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Nest of a Killdeer

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President's Page

THE dedication ceremonies at Badlands Nat'l Monument, which I attended Sept. 16, 1959, re-emphasized to me the importance of this and other National Park Service areas in bird study. National Park policy, in all areas except those in which the emphasis is primarily historical, is to maintain conditions as close to those of pre-European settlement as possible. Specifically this means the preservation of all plants and animals in a condition of natural balance, permitting artificial control only when natural controls are not sufficient to maintain normal numbers.

The Badlands are important in the birdlife of South Dakota as an eastern most breeding area for at least two dry country species—Say's Phoebe and Mountain Bluebird. The Rock Wren also has here an outpost, from which its numbers become fewer to the east. Because of full protection, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed and Marsh Hawks, Prairie Falcon, and Great Horned Owl may be seen. Many smaller birds, such as Robins, Juncos, and Tree Sparrows, winter in the juniper thickets around Cedar Pass. The upland prairies are typical breeding areas for the more common prairie birds of the state, including Horned Lark, Meadowlark, and Lark Sparrow. Many parts of the Monument, particularly Sheep Mountain Table and parts of the Sage Creek Basin, contain virgin or relatively undisturbed prairie, where we can observe birds and other widlife under primeval conditions.

In the future, I think SDOU should hold a meeting at Badlands National Monument. Facilities are available at Cedar Pass for lodging, and a new visitor center, with a museum and full-time park naturalist, has recently been opened. In April, 1959, I visited briefly with the late George Sholly, who was then superintendent of the Monument. He showed me some of the new Mission 66 camping facilities, the accommodations of Cedar Pass Lodge, and the new outdoor amphitheater, which has subsequently been named in his memory. He was enthusiastic about the possibility of a SDOU meeting at the Badlands, and naturally hoped that we could plan it soon. I believe that we will find the same interest in all the administrative staff.

Because of the milestone in its history, I have talked about Badlands, but I want to emphasize that National Park areas in other parts of South Dakota and throughout the country are always outstanding localities for bird study. In the Black Hills, for example, we have four National Park areas—Wind Cave National Park, Jewel Cave National Monument, and Mt. Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota, and Devils Tower National Monument in Wyoming. National Park wilderness principles insure the continuation of natural conditions, as well as the protection of all forms of wildlife. As students of bird life, we should take advantage of these matchless bird study areas, and in addition we must work to keep public opinion favorable to the objective of wilderness preservation.

—N. R. Whitney

Should SDOU . . . . ?

(A Questionnaire on Policy)

H. F. Chapman

WHILE SDOU may have outlived its "growing pains" (or so we like to believe!), there are propositions which must be faced-up to if SDOU is to continue to merit the maturity with which it is now generally credited. Some of these matters were dealt with by President Whitney, past Presidents Findley and Krause and Director Lowry Elliott in the last issue of Bird Notes. Their comments are recommended for re-reading here and now.

Perhaps this general statement can be made more definitive by some questions. Their relative importance is a matter of opinion.

What should be the policy of SDOU relative to the use of insect poisons which was so ably discussed in the Editorial by Jim Johnson in the last issue of Bird Notes?

What should be the policy of SDOU concerning proposed legislation to make the Mourning Dove a game bird? Can such a policy be supported by facts or may it rest on sentiment or both?

Is the present law which furnishes no protection for ravens and various hawks, owls and "blackbirds" satisfactory? If so, to whom? If not, what, if anything, may be done about it?

What should be the policy of SDOU concerning the shooting or trapping of eagles, hawks and owls? Should SDOU attempt to obtain and print the facts concerning destruction of "alleged predatory" birds? If so, why?

What should be the policy of SDOU with reference to the taking of specimens of birds for scientific study or establishing "firsts"? By residents? By non-residents? Should reports to the state be required of permit holders? To SDOU? Should the state be entitled to receive and retain any of the specimens so taken? If the state adopts a policy can SDOU cooperate with state officials in administering it? If so, how?

Should liason be established and maintained with other organizations which are or may be interested in some of the subjects of our interest? Garden Clubs? Izaak Walton Chapters? Wild-life associations? Science groups? 4-H Clubs? How? Why? When?

Is it important that personnel of the State Game, Fish and Parks Department be kept aware of SDOU and its publications and its program, if any? If so, how and when may that be accomplished? At whose expense?

Is the absence of Ornithology from the curriculum of secondary schools and colleges in South Dakota of concern to SDOU? If so, how may the situation be improved?

How can there be assembled the data essentially necessary as the basis of a worth-while annotated state bird list?

May members for SDOU be obtained in the sections of the state where there are now no members at all? If so, how and at what cost?

Is it desirable that S. D. Bird Notes be regularly displayed in the libraries of high schools and colleges in South Dakota? Should SDOU subsidize such a program, in whole or in part?

How profitably may SDOU go into the study of drainage, flooding, use and ownership of habitat where wildlife now survives and thrives?

It will be noted, of course, that some of these matters are of such controversial nature there probably cannot now be, and perhaps should not be, a firm declaration of policy on the point. Diversity of view is a natural consequence

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A Backyard Project With Quail And Chukar Partridge

Arthur Lundquist

ED VON ROHR and the author visited a game farm in southern Nebraska in May, 1958. There we purchased 100 quail (Bob white) and 15 Chukar partridge eggs. These were placed in an oil burning lamp incubator, and we were rewarded with a good hatch.

