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Burrowing Owl

—E. W. Steffen

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Vol. XV, No. 3 **September, 1963** **Whole No. 58**

In This Number . . .

President's Page, L. J. Moriarty 51
Finding and Watching Birds in North Dakota, Vernon W. Erickson 52
Ruddy Turnstones, Alfred Peterson 54
Birding Along White River, Velma DeVries 55
Birds' Nests of South Dakota, L. J. Moriarty 59
Goose Roundup at Waubay, Reporter and Farmer 60
General Notes of Special Interest: Glossy Ibis at Sand Lake, Golden Plovers west of Oakwood Lakes, Early nesting Coots and Grebes at Lake Preston, Spring Day at Waubay, Request for information—Belle Fourche, Mockingbird near Letcher, Eastern Meadowlark, Where does the Kingbird build its nest, Huge Flock of Northern Phalarope northwest of Watertown, Sandhill Crane migration, Early Dove at Aberdeen, Kingfisher arrival in Walworth County, Gray Robins, Plover Day—various, Gold-finches at Pickerel Lake 61
New Members 68
Book Reviews:
Natural History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition 70
The Life of Birds, Joel Carl Welty 71

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President's Page

A COMMITTEE has been appointed to go to work compiling an annotated check-list of South Dakota birds.

New knowledge, accumulated since the date of the earlier publications, justifies the step. Changing conditions have also had effects on birdlife, the extent of which may never be fully evaluated.

Your President and the Committee fully realize that this is a big undertaking, one that will take years to complete. Likewise, all are aware that, upon completion there will still be errors to correct as well as data continually becoming obsolete; so there will never cease to be need for revision, as long as birds are able to live here.

There are many areas in the State which have had little bird study. Particularly neglected is the northwest corner, the Harding County area; and the whole West River, outside of the Black Hills, has spots but little better.

The kind of a check-list that the Committee turns out will depend on the amount and quality of data sent in by the entire membership. That is not just a manner of speaking; it is the simple fact.

Most needed now are authentic nesting and reliable sight records from your areas, or seldom studied spots where you have been or will visit. You can make them more useful by being sure about the county, the year, and the time of year, down to the day, if you can, a few words of description about any nests found and identified.

Two other things: Be sure the notes are readable. Be constantly on the lookout for new people interested in helping.

By all means keep lists accurately for each field trip, working up copies for the check-list Committee, with detail, while it is still fresh in your mind.

You can send the material to the Editor for now, while we are getting organized. And a word of caution: Send him material in the shape you would like to get it yourself. Too much wastebasket material wears him down.

Any people you know who have worked South Dakota but do not live here now should be contacted for copies of their notes, or give the Editor their names and addresses.

The help of everyone is essential to arrive at any sort of reliable check-list in any reasonable time. As an example of the thing we want to avoid: We know of at least 4 species that are not on the old list; and I feel sure that some of the sparrows are here—and missed for lack of study and field work.

With a good response we will have a volume of material to work on. As this begins to shape up we will have a clearer idea of the particular areas, and species needing special effort.

And let no one think there is any shortage of ignorance about the birds of the eastern third of the state. Simply because we have more data here and more workers, a greater amount of work is needed to end with comparable accuracy.

So you can start work now, wherever you are. —**L. J. Moriarty.**

Finding and Watching Birds in North Dakota

Vernon W. Erickson

(Museum assistant for the State Historical Society of North Dakota and Secretary of the Bismarck Audubon Society)

EVER since the beginning of mankind, we have been fascinated by the power of flight; the graceful motions of the Gull, the solitary soar of the Eagle, and the alternate fluttering and sailing of the Meadowlark. Our curiosity is excited by the "hoo-hoo" of the Great-horned Owl, the mimic sounds of the Catbird, or the melodius Warble of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak. We are delighted by the beautiful plumage of the great Blue Heron, the Baltimore Oriole, and the iridescent colors of the Wood Duck.

We study the mystery of migration, the departure and arrival of great flights of birds. The Swainson's Hawk that is seen on our prairies in the summer, spends his winter on the Pampas of Argentina in South America.

Where To Look For Birds

Birds are almost everywhere. Look at the trees, bushes, ground and the sky or they may be in your bird bath or your window feeder. Visit the fields, meadows, marshes, lakes and sloughs where they also can be found.

Inquire at your local Audubon Society or other bird clubs and ask them to take you on a regular field trip. They conduct an annual Christmas bird-count and invite all interested people to join in the fun.

Keep a notebook and jot down all birds, migrations, and locations listed in newspapers; local, state, and national outdoor magazines and other news sources.

When and How to Find Birds

The best time of the day to find birds is in the early morning, when the birds awake and search for food. A good bird watcher will pick this time of day for observing. During mid-day, they are less active and are not easy to find. The late afternoon is also a good opportunity to spot birds as they feed again before they rest for the night.

By studying the sounds of birds, you can learn to identify almost all species by its voice. A good field guide should be referred to at every possible and uncertain sighting and a set of fieldglasses or binoculars should be carried to aid in the proper identification of species.

Distinguishing the Bird Family

Learn to determine a bird according to its family; such as, the Robin and the Bluebird are Thrushes; the Phoebes and the Kingbirds are of the Flycatcher Family. The best system to identify the hawks is to recognize the Genera-accipter, the Buteos and the Falcon Family.

Bird Migration in North Dakota

The migration flights in North Dakota for our arriving waterfowl can be seen in April to latter May. The Canada Goose, Pintails, and Mallards are sometimes seen in mid-March; departing mid-September to November. Mallards are usually the last to leave; many can be seen as late as the early part of December.

Our shorebirds can be seen arriving

in late April to June. Probably the first to be seen is the lesser Yellow-legs, Coots, Semi-palmated Sandpipers, Wilsons or the Common Snipe. The Ring-neck Gull is sometimes sighted on the first few days of April. The departing dates are from August to mid-September.

The land-birds start arriving during latter April to June. The Crow seems to be the lead-winger, followed closely by the Robin. The Red-winged Blackbirds, Song Sparrows, Marsh Hawks, and some of our Woodpeckers arrive in early May. The Mountain Bluebird can be seen in the badlands as early as late March.

Bird Watching in North Dakota

The best areas in North Dakota to observe birdlife are the National Wildlife Refuges, the Turtle Mountains and the Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park. The surrounding badlands are probably the most interesting locale.

To the south of Roosevelt Park in Slope and Bowman Counties can be found the Sage Grouse which are occasionally seen in the Park. Western Meadowlarks inhabit the grasslands. Say's Phoebes, Rock Wrens, and Cliff Swallows nest on the cliffs and rock ledges in the various areas. A Golden Eagle can sometimes be seen as well as mountain Bluebirds, Yellow-breasted Chat, Brewer's Sparrow, Lazuli Bunting and various other species that do not migrate further east.

The Devils Lake Area is probably the best place for studying the arrival of the goose flights.

At Chase Lake National Wildlife Refuge, hundreds of White Pelicans nest every year. Permission must be acquired before entry into this refuge.

The Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge is the host to thousands of Western Grebes where all members of the Grebe Family can be seen. The ducks congregate in numerous numbers as does various shorebirds and Warblers.

