

SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

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Whole No. 50



H. F. CHAPMAN, HIS VISION: S.D.O.U.

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President's Page

I WRITE from Indianola, Washington, where I am vacationing. Though I have been here before, the environs of Puget Sound are still new and fascinating. Many new birds have been added to my Life-List but perhaps the most thrilling is the Pileated Woodpecker that visits our private woods. His own particular brand of 'kuk-kuk-kuk-kuk', his slow, loud hammering, his large size, and his striking coloring make him especially exciting to hear and see.

I hope to do some Oregon birding and to visit the Pioneer Tillamook Museum where Alex Walker is curator. You remember Mr. Walker as the former resident of Armour, South Dakota who flew to our 1961 Watertown Convention and gave us that wonderful surprise showing of his own slides of shore birds taken along the Oregon and Alaskan coasts. He has one of the best private collections of mounted humming birds and he gives credit to our past president, Crutchett for encouraging him as a youth in bird study, giving him his first bird book, Chapman's **Color Key to the Birds**.

This brings to mind my pet urge: the encouragement of young people in bird study. All SDOU members should work through schools, youth groups, Scouts and neighborhood clubs to guide

or to speak to these youth groups. It takes patience and energy to work with young people but I am sure that it pays off. We need the interest and drive of youth to carry on what we have only begun.

Dr. Moriarty's work with young people is especially commendable. Billy Tallen's excellent contribution on Hawks in our junior section of the last issue of Bird Notes is a result of Dr. Moriarty's efforts. Billy has the makings of another Alex Walker and it took an interested adult to guide him. Likewise Carol Breen, Lois Chapman and Clara Yarger have done outstanding youth work in bird study. No doubt many other SDOU members have given their time and talents to this cause. I only hope that in spite of arthritis and impatience we continue to consider it worth while.

David Holden and Richard Hurd, who were appointed to a Committee to Preserve the Natural Areas in South Dakota, have drawn up some articles pertaining to the conservation of natural areas in our state. They appear in this issue of Bird Notes, following Mr. Harrell's background article, and should spearhead our drive in this direction. Concentration of effort on preserving these areas—often special habitats for birds that otherwise might become extinct, is a worthy project for S.D.O.U. The content of these articles should be incorporated in our thinking and in our conversation so that we may help others to realize the necessity of

(Continued on Page 73)



H. F. Chapman

Herbert Krause



AT VERMILLION, 1951

(Left to right: M. E. Burgi, H. F. Chapman, J. Scott Findley,
M. S. Mallory)

IT MAY have been curiosity and youthful acquisitiveness which sent the boy, Herman Chapman into the drought-stunted timber claims and onto the prairies surrounding his father's farm to collect bird's eggs and trade the blown shells to the kids in town. But it was more than that, much more, which stopped him at his work in the farm yard sometimes, head up and listening, and backed him into the barn's shadow where, hand shielding his eyes against the bright April sun, he "scanned the high sky for the makers of the

faintly-ringing notes from afar; then, finding them, stood transfixed as he watched the slow spiraling of hundreds of tiny specks shining in the very depths of the great blue bowl, listening to the trilling bugle-calls of the Sandhill Cranes which drifted down to him on the warm spring air."

The man Herman Chapman remembered the boy growing up on the farm near Alexandria, South Dakota, when years later, as editor of **South Dakota Bird Notes**, he wrote those nostalgic words. And he remembered those

mornings when the new farm house was being built and he, the boy, slept outdoors on the newly laid floor, roofless to the sky, waking to the smell of new lumber, the dawn red beyond the studdings and the morning loud with the twitter-chatter of the Eastern Kingbirds—"White Kingbirds," he called them then. And who will say such memories—kingbird-cry and crane-bugle, laid strongly upon the boy's mind, were not guidons to the man, years later, when strong compulsion urged him to organize the resources of bird enthusiasts to study, record and preserve the avifauna of the state? And no doubt he remembered the young clerk to the Register of the Land Office at Gregory, S. Dak., who in 1909 went into Tripp county with a homesteader while late winter leaned toward spring, and saw from a shanty door, pink sunlight on the snow and heard meadowlarks lifting the morning with the flagolets of song. "I can hear those meadowlarks yet," he recalls, yesterday's gleam in his eyes as he makes today's plans to arouse people to the peril of their diminishing wildlife resources.

He began hunting early, he remembers, carrying a shotgun with the boys, his friends in town. On one of these forays, he stalked a flock of Mallards in a pothole and blasted away; but he raised a horse-laugh among his buddies—the Mallards were nothing more than coots—mud-hens, he might have called them. It probably was a lesson for the boy, one that smarted deeply. But the man recalls, "I was a hunter all those years." And so he was, training himself to launch the clean shot that kills rather than cripples. Even then no doubt the external desire to enjoy the out-of-doors and hunting was tempered by the inner awareness of the need for conserving the species.

Statistics are vital but skeletal. Herman Chapman was born on February 9, 1888, at Alexandria, then Dakota Territory, attended country school; graduated from the local high school; studied law and business; taught school; was deputy U. S. Marshal; became first Secretary of the S. D. Tax Commission; and U. S. District court reporter; had time and energy to engage in a dozen activities.

These are overt statistics. They say little about shattering deep-touching events, one of which was the shining awareness that he was not to be alone in his intense appreciation of wildlife. For in Miss Lois Nichols he found a wife who encouraged the direction of his interest in South Dakota avifauna.

Birding became mixed up with precedents, torts and cases. While studying at the Law School of the University of South Dakota (from which he graduated *magna cum laude*), he went with Dr. William Over to gather owl's nests along the Missouri River bottoms near Vermillion. With him he dragged ropes over the waving meadow grasses to flush out Marsh Hawks and collect their nests. Perhaps it was here that he acquired the habit of recording the observations which he later made on the miles he traveled about the state.

For a time as editor of *SUNSHINE MAGAZINE* he published articles on birds as a part of his new determination to bring wildlife to the attention of his South Dakota readers. He was one of four lawyers who drafted the non-political bi-partisan Game Commission law now operating in the state.

In May, 1948, the Chapmans attended a joint meeting of the Iowa and Nebraska Ornithologists' Unions at Sioux City, Iowa, and a wonderful mischief was begun. Previously, their bird observations while intense had been per-

sonal and uncoordinated. Now began the desire to join with others to describe the state's rich wildlife, especially its birds.