The Bob whites hatched out eighty fine birds and the Chukars twelve. We fixed up brooders and pens for raising them till two months old.

About mid-August the quail were put out at a number of farms, with various degrees of success. Twenty-five birds were raised to near maturity and we released them at the State Recreational Area at Pickerel Lake.

In the fall, the farmers having birds, reported the number and sex of each, as near as possible, and some had too many males, while another counted mostly females. So then we ordered additional birds from the Nebraska game farm to make the right proportion in each planting. We also placed five pairs out of this order of thirty adult birds at the Fort Sisseton area.

The Chukar partridges, being only twelve in number, we didn't think were enough to try to plant out in the open, so we kept them over winter, in a pen, to use as brood stock. In the meantime we received eight more half grown birds from a game farm in Colorado to add to our bunch. During the winter one bird accidently hung itself. So we started our 1959 spring project with 19 Chukars plus 5 quail that we had kept and wintered with the partridges, making 24 pets in all, for they become very tame when tended by people all the time.

Early in the spring we could see

LUNDQUIST, PARTNERS, AND FRIENDS
Chukars above. Bob Whites below

Photo by John C. Carlsen, Mgr., Waubay Refuge

that there were too many male partridges for peaceful farming. So seven cocks were leg-banded and released on farms where we had hoped to rear the young. Thus our brood stock was down to 10 females and two males for the partridges, three females and two males for the quail. The latter were placed in separate pens, a pair in one and two females and a male in the other.

The Chukars started laying eggs the last of April and the quail the middle of May. As soon as we had the required number of eggs for a setting, we would give them to a clucky hen (mostly bantams) on some farm having an interest in wildlife and such

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The Status Of The Purple Martin

Wm. Youngworth

THE Purple Martin was formerly a very common or abundant bird locally in many areas, but two interlopers have mast nesting unbearable and now the Martin is sadly decreased in numbers. From about 1890 to 1930 the English Sparrow was the culprit in this area. From about 1930 to the present time the sparrow has been pushed aside and a more vicious intruder, the Starling has taken over the nesting sites of the Martin. Years ago when the Martin houses started to fill up with sparrow nests the owners often became disgusted and took the houses down for good. The remaining houses are now subject to the larger Starling, who not only breaks up the nest, but is as voracious as the Blue Jay or the Grackle when it comes to disposing of the eggs and young.

Such is the situation as local birders of the South Dakota, Nebraska, and Iowa region approach the 1960 season. The great flockings of the Martins of my boyhood days in Bon Homme County, South Dakota, are not seen by this observer anymore. The summer occurrence of the Martin seems to be confined to a few pairs now and then. Therefore it behooves anyone interested in the ornithology of this tri-state area to keep accurate and detailed records of not only the Martin, but of all of our native birds. One by one they disappear from our landscape, often before we realize that they are gone. One good case is the near disappearance of the Burrowing Owl from the Iowa faunal scene. This has happened within the last twenty years.

Since Sioux City is located at the junction of three states it has been nearly impossible to keep all bird migration records separate. Personally I have made about as many field trips into Union County, South Dakota, as I have made here in Iowa, from 1919 to the present. In those earlier years, I made infrequent field trips to Nebraska, because of a toll bridge. Since the bridge has been made toll free my field trips to Nebraska have increased many fold and I now make nearly as many trips to that area as I do to the other two. This is all given to point out that many of my migration records are not always from Iowa, but from the states of South Dakota and Nebraska as well.

The value of early or late migration records, however, lies in just one thing, getting them in print. Unless you are a really great ornithologist and those people are really rare, your bulging field notebook will be little used after you have passed on. Few if any people will be interested in going through your records to find that you saw the first Martin of the season on April 11, 1927. The point is that many of our records of this date are valuable enough to be in print, where they will never be lost, because fifty years from now other eager students of bird life will wonder what bird life was like back in the twentieth century and it will all be there in the record in South Dakota Bird Notes. The chore of keeping up migration records finally forces one to skip now and then and the result is that for most species I now just enter the first or second times observed in the spring and the last few times seen in the fall. For one species I have kept more accurate records and on the Harris Sparrow in nearly thirty-five years I have quite close to one thousand entries. Valuable to the owner, they are almost priceless if you are a serious student of bird life, but to any one else they are junk in their original

form, viz; I have offered all my records to two well known organizations and they deign even the courtesy of a reply. So South Dakota birdwatchers mark your migration records well and ever plan to get them into print.

My earliest spring arrival date for the Purple Martin in the Sioux City area is March 29, 1950, when martins arrived at the martin house of Mr. W. Bert Smith of Sioux City. These martins came back again on April 1 and then were gone again until April 11th. Other early arrival dates are April 4, 1930; April 6, 1932; April 7, 1935; April 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 1948; April 6, 1949; April 7, 1954; and April 7, 1958. Outside of these early arrival dates the average seems to be between April 10th and 15th. In nine other years I did not list the arrival dates until after April 15th, but some of these were the years of World War II and I was so engrossed in other matters that I even forgot to write down any arrival date. This happened during five years.

