

SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

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SEPTEMBER, 1962

Whole No. 54



Zeus, a Golden Eagle

--Wayne Trimm

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President's Page

THE dates for our winter meeting have been set for Saturday P. M., Jan. 19 and Sunday the 20th at Brookings. Herb Krause is working on the program and we will expect to have that in the next issue of Bird Notes. Mark off these dates and plan to attend. The last winter meeting was more than worth while, and we are sure this one will be also.

Preliminary plans for the annual Spring meeting to be held at Webster, May 25-26, 1963 are in the embryonic stage with Herman Chilson as chairman. From past experience working with him, I feel sure it will be one of our best. The Program for that meeting will be in your hands in advance so save the dates. I would also suggest that those of you who can, come before and stay after the regular meeting as that part of our State is packed with things of interest.



Following are some things that should be discussed at the January meeting at Brookings. Give them study and come prepared to express your views so we can come up with worth while answers.

1. What is your thinking on collectors permits? Should they be allowed for educational purposes only? Should permits be issued also for persons to legally collect and preserve birds which have died from natural causes?

2. What will be our stand on any op-

en season on the Sandhill Crane in South Dakota?

3. What will be our stand on any future attempt to open a season on the Mourning Dove? Your President attempted to speak for S.D.O.U. On that question in the Sioux Falls Argus Leader of Sunday, July 1st. If you can get a copy study it over and take me apart if you think I am wrong. It is a problem to speak for 300 people and expect to please all, but I am accustomed to speaking my mind—and being wrong at times. I will try to take it in stride.

4. What effort do we want to make to establish natural areas in our State and how best can we accomplish those aims?

5. What further efforts should we make in the way of acquiring wetlands? How can we help overcome some objection made to that program? I was glad to learn that Gov. Gubbrud has indicated a less unfavorable stand. His main objection concerned taking more lands off the tax rolls, a legitimate objection but not insurmountable in my thinking.

6. Study the South Dakota conservancy law. I have read it and have not concluded that it is all good. The title is good as we are all for conservancy; but try to decide whether it will accomplish those ends, or whether, as some feel, it may be very destructive to wild life.

7. Make suggestions for the Spring meeting on program and volunteer if you have something to contribute. We have much talent within our own group. Come prepared to contribute your share. You get what you give.—**L. J. Moriarty.**

Birding Along White River

Velma DeVries

Belvidere
June 23, 1962

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Through the courtesy of Miss Esther Serr of Rapid City I have received the March and June issues of South Dakota Bird Notes, and have enjoyed them very much. Enclosed is \$3.00 check for membership and subscription.

Although I have enjoyed watching and identifying common prairie birds since I was a girl, it was Miss Serr (with the help of an elusive cuckoo that teased me all last summer) who prompted me to suggest a bird book (BIRDS OF AMERICA, Garden City) and a binocular for our family present last Christmas. The enthusiasm with which our five children have taken to bird watching would indicate that our choice was a happy one.

Our ranch is near the banks of the White River, five and one-half miles southwest of Belvidere. Our window looks out upon cottonwood and Russian olive trees, so that we see a number of tree-loving birds as well as the prairie species that live in the river breaks and upland pastures. Last fall and winter we identified Chickadees, Slate-colored Juncos, Evening Grosbeaks, Bohemian Waxwings, Tree Sparrows, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Brown Creepers, Downy Woodpeckers, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Pheasants, Sharp-tailed Grouse, and a Bald Eagle.

This spring we had a great deal of amusement from the zany spinning and bobbing of a flock of Northern Phalaropes which spent several days (begin-

ning March 27) on a small dam along the road to school.

Birds are exceptionally numerous in this area this summer. Most common are Meadowlarks, Lark Buntings, Lark Sparrows, Brown Thrashers, Kingbirds, Crested Flycatchers, Mourning Doves, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Shrikes, Blue Jays, Flickers, Redwinged Blackbirds, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Common Grackles, and Orioles. I have been able to watch through the glasses at a distance the perching and flight of a Cuckoo. Another time I came upon one in a plum thicket and was able to watch it at close range as it sat "frozen" in its peculiar hunched position, tail hanging down. I could not tell whether it was the black or yellow-billed species, but there was a distinct reddish cast about its eye and I could not make out any conspicuous white spots in its tail. But a cuckoo in the yard this evening had a distinctly yellow bill.

Arthur Johnston reported seeing two large white birds swimming in the White River near his home this spring. A few days later, on May 27, the children and I saw White Pelicans flying back and forth along the river.

Last evening, as the children and I worked in the garden, we were entertained by a Bobwhite who sat in full view on a nearby tree, whistling cheerfully. The Bobwhites in this area were planted by L. A. Pier a few years ago. Apparently they don't winter well here, as this is the first one we have heard this year.

We have identified three different

orioles near our house this spring. The Bullock's Oriole has been around other years, and is easily identified by the orange color running along the sides of his head. But Sarah Jane McDonald and Lavonne Foreman were with me one Sunday afternoon when we were able to definitely identify both a male Baltimore Oriole and a male Orchard Oriole. We had been seeing a grayish-brown bird with yellow on its head and underparts, and a distinctive black mask over eyes and chin. We searched vainly among warblers, sparrows, etc., in our books, wondering why a bird with such pronounced marking should not be featured on the colored plates. Finally I chanced upon a picture of a young male Orchard Oriole, and our search was over.