Whatever catalyst was needed to precipitate action, they undoubtedly found at this joint convention. Reporting the Sioux City bird meeting for the STURGIS TIMES, H. E. Foster wrote about the Chapmans: "They became very enthusiastic over identification of South Dakota birds and are trying to form a union in their state." A meeting of the National Union in Omaha in October, which they attended, apparently was the final impetus.

Writing to Victor Webster, State College, Brookings, Chapman confessed: "We felt a similar organization like that in Iowa and Nebraska should be functioning in South Dakota." Plans for organization included questionnaires sent to biologists and zoologists at colleges and high schools, but, wrote Chapman to Webster, "I am a little discouraged by the limited number of returns." Despite these disappointments, plans went ahead. In December a circular informed interested wildlife people that at Sioux Falls on January 15, 1949, would be held an organizational meeting dedicated to "the early creation of a South Dakota Ornithologists' Union."

On that snow-stormy day in January one of Herman Chapman's treasured visions took shape and form. Other individuals there were who nurtured the dream and assisted in its formation, no doubt. But his was the intense, unselfish devotion which insisted on a state-wide unified study and recording of avian species in the state. His determination to preserve for future students the records of South Dakota bird life constituted the cornerstone of the organization. When apathy and lack of dedication threatened the fledgling Un-

ion, his enthusiasm and faith frequently seemed to be its only shield and bolster. He was its first president; and when the elected editor of the proposed quarterly became too busy, Chapman became the Union's first editor also, a position he held for the first five years. Although the records indicate that E. R. Lamster was chosen Editor-Librarian, actually Chapman launched SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES. In the first three issues he set high editorial standards which challenge succeeding editors.

"The die is cast," Chapman wrote to Dr. O. A. Stevens, State College, Fargo, N. D.; "the bridge is crossed." SDOU was on its way.

In the following ten years Chapman saw the Union take root and settle down to assured permanence. He saw the inauguration of spring annual meetings; the excitement of first field trips; the initial appearance of a state Christmas Bird Count enumerating according to species, locality and numbers; the compilation of the first "five-year" index of BIRD NOTES; the assembling of a check-list of the state's birds and the formulation of plans for the writing of a volume on the state's ornithological resources.

Time and again the haul was long and the pull hard for the growing Union. Without Chapman's unflagging, enthusiastic often stubborn determination, without his sagacious forthrightness, single-gauged where SDOU was concerned, the Union probably would not be the sturdy organization it is today. In truth, there may never have been a Union, at all.

Even without a Union, however, Chapman's enthusiasm for South Dakota birds would have been an inspiring stimulation to state bird study. There are scores of individuals, eager bird ob-



—Photo by Huren Recreation Board

WITH OTHER OFFICERS OF S.D.O.U., 1950

(Left to right: W. B. Mallory, Secy.; Gerald B. Spawn, Pres.; S. H. Rames, Treas.; E. R. Lamster; J. O. Johnson, Director. Seated: H. F. Chapman, Editor

servers now, who will testify that the Chapmans first aroused their interest by showing them how much fun birding really is—how much of sky and season—changing hillside, of stream and prairie out-of-doors there is in birding beside the excitement of identifying a

new bird or discovering unexpected facts about an old. This writer is one of them, gratefully acknowledging his debt to their persuasive encouragement.

In this light there is much signifi-

(Continued on Page 73)

A Spring Migration of Waterfowl in Briefly Favorable Weather

A SYMPOSIUM OF OBSERVATIONS SURROUNDING THE EVENT

THE LOCAL SCENE, A FOREWORD

J. W. Johnson

A CHILL southerly wind cut deeply, to quickly remind us that this April 5, 1960 was too early to be out without a coat. But the show passing overhead was hard to leave, even for a minute. A phone call from the Jonkel's, soon after 5 p. m., to get out and see the ducks going north had rushed us out heedlessly.

At first we missed them; they were flying high—and fast. But, when we began to see them, they were all over the sky, in little flocks of a dozen or so, coming into sight from the south, fading away into the north, and stretching away to east and west, without change, so far as the eye could see.

The little flocks were far enough apart you had to hunt for the next, and the next. But, once you had the knack of it, you had an eye on one all the time.

They flew at differing heights, but none low enough to show any color except black and white, or, rather, shades of light and dark. Some were so high as to be all but invisible in the thin, bright overcast. But the thing that impressed me most was the speed of their flight—high for the beat of their wings.

It was nearly a year later, in February, 1961, when George Jonkel and I were conferring with Dr. Pack, State Climatologist, about a possible study of local weather influence on bird movements, that this sudden migration was mentioned by George. He had noted

that the wind had been unfavorable, northerly, the day before and the day after the passage, and thought the coincidence might be of interest in the present discussion.

Dr. Pack quickly brought out the weather maps for the period, and, in a few moments, made the picture clear: The ducks had taken advantage of a sudden and brief few hours of favorable wind to move north. We assumed they moved on until they were precipitated by meeting the northerly wind that soon followed, about 7 p. m., possibly in the area of Sand Lake Refuge.

The whole event seemed to have interesting possibilities for further study. It was at once arranged to assemble the available material for Bird Notes, so that it could be made a matter of record.

As the weather conditions are detailed by Dr. Pack, followed by Mr. Jonkel's observations and the results of his inquiries of the managers of the National Wildlife Refuges for data, it will be obvious to all that, as usual, we are handicapped by lack of observers in the right places. Too much of the data is lacking for the full value of the event to be realized in improved understanding of its mechanics.

Possibly other information by other observers of the movement described may exist. If so it will be greatly appreciated. Space will gladly be made available for either additional data or comment.—Huron.

A SURVEY OF WEATHER CONDITIONS PREVAILING SHORTLY BEFORE, DURING, AND SHORTLY AFTER THE OBSERVATION OF HEAVY WATERFOWL MIGRATION AT HURON, SOUTH DAKOTA, ON APRIL 5, 1960

Dr. A. Boyd Pack, State Climatologist,
U. S. Weather Bureau

April 4, 1960

Synoptic Weather Situation: Cyclonic circulation prevailed over southeastern Canada and the Great Lakes, extending as far west as Minnesota, with a low pressure trough running southwestward from New England along the Appalachians and to the central Gulf of Mexico. A weak ridge of high pressure from northern Saskatchewan to Montana early on the 4th moved to a line from northern Manitoba to the western Dakotas by early afternoon of the 4th. A stationary high cell remained over the Idaho-Utah area all day. A deep low pressure from the Pacific moved into the Yukon Territory with a warm frontal system extending southeast into eastern Montana and Wyoming by midday of the 4th. Precipitation was observed on the 4th over much of Minnesota, Iowa, and eastward, and at a few widely scattered points in extreme eastern Dakotas.

