

# SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

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Wilson's Warblers

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Vol. XXIII, No. 2

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*In This Number . . .*

President's Page, J. W. Johnson .....	31
Black Brant and Ross' Geese Visit LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge, Victor M. Hall .....	32
Birds of Hot Brook at Hot Springs, Robert A. Gossel .....	33
Use of Stock Ponds by Breeding Waterfowl and Other Water Birds in Stanley County, South Dakota, J. T. Lokemoen .....	34
1971 Winter Season for South Dakota, December 1, 1970-March 31, 1971 .....	37
Use of an Eastern South Dakota Shelterbelt by Nesting Birds, Nancy H. Field .....	43
Ducks on the Hot Springs River, Lucille Wedge .....	46
Spring Meeting at Aberdeen, 1971, Larry R. Lynch .....	47
Spring Meeting Combined List of Birds Observed in Brown County (Aberdeen) May 21-23, 1971 .....	48
General Notes of Special Interest .....	50
Book Review, J. W. Johnson .....	54
By-Laws of South Dakota Ornithologists' Union .....	56
Notes from Sparks' Mini-Ranch .....	58
Cover Picture .....	59
"Acres for Wildlife" .....	60

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## President's Page

**A**NOTHER spring meeting is history and many of us have acquired further insight into the wildlife areas of another part of the state. The method of exploring in small groups seems to have settled on us so comfortably we wonder why it took so long to be discovered and adopted. Perhaps, in a few years, no one will remember the long caravans, from which only the few saw much more than places where something, probably birds, had been.

For the record, it should be set down here that Les Baylor started it with the meeting at Bison, June, 1970. No doubt other comparable improvements in our methods are possible—and will be equally obvious, once they are found. Much of South Dakota has not yet been studied by SDOU, Aberdeen and B. J. Rose have just reminded us. This thought is worth attention when future spring meetings are planned. Also, long lists may not be the best measure now for selecting a site. How about finding what is present in a less well-known area? Blank areas on maps surely are most often only areas of ignorance.

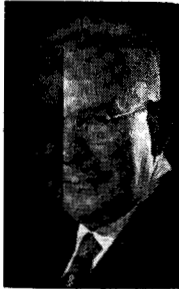
The slightly under 400 species of birds recorded in the state with their plumage and behavior variations, are too many for most of us (by orders of magnitude, for myself) to become even

fairly familiar with. Why not, as individuals or small groups, allot a larger share of our limited study time to smaller sections of the check-list, giving us a manageable field. For most of us encyclopedic knowledge of all aspects of all our birds is as unattainable as the end of the rainbow. But the small wood that hides the apparent end will have its quota of the gold of new information, perhaps enough to justify a lifetime of study.

Anyone, with regular application, can now make himself master of a small field of his interest. And few indeed do more, we feel as our more vocal Ph.D's daily overstep the bounds of their competence.

While the main effort of SDOU and "Bird Notes" has been with the study of distribution, and quite properly, it no longer needs to be so confined. There is other work with birds and no less interesting.

Perhaps a committee could be named, including some of the executive committee, and others as well, to list and describe some fields of study, larger or smaller, that could be undertaken by individuals or groups of two or three with an interest in birds. Counseling of workers could be provided by the committee as needed such a set up is nothing new. It is the usual handling of thesis assignments for college degrees, though less formal. And something for those to whom a list of bird names is not a final goal.—J. W. Johnson



# Black Brant and Ross' Geese Visit LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge

Victor M. Hall

**T**WO new waterfowl species for the refuge were recorded in April, 1971.

On April 2, while conducting the weekly waterfowl count, two small white geese were observed with the captive flock of Canada geese in Impoundment No. 5 by myself and Conrad A. Fjetland. The birds flew out of the goose pen and landed about 100 yards away. They returned to the goose pen about an hour later, and were identified as Ross' geese. The pair, in adult plumage, was gone the following day. Two Ross' geese, believed to be the same pair, were back in the same pen on April 16. This time the birds were much tamer and allowed us to photograph them from outside the pen without flying. Everyone on the refuge got an opportunity to observe these diminutive geese before they departed either on the 16th or 17th. The short neck and small bills were readily apparent. Their size could readily be compared with both mallards and large Canada geese.

The black brant was first seen April 19. On this very rainy day the brant was sitting on Dike No. 7, in the company of a Canada goose. As the vehicle approached, it flushed and landed out about 75 yards in Pool No. 7. My wife and I made the identification with a 20X spotting scope. The brant then flew into the nearby goose pen. We

photographed it there later on the 19th and again on the 20th. The brant was wary, but could be approached to 30 or 40 feet when in the middle of the captive Canadas. We saw the brant in the vicinity of Dike No. 7 and the goose pen until April 23, when it moved to the Pool No. 5 goose pen and later to Pool No. 9. It was last seen in the company of about nine free flying Canadas in Pool No. 9. The dark chest clearly separated it from the Atlantic brant.

The captive Canada geese provide sufficient attraction to these wandering birds to hold them in the area longer, and render them more approachable.—  
Martin