The material by Claude Barr in the June Bird Notes on Long-billed Curlews was particularly interesting to me. First, the Barrs have been neighbors and friends of my family since before I was born. Second, I remember very well the Long-billed Curlews. They were common inhabitants of eastern Fall River County in the late 30's and early 40's. And, third, this spring is the first time in the fifteen years I have lived here at Belvidere that I have seen or heard a curlew. We have heard them a number of times, and the men report seeing five or six of the birds out north of town when they were moving cattle on June 19.

One of our pastures was a favorite nesting place of the curlews when I was a girl (seven miles northeast of Oelrichs). More than once I was the victim of the bold and direct tactics by which they sought to protect their families and drive away intruders. As I rode dreamily through the rolling hills an old Curlew would rise noiselessly to a point above and behind me. Then, without warning, wings outstretched and long curved bill open

wide, it would swoop to within a few feet of the top of my hat, uttering a shrill, nerve-shattering "Cuurrr-lew-lew-lew." The latter syllables were uttered in rhythm to the beating of its wings as it picked up altitude and disappeared over a rise, leaving me to restore my own equilibrium and that of my horse as best I could.

Getting back to this spring, we enjoyed watching a pair of young Great Horned Owls sitting on the horizontal limb of a dead tree. We discovered them late in May, and were able to watch them for almost a week before they became strong enough to find a hiding place away from our spying eyes. It was fun to look at them through the glasses from various vantage points. They sat on the branch, one staring over the other's shoulder. Regardless of the angle from which we approached them, we were met by a pair of stern faces, comical to behold on babies so fuzzy and helpless.

We are hoping Esther Serr and a party from Rapid City will be able to come to our place sometime in September for a day of birding. Maybe we can pick up some pointers to help us get even more enjoyment out of a fascinating hobby.—Velma (Mrs. Wallace) DeVries.

COVER

We have failed to get from Wayne Trimm the story of the particular Golden Eagle whose picture graces our cover. But the bird was named Zeus and has a worthwhile story, we are assured by the Chapmans who own the original painting and gave the half tone to Bird Notes.

Our Juniors

Dear Juniors:

Due to illness I was unable to attend the convention in Pierre, but I am very happy to learn from my friends that many of you were there. It must have been fun birding on Farm Island and helping Mrs. Holden with the banding. Those of you living near or in Watertown are very fortunate to have Dr. Moriarty as a leader. Perhaps you can organize a Watertown Bird Club soon.

I think a good way to start a Junior Bird Club is by using the National Audubon Society's material written especially for you. The third and fourth grades in my school used it last spring, along with their science unit on birds. While they spent only eight weeks, or

sixteen lessons on it, there is enough material to supply a club, meeting once a month, for a year.

If any of you are interested, write to the National Audubon Society, 1130 Fifth Avenue, New York 28, New York, and ask for information about their Junior Audubon Bird Clubs.

Mr. Johnson and I were so happy to have three fine letters from Juniors in the March issue. Keep them coming.

If any of you are in Rapid City this summer call me and maybe we can do some birding together. We are the only Yargers in the phone book.

I hope you have had a happy summer.—Clara Yarger, 2742 St. Anne St., Rapid City.

LATE WINTER BIRDS

Bill Talen, Jr.

Many winter birds were seen in Watertown. I had as many as 4 Evening Grosbeaks and 12 Purple Finches. Both probably were attracted by sunflower seeds on the ground.

I found a dead Purple Finch and an Evening Grosbeak. Both were beautiful specimens and were killed by flying into picture windows.

Very scarce compared to other years were the Cedar Waxwings, Downy Woodpeckers, and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Crows and Longspurs were common. And so were Slate-colored Juncos. Bohemian Waxwings were also common and were seen single (usually they congregate in flocks).

Later on, in the spring, I identified a Bay-breasted Warbler and saw both kinglets many times.

A dead Rose-breasted Grosbeak and

a Cape May Warbler were found. All the thrushes were seen and Mory saw a Canada Warbler.—Watertown.

* * * *

A BIRDING TRIP

Marlene Ewert, Age 9

I would like to tell you about a birding trip I took with the Black Hills Audubon Society. We went on Sunday, April 29, 1962. The weather was warm and sunny. The wind was mild. There were some clouds in the sky. The temperature was 58.

We met at the School of Mines campus in Rapid City. While waiting there, we saw English Sparrows and heard a Chipping Sparrow.

We went east through Rapid Valley seeing several Western Meadowlarks and Red-wing Blackbirds.

We were going to a Great Blue Heron rookery. We left the cars near the road and walked back through a field

across a creek toward the rookery. On the walk we saw a Brewer's Blackbird, Robins, Rough-winged Swallows, a Common Crow, and a Mourning Dove. We did not get too close to the rookery as it disturbed the birds but we could see their nests in the trees. We counted 20 Herons.

The Great Blue Heron is often called a Crane. One difference between them is that the Crane flies with its neck stretched out and the Heron with its neck folded back.

Another new bird for me that day was the Long-billed Curlew. We saw three. One flew over our heads and I could tell what it was without binoculars. We had seen 2 Curlews before that in a field with a bird that looked like a Willet. Mrs. Yarger wasn't positive it was a Willet but we think so.

On our way home we saw a Red-shafted Flicker, Killdeer, Pheasant, Marsh

Hawk, and a Sparrow Hawk. I saw 16 birds in all on my South Dakota check List.