Surface Weather Conditions at Huron, South Dakota: Winds were north northwest to west northwest all day with velocities up to early evening of 10 to 20 m.p.m. and occasional afternoon gusts up to 30 m.p.h. Winds diminished to 8 to 12 m.p.h. after 7:00 p. m. Skies were clear through 8 a. m. becoming low broken to overcast, ceilings mostly 1800 to 4000 feet for the remainder of the day. Barometric pressure increased steadily until 10:00 p. m. on the 4th and then commenced falling. Temperatures followed a more or less

normal diurnal trend with extremes of 32° and 44° F. Sunshine amounted to about 70 per cent of the total possible for this date. There was no precipitation, although a trace of snow remained from the storm of April 1-2nd. Visibility was unrestricted at the surface and relative humidity ranged from 67 to 96 per cent.

April 5, 1960

Synoptic Weather Situation: By early morning of the 5th a small, weak high pressure cell lay between Huron and Rapid City, centered in central South Dakota and reaching from Bismarck, North Dakota to north central Nebraska. The deep low pressure, centered in the Yukon late on the 4th, had moved to a little north of the northern Alberta boundary by early on the 5th. A warm front extended south southeast from this low into eastern Montana and Wyoming. A warm air sector covered western and central Montana and adjacent sections of Wyoming and Idaho early on the 5th with temperatures in the low fifties. A broad area of cyclonic circulation covered the eastern third of the United States, extending as far west as Minneapolis, Des Moines, and Kansas City.

By early evening of the 5th the small high pressure cell in central South Dakota had moved eastward through the state and had become absorbed by a ridge of high pressure extending southward along a line running through western Ontario, western Wisconsin, central Missouri, and central Arkansas to a high pressure centered in the western Gulf of Mexico. See accompanying synoptic weather map for 6:00 p. m., C. S. T., April 5, 1960. The frontal system associated with the deep Canadian low had moved quite rapidly southeastward by early evening of the 5th. By 6:00 p. m. of the 5th the warm front had moved eastward to a line running

southward through Bismarck, Pierre, and Valentine with rather warm air (temperatures near 75°) covering the western halves of South Dakota and Nebraska. Moderately colder air had pushed rapidly southward and covered most of eastern Montana and western North Dakota by early evening. This colder air spread over all of South Dakota except the extreme southeast by midnight of the 5th. The Huron area was briefly in the warm air sector between about 10:00 and 11:00 p. m. On the 5th no precipitation was recorded in the Dakotas, nor in any of the bordering states.

Surface Weather Conditions at Huron, South Dakota: Winds backed from north northwest at 1:00 a. m. to southerly by 9:00 a. m. during which time velocities were of the order of 5 to 10 m.p.h. Winds varied between south and south southeast from 9:00 a. m. through 10:00 p. m. before veering back into the northwest by midnight of April 5. Velocities during the period of southerly surface winds ranged from 10 to 20 m.p.h. with highest winds, including gusts to 25 to 30 m.p.h., occurring during the hours of 2 to 4:00 p. m. The shift of wind direction to northwest by midnight was accompanied by velocities near 20 m.p.h. Sky conditions on the 5th were marked by lifting of the low overcast and clearing skies through 5:00 a. m. Thin broken to overcast high cloudiness developed by 7:00 a. m. and prevailed for the remainder of the day without any appreciable change in thickness. The ceiling lowered to about 15,000 feet during the approach of the frontal system late in the evening. Full sunshine was recorded, indicating that the high cloudiness remained quite thin all day.

Barometric pressure fell steadily until 11:00 p. m. (28.82 to 28.29 inches,

station pressure) and then began rising with the frontal passage. Temperatures warmed from a morning minimum of 26° to 45 to 50° range during the afternoon and up to shortly after sunset (7:05 p. m.). During the late evening hours temperatures remained in the low forties except for a brief rise to 48° at midnight of the 5th. No precipitation occurred at Huron and the surface visibility was unrestricted. The trace of snow from the previous day largely disappeared on the 5th. The relative humidity ranged from 96 per cent before sunrise (6:08 a. m.) down to an afternoon low of 68 per cent. The James River was at flood stage at Huron, as well as other places along its course from North Dakota boundary to Yankton, South Dakota.

April 6, 1960

Synoptic Weather Situation: A weak cell of low pressure, forming near Lake Winnipeg early in the morning, moved rapidly southeast to near Detroit by late on the 6th. This low was accompanied eastward by the frontal system that passed through South Dakota on the 5th. Cyclonic circulation with northwesterly winds and moderately colder temperatures thus dominated the Dakotas, Minnesota, and the central Mississippi Valley. An expanding ridge of high pressure stretched southeastward from a center in northern British Columbia and reached central Nebraska and northern Kansas by midday of the 6th. Precipitation in the upper midwest on the 6th was limited to northeast Minnesota.

THE COVER

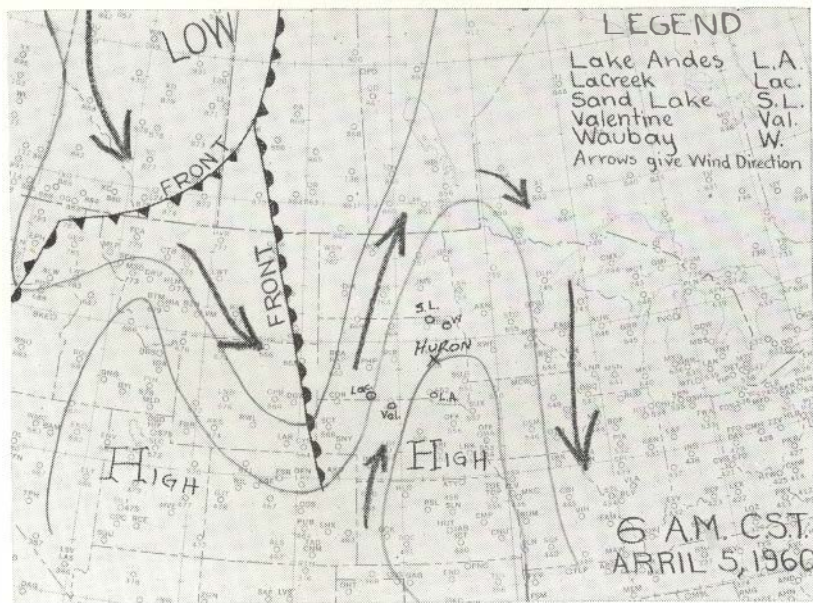
A tribute to H.F.C. by Wayne Trimm. The halftone, a gift to S. D. O. U. by Mr. Chapman.

