

# SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

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

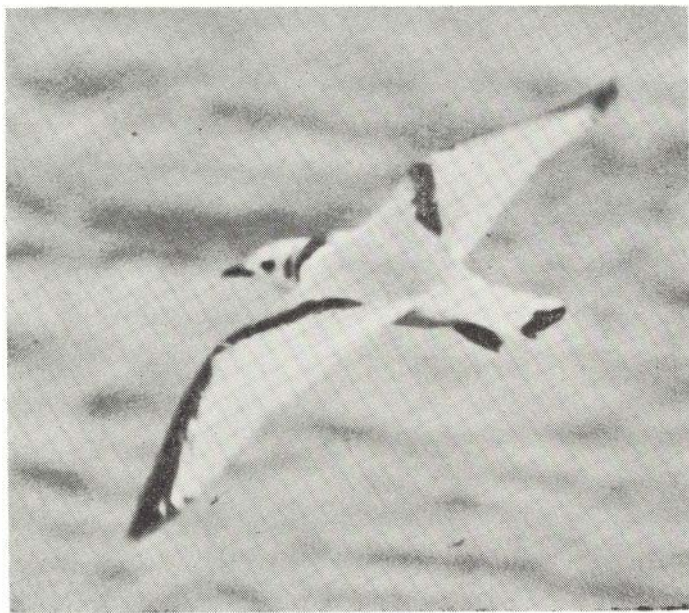
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Vol. XIX, No. 4

DECEMBER, 1967

Whole No. 75

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Black-legged Kittiwake at Big Bend Dam

—From Color Transparency by B. J. Rose

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Vol XIX, No. 4

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## President's Page

READERS of Herman Chilson's last President's Page must have noted with regret his intention to retire as SDOU's president. Herman brought to this position a splendid combination of practical experience and personal dignity. His laudable services have been appreciated by all SDOU members. Now we look forward to his emulating our other previous presidents by being an active past president, as we know he will be.



Since Herman's determination prevailed at the directors meeting, I must follow him with the dedication to serve SDOU as well as he and others before him have served. Humbled by the prospects of the task, I am encouraged nevertheless by the continuation of experienced officers in key positions, Jim Johnson, editor; Nelda Holden, treasurer; Jean Jonkel, secretary. And SDOU is favored in having as its new vice president Dr. Byron Harrell, who has contributed substantially to South Dakota ornithology through his work at the University of South Dakota.

SDOU members will note with interest, and we hope with approval, significant decisions from our recent business meeting. For a number of years SDOU has operated on a close margin between income from dues and expenses associated with publishing *Bird Notes*. This year at our business meeting in Madison, the members received the publisher's notice of a

necessary increase in our printing costs. Wisely, I think, the members voted to accept this increase so that we might continue the high standards and quality of *Bird Notes*.

The decision then left the directors the practical problem of balancing income and expenses. By reading this issue's masthead, you will see the nature of their action: the first major change in dues since the inception of SDOU in 1949. But the change is other than a simple dollar increase for regular dues. There is new thinking about classes of membership. The sustaining membership is now more meaningful to members having a special desire to support SDOU. The new family membership provides for the fact that, increasingly, couples share an interest in bird study. Togetherness has come to ornithology. This new membership class for husbands and wives gives them a shared subscription to *Bird Notes* and equal voice in SDOU affairs—but at a cost slightly less than two regular memberships.

Other items of interest from the business meeting: The Check List Committee is making progress toward completing the new Check List of the Birds of South Dakota. There is even tentative speculation for a completion date—about 1970. That goal will be aided measurably if members and others studying South Dakota birds will continue to send our editor their notes for publication. Also, in the business meeting we received news that the museum at Vermillion has been named the W. H. Over Dakota Museum. Attaining this designation became a spe-

(Concluded on Page 95)

# The Black-Legged Kittiwake in South Dakota

Bruce K. Harris

A FIELD trip to the Black Hills on November 3, 1967, gave me a chance to check the birds at Big Bend Dam on the Missouri River in Buffalo County. From the walkway below the dam on the east side of the river I began observations on the many gulls wheeling below the spillway. There were 30-40 Ring-bills, several immature Herring gulls, and two immature Bonaparte's, all working briskly back and forth, competing for whatever food might be churned to the surface by the force of the water from the two control gates that were open. When I sighted the Kittiwake my first thought was of a Sabine's gull, with its conspicuous black wing-tips, in contrast to the white primaries that are so characteristic of the more common Bonaparte's gull. A closer view brought out the black neck band, or "hash mark," along with the spot behind the eye, and the diagonal black band across the upper wings.

It was difficult to keep track of an individual bird in the whirling mass, and I lost sight of the gull occasionally when it would fly down-river several hundred yards, but it moved in close to the spill-way on three different occasions, giving me a good view of the characteristic markings noted above. I did not have a field guide with me at the time, and I was not at all sure what species I was seeing, never having seen any of the small, black-headed gulls except for Bonaparte's and Sabine's gull—the latter only once, and in adult plumage. But I knew it was something unusual, so I sketched the bird in my notebook, and then checked on the possibility of collecting it. Off-

cially at the Corps of Engineers office inside the dam were rather reluctant, but willing, to allow me to take the bird, once I had convinced them that I had both state and federal collecting permits, and that the species involved was really something rare. But as luck would have it, there were no fishing boats working below the spillway, and I did not want to shoot a specimen without having some chance of retrieving it. So I continued on to Rapid City, intending to stop again on the way home, hoping for better conditions for collecting the bird.

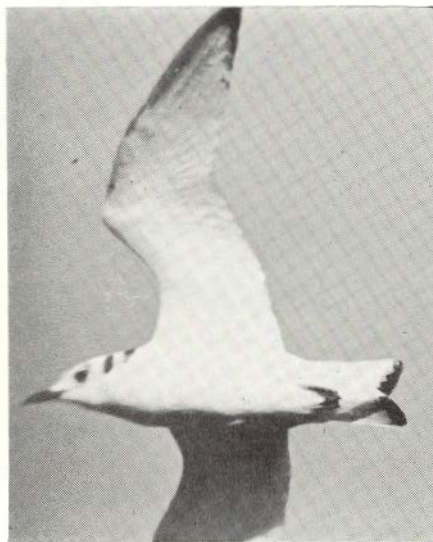
In Rapid City I borrowed a field guide, and after comparing the plates with my sketch and notes, I concluded that I had seen a Kittiwake. I also called Dr. Nat Whitney and B. J. Rose, telling them about the bird. They were rather non-committal, but both agreed to stop by the dam the following week, when they would go east for the SD●U meeting at Madison.

