

# SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

Official Publication  
of  
SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION  
(Organized 1949)

---

Vol. XV No. 4

DECEMBER, 1963

Whole No. 59

---



Upland Plover

—F. W. Kent

South Dakota Bird Notes, the Organ of South Dakota Ornithologists Union, is sent to all members whose dues are paid for the current year. Adults \$3.00; Juniors (10-16) \$1.00 per year. Single and back copies \$1.00 to non-members; \$0.50 to members. All dues should be remitted to the Treasurer, Nelda Holden, Route 1, Box 80, Brookings, S. Dak. All manuscripts for publication should be sent to the Editor, J. W. Johnson, 1421 Utah Ave. SE, Huron, S. Dak. Orders for back numbers should be sent to the Librarian, Herman P. Chilson, Webster, S. Dak. Published Quarterly.

Vol. XV, No. 4

December, 1963

Whole No. 59

*In This Number . . .*

Nesting Platforms for Canada Geese, L. J. Moriarty .....	75
Nesting Platform for Canada Geese, L. J. Moriarty .....	76
Shore Bird Identification, Alfred Peterson .....	78
South Dakota Bird Records, 1938 to 1963 .....	79
Birds' Nests of South Dakota, L. J. Moriarty .....	83
Bluebird Homes placed in Webster Area, Reporter and Farmer .....	84
General Notes of Special Interest: Twelve year old Blue Jay found at Doland, McCown's Longspurs at Washburn, N. Dak.; Willets, Avocets, Marbled Godwits, Wilson's Phalaropes at Dawson, N. Dak., List of Birds from two trips through the Dakotas, Summer of 1963, Belle Fourche Notes, Gray Robins—A Progress Report, White-winged and Red Crossbills, Red-shafted Flicker, Western Grebes near Huron, Nest destruction by predators, Black-throated Blue Warbler at Huron, Gray Robins at Britton, Partial Albino Robin at Huron, Wild Turkey breeding records: Wilmot and Faulkton, Long-billed Curlew breeding in Perkins County, Colony of Burrowing Owls at Watford City, N. Dak., Kentucky Warbler at Huron .....	85-93
S.D.O.U. Mid-Winter Meeting at Huron .....	94
Hotels and Motels at Huron .....	95
In Memoriam—Gerald B. Spawn, Nelda Holden .....	96

**South Dakota Ornithologists' Union**

**OFFICERS 1963-64**

President .....	Dr. L. J. Moriarty, 302 New Midland Bldg., Watertown
Vice President .....	L. M. Baylor, S. D. School of Mines and Technology, Rapid City
Secretary and Treasurer .....	Nelda Holden, Route 1, Box 80, Brookings
Membership Chairman .....	Lowry Elliott, Rt. 1, Box 84, Milbank
Liaison Chairman .....	N. R. Whitney, M. D., 633 South Berry Pines Road, Rapid City
Editor .....	J. W. Johnson, 1421 Utah Ave. SE, Huron
Librarian .....	Herman P. Chilson, Webster

**DIRECTORS**

For Term Expiring 1964: Louise Crutchett, Armour; Chas. Rogge, Sioux Falls; L. J. Moriarty, Watertown; Nelda Holden, Brookings; Luis N. Chapman, Sioux Falls.

For Term Expiring 1965: Herman Chilson, Webster; Willis Hall, Yankton; Herbert Krause, Sioux Falls; N. R. Whitney, Jr., Rapid City; L. M. Baylor, Rapid City.

For Term Expiring 1966: Alfred Peterson, Brandt; Ruth Habeger, Madison; J. W. Johnson, Huron; Clara Yarger, Rapid City; Lowry Elliott, Milbank.

## President's Page

Our Winter Meeting will be held Saturday, January 18 and Sunday, January 19, at the Marvin Hughitt Hotel, Huron. A good program is in the works.

Willis Hall has consented to show some of his slides. Dr. Whitney will have skins and slides of some birds of the Black Hills. Warren Jackson, Birk, S. D., will tell about the Prairie Chickens.

Dr. Paul Springer, Brookings, will tell something about the Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at State College.



Time is being saved for banding reports; so banders should come prepared. Also there will be a business meeting.

Everyone should bring material bearing on our plans for future annotated check-list. We need authentic data from all areas, and all seasons of the year. It will be a big job and there are all too few of us to do it. Everyone's help is essential.

The Wilson Ornithological Society has accepted with pleasure our invitation to hold their 1965 meeting at Sylvan Lake in the Black Hills. Tentative

dates are June 17-20. A lot of work will be called for in preparation, because we want this to be an occasion to remember. Anyone willing to help should contact Mrs. Holden, our Secretary-Treasurer.

In particular we should prepare a list of outstanding spots for guests to bird along the way, for most will travel by car. Perhaps someone could write a short article for *Bird Notes*, telling the best areas for birding in our state, giving the species to be expected at that time of year. It might be best to divide the state up into areas for different writers to work up. This is the farthest west meeting in this Society's history and many of the members may be seeing our birds for the first time. We want to do all we can to make sure they do not miss a hoped-for bird from lack of convenient local information.

But, above all, come to the Huron meeting to express yourselves, air your ideas. S.D.O.U. constantly needs fresh opinions, new problems, and new lines of attack on them. Nothing but good can result if everyone gets into the act.

And don't forget to bring something for the editor. If it is of interest to you, perhaps others will enjoy it too.

Keep accurate notes of your birding. These make records of value in the future, will help with the annotated list.  
—L. J. Moriarty.

# Nesting Platforms For Canada Geese

L. J. Moriarty

DEVELOPED in an attempt to encourage nesting of Canada geese at the Waubay Refuge for the past several years, artificial platforms are now being provided for the birds.

The initial attempt was made using tubs placed in trees, though without the success experienced with that method in Illinois.

Canada geese will generally not accept a nesting site unless it is inaccessible to predators, such as an island of some sort. In watching this project more or less constantly since the start, I have seen one nest on a hay stack outside the refuge, this being an island of sorts.

The method used to entice these birds to remain was to build some small islands by piling rock on the ice. When the ice melted the rock stood above the water level. This was costly but successful.

The next idea used was to drive four steel posts into the lake bed, fasten wire mesh over the top, on which was placed three or four bales of straw, topped by a discarded tire casing. The birds took over most of these, nesting inside the tire.

Now on new nesting platforms only about one bale of straw is used, open and spread, for it was found the weight of additional bales pushes the posts into the soft mud of the lake bed, in some cases on one side only, causing the nest to tip. Ice and wave action destroy some but, when placed in shallow water, at the outer edge of the prugmite and cattail lines, in more sheltered areas, they stand better.

Changing water levels produce problems such as high water allowing the waves to pound the under side and low water leaving them high and dry. However geese raise broods on nearly every good platform.

The Canada goose lays from 4 to 10 eggs, most often 5 or 6, that take 25-30 days for incubation. They mate for life. The gander never incubates but stays almost constantly on guard and is staunch in defense of the nest.

The nest is lined with a thick layer of down from the breast, which the goose pulls over the eggs when leaving for food. This acts much as a down sleeping bag, holding the heat so the eggs do not chill and hiding them from predators. When flushed she has no time to cover them; so one should leave quickly to allow her to return to the eggs. Nests should not knowingly be approached until the eggs are well incubated.

The birds nest so early the young are hatched and the nest deserted before most other waterfowl nest; so one of the bonuses is that, in most cases, a pair of redheads or canvasbacks will raise a brood on the same platform. By laying so early, some eggs are lost by freezing; but the pair will then re-nest with fewer eggs.

