

SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

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of
SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION
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Whole No. 10



Nest of Baltimore Oriole

—Cut Courtesy W. H. Over Museum, U. of S. D.

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"The purposes for which this corporation is formed are to encourage study of birds in South Dakota and to promote the study of Ornithology by more closely uniting students of this branch of natural science."

Articles of Incorporation, South Dakota Ornithologists Union

Volume III, No. 3

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Contents

President's Page	35
Notes on Sennett's Nighthawk—H. F. Chapman	36-37
Pioneer Prairie Ornithologists	
Henry Behrens—Harry E. Behrens	38
Wilson Tout—H.F.C.	38-39
Books and Articles About Birds	40
General Notes of Special Interest	41-46
Trips in Waubay Lake Area; Egrets Nesting Near S. D.; Cowbird in Lark Sparrow's Nest; Migrating Warblers, Sioux Falls, S. D.; Barn Swallows Nesting Under Bridges; Cliff Swallows on Wheeler Bridge; Blue Grosbeaks Near White River; Marsh Hawks Transfer Prey; Some Birds in the Pine Ridge Area; Pomarine Jaeger in South Dakota; Dawn Herald; Hawks Nests.	
Short Tales	47
I Remember—Paul W. Mallory	48

SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

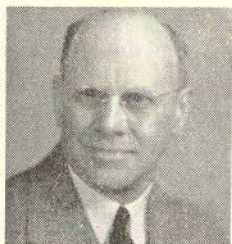
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President's Page



J. S. Findley

Sioux Falls

IN THE JUNE *Bird Notes* we mentioned the challenge to study South Dakota species about which so little is known, and to publish the news and data so that they are available to all who are interested.

The remarks were a bare outline of what can be done. When we begin to fill in the outline, I suggest turning to *Bird Notes*, Vol. I, No. 1 and re-reading "Opportunity-Challenge" by Dr. Olin Sewell Pettingill, Jr. Notice the opportunities for study that will lead to definite contributions.

Dr. Pettingill suggests that we can supply information about prairie birds as a separate fauna; as to "their distribution in relation to seasons, terrain, vegetation and climatic conditions"; as to the size of the populations in the short-grass prairie and in the long-grass prairie; and as to "the effect on bird life of grazing, crop production and water impoundment."

There are questions about the actual ranges of many of our birds. Most of the books do not credit us with Blue Grosbeaks, but they breed along the Missouri River in southern South Dakota, along the White River, up the Missouri to Chamberlain, or perhaps to Pierre; but do they go farther up the river, to Mobridge? Dr. Pettingill

asks also how far west do Ruby-throated Hummingbirds go and how far east the Black-chinned? Where do the ranges of Eastern and Western Grasshopper Sparrows meet or overlap? Sprague's Pipit and McCown's Longspur apparently nest in the northern part of the state, but we lack definite information.

The June 1950 *Bird Notes* quoted Dr. Pettingill again when, as President of the Wilson Ornithological Club, he discussed such problems, toward the solution of which we all can make contributions, as:

- Length of incubation periods;
- Length of nestling life;
- Daily activity rhythms;
- Size of clutch;
- Where diurnal birds spend the night;
- Water requirements;
- Predation upon birds;
- Nest building;
- Mating displays;
- Parental defense;
- Multiple-broodedness.

S. D. O. U. has received requests for help on studies of Mourning Dove populations, hawk migration flyways and hawk counts, and on other specific questions that can be added to Dr. Pettingill's list.

As we get our fun out of birding, we have also these many opportunities, and more, to make contributions that will be welcomed by other ornithologists, and we will have the satisfaction of adding to the sum of knowledge.

Notes On Sennett's Nighthawk

By H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. Dak.

IN BIRDS OF SOUTH DAKOTA, Over and Thoms list the Night hawk, with two subspecies: Western and Sennett's. The last is described as smaller and paler than the others. As to its range, they say: "It is also a bird of the plains, but it seems to follow the foothills of the mountainous districts more closely than the other species," adding, "A summer resident; habits the same as the others."

More detailed description of Sennett's is found in Roberts **Birds of Minnesota**: "a smaller, grayer, paler bird, with little or no buffy in plumage . . . This race occurs as a summer resident in western Minnesota, but intergrades with the darker race are frequent throughout the state." Specimens taken in southwestern Minnesota, near South Dakota, were regarded as Sennett's. Elsewhere Roberts says: "On the western prairies may be seen a much paler-colored Nighthawk than the bird usually found in the eastern part of the state (Minn.). The white markings predominate and the smaller wing-coverts are almost pure white in typical individuals. This is Sennett's Nighthawk which reaches its highest development on the plains farther west. Its rank is that of a subspecies and all degrees of intergradation between it and the darker birds occur throughout the state."

This subspecies is described by Taverner in **Birds of Canada** as a pale, whitish subspecies which breeds in the southern provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and south to Nebraska.