Returning to Woonsocket on November 7th, I was much discouraged in not finding the Kittiwake at Big Bend. There were few gulls working the spillway, and I could not even find many birds on the mud flats further down the river. As I knew of no experienced birders within a hundred miles of Big Bend, I decided my gull would probably never be seen again. Needless to say, I was more than glad to see B. J. Rose at Madison on the evening of November 17th, and to hear that he had observed the bird and taken pictures of it. The pictures turned out to be better than B. J. had hoped for; the quality of his photography is apparent

in the pictures which appear with this article. Later in the day, on the 17th, the Kittiwake was also observed by Nat Whitney, Don Adolphson, and Les Baylor. It was still present there on November 28th, when I stopped again at Big Bend.

I noted no unusual behavior or flight pattern during my observations. The Kittiwake mingled freely with other species present while scavaging the turbulent waters below the dam. It rested on the banks of the river or on exposed bars, and was observed with both Herring and Ring-billed gulls. Although the black feet were not noted (they show clearly in one of the pictures,—Ed.), even while it was resting on shore, the bird was undoubtedly a Black-legged Kittiwake (most likely *Rissa t. tridactyla*), as the Red-legged Kittiwake is recorded only as accidental in the United States, in west-central Yukon and northwestern Oregon, according to the 5th AOU Checklist (1957). The Pacific Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla pollicaris*) winters along the Pacific coast to northern Lower California, according to Bent's "Life Histories of North American Gulls and Terns" (1947). *Rissa t. tridactyla* is listed as accidental in Wyoming, Colorado, (two records) Iowa, and Wisconsin, in the 5th AOU Checklist. According to Bent (op. cit.), there are casual records for the Great Lakes, "where it is observed rather frequently, and west to Michigan and Wisconsin." However, the first observation of a Kittiwake on Lake Superior was made on December 15, 1964, by Janet C. Green, on the north shore between Duluth and Two Harbors (see *The Loon*, June, 1965).

The "Great Lakes of South Dakota" which have resulted from the construction of Big Bend, Oahe, Gavins Point, and Fort Randall Dams have undoubtedly influenced the distribution of certain species of birds over the past few



Passing Low Overhead.  
Black-legged Kittiwake  
at Big Bend Dam

—From Color Transparency by B. J. Rose

years. These interesting bodies of water should reward careful watching in the coming years. It is not at all unlikely that such birds as Jaegers, Glaucous gulls (see two notes this issue.—Ed.), Eider, and Harlequin ducks might turn up along the Missouri River on these huge, inland lakes.—Woonsocket.

## Burrowing Owls in Day County

Herman P. Chilson

SATURDAY evening, August 13th, about 10:00 p.m., while driving to our summer home at Pickerel Lake, we flushed a bird in the road, which ran in front of the car, then flew about 25 feet, and again started to walk in the road. I drove slowly to within fifteen feet of it, and it repeated its performance. While I was staring at the bird in front of us, I asked my wife to help me determine the size, color, and markings. We both agreed that it was about robin size, pale tannish brown, with a grayish head, and rather light colored underneath.

We again flushed the bird and it ran several feet in front of us and then flew a short distance to again light in the gravel road ahead of us. Now it was joined by another bird of exactly the same size and color. They walked around and seemed to be feeding in the road, paying scant attention to us. I said to my wife, "These could be Burrowing Owls." We both noticed the unusually long legs and were impressed at the ease with which they could run and walk.

We flushed them three or four more times and my wife was getting impatient because we had frozen food in the car for Sunday dinner. She said, "Oh for cat's sake, let's go home." To placate her I started again and almost hit one of the birds as it turned in front of the car and gave me a close look. I saw the bright yellow eyes and the owl face in the headlights of our car as it flew away. Now I also knew that what I had seen two weeks earlier in almost the identical spot was a Burrowing Owl. Then I had dismissed the bird with a passing glance and a guess that it could be a Night hawk.

This location is approximately one

mile from our cottage and the gravel road runs alongside a quarter section which has been in soil-bank for the past eight years. This could explain the presence of the owls at this location.

Immediately upon arrival, I reached for my Peterson Guide. There was no question at all. They were Burrowing Owls. The color, the long legs, absence of ears, all checked out perfectly.

The Waubay National Wildlife Refuge Check List shows Burrowing Owls as uncommon summer residents. The S.D.O.U. Check List records them as summer residents in the northeastern corner of South Dakota.

Turning now to Bent, page 389, describing juvenile plumage, I read, "... in this plumage, the crown, hind neck, and back are dull grayish brown to buff brown, most grayish on the head . . . the under parts and upper tail coverts are pale buff and unspotted . . ."

The two owls we had seen were undoubtedly juvenile birds. We were particularly happy, as this was our first sighting of Burrowing Owls in Day County.

Bent also says, "The Burrowing Owl is unquestionably one of our most beneficial birds of prey . . . its insect food includes grasshoppers, locusts, beetles, crickets, caterpillars, dragonflies and various other insects . . . lizards, snakes, frogs, toads, salamanders, fishes . . ."

On page 393 Bent quotes Dr. Brenckle who had banded 300 Burrowing Owls near Northville, South Dakota. Bent says, "Many of the returns were of birds killed on highways at nearby points . . ."—Webster.

# Check-List Committee Meeting, Nov. 18, 1967

N. R. Whitney

THE Check-List Committee met in Madison, November 18, 1967, with the Chairman, N. R. Whitney, presiding. Other members of the committee in attendance were J. W. Johnson, Nelda Holden, Mrs. Harter, B. J. Rose, and Bruce Harris. Outgoing President, Herman Chilson and incoming President Les Baylor also attended *ex officio*.

Discussion centered mainly around information to be included. Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Harter circulated a data outline with the following headings: Status, Ecology, Nesting, Migration, Specimen Records, and Changes in Status of the Species.

Mrs. Harter pointed out that more fall dates are needed. Mr. Baylor questioned the value of including specific migration dates, although Mrs. Holden suggested that some dates should be included, in order to document the seasons of nesting and migration.

Several members mentioned the fact that the 1957 edition of the A.O.U. Checklist of North American Birds contains several inaccuracies as to exact distribution of birds in South Dakota, and that these specific points should be corrected in our own publication, and should also be called to the attention of the A.O.U. Checklist committee, which is currently rewriting the checklist.

