

# **SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES**

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## President's Page



**T**HE FIRST three months of our S. D. O. U. year have passed rather quietly, perhaps, for many of us but the special committee working on our number one project has been active and has progressed in its revision

of our state check-list. Our best list at present is Over and Thoms Birds of South Dakota which listed 380 species in its last issue in 1946. Additional species have been found and now a complete and accurate list of South Dakota birds is much needed.

Dr. N. R. Whitney, chairman of the committee, reports that the revision should be completed this year. It will be a great help to students of our birds.

Suggestions For Bird Field Study (Wildlife Leaflet, B. S. No. 150, Jan. 1950, Bureau of Wildlife Survey) stresses the importance to the amateur of state and local lists in these words: "Many periodicals deal entirely with birds. Some contain local lists and are designed to meet the needs of the amateur. State lists have been and are being published. Lists are also issued for restricted areas. The beginner should always bear in mind that only a part of the birds treated in any standard manual or state list are likely to occur in his immediate locality. He should study the local list to learn which ones he can expect to see."

Such a local list is the recently published booklet, Birds of Union County, by Stevens, Youngworth and Felton. (36 pages, 75c, W. R. Felton, Jr., McCook Lake, Jefferson, South Dakota). Wm. Youngworth and W. R. Felton, Jr. are members of SDOU, and their book is a substantial addition to the literature on South Dakota birds and is proving a valuable help to our check-list committee. It certainly should be in the hands of SDOU members especially those in the southeastern section of the state.

Only trained ornithologists can find the right answers to some of the questions about bird life in South Dakota, and sometimes it may be necessary to do a certain amount of collecting. Collecting is objectionable to many of our members, and with good reason. It is being restricted more and more, but some questions can be answered only by collecting.

This summer a group from Cornell University under the direction of Dr. Charles G. Sibley spent a short time in the Black Hills to study some of the hybrids among Flickers, Bullock's Orioles, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Lazuli Buntings and Towhees. The party collected about a dozen Flickers and not over four each of the other species. They concluded that all the Flickers in the area covered were hybrids between the Yellow-shafted and the Red-shafted Flickers; and that the Hills are well west of the zone of hybridization of the other four species.

There are questions about certain of the flycatchers and hummingbirds in the Black Hills and perhaps some distasteful collecting may be necessary when and if the answers are to be found.

# Larks On The Fairways

Willis Hall

ON MAY 12, 1955, a friend told me of a bird nest he had found on the fairway of the golf course north of Yankton. We went to the place but had to look for some time to re-discover the small nest and its downy young. Then, after going off some distance, we saw two Prairie Horned Larks nearby, walking about in a nonchalant, but business-like manner.

Within the next few weeks I found that there were many larks on the golf course. Perhaps many of them were the young from early broods, for the Prairie Horned Lark is known for its early nesting habit,—often nesting before the snow is all gone from the grassy hills.

On June 3, 1955 my golfing friend told me of another lark nest he had found at the golf course. This contained five eggs. By the evening of June 7 two eggs had hatched. The next day four young were in the nest. The remaining egg was still in the nest after the young had left.

A week after hatching, the four young were still in the nest but when the parent birds brought food, two of them would toddle as much as a foot away from home. They were a little shaky on their legs and tried to steady themselves with outstretched wings. Once one of them found its way to the shade provided by my camera. It remained there for some time and when it returned to the nest the others opened their mouths to be fed.

It is indeed a wonder how these small birds could withstand the sun glaring down all day upon them. Their exposed skin between the rows of feathers did appear to have a very healthy sunburn. No doubt the parents gave the young some shelter during the hottest part of the day.

On June 15 the first young lark wandered from the nest, and, encouraged by both parents, made its way to the longer grass at the edge of the fairway. There both parent birds bestowed much attention on it, feeding it numerous times with food they found close at hand.

The next morning only one remained in the nest and while I watched from a distance it toddled away so secretly that I did not see it until it was about 20 feet on its way to the rough grass. One of the adult birds went ahead of it and turned back now and then to see its progress.

During my observation of the birds, grasshoppers were the only food which I could identify as being fed. On several occasions I saw the grasshoppers being subdued by a series of blows. It was impossible to get pictures of the food brought to the nest, because the parent birds, when within three or four feet of the nest, would put on a final burst of speed and without any hesitation would have the food down the young one's throat. In addition to grasshoppers, Prairie Horned Larks are known to eat other insects and perhaps a greater amount of weed seeds.

At the end of July I returned to the golf course. It was quite a different place from what it was in May and June when the joyous songs of the larks across the fairways greeted me as the low sun came over the fields. Somehow the rather discordant jumble of notes boldly following one another in rapid succession was just the right contrast for the frail but sweet melody which followed. And how different were those larks of early summer from those in winter flying with the north wind and the snow.

