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Least Terns

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In This Number . . .

Cover: Photo of Least Tern by R. S. Wycoff, Halftone, gift of Wm. Youngworth.

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President's Page

Protection of hawks and owls in South Dakota is of prime importance. Reports given to me indicate there has been more shooting of hawks this fall than in previous years. Some observers think this may be due to two things: (1) there has been a substantial movement of these so-called 'predators' across our state and (2) the nice fall weather brought many people into the fields and, since there was but little duck shooting, some hunters have been trigger-happy on the unsuspecting hawks and owls.

For evidence to support the first reason, read the article in South Dakota Bird Notes, by Krause, "Unusual Migratory Waves at Sioux Falls," 1959 (43:72-75)

Much "trigger-happy" shooting is due to misunderstanding. Some folks still have the false idea that all hawks should be classified as "big chicken hawks" and "little chicken hawks." The truth is that hawks seldom kill chickens, and much of the flesh eaten by hawks is already dead—carrion. Predation is a natural thing, one flesh-eating animal killing another live animal and eating it. It is not the blood-thirsty, malicious practice of killing for fun. Hawks kill only when hungry, following the natural law of survival. The majority of live food taken by hawks and owls is rodents, and authorities of the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture estimate that each hawk saves a farmer $110 per year by preventing rodent damage. Most owls are similarly valuable.

Free copies of articles in defense of hawks and owls can be obtained for your study and information. You can inform your friends of the facts. Try to influence them to enjoy the hawk's unexcelled beauty and speed of flight. In their mating hawks put on a spectacular show. Plunging from a height of hundreds of feet, the male dashes downward in a dive of dazzling speed, flips into a somersault, then bounds up for another performance. This may be done as often as 16 times in succession!

The buteos, which have broad wings, have special wing equipment which enables them to swing in lazy circles over the fields and meadows with no apparent wing-tip movements. Scientists tell us the open spaces between the outer wing feathers give the hawk instant control over the air currents in maneuvers, enabling it to use the slightest air currents to gain a speed of up to 80 miles an hour, without moving the wings.

Hawks also have the keenest sight of any of the birds, with at least eight times the vision of a human. A person with such vision could read news headlines at a distance of one-fourth mile.

Hawks seem to have near-human qualities of love, anger and playfulness which have made them favorites of observant bird-watchers. Why not advertise these qualities of these lovely creatures?

The states of Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Maine, Connecticut, Ohio, Florida, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and

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Songs and Sounds of Birds *

Adelene M. Siljenberg

ON THE midwest prairies of South Dakota from the first day of March, when attentive ears hear the low lament of the mourning dove, until a late day in September, when a house wren scolds if he is disturbed in a brush pile by the garden, the birds of the yard, neighborhood, and town mingle with the human inhabitants as if they had been sent written invitations to return from the southland for a summer-long visit. And, whether they are observed or passed unnoticed by the human population, they go about their activities of mating, nesting, caring for their young, defending their persons and territories, singing, and uttering sounds of warning or distress as if their lives depended upon their efforts as, indeed, is true. Without question, keeping themselves alive and flight-strong and their young ones' growing appetites satisfied, demands assiduous care all day long.

Communicating their needs and emotions by sounds and songs is as necessary to birds as communication by language is to people. They are equipped to do this by the syrinx or lower larynx, the voice-organ of birds. This organ is elaborately developed in the more melodious of the Passeres group, making possible kinds of notes of a quality to delight the ears of those sensitive to their refrains.

Not all members of the group Passeres play pleasingly on their throat pipes. The Bronzed Grackle clucks noisily with a continual "tsir, tsir" sound that is tiresomely repetitious, and his endeavors to produce a more musical note often end in a squeak. In contrast the Mimidae family of perching birds utter wide range of melodious sounds, beginning their concert performances in the spring and continuing, although less frequently, into the fall season. The Brown Thrasher and the Catbirds seemed to have arranged a cooperative time schedule so that when one member of the species is occupied nesting or resting, the other takes up the joyful burden of song.

As surely as the first week of May arrives, or even the last week of April, the Brown Thrasher announces his return with a jubilant lay, commonly from the high, bare branch of a tall mulberry, walnut, or elm tree. This slender, long-tailed songster opens his bill to at least an inch at its outer extremity, and a sequence of hundreds of notes tumbles out, deliberately phrased and spaced. His generous outpouring of melody is of a bold, definite nature, a dawn-to-darkness dedication. Warbled phrases in pairs, trilled notes in triplets, and whistles in four, gush from a visibly throbbing, tireless syrinx, the pattern of harmony marred sometimes, however, by chirps and hisses.

This serenade may last several minutes and, at its close, this bird of rich, brown color drops in a falling attitude from his prominent perch, as if the release of song had left him without buoyance. He alternates his song with a call, a full, rich "chup, chup."

The listener is challenged by the Mimadae to decide which is the superior singer, the Brown Thrasher or the Catbird. The following quotations from

my notes give my impressions:

April 24, 1947. A Catbird on a high cottonwood branch sang an impromptu concert of trills and tremelos, expressing his joy in this year's unfolding. May 12. The Catbird's song resembles the Robin's warble at times but his mewing as he glides over the flower bed convinces the observer he is rightfully named.

June 24, 1948. After listening to the Catbird's song day after day, I think that he is the most versatile utterer of sounds of the yard and neighborhood birds. In running fashion, he can represent with his syrinx, sounds as varied as the different instruments in a symphony orchestra: bubbling, cawing, twanging, whistling notes intermingled with melodious strains. Once a noise issued from his throat which sounded like a small child practicing a new yodel, but the odd call came from the Catbird's voice box. It was jabber talk.

May 22, 1952. Combining the planting of zinnia seeds with the carolling of a catbird on a warm misting morning is as pleasurable in practice as it sounds in words. June. The Catbird sang daily during this month. July 6. After the morning's sultry downpour he trilled sweetly, punctuating the calm but lowering the atmosphere of the Sabbath. His mewings mingled with the giant firecracker thunderings overhead. Sang after eight-thirty p. m.

August 13, 1953. The Catbird sings from telephone wires, walnut trees, evergreen hedges, plum brush and lilac bush. I heard him sing continuously for a half hour, between 7:45 and 8:15, June 20, 1952, on an ideal summer evening.

May 5, 1954. The Brown Thrasher's imitations are not as obvious as those of the Catbird.

May 16. The Catbird sings some notes, utters others, and runs them together in a chattering, tumbling manner. Some notes buzz, some trill, some are squeezed out, others chirp, rattle, warble, and at times, defy description. Others grate, even sound like a barnyard chicken.

While the Brown Thrasher may be heard daily in May and often June, he sings infrequently in July and August. The Catbird can be heard at intervals during the latter part of summer more often than the Brown Thrasher. As late as September 18, he may be heard mewing in the yard, under the hedge, or near the water pan, and his mewing is, at times, more expressive than at others, in a bubbling, boiling style, loud and insistant.

Both of these interesting mimics are excellent singers, but they differ in spirit and technique of performance. The Brown Thrasher is a studied, conscious songster, more like a musical leader, and one of extensive versatility. The spontaneous singing of the catbird may be said to appeal more to the heart than to the mind.

While the music of the birds may inspire emotional reactions of joy, sadness, or plaintiveness in the listener, these sentiments are not expressions of the birds' feelings. But it is acceptable to say that birds express sounds to call their mates and their young, and to show alarm. And why birds sing shall be left for listeners of bird songs to decide, if they wish to reflect upon as well as enjoy nature's gift of song from her creatures of the air.—**Vermillion**.

* From Museum News, W. H. Over Museum, State University of South Dakota, Vermillion, with permission of publisher and author.

Least Tern

As a Wanderer in the Upper Missouri River Valley

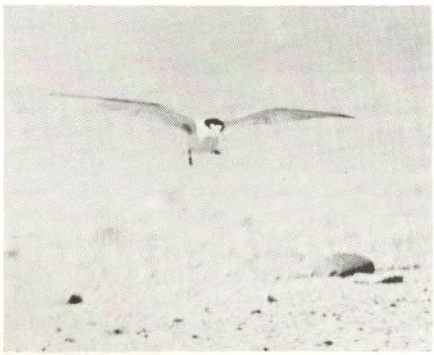
Wm. Youngworth

FOR many years I have been interested in the migration and nesting of the interior Least Tern in the Upper Missouri River Valley and while I must admit that for too many years I just put down the arrival and departure dates I do have other dates of occurrence far from their nesting sites and it is of these that I now write.

The Least Tern has been known from the Missouri Valley for more than one hundred years and one of the early records was that of Lieut. Warren on July 2, 1857, from the Yellowstone River near Fort Union. This record has been given for Montana, but could well be a joint record with North Dakota, for the Yellowstone River crosses into what is now North Dakota before emptying into the Missouri River. On this same expedition Lieut. Warren also collected Least Terns on both the Platte and the Loup Rivers in what is now the state of Nebraska.

Many readers will no doubt agree with me that too often bird names are arbitrarily changed by those in the seat of authority and often the names in the original were much more descriptive and intriguing. Such is the case with the Least Tern, which Dr. Elliott Coues used to call by the delightful name of Silver Ternlet.