The fall migration of the Purple Martin is often a never to be forgotten experience. Often the birds are gone by the latter part of August and if one should procrastinate a bit and think he will start listing the martins on the morrow, the to-morrow is too late. They are gone. This has happened to this observer in sixteen years. The real thrill of bird study, however comes on that fall day when you see Purple Martins so late in the Fall that you figure that is your record of all records for the species. That first happened to me in 1946 when I listed martins from September 2nd and then on almost daily until September 26th. I thought that was a fair record, but on October 1st and again October 5th the martins were logged. September 1954 followed much the same pattern with the Purple Martin flight being noticed almost daily, then with a break at the end of the month and then the sighting of one martin on October 9th, but several on October 10th. I can well imagine the thrill that the late Dr. T. S. Roberts had when on October 21, 1920, he witnessed the final flight of the Purple Martins through the Minnesota River Valley. On that day he witnessed the latest fall flight from Minnesota and well may be the last really big flight ever to leave his state. Since his day the Purple Martin surely has been on the decline, as it did much earlier in the eastern part of the United States. Repeating myself I again urge all South Dakota observers to keep good records of your bird migrations and from time to time get them into print.

* * *

SHOULD SDOU . . . ?

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of members having various backgrounds, interests and motives. However, this of itself does not preclude the possibility of advantage accruing from discussion and consideration. Then, perhaps SDOU has not attained the stature and influence which may justify a serious attempt to dispose of some of these matters. Of course, the questions do not encompass the entire field.

The Minnesota Ornithologists Union has adopted the plan of holding a winter meeting devoted to papers, discussions and pictures, with the summer session devoted almost exclusively to field trips. If such a plan were adopted in South Dakota some of the foregoing questions could furnish the basis for a very interesting meeting which might well result in substantial betterment of the policy aspect of SDOU during its second decade.

A Farmer Watches Birds

Lowry Elliott

THERE is no finer place to watch ground feeding birds than from a tractor while doing field work. In spite of the noise of the tractor and machinery, many birds soon overcome their fear and run ahead or fly a short distance to one side. They are much less afraid of the tractor than of a man on foot.

Birds delight to feed along the plow furrow, along the edge of the discing or dragging, any place where the soil is turned or disturbed.

Along the swath of new mown hay and a newly raked hay field are picnic grounds for all the birds in the neighborhood.

On cool windy days the Barn Swallows circle around and around the tractor, catching the insects it causes to fly up.

The Franklin's Gulls follow the plow, gathering earth worms, grubs, and grasshoppers. A mouse is a choice tidbit to be caught and fought over.

Sparrow Hawks watch from utility poles and lines along roads near fields. When a mouse leaves his nest in trash that is plowed or disced over, he is quickly caught. It is surprising how far those little hawks can see a mouse running for shelter.

Some of the birds that come to the fields are Robins, Grackles, Red-winged Blackbirds, Meadowlarks, Brewer's and Rusty Blackbirds, Starlings, Killdeers, Vesper Sparrows, Mourning Doves, Pheasants, Hungaria Partridges, Bobolinks, Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs, and many others.

The Upland Plovers that nest in prairie pastures near by often feed along newly turned soil. They are more often heard than seen.

The Golden Plovers have visited us each spring for the last eighteen years in varying numbers. Sometimes several hundreds stay about a week or more and are quite tame before leaving. Only a few small flocks stopped for a short time this spring. Saw a few more flocks flying swiftly on north.

The small plover such as Buff-breasted Sandpipers come at the same time as the Golden Plovers and feed in the same fields. Never plentiful, usually in small flocks but occasionally in pairs, they become very tame.

The Franklin's Gulls still rest for hours on our farm lane which runs past a slough that was drained some years ago.

These seldom seen and little known birds, the Pipits, are often plentiful, more so than most bird watchers realize. They are found out in the big fields and visit us regularly both spring and fall. The American Pipit is much more plentiful than the Sprague's Pipit.

They are small fawn colored ground feeding birds with a sharp bill like a Robin, white outer tail feathers like a Junco or Vesper Sparrow and a wiggle-waggle like a Sandpiper or Water Thrush. They are often quite wild and feed and travel in small loose flocks.

Have seen Burrowing Owls three different times on the farm in small groups, possibly a family, and always on the hill tops near the badger holes. Since I no longer ride the tractor I see fewer of these kinds of birds.

Nature Study Opportunities in the National Parks

N. R. Whitney

AS I wrote the President's Page for this issue, my thoughts turned back to some of my other experiences with nature study in the various areas of our National Park system which I have visited or read about. National Parks have played a large part in the development of my interest to its present intense degree, and I want to express my appreciation to all the men of the National Park Service who have made a part-time or full-time career of helping the public to gain a deeper understanding of natural conditions as they are exemplified in park areas.

Currently, the National Park Service administers thirty National Parks, and about 150 National Monuments, National Memorials, and Historic Sites. I have seen only a few of them but whenever I am in a new part of the country, I try to visit any National Park areas in the region in order to learn the basic natural features. Rocky Mountain National Park in northern Colorado, for example, where I first met some of the mountain birds, includes a variety of habitats, from the ponderosa pine forests at 8,000 feet up through lodgepole pine, Englemann spruce, and finally alpine tundra, each with its characteristic community of birds, mammals, insects, and other forms of wildlife. Mammoth Cave National Park, in central Kentucky, is known because of its beautiful caverns and fascinating cave fauna, but it includes also several square miles of second-growth deciduous forest, an excellent place to study spring wild flowers and warbler migrations in May or to observe nesting habits of Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Kentucky Warblers and many other birds of the southeastern forests. Similarly, Sahuaro and Organ Pipe National Monuments in southern Arizona are among the best places to study the many species of Mexican birds that enter our country only along the border.