Black Brant  
and Canada Geese

—Picture by Victor Hall

SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

# Birds of Hot Brook at Hot Springs

Robert A. Gossel

- Mallard, all year.  
Turkey Vulture, spring, summer, fall.  
Sharp-shinned Hawk, fall.  
Red-tailed Hawk, spring, summer, fall.  
Swainson's Hawk, fall.  
Golden Eagle, all year, but more in the fall and winter.  
Sparrow Hawk, spring and fall.  
Turkeys, on the western side of the hills, all year.  
White-throated Swift, late spring and summer, all over Hot Springs.  
Belted Kingfisher, at times all year.  
Red-shafted Flicker, most of the year.  
Downy Woodpecker, most of the year.  
Eastern Kingbird, spring, summer and early fall.  
Western Kingbird, spring, summer and early fall.  
Say's Phoebe, on the west side of the canyon, spring and summer.  
Western Wood Pewee, spring, summer and early fall.  
Violet-green Swallow, late spring, summer and early fall.  
Cliff Swallow, late spring, summer and early fall.  
Blue Jay, most of the year.  
Black-billed Magpie, all year.  
Common Crow, all year.  
Pinon Jay, all fall and winter.  
Black-capped Chickadee, all year, more in fall.  
White-breasted Nuthatch, all year.  
Brown Creeper, winter, in Chautauqua Park.  
House Wren, summer.  
Canon Wren, spring, summer, fall.  
Rock Wren, spring, summer and fall.  
Catbird, spring, summer, early fall.  
Brown Thrasher, spring, summer and early fall.  
Robin, most of year.  
Mountain Bluebird, spring, summer and fall.
- Townsend's Solitaire, most of year.  
Solitary Vireo, fall.  
Red-eyed Vireo, spring, summer and fall.  
Yellow Warbler, spring, summer and early fall.  
Myrtle Warbler, spring, summer and fall.  
Audubon Warbler, spring, summer and fall.  
MacGillivray's Warbler, fall.  
Yellow-breasted Chat, spring, summer and early fall.  
Wilson's Warbler, spring and fall.  
American Redstart, spring, summer and fall.  
Western Meadowlark, spring, summer and fall.  
Red-winged Blackbird, early spring, summer and fall.  
Bullock's Oriole, late spring, summer and early fall.  
Common Grackle, spring, summer and fall.  
Western Tanager, late spring, summer and early fall.  
Lazuli Bunting, summer.  
Pine Siskin, spring and late fall.  
American Goldfinch, spring, summer and fall.  
Rufous-sided Towhee, late spring, summer and early fall.  
Black-headed Grosbeak, late spring, summer and early fall.  
Lark Sparrow, spring, summer and fall.  
White-winged Junco, fall and winter.  
Oregon Junco, all winter.  
Chipping Sparrow, spring, summer and fall.  
White-crowned Sparrow, common spring and fall transient.—By Robert A. Gossel, Rt. 1 79-C, Hot Springs, S. Dak. 57747

# Use of Stock Ponds by Breeding Waterfowl and Other Water Birds in Stanley County, South Dakota

J. T. Lokemoen

**B**REEDING waterfowl and other water birds were recorded on 50 stock ponds in eastern Stanley County, South Dakota, from May 20 through June 30, 1966. The observations were made in connection with a study conducted to determine the relationships between waterfowl use and stock pond design, location, and management. For the purposes of this study the frequency of occurrence of breeding water birds on stock ponds was determined in order to compare changes in species status since earlier studies.

Numbers of ducks and coots breeding on 50 stock ponds of eastern Stanley County in 1950 and 1951 were reported by Bue, et al. (1952) and Bue (1956). Breeding birds other than ducks and coots were recorded during this same study and reported on by Blankenship et al. (1953). In 1966, another study of stock ponds was conducted about 70 miles southwest in Jackson County. Waterfowl and shorebird use of 13 stock ponds in that area were reported by Evans and Kerbs (1967).

## STUDY AREA

The 50 stock ponds investigated in 1966 were located along a 24-mile stretch of U.S. Highway No. 14 which is just west of Fort Pierre. Most of the ponds were located within two miles of the highway and the average size was 3.2 acres. The principal soils in the area are clay, clay loam, and silty clay-loam, all of which are extremely

sticky and plastic when wet and hard and tough when dry. Major upland grass species are western wheatgrass, buffalo grass, blue grama, and green needlegrass. The mean annual precipitation at Pierre is 16.33 inches.

## RESULTS

Three observations of breeding water birds were made at all ponds, one each during the periods May 20-25, June 8-10, and June 28-30. A species was considered as a breeding bird at a pond if it was recorded during any of the three visits.

In Table 1 the percent occurrence of each species on the 50 ponds is noted in the first column. Mallards occurring on 82 percent of the ponds were recorded most often. Killdeers, being recorded on 78 percent of the ponds, were the second in occurrence. Gadwalls, third (60 percent), were followed by red-winged blackbirds and upland plovers (44 percent each). Young birds or nests were observed in 1966 for all species listed in Table 1 except the green-winged teal and yellowthroat.

In 1950 and 1951, Bue et al. (1952) and Bue (1956) found breeding waterfowl species similar to those found in 1966, and they recorded one pair of breeding ruddy ducks, however, none were recorded in 1966. Also, they observed few widgeon, whereas, widgeon were common in 1966. Blankenship et al. (1953) only noted long-billed cur-

lews and yellow-headed blackbirds as migrants. Both were fairly common breeders on the study area in 1966. In 1958, Gensch, (Unpublished report, 1958. Pierre stock ponds study area—South Dakota. Filed with the Wildlife Research Laboratory, Denver, Colorado. 33 pp.) conducted a follow-up study of 40 of the ponds studied in 1950 and 1951. He noted the same waterfowl breeding species as Bue, but the American coot population had greatly expanded.

The coot population has varied greatly in this eastern Stanley County location. In 1950 and 1951 there was an estimated annual population of eight pairs on 50 ponds. In 1958, Gensch estimated there were 123 coot pairs on only 40 ponds. In 1966, there were about six pairs of coot on 50 ponds.

On Jackson County stock ponds, Evans and Kerbs (1967) noted young mallards, gadwalls, pintails, and blue-winged teal. They observed no young widgeon or shovelers. Other water birds found nesting on their area were similar to those on the Stanley County area except that they did not observe breeding pied-billed grebes, sora rails, yellow-headed blackbirds, or American coots.

A general comparison between Visner's (1909, 1911, 1913) early 1900 observations in western South Dakota and those of recent times suggests that water birds breed here in greater abundance than formerly. Ducks have been particularly successful in adapting to the newly created water areas. Where originally only an occasional creek pool

was present, now several stock ponds, 1-10 acres in size, occur in each square mile.

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## Chestnut-collared Longspur

—E. W. Steffen

**Table 1. Recent and past observations of breeding waterfowl and water birds in Stanley County, South Dakota.**

SPECIES	Percent occurrence on ponds—1966	General breeding status—1950-1951 <sup>1</sup>
Pied-billed grebe	4	Common
Mallard	82	Abundant
Gadwall	60	Common
Pintail	32	Common
Green-winged Teal	6	Migrant
Blue-winged teal	40	Abundant
American widgeon	40	Uncommon
Shoveler	14	Common
Sora	6	Common
American coot	6	Common
Killdeer	78	Common
Long-billed curlew	10	Migrant
Upland plover	44	Common
Wilson's phalarope	10	Common
Yellowthroat	2	Migrant
Yellow-hd. blackbird	8	Migrant
Red-winged blackbird	44	Common

<sup>1</sup>Breeding status from Bue et al. (1952), Blankenship et al. (1953) and Bue (1956).