Surface Weather Conditions at Huron, South Dakota: Winds were north northwest to west northwest all day with velocities of 18 to 28 m.p.h. through 5:00 p. m., decreasing to near 10 m.p.h. through midnight. Highest velocities, including gusts of 30 to 40 m.p.h., were observed between 9:00 a. m. and 4:00 p. m. There was decreasing high thin cloudiness during the morning hours. Clear skies shortly before noon were followed by thin scattered to broken high cloudiness during the afternoon and evening hours. Virtually full sunshine prevailed.

Barometric pressure increased steadily from 28.36 inches at 1:00 a. m. to 28.61 inches by midnight of the 6th.

Temperatures remained in the low forties during the morning hours, rising to a maximum of 54° about 3:00 p. m. and then cooling quite rapidly to 37° six hours later. There was no precipitation, and surface visibility was unrestricted. The relative humidity ranged from an early morning high of 89 per cent to a late afternoon low of 40 per cent.

Tabulated on the following page are data on the direction and velocity of winds near the surface and up to about 5,000 feet above the ground at Huron, South Dakota. These data are from pilot balloon observations on April 5, and April 6, 1960.



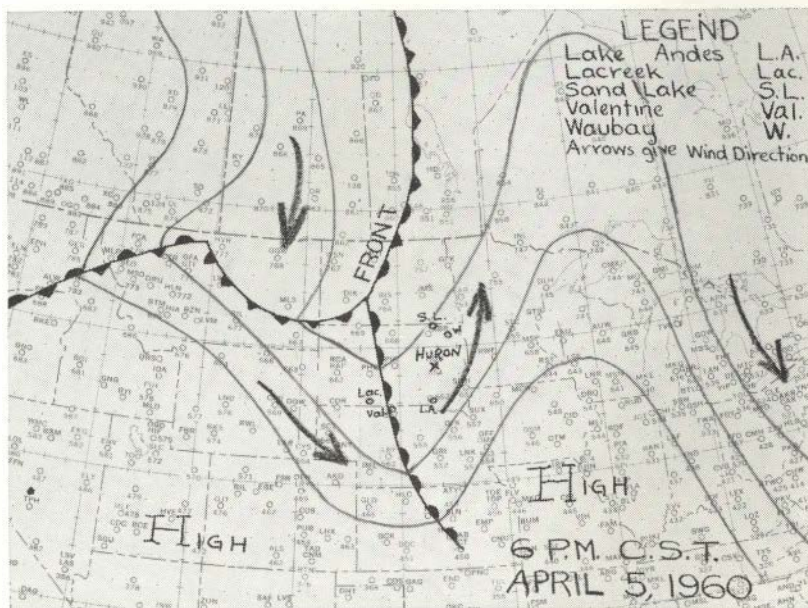
Weather Map — Morning of the Flight

TABLE 1—Surface and upper level winds at Huron, South Dakota, as measured by pilot balloons. Heights are above ground level, directions in degrees and velocities in miles per hour.

Huron, South Dakota						
Approx. Height	6 a. m., C. S. T. April 5, 1960		6 p. m., C. S. T. April 5, 1960		6 a. m., C. S. T. April 6, 1960	
	Direction*	Velocity	Direction*	Velocity	Direction*	Velocity
Surface	300	9	180	16	330	18
300 ft.	310	9	180	20	340	35
500 ft.	310	9	180	20	340	28
1000 ft.	310	9	180	25	340	23
1800 ft.	350	9	200	32	340	44
3300 ft.	350	20	250	40	330	47
4800 ft.	340	32	290	40	310	50

*360° equals north; 180° equals south.

—U. S. Weather Bureau, Huron, South Dakota



Weather Map — As the Flight Passed Huron

THE WATERFOWL MOVEMENT OF APRIL 5, 1960

George Jonkel, Biologist

"Migratory birds have developed a rather remarkable system of what is called in modern aviation, "pressure-pattern Flying." This is a system that takes advantage of the maximum possible amount of tail wind in long distance flights." This quotation from Lansberg's *Bird Migrations and Pressure Patterns* is included in a chapter in Hockbaum's *Travels and Traditions of Waterfowl*, describing the conditions leading to mass movements of Waterfowl. Although this system is described for fall movements, it was certainly being employed on April 5, 1960 by flights of Mallards and Pintails passing over Huron.

We noticed the flight in the late afternoon and the movement was still in progress at dusk. Thousands of ducks were moving along rapidly northward on a tail wind. They were flying in groups of from 10 to 50 birds, although some larger flocks were observed, at altitudes from several hundred to perhaps a thousand feet over the town. From our yard in the south edge of Huron and with the aid of a 7x50 binocular we could see ducks moving a mile or more away, both east and west, with the greatest concentration of birds apparently following the James River. Several large low-flying flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds accompanied the ducks.

In the Huron vicinity we had seen no ducks before the April 5th movement. West of Huron the spring migration was in progress earlier. On March 31, Milt Reeves of Aberdeen reported seeing migrating waterfowl from the highway as he went from Aberdeen south on U. S. Highway 281 to U. S.

Highway 14 and then west to Pierre, although probably no large movement had yet occurred.

At the Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge near Martin in southeastern South Dakota, Manager, Mr. Charles Hughlet reported that, on April 5, there was no significant influx or departure of waterfowl and that, during that week the wind blew from the northwest.

While he did not observe a change of wind from northwest to southerly, the weather maps supplied by Dr. Pack and reproduced in part, indicate that a brief shift of wind to southerly must have occurred between midnight and 6 a. m. April 5. However, it seems to have had no effect on the duck movement in that area, no doubt because of the early morning hours.

Farther to the east of Huron no noticeable waterfowl movement occurred at this time and apparently the migration was slower. Mr. John Carlsen, Manager of the Waubay National Wildlife Refuge, reported that his records show very little on duck migration for April 5. A few American Mergansers and Lesser Scaup were first noted on April 6. Snow and Blue Geese started migrating over on April 7, which was also a day of general hawk migration. The migrational tempo increased considerably after April 10 for waterfowl.