The Turtle Mountains is the only place in North Dakota where the common Loon breeds. The Ruffed Grouse is a permanent resident and the Philadelphia Vireo also breeds there which is one of the few spots in the United States. Our summer residents include the Northern Water Thrush. Broad-winged Hawk, Eastern Wood Pewee, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Eastern Towhee, and occasionally a Raven.

It is with sincere hope that the conservation movement is continued successfully, by the National Audubon Society and other conservation organizations.

A sad thought comes to mind when we think of the late arrival of conservation, too late to save the Great Auk, Labrador Duck, Carolina Parakeet, and the Passenger Pigeon which was once the most numerous bird in the world.

Now we are fighting for our national emblem of the sky, the Bald Eagle, and the beautiful Whooping Crane that once nested by the thousands over the Great Plains.

It is with the Author's earnest desire that the reader may be stimulated with the interest to appreciate the beauties of nature, which eventually leads to the protection and conservation of all wildlife.—**North Dakota Outdoor, April, 1963.**

* * *

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Ruddy Turnstones

Alfred Peterson

THE Ruddy Turnstones were indeed unusual in numbers in the Waubay area during the last days of May, 1963. Eighty miles to go from Brandt to Waubay preclude thoughts of daily checks to ascertain the earliest dates, and the end of spring migration could only be watched for by someone who lives near the gathering of Shore Birds.

Trips to Waubay were made on April 30, May 10 and May 15, and those trips involved about five hundred miles of travel. Also, the onset of warm weather does not invite a lot of driving.

With only five missing, the list for the two days grows impressive. Of the second list I saw 2 Solitary Sandpipers 5|29 near Bird Haven; 1 Greater Yellowlegs 5|29 near Bird Haven; 4 Dowitchers 5|24 at Bitter Lake; 200 Golden Plover 5|21 at Brandt.

Probably because they both find much of their nourishment on wave-washed sandy shores Ruddy Turnstones and Sanderlings are often found together while on their spring migration route. A most beautiful setting of this sort occured at the south shore of Dry Lake at Lake Poinsett, June 5, 1958. 30 or 31 Turnstones, flocked with the same number of Sanderlings, fed eagerly and skillfully in the heavy wash from a northwest wind. They now and then took a little turn out over the water, and returned to the spot just vacated, showing only a half-hearted interest in the car that stood so near them.

The Sanderlings were in two stages of plumage, the buffy head and neck for spring and summer use and the white and gray from winter, slow to change to summer dress. This scene lingers in my mind as a nearly perfect occasion in every particular.

TURNSTONE RECORDS

On June 3, 1949, a swarm ranged on the shore of Lake Enemy Swim, to the number of 300. I have mislaid my record for the date, but the above is, I think, correct.

RUDDY TURNSTONE

1953: May 14, 1 at Lake Poinsett; 5|16, about 20 at Rush Lake; 5|17, 2 Rush Lake and 1 at Hayti; 5|23, 20 and 21 Rush Lake; 5|31, 48 Rush Lake and few others. See Dec., 1953, Bird Notes.

1954: May 24, 5, and 8 Rush Lake; 5|29, 2 Kampeska and 96 Rush Lake. 8|8, 15 Rush Lake; 8|22, 15 Rush Lake; 9|5, none found.

1955: May 21, 2 at Salt Lake; 5|24, 3 at Salt Lake; 5|25, 9 at Stone Bridge; 5|29, about 8 Salt Lake; 6|2, 42 at Rush Lake; 6|7, 60 or so at Dry Lake, Poinsett; 6|10, 2 at Clear Lake; 8|15, 2 at Rush Lake.

1956: May 19, 1, and 2 Rush Lake grade; 5|23, 6 near Thomas and 2 near Clear Lake; 5|27, 3 singles. Very many reported for Rush Lake in morning, but we found 60 in grain field south of the lake and none along the grade. (Field trip of S.D.O.U.) Saw about 20 on south shore of Lake Minnewasta.

1957: May 19, 1 on 183 near White River; 5|22, 1 at Albee; 5|24, 14 at Hayti; 5|29, 2 at Waubay Lakes, and about 15 northwest shore of Lake Minnewasta.

1958: May 18, 6 west of Oakwoods; 5|19, 2 at same place; 5|23, about 30 Rush Lake and about at Hedtke's pass; 5|27,

(Continued on Page 59)

Birding Along White River

Velma De Vries

Belvidere, S. Dak.
May 5, 1963

Dear Mr. Johnson:

This has been such a rewarding spring for birding here on the White River that I hardly know where to begin my letter. In fact, it is hard to stay in the house long enough to write a letter! Nearly every time I go out I find some new species, besides the countless old friends which are returning for the nesting season.

A week ago I watched for almost an hour the courtship activities of a trio of Yellow Shafted Flickers - two males and a female. One male had brilliant yellow feathers on the underside of his wings and tail. The other must have been one of the hybrids described by Peterson, for his underparts were a dazzling orange. Both had the red crescents at the back of their heads and black "mustaches". The female showed only a hint of red at her nape, and no "mustache."

My attention was first attracted by what seemed to be an endless pursuit by the two males, from one large cottonwood to another along the bank of the river. I thought at first that they were fighting over possession of a bride or a nest, but they gave no display of ill-will, even though they were often only a foot or two apart on a limb. At last they centered their activities in one large tree, and it was then that I became conscious of the third party. She did give them a little restrained applause whenever they passed near her, by bobbing her head up and down and emitting a low "Isp", but otherwise she seemed quite unimpressed by the brilliant display of color and action which was obviously being carried on for her benefit. A little later she flew to a hole in the trunk of a tree, stuck her head in and examined the hole at great length, ignoring the males altogether.

The two would flit and hop from limb to limb, and from twig to trunk, and finally to the ground, where they hopped over each other several times. The more excited they became the more breathtakingly they displayed their plumage—spreading their wings and tails so that the yellow and orange were visible from the top side as well as the bottom. What a transformation there was in what is ordinarily a rather shy, plain-looking bird.

The festivities were still in full swing when I had to tear myself away, so we may never know whether it was the Yellow or the Orange who won the fair lady!

We have also had the good fortune to observe dancing Sharp-tailed Grouse this spring. Wally had seen them before, but it was a first for me and the children.

The Great Horned Owls are rearing their family in the same tree where they nested last year. On April 7th we first discovered the old Owl sitting on the nest. (She had undoubtedly been there sometime before we spotted her.) On April 27th we saw three babies in the nest. At that time, one had become quite feathered, the second was almost as large, but still gray and fuzzy, while the third was a much smaller ball of gray down. Now (May 5) the largest is able to go out on the limb away from the nest, and the two larger ones are showing the characteristic "ears." I

have been trying in vain to find a book which gives the incubation period for these Owls' eggs.

The Loggerhead Shrikes are again nesting in a tree within a few rods of the house. One day as we were riding, Wally pointed out a young bob-tailed mouse which had been impaled on a twig—mute evidence that a Shrike had been there. According to **Birds of America**, the Shrike has so little strength in its claws that it cannot hold its prey to eat it without securing it to a thorn, twig or barb.

We always enjoy seeing and hearing the Mourning Dove, but this year we are particularly conscious of them because of the controversy over subjecting them to a hunting season. Quite a number of them have returned, and are pairing off.