## DISCUSSION

This eastern South Dakota shelterbelt provided nesting habitat for grackles, mourning doves, brown thrashers, and one long-eared owl. Trees preferred for nesting were the red cedar, chinkota elm, Siberian elm and harbin pear. Of less importance to nesting were the Russian olive and ponderosa pine. Honeysuckle, cottonwood and green ash trees were not used for nesting of any species. Grackles seemed to find certain "neighborhoods" more desirable. The location of each grackle and dove nest is shown in Fig. 2. Neighborhood tendencies were probably a result of grackle preference for red cedar and chinkota elm as nesting habitat. Crowding was not, however, a characteristic of this shelterbelt since only 12.1 percent of the trees were used for nesting.

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## McCown's Longspur

—E. W. Steffen



# 1971 Winter Season for South Dakota

December 1, 1970-March 31, 1971

## SOUTH DAKOTA REPORTERS

Don Adolphson (DA), Rapid City.  
L. M. Baylor (LMB), Rapid City.  
H. P. Chilson (HPC), Webster.  
Velma DeVries (VD), Belvidere.  
June Harter (JH), Highmore.  
Alfred Hinds (AH), Prairie City, Perkins County.  
James W. Johnson (JWJ), Huron.  
Conrad A. Fjetland (CAF), LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge, Martin.  
Barney Nordstrom (BN), Fairburn, Custer County.  
B. J. Rose (BJR), Pierre, State Game and Fish Department.  
Esther Serr (ES), Compiler, Black Hills Audubon Society, 615-8th Street, Rapid City.  
Harold W. Wager (HWW), Cresbard.  
Irma Weyler (IW), Belle Fourche.  
Dave Gilbert (DG), Wetlands Management Office, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Madison, S. Dak.  
N. R. Whitney (NRW), Rapid City.  
Herbert Krause (HK), Augustana College, Sioux Falls.  
Dr. Gilbert Blankespoor (GB), Augustana College, Sioux Falls.

This has been the longest winter this area has experienced for some time. With 62 inches of snow at the Rapid City Weather Bureau since last fall, there has been continuous snow, some melting and then ice and more ice. There were no severe blizzards or cold but almost daily snow flurries—it is hard to believe the total snow fall. Alfred Hinds from Prairie City, Perkins County, describes it as a very trying winter.

Our observers and the general public comment there are so few birds. Yet when we have field trips, and really search, we find the species but not in such numbers. Mrs. Irma Weyler, Belle Fourche, has this to say about the situation . . . "Because the natural food supply is so abundant, we hesitate to state flatly that birds in the countryside are at an all-time low. We prefer to believe that the abundance of food has held birds in the country. Even in a storm, we know, that the natural food is still accessible on the twigs, and al-

ways there is that endless supply of buds on shrub and tree."

The shrubs and trees are still loaded with fruit in Rapid City waiting for the boreal species that have been almost totally absent all winter.

## SWANS, GEESE AND DUCKS

**Trumpeter Swan**—81 on LaCreek Refuge Jan. 1 to 45 at end of the season as the pairs go off the refuge to nest (CAF).

**Canada Goose**—One with band wintered at Canyon Lake, Rapid City (LMB); 1680 at Pierre Dec. 29 (BJR); 500 wintered at LaCreek to 1700 by the third week in Feb. (CAF); 4 on Mar. 13, and 25 on Mar. 30 in Minnehaha County (HK).

**White-fronted Goose**—One at LaCreek March 8; 7 in a flock of Snow-Blue Geese on Wall Lake, Minnehaha County, March 30 (HK).

**Snow-Blue Goose**—5 flocks of 2500+ (plus) on March 13, 100,000-125,000 (estimate) near Wall Lake on March 30. Peak number not related to weather, apparently. (HK).

**Mallard**—Started the period at 1200 and built up to 4000 by March 16 at LaCreek; 300 at Canyon Lake, Jan. 1; 2000 east of Newell, Butte County, on the ground in a feedlot (NRW); 10,636 on Dec. 29 at Pierre (BJR); 4 on March 6 and 400+ on March 30 at Wall, Grass and Beaver Lakes in Minnehaha County (HK).

**Black Duck**—One at Pierre Dec. 29 (BJR).

**Gadwall**—Regular winter resident in numbers at Canyon Lake, Rapid City, but the lake had been drained with just puddles remaining so the number was down to less than 10 (LMB); first

spring date at LaCreek, March 10; two at Pierre Dec. 29; three at Grass Lake, Minnehaha County March 30.

**Pintail**—First date at LaCreek Feb. 16, and Feb. 20 at Rapid City; 3 at Pierre Dec. 29; 50 on a pond near Mud Butte, Meade County, March 31 (NRW); 45 in Minnehaha County on March 13.

**Green-winged Teal**—10 or less winter residents on Canyon Lake; 4 at Pierre Dec. 29; first spring date at LaCreek March 5; 10 in Minnehaha County March 30.

**American Widgeon**—Two to four wintered at Canyon Lake; one at Pierre Dec. 29; first date at LaCreek March 12; six on Grass Lake, Minnehaha County March 30.

**Shoveler**—First date at LaCreek March 12; three on Grass Lake, Minnehaha County March 30.

**Wood Duck**—One in late December at Pierre (BJR).

**Redhead**—First spring date at LaCreek, March 1; Canyon Lake, March 4.

**Ring-necked Duck**—One at Pierre Dec. 29; first date at LaCreek March 10; two on Grass Lake, March 30.

**Lesser Scaup**—2 at Pierre Dec. 29; none at Rapid City (unusual); first date at LaCreek, March 10; two near Grass Lake, March 30.

**Canvasback**—First date at LaCreek March 8.

**Common Goldeneye**—About 60 on Canyon Lake all period; 48 at Pierre Dec. 29; few at LaCreek at beginning and built up to 98 on March 10; None in western Minnehaha.

**Barrow's Goldeneye**—One male reported in the fall period continued to frequent Canyon Lake in Rapid City all winter. L. M. Baylor and N. R. Whitney had about 14 different observations on this duck. It would leave Canyon Lake for a few weeks and then re-appear. Baylor believes that it went out to other ponds with a flock of Common Gold-

eneys as he could notice an increase of about 25 Common Goldeneyes each time when it returned.

