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Whole No. 19



KINGBIRD (Eastern or Common) ON NEST

See page 67

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President's Page



Another year is before us and we hope it will see a bigger and better SDOU. One thing which will assure us of that goal is increased activity in bird-study throughout the state. As has been said so often, South Dakota offers one of the best areas for amateur birding in the country. Our active members are far too few and are grouped too much in a few localities thus giving us only moderate coverage of bird activity and in only a few areas. Part of the answer to this problem lies in obtaining more members from counties not now represented in SDOU. In the next few weeks let us bend our efforts toward increasing interest in birdlife in every area we can, through trips, movies, discussions and other means for awakening new interests and rekindling old. New members will be highly rewarding to our organization and it will be rewarding to them.

* * *

SDOU has been invited by the Nebraska Ornithologist's Union to meet with them in joint session with the Iowa Ornithologist's Union in May, 1955, at Sioux City, Iowa. We have many common problems and lack sufficient members to study birds on a state-wide basis. Meeting together may help each of us answer questions about bird distribution which we cannot answer alone. Please

consider this invitation carefully so that we may make our decision at the annual meeting.

* * *

Two books which we have read recently should be of interest to all birders. Thoreau's *Walden* takes us back a century to live and think with a man who, impatient with the artificialities and trivia of the cities of his day, slipped away to the woods and lived alone on the bank of Walden Pond for many months. There, in his solitary communion with nature, he found peace and a deep sense of moral order. In our all too infrequent visits with our feathered friends we seek the same things, and come away refreshed.

* * *

Sand County Almanac, by Aldo Leopold, is delightfully written, part is reminiscent and part philosophical. Leopold urges us to apply the sense of responsibility we now have for our fellow men, and to a lesser extent for nations, to the land which gives us life. He says we have the technology and machines to treat our natural resources the way they should be treated, but we lack an ethic—a "feeling for the land"—which will cause us to live in peace with it, knowing that the land and all it sustains—water, forest and wildlife—will be kept in a useful condition for future generations. May we urge you to browse in these two books; they will open unexpected paths of pleasure in the interpretation of avian activities; they will deepen your philosophy and add meaning to your bird-study.

—Cecil P. Haight,
Spearfish, S. D.

Shore Birds In '53

ALFRED PETERSON, Brandt, S. Dak.

IN THE past year of 1953 I have given much of my time to bird-watching with most of my interest centering on the Shore Birds to be found within the range of an easy day's drive. Certainly Water Birds in general were not neglected nor were Land Birds, for among them I have many favorites. But to keep this contribution from exceeding allowable bounds of space in "Bird Notes" it is restricted as here presented.

The Lake Section of the Prairie Hills extends from Sioux Falls to and beyond the S. D.-N. D. state line, in a northwesterly direction, rising abruptly to a height of some 400 to 600 feet above low ground on the east, and thus appearing as a solid wall when viewed from a distance. Such a landmark as this undoubtedly draws many species of birds in migration, some of them to make it their summer home. Rough country, dotted with lakes and potholes, is prominent in the northern half. Much of the land is undrained. Consequently, after a winter of adequate snowfall the spring thaw brings several feet of fresh water into every lake and pond, there gradually to lower in depth during summer heat. Shore Birds returning from the north find so many mud flats, water at wading depth suited to their needs, that many remain day after day, or weeks, at favored spots.

Thirty-two species of Shore Birds are listed for South Dakota by the Sioux Falls Bird Club. Of these, two—Western Sandpiper and Black-necked Stilt—have never come to my attention. Four—Piping Plover, Woodcock, Red-backed Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper—are in my Minnesota list, made more than twenty years ago. Now, as a reporter of

current events, with quiet thoughts of contentment, I offer this list of Shore Birds that I have seen during 1953. It has been nice to meet them.

Semi-palmated Plover. A transient, not at all common. In every way deserving of admiration. Spring: May 13, 1; several times until 5|18, when 4 at Fox Lake. Fall: July 24, 1; 7|25, 5 Andover; 9|24, 2 Bitter Lake.

Killdeer. Summer resident, the commonest of them all, coming early and staying late. Everyone knows the Killdeer, as it comes at a time when birds are a welcome sign of spring. Spring: March 29, several; 3|31, becoming plentiful. Fall: Many until cold weather.

Golden Plover. Transient visitant. One of our "vanishing shore birds" that is decidedly on the way back. In recent years satisfactory increase has been shown. Spring: May 9, 1; 5|13, 5♂; 5|14, 35 north of Brookings, again 5|21; 5|14, 9♀; 5|16, 120 near Brandt, remaining in the same field and pasture until 5|25; 5|23, 100 west of town. Other records, earlier and later than the last above-named, the latest a cripple 5|28. Fall: Sept. 26, about 25 near Lake Alice; 9|30, 33 at Slippery Dick near Clear Lake; 10|6, 50 Brandt; several dates and places, the latest being 10|11, when 22 Brandt and 1 Altamont.

Black-bellied Plover. Transient visitant. Never common, this species may be rated as scarce. Occasionally found with Golden Plover, but hardly a congenial arrangement. The Black-bellied prefers low ground near water, whereas the Golden deploys over open fields and pastures and is fond of burnt-over ground. Spring: May 18, 1; 5|19, 2; 5|21, 1 Lake Preston; 5|22, 4 Fox Lake; 5|25, 2 Lake Cochran. Fall: Sept. 24, 8 at Bitter Lake,

one of them in almost complete spring plumage; 9|27 and 10|10, 1 Bitter Lake; 10|11, 2 Lake Alice; 10|14, 1 Tunerville; 10|8, 1 Round Lake north of Goodwin.

Ruddy Turnstone. Fairly common as they dally on their way in spring, but rare in fall. For the spectacular in plumage we need go no further. Spring: May 14, 1 Lake Poinsett; 5|16, about 20 Rush Lake; 5|17, 2 Rush Lake and 1 Lake Marsh; 5|23, 41 Rush Lake; 5|31, 48 Rush Lake and several elsewhere. Fall: None seen this year.

Wilson's Snipe. Now only a reminder of better days. Formerly it was plentiful but to find it now, except as an uncommon migrant, would be unexpected. Spring: April 13, 1; 4|20, 2; 4|21, 3; 4|28, 2; 4|31, 1 Astoria. Fall: Sept. 13, 1 near Brookings.