# Ring-Billed Gulls Nest In South Dakota

Arthur R. Lundquist

**M**OST authorities describe the breeding range of the Ring-billed Gull, *Larus delawarensis*, as being in northern North America as far south as the Great Lakes and to Stump Lake in the Devils Lake area in North Dakota (Bent) and, farther west, down to northern Utah (Pough). No mention is made of South Dakota. However, for many years there has been a nesting colony in the Waubay area in northeastern South Dakota, in latitude about 200 miles south of Devils Lake, North Dakota.

I first visited this colony on the east island of Waubay Lake in 1922. Then during the next 14 or 15 years I made one or more visits to the island during each nesting season.

Then the lake dried up and the colony moved elsewhere. When water came back the lake level became so high there was not room on the island, or the right type of ground, for gull nesting and the space had been pre-empted by White Pelicans and Double-crested Cormorants.

The water is also very deep in Bitter Lake about five miles south of Waubay city. A former peninsula on the west side was cut off at the neck by high water and an island resulted. I had heard that Ring-billed Gulls were nesting on this island during the last couple of years.

On July 2 the Spot Findeys and Melvin Wheelers were birding in the Bitter Lake area and noticed the gull activity on the small weedy island. They were not equipped with the boots necessary to visit the island but were sure it held a nesting colony.

They told me about it and I visited the island on July 4. There was a colony of about 400 nests, judging by

the number of adults present. The nests were in a heavy growth of marsh sedge.

A large number of the young took to the water as I approached. Some were full-grown and learning to fly, and the smallest of the gulls were about a third grown.

There were 50, or more, dead young. Two adults were sick and unable to fly. I looked one over quite carefully and came to the conclusion the birds were suffering from botulism. This is not surprising as the Ring-billed Gull is an eater of old dead meat which might readily be infected with *Clostridium botulinum*.

The Bitter Lake colony is about 10 miles from the site of the former Waubay Lake colony and is approximately the same size, so perhaps it is made up of many of the old birds of that colony.

On July 16, Carl M. Johnson visited the colony intending to band some of the gulls. The smallest of the young were at least half grown, and all that could not fly took to the water. He was able to band a few but returned at night with flash lights to catch and band some more.

## THE COVER

The cover picture for this issue of Bird Notes is through the generosity of Mr. Willis Hall, Yankton, S. Dak., and is one of the results of his patience and his skill as a photographer. It is a portrait of some of the Prairie Horned Larks about which he tells on page 30.

# Birding In Old Mexico

L. J. Moriarty

ON FEBRUARY 12, 1955, we left Watertown for a sight seeing and birding trip in Mexico. Our route took us across Nebraska and Kansas, New Mexico and Arizona to Nogales, on the border, then down the west coast of Old Mexico to Guadalajara, thence east to San Luis Potosi, north to Ciudad Victoria and then back home.

Outlining the trip does not even hint at the adventures, the happy experiences, and the "firsts" of many kinds. There were too many for this brief account, but some of them may interest bird watchers because we saw many exotic birds and even got "firsts" among some that are our own birds for a part of the year. So our outline will mention only a few of the more unusual birds and events. It is far from inclusive for after all there are other stories for Bird Notes.

As we started south our first pleasant surprise was to meet some of our birds working north in anticipation of Spring,—enough Crows, and beer cans too, to last a life time. One of the first additions to our list was an Arizona Jay. Then the Boice Thompson Arboretum was worth much more time than we had, but we still came up with Red-naped and Williamson Sapsuckers, Gila Woodpecker, Palmer Thrasher, Bridled Titmouse, Cactus Wren. Next came our first Road Runner, then Steller's Jay, a Three-toed Woodpecker, and Phainopepla. Of course, these were in addition to many old acquaintances.

After crossing the Border at Nogales, we drove to Hermosillo, Sonora, and there a disappointment developed into a most rewarding experience. No accommodations were avail-

able at the motor court. We and another couple from the States were directed to a third rate hotel for the only available rooms in town. We preferred to sleep in our cars. It was 6:35 and a motel room with two double beds reserved till 6:30 had not been claimed. It could only be rented to four people. The other couple looked all right to us and so we proposed that the four of us take it rather than sleep in our cars or go to the third-rate hotel to share rooms with the bugs.

We had passed the other couple on the road in the afternoon, when they were looking at some birds and had remarked about "another pair of crazy North American bird watchers like us". Now we learned that they were the Sam Argentas who were on their fifth birding trip in Mexico. We could stack only 5 bird books against their dozen. They turned out to be Class A birders and Class AA people to be with.

We saw bird and birds, Mexican birds, western birds, northern birds wintering in the south, old acquaintances and strangers. We saw the garbage disposal system of Mexico at work,—Black and Turkey Vultures and Caracaras. We saw White-winged Doves by the thousands; over 200 Pyrrhuloxia within a few hundred yards on a side road (33 from one tree by actual count).