This graceful little tern was apparently much more common in the early days, as scattered colonies nested on lakes in northern Iowa and all along the Mississippi River to Minnesota. Today the main nesting ground is along the Missouri River to mid-South Dakota and out along the tributary rivers through Kansas and Nebraska. One of the best nesting rivers is the Platte and it is on this river near Lexington, Nebraska, that Dr. Ray S. Wycoff has been studying the nesting areas of the Least Tern for the last seventeen years. He kindly granted me permission to use one of his fine photographs of the valiant little mother tern protecting her young, with the camera lens only two feet away. (See Cover)



Coming in For a Landing

Photo by R. S. Wycoff. Halftone a gift of Wm. Youngworth.

Another reason that I wanted to get more publicity on the Least Tern in this area was to bring to bird students' attention, a probably little known recent work on the Least Tern, titled The Least Tern in the Mississippi Valley, by John William Hardy, 1957, Publications of the Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. This fine paper brings in much of South Dakota's known investigations on

the Least Tern and especially the fine work by Stephen S. Visher in the Vermillion area.

In the past thirty years I have often found Least Terns feeding far from the Missouri River and any known nesting areas and I usually concluded that they were merely unmated birds, but when I read Dr. Wycoff's informative article on the breeding of the Least Tern in the Nebraska Bird Review for July 1960, I decided that, maybe, there was another reason for my wandering terns. Dr. Wycoff points out that on certain years, after the nests were flooded out, the terns produced no young and I assume probably scattered all over to feed.

The first time was in 1928 while fishing at Lake Andes, South Dakota, that I noticed several Least Terns which had wandered over from the then un-dammed Missouri River. From then on I kept watch and noticed that I could nearly always find them wandering up the Big Sioux River with the farthest north being in the vicinity of Canton, South Dakota.

In western Iowa the largest river flowing into the Missouri River is the Little Sioux River and its tributary the West Fork. Large drainage ditches enter these rivers at various points and it is not uncommon to find a Least Tern beating his way up a ditch with two or three feet of water and just a few feet wide. Locations of many of my records would show that these terns are as much as seventy-five miles from the mouth of the river, but might be only one half that distance from the Missouri River if they flew directly overland from their feeding areas.

One record of the Least Tern which I feel has been long over-looked by many authorities is one made by the late Elmer T. Judd in eastern North Dakota. I visited Mr. Judd on two occasions and found him to be a fine field man and a wonderful host. In his paper on the Birds of the Big Coulee et al, 1917, he gives a record of the Least Tern from the Devils and Stump Lakes area. Knowing his ability in the field and now knowing that the Least Tern is quite a wanderer, this writer has no doubt at all that a Least Tern beat his way up the valley of the James River in eastern South Dakota and visited the Devils Lake area where Mr. Judd found it.

To summarize then, we should say that this dainty little tern with his silvery plumage and black cap and white brow is a regular summer resident in southeastern South Dakota, but should be looked for as a breeding bird along the western rivers such as the White and the Cheyenne. It should also be looked for along the main stem of the Missouri River north from Fort Randall Dam, where it has probably been missed as a breeding bird. It should also be looked for as wanderer all over the state of South Dakota and the finding of it in some area where it is now unknown will be a red letter day in the life of some really interested observer.

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The Life Of Our Martins

J. W. Johnson

CHAPTER IV
1959
ARRIVAL — NEST BUILDING

A year of increasing drought; a not particularly mild or early spring. But our martins were earlier than usual. The first appeared April 4, a week before I would really look for them.

Edward Mann, who has a martin colony at his cabin on Lake Byron, had an arrival on April 2, his earliest in the 8 years the house has been used.

Since our colony residence goes back only to 1956, the early date means little here. But I was reminded of data given me by Mr. Wm. Youngworth of Sioux City, Ia., in a letter dated April 7, 1958. Probably we can assume at least a day's difference in arrival time due to the difference in latitude of the two points.

Youngworth's records go back to 1926 and his earliest arrival, April 3, 1948, would be comparable with mine on that basis. A record on another colony was March 29, and April 1, 1959—not too much variation when we remember latitude difference.

For ease of reference and to save space, details of arrival and early activity is tabulated below. As in past years, apartments of the martin house are numbered 1 to 9 from left top to right bottom—3 rows of 3—and east or west side is designated by E. or W.

Date	Hour	Color Purple	Color Gray	REMARKS
April				
4	6:15 a.m.	1		
6	5:45 a.m.	1		In 1 E. Returned again 6:25 p. m.
7	6:15 a.m.	1		In 1 E. Bird awake when first seen.
8	6:15 a.m.	1		In 1 E. Left at 7:20 a. m.
	8:25 a.m.	2		Assumed 1 new arrival
	1.00 p.m.	2	1	Possibly 4 birds here now.
9		2	1	1 purple and the gray much together.
10	7:30 a.m.	2	1	1 purple and the gray much together.
11		2	1	Inch of snow last night. Temp. 31.
12		2	1	
13		2	1	
14	Late p.m.	1		Only 1 bird seen today.
15	6:35 a.m.	1	1	Paired behavior
16	8:00 a.m.	2	2	One of the grays very dark.
	(No further observations until April 30, after an absence of 13 days)			
30	11:00 a.m.	5	4	Present on our return this date.
May				
1	p.m.	4	4	Acting as if paired, sitting close on wires, visiting apartments together, etc.
1			3 or 4	New arrivals appeared in late p. m. with much chatter (as of greeting).
6	Various	4	7	
15				Purple male found sick or starved on ground—assumed lack of food because of cold. Later disappeared—to be found dead May 20.

All during the period May 1 to May 19, 8 martins were present regularly—4 of them in full purple. They acted as pairs, each preempting an apartment and going and coming as though it were home. The light colored ones often sat in these apartments looking out for long periods with an air of ownership. Sometimes their place would be taken by a male for shorter intervals.

Only one apartment on the east side, facing our windows, was used regularly. Observation of the west side was much less complete.

In the east apartment both birds of the pair were to be seen early in the mornings, sometimes lying flat on the floor so that no detail could be made out, even with 7x50 binocular, except that a dark object, like a bird, was there. More than once I was convinced that one of them had died of cold and hunger during the night and that I was seeing a dead bird.

A little later one of them would wake, move to the door, and stand for a few minutes before emerging. The second of the pair would follow soon after.

For a few days after the apparent arrival of the new flock late in the afternoon of May 1, up to 11 birds could be seen at times. Later only the 4 pairs (?) were seen until the morning of May 20.

The three pairs that took over on the west side of the house, so far as I was able to observe, behaved in all ways like the pair on the east.

The cool weather and regular light frost during the period must have made living hard for them.

On May 15 a purple male was found on the ground, unable to fly and suffering from diarrhea. He was not seen again but his death was assumed. Periodic counts after that date never showed more than 7 birds until the morning of May 20.

On May 19, martins of both sexes were carrying nesting material to 1 E. and 9 W. A total of 7 birds was about.

At 6:00 a. m. May 20 a light rain started. At 6:15 confusion about the house led me to notice birds present in numbers and they were almost all about the east side, only occasionally lighting on the west.

Counts ran up to 11 maximum and a check of colors—the only time I could be sure of all (9) present at the moment showed only one purple among them. In fact, I was never sure of more than one purple bird at any time during the hour I was able to watch.

By the excitement, the occasional struggles for apartments, the small number of purple males and the large number of light-colored birds, the fact that they concentrated on the east side, all led to the conclusion that most of the flock of 11 were new arrivals.

Either the original 7 or 8 were away or keeping inside the west apartments. A drizzle of rain, getting stronger as time went on, was falling during the whole period.

The bird found sick May 15 was assumed to be the one found dead in the flicker box May 20. It must have found strength to climb the hackberry tree the 12 feet or so to the box and crawl in the hole, where it died.

On May 22, 5 purple and 12 gray birds were seen, of which 10 seemed paired. This is the greatest number of birds seen in the vicinity of the house. For obvious reasons this method of counting can give only the minimum number in

residence and has little necessary relation to the actual total.

In this case there were at least six pairs here because six nests were built, six clutches of eggs laid, hatched, the birds from six nests were observed in the apartments, banded, and left the nests in due course.

GENERAL

Among the factors unsolved in the study of Purple Martins, these stand out: identification of individuals and sparrow competition, with the possible effect on behavior of measures taken to solve the first two.

In the past seasons I have felt that I had fallen between all possible pairs of stools—even made it my own behavior pattern. While I took account of martin protests at my intrustion in removing sparrow nests, the sparrows increased their aggression to drive the martins from apartments in which they already seemed to be laying—which my lack of inspection left me unable to prove.

Identification of individual martins by color pattern may be possible hut it will take some one with a better memory and a sharper eye than mine.

In the spring of 1958, a friend, Carl Metzgar, came to tell me of his success in trapping sparrows from the martin house with rat traps—the spring type with wood base.

In the few days that remained before our martins returned I was able to catch a number of sparrows with these traps on the platforms—enough to show their lack of appreciation of the mechanism.

When the first martin appeared early, his arrival put a quick end to the trapping. But, sharp on the departure of the last martins in August, the traps went back on the platforms of the martin house. Trapping success was considerable for a couple of months. About 50 sparrows were taken—killed instantly by the heavy spring of the traps. Three starlings were also trapped, of which two were dispatched and the third escaped. Since other birds in this area take no interest in a martin house they are not likely to be caught.

