the species most likely to be attracted to such feeding stations.

* * * * * * * * * *

There are many types of feeders on the market and other types which are relatively easy to construct and quite inexpensive. But you don't have to wait until you can buy or make a feeder. In addition to the feeder, I place sorghum heads into our spirea bushes and the birds make good use of them. The main idea is to get the food out where the birds can get it--where they are somewhat protected from the wind and cannot easily fall victims to cats and dogs —the birds will do the rest.

If you have not tried feeding birds at a window feeder or other feeders which you can watch from your windows, let me urge you to try it this winter.

IDENTIFYING BIRDS AFIELD

A. F. GANIER

NASHVILLE, TENN.

ON going afield with an experienced observer of birds the beginner is usually surprised as well as puzzled at the readiness with which the various species are discerned, identified and pointed out for his further study. Frequently it is little more than a fleeting glimpse near at hand, or a bird in the distance, whose song, call note or color cannot be had, yet an almost intangible bit or chain of evidence proclaimed to the keen and experienced observer the identity of the species in question. Broadly speaking, this method of identifying birds afield may be termed a "process of elimination" and fitness to accurately apply such a process can only be attained after careful study and long and close observation. More time given to studiously watching birds when found and less toward building up big daily lists is the means by which this knowledge may be had.

There are many enthusiastic students of bird life who, after years of work in the open, are still dependent upon note or song or upon a reasonably close view of the coloration or plumage before they are at all sure of their bird. In fact so much has been said and written of color keys and field glasses that the tyro might readily believe that little else may avail in his efforts to identify. It is therefore the purpose of this paper to maintain that no less a factor is knowledge of the fact that each species of birds has pronounced characteristics, mannerisms, habits and habitats, which may be learned as certainly as color and song and used as a convenient method of identification on trips afield.

I have a good friend whose ear is so keen and so well attuned by practice that he has only to hear the faintest note or muttering of some bird to be able to name it. I have other friends who have their color keys so clearly charted in their minds that with a bit of study as to color and size they feel safe in naming their bird. But what of the occasions when glasses are not at hand or when the light is poor, and what of the birds that are silent or out of earshot?

My own plan is to rely much less on color and song than upon mannerisms, feeding habits and habitat, and thus while my friend with glasses is trying for a view as to color, I have passed on and perhaps recorded a dozen more that would else have flown away and thus escaped my record. So varied are these characteristics that a few will be cited here, such as position of body and tail in flight, method of wing stroke, manner of alighting, position of body after alighting, location chosen in tree or shrub for alighting, conduct of the bird after it has alit, method of hopping, walking or scratching, uneasiness or the reverse, position while feeding on branches or fly-catching in mid-air, method of flocking or appearing singly or scattered, shape assumed by the flocks, special mannerisms during period of courtship, etc. etc.

As illustrations for some of the points enumerated, let us take some of the birds of prey. Those familiar with both the Black and Turkey Vultures can readily identify them at a distance of a mile by watching for a few moments the time and method of wing beat. Aside from this the Turkey Vulture is usually found close to the ground seeking its food, while the Black species more often soars at a great height where he can keep a dozen Turkey Vultures under surveillance and thus rob the first one of them that locates food.

Passing to the hawks, we know of the characteristic soaring habits of the Red-tail and the Broad-winged and contrast them with the rapid, low, direct flight of the Cooper's and the Sharp-shinned. Those who have watched the Sparrow Hawk hover in mid-air over a hayfield need only to remember this characteristic to separate it from the Sharp-shinned and the Pigeon Hawk and if another long range characteristic is required it will be found that the Sparrow Hawk chooses for its perch a site that would rarely or never be chosen by the other two small species. Again, with reference to the latter, there are field characteristics just as pronounced between the Sharp-shinned Hawk and the Pigeon Hawk.

* * * * *

Taking up next an ever-puzzling family for the amateur, the sparrows, the study of their habits and habitat will be found to be the most accurate as well as the most rapid method of listing those dull-colored little birds. Let us take for instance the White-crowned and the White-throated Sparrows. The former when startled will work its way upward to the top of some shrub in the thicket and there eye the intruder with body poised upright and crest erected, the very personification of the wild Canadian country in which he is reared. His cousin, the White-throat, is sociable and good-natured, showing no great fear and only a desire to slouch along with his fellows and to move on, feeding unconcernedly as he does so. Tho greatly as these two sparrows differ in their dispositions ,specimens examined together in the hand show that in size and markings they differ but slightly.