**Bufflehead**—1 female wintered at LaCreek; first spring date at LaCreek was March 1; none in Minnehaha.

**Hooded Merganser**—Two pair at LaCreek most of period.

**Common Merganser**—A few at Canyon Lake all winter; none at LaCreek (unusual); first spring date at LaCreek Feb. 15; 27 at Pierre Dec. 29; 4 near Grass Lake, Minnehaha County, on March 13.

## HAWKS AND EAGLES

**Sharp-shinned Hawk**—Bothered in yards occasionally in Rapid City (ES); 1 at Pierre late December.

**Cooper's Hawk**—1 got a Junco in Rapid City Jan. 8.

**Red-tailed Hawk**—1 wintered in Canyon Lake area (ES); 2 in Pierre Dec. 29; 1 at Lake Andes Feb. 6 (DA); 2 at Cresbard December (HWW).

**Rough-legged Hawk**—About 5 at LaCreek all winter; 20 at Lemmon, Perkins County, Dec. 1 (DA); 1 at Lake Andes Feb. 6 (DA); 13 at Pierre Dec. 29 (BJR); 2 at Rapid City Dec. 27. N. R. Whitney comments that the Rough-legged population was very low in the Rapid City area; one near Wall Lake, Minnehaha County March 30.

**Ferruginous Hawk**—1 at Belle Fourche Feb. 12 (DA); four at Lake Andes Feb. 6 (DA).

**Golden Eagle**—2 wintered at LaCreek with a peak of 6 during February; 2 at Pierre Dec. 29; 2 average around Rapid City all winter; pair on nest near Fairburn, Custer County, March 7 (BN); 2 to 3 all winter in Perkins County (AH); one seen in good light over Sioux Falls and observed four minutes (HK) on March 21.

**Bald Eagle**—9 at LaCreek Jan. 1, down to 2 by March 16 (CAF); 7 at Angostura Reservoir, Fall River County December (DA); 2 at Orman Dam,

Butte County, Feb. 12 (DA); 25 at Lake Andes Feb. 6 (DA); 12 at Pierre Dec. 29 (BJR); one adult wintered in the Canyon Lake area within Rapid City from Jan. 1 throughout period. It was observed many times flying low over Rapid Creek and skimming the roof tops. It is obvious that the Game Refuges and Missouri River dams provide food for the Bald Eagle.

**Marsh Hawk**—1 or 2 present at LaCreek all period; first spring date in Meade County March 16 (DA); 2 in Perkins County March 31 (DA); 6 on March 13 and 1 male on March 21 in Minnehaha County (HK).

**Prairie Falcon**—1 observed frequently at LaCreek during February; 1 at Hot Springs, Fall River County Jan. 21 (DA).

**Peregrine Falcon**—1 at Lake Andes Feb. 6 and identified by Refuge manager. This is the only observation for some time in South Dakota (NRW).

**Pigeon Hawk**—2 sighted in Rapid City and 1 of those with a Junco March 15; one at Pierre Dec. 29.

**Sparrow Hawk**—One in Rapid City Dec. 27; 2 at Pierre Dec. 29; first spring date in Rapid City March 2; two March 31, 4, March 27, 3, March 30 in Minnehaha County (HK); one in north Minnehaha County, Dec. 27 (GB).

#### GROUSE, PHEASANT AND GRAY PARTRIDGE

**Sharp-tailed Grouse**—35 wintered at LaCreek; 26 at Rapid City Dec. 27; 161 at Pierre Dec. 29.

**Greater Prairie Chicken**—1 at Pierre Dec. 29 (BJR).

**Turkey**—9 on Dec. 27 at Rapid City. A few Sharp-tailed Grouse, Pheasants and Gray Partridge wintered in Perkins County. Alfred Hinds tells that these game birds start out fairly well at the beginning of the winter, but by spring

there are few left which he believes are taken by predators more so than weather. Partridge were found in Minnehaha County, 12 on Dec. 27 (GB) and two near Wall Lake March 30 (HK).

**Pheasants**—3000 wintered at LaCreek; 105 at Pierre on Dec. 29 and 6 at Rapid City Dec. 27; 3 at Webster in December (HPC); 155 at Huron Dec. 26 (JWJ); 202 at Cresbard in December (HWW); 65 females near Wall, Grass, and Beaver Lakes in Minnehaha on March 27 (HK).

#### CRANES, RAILS, SHOREBIRDS, GULLS AND DOVES

**American Coot**—First spring date at LaCreek March 15; 1 or 2 on Canyon Lake until March 7.

**Common Snipe**—1 wintered at LaCreek and 2 at Rapid City; first spring date at LaCreek Feb. 27; 1 at Wall Lake March 27 (HK).

**Killdeer**—1 wintered at Rapid City; first spring date at LaCreek March 10; at Belvidere March 10 (VD); at Rapid City on the prairie March 14; in Perkins County March 13 (AH).

**Sandhill Crane**—Flock of 350 flying low March 30 along Spring Creek, Pennington County (ES).

**Mourning Dove**—1 at Huron Dec. 26 (JWJ); 4 in Sioux Falls March 28 (HK).

**Ring-billed Gull**—1 on Canyon Lake Dec. 1 (LMB); first spring date March 27, 11 at Rapid City; 4 at Grass Lake March 30.

**Herring Gull**—7 at Pierre on Dec. 29 (BJR).

**Franklin's Gull**—6 at Grass Lake, Minnehaha County March 30 (HK).

#### OWLS

**Screech Owl**—1 at Pierre Dec. 29; 1

at Cresbard December (HWW); 1 in Perkins County Jan. 2 (AH).

**Great Horned Owl**—2 pairs present at LaCreek during period; 6 at Pierre Dec. 29; 2 at Huron Dec. 26; 6 at Madison Dec. 31 (DG); pair took over a Swainson's Hawk nest on March 3 at Rapid City (NRW); 2 pairs nesting at Belvidere (VD); pair on nest March 7 at Fairburn, Custer County (BN); one at Wall Lake on March 27 (HK).

**Snowy Owl**—1 at LaCreek March 5; 1 north of Highmore, Hyde County (JH); 1 in Perkins County Jan. 8 (AH).

**Short-eared Owl**—3 at LaCreek observed four times during period (CAF).

#### WOODPECKERS

**Flicker**—Some report Red-shafted, some Yellow-shafted, but N. R. Whitney believes that any flickers in South Dakota are hybrids. A few seem to winter in every part of the state as do the **Hairy** and **Downy Woodpeckers**.