I spent May, 1963 looking for nesting Canadas at the refuge and surrounding areas, spotting 21 nesting pairs. No doubt many more were missed. I saw 10 on man-made platforms and 2 on muskrat houses at the refuge.

Last fall the Department of Game, Fish and Parks constructed some nest-

ing platforms on wood posts along the west shore of Bitter Lake and in the small sloughs on the public shooting area just west. These were completed in time for the 1963 nesting season. I found one pair nesting on a muskrat house and two on platforms at Bitter Lake. Pairs were nesting on six of the eight platforms that I saw in the public shooting area.

A plan that no doubt would work would be to dredge out the bases of some of the long narrow points, making them into islands. This is more costly but probably more permanent.

An example of the adaptability of these birds was that of a pair that nested in plain sight on a muskrat house in Spring Lake. Heavy rains raised the lake level until waves were about to destroy the nest. The refuge men drove posts beside the nest, wired an old bed spring on top, lifted the top of the muskrat house, nest and all onto this. The goose took over and raised 5 young and a redhead raised a brood there when the goose left.

Now, noting Lowry Elliott's idea for a "What we can do," there are many suitable areas for these platforms in northeastern South Dakota.

Horseshoe Lake northwest of Watertown is a public shooting area with suitable islands upon which I have found a pair of Canadas that raised a brood in the spring of 1959, and a pair is nesting there as this is written. At least one pair nested at Grass Lake by Florence in recent years. Long Lake, Swan Lake, and many others are suitable sites where I believe these geese would take over if suitable platforms were erected, probably without even planting pinioned birds.

And, for the bonuses to be expected: First I am sure the Department of

Game, Fish and Parks would welcome projects where clubs would erect or help erect these nesting sites. Certainly this is a proven and practical method of encouraging the nesting of Canada geese in the area. Of course a lot is yet to be learned and everyone makes mistakes when dealing with a little known matter; but little is done or learned without trying.

These platforms would also help overcome the shortage of diving ducks by providing spots for their nesting, following the geese.

Certainly public relations could only be improved by showing land owners we are interested in raising game as well as shooting it. And anything costing us money and effort becomes the more valuable to us.—**Watertown.**



Canada Warbler

—Drawing & Etching Courtesy E. W. Steffen

# Shore Bird Identification

Alfred Peterson

**S**UPPLEMENTING my paper: Shore Birds of Northeastern South Dakota, *Some Impressions*, (Bird Notes, Vol. X:37) the following Check-list will provide a convenient reference and an aid to becoming familiar with the different species seen in this area. This list designates characters easily seen at close range. With "A Field Guide to the Birds" in hand identification should not be difficult.

**Ringed Plover.** Neck ring; dark above; dark cheeks.

**Piping Plover.** Thin breast band; pale above; bar over forehead.

**Killdeer.** Two breast rings; golden-red rump; noisy; on meadows.

**Golden Plover.** Black below; dark above; back uniform, no pattern.

**Black-bellied Plover.** Black below; pale above; white rump; black axillars.

**Ruddy Turnstone.** Harlequin pattern.

**Woodcock.** Extremely long bill; brown; ruddy below.

**Common Snipe.** Long slender bill; brownish; brick-red tail, barred.

**Long-billed Curlew.** Large; very long decurved bill.

**Hudsonian Curlew.** Decurved bill; striped head.

**Upland Plover.** Small head; long tail; flight often like Spotted Sandpiper.

**Spotted Sandpiper.** Spotted breast; teeters; peculiar low wing stroke.

**Solitary Sandpiper.** Dark back; nods; silky back finely speckled.

**Willet.** Large; white tail and much white in wings shown in flight.

**Greater Yellowlegs.** Long yellow legs; white rump; nods and teeters.

**Lesser Yellowlegs.** Like the Greater but smaller; slim bill.

**Knot.** Brick-red throat and breast; short bill.

**Pectoral Sandpiper.** Dark back; sharply defined breast band; short bill.

**White-rumped Sandpiper.** Brownish; breast and flanks sharply streaked.

**Baird's Sandpiper.** Buffy breast; scaly back; black legs; early spring arrival.

**Least Sandpiper.** Small; ruddy back; yellowish-green legs; slim bill.

**Semipalmated Sandpiper.** Stout bill; gray; black legs.

**Western Sandpiper.** Longer bill. Hard to identify.

**Dunlin. Red-backed;** black belly; slightly decurved bill.

**Dowitcher.** Long bill; rusty breast; white streak up back; probes in mud.

**Stilt Sandpiper.** Long bill; white rump; heavily barred below; probes.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper.** Buff below; white wing linings; short bill.

**Marbled Godwit.** Large; upturned bill; uniform buff-brown in flight.

**Hudsonian Godwit.** Upturned bill; rusty breast; bar-tailed.

**Sanderling.** Stout black bill; black legs; white wing-stripe.

**Avocet.** Large; upturned bill; black and white pattern.

**Black-necked Stilt.** Large; long legs; black above and white below.

**Wilson's Phalarope.** Dark wings; white rump; light crown; a whirligig.

**Northern Phalarope.** Smaller; darker; dark crown; a whirligig.—Brandt.

# South Dakota Bird Records, 1938 to 1963

Bruce K. Harris

Silver City, N. M.  
September 23, 1963

Dear Mr. Johnson:

I enclose a number of bird records for northeastern South Dakota, chiefly from Roberts County, which have accumulated over quite a period of years and should have been reported long ago. My experience here in New Mexico is part of the reason for getting these delinquent records to you. I have been active in accumulating data for an annotated check-list of the birds of New Mexico, and it has been with a good deal of exasperation and frustration that I have located very good records, often specimens, which have been gathering dust in collections or notebooks around the state. In most cases the individual concerned had good intentions of publishing or otherwise making available the information to interested parties, but just never got around to it. I find this has been the case with my South Dakota records, and it is time to make amends.

There are few species listed here which have not been reported by others in South Dakota Bird Notes, but most have been reported irregularly. I have selected some of these records because they add to nesting data for the northeast corner of the state; others seemed noteworthy because of seasonal occurrence. The records from Homer Dusing are included with all the confidence I place in my own records, for I have hunted and camped with Homer for nearly thirty years. He is a very competent observer where waterfowl and game birds are concerned, though he has little interest in other groups.

As the saying goes, "many happy days

I squandered." Most of my records go back to a four year period beginning in 1938, when I did a good deal of birding as a high school student at Wilmot. During those years the very large part of my activity was confined to a radius of seven miles around Wilmot. Most of it was at Bullhead Lake, a large slough four miles east of town, and at Sodak Park on Big Stone Lake, where my parents had a summer cottage. We moved to the cottage as soon as school was out in May, and spent the entire summer at the lake.

It is very unfortunate that I kept no record of bird numbers until after 1942, for this information is as valuable as any we can collect. I have gone over my records rather carefully, and have discarded any which I feel were misidentified during my early years of birding. I had records for the Connecticut Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Jaeger, and Surf Scooter, among others. It is entirely possible that I actually saw those species, but I am not confident enough of the records to use them. The "rare" things reported here are those I am sure of—most of them I remember as well today as on the day I found them over twenty years ago.

I have arrival dates for all species observed during the period 1938-42, and for 1946. If the information will be of any use to you I will be happy to work up a table of spring arrival dates for those species seen regularly during that six year period.

Yours sincerely,

Bruce K. Harris,  
New Mexico Dept. Game & Fish

**Horned Grebe**

Wilmot, April 26, 1941.  
Bullhead Lake, Sept. 14, 1943.