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Taking two more species of about the same size, we will consider the Field and the Chipping Sparrows. Aside from the longer tail and lighter color of the former, one must, at a distance, rely upon their movements for their identity. It will be found that the Chipping Sparrow feeds in the trees, shrubs and upon the bare ground or close-cropped grass, while the Field Sparrow chooses the weeds, briars and ground covered with long grass. He is a bird of the brush while the Chipping is a bird of the open. Aside from habitat the two may be distinguished from each other by their manner of flight and other characteristics.

* * * * *

And so in turn I might take up each member of the sparrow family and recite how each one has one or more characteristics not shared by its cousins and which are quite as infallible, or more so, than field observations of song or color. In no closely allied family are mannerisms as distinct as among the woodpeckers. Mere coloration, size and call facilitate identification but close observations will reveal that each species has its own distinct manner of going about its climbing, pecking, trying, hammering, flying and feeding. Take for instance the Sapsucker, it clings close to an upright limb and keeps the better part of a stout one between himself and the observer, as tho he expected to be shot at for his sapsucking proclivities. Then take the Downy and the Red-bellied Woodpeckers, which, apparently knowing the good they do, have none of sneak about them and trustingly show themselves in full, making a clatter about it all the while. That splendid member of the woodpecker family, the Pileated, has an individuality and nobility about him that commands wonder and respect. When one has won the confidence of one of these birds its gentleness is surprising and the dignity of its bearing begets for it both respect and interest.

* * * * *

The great warbler family is no exception to the law of varied field characteristics and, aside from colors and markings, all of the items which I have mentioned may be brought to bear to bring about a process of elimination, and so come quickly to proper identification. I

confess that, with this family, I have not fully mastered the process which I have outlined but knowing that my friend with keen ear has mentioned 57 varieties of thin, weak warbler "chips," I have little doubt that their mannerisms will be found to differ in a pronounced way.

Passing on to a few scattered examples which are probably well known to most observers, I recall to your mind how the Shrike flies its low level flight and then at the end rises abruptly to a point of vantage; how the Palm Warbler identifies itself by nervously twitching its tail; how the Water-thrushes make their identity easy by bobbing up and down, how certain ducks dive while others feed only in shallow water; how the Chat and the Yellow-throat may be identified at a distance when he mounts high in the air and then falls pell-mell to earth again; how the Nighthawk is at home on the wing while its near cousin, the Whip-poor-will, prefers to rest on a woodland bough; how the Grey-cheeked Thrush will allow close approach while his very near cousin, the Olive-backed, is as wild and as wary as a Great Horned Owl, and so on. I might cite many more examples with which you are familiar.

Summing it all up, one will find that the most interesting of all methods of identifying birds is that which involves not chiefly the color and song, but the actions, habits, habitat and other characteristics of the various species, and in arriving at a working knowledge of this method the observer opens to himself a new angle and wide field of bird study which will afford him interest unending. (Wilson Bulletin, Dec. 1923)

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How Long A Life List

A "Life List" has been defined as "a total list of birds with which the observer has made a field acquaintance, including only species seen in the living state."

Whether such a list, by itself, is of any scientific value may be doubted. Whether it is a reliable guage of one's ornithological skill or knowledge is probably debatable. The length of the list usually depends upon the amount of traveling the observer has done, at favorable seasons and in or near habitat acceptable to or used by birds.

Nevertheless, compiling a life list adds pleasure and interest to bird-watching. Roger Tory Peterson recognized this when he made provision in the fore part of the last edition of **Field Guide to the Birds** for the recording of a life list.

Perhaps by making some limitations we can add some value to the making of our own life list. If we accept the definition given above we exclude dead birds, no matter how killed or where seen dead. Accidentals will be eliminated to some extent if we confine ourselves to the 380 species listed in **Birds of South Dakota**. Better acquaintance with local ornithology will be developed if the listed identifications are confined to those actually made within the boundaries of South Dakota. While there may be some support for using a combination of the observations made by more than one person, such as husband and wife, it may serve to sharpen and improve the accuracy of the observer's information and observation if only one individual's identifications are recorded in the list.

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"A common thing is a grass blade small, Crushed by the feet that pass, But all the dwarfs and giants tall, Working till doomsday shadows fall, Can't make a blade of grass."—**Wonderful, by Julian Stearns Cutler.**

Nesting of the Red Crossbill

AUSTIN P. LARRABEE

YANKTON, S. D.

THE Red Crossbill, **Loxia curvirostra minor**, is, in the vicinity of Yankton, S. D., an irregular and rare visitor, occurring for the most part during the fall and early winter. Individuals evidently stray in occasionally during the summer, for two of these birds were seen on July 10, 1919. During the fall of 1916, the crossbills were more common than in any year since, but even then in flocks of six or eight only. For about a month from the middle of September, flocks of about these numbers visited some honey locusts near my home. When the food supply failed here, they scattered out and were seen occasionally during November and December, —generally a solitary individual. The last record for that winter was on January 28, when six were seen. During the next two winters, the crossbills were very rare, especially so in 1917-18, when but one was seen for the season. They were scarcely less rare the following winter, for they were recorded but four times, and each time a single individual only. During the present winter, none has been seen.