The April 5 flight over Huron apparently continued on north to at least Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Mr. Lyle Schoonover, Refuge Manager, writes: "Our census on March 31 showed no blues, 25 snows, 1,000 mallards, and 2,500 pintails. On April 10, we had 11,000 snows, 13,000 blues, 2,500 mallards, and 3,000 pintails. There was a big movement through this area

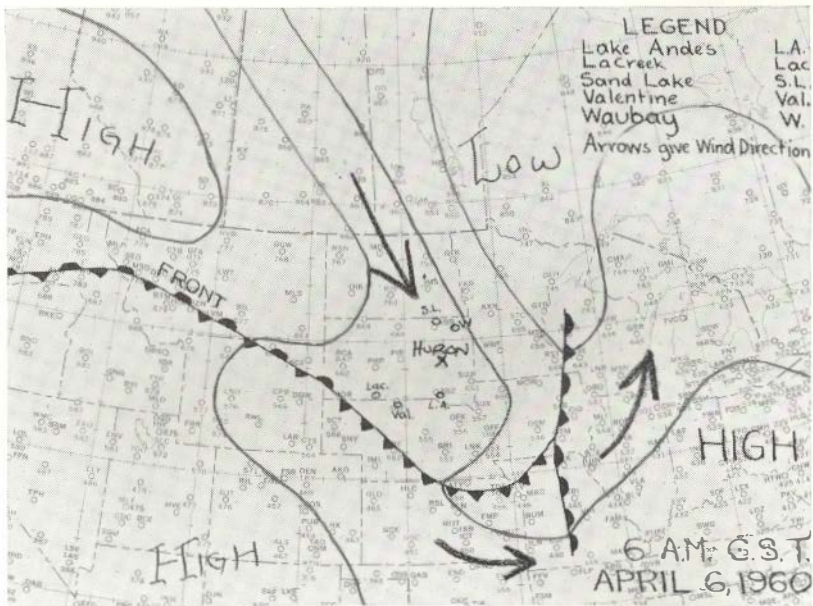
at that period but I can't give you much help on specific days."

The movement at Sand Lake during that period probably was correlated with the south wind and waterfowl movement seen at Huron. Sand Lake is almost 100 miles due north of Huron, on the James River also.

The picture, as interpreted from observations, was of a condition favorable to waterfowl migration occurring primarily in the James River Valley and waterfowl oriented to move north through

that area proceeded to take full advantage of the tail wind, brief though it was. It should be remembered that the James, being in flood, and numerous low areas filled with water from the melting of heavy snow cover provided suitable rest areas throughout the flight, particularly north of Huron.

In Table I we note that wind velocity at 1000 feet at 6 p. m., April 5 was 25 miles per hour, a quite respectable addition to the ducks' probable air speed of 60 miles per hour.—Huron.



Weather Map — Morning After the Flight

Birds' Nests of South Dakota

L. J. Moriarty

A. O. U. #604 DICKCISSEL (*Spiza americana*)

THIS common bird of eastern South Dakota nests plentifully on the ground or in a low bush, weed or alfalfa plant base. I have never found its nest as much as 2 feet above ground. Neither have I found one where the rim of the nest cup was level with the ground. The base of the nest is often on the ground but not in a hollow in the ground. The middle of June is the best time to find them in our area.

The nest is a well built cup, woven of grasses. It is circularly woven with finer grass and rootlets for the lining. It is well constructed and well concealed. Good locations are in the low shoots of the wild plum row at the outside of some weedy young shelterbelt or in alfalfa or weed bases at the edge of fields. Patiently watching a singing bird to see where it goes can lead you to the nest. Walking in an area where there are singing birds, watching the ground, you may flush the nesting female.

The nests are about 4 inches across the outside, about 2½ inches across the cup, and 1½ inch deep. The eggs usually number 4, occasionally 5, and measure 0.8 by 0.65 inch, roundish ovate, being not strongly pointed. The color I find to be a pale blue with a slight greenish tint and all of probably 50 I have seen had some brown dots or spots, most of them sparsely spotted, but never have I seen one with no spots at all. Dr. Coues, in his handbook of Northwestern Ornithology, says, "I have seen none not perfectly plain". I would not say they are truly colonial but I do generally find other nests in

the area when one nest is found. I have found nests not over 20 feet apart and the majority I find contain 1 or 2 cowbird's eggs.—Watertown.

DICKCISSELS—July 1910. Dickcissels are tardy nesters and it was not until July 8, 1910 that I started a bird from one of the currant bushes and found there my first nest. It was rather bulky and coarsely made, being composed of corn husks, grasses and weed stems, lined with horse hair. It contained five eggs of a light blue color, much resembling those of the bluebird.

Nearly a year later I found another nest. This one was placed in a small plum tree, a few feet above the ground. It was more compactly made than usual and contained five eggs.

I found a nest a few days later in a little plum bush, surrounded by a jungle of weeds so tall that the sunlight could not reach the nest. It was little more than a platform of weed stems, which contained at this time two young birds three or four days old.

The male had been singing from a nearby cottonwood tree while I prepared the area for photography. As soon as I was out of his sight he approached close to the nest. The mother bird was very restless, flitting from weed to weed with a grasshopper in her mouth. It was several minutes before she dared to light on the plum bush and several more before the grasshopper was placed in one of the open mouths. By this time the male bird had also caught an insect but was more

(Continued on Page 78)

Natural Area Preservation in South Dakota

Myron E. Harrell

AT THE May meeting of the S. D. O. U., I brought up the pressing need for preservation of natural areas in this state. After considerable favorable discussion, I suggested a resolution giving the backing of the organization to the concept of preservation of natural areas. I read a copy of a resolution passed by the South Dakota Academy of Sciences at the meeting of May 6, 1961; this resolution had been presented by Drs. Dilwyn J. Rogers and Willard N. Rosine and myself. Instead of a similar resolution a motion was made and passed without further opportunity for discussion to refer the wording of such a motion to a committee to be picked by the President. From my point of view this was an unfortunate delay since the motion of support can not come up for approval until the next meeting, and I believe the matter is of considerable urgency.