There were children and grown-ups from the Rapid Valley School. My two friends, Joanne and Bonnie French, and I are from Evergreen District.—**Rt. 1, Box 364 C, Rapid City, S. D.**

* * * *

WATCHING BIRDS

Sharon Loos, Age 8

I like to watch birds. Do you? We have a Meadowlark at our bird bath every morning. Sometimes we see the English Sparrows there too.

In our garage we have a Sparrow's nest. A Starling is trying to build its nest there too. But the Sparrow doesn't want him to do it. The Starling is trying to build it up while the Sparrow is away.—**Box 329A, St. Road 787-4556, Rapid City.**



Screech
Owl

—E. W. Steffen

Birds' Nests of South Dakota

L. J. Moriarty

A. O. U. #511 COMMON GRACKLE (*Quiscalus quiscula*)

THE Common Grackle nests everywhere in eastern South Dakota. They are inclined to nest colonially, often but a few feet apart in choke-cherry thickets and other low brushy areas. They seem to prefer a location near water. However, they are adaptable and will use almost any kind of tree or bush. Conifers are favored.

Usually the nest is placed from 6 to 12 feet above ground but quite often somewhat higher. It is well constructed, somewhat like a Robin's nest but larger, deeper, both overall and in depth of cup. It is usually built rather loosely on the outside but well woven as with all the black-bird-oriole family, the weavers.

The nests I find are built entirely of grasses, lined with finer rootlets, with some mud being used. I do not find any twigs or leaves used to any extent. The lining is circularly placed in a very neat manner.

They start nest building in our area as early as the first part of May, in spruce trees, and sometimes re-nest in suitable seasons.

The nest measures, on the outside, from 5 to 8 inches deep by 7 inches across, is tightly woven into a multiple fork of a tree. The cup is about 3½ inches deep and 4 inches wide.

The usual clutch is 5 eggs; but sometimes 4 or 6. I have found very few Cowbird eggs in grackle nests although redwing nests in the immediate area usually do have them.

The eggs are rather long ovate with a blue-green ground color blotched and heavily scrawled, most profusely around the larger end, with dark, purplish, brown with some smaller spots and scrawls that are distributed pretty well over the egg and appear to be within the shell or slightly under the surface. The large markings are definitely on the outside and can be felt. The eggs measure about 1.25 x 0.90 inches.

This bird is rather fond of other birds' eggs and young, though not nearly so much so as the Bluejay. The parents are aggressive in defense of the nest.

* * * *

A. O. U. #538 CHESTNUT COLLARED LONGSPUR (*Calcarius ornatus*)

These nests are very hard to find at first. I hunted two summers without success. Now, in the first half of July, I can find as many as 4 or 5 nests in an hour or two. They are found in short grass pastures and, most often, within a few feet of a rock or weed where the male can sit or perch to watch and sing.

When one nears the nest area, the male will fly directly overhead, then usually directly over the nest, where it hovers and sings, alight about 20 or 30 feet away, and utter the alarm call of three sharp notes, all of one pitch (thee, thee, thee). Then, when one moves closer to where the nest appears to be, watching closely to see whether the bird goes by on the same side,

(Continued on Page 56)

General Notes of Special Interest

BANDING ON FARM ISLAND—During the Spring Meeting at Pierre, I stretched three mist nets on Farm Island in the hopes of banding some of the many birds present in the area. By late Sunday afternoon 52 birds were banded, representing 18 species.

The following is the list of birds banded: Black-billed Cuckoo - 1, Alder Flycatcher - 4, House Wren - 1, Catbird - 2, Brown Thrasher - 1, Swainson's Thrush - 1, Cedar Waxwing - 1, Red-eyed Vireo - 8, Black and White Warbler - 1, Yellow Warbler - 3, (2 male, 1 female), Ovenbird - 1, Macgillivray's Warbler - 1, Yellow-breasted Chat - 5, American Redstart - 10 (4 males, 6 females), Baltimore Oriole - 2 females, Scarlet Tanager - 2 males, Black-headed Grosbeak - 7 (5 males, 2 females), and Spotted Towhee - 1.

It was quite satisfying to see the enthusiasm of the Junior Members who helped me keep an eye on the nets. They really enjoyed seeing the birds in hand.—**Nelva Holden** (Mrs. **David J.**), **Brookings**.

* * * *

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE AT ABERDEEN—I saw two different Solitaires in March, 1962: The first was in Aberdeen on March 8, the other at Richmond Lake State Park on March 28. I watched both birds for some time. The gray overall color, the white outer tail feathers, the tawny wing-patches, the eye-ring and size could belong to no other species.

Mrs. Paul G. Bunker, also an avid birder, too, saw a Solitaire in Aberdeen about March 8.—**L. R. Lynch**, 714 8th Ave. S. E., **Aberdeen**.

CATTLE EGRET, GLOSSY IBIS, AND LEAST BITTERN AT SAND LAKE—A Cattle Egret was first observed on the Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge, July 17, 1961. Since then a single bird of this species has been sighted several times in the same portion of the refuge during June, 1962.

Another new record was established at the Sand Lake Refuge with the sighting of a Glossy Ibis on June 7, 1962. The bird was not found in later visits to this marsh.

The Least Bittern is recorded as an occasional visitor to the refuge, but none have been seen for several years prior to 1962. This species was sighted frequently near the refuge observation site on State Highway 10 during the months of May and June, 1962.—**Lyle J. Schoonover**, **Refuge Manager, Sand Lake Refuge, Columbia**.