A number of Wilson's Phalaropes have been feeding on a small dam near town. I've also seen two Lesser Yellowlegs, and a Sandpiper (several of the same species) which seems to resemble the Baird's most closely of any pictured by Peterson. The back is quite scaly, the underside white. The entire head and throat, neck and upper breast are uniformly streaked brown, with no white or light areas around the eye. The bill seems to be more the size and shape of the Western's.

We have spotted several pairs of Rufous-sided Towhees. I do hope that they will settle down here to nest. The Lark Buntings have come back as they left—in a flock. I saw my first Brown Thrasher of the season yesterday. The Blue Jays arrived a couple of days ago. So far we haven't seen any Red-headed Woodpeckers, although the Downys and Hairy Woodpeckers were here all winter. The Western Kingbirds have arrived, but not the Eastern.

I have learned to identify Vesper Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows, Chipping Sparrows, and Savannah Sparrows, besides the familiar Tree and Lark Sparrows. Also new to me was a Yellow-throated.

Marsh Hawks, Swainson's Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks and Sparrow Hawks are a familiar sight. Other common birds which we see are Magpies, Pheasants, Horned Larks, Brown-headed Cowbirds, Grackles, Red-winged Blackbirds, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Killdeers, Robins, Franklin's Gulls, Meadowlarks.

It is always interesting to receive letters from other birders, and we will be glad to have anyone drop in for a visit who happens to be in this area.

June 24, 1963

So many interesting things have turned up here since my last letter that I am going to write again while they are fresh in my memory. Socially, we enjoyed a very pleasant visit with the Chapmans of Sioux Falls when they took time to stop in on their way to Rapid City on June 12. Our family of young Loggerhead Shrikes was just leaving the nest that day, and all five of the fledglings were out where they could be seen.

While Mrs. Chapman talked music beside the piano with our daughters, we took her husband on a bumpy ride in the pick-up around the river meadow. The young Great Horned Owls had been flying for some time, but we spotted one in a tree over the oats stacks where mice are in plentiful supply. Our visitors remarked that the Lark Sparrows are not as common around Sioux Falls as in our area.

Esther Serr was in Belvidere June 23 for an alumni picnic. Afterwards she and I went off to the large dam north of town to pick up a dead White Pelican. It had flown in the day before with a flock of twelve or more, and

had fatally injured itself when it hit the grain elevator by the railroad. Esther wanted to take it to Rapid City to a friend who mounts birds. We have wondered why a flock of Pelicans would be on the move at this time of year, and which direction they were going.

We like people even more than birds, and we want to issue a standing invitation to all birders who happen to be in our part of the state to slip the 5½ miles off Highway 16 and pay us a visit.

Shortly after I last wrote you, we discovered that there were actually four young Great Horned Owls in the nest. On May 21 I found a sucked-out egg on the ground below the Swainson's Hawk nest. Apparently the nest was broken up completely, for we haven't seen the old Hawks around since.

The Shrike's nest presents a rather interesting feat of engineering. Above the nest itself, which is sturdily built in the crotch of a Chinese Elm, there is what appears to be a loosely-woven "wind-break" of dead twigs. This reaches up for some distance on the west and north sides. We have had some real hard winds this spring, one of which overturned a small building—but the Shrikes' twigs remained firmly anchored. I hope to climb up near enough to get a good picture, now that the family has vacated.

On June 17 I found a full-grown Meadowlark hanging by the skin of its neck from the barb of a wire fence. Nearby a very young fledgling was wandering helplessly about. Do any birds other than Shrikes impale their victims? It hardly seems possible that a Shrike could kill a Meadowlark, or even that it could carry such a large bird to the top wire of a fence and fasten it there if it had found it already dead. I'd surely like to hear from anybody who has more information.

There was a sequel to the courtship of the Flickers. On June 9, as I was walking about, some distance from the place where I had watched the Yellow and the Orange males vying for the attention of a single female (April 28), my attention was again attracted by the sound and sight of a male Flicker "showing off." Shortly two more had made their appearance—a female and another male. As the two males—a Yellow and an Orange—were displaying their colors, there came a sharp cry from a hole in a tree over my head. One of the males paused long enough to answer sharply, but did not leave the dance. Looking up I saw a second female peering out of her hole to watch the proceedings. Again I have come up with an unanswered question. Are Flickers supposed to be monogamous during the nesting season?

The noisy Grackles have moved out of our houseyard, having reared their young. The numbers of Brown Thrashers flying about together indicate that they have successfully completed their family chores too. On the other hand, just a week ago an Eastern Kingbird was doing its best to dismantle Jim's basketball net in order to get string for its nest. The Western Kingbirds and the Robins are still brooding also. A large number of young ducks are in evidence on the various dams. Wally saw an Upland Plover nest late in May. The Barn Swallows are raising a family in our cattle shed.

I have heard both Yellow-Billed and Black-Billed Cuckoos again this year. I suspect that their feigned shyness is partly an act, since they seem to enjoy sitting where they can talk to me without being seen when I am working around the yard. And sometimes when we go to ride, one will leave the trees around the house to fly swiftly and noiselessly over our heads to the nearest trees along the river, where it can

again join in the conversation from a safe distance.

The men saw a number of Long-Billed Curlews again in May. There is a certain area north of town which seems to suit them.

This spring I saw a number of species which were new to me. Most of them were migrating, I am sure. These included Pine Siskins, Blackpoll Warbler, Lazula Buntings, White-crowned Sparrows, Black Terns, Snipes, a Wood Thrush, a Black-Headed Grosbeak, a Thrush which I could not positively name as either Swainson's or Gray-Cheeked, Wilson's Phalaropes, and a number of Sandpipers which had me stumped.

One day coming home from town I saw a Sparrow Hawk fly away from something in the road ditch. Stopping to investigate I found a small Cottontail, still twitching although pieces of its skull were lying about and its brain had been completely eaten.

August 1, 1963

On July 1st I saw a flock of about a dozen Bobolinks on our meadow. This is the first time in my life that I have seen a true Bobolink, although our neighbors on the south side of the river tell me that they have seen them for two summers. The Dickcissels have been quite numerous here this summer. I had seen and heard them last year, but it took me this long to put a name with them.

There was a male Rufous-sided Towhee on a bush in our pasture July 3. This was the first one I had seen during nesting season, so had written them off as migrants. A Blue Grosbeak came to drink from the pond where the children and I were swimming on June 27.

One day as I was driving along a dirt road northeast of Belvidere I saw two Bitterns standing at the edge of a stock dam, stiff as pokers, with their bills pointing straight in the air. While this stance serves them well when they are standing among rushes and reeds, it is a poor camouflage in an environment of buffalo grass and dried cows' tracks!

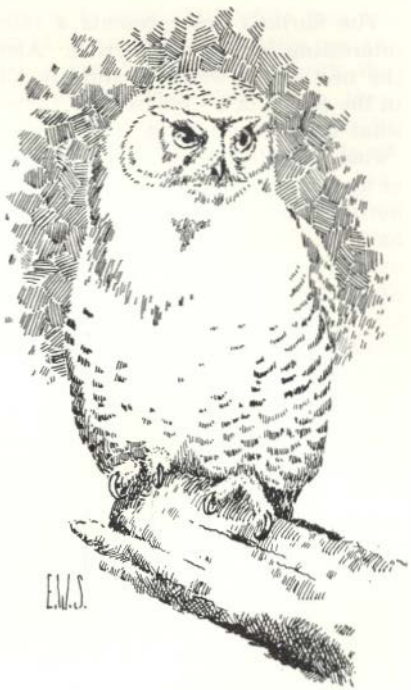
I would have liked very much to attend the Webster Convention—maybe one of these years it will be possible.