Dr. Whitney reported that he had recently sent nine specimens to Dr. G. M. Sutton of Norman, Oklahoma for

sub-specific identification. Members agreed that since none of us are qualified taxonomists, our present publication should not attempt to discuss sub-specific distribution of species within the state.

Review of institutional collections for South Dakota specimens were discussed briefly, and Mr. Harris mentioned that a number of South Dakota specimens were included in the collection of Coe College, at Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Dr. Whitney reported that he had already obtained a list of South Dakota specimens in this collection. Dr. Whitney currently has on hand lists of the South Dakota specimens from the University of Iowa collection at Iowa City, University of Nebraska collection at Lincoln, and the University of South Dakota collection at Vermillion.

We agreed that outline maps of South Dakota and copies of Johnson's outline should be mimeographed and made available to all members of the committee for further work. When each member has completed work on a species, the account will then be circulated among other members of the committee for review. Mr. Rose and Mr. Baylor thought they could arrange for duplicating facilities.

The target date for publication is 1970. The committee will plan to meet again at the May meeting in Highmore. —Rapid City.

# Spring Meeting at Highmore

## EAST WING MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM

May 17, 18, 19, 1968

### —TENTATIVE PROGRAM—

#### Friday, May 17

7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.—Registration and get-together, slides and/or experiences.

#### Saturday, May 18

Field trips being planned. Business and Check-List Committee Meetings hours yet to be determined. If enough interest, trail rides will be organized—including the horses.

6:00 p.m.—Banquet at Auditorium. Lutheran Ladies Aid.

#### Sunday, May 19

Field trips and trail rides in forenoon.

12:00 Noon—Lunch and Check-List.

### HIGHMORE ACCOMMODATIONS

Prairie View Motel, near Junction Highways 14 and 47 .....	\$5-\$12
Gateway Motel, near Junction Highways 14 and 47 .....	\$5-\$12
Ranch Motel, four miles west on Highway 14 .....	\$3-\$12
Free Camp Sites .....	City Park

### Cafes

Namanny's, Lillian's, Clara's and Plamor Lanes

Those who will camp should let Mrs. June Harter, Highmore know so additional sites can be arranged for if needed.

The trail rides will only be organized if there is interest. If you want to go birding on a horse, let Mrs. Harter know.

An idea of the number who will attend the banquet will help the ladies planning. Drop Mrs. Harter a card when you know.



# 1967 Breeding Bird Survey

N. R. Whitney, Rapid City, Co-ordinator

IN JUNE, 1967, South Dakota ornithologists joined the Cooperative Breeding Bird Survey, organized by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Populations station. W. T. Van Velzen, coordinator of the 1967 study, had assigned 29 routes (see S.D.B.N., vol. XIX: 20-21, 1967) and later had suggested six more in the western half of the state. Surveys were made by South Dakota ornithologists over 27 of these routes, as follows:

- Route No. 1—Lincoln County, Charles Rogge.
- Route No. 2—Hutchinson County, Charles Rogge.
- Route No. 4—Aurora County, Bruce Harris.
- Route No. 5—Charles Mix County, David Olson.
- Route No. 6—Brule County, Mrs. J. Harter.
- Route No. 8—Todd County, B. J. Rose.
- Route No. 9—Shannon County, Keith Evans.
- Route No. 10—Brookings County, Paul Springer.
- Route No. 11—Clark County, L. J. Moriarty.
- Route No. 12—Miner County, Charles Rogge.
- Route No. 13—Beadle County, Mrs. L. Johnson.
- Route No. 14—Jerauld County, Mrs. L. Johnson.
- Route No. 15—Buffalo County, Mrs. J. Harter.
- Route No. 16—Buffalo County, Mrs. J. Harter.
- Route No. 17—Roberts County, Bruce Harris.
- Route No. 18—Marshall County, Robert Johnson.
- Route No. 19—Marshall County, M. D. McClure.
- Route No. 20—McPherson County, Jack Saunders.
- Route No. 21—Spink County, L. J. Moriarty.
- Route No. 23—McPherson County, Jack Saunders.
- Route No. 26—Pennington County, B. J. Rose. (Recheck later by Keith Evans.)
- Route No. 27—Lawrence and Pennington Counties, N. R. Whitney.
- Route No. 28—Meade County, B. J. Rose.
- Route No. 29—Custer County, N. R. Whitney.
- Route No. 39—Haakon County, B. J. Rose.
- Route No. 31—Harding and Butte Counties, Don Adolphson.
- Route No. 32—Jackson County, N. R. Whitney.

The following summary covers only 24 of these routes, because reports for Routes 4, 9 and 17 had not been received at the Patuxent office at the time the original IBM machine listings were printed out. Of the 24, two were within the Black Hills, six were in West River Prairies, and the other 16 were in East River habitats.

On the 24 routes tabulated, a total of 129 species were recorded. While a complete listing of these species would be of limited interest, the following observations seem worth mentioning. The machine listings include a tremendous amount of statistical information, which may grow in value with the passage of time.

Only three species, Mourning Dove, Western Meadowlark, and Red-winged

Blackbird, were recorded on all 24 counts. Other species found frequently were Mallard (22 routes), Blue-winged Teal (19), Pheasant (21), Killdeer (22), Eastern Kingbird (20), Western Kingbird (19), Horned Lark (21), Barn Swallow (23), Robin (19), Common Grackle (20), Cowbird (21), Dickcissel, (21), Lark Bunting (20).

Species seen only on Black Hills routes were Sharp-shinned Hawk, Screech Owl, White-throated Swift, Hairy Woodpecker, Western Flycatcher, Western Wood Pewee, Violet-green Swallow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Mountain Bluebird, Solitary Vireo, Audubon's Warbler, Ovenbird, Yellow-breasted Chat, Western Tanager, Lazuli Bunting, Pine Siskin, and White-winged Junco.

Spotted Sandpiper and American Redstart were reported on both the Lawrence and Todd county routes, but not elsewhere.

Species recorded only on West River Prairie routes were Eared Grebe, Long-billed Curlew, Eastern Phoebe (Haakon County), Say's Phoebe, (Meade County), Rock Wren (Badlands N. M.), and Blue Grosbeak (Todd and Meade counties).

Species recorded on only a few East River routes were Western Grebe (McPherson County), White Pelican (McPherson County), Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, American Bittern, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Rough-legged Hawk (Buffalo County), Willet (McPherson County), Marbled Godwit, Avocet, Franklin's Gull, Rock Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Short-eared Owl (Beadle County), Traill's Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher (Clark and Spink counties), Eastern Wood Pewee, Purple

Martin, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Short-billed Marsh Wren (Marshall County), Eastern Bluebird, Sprague's Pipit, Bell's Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo (Marshall County), Bobolink, Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Lincoln County), Savannah Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow (Buffalo County), Clay-colored Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow (Brookings County).