* * * *

WHOOPING CRANE SIGHTED NEAR MARTIN, SOUTH DAKOTA—On the afternoon of May 18, 1962 I was driving south on highway 73 about 15 miles north of the headquarters of the La-Creek National Wildlife Refuge. At a distance of about a half a mile I noticed a large white bird feeding in a shallow pothole. I thought at once that this bird must be a whooping crane, but I could not really believe my great fortune in seeing a member of this nearly extinct species until I parked at the side of the road and observed the bird closely through field glasses and my 20 power spotting scope.

The whooping crane I observed was evidently a young bird, since many brown feathers were apparent in its plumage. The vivid coloring of the head that I expected was not present

although the color pattern of pink on the base of the bill and black on the head was very definite. This bird was all alone on the small pothole and I observed it closely from a distance of about 75 yards. I watched the bird until I was certain in my own mind that I was actually seeing a whooping crane.

I then drove to the headquarters of the Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge where I notified all staff members of my observation. All of the personnel, with our wives and children, returned to the pothole where I had seen the whooping crane. It was still there and put on an excellent demonstration of the characteristic feeding habits of the species for a period of one-half hour, as we all watched. At one time we thought that the bird would fly away. It rose into the air several feet with its wings outspread but then settled back down to the water's edge and continued to feed.

The whooper did not seem to be troubled by the traffic along highway 73 or by the two car-loads of people watching. We left it undisturbed along the edge of the pothole.

We left the whooper at about 5:00 p. m. I returned to the refuge and picked up a movie camera to try to get some pictures. However, when I returned to the pothole about 5:45, the bird was gone. We searched for it on water areas in the immediate vicinity but could not find it.

The wife of the rancher on whose land the bird was seen said she had seen a large white bird on this pothole early in the morning but had not gone close to it and did not know what kind of bird it was. The whooper had evidently spent an entire day in the vicinity of Martin resting and feeding and then moved on north, continuing its migration. It probably was a straggler from the main flock of whooping

cranes which went through South Dakota about two weeks before the bird was seen near the LaCreek Refuge.

Each year we have reports of one or more whooping cranes being observed near the refuge but this is the first time that we have been able to verify an observation of that bird.—C. A. Hughlett, LaCreek Refuge, Martin.

* * * *

SWANS IN NORTHEASTERN SOUTH DAKOTA—On April 14, 1962, a flock of 12 Whistling Swans passed over our farm, flying low and headed North.

The next day, at Lake Albert, 4½ miles north, the lake itself was still icebound but the sloughs and potholes nearby were full of water. At Swartz Slough there were over 100 Swans, as well as 2 Buffleheads, 46 White-fronted Geese, 12 Common Mergansers, 8 Canvasbacks and 12 Lesser Scaup.

More Swans were in the larger potholes in a two-mile square east of Lake Albert and west of Highway 12. These birds were tame and feeding in potholes in fall-plowed soilbank land and in potholes in plowed cornfields. In the water of three potholes a total of 330 Swans were counted. In the air, flying low and going west were about 90 more. They straggled along and were easy to count.

In all, my count came to 520 and I am sure there were more than that.

In the same area the next day, April 16, only 21 Swans were still to be found, mostly old birds, I believe, while the ducks had greatly increased in species and numbers. By the next day all the Swans were gone and none were seen later.—Lowry Elliott, Milbank.

* * * *

WOODCOCK IN BROOKINGS—Sunday morning, March 25th, Herbert Cheever called to say he had an American Woodcock in his yard. We quickly grabbed camera equipment, binoculars

and bird guides hoping to get there before it might be disturbed. Sure enough there it sat, just about 15 feet from their dining room window, at the base of a shrub. There was no mistaking it with its long bill and barred crown. It was a hazy morning but the coloration showed up well. It sat in the same spot, occasionally changing its position, all the time we observed it. Orena Cooper and Gerald Spawn were there observing it also. Mr. Spawn was able to get some good pictures of it

The Woodcock remained until 4:00 that afternoon when Mrs. Cheever chased away a hunting dog which came into the yard. The Woodcock was gone when she went back into the house and was not seen again.

In the past South Dakota Bird Notes, the Woodcock is listed as accidental in the Checklist of South Dakota Birds (VIII:19). It was observed three other times in the past 10 years; one June 2, 1954 at Bird Haven near Milbank by Lowry Elliott (VI:35), one in the extreme S. E. corner of Union County on June 13, 1959, by Wm. Youngworth (X:63), and one feeding on a lawn of a home in Sioux Falls on July 22, 1959 by John S. Tuthill (XI:35).

These observations were all made after migration. Evidently the Woodcock at Brookings was migrating through and stopped to rest during the day before moving on that night.—Nelda Holden, Brookings.

* * * *

MOCKINGBIRD NEAR SIOUX FALLS
—On June 1, 1962 I had the pleasure of seeing a Mockingbird at my home northeast of Sioux Falls. The pictures of Peterson and Pough matched the bird I saw in every detail.

The bird remained for three days and then disappeared. It drank from our pedestal birdbath, foraged on our front lawn in full view of my 7 x 50 bin-

ocular and perched on some low bushes (*Viburnum lentago*). It was shy and, when the door was opened, quickly flew to the cover of a red cedar tree. It also sang twice that I heard, its song conforming closely to that recorded by Allen and Kellogg.