Sincerely,

Velma (Mrs. Wallace) DeVries

* * *

EDITOR'S NOTE: Space had been saved for the expected pictures of the Shrike's nest, Deluxe Model, promised by Mrs. DeVries. But, when they arrived, they were good enough to justify special treatment in a later issue. Perhaps December.



Snowy Owl

—E. W. Steffen

Birds' Nests of South Dakota

L. J. Moriarty

A.O.U. #622 LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (Lanius ludovicianus ludovicianus)

THIS species nests, at least in the eastern part of our state, in low shrubby trees, not in dense woods, in Russian olive, young elm, and hackberry, usually in heavily twigged areas near the trunk.

The nest is from 4 to 35 feet above the ground, usually from 6 to 12 feet in our area. It cannot be told from that of the White-rumped Shrike (**L. l. excubitorides**) which no doubt also nests in the state. The location is at some distance from buildings.

The birds are early nesters, eggs being laid during the first half of May in our area. They may also rear a second brood.

The nest is rather bulky but well constructed of small twigs in the base, fine grasses and, in this area, much old flax straw. Usually it is well lined with fur, commonly of the rabbit. String is also used. The result is a nest looking much like a very large flat western kingbird's nest.

It measures about 7 inches across by 4½ inches high. The cup is about 3 inches across and 2½ inches deep.

The number of eggs may be from 4 to 6 but I have found 4 or 5 most common. They measure about 25x18 mm, vary much in color but are always spotted, running from neutral grays to dark, brownish black, more concentrated on the larger end.

The female does the incubation, and depends on the male for food. When the young are hatched both parents put up a bold defense and scold sharply with a harsh cawing sound, snapping their bills sharply, spreading the tail and alighting close.

When the young are two-thirds grown, they will climb out of the nest to the upper limbs to hide. When shaken down, they will turn on the back, snap the bill, and strike with the feet like young hawks. They remind me most of young Marsh Hawks in action as well as in looks. The young disgorge pellets of undigested bettle shells as do hawks and owls. The female does most of the feeding, much of the food being brought to her by the male who also feeds the young during her absence.—**Watertown.**

* * *

Ruddy Turnstones

(Continued from Page 54)

2 Fox Lake; 6|1, 9 Fox Lake; 6|5, 30 at Dry Lake, Poinsett.

1959: May 19, 49 on Rush Lake; 5|26, about 70 Rush Lake.

1960: May 15, 3 on Lake Minnewasta; 5|22, 31 Rush Lake and 9 Minnewasta; 5|26, 4 Rush Lake.

1961: May 20, 2 near Thomas; 5|22, 3 the same, and 20 Lake Albert; 5|21, 20 Rush Lake.

1962: May 14, 12 Rush Lake; 5|18, 30 Rush Lake and 1 other.

1963: May 24, about 200 at Rush Lake; 5|25, about 100 Rush Lake; 5|26, only about 25 seen; 5|28, 300 Rush Lake, and 2 singles elsewhere, 6|5, 3.—**Brandt.**

Enthusiasm—Not Mutual

—Photo and Story Courtesy Reporter and Farmer, Webster

The Annual Goose Round-up at the Waubay National Wildlife Refuge was held recently, an event which includes rounding up as many of the wild geese as possible, putting bands on the legs of those not already banded, and keeping records which will guide the Wildlife Service in game management.

Shown here is one of the Canadas, being held by Dr. L. J. Moriarty, Watertown, who is president of the South Dakota Ornithologists Union and was on hand for the occasion.

Thirty-nine of the geese were herded into the corral and comprised an estimated one-third of those making the Refuge their habitat. Twelve of these 39 had been banded previously. The largest goose trapped weighed 10 lbs., 12 ozs., which was probably three pounds less than it will weigh this fall after the nesting and moulting season.

Some of the more wily birds, representing those who were farther past the moulting season and were able to fly, eluded the drivers in boats, either by flying or by diving under the water to make their get-away.

Taking part in the Round-up were Game, Fish and Parks personnel as follows: Maurice Anderson, Area Game Manager, Aberdeen; John Pepowski, district game manager, Watertown; Walter Larson, district game manager, Mobridge; Curtis Twedt, with the office at Huron; Lyle Schoonover, Manager Sand Lake Wildlife Refuge, Columbia; Bob Johnson, Manager Waubay National Wildlife Refuge, Waubay; E. J. Fromelt, Refuge Aide, Grenville; and Jim Pulliam, Wetlands Manager, Webster.

General Notes of Special Interest

GLOSSY IBIS AT SAND LAKE REFUGE—Last Sunday, June 23, Mrs. Rogge and I stopped at the Sand Lake Refuge for two hours of birding at midday. We were returning from a trip to the North Dakota Badlands. As we were driving through the Refuge we had a real surprise and a rare treat. We observed a Glossy Ibis at close range. It was feeding at the edge of a piece of open water near one of the cattle guards. The long, decurved bill and the dark mahogany plumage made us sure of our identification. We could even see the darker tip of the long bill through our 8.5 X binoculars. The bird seemed undisturbed by our presence. After we had observed it for ten minutes or more it flew a short distance farther away and began feeding again. **—Charles H. Rogge.**

* * * *

GOLDEN PLOVERS WEST OF OAKWOOD LAKES—On May 17, 1963, shortly after leaving Oakwood Lakes after a day of birding, a party from Huron came up on a pasture with a number of dark-bodied, stocky shore birds. The solid black belly, the golden spangles above, and the broad white stripe extending from the eye down the side of the neck, suggesting a huge question mark, identified them at once as Golden Plovers.

Glancing backward, we observed that the field was dotted with these beautiful birds—sixty, at least. In the late afternoon sunlight the golden sheen was especially striking.

Three or four birds flew up, then settled down nearby, holding their wings elevated after lighting, then slowly folding them downward. All seemed to be facing the late sun and the rather strong wind from the west-northwest.

The birds were quiet, uttering only an occasional "Quee--Quee". We noted a few birds nestled close to the ground, resting, apparently, after a long migratory flight.

We studied the flock for Black-bellied Plovers but could find none among the Golden.—**Carrie Pierce, Huron.**

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EARLY NESTING COOTS AND GREBES OBSERVED AT LAKE PRESTON ON MAY 1—The nest of an American Coot with 8 eggs, thought to be a completed clutch was found. In the same general area and on the same day a Pied-billed Grebe nest was seen with 4 or 5 eggs. It is believed this date is quite early.—Reported verbally by **Ray Hart, Aberdeen, and Curtis Tweed, Huron, Dept. of Game, Fish and Parks.**

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A PERFECT SPRING DAY—WAUBAY—On May 8, 1963, I had quite a day driving early to the Waubay Refuge, where Bob Johnson, an assisant, and I took a boat to the Cormorant Island in Waubay lake, where an estimated 225-250 White Pelicans were nesting. Nearly all nests had 2 eggs, a few one or three, freshly laid to half incubated. Most nests were simply sand and soil scraped into a rim around the depression.