In discussing this situation it might be well to define "natural areas." In general terms such areas are living museums representing various habitats or types of landscapes unmodified by the civilizing hand of man. Admittedly there are few areas that have not undergone some change due to man's activity, but areas can still be found in South Dakota where the effects have as yet been minimal. Reasons why such areas should be preserved are many. One of the most significant is their scientific importance. These areas provide conditions for certain types of ecological research otherwise impossible. In applied science areas that are not sprayed for weeds or insects, are not grazed, or otherwise disturbed can be important, even essential, controls in

investigation of land-use techniques. The chances of survival of certain kinds of animals and plants are enhanced if areas are protected from other uses. Many natural areas have considerable educational value. In addition to these, there is the not inconsiderable esthetic value.

Our problem in preservation of such lands is the demand for other uses, and in this field multi-purpose areas are not usually satisfactory. Our park areas and our wildlife areas are devoted to other main purposes and development for these purposes is often destructive to natural area values. Examples of such development might include spraying for insects and construction of camp sites in park areas or planting for additional cover or impoundments in wildlife areas. When incorporated in other programs natural areas will only be properly handled if they are designated for a single main purpose—that of natural areas.

What can be done? There are a number of public agencies and private organizations that are concerned. Support can be given to development of public policy in the form of the Wilderness Bill in Congress or in some other form in the state. The S. D. O. U. and the individual members can give moral and financial support to private organizations that are trying to initiate preservation projects. The South Dakota Bird Notes could do a service with a series of articles on conservation organizations. Every S. D. O. U. member should also be a member of one or more conservation organizations. Every year the job will be harder to do. Everyone

who is interested must help.—**Department of Zoology, State University of South Dakota, Vermillion, S. D.**

PROPOSAL ON NATURAL AREAS

The following is a proposal, or similar one, which will be submitted for approval at the next regular meeting. Study it carefully and be prepared to offer constructive criticisms. Credit for developing the proposal goes to Dick Hurd formerly of Rapid City, but now located at Juneau, Alaska.

Whereas the existence and perpetuation of all living organisms are intimately related with their environment, and

Whereas these relationships are complex and to be understood require both intensive and extensive study, and

Whereas bird life is a facet of the total fauna existing in all plant communities,

Therefore be it resolved that South Dakota Ornithological Union goes on record as endorsing and supporting the preservation of natural areas in South Dakota for scientific, recreational, and educational purposes.

I should like to take this opportunity to notify the members that if they are aware of any desirable natural areas, they should notify Dr. Byron Harrell, Department of Zoology, University of South Dakota as he is your South Dakota Nature Conservancy representative. Remember, a natural area should not be populated by weeds, Bromegrass, Kentucky Blue grass, Quack grass or any other species which are indicative of disturbance. Your chance of finding a good area today is not as great as it was a few years ago; the

chance in the future depends a great deal on your action now. So start looking and be ready to report at your next meeting. You may be lucky enough to witness a sight that our first pioneers witnessed over the entire area and if you do, let's preserve it.—**David Holden, Brookings.**

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President's Letter

(Continued from Page 59)

prompt action to save our few remaining natural areas before they are gone forever.

With the approach of the fall hunting season let us be on the alert to call attention to the new law which protects all owls and hawks in our state. A day or two before the season opens a reminder to your local newspaper may be of help.—**Ruth C. Habeger.**

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H. F. Chapman

(Continued from Page 63)

cance in what Chapman wrote after that memorable Sioux City meeting. 'If we, Mrs. C. and I,' he wrote, "could do a little to broaden the horizons of South Dakotans as to bird study as we have had ours widened, we might justify our existence to some extent." In such justification does history enshrine its formulators.—**English Department, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.**

CORRECTION—On page 43 of the June 1961 number of Bird Notes, in the second line of the item "PALM WARBLERS IN DAY COUNTY" the year of 1960 is in error. The correct year is 1957. The reason for the meticulousity is that this may be the first record for Day County.

Our Juniors

Dear Juniors:

The letter below put your editor in a tough spot. I hope I have found the best way out of it.

The letter is so entertaining and has much that is new and interesting. So it is easy to forget one important fact: Both game and migratory birds are protected by laws against possession or even interference. And it would not do to seem to approve anything that might, if carried on with not too good judgment, get you into trouble.

I couldn't stand not to run it and it did not seem right not to give credit to Ronald for telling us what he had learned. Which again might not work out very well.

Checking with Ronald and his parents I found that they well knew the laws but were taking a wider view of the problem than I. Without saying it just that way, they believe that teaching Ronald to appreciate birds could be more important to future generations of birds than the question of whether to blindly obey the letter of the law—possibly at the expense of its real intent: the long term protection of birds.

And it is a fact that great numbers of nesting birds are killed every summer by young people unfortunate in their choice of parents to teach them better.

So I am running Ronald's letter with the understanding that birds with parents able to care for them must not be bothered. Study them as much as you can without interfering with their parents' care and tell us about it. But use a little judgment about getting too close to nests and don't hang around where you will draw attention of predators, animal, bird—or human, to the nest.

If you find a young or crippled bird that really needs your help—and that is sometimes a tough decision—do the best you can for it. And, if it recovers or gets able to go on its own, release it under the best circumstances you can.—Ed.

OUR "MUDDY" FRIENDS

Ronald Highstreet

Age 12, Hurley, S. D.

We live in Hurley which is about 2 miles from a wetland, slough area, known around here, at least, as Mud Lake.

Dad took my little brother and me out one evening after supper so we could develop a hunter's eye, for this is where he does all his duck hunting. While out, we saw several floating nests

which we believed to be Coot, and in one nest in particular, was one lone egg which had a little red bill sticking out saying "peep peep". Dad believed the mother had become tired of waiting for this last chick, and had probably deserted it. So we took it home with us.

Mom put it in a box under a desk lamp to keep it warm, and we all watched this funny looking bird kick its way out of the egg. All of us were very

much surprised at what a big bird came out of that small egg and especially at the large feet.

Instead of getting up on its feet like little chickens do, it lay flat with its feet sticking out behind. It had a bald red head, bright red bill, tiny wings, blue around the eyes and one of the neighbors said it resembled a steel wool scouring pad.

Mom left the desk lamp on all night to keep it warm, and I know mom and dad never expected it to be alive next morning. My little sister asked every morning for the next few days if the bird had lasted another night.

After a couple of days it began to eat. Mom fed it bread and milk and egg biscuits wet with milk, that we had left over from the time when we had a canary. Mom tried to feed it everything we ate, trying to find something it liked.

To our surprise it liked baked beans best, also cottage cheese and a little spaghetti. This bird hatched June 1 and it is more than a month old and still mostly feet and legs, although it is getting a few wing feathers now. At first it could eat only one bean, but now it can gobble up a whole can lid full.