During the winter the traps were kept set and an occasional sparrow was caught, about twenty total. When spring came the upsurge of interest in nesting brought additional sparrows to the traps. The martins' unusually early arrival, on April 4, stopped the trapping before sparrow numbers had been reduced as much as I had hoped.

Sparrow competition was still strong while the martins were building. While tearing out sparrow nests, I found the martins soon ceased to protest my close approach. I accordingly ventured to make some inspection of their nests while I was about the house. Details of the result will follow.

During the summer I learned by close study that, after a sparrow has definitely taken over an apartment and is building in it, the martins seldow interfere. When they do act it is against the sparrow and not against the nest. And they avoid entering the area before the sparrow-infested apartment.

This gave me the idea of trapping a nest building sparrow right out of the midst of the busy martin colony—without harm to the martins. And it worked perfectly. Often the sparrow was caught within less than five minutes after setting the trap. For this work special care was taken to set the trap on a hair-trigger with the sliding parts oiled so it would throw at the slightest touch. While the re-

maining sparrow of either sex quickly acquired a new mate and the nest went on, so did my trapping and nest destruction.

The result of the season's work was something like a couple of dozen sparrows trapped and not one sparrow fledged in the martin house.

As soon as the martins were gone traps were again set on every platform. But the harvest was getting low. Sparrows were few and had given up the habit of sleeping in the martin house. Yet there were occasional days when things changed. For example, one sunny morning I caught five sparrows in four traps in just a few minutes—two killed together in one trap.

Referring again to the inspection of the martin nests, I found one martin habit made for uncertain results: The scattering of pieces of green leaves over the nest and eggs. I dared not disturb the arrangement by moving the leaf fragments; they often covered the nest so thoroughly it was impossible to be certain of the number of eggs or even the number of young birds. For that reason the observed numbers of eggs are open to question.

Any useful purpose to be served by these green leaves is obscure. It might be they provide moisture needed by the eggs.

EGGS — INCUBATION — FLEDGING

The first real inspection of martin nests was made June 12. Eggs were found in apartments as tabulated below. Pieces of green leaves, scattered about over nest and eggs, often left some doubt as to actual numbers. To distinguish from eggs, young birds are indicated by enclosing their number in ():

Date	East Side Apartment Number			West Side Apartment Number		
	1	4	7	1	7	9
June						
12 eggs	4	1	3	1		3
19	6	3	3	5	3	3
23				Probable hatching date		(3) (Really 4)
24	(4) Probable hatching date					
27	(4) Estimated 3 days old			5	3	(3) Really 4
July						
1				(5)*	1(2)**	(4)
				*Tiny - newly hatched		
				**Clearly bigger than in 1W above		
2	(4)	3	(1)2(1 pipped)			
4	(5)	2	(2)2	(3)	1(2)	(4)
5						4 Banded 1 Too small
7	(5)	(2)	(4)			
7	5 Banded					
11		(2) 1	(4)1	(4)	(2)	
12				4 Banded	2 Banded	Small bird found dead and removed
18		1 Banded 2 Banded				
23					All out 6:30 p.m.	
24	All out at 4:30 p.m.					All out at 6:30 p.m.

30			All out at 5:00 p.m.			
				All out		
Aug. 3		Lone bird out 6:30-7:15 a.m.				

RESUME

Hatched	6-24	7-6	7-2*	7-1	6-28	6-23
*Only hatch actually observed. Others estimated.						
Age (days) at:						
Banding	14	12	16	11	14	12
Number banded	5	1	2	4	2	4
Leaving Nest	30	28	28	29	25	31
Left Nest	7-24	8-3*	7-30	7-30	7-23	7-24

* Left nest 6:30-7:15 a. m. Rest at unknown hours during the day.

Bands were applied to the young martins by George Jonkel of Huron, as detailed below:

Date			Leg	Apartment	Band Number
July	5	1959	left	9 West	552-07-110
July	5	1959	left	9 West	552-07-111
July	5	1959	left	9 West	552-07-112
July	5	1959	left	9 West	552-07-114
July	7	1959	right	1 East	552-07-113
July	7	1959	right	1 East	552-07-115
July	7	1959	right	1 East	552-07-116
July	7	1959	right	1 East	552-07-117
July	7	1959	right	1 East	552-07-118
July	12	1959	left	7 West	552-07-119
July	12	1959	left	7 West	*552-07-120
July	12	1959	left	1 West	552-07-121
July	12	1959	left	1 West	552-07-122
July	12	1959	left	1 West	552-07-123
July	12	1959	left	1 West	552-07-124
July	18	1959	right	4 East	552-07-126
July	18	1959	right	7 East	552-07-127
July	18	1959	right	7 East	552-07-128

TOTAL BIRDS BANDED — 18

* This bird found dead "a few days before" July 5, 1960—Letter from W. L. Buker, Box 734, Ellendale, N. Dak.

AFTERWARD

On the morning of August 1, 1959, a martin was found dead under the wires, as though fallen from them. It was stiff and ants had found it, though it could not have been dead longer than from the evening before. It was gray but wore no band. It was assumed to be an adult female of the colony.

On August 8, 15 martins were present (5 purple) and no bands visible after study with the glasses. More than the 10-12 remaining of the adults of the colony but less than the maximum seen on other occasions before the young were out.

Also on August 8 came my first sight of a banded martin. It was with 7 others—all adults without bands (2 purple)—around the house at 8 a. m. The band

was on the left leg and I saw it several times clearly and caught the glint of sunlight on it several other times. This bird, a gray with a gray collar, sat on top of the house with less activity than the others who were much on the move. The band on the left leg indicated the west side of the house. The last birds banded there were 4 from 1 W and 2 from 7 W on July 12. Why no other banded birds and few adults were seen about the house compared to other seasons is a question I have no answer for.

Of spectacular interest was the fact that no young but the one referred to above was seen about the house after the birds had left the nests, and none was seen returning to roost there under the customary close supervision of old birds.

This year the rule was: When they were once out they were gone and not seen again.

COMMUNITY FLOCK — DEPARTURE

The community roost was checked for martins during July and August with results as follows:

July 11	8:15 p.m.	7 martins flying. None on wires at any time.
July 14	8:15 p.m.	4 martins flying. None on wires at any time.
July 24	8:15 p.m.	15 martins flying; seen several times between 8:00 and 8:25 — probably different flocks going to roost in the trees.
July 25	8:00 p.m.	The early season perch — the wires by the grain bins — in use for the first time this season. About 36 birds present but some coming and going.
Aug. 2	8:20 p.m.	For the first time this season about 40 martins are using the wires over the road. At the same time 36 on the wires by the grain bins.
Aug. 14	8:00 p.m.	About 75 martins estimated in the air.
Aug. 15	8:00 p.m.	Few martins on wires but many in the air, probably 75, which gradually disappeared into the trees (?).
Aug. 16	8:00 p.m.	About 75 martins in the air at one time. No more than 3 seen at the house during this period and then rarely.
Aug. 19	8:00 p.m.	No martins on the wires. No more than a dozen were in the air at any one time.
Aug. 20	8:00	Few martins about. A few sailed over the trees. A dozen or so appeared on the wires (where 300 had been in 1956) and a little later about 25 appeared over the trees — a total of 35 seen at one time.
Aug. 21		No martins seen at the house during the last several days. Only a dozen were flying at one time near the roost.
Aug. 23		Only 6 martins sailing about over the trees. None on the wires.
Aug. 24		No more than 4 martins seen at one time.
Aug. 26		No martins at all seen at the roost.

DISCUSSION

Consideration of the above data in the light of patterns of past years, indicates no simple conclusion is justified. Behavior differs so markedly from one year to another it is hard to picture these birds as being creatures bound by tradition.

Obviously their return next spring will be watched with interest—particularly for bands.—**Huron, S. D.**

Sandhill Crane Crouched in Concealing Position During Incubation
—Courtesy Wilson Bulletin

Heath Hen

—Courtesy Wilson Bulletin

Grebes Over the Years

Alfred Peterson

Red-necked Grebe

1953—May 21, 1; 5-10, 1 Rush Lake; 5-14 and 5-21, 3 at Lake Preston; 5-23, 3 near Grenville; 5-31, 2 Rush Lake; 8-5, several old and young on Lake Preston, 1 old, quite tame.

1954—April 13, 2 on Hildebrand Lake near Refuge headquarters, 5-5, 2 at the same place; 5-16, 1 Rush Lake; 5-24, 2 Rush Lake; 7-25, 1.

1955—April 30, 1 Rush Lake; 5-8, 1 Rush Lake and 2 on Waubay Refuge.

1956—May 6, 3 Rush Lake and 2 pairs near Waubay Refuge headquarters; 5-19, 1 near Thomas; 5-27, again the 2 pairs on Waubay Refuge.

1957—May 5, 1 Rush Lake.

1958—Not seen.

1959—May 5, 1 Hildebrand Lake, and Manager Carlsen said there were several pairs on Spring Lake; 5-8, 1 Rush Lake, 1 near Refuge and 2 pairs on Spring Lake; 5-26, heard on Refuge.

1960—April 29, 2 Rush Lake and 3 So. Waubay Lake; 5-2, 1 near Thomas; 5-22, heard at Spring Lake.