Routes surveyed had been designated in advance, on a random basis, by the Fish and Wildlife Service, with the intention of having one route or more in each degree-block. (For example, between 99 degrees and 100 degrees west and 44 degrees and 45 degrees north). All routes were to be surveyed in June, with the investigator starting at the designated starting point 30 minutes prior to official sunrise, listening for three minutes, and recording all birds seen or heard from this point. He was then to drive one-half mile by the car speedometer, and then look and listen for another timed three minutes. This was to be continued for a total of 50 stops. The observer was asked to record all birds heard and seen within one-fourth mile of the stopping point. Theoretically, this gives a transect 25 miles long and half a mile wide, or 12.5 square miles.

In practice, this technique does not give a complete count of all birds in the area. The three-minute observation period does not allow an observer to move far enough from the road to identify individual birds that may be noticed near the limit of the quarter-mile radius. Also, many species are secretive, and would not be noticed at all. However, birds that are singing or that are foraging conspicuously, such as Killdeers and Turkey Vultures, will

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# Snowy Owl Observations Winter 1966-67

D. G. Adolphson

THOMAS H. Nicholls, University of Minnesota, collected data on 366 snowy owls that were sighted by 175 observers in the north central part of the United States during the winter of 1966-67. Nicholls reported that in South Dakota there were 101 owls seen by 13 observers. This is the second highest number of owls reported in the state since observations were first recorded for the last 18 years (Adolphson and Jonkel, 1965, SDBN, Vol. XVII: 66).

Snowy owls were sighted in 22 counties of South Dakota with 54 seen in the northeastern part, 37 in the southeastern part, four in the northwestern part, and six in the southwestern part. Most owls were again seen in the James River Valley and around lakes in eastern South Dakota. Over half of the owls were seen on or near National Wildlife Refuges with 39 on or near Sand Lake Wildlife Refuge and 26 on

or near Lake Andes Wildlife Refuge.

During the winter one owl was seen in October, three in November, 40 in December, 35 in January, 11 in February, 10 in March, and one in April. This corresponds to the data compiled by Adolphson and Jonkel, 1965, in a 16 years of record report that shows one per cent of the owls will be seen in South Dakota during October, 14 per cent in November, 25 per cent in December, 36 per cent in January, 18 per cent in February, six per cent in March, and less than one per cent in April.

Anyone sighting snowy owls is urged to send the data to the address below so we can continue the South Dakota survey. Also, anyone finding in South Dakota a great horned owl or hawk nest with young this spring is urged to contact me.—2611 Lawndale Drive, Rapid City, S. Dak. 57701.

be recorded with reasonable accuracy. Thus among the variables that affect the number of birds seen will be the conspicuousness of the various species present, the time of day or of year as it influences the intensity of singing, and the ability of the observer to identify birds by song or by quick glimpse.

In order to minimize the last two variables in subsequent years, the Fish and Wildlife Service urges that a particular route be run by the same observer each year, as close as possible to the same day. The standardized period for counting insures that the same route will be covered each year, with observers attempting to stop each year at the exact points as in previous years. Hopefully, therefore, the recorded pop-

ulations of conspicuous species, such as Meadowlarks and Lark Buntings, should be comparable on a year-to-year basis. Less conspicuous species, such as the Great Horned Owl, may often be overlooked, and other techniques will need to be worked out for reliable determination of their numbers.

What value does this approach have to us in South Dakota as a technique of learning more about the birds of the state? First it will help us to learn more accurately the distribution of birds within the state. Second, it will give us estimates of the population density of many species. And third, it will help us to know, in some cases, how the populations of species change from year to year.—Rapid City.

## Book Reviews

J. W. Johnson

**H**OURS and the Birds, A Saskatchewan Record, by R. D. Symons. \$12.50. University of Toronto Press. 1967. 224 pages plus xiii pages, including an index to birds, another to flowers, shrubs, and trees, and still a third to mammals, fish and insects, and a bibliography. 8" x 10". Profusely illustrated with drawings and paintings by the author.

In his preface the author disclaims this being a check-list or a field guide. It is, he says, one man's account of what he has seen, felt, and how his imagination was awakened and his life influenced. He was not a professional naturalist "but mostly a rancher." The period covered is from 1914 to 1966, the area: "Most of Saskatchewan, with parts of Montana, Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia."

Most of the drawings are redrawn field sketches including descriptive title and date. None of them lack the appeal of the original, often a young bird, usually enhanced by the magic of the artist. Even the less finished sketches are thoroughly pleasing. The 17 color plates, usually of groups of birds, have the refreshingly light look of watercolor.

But, again, this is not a book just about birds, though they are generally the center of attention. They are placed in their environments, being themselves, and the surrounding flora and fauna as a ecological community is given attention and appreciation.

The text of "what one man has seen and felt" gives ample evidence of being the select bits from a busy lifetime of seeing with care and desire to understand. No doubt it could have been ex-

tended indefinitely and with no lessening of its charm.

Page after page of things seen, one-in-a-lifetime observations: A pair of Marsh Hawks keeping a grounded Golden Eagle from rising. Stories of the great and their reactions to bird problems: Advice from the Duke of Wellington to Queen Victoria who had appealed to him on the matter of ladies' hats being spotted by sparrows: "Try Sparrow Hawks, ma'am." Which leads to an appreciative account of the ways of this lovely little falcon that really catches sparrows but seldom.

On and on, observation leading to comment, entrancing for any one with senses capable of being put in tune with any of the infinite vibrations of the world of nature.

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**The Life of Prairies and Plains** by Durward Allen. McGraw-Hill, 1967, produced jointly with **The World Book Encyclopedia**. \$4.95. The eighth of the series, **Our Living World of Nature** and uniform with the earlier volumes. 232 Pages, including Index, Glossary, Bibliography, and 20 pages of Appendices. Two pages of the latter give basic features for indentifying grasses.

The usual profuse illustrations are no less spectacular than in earlier numbers. Among them: Head on shots of buffalo, an oddly different picture of the Badlands, a skyful of snow geese, some archeology of the region: a buffalo hunt of 8,500 years ago, and foxtail barley heads backlighted by the low sun. A number of Audubon's paintings of birds and mammals make an inter-

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# North American Nest-Record Card Program

Laboratory of Ornithology

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

NEWSLETTER

FALL, 1967

**N**OW in its third year, the Nest-Record Card Program has generated a great deal of enthusiasm. During the first half of this year we mailed over 50,000 cards to contributors in all parts of the United States and Canada. To date, about 8,000 of these have been returned with data, and we wish to remind all contributors at this time to return completed cards to your Regional Center or to the Laboratory. Cards should be completed on all active nests found in which the contents are known even if the nest is only visited on one occasion.