Long-billed Curlew. On only one occasion have I ever seen this fine bird. June 12, at LaCreek Game Refuge, Kenneth Krumm kindly gave me his time to find 4 for a new name on my list. Perhaps it will not again be found on the eastern Prairie Hills, although formerly Minnesota also claimed it as a summer resident.

Upland Plover. Regular at nesting time. Once upon a time this sandpiper—for such it is—was known as "prairie pigeon" by amateur sportsmen, a title sometimes shared by Golden Plover. Both are now protected and both are gaining strength. Spring: May 8, 1; 5|9, 1 Goodwin; 5|10, 3 Waubay. Also elsewhere now and then, scattered, the last date recorded Aug. 2 near Goodwin.

Spotted Sandpiper. Fairly common in summer, along lake shores and river banks. Spring: May 13, several Clear Lake; 5|16, 3 Bitter Lake; 5|31, 2.

Solitary Sandpiper. A somewhat scarce migrant. The Solitary Sand-

piper shuns the company of other members of its class. Black soil, with temporary pools from recent rains are its preference, or similar conditions at creek banks; and so it is that it is not seen on sandy beaches where other Shore Birds love to congregate. Spring: May 13, 1; 5|14, 1; 5|18, 1; 5|21, 1. Fall: July 23, 1 at Clear Lake; 8|24, 1 Toronto.

Willet. The Willet is a summer resident, in watered areas. And, being so clearly marked, so loud and so bold, wherever present it will not be missed. Spring: May 3, 4 Waubay; 5|10, 2 Florence; 5|13, 3 Fox Lake; 5|15, 1; 5|17, 7 Rush Lake. Also many other later dates. Fall: July 13, near Java, an adult with 3 young half grown or larger; 8|23, 10 Rush Lake; 9|3, 1 Bitter Lake.

Greater Yellow-legs. Irregular migrant, occasionally common, but always outnumbered by the Lesser. Spring: April 10, 4 Fox Lake; 4|11, 6; 4|12, 2 Oakwood Lakes and 8 others along the way. Day after day, 1 to half dozen many places. The highest number seen, 10 at Fox Lake 5|3, and the latest 5|13, at same place. Fall: July 26, 1 near Madison, Minn.; 7|30, 3 Rush Lake; 9|3 1 Bitter Lake; several other dates various places until 9|24, when 3 appeared at Altamont. The little group of mud flats near Altamont and Tunerville held small lots of Greater throughout the month of September, even to Oct. 7, their last day here. 20 were on hand the last week of their stay.

Lesser Yellow-legs. Plentiful in migration. One of the shyest of Shore Birds. Spring: March 29, several; 4|1, 2; 4|5, 5. Balance of the month of April and up to May 19, found rather sparingly everywhere. Fall: July 10, saw 2 on trip to North Dakota, and the following day, 24 in a pool 1½ miles east of Lakota, N.

(Continued on Page 62)

The Western Grebe In South Dakota

WM. YOUNGWORTH, Sioux City, Iowa

DURING 1929, 1930 and 1931, the writer had the pleasure of working in the field with Mr. W. F. Kubichek, of what is now the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service, in the Fort Sisseton region of South Dakota. Mr. Arthur R. Lundquist, of Webster, S. D., was our guide whenever he could take time off from his work. Other co-workers were: Walter Thietje, now the amiable Director of the University Museum at Iowa City, Iowa; George Ammann, who has done fine work on grouse studies for the Michigan Conservation Department; Stanley Stolba of Coe College; George Friley, then a student of Iowa State College, and others. One year the late Dr. T. C. Stephens of Morningside College, Sioux City, Iowa, was guest of Mr. Kubichek.

One of the species which we worked with was the Western Grebe. This fine bird is regularly found breeding in various parts of South Dakota including: LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge near Martin in the extreme southwestern-central part of the state; at Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge near Aberdeen; at Oakwood Lakes State Park near Brookings; and in the Webster-Fort Sisseton area. Dr. Stephens and the writer once found this Grebe breeding at Lake Albert, and the writer has visited the nesting colony on Dry Lake, both in Hamlin County. It has been found, as a rare breeder, in extreme western Minnesota.

Part of Mr. Kubichek's work was photographing the home-life of the various shore and marsh-birds. It was with high hopes that I rowed out on Rush Lake with him on the fine morning of June 6, 1930, to watch and photograph the lovely Western Grebe at home on its nest just four feet from

our blind.

The boat was returning to shore and we had been in the blind just about long enough for the birdman to get his camera set and focused on the nest when the female grebe came swimming toward the nest and suddenly dove. My first thought was she had heard us, but just as quickly she emerged beside the nest, and, with a slight lunge, was up on the edge of the nest. We noticed she stood on her toes, not tarsi, and walked to the eggs. She gently pushed herself over, but as yet not down on them, and while in this half-standing position, she suddenly split the feathers on her breast and abdomen and quickly settled on the much-stained eggs.

The accompanying pictures show the details of this nest. Cane seemed to be the favorite nesting material, although rushes are also used. As the nests are built of rotting vegetation the eggs soon become stained, so one will scarcely ever find a nice clean set of Western Grebe's eggs.

We watched the mother bird reach out and pull pieces of reed and debris up onto the nest and often right up to her body. W. L. Finley is quoted by A. C. Bent as never having seen a Western Grebe cover her eggs, as the other species of grebes do. We had several nests under observation from the blind. In most instances the female would leave without covering, but one hen nearly always covered her eggs, as shown in one of the photographs.

When our bird wasn't picking at nesting material she would often stand up and, with her bill half open, reach down and turn each egg, a necessary party of successful incubation. At other times she would stand

up, raise her crest and give a piercing cry, then usually turn and face the other way on the nest.

Sometimes we deliberately chased this grebe from her nest, so "action shots" could be taken of the leave-taking, and we then observed some of the other interesting habits of this species. The female would often chase her mate across the water, holding her beak wide open, all the while giving the wild grebe call. Sometimes the two would swim with their heads and necks stretched out

flapping the wings mightily.

The courting routine of this grebe has been often shown in movies and has been written up many times, so we will forego describing it here. We saw it many times from our blind and it is a pretty sight.