A regular summer resident. In 1952 a pair chose a small muskrat house on Fox Lake for their nest location, and succeeded in raising one young. The nest was open to the gaze of any man or crow that might pass along. The Red-necked Grebe nests commonly enough in the Waubay region and further north.

Horned Grebe

1953—April 28, 10 on Clear Lake; 5-3, 1 Rush Lake and 1 Bitter Lake; 5-5, 5 on Clear Lake; 5-10, 1 Rush Lake.

1954—Not seen.

1955—April 21, 1 on Clear Lake.

1956—April 20, 1 on Lake Oliver; 4-22, 2 Rush Lake; 5-6, all of 20 on an old Lake Kampeska sand pit, a number on Rush Lake and near Troy; 5-11, 1 on Lake Cochrane.

1957—April 22, 1 Lake Mary and 10 on Clear Lake; 4-26, 2 Clear Lake; 4-28, 4 Clear Lake; 5-4, 2 six miles north of Kruse station on Hi-way 212.

1958—April 29, 4 or 5 on Clear Lake; 4-30, dozen or so Clear Lake; 5-1, 12 seen on trip toward Nassau, Minn.

1959—April 15, 2 on Round Lake northeast of Goodwin; 4-16, 3 on Clear Lake; 4-18, 1; 4-23, 2; 4-29, 3 near Thomas.

1960—April 25, 2 Clear Lake; 4-29, 1 or 2 seen; 5-4, 1 Clear Lake; 5-6, 2; 5-7, 12 Clear Lake; 5-11, 1 Hayti; 5-22, 1 Rush Lake; 5-26, 1 west of Bristol.

I have not had any reason to think that the Horned Grebe nests in this region. Clear Lake attracts it in spring migration for a time. 20 or more, scattered on deep water in an old sandpit at Lake Kampeska, May 6, 1956, comprise my highest count of this species.

Eared Grebe

1953—May 14, 5 at Lake Preston; 7-25, 5 or 6 broods moving about on a long narrow pond nine miles south of Butler; 8-5, 1 at Lake Preston.

1954—April 22, 1 Clear Lake; 4-28, 1 Fox Lake; 5-5, 1 Rush Lake; 5-9, 2 Rush Lake and 2 near Thomas; 5-12, 1 at Astoria.

1955—None recorded.

1956—5-6, 2 Rush Lake; 5-14, 8 on Salt

Lake; 5-17, 7 near Thomas; 5-23, 1 Thomas; 5-26, 1 at Horseshoe Lake; 5-29, 1 Salt Lake; 8-18, 1 Rush Lake.

1957—April 20, 1 Clear Lake; 4-21, 3 Clear Lake; 4-24, 1 near Thomas; 4-25, 1 Lake Oliver.

1958—None recorded.

1959—April 27, 6 on Lake Alice; 4-29, 1 Thomas; 5-7, 5 Lake Alice; 5-8, 2 Rush Lake.

1960—May 14, 8 on Rush Lake; 5-22 and 5-26, the same; 6-6, 1 Clear Lake; 6-12, 1 Clear Lake.

Nesting in colonies, as it does, the Eared Grebe has scant mention in my notes for the years 1953 to 1960. A boat would be necessary in a search for their nests, and I have no boat. But, on July 25, 1953, five or six broods of young, attended closely by the elders, fed out in the open near shore of a long narrow pond, nine miles southwest of Butler, S. D. May 14, 1953, while watching from my car at the Lake Preston bridge, I saw 5 Eared Grebes, also 3 Red-necked and 2 Westerns. Again on Aug. 5 at the same place I saw 1 Eared, several Red-necked and a number of Western Grebes. It seems probable that they had nested there. May 14 to May 26, 8 Eared Grebes were present on Rush Lake at the west end of grade, replacing the Westerns at that point.

Western Grebe

1953—May 4, more than a dozen at Oakwood Lake; 5-10, 10 or 12 on Rush Lake; 5-14, many at Oakwood Lake and 2 Lake Preston; 5-17, a number on Rush Lake; 5-21, many Oakwood Lake and some Lake Preston; 5-23, 2 at Bitter Lake; 7-13, many old and young Rush Lake; 7-20, about 100 at Oakwood Lake. Many other dates; 10-17, 1 on Rush Lake.

1954—April 25, 4 pairs Oakwood Lake; 5-9, 2 Rush Lake and heard at Grenville; 5-10, 1 Fox Lake; 5-13, 2 Lake Alice; 5-24, 7 seen Rush Lake; 7-25, many on Rush Lake and several elsewhere; 7-29, many Oakwood Lake; 8-8, very many Rush Lake; 9-5, not so many; 9-19, 2 Rush Lake.

1955—April 30, 5 Rush Lake; 5-8, 2 Rush Lake; 5-9, few on Lake Whitewood; 5-15, several Rush Lake—also 5-22 and 6-2.

1956—May 6, 12 Rush Lake; 5-10, 1 Dry Lake at Lake Poinsett; 5-20, numerous near Thomas and on Rush Lake; 5-23, the same at Thomas; 5-26, 2 Horseshoe Lake; 5-27, regular on Rush Lake; 8-5 and 9-17, many Rush Lake.

1957—May 5, 12 seen Rush Lake; 5-8, 3 Clear Lake; 9-6, few west end Lake Whitewood; 9-7, many on Rush Lake.

1958—May 5, 2 seen Rush Lake; 5-23 and 6-22, abundant on Rush Lake and some on Waubay Lake; 8-15, plentiful Rush Lake and few elsewhere.

1959—April 29, about 25 near Thomas; 5-5, a number Rush Lake, and on 5-8 many there. Likewise 5-13, 5-19 and 5-26.

1960—May 12, 3 on Lake Cochrane; 5-14, 1 on Clear Lake; 5-15, surprisingly, none seen on Rush Lake; 5-22, only 2 seen Rush Lake; 6-3, 1 on Clear Lake; 6-6, 3 Clear Lake; 6-11, 3; 6-12, 10; 6-13, 6; 6-15, 12; 6-16, 12; 6-17, 12; 6-18, 12; 6-19, 7; 6-20, 6-24 and 6-26, several; 6-27, 7; 6-28, 8; 6-29, 10; 7-2, 1 only; 7-4, 2; 7-5, 5; 7-7, 3; 7-10, 3; 7-11, 7; 7-12, 2; 7-14 and 7-18, 1. All of these unnamed were from Clear Lake.

Oakwood Lakes in 1953 harbored many Western Grebes, no doubt nesting there, and numbering about 100 in late

(Continued on Page 32)

Grebes

(Continued from Page 81)

July. Year after year this Grebe has been in good display on Rush Lake along the mile-long grade of Highway 12. Not so in 1960, however, for only 2 were seen a time or two. 8 Eared Grebes replaced them near the western shore of the lake. It came as a surprise to find them represented on Clear Lake by a few that gave no evidence of nesting anywhere nearby.

Pied-billed Grebe

1953—April 4, 2 at Clear Lake; 4-5 1 Clear Lake; 4-9, 2 Clear Lake. A very common summer resident, but it does not maintain itself in colonies, as is the habit of the Eared and the Western.

1954—April 16, 1; 4-17, 1; 4-18, fairly common.

1955—April 5, 4 Clear Lake; 4-7, 4 Clear Lake.

1956—April 19, 1; 4-26, 1; 5-6, few; 5-29, 1 heard at Salt Lake. Many seen during September and 11-9, 2 at Fox Lake.

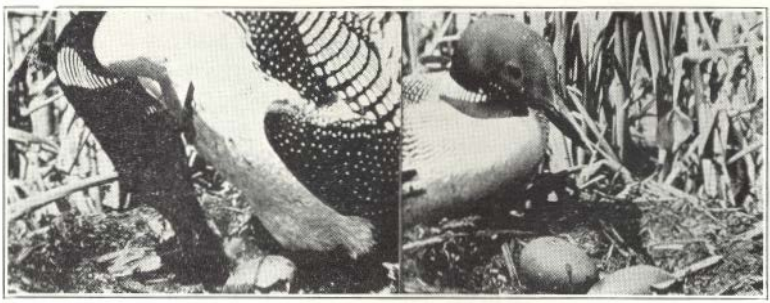
1957—April 21, 2 near Clear Lake; 4-22, 2 Lake Mary; 4-25, several seen; 10-11 ,1.

1958—April 7, 1 Clear Lake; 4-9, 2 Clear Lake; 4-10, 1 Rush Lake; 8-15 and 8-21, plentiful; 9-12, few seen; 11-12,, 1 at Lake Alice.

1959—April 7, 1; 4-15, 1; 4-16, 8 Clear Lake; 4-28, several; 10-5, dozen on Clear Lake; 10-15, the same.

1960—April 12, 2; 4-17, 2; 4-20, 1; 4-25, 2 Fox Lake.

Better known as Hell-diver this Grebe is tucked away in all fair-sized potholes or sloughs. It is anti-social and drives intruders of its own kind from its premises with great vigor, on the surface and below.—**Brandt**.



Common Loon

—Courtesy Wilson Bulletin

Birds' Nests of South Dakota

L. J. Moriarty

A.O.U #423 CHIMNEY SWIFT
(Chaetura Pelagica)

I AM certain that this bird nests plentifully in South Dakota, but, until September 1, 1960, I had only seen pictures of the nests. Before settlement of the country they nested in hollow trees, caves, and holes in cliffs, but with the coming of the white man, they have greatly increased, due to the chimney making an ideal nesting site.