We have had several inquiries as to the best way to return the cards to us. Up to 50 carry very well in an envelope of suitable size. Any larger number should be either boxed or wrapped in heavy paper. Tie all packages securely. All nest-record cards may be mailed **third class**. While no cards have been lost to the best of our knowledge, some large packages have arrived in poor condition.

It would be helpful to have more Regional Centers, especially in the western part of the country. There are no Regional Centers cooperating with our program in Wyoming, Mississippi, Arkansas, or New Hampshire; and only one center in Washington, Idaho, Nevada, and Louisiana. We now have 132 Regional Centers in the United States, five in Canada, and one in Bermuda. This does not include 19 State Fish and Game Departments who have agreed to cooperate in the Mourning Dove Survey.

Several local nest-record card programs have sent us their data this year. Among these are MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY, KANSAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, BROOKS BIRD CLUB, and PRAIRIE NEST RECORD SCHEME in Saskatchewan, Canada. Included in those sent us from Kansas Ornithological Society were 13 old records from 1885 to 1899! This information is valuable to our research. If any contributors or other Regional Centers have data from previous years, we would be happy to have them, if the records can be copied onto our nest-record cards.

Up to the 15th of October, the following Regional Centers returned large numbers of nest-record cards completed by their members:

Brooks Bird Club, West Virginia ..	401	Audubon Society of Montana .....	112
Kansas Ornithology Society .....	175	Kirtland Bird Club, Ohio .....	221
Los Angeles Audubon Society .....	250	Oklahoma Ornithology Society ...	174
Adrian College, Michigan .....	128	South Dakota Department of	
Detroit Audubon Society .....	253	Game, Fish and Parks .....	117

Major Contributors as of October 15:

Arthur W. Allen .....	79	John C. Miller .....	1525
Mrs. Willars Campbell .....	76	Dr. Louis Moos .....	113
Derb Carter .....	65	D. M. Niles .....	67
Donald Clark .....	59	Miles Peele .....	128
C. W. Comer .....	59	Matthew Perry .....	59
Mrs. Allan Cruickshank .....	66	Mrs. Donald Perry .....	56
Thomas H. Davis Jr. ....	427	J. D. Rising .....	68
E. E. Ditterline .....	99	Dennis Rupert .....	84
Rod Drewien .....	105	Jeffrey Sanders .....	81
Mrs. Bradley Fisk .....	70	Kenneth Seyffert .....	54
James Forbes .....	50	Jacob Stowers .....	60
Mrs. Alice Fries .....	255	Muriel Sneller .....	94
N. and A. Kelley .....	54	Jon Swenson .....	130
Glenn Kilson .....	59	L. H. Walkinshaw .....	83
Mrs. Walter Klabunde .....	106	Stuart Wilson .....	99
Gordon Maclean .....	70	Col. L. R. Wolfe .....	139

Many contributors are collecting data on colonial nesting birds, and we have sent to these people a zeroxed copy of the card used by the British Trust for Ornithology. This is only a temporary measure, and we hope in the near future to have our own nest-record card for colonial birds.

The important part of the work of the nest-record card program is the accumulation of data on all species, common and rare. It may be of interest to note that we received cards for the first time on the following species: Allen's Hummingbird (3), Wrentit (3), Black-throated Gray Warbler (2), Tricolored Blackbird (2), and Sage Sparrow (2).

Several of you, when returning cards, have included notes of additional interest and special data. We encourage you to give this information on the nest-record card whenever possible. Any suggestions for enlarging or improving the program are welcome.

We wish to express our appreciation for the interest and cooperation you have shown in the Nest-record Card Program. We hope that you will continue to assist us next year, and encourage others to become familiar with the program.

esting addition and suffer not at all in comparison with modern color photos.

It is of primary interest to people of our region, for it treats of local ecology—yet of much of that which is gone forever.

And, because this book is about the country we know, or would have known had we been here before the turn of the century, a close view of its organization is of special interest.

It is divided into four parts. The first deals with the various kinds of grass-

lands—the differences between tall grass prairies, mixed prairies, and short grass prairies—and discusses the effects of the ice age on the grass lands, i e., how the climate changed, and how some grass land species were cut off in isolated patches far to the east of their principal range.

In the second part, the author describes the plants and animals of the grassland and explains their adaptations of the habitat. The grassland and its

(Concluded on Page 87)

## New Museum Group Formed

Joyce Harrell

**F**RIENDS of the Museum, a non-profit organization established in 1967 to support the W. H. Over Dakota Museum, Vermillion, South Dakota, invites everyone to become a member who is interested in this Museum, its growth, its exhibits, its service to our state. As a part of the University of South Dakota, the Museum was begun in 1913 by W. H. Over, who remained its director for 35 years. The present director, James H. Howard, has held this position since 1963.

At the present time the Museum is expanding to occupy a new space and is eager to be of greater service. Among the present exhibits are displays relating to South Dakota archeology and historic Indian culture. A campus art gallery is now under construction. Plans for the near future include a series of natural history dioramas depicting the ecology of four areas of our state, and extensive displays from Mr. Arne B. Larson's

"Shrine to Music."

Friends of the Museum plans to support and promote the growth of the W. H. Over Dakota Museum through contributions and services such as the establishment of a Museum Gift Shop. Privileges of membership will include special rates in the gift shop, receipt of the Friends of the Museum Newsletter, and a voice in the proceedings of the organization. Annual voting memberships are available in the following categories: Member, \$3.00, Husband-Wife Donors, \$10.00, Sustaining, \$10.00, Supporting, \$50.00. A donor of \$250.00 minimum becomes a Life Member. Annual non-voting memberships are also available as Affiliate (institutional), \$10.00 minimum, and Junior, \$0.50.

To join, write Friends of the Museum, c/o W. H. Over Dakota Museum, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, S. Dak. 57069.

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inhabitants are discussed from an ecological point of view in the third part of the book, which explains not only what went on in primitive times, but also how and why. In the last part Dr. Allen deals with man's role in the grasslands. Among the questions he considers are: What happened to the early agricultural settlers in the plains when they replaced the dog with the horse? How did the plains Indian culture develop and where did the plains Indians come from? Have we really saved the buffalo?