Two days of birding at Guymas was rewarding—Reddish, Snowy and American Egrets, Louisiana Herons, Brown Pelicans, Glaucus Gulls, White Ibis, Short-billed Gulls.

On the second day we went a few miles inland on a trail and saw Spot-breasted Wrens, Arkansas Green-

backed Finch; Lazuli, Beautiful and Orange-breasted Buntings. We also visited the camp of some gypsies who charged us 5 pesos to visit their camp. They were bird trappers. There are no laws in Mexico to protect song birds and these people were making a living by trapping and selling birds. Even their own living seemed to us little removed from the animal's.

As we went down the coast we saw some of our South Dakota birds, Say's Phoebe, Violet-green Swallow, Lark Sparrow, Avocet, Cinnamon Teal, DOWITCHER, Eared Grebe. But more exciting to us were Pacific Loons, Royal Tern, Laughing Gull, Desert Sparrow, Plumbeous Gnatcatcher, Buff-bellied and Plain-capped Star-throat Hummingbirds, Green-tailed Towhees, Mexican Flycatchers and Gilded Flickers.

On another day we added Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Treganza Herons, Inca and Ground Doves, Painted Buntings, Vermillion Flycatchers (what a blaze of color!), hundreds of Glossy Ibis on an irrigated field, many Green Parakeets, noisy White-fronted Parrots flying like ducks and alighting in trees, Berylline Hummingbirds, Mexican White Hawk, White-naped Swift, Orange-chinned Parakeets in flocks.

Other experiences were crossing a river on a ferry of planks on two small boats, and crossing two other rivers on railroad bridges.

More birds,—Yellow-billed Cacique, Pileated Woodpecker, Hooded Oriole, Couch's Kingbird, Kiskadee or Derby Flycatcher, (the greatest eye-catcher after the Vermillion Flycatcher).

The next experience was going up a river in a dugout to see shore birds at close range. White-faced Glossy Ibis, Boat-billed Heron, Long-billed Curlew, Anhinga, and of course all the repeaters. The tide was low and we could not go far enough to see

Rosette Spoonbills and Flamingos. We did see Green Kingfishers, Tricolored Herons, Osprey, Aplomado Falcon, Black Skimmers, Olivaceous Cormorants and Mangrove Swallows.

The river was lined with mangrove trees, and oysters were fastened on all the roots and limbs hanging in the water. Nearly naked Indians were pulling the oysters off and loading them into their dugouts, to get about \$4.00 a load for them. We ate fresh oysters on the half shell and were surprised no salt or sauce is necessary.

The next day we had another "first" 20 miles in the Pacific in a 20 foot boat,—whales and turtles 6 feet across; for birds, the Man-o'-War and Red-footed Booby. We trolled for Blue Marlin Sailfish and a slick Brown Booby dove for our bait. Our next "first" was an 8-foot Blue Marlin after a 45 minute battle.

Something else; the fluorescence of the breakers in the tropical sea at night, and fluorescent footprints in the wet sand when you walk by the water.

Our next stop was Guadalajara, the second city of Mexico. We remember in particular paying 72 cents for 2 nights car storage in a city garage and a wash job.

Near the city we also remember the 5-inch Blue-rumped Parrotlets, mostly green all over, noisy like their whole tribe; and flocks of Orange-chinned Parakeets billing like lovebirds, 20 in one tree.

Our route turned east to San Luis Potosi. "Firsts" were not so frequent but there were a few,—Scrub Jays, Bendire's and Sage Thrashers, White-necked Woodpeckers.

The route turned north toward Ciudad Victoria and we were interested in Great-tailed Grackles, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Ladder-back-

(Continued on Page 41)

# Some Observations On Breeding Behavior Of Waterfowl In Day County

Donald A. Jenni

THE OBSERVATIONS presented here were made in the course of a breeding study of the waterfowl of Day County, South Dakota, and may serve to illustrate some of the points presented in my article on Social Behavior of Waterfowl (Bird Notes, No. 25, June 1955). The study was made on a 10½ square mile area of typical Prairie Hills pot-hole habitat during the breeding season of 1954.

There was a demonstration of Blue-winged Teal tolerance in the last week of May on a 3½-acre pot-hole. As the pot-hole was approached a single drake swam out from shore, soon followed by a bluewing pair from about the same place. The hen approached the lone drake. Her mate rushed the lone drake which flew about 10 feet. The procedure was repeated. Then a second pair swam out from shore a short distance from the place from which the first 3 birds had come. The lone drake was left undisturbed as long as he stayed at least 10 feet away. When he approached closer, the mated ducks would start bobbing their heads. The lone drake would duplicate the action and then swim away. Occasionally the head bobbing failed to repel the lone drake and one of the mated drakes would rush him and he would fly about 10 feet. The two pairs would swim closer together, 3 or 4 feet, than one would normally expect, but they would not tolerate the lone drake so close.