On September first I received a letter from Miss Louise Flett of Milbank, a member of S. D. O. U., stating that she had a Chimney Swift's nest with 4 eggs taken on July 4th, 1891 by her father, which she had never felt like throwing away. Evidently he had more interest in ornithology than in fireworks.

We drove up at once and she gave us the nest, along with the eggs of 34 other species, which were unmarked and collected between 1891 and 1897 by her father, Dr. Charles Flett who taught school for some years before studying medicine in Wisconsin. He practiced in Milbank from 1910 until 1948. As with many early medical men, Dr. Flett had a great interest in birds. To him and his daughter I feel indebted for a rare specimen which should be preserved.

The nest could have been taken right out of Roberts "Birds of Minnesota." It is made of small twigs, a little smaller than a kitchen match, which are selected by the bird and snapped off in a diving flight such as that of a hawk, swooping upon its prey.

These are covered with a glue, produced by the bird, so they look varnished. They are glued to the inside of the chimney one at a time to make a half saucer measuring 4½ inches across the base, against the wall and 2¼ inches from the wall to the outer edge. The sticks are arranged much as one lays one log upon another to build a cabin, making the nest essentially one twig, or two at most, thick, the structure being so thin it can be seen thru. My wife says it was built like a Missouri rail fence.

From the bottom of the cup to the top of the rim, the nest is just ¾ of an inch. The nest contains 4 pure white eggs laid directly on the twigs with no lining except a couple of leaves glued to its bottom. The eggs measure .75" x.50" are very elongated ovate matching well the cigar shape of the bird's body.

Dr. Brewer writes: "The nest of the Chimney Swift is one of the most remarkable structures of the kind to be found among the handiwork of even this interesting family, nearly all of whom are far from being undistinguished for their architectural accomplishments. It is composed of small twigs, of nearly uniform size, which are interwoven into a neat semi-circular basket." I do not believe a better descriptive sentence could be written.

To continue Dr. Brewer: "In selecting the twigs with which to construct the nest, the swift seems to prefer to break from the tree such as are best adapted to its wants, rather than to gather those already scattered upon the ground. This is done with great skill.

The Chimney Swifts have specialized and adroitness while on the wing.

(Continued on Page 90)

Our Juniors

Carrie Pierce

Dear Juniors:

The paper below wasn't written for this page; but it was so interesting and well written I felt it should be directed to you. If you like it maybe we can persuade Mrs. Pierce to do others.—The Editor.

From my daily log of events, as seen in my garden, October 21 to November 24, 1960.

October 21 was ironing day—a fine occupation to share with bird watching. The garden sprinkler spread a small carpet of attractive moisture. When a lovely Evening Grosbeak appeared under the apple tree and later in the bird bath, I felt that the day was going to be something special.

Chickadees, busy in the lilac bushes, soon found the feeder with its sunflower seed spread. A Downy Woodpecker came to the suet on the big elm tree. Juncos flashed their white tail feathers in the sun. Robins everywhere, some of them with bands, undoubtedly placed there by the Johnson-Jonkel bird banding crew. White-throated Sparrows and a couple of Harris' came now and then all day to scratch among the leaves or splash themselves in the bird bath.

October 24. The first Red-breasted Nuthatch at our feeder since the fall of 1957 came often for the sunflower seed. A Myrtle Warbler flashed its yellow markings in and out of the low shrubs. A Goldfinch appeared in his buffy fall dress and a Tree Sparrow, wearing a black stickpin on his breast and a rusty cap on his head.

October 26. A red-letter day. My first Fox Sparrow was vigorously scratching among the leaves at the base of a small Juniper. I called the Ketelle's, who came right over. Strangely, the Fox Sparrow soon came back so they too could see it. Heavy lines of brown on the breast, reddish coloring on the wings and long tail, all made this hard worker a Fox Sparrow. I saw it three times that day and then no more, though I have watched for it ever since. It must have moved on south on migration.

A Brown Creeper and two Pine Siskins were added to the group already seen. Six Evening Grosbeaks were now coming to the garden each day and more Harris' Sparrows were about. On this day a large flock of Robins appeared, the last day when twelve or more were present at one time.

October 28. Evening Grosbeak increased to nine. I was still seeing large numbers of Harris' Sparrows and White-throated Sparrows, also the one Red-breasted Nuthatch and one Myrtle Warbler.

October 29. The first Cardinal seen in our garden in the nine years it has been planted. Cardinals have been rare in Huron since the big hail storm of June, 1952.

October 31. A Pine Grosbeak was in the apple tree—with two Evening Grosbeaks. Gray in color, it is larger than the Evening Grosbeaks and has

a long tail; its two white wing bars look narrow. But the most striking point about its color is the brick or rusty red head and rump.

November 4. A second Pine Grosbeak appeared with the first. Its head and rump were more olive colored, leading us to believe that we had an immature male and female. The two birds appeared also on November 5, 6, 7, and again on the 11th.

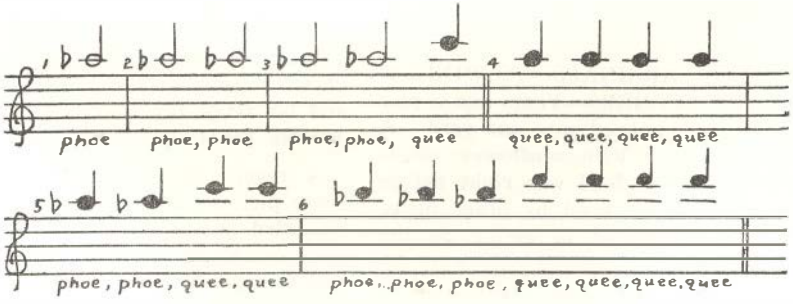
The bird bath is a great attraction. Fruit of the apple tree and highbush cranberries seem to be their favorite food.

November 16. At breakfast my husband said: "Here's a Robin. No, it's too large, but it has a red breast." I dashed to the window in time to see, not one, but five White-winged Crossbills flying into our neighbor's Norway spruce, where there were a few cones. Henry may not always be accurate in his bird names but he has certainly shown me some very special birds in the garden.

November 17. High wind and fine snow brought seven Evening Grosbeaks to the bird bath. About 4:15 the Cardinal came and spent ten minutes under the feeder, gleaning sunflower seed the sparrows had spilled, and taking shelter from the cold wind. I hoped he would find the feeder, with its tray of sunflower seed placed there especially for grosbeaks and cardinals.

November 23. The beautful male Cardinal spent fifteen minutes in the garden. He found squash seed that I had placed on a ground feeder. In general he seemed less shy than on the first trip. The Evening Grosbeaks, usually six in number, came to the bird bath several times. Pine Siskins appear frequently. Other daily visitors are downy woodpeckers, hairy woodpeckers, chickadees, a Flicker, brown creepers, and, sometimes, a Blue Jay. —**Huron.**

Never underestimate a Grackle. On a feeder the hard bread baffled sparrows and even a Blue Jay. They gave up. Along came a Grackle. Without hesitation, he carried the hard bread to the nearby bird bath and dunked it until it was soft enough to eat.—**Carol Breen, Hurley.**



Voice of Harris' Sparrow

—Courtesy Wilson Bulletin

General Notes of Special Interest

NEW MEMBERS—We are happy for the new members—see list elsewhere. If, in the confusion of this office any of them failed to get the four numbers of Bird Notes for 1960, he has but to drop the editor a note advising.

* * * *

BINDING OF BIRD NOTES—L. J. Moriarty advised he has a deal for binding back issues of Bird Notes with a local shop. The binding is the spiral system, of a size that five volumes and the index go nicely into one of them. The cost is $3.00 each and on a strictly while-they-last basis of stock left over from another binding job. L. J. says bring your back numbers to the May Convention. They can be punched and bound while you wait.

* * * *

1961 DUES—Due January 1, 1961. Members can save SDOU postage, as well as wear and tear on our Secretary and Treasurer by making payment now, without waiting for the notice. Address: Dr. L. J. Moriarty, 302 New Midland Bank Bldg., Watertown.

* * * *

RAISING CARDINALS—TO WINDOW HEIGHT FEEDERS—Years ago a pair of Cardinals moved into our yard. A window feeder with sunflower seeds and other bird feed was right before them and being used by other birds. But they persisted in eating on the ground, where prowling cats were always a possible danger. Birds can be exasperatingly dense at times.

An old step ladder gave me an idea: Sunflower seeds were spread on the bottom step of the ladder, which was placed in the middle of the area where they had been eating on the ground. Both Cardinals found these the first day.

The next day the ladder was moved a little way towards the window and the third day the seed was put on the second step. By now the Cardinals were with me. In another couple of days the seed was on top of the ladder, the same height as the window feeder and next to it.

From then on the two birds ate in the glass-covered feeder. They were with us for some two years, generally coming daily during the winter and less often in the summer.—**J. W. Johnson, Huron.**

* * * *

WAYNE TRIMM needs no introduction to most of you. But, for the benefit of the new members, he is the top ranking artist of wildlife subjects whose color spreads are an institution in the New York Conservationist. Encyclopedias and other books able to pay for it contend for his work, fuss because he can't keep up with demand.