In the appendix to **Field Guide to the Birds**, Peterson notes Sennett's as a subspecies of the Great Plains, breeding from the northern boundary of North Dakota and eastern Montana south to northwestern Iowa and northern Nebraska.

F. A. Patton, then of Hermosa, S. D., published in *The Oologist* a series of articles on "Birds of the Foothills." In the Sept. 1924, issue appeared a note of which the following is a condensation: . . . Sennett's Nighthawk is a bird of the barren, isolated regions, preferring a dry, almost desert climate. Up until about 1890 this bird could be found over much of South Dakota. At present (1924) its range is confined to that part of the state between the Missouri River and the Black Hills, including the Bad Lands, and well up into the foothills. For nesting site it prefers a barren, stony place, especially a cattle or horse trail over a stony knoll destitute of vegetation. Never have I seen the bird or its nest in any way concealed by grass or other vegetation. The eggs are laid on a rock or among stones with no depression or formation for the nest. The eggs are plain gray and so blend with the rock that, although almost at one's feet, they are difficult to see. The general color of Sennett's Nighthawk is plain grayish, with the white spots on the wings less conspicuous than in other subspecies. These birds will perch in the blazing sun on the hottest summer day on a rock so hot one cannot hold a hand on it. They seem stupid and I have known them to let one approach close enough to strike them with a stick. . . .

Consistent with the statement by Roberts as to range is the annotation in Visher's *List of Birds of Sanborn County, Southeast-Central South Dakota*, *The Auk*, Oct. 1913, wherein it is stated that Sennett's Nighthawk is "an abundant summer resident." The same report is found in Visher's "List of Birds of Clay County (Southeastern S. D.)" published in *Wilson Bulletin*, 1915. Westward movement or perhaps extension of its range is indicated

in List of Birds of the Pine Ridge Reservation (Southwestern S. D.) by Visher, Wilson Bulletin, March, 1912, by the note: "Most of the nighthawks of the plains are of this (Sennett's) variety," although the Western "nests commonly, especially on the forested buttes."

Predominance of the Western form in extreme western portions of the state is reflected in other studies. Visher published a Preliminary List of the Summer Birds of Fall River County, Southwestern South Dakota, in Wilson Bulletin, March, 1912. In this study made during July and August, 1911, the Western Nighthawk is noted as especially common in the foothills, without any reference to Sennett's. In a List of the Birds of Western South Dakota, The Auk, April, 1909, which was compiled by Visher from various authentic sources back as far as 1857, the Western is noted as "abundant breeder on the plains." He reports the inclusion of a specimen of this subspecies in the Behrens collection, referred to elsewhere in this issue. One more early record is found in Annotated List of the Birds of Harding County, Northwestern South Dakota, by Stephen Sargent Visher, The Auk, January, 1911. The Western is there included in a list of "the conspicuous nesting birds of the steppe or plains" and elsewhere the annotation reads: "common breeder in the plains."

Alfred R. Reagan published in The Auk, Oct. 1908, a list of the birds of the Rosebud Indian Reservation (central southwestern So. Dak.) based on observations made by him in 1904. His annotation as to Western Nighthawk reads: "This bird is one of the most common large birds of the country. I found a nest in the potato patch. The female was on it when I found it. She dragged herself over the ground, fluttered and squawked. At length I scared her so that she flew. I then found that she had been

dragging her eggs under her as she drew herself over the ground. There was nothing, however, that could be called a nest except a little hollowed-out place. There was neither stick, straw, nor feathers to mark the place. The eggs were two in number, of a dirty mud color." Since this area lies east of the Pine Ridge Reservation where Visher found Sennett's predominating, and since Reagan does not list Sennett's, there seems to be some inconsistency between the two reports.

In **Birds of Lincoln County (Nebr.)** Tout states that Sennett's breeds over the northern Great Plains to northern Nebraska where it meets another subspecies, Howell's. This could account for further intergrading along the South Dakota-Nebraska border, which may lead to difficulty in properly classifying specimens from that area.

In June 16, 1951, Mrs. Chapman and I drove through Custer National Forest (Slim Buttes) on Highway 8, and a few miles east of Reva Gap we noted three Nighthawks on fence posts close to the highway. Study of these birds from but a few feet led to the conclusion that they were not the pale, whitish variety called "Sennett's" by the experts, and they did not seem as dark as birds commonly noted in the Sioux Falls area. Perhaps they were intergrades between the Western form and Sennett's.

The catalog of W. H. Over Museum at the University of South Dakota includes but one Sennett's, a female taken at Roubaix, Lawrence County, 1911, and determined by Oberholser. Specimens of the Western are listed as from Washington, Hughes and Jackson Counties; while there is an Eastern from Sanborn County. These were all collected a good many years ago, and many conditions have changed materially in much of the state. A series of careful observations made now might disclose some shifting in the Nighthawk populations of the state.