**Red-headed Woodpecker**—Late date at Pierre Dec. 29 (BJR).

#### LARKS AND JAYS

**Horned Lark**—381 at Pierre Dec. 29; 500 at Cresbard December; 110 at Webster December; 84 at Huron Dec. 26; 65 at Rapid City Dec. 27; this species began moving at LaCreek Feb. 20; at Rapid City Feb. 26; by March 25 the Horned Larks were paired and on territory at Rapid City (ES), Meade County (NRW), and in northern Perkins County (DA); 50 at Grass Lake March 13.

**Northern Horned Lark**—1 near Sioux Falls March 20, 1 at Wall Lake, Minnehaha County on March 20. Both in good light at 75 to 100 feet away for four minutes (HK and GB). I need a lesson on the difference between Horned Lark and Northern Horned Lark (ES).

**Blue Jay**—1 at Webster December

(HPC); 2 at Huron Dec. 26; 14 at Madison Dec. 31; 7 at Belle Fourche Feb. 12; 106 at Rapid City Dec. 27. Rapid City is on the western edge of the Blue Jay range yet there have been many all through the period possibly due to the good acorn crop and the protection of the Black Hills. Black Hills Audubon Society members have not been able to distinguish any Blue Jay migration as described by others in "Audubon Field Notes." Two seen in March at Sioux Falls—very scarce (HK).

**Gray Jay**—5 at Rapid City Dec. 27; as a rule they are at higher elevations in the Black Hills.

**Pinon Jay**—241 at Rapid City on Dec. 27. Flocks frequent the feeders located at the edge of the Black Hills, but this winter seemed to be in smaller numbers—about 40 in a flock.

**Black-billed Magpie**—123 at Rapid City Dec. 27 which is more than usual; peak of 20 at LaCreek Jan. 21; 23 at Pierre Dec. 29.

**Common Crow**—66 at Rapid City Dec. 27; 9 at Huron Dec. 26; 38 at Madison Dec. 31; first spring date at LaCreek Feb. 20; 28 at Perkins County, March 24; 42 near Grass Lake March 30.

#### CHICKADEES, NUTHATCHES, CREEPER, DIPPER AND WREN

**Black-capped Chickadees**—Wintered at Pierre, Huron, Belvidere, Belle Fourche, Madison, Rapid City, Perkins County, and scarce in Sioux Falls. N. R. Whitney found many Black-capped Chickadees at nearly 7000 feet on Terry Peak Ski Slopes which probably explains the scarcity in Rapid City. The cold was not so intense to send them down from the higher Black Hills.

**Boreal Chickadee**—Six during March in Sioux Falls (HK).

**White-breasted Nuthatch**—13 at Madison Dec. 31; 2 at Webster; 2 at Pierre;

1 at Huron Dec. 26; 10 at Rapid City Dec. 27 and 1 at Rapid City Feb. 28; present at Sioux Falls.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch**—10 at Rapid City Dec. 27, one Feb. 28; one at Pierre Dec. 29; none at Sioux Falls—first absence for years (HK).

**Brown Creeper**—7 sightings at Rapid City during period; 1 at Madison Dec. 21; 3 at Huron Dec. 26; about 10 at Sioux Falls during winter season (GB).

**Dipper**—One wintered in Rapid Creek near Rapid City.

**Canyon Wren**—4 in Box Elder Canyon near Rapid City Dec. 26 (NRW).

### THRUSHES, KINGLETS AND WAXWINGS

**Robin**—104 at Rapid City Dec. 27; 1 at Madison Dec. 31; 75 at Pierre Dec. 28; 5 at Huron Dec. 26; 1 at Perkins County all winter; 1 at Highmore; came to Belvidere early March; few wintered at Belle Fourche. Irma Weyler tells—“After all, spring is on the way. It already has started advancing up the United States from the south, moving at an average of 15 miles a day. Like a warm flood it creeps up across the lowlands, up the valleys and climbs the mountains, rising at a rate of 100 feet a day . . . but Hills men can watch the movement of spring by climbing a mountain. They can note the swelling buds in the valleys and compare them with the snow-locked buds a thousand feet up the slope. It's easiest to watch the climb of spring at blossom time, to see the apple trees in bloom in Lead, for instance, after all the petals have dropped from the trees in the home yard in the valley.” (Feb. 23, 1971, editorial, “Daily Belle Fourche Post”). Herb Krause counted 52 on March 13 when he and Gil Blankespoor did their usual 45 mile route on Saturday near Sioux Falls. He suspects this was connected

to the weather as there were southerly winds 20 to 40 miles an hour that blew for 36 hours and temperatures peaked at 66 degrees by March 30.

**Eastern Bluebird**—1 near Grass Lake March 30 (HK).

**Mountain Bluebird**—First spring date March 12, Rockerville, Pennington County; March 13 at Rapid City (DA); March 27 paired and on territory at the edge of the Black Hills; the Mountain Bluebird doesn't seem to go into the canyons of the Black Hills until later (ES); first spring date at Fairburn March 27 while in 1970 they came to Fairburn Feb. 21.

**Townsend's Solitaire**—Many during the period at Rapid City—probably triple the usual number.

**Golden-crowned Kinglet**—7 at Rapid City Dec. 27; none at Sioux Falls this season.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet**—One straggler in Rapid City Dec. 16.

**Bohemian Waxwing**—Small and infrequent flocks at Rapid City, Perkins County, Highmore, Huron and Belle Fourche.

**Cedar Waxwing**—Small and infrequent at Huron, Highmore and just a few at Rapid City until March 18 when several reported flocks of 30 to 50; 2 north Minnehaha County Dec. 27 (GB) and one March 16 Sioux Falls (HK).

### SHRIKE, STARLING AND HOUSE SPARROW

**Northern Shrike**—1 to 3 reported at Rapid City, LaCreek, Highmore, Huron and Perkins County. One migrant at Grass Lake March 30—very scarce (HK).

**Starling**—All reporters listed Starlings from 1 to 809, but Rapid City

tops the list with 1500 to 2000 roosting in the Gamble Store sign down town Rapid City.

**House Sparrow**—Madison topped the Christmas count with 1419, Pierre 1362, Rapid City 740, Huron 918, Highmore 200 down to 10 at Webster.