There were also an estimated 1500 Double-breasted Cormorant nests, nearly all having 4 eggs, a few 5 or 6, which we judged to be the product of more

than one bird. The freshly laid eggs were of a rather pretty blue color.

In addition somewhat over 100 ring-billed Gulls' nests were present, most with one or two eggs and in the process of construction. Needless to say three cameras got a good work out.

The West Island appeared to have an equal number of Pelicans nesting as well as probably 100 Cormorant and 100 Ring-billed Gulls nesting. However I did not go to it.

In addition I saw many ducks of most species, including American Mergansers, 3 Rio Grande turkeys, Pectral Sandpipers, Western Sandpipers, Wilson's Phalarope by the hundreds, Marbled Godwits, Avocets in small groups, 3 redtailed Hawks, 1 Krider's, 6 Swainsons, all nesting, 12 Canada goose nests at the Refuge, 8 at Bitter Lake public shooting area, nesting and one at Horseshoe lake, nesting. Probably 100 western Grebes were courting at Rush Lake, 2 Semi-palmated Plovers, 2 Short-eared Owls, 100 plus Black-crowned Night Herons, Sora Rails calling, Willets flashing black and white wings, Clay-colored Sparrows by the hundred, Brown Thrashers singing, Yellow-headed Blackbirds crowing, good companions, fair sandwiches, no wind, 77 degrees, home and a hot bath, what more could you want?—**L. J. Moriarty.**

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HELP! HELP! HELP! — Can you tell us where we can find the white-winged junco or the burrowing owl?

Visitors have been asking us this question lately—visitors from Wisconsin, from Iowa, from Indiana, and Kansas, and one yesterday from Canada. All of them are birders, members of the National Audubon Society or the ornithologist societies of their various states. One of the goals of their visit to the Black Hills and foothills is to see one or both of these birds. The question comes so frequently that we believe it must have been included in "birds to see" notes of the states recently. Incidentally, most bird books list both the burrowing owl and the white-winged junco as native to this area.

Since we write about birds—the ones in our yard—it is expected that we know all about birds. We have found that our information is pretty sketchy as to where to look for the particular junco and owl. The best we can say is to drive north and look for a spot you'd choose if you were a junco or owl. Consequently, we are asking for help from those who know where these birds nest, know in terms of so many miles from this abandoned store or that highway sign.

The burrowing owl should be comparatively easy. It's the common one most of us call the prairie owl. It's small, about nine inches, and has long legs for an owl. Most owls, when perched, show no legs, as if the feet came from the feathers. The observer is conscious of the legs immediately when the burrowing owl is seen perched on a fence post. (It is diurnal.) This small owl lives in abandoned prairie dog holes in this area, usually, or in fox or badger holes. It is found in all our West River prairie country and is clearly an owl—owl face and owl color, brownish gray with light breast barred with brown. It does not live with the prairie dogs and rattlesnakes, as so many think. It uses only abandoned holes, and in these widens the passage four or five feet back, to build a nest. Its eggs are white, as if nature thought any eggs so hidden needed no protective coloration.

The white-winged junco should not be hard to recognize. It is colored much like the common slate-colored junco, but is slightly larger and paler, has more white in the tail and two white wing bars, from which it takes its

name. We have seen this junco in the Black Hills near Pactola. Bird books, however, usually list it as particular to the Harding county area of western South Dakota.

So, help! Will somebody give us directions as to where to send strangers to look for the burrowing owl and the white-winged junco, somehere in this area?—**Irma Weyler, Belle Fourche Daily Post.**

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MOCKINGBIRD NEAR LETCHER—Ray Hart and Curtis Tweed, Department of Game, Fish, and Parks, Aberdeen and Huron, respectively, advised the editor verbally on May 10, 1963, that about 4:00 on that date they, with Gerald Popsichsh, U.S.F.&W.S., Minneapolis, saw a Mockingbird in the Letcher vicinity and observed it for about 15 minutes while it remained in the area.

The bird stood on top of steel fence posts, flying from one to another as approached. Close study was made by all three at distances of no more than 100' with 7x50 binoculars. All three are familiar with mockingbirds and Hart and Tweed, at least, know the Townsend's Solitaire well.

All three were agreed that they were seeing a Mockingbird, and commented on the prominent white wing-patches that flashed out when the bird took flight.

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EASTERN MEADOWLARK—On the way from the Webster meeting I took my California guests to a spot two miles east of Watertown to show them a new lifer, the Chestnut-colored Longspur. While looking at the Longspur a Meadowlark lighted on a rock and sang its short questioning song very distinctly, while on an adjacent rock a westerner sang its song so common to us all. This gave us a perfect opportunity to be certain of the identification. I have a feeling there are more of these birds around than we realize, but being so used to seeing them we fail to recognize the difference.—**L. J. Moriarty.**

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PROBLEMS—HUMAN ONES—Where does the kingbird build its nest? (Everybody knows the kingbird—the black flycatcher with white breast and white band across the tip of its tail.)

We were at the window watching half a dozen kingbirds darting from fence posts into the air to catch insects.

As if in answer to the question here came a kingbird carrying a twig in its bill. It flew into a crotch high in the elm tree over the terrace. The bird was building a nest, its mate watching the busy poking, poking to get the twig seated just right. The process went on, trip after trip, one bird bearing the twig or grass, the other flying along to observe. (Both male and female look alike, but we take it for granted the female was doing the work.)

Although the foliage on the elm is thin from at least two frost killbacks, the nest was not visible except for the movement of the busy kingbird.

It's about the same fork in which orchard orioles built last year. And then, as if in answer to that question, here came the orchard orioles. However this was not a harmonious pair. It was a single male with two females, and the females were fighting like a couple of women after the same man. Occasionally, the three birds would perch peacefully in the elm, the females near the male, and farthest from each other. Then one female would fly at the other and the two of them swirl off fighting in the air. The male followed them. Before long the three would be back and do it all over again. The male clearly was sticking with his women. The triangle appears to be a male try-

ing to practice bigamy and to locate, if possible, in the elm tree.

How human bird problems are. There is the male orchard oriole trying to make it with two wives. And the kingbird has a problem. The yellow-billed cuckoo, like a sneak thief, is taking long grasses from the kingbird nest and flying with them to the draw by the spring. The cuckoo times its trips while the kingbirds are away, and so far hasn't been caught. But we are not concerned for the kingbird. This daring little fellow attacks any bird, regardless of size, that threatens its nesting area. We have seen kingbirds dive at hawks, magpies and crows, and drive them away. One morning a kingbird lit on the back of a crow in flight and got in several good pecks before the crow shook it off.

The kingbirds paid no attention to the orioles looking over the elm. Apparently, the kingbird attacks only those birds which threaten its nesting site. Since the cuckoo has been on the hill for over a week, the kingbird does not object to it either. Besides, the cuckoo builds such a sketchy nest, that the kingbird won't miss the small amount of materials. However, the cukoo had better not get caught at its stealing. The kingbird is really the king of his nesting site.—**Irma Weyler, Belle Fourche Daily Post.**

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HUGE FLOCK OF NORTHERN PHALAROPE NORTHWEST OF WATERTOWN—Going to the Webster meeting, I spent Friday forenoon birding my way and at Stink Lake 16 miles northwest of Watertown, I stopped to study the Phalarope feeding around the border. Imagine my surprise to discover that they were all Northern Phalarope. I estimated there were 2000 of them in a narrow band bordering the whole lake. In recent years I have seen very few. In fact none for three years.—**L. J. Moriarty.**

SANDHILL CRANE MIGRATION—On March 31, 1963 I observed a large movement of Sandhill Cranes over the Oahe Reservoir, just above Pierre. Within one hour about 20 flocks passed over. The weather was mild with moderate westerly winds.