The most common types of Blue-wing display were the head-bob and the short rush. Generally a short series of bobs are all that is required to settle a dispute. During the period

of greatest defense activity it is not uncommon to see several displays of Blue-wing defense in one day.

The Gadwall appeared to defend a large area. A single pair was often seen to defend an entire 5-acre pot-hole. The defense consisted almost entirely of aerial chases and involved little or no head-bobbing and swimming.

An illustration of typical Gadwall defense occurred when a pair of Gadwalls landed in the east end of a 4¾-acre pothole. Immediately a Gadwall drake flew from a stand of emergent vegetation in the west end and landed near the pair. The pair jumped and the second drake followed. All three were visible for about two minutes. Their flight resembled courting flights. When the trio was about 500 to 600 yards from the pothole, the second drake returned to the vegetation where he was first seen. He was flushed later and was found to have a hen with him.

Less typical of Gadwall display was an incident on a large pothole one evening in early July. A pair landed in one end and the drake of a pair at the other end flew toward them and they took off immediately. He followed the pair and returned in about 3 or 4 minutes to find his hen had left. A few minutes later a pair of Gadwall landed in the pothole. (They may have been the birds that tried to land earlier.) The drake chased them away and though I remained by the pothole till after sundown more than an hour later, none of them returned.

Like the Gadwall, and unlike the Blue-winged Teal, the Mallard appears to require a large defended



area. Mallard defense was observed resembling that first described for Gadwall.

One evening in early July a pair of Gadwall landed along the south edge of a large pothole. A Mallard left his hen on the north edge and flew straight toward the pair and landed near them. The Mallard sat very still and looked at the Gadwalls for a few seconds, then wagged his tail, quacked softly once, turned around and swam back to his mate. This appeared to be a case of mistaken identity, as the Mallard's intentions when he left his mate seemed obvious.

The only instance of inter-specific strife was a lone Blue-winged drake that kept chasing a Gadwall drake from a small area of bare shore on a 10-acre pothole. Apparently the Blue-wing was on his loaf spot and the Gadwall persisted in feeding too close to him. I was surprised that the small Teal was successful in his contest with the Gadwall.

There was a late blizzard the week-end of May 1-2, 1954, when many birds had arrived at the breeding area. Nearly all the potholes froze and forced the birds to abandon their individual areas. These birds concentrated on large water areas such as the small lakes of the Waubay Refuge and Waubay Lake which did not freeze. Although they gathered in small flocks, it was still obvious that they were paired.

The Bluewinged Teal, the most abundant duck in the area, had the smallest defended area of any of the ducks observed. Mallards and Gadwalls defended much larger areas that held 3 or more pairs of Bluewings at the same time.

Waterfowl breeding behavior is somewhat flexible and often the most interesting behavior is the atypical.

**Donald A. Jenni**, who has given us two good articles, "Social Behavior of Waterfowl!" (June 1955 Bird Notes) and "Observations of Duck Behavior" (in this issue) spent five months last year in field world with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks. The two articles are based on the waterfowl study he did near Waubay.

He has also done conservation work with the California Division of Forestry and the Department of Fish and Game, and the United States Department of Agriculture. His educational background includes a California high school, a B. S. in Fish and Game Management from Oregon State College and a Master's degree from Utah State College in Wildlife Management.

He was not back to Waubay this year because the Air Force called him to two year's active duty, but after that tour of duty he plans to get his Ph. D. in avian ecology.

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## Birding In Old Mexico

(Continued from Page 39)

ed Woodpecker, and Slaty-tailed Trogons chasing an owl we could not identify.

All this and more. Naked tots, cattle, burros and Mexicans taking siestas on the highway, thatched adobe huts contrasting with modern buildings, coca cola 3c a bottle, deserts with cacti and thorns, forests, tropical seas, poverty, squalor, and riches, pretty good motels, food both good and bad, and birds, birds, and birds! But above all we had the finest of companions in the strangers from California. We hope to plan another trip and we hope it can be with them.

## Hinderman Collection At Redfield

One of the earlier collections of South Dakota birds was made at Redfield by a man named Hinderman who had his own small natural history museum in which he exhibited a considerable number of specimen of birds and mammals and a big collection of butterflies. Later Mr. Hinderman and his collection moved to the basement of the library. Sometime after his death the library basement was needed for a recreation room and the collection was moved to the city hall where it now is.