The general similarity between the Mockingbird and the Townsend's Solitaire proved a little confusing to me in March of last year when one of the latter visited the same place where I saw the Mockingbird this year. A hurried glance could lead to some difficulty in identification, particularly to a beginner such as I. But now I am sure that both birds visited our home.—R. R. Nelson, Rt. 2, Box 122, Sioux Falls.

* * * *

BIRDS OF THE TRI-STATE AREA—

From the varied observations mailed, telephoned or told to this writer, there must be hundreds of people in the Tri-State area interested in birds. They tell of the behavior of well-known birds; they tell of the less common and the rare, their observations sufficiently accurate that the bird, if a stranger, may be identified thru bird guides. Later the identification is confirmed and sometimes the new bird becomes familiar to many—as with the waxwings and evening grosbeaks.

There are Townsend's solitaires in this area. They nest, we know, along Redwater east of town and make occasional visits to our hill. A few years ago, when a pair of mockingbirds nested in Hay Creek draw, any number of people were certain that we were mistaking the solitaire for the mockingbird. But we weren't. We had both. Though both birds have somewhat similar colors, the silhouette particularly, is different—so different that one can be told from the other in flight.

Known to many in this area now is the Lewis woodpecker—an 11-inch,

dark woodpecker with a rose-red belly, a wide gray (almost lavender) collar and bib, black head and red face. This woodpecker is seen, both winter and summer, in the ponderosa timber near Colony and in Belleview where the ponderosa finger into town.

With a bit of concentrated observation, these birds might all be added to the list of birds of the northern Black Hills.—Irma G. Weyler, Daily Belle Fourche Post.

* * * * *

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER NEAR SIOUX FALLS—May 26, 1962, at 8:00 a. m., the sky was overcast in the area of my home in the foot of the Cactus Hills northeast of Sioux Falls. In a low spot with tall willows and thick undergrowth I observed a large, thick-necked bird perched in flycatcher fashion on the upper most dead limb of the tallest black willow (*Salix nigra*) in the area.

It would occasionally sally forth and then return to the branch. With an excellent opportunity to view the bird, standing only about 30 feet from the tree in which it perched, I could see the breast and belly which, upon referring to Peterson's "Guide," exactly matched the description: "a dark jacket unbuttoned down the front"

The size of the bill—quite large, distinct whiteness of the throat, and very stocky appearance (a little smaller than the Crested Flycatcher but seemingly with little or no neck) made the identification of the Olive-sided Flycatcher unmistakable. Upon my return to the house I consulted Pough's "Eastern Land Birds" and found it bore out the identification, as did Youngworth's *Olive-sided Flycatcher as a Migrant in the Upper Missouri River Valley*, Bird Notes XIII:28.

The only distinctive characteristic that I did not see—the bird had flown



Cedar Waxwing

—E. W. Steffen

while I was watching it and did not return—were the white patches on its sides. However, Peterson remarks that they are not always visible and are not determinative. Youngworth's comments upon its perching habits—tall dead branches or trees near banks (this one was near a sand pit), its solitary habits, its migrational silence, and its occasional sightings by birders in eastern South Dakota all tend to confirm the identification.

The dates of migration given by Youngworth (May 10-25) are close. — R. R. Nelson, Rt. 2, Box 122, Sioux Falls.

* * * * *

PLUMAGE VARIATION IN SCARLET TANAGER—The Scarlet Tanagers banded on Farm Island were of interest to me for they had a red spot in the black wing. It appeared in the metacarpal area near the bend of the wing,

and showed up very nicely in the Kodachrome Slide taken of one of the birds.

I became curious so did some research on the Scarlet Tanager. In one of my Auk Magazines I found this statement in Robert W. Nero's article **Plumage Aberrations in Redwings**: "The Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Phœucticus ludovicianus*,) and the Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) show considerable red in this area of the wing in sub-adult plumage, and usually this part of the adult plumage is all black, but in a few Scarlet Tanagers I have found red feathers scattered among the black." (Auk, 71:149). Evidently my two tanagers were sub-adult.—**Nelda Holden** (Mrs. David J.), Brookings

* * * * *

EVENING GROSBEEKS AT ABERDEEN—Numbers of Evening Grosbeaks were seen in Aberdeen during the past winter. My first sighting was on January 1, 1962, of a male and female. Later, in February, I saw three flocks at different times in the same hackberry tree, the largest of 11 birds, the others of 9 and 6. Probably the same birds were included in all. Many other people reported seeing quite a few of the birds at different times.—**L. R. Lynch**, 714 8th Ave. S. E., Aberdeen.

* * * * *

LONG-BILLED CURLEWS NEAR PIERRE—At a point 8 miles north and 7 miles west of the junction of Highway 14 and the east access road to Oahc Dam, late in the afternoon of May 27, 1962, two Long-billed Curlews were first noticed by Dr. David Holden of Brookings and South Dakota State College.

At once the car was stopped and backed up to a favorable viewing position while all present studied the birds with care, comparing with the picture and text in Peterson.

The two Curlews were in company,

though separated by a hundred yards when first seen. Their distances from the car were about 50 and 100 yards. Soon the near bird flew to join the other, giving us an image of the flight attitude.

Through 7 x 50 binoculars used by all, the distinctive length and curve of bill could be plainly seen. The weather was cloudy but the light was adequate to show the varying shades of brown, both at rest and in flight. The grass was green from recent rains but still too short to conceal anything of the birds but their legs and feet.