More of the Red Crossbills were observed during the winter of 1919-20, although not as many as in the fall of 1916. They were first noticed on November 11, when six were seen. Between then and the following March, they were noted three times. On the seventeenth of March, two pairs were observed in a group of Scotch pines in one corner of the college athletic park. This was a particularly noteworthy occasion, for one of the males favored me with a song, the first that I had ever heard. The song was rather subdued, a varied warble that would not rank high musically, but which had a sweetness of tone combined with a tang of wildness that made it attractive and pleasing. Until the latter part of the month, a pair of crossbills were to be found regularly in the pines feeding on the seeds, which they secured by deftly tearing the cones apart.

This pair occurred so regularly that I began to suspect that they were contemplating nesting. My suspicions proved to be well founded. On March 25 I located a nest about eighteen feet from the ground in one of the pines. At the time of the discovery, the female crossbill was on the nest, evidently nearly completed, arranging materials and moulding the nest into shape by turning around and around. The male took no part in nest building but, perched on the top of an adjacent pine, sang while his mate worked. When she flew away, he followed closely after, returning to his observation point when she came back with more nesting material. On the twenty-ninth, I climbed up to the nest for the first time. The female was on the nest but did not fly until I was nearly on a level with her. Neither she nor her mate appeared much disturbed by my intrusion and watched me apparently unconcerned from nearby trees. At that time, two eggs had been laid. On the following day, I visited the nest again. The crossbills were not around at first, but appeared soon after and watched me as indifferently as before while I inspected the nest. There were still two eggs. Two days later, I went to the pines in the midst of a snow storm. The crossbills were not in evidence. I could not see that either of the birds was on the nest, but decided that it would not be wise to investigate for eggs would chill too quickly on such a cold, disagreeable day. So I went away with a vague premonition that all was not well.

It was not until the eighth of April that I went to the nest once more. As I came near the pines, I missed the twittering call that the male was wont to give to his mate, nor could I see either of them. The reason was apparent when I looked into the nest, for there I saw evidences of one of the common tragedies of bird life. But one egg was left in the nest and that one badly broken. Little wonder that the owners of the nest had deserted the place and were seen there no more. The pines are a favorite resort of Bronzed Grackles, a pair nesting in one of the nearby pines later on, and I wondered if any of these were responsible for the disaster. The nest and egg were taken and are now a part of the collection of the college.

The nest was placed in the fork of a branch not far from the trunk. Small twigs from a hedge of Russian olive close by were used for the foundation of the nest. These were arranged crosswise and interlaced so as to round off the substantial and firm foundation. The nest proper was made of grasses, small weed stalks, fine rootlets, strips of bark mainly from the hedge, and a string or two. The lining was composed of the finest of the grasses and strips of bark, together with an abundance of plant down and a few feathers, making a very compact and warm nest. The materials used could all be procured near at hand, so the birds did not need to go far to get them. . . . . .

This is, apparently, the first recorded instance of the Red Crossbill nesting in southeastern South Dakota, and adds a new locality to the several instances reported elsewhere in the United States of the bird nesting outside of its regular breeding haunts. It is to be regretted that the efforts of this pair should have ended so disastrously.—Proceedings of South Dakota Academy of Science, 1920.

Books and Articles About Birds

WHERE TO FIND BIRDS IN MINNESOTA. By Kenneth D. Morrison and Josephine Daneman Herz. Published by The Itasca Press, Book Division of Webb Pub. Co., St. Paul, Minn. 136 pages, $1.50.

Members of SDOU will recall that "Ken" Morrison attended our organization meeting, as representative of National Audubon Society. He is now Editor of Audubon Magazine. During his experience in Minnesota with the state conservation organization, and while he was conducting Audubon Tours in Itasca State Park, he really learned where birds were to be found in Minnesota. This publication is a summary of what he learned and what other expert bird-watchers have reported.

This compilation includes reports on 62 outstanding areas where birds may be found. Birding areas in the same part of the state are grouped together. There are maps, alphabetical lists, directories, and sketches—all designed to make this a very practical guide for anyone who can spend even a little time in Minnesota.—HFC

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THE BIRDS OF FORT SISSETON, SOUTH DAKOTA, A SIXTY YEAR COMPARISON. By Wm. Youngworth. Reprint of an authoritative, illustrated 27-page article, by a competent observer. Send 25c in stamps to SDOU, Supply limited.

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"Yes, indeed, there is lots of tragedy in the world. That fact adds a bit to the desirability of bird-study, which affords relief and wholesome relaxation."

—S. S. Visher.

SANDHILL CRANES IN SOUTH DAKOTA

H. F. CHAPMAN

SIOUX FALLS, S. D.

THIS is but a preliminary review of some of the records relating to Grus canadensis tibida in South Dakota, all of which are accessible to anyone who may attempt a serious study of this subject.

The report of G. S. Agersborg on the Birds of Southeastern South Dakota, published in The Auk, 1885, states that the Sandhill Crane was then a common migrant in that area, and that "a few remain during the breeding season. I have never found its nest, but am reliably informed of its breeding here."

In 1935 Wm. Youngworth published the results of his study of The Birds of Fort Sisseton, South Dakota, (Wilson Bulletin, Sept. 1935) in which he compared his findings with those made by Dr. Chas. E. McChesney in the 1870's. On the basis of the McChesney report Youngworth says: "The Sandhill Crane formerly bred on the Coteau," and adds, "but at present time it is an uncommon bird even as a migrant."

The annotation in **Birds of South Dakota**, Over and Thoms, 1946, relative to this species includes the following:

"Once very common in migration over the eastern part of the state and nested. The set of two eggs in Museum collection was taken in Miner County, May 22, 1887 . . . of recent years the Sandhill Crane has shifted its migratory route to the west and at present is seen both spring and fall in large numbers flying over the eastern foothills of the Black Hills, often alighting to rest."

Members of SDOU will recall the article by Dr. S. S. Visher, in the March 1950 issue of South Dakota Bird Notes, in which he recounted his observations, during his early boyhood, of Sandhill Cranes in Sanborn County, South Dakota, and his vivid description of their dancing.

Within the past 10 years the writer has seen large flocks of Sandhills, both in flight and feeding in cornfields, in the area adjacent to the Missouri River, between Chamberlain and Platte, where Canada Geese are so prevalent each fall. Goose hunters frequently report similar obesrvations in that same general area.

—CUT COURTESY WILSON BULLETIN

NEST OF SANDHILL CRANES

Mr. James Kimball, a director of SDOU, at Pierre, S. D., reports that there was an unusually heavy flight of Cranes down the Missouri Valley this fall (1950).

In the note by Mr. Kenneth Krumm found in this issue, there is reference to the flight of this species near the Black Hills, which corroborates the statement of Over and Thoms relative to the shift of migration route.

The foregoing sketchy review merely serves to emphasize the oft-repeated statement that there is a lot of South Dakota ornithology concerning which there is little, if any, published record.

(Continued on next page)

But there is a growing interest on the part of South Dakotans and others in the general subject and in particular species which may be observed here.

Dr. L. H. Walkinshaw, of Battle Creek, Mich., for years has been studying the Sandhill Crane, and he is now one of the leading authorities in the United States on this species. He is the author of The Sandhill Cranes, published in 1940 by Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bloomfield Hills, Mich., which is the outstanding current publication dealing with these interesting birds. Fortunately, Dr. Walkinshaw's interest in the species continues. We visited at the meeting of American Ornithologists' Union at Minneapolis last October, and he was much interested in the possibility of securing Sandhill migration data from this area. He desires to obtain all possible information from various parts of South Dakota about these long-legged birds, including the following specific items: dates of migration, including first dates, dates of heaviest abundance and last dates seen; actual or estimated numbers of birds seen; the place where seen; where they fed; where they roosted at night; and whether they migrated by night or day or both.

In view of the fact that SDOU is endeavoring to accumulate current and complete information about all the birds of South Dakota, Dr. Walkinshaw suggests that all reports on Sandhill Cranes in this state might well be cleared through our office, and forwarded on to him. We shall be glad to cooperate in this regard.

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Among the outstanding characteristics of the Sandhill Crane are its various calls, particularly those given while the birds are in flight. Dr. Visher has given a brief description of the vocal activities of the species. Many another South Dakota farm boy has stopped his work, and, with hand shielding his eyes from the bright sunlight, scanned the high sky for the sources of those faintly-ringing notes from afar; then, finding them, has stood transfixed as he watched the slow spiralling of hundreds of tiny specks shining in the very depths of the great blue bowl, listening to the trilling bugle-calls of the Sandhill Cranes which drifted down to him on the warm spring wind.

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What to Do With a Bird Band

1. Print the full number of the band, including the series designation and the serial number.

2. If the bird is alive, read the number without removing the band and release the bird again; if dead, remove the band, flatten it out, and fasten it to the letter with scotch tape. If it is desired as a souvenir, the band will be returned to the finder after being examined.

3. State the exact date, location (town, county, state) and manner in which the bird was obtained (i.e. shot, trapped, found dead, etc.)

4. Print your name and permanent address clearly on your letter. Keep a record of the band number and refer to it on all subsequent correspondence.

Address letter to:

Bird-Banding Office
Patuxent Research Refuge
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Laurel, Maryland.

All letters will be acknowledged and this acknowledgment will state the name of the bird, date and place banded, and the name and address of the bander.

General Notes of Special Interest

CENTRAL BLACK HILLS NOTES—Have been doing some deer hunting which, of course, gives me a chance to note birds in the hunting areas. Found two Robins and three Townsend's Solitaires on Victoria Creek. Believe they will live in the valley all winter; seemed to be living on Thorn Apples which are plentiful here. There seem to be more Chickadees and White-breasted Nuthatches in this area this year. Saw two Brown Creepers. Fall migration was short so not many birds seen; they seemed to have all left in one day. Many Starlings were traveling in large flocks with Red-winged Blackbirds, Cow-birds, Bronzed Grackles and a few Yellow-headed Blackbirds.—Harry C. Behrens, Rapid City, S. D.

WEST RIVER NOTES—The recent late summer and autumn migration in western South Dakota exhibited certain characteristics or trends of general interest although no rare or unusual records were obtained in the writer's territory. The waterfowl migration in the Lacreek area appeared to be somewhat lighter than that of last season, at least in the number of the more common surface-feeding species of ducks: Mallard, Pintail, Gadwall, and Blue-winged Teal. The goose flight followed the general migration pattern observed here for several seasons, most of the birds apparently turning southeast along the Missouri River to concentrate in the valley between Chamberlain and Lake Andes, although limited numbers of both Canada and White-fronted Geese moved on to rest and feed in small concentrations in southwestern South Dakota. Birds of prey (except the Rough-legged Hawk) were generally scarce. The most interesting observations among this group consisting of a few sight records of the Prairie Falcon and Pigeon Hawk. An unusually large migration of Sandhill Cranes moved through the western section of the state this fall, numerous flocks being reported by various observers from September 30 to October 15th. State Warden Roy Clennon, of Sturgis, reported a very heavy migration of Cranes, October 10-12th, in the northern Black Hills area. Many large flocks passed over both day and night. Mourning Doves appear to have increased considerably this season. Large flocks of these birds were noted throughout August and early September. One of the more interesting bird records obtained this fall was that of an Evening Grosbeak, observed in the Refuge Headquarters yard on November 5th. The Horned Larks and Longspurs returned in force with the first cold wave of the season, November 8-10th. Small flocks of Juncos began drifting through the Refuge in mid-October, a definite proportion of these exhibiting variations in plumage ranging from well-defined black hoods, reddish-brown backs, and rusty sides to less prominent coloration, suggesting crosses of western forms with the common slate-colored species, or immature forms of the slate-colored.—Kenneth Krumm, Manager, Lacreek Refuge, Martin, S. D.

LEWIS'S WOODPECKER IN ROBERTS COUNTY.—There are few birds that do not occasionally wander out of their customary range, and the handsome Lewis's Woodpecker is no exception. Distributed over western North America, it is found east to Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico; strays have been recorded

from North Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, and even Rhode Island. (Bent, 1921) According to Over and Thoms in Birds of South Dakota, this woodpecker is a summer resident of the Black Hills, and Visher in his List of Birds of Western South Dakota (Auk, 1909) states: "Very abundant breeder in central wilder part of the Hills; uncommon elsewhere." However, to my knowledge there is no published record for this bird east of that area in this state.* On April 6, 1940, a Lewis's Woodpecker was seen in the northeastern corner of the state, at Sodak Park on Big Stone Lake, and was watched for 20 minutes from a distance of not over 30 yards. When first noticed the bird was being chased about a grove of dead oak trees by a male Red-headed Woodpecker. The two birds were observed with 4x binoculars. The record is of additional interest as the date is unusually early for the arrival of the Red-headed Woodpecker.—Bruce K. Harris, Bismark, N. D.

(*There is an unpublished sight record of this species by Wm. Youngworth in Union County, S. D. on Jan. 17, 1929. Ed.)

FLORIDA GALLINULES—The Florida Gallinule is seen off and on in northeastern South Dakota, along with Coots, at nesting time. It is not reported very often, and I think this is mainly because by all but a few observers they are probably mistaken for Coots. In Day County they have been seen by myself and Wesley Kubichek, and by Wm. Youngworth who classifies the species as "summer residents," here. Over and Thoms, in Birds of South Dakota, report them as "occasionally nesting." Kenneth Dahlgren, a state game technician, told me he saw a Florida Gallinule in a marshy area near Huron, S. D., with Coots, during the summer of 1950.—A. R. Lundquist, Webster, S. D.

KINGBIRDS IN S. E. SO. DAK.—During the summer of 1950 we made notes of the number and species of the Kingbirds observed on and along the highway. All of the 25 trips, except two, were made within a radius of 25-30 miles of Sioux Falls and included a variety of types of terrain. Practically none of the territory traversed was east of Sioux Falls. The period covered was May 20 to September 17. On the first day we saw 7 Easterns and 1 Western (Arkansas); on the last day, 2 Easterns and no Westerns. The peak in numbers was on August 2nd: 94 Easterns and 12 Westerns. On June 19, between Pierre and Chamberlain, much of the way near the Missouri River, we saw 25 Easterns and 2 Westerns. No Western was observed after September 3, while Easterns were noted on four subsequent dates, the last on September 17. Season totals: Eastern 491, Western 92. Similar studies in other parts of South Dakota would produce much information on the distribution of these two species.—Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. D.

FALL MIGRATION, SAND LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, 1950—The return of birds from the north really began about July 15 with the first observations made on Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. These birds are absent from Sand Lake for only about 30 days during summer. As of August 15 we noted concentrations of both Yellowlegs, Long-billed Dowitchers, Marbled Goodwits, Baird's Sandpipers, Phalaropes and other shore birds. This date probably represented our peak of fall population of shorebirds at the refuge.

Worthy of special note was the recording of a movement of American Pipits and Sanderlings through the refuge on October 14. Only two Wilson's Snipe were noted this fall; these on November 7. Marbled Godwits were again very abundant on the refuge—80 were recorded in one flock on September 3.

On August 10 a movement of Red-tailed Hawks was recorded.

A rather rare observation was made on a pair of Wood Ducks on August 15. Extremely rare was the noting of a female Old Squaw in winter plumage on November 8.

Our late summer waterfowl population of 10,000 ducks and 150 geese was recorded on August 31; these were largely resident breeding birds. Our breeding goose flock was composed entirely of Common Canada Geese. A very few Snow and Blue Geese were observed during the summer but these were probably crippled birds that did not nest. Blue-winged Teal outnumbered other summer ducks with 5,000 recorded on August 31. At the same date 1,500 Pintails, 1,500 Mallards, 500 Baldpates, 500 Gadwalls, 500 Shovellers and 500 other ducks were recorded.

First evidence of fall migration was noted among the Blue-winged Teal, an increase of which began in August and built up to a peak by mid-September. Coots were more numerous this fall with 10,000 present in early October. Coots, Baldpates, Green-winged Teal and Shovellers increased very rapidly throughout September; all reached peak population early in October.

The flight of Mallards was less pronounced and much delayed this fall. Abundance of water and feed in North Dakota, combined with late harvest of local corn, markedly reduced our Mallard population. A quick freeze-up on November 9 drove out many of the Mallards and most of the other puddle ducks. Mallards increased later. We still have 20,000 Mallards as of Dec. 4.

We saw a good flight of Redheads, Canvasbacks and Ruddy Ducks during the first part of October. These species were more numerous than usual. Scaups came through in somewhat reduced numbers. American Goldeneyes and American Mergansers were noted in limited numbers late in November.

The recorded duck population (all species) of the Refuge for the season was as follows: 10,000 August 31, 20,000 September 21, 48,000 October 5, 50,000 October 16, 60,000 October 27, 75,000 November 3, 38,000 November 10, 85,000 November 18, and 24,000 November 28.

Fall migration of geese began September 21 with the arrival of 80 White-fronted Geese and followed on September 22 by a few Snow and Blue Geese. Richardson's Geese were first recorded on September 26—50 birds. The goose flock built up gradually until October 7, then suddenly tripled in 48 hours during a period of rather stormy weather. Throughout the remainder of October geese increased steadily on the refuge, reaching a peak of 60,000 birds on October 27. This equalled the fall goose population record established in 1949 with the peak number recorded at almost exactly the same date as during the previous year. The flock composition on October 27 was 44,700 Lesser Canada and Richardson's Geese, 1,000 Common Canada Geese (Honkers), 14,000 Snow Geese, 3,000 Blue Geese and 1,500 White-fronted Geese. Snow Geese showed the greatest increase.

The first real cold spell of the fall, coming November 1 to 3, reduced the goose flock considerably and the quick freeze-up on November 9 drove the bulk of our geese southward. Most pronounced movements occurred on October 7-8, November 1-3 and November 8-9.

The refuge goose flock for the fall period was recorded as follows: 4,850 October 5; 50,000 October 16; 57,000 October 22; 60,000 October 27; 44,700 November 3; 3,500 November 10; 1,500 November 18 and 265 on November 28. The fall goose flock at the refuge has been building up steadily since the refuge was established, starting with a few hundred birds in the late 1930's. The fall flight of Snow Geese during the 1949 and 1950 seasons has been very outstanding, having increased from a few hundred birds to the 14,000 recorded this fall.

Six Whistling Swans were noted on October 26. These birds remained on the refuge for about two weeks. One Swan is still on the refuge as of December1, being observed daily, together with Canada Geese and Mallards, about a small open patch of water maintained by the concentration of ducks.

Snowy Owls, seen in unusual numbers last winter, have again shown up in large numbers. First seen on November 7, Snowy Owls now number about 50 for the refuge. This is nearly twice the number recorded last winter.

—Clair T. Rollings, Refuge Manager, Columbia, S. D.

AMERICAN EIDER IN EASTERN S. D.—On Nov. 7, 1940, at Lake Poinsett, Hamlin County, S. D., an immature female American Eider was shot by Charles Berchtold, Clear Lake, S. D. He gave it to one of my wildlife major students, Walter Neville, now deceased, who brought it to the college for identification. It was found to be identical with a specimen obtained from the Central Scientific Company, of Chicago, which was identified as female American Eider, Somateria mollissima dresseri Sharpe. The bird was mounted in life pose by Carl Peterson, and is now in the collection of the Entomology-Zoology Dept., State College, Brookings, S. D. This species is exceedingly rare in this part of the continent. Dr. Roberts (Birds of Minnesota) does not list it as occurring even accidentally in Minnesota or neighboring states; however, T. G. Pearson (Birds in America) lists it as occurring "in the interior rarely to Colorado, Iowa, Wisconsin, Ohio and western New York." I believe this to be the only record of this species, certainly the only preserved specimen record now known, for South Dakota.

—Gerald B. Spawn, Ent.-Zool. Dept., S. D. State College, Brookings, S. D.

BURROWING OWLS, HORNED LARKS (1926)—Riding the cactus-covered prairies of Harding County, South Dakota, the week of May 6th to 14th, 1925, I found Burrowing Owls plentiful. Pairs of these Owls were inhabiting the deserted burrows of the Prairie Dog, scattered here and there over the prairie, and were easily located as one or both would perch on the mound in front of the burrow.

In examining these burrows I found about the entrance, and down in the burrows, quantities of feathers of the Desert Horned Lark, mostly wing and tail feathers. Digging into the burrows, I would find from four to six partly-eaten bodies of the larks, mostly young birds just flying, also usually a less amount of partly-eaten field mice.

Not a burrow did I find but showed evidence that more than fifty per cent of the food of these owls was larks.

I easily trapped a number of these owls for our Zoo by placing a gill net with inch and a half mesh over the burrow.—F. A. Patton—The Oologist, Feb., 1926.

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John Krider, a taxidermist, ornithologist, and gunsmith, of Philadelphia, made a trip to northwestern Minnesota in 1870 with Dr. W. L. Abbott. The type specimen of Krider's Hawk, collected on this trip in northern Iowa, is in the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science.

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Clarke's Nutcrackers sometimes perch beside a hornet nest and pick the hornets off as they emerge from the door, says the National Wildlife Federation.

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The 32nd annual meeting of Wilson Ornithological Club will be held at Davenport, Iowa, April 27 and 28, 1951. For further details write to Secretary Harold F. Mayfield, 2557 Portsmouth Ave., Toledo 13, Ohio.

SDOU News

THE Board of Directors of South Dakota Ornithologists Union met at Sioux Falls on December 16th in the Chamber of Commerce. Those present were Gerald B. Spawn, President, Brookings, S. D.; J. S. Findley, Vice-president, Sioux Falls; W. B. Mallory, Secretary, Canton; M. E. Burgi, Springfield; H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls; Ruth Habeger, Madison; Wesley R. Hurt, Vermillion; J. O. Johnson, Watertown; Kenneth Krumm, Martin; Claude A. Van Epps, Huron.

It was decided that the annual meeting of SDOU should be held in the spring, rather than in winter, as heretofore. The date was fixed as May 5 and 6. Dr. Wesley R. Hurt, Director of the W. H. Over Museum, invited the organization to hold its meeting at the University at Vermillion, and the invitation was unanimously accepted. Dr. Hurt was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Arrangements, with special request that Dr. Over be placed in charge of the Field Trip on the 6th. A program committee composed of Ruth Habeger, Chairman, M. E. Burgi, J. O. Johnson and H. F. Chapman, was appointed by the President.

Mr. Van Epps, Chairman of the Committee on Christmas Bird Census outlined his plans to make this a state-wide project this year.

Lunch was served by Mrs. Findley and Mrs. Chapman.

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For many years Drs. Frank and Mary Roberts, of Spirit Lake, were among the leading ornithologists of Iowa. A couple of years ago they gave up active practice, traveled about the country, resting and doing some casual birding. They have now located at Pine Ridge, South Dakota, where they have a less exacting practice and more leisure. They both promptly joined SDOU and are already taking an active interest in the ornithology of their new home community and surrounding areas. These interesting people are the parents of Mary R. Musgrove, who with her husband, Jack W. Musgrove, compiled **Waterfowl in Iowa,** which was published by the State Conservation Commission of Iowa a few years ago. With the Drs. Roberts at Pine Ridge and Kenneth Krumm at La-Creek Refuge near Martin, that section of the state will be studied by highly skilled observers of birdlife.

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Willis Hall and his charming wife, Rosamund, of Yankton, are conducting a winter bird population study in the Missouri River flood plain near their home. We saw them late in the afternoon of a cloudy, cold November day, as they were returning from making a study of the ground cover; Willis had his hands full of all sorts of vegetation, dry and brown, while Rosamund held aloft both hands clothed with cotton flannel mittens completely covered with the seeds of cockleburrs, beggar's lice and other forms of stick-tight-and-hold-fasts. Members of SDOU will recall that in the October, 1949 issue of **Bird** Notes there was a news note about two similar studies which had been conducted by Willis Hall in the vicinity of Spearfish. His reports were published in **Audubon Field Notes,** June, 1949. If other members of SDOU are interested in making similar studies in the state, some helpful literature can be obtained from National Eudubon Society, 1000 Fifth Avenue, New York.

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Rev. Paul Mallory, who was an active member of SDOU at Huron has moved to Chicago.

I Remember

BY J. O. JOHNSON

WATERTOWN, S. D.

ON my return from the West this fall I called on an old friend, Chas. M. Kranz, who has been confined to his home the past year by the infirmities of old age. A female Purple Martin was flying about the room. A neighbor has martin houses and this bird with two others had fallen to the ground. The other two disappeared but this one was crippled and unable to move. The children picked it up and took it to Mr. Kranz. It was nearly starved, could not open its beak. His daughter, Esther Kranz, took charge of it. She fed it milk with an eye-dropper, later bread soaked in milk as its swallowing apparatus became more normal, and it could open its beak a little. She tried bird seed, hard-boiled eggs, and later raw beef. It would eat the yolk but not the white of the egg. It apparently ate some of the seeds and crumbled popped rice, but has now quit the bread and milk and eats the beef and yolk of eggs. The beef is frozen, so it can be cut in thin strips and cut small, then warmed. It has thrived on this diet.

Kranz usually sits in a chair, back from a table a foot or so, with another chair at his left, pushed in to the table. On a chair to the right is a blanket, folded to cover his lap. When the Martin wants a drink it lights on the back of the chair to his left. He has a dish of water on the table and holds it up to the bird and it gets its drink. If it wants food it lights on his knee; he spreads the blanket on his lap. He has a cane with a handle shaped in a half circle. He hangs that on the edge of the blanket, the handle forming an arch. He places the dish of food on his lap some distance from the cane handle, at times right beside the bird. It makes no move to touch it until it is told to go under London Bridge and has gone around under the cane handle and back to the food. He has to wear a cap, as the Martin often lights on his head and her sharp toes dig in too much when it takes off.

They call it and it will come to them and has no fear of them whatever,—is perfectly at home.

Roberts, in his Birds of Minnesota, reports an instance of a young lady feeding bread crumbs to a Martin she called "Blackie." She would call his name and he would come from the flock to her.

This strikes me as an unusual experience with birds and I submit it accordingly.

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Airplane

Shimmer of steel
  Against blue of sky . . .
A whirring speck
  Swift-winging by.
Man-made whirrings,
  Man-made wings;
But note this difference—
  God's bird sings.

—Lucille Veneklasen

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". . . I should like to express my own sense of indebtedness to those bird lovers, who make no claim to being scientific ornithologists, but without whom our knowledge of American birds could not have reached its present development."

—Ludlow Griscom, Field Identification, The Auk.

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"One of the greatest advantages of field ornithology is that the more we know about it, the more we enjoy it, and the more we can benefit others."

—Ludlow Griscom, Field Identification, The Auk.