Dr. L. J. Moriarty, treasurer of SDOU, often visited the museum as a youngster in Redfield. President J. O. Johnson and H. V. Padnos made the following list of the South Dakota bird specimens for the record:

Common Loon  
Eared Grebe  
Green Heron  
Black-crowned Night Heron  
American Bittern  
Least Bittern  
White-fronted Goose  
Gadwall  
American Widgeon  
Pintail  
Green-winged Teal  
Blue-winged Teal  
Shoveler  
Lesser Scaup  
American Golden-eye  
Old Squaw  
Ruddy Duck  
Hooded Merganser  
American Merganser  
Black Vulture  
Goshawk  
Swainson's Hawk  
Rough-legged Hawk  
Golden Eagle  
Bald Eagle  
Marsh Hawk  
Osprey  
Gyr Falcon  
Duck Hawk  
Sparrow Hawk  
Ruffed Grouse  
Prairie Chicken  
Sharp-tailed Grouse  
Bob-White

Hungarian Partridge  
Pheasant  
Coot  
Killdeer  
Golden Plover  
Spotted Sandpiper  
Willet  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Least Sandpiper  
Dowitcher  
Marbled Godwit  
Hudsonian Godwit  
Avocet  
Wilson's Phalarope  
Ring-billed Gull  
Laughing Gull  
Franklin's Gull  
Common Tern  
Black Tern  
Yellow-billed Cuckoo  
Black-billed Cuckoo  
Barn Owl  
Screech Owl  
Hawk Owl  
Burrowing Owl  
Short-eared Owl  
Nighthawk  
Ruby-throated Hummingbird  
Belted Kingfisher  
Flicker  
Red-shafted Flicker  
Red-headed Woodpecker  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Hairy Woodpecker  
Least Flycatcher  
Horned Lark  
Purple Martin  
Crow  
Magpie  
Long-billed Marsh Wren  
Catbird  
Brown Thrasher  
Wood Thrush  
Olive-backed Thrush  
Eastern Bluebird  
Golden-crowned Kinglet  
Northern Shrike  
Golden-winged Warbler  
Tennessee Warbler  
Nashville Warbler  
Yellow Warbler  
Magnolia Warbler  
Cape May Warbler  
Myrtle Warbler  
Black-throated Green Warbler  
Blackburnian Warbler  
Chestnut-sided Warbler  
Bay-breasted Warbler

## With The Banders

**M**OST OF OUR South Dakota banders say this has been a poor season, but we wonder. Perhaps they were ambitious and were disappointed in not realizing overly optimistic goals. Anyway, a look at Carl M. Johnson's report makes one think it was a good season,—1500 individuals of 65 species. Some of them were Minnesota birds trapped near his home a few miles over the line, but he was in South Dakota several times to help Kenneth Krumm band White Pelicans at LaCreek, to put bands on Waubay Black-crowned Night Herons until he ran out of bands, catch Magpies in the Badlands and Ring-billed Gulls at Bitter Lake.

Another 10-miles-over-the-line bander is Mrs. C. E. Peterson, Madison, Minnesota. Her report of 116 individuals and 30 species so far this year seems noteworthy because she trapped them in town in her backyard. In 1954 it was 443 birds of 50 species and so business will have to pick up this Fall or this year will be a disappointment.

One of Mrs. Peterson's recovered bands had been put on a Grackle in

1951 and was found this year in Arkansas. 5 birds returned to be trapped again.

Nearby on the South Dakota side of the line, Lowry Elliott and H. W. Wagar were banding at Milbank. Mr. Wagar caught 10 species in a trap near a busy driveway. The Grackles furnished a lot of the business. 2 of them were found dead nearby a few days later, which may tell something of the uncertainties of bird life. 4 Grackles and a Robin banded a year ago were re-trapped this year.

This summer Dr. Wagar moved to Winner and should get some interesting birds in that part of the State. (For an early report, see page 45.)

Mr. Elliott's big day was July 3 when he caught 25 individuals of 5 species, but he underscores 2 Lincoln's Sparrows banded on June 30.

Ruth Habeger, Madison, S. D., says it is a poor year and that only Grackles get into her traps and too often it is the same Grackle. Her nieces and nephews enjoyed helping by baiting with a dead minnow and placing the trap on the lake shore to catch the Grackles.

Besides Grackles she banded Blue Jays, Robin and Brown Thrasher. Her only recovery was the band on an English Sparrow on which she had practiced a year ago. There were 5 returns of Grackles and a Brown Thrasher.

Kenneth Krumm was bothered by weather early in the year when he wanted to do some intensive trapping of waterfowl. (See page 46 for report on Redheads.) He and Carl Johnson banded the immature birds of the Pelican colony on the LaCreek Refuge.

Our opinion is:—good year or poor year, a lot of interesting and valuable data is being accumulated.