Besides Dr. Holden there were present: Blanche Battin, Jean Jonkei, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Johnson, and Mary Aberdeen Ketelle.—**J. W. Johnson**, Huron.

* * * * *

ENGLISH SPARROWS DESTROY MARTIN EGGS—On the afternoon of June 10, 1962, I sat for a few minutes on the lawn, watching many Purple Martins and a few House Sparrows as they entered and left various rooms of the martin house. I was trying to determine which rooms were in the possession of each species.

A pair of House Sparrows left the opposite side of the house and came down to the paved driveway about 15 feet from me. As one Sparrow still was about 18" above the road I heard a "Plop." The two birds returned immediately to the martin house.

Walking over to the spot on the drive where the Sparrows had been, I found a freshly smashed martin egg.

In other years I have found good indications of the destruction of martin eggs by pecking and by rolling them from the nest and dropping them onto a concrete foundation that held the tower. On circumstantial evidence I called the sparrows guilty.

In the act described I do not know whether the egg was carried by the

male or the female sparrow. Nor do I know how the sparrow was able to carry the egg. It seems it must have been in the feet.—Chas. P. Crutchett, **Armour**.

(Editor's note: I too have had no doubts about the sparrows destroying martin eggs. Using a George Lowery design house this year for the first time, I was able to keep close check on the nests and numbers of eggs. One or two eggs would be taken from a martin's nest each day until all were gone. The shells would be found on the ground under the house, as though the egg were simply rolled out, to break on the ground.

Then, the very afternoon that I received Mr. Crutchett's letter, I had confirmation that the eggs must be carried sometimes: In the Lowery style house all the apartments open on the front of the house. But I found a freshly broken egg **BACK** of the house, where it could not have been if it had fallen or been rolled out the opening of the apartment. And there was no wind blowing during the period when it must have been done.

I suppose we might, however, suggest the possibility of a falling egg being struck accidentally by a flying or struggling bird in the air to account for the location where this one was found, and something of the sort is always possible.—Ed.)

* * * * *

GOOSE MIGRATION—1962—● On April 4, 1962, Mrs. Moriarty and I drove south from Watertown 6 miles to Helbing's Sloughs, where a concentration of Snow, Blue, Canada, Lesser Canada, and White-fronted Geese were found.

From there we went west 4 miles and then south toward Hayti. On the way we came upon one of the greatest concentrations of geese we had ever seen. This flock on the ground and water was over a mile long and about

25 to 30 yards wide, and covered the surface so completely that it looked like a great snowdrift.

With a 22 power scope and estimating by hundreds, I figured there were over 30,000 geese in this flock.

On, south to Marsh Lake, Lake Norden, and Lake Albert, where we saw more great flocks. I estimate we saw about 1000 White-fronted Geese, 10,000 Canadas of the various sizes, 35,000 Blue and even more Snow Geese, making, in about three hours, an estimated 80,000 geese or more.

This was probably a once in a lifetime event.—**L. J. Moriarty**.

* * * * *

INLAND BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION—will hold its Annual Conference in Omaha, Nebraska, November 3-4, 1962, at the Gene Appley Library, University of Omaha. Host groups are the Omaha Bird Club and the University of Omaha.

Meals will be served on the Campus at cost. Elmwood Park borders the Campus to provide ample birding area within walking distance. Parking space is available on the Campus. Many motels and hotels are within a few blocks of the Campus. The new library building has projection booth with sound equipment. A lounge across the hall from the Auditorium will be available and coffee will be served there. Planning is for a broad program for the benefit of all interested in ornithology.

SDOU members are invited to attend. For more information contact **Mrs. John Lueshen, Wisner, Nebraska, General Chairman**.

* * * * *

ODDLY COLORED WARBLER WEST OF PIERRE—While returning to Deadwood from the SDOU meeting at Pierre May 27, 1962, my son, Dick, and I stopped to look over a typical prairie pot-hole about fifty miles west of Pierre. We noted about the expected resident

species for this type of habitat as well as a number of Redstarts.

I put my binocular on a movement in a small tree in the willows next to the water and saw what I was about to dismiss as another female Redstart when she turned and displayed a dark pattern on the breast. This called for a closer look.

We were surrounded by miles of rolling prairie, without another tree in sight; so she was more or less confined to our immediate area. Although she was hopping about in the usual uncooperative warbler manner, we could always find her for another look; so we were able to observe her closely.

She was olive on the back, wings, and tail, seemingly a little darker than the average female redstart. Wings were plain but the tail had the usual large yellow "windows." Breast and belly were grayish with a narrow stripe of yellow on the sides. The markings on the chest were heavy black spots arranged in necklace formation as on the Canada warbler, but on one side only, stopping about at the midline of the breast. I also had the impression that she was smaller than the usual female redstart but perhaps within the normal variation of individuals.

I am unfamiliar with hybridization among the warblers and can find no reference to it among the books available to me. But this bird suggests a product of a redstart plus some other warbler, with the Canada being a likely suspect. If anyone has any other ideas I would appreciate hearing them.—**Dr. V. B. Van Heuvelen, Deadwood.**

* * * *

GRACKLES KILL THRUSH—On the morning of May 19, 1962, Miss Etta French heard a commotion in her yard and saw two grackles attacking a smaller bird, which they seemed to have penned in the corner of the fence.