Bird Notes, not in that category at all, still has his Lark Buntings on the covers of the first and 40th Numbers and his Gray Jay on Number 43 (December 1959).

A recent note from him included some pictures we will share with you via **Bird Notes** covers in due time, along with the word that he has just been to Alaska. Our prompt questions brought us a little more on that.

Literally a flying trip, it was a sort of postman's holiday after material for illustrations of northern wildlife. Just happened that a hunting party was go-

ing that way at the same time. And when a caribou, carrying a radically outsized set of horns interrupted his photography of some local flora, it just happened that Wayne had nothing but his favorite bow and arrows along.

So he just had to kill the critter.

* * * *

CROSSBILLS AT WATERTOWN—On November 11, 1 spent about an hour birding at the cemetery. A terrific crop of cones cover the spruces this year. I saw 12 White-winged Crossbills working on one spruce, watched them for 20 minutes, until they moved on.

About 50 feet farther on another flock I first thought might be the same ones turned out to be Red Crossbills instead.

About 50 Pine Siskins, 200 juncos, 20 or so Harris' Sparrows, and 8 Bohemian Waxwings were working in the same area.

November 12. Ten White-winged Crossbills drinking in our yard. I have decided this will be another good winter for visitors from the north—or, perhaps, I am just learning to find them.

Where spruces have plenty of cones, stand perfectly still on a near windless day, and listen for falling cones and the sound of crossbills clipping them; also for their characteristic chatter you soon learn to recognize.—**L. J. Moriarty, Watertown.**

* * * *

AT THE 1961 CONVENTION at Watertown Dr. Moriarty will have on display the nest of the Chimney Swift described in the current article. Also he will have the unmarked egg collection given him by Miss Flett of Milbank, hoping for some assistance in identifying them.

COMMON GRACKLES ON COLLEGE CAMPUS—For the second year in succession, Common Grackles nested on the Augustana College campus. Sutton (1928. BIRDS OF PENNSYLVANIA, 103) speaks of their preference for "parks, cemeteries and college campuses." One pair came periously close to education, bringing off a brood at the very doorstep of the Administration Building.

I first noticed the nesting pairs on May 3 when I saw a grackle carrying a stick into a red cedar, one of six trees, three on a side, bordering the walk in front of the Ad Building. I found three nests in three of the trees. Two were completed, one nearly so. One completed nest was close to the entranee of the building where each day at the end of class hours hundreds of students and faculty members rush out in the chatter of hurry to the next class session. Yet here this pair built a nest and brooded eggs. They fed young through the pinfeather stages to fledgling growth and brought at least three young out of the cedar to the bushes on the lawn and then up and away, despite the commotion, academic and nonacademic, of the pedants and professors, Phi Betta Kappas and unabashed D's, entering and departing the building and passing the nest tree. Left alone, birds are not nearly as intolerant of the human species as the human species chooses to believe.

It was in this same cedar that a pair nested last year, although I have little information about their fortunes except that I heard young in the nest and saw adults bring food.

On May 23 I first heard the young giving their softly-uttered hard cries in the nest nearest the building. The incubation period is about 14 days

(1958. Gross in Bent, LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN BLACKBIRDS . . . 401). This means that I probably noticed the birds about the time the last of the eggs was being laid. Four to five eggs seemed to be the average-sized clutch (Bent. IBID).

After the 23rd the sounds of the growing birds increased in volume. I heard the young in the second and third cedar trees on the 25th and the 27th. The adults paid little attention to the usual passing fair. But if anyone stopped to peer up at the nest or brushed the tree, at once their loud scoldings descended on the intruder. Soon the rest of the colony joined in with noisy chatter and some downward swoopings.

On June 13 I found three young, fully feathered, on the lawn, their bodies slaty gray, their breasts darkly streaked. They flew readily if awkwardly, bumbling into the branches rather than alighting skillfully. Later I found 2 more on the ground about a block from the campus. Presumably these were from the cedar tree colony.

On June 27th I heard harsh cheeping sounds from the tree nearest the Ad Building and saw an adult grackle alight there, carrying food. I found only one nest in this tree, apparently the same one that had housed the first brood, and can only conclude that this pair was solving the housing problem by re-using the old homestead. Second broodings apparently do occur (Bent, IBID.) but whether this was a second brood by the original couple or a brood by another pair, I have no way of knowing. But another brood was certainly clamoring for food.—**Herbert Krause, Dept. of English, Augustana College, Sioux Falls.**

SOMETHING FOR THE BIRDS

Frances L. McWilliams

How dignified the sagehen is
Sauntering down my row of peas;
Sampling this pod, sampling that,
Slitting those that please.

Leading forth her hungry brood,
She's a very early riser.
Perhaps in search of early worms,
When peas surprise her.

My strawberries they come to next
A lesson in taste is seen:
She tells her chicks to eat the red,
Leaving me the green.

My garden is a lovely place
With succulent food past words,
And I am always glad we plant
So much for the birds!

Box 90, Cohagen, Montana

* * * *

SANDHILL CRANES PASSING HURON—About four o'clock in the afternoon of October 23, 1960 I observed two flocks of cranes consisting of about 100 birds each flying in a south-southwestern direction. I was located six miles north and one mile east from Huron. This was the first opportunity I have had in many years to observe cranes migrating, although I am in the field several times during the season when they move south. I am wondering if it isn't unusual, now for cranes to pass through this area.—**M. D. Ritchey, Huron.**

* * * *

GRAY JAY AT HURON—About 11:15 a. m., November 6, 1960, a Gray Jay spent several minutes working through our yard at 1722 Kansas, SE. Jean saw the bird first in a small apple tree about 15 feet from the window. It quickly moved to a trellis no more than

10 feet away. By the time George saw it, it had moved on to a stone wall about 25 feet away, leaving soon after.

We are both quite familiar with this species from having lived in Montana and have no doubt at all of the identity of the bird we saw.—**George and Jean Jonkel, Huron.**

* * * *

RED CROSSBILLS AT HURON—October 16, 1960. We visited Riverside Cemetery in the afternoon and found a small flock of Red Crossbills working over the spruce cones of the well laden trees.

Three red males and 9 females or immatures made up the flock actually seen. No White-winged Crossbills were found.—**J. W. Johnson, Huron.**

* * * *

WOOD DUCKS NEAR BIG STONE CITY—It was May 18, 1960, when I first noted this most colorful duck. Never having seen one before, I had to consult Peterson's book to know it was a Wood Duck. The white face markings, the red and white bill, and the "highly irridescent" coloring of its body plumage were so fascinating I kept the duck focused in the field of my binocular until he swam completely out of sight. This was in the Yellow Bank River which flows very near our home.

The next day there were two ducks, a male and a female. Since that time I have seen this pair at infrequent intervals. Though they must have nested in the woods near the river, at no time did I see young ducks with this pair. Search for the nest was impossible due to the dense underbrush.

Early on October 10 I was amazed to see many Wood Ducks on the river. I counted 14, perhaps a flock on migration.

Later that morning, as I walked in the orchard not far above the river, I heard a chorus of the most unusual sounds (Peterson describes them as "shrill and raucous") as the flock of Wood Ducks took flight from the river.

I assumed the summer pair had gone with them. But not so; I still see them nearly every day. Today (October 18) there were two pairs swimming and dipping in the river—**Mrs. Arthur H. Riss, Big Stone City.**

* * * *

COOPER'S HAWK PREDATION ON WHITE-WINGED JUNCO—During my four-year life history study of the White-winged Junco, and my concomitant review of the literature, (see South Dakota Bird Notes, vol. XII, p. 24, 1960), I was unable to find any specific information on predation upon wild free-living individuals of this species. Therefore I think the following observation should be recorded.

On September 12, 1960, a flock of 10 or 12 White-winged Juncos (Junco aikeni) came to our winter feeding area. This flock was the first we had seen around the house this fall. The usual pattern is that junco flocks are present here almost daily throughout the winter until late April or early May. They then return in early fall.

On this occasion, the flock had been feeding only a few minutes when all the birds flew in apparent alarm, and we saw that a larger bird had flown into the flock. As we watched it, we were able to identify it definitely as a Cooper's Hawk (Accipiter cooperii). It selected one bird from the flock and pursued it for a fraction of a minute, finally capturing it in flight.

The hawk then retreated to a nearby pine, but the remaining juncos did not return.—**N. R. Whitney, Route 1, Box 41, Rapid City, S. D.**

NOTES FROM FORT RANDALL—Mrs. Youngworth and I decided long ago that the best point to view the immensity of the Fort Randall Dam impoundment was from a point on a dirt road as it crests the junior mountains southeast of the town of Pickstown and it was to this spot that we journeyed on October 17, 1960. The day was sunny and crisp and an added rarity was the almost absence of wind. We enjoyed our view to the fullest and then descended to the Randall Creek Picnic Area for the more mundane activity of eating our lunch.

We were grected at the first group of picnic tables by a small flock of Magpies. These birds were not too wild and stayed in the general area while we ate and later started our bird tour of the park. The fall migration of Flickers was on and we found them everywhere. We must have seen two or three hundred of them.

Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers were also common, but the real surprise was the presence of several pairs of Red-bellied Woodpeckers. I soon discovered the main reason for the abundance of woodpeckers was the half dead condition of the many native Box Elder trees.