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Black-poll Warbler  
Prairie Warbler  
Northern Water-thrush  
Mourning Warbler  
Canada Warbler  
Redstart  
Bobolink  
Yellow-headed Blackbird  
Red-wing  
Orchard Oriole  
Baltimore Oriole  
Purple Grackle  
Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
Indigo Bunting  
Dickcissel  
Common Redpoll  
American Goldfinch  
Towhee  
Lark Bunting  
White-throated Sparrow  
Chestnut-collared Longspur

## *General Notes of Special Interest*

**KING RAIL**—On August 9, 1955 I saw a King Rail on the south bay of Lake Alice near Altamont. It stood at attention on the roadway through the swamp and then as I watched for twenty minutes it alternately moved about cautiously or hustled to nearby cover. It was about three rods away at first and then two rods before its last disappearance. Its occurrence is called "rare" in this area.—**Alfred Peterson, Brandt, S. D.**  
\* \* \* \*

**OWLS IN S. E. SOUTH DAKOTA**—One day last winter we watched a Snowy Owl hunt in fields northeast of Sioux Falls. It zig-zagged much like the hunt-pattern of the Short-eared Owl along the fence lines where small snow drifts had formed over weeds. Two jack rabbits which moved about near the fence did not seem to interest the Snowy, nor were they disturbed by its presence.

On July 16, 1955, we saw six Burrowing Owls in a pasture 1½ miles west of the northwest corner of Alexandria, Hanson County, S. D. They were apparently feeding and at first were well scattered but eventually they gathered on the ground into a compact group well away from the highway. All appeared to be of about the same size, and we assumed it was a pair with their brood. A week later we again drove by the pasture, without stopping, and saw only one owl but our examination was not at all close.

During the hot nights in early August we heard Screech Owls singing in the large trees near our home. We were interested that the variations in the rendition by caller and answerer were the same.—**Herman and Lois Chapman, Sioux Falls, S. D.**

**CHESTNUT - COLLARED LONG-SPUR NEST**—On July 3, 1955, Mr. Arthur Lundquist guided us on an extremely interesting trip through the Waubay Lake region. We saw waterfowl and waders in big numbers and other interesting species in smaller numbers.

On a grassy "pass" between lakes we found many Chestnut-collared Longspurs with the males singing as they flew, or perching on cone-flowers and weed stems. Their black breasts made them look almost like small Bobolinks, while the broad white in their tails reminded us of small Meadowlarks, although they could not be mistaken for either Bobolinks or Meadowlarks. On bare ground or very short grass they looked rather sparrow-like, but they walked or ran instead of hopping.

The climax of our Longspur study came when a female walked from the very short grass of a path into taller grass. We went slowly to the place. She did not flush until we were about 3 feet from where she had disappeared. There, in a small clump of six- or seven-inch tall *Artemisia*, was her nest with six eggs finely speckled with brown.

The nest was built on the ground and was constructed with nicely woven dried grass. It was unlined except for fine grass. The outside diameter was about 2½ inches and the inside diameter about 2 inches. It was about 1½ inches deep.

We recorded it on a color slide, and when we left the bird returned to her nest before we had gone 50 feet.—**Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Wheeler, Sioux Falls, S. D.**

**CHIMNEY SWIFT NESTING**—A building near our house has a seldom used concrete block chimney rising a few feet above the flat roof. As we sat in our patio in the summer of 1954 we often would see Chimney Swifts dropping into the chimney. Of course, that called for an investigation.

We found the Swifts building a nest like a segment of a shallow cup a short distance below the top of the chimney. The material used was very small sticks and straws cemented together and to the side of the chimney with saliva.

When the nest was about two inches wide an egg was laid in it, and when it was completed with a width of about three inches the clutch consisted of five eggs.

This concurrent building and laying was a fact new to us because our books fail to comment about Chimney Swifts starting to lay the eggs before the nest is completed, and adding to the nest as the eggs are laid.

Our whole family developed into ardent roof-top superintendents of this construction job and recorded the progress with a series of photographs. We assumed that the swift normally sat lengthwise on the nest when incubating the eggs but when we looked down the chimney she perched on the edge of the nest with her chin against the chimney, looking up at us.

The young were cared for in the chimney until they were excellent flyers. They could be distinguished from their parents by the number of times they would over-shoot the chimney while attempting to drop in to it.

In 1955 a banded adult returned and raised a family of four from a clutch of five eggs. The second week in

August they deserted their home and roosted with a large flock in a larger chimney six blocks away. They are still here (August 30) but probably will leave us within the next couple of weeks.—**Carl M. Johnson, Worthington, Minn.**

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**CAROLINA WREN**—On August 10, 1955, I had a real thrill when I found a Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) in my trap. It was the first I had ever seen. I checked my references and then put my band on it.