### BLACKBIRDS

**Western Meadowlark**—Few wintered in sheltered places at all points in western South Dakota; first spring date at LaCreek March 12; 24 on Dec. 31 at Madison; 10 at Huron Dec. 26; 6 on Dec. 27 north Minnehaha (GB).

**Red-winged Blackbird**—30 wintered at LaCreek with several thousand by March 16; 13 at Pierre Dec. 29; first spring date at Belvidere, March 13 and Rapid City March 14; Minnehaha County 300+ March 13, and one flock of 50+ females and 4 males.

**Rusty Blackbird**—5 at Rapid City Dec. 27; 36 at Madison Dec. 31; 6 at Humboldt March 13, 3 at Grass Lake March 20, 1 at Grass Lake March 30 all in Minnehaha County.

**Brewer's Blackbird**—2 started the winter at Huron, but one succumbed before the end of the period (JWJ).

**Common Grackle**—1 at Madison Dec. 31; 4 at Pierre Dec. 29; 3 wintered at LaCreek (unusual); one in Minnehaha March 13 and several hundred on March 27 (HK).

### CARDINAL, GROSBEAKS AND REDPOLLS

**Cardinal**—A pair at Huron during period (JWJ); 1 at Pierre Dec. 29 (BJR); present in Sioux Falls.

**Evening Grosbeak**—Few flocks of 50 at Rapid City but not as concentrated as usual; none at Belle Fourche (unusual) and none at Sioux Falls. Boreal

species almost totally absent. Few observations of **Cassin's Finch** in singles at Rapid City; 1 **Purple Finch** at Huron; none at Sioux Falls (unusual). No **Redpoll** sightings anyplace. Two **Red Crossbills** at Rapid City Dec. 27 and none at Sioux Falls.

**Pine Siskin**—Present all period in small numbers at Rapid City; then they started to increase mid-February, and by the end of the period, observers were wishing they would go away so some other species could feed. None at Sioux Falls (unusual).

**American Goldfinch**—27 at Madison Dec. 31; 41 at Huron Dec. 26; 12 at Rapid City Dec. 29. By March 1 there were frequent flocks around Rapid City and March 14 N. R. Whitney noted a flock of 50 about 20% into spring plumage; one at Sioux Falls March 13, 20 and 28 in different localities (HK).

### SPARROWS, BUNTINGS AND JUNCOS

**White-winged Junco**—278 at Rapid City Dec. 27. One observer estimated 65% white-wing and the balance equally divided between Slate and Oregon daily at his feeder. White-wing numbers are definitely up this year (ES). Others reporting **Slate-colored Junco**—10 at Belle Fourche Feb. 12; 40 at Pierre Dec. 29; 46 at Madison Dec. 31; LaCreek March 13; 4 on March 13; 6 March 30, 2 March 27, and 6 March 28 all in Minnehaha County. Numbers seem reduced this season (HK).

**Tree Sparrow**—Number down at Rapid City during period; 142 at Pierre Dec. 29; 9 at Huron Dec. 26; 63 at Madison Dec. 31; few at Sioux Falls in mid-winter (GB); they also wintered at LaCreek and Belvidere. Tree Sparrows started moving at Fairburn mid-March; Rapid City noticed a definite build-up

(Continued on Page 59)

SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

# Use of an Eastern South Dakota Shelterbelt by Nesting Birds

Nancy H. Field, South Dakota Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Brookings  
(Present Address: Bellevue, Washington)

## INTRODUCTION

**N**UMEROUS shelterbelts have been planted in South Dakota. Their use by nesting mourning doves (*Zenaidura macroura*) and pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*) has been reported (Drewein and Sparrowe, 1966; Trautman, 1960). However, their value in production of other birds is not well known. The objective of this study was to measure use by nesting birds of a shelterbelt in Brookings County.

## METHODS

This study was conducted in a shelterbelt, three miles north of Brookings, which was planted in 1952. The shelterbelt was 1560 feet long and divided into eight sections with eight rows of trees planted in each section (Fig. 1). It was designed by the Department of Horticulture and Forestry at South Dakota State University for the purpose of studying the performance of different arrangements of shelterbelt species. Each section is a replication of one of six designs. Most sections contain two rows of shrubs, three rows of evergreens and three rows of hardwoods. Evaluation of each design is based on height, growth, survival, wind and snow damage, and ability to stop or divert snow. The species of trees contained in the shelterbelt are listed in Fig. 1.

Three sections (1, 4 and 7) totaling 560 feet were thoroughly searched for nests. When a nest was found, the spe-

cies of bird and tree and the height of the nest above ground was recorded.

## RESULTS

The four nesting bird species found were common grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*), mourning dove *Zenaidura macroura*, brown thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*), and long-eared owl (*Asio otus*). Of the 75 nests found, 59 were made by grackles, 14 by doves and one each by a brown thrasher and a long-eared owl (Table 1). Other birds seen in the shelterbelt during the period of study were robins (*Turdus migratorius*) and goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*). Thirty-eight nests were found in red cedar, 22 in chinquapin elm, nine in Siberian elm, three in ponderosa pine, two in Russian olive and one in harbin pear (Table 1). No nests were found in honeysuckle, cottonwood or green ash trees. The majority of grackle nests and mourning dove nests were in red cedar and chinquapin elm. The brown thrasher nest was found in a Siberian elm seedling while the long-eared owl nest was at the top of a ponderosa pine.

Twelve percent of the trees on the sample plots were used for nesting (Table 1). Nests had been constructed in five percent of the Russian olives, seven percent of the ponderosa pine, 20 percent of the harbin pear, 20 percent of the Siberian elms, 25 percent of the red cedars and 31 percent of the chinquapin elms.

Grackle nests averaged 10.9 feet above the ground and the mourning dove nests 7.5 feet. The brown thrasher nest was four feet high and the long-

eared owl nest was 15 feet above the ground. Fifty-five of the 59 grackle nests were found in the six center rows of the shelterbelt and only four in the two outer rows.

Sample sections four and seven were mirror images with the exception of

an outer row in each section (Fig. 1). The two rows of red cedars in section four were exposed to the north and had a total of eight nests. In section seven, where the two rows of cedars were exposed to the south, 27 nests had been constructed.