Durward Allen is Professor of Wildlife Management in the Department of Forestry and Conservation at Purdue University. He has spent many years in active research on wildlife as it pertains to agricultural lands and has been associated with various wildlife experimental stations. Dr. Allen, past president of the Wildlife Society, has received several national awards for his books, scientific papers, and magazine articles in the field of wildlife biology and conservation.

## *General Notes of Special Interest*

GLAUCOUS GULLS AT GAVIN'S POINT DAM—On February 17, 1967, in the open water below Gavin's Point Dam, I saw two second year Glaucous Gulls. These gulls were very large and, from a distance appeared almost pure white. At close range they showed some buffy tinges on the outer fringes of their feathers. They had pink feet and black-tipped flesh-colored bills. I don't know if these birds are a rarity in South Dakota or not but they are the first I have seen here. I know they are seen quite regularly in the winter around Duluth.—August Hoeger, 2505 S. Main, Sioux Falls.

\* \* \* \*

SECOND OBSERVATION OF GLAUCOUS GULLS AT GAVIN'S POINT DAM—About 2:30 p.m., February 18, 1967, my wife, Doris, and I observed two first-winter Glaucous Gulls on and near an ice covered sand bar in the tail waters of Gavin's Point Dam, about ½ mile east of the dam, near Yankton, S. Dak. It was a calm, cloudy day about 11 degrees above zero.

For some unknown reason, we did not have our Peterson field guide with us, but we did have a 7x50 binocular.

Here are the notes we took on these gulls: When first spotted, both gulls were flying over the water. Between them and a little above flew an adult Bald Eagle. The wing span of the gulls was slightly shorter than that of the eagle. The gulls landed on an ice covered sand bar so we drove as close to them as we could, about 100 yards. They were both the same size and color—dirty white, the underparts and primaries being whiter. The bill was large and had a black tip, the rest of

the bill being whitish-pink. The legs were pinkish-orange. There were no distinct markings of any kind on the birds, other than the black-tipped bill. The wings, at rest, were about the same length as the tail.

When we got home we consulted our field guides, *A Field Guide to the Birds* and *A Field Guide to the Western Birds* by Peterson and found two species resembling the gulls we had seen: the Iceland Gull and the Glaucous Gull. The Glaucous-winged Gull was ruled out because of the light color and the white primaries of the birds we saw.

We identified these as Glaucous Gulls for two reasons: First, the wings did not extend beyond the tail. The eastern field guide states in regard to the Iceland Gull: "The wing of the Iceland is proportionately longer, extending well beyond the tip of the tail at rest." Second, the size of the bill was larger in comparison with the rest of the bird. The eastern guide states: "Then the best mark is the bill, which in the Glaucous is much longer and heavier." —Delbert A. Nelson, 4418 Apple Road, Sioux Falls.

EDITOR'S NOTE—After the above two observations were prepared for the September issue there came the June, 1967 number of *The Loon*, published by the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union.

Prominent in it was a four-page article by Janet C. Green, 9773 North Shore Drive, Duluth, Minn. 55804 on *The Iceland (and Glaucous) Gull in Minnesota, Its Status and Identification*.

A few minutes with Mrs. Green's data changed the plans. The two notes were held up for study, along with



her article—when there might be time. She has been studying the gulls in her area each winter since 1960 with increasing attention. She has found that variations in size, color and size of bill used by the field books to distinguish between these two species are sufficient to cast doubt on all but the most detailed and experienced observations. Moreover, the Iceland Gull has been identified in small numbers in the Duluth area with regularity and certainty. But she stresses that it's not easy or as clearcut as the average observer would gather from the field books.

Yet in spite of the ever possible presence of the Iceland Gull in her area, its numbers are regularly only a fraction of the Glaucous Gulls seen and she feels that "it is safe to assume (any seen) are the latter species unless one can prove otherwise. And the proof should be study and comparison with the gulls present at the same time and detailed notes taken in the field while looking at the bird in question (and not at the bird books—it is easy to confuse what one sees with what is stated in the field guides). When the identification is doubtful, it is probably a small Glaucous Gull. An Iceland Gull well seen by an observer familiar with the Glaucous Gull does not produce the same element of doubt because it is a smaller, daintier bird."

Until we have better information the same words no doubt can apply to gulls seen in South Dakota, possibly with still less chance of seeing the Iceland Gull. But it is a problem well to have in mind as we study the gulls about the new lakes in the state in the coming years.

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CARDINALS IN DAY COUNTY.—It was on June 23, 1967, that I saw a red

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bird flying up against our large window in our family room. We knew at once it was a Cardinal and couldn't believe our eyes. My first thought was "is there a pair?"

He would fly away and always come right back. He also did this at the other three homes on the farm several times a day. This kept on two or three days and soon we saw the female. She sat in the Cedar about 20 feet from the house, but never came closer.

After I saw the pair, I wondered what I could do to encourage them to stay, but they decided that on their own.

I never found out if they nested after coming that late in the season. We have several acres of shelter belt around the homestead, but it is too grown up to think of trying to follow a bird in it.

Herman Chilson said I should feed them sunflower seeds and maybe they would stay all winter. As I had grown sunflowers in my garden, I set up a three foot feeder and put the seeds in it. Toward evening they both came and ate from the feeder. The male always come first, but in a short time the female was also there. They would sit in the feeder and put the whole seed in their beak and shell it, eating just the inside. I sat in the family room and counted as many as 11 seeds the male ate at one time. He would also carry a seed away in his beak many times as he flew away from the feeder, and I wondered if he took it to the female, when she wasn't eating with him.

I would see the male at the feeder just as it was getting daylight and late in the evening just before dark.

During summer months the male had a pretty song and you could spot him in a bush anywhere by it, but toward fall, he just had a short chirp.

I noticed in late fall, they ate the

cedar and hackberry seeds too.

They fly close to the ground and glide half the time.

The male is a bright red color in the summer with a topknot on his head—later this fall he has turned a brownish red, all but his head. He has black around his beak. Their beak is short and quite thick and also red, as are their feet.

The female, as all other bird species, is not as brightly colored. Her feathers are a greenish brown with brick red feathers in and under wing and tail and topknot on her head.

They both chase the other birds who come to the feeder when they are there.

A cat caught the male at the feeder three weeks ago (November 29, 1967), but the female comes to the feeder to eat since we have a cover of light snow.

I'm in the hope she will stay and maybe in spring she will attract other Cardinals to stay. Never noticed any young ones around.—Mrs. Herman Reetz, Webster.