**American Egret**

Single bird seen approximately 1 mile west of Bullhead Lake May 2, 1952. Viewed at 150 yards with glass.

**Little Blue Heron**

Adult bird at Hartford Beach, July 7, 1938. Observed also by Claude Van Epps, I believe. Van Epps was nature counselor at the nearby Scout camp at that time.

**Whistling Swan**

Very heavy migration thru the county during April, 1938. According to the Wilmot Enterprise, 2000-3000 were at Bullhead Lake on April 10, 1938. I remember the huge flocks very well, but made no estimate of numbers.

**Black Duck**

Bullhead Lake, Sept. 6, 1948. Two birds.  
Sand Lake Refuge (Brown County), Sept. 4, 1951. Three birds.

**Wood Duck**

Sand Lake Refuge, Sept. 4, 1951. 8 birds, apparently a brood.  
Hartford Beach, (Big Stone Lake), May 26, 1953. Single male.  
Sodak Park, June 11, 1963. Female which appeared interested in nesting site in large cottonwood tree overhanging lake. No nest or young were located.

Homer Dusing reported seeing "at least 40" Wood Ducks along the little Minnesota River just north of Browns Valley, Minnesota, on April 7, 1963. Browns Valley is on the South Dakota line, only 13 miles from Wilmot. The birds Homer saw were flushed from the stream as he hiked along it, and he maintains that the number is conservative, with duplicates eliminated. They were in small

groups, as one would expect with Wood ducks.

**Hooded Merganser**

Madsen Beach, (Big Stone Lake); Oct. 28, 1939. Female shot by H. Dusing and observed by me.  
Sodak Park; Nov. 4, 1956. Single female.

**Ferruginous Rough-Legged Hawk**

Wilmot; March 29, 1942. Two birds flew low over head, 5 miles E. town. I remember distinctly the very white underparts, with rufous V-pattern formed by the legs and thighs.  
Ft. Sisseton area, Sept. 17, 1954.

**Duck Hawk**

Sodak Park; May 7, 1946. Single bird. I also have a fall record for 1946 (Sept.) when a Duck Hawk was observed forcing a duck to hit the water at top speed, to escape capture.

**Osprey**

Sodak Park, Sept. 18, 1938.  
Sodak Park, May 13, 1939.  
Sodak Park, April 24, 1940  
Sodak Park, Aug. 28, 1941.  
Sodak Park, Aug. 31, 1946.  
Sodak Park, June 10, 1963 (1 bird)

**Prairie Falcon**

Wilmot, Sept. 23, 1938.  
Wilmot, March 18, 1942.  
Wilmot, Sept. 11, 1942.  
Bullhead Lake, Sept. 14, 1943.  
Wilmot, August 30, 1946.

**Sandhill Crane**

Sodak Park, March 25, 1939. Five birds flew low over cottage.  
Sodak Park, April 13, 1940. Small flights of birds, very high, moving north over lake, calling.

**Piping Plover**

Peever (Big Coulee area), May 21, 1961. Single bird.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper**

Bullhead Lake, May 16, 1946. Four birds, observed carefully, up to 10 yards.

Bullhead Lake, Sept. 9, 1946. Small flock in plowing near Lake.

**Woodcock**

Wilmot, May 12, 1938. Single bird observed along shrubbery in flooded backyard. Carefully observed at 15 yards; noted large eye and bill. No doubt as to species as I was familiar with Wilson snipe.

**Hudsonian Godwit**

Bullhead Lake, May 10, 1939.  
Wilmot, April 24, 1940.  
Bullhead Lake, May 16, 1946.

**Avocet**

Roslyn (Day Co.), June 1, 1953. Six birds.  
Peever, May 21, 1961.

**Northern Phalarope**

Roslyn, June 1, 1963. 31 birds.  
Lake City (Marshall Co.), May 27, 1959. Single bird with 5-6 Wilson's Phalaropes.

**Bonaparte Gull**

Sodak Park, Sept. 6, 1948. Strange that I did not see this species more often.

**Red-shafted Flicker**

Wilmot, March 31, 1946. Probably hybrid.

**Red-headed Woodpecker**

Wilmot, March 19, 1938.  
Sodak Park, April 6, 1940. These are early dates for arrival of this species. The bird usually arrives in May, according to my six year record.

**Magpie**

Britton (Marshall Co.), Dec. 1949. Dusing reported at least four birds during winter, while running his trap lines. He reports that from that date they have been seen regularly during the late fall and winter, in increasing numbers. He has caught several in traps.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch**

Wilmot, May 20, 1938  
Wilmot, Nov. 30, 1941

**Winter Wren**

Sodak Park, Oct. 22, 1956. Single bird.

**Veery**

Sodak Park. This species was recorded regularly from 1939-42; also in 1951 and 1961. A nest was found on June 11, 1940, and I have dates which suggest nesting in 1939 and 1951. I believe the Veery is a regular nesting species in the Northeast corner, though not common.

**Mountain Bluebird**

Hecla (Brown Co.), April 3, 1952. Several birds 4 miles north of Brown County line, near Hecla. I also saw this species near Oakes, N. D., just across the line from South Dakota, on the same date.

**Bohemian Waxwing**

Wilmot; Jan. 1, 1939, and Nov. 16, 1941.

**Sprague's Pipit**

Wilmot; April 24, 1946. Single bird carefully observed in hills west of town.

**Blue-headed Vereo**

Sodak Park; May 10, 1942 and Sept. 3, 1946.

**Nashville Warbler**

Wilmot, May 20, 1946.  
Sodak Park, Sept. 3, 1946.  
Peever (Big Coulee); May 21, 1961.

**Magnolia Warbler**

Wilmot, May 18, 1938.  
Wilmot, May 17, 1939.  
Wilmot, May 14, 1940  
Wilmot, May 16, 1942.  
Wilmot, May 20, 1946.  
Wilmot, May 22, 1953.  
Peever (Big Coulee), May 21, 1961.

**Cap May Warbler**

Sodak Park; May 11, 1938, and May 16, 1940.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler**

Sodak Park; Sept. 7, 1941 (single male), and Sept. 19, 1942.

**Black-throated Green Warbler**

Wilmot; May 17, 1942 (single male).

**Blackburnian Warbler**

Wilmot, May 18, 1938.

Sodak Park, May, 1946.

Peever (Big Coulee), May 21, 1961.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler**

Wilmot, May 25, 1939.

Peever (Big Coulee), May 21, 1961.

**Bay-breasted Warbler**

Wilmot, May 17, 1938 and May 17, 1942.

Sodak Park, May 25, 1940.

Brookings, May 23, 1959.

**Canada Warbler**

Wilmot, Sept. 1, 1942.

Wilmot, May 24, 1946.

Wilmot, May 21, 1961.

**American Redstart**

Males were observed at Hartford Beach (Big Stone Lake) during the period June 24, July 23, 1940, and nesting was suspected. On June 23, 1941, a nest with young was located at Sodak Park. On June 10, 1963, two males and a female were noted at Hartford Beach, though no nest was located. I believe it's likely that this species nests regularly in small numbers, along Big Stone Lake, and probably at Big Coulee.

**Baltimore Oriole**

Female or imm. male seen at Wilmot on Nov. 3, 1941—very late.

**Scarlet Tanager**

Recorded at Sodak Park regularly from 1938-1946, also in 1953, 1961 and in 1963. Although I have never located a nest, there is no doubt in my mind that the Scarlet Tanager is a regular summer resident in the Northeast corner of the state.