Now our bird has a companion. Dad took mom out on Mud Lake one evening too and she pulled a little one out of the water that was swimming by the boat. It was smaller than ours and we figured it was about 2 days old. Also it couldn't walk as well as it could swim but soon developed land legs..

We thought our Coot would be glad to see another like it, but mom had never showed our bird anything before that wasn't good to eat; so it was determined to eat the new one. It pecked it good and hard a few times, but finally gave up. Mom said it had never seen anything but us, and probably

thought it was "people." The two are friends now.

Dad built a pen outside for them to run in, and at night, when it got so cold, we brought them in and put them in a little cage with the desk lamp close to keep them warm. They liked the lamp and squawked very loud if it wasn't turned on. Then they would snuggle up beside it and go to sleep.

It has been fun comparing the one hatched on Mud Lake with the one that has never seen it. Dad brings in a pail of green stuff from Mud Lake for them to eat, along with beans and cottage cheese which they both like.

We took them to the neighbors one day to swim in their tank. The little one darted around; the older one kept trying to climb out. Mom says he just doesn't seem to realize he is a "Mud Hen."

We enjoy bird watching around Mud Lake. This spring besides almost every kind of duck, we saw plovers, phalaropes, godwits, dowitchers, many different sandpipers, herons, two kinds of bitterns, rails, etc.. Some of these we had never seen before. We have been trying to spot some baby ducks, but have not seen any.

Soon we plan to turn our "Mud Hens" loose as they are big enough to care for themselves. We would like to band them first.—July 3, 1961.

Later Ronald's mother gave us some more of the story.

"On July 23 we released the Coots. They were well feathered and had grown beyond belief, considering their unusual diet. They seemed quite happy with their new home, which surprised us as they had not shown any love for water. When we left them, they were paddling noisily down into the lake and finding new things to eat. The

(Continued on Page 73)

General Notes of Special Interest

MOCKINGBIRDS AT PRAIRIE GEM RANCH—On May 25, 1961 a Mockingbird came, a wonderful and incessant singer. He stayed for five days. The last morning, before I was awake, Mrs. Barr was sure there were two singers. And before night, there were none at all. Nor any since.—**Claude A. Barr, Prairie Gem Ranch, Smithwick.**

(Claude Barr has lived in Arkansas and would know mockingbirds.—Ed.)

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UPLAND PLOVER IN UNION COUNTY—It is not unusual to find the Upland Plover migrating in the spring through Union County, but summer records are another thing. Prior to 1948 this observer and his wife made summer trips to Union County for the sole purpose of trying to find this plover in the summer. Plover habitat is almost gone from Union County, but not so with Clay, Yankton and Bon Homme counties. Therefore on June 10, 1961, as we were a few miles south of Elk Point and we saw an on-guard Upland Plover fly up from a fence post, we were as excited as if we had seen a rare bird. It was proof that at least one pair of plover still spent the summer in Union County. Farther on we saw several Upland Plover in the three above mentioned counties where because of some fine native hay land we still expect to see them every summer.—**Wm. Youngworth, Sioux City, Iowa.**

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BARN OWL—July 10, 1961, Clarence F. Scheper, Sioux Falls, S. D., observed a Barn Owl in a cavity in the face of a chalk cliff along the Missouri River, close to the mouth of Snake Creek.

Over & Thoms indicate such occurrence to be common, but there have been no other recent reports so far as I am informed.—**H. F. Chapman, Sioux Falls.**

* * * *

POSSIBLE BACHMAN'S WARBLER?—Of course Bachman's Warbler is never mentioned in connection with South Dakota. A bird of the Southeastern United States, it has been reported no closer than Missouri; its absolute rarity, in its normal range, would make the appearance here, even of a straggler, a most unlikely event.

Accordingly, none of us look for the bird at all, certainly not seriously, and it is never considered as a possibility when some warbler is being unusually recalcitrant.

So, when Herman Chilson saw an odd Warbler about his place on Pickerel Lake May 7 of this year and couldn't find anything else it resembled but a Bachman's Warbler, female, he was in no hurry to announce it widely. However, he did write to Herb Krause about it and speak of it to Alfred Peterson.

Over a month later, during the week end of June 17-18, Mary M. Tremaine, 4322 N. 52nd St., Omaha 4, Nebr., and Miss Bertha Winter of Lincoln, Nebr., were birding in the same general area. Not being acquainted with the ground, they were, until revisiting the place as described below, unable to give an exact location for their observation. Their description put it somewhere in the Grenville, Waubay, Pickerel Lake triangle, however.

Again no one was looking for a

Bachman's Warbler. But a bird was seen in a scrub thicket by a lake and studied closely for some 20 minutes before it took refuge in larger trees some distance across the road from the area where it had been first seen. No thought of Bachman's Warbler occurred at this time. Only afterward, when observed details were being compared with pictures, did it appear that this bird resembled rather closely a Bachman's Warbler, male, and nothing else that could be found.

Mary wrote to Alfred Peterson who contacted Herman, who restudied his notes of May 7, and replied, copy to several others, urging her to make report in detail for the record. The report was made, with an accompanying note that she expected to visit the area in question July 30 and find the actual point of her observation, with the hope of seeing the bird again.

Herman and I arranged to be present with indicated equipment, see the bird, if it was still present, and learn the exact location.

Shortly after 9 a. m., July 30, the three of us met at Waubay Headquarters, along with Mrs. Chilson, who brought Herman and then hurried back to prepare lunch for all of us.

Quickly we got started, and found the scene of Mary's observation hardly a mile from Headquarters, on the north shore of Hillebrand Lake. The scrub thicket by the shore is sumac, with a scattering of small boxelders; the distant trees across the road, where the bird took refuge, a considerable area of chokecherry surrounded by other and larger trees. Some six miles to the northeast is the Chilson property on Pickerel Lake, where Herman's observation of May 7 was made.

The three of us combed the area of

sumac and vicinity for the next three hours, hoping to flush the little bird that had caused all the commotion—but with no success.

Chipping and Clay-colored Sparrows were about in numbers. An occasional Yellow Warbler was seen. A Yellowthroat was heard now and then. Catbirds and Thrashers, as well as small flycatchers and both kingbirds were seen. But nothing that could answer the description of Bachman's Warbler.

We consoled ourselves with the possibility that the birds, whatever they might be, had left the area by this relatively late date and might be seen again next spring.