(Mrs. Reetz encloses an excellent color photo of the Cardinal male at her window.—Ed.)

\* \* \* \*

**WHITE-WINGED SCOTER KILLED IN BROOKINGS COUNTY**—On October 26, 1967, I shot a juvenile White-winged Scoter on Moe Slough, which is north of Oakwood Lakes in Brookings County. The bird was compared with the picture on Plate No. 27, p. 443 of *The Ducks, Geese, and Swans of North America* by F. H. Kortright.—Larry F. Fredrickson, S. D. Department of Game, Fish, and Parks, East Men's Hall, State University, Brookings.

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**EUROPEAN WIDGEON NEAR HIGHMORE**—During the early forenoon (6:00-8:45 A. M.) on May 4, 1964, my

daughter Nanci, who is a careful and conscious observer, saw two European Widgeon, a male and a female, in a pond about 6 miles south of Highmore.

Nanci had compared them with both pictures and text in the books of Peterson and Pough, checking every detail of both birds.

The sky was clear that morning, temperature 48 and the wind slight. The birds were close and observation was easy with view good and clear.

The next day she took her sister, Lois to see them in the afternoon but they were not on the pond. However, both girls went again on May 7, from 5 to 6:30 P. M. and again saw them, presumably the same two individuals.

Nanci made the record on a checklist card at the time and the observation was much discussed, with real certainty about the presence of the two birds and that they were not American Widgeon, and well aware that the sighting of such a rare species must arouse doubts.—June Harter.

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#### PRAIRIE FALCON IN DAY COUNTY

—On April 6, 1960 Fred Staunton, former manager of Waubay Federal Wildlife Refuge and I were on our way to our summer home at Pickerel Lake. Just before reaching it we had quite an experience: two ducks being chased by a hawk zoomed across the highway right in front of us, barely missed our car. The ducks dropped into a roadside pond and submerged while the hawk flew on. We stopped the car and Fred pointed out the very light pale coloration of the bird and the pointed wings and said, "That is a Prairie Falcon." It was a first for me and I have not seen one since.

The check list of the Waubay Federal Wildlife Refuge lists the Prairie Falcon as an uncommon spring and fall visitor.—Herman P. Chilson, Webster.

SANBORN COUNTY NOTES—RED-BREASTED MERGANSER, WESTERN BLUEBIRD AND BELL'S VIREO—The Red-breasted Merganser is not a conspicuous bird, and is easily overlooked among waterfowl. It is probably for this reason that it is seldom reported in the prairie states, although it very likely is not as rare as the records would indicate. My only record for the species until this year was at Big Stone Lake, in 1939. On March 29, 1967, a pair of these birds was carefully observed at Twin Lakes, Sanborn County. They stayed well out in the middle of the lake where they were difficult to observe; at a distance even the male is not a conspicuously marked bird. These birds were still present on March 31st.

A fairly common bird throughout the western half of South Dakota, the **Western Bluebird** is not often reported east of the Missouri River. In 1952 I observed this species in SE North Dakota, within four miles of the South Dakota line, and there has been at least one minor invasion of the birds in Lake County, at Madison, in 1956 B. N. (VIII: 29), but there are few other records. The occurrence of a single bird in Sanborn County on March 19, 1967, is therefore of particular interest. This bird was found about three miles north and two miles east of Woonsocket.

**Bell's Vireo** is a species which is locally distributed along the Missouri and White Rivers in South Dakota, though it is seldom reported. Records from the east-river country are even more unusual, so I was particularly pleased to find two singing males in Sanborn County on June 14, 1967. The location is an interesting little niche six miles east of Woonsocket, where I have also found Mockingbirds, Cardinals and Wood Ducks. Both vireos were

in full song on the above date, and on June 24th. A search for a nest was unsuccessful, but another check will be made in the fall, after leaves have fallen from the bushes where the nest might be found. One male was still singing at the above location on July 30th.—**Bruce Harris, Woonsocket.**

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CINNAMON TEAL AND BLUEWING-SHOVELER CROSS IN LYMAN COUNTY?—Since writing to you the past summer regarding the occurrence of Cinnamon Teal in South Dakota I have had an additional experience with them, and with teal in general.

I took part in the special early teal season as I have done since it started. On a warm, sunny Sunday afternoon, September 10, 1967, while hunting stock dams in northern Lyman County I encountered a flock of approximately 50 Greenwings, Bluewings and Shovelers. I bagged a Greenwing first and then shortly thereafter what I thought to be three Bluewings.

Two of these turned out unmistakably to be male Cinnamon Teal, not yet in full fall plumage but with head, neck and breast feathers beginning to take on the cinnamon-red color. I took these birds home without plucking them in the field as I normally do and examined them quite closely.

I was in the process of stripping feathers from the third duck in the field when I was suddenly aware of the fact that it was a Bluewing Teal in most respects but had other definite characteristics. Upon comparison with the Cinnamon Teal it was found to have the same prominent blue wing patch, common to Cinnamon and Bluewing Teal and to Shoveler; however, it was measureably larger. The most prominent feature was the head and bill. The head shape and the overly long bill were Shoveler in all respects

except that the bill was not "spooned", which made it appear even longer in respect to the head.

I have Kortright's book on the Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America and have noted his reference to hybrids. I once observed a Mallard-Widgeon hybrid shot by another member of a hunting party. In my opinion my September "Teal" was a Bluewing Teal-Shoveler cross. Do you have any reports of similar crosses?—R. V. Summerside, 102, S. Madison Ave., Pierre.

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**MAGPIES IN DAY COUNTY**—In the latter part of April, 1967, I was helping my father-in-law, Chester Sellevold, on his farm two and one-half miles north of Grenville. One evening about 6:30, I was a quarter mile north of the buildings when I noticed a large flock of birds take off in flight. I thought of a flock of blackbirds back for the season until I saw more of them running along the ground. I had never seen a bird like these before. They were dark, with a long tail, and, as they rose in flight, their tails spread out like a fan. Then I saw the tails had the appearance of being bordered with white. They had white on their breasts and some white on their wings. Between 40 and 60 birds were in the two flocks.

Back at the house I mentioned them to my mother-in-law and she said they were magpies. She had seen them while visiting relatives in Montana. She had thought they were pretty when she first saw them but was told they were a nuisance bird when they were thick.

We found a small paperback Guide to the Most Familiar American Birds by Herbert S. Zim and Ira Gabrielson. In it I easily identified the birds from the picture of the magpie.—Gary Johnson, Webster.