Maurice Anderson of our Department observed this movement over Whitlock Crossing on the same day. A farmer, near Hoven, saw a considerable number of Cranes in the Swan Lake (S.E. Walworth County) area.

On June 13-14, Dave Fisher, U. S. Game Management Agent from Pierre, reported a large movement of Cranes from the south over Mobridge.—**Ray D. Hart, Waterfowl Research Biologist, Dept. of Game, Fish, and Parks, Aberdeen.**

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EARLY DOVE AT ABERDEEN—On April 1, 1963, I saw a Mourning Dove in Aberdeen. The date seemed early to me.—**Ray D. Hart, Dept. of Game, Fish and Parks, Aberdeen.**

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KINGFISHER ARRIVAL IN WALWORTH COUNTY—On April 9, 1963, I observed a Belted Kingfisher at Swan Lake in Southeast Walworth County.—**Ray D. Hart, Department of Game, Fish and Parks, Aberdeen.**

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GRAY ROBINS—The Editor is trying to get some data together on an interesting variation in robins. These birds are most noticeable in fall migration. We see the first ones around the last week in August and their numbers increase gradually until they sometimes make up half the robins coming to our nets, by the end of the first week in September. From then on they are seldom less than 25 per cent until the end

of our banding season well into October.

They are not noticed here in the spring migration, possibly indicating a swift and late passage, for we do less banding while the local birds are incubating. One spring report has them passing Ft. William, Ont. in May, while their local robins are incubating.

The color of the birds is easily distinguished from the robins we usually see by a steel gray tint that appears to overlay the red of the breast. Many have a tan area on the face and sides of the neck. The amount of gray and its intensity vary somewhat and there are individuals in which it is barely present, though these are exceptional.

Particularly noticeable to one handling the birds as we do is their excellent physical condition, large, well fleshed, and firm so that we could be sure of one by feel alone, compared to our local robins, that are often rather scrawny specimens.

A. E. Allin, Regional Laboratory, Ontario Department of Health, Ft. William, Ont., writes in the Flicker, Vol. 35:60: "(on April 16, 1963) there was a wave of male robins, new arrivals—when the local birds were far advanced in their nest building. Another flock of 20 was seen on April 28. A late movement of robins with peculiar colorations is seen here each year and has been reported in many other regions across the center of the continent. The April 16 flight was earlier than usual. We believe this is a race of robin which requires further study."

This refers, of course, to the birds we have been calling "gray robins." It should be mentioned that robins were early this spring of 1963, at least two weeks. In discussing this population with Mr. Allin at Webster, he mentioned that they came in May sometimes, as indicated above.

Any sort of observation you can give us will be helpful and appreciated.—**Huron.**

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A PLOVER DAY—VARIOUS—On May 22, 1963, I drove up to Lowry Elliott's farm to take pictures of a green Heron's nest. On the way I saw 12 Upland Plover. We then worked the area within a few miles of his farm seeing an estimated 600 plus Golden Plover, 50 plus Black Bellied Plover, 7 ringed Plover and uncounted Killdeer including two families of nearly half grown young, which we considered very early.

In addition we saw an estimated 50 Marbled Godwits and 200 plus Hudsonian Godwits, thousands of Pectoral Sandpipers, White-rumped, Western, Least and Semi-palmated Sandpipers.

It is our feeling that the Whetstone Valley thru eastern South Dakota is the main flyway for the golden, black bellied and ringed plovers. I see many more of these birds on the east side of Coteau range of hills than on the west side in the Sioux river valley.—**L. J. Moriarty.**

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DUTCH ELM DISEASE has reached St. Paul. The dead trees left in its wake lead to concern for devastation there.

No doubt general spraying with DDT was loudly advocated, with promise of low cost protection.

A rapid but thorough survey to locate infected trees is underway, giving everyone the hope that sanitation, the removal of all infected trees and parts of trees, will be the selected treatment.

Other areas have chosen spraying, losing their birds, their trees—and still face the enormous expense of mass removal of dead trees.

GOLDFINCHES AT PICKEREL LAKE —On January 29, 1963, I went out to the cabin to turn up the thermostat and to make some other advance preparations for our annual winter vacation at Pickerel Lake. The day was sunny but raw, windy and 5 degrees below zero.

Taking a short jaunt to the garden, to inspect the winter rabbit damage, my eyes caught a movement of small birds in the tops of the Scotch Pines **(Pinus sylvestris)** and the Pitch Pines **(Pinus rigida).** The first thing I noticed was the small size and the definite wing bars, but my viewing light was bad as I was looking into the sun. To further complicate matters my binoculars were hard to adjust due to the cold weather and would fog over; on top of this the birds would not cooperate and kept moving from one tree to the other. Then I could see yellowish on some of the throats and all of them were whitish grey underneath. They moved again and I thought some birds looked like they had a soft brown colored head and others had a greenish head. The wings and tail tips were on the blackish order. I kept trying to secure a better look at them but they finally flew away and by this time my fingers were stiff, I was freezing, and disgusted not only with myself but my binocular and my bird watching technique.

Lots of thoughts were going through my mind: What kind of birds? What color would they have been in good light? Had I seen more than one species? I knew they were much smaller than a sparrow, and I assumed they could not be Kinglets because they were a trifle too large.

Friday, February 1st, we moved out to the lake with our groceries, meat, clothing, etc. We had just finished unpacking and had settled down for a welcome cup of coffee and were enjoying the Chickadees, Nuthatches, Downies, Pine Siskins and Juncos feeding on the sunflower seeds and peanut hearts in our front yard. It was a beautiful day, sunny, 40 degrees above; the water was standing in little puddles on our stone wall and in the sun dial. Suddenly 8 little birds appeared and were soon drinking and bathing in the little pools on our wall! I reached for my binocular to study them a little closer. Here were the same birds I had seen the other day and I could plainly see that they varied in color. Now I knew for sure that it was not my imagination or the sun playing tricks on me the previous day!

The stone wall is less than 15 feet from my living room chair and with the sun in my back I had perfect light. Fortunately we had 3 Pine Siskins, 2 house sparrows, several Chickadees and some Juncos feeding in the yard at the same time which gave us a perfect opportunity to estimate their size. They were definitely lots smaller than the sparrows and a trifle smaller than the Pine Siskins! The blacking wing pattern agreed exactly with Peterson's Guide open before me: Goldfinch—but the size was wrong and the coloration did not match exactly with the American Goldfinch. The color on the heads and backs was greenish on some and brownish on others and I could see no white on the rump of any of them, but I did notice that there was a variation of color in the wing bars, some of them being much whiter.

I then opened the Western Guide to find, "Male Goldfinches like summer females only grayer. Female Lesser Goldfinch differs from female American Goldfinch by greener back; lacks whitish rump. Black cap retained by Lesser Goldfinch male in winter. Female Lesser is smaller than female

American, more greenish, has dark rump. American Goldfinch always shows white near rump."

