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SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

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Volume IX, No. 1

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South Dakota Ornithologists' Union

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President's Page



YEARS ago another boy and I located a long thick grove that to us seemed full of birds,—doves, grackles, thrashers, woodpeckers, orioles, jays, robins, goldfinches, redwings, and always one pair of crows. In summer quail

nested there; in winter prairie chickens sought the grove's shelter. Besides the heavy growth of trees, an added bird attraction was a plugged artesian well which still trickled a small stream of water.

It was a bird's paradise, a Mecca for bird watchers so rewarding to us that we visited it often in summer, occasionally in winter, and went through from end to end.

We learned that we could see the birds better when we avoided making noise as we progressed. Our rule was no unnecessary talking. Then we decided to make an "Indian Trail".

We started at one end of the grove and broke obstructing branches, blazed a few dead trees, and threw all dry branches out of the trail, and so were able to follow the same course each time. Soon we had a beaten path the full half mile length of the grove, that we could follow without snapping a branch or stepping on a single dry twig.

We found that by proceeding silently we could see more birds and observe them more closely than had

ever been possible before. We could even get right under the tree with the crow's nest without being discovered.

Our "Indian Trail" really paid off, and now I can recommend a similar one for any one who visits a grove repeatedly.

* * *

The annual meeting of SDOU for this year is to be held at the LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge near Martin, S. D. on May 18 and 19. This refuge has a great abundance and variety of bird life and the field trips will be exciting. Kenneth Krumm's committee has arranged an interesting and educational program.

Members who are accustomed to attend these annual meetings always want to return. If you have attended before, come again; if you haven't try it this year. You will be thrilled.

* * *

Before closing my term as president, I thank the members of SDOU for their fine cooperation. I would mention the valuable help of former president J. O. Johnson, the aid of the executive committee, the financial help through the stationery sales of Mrs. J. S. Findley, the work of Willis and Mrs. Hall on indexing Bird Notes, and all those who have pushed so successfully the membership drive.

All members also appreciate most thoroughly the fine job of Editor J. S. Findley who has continued the excellent work of his predecessor, H. F. Chapman, the first editor of Bird Notes.

Charles P. Crutchett.

SEE YOU IN MARTIN

With the Bird Banders

From Kenneth Krumm, manager of the LaCreek Federal Wildlife Refuge, comes perhaps the most interesting report from among SDOU members who are bird banders. Mr. Krumm participated in an experiment with Redhead ducks hatched at Delta, Manitoba, but released at LaCreek in August, 1954, when they were from 4 to 7 weeks old. There is habitat at LaCreek which appeared suitable for Redheads, but it was unknown whether the ducks would return there or to Delta after their fall migration. The first chapters of the story were told in Bird Notes VI:49 and VII:46. Now Mr. Krumm has written another very interesting chapter on data resulting from the banding.

"A total of 53 band returns occurring from September 24, 1954, through October 14, 1956, have been received on this flock through the Bird Banding Office of the Service. Three of the earliest are of special interest. One of these involved a female shot in Provencher District, Manitoba, Canada, sometime after September 24, 1954, not too distant from the ancestral area at the southern tip of Lake Manitoba. Two other early recoveries were of males on October 1, 1954 at Houghton, North Dakota, and on October 3, 1954, at Roy Lake in northeastern South Dakota. Other returns indicate the curious apparent migrational tendency of segments of the local Redhead flocks to migrate northeast and east through the Great Lakes region to the Atlantic coast. One specimen each was reported from the states of New Jersey, Virginia, Florida and Georgia.

"The western limits of the migration were indicated by solitary returns from Colorado and Utah.

"Although scattered returns were received over a wide expanse of the continent from Great Salt Lake to the Atlantic Ocean, the bulk of the flock moved southward over the Great Plains to wintering grounds on the Texas Gulf coast. A substantial percentage of the returns were from the Corpus Christi-Aransas region, though scattered records were obtained elsewhere along the Texas Gulf Coast from the Sabine area to Brownsville on the Mexican border."

"The following chart gives further data on the sex, year and locality of the recoveries.

	1954		1955		1956		Total recoveries
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	
Manitoba	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Colorado	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Florida	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Georgia	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Kansas	1	1	—	—	—	—	2
Louisiana	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Minnesota	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Nebraska	5	2	1	—	—	—	8
New Jersey	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
North Dakota	1	—	—	—	—	2	3
Oklahoma	1	1	—	1	—	—	3
South Dakota	3	—	—	1	—	—	4
Texas	11	8	2	—	—	—	21
	2	1	(11-6-54 to 1-3-55)				3
Virginia	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Utah	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
	25	16	6	2	0	4	53

"An intensive banding research project was initiated during the Spring of 1955 with 6 trapping stations established on the release area, pool No. 9 of the LaCreek Refuge. Despite unfavorable trapping conditions created by unusually severe protracted gales, 6 of the banded Redheads were caught between April 26, and May 8, 1955. All were females. In addition to these 6, a seventh female was taken by a hunter about November 15, 1955, in the immediate vicinity of the refuge.

"These 7 were all females and 4 of them were retrapped on the northwest shore of Pool No. 9 within 300 yards of the original point of release. The other 2 were secured on the northeastern shore of the same pool."

* * *

Lowery Elliott, Milbank, S. D., had a good year banding at Bird Haven and put his bands on 802 birds of 55 species. There were 11 species of sparrows; Vesper, Grasshopper, Harris's, Gambel's, White-throated, Tree, Chipping, Clay-colored, Song, Lincoln's, Swamp. The 12 species of warblers were: Nashville, Orange-crowned, Tennessee, Yellow, Myrtle, Magnolia, Chestnut-sided, Black-polled, Blackburnian, Connecticut, Yellowthroat, Redstart. Other interesting birds were 19 Oregon Juncos against 65 Slate-colored, a Blue-headed Vireo, 1 Carolina Wren, 1 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher.

A fledgling Mourning Dove banded August 14, 1955, by Mr. Elliott was shot May 23, 1956 near Muncipia de Fala, Jalisco, Mexico. A male Yellowthroat banded June 25, 1955, returned to his trap on May 20, 1956, and then came back again three times in June.

The records of Mrs. C. E. Peterson, Madison, Minnesota, are interesting to us in eastern South Dakota because her station is only about 10 miles from the South Dakota line. Her 1956 report of 677 individuals of 60 species banded is remarkable, especially when we consider that her station is right in town.

Mrs. Peterson got 4 new species, a Saw-whet Owl, a Black-throated Gray Warbler, 1 Macgillivray's Warbler, and 1 Lazuli Bunting. The 2 warblers and the Lazuli Bunting are quite unusual as far east as Minnesota. Audubon Field Notes reported several Black-throated Gray Warblers as accidental in eastern localities.

The bands on 3 Bronzed Grackles were recovered from Arkansas, Strandburg, S. D., and Minneapolis; and from a Robin from Texas. Another Robin banded on September 1, 1955, was trapped and released in Alabama on December 29, 1955. Also 10 birds she had banded in previous years returned in 1955, 5 Chickadees, 3 Brown Thrashers, 1 House Wren and 1 Cowbird.

* * *

The list of banded birds from Dr. N. R. Whitney, Rapid City, is another very interesting one: 139 White-winged Juncos, 33 Pinyon Jays, 25 White-crowned Sparrows, 15 Black-capped Chickadees, 8 Chipping Sparrows, 5 Western Tanagers, 4 Robins, 4 Brewers Blackbirds, 2 Yellow-throats, 1 Mourning Dove, 1 Belted Kingfisher, 1 Blue Jay, 1 House Wren, 1 Red-eyed Vireo, 1 Yellow Warbler, 1 Western Meadowlark, 1 Grackle, 1 Goldfinch, 1 Red Crossbill, 1 Oregon Junco.

* * *

Miss Ruth Habeger, Madison, says that the Grackles gave her a bad time. They wouldn't stay out of the traps. J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, tells of a Catbird that escaped from a cat by going into his trap. The cat could not find the way in, but the bird was already badly injured. He put it in a cage and had trouble finding food for it until he tried canned dog food. The catbird ate a

surprising amount of it and thrived. It grew new flight feathers and replacements for missing tail feathers and was released. After a day of freedom it returned to the trap and was released again the next day when other catbirds seemed to be going south.

* * *

Mrs. John Lueshen, Wisner, Nebraska, has a very interesting item in her 1956 banding report. Of the more than 1000 individuals of 45 species, 77 were Baltimore Orioles that she caught in her yard. Her comment was, "Banding reveals so many interesting facts!"

H. W. Wagar, Winner, reports that 1956 was a poor year because the noise of building near his traps frightened the birds. The number of individuals dropped from 302 in 1955 to 56 of 20 species last year, but it still raised Dr. Wagar's grand total of banded birds to 2290. His report is also interesting because of the information added in an area where little ornithological work has been done.

The 20 species were: Mourning Dove, Western Kingbird, Black-capped Chickadee, House Wren, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Olive-backed Thrush, Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-throat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Baltimore Oriole, Western Tanager (in the Black Hills), Spotted Towhee, Slate-colored Junco, Gambel's Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow.

His bands recovered were on 2 Blue Jays and a Grackle found near the places he had banded them a year earlier.

We repeat Mrs. Lueshen's comment, "Banding reveals so many interesting facts!"

* * *

Editorial Comment

Lake Andes Birdlife 40 Years Ago, written by Mr. B. T. Boylan, Jr. for the September, 1956, Bird Notes, has elicited considerable comment and discussion among ornithologists, old time duck hunters, and present day hunters and bird watchers. There is not always agreement, except that the numbers of Lake Andes wildfowl is not what it used to be. There is some difference of opinion as to some species.

Mr. Boylan said of the "Snow Geese, more of the Greater Snows than the Lessers". But the ornithologists refer us to Bent (Life Histories of North American Waterfowl) and to Kortright (Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America) who say that the Greater Snow Goose is "exclusively

a bird of the Atlantic coast" and "occupies a very narrow winter range on the Atlantic Coast which it reaches by a decidedly eastern migration route from its breeding range in northern Greenland". On the other hand the old time hunters agree among themselves that they used to get lots of two sizes of Snows which they called Greater and Lesser.

The White-cheeked Goose, according to Mr. Boylan, was "rare, but I have shot it". This is a dark subspecies of the Canada Goose which is also called the Western Canada Goose. Bent and Kortright say it is non-migratory and has a range on the northwest coast from British Columbia to Alaska, seldom wandering far inland. The Cackling Goose is also dark and

does wander inland and has been reported even in Wisconsin.

Brant were mentioned by Mr. Boylan. The authorities agree that Brant sometime wander inland or may get to the west coast, and the Black Brant to the east coast. It seems certain that the old timers would not confuse the Brant with any other goose, although the name is rather widely used for other geese, especially for some of the Canada Goose subspecies.

It seems to us there is considerable chance of misunderstanding because of the multiplicity of colloquial names and of changes even in the accepted common names; for instance, the case of *Branta canadensis hutchinsi* which has been called Hutchin's Goose and Richardson's Goose, while up to 1931 the Lesser Canada Goose was called Hutchin' Goose.

Undoubtedly there have been changes in the populations and the migrants in the last 40 or 50 years. Changes have been noticeable in an even shorter period. Also over a considerable period there is a possibility of changes in the numbers of wanderers, or rarifies, or accidentals that might appear in a good wildfowl stopping place such as Lake Andes.

Without the specimens, the discussion of what was there and what was not there could go on interminably.

* * *

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union is to be held at the LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge, Martin, S. D. May 18-19, 1957. The program committee consisting of President C. P. Critchett, Armour, Dr. N. R. Whitney, Rapid City, Mr. J. O. Johnson, Watertown, and Refuge Manager Kenneth Krumm has worked out a program emphasizing

the bird life of the State's southwestern short grass prairie, the sandhills border region, and opportunities for bird study in the National Wildlife Refuges and Parks.

The program will be varied with speakers, movies, slides from our membership, the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Parks. There will also be a period for volunteer birds notes by members of the audience.

The entertainment at the banquet on Saturday evening will be songs and dances of the Sioux by a group of Oglalla Sioux Indians led by Chief Black Elk who will interpret and explain for us.

The program, business meeting and field trips will be at the Refuge and its headquarters, 13 miles southeast of Martin. The banquet will be in Martin at the American Legion-Community Hall. There are adequate hotel and motel accommodations in Martin. Arrangements have been made with cafes for early breakfasts. Picnic lunches are planned at the Refuge to limit the noon hour travel.

Before the dates the committee expects to send each member a copy of the program, list of accommodations, travel routes, and possibly other information.

The field trips will permit observation of the varied birdlife of the Refuge, which is in a local transitional zone between sandhills, marsh and arid upland prairie. The bird life will range from marsh and water birds, to arboreal forms frequenting small groves and tree fringes, to typical species of the short grass prairie. There will be Curlews, Avocets, Willets and the isolated colony of Eastern Meadowlarks whose subdued calls contrast with the loud ringing carols of the western bird on the adjacent uplands.

This will be a meeting that should not be missed!

Invitation

"38th Annual Meeting, Wilson Ornithological Society

"The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union, University of Minnesota, Duluth Campus, and the Duluth Bird Club will be hosts to the 1957 meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Society on June 13th through the 16th. The site of the meeting will be the University of Minnesota Campus at Duluth.

"The local committee on arrangements is planning an extensive program of field work, including an all-day trip on Sunday to the Wilderness Country of Northern Minnesota.

"The hosts take this special opportunity to invite members of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union to attend this meeting.

P. B. Hofslund, Chairman Local
Committee on Arrangements."

(Seldom does the Wilson Ornithological Society hold a meeting as near us as this Duluth meeting will be. Its meeting are among the finest and most enjoyable, and so we hope that many members of SDOU will take advantage of the opportunity to meet with the Wilson Society. It will be well worth while.)

* * *

THE COVER

The cover picture shows two Coot chicks waiting for their brothers and sisters to hatch. It is another of J. O. Johnson's excellent photos.

* * *

According to the National Geographic Magazine the Spotted-breasted Oriole now nests near Miami, Florida. They may have been liberated there or they may have been blown in by tropical storms from their home in southern Mexico, 1000 air miles away. It is a new bird in this country.

MRS. C. J. NELSON

Death came to Mrs. Mary A. Nelson suddenly on April 2, 1957 at her home in Canton, South Dakota. Burial was at her birthplace, Parker, S. D.

After her graduation from the University of South Dakota, Mrs. Nelson taught school for many years at Huron, Lennox and Canton. After her marriage in 1925 she had moved to her husband's farm south of Canton and they lived there until 1941 when they moved to Canton. Mr. Nelson died five years later and Mrs. Nelson remained in Canton taking an active part in church and community affairs. She was a member of the board and treasurer for the Canton City Library for many years.

She was a friend of Judge and Mrs. W. B. Mallory and had spent the most of her last afternoon visiting with Mrs. Mallory.

Mrs. Nelson was a charter member of South Dakota Ornithologists' Union and contributed several notes of interest. Her will included a bequest of \$200 to SDOU.

* * *

ORNITHOLOGY OF THE MAJOR LONG EXPEDITION, 1823, by Herbert Krause, is an article in the September, 1956, issue of the Minnesota Naturalist. The main sources are the Narrative of the Expedition to the Sources of St. Peter's River by William Keating, geologist and historiographer of the expedition, and the unpublished "Papers" by Long and "Diary" of Colhoun, astronomer of the expedition, which are in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society.

Prof. Krause has written another article on the mammals seen by the expedition, which is to appear in a later issue of the Minnesota Naturalist.

General Notes of Special Interest

PINE GROSBEAKS IN DAY COUNTY—On the first day of February, 1957, while walking through the woods at Pickerel Lake, I heard some beautiful singing which was so different from the “dee-dee” of the Chickadee, the “yank” of the Nut-hatch, “screech” of the Blue Jay, and “peek” of the woodpecker that I had to investigate to see who was responsible.

A large Robin-sized bird was sitting high in a tall ash tree. I was lucky enough to have it swoop down to a lower branch not over six feet from me. It obliged me by sitting there and singing for at least five minutes, so I had a good chance to study it closely. It was an immature male Pine Grosbeak with rusty head and rusty tail coverts but the back was definitely more reddish than rusty.

Two days later I saw a female of the same species feeding on pussy willow buds. She would feed on one tree for a minute or two and then move on to another pussy willow tree. She hung or perched on one branch and stretched out to feed on the closest branch to her. She never fed on the same branch on which she perched.—**Herman P. Chilson, Webster, S. Dak.**

* * *

PINE GROSBEAK IN MINNEHAHA COUNTY—On February 3, 1957, it was my good fortune to discover a Pine Grosbeak in Woodlawn Cemetery, Sioux Falls. This may be a first record for Minnehaha County. A female was feeding in an ash tree. The pearly gray breast, the generally grayish body, the dull yellow on head and rump (the immature males that I

saw in northern Minnesota had reddish), the white wingbars, the rather heavy, darkish bill, the large (about Robin—) size, the longish emarginate tail,—all these field marks indicated the species.

I called Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Wheeler to corroborate the points. We had good views of the bird as it leaned to pluck seeds or stretched up to pull down fruit.

On February 4 Dr. Willard Rosine, Biology Department, Augustana College, and a group of students saw two females in the same locality. Wesley Halbritter photographed them. On February 7, 10 and 17 I saw what presumably were the same individuals.

On three occasions I heard what seemed to be alarm calls, musical “taa-chee” and “ta-tee-tee-tay” notes, on the approach of an intruder—myself. Twice I found the birds high in the trees. Instead of flying out and away as I came near, they fluttered down among the branches until they were about half way down. Then they flashed out of the ash and into nearby spruces, where they disappeared among the downswep branches near the foot of the tree. The third time they were in the lower part of the ash and again flew into the conifers, alighting near the base. It may not be significant but it struck me as unusual that these birds sought the shelter of the thickest portion of the ash tree before they left its protection and then flew into the lowest branches of the conifer.

Available published literature does not reveal previous records of the Pine Grosbeak in Minnehaha County,

nor perhaps in the eastern part of the State. McChesney does not list it at Ft. Sisseton (1879), though Over and Thoms' Birds of South Dakota (1921) refers to McChesney's report of a Pine Grosbeak in that area in 1898. I have been unable to verify this nor have I been able to find a paper written by McChesney as late as 1898 about the Ft. Sisseton area. Over and Thoms mention Mr. A. T. Colem who saw Pine Grosbeaks in Union County "in earlier years". Stephens, Youngworth and Felton (1955) do not list it for that County. It is not included in Visser's report (1912) on south-central South Dakota though Kettle notes a male and female in 1952 at Huron (Bird Notes, V(1):15). Larson's Birds of Sioux Falls and Vicinity (1925), covering 1906-16, does not include it for Minnehaha County. Dr. N. R. Whitney, Jr., Rapid City, writes me that a female Pine Grosbeak was killed in Watertown in December, 1956, and presumably is in the Harry Behrens collection.—**Herbert Krause, Augustana College, Sioux Falls.**

* * *

SWANS IN EASTERN SODAK— There was no school on March 27, 1957, so we went to see what the spring migration had brought our way. Our little trip took us 5 miles south of Hurley to Swan Lake, and this time it was more than a name and we were thrilled to find eight Whistling Swans on Swan Lake. They were feeding near the lake shore where we could watch them. We even noticed that they held their necks nearly straight and not curved like an S as swans are usually pictured. We also saw them take off to make a short flight around the lake and come back again.

We had never seen swans before and now began to wonder why Swan Lake was so named. As near as we

can find out, it was because of its shape. But my brother Bob has seen it from an airplane and he says the lake is not shaped like a swan. We have heard that swans have stopped occasionally to feed. We were glad to see them because they stayed only four days.—**Holly Breen, Hurley, S. D.**

On March 26, 1957, we were looking at geese and ducks when we approached a small lake about 2½ miles northwest of Hartford. There were many waterfowl on it and most of them paid little attention to our car. However, three Whistling Swans took off and flew in the direction from which we had come, west, nearly parallel with the road so that we had a good look at them through our binoculars. They were the first swans we had seen in our neighborhood since 1950.

Two days later we received a card from Holly Breen, Hurley, S. D., telling of swans on Swan Lake. We were able to drive down to look for them. They were feeding on the lake and we had a good time watching. It amused us to see one swan feeding in "neck deep" water with five or six Redheads close around it. Seemingly when the swan loosened some food on the lake bottom the ducks dove in under it to get an easy meal like sparrows rob Robins pulling worms from a lawn.

On March 30, we were at Oakwood Lakes. We found very little open water and only a few ducks around the edges of small bays. But as we stood on the ridge between the lakes we heard the "woo-woo'-oo" of a flock of swans. They approached from the south and flew almost directly over us at a rather low altitude, in a sharp V with five swans on one side and 13 on the other side of the V. There was a brisk wind from the south southeast and the swans were soon gone in a direc-

tion a little west of north. We could clearly see the head and neck making half the length or more, and the black feet tucked up under the tails.—Mrs. J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, S. D.

Under date of March 30, 1957, a daily paper carried a story of farmer Elmer Heitman, Humboldt, S. D., asking sportsmen and conservationists to protect 15 Whistling Swans that were resting on his pond. It said that four had been on the pond during the past week and had been joined by 11 more on the day before. Then on the 30th the flock moved on except for three that went to another pond only about 1½ miles away.

Heitman recalled that swans had been shot illegally near Lake Campbell in Brookings County last fall, and that the last time he had heard of swans in Minnehaha County was in 1950.

This newspaper item prompted me to look up my records. They show:

1953. March 31. About 20 Whistling Swans near Fox Lake and 14 near Clear Lake. C. Vik says five seen at Fish Lake a week ago. 4|3. 10 south of Bitter Lake and well over 60 on Bitter Lake, also 40 plus on Swan Lake south of Webster. 4|11. Sisseton editor on air reported Canadas and Swans at Mud Lake near Roslyn. 4|18. 13 Bitter Lake, seven near Holmquist. 4|23. W. A. Rose reports that two weeks ago on Stink Lake near Eden, a great number of Swans and Canvasbacks, also some at N. E. corner of Deuel County some time ago.

1954. April 8-10. 10 at Singsaas slough near Astoria.

1955. April 23. 4 on Bitter Lake.

1956. April 23. W. A. Rose tells me a large flock on Dry Lake, (Poinsett) a while back. Was reported to Game Warden Kolb who went to see them. One found dead went to Rose for preservation.

1957. March 25. 150 seen by M. O.

Hawley at Fox Lake. Also seen by W. A. Rose at Clear Lake in flight at 7:00 P. M. 7 others had been noted by Clear Lake informant earlier in the day. 3|27. Near Thomas, 33 and 8 came in after 21 departed to the northwest. 3|29. 32 at the same place. Game Warden Deblon said 13 swans were there Sunday the 24th and that he found a good flock over near South Shore. I visited that locality 3|30 and found 31 there. 3|31. 9 on Dry Lake at Florence. A good 150 on Bitter Lake, but none at Thomas.

It is to be expected that many of these swans will linger in this Lake Region a week or more, Distance from home prevents a daily check-up on them, but, as the spirit moves, several trips for this purpose may yet be made.—Alfred Peterson, Brandt, S. D.

* * *

LEWIS'S WOODPECKER IN NORTHEASTERN SODAK — On March 4, 1957, an unusual bird flew across the road near our mail box here at Bird Haven. It was large but smaller than a Crow. It had a rosy red breast and dark, almost black, wings and tail. The tail was short and the wings rather wide and rounded. It flew rapidly in straight level flight without the undulations in the flight of our native woodpeckers, and went on without stopping.

I recognized it as a Lewis's Woodpecker because of my acquaintance with them when I lived near the Black Hills.

We did not consider them common birds in the Black Hills, and here at Bird Haven within two miles of the Minnesota line the bird was far east of its normal range.

In mid-winter I saw another bird flying over our place but it was not near enough for me to be certain of its identity although it had the same characteristics.—Lowery Elliott, Milbank, S. Dak.

MOCKINGBIRD IN GRANT COUNTY

—On November 15, 1956, during our first snow storm of the season, my neighbor Karl Loeschke asked me about a strange bird that had been in his cedar trees all day. We drove to his farm, two miles south of mine and found the bird sitting in a small box elder tree next to the cedars where it could be seen from his large west window. It was dark gray on the back, lighter on the breast and belly, had white wing bars and a wide white patch, and also white outer tail feathers, a light eye line, and black legs and feet. The white on the wings and tail was very noticeable in flight. It was a Mockingbird.

There were about four inches of snow on the cedar branches and the bird seemed cold and reluctant to walk on the snow. It fed on cedar berries on the wing, picking them off while hovering, and then flew back to the box elder tree where there was little snow, when tired. It seemed unafraid and often came within ten feet of the window where we watched.

Last Spring I had a glimpse of a bird a mile south of Mr. Loesche's place that looked like a Mockingbird but was unable to make a positive identification.

The Mockingbird that we watched was seen again two days later, and then again in ten days. After that it was not seen.

The large window is the same from which a year ago I watched Bohemian Waxwings feeding on cedar berries and then taking great gulps of snow.
—Lowery Elliott, Milbank, S. Dak.

* * *

KILLDEER WINTER NEAR ARMOUR—A farmer friend called on me today (March 20, 1957) and we had the following ornithological conversation when I asked, "Any meadowlarks around yet?"

"I've had pretty near a dozen around the place all winter."

"Are they singing yet?"

"Yes, and today my Killdeers were singing, too."

"Killdeers! Are they back already?"

"I've had two in my barnyard all winter. Early I thought there was just one, but later I found the other."

"What do they find to eat?"

"Lots of corn and grain around a barnyard."

"I thought Killdeers ate worms and bugs, and hung around the shores of lakes and streams, and that they needed lots of water."

"There was plenty of water. My tank overflowed frequently. Today they were out in the field."

This is the first time I have ever heard of Killdeers staying through the winter here in South Dakota.—
C. P. Crutchett, Armour, S. Dak.

(Editor's Note. In Life Histories of North America Shore Birds, Bent says the winter range of the Killdeer extends north rarely to Kansas, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio. Hence, this South Dakota report is another more rare winter occurrence even farther north.)

* * *

Willis Hall, Yankton, S. D. reports that on March 21, 1957, a large bird was soaring over the college campus about noon. When it came nearer he could see it was a Bald Eagle. It flew rather low and seemed unconcerned with him taking pictures of it.

* * *

Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Wheeler, Sioux Falls, were photographing wild flowers in Newton Hills on April 14 when a Red-bellied Woodpecker forced itself on their attention by its flicker-like "singing" and hammering. It seemed to get replies from one of its own kind but the Wheelers did not locate the other bird.

CONCERNING CEDAR WAXWINGS

—An examination of the reports in Bird Notes of the Christmas Bird Counts was prompted by my interest in Cedar Waxwings, just as anyone who has ever seen a waxwing surely must be interested in them. They were listed every year since 1951, except 1953, nine times from six places from east to west across the southern part of the State,—Vermillion, Yankton, Springfield, Sioux Falls, Brookings, Hot Springs. In 1955 the Cedar Waxwing was found only in Hot Springs while the much less common Bohemian was seen in four localities.

My own sight records in Vermillion, which I have kept since 1947, include by observations in the Christmas Counts of 1951 and 1956, and also on February 29, 1948, March 1, 1949, March 10, 1954 and March 3, 1956. I am struck by the grouping of these dates within less than two weeks of February and March.

My March 10, 1954, observation is the one that stands out in my memory because then I was thrilled to see more closely than ever before the fine, wavy crests; the white under tail coverts; the velvety black mask from bill to crest and black chin which added distinction to the already aristocratic birds; the smooth rich brown back blending subtly with the olive gray breast and contrasting sharply with the under-ripe peach color of the abdomen; then at right angles to the lines of red drops on the tips of the secondaries was a narrow white stripe formed by the upper edges of the tertiaries.

The waxwings repetitively uttered an extremely high strong monosyllabic "eEEEE". I tried to imitate it but could not come near the very high pitch of the waxwings' tones.—**Adelene M. Siljeborg, Vermillion, S. Dak.**

MARCH, 1957

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE — An interesting South Dakota record appears in Miscellaneous Publications No. 10, University of Michigan, Museum of Zoology, "A Preliminary Survey of the Bird Life of North Dakota" by Norman A. Wood (1923). The list includes the Swallow-tailed Kite with a notation:

"112. *Elanoides forficatus* (Linnaeus). Swallow-tailed Kite. Coues, 1878, p. 147; 'I am informed by my valued correspondent, Dr. C. E. McChesney, U.S.A., of the occurrence of *Elanoides forficatus* at Ft. Sisseton, Dakota, during nearly the whole of last winter. (This fort was in Roberts County, not far from the North Dakota line.) This account tallies with Trippe's Minnesota record, north of Mille Lac, lat. 47°, while at Pembina, Dakota, lat. 49°, I was assured by an officer of the occasional appearance of the bird there.'"

The bibliography gives the reference to Coues in these words:

"1878 Coues, Elliott. Swallow-tailed Kite in Dakota in Winter. Bull. of the Nuttall Ornithological Club, Vol. III, No. 3, p. 147. Cambridge, 1878."

Old Fort Sisseton is in Roberts County, South Dakota, and many of the buildings still stand and are a part of a state park. The Swallow-tailed Kite was included in Dr. McChesney's "Notes on the Birds of Fort Sisseton, Dakota Territory" (1879) and in Wm. Youngworth's "The Birds of Fort Sisseton, South Dakota, a Sixty Year Comparison". (Wilson Bulletin XLVII:216)—**J. S. Findley.**

* * *

The design for the 1957-58 migratory bird hunting stamp will be two American Eiders flying over surf. It is a design submitted by Jackson M. Abbott from among 106 entries.

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