Fig. 1. Schema of shelterbelt showing species of trees occurring there. Examination of nests was confined to sections one, four and seven.

SECTIONS

		8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
↑ N   R O W S	8	Hs	Hs	RC CH	RC CH	RC CH	Hs	RC CH	Hs Hs
	7	Ro	CH	RC	RC	RC	CH	RC	GA HP
	6	GA	SE	RC	GA	RC	SE	GA	CH GA
	5	CW	GA	PP	CH	PP	GA	CH	CW SE
	4	CW	PP	GA	SE	GA	PP	SE	CW CH
	3	GA	RC	SE	GA	SE	RC	GA	CH CW
	2	Ro	RC	CH	RC	CH	RC	RC	GA CW
	1	Hs	RC CH	Ro	RC CH	Ro	RC CH	RC CH	Ro Ro
		200'	200'	200'	200'	200'	200'	200'	150'

Key:

- Hs—Honeysuckle (*Lonicera tartarica*)
- Ro—Russian Olive (*Elacagnus augustifolia*)
- CW—Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*)
- GA—Green Ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*)
- CH—Chinkota Elm (*Ulmus pumila chinkota*)
- SE—Siberian Elm (*Ulmus pumila*)
- RC—Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)
- PP—Ponderosa Pine (*Pinus ponderosa*)
- HP—Harbin Pear (*Pyrus ussuriensis*)



Fig. 2. Graph showing location of grackle nests (X) and mourning dove nests (O) in sections one, four and seven.

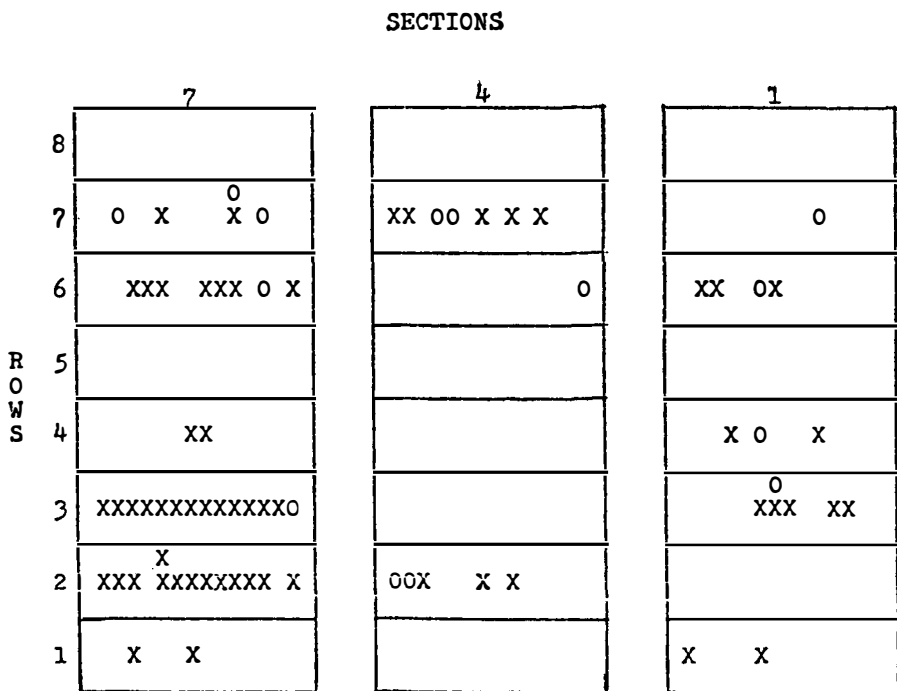


Table 1. Species of trees used by nesting birds in South Dakota shelterbelts, 1970.

Species of trees _____	Hs	Ro	CW	GA	CH	SE	RC	PP	HP	Total
<b>Number of nests</b>										
Grackle _____	0	2	0	0	15	7	33	2	0	59
Mourning Dove _____	0	0	0	0	7	1	5	0	1	14
Brown Thrasher _____	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Long-eared Owl _____	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Total _____</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Number of Trees _____</b>										
	79	41	6	76	72	44	155	45	5	621
<b>Percent of trees with nests</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30.6</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12.1</b>

# Ducks on the Hot Springs River

Lucille Wedge



## Mallards at Hot Springs by Lucille Wedge

**T**HE Fall River in Hot Springs is a haven for ducks, as well as for the bird lovers who delight in watching them.

Because of the hot springs feeding the river, the water doesn't freeze over during the winter and the ducks, mostly wild mallards, remain there the year around—feeding, nesting and hatching out little ones in plain sight of all the spectators who line the retaining wall of the parking area above.

A flock of over 50 were along the grassy bank the day I watched them.

Although the water depth is no more than a few inches, the current is swift and the foraging mallards have only to drag their limp feet to be carried from one small island to another. When they have gone far enough they simply stand up and the current moves on without them.

One evening in March, I stopped to peer over the wall but could see nothing

except a rolling mist a few feet above the river. The cold night air was vaporizing over the warm water. It drifted slowly down the river with new mists rising up as fast as they wafted away. At first I could hear the ducks but couldn't see them. Then I spotted a whole flock of mallards sitting close together on an island near the opposite shore. They were muttering softly to each other while a few drakes vigorously preened their feathers. The air was freezing cold where I stood but 20 feet down to the river bed, the ducks were in the warmth of the hot springs.

When I went back a few weeks later to take some pictures, the ducks were too scattered to photograph so I threw shelled corn over the wall to bring them together. And come they did—from the river banks, the water and from the islands. They would run a few

(Continued on Page 55)

# Spring Meeting at Aberdeen, 1971

Larry R. Lynch

**S**DOU came to Aberdeen May 21-23 for the Spring Meeting. Registration was in the library lobby of Northern State College, starting at 7:00 p.m.

Saturday was devoted to field trips over Brown County, the on-your-own type invented by Les Baylor for Bison last year. Covered were prairie, river bottom, Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge, as well as small and local spots of good birding treasured by the local people. A favorite area was the Scatterwood Lakes vicinity in the southwest corner of the county.

The banquet Saturday evening in the Rushmore Room of the Student Union was attended by 41. Guests we were happy to see were Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Hinds of Prairie City and Mr. and Mrs. Willis Hall of Yankton.

At a brief business meeting after the banquet recognition of the work of B. J. Rose in arranging the meeting had first attention. Honorary Membership in SDOU was voted Herman and Lois Chapman for their dedicated work over the years. "Without them," it was remarked, "there probably would not have been a South Dakota Ornithologists' Union."