Miss French rushed to the victim's

defense but the grackles had pecked it severely. She picked up the small bird, still alive. It died in her hand. She brought the still warm body to my drug store for identification.

It was a beautiful Gray-cheeked Thrush.—**Chas. P. Crutchett, Armour.**

* * * *

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS AT ABERDEEN—Henry M. Reeves, 810 15th Ave. S. E., advised that arrangements have been completed for the Audubon Screen Tours to present three lectures with their wildlife color films there during the coming winter.

The series starts October 26, 1962 with Charles T. Hotchkiss, **Teton Trails**, followed February 8, 1963 by Edgar T. Jones, **Alberta Outdoors**, and March 23 1963 by Bristol Foster, **Roving Three Continents**.

The lectures will start at 8:00 p. m. at the Auditorium of Northern State Teachers College. Season, or single, Family, Adult, or student tickets on sale at Weber Floral in Aberdeen and at the door.

Local sponsor is the Aberdeen Garden Club, Mr. Paul Underwood, president.

This editor, having been privileged to attend some sixty Audubon Screen Tour lectures, including two of those listed above, in the past 12 years, feels no hesitation in recommending them, both for their educational value and unequalled entertainment.

* * * *

PURPLE FINCHES AT PICKEREL LAKE—On Wednesday morning, January 31, 1962, the pungent aroma of brewing coffee slowly drifting into the bedroom helped to speed me into my thermal underwear in preparation for a day of ice fishing.

"Hurry, there is a sparrow-like bird with lots of red all over it feeding on the front lawn," my wife, Agnes, was

calling from the kitchen. She was accustomed to the usual Juncos, Downies, Hairies, Chickadees, Pheasants, Redpolls, Creepers and Nuthatches in our yard but this was something different.

I hurriedly put the glasses on the bird and sure enough it was a male Purple Finch. I was elated, too, because the last one I had seen was a lone male in October, 1953 about 150 yards from this same spot. Later that same afternoon there were two of them, the male, plus a female or an immature. We saw them several times each day from the 31st of January to

the 12th of February, 1962. For the greater majority of times they were together although there were a few instances when we would see just one or the other.

We had cleared a spot on our front lawn about 4 feet square and only 12 feet from our picture window. This was replenished daily with sunflower seeds. The Finches seemed to pick up the seed, turn it over in their mandibles until it was vertical, and then crush and eat it. This was quite a contrast from the manner of the Tree Sparrows and the Juncos. They did



Western Meadowlark

—E. W. Steffen

not go through this procedure but seemed to be able to crush the seed in any position and with much less effort.

Peterson says, "rosy-red—brightest on head and rump." Roberts says, "... richest on crown and palest on rump." The particular male we saw was just as bright on the rump as on his head—in fact I thought the rump was the brightest color on the whole bird. The red coloring on his breast made the white area look like an inverted V.

Female or immature? We could detect no "greenish yellow on rump or underparts," or "on the edges of tail and wing feathers," according to Roberts. He also says, "the first nuptial plumage of the male is practically like that of the female." The bird was generally brownish with a lot of stripes, buffy white below, streaked with brown and about the size of a house sparrow with a large finch bill and a whitish stripe above the eye.—**Herman and Agnes Chilson, Pickerel Lake, Day County.**

* * * *

LAZULA BUNTING AT FEEDER IN WATERTOWN—After many years of birding I have had only fleeting glimpses of the Lazula Bunting. Then on May 20, 1962, a beautiful full plumaged male fed at my feeder with the sparrows for an hour. On the afternoon of the same day, while birding at the Waubay Wildlife Refuge, I saw another male on a bush in perfect light. I had never seen them at all east of Pierre, and wonder if they did not migrate a little east of their usual range this year.—**L. J. Moriarty, Watertown.**

* * * *

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER IN LYMAN COUNTY—On June 18, 1962, on a trip to Winner, I saw a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher along the highway at a point just half a mile west of Vivian.

Having been raised in Oklahoma, where this species is common, I am quite familiar with it and its behavior; there is little chance for me to be mistaken in my identification. I was able to observe the bird both sitting and in flight from a distance of about 125 feet.

This flycatcher has the swooping and dipping flight of the kingbirds. The addition of frequent flourishes of the long tail feathers gives an effect not likely to be confused with any other bird.—**Wendell Bever, Chief, Game Division, Department of Game, Fish, and Parks, Pierre.**

* * * *

CAPE MAY WARBLER KILLED AT WATERTOWN—On May 15, 1962, Peter Beardsley brought me five birds that were killed by striking windows. Among them was a male Cape May Warbler. This is a rare bird, one I have never seen anywhere before. It is on our check-list but I wonder if anyone in the group has identified it in our state in recent years.—**L. J. Moriarty, Watertown.**

* * * *

COMMON EGRET AT WATERTOWN—At 7:45 a. m., April 30, 1962, in driving to my office, I used the street at the east side of the Sioux River in the northwest part of Watertown. There I saw a large white bird that I knew must belong to the Heron family.

I drove back home, about 4 blocks away, and got my 22 power scope. The bird proved to be a Common Egret. Not so common in our state, though it has been seen before, and new to me for the state.

The following morning two of the birds were feeding in the same area and regularly until May 4, when Mrs. Moriarty got to see them.—**L. J. Moriarty, Watertown.**



Lois N. Chapman and Sage Grouse Chick, Harding Co.