Our next move was to the Chilson home on Pickerel Lake where we were both amazed and entranced by the beauty of this spot of generous acreage, thickly covered with classic bird habitat, from water front to prairie, including large trees, thickets, evergreens, fruit, and pasture.

Only the wonderful meal Mrs. Chilson soon had for us could compete in interest.

Late in the afternoon Mary left to continue her vacation trip into Canada; not long after I too had to leave this wonderful place and its people to get back to the nuisance of making a living.

And that is the story to date on our impossible avian adventure. Next year we can hope it will continue. The reason for this advance note is, of course, to alert anyone interested so there may be more help next year with the basic question: What kind of a warbler would so nearly resemble Bachman's to two careful and independent observers—if not Bachman's.—**J. W. JOHNSON, Huron.**

A NEW RECORDING OF BIRD SONGS

BIRD SONGS IN YOUR GARDEN, complete with high-fidelity 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm phonograph record. A Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology Bookalbum. Text and photographs by Arthur A. Allen. Phonograph record by Peter Paul Kellogg. \$5.95.

The album, vividly illustrated with 53 photographs (31 in full color) gives brief descriptive information about the songs and habits of 25 species of birds commonly heard in the gardens of eastern U. S. and Canada, tells what to plant to attract birds, how to build bird houses, baths and feeders, and lists selected reading references for further study.

One side of the record is arranged to aid in learning to identify the bird songs. The other side is for pure enjoyment of bird song and excellent for use on a winter's day when song birds are far away.

Miss Mary Aberdeen Kettle who for many years has made a study of bird calls and songs has these critical observations to offer.

"It is an interesting record for those wishing to learn bird songs. The record side with just singing leaves me, however, with a desire to know what they are.

"I felt that the Song Sparrow often sings more beautifully and with less buzz. As for the Red Eyed Vireo's song, any of that species I've heard have never sung with such speed. At times the song sounds raspy and coarse.

"It is my feeling that when Mr. Arthur Allen and Mr. Paul Kellogg collaborated with Roger Tory Peterson in the "Field Guide to Bird Songs of Eastern and Central North America", the best recording of the songs of birds was made, because of the lack of back-

ground interference. However, we do not hear them that way in nature and this album would make a valuable addition to one's library of bird songs."—**Blanche Battin, Huron.**

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Birds' Nests

(Continued from Page 71)

timid than his mate and it was some time before the food was delivered.

The principal food brought to the young consisted of grasshoppers, which were abundant. The male assisted the female in feeding. As food was brought every few minutes the amount consumed by each of the young in a day must have been several times its own weight.

The nesting sites selected by the Dickcissel vary much; sometimes the nests are placed on the ground, in a clump of grass or in wild rose bushes, trees, and shrubbery, although they are seldom fifteen feet above the ground. In the past season one nest was found in a low tree, and contained three Dickcissel eggs and one, a stranger, deposited there by a Yellow-billed Cuckoo or "Rain Crow." Whether this was a wilful act of parasitism, as practiced by the European Cuckoo or our American Cowbirds, I cannot say. When I returned to examine the nest the eggs were all broken and my chance to photograph or collect the set was gone.—**Alex Walker, Armour.**

(The above was abstracted from **The Curio Collector**, Spring, 1912, with permission of the author. Mr. Walker is now in Tillamook, Oregon, Curator of the Pioneer Museum there. At Dr. Moriarty's suggestion Mr. Walker's account accompanies his own description of the Dickcissel nest. Those who had the privilege of seeing Mr. Walker's color slides at the impromptu evening show at Watertown, May 19, 1961, will need no further introduction to his work.—Ed.)

DR. GEORGE H. LOWERY, JR., president of the American Ornithologists' Union, Museum of Zoology, Louisiana State University, in a letter on other matters, adds a thought on a subject near to his heart:

"Our Society needs the help and support of every dedicated student of birds in the country. If every person who derives pleasure from his pursuit of the study of birds would become a member of the American Ornithologists' Union each would be making a contribution to the advancement of the science of ornithology. It is only through a healthy membership that we can continue to publish THE AUK and other important scientific publications of our Society and to render the other services that we perform. I have been toying with the idea of asking the editors of all the state and regional bird journals to run editorials asking their members this question: "Are you a member of the A. O. U.?"

"Of course, in asking the question, the editorial would need also to tell something about the A.O.U.—that it publishes the CHECK-LIST OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS, that it is about to publish the first of a series of volumes entitled the HANDBOOK OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS, that the A.O.U. supports ornithological research and the publication of monographs and other scholarly works, and that the A.O.U. carries on educational activities to promote the study, enjoyment, and preservation of birds.

"We have at the present time, according to the most recent list available to me, only nine members in South Dakota. I feel that most of the members of your state organization would profit immeasurably by affiliation with the A.O.U. and, by the same token, the A.O.U. would profit immeasurably by having them as members.

"As editor of South Dakota Bird

Notes, would you consider writing a special editorial for inclusion in your journal? Anyone desiring to become a member may do so by writing to me, to any of the officers of the Union, or to a member of the Membership Committee. Mr. Winston W. Brockner, 63 Ardmore Place, Buffalo 13, New York, is now the Chairman of the Membership Committee and Mr. William F. Rapp, 430 Ivy Avenue, Crete, Nebraska, is a member of the committee from your general area."

These words, direct from Dr. Lowery, obviously have more appeal than anything this editor is likely to put together. Accordingly—well, it's not every ornithological publication that can have the president of the American Ornithological Union do a guest editorial.—Ed.

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Our Juniors

(Continued from Page 75)

other coots would make noises in the rushes and it was quite funny to watch them cock their heads to one side and listen to these new sounds.

We have been out there three times since to see if we could spot them, without success. However, there are two off in the rushes that are very noisy; we feel that these must be ours. Considering the many coots out there, and these being the only two that are so noisy, we feel they must be the same. We have certainly learned a new appreciation for the dingy "mud-hen."—**Mrs. Emil Highstreet, Hurley.**

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H. F. CHAPMAN, with typical generosity, has removed the problem of the out-of-print December, 1949 issue of BIRD NOTES (Vol. 1, No. 3). At his own expense he has had a new printing of 200 copies made and turned over to the Librarian, Herman Chilson, Webster, from whom they can now be obtained.

In Memoriam

J. O. Johnson died June 16, 1961. All who knew him will feel the loss, members of S.D.O.U. more than most. Our best tribute to his memory lies in ever advancing the work he found so worthwhile.