These old trees were liberally punctured by numerous woodpecker holes and I at once called the area "Woodpecker Haven." While the Red-bellied Woodpecker is not new to eastern South Dakota and has been reported by observers for many years, it is a bird of heavier timber and I think many observers pass it up.

Probably with a bit of field work, this woodpecker can be found anywhere along the main stem of the Missouri River in both North and South Dakota, especially during the summer season. Lack of food might cause it to migrate from the more northern areas, but given winter food, they will be found not uncommon in southeastern South Dakota.

The Randall Creek Recreation Area is down behind the huge dam and should be a fine place for wintering birds. With plenty of native plant life plus thousands of recently planted shrubs, this area should be a fine place to study summer birds as well. Before leaving the picnic area we had the pleasure of seeing three Myrtle Warblers and because of their sudden scarcity, we almost felt that this was the best field observation of the day.—**Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Youngworth, Sioux City, Iowa.**

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Birds' Nests

(Continued from Page 83)

Sweeping on the coveted twig, somewhat as a Hawk rushed on its prey, it parts it at the desired place and bears it off to its nest. Each of these twigs is firmly fastened to its fellows by an adhesive saliva, secreted by the bird, and the whole structure is strongly cemented to the side of the chimney in which it is built by means of the same secretion. When dry this saliva hardens into a glue-like substance, apparently firmer than the twigs themselves. In separating nests from the side of a chimney, I have known portions of the brick to which it was fastened to give away sooner than the cement with which it had been secured."

The nest is so small that at a very early age the young leave it and cling to the wall, climbing to the top while still very young and unable to fly, where they are fed by their parents.

The chimney swifts have specialized feet so constructed that all four toes can reach forward to grip the wall; in this they are assisted by stiff quilled tail feathers. —**Watertown, S. Dak.**

RED CROSSBILLS IN WEBSTER—On Friday, November 4, at 2:30 p. m., my sister, Mrs. Ed Peters, called to tell me she had some new birds in her yard, some she had never seen before. They were red and gray, though some were green and gray. Their size was something like a sparrow and they were so tame, people and bicycle riders passing on the sidewalk did not bother them at all. I drove by home to pick up my 6x30 Bausch and Lomb binocular and, when I got there I found nine of the birds.

The first I looked at was a female, but I was not sure what I had. Then I studied the others. On some the head, breast, and body was dark red with dull graying wings, no wing bars, and bright rump feathers. Others were dull olive-green on the head, body, and breast but with bright yellow-green rump and darker wings, with no wing bars.

These last would be females, it seemed to me, and were colored green in exactly the same places where the others, the males, were red. There were 4 males and 5 females feeding under a large ash tree and they were eating the ash seeds. This is our common green ash, native (**Fraxinus pennsylvanica, var. subintegerrina**).

In a few minutes they took off over the house, and I drove around the block but could not find them again. I was sure they were Red Crossbills as I had sight records for 1951 and 1957 in the Black Hills.

On November 7, Mrs. Peters called again and I hurried up there. This time two were feeding under the ash tree. I had a good view—compared them with Peterson's pictures—and there could be no mistake, even though I had not seen the bills.

Two days later (November 9) Mrs. Peters called and, this time, they were in her neighbor's yard. There were five of them that day and what a beautiful sight.

The morning sun was at my back and I had perfect viewing from my car through the binocular. This time I could see the crossed bills so plainly and the sun shining on their bodies made a beautiful red glow in the morning light. As usual they were under an ash tree and feeding on the ash seeds on the ground.

That evening I called John Carlsen, Manager of the Waubay Game Refuge, and he told me that he had sight records for October 7 and November 2, 1960. He also said this was the first for the Refuge since they had started keeping records in the early thirties.

On November 15, Mrs. Art Lundquist reported a male Red Crossbill in her bird bath. I was sure these were the first observations of this bird for Webster and I was glad of the corroboration of John Carlsen and Mrs. Lundquist.—**Herman P. Chilson, Webster.**

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RED CROSSBILLS IN CUSTER COUNTY—Since 1949 I have spent a week each year, deer hunting in the Limestone country around Custer. We usually hunt in the same areas year after year; Lightning Creek, Gillette Canyon, East Hell's Canyon, West Hell's Canyon, Bear Mountain area, and Red Bird Canyon.

I had only two sight records for the Hills and they were in 1951 and 1957. This year I saw more Red Crossbills than ever before. I saw Red Crossbills every day from November 11 to November 17th. They were beautiful as the sun's rays made their red bodies glow a faming red against the bright blue sky and white clouds.

One did not have to look for them. They advertised their presence by their sharp, loud "clip-clip-clip." They were

usually in groups of 10 to 14, although I saw some flocks much larger and some of just a few.

Females and immatures seemed to constitute the majority of the birds seen. They spent most of the time going from one place to another, it seemed, but, now and then, they would settle down in the tops of the pines and start to work on the cones and eat the seeds.

Their sharp :"clip-clip-clip" varied in combinations of one, two, three, and rarely, four "clips." At first I did not know that they warbled too and I was looking for another bird until I saw one warbling a beautiful song in combination with some "clip-clip-clips".

Can someone explain this pbenomenon: On three different occasions I saw two males fighting or, at least, putting on a good demonstration—one right close on the tail of the one ahead and chasing him away. This time of the year, with no territory to defend, no mating, no nest to protect, what would they be fighting for?—**Herman P. Chilson, Webster.**

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ROBINS IN CUSTER COUNTY—I have hunted the same Custer Limestone area for the past 11 years during deer season and this season I saw more Robins in the woods than in any previous year. Seeing them and hearing their good old familiar song in the middle of November did not seem real to me, especially since I found them from ¼ to ½ mile inside the deep timber.

I tried to learn what they were feeding on but could not see well enough. This seemed to be an unusually good year for Kinnikinic (or Bearberry) and Juniper berries along with a bumper crop of pine cones. Could they have been feeding on these? Have they changed their diet? Is this a super-intelligent race of Robins who have fled to the woods, knowing that man and the chemical spray companies are after them? It has been reported that DDT is absorbed by angleworms and that 6 to 8 such worms will make a Robin sterile and a dozen to fifteen will kill him.

"Herb" Krause suggests that Robins vary their diet in the fall by turning to a lower protein-type of food such as hackberries, juniper berries and buckthorn fruits. He noted during the warm weather of October 1960 in Sioux Falls parks that, with the sprinklers on and angleworms available by the dozen, the Robins ignored them completely and chose to eat berries instead.

I would like to hear from some of the Black Hills ornithologists. Do Robins winter in the wooded areas? What is your observation of their diet?—**Herman P. Chilson, Webster.**

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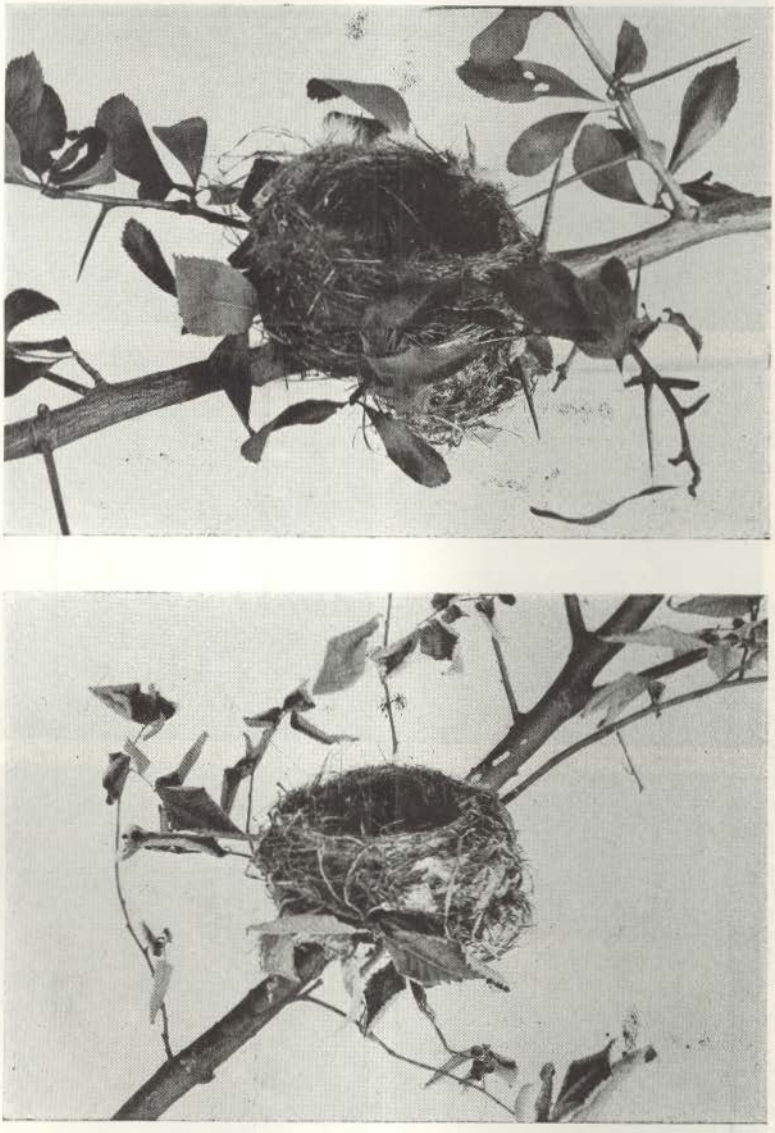
PURPLE MARTIN ORNAMENTS—I had 10 Purple Martin nests in my martin house, with the successful raising of 40 young, which were banded. When I cleaned out the martin house this fall, I was surprised to find, in four of the nests, some round aluminum pieces which looked like the heads of tacks.