We returned a few days later to these grebes' nests and found the young birds breaking from the shell. As soon as the newly-hatched birds are somewhat dried off, the old birds start calling and the young scramble off into the water and climb aboard



Nest of Western Grebe. The usual clutch of eggs is four; six is rather unusual.

just above the water. They looked very snake-like in this performance. They spent much time floating on one side, with much of the pure white underparts exposed, as they preened, sometimes reaching up with a foot to scratch the side of the head. They often floated with the head tipped way over backwards, rubbing crown of the head vigorously on the feathers of the back. And, of course, they indulged in that habit of most water-birds, standing up in the water and

a nice feathery boat. The wing covers of the parents are raised and the babies crawl under, leaving just their heads exposed. Sometimes when the adult dives the young lose their seats and come bobbing up. We watched one such baby swim and dive. On the surface it swam with its tiny wings outstretched to balance itself. It soon tired of diving and wanted to climb into our boat. So we brought it aboard and fed it tiny bits of meat from the breast of a dead phalarope,

which it ate readily.

Our baby soon got lonesome, and started to "cheep." The response was almost immediate,—a Western Grebe broke water within 25 feet of our boat; another adult started calling near by and the young one instantly quickened its own plaintive "cheeping." We knew we should not keep such a cunning little fellow away from its mother long, so soon released it in the thick rushes where the par-

ded with cloth, on the edges of three nests, and we then retired from the scene. We waited too long, however, for on returning we found the traps sprung, but the birds had apparently pulled themselves free. Our next move was to reset traps and hide in the blind, about six feet from the nest, so we might move in quickly in event of capture. We sent the boat back to shore and didn't have long to wait until a female gave her



Covered Nest of Western Grebe. Usually they do not cover.

ents were anxiously calling.

This little fellow was colored differently than the young of the other species of grebe, being an even shade of mousy-gray on the head and back, the under parts shading to a beautiful silver-gray.

On June 10, 1930, Mr. Kubichek and I rowed out to the Western Grebe colony in Rush Lake on a project—we hoped we could settle to our own satisfaction, for once and all, whether Western Grebes take off in flight from land. Kubichek set three steel traps, with jaws heavily pad-

ded with cloth, on the edges of three nests, and we then retired from the scene. We waited too long, however, for on returning we found the traps sprung, but the birds had apparently pulled themselves free. Our next move was to reset traps and hide in the blind, about six feet from the nest, so we might move in quickly in event of capture. We sent the boat back to shore and didn't have long to wait until a female gave her piercing call a short way off and soon broke water near the nest. She spied the trap, even though it was covered with wet reeds, and tried her best to pull it into the water, but it was too heavy. She then climbed up onto the nest and was caught in the trap in doing so. From the fight she put up we could see how the others had pulled out of the traps, for by the time we had reached out, caught the trap chain and pulled the trap to us, she was nearly free. The fight this mother bird put up was something to see, and the lightning-fast thrusts of her

bill were vicious. All the while she kept screaming and quieted down only after we had her in a sack.

Back on shore we rigged up a long length of wire between two posts, then tied one end of a cord to one leg of our captive and looped the other end over the wire. But our bird refused to budge and would just scream and strike at us. Finally somebody had the happy thought that we were too far from water. We then moved down so that one post stood in the water. That was the secret, and the minute our grebe saw home she stood up on her toes and ran headlong for the water. However, she couldn't get into the air and finally fell flat. On some of those runs she would flap her wings wildly, on others hold them tightly to her sides and just run. These runs had been taking her out in to shallow water and the knot in the cord on her leg became soaked, and on her last run it came untied and that homesick grebe just kept right on going.

Test runs of one grebe didn't solve our problem, so as sort of an anticlimax, we went right out and set our two other traps and promptly caught another grebe. A Florida Gallinule had bumped into the third trap. The second grebe was even more vicious than the first, also more active. We were more careful with her. After trying unsuccessfully to get her to take off from a bare farmyard, and from a nearby gravel road, we moved back to the bare pasture. This time two of us ran with her and she made several runs of 75 feet but was unable to lift herself from the ground. This bird was banded with band number 100751 and was gently released in water, which is ever the home of the Western Grebe.

The Gallinule wouldn't even run to the water, but would try to hide in a

tuft of grass or in the bushes. When banded and released by being thrown into the air it fell with a thud. After being placed in the water it finally seemed to realize it was free and struck off for the distant bulrushes of home.

It should be emphasized that these birds were not hurt by being taken in the steel traps, as the jaws were well padded. In no case did we keep the birds away from their nests any longer than they probably might stay under natural conditions. Many of the marsh-dwellers remain away from their eggs for quite some time, and the sun and steaming vegetation carry on the incubation.

* * *

In the September, 1935, issue of *Wilson Bulletin* there was published "The Birds of Fort Sisseton, South Dakota, a Sixty-Year Comparison. By Wm. Youngworth." Some of the cuts used in that fine annotated list are used to illustrate the foregoing article on the Western Grebe, by the same author, and see back cover. Reprints of the original article are available through SDOU at 25c per copy.

☆ ☆ ☆

THE COVER Photo by Wm. Youngworth, Sioux City, Iowa, published in *Wilson Bulletin*, Sept. 1935, with note: "In taking this picture, the photographer approached on foot until the lens of camera was four feet from bird." We shall be glad to publish the names and address of each member of SDOU who reports seeing a Kingbird on nest in South Dakota in 1953, giving date and location, (including kind of tree or structure where nest was placed) and whether Eastern or Western. Similar data for 1954 will be welcomed.—Eds.

Shore Birds in '53

(Continued from Page 57)

D.; 7|12, 20 in a good pond near Minot; 7|13, a number near Andover, S. D.; 7|24, 4 Astoria. Then, 7|25, thirteen miles west of Watertown, at 5:30 p. m., not less than 100, just arrived and very restless. Picking up again at 8|23, a dozen Florence and same number Bitter Lake. During the month of September, many dates and locations up to about 50 the 29th at Tunerville, increased to near 150 by Oct. 7, and dropping to some 70 three days later. Oct. 18 is the last date appearing in my notes, closing out the year with 25 at Altamont.