This is not to say, of course, that such areas are the only places where these birds may be seen. The convenience of the National Parks comes, however, from many aspects. First, since the areas belong to the government, we can visit them without concern about trespassing on someone's private property. Second, we can know that the plant and animal species are living under natural conditions, and that no species is present in artificially high or low population because of human management. Third, if we wish to study a particular area for an extended period of time, we can be reasonably sure that it will remain the same year after year, subject only to the changes of natural biotic succession and climatic and geological change.

Furthermore, many of the National Parks have museums located in the visitor centers and ranger-naturalists stationed at points of interest to explain geological, vegetational and, wildlife features of the park to all interested visitors, and all park areas encourage all forms of nature study consistent with the protection and preservation of the park. When I was stationed in central Georgia with the Air Force, I frequently visited Ocmulgee National

Monument near Macon, a small area set aside for the preservation and interpretation of a group of prehistoric Indian mounds, but which also included excellent examples of upland pine forest, swamp deciduous forest, and open river bottomland characteristic of that part of the South. Here I made my start in the censusing of breeding and wintering bird populations in a known area of uniform habitat.

The three national ornithological journals—The Auk, The Condor, and The Wilson Bulletin—carry articles on bird life in the National Parks on occasion, and Audubon Field Notes is a treasure house of scattered information on the birds of various national park areas. Dr. Oliver Scott, for example, reports regularly on observations at Devil's Tower, Yellowstone, Rocky Mountain, Grand Teton, and Mesa Verde in his seasonal reports of the Great Basin and Central Rocky Mountain region. The April, 1959, issue reports the results of Christmas Counts from Acadia, Shenandoah, Everglades, Great Smoky Mountains, Rocky Mountain, Carlsbad Caverns, and Yosemite. My own studies in Ocmulgee National Monument are published in Audubon Field Notes, vol. 6, p. 225 and 310, and vol. 7, pp. 244-245. These are all listed merely as examples, since almost every issue of Audubon Field Notes reports observations from some of the National Parks.

Finally the National Park Service itself publishes reports on all aspects of natural history for the benefit of interested visitors. Such reports can be purchased at the park museums and through the Government Printing Office in Washington. Whether or not a published list is available, the park superintendent or naturalist keeps a record of birds and other animals known from the park, and usually is willing to discuss this list with interested visitors on request.

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Nest of Sandhill Crane

—Courtesy of Wilson Bulletin

Hawks, 1959

Alfred Peterson

DURING the course of driving several thousand miles on highways and by-ways, looking for birds this year, 1959, Hawks of the following species came to my notice:

(1) Sharp-shinned Hawk
(2) Cooper's Hawk
(3) Red-tailed Hawk
(4) Swainson's Hawk
(5) Rough-legged Hawk
(6) Marsh Hawk
(7) Prairie Falcon
(8) Duck Hawk
(9) Pigeon Hawk
(10) Sparrow Hawk

Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks have long tails and short rounded wings, being thus fitted for movement in trees and brush, and are not often seen in the open. A Sharp-shin Oct. 5 at Ulven Park, Clear Lake, and 2 Cooper's Hawks Sept. 9 at Lake Cochrane, are my only records for the year. The latter were immature birds in brown plumage.

Red-tailed, Swainson's and Rough-legged Hawks have broad wings and rounded tails. The Red-tail may be separated into four forms; that is, Eastern, Western, Harlan's and Kriders. An ordinary mature Red-tail is to be recognized by its bright reddish tail; whereas an immature, with a tail crossed by many narrow bars, a white breast, and a band of parallel streaks on lower belly, is frequently tame enough to allow olose examination. Harlan's might be difficult, but a light-colored tail, if on a black hawk, would be suggestive. Krider's, nearly white, is rare. The Red-tailed Hawk is fairly common spring and fall, with the exception of the Marsh Hawk, second only to the Sparrow Hawk.

Swainson's Hawk, from the West, a summer resident, is uncommon here near the Minnesota line. A fine specimen, perched quietly on a fence post unafraid, April 18, was worthy of admiration.

The Rough-legged Hawk, from the North, a "winter hawk," is sometimes quite common, as it has been this year. A good one April 8 and another April 14 were seen near home, and May 8 one of the light phase near Waubay Refuge. For the fall record I have noted a single at Clear Lake Nov. 2, and on Nov. 12, a black phase at Spencer, Iowa, and a light and buff near Luverne, Minn. The last lay at side of highway, dead from gunshot, open to the ignominy of being eaten by a pack of foraging crows.

The Marsh Hawk should be familiar to everyone, as it is a summer resident incessantly combing grassland and marshes for prey, occasionally taking small birds.

Prairie Falcon and Duck Hawk, Pigeon Hawk and Sparrow Hawk, medium size and small, are swift flyers, members of a class called Falcons. Long narrow pointed wings, turned backward at the bend of wing, readily identify them in the field as Falcons. The Prairie Falcon is lighter in color than the Duck Hawk. One passed before me at Hidewood Valley near Clear Lake Sept. 16. On Sept. 30 a Duck Hawk sat on a boulder out in the shallow water of Lake Marsh at Hayti. When put to flight it went up and away, then back and forth, higher and higher, reluctant as it seemed to be to leave the lake. The Pigeon Hawk is streaked, and blue-backed when mature. It is not at all common. I saw 1 Oct. 7 on a high pole east of Tunerville. The handsome Sparrow Hawk is so common that it should be known to everyone.