Pioneer Prairie Ornithologists

HENRY BEHRENS

Harry C. Behrens, Rapid City, South Dakota

HENRY BEHRENS was born in Tassan, Oldenburg, Germany, in 1845, and died at Rapid City, South Dakota, at the age of 90 years.

He received his education at his birthplace, and at Hamburg. After he learned the trade of cabinet-making he served two years in the German Army. At the age of 23 he came to the United States, working at his trade for a short time in Chicago, then moving to Oshkosh, Wis., where he operated a furniture store. On August 8, 1871, he was married to Emma Petersilea. In 1897 they moved to Rapid City, S. D., where Mr. Behrens started a furniture store and a mortuary, and members of the second generation of his family still operate a mortuary there.

He traveled many miles each week on business trips. The ranch home was some 20 miles southeast of Rapid City, on Spring Creek, and it was necessary for Henry to go out there each week with supplies for his family and the hired help. All these trips, made with horse and buggy, were necessarily slow and on them he found ample time and many opportunities to

study the birds of the Hills and the Foothills.

It was in 1898 that Mr. Behrens began collecting and mounting specimens of the birds of that interesting part of the Black Hills region. This collection, still in excellent condition, is maintained in the big brick Spring Creek ranch house, in glass cases, built by this former German cabinet-maker. There are over 800 mounted specimens, most of them taken by him during the very early part of his residence in the Hills, 1898-1901. Each carries a tag bearing both the common and the technical name, the sex, and the date of mounting. All these items were collected within approximately 20 miles of the ranch, although some, such as some of the gulls and terns, pelicans, Canada Geese, loons and cranes, were not natives.

In this collection are numerous skins of birds from Georgia, Florida and California, which were obtained by Mr. Behrens by exchange with other taxidermists. Many specimens were sent by him to Dr. Christopherson, Head of the Biological Department at Ann Arbor, Michigan.

* * * * *

WILSON TOUT

WILSON TOUT, of North Platte, Nebraska, was one of the charter members of South Dakota's Ornithologists' Union. He continued to be interested and made many helpful suggestions concerning the operation of the organization in its formative period. At the annual spring meeting

at Vermillion in May, 1951, he was on the program with a demonstration of his method of interesting boys and girls in the study of birds, a typical activity for him—helping others, not merely doing something for his own selfish satisfaction. As we stood in the chilly wind that night as he wait-

ed for the bus to take him back to North Platte, he expressed his very great pleasure in having been able to contribute to the success of the meeting. He was grateful for the little personal things we had done to make his visit pleasant, and said so that night, and in a note later.

On June 18th, he passed away—a heart attack, in his 76th year.

For many years Wilson Tout was the publisher of the Lincoln County (Nebr.) Tribune. During a long period he ran an article each week about some species of bird which he had observed or heard or learned about in that community. The type was saved until a number of such items had been accumulated, and then that was all printed for later use in a book, "The **Birds of Lincoln County**," the sheets were wrapped up, the type metal was recovered, and the process was repeated. Eventually an entire volume was ready for binding and distribution. There isn't any other bird book like it, and there will never be because Wilson Tout has gone. But the school boy who found a crippled bird

and brought it to his friend, the rural mail carrier who observed the behavior of a bird in courtship and told the newspaper man about it, the Game Warden who noted and reported something of particular interest . . . these and many others contributed much to the worth of that book. Because their simple stories were told and credited to them in the columns of this country newspaper and in this unusual bird book, it is hardly true to say that Wilson Tout wrote it; he merely reported and recorded a large portion of it. But he was alert and afoot and observed much of the bird-life of that community, so he did write some of it. His wife, his companion in much of his "birding", passed on before the book was completed. The brief story in that book about how a tiny bird, a favorite species of Mrs. Tout's, sang during the services at the cemetery is something only Wilson Tout could have written!

Educator; newspaperman; mammalogist; ornithologist; historian; Mason; Rotarian; Methodist; husband; father; friend

H. F. C.

* * * * *

"Conservation of habitat is an essential part of any conservation program to protect birds. Protection of birds themselves is to no avail if the habitats are destroyed."—John W. Aldrich, *Where Birds Live*.—How many sloughs and potholes were drained in your community in 1950; in 1951?

* * *

"Your publication, *South Dakota Bird Notes*, is a fine little pamphlet, and I am sure it is of help to South Dakota teachers and those interested in birdlife in your state. We do not have anything like it in North Dakota."—Ella Schroeder, Editor, *The North Dakota Teacher*.

Clair T. Rollings, until recently Manager of the Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge, near Columbia, S. D., has been transferred to the offices of the Fish and Wildlife Service in Minneapolis. Shortly before he made the shift Mr. Rollings published in the *Dakota Farmer* (July 7, 1951) a short article "Bird Study Grows". This was a brief statement about SDOU, its purposes and possibilities, and as a direct result, there have been a good number of inquiries for more information about this organization. Members will find other publications willing to print similar articles, and that will help SDOU to grow.