Birds' Nests

(Continued from Page 56)

watching where he sings and hovers, the nest can usually be found at once. Generally it is not far from a rock, often in buffalo grass, and sometimes hidden under a tuft of grass.

The cup is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches across by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, lightly lined with fine grass. The rim is level with the ground.

The usual clutch is five but some nests with three or four young indicate they sometimes lay fewer or, perhaps, some fail to hatch. The eggs measure 0.80×0.60 inches, are ovate and of a light grayish white ground color, spotted rather liberally with dirty brown in smallish spots, without much scrawling. I have never found a nest with Cowbird eggs.

The young are rather black skinned, with a creamy yellow down. I have

watched them being fed rather large, unidentified, green worms which the parent tears into portions for division among the nestlings. Both parents feed the young and the male is more bold around the nest and will often hover only 2 or 3 feet over one's head.

I believe this bird must nest twice a season as I have found nests with eggs, others with downy young, another with young just able to fly a few feet and immatures on the fence able to care for themselves, all on the same day: July 16.

They nest in suitable short grass, hilly and stony pastures, both east and west of the Missouri, throughout the state. They are inclined to nest colonially, at least, several nest in the same pasture and the nests I have found were about 100 yards apart.

The birds defend their territory, at least, near the nest.—Watertown.

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 Wilson, Roy C. 806 S. Main St., Milbank
 Winter, Bertha 1004 E. St., Lincoln, Nebr.
 Wipf, Mrs. John Freeman
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 Woolstencroft, Mrs. Mark Box 634, Watertown
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Comparison of Spring Arrival Dates for 15 Common Birds

Waubay National Wildlife Refuge

Waubay, South Dakota

	1959	1960	1961
Canada Goose	3 16	3 31	3 9
Mallard	3 18	3 29	3 17
Gadwall	3 31	4 13	4 1
Blue-winged Teal	4 16	4 21	3 26
Lesser Scaup	4 2	4 6	3 24
Ruddy Duck	4 23	4 22	4 24
Marsh Hawk	3 18	3 30	3 4
Coot	4 10	4 13	4 5
Killdeer	3 31	4 7	3 24
Yellow-shafted Flicker	4 6	4 15	3 28
Purple Martin	4 20	4 13	4 22
Robin	4 1	4 2	3 19
Meadowlark	3 18	4 4	3 16
Yellow-headed Blackbird	4 22	4 23	4 21
Redwing	3 23	3 31	3 17

Arrival dates for these 15 species are being used as a phenological index.—
J. C. Carlsen, Refuge Manager

Mr. Carlsen is now stationed at Minot, N. Dak. (See page 67 for address). Perhaps Mr. Johnson, at Waubay, will give us data for succeeding years—as well as other avian events of the area.

Species of Birds Observed in the Pierre Vicinity

May 26-27, 1962

By members of South Dakota Ornithologists' Union

Western Grebe	Common Nighthawk	Black and White Warbler
White Pelican	Chimney Swift	Tennessee Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Belted Kingfisher	Yellow Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Yellow-shafted Flicker	Magnolia Warbler
Canada Goose	Red-headed Woodpecker	Chestnut-sided Warbler
White-fronted Goose	Hairy Woodpecker	Black-poll Warbler
Mallard	Downy Woodpecker	Ovenbird
Gadwall	Eastern Kingbird	Mourning Warbler
Pintail	Western Kingbird	MacGillivray's Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Great Crested Flycatcher	Yellow-throat
Wood Duck	Eastern Phoebe	Yellow-breasted Chat
Redhead	Least Flycatcher	Wilson's Warbler
Canvasback	Western Wood Pewee	American Redstart
Lesser Scaup	Olive-sided Flycatcher	House Sparrow
Ruddy Duck	Tree Swallow	Bobolink
Turkey Vulture	Bank Swallow	Western Meadowlark
Cooper's Hawk	Rough-winged Swallow	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Red-tailed Hawk	Barn Swallow	Redwinged Blackbird
Swainson's Hawk	Cliff Swallow	Orchard Oriole
Rough-legged Hawk	Purple Martin	Baltimore Oriole
Marsh Hawk	Blue Jay	Common Grackle
Osprey	Black-billed Magpie	Brown-headed Cowbird
Sparrow Hawk	Raven	Scarlet Tanager
Sharp-tailed Grouse	Common Crow	Cardinal
Bobwhite	Black-capped Chickadee	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Ring-necked Pheasant	White-breasted Nuthatch	Black-headed Grosbeak
Wild Turkey	House Wren	Blue Grosbeak
American Coot	Catbird	Indigo Bunting
Killdeer	Brown Thrasher	Lazuli Bunting
Upland Plover	Robin	Dickcissel
Pectorial Sandpiper	Wood Thrush	American Goldfinch
Wilson's Phalarope	Swainson's Thrush	Rufous-sided Towhee
Ring-billed Gull	Veery	Lark Bunting
Franklin's Gull	Eastern Bluebird	Vesper Sparrow
Common Tern	Cedar Waxwing	Lark Sparrow
Black Tern	Northern Shrike	Chipping Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Starling	Clay-colored Sparrow
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Bell's Vireo	White-crowned Sparrow
Black-billed Cuckoo	Red-eyed Vireo	Chestnut-collared Longspur
Great Horned Owl	Philadelphia Vireo	
Short-eared Owl	Warbling Vireo	

Total - 121 Species

SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES