

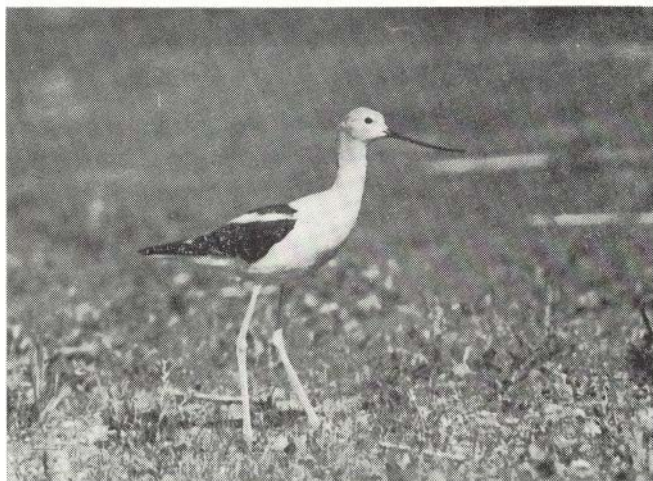
SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

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

Vol. XIX, No. 3

SEPTEMBER, 1967

Whole No. 74



Avocet

—Kent Olson

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President's Page

THERE are many overtones to this, my last President's Page. Sadness permeates my goodbye but this is partially offset by the satisfaction of knowing that I have sweated blood for the last time writing this page. Writing may come easy for some but for me it is hard work. (It's hard work for everybody.—Ed.)

It has been my privilege, and a great honor, to serve as your president these past two and one half years. I am reminded of what Yogi Berra, the great Yankee ball player, said at a party honoring him. When he was presented with a gift, Yogi remarked, "I want to thank everybody who made this day necessary."



I too am mindful of the loyal, devoted officers and members of S. D. O. U. No president could ask for a nicer group to work with. In particular I want to thank the following: James Johnson, our editor, the board of directors, Vice President Les Baylor, Membership Chairman Lowry Elliott, Treasurer Nelda Holden, Secretary Jean Jonkel, Dr. Whitney, Chairman of Check List Committee, the Check List Committee, the Liaison Committee, the Library Committee, the Emblem and Stationery Committee, and all of the convention committees who have served these past few years.

"What is best for S. D. O. U. and its future?" has been the thought upper-

most in the minds of your president and your officers. We have tried to be sincere and objective in our decisions. If progress has been made, credit should go to the officers and directors; if mistakes have been made, they are honest ones, and your president accepts the blame.

Next January S. D. O. U. will be nineteen years old. This is quite a respectable age as far as organizations go. S. D. O. U. is not an island unto itself, but just a segment, an important one to be sure, of the larger overall conservation picture.

We are but a ripple in the lake of time but small ripples spread all over. Let us continue to make ourselves heard. Let us keep screaming about air and water pollution. Let us work to secure legislation banning the sale of DDT and other insecticides which are lethal in the bird's food chains. Let us help save the 250 birds and mammals which are on the verge of disappearing.

We have an excellent medium for expressing our thoughts in our **Bird Notes** magazine and the lecture platform to which many of us are called.

Our check list is no longer a dream but is slowly becoming a reality under the guidance of Nat Whitney. Again may I urge your support for this great undertaking.

Our membership has grown from 234 in 1965 to 260 in 1967 under Lowry Elliott's supervision. Thanks to Herman and Lois Chapman, we are now financially able to put on a membership campaign in the West River Country.—**Herman Chilson.**

White-Faced Ibis Observed on Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge

Donald A. Hammer

PERSONNEL at Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge recorded three observations of White-Faced Ibises during the spring and summer of 1967. A description of the birds and each observation is given below.

Morphological Description

A medium sized bird with a wing span similar to that of an avocet, however the body was considerably more robust. It appeared to have a small red patch immediately around the eye and near the base of the long decurved bill. A larger white patch was noted outside and around the red patch. The head, breast, belly and back were glossy reddish brown. The wings appeared to be iridescent blue-green. This color was also noted in the tail region; however, the wings were held in the resting position, preventing an accurate observation of the tail. The legs appeared purple and about the same length as those of an avocet. At a distance of 100 yards, the bird appeared black without the aid of field glasses. At 50 yards the rusty brown and blue-green colors were readily apparent.

Observations

On May 29, 1967 at 7:30 a.m., John W. Ellis and Donald G. Young flushed a dark bird with a decurved bill and a slightly larger body than an avocet from the shoreline of a refuge pool.

On July 3, 1967 at 6:30 p.m., Donald A. Hammer and John W. Ellis flushed two similar birds approximately two miles west of the above location. They were observed while circling over the area for approximately three minutes. The outstretched neck and trailing legs

while in flight were readily apparent. Harassment by Red-wing and Yellow-headed Blackbirds prevented them from landing in the vicinity. After successfully evading the blackbirds, they were able to land about one-fourth mile away along the shoreline of another dike.

On July 11, 1967 at 8:30 a.m., a medium-sized dark bird was flushed from the shoreline of a shallow pool when Donald G. Young and Donald A. Hammer drove into the area. It flew about 100 yards and landed in the middle of another small shallow pool where it remained for over 30 minutes. While under observation, the bird was apparently probing in the mud under two to three inches of water as do feeding avocets, willets, etc. Although it captured and ate a number of items, no identification of these food articles was possible. Numerous attempts to startle the bird were made, inducing it to lift its head and assume a more upright position so that the head would be more visible on a photograph. It did not frighten easily and when it did, the alert position was held for only two to three seconds. The bird remained in the same small pool as the observers drove out of the area.

The three observations described above were made with the aid of 7x50 B&L binoculars and/or a 800 mm telephoto camera lens. A number of photographs were taken of this bird at a distance of 50 yards utilizing 800 mm telephoto lens, and the photos obtained were placed in the Lacreek Refuge

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SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

**Winter Meeting at Madison,
November 17-18-19, 1967
Trojan Center, General Beadle State College**

—TENTATIVE PROGRAM—

Friday, Nov. 17

7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.—Registration and informal gathering. A good time for displays and sharing of slides, experiences, and getting to know new members.

Saturday, Nov. 18

8:00-10:00 a.m.—Check-List Committee breakfast meeting.

8:00-10:00 a.m.—Raptor Research Foundation Board of Directors meeting.

8:00-10:00 a.m.—Open time for everyone else. A bird trip may be arranged if demand and weather coincide.

10:00-10:15 a.m.—Coffee.

10:00-Noon—Business meeting.

Afternoon—Paper session.

Evening—Banquet at Hotel Park, 223 South Egan. \$2.

Sunday, Nov. 19

Forenoon—Finish paper session and business.

CALL FOR PAPERS

More papers are needed. Rush titles to Dave and Nelda Holden in time to have them printed in the program. Make note of time and any special equipment you will require for adequate presentation. Papers should be filed with SDOU. This has been neglected in late years.

MADISON ACCOMMODATIONS

Lake Park Motel, West, Highway 34
Pierson Motor Lodge, West, Highway 34
Shady Rest Motel, 1120 North West 2
Hotel Madison, 122 South Egan
Hotel Park, 223 South Egan

Roberts County Notes

Yellow-Throated Vireo, Veery and Scarlet Tanager

Bruce K. Harris

DURING the period 1935-42 these three species were seen or heard regularly at Sodak Park, on Big Stone Lake. From 1947 to 1966 I lived in other states, but managed to return to the Sodak cottage on vacations most years, usually during May or June. For the past ten years the above-mentioned species were absent or much reduced in numbers, and I was concerned about their status here as Roberts County has some of their best habitat in South Dakota. I am happy to report that observations made during the past two summers (1966, 1967) allow a more optimistic picture for the future of these birds in the state, especially for the Veery and Scarlet Tanager.

The Veery is evidently losing ground in Roberts County (and probably in South Dakota) as a summer resident, most likely a result of human intrusion into its limited breeding habitat. I heard a singing male at Sica Hollow, near Sisseton, on July 17, 1966, and two singing birds were noted in the Big Coulee area SW of Peever on July 10th and 12th, 1967. But no birds were seen or heard in the Hartford Beach and Sodak areas during the past two summers, despite a good deal of time spent near habitat where nests were found in earlier years.

The Yellow-throated Vireo and Scarlet Tanager are evidently doing well along Big Stone Lake, and I can't explain my failure to find them during

the past few years, considering their relative abundance noted during the past summer. I did not find the Vireo during the 1966 season, but in 1967 I located at least six singing males in the two miles of shore between Sodak Park and Linden Beach. No nests were found, but there is every reason to believe that the Yellow-throated Vireo is fairly common as a breeding species in the area covered. I have never seen or heard this bird in the deep coulees near Sisseton and Peever.

During the 1966 breeding season I had only one record for the Scarlet Tanager—a singing male at Sica Hollow on July 17th. But on July 11, 1967 I found three singing males between Hartford and Linden Beach. One bird was feeding full-fledged young out of the nest, while a female (assumed to be his mate) was building, or re-building, a nest in a nearby tree. This appears to be something unusual, as I can find nothing in the literature to suggest that this species produces two broods a season.

Other 1967 records of the Scarlet Tanager were singing males noted at Sodak Park on June 31, and in the Big Coulee SW of Peever on July 12th. A migration record for May 10th near Ideal, Tripp County (adult male) should add to the few west-river records for the Scarlet Tanager.—**Woonsocket.**

Summer Season in the Black Hills

Esther Serr

DUE to experience and greater number of observers, new and rarer species have been found in the Black Hills area. Then, the double amount of rainfall for the year through June has provided excellent birding for the Black Hills Audubon Society members.

"Big Count Days" was held June 4 when members went into the field to bring in a total of 112 species.

The **European Mute Swans** given to Storybook Island in Rapid City by Kenneth Thompson nested in Canyon Lake Park. Four cygnets were hatched from seven eggs but three of the cygnets were apparently stolen. One while the swans were in Canyon Lake Park, and two more after they were moved to Storybook Island.

A **Broad-Winged Hawk** was identified by B. J. Rose on a May 7, 1967, field trip. It sat in high trees and could be observed by members for about 15 minutes near the Cement Plant pond.

Screech Owls nested in the residential area of Canyon Lake. Two adults and four downy young were noted in high cottonwoods June 6, 1967, near Cottonwood Street. Black Hills Audubon Society members were called and B. J. Rose photographed them. Gertrude Bachmann has noted the same family on June 19 and July 4. Then, on July 10 two young came to her bird bath; one seemed to know what to do but the other didn't take to the water so well.

Les Baylor heard a **Poorwill** calling May 23, 1967, from Yucca Hill east of

Red Dale Drive. Another **Poorwill** was found in a garage in the Robbinsdale area of the city June 17 by boys. It was photographed by B. J. Rose, banded by Dr. N. R. Whitney and released.

The **Olive-Sided Flycatcher** was noted on a field trip July 2, 1967, above Black Fox Campground at about 5,862 feet elevation, and photographed by B. J. Rose. This bird was calling and appeared to be on territory. About three-fourths mile up the canyon another of the species was heard singing.

An **Eastern Bluebird** was noted in a farmyard on July 2, 1967, on the Rochford road near Highway 385 by Esther Serr and Elizabeth Southmayd. B. J. Rose saw an **Eastern Bluebird** in the same area on July 9.

Cardinals were reported in the city June 8, 1967, by David Davies; June 7 by Isaac Chase and June 14 by Elizabeth Southmayd.

Blackburnian Warblers were noted on July 2, 1967, field trip to Black Fox Campground and photographed by B. J. Rose. They were stalked about three hours as they flitted about in the high spruce singing constantly. Members believe there were at least two. One appeared to be on territory.

A **Mourning Warbler** was sighted by B. J. Rose and Elizabeth Southmayd, June 4, 1967, across from the Fish Hatchery in the Canyon Lake area. A previous sighting, May 27, 1965, was reported by Elizabeth Southmayd when she observed a **Mourning Warbler** at 15 feet with unobstructed view in a

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Bird Loss at Highmore, May, 1967

June Harter

THE week ending May 1, 1967, began with chilly weather, warming slightly. On Friday, the thermometer zoomed into the 80's and the sun helped the illusion that spring might replace winter. But our hopes were dashed by a cold mist from heavy gray clouds the next day, and Sunday was worse with a strong northeast wind, rain and cold. It was a week end of blizzards west and north of us and tornadoes east.

Monday morning, May 1, it was snowing with strong north winds and an unusual number of birds were looking for something to eat. Fortunately the snow stopped about noon and it was much easier to keep feeding places open. During the day it became apparent that the unusual numbers of birds was a general condition for Highmore and immediate vicinity rather than just our own.

An original estimate of several hundred birds seemed, eventually, to be conservative. At that time of the year we can expect to see only an occasional robin or grackle on the lawns in town, but, on May 1 and 2, we could see from 1 to a dozen of several species anywhere we looked. Observers with forty or more years experience had never seen anything like it.

A migratory flock of robins, 500 or more, was in Highmore. Harris', White-crowned, Gambel's, and white-throated sparrows predominated among the eleven sparrow species we recorded. Of particular interest was their seemingly wider than usual crown stripes, their whiteness, and the brilliance of the yellow spots of the white-throated sparrows. One of the latter had an overall

tan color that was quite noticeable when it was feeding with the others.

We seldom see fox sparrows but the first four days of May gave us an opportunity to watch two beautiful, richly-colored specimens and we saw another in town. Other species recorded were tree, clay-colored, field, Lincoln's, swamp, and song sparrows.

Other arrivals were the towhees, both eastern and Arctic subspecies, another instance where it would be difficult to estimate how many. On past occasions I have seen one or two towhees in our yard and found 20 to 30 in the shelter-belt half an hour later. A summary of records for the first four days of May, 1967, shows more towhees than this area has had for many years and the last previous sighting of the eastern subspecies was in 1962. This year, wherever there was a feeder, there would be six or more of one or both subspecies.

A Cooper's Hawk found easy pickings in our yard May 1 and 2. It is an odd experience to be sitting at the window watching a yard full of birds and have them suddenly disappear into nearby trees and shrubs, leaving not a sound or movement anywhere.

Typical high-low temperatures for the period April 29-May 4, inclusive, were 34-30, 39-18, and 48-19. Insects were not to be found easily and evidence indicates a severe loss among the martins, myrtle warblers, and wrens that arrived before the cold spell. Fourteen martins in one place seemed intent on staying but later disappeared. Dead martins found a few

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SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

Raptor Research Foundation, Inc.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

ALL life on the planet is, and perhaps always has been, subjected to stresses caused by environmental changes. Our era seems to be one of accelerated changes due, in no small part, to very rapid expansion of human populations and influences.

That environmental modification by human activities is seriously threatening many species of wildlife is well recognized. High on the list of threatened species are several of our raptors. Recognizing that most wildlife is moving into a period of management by man and that its future will depend upon the efficacy of that management, a group especially interested in birds of prey incorporated Raptor Research Foundation in 1965.

STRUCTURE

The Raptor Research Foundation (Centerville, S. Dak.) is a non-profit corporation whose purpose is to stimulate, coordinate, direct and conduct research in the biology and management of birds of prey, and to promote a better public understanding and appreciation of the value of these birds.

The business of the foundation is conducted by a Board of Directors with the advice of an Advisory Board consisting of professional scientists and qualified amateurs who have special interest in the raptors. Anyone wishing to support the work of the Foundation

may become an associate member by making an annual contribution.

PRESENT ACTIVITIES

Activities which use the name of Raptor Research Foundation must have the prior approval of the Board of Directors. Projects in a number of areas have been initiated.

1. Captivity Breeding. Seven projects, aimed at developing techniques of captivity breeding of raptors, are currently being sponsored by Raptor Research Foundation. These are given high priority because the techniques will provide a useful if not indispensable tool in solving other research problems.

2. Population study. Three population studies are being conducted. Two are local in scope. One is a statewide survey to provide information for use by conservation department officials.*

3. Information Exchange. Plans are being developed to provide a medium of information exchange among persons interested in raptor research.

4. Bio-telemetry. This applied use of electronic tracking and informational gathering systems promises to be valuable in many areas of raptor research. A project in this area has been started.

5. Education and Public Relations. Public relations are an important part of wildlife management. The Foundation is considering plans to develop a source of information and material to aid in this field . . . in this vein, information and personnel were furnished to give basic training in identification

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Book Review

J. W. Johnson

THE Life of Rivers and Streams by Robert L. Usinger. McGraw-Hill, produced jointly with **The World Book Encyclopedia**. \$4.95. 232 pages including index, Appendix and Glossary.

That this volume, the seventh of the series, **Our Living World of Nature** and uniform with the earlier numbers, is beautiful, absorbing, and educational was to be expected. Indeed, the color photography is spectacularly so. Trying to pick outstanding examples for special mention leaves few to pass over and becomes something of random selection distributed by categories.

A spread of three of a kingfisher diving into a clear, pebbled stream, catching a fish in the water, and taking off with it comes early and stays on the list in spite of later splendors: a full page plate of a water penny, a crayfish seen full-face, a dipper, an appealing, watersoaked young spotted sandpiper, a mayfly moulting, an otter, a spread of turtles, a frame-filling sunfish, a bullhead, downy egrets displaying their golden slippers, algae, a back-lighted fisherman in a forest pool, a child in a red sweater catching living specimens in a boulder-strewn creek. All and many more are worth seeing and study.

The arrangement of text and pictures is less formal and less complex than in previous volumes. Perhaps the wide range of subject matter enforced simplification to keep the book within size. The obvious point that this life described is about to be lost—and within our own time—if we are not both aware and willing to pay the

price of saving a little of it—too calls for a simple treatment.

So we are shown quickly what we still have, in spite of past abuses, and then, how we are losing it. Some of these latter pictures are graphically not pretty but we have all seen their like many times—and too often looked away, as we passed by on the other side.

And this book shows us the causes of the pollution in our streams as well as the results and what must be done if we are to escape stagnation in our own filth.

It can be done and much is already under way. But only active and constant attention along with understanding work will do it.—**Huron**.

* * * *

CHILSON PRESENTS AWARD

As we know, our president is a man of many parts. Not surprising is a picture coming recently to this desk. It shows Herman, as President of the South Dakota Horticultural Society, presenting its John Robertson Gold Medal Memorial Award to Ronald M. Peterson, head of the South Dakota State University Horticulture-Forestry Department for "Outstanding Contributions to Horticulture."

Birds' Nests of South Dakota

L. J. Moriarty

A. O. U. #264.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius americanus*)

IN 1939, I found a pair of Long-billed Curlews nesting just north of Wauertown but, at that time, I was not taking pictures of nests.

While at Belvidere for the Meeting on May 20, 1967, I saw four pairs and, with the aid of two local ranchers, found two nests, each with 4 eggs. One, about 5 miles north of Kadoka, in a closely grazed sheep pasture, was photographed by Whitney, Hall, Rose, and others.

The rim of the cup was even with the surface, 8" across and 2½" deep,

well made, lined with fine dry grass, about 1" thick at the rim.

The eggs were well incubated and the bird held until we were about 100 feet from her, when she ran away and put on a crippled bird act, but with little noise. The eggs were pointed as are the eggs of waders I have seen. They measured 2½" x 2", with a rather deep, buffy, dead grass color, spotted with mauve brown and liberally blotched and scrawled with deep chocolate brown, principally around the larger end. This coloring made them all but invisible in the nest.

Over says the eggs are nearly as large as those of the domestic leghorn

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Nest of Long-billed Curlew

—Willis Hall

General Notes of Special Interest

SPECIMEN RECORDS FOR THE GOSHAWK AND LEAST BITTERN—

On August 8, 1967, a Least Bittern was discovered lodged against the radiator of a car driven by William Bradwisch, Game, Fish and Parks Fisheries biologist stationed at Woonsocket. Mr. Bradwisch reports that the bird was probably struck near Ferney, Brown County, on the above date. A wing of this bird was salvaged, and is available at the Game, Fish and Parks office in Woonsocket. Although there are few records for the Least Bittern in South Dakota, there is reason to believe that it is not an uncommon bird. The writer observed this species at Bullhead Lake, Roberts County, on July 1, 1967.

Another significant specimen record contributed by Bradwisch is that of an immature Goshawk which was killed on the Bradwisch farm near White Lake, Aurora County, on March 1, 1965. The bird was shot while attacking chickens. This specimen was mounted and is in Mr. Bradwisch's home at Woonsocket. There have been very few records for the Goshawk in South Dakota during recent years.—**Bruce K. Harris, Woonsocket.**

* * * *

WHOOPING CRANES SIGHTED NEAR CLARK, SOUTH DAKOTA—At 2:30 p.m. on April 8, 1967, two whooping cranes were sighted by M. Gilbert Kloster on the farm of his father, Martin Kloster, located 6 miles east and 7 miles north of Clark, South Dakota. The younger Kloster noticed that something had scared the cattle, causing them to move from a corn field up to the farm buildings. As he walked over a hill, he saw two large white birds which flushed at a distance of 200 yards from him.

Apparently the cattle had been scared by the two birds that had landed in the corn field to feed. According to Gilbert Kloster, the birds stood from 5 to 6 feet tall and had black wing tips. They ran 8 to 10 feet along the ground before becoming airborne. The call of the birds was checked later against a record of bird calls for further identification. All evidence indicated that the birds could be only whooping cranes.

On April 13, 1967, the two cranes were seen again by Martin Kloster. The birds were standing just above the edge of a slough about one mile from Kloster's farm buildings. The sighting was made with binoculars at a distance of one-half mile. On April 15, 1967, the two cranes were seen again by Gilbert Kloster and his brother, Meldon Kloster, in the same slough that their father had seen the birds on the 13th. The two observers were able to get within 70 yards of them before they flew. The birds were seen once more on April 18, 1967, by Martin Kloster. This time they were feeding in a corn field about one-half mile from the farm buildings.

Notification of these sightings was made to Federal and State Wardens. Unfortunately, the birds could not be located when a search was made for them.—**Bruce Burkett, student at South Dakota State University, Brookings, summer employee, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, Jamestown, N. Dak.**

* * * *

WHITE-TAILED ROBIN IN THE BLACK HILLS—On a rainy Fourth of July afternoon I spotted from a distance a strange white-tailed bird about

one mile north of Nahant (Lawrence Co.). I was in this vicinity studying the only known naturally-occurring stand of lodgepole pine in the Black Hills. Although I did not have field glasses, I stalked the bird to within 15 feet and identified it as a male robin. The complete set of tail feathers (rectrices) was pure white, forming a beautiful white fan as the bird flew.

This apparent lack of pigment possibly could be due to a localized absence or inactivity of pigment cells in the follicles of the tail feathers. The genetics and development of pigmentation patterns in birds are fairly complicated and are regulated by numerous factors. I do not want to go into greater detail, but wish to point out that the term "partial albino" is not appropriate in describing partially-white birds.—**Dilwyn J. Rogers, Associate Professor of Biology, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.**

* * * *

WILD TURKEY ATTEMPTS NESTING NEAR RAPID CITY—A turkey nest containing 10 eggs (fig. 1) was located just north of Rapid City on May 20, 1967. The nest was in the bottom of a small draw with an east aspect and on a 5 percent slope. Dominant vegetation within 10 feet of the nest consisted of Japanese chess, woods rose, bluegrass, western snowberry, dandelion and cudweed sage. The nest was located under the overhanging branches of cudweed sage, a plant not abundant in the area. The height of the vegetation around the nest averaged 12 inches. The nearest overstory vegetation, a pine tree, was 60 yards away.

The nest was observed with binoculars on May 20, 21 and 22, at a time when the hen should have been incubating the eggs. However, she was never observed in the area. Upon investigation, no signs of an active nest were present. The nest had been deserted earlier as the eggs had not been

turned recently and small amounts of vegetation were starting to grow around them.

The lack of success of this nesting attempt was probably due to human disturbance within the immediate area, as two different clubs center their activities in a building only 30 yards from the nesting site.—**Roger R. Kerbs, Rapid City.**

(See Photo Page 67)

* * * *

CINNAMON TEAL RECORDS—The mention of a Cinnamon Teal rings a bell with me. I bagged a male Cinnamon Teal at Cottonwood Lake, Sully County, on November 3, 1937. I have since observed a few spring migrants but no others during the fall flight.

I have been a bird watcher of one degree or another for well over 50 years, primarily in South Dakota. I was born in Huron, grew up in Redfield, and have covered most of the state at one time or another, with time out for Alcan Highway construction and with the Navy Seabees.

My very complete record of game birds bagged since 1933 readily gave me the above information.—**R. V. Summerside, 102 South Madison, Pierre.**

* * * *

FRANKLIN'S GULL IN DUPREE AREA—In August, 1966 I was told of gulls coming to a ranch on the Moreau River and devouring grasshoppers in a flax field in a day. On the following day, they stripped a cornfield of the pests. The sheriff saw them and both he and the rancher estimate there must have been 2,000 of the birds.

They seem to have followed up the Moreau River, feeding as they went along.

We do not have gulls in this county (Ziebach) other than an occasional few that fly over in very wet weather, so I went to the ranch to see them. But only a few were left.—**Mrs. Mahle Ross, Dupree.**

AVOCETS NESTING NEAR LAKE HENRY—While relocating a photo blind on the shore of Lake Henry, I observed 10 Avocets and, after a brief search located four nests.

The nests consisted of a shallow depression scooped out in the sand, lined with primary feather tracts, probably shed during the summer before by Western Grebes (7).

Three nests were grouped in a line about fifty feet apart. The fourth nest was located about 200 yards from the other three.

After setting up a photo blind near

the three nests, my wife and I, on June 24 and 25, observed and photographed Avocets as they performed their incubation duties. One nest was serviced by two birds that were seen to change shifts three times from 1-3:30 p.m., C.D.T., on June 25. During incubation, the birds would rise up frequently and appear to rotate the eggs with their bills.

On June 25, we removed the blind and left the area. All nests were still being attended. On July 16, we again located each nest site but could find no sign of the Avocets or the eggs.—**Kent Olson, Huron.**



Avocet Nest—Lake Henry

—Kent Olson

LAPLAND LONGSPURS FOUND DEAD AT HECLA—On the morning of March 20, 1967 the residents of Hecla, S. Dak. woke up to find dead birds scattered around the town. United States Game Agent Howard Lovrien and State Warden LaBern Roth investigated the matter. The birds were identified as Lapland Longspurs. An estimated 200 Longspurs were found dead, mainly in the vicinity of street lights. During the night a low overcast and snow squalls had developed and it is believed the migrating flocks had become confused and flew into the ground. There were no dead Longspurs found outside the town nor were any found dead at a tall telephone relay tower several miles south of town. Hecla is in the north part of Brown County.—Howard T. Lovrien, Aberdeen, South Dakota.

* * * *

WHITE PELICAN AND WHISTLING SWAN JOIN CANYON LAKE DUCKS IN RAPID CITY—On November 11, 1966 L. M. Baylor and Dr. N. R. Whitney, Jr. confirmed a sighting on Canyon Lake of a White Pelican by Les' daughter, Marnie. An immature Whistling Swan was also observed on the lake. These observations are the first recorded for these species at Canyon Lake. However, stays at the lake were shortlived for both birds.

After two weeks the Swan became entangled in fish line and strangled. Checked by L. M. Baylor and Harry Behrens, the Swan weighed 15¼ pounds, had a wing spread of 6 feet, 10¾ inches and a length of 3 feet, 10½ inches. The specimen was reported to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is now in the collection of the Cooperative Wildlife Research Station, South Dakota State University, Brookings.

On December 30, personnel of Marine Life, a tourist attraction, were authorized by Assistant Chief Game Warden

Darrel Brady, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, to capture the Pelican and keep it for the winter. This is the second Pelican that they acquired this year. In October another Pelican was found in half-starved condition on Deerfield Reservoir in the Black Hills and turned over to Marine Life.—Esther Serr, Rapid City.

* * * *

FIRST SPECIMEN RECORDS FOR VARIED THRUSH, BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER AND HOUSE FINCH—The first South Dakota specimens for the Varied thrush, Buff-breasted sandpiper and the House finch were taken during the past year (1966) by me. More detailed information will be submitted at a later date.—Bruce K. Harris, Woonsocket.

* * * *

BAROMETRIC BIRDS—In a short article in the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology NEWSLETTER for April, 1967, birds are described as barometers because they are generally closely adjusted to their natural environment and consequently are sensitive to changes. Like barometers, their numbers hold steady when there are no changes, rise when the changes are favorable, drop when unfavorable.

One of the primary purposes of the Laboratory's Nest Card Program is to gather barometric readings. In this way causes for population fluctuations may be determined and appropriate remedial action taken.

The Laboratory points out that common birds, dirt common birds, are as good barometers as any!"

Write the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. for information about participation in the Program.—Michigan Audubon Newsletter.

**ABERDEEN CHRISTMAS COUNT,
1966**

Mallard	86
Rough-legged hawk	12
Marsh hawk	1
Prairie falcon	1
Ring-necked pheasant	306
Long-eared owl	4
Short-eared owl	6
Saw-whet owl	1
Screech owl	1
Great horned owl	8
Snowy owl	4
Burrowing owl	1
Flicker y-s	15
Hairy woodpecker	4
Downy woodpecker	2
Horned lark	354
Blue jay	4
Common crow	29
Black-capped chickadee	41
Brown creeper	2
Robin	8
Bohemian waxwing	6
Cedar waxwing	86
Northern shrike	3
Starling	188
House sparrow	988
Western meadowlark	1
Red-winged blackbird	15
Rusty blackbird	35
Common grackle	1
Pine grosbeak	2
American goldfinch	10
Red crossbill	36
Slate-colored junco	2
Tree sparrow	31
Lapland longspur	1,000

Received after the other counts were set up, to have included this one would have required the resetting of the double page. Accordingly, it was held for separate publication in this issue.

* * * *

MOCKINGBIRD AT HIGHMORE—
June 7, 1967. A Mockingbird has been here for the past week. It has treated us to a few songs and we watched it yesterday as it perched on a TV antenna.—**June Harter, Highmore.**

Ibis

(Concluded from Page 52)

slide collection. Although none of the observers had previously seen and identified a White-Faced Ibis, after consulting Roger Tory Peterson's **A Field Guide To The Birds** and **A Field Guide To Western Birds** during actual field observations, it is the general opinion of these observers that the birds seen were White-Faced Ibises.—**Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge, Martin, S. Dak. 57551.**

* * * *

Bird Loss

(Concluded from Page 56)

days later included a pair in the martin house and three individuals in a neighbor's yard.

Myrtle warblers started arriving about April 25 and in numbers so that one or two could be seen anywhere. We watched one on May 1 that seemed to have a feeling of desperation as it dashed wildly about from plant to tree looking for insects. I opened the garage door, hoping it would find its way to some flies by the windows. Later I found two dead myrtles, and at least one was found in town. While waiting in the car in front of the post office Monday afternoon, I watched one scurrying along the sidewalk, searching every crevice and corner, apparently oblivious of several people walking near it.

No reports of dead wrens have come in so far but I believe many were lost. Many wren houses that are usually occupied are empty now.—**Highmore.**

Dioramas By Wayne Trimm

Installed at Augustana

J. W. Johnson

NEARING the end of a long hall, I looked out the window on a scene so real it seemed unreal: a small mountain stream turned into a narrow lake by a beaver dam, the background curtained by a steep hill so near it was hardly less green than the valley at its foot.

Boulders strewed the foreground, among them the familiar plants of the Hills, standing out so clearly they could be picked.

The first glimpse stopped me, still far from the deep window-like opening. This took time to accept.

Lack of preparation caused much of the shock effect, I think. The Chapmans had tried to tell me, "exquisitely beautiful," but the words hadn't meant anything like this.

The others moved up for closer study but I was held back by the need to adjust to the positive feeling that I was looking out into a real scene in bright sunshine of a summer day.

Not everything was green. Below the dam vegetation marked its deprivation of water by yellow and red. Blooming plants in their varying zones of moisture and soil gave tints and shades.

But the other scenes drew me on, too soon, to go paging through the book. Next was a rolling prairie in varying shades of yellow, that led naturally through the haze of distant hills to the pale clouds of the horizon.

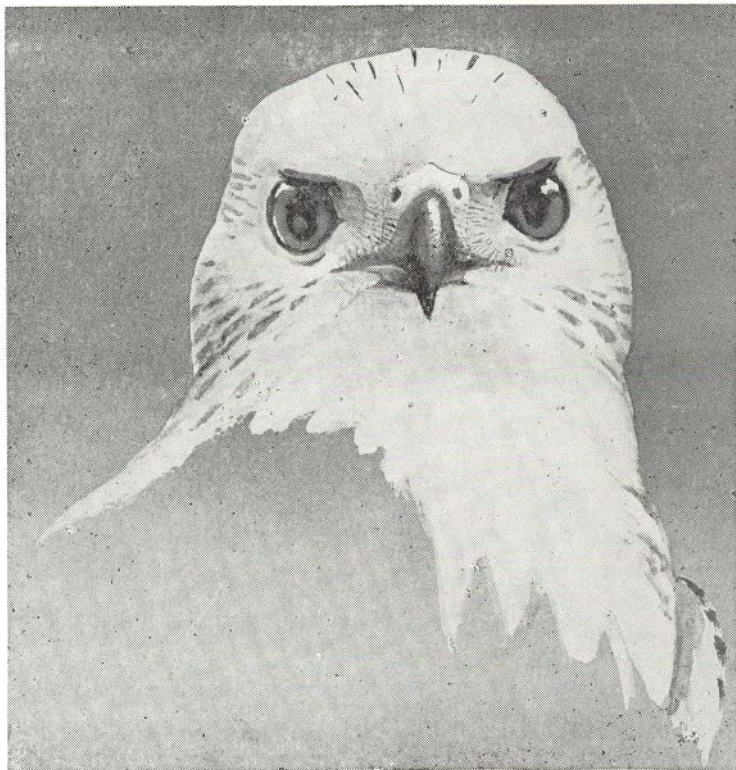
Buffalo and pronghorn stood about the foreground of this one, some almost within reach, others scattering out into the far distance. Drawing nearer, I could see the big animals were

not alone. Just over the crest of the rise, less than fifty feet if the scene had been as real as it looked, a little group of sharp-tails had one member with stretched neck keeping a skeptical eye on our intrusion. Other small animals and birds were there but they had to wait while I moved over to see the third scene of the Missouri.

Dr. Froiland was just telling the rest how this scene had been selected on the ground, just above Ft. Randall, from a point just below the top of the hills: River channels and sandbars, wide and enclosed by meandering hills. It was now right there before us. And the air was lined with little flights of geese and ducks, their species obvious in the closeups, Canada, snows, blues, sandhill cranes farther away, and all the rest, if one took a moment to examine the river far below, where blue heron waited in pathetic patience for fish in the waters along the shore.

But that close look brought out the long lines of geese and ducks that, one after another, faded away into the distance. There seemed no end to them. Someone tried to talk about how many birds there might be in the scene; but I had no interest since it was man-made, the numbers had to have a limit, however great. The skill was in the artist, who could create the impression of birds literally without number.

Knowing we had but a few minutes more, I walked back and forth in front of the three scenes, Black Hills, Prairie and Missouri, trying to take in as much as possible in our last few minutes, with the usual resulting con-



White Gyrfalcon

—Wayne Trimm

fusion of memory. It was just too much. An animal on a boulder was a marmot—or might be a woodchuck. The prairie dogs might be watching the hawk, that probably had designs on them.

I broke away from that to go back to the river scene and the near flights of geese. What held them up, in the air, almost in the foreground?

A closer look caught the touching

wingtips of their lines—and gave the clue to the answer: they were strung on wire, and a clever job it was. They were as much like geese flying in line as the geese themselves could be—a flight of Canadas and another of snows. Farther away, in their long lines, they were painted on the receding sky and yet looked as natural as the real ones do. I thought of Herb Krause's "Geese along the Missouri" that pictured in words a scene much like that before

us, may have influenced the artist—who was Wayne Trimm, Augustana '48. Krause has taught at Augustana for many years, writing and English, and he and Trimm must have known each other well.

These three dioramas had just been installed in Gilbert Science Center at Augustana. No doubt their history from conception to installation here would make an interesting and worthwhile story in itself but—it hasn't been put together yet. Of course several people at least must have had a hand in making them possible and we hope someone can take the time soon to get it down.

Our trip to Sioux Falls came of an impulse to visit the Chapmans. From them we heard about the dioramas and that we had to see them—even if it was Sunday afternoon and the building closed. They called Dr. Froiland and

he would be glad to go over and open the place for us.

The overall sense of unreality about the scenes that first bothered me perhaps came from their seeming everywhere at their best at the instant of viewing. Art can do that and should, though nature usually doesn't. The best lighting seldom happens at just the right time with the plants putting on their bravest show and the birds and animals all being visible and on their best behavior when the best light shows them off.

The big game animals in the round—elk, deer, bison—were the work of Louis Paul Jonas, New York, foremost animal sculptor of the world. All the rest was the work of Wayne Trimm.

So everything was caught at its best moment—and why not?—**Huron**.

(This article appeared in **The Daily Plainsman** for August 27, 1967. Reproduced here by permission.)



Turkey Nest—Abandoned

—Robert R. Krebs

(See Page 61)



Gray Jay

—Wayne Trimm

Black Hills

(Concluded from Page 55)

low bush for at least 10 minutes in her yard on Dilger Street.

At Belvidere, a flock of 18 **Red Cross-bills** was observed feeding in Chinese elm trees by Esther Serr on July 4, 1967.

Green-Tailed Towhees were observed in the Fairburn and Rapid City areas. On May 10, 1967, one appeared at the feeder of B. J. Rose; it was caught in a mist net on May 11 and photographed by B. J. Rose; banded by Dr. N. R. Whitney and released. It was observed on May 12th and 13th. Mrs. Harold Smith of Fairburn saw one May 11 at her feeder. Mary Hyde had previously observed a **Green-Tailed Towhee** May 30, 1965, in her yard, but no one else saw it at the time.

On June 21, 1967, B. J. Rose, accompanied by Granville Smith of Columbus, Ohio, and Mr. and Mrs. Joe Kleiman of Royal Oak, Michigan, found three or four pairs of **Brewer's Sparrows**. The sparrows were in a greasewood-sagebrush area. After searching for some time, a nest of three newly-hatched young was found in a clump of greasewood.

On June 24th, Lois and B. J. Rose, and Dr. N. R. Whitney visited the nest and photographed the young and adults. The nest was checked on July 4th, but the young were gone. Several **Brewer's Sparrows** were seen and three were still singing on this date. The nest was found about 16 miles north of Belle Fourche in Butte County.

Other summer visitors, who were taken into the field by Black Hills Audubon Society members were Mr. and Mrs. Parker from Sacramento, Calif., Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Swanick, Mandan, N. Dak. and Mr. and Mrs. Harold Baxter, Arcadia, Calif.—**Rapid City.**

Birds' Nests

(Concluded from Page 59)

chicken. I feel sure these were much larger, about halfway between the leg-horn and the domestic turkey egg in size, which led me to remark that they were almost as large as a turkey egg.

The second nest was in a winter wheat field, about a mile north of Belvidere. The eggs were 4 also, as with all the shore birds normally. Eggs and nest were identical with the other.

I was particularly glad to find these as I feared that I might never get another chance. I was also pleased to find several of these quite rare birds since the last I had seen were on the Texas Gulf Coast in winter.—**Watertown.**

* * * *

Raptors

(Concluded from Page 57)

and value of birds of prey to an Indian Reservation Ranger Training Program.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Presently most of the work of Raptor Research Foundation is being conducted by the efforts and support of voluntary participants. Financial contributions will enable the Foundation to expand greatly its activities.

RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Address: Centerville, South Dakota

"Raptor Research News, the quarterly publication of this organization, which has distributed its third issue, has become a gold mine of information and sources on the problems allied to reproduction of raptors. It brings you right up to the frontier of knowledge on the subject.

It runs to about 20 typed pages, single-spaced, each issue, and is sent to members and contributors.—**J. W. Johnson.**

Alfred Peterson

July 17, 1967

Miss Ida L. Peterson
Algona, Iowa 50511
Dear Miss Peterson:

A letter from Lowry Elliott of Milbank, S. Dak. received Saturday tells of the passing of your brother, Alfred. I am sure it is not necessary to tell you that this news strikes pretty deeply because I counted Alfred as one of my closest friends. At the same time I confess a feeling of something like relief, because all the reports I had had about him in recent times had indicated the probability that he would never recover. When one gets pretty well down on the Western Slope of life the loss of such a one is irreparable—we oldsters do not make new friends frequently or readily.

Of course, I regret that I did not have word at a time when I could do something to help you and give clearer expression of my friendship for Alfred. Mrs. Chapman and I had many trips afield with this charming little old fellow and we hoped we had a secure place in his affections.

It was a good many years ago that I came to learn of the contribution Alfred had made to the study of bird life, primarily in western Minnesota. When I found him at Brandt he had apparently given up all interest in bird life and was confining his interest to collecting minerals and rocks. Eventually, however, I succeeded in getting him to join me in a study of ornithology of South Dakota. He proceeded to apply his unusual mentality and persistence to the study of the feathered folks of his area and soon came to be recognized as our leading authority on birds of the shores and marshes. His contributions to "South Dakota Bird Notes" have been many and valuable—in fact, they stand almost alone.

Mr. Elliott gave me no details, except to say that he understood Alfred's field notes were to go to Augustana College, which is located here in Sioux Falls. With the passing of years these will constitute source material of high value. They will serve as a monument to the intelligence, industry and understanding which he applied in his deep study of an interesting segment of our wildlife.

Mrs. Chapman joins in extending our deepest sympathy.

Sincerely,

H. F. CHAPMAN
516 N. W. Bank Bldg.
Sioux Falls, S. Dak.



Alfred Peterson

In Memoriam

Alfred Peterson

Alfred Peterson died June 27, 1967 at the Clear Lake Hospital. Funeral services were held at the Hardy Funeral Chapel and at Algona, Iowa, where he was buried.

To those of us privileged to know Alfred and work with him in the field, his place will never be filled. For shore birds no one thought of questioning an observation of his. And he knew the literature on these birds and others better than most.

It was a pleasure to write his biography for *Bird Notes* (Vol. XII :4-7,18) of March, 1960 as well as publish much from his notes and records from 1959 to the recent past. The indexes show the volume of his published work for his area. Without him our knowledge of the region's shore birds would be meager indeed.