**Cardinal**

Hartford Beach (Big Stone Lake); one male observed on Christmas

Count made Dec. 27, 1941. A pair were at Hartford on Dec. 24, 1956 Christmas Count. Wilmot (hills w. town 7 miles); single male on May 4, 1952.

**Indigo Bunting**

Sodak Park, May 27, 1946.

Sodak Park, May 22, 1961.

Sodak Park, June 5, 1963.

Single males, full song, in all cases.

I believe this bird may nest at Sodak Park.

**Pine Siskin**

Wilmot: May 20, 1942, and May 29, 1961.

**Lark Bunting**

Sodak Park; single males on prairie above lake, on May 28, 1941 and May 19, 1953.

**Purple Finch**

Sodak Park; immature males, March 26, 1938, Nov. 17, 1956. Singing.

**Red Cross bill**

Sodak Park; four birds, on May 22, 1961.

**Swamp Sparrow**

Bullhead Lake, April 18, 1942.

Fort Sisseton area, May 21, 1961.

**Chestnut-collared Longspur**

Sodak Park (hills above lake); single male on May 10, 1942.—111 East College Silver City, New Mexico.

**Dues for 1964**

If the members will send checks for 1964 dues before Jan. 1, 1964, they will save S.D.O.U. the cost of sending a notice. Please make checks payable to S.D.O.U.—Nelda Holden, Route 1, Box 80, Brookings.

# Birds' Nests of South Dakota

L. J. Moriarty

## A. O. U. #704 CATBIRD (*Dumetella carolinensis*)

**T**HIS slate-colored close relative of the Mockingbird nests commonly throughout the state, in suitable locations. The nests are most often made in thickets of low shrubs, bushes, and vines. Thickets along streams are one of the favorite locations. In towns they nest in hedges. Seldom do they nest in open trees.

The nest is usually placed not over 10 feet above ground, generally from 6 to 10 feet but also down almost to ground level, though I have never found a nest on the ground.

The nest is rather bulky, about 8 inches across by 4 high, placed in a secure position, composed of twigs with leaves and weed stems working up to the cup which is quite circularly lined with finer weeds, rootlets and shreds of bark from grape vines. The cup measures about 2 inches deep by 3¼ wide. In towns the nest often contains string, rags, cellophane, paper, and the like.

The eggs are of pure dark green, unmarked and glossy, to me one of the most beautiful of eggs. They are ovate, measuring about .90 x .65 inches. The usual clutch is 4 or 5, 4 being the most common.

I have never seen a cowbird's egg in a catbird's nest, although I have found their nests very close to other nests, nearly every one of which contained cowbird's eggs. Others have reported finding them parasitized in a few cases.

Some believe that this bird recognizes the cowbird's egg as being different and destroys it. In addition, the catbird is

strong in defense of its rather small territory and drives intruders away. I once saw a cowbird light about 6 feet from a catbird nest in a clump of choke cherry bushes; the catbird drove it away at once. The catbird battles any intruder! I have had them fly so close in defense of the nest that I could actually feel the wing-tips strike my face.

\* \* \*

## A. O. U. #546a GRASSHOPPER SPARROW

(*Ammodramus savannarum  
perpallidus*)

**A** COMMON nesting small sparrow, on the ground, under long grass, or under mown grass, covered like the meadowlark's nest.

The cup rim is level with the top of the ground, about 2 inches across by 1½ inches deep.

The 4 or 5 white eggs are speckled with chestnut, reddish brown, and some larger blotches around the larger end. They are ovate, about .75 x .50 inches.

The nest is hard to find and identify as the bird flutters through the grass for a few feet and disappears, then slips back through the grass to the nest without being seen.

Twice I have found the nest in brome grass hay fields in Eastern South Dakota with five eggs in mid-July; so I assume they are rather late nesters, though these could have been second attempts.

I have always found them under dead grass with an opening tunnel to the side that could well have been taken for a meadow mouse tunnel in the grass.—  
**Watertown.**



## Bluebird Homes Placed In Area

A lot of bluebirds are going to have ready-built homes in the Webster area as a result of activities of the local troop of Boy Scouts and their sponsoring organization, the Webster Kiwanis Club. One of the 25 such houses built by the Scouts in recent weeks is shown above, after placement at the Waubay Lake Game Refuge. A total of 20 were erected there, and still others have been put up, or will be put up, in Webster, and other areas.

Pictured above, left to right, are Harold Wickre, assistant district Boy Scout commissioner; Dr. Wm. J. Smith, chairman of the Boys & Girls Work Committee of the Kiwanis Club, and Bob Johnson, Game Refuge manager who cooperated fully in the project, assisted in picking out suitable locations and erecting the houses.

In addition to the 20 bluebird houses erected at the Game Refuge, six others are ready for putting up at the Webster City Park or other suitable places around Webster; one has been put up by Ludwig Langager at the Izaak Walton clubhouse and another put up by E. A. Sewell at the Bethesda Nursing Home.

Full cooperation was shown in the project, by some 25 boy scouts, their Scoutmaster Lawrence Sauer and assistance George Bennett, Kenneth Buhler and Clem Kehrwald, and others including the Boys and Girls Committee and other Kiwanians. George Bennett, owner-manager of the Bennett Lumber Company, sawed the redwood lumber into correct sizes for the houses.

The idea was proposed by H. P. Chilson, Webster, as a Boy Scout project and was quickly accepted. Later in the season Mr. Chilson advised that all of the houses have been taken over by Tree Swallows, though there are quite a few Bluebirds in the immediate area.

There will be six more houses put up next spring and Refuge Manager Bob Johnson thinks he will set these lower to see if the Bluebirds will like them better that way.—Reporter and Farmer.

## General Notes of Special Interest

TWELVE YEAR OLD BLUE JAY FOUND AT DOLAND—Mr. Fred Kitman of Doland found a dead Blue Jay on April 14, 1963. The bird was banded—number 423-04399. The information and the band was sent in to the Laurel, Maryland Research Refuge. The return card from the Refuge showed that the Jay was banded by Joe Craeger at Ponca City, Oklahoma, on January 1, 1952.—George Jonkel.

\* \* \* \*

McCOWN'S LONGSPURS AT WASHBURN, NORTH DAKOTA—On July 9, 1963, I observed a single male McCown's Longspur on the east side of the Missouri River, about six miles east of Washburn, N. Dak. The bird was well observed through binoculars and a 25X spotting scope at distances down to 50 feet. It was in full breeding plumage. Although there were many Chestnut-collared Longspurs about, this individual was the only McCown's seen in the course of a 1,000 mile trip across both North and South Dakota.—B. A. Grant, 111 E. 9th St., Morris, Minn.

\* \* \* \*

WILLETS, AVOCETS, MARBLED GODWITS, ETC., AT DAWSON, NORTH DAKOTA—It may be of interest to record that in driving across North Dakota, I came upon an unusually rich avifauna at a small alkaline slough easily accessible from U. S. Hwy. 10. The slough is located five miles south of Dawson, Kidder Co., N. Dak., on the west side of N. Dak. Hwy. 3. It is about 1½ miles in diameter, roughly circular, very shallow, and was fringed with a wide border of high grasses,

cattails, and bare alkaline mud flats at the time of my visit on June 15, 1963.