A BACKYARD PROJECT

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projects. So now several boys have the birds for their hobbies.

By July 11 we had gathered 552 partridge eggs and 85 quail, and had them under setting hens in different parts of the county. Some of these hatched out almost 100% and others, where the hen wasn't so faithful, not very good.

On July 11 our brood stock, adult birds, were released. Ten of the Chukars were put out at the Waubay Game Refuge and one pair near the Day County Izaak Walton game cover, plus a pair of Bob whites at the Ike's shelter. Also the two females and one male quail were added to some already at the Walter Reetz farm from the fall before, in a good location five miles south of Webster.

We have high hopes that the plantings will be successful. From the quail put out at the Pickerel Lake area we had one report of a nice brood this summer.

The Chukars, for the most part, have remained tame, although allowed full freedom. There is one brood of 18 young, raised by a bantam hen, nearly full grown now, which roosts on the cow stanchions in the barn every night along with the bantam chickens. They roam the farm during the day but they do like their regular place to spend the night. These partridges are raised just like chickens and they were amusing to us how they chuckle when they eat and seem almost to talk to each other. If one gets away from the flock he calls and the others answer. The old rooster watches his flock and has a certain call that you would be sure to remember, after you have heard it a few times. The adult birds are about the size of a hen pheasant, and so are bigger than the Hungarian partridge.

When the game books mentioned that they were prolific layers, producing 60 to 70 eggs a season, we wondered a bit about that record; but we kept exact count every day (on the calendar) and our ten hens laid the 552 eggs in the 3 months before they were let loose, about mid-July, and they were still going strong even then.

For the Chukars it is too early to say whether they will survive and do well. Perhaps by another year we may have more reports on the prospect from the interested parties.

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NATURE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

(Continued from page 50)

The following list of bird publications from the National Parks is not complete by any means, but will show examples of what is available.

Bailey, Florence Merriam—Among the birds of the Grand Canyon Country. 1939.

Dixon, Joseph S.—Birds and Mammals of Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska. Fauna Series No. 3, 1938.

Grater, Russell K.—Birds of Zion, Bryce, and Cedar Breaks. 1947.

Kleinschmitz, F. L.—Field manual of birds of Rocky Mountain National Park. 1939.

Murie, Adolph—Ecology of the coyote in the Yellowstone. Fauna Series No. 4, 1940. Discussed several species of birds, especially Trumpeter Swan.

Murie, Adolph—The wolves of Mount McKinley. Fauna Series No. 5. 1944. Contains a fascinating chapter on the Golden Eagle.

General Notes of Special Interest

PINE GROSBEAKS—Two Pine Grosbeaks, female or immature, were in our yard November 14, 1959, our earliest record. The temperature was 10 below at the time. This might be a good winter for birds from the far north, as we have also had Purple Finches here. —**L. J. Moriarty**

As if to confirm his own prediction, Mr. Moriarty wrote again on November 26, 1959: "We located a flock of 12 Pine Grosbeaks today, feeding on ash, mountain ash, and cedar berries. National Geographic "Book of Birds" says, 'They appear . . . when food fails in the north . . . in flocks not usually large and in one comprising a dozen birds there are likely to be not more than two or three of the rosy-red adult males.' Well this flock was composed of 2 bright males, 3 young males just showing a little red, and 7 females. We watched them feed for over an hour."

BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS—Mr. Moriarty also reported seeing 17 Bohemian Waxwings in their yard on November 14—also an earliest date for that species.

* * * *

THE CASE OF THE BLUE GOOSE—Concerning a little goose that dropped in for lunch and stayed to dine. This little goose was first seen by Mr. Ernest Schnarr at his farm place five miles northeast of Brandt the morning of Oct. 18. The usual query, "what kind of a bird is that?", came to me, proof that of several persons who had seen the stranger none knew it as a goose when they saw it close up. It was an immature Blue Goose, with dark legs, dark bill and dark head, rather undersize but strong in flight, as it showed by joining the haughty farm geese in their exercise sprints, or by taking longer flights of its own. It plucked grass and ate corn in the friendly company of Mr. Schnarr's money-making, fattening geese, and stepped aside even as they when approached, but gave no sign of fear. Such was the pattern of events day after day until the time lengthened into weeks. On Nov. 13, after a day of snow and poor visibility, the visitor was missing, at the end of a stay of 28 days.—**Alfred Peterson, Brandt.**

* * * *

CEDAR WAXWINGS IN DAY COUNTY—I was happy to see the articles on Cedar Waxwings in the September, 1958 issue. Mrs. Alice Fiksdal of Pickerel Lake mentions the Waxwings picking up string in her caragana bushes in the spring of 1958. John Carlsen, in Audubon Field Notes of Aug. 20, 1958, said quite a few Cedar Waxwings were nesting in the vicinity of his Refuge Headquarters at Waubay.

This confirms my notes of 1950 and 1958. I had a sight record of Waxwings for June 21, 1958 at Pickerel Lake. Also at Pickerel Lake in the summer of 1950 we had a mother feeding her babies in a tree in our yard. We called our neighbors to see it and the Judge Coomes family and Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Loe also saw it.