The birds left the water puddles on the wall and flew a few feet to some Yellow Willows (**Salix Lutea**) on the lake shore and fed on the willow galls which look like Pine cones. A few minutes later they left and I was still puzzled. Referring to Birds of America did not enlighten us any further.

Then I turned to Roberts, Birds of Minnesota, "Adult fall and winter plumage: the yellow largely replaced by deep buff and brownish olive. The male has blacker wings and tail than the female with more conspicuous white markings, which in female are buffy. Yellow shoulder patches of male retained in part at least. Juvenal: brown above, below pale yellow, brightest on chin and throat, elsewhere passing into deep buff on sides and flanks; wings and tail black in male with markings more or less buffy. First fall and winter plumage: is still brown both above and below, with broad buff wing bars; lesser coverts are not bright yellow as in winter adults, being dark or pale yellowish, measurements 4½ to 5 inches." I noticed that Roberts' measurements differed from Peterson's Eastern Guide of 5 to 5½ inches and the 5 inches of Birds of America for the American Goldfinch.

On Monday, February 4, I was returning to our cottage from the fish shack after an uneventful morning of fishing and again noticed some birds in the ash and oak trees. Here were from 6 to 10 Goldfinches. It was a nice warm day, sunny, no wind and about 42 degrees above zero. They kept moving quite actively and this time I really looked hard for the yellow shoulder patches and the white rump markings but could not see any. After 15 or 20 minutes of flitting from tree to tree they finally took off, and I did not see them again until February 17, my last time.

We reached the following conclusions: there were juveniles in the group. There could not have been any adult male American Goldfinches as there were no yellow shoulder patches. Peterson says, "whitish near rump always present in American Goldfinch", but Roberts says, "female markings are buffy."

These then could have been all American Goldfinch females and juveniles except for two important differences, the size, being definitely smaller than the Pine Siskins; also the bright greenish color on some of the birds. There were no black head caps which would eliminate the male Lesser Goldfinch. After reading the territorial designation of the Lesser as being in the Rocky Mountain area I immediately had my doubts on that possibility, but when studying the different texts and our own notes, these facts on the small size, and bright greenish color, persistently came back to me and I could not get them out of my mind.

William Over in his BIRDS OF SOUTH DAKOTA, lists the Arkansas Goldfinch as one of the birds of South Dakota. Wm. Youngworth in THE BIRDS OF FORT SISSETON, SOUTH DAKOTA and Stephens, Youngworth and Felton in BIRDS OF UNION COUNTY recognize only **Spinus tristus**, the American Goldfinch.

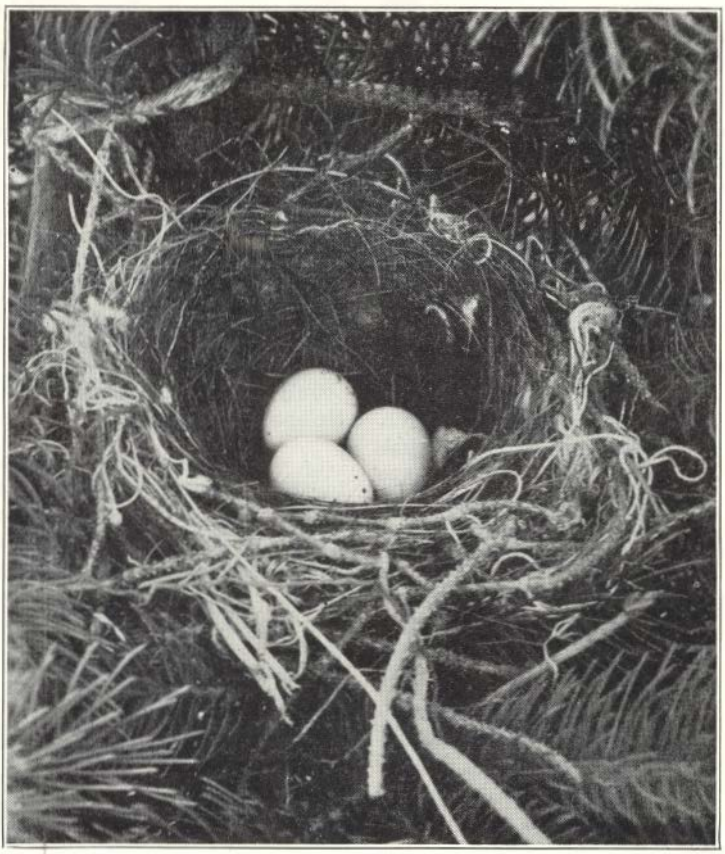
On March 21st it was necessary for me to attend Market Week in Minneapolis, Minnesota. While there I drove out to the Museum of Natural History on the University of Minnesota campus and Dr. Dwain Warner, the curator, kindly listened to my story about the Goldfinches and offered to show me the trays of Goldfinches and

Pine Siskins. Here were adult males, females, immatures and juveniles in varying degrees of spring, summer, fall and winter plumage. I could see then that there was a lot of difference in the size of birds within the same species also that the white rump marking was difficult to see as was the shoulder patch. I was satisfied they were all American Goldfinches on practically all counts except one: they had no birds with the bright greenish color on the head and backs like those we had seen.—**Herman and Agnes Chilson, Webster.**

The Mourning Dove in Illinois by Harold C. Hanson and Charles W. Kossack. Illinois Department of Conservation Technical Bulletin No. 2. Single copies can probably be had without charge in the pamphlet form from the Illinois Department of Conservation, Springfield, Ill. A hard cover edition is sold by the Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, Ill., for $5. Solidly researched data for 126 pages, plus 7 pages of literature cited. Facts on the Mourning Dove; without it you may be just talking.

NEW MEMBERS

Albers, Marvin L. P.	Meckling
Anderson, Dr. Allan J.	15 W. 10th Ave., Webster
Atkinson, David (Junior Member)	Webster
Barry, Bill	409 W. 7th Ave., Webster
Barry, Nancy	409 W. 7th Ave., Webster
Burton, Mrs. Goldie	1123 Omaha Street, Rapid City
Elliott, Mrs. H. V.	903 Franklin Street, Rapid City
Fiksdal, John	Webster
Frederickson, Lawrence F.	1126 E. 1st Street, Webster
Froiland, Mrs. Bennett	1031 8th Ave., Brookings
Hanson, Derrel	921 N. Summit, Madison
Hugen, Fred	Sisseton
Karlins, Nat	419 W. 7th Ave., Webster
Kruegar, Don Roger	411 N. Liberty, Madison
McFarlane, Alan	810 S. Merton Street, Aberdeen
Podoll, Elmer	Columbia
Pulliam, James W., Jr.	614 W. 2nd Street, Webster
Robertson, George P.	215 W. 26th Street, Sioux Falls
Runner, Rev. Joseph T.	P. O. Box 27, Brentford
Stavig, Julius	R. F. D., Webster
Thompson, Kenneth	Box 1445, Rapid City
Wickre, Harold O.	420 E. 9th Street, Webster



Nest of Pine Siskin

—Courtesy of Wilson Bulletin

Book Reviews

The Natural History of the Lewis and and Clark Expedition, Edited, with an introduction, by Raymond Darwin Burroughs. Michigan State University Press. 340 Pages, with Notes and Index. $7.50.