They were only about ¼ inch in diameter but they were incorporated in the nesting material. There were 20 of these in one nest and I found 44 of them altogether. Also present were small shiny white stones similar to parts of clam shells, however I did not count these.

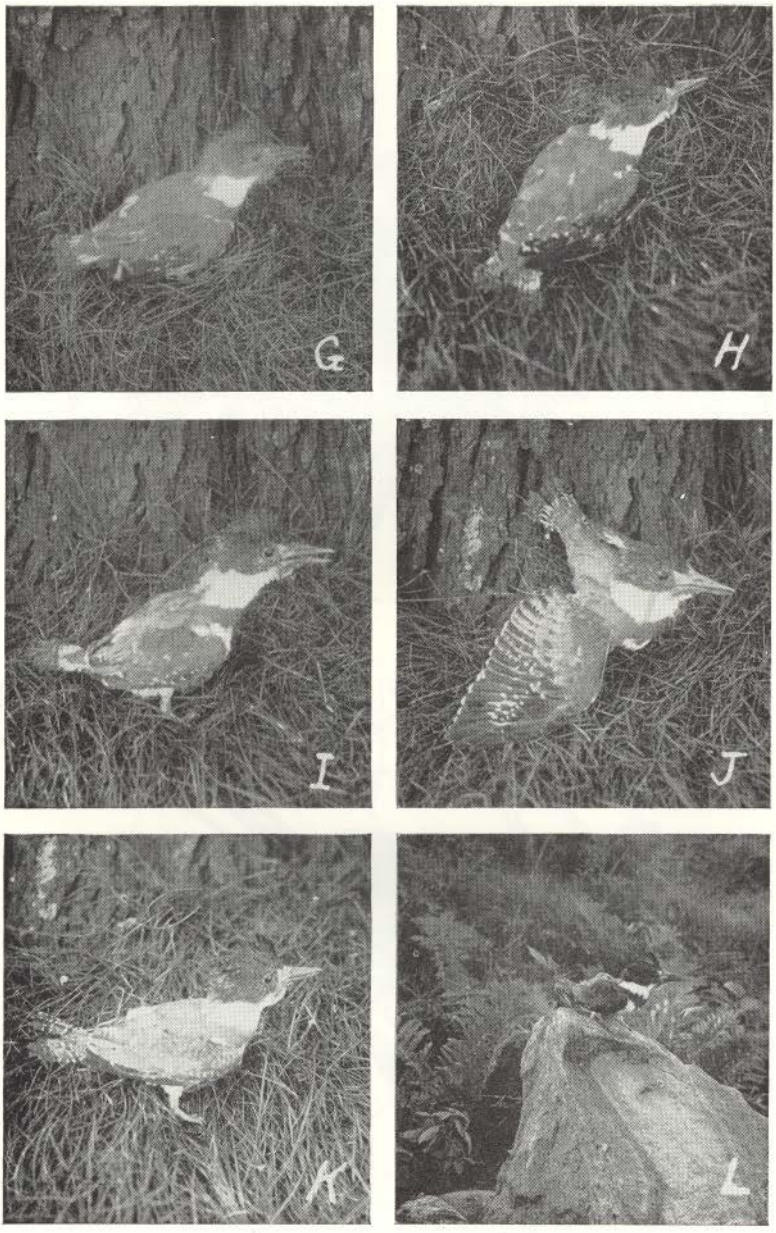
I found these shiny decorations in the first-floor nests of the house but none in the nests of the second floor.

I am interested in hearing if anyone else has noticed anything like this in their martin nests. Could it be that martins have a tendency to collect shiny objects, as magpies do? I hope to find out more about this next year. —**Mrs. David Holden, Brookings.**



Nests of Alder Flycatcher

—Courtesy Wilson Bulletin



Belted Kingfisher

—Courtesy Wilson Bulletin

New Members of SDOU, 1960

As a result of the activity of our Membership Chairman, Lowry Ellott, and his Committee, we have a list of new members to add to that carried in the June, 1960 number.

We all welcome these people into our beloved organization and hope they will find with us a community of interest — as well as learn of the vast amount of work that needs to be done if we are to realize even a little of our underlying purpose. May they take an active part in helping with our understanding of the part wildlife plays in our ecology and their work lead toward intelligent action for mitigating the humanity of man.

But, with all honor to Lowry and his helpers, we must not lose sight of a most important way in which an organization can grow: Person to person contact by friends and close acquaintances. We all know a few people who would make good members — if SDOU could be properly brought to their attention. Maybe one among these few needs only to see a copy of **Bird Notes** — and to learn how few of us are Ph. D.'s who know birds best by their Latin names.

Above all, new members and old: Give us your observations, so they may be made a permanent record.

Anderson, Ernest — c|o Berchal Anderson, Hurley
Atherton, Nora M. — Flandreau
Benson, Mrs. Dewey (6 Junior Memberships) — Hurley
Brown, Wendell — 5224 Blake Road, Minneapolis, Minn.
Card, Harold — Webster
Carlsen, J. C. — Waubay
Carlson, Loris — c|o Kenneth Carlson, Hurley
Cave, R. B. — 260 North Shore Drive, Lake Kampeska, Watertown
Cave, Mrs. R. B. — 260 North Shore Drive, Lake Kampeska, Watertown
Engebretson, David — Webster
Gilbertson, Mrs. Ted — Roslyn
Hagen, Mrs. George — Armour
Harter, Mrs. Morris — Highmore
Heraty, Alene — 515 W. 13th St., Sioux Falls
Highstreet, Ronnie — Hurley
Hintz, Monty — c|o Darrel Hintz, Hurley
Holden, Ann — 15 Beech Tree Lane, Bronxville, N. Y.
Holden, Jos. S. — 602 S. 6th St., Milbank
Holden, LSDR, J. J., U. S. N., Staff Com Des Ron, II, c|o F.P.O., San Francisco, Calif.
Johnson, Mrs. Lenord L. — Questover Farm, Big Stone City
Knutson, Todd — c|o Alvern Knutson, Hurley
Leland, David — 432 13th St., Huron
Locke, Mrs. E. H. — Webster
Olawsky, Mrs. G. W. — 509 S. Montana, Mitchell
Pack, Sylvia Ellen — 555 Jefferson Boulevard, Huron
Pearson, Robert — Webster
Phillippi, F. F. — Box 165, Milbank
Pierce, Max E. — 2020 S. Grange Ave., Sioux Falls
Pringle, Benjamin O. — Bridgewater
Rayburn, Steven — Hurley

Scott, David	Geddes
Smokstad, Doris Webb	721 No. Park St., Watertown
Szalay, Rev. Eugene W.	Box 765, Winner
Vander Linden, Mrs. L.	Webster
von Rohr, Edward	Webster
Warren, Mrs. Myrtle	309 E. 5th St., Miller
Wist, L. B.	5127 East Earl Drive, Phoenix, Ariz.

President's Page

(Continued from Page 67)

California have laws which give hawks protection. The protection provided by the laws of South Dakota, with your help, can he made complete.

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This fall I asked Philip DuMont, a SDOU member who lives in Washington, D. C., to represent us at the second organizational meeting held in Washington to correlate the activities of state Audubon Societies and Natural History Societies into a Council of Natural History Societies. A report of this meeting came to me recently. Several directors have read it and are of the opinion that SDOU has a great deal to gain by joining such an organization. We can become a charter member if we join before August 1. I recommend that SDOU consider action on this matter at our May meeting in Watertown.

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Since I wrote my Master's thesis on native prairies, I am vitally interested in their preservation. The time has come to set aside some of the remnants of this type of American wilderness. Dr. N. R. Whitney, of Rapid City, is chairman of the American Wilderness Society in our state. If you know of an area of prairie or woodland in South Dakota which has not lost its original character, please write to him about it. It would be a pity if this part of our natural heritage should be lost, as the passenger pigeon has become extinct. Without the prairie, the generations to come will lose the full concept of our pioneering forefathers.

"A Gathering of Shore Birds" by Dr. Henry Marion Hall, edited with additions by Roland C. Clement, is fresh off the press of Devin-Adair Co., 23 East 26th St., New York. The book, available for $10, should be a great help in identifying these little-known fellows which stop so briefly on our lake shores, sloughs and waterways.—**Ruth C. Habeger.**

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Least Tern

(Continued from Page 71)

of the Museum, Michigan State University. P. 1-60.

Judd, E. T., 1957. **List of North Dakota Birds found in the Big Coulee, Turtle Mountains, and Devils Lake Region.** Published by author. P. 6.

Saunders, A. A. 1921. **A Distributional List of the Birds of Montana.** Cooper Ornithological Club, Berkeley, California, P. 31.

Wycoff, R. S. 1960. **The Least Tern.** Nebraska Bird Review, 28:39-42.

—**Sioux City, Iowa**

COVER

Least Tern stays with her chicks. Camera at 2 feet distance. Photo by R. S. Wycoff. Halftone, a gift from Wm. Youngworth.