In addition to nine species of ducks, I counted over twenty Willets, well over 100 Avocets, ten Marbled Godwits, and at least 200 Wilson's Phalaropes. Some of the Avocets were accompanied by small young and others could be seen to be incubating. There was every reason to think that all of the species mentioned were breeding on or around the slough. Also on, around, or over the slough were numbers of Gulls (Ring-billed, Franklin's), Terns (Black, Common, Forster's), Rails (Sora, Virginia), White Pelicans, and some northern-breeding migrant shorebirds (six species).

I made no attempt to estimate the numbers of Willets, Avocets, etc., on the entire slough—much of it was out of range of my 25X scope—and the figures given are consequently on the low side.—B. A. Grant, 111 E. 9th St., Morris, Minn.

\* \* \* \*

A LIST OF OTHER INTERESTING RECORDS FROM TWO TRIPS THROUGH THE DAKOTAS: SUMMER 1963—

Eared Grebe: 6.vii.63, Waubay, Day Co., S. Dak., common.

Western Grebe: 6.vii.63, Waubay, Day Co., S. Dak., many adults with broods from newly hatched to nearly full grown.

Red-tailed Hawk: 7.vii.63, Reva, Harding Co., S. Dak., adult feeding three fledged young in nest on cliff.

Ferruginous Hawk: 14.vi.63, Amidon, Slope Co., N. Dak., one adult seen.

Golden Eagle: 13.vi.63, Reva, Harding

Co., S. Dak., one seen soaring. 14.vi.63, Billings Co., N. Dak., nests seen with one young (ready to fly 8.vii.63) and with two young (flew before 8.vii.63).

Prairie Falcon: 7.vii.63, Reva, Harding Co., S. Dak., pair seen.

Caspian Tern: 9.vii.63, Cole Harbor, McLean Co., N. Dak., one seen.

Burrowing Owl: 6.vii.63, Edmunds Co., S. Dak., pair with four or more young.

Lewis's Woodpecker: 7.vii.63, Reva, Harding Co., S. Dak., one seen.

Say's Phoebe: 14.vi.63, Medora, Billings Co., N. Dak., one seen.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 13.vi.63, Spearfish Canyon, Lawrence Co., S. Dak., one seen.

Rock Wren: 7-9.vii.63, Harding Co., S. Dak., and Billings Co., N. Dak., common. 8.vii.63, McKenzie Co., N. Dak., seen feeding four large young out of nest.

Sage Thrasher: 14.vi.63, Amidon, Slope Co., N. Dak., one seen.

Mountain Bluebird: 13.vi.63, Spearfish Canyon, Lawrence Co., S. Dak., pair seen feeding four large young in nest in fence post.

Townsend's Solitaire: 13.vi.63, Spearfish Canyon, Lawrence Co., S. Dak., one seen.

Sprague's Pipit: 9.vii.63, Foster Co., N. Dak., one seen and heard in courtship flight.

Solitary Vireo: 13.vi.63, Lead, Lawrence Co., S. Dak., one seen.

Audubon's Warbler: 13.vi.63, Lead, Lawrence Co., S. Dak., one seen.

MacGillivray's Warbler: 13.vi.63, Lead, Lawrence Co., S. Dak., two seen.

Yellow-breasted Chat: 14.vi. & 8-9.vii.63, Billings and McKenzie Cos., N. Dak., common.

Orchard Oriole: 12.vi.63, La Plant, Dewey Co., S. Dak., one seen.

Western Tanager: 12-13.vi.63, Spearfish

Canyon, Lawrence Co., S. Dak., common.

Black-headed Grosbeak: 13.vi.63, Spearfish, Lawrence Co., S. Dak., one seen. 8:vii.63, Medora, Billings Co., N. Dak., two seen.

Lazuli Bunting: 8-9.vii.63, Billings and McKenzie Cos., N. Dak., common.

Brewer's Sparrow: 8.vii.63, Medora, Billings Co., N. Dak., one seen.

White-winged Junco: 13.vi.63, Lead, Lawrence Co., S. Dak., one seen.

Chestnut-collared Longspur: 12.vi.63, Clark, Clark Co., S. Dak., adults with flying young. 9.vii.63, Bowdon, Wells Co., N. Dak., nest with 4 Longspur and 2 Cowbird eggs.

The two trips covered eight days altogether—June 12-15 and July 6-9, 1963. During that time about 2150 miles were covered, and a total of 135 species of birds observed. Also seen were 14 species of mammals.—**B. A. Grant, 111 E. 9th St., Morris, Minn.**

\* \* \* \*

**BELLE FOURCHE NOTES**—Turn on the sprinkler on a hot summer day, preferably near or under a tree so that the spray drips thru the leaves, and you'll draw a flock of birds.

First to our sprinkler set under the weeping willow come robins. They sit in the grass and let the water hit on their heads and drip off their tails. Anybody concerned about the insecticide kill of robins would cease to worry if he could see the flock that in minutes after the water is turned on, gathers on the ground under the sprinkler—young ones still in need of feeding, speckle-breasted but independent, and faded adult birds, worn with parental cares of raising what appears to be three hatchlings.

The robin flock numbers over 20 birds at a time, and must be more than that because of the coming and going. Since these are natives, not migrants,

that's a bumper crop of robins for our hill. It's remarkable, further, because the neighborhood has had a bumper crop of cats, all of which hunt more or less on our hill. There are white cats, black cats, yellow cats, maltese, tiger and calico—all in both short-hair and long-hair varieties. From the number of young robins under the sprinkler, the parents must have added a survival course to the training of their young.

In the branches above the sprinkler sit a half dozen, at least, catbirds. They are bathing and preening in the spray. Their washed feathers accent their coloring—the rich charcoal body, black head and henna under-tail coverts. But the catbird's silhouette is his handsomest feature—the slender body, the long, up-tilted tail, the tapered head and bill. Though slightly smaller, he's every bit as attractive as his cousins the mockingbird and brown thrasher. Except that he never repeats, his song is like that of the two cousins. (The mocker builds the song into a concert by singing the phrase over and over, up to ten times; the thrasher repeats it once.) However, the catbird follows the song with the raucous mimicking of a cat's meow or the caw of a crow—as if it were sissified to sing so beautiful a song.

But that's not all the sprinkler draws on a hot summer afternoon. There are varied warblers, goldfinches, grosbeaks or orioles. It may draw something rare like a western tanager. There's nothing so inviting as a cool spray on a hot day—to bird or man.

If you're bored some hot summer afternoon, turn on the water and let the birds stage a show for you. Besides, you may after a few minutes of watching decide there is more to birding than you thought.

#### Without Olives

The late May freeze took the Russian

olives, favorite food of the evening grosbeaks. To these trees in winter come flocks of both grosbeaks and cedar waxwings, flocks of two dozen or more birds that stay for weeks. Though robins in the fall gorge on the olives before flying south, always there are enough to care for all the winter feeding needs.

Naturally, we feared that with the olives gone, there would be no grosbeaks this fall and winter. But it appears that grosbeaks have a second choice, and a third or fourth—and there is an ample supply of all. In fact, grosbeaks already have started to feed on our hill. A flock of around 20 has been headquartering here for almost two weeks, feeding on their second choice berry—the cotoneaster. Though they feed steadily, the berries, from green stage thru dead ripe, look as thick as ever. Many a fall and winter these berries have gone practically untouched while the birds fed on the olives. Since we have seen the grosbeak flock in the red osier dogwoods and the honeysuckles feeding, we believe that these berries, in that order, are third and fourth choices.

Now that the waxwings are finding plenty to eat without the olives, we believe that there will be waxwing flocks as usual this fall and winter. Besides, the waxwings have another choice—the cedar and juniper berries, of which there likewise is a bumper crop.

The grosbeak flock here now is quite a sight—mature males in full color, gold and bronze with bold accents of black and white. The females are gray, as were some of the young males, at first. But in the past few days, the young males have begun to color so that now they are mottled gold and gray on the breast. A new birder would be in a tizzy trying to identify a lone young male right now. However, all have the same body form and habits and all have

the big beaks—so big that they fit the description "little parrots," so many give for them. However, the beaks do not curve like a parrot's.

The big grosbeak flock in the late summer is a happy sight for birders. It means that the few pairs that nested in the area have had a good hatch and good luck raising their families. It means too that all the flock will return here to nest.

The grosbeak is a friendly bird, it likes people and likes to feed at windowsills. Now, while the flock is feeding in the cotoneaster which is near the terrace steps, they are like a welcoming committee when we come home. The first day or two after their arrival they flew up into an elm above the shrub, but now they stay where they are—so close to us that we easily could touch them as we pass, if we so chose.

There will be grosbeaks this fall and winter, though the Russian olives are gone. And that's joyous news for many who enjoy grosbeaks in winter though they may not know what bird they are. Birds as beautiful as one from the tropics in western South Dakota in winter. Who wouldn't like that sight?—Irma Weyer, *Belle Fourche Daily Post*.

\* \* \* \* \*

**GRAY ROBINS—A PROGRESS REPORT**—As could have been predicted, this question at once became manifold when given a closer look. While we here all but missed the passage of the "real gray" ones, those birds with the steel-gray breasts, this fall, our sharpened attention has shown us a number of more or less standardized variations in color that, in other years, passed through our hands without note or remark. It is assumed, for the moment, these are of minor importance, though possibly representing localized populations that are moving through.

An example, more clear-cut than us-

ual, occurred on the evening of September 29, 1963. On that occasion we caught 25 unhanded robins. Of these, 16 were of a nearly identical color: Lighter than usual breast and with a strong tinge of tan on the tips of the feathers on the sides of the neck. These birds were clearly different from the other nine which had the usual variations in shade of red, more or less lined with white, that we consider normal in the local population. No other birds like the 16 were caught at any other time during the season except that a single, possibly a straggler of the population represented by the 16, was taken and banded on Oct. 7—the only bird caught that evening which thus marked the end of the banding for the season, so far as robins are concerned.

It seems probable now that the grays of our particular interest came through about the last week in August, or earlier than expected. It happened that we had been out of town and the Jonkel's were able to band only one evening during that period. Two of the grays were noted that evening by them but none of us saw any on later evenings.

Only after this conclusion was reached was a note received from Ella McNeil of Britton, included in this issue, describing how she called a number of friends to see the unusually light colored robins, before receiving the September issue asking for information on them. She also saw them the last week of August and first of September.

On September 20, Dr. Bailey of Denver wrote in regard to the gray robins: "Haven't seen any yet this fall—in fact I have hardly seen a robin, let alone migrants from the north. There has been a strange dearth of them around all summer."

Dr. Breckenridge, Minneapolis, wrote, September 19; You might be interested in knowing that late last August I was

at the southeast corner of Great Bear Lake in the Canadian Northwest Territories and found these same robins migrating south at that point, indicating they must come from even farther north, possibly in the area of the Mackenzie Delta or northeastern Alaska. I trust that, some time, we will be able to secure enough specimens to describe this as a separate race."

Thus the evidence so far appears to indicate an early and rapid passage for the northern populations, which might be expected also from their rather early spring migration this year.

As a result of Dr. Breckenridge's letter it was arranged for Gerald Konsler, Biology, Huron College, to make a detailed study of plumages of the robins taken by our nets. While none of the population of particular interest were handled after he had joined the work, Mr. Konsler found a number of interesting patterns of variation in plumage which he will describe in due course for *Bird Notes*. Exact descriptions of the "real gray ones" will thus have to wait for another season.—**J. W. Johnson.**

\* \* \* \*

**CROSS-BILLS, RED-SHAFTED FLICKER, WESTERN GREBES NEAR HURON**—September 22, 1963, Mrs. George Vanderstein and I were cruising slowly north of Huron on a graveled road, looking for fall migrants. We stopped near a bridge that spanned a creek which was studded with stones of all sizes. Six small ducks with their green specula brilliant in the sunlight proved to be Green-winged Teal. Two Wilson's Snipe were nearby. On the muddy bank of the stream a touch of rose attracted our attention.

To our astonishment we found there a small flock of White-winged Crossbills and, with them, two Goldfinches. As we watched we saw that the birds were drifting in from a large evergreen

tree at the top of the hill. We moved the car near the tree, which we found laden with cones. There we identified some red Crossbills and their acrobatics in working over the cones.

The birds were moving from tree to tree in a grove of pines. A number of them were accommodating enough to perch on the limbs of a dead pine, thus affording excellent views. Several Pine Siskins and Yellow-shafted Flickers appeared with the flock of Crossbills.

Farther on we stopped to study a young Flicker in the weeds along a fence line. His grayish-brown head lacked the red at the nape. A slight hint of salmon showed along the edge of the folded wing. Soon he flew to a pole and later into the field, showing plainly the reddish color of wings and tail—a red-shafted—rather hybrid—Flicker.

At Lake Byron were many Western Grebes, Ring-billed Gulls, and Cormorants, along with a few Great Blue Herons. A flock of more than 200 White Pelicans were on a small point extending out into the lake. About half of them moved out into the water and drifted wide into a formation beautiful to watch.—**Carrie Pierce, Huron.**

\* \* \* \*

**DEAR MR. JOHNSON**—The arrival of *Bird Notes* yesterday reminded me that I have been putting off writing up an experience I had which I think is worth calling to the attention of the members. I received my banding permit last November thanks to Nelda Hoiden's lessons during the S. D. O. U. meeting on Farm Island the preceding May. I've really been enjoying it and learning a lot. It certainly adds a new dimension to the hobby of birding.

The article "Just One Swamp Sparrow's Nest" by William Youngworth in June '63 *Bird Notes* makes a good point

which I think deserves further emphasis. He mentioned, as you probably recall, that bird nests are quite safe from predators until a human finds one, then at night the predator will follow the human scent trail out of curiosity and find the nest.

I thought this was interesting but didn't give it too much thought until the experience I had later in the summer. I had been watching the progress of a robin's nest at Sheridan Lake, from a short distance so as not to disturb the process, with the object of banding the nestlings later. The nest was very low, only about four feet from the ground, in a small pine tree. I watched it without getting too close from the building of the nest through the appearance of the eggs to the successful hatching of three tiny nestlings. When they were about half grown I handled the tree and nest for the first time and banded the three birds. The same morning I found the nest of a redwing blackbird just a stone's throw away in some cattails about a yard from shore in perhaps six inches of water. It contained five eggs so I noted its location well for later attention.

Just two days later I was in the area again and noticed it was strangely quiet. What was missing was the harassment of the male redwing. I checked its nest and found it tipped with a few pieces of egg shells in it. Going over to the robin's nest I found it torn and the nestlings missing. There was no indication what the predator was but there are raccoons, skunks, and mink in the area.

I believe we should be more careful not to approach nests too closely and to avoid handling when photographing or "just looking."—**V. B. Van Heuvelen, Deadwood.**

**BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER AT HURON**—Just before 7 a. m. on October 7, 1963, I saw a male Black-throated Blue Warbler light on the ladder lying against the post holding the martin house. It was my first sight of this bird and the overall bluish aspect with the prominent black face, and black on the white breast along the wings gave me no immediate clue as to identity.

But, picking up a Peterson, I quickly found the picture: Black-throated Blue Warbler. The male was nearly identical with the bird before me except for a slightly smaller area of black on the bird than on the picture.

Over and Thoms observe that this bird is seen on migration along the east side of the state but has been banded at Aberdeen.—**J. W. Johnson, Huron.**

\* \* \* \*

**GRAY ROBINS AT BRITTON**—In response to the request for information on the gray robins, I began seeing them the last week in August and the first in September. And to verify our having decided they were the Gray Robins, here came our magazine, *Bird Notes*.

There it was, on page 64, our editor giving information we really wanted. I say "we," for I had called Mrs. Lloyd McLaughlin, Mrs. C. M. Dressen, Mrs. Arthur Borham, and Mrs. A. M. Adland to come and see our Gray Robins—that none of us had heard of by that name before.

We thought of them as different—and decided, although we have seen them before, we had never heard them described. If we had thought of them as robins it was that they were moulting—so different and beautiful—silver gray covering the red of the breast and the large white ring around the eye. You also mention a much larger bird.

SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

They arrived in flocks, made themselves at home at the low bird bath near the martin house. Watching from my breakfast room windows, facing east, I first became acquainted with them. And I agree they need further study.

They even took time to play. They gathered string as if to build nests, hit the windows with a bang in their darting here and there, sometimes would sing a song as in the spring instead of the usual chirp of fall.

I just had to tell you the news: There were more of them than of the local robins here for a while.—Ella McNeil, Britton.

\* \* \* \*

#### PARTIAL ALBINO ROBIN AT HURON

—In the forenoon of September 22, 1963, while Lucille and I were watching the busy bird life in the back yard, a robin came and lit on the wires some fifty feet away. Even in the dull light of this cloudy morning and against the heavy clouds of the western sky, snowy white marks shone on the bird's back and tail.

Careful examination with the 7x50's made clear that the white was a spot that covered most of the scapulas, and ran widely down the secondaries to jump to the tail, where it included three of the left center tail feathers. Only the left rear of the bird was visible at first but later it turned to show that the white was duplicated on the right side, except in the tail.

The bird was cautious and timid. It did not join the others about the bath but it did come to a perch on a closer wire, so that I could see that it wore a band, an old one, clearly. Also that the head and neck were finely speckled with white and there were larger spots of white on the breast.

After our initial surprise at seeing the band and knowing that we would not have banded such a spectacular

bird without remembering it, we finally recalled the Jonkels telling, two or three years ago, of banding a robin with a lot of white; "really a pretty bird," Jean had remarked. So this must be the same, years older, wiser, and more cautious.

Soon it left and we did not see it again.—J. W. Johnson, Huron.

\* \* \* \*

#### WILD TURKEY BREEDING RECORDS: WILMOT AND FAULKTON, S. DAK.

—On two recent occasions I have observed Wild Turkey hens with young in eastern South Dakota. The earlier observation, made at Wilmot, Roberts Co., on Sept. 19, 1962, was of a hen accompanied by eight or more one-third grown young. They were feeding along the border of a roadside tree-belt and were easily approached because of the inability of the young to fly and the reluctance of the female to go very far from her brood. Although incapable of fluttering more than a few feet to very low bushes, the young were very quick afoot. We repeatedly got within a very few feet of the female and her brood and were able to see the buffy terminal band on her tail, a characteristic of the wild as opposed to the domesticated turkey. When cornered, the female proved a strong flier, taking off with powerful wingbeats, and ending in a very long, shallow glide, which carried her some 200 yards down the road. Communication between the hen and her chicks was constant and by means of chucking sounds and whistles. Sept. 19 is of course a very late date for small Wild Turkey chicks. It is possible that the bird was a recent plant whose reproductive cycle had been disturbed in the process of transplantation.

On June 12, 1963, near Faulkton, Faulk Co., accompanied by P. McGinnis, B. McGinnis, and L. Grant, I saw a second hen Wild Turkey. This one had a

brood of about twelve chicks no more than 6 or 7 inches long (one was measured in the hand). They were feeding in tall grass between the highway and a pasture. Once again the hen was very bold in defense of the chicks, chucking to them constantly, and permitting me to approach within five yards of her.—**R. A. Grant, 111 E. 9th St., Morris, Minn.**

\* \* \* \* \*

**LONG-BILLED CURLEW BREEDING IN PERKINS CO.**—On June 14, 1963, about one mile west of Lemmon, Perkins Co., S. Dak., P. and B. McGinnis, L. Grant and I noticed two adult Long-billed Curlews feeding in a field, strip-sown to corn (just sprouting) and oats (about 12 inches high). We stopped and watched the birds from about 200 yards through a 25X spotting scope. After a few minutes two young curlews (about 7 inches high, buffy with dark spots) emerged from the oats to feed alongside of the adults, who remained alert but showed no other sign of alarm at being watched. The very long decurved bill, brown color, and huge size of the adults were all carefully noted.—**R. A. Grant, 11 E. 9th St., Morris, Minn.**

\* \* \* \* \*

**A COLONY OF BURROWING OWLS AT WATFORD CITY, NORTH DAKOTA**—On July 9, 1963, a few miles east of Watford City, N. Dak., I noticed several Burrowing Owls in a large fenced pasture. Upon investigation, I found there were at least four and possibly as many as ten pairs resident in the field, which covered an area of 80 acres and was very closely cropped. Pellets were collected at 12 or 15 of the many badger, skunk, and ground squirrel holes. These contained almost entirely mammal and insect remains. I saw no sign of young owls. They might be expected to emerge from the burrows

a little later in July at that latitude. But I counted a minimum of nine adults flying about. Horned Larks and Chestnut-collared Longspurs were abundant in the pasture and I found a nest of the later species which contained five eggs. Leaving the pasture, I startled a Gray Partridge accompanied by six half-grown young.—**R. A. Grant, 111 E. 9th St., Morris, Minn.**

\* \* \* \* \*

**KENTUCKY WARBLER AT HURON**—Shortly after 7:00 a. m. September 16, 1963, a warbler in the grass near the bird bath, with much of the behavior and appearance of the yellowthroat, attracted my notice. That species not being uncommon the bird would have had only a passing remark except that I noted that the black mask was divided by a yellow line from beak to eye and also lacked the white border of the yellowthroat's.

Close study of the bird at a distance of 15 to 20 feet, and comparison with the pictures in Peterson at the same time, made sure that it was a Kentucky Warbler.

When the bird had left I checked *Warblers of America* and found the description and pictures of the Kentucky to agree almost exactly with the bird I had seen.

The bird was about the yard the next day, though Lucille had been unable to catch sight of it, and on the 18th it was in sight for a timed six minutes about the bird bath, though kept from it by the splashing robins that filled it. In the afternoon of that day it found the bath unoccupied for once and hurried to get in—so much that it got over its depth and had to go through the motions of swimming to get back to where it could touch bottom. This time Lucille was present to see the whole performance. This was our last sight of the bird.

During the days when it was present we became aware of a "Chuck" note that sounded irregularly. It was clearly different from the "Chuck" of the thrasher and from the "Check" of the Myrtle Warbler, neither of which were present so far as we knew. Both Peterson and *Warblers of America* mention this note of the Kentucky Warbler and it made an additional item toward identification.

Since the colors of the sexes are alike, "the female similar but duller," and we have no basis of comparison, it is not possible to decide the sex of the individual seen. The only difference noted in color pattern, from the pictures was in the spectacles. Only the lower circle, under the eye was clear and sharp. The "nose piece" was somewhat wider than that pictured.

Moderate search of the literature has brought out but two mentions of

this species in South Dakota—oddly enough, in the Black Hills area, while the usual range in standard works comes only to "northeast Nebraska."

Over and Thoms: "The bird has been seen in June in the Black Hills and in the Cave Hills of Harding County."

Bird Notes, Vol. IV:10: "Seen in 1920 in Spearfish Canyon." This was from data supplied to Cecil P. Haight by Mr. and Mrs. F. L. Bennett of Spearfish, "who have been studying birds there since 1917 and in whose knowledge of birds and biology I have the utmost confidence."—Cecil P. Haight.

Remembering my first impression on sighting the bird, I am wondering if it hasn't been mistaken for a yellowthroat after a casual and not too clear observation in the past, as would have been the case here had it not been so close and in the open.—J. W. Johnson, Huron.

## Cardinal

—Drawing & Etching Courtesy E. W. Steffen



# S. D. O. U. Mid-Winter Meeting

**HURON, S. DAK.**

**JANUARY 18-19, 1964**

## **SATURDAY**

**7:00-8:00 p. m.** Registration

**8:00-9:00 p. m.** Willis Hall, Yankton, a showing of wildlife pictures.

## **SUNDAY**

**9:00-9:30 a. m.** Registration

**9:30-12 noon** Business meeting

Summary of 1963 banding activities

The Canada Goose, by Dr. L. J. Moriarty, Watertown

Introduction of Dr. Paul F. Springer, Brookings and explanation of his work on the new Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit.

**12:30-1:30 p. m.** Luncheon

**1:30-3:00 p. m.** Birds of the Black Hills area (Skins and slides) by Dr. N. R. Whitney, Jr., Rapid City.

Prairie Chicken, by Warren Jackson, Birk, S. Dak.

Headquarters: Marvin Hughitt Hotel

Send reservations for luncheon by January 15th to Blanche Battin, 546 Dakota S. Apt. 23, Huron, S. Dak.

---

## **BRIEFLY . . .**

It has been suggested that some of us forego a birding vacation in Mexico, Hawaii, Florida, or the Southwest and rather spend the time in some of the sparsely populated counties of north-western South Dakota. It is terra incognita birdwise, yet the birds you see you will generally know. And the whole time you will be on the frontier of knowledge, gathering new information that needs publication. Bird Notes can well use the story in detail—and the upcoming Annotated List the essentials of your observations. Probably the eas-

iest way to do something that will be of interest in the next century.

For the first time in 70 years the rare trumpeter swan—the world's largest waterfowl—has successfully nested east of the American Rockies. One of the two pairs of trumpeters introduced by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the Lacreek National Refuge in South Dakota has hatched four healthy young. The other pair was reported brooding eggs.—Audubon Leader's Conservation Guide.

We hope for more detail from Manager Monnie.

## Hotels and Motels Welcome You To Huron, South Dakota

### THE CONVENTION CITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA

**MARVIN HUGHITT HOTEL**, 152 units, Reagen Jones, Manager, 375 Dakota Avenue South, Phone EI 2-8731. Radios and television available. Air conditioning in some units. Coffee Shop, cocktail lounge with lunches and dinners served, party and banquet rooms. Member of AAA.

**THE INN**, 81 units, M. Tracy Gitchell, Manager, 3rd and Wisconsin S. W., Phone EI 2-8611. All rooms are air conditioned and have been redecorated. King George's Coffee House with accommodations for banquets, meetings and conventions in the Stag Room, Crown Room, Embassy Room, Steak House, and the Piano Bar.

**BELL MOTEL**, 16 units, Ronald Babb, Manager, 1274 3rd Street S. W., Phone EI 2-6707. Five kitchenettes, some air conditioned units. Open winter and summer. Member of AMA and AMHA.

**CONROY MOTEL**, 16 units, Mrs. Carroll Swartout, Manager, Highway 14 West. Phone EI 2-6781. One kitchenette, telephone and television available. Bath and shower in all units. Member of AAA.

**ISABELLE MOTEL**, 19 units, Frank Ludwig, Manager, 1755 3rd S. W., Phone EI 2-6408. Five kitchenettes, some units air conditioned. Telephones and television available in all units. Playground for children. Open winter and summer. Member of AMHA.

**MOTEL 37**, 12 units, Paul and Marie Clark, Managers, Highway 37 at 21st Street South. Phone EI 2-8586. Telephone and television in all units. Air conditioning in all units. Guest controlled heat. Bath and vanity in all units. Open all year.

**PARSON'S MOTEL**, 14 units, Ira Parson, Manager, 1705 Dakota South, Phone EI 2-9184. Eight kitchenettes, open all year around. Air conditioning and television available. Bath in all units.

**PLAINS MOTEL**, 46 units, A. R. Barnes, Manager, 924 4th, N. E., Phone EI 2-6455. Telephone and television in all units. Air conditioning in all units. Bath and shower in all units. Swimming Pool.

**RAINY'S HOME CABINS**, 7 units, Carroll Winegar, Manager, 1235 3rd S. W., Phone EI 2-3662. Six kitchenettes. Showers in all units.

**RIVERSIDE MOTEL**, 14 units, George Snow, Manager, 710 3rd S. E., Phone EI 2-6748. All units air conditioned. Bath and shower in each unit. Telephone and television available. Member of AAA.

**TRAVELER MOTEL**, 24 units, Bob and Phyllis Worrall, Managers, 241 Lincoln N. W., Phone EI 2-6703. Air conditioning available, open year around. Member of AAA. Telephone and television available.

## In Memoriam

Dr. Gerald B. Spawn, one of our charter members and past presidents of South Dakota Ornithologists Union, died suddenly August 21st of a heart ailment. Dr. Spawn was an active member of S.D.O.U. during its beginnings, being its first vice-president, its second president, in 1950, and on the Board of Directors through 1959.

Dr. Spawn was born in Chester, South Dakota in 1907 and as a boy became interested in wildlife around him. He received his B. S. degree from South Dakota State College in 1931 and his M. S. degree in 1933. In 1941 he completed his work in entomology for his Ph. D. from Iowa State University.

During his graduate studies he served as one of the first wildlife refuge managers at Squaw Creek in Mound City, Missouri from 1935-38. As part of this job he became a bird bander and held his permit until his death. He once recalled how thrilled he was about catching and banding a King Rail at Squaw Creek.

In 1938 he was hired by South Dakota State College as an instructor to develop a curriculum in wildlife management. He worked relentlessly toward the goal of establishing the high calibre wildlife curriculum which is now being offered at State College. As part of this curriculum he taught the Ornithology course for many years before he turned it over to others in his department.

In 1953 he became head of the Zoology-Entomology Department which he held until July 1963 when he became head of the newly developed Department of Wildlife Management. Since the Wildlife curriculum has been set up, about 300 students have graduated with a major in wildlife and now hold jobs



in South Dakota and other states, on college staffs, with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other government agencies, and in industry as specialists in wildlife management. Dr. Spawn did much more for his students than just teaching them his philosophy of wildlife management, for he was always ready and willing to listen and help with their personal problems. Currently there are around 100 students majoring in wildlife.

Dr. Spawn saw another of his dreams come true with the establishment of the Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at South Dakota State College this past July. He had been working for such a unit as this for several years. It is unfortunate that he could not have lived longer to be a part of the workings of the new Wildlife Management Department and the Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit. —Nelda Holden.