A birding trip beyond all dreams, the first across a practically new and unexplored continent. Imagine being there to catch the first sight of heretofore undescribed species of birds, reading the first notes of the new knowledge that these people brought to civilization about our now familiar and well loved western birds.

Of the great work of the Expedition's Journal, this book retains the adventure of exploring, for the first time, the wildlife of our west. That it actually happened and nearly 160 years ago is hard to keep in mind, the whole atmosphere of the book is on such a grand scale and of events barely ended.

Much of the effect is probably due to the device of quoting the expedition records in their original spelling—after the reader has been well prepared for it, of course. The quality of these men of action is not dimmed by their lack of interest in consistent spelling.

You are there, at the first meeting with our birds, animals, and plants. Yet, again, you are with the editor when he unravels the occasional puzzle of just what species was actually meant by the explorers—who were working before classification, we must keep in mind. In fact it was their observations that furnished the data for later classification of many of the species they discovered.

They had to use their own and the Indian names because there were no others. We still call them "Whistling Swans", the name coined by Lewis and Clark to describe these great birds.

Original descriptions of 23 birds are listed by the editor as having been written by the expedition. Among them, in addition to the Whistling Swan, we find the White-fronted Goose, the Lesser Canada Goose, the Ring-necked Duck, the Great Gray Owl, Steller's Jay, our Western Meadowlark, and the Sage Grouse. Lewis' Woodpecker, one of the feathered sights of the Black Hills, deserves a special quotation of the first record.

July 20, 1805 (Near future site of Helena, Montana).

"I saw a black woodpecker (or crow) today about the size of the lark woodpecker, as black as a crow. I endeavored to get a shoot at it but could not. It is a distinct species of woodpecker; it has a long tail and flies a good deal like a jay bird," Lewis.

Later a number of the birds were taken and an accurately detailed description was written under the date of May 27, 1806. The "lark woodpecker" used as a comparison for size was the flicker, seen regularly along the route of the expedition.

The American Magpie was another bird first recorded by Lewis and Clark. The first collected was at Crow Creek a little above the mouth of the White River.

Sept. 17, 1804 (vic. of Crow Creek).

"Capt. Lewis went out with a view to see the countrey and its productions, he killed a buffalow and a remarkable

bird (Magpy) of the Corvus Species, long tail and upper part of the feathers and also the wings is of purplish variated green, the back and part of the wing feathers are white edged with black, white belly, while from the root of wings to the center of the back is white, the head, nake (neck) breast and other parts black—the beeke like a crow. About the size of a large pigion, a butifull thing." Clark.

Lewis' own description of this bird occupies nearly a page in the book, and gives much detail, a mark of the interest aroused by the new species. Not only skins but live birds were sent to President Jefferson from Ft. Mandan and were actually received. One of the living Magpies was given to the Peale Museum of Philadelphia where it was studied by Alexander Wilson, whose **American Ornithology** included a picture of it.

Clark's Nutcracker was another bird collected by the Expedition and described by Wilson in his book. The explorer's first account of it was given under date of August 22, 1805 at a location in what is now Idaho.

"I saw today a species of woodpecker which fed on the seeds of pine, its beak and its tail were white, its wings were black, and every other part was a dark brown. It was about the size of a robin." Lewis. The detailed description had to wait until the return trip, when, in May, 1806, several were collected.

Not all of the book is about naming strange birds, plants, and animals. Brutal contact with brown and grizzly bears gives some particularly bad moments. Described in brief but adequate terms, they tell of numerous encounters that were exciting enough for their simple details to furnish ample eloquence.

The Life of Birds, by Joel Carl Welty, Professor of Zoology, Beloit College. Alfred A. Knopf, New York (1963) 546 pages. Profusely illustrated with photographs and Norman Tolson's graphic drawings. $12.95.

The first paragraph of the Preface of this book sets the tone for the whole work.

"The chief aim of this book is to present, simply and straightforwardly, the basic facts of bird biology. A second aim is to arouse in the reader a lasting enthusiasm for birds and the wonderful things they do. If the first goal is attained, reaching the second should be assured by the facts themselves. They make a fascinating story when they are considered in relation to the live, throbbing bird and its problems of existence."

Details follow to describe and limit the work, the sources, the compromises between extremes. A paragraph notes the "disdain" of other zoologists for ornithologists because of the "occasional lapses from scientific objectivity of overenthusiastic colleagues."

Being one of the "enthusiastic amateur colleagues" this reviewer must admit some factual basis for the charges and regret any actual damages caused.

But most regretable is the fact that an ornithologist of the level indicated by this superb book should, through the nearly universal human sense of insecurity, be made to feel a lack of full approval from allied disciplines. In so far as the disdain for ornithology exists, could it not be also the result of similar but even greater feelings of inadequacy of these others, overcorrected by the academic equivalent of gang swagger?

In any case we amateurs could improve our own behavior by being, not less enthusiastic, but better informed

and more careful with our observations. For our own lack of security Welty's half page listing of beginnings or advances in human knowledge largely or wholly due to the work of ornithologists is something to keep in mind. Even better are his comments about the surge and rapid discovery in the science of ornithology, the increase of interest, of doctorates, the development and availablity of instruments and methods for new and mass research.

For the book itself, giving a reasonable adequate idea of it in few words is a responsibility not lightly undertaken by one with respect for its subject matter. Certainly it well lives up to its author's preface, and more.

It would seem an almost ideal text on bird biology for a student who must work alone. Systematically organized with 23 chapters in more or less conventional divisions, it opens with "Birds as Flying Machines," followed by "Kinds of Birds," through six divisions of physiology, five of behavior, one each on nests, eggs, incubation, care and development of young, numbers of birds, ecology, geography, flight, origin, and evolution.

On this basic framework the author has made learning a pleasing adventure. The book is hard to lay down, though, manifestly, no one could read the more than 500 pages of solid information at one sitting. Yet it is equally hard to keep from nipping about, snatching a new and interesting fact here, participating in a buildup for future discovery there, wandering about at random as though through some new bazaar of learning, where even familiar goods are displayed with an air, with some new touch, or lighting, to bring out an aspect never noted before.

An example of the author's style and approach is his discussion of the secondary sex characters: "The extravagant development of these 'badges of sex' in many birds is likely related to their behavior reactions and their fugitive mode of living. A male bird, showing his fine feathers and splendid voice before his intended, has to make a persuasive impression in a hurry, before either of them is frightened away by some predator. And competition with other males of the same species has undoubtedly played a role in intensifying these secondary sexual characters. Darwin developed this theme in his principle of sexual selection."

An alphabetical list of references of 20 pages and an index of 21 pages complete the book and enhance its usefulness.—**J. W. Johnson, Huron.**

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BRIEFLY . . .

Lowry Elliott suggests that Bob Johnson, Dr. Moriarty, et al, write up the goose nesting platforms for **Bird Notes.** Says the success of the platforms should be widely advertised and the erection of many more by sportsman's groups encouraged.

Dr. Moriarty reminds us that, to identify the **maxima,** when banding the geese, you measure toes and bills.

Willis and Mrs. Hall, we hear, are working on some pictures of Red-tails. We hope to see the results in time—and get the story for you.

Would it be asking too much for bird lists to be put in check-list order? And take a chore off the downtrodden editor. Now I get even by just not getting to them. And I hate to leave them out.