She made several trips to the honeysuckle bush for fruit. She was not too afraid of one or two of us, but, when more gathered she moved the little ones into the denser part of the woods. —**Herman P. Chilson, Webster.**

WAYNE TRIMM, whose drawings of Lark Buntings were on the covers of the first, as well as the fortieth issues, drops us a note to say he will have other drawings for us, as time allows.

Everyone will be interested to know that he is doing the color plates for "Birds of Colorado" by Alfred M. Bailey of the Denver Museum of Natural History.

We hope our Colorado friends will not mind the whisper that he is using as models, skins collected by himself in . . . South Dakota.

* * * *

Dr. and Mrs. Moriarty expect to spend March in Old Mexico with the birds. They plan on dividing their time among three spots in the state of Hidalgo recommended by Dr. Dwaine Warner of the Museum of Natural History of the University of Minnesota.

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EASTERN SNOW BUNTING—October 25, while hunting pheasants, I saw four small flocks of Eastern Snow Buntings. In looking over my notes I find we have never recorded them here earlier than November before. I wonder if others have seen them so early. **—L. J. Moriarty, Watertown.**

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PINE SISKINS AT WAUBAY—While standing in Dr. Miller's yard in Waubay, John Carlsen, Manager of the Refuge, and I saw some small birds in the trees and put the glasses on them. John identified them as Pine Siskins, being familiar with them, and it was another first for me. We looked at our Peterson's Guide and then at the birds again. There was no mistake about it. They were Pine Siskins. It was a thrill to me to add another to my life list.— **Herman P. Chilson, Webster.**

SNOWY EGRETS IN DAY COUNTY—Throughout the months of July and August I had reports of a white, heron-like bird on Rush Lake. This was nothing strange, for American Egrets have visited that area off and on for some thirty years to my knowledge.

Then, one day in August, J. R. Fiksdal of Webster spoke of observing the bird closely with a binocular and seeing that it had yellow feet. Also it would dart this way and that, stirring up the water. Fiksdal looked up the bird in his Peterson's Guide and was sure it was a Snowy Egret.

After this report I went out to Rush Lake each evening for several days. The Egret was usually feeding in the same place, in shallow water near shore, at the east end of the highway grade. It was in a good place to observe with a binocular. He indeed had "yellow slippers."

On the afternoon of the twenty-ninth of August my daughter Dorothy and I put a duck boat on the lake. I had my movie camera along, hoping to take a few feet of movies.

We found the bird near its old haunt but it promptly flew to the south shore. We poled through the rushes to near where it had landed and were surprised to find two birds instead of one.

They flew away and disappeared in the east. Dorothy and I went back to the evening feeding grounds and pushed our boat into the rushes, using them as a blind.

We sat there about two hours, hoping the birds would come back. The light was getting worse and worse. Just when we were about to give up one of them glided in. He was only about twenty-five feet from us. The light wasn't quite good enough but we took some pictures anyway. On developing, they were a little out of focus.

The next day I was driving along the

east side of Blue Dog Lake at the Owens Creek backwater. There I saw a Snowy Egret. I worked my way through the willows to a spot near the shore and waited. The bird came closer and closer until I did get a few feet of movies.

I had hoped to let it get quite close but it flew away when a car stopped on the highway and some frog hunters got out and came down to the shore.

This may have been a third Snowy Egret—or it may have been one of the Rush Lake birds.—**A. R. Lundquist, Webster.**

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BIRDS SEEN IN THE WAUBAY-WEBSTER AREA—June 15, 1959.—At Rush Lake and elsewhere many Pintail, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, and Red-headed Ducks. At Rush Lake counted a flock of more than 40 Marbled Godwits, 60 Ruddy Ducks, many Franklin's Gulls, 5 pairs of Eared Grebes, over 100 Western Grebes, a Pie-billed Grebe, 3 Ruddy Turnstones, 3 Wilson's Phalaropes, Black Terns and a few Common Terns, Night Herons, Coots and Willets.

Near Summit several Upland Plovers and Nighthawks.

At Hedtke Pass, between Waubay Lakes—Many warblers there and one Double-Crested Cormorant colony on an island. Maybe 300 to 400 young there, quite large. Also a nesting colony of Ring-billed Gulls on the east end of the island, near the water.

Met Herman Chilson at Blue Dog Lake and we went to Bitter Lake. Along the west side of Rush Lake we saw a Willet with 4 chicks and a pair of Blue Geese. The Chestnut-colared Long-spurs allowed a good look at six of them. They are near the northwest part of Bitter Lake, between the road and the lake, not far from the Public Shooting Area.

We then drove out to Herman Chilson's beautiful cabin on the west side of Pickerel Lake. The cabin is surrounded by many large trees. Many evergreens, trees, and shrubs have been planted. They can be irrigated from the lake.

A wonderful place for birds here. He has a king-sized martin house with its many rooms occupied. A number of small houses hold Tree Swallows.—**Lowry Elliott, Milbank.**

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BLUE HERONS IN DAY COUNTY—This has really been a heron year! Friday, October 2, 1959, my wife and I had the thrill of seeing 2 Little Blue Herons and 3 Great Blue Herons together in the outlet of Owens Creek where it joins Blue Dog Lake. We sat in the car for over half an hour and watched them with 6x30 glasses at less than 100 feet. They paid scant attention to us, as they were feeding in the shallow water.

I saw my first Great Blue Heron in company with Herb Krause on our annual field trip in May 1956. The size of these birds seemed to be about 4 feet tall and the smaller ones, the Little Blues, were much slimmer than our Black-crowned Night Herons and appeared to me to be a little taller also. This eliminated the Green Herons which sometimes appear blue also. There was no white on the head or any part of the body and the color was a dark bluish gray. I was sure they could not be Yellow-crowned Night Herons either.

Only one of the Great Blues had a prominent crest or displayed as much white on the head as Peterson illustrates. One was buffy on his head and throat and the body looked brown-

ish, like an American Bittern. One of the birds had a beautiful pattern in the neck and throat that looked like a small board with a flat grain that had been stained a golden brown finish. I have never seen anything exactly like this on any bird I have ever seen.

After we tired of watching them I honked my horn to make them fly. They took off in all directions: Two of them went south and lit in the trees 100 yards away; one flew west and two east to the creek across the road. They all showed the typical folded neck of the heron in flight and the legs trailed straight out behind. The legs were dark with no trace of yellow on them. Not one of them made a sound and I was particularly interested in hearing their call again as earlier I had heard it on Pickerel Lake when it did not seem to sound exactly as I read Peterson's description of it.

From the middle of May until November 1 we live at our lake home; so each day I have to commute 25 miles each way. This takes me over the Rush Lake grade and north past Blue Dog Lake which is a bird lover's paradise.

Here are the sight records for this season:

Great Blue Herons at Pickerel Lake: 9|13, 9|21, 9|23, 10|1, 10|2

Great Blue Herons at Rush Lake: 8|7, 8|28, 9|3, 10|1, 10|2

Little Blues at Rush and Blue Dog: 9|1, 10|2, 10|5, 10|6.

Snowy Egret at Rush Lake: 7|25, 7|28, 9|13.

The behavior pattern was different at Pickerel Lake than at Owens Creek. This one solitary Great Blue Heron was more timid and would fly away from the opposite shore of the bay 150 yards distant when I walked down to the shore line. I only heard the call once. It was a three syllable: "Wahnk, wahnk, wahnk," rather than the "Frahnk, frahnk, frahnk," of Peterson.

The Black-crowned Night Herons are commonplace and we hear their call often,—it is exactly like the "Guok, guok, guok" of Peterson. We can count from 3 to 5 in our bay at any time, sitting and waiting for an unsuspecting frog, crayfish, etc. It is fun to watch them wash a frog in the water before eating it.—**Herman and Agnes Chilson, Webster.**

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TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE IN HURON AREA—A Townsend's Solitaire appeared in our back yard November 9, 1959. The bird was first seen by Mrs. Johnson, who knows them well. It returned several times during that day, from 10 a. m. to 4 p. m. It was at the feed tray that contained only grain, and at the high bush cranberries that were full of fruit. However, it was not seen to eat at any time that day.

It was present several times during the forenoon of November 10; on November 12 it ate bittersweet berries from the vines growing against the house near the window. On November 13 it was at the feed tray again but was not seen to eat. It was last seen by myself when it came to the bittersweet vine and ate 3 berries at 7:30 a. m., November 14. The temperature was, at that time, 18 degrees below zero!

The marking of this bird, seen often at close range, gave us some concern. The eye ring was barely visible in good light, in contrast to the rather prominent rings seen on birds of the species in the area in past years. The buff of the wings was so slight as to be in doubt also.

Most interesting of all to us was the white patch at the bottom of the wings, just below the wing bars. In flight this patch was particularly noticeable.

The white feathers in the sides of the tail, seen in flight, were also wider than we are used to seeing, apparently 3 feathers on each side.

We had seen this bird at close range several times, had studied the beak and the behavior, and were positive it could not have been a mockingbird—with which we are also familiar from having lived in the south and visited mockingbird territory as recently as last April.

These white marks were also seen on birds observed here in 1957 and left us with some doubt of identification. The first was on May 8, 1957 and the place was the James River bottom about the foot of 8th St., Huron, roughly a mile from our home. The second was in our back yard August 16, 1957. The quite detailed notes for both made at the time, due to doubt of the identity, emphasized the extra white in tail and wings and that the beak was unlike that of a mockingbird. The gray of the breast, that was too dark for a mockingbird, was also noted, while eye ring and buffy marks on the wings were omitted because they were not seen.

The variant coloring of the three sighted (we now identify the two of 1957 as Solitaires) gives a fair possibility that they were actually the same individual, even though separated by two and a half years of time and a mile of distance. The May and August sighting could indicate a summer resident, at least.

For convenient reference our other records of this species are added: The first sighting was on December 1, 1956, at the cemetery here. They (two were usually seen near together) spent the winter there and were available for display any time we had a visitor with a few moments' time. They were seen and included in the Christmas Bird Count that year.

A single bird was seen and examined at leisure at Iroquois Lake by Miss Mary Aberdeen Ketelle and myself on September 14, 1958.

On November 22, 1958 a single bird was seen in the cemetery here and confirmed the next day. This bird was seen with one or possibly two others at irregular intervals during the early part of the winter, two being found for the Christmas Bird Count. They were often seen drinking from a leaky hydrant that provided water, drop by drop, even on the coldest days.

On November 30, we heard one of these latter birds give the "squeeking hinge" note, the only time we have ever heard it. The two birds of 1956-57 sang regularly, however, during the early part of the winter.—**J. W. Johnson, Huron.**

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NOTES FROM BIRD HAVEN AREA—Jan. 7, 1959. Flocks of Snow Buntings: 150, 5, 12 along Highway 20 about 2 miles east of town of South Shore.

Jan. 17—A flock of about 200 Goldfinches four miles north of home, feeding in weedy soy bean field and on sunflowers in a slough. Many flew up on wires and on tall sunflowers so had a good chance to count them. Have never seen so many in one flock before.

March 23—At outlet of Big Stone Lake. Many ducks, including over 50 American Golden-eyes. At home two flocks of Double-crested Cormorants flew over, low. Total 55 birds.

April 6—First Purple Martin, an all purple male, trying to get into a house that had not been put up yet. Would fly away and approach the site again, from all directions, and hover over the same spot. Was not interested in the other martin houses in plain sight 200 feet away.

April 16—Two Martins arrived, first seen since April 6.

May 5—20 Golden Plovers on our farm. Caught a Brown Thrasher that

I had banded two years ago. Martins building nests. Another flock of Golden Plovers (28).

May 20—First warbler migration but not plentiful. Banded 1 Mourning Warbler, 1 Redstart, 1 Tennessee Warbler, 1 Magnolia Warbler, 1 MacGillivray's Warbler—first and only one have banded of this western bird. Rare here.

May 26—Martins carrying mud for nests.

June 10—Martins carrying pieces of green leaves into nests.

June 30—Caught a Bronzed Grackle that I had banded over four years ago.

July 13—A male Yellow-throat feeding a young Cowbird—four times his size.

July 24—Two Avocet adults with 3 almost full grown young.

August 17—Warbler migration has started. Banded a male Wilson's Warbler.

August 25—Banded a Mourning Warbler.

September 6—Sharp-shinned Hawk trying, unsuccessfully, to catch Barn Swallows flying in the air over Lake Albert.

September 16—Banded two nesting Mourning Doves just ready to leave the nest.

September 20—A pair of Blue Jays sparring with a Sharp-shinned Hawk. Watched it until tired: A draw.

September 21—Banded a Blue-headed Vireo.

September 22—Banded 6 Robins, 1 Slate-colored Junco, 6 Myrtle Warblers, 1 Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 2 Gamble's Sparrows, 2 Lincoln's Sparrows, 5 Cedar Waxwings, a total of 23 birds. **—Lowry Elliot, Milbank.**

Nest of Prairie Horned Lark

—Courtesy of Wilson Bulletin

Editorial Comment

Youngworth's paper on the Status of the Purple Martin in this issue also carries particular import for his general remarks about getting observational material published in permanently available form.

Aside from a researcher's problem of running down known unpublished notes, poorly cared for by often indifferent relatives, and finding them hard to read and interpret is another:

Records, often covering long periods, with no known clue to their existence in any of the literature. Without doubt literally tons of such material does exist—or did, until disposed of by unknowing heirs as waste paper. Its combined information would be priceless—in usable form.

As to be expected, the answer lies partly in the field of psychology. So many of us are a difficult mixture of modesty and pride, fears of inferiority, and what not we keep what we are doing to ourselves, lest somebody fail to understand or appreciate it or us in the style we would like. So we go on, never really trying to get our data printed. As it piles up and becomes more meaningful, the task of getting it in shape for publication becomes more formidable—and less and less likely to get done.

It is in this area that publications such as Bird Notes can serve their most useful purpose. Our readership is relatively small—and our own kind. We don't need to be afraid of speaking out loud when we have something to say. Fine writing is not necessary because we can understand pretty well what the other has in mind. Facts are the thing.

And seeing your material in print and the way it looks among the rest will not only help your confidence in what you are doing but show you how it can be improved and better arranged for the permanent record it can become. You can start out with short notes, until you feel able to combine your observations into a bigger picture.

Another result of having a few of your things printed: You get to be a more careful, and therefore a better observer, just because you come more to realize how much may depend on your decision as to the bird you are seeing.

And people, like birds, do not last forever. But their careful observations, well printed and located in many libraries, both public and private, will be around an awfully long time. They will be precious to students in a time when species of birds now so common may be few or unknown.

Your published spare time records might easily be the only important thing you ever did, so far as the next century would know.

BULLETIN

Arrangements are already under way for the 1960 SDOU Convention. President Whitney advises the final date are: May 28, 29, and 30 — the place: Rapid City.

The present plan is to devote the Saturday meeting to papers and then arrange for field trips Sunday and Monday. The theme of the paper session will be "The Birds of the Black Hills," but the exact program is still to be worked out.

We are, however, assured that certain prominent citizens of the Hills, such as the White-throated Swift, Lewis Woodpecker, Water Ouzel, Townsend's Solitaire, Western Tanager, and White-winged Junco, have, in their own way, practically promised to be on hand. We can count on them.

Some others, such as the two Three-toed Woodpeckers and the Poorwill will make no commitments; but it is hoped they will recognize their duty to their public and put in an appearance.

Even a few of this list would make a good show.

Common Tern

Courtesy Wilson Bulletin Photo by O. S. Pettingill