Books and Articles About Birds

AUDUBON FIELD NOTES. Published by National Audubon Society, 1000 Fifth Ave., New York 20, N. Y., \$2.00 per year.

Described in a recent issue of Audubon Magazine by a noted ornithologist and writer in this fashion: "Six times a year Audubon Field Notes brings the American field student news of the birds over the country. The Christmas Bird Census, the oldest and best-known feature of these reports, gives a vivid picture of our winter bird life. The Breeding Bird Census, now in its fifteenth year, is the most important scientific contribution of the Field Notes; it is a valuable series of reports on the ecology of our breeding birds, involving a large variety of habitats, many co-workers following population changes year after year. The four other issues . . . Spring Migration, Fall Migration, The Nesting Season, and Winter Season . . . summarize the outstanding events in bird movements and nesting success from the 19 regions into which the country is divided. Five of the six numbers are preceded by a summary of the most important facts. For all bird students interested in watching migration or studying nesting or winter populations, Audubon Field Notes is indispensable."

A substantial number of members of SDOU are making regular reports to Dr. and Mrs. R. T. Gammell, of Kenmare, N. D., editors for the Northern Great Plains Region which includes South Dakota. In the June, 1951 issue, credit for significant reports is given to Krumm, Rollings, Behrens, Lauritzen, Findley, Mallory and Gammell, all members of SDOU.—HFC

MODERN BIRD STUDY. By Lowell Griscolm. Published by Harvard University Press, 1947. i-x, pp. 1-190, 15 ill., 10 maps and diagrams, \$2.50.

This little book is based on lectures given at Lowell Institute by the author, who is Chairman of the Board of National Audubon Society. The small pages, 5½x8, embrace much material, the cream of Mr. Griscolm's nearly 40 years of active field work over much of both North and South America. Subjects treated include: Development of Field Ornithology; Capacity, Intelligence and Adaptability of Birds; Migration; Distribution; and Classification and the Species Concept. This, too, with a minimum of scientific jargon, to the relief of that part of the public which, it may easily be assumed, is intended to "receive enlightenment."—HFC

* * *

HANDBOOK OF NORTH DAKOTA PLANTS, by Dr. O. A. Stevens, Fargo, N. D. Published by North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, N. D. Agr. College, Fargo, \$4.50. This splendid botanical work was written by one of the finest ornithologists of the Northwest. Bird-watchers could well use it in the study of habitats in which birds are found.—HFC

* * *

The August, 1951, number of the National Geographic Magazine carried an article on "Freezing the Flight of Hummingbirds" by Edgerton, Niedrach and Van Riper, illustrated with 24 pictures, 17 being in color. Stopping the motion of Hummingbird wings was a problem the authors solved with their own "strobe" apparatus. The birds move their wings at a normal rate of about 55 beats per second, but, upon occasions, it may go up to 200.—JSF

General Notes of Special Interest

ANOTHER STATEMENT OF EDITORIAL POLICY

"It has been the policy of past editors to publish material that adds to our total score of printed knowledge rather than drawing from it, material that is the result of original work and thought, material not duplicated elsewhere. It will be the endeavor of your new editor to continue that policy."—*The Oriole*, official organ of Georgia Ornithological Society, March, 1950.

* * * * *

TRIPS IN WAUBAY LAKE AREA—1951—June 30th daughter Dorothy and I investigated by boat the water and rush areas of Rush Lake from U. S. Highway 12, thence north one mile to the wooded island. Young Western Grebes were noted with the old birds throughout the rush areas. A colony of unhatched Western Grebe nests was found in the rushes near the east end of the island. About 200 Mallards, mostly drakes, were found feeding on a large sago pondweed bed. No colony nesting by any species on this island this year.

July 1st while hiking in a wooded coulee seven miles southwest of Peever, Roberts County, a full plumaged male Scarlet Tanager and mate were seen. I have observed this bird only once before in northeastern South Dakota, and that record was in the same locality some fifteen years ago.