Its range is usually given as southeastern United States up to southern Iowa and southeast Nebraska, but Over in Birds of South Dakota says it "is seen here only as a migrant in the southeast corner of the State". Roberts cites a few occurrences in southeastern Minnesota. Bent in Life Histories of North American Nuthatches, Wrens and Thrashers says "The range of the Carolina Wren seems to be extending northward, since there are a number of records of its occurrence north to South Dakota (Yankton County) and Big Stone Lake."—**H. W. Wagar, Winner, S. D.**

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**PEREGRINE FALCON NEAR WALL LAKE**—On March 15, 1955, we were driving near Wall Lake, Minnehaha County, when we saw a crow-size falcon-shaped bird flying low over a field away from the road. The brownish back, slender body, dark bands on the tail and the pointed wings, suggested one of the Falconidae although we did not get a good view of the head or breast. The bird had been feeding on a recently killed hen pheasant. Tentatively, we identified the bird as a Peregrine Falcon or Duck Hawk.

On April 22, 1955, we came upon a hawk perched on a fence post in the

same general area. We had a look at it in fairly good light. The light-colored body with whitish throat and upper breast which became washed with a bluish tinge farther down, dark "mustaches", slate-blue head which appeared almost glossy, barred sides and under parts,—all suggested the Peregrine Falcon. When it flew we saw the brownish back and the narrow compressed tail with faint dark bands which we had seen on the individual observed previously. This one, too, flew low over the field with fairly rapid wing-beats followed by a sail. We agreed that it was a Peregrine and probably the same one we had seen in March.

Over and Thoms (Birds of South Dakota) say this species is "Frequently seen in the State, though it is not common". South Dakota Bird Notes lists several occurrences in recent years, as do the Christmas Bird Counts in Audubon Field Notes, one of which (3:126) records it for Minnehaha County in 1949.—Herbert Krause and Willard Rosine, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, S. D.

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**FURTHER NOTES ON REDHEAD DUCKS AT LACREEK**—Some subsequent notes on the Redhead Ducks experimentally released at LaCreek Refuge, as reported in the September, 1954, South Dakota Bird Notes, may be of interest. These 305 birds were transferred from the Delta Waterfowl Research Station in Manitoba through cooperation with Mr. Milton Weller, who is conducting research work on this species, and were released August 17, 1954, at this Refuge after marking them with special colored bands.

42 band recoveries from the flock have been reported through the banding office of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Of this number, 40 were

taken by hunters, 1 was found dead in Texas apparently killed by a reptile, 1 was found on a fisherman's set line in Texas. An interesting dispersal pattern was indicated with 1 recovery reported in Manitoba, 2 in northeastern South Dakota, 1 each in North Dakota, Georgia, Florida and Colorado, and the others showing a normal southward drift through Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma to Texas where 24 of the recoveries were reported.

Intensive trapping was carried on this Spring with the use of a number of small cage traps, to ascertain whether any number of these birds returned to the Refuge. Constant gale winds of unusual severity interfered considerably with operations but 6 of the experimentally released birds, all females, were retaken. All 6 were recaptured on the same pool where the release was made in 1954, with 4 of them being secured in one banding trap only 300 yards from the original point of release.—Kenneth Krumm, LaCreek Refuge, Martin, S. D.

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**PIPING PLOVER**—August 7, 1955. We were a party of four, Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Chapman, W. A. Rose and I, up in the Waubay region of lakes and ponds. Shore birds were the principle order of the day. Several species were there in satisfactory numbers, but some were gone or their numbers had dwindled from the crowds that had occupied acceptable shallows five days earlier. However, something new had been added at Bitter Lake. A little group of 3 young and 1 adult running about on the wet mud, that were identified as Piping Plover. The parent bird gave us a pretty bow while facing us and lowering its head to pick up a bit of food. Thus it showed the black band

laid over the crown, nearly from eye to eye. My day was made! The sight of these four little-birds of the shore line was thrill enough for one day.

I visited Bitter Lake again on August 10 to get a better check on the Piping Plovers and was pleased to find 4 young and 1 adult. In August 15 the little group of 5 was on the mud flat near the highway. They did not fly nor try to hide as I walked them a half mile down the beach. The "patter of little feet" carried them along briskly, stop and go in plover fashion, until they escaped the ogre that pursued them.—**Alfred Peterson, Brandt, S. D.**

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**CASPIAN TERN**—May 25, 1955 was a good day for birding and its climax came at Lake Mary, near Lake Norden, S. D., when I saw a Caspian Tern at rest so that easy observation made possible a careful comparison with the descriptions. Exactly thirty-one years before, on May 25, 1924, I had seen three under similar conditions on Lake Benton, Minnesota, only a few miles from the South Dakota line.

May 24-25 were good days for numbers and other species on several of "my" lakes. Besides the Caspian Tern, Forster's and Black Terns were numerous. Then of Sandpipers there were Semi-palmated, Least, Pectoral, Red-backed, Stilt, and White-rumped; of Plovers, Ringed and Black-bellied; and there were Hudsonian and Marbled Godwits, Ruddy Turnstones, Willets, Avocets, Northern and Wilson's Phalarope, Sanderlings, and Ring-billed Gulls.

The dry weather may have kept Snipe away, and this Spring I have seen only one Buff-breasted Sandpiper tagging along in a flock of 16 Golden Plover.—**Alfred Peterson, Brandt, S. D.**

#### **LEAST BITTERN AT LACREEK—**

While accompanying the writer on a waterfowl brood survey at LaCreek Refuge on July 27, 1955, Federal biologist Merrill Hammond flushed a Least Bittern from the marsh on the eastern border of pool No. 9. As this was a first record for the refuge, he summoned me to the place but we were unable to flush the bird again from the dense emergent vegetation. Though the observer had only a brief view of the bird, the small size and the buff wing patches were unmistakable. The record of this bittern in the southwestern part of the State is of interest, although last season Mr. Hammond photographed a specimen at the Valentine Lakes Refuge some 90 miles to the southeast in Nebraska.—**Kenneth Krumm, LaCreek Refuge, Martin, S. D.**

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#### **CINNAMON TEAL AT LACREEK—**

The range of the Cinnamon Teak (*Anas cyanoptera*) in the U. S. is generally described as the western and southwestern states, eastward on the Great Plains to about the hundredth meridian, but rarely east of that line.

The occurrence of straggling pairs at LaCreek Refuge at 101° 30' longitude generally confirms this description of the eastern limit of the range. Stray pairs have been recorded here intermittently as far back as 1939, according to Refuge records. Recent records include a pair of the birds observed in the Spring of 1953, which established themselves on a territory adjacent to the main outlet dam of LaCreek Lake and remained several weeks. Another pair was observed on May 29, 1955.

The status of this species in this area therefore might be described as a "straggler in the extreme eastern section of its range."—**Kenneth Krumm, Martin, S. D.**

**GYRFALCON**—On the rainy forenoon of April 23, 1955, Scout Leader George Goebel, Scouts Bob Hahn, Bob Rishois, Jeff Thisson and Jerry Vorpahl, and I were driving through a wooded spot on the south shore of Wall Lake, Minnehaha County, when we saw a hawk shaped bird perched on a dry limb. We stopped and all members of the party had a fairly good look at it.

Through 9x50 binocular, I saw a bird larger than a crow, of uniform dark slate color,—salt and pepper gray with more pepper than salt giving the effect of dark gray sprinkled on light gray. The bird faced us. There were not distinctive marks. The head appeared small and of a shade a little lighter than the body. It seemed powerfully built, but not chunky like a Buteo, instead rather slender like an Accipiter.

When it flushed we saw pointed wings and a tightly folded, slightly pointed tail that appeared longer than a Buteo's. No white showed although there was a suggestion of lightness near the rump. Small bar-rings were on the back and especially on the forepart of the wings. The wing beats were rapid but since it very soon perched on a tree near the water edge we did not see it sail. We had another good look at it before it again took wing and disappeared among the trees.

We believe we saw a Gyrfalcon in the gray phase. Over and Thoms (1946. Birds of South Dakota) call it "a rare winter visitor." However, the Gyrfalcon has occurred in the vicinity at least four times in recent years (1949, 1950. Chapman, Mal-lory, Donohoe, S. D. Bird Notes, II:14. 1952. Dahlgren. Bird Notes IV:27).

—Herbert Krause, Augustana Col-lege, Sioux Falls.

**MOCKINGBIRDS AT PLATTE**—On July 10, 1955, I was on my way to find a Vesper Sparrow in a pasture near our orchard, when I flushed 3 strange birds nearly the size and shape of Brown Thrashers, but gray with striking white wing patches that showed in flight. Since then I have seen one or two of these birds on at least ten different occasions.

One such occasion was August 14 which was a very warm day when many birds came to the bird bath only a few feet from the kitchen win-dow. About 6:00 p. m. one of the new birds appeared at the bird bath. It was a trifle shy and stayed only a short time, but it came again a little later.

These birds do not have black lines through their eyes like Shrikes and the white patch on the wings is much larger. They scold me so very much like Brown Thrashers do that I am still unable to tell whether it is the new bird or a Thrasher until I see it.

I am sure they are Mockingbirds as nothing else in my books resembles them, and a neighbor who spent some time in Florida where he saw and heard mockingbirds, tells me that he has heard Mockingbirds singing here this summer. My grandson who de-livers papers saw one of the new birds singing a few blocks from our house.

We have about 6 acres in orchard and windbreak where the mockers seem to stay. They are particularly fond of the berries of cotoneaster.

My theory is that I have been seeing young birds hatched in this vicinity. When I first saw them the family had not broken up, but since then I have never seen more than two at a time, and lately only one. I hope they like the place and the convenience of our bird bath, stay till late Fall and come back next year.—Charles A. Nash, Platte, S. D.