Pectoral Sandpiper. Common in migration. Wherever one looks, in season, the Pectoral Sandpiper is sure to appear, or so it seems. Plentiful as it is and has always been, it is so widespread, often away from water, that up to 30 of them together would be a good gathering. It is a "krieker", so named from its alarm note. Spring: April 1, 8 at Hendricks; 4|5, some 20 near Garden City; then repeatedly in many places until May 25, when a few were present at Astoria. Fall: Sept. 10, 1; 9|14, 2; other dates distant. Arrived at Altamont-Tunerville 9|30, remaining until 10|11, in numbers 8 to 10 or 15, latterly 5 daily.

White-rumped Sandpiper. Uncommon to rare migrant. Note the white rump serves to distinguish the White-rumped and Stilt sandpipers, the first-named is a short-bill, the latter a long-bill. Spring: May 19, about 25, very shy, at Astoria; 5|21, nearly 100 Lake Preston; 5|23, 20 near Clear Lake; 5|25, few Astoria; 5|28, few Clear Lake. Fall: Sept. 3, about 20 Bitter Lake.

Baird's Sandpiper. The rating "rare" is probably unfair to this bird

of the buffy head and scaly back, so well shown when seen in bright sunlight. Its alarm note reminds one of the Pectoral's in a way. Spring: April 10, 1; 4|11, dozen or so; 4|21, about 30; 4|22, 50; 4|23, 100; 4|26, not so many. These were all found at a grassy overflow near Brandt. Fall: Aug. 23, several Rush Lake; 9|7, dozen Kampeska grade—seen there several times later. 9|25, 8 Kampeska and 15 Rush Lake; 9|27, likewise; 10|10, 2 Rush Lake; 10|17, 4 Rush Lake.

Least Sandpiper. Common in migration but not truly abundant, and during the 1953 season comparatively scarce. The little one with the greenish legs, by which it may be known when in the company of its social equal, the Semi-palmated Sandpiper. Spring: May 13, 5; 5|17, 2 Bitter Lake; Fall: Sept. 10, 5; 9|12, 2 Kampeska; 9|18, 6 Fox Lake; others, and last, 10|6, 1 at Bitter Lake.

Dowitcher. Regular, spring and fall. One of the tamest of the tame, often standing quietly on a bar refusing to be flushed by antics that would startle many other species. Frequently seen with Stilt Sandpipers. When put up they may go out in one gathering, each of the two species forming a segment of its own. Spring: April 28, 3; 5|5, 5; 5|10, 16 north of Florence; several later dates same region; 5|19, 5 Astoria. Fall: Aug. 23, about 100 Bitter Lake; 9|3, 40, and 9|13, 95 Bitter Lake; many dates various places, first appearing at Altamont 9|30, about 20. Many sights followed in October, at Bitter Lake, Waubay, Tunerville, the most 10|10, 65 at Waubay, the last, 10|22, 14 at Tunerville.

Stilt Sandpiper. Not rare, but scarce enough as it passes on to be welcomed on sight. As a true wader it is apt to be seen out away from

shore, sometimes a little difficult. Spring: May 10, 7 north of Florence; 5|15, several Brandt; now many places until 5|23, when 3 Clear Lake and 12 Grenville. Fall: July 13, dozen at Andover with the Marbled Godwits; 7|25, few at same place; 8|17, 3 at Iroquois; 8|23, 30 Bitter Lake; 9|7, 4 west of Watertown.

Semi-palmated Sandpiper. As a transient, one of several species together that are called "peeps", this bird is probably to be considered as common. Spring: May 10, a number seen; 5|13, several Fox Lake; 5|16, few Rush Lake; 5|21, Lake Preston; 5|23, Grenville. Fall: July 13, Andover.

Marbled Godwit. A summer resident. "Red" is expressive of this bird's appearance as it extends its wings in flight. Its lack of fear is a trait that pleases. It has no fear whatever of an automobile and very little of a person on foot. Spring: April 26, 4 Clear Lake; 4|28, 3; and seven dates of 1 or 2. 6|3, 2 near Newell; 6|6, a pair near Pine Ridge hustling a large hawk off their premises. The hawk did not seem to mind. Fall: July 13, 41 near Andover, in a barnyard with a little puddle and the decayed remains of an old strawpile, which clearly the Godwits found very enticing. A flock of 9 passed over Bitter Lake later in the day. 7|25, 12 at the aforesaid strawpile; 8|23, 3 Bitter Lake; 10|11, 1.

Hudsonian Godwit. This species is a regular spring migrant through eastern South Dakota. Spring: April 18, 4 near Lake Kampeska, 1 Rush Lake; 4|20, 7 Fox Lake, 5 Clear Lake and 8 in flight; 4|21, 5 Fox Lake; 4|22, the same and 6 others; 4|23, the same 6; 4|26, 2 Fox Lake, 8 Clear Lake; 5|14, 25 at Badger; four dates near home; 5|21, 34 within the city limits, close in, at Lake Preston, where they had been seen a week earlier; 5|22, 1 Fall. None. Rare in fall.

Sanderling. Transient. Generally found sparingly on sandy beaches of larger ponds or lakes. Spring: May 14, 2 Lake; Poinsett; 5|23, 2 or 3 Rush Lake. Fall: Sept. 13, Rush Lake, 1 young matching the plate by Fuertes in "Birds of New York"; 9|27, 3 Kampeska grade and 1 Rush Lake; 10|2, 1 near Tunerville; 10|6, 50 to 60 at Bitter Lake with 30 Stilt Sandpipers. The Sanderlings were very restless, flying out in small detachments of 12 or 15, only to rejoin their companions on shallow water. Shortly they took off again in the same manner, one after the other, keeping very low over margin of lake as they continued on out of sight. This occurred near the noon hour. A look several hours later disclosed neither Sanderlings nor Stilt Sandpipers. Oct. 10, 1 at Rush Lake grade.

Avocet. Fairly common summer resident. A very showy bird, not at all shy. The three pairs on the stony island near Bitter Lake grade led me to believe that they were set for the summer, but in this I was to be disappointed. Spring: May 2, 2 near Florence; 5|10, 4 north of Florence and 6 at Bitter Lake; 5|17, 6 Bitter Lake, 2 near Florence; 5|31, 6 Bitter Lake. Fall: Not seen.

Wilson's Phalarope. Regular summer resident, pretty well distributed among small ponds. Spring: April 23 4; 4|26, 1; 5|3, 6 at Florence; 5|9, about 10 Round Lake north of Goodwin; 5|10, nearly 50 along the way to Wau-bay; 5|14, 20 Lake Poinsett, and 8 others; 5|15, 20 Brandt; 5|16, 20 Lake Kampeska and some at Bitter Lake; several other dates until 6|3, the last, 2 Lake Kampeska and 8 at Ridgeview. Fall: Cannot claim a fall record.

(Continued on Page 71)

General Notes of Special Interest

HERMIT THRUSH, ETC., AT BRITTON, S. D.—On Jan. 10, 1954, at 12 below I first saw the Hermit Thrush that now has become a daily visitor at my bird-feeder. The feeder is only 9 feet from my window and my observation has been confirmed by 4 other persons. Seems to be a healthy bird. People in Britton are becoming quite bird-conscious.—Mrs. Edward Drissen, Britton, S. D.

* * *

WINTER VISITANTS AT BRITTON, S. D.—This has been an unusually good winter to watch birds. On Monday, Jan. 11, we saw a Hermit Thrush in Mr. Drissen's yard, and on Jan. 10, with 10 below, two robins and a black bird were on the feeder. Besides the above, have had regulars, such as Blue Jays, Goldfinches, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Brown Creepers, Chickadees and a lone Flicker. During the last week in December we saw a flock of six Meadowlarks—rather unusual though several have called to say they have seen a lone Meadowlark in their yard.—Mrs. Arthur Bonham, Britton, S. D.

* * *

SCOTER AND MALLARD-X-PINTAIL HYBRID AT LAKE ANDES, S. D.—Mr. Leo Kirsch, Manager of the Lake Andes Wildlife Refuge, reports that while checking hunters' bags this fall he found one that included a White-winged Scoter which had been shot in that vicinity.

Mr. Kirsch also reported he was holding a duck in his "duck hospital" which was quite evidently a Mallard x Pintail hybrid. It had the head, neck and breast markings of a drake Mallard, and the body and tail of a

Pintail. While the head and neck were marked like a Mallard's, their shape was more like a Pintail's. The feet were the color of a Mallard's, but the speculum was like neither the Mallard's nor the Pintail's, instead it was bordered like a Mallard's and had the Mallard's green head, rather than the proper blue or shades of brown of the Pintail's speculum.

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BALD EAGLES AT LAKE ANDES—On Dec. 11, 1953, Refuge Manager Kirsch, wrote: "The Bald Eagles have not moved into the Lake Andes area in any number as yet. I saw one this week on the east side of the center lake north of Ravinia. There are a large number of Eagles (Bald and Golden) along the Missouri River above the Fort Randall Dam, and we will most likely have some of these birds in this area." On Jan. 1, 1954, the J. S. Findleys and Melvin Wheelers of Sioux Falls were at Lake Andes and reported seeing six Bald Eagles and a host of Canada Geese and ducks, mostly Mallards. On January 16, 1954, Alex McKie of Omaha, and H. F. Chapman of Sioux Falls were driving past the Lake and saw five Bald Eagles near a concentration of ducks and geese. The next day they saw four Magpies in the Missouri River Valley, a short distance south of the mouth of the White River, and several Rough-legged Hawks over adjacent upland prairie.

* * *

SUB-ZERO BIRD-FEEDING—Just a note to tell about a stunt my wife is doing to entice and help the birds these sub-zero days. She has a couple of cardboard trays such as rolls come in) half filled with sand. She

warms these on a radiator, spreads suet and nuts over the same, and sets them out on the feeding tray. The Chickadee, Nuthatch, etc., instead of feeding while standing on one leg with the other warming up in the feathers, cuddle up snugly on the sand and fill up on the small particles, then and there. There isn't so much flitting back and forth. By taking out a warm tray and bringing in the cooled one she has quite a warming-refueling station.

P. S. The Flicker is visiting the Dahling, Knott and Lundquist feeding trays. While out to a meeting at Pierre on Jan. 10, I saw about a thousand ducks and Canada Geese on "Governor's Pond". Noticed particularly that among them were four Wood Ducks.—**Arthur R. Lundquist, Webster, S. D.**

* * *

MORE WEBSTER AREA NOTES—"Herman Chilson was telling me about his feeding box at the Pickerel Lake Cottage. He has a large picture window with the bird-feeding area just below the window. On Jan. 3, 1954, he says, he had Slate-colored Junco, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Chickadee, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Blue Jay, Northern Shrike and Brown Creeper".—**Arthur R. Lundquist, Webster, S. D.**

* * *

THE OWL AND THE KINGBIRD—On June 9, as I approached to within some 30 feet of a large elm tree, there was suddenly much ado among its thickly-leaved branches, a loud rustling and flapping of wings, and out burst a Great Horned Owl, closely pursued by an Eastern Kingbird. The kingbird followed only a few feet and then hopped on the owl's back. The owl angled toward the ground about 50 feet from the tree. The kingbird rode and pecked, until the owl was

a few feet from landing, then dismounted and flew away with a loud chattering. The owl ruffled its feathers to arrange them as they had been disarranged by its unwanted passenger.—**H. V. Padrnos, Redfield, S. D.**

* * *

NOTES FROM REDFIELD—Bluebirds, from eight to a dozen of them, were observed between March 22 and March 28, 1953, hovering not far above the ground, flying hither and yon, or perching on tall weeds. The first Myrtle Warbler was seen April 9. Until April 13 it was an active feeder on suet and tried to drive Chickadees away. Myrtle Warblers, however, were numerous and the last one was observed May 16. The first Hermit Thrush appeared April 26, and on the 29th there were eight of them around the house. They did a lot of scratching among the dead leaves and at times they were right under the windows. They were observed almost every day until May 3. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was seen in a tall cottonwood May 3. I was surprised to see a lone Harris's Sparrow on July 4—it should have been north long ago.

On July 14, in a mowed Crested Wheatgrass field were observed the young of the Upland Plover. They were of various sizes—from, what appeared to be a week old, thru one-fourth, one-half and three-fourths grown. Crested Wheat, being a bunch grass, is evidently a preferred habitat for the Upland Plover for nesting. Dickcissels were much more numerous in 1953 than in 1952, and Lark Buntings also seemed to be more numerous. Both like to nest in alfalfa fields.

Aug. 4, a Red-headed Woodpecker brought one young to feed on suet at the window box. A group of seven Cedar Waxwings were observed feeding on Russian Olive seeds Sept.

20.—H. V. Padrnes, Redfield, S. Dak.

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BIRDS OF THE FT. RANDALL RESERVOIR AREA—The period May 12 to June 5, 1946, was spent in the Ft. Randall Reservoir Area, in parts of Buffalo, Brule, Charles Mix, Lyman and Gregory Counties of South Dakota. Inspection of habitat in the Missouri River bottoms and on the adjacent uplands was made. Bird notes were incidental to other duties and no systematic bird studies were made. (Note: Mr. Randall's list has been rearranged, to save space)

American Island (In Missouri River, between Chamberlain and Oacoma): Red-tailed Hawk May 20; Black-billed Cuckoo, May 31; Screech Owl, May 19; Great Horned Owl May 16; Black-headed Grosbeak May 29 and 31; Blue Grosbeak May 23 to 31; Indigo Bunting May 15 to 27; Harris's Sparrow May 12 and 13; Lazuli Bunting May 22-June 3;

Missouri River Bottoms (including River itself): Cooper's Hawk May 17; Scaup Duck May 14; Cardinal, nest and young; Red-eyed Towhee, common after May 13;

Red Lake (An extensive slough or upland marsh, southeast of Chamberlain, adjacent to the River bottom)—Black-crowned Night Heron, common; White Pelican May 15; Cinnamon Teal May 23; Redhead May 14; Scaup Duck May 23; American Coot, common; Least Sandpiper May 15; Dowitcher May 15; Avocet, May 25;

Upland Ponds and Marshes: Pied-billed Grebe, several; Mallard, common; Gadwall, occasionally; Baldpate, occasionally; Pintail, common; Green-winged Teal, two records; Blue-winged Teal, fairly common; Shoveller, fairly common; Ruddy Duck May 29, west of Platte; Sora, several; Killdeer, common; Wilson's Snipe, May 15; Spotted Sandpiper May 22; Greater Yellowlegs May 14;

Lesser L-Y May 15; Wilson's Phalarope, common; Franklin's Gull, common; Black Tern, common;

Habitat not defined (common): Swainson's Hawk; Marsh Hawk; Ring-necked Pheasant; (Prairie) Sharp-tailed Grouse, fairly; Mourning Dove; Burrowing Owl; Short-eared Owl; Northern (Yellow-Shafted) Flicker; Red-headed Woodpecker, fairly; Hairy Woodpecker; Downy Woodpecker; Eastern Kingbird, after May 13; Western Kingbird, after May 13; Northern Crested Flycatcher, after May 24; Horned Lark, on prairie; Tree Swallow, near Chamberlain; Bank Swallow, after May 14; Rough-winged Swallow, after May 14; Barn Swallow, after May 14; Northern Cliff Swallow, after May 14; Northern Blue Jay, after May 14; American Magpie; Eastern Crow; Black-capped Chickadee; House Wren, nests; Catbird, after May 24; Brown Thrasher, after May 13; Robin, after May 11; Olive-backed Thrush, May 12-25, not seen after May 25; Eastern Bluebird; Migrant Shrike, regularly; Starling; Eastern Yellow Warbler, after May 14; Western (?) Yellowthroat, after May 17; Yellow-breasted Chat, after May 20; American Redstart, after May 20; English Sparrow; Western Meadowlark; Yellow-headed Blackbird, locally; Redwing; Orchard Oriole, after May 19; Baltimore Oriole, after May 14; Bronzed Grackle; Cowbird, after May 14; Eastern Goldfinch, after May 13; Lark Bunting, uplands; Grasshopper Sparrow, uplands; Lark Sparrow; Chipping Sparrow, fairly;

Habitat not stated (other than common): American Bittern, several after May 20; Ferruginous Rough-Leg, May 21, south of Oacoma; Sparrow Hawk, May 14, near Chamberlain; Prairie Chicken, one; Eastern Bobwhite, two; Upland Plover, May 16; Nighthawk, several, late May; Chim-

the extreme northwest corner of the city near the mouth of South Canyon. Within walking distance are weedy fields, stream-bottom thickets, and open ponderosa pine woods. A half square mile of this area, I have checked seven times. Frequently I found Townsend's Solitaires in the scattered cottonwoods along the stream and in the pines of the hillside. At least four individuals are wintering here. Individual solitaires range widely through both habitats. Since our arrival, a flock of 20 juncos has frequently visited our yard to feed. I have studied this flock seven times with a binocular and identified most of the birds as Oregon Juncos. Two or three individuals show the striking black head, gray wings, and brown back and ney Swift, several, Chamberlain; Belted Kingfisher, several; Red-bellied Woodpecker, May 21; Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, May 17; Phoebe, May 17, 23 and 24; White-breasted Nut-hatch, not common, first, May 24; Cedar Waxwing, May 24 and 26, small flock; Red-eyed Vireo, seen May 27 and 31, heard on other occasions; Warbling Vireo, May 20; Black and White Warbler, May 17 to 31; Tennessee Warbler, several; Magnolia Warbler, May 20; Myrtle Warbler, May 14 and 17; Cerulean Warbler, one 15 miles north of Chamberlain (bottom?); Black-poll Warbler, May 24-27; Oven-bird, several after May 22; Mourning Warbler, May 23; Scarlet Tanager, May 20, 27, 28, June 2; Dickcissel, (5) May 23-June 3; Vesper Sparrow (2) May 15 and 16; White-crowned Sparrow, May 19.—**Robert N. Randall, 928 16th St., Bismarck, N. D.**

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SOLITAIRES AND JUNCOS WINTER IN BLACK HILLS—Nov. 1, 1953, we moved to the new Meadowwood addition of Rapid City, located at

sides typical of the male Oregon. One or two have the more extensive pinkish-buff sides of the Pink-sided Junco. Three times I have seen a Junco or two with brighter reddish back and gray sides—apparently a Gray-headed Junco. Usually I have found one or two Slate-colored Juncos in the flock, but only rarely a White-winged Junco. Most of this flock is then composed of female and immature Oregons—dull-plumaged birds with gray heads and wings, brown backs, and a trace of brown or buff under the wings.

In other localities around Rapid City, large flocks of nearly all White-winged Juncos can be found in similar habitats. On Jan. 9, Harry Behrens and I counted a flock of 200 White-wings in the Spring Creek bottoms, and only four Slates were among them. Could it be that the wintering Oregons, coming in from the northwest, avoid associating with the larger permanent resident White-wings?—**Nathaniel R. Whitney, Jr., Rapid City, S. D.**

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Some Personalities

Since the note about the Trimms appeared in the last issue of Bird Notes, the November-December issue of Audubon Magazine has been received. It carried as the "middle spread" another husband-wife contribution by the Trimms, entitled "A Wild Animal pet with character can be unforgettable. Here was one, the Baby Coyote called SHAG". The article was written by Lynn Trimm and the illustrations are by H. Wayne Trimm. We suggest that SDOUsers subscribe for the magazine, to begin with this Nov.-Dec. issue. The Sioux Falls Argus Leader carried a story about this latest adventure by two delightful folks.

Yankton Man Hunts Birds With Camera

By AGNES VLASAK

Yankton, S. D.—Shooting birds as a hobby might imply rather cold-blooded sport, but Willis Hall, 40-year old technician for the Freeman Corporation at Yankton, a biology major and an avid student of natural science, wouldn't harm a feather on a sparrow—yet he is known to move slowly and stealthily on feeding and nesting birds, catching them unawares and in their most unsuspecting moments.

To him, a bird in the bush is worth two in the hand any day, and some of his best takes are made in the birds' natural habitat, feeding and nesting.

Hall is a bird photographer, and one so skilled and discriminating that two out of four blue-jay color photographs were accepted this year for the international exhibit of nature photography in the Natural History Museum in Chicago. His name appears in "Who's Who in Nature Photography."

Over 200 Slides

Hall began his collection of color photos of birds two and a half years ago. To date he has mounted in the neighborhood of some 200 slides, accepting on the average one shot in 10 for mounting. That means he has taken over 2,500 pictures of birds. He is his own severest critic and every one of his bird series is positive proof of the discriminating quality of his work.

Hall persists in "method in my madness" as he jokingly refers to his hobby . . . a procedure which perhaps is responsible for putting his bird movies up front of many a slide program.

Growth Is Recorded

He begins each series (series are catalogued blue-jay, cardinal, meadow-lark, thrush, etc.) with several "atmosphere" shots such as sunsets or cloudscares and shows the location of the grove and the tree. He follows this by a closeup of the nest with eggs in it, the mother birds on the nest, then the hatched young, followed, perhaps, by a shot of the father birds bringing home the worms. He photographs them as the young grow up, records in full color all the changes in plumage.

He has some prize shots of the little ones trying their wings, often follows them graphically from branch to branch in their initial adventures from the nest.

Only once could Hall get to within two and a half feet of his subject, so depends on the remote operation of his specially adapted Kodak Tourist camera for most of his shots. Equipped with a special portrait lens, 4.5 opening and exposure up to 1/800 of a second, the camera is mounted on a wooden platform. Included is a built in cable release, range finder and a mounted tape measure for distance in closeups. A camouflage covering sewed in 50 gores covers all metal and shiny parts of the flash-holder. Hall also uses a 4 by 5 Graflex which he camouflages when used outside the blind.

Establishes Relationship

Hall's pre-picture activities are probably even more time consuming than his watching and waiting for the birds. He must first establish a public relations setup with his subjects that will immunize them to his meandering about their nests and feeding stations. He accomplishes this by

setting up a dummy camera in his yard, or wherever he plans to do the shooting . . . perhaps near a nest where he intends to film a series. Then the actual camera is set up, focused and readied and all the photographer has to do is take cover and wait for his birds. Then from his foxhole, Hall pulls a wire, setting off the camera's mechanism, adding, if his luck breaks just right, another gem to his collection. Of vital importance at this crucial moment, Hall asserts, is to remain absolutely motionless.

Hall finds the winter an ideal season for bird photography, as most birds can be attracted with food. Spring is ideal for family shots . . . Nesting and mating and baby bird photos. Early morning, between 4 and 7 o'clock are good hours as are late afternoon and early evening.

In addition to his many bird pictures, Hall has made several fine studies of wild flowers and grasses as well as smaller wood animals.

—Stoux Falls, S. D. Arkus-Lender

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Willis Hall of Yankton, S. D., is the subject of a story which is quoted at length above. He may not have intended that we should publish his rather personal letter about the birding activities of his wife Rosamond and himself, but there is much in it of general interest which we want to share with others. He says: "Christmas Day was an unusually favorable day for this time of year and we saw quite a few birds on our Bird Count. The most pleasing sight I think, was a flock of Meadowlarks. There were about 21, and their yellow breasts showed up well against the snowy background. I was surprised to find so many Harris's Sparrows here this winter.

"We are always interested in South Dakota Bird Notes. There are some

very good bird-watchers who report consistently . . . Last summer I spent practically all of my spare time trying to get pictures of birds. While I did get a few pictures I missed the best opportunities—for instance, one day when I was in my burlap blind, a wren, which had been enthusiastically singing on a twig a couple of feet away, suddenly hopped over to my peephole in the blind and looked right in at me. Another day some strange jerking on one corner of my blind made me investigate. There, within a few inches of my nose, was a female Baltimore Oriole pulling very determinedly on one of the coarse threads in the burlap fabric."

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Shore Birds in '53

(Continued from Page 63)

Northern Phalarope. Irregular transient. Emulating a popular soap of the radio, this little bird floats, and bears away from those that must keep their feet in contact with earth. Spring: May 17, at least 150 at Bitter Lake; 5/21, 16 near Oakwood Lakes; 5/23 a strong 1000 on Bitter Lake; 5/31, 32 counted same place. By the process of picking groups of fives and tens adding up to 350, then finding half as many remaining to total 500, one side of "Avocet Island" was taken care of. Looking to the other side, a good estimate made out 300, to which about 200 on the main lake brought a grand total of 1000 (5/23). It was an animated scene, with hundreds upon hundreds of active fairies twirling and bobbing over the rippling waves. Fall: Oct. 10, 2.

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Adrian C. Fox, former president of the Nebraska Ornithologists Union, is being transferred from Lincoln, Nebr. to Bismarck, North Dakota.

Letter from Hot Springs, S. Dak.

Dear Friends:

I wish to tell you all about the many bird visitors we have had this fall. In the summer we had quite a few visitors in the yard at the bird bath and feeders; but beginning in October and on thru November and even yet we are having many visitors . . . more at a time than any previous year that we can remember. Each day runs from five to nine or ten different kinds. On Nov. 19 we counted nine kinds here that day.

Waxwings, 2 kinds, Bohemian & Cedar. Grosbeaks, Evening or Western. Robins, Common kind and white-headed. Sparrows. At least three kinds, maybe more. Starlings, which are accumulating fast out here. Juncos, 3 kinds, black-headed, rusty sided, slate color. Chickadees, black-capped. Sapsucker. Woodpecker. Downy.

Soon after that, the flicker visited for a while . . . do not see it any more. The downy woodpecker comes each day to the suet on the tree.

And do the birds bathe! . . . I should say so! We have to replenish the bath now and then during the day, and each night empty it of the water or ice which has formed. We are having quite mild weather for this time of year and not much snow. What little we get is soon gone.

Now about the white-headed robins. As near as we could detect, there were three of them. Never but one here at a time. Their heads are not all white; but mostly so, with a gray splotch on it and then on the body of the robins are scattered white spots . . . some on wings and tail. We are wondering what they are crossed with. Wish we could have taken a picture of them. The white-headed robins were here for about ten days . . . off and on. Now gone, and have been for about ten days. We have never seen such markings on robins, before.

The starlings are in very big flocks now. The other day on the wires not far away and in the high trees, I hastily counted nearly a hundred before they dashed away. I am sure there were quite a little over a hundred. Some times on the bird bath we will count nine or ten birds trying to drink or take a bath. The bath rim will be just full all around. The bath is about three feet above ground. Mighty interesting to watch them stand up for themselves or allow the "other fellow" to scare them away. Sometimes there will be mostly evening grosbeaks or waxwings or robins or starlings or sparrows.

The sparrows and the downy have quite a time seeing who will give or take at the suet. The downy is not as shy as he was at first and stands up for himself more. The sapsucker only stays a very short time when he comes to the tree or the bath. We see but one at a time of these two kinds of birds and their visits are very short. The downy comes oftener than the sapsucker.

On the ground near the house we have two pans with water, too, at which many birds visit, as well as the neighboring dogs. We find so many people do not see that their dogs have plenty of water, so we are glad when they find ours. So often a dog will drink and drink, showing he is mighty thirsty. The suet on the tree and the several feeders are on the east side of the house so are protected pretty well from the prevailing west winds.

In October quite a flock of Canada Jays were here for about a week before going on down south.

Why do some robins have white rings around their eyes and some do not? What does that indicate? One or two robins have very black heads. As you will guess, we are certainly enjoying the birds.

I read the article in the Post about the Bird Calls and sent for three; one for myself and the other two for gifts.

Hope I have not worn you out with all this birding, and am wishing you a fine New Year and trust you enjoyed a Merry Christmas.

Most cordially, Mrs. H. B. Stevens.

Roster of Membership

S. D. O. U. — 1953

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Dr. W. A. Rothschild	Madison, S. D.
Mrs. Geo. Hunter	Madison, S. D.
Philip A. DuMont, 4114 Fessenden St., N. W.	Washington 16, D. C.
Wm. F. Rapp, Jr., 430 Ivy Ave.	Crete, Nebr.
Miss Gertrude Gill, 708 N. Washington, Box 705	Madison, S. D.
Rev. E. W. Szalay, Box 101	Mission, S. D.
Mrs. G. W. Robertson, Rt. 1, Box 64	Rapid City, S. D.
H. E. Thurston, 2012 W. 22nd St.	Sioux Falls, S. D.
Prof. Edwin B. Harding, 1028 8th Ave.	Brookings, S. D.
Mrs. Chas. G. Wilson	Midland, S. D.
Robert R. Johnson, Box 461	Chamberlain, S. D.
Mrs. Lorna L. Jensen	Mission, S. D.
Moses F. Shindelbower	Kyle, S. D.
Mrs. Nila Dale Cowan	Langford, S. D.
Frank Cowan	Langford, S. D.
Dr. Wesley R. Hurt, U. S. D. Museum	Vermillion, S. D.
Mrs. Geo. Jorgenson	Dell Rapids, S. D.
Mrs. H. R. Woodward, 110 S. Connor St.	Hot Springs, S. D.
N. R. Whitney, 4350 Meadowwood Dr.	Rapid City, S. D.

Honorary 1953

Dr. W. H. Over	Vermillion, S. D.
Dr. S. S. Visher, Indiana University	Bloomington, Ind.
W. B. Mallory	Canton, S. D.



SDOU Annual Meeting 1954

While it is too early to make definite announcement of the schedule for the Fifth Annual Meeting of SDOU, it has been determined that it will be held somewhere in the Black Hills during the week-end of May 29, 30 and 31. Sessions and field-trips in both the Northern and the Southern Hills are probabilities. In view of the possibility the 1955 meeting may be held at Sioux City, Iowa, jointly with Iowa and Nebraska, a 1954 session in South Dakota becomes increasingly important.

The Editors, with their wives, have attended several conventions of state and national organizations interested in ornithology. These have been most pleasant and profitable experiences. Programs always include papers and discussions which are interesting and helpful to folks who are mere beginners in bird-study. Invariably some fine films are shown. The planned field-trips are most interesting and enjoyable. Finally there are wonderful folks from many places, of various vocations and avocations, who are at least as friendly and pleasant as we are, and so we have fun! The SDOU meeting will surely fall within that pattern.

Opportunities for birding in the general area are almost limitless. Because of the wide variety of habitat within the Black Hills, in the Bad Lands and on the adjacent immense short-grass prairies, considerable time should be devoted to the trip.

Northeastern South Dakota Lake Region