**OLD-SQUAW DUCK IN SOUTH DAKOTA**—November 15, 1967 I collected a male Old-Squaw in full plumage on Swan Lake in Walworth County. The duck decoyed into some Mallard decoys in a quiet area among the cattails and bulrushes. Other ducks observed in the vicinity were Pintails, Lesser Scaup, American Golden-eye, Shovelers, Canvas-backs and many Mallards.

This is the first Old-Squaw duck I have seen in South Dakota. The specimen will be mounted for the Game, Fish and Parks Department's Waterfowl Display at Pierre.—Dave Fisher, Pierre.

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**WHIP-POOR-WILL AT HURON**—A female Whip-poor-will was sighted in a shelterbelt about six miles northwest of Huron on June 2, 1967. The bird was flushed from a log and it flew to the ground and then later flew up into a tree. It was observed by Jean Jonkel and myself and was identified as a female Whip-poor-will.

This is the first Whip-poor-will we have seen or heard of in this vicinity.—George Jonkel, Huron.

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#### **ENVIRONMENT DEFENDERS SUE MICHIGAN ON DDT**

At the recent National Audubon Convention in Atlantic City, N. J., Sept. 29-Oct. 3, Dr. H. Lewis Batts, Jr., President of Michigan Audubon Society and the Kalamazoo Nature Center, proposed a resolution that was promptly voted on affirmatively at the annual meeting of the members, as follows:

"Whereas, it seems necessary to resort to the courts to effect a ban on DDT, and

"Whereas, during the panel discussion yesterday, on "Using the Law to Defend Man's Environment," it became

obvious that coordination of legal action to defend the environment is necessary, now, therefore,

"Be it Resolved that the National Audubon Society retain special counsel to consider the establishment of an Environmental Defense Fund, as a separate tax-exempt entity if necessary, to use the law to defend our environment."

The original impetus for this resolution came from the presentation of the Long Island (N.Y.) DDT case by the successful prosecutor of this case, attorney Victor J. Yannacone, Jr.

With the encouragement provided by the discussion which accompanied this resolution, both during and after the meeting, the ad hoc committee of scientists and others who helped Mr. Yannacone fight his DDT case, decided to incorporate itself without waiting for further backing and they have formed The Environmental Defense Fund, Inc.

The group was immediately invited to press a suit against the State of Michigan to enjoin the use of DDT in Dutch elm disease control and of dieldrin for Japanese beetle control. Suit was filed in the U. S. District Court, Grand Rapids, Michigan on October 25.

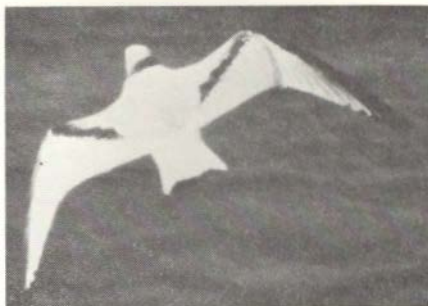
On October 27 Roland C. Clement, Vice President of the National Audubon Society, telegraphed Governor Romney of Michigan, urging a moratorium on the dieldrin spray program until the courts had decided the issue on its merits.—Audubon Leader's Conservation Guide.

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#### NORTH AMERICAN NEST RECORD CARD PROGRAM

As many readers are aware, the Nest Record Card Program is now completing its third year on a continent-wide basis. We appreciate the assistance of the hundreds of persons and Bird Clubs whose enthusiasm and

DECEMBER, 1967



### Going Away. Black-legged Kittiwake at Big Bend Dam

—From Color Transparency by B. J. Rose

patience make this program possible. We are anxious to solicit help from as many clubs and cooperators as possible. If you are interested in helping in this research, please get in touch with the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University for instructions and nest-record cards. Before the new nesting season begins, we urge all present contributors to return any completed cards. We also request that participating clubs and birders order additional cards, if necessary, well in advance of the 1968 nesting season.—(Mrs.) Edith Edgerton, Nest Record Card Program, Laboratory of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, New York 14850.

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## Song Sparrow

—E. W. Steffen

Engraving Courtesy Wilson Bulletin

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## President's Page

(Concluded from Page 75)

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cial SDOU project with the approval of Herman Chapman's resolution to this effect. We are grateful to the individuals and state agencies instrumental in bringing about this enduring honor to Mr. Over for his contributions to knowledge of South Dakota natural history.

Our special recognition goes to Ruth Habeger, Nelda and David Holden for organizing the winter meeting at Madison. The paper session was particularly interesting in its blending of reports by professional biologists, graduate students from South Dakota State University, and avocational bird students. Their contributions certainly rewarded the many members in attendance. To members who have not attended or do not regularly attend SDOU meetings, please consider adding to your bird study experiences by attending the meetings. You can start with the next meeting at Highmore, May 17-19, 1968.—L. M. Baylor.

### PROGRESS IN PEST CONTROL

The World Health Organization, concerned about increasing evidence of human liver damage by chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides (our old "friends" DDT, aldrin, endrin, dieldrin, heptachlor, etc.), has encouraged a team of geneticists to help solve mosquito control needs in the Far East.

Earlier this year, Prof. Hannes Laven, of West Germany, succeeded in producing laboratory-bred strains of the mosquito, *Culex fatigans*, with a "cystoplasmic incompatibility" that resulted in sterile matings when these male mosquitos were released in a Burmese village. In about three months, the entire native mosquito population of this species had been eradicated for lack of reproduction.

This approach is ideal for the elimination of introduced species with limited niche requirements, such as *Aedes aegypti*, on which the U.S. Public Health Service is now lavishing millions of dollars worth of chemical pesticides in the southeastern United States.—Audubon Leader's Conservation Guide.



Black-legged Kittiwake at Big Bend Dam

—From Color Transparencly by B. J. Rose

## In Memoriam

Stephen Sargent Visher

S. S. Visher died October 25, 1967 at the age of 79 in Bloomington, Indiana, where he had lived and worked the last 48 years of his life.

Eminent as a geographer, Dr. Visher had known many environments in many parts of the world. His early work was done in South Dakota and our knowledge of birdlife in various parts of the state has been enriched by his efforts. Appreciation of his interest in birds by the founders of SDOU resulted in his being named an honorary member in 1951. *Bird Notes* carried a brief biography in the issue of December 1966 (Vol. XVIII:78) with a partial list of his published work and honors.

Throughout a long and busy life he never lost his interest in birds and always “. . . felt deeply grateful for the stimulation of my early study of South Dakota birds, a major influence in my life.”