July 4th Dorothy and I started on the east shore of South Waubay Lake and travelled by boat a zigzag route covering at least seven miles. First we visited the east island where about 500 nests of nearly full-grown Double-crested Cormorants covered the island. Not wishing to disturb them, we did not tarry there. Western Grebes, adults and young, were abundant all over the lake,—more of this species in this lake than I have seen before in one day over a thirty years span. Wendt's Bay (northwest end of lake) was found to be an extensive bird haven. Several hundred Black-crowned Night Herons were nesting in the bulrushes along the north shore. Some of the nests held young while others held eggs only. About thirty unhatched Western Grebe nests were found in the southeast part of this bay. Forster's Terns were found nesting throughout the bay, on rathouses and floating rush mats. We counted eight nests on one rathouse. Beachy's Bay, (southwest end of lake) also had considerable nesting. Western Grebes were nesting in small groups at two or three points. Forster's Terns were nesting in the rushes upon every old rathouse and wherever there were rushes floating. Coots' nests were noted here and there throughout the bay. We beached our boat near a country road, ending a very enjoyable day.—**Arthur R. Lundquist, Webster, S. D.**

* * * * *

EGRETS NESTING NEAR S. D.—*The Iowa Conservationist* reports that on June 9, 1951, a conservation officer discovered American Egrets nesting near Modale, Iowa, near the Missouri River. The next day it was determined that ten pairs were nesting in large cottonwood trees which also supported the nests of Double-crested Cormorants and Black-crowned Night Herons. Near the middle of the colonies was the nest of a Red-tailed Hawk that apparently

got along peaceably with the other birds. This, the only known nesting of American Egrets in Iowa at present, is about seventy-five miles from South Dakota. The birds once were considered rare in South Dakota but now are frequently seen in the southeastern part of the state in the late summer when the juveniles migrate to new fishing grounds. They go south in the late fall for the winter.—**J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, S. D.**

COWBIRD IN LARK SPARROW'S NEST—On June 14, 1951, the nest of a Lark Sparrow was found on lower Spring Creek a few feet off the county road. The nest was on a high bank of Spring Creek and under a clump of bunch grass. It was well-made of fine grasses and some horse-hair. The nest contained four eggs and one young, possibly a day old. The bird found in the nest looked much like a young Cowbird. At least one Lark Sparrow was carrying food to the nestling. When the nest was visited again on June 20 the young bird was gone, but the four eggs remained and the nest seemed cold. No parent birds were seen during the few minutes this observation was made. On July 23 the eggs were gone but the nest had not been disturbed or damaged in any way. The young bird fits the usual description of a young Cowbird, and according to Friedmann in his book "The Cowbirds", the young can leave the nest in nine to eleven days. Cowbirds have been seen in this vicinity, and it is possible the other eggs were eaten by a garter snake as they are common in this area.—**Harry C. Behrens, Rapid City, S. D.**

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MIGRATING WARBLERS, SIOUX FALLS, S. D.—The Warbler wave passing through Sioux Falls in May seemed thinner and more erratic this year (1951) than last. Three species, the Prothonotary, the Cerulean and the Cape May were among the migrants I observed.

I had a five-minute view of the Prothonotary on May 18th. The bright yellow-orange head and breast, the area beyond the nape shading to brownish-yellow, and the bluish-light-grayish back easily identified it. Unhurriedly it passed from elm to elm, sometimes hanging poised under a half-grown leaf, wings fluttering like a Hummingbird's so that it looked like a suspended shimmer of yellow touched at the edges with the shadow of bluish-gray. From illustrations in various guides, I expected a thick-necked stoutish bird. I found it slenderer than the Yellow Warbler and much more buoyant; this individual was, at least.

The Cerulean which I saw on the 18th was resting and preening at mid-level of an elm and so afforded a good view of the airy, sky-blue back (a blue of amazing lightness yet intense), the blackish streaks on the back, the two wing bars, the white throat and breast divided by a distinct blackish line. Perhaps it is the combination of white and blue which gives this individual a freshly-washed, clean-cut appearance.

On the 15th I saw a Cape May, a female, at tree-top level of an elm. The observation was short; no more than a minute of foraging among the half-distinct leaves but the characteristic yellow mark on the neck, the faint but distinct dark streaks on the breast and the yellowish tinge in the rump, all indicated this species. It passed from limb to limb very much in the manner of the Tennessee.

I noticed a Black-throated Green Warbler on May 8th, one day earlier

this year than last, and another on May 15th. Both were feeding and singing in the lower branches of a maple. I learned the song pattern, put it down in my notes and found just recently that it is a fair duplicate of the recorded performance of this species in Vol. II of the excellent **Bird Songs of America**.

On May 15th I recorded a Bay-breasted and on the 16th and 17th Chestnut-sided Warblers.

Other Warblers observed and recorded between May 10 and 24 were: Orange-crowned, Myrtle, Black and White, Tennessee, Blackburnian, Blackpoll, Wilson, Magnolia and Yellow.—**Herbert Krause, Sioux Falls, S. D.**

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BARN SWALLOWS NESTING UNDER BRIDGES—That note in the June issue about this subject certainly served one purpose! Lester R. Lauritzen of Centerville wrote that such nesting occurs so commonly in his part of the state that it is not news, scarcely worth comment. President Findley says that the practice is so universal in the Sioux Falls area that he and Mrs. F. habitually refer to these as "Bridge Swallows." Art Lundquist stated that in the Webster area the larger wooden bridges are regularly used as nesting sites by Barn Swallows. That makes it pretty general, doesn't it. Maybe I could "get by" with a report that this species has been observed nesting in a barn! —**HFC.**

* * * * *

CLIFF SWALLOWS ON WHEELER BRIDGE: BLUE GROSBEAKS NEAR WHITE RIVER—On July 4, 1951, we saw hundreds of Cliff Swallows feeding over the road and hills at the south end of the Missouri River bridge at Wheeler, S. D. Under the roadway there were many nests plastered on the inner sides of the large concrete columns; i. e. the nests were on the west side of the east columns and the east sides of the west columns. Only a few nests were on the outer sides under the capitals of the columns.

Six Blue Grosbeaks were observed near the White River on Highway 47 southwest of Chamberlain, S. D. on July 4, 1951. The first pair was watched for about 15 minutes, as the male appeared to try to impress the female while she took short flights along a fence. The "show" went on until they came to another male on the fence. The first male drove off the second and then flew with the female in the opposite direction. The others were a pair and a female. All were on the road fences and were observed with 8x binoculars. Another pair of Blue Grosbeaks was seen on fence wires about a mile east of Wheeler, eating seeds of grass that blew within reach.—**Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, S. D.**

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MARSH HAWKS TRANSFER PREY.—On July 8, 1951, a party of Sioux Falls bird-watchers, including Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Findley and the Chapmans, were treating Miss Zell C. Lee, of Sioux City, Iowa, to some South Dakota birding a few miles southwest of Sioux Falls. A female Marsh Hawk was seen over a field adjoining the highway. Immediately another hawk appeared from behind a small farm grove, crossing the road a few rods ahead of our car. It was carrying something, and, incidentally, was being harassed by a smaller

bird, probably a Kingbird. Bad light hindered identification and excitement dulled our perception, but it seemed to be agreed that it was not very large, had quite a long tail, and appeared quite dark. Then as this hawk was crossing a grainfield in the general vicinity where the female Marsh Hawk had been observed, we saw a larger bird, then in low flight, swoop directly at the other; the smaller bird released the object it had been carrying which the larger bird then seized in midair; and the two immediately separated. There was so much excited discussion as to what had happened that no one noted where either of the birds went. It seems reasonable to believe we witnessed the passing of prey by a male Marsh Hawk to its mate while both were in flight. There is a fine drawing by Breckenridge, depicting his observation of a similar affair, in Roberts, *Birds of Minnesota*. Movies by Maslowski and Deusing of such an event are included in Walt Disney's "Beaver Valley." —H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. D.

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SOME BIRDS IN THE PINE RIDGE AREA.—We lived at Pine Ridge, (S. W. So. Dak.) from Oct. 1950, to July, 1951. During this time we saw 137 species of birds, mostly within a radius of 50 to 60 miles.

On several trips last spring we counted Kingbirds. On an average there were about 6 Eastern to 1 Arkansas. The first arrivals we saw of each species were on the same date. Early in the spring there were about 8 or 9 times as many Eastern, but later in the season the Arkansas increased. Perhaps this was not a seasonal variation; perhaps there was a difference in types of terrain we visited. We had supposed that in western South Dakota there would be more of the Arkansas than of the Eastern. We were unable to find any data to show whether what we found was a stable condition.

In our childhood we lived about 90 miles east of Sioux Falls, S. D., at Jackson, Minn., and at Spirit Lake, Iowa. We first noticed the Arkansas there in 1907, although Dr. T. S. Roberts says they began nesting in Minnesota somewhat earlier than that. Their number increased until about 1930, when they were approximately as plentiful as the Eastern form. After that the western species decreased. We believe there are now from 10 to 20 times as many Eastern as Arkansas around Spirit Lake.

We heard an Eastern Meadowlark near Crawford, Nebr., and another on Lacreek Refuge. We are very familiar with the songs of both forms, as we have lived where both were common. At Spirit Lake, Iowa, 400 miles east of the Pine Ridge area, we never recorded an Eastern, although we lived there many years. Some Western Meadowlarks have an abbreviated, less elaborate song when they arrive in the spring but it is easily distinguished from the full song of the Eastern Meadowlark.

On a drive from Manderson to Wounded Knee we saw Lazuli Buntings, about 1 to a mile. We stopped frequently to add visual confirmation to our song identification. Their song is similar to that of the Indigo Bunting, but the rhythm is different.

A Lincoln Sparrow was seen just north of Crawford, Nebr.

We watched Lark Buntings to see if their song occurred at any particular

part of what we called their "song flight." The birds would rise, fly along with rather stiff, rapidly vibrating wings, and then drop. It may have been a courtship flight but was carried late into the season. We found they sang at any point during this flight. Some finished their song after alighting. We rarely saw one return to the spot from which it arose. Sometimes they flew from one place to another with ordinary flight, not with the rapid wing quiver, and sang as they flew. The approach of an automobile seemed to stimulate them to fly and sing much as it stimulates the Dickcissel.

Long-tailed Chats were in the greatest abundance we have ever seen, a mile or two south of Pine Ridge. In a small bushy valley of perhaps 40 acres we saw at least a dozen pairs.

We saw White Pelicans at Lacreek Refuge; Kenneth Krumm told us they nest there regularly.

We heard Poor-Wills at the roadside between Pine Ridge and Manderson. They began calling about an hour after sunset. None were heard closer to Pine Ridge than 6 miles, and the greatest concentration was within the next few miles. They were in the wooded valleys and were best heard if we paused where a valley intersected the road. We found them nowhere else on the Reservation, and heard them only during the first week in July, but we made only a few trips to listen for them.

While the Black Hills are at some distance from the Pine Ridge Reservation, we add a note concerning observations made there. A pair of Water Ouzels nested and raised a brood under the bridge between Spearfish Canyon road and Spearfish Canyon Camp. Three of these birds were excitedly flying around another nest farther down the canyon near the Homestake Power Plant. Two of them began fighting. One got the other down on the ground. After quite a struggle the lower bird was still. The other one pecked at the non-resistant adversary and pulled at its feet and wings. The beaten bird showed no sign of life. This continued for about 15 minutes, when suddenly both flew away. Two weeks later we found the nest abandoned and partially disintegrated.—**Drs. Frank and Mary Roberts, Spirit Lake, Iowa.**

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POMARINE JAEGER IN SOUTH DAKOTA. —"During the past fall (1932) a specimen of the Pomarine Jaeger was sent to the Museum of Natural History of the University of Minnesota by Mr. Alfred Peterson of Pipestone, Minn. The bird had been taken on October 9, 1932, by Mr. R. A. Hyde near Madison, S. D. It was in the dark immature plumage, with the central tail feathers hardly appreciably longer than the other rectrices. An examination of the stomach contents revealed that it had recently fed on a portion of an adult Franklin's Gull. This bird is known to prey on small birds, and if hard pressed might be capable of taking a Franklin's Gull, but very likely it was

playing the role of scavenger in feeding on this bird. W. J. Breckenridge, Museum of Natural History, Minneapolis, Minn.—*The Wilson Bulletin*, June, 1933.

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DAWN HERALD.—In *Wilson Bulletin*, June, 1925, there is a fine article "Martins and Martin Houses," by T. H. Marton, Atlantic, Iowa. In connection with description of losses caused by absence of winged insects during a cold period, he said: "With them perished a strong male with a peculiar call, whom we had fancifully named the 'dawn herald', because his call was given earliest of all in the morning and was entirely different from the usual notes. This distinctive note was uttered only in the morning, and that morning salutation was not again heard until several years had elapsed. I wish to call this to the especial attention of martin lovers. How many have heard a distinct early morning call?"

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HAWKS NESTS.—In an article dealing in part with depredations on nests of hawks in a western area, E. S. Cameron in *The Auk*, Oct. 1908, writes: "Swainson's Hawk is the worst sufferer of any, because it builds conspicuously in a low tree on the prairie right in the way of passing ranchmen and others, whereas the Redtail has its nest at an inaccessible height and generally escapes molestation. Like the last-mentioned bird, a pair of Swainson's Hawks will return to the same tree year after year and repair the old nest, nor will they build a new one unless the other should be entirely demolished."

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LEAST BITTERN

Mae Winker Goodman
in *Christian Science Monitor*

Is it the wind
that whispers through the marshes,
barely brushing the cattails and the
flags?
or is the bittern there,
the little bittern
blended against the brown and yellow
rushes,
sliding invisibly between the grasses?
Queer little bird,
so secretive, so shy,

as slender as the reeds you hide
among,
you haunt the marshes of the earth
and sky
betrayed by nothing
but your own weird song.

* * *

FOR NEUROSES

Pittsburgh Press

Bird-watching, says a noted ornithologist, is an excellent antidote for neuroses.

In other words, a bird in the bush is worth two bats in the belfry.

Short Tales

This spring one farmer living near Corsica, S. D., claimed bounty for 1496 crows at his farm; while another claimant presented 480.

Gerald B. Spawn, Brookings, SDOU Pres. in 1950, was stationed at Squaw Creek Refuge, Holt County, Missouri, in 1936.

Kenneth Krumm, manager of Federal Wildlife Refuge, near Martin, says that a hailstorm on June 19 killed many White Pelicans and D. C. Cormorants, although many adults probably escaped. One dead Pelican had been banded at Bowdoin Refuge, Montana, 8 years before.

W. B. Mallory, SDOU Secretary, observed a White-breasted Nuthatch at Canton, July 18, 1951, and says: "This is the first time I have seen this species in southeastern S. D. in July." He also heard a Bob-white in his yard on June 17th, the first for several years.

Support for the view that Western Kingbirds are apt to be found closer to towns and houses than are Easterns, is found in Lester Lauritzen's report of Westerns nesting in an elm close to the farm home, and renesting in the eavestrough of the house, in the Centerville community.

The roof of a downtown building, across the street from the Editor's window, is flooded for cooling purposes. Every fall one or two Spotted Sandpipers feed there for a while. This year a Lesser Yellowlegs joined. Pigeons occasionally bathe there, but awkwardly. Nighthawks, Martins and Swallows are seen scooping up a drink while awing.

SDOU Director Mrs. H. B. Stevens, Hot Springs, had Evening Grosbeaks at her feeding station on March 6th.

Mrs. Arthur Bonham, Britton, reported but few birds at her home last winter, but there were three Flickers which fed there most of the winter.

SDOU Director Kenneth Krumm, Martin, saw a variety of Juncos during the spring at the Refuge: Slate-colored, Western, and many which were probably intergrades.

Dr. J. F. Brenckle, Mellette, trapped and banded a Cardinal on April 22, 1937, at Northville.

Herbert Krause, Sioux Falls, observed Red Crossbills feeding on the seeds of the ash tree. Is this what Adelene Siljeborg of Vermillion noted a year or so ago, failing to identify the feeders?

A Scarlet Tanager, male, was observed in the Missouri River Valley near Pierre by the Chapmans this summer.

Scott and Alma Findley observed a Black Tern's nest on a muskrat house in a slough near Wall Lake Corner (11 mi. w. of Soo Falls) where rails were much in evidence during summer of 1950.

Dr. and Mrs. J. D. Donahoe, Sioux Falls, report a Chickadee with a distinctly brown cap fed with larger black-capped birds at their sunflower tray this fall.

"Bill" Felton, Jefferson, was glassing some American Mergansers in an open hole in the ice on March 22, when, he says: "I heard whistling that startled me and reminded me of the high mountain lakes, and, sure enough here came a pair of American Goldeneyes into the open water."

Katherine Kaufman, Freeman, saw and heard a Blue Grosbeak sing near Pickstown this summer, and complains that Chickadees eat much poppy seed intended for rolls.

Two species of Cuckoo, Black-billed and Yellow-billed, are summer residents of South Dakota. Look for B-B nests in bushes and Y-B in trees. They do not lay their eggs in nests of other birds—Cowbirds do.

I Remember

By Paul W. Mallory, Chicago, Illinois

My thoughts go back to a rainy evening when I was about 15 years old. I was riding my bicycle along a Lennox, S. D., street at a medium speed. Under a street light I was suddenly confronted by a number of large objects and, although I tried not to do so, I hit one of them and ended up against a fence with my bicycle on top of me. A great flapping of large wings and a chorus of "honks" told me that a small flock of geese had evidently mistaken the reflection of light on the wet street for a pool of water and alighted there for the night. I do not know whether I or the geese were more surprised, but I limped home wheeling my bike by hand and pretty well shaken up. There were no dead geese about so I had not injured the cause of conservation, but I may have made the wild geese wilder. Perhaps this verifies the statement that "No one knows where the wild goose goes."

* * *

Another one of my memories concerns an occurrence when I was a small boy; and I am relating this in collaboration with my father, W. B. Mallory, who used to take several older boys and myself on a walk each Sunday looking for something new in Birdland. On one of these trips we discovered the nest of a Marsh Hawk and we visited it each Sunday for five more weeks.

The discovery was made by reason of the old birds, which on our approach flew about in evident alarm, constantly crying "Kee e, kee e" and diving at us continually. The nest was located in the rushes out in the water about 10 feet from the shore of

a small slough and when found contained four eggs. The nesting material consisted of weeds, coarse stems and grass and the nest was not well concealed.

On our second visit two of the eggs were hatched and two were still in the nest. One egg never did hatch and eventually disappeared. The nestlings were soft, downy creatures, but nevertheless turned over on their backs and threatened us with their tiny claws. The old birds at this time were frantic and dived even closer than before to our heads. On the third visit there were three young in the nest, two of them quite bellicose but harmless if carefully handled. On the fourth visit the young were really warlike, threatening us with quick thrusts of their claws. On our fifth visit two of the young could fly so well they could not be caught, but the smallest was captured after a merry chase and proved to be a tough customer to handle. On the sixth Sunday only the smallest bird was about. Although we exhausted ourselves trying to catch it all our efforts were in vain.

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I also remember that on one of the trips just mentioned we discovered the nest of a Tree Swallow in a fence post. This post had a hole extending from the top down to the nest and another on the side just above the nest. The location was close to a colony of Burrowing Owls, another hazard. The dead female swallow lay close to the post; however the male was taking care of the family and when we checked it again a week later the young birds were gone and we hope they escaped.