President Johnson announced that a committee would be appointed for nominating a slate of officers to be voted

on at the Fall Meeting, as well as a committee to decide the time and place for the meeting and arrange a program.

The meeting then adjourned to the Student Union Ballroom, where Don Artz, professional photographer of Aberdeen, demonstrated that solid grounding in the art of photography is a great help in wildlife photography. He opened his program with the remark that, "B. J. makes pictures of birds, Willis Hall makes portraits of birds, while I make snapshots." And he then showed a long series of quite elegant "Snapshots." "We are all looking forward to the time when he will have filled out more of the check-list with his own pictures and we can see them," was the common reaction at the end of the program.

The Sunday forenoon field trips were made in the rain but many new birds were seen by more people in spite of that.

After lunch the call-off at the library ended with a total of 144 species—in addition to the controversials that were dropped.

A couple of notable sightings were: a Yellow-crowned Night Heron and three Scarlet Tanagers.—502 South First Street, Aberdeen

# Spring Meeting Combined List of Birds Observed in Brown County (Aberdeen) May 21-23, 1971

Common Loon	Semi-palmated Plover
Eared Grebe	Killdeer
Western Grebe	Upland Plover
Pied-billed Grebe	Spotted Sandpiper
White Pelican	Solitary Sandpiper
Double-crested Cormorant	Willet
Great Blue Heron	Lesser Yellowlegs
Green Heron	Pectoral Sandpiper
Common Egret	White-rumped Sandpiper
Black-crowned Night Heron	Baird's Sandpiper
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	Least Sandpiper
American Bittern	Dunlin
Canada Goose	Long-billed Dowitcher
White-fronted Goose	Stilt Sandpiper
Snow Goose	Semi-palmated Sandpiper
Blue Goose	Marbled Godwit
Mallard	Hudsonian Godwit
Gadwall	Sanderling
Pintail	Avocet
Green-winged Teal	Wilson's Phalarope
Blue-winged Teal	Northern Phalarope
American Widgeon	Ring-billed Gull
Shoveler	Franklin's Gull
Wood Duck	Forster's Tern
Redhead	Common Tern
Canvasback	Black Tern
Lesser Scaup	Mourning Dove
Ruddy Duck	Screech Owl
Red-tailed Hawk	Great Horned Owl
Swainson's Hawk	Burrowing Owl
Marsh Hawk	Short-eared Owl
Sparrow Hawk	Nighthawk
Ring-necked Pheasant	Chimney Swift
Gray Partridge	Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Virginia Rail	Belted Kingfisher
American Coot	Yellow-shafted Flicker

Red-headed Woodpecker  
Hairy Woodpecker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Eastern Kingbird  
Western Kingbird  
Least Flycatcher  
Olive-sided Flycatcher  
Horned Lark  
Tree Swallow  
Bank Swallow  
Rough-winged Swallow  
Barn Swallow  
Cliff Swallow  
Purple Martin  
Blue Jay  
Common Crow  
Black-capped Chickadee  
White-breasted Nuthatch  
House Wren  
Long-billed Marsh Wren  
Mockingbird  
Catbird  
Brown Thrasher  
Robin  
Swainson's Thrush  
Eastern Bluebird  
Cedar Waxwing  
Loggerhead Shrike  
Starling  
Red-eyed Vireo  
Warbling Vireo  
Black and White Warbler  
Golden-winged Warbler  
Tennessee Warbler  
Orange-crowned Warbler  
Nashville Warbler  
Yellow Warbler

Magnolia Warbler  
Myrtle Warbler  
Black-throated Green Warbler  
Chestnut-sided Warbler  
Bay-breasted Warbler  
Blackpoll Warbler  
Ovenbird  
Northern Waterthrush  
Yellowthroat  
American Redstart  
House Sparrow  
Bobolink  
Western Meadowlark  
Eastern Meadowlark  
Yellow-headed Blackbird  
Redwinged Blackbird  
Orchard Oriole  
Baltimore Oriole  
Brewer's Blackbird  
Common Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
Scarlet Tanager  
Cardinal  
Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
American Goldfinch  
Lark Bunting  
Savannah Sparrow  
Grasshopper Sparrow  
Vesper Sparrow  
Lark Sparrow  
Chipping Sparrow  
Clay-colored Sparrow  
Harris' Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Chestnut-collared Longspur  
TOTAL—144 Species

## *General Notes of Special Interest*

NESTING RECORDS FOR THE LONG-EARED OWL IN SANBORN AND ROBERTS COUNTIES—The Long-eared Owl is a species not often reported, although recent field studies suggest that it is actually a fairly common bird in South Dakota, especially as a winter resident. It is a small replica of the Great-Horned Owl, and is very likely mistaken for the larger bird by inexperienced observers. As with other owls, it is often easily approached, once it is spotted in the woods, relying as it does on its plumage pattern to enable it to blend into its surroundings. I have not run across many Long-eared owls shot by hunters, but I suspect that this species is often shot by people who confuse it with the Great-Horned Owl. Because the Long-ear is quite a confiding bird this type of mortality may account for its scarcity in some areas.

There are very few nest records for South Dakota, so I was particularly interested in finding Long-eared Owls regularly in a 40 acre planting of mature conifers (mixed pine and cedar) near Letcher, Sanborn County, during April of 1968. A nest containing one egg was located on May 5, after flushing the bird from the general vicinity several times during the preceding month. The nest was only an accumulation of litter in a fork of a large cedar tree. It was much like similar deposits in other trees located in the dense juniper stand. I had checked several others and decided none had ever been used by birds, taking them to be old squirrel nests. It was not over eight feet from the ground and quite easily reached for observation. I stayed clear of the nest for the next two

weeks, not wanting to cause the bird to desert its eggs, as often happens when Longeared Owls are disturbed, according to various accounts. But when I checked the nest on May 20, I found the remains of one egg, concluding that from the appearance of things that a squirrel might have destroyed the egg.

Since this time I have observed Long-eared Owls in the Letcher conifers throughout the year, and I suspect that they nest there regularly, although no other nest was found at this locality.

I had been seeing Long-ears regularly at Twin Lakes State Park near Woonsocket, and on April 10, 1969 a bird was found nesting in a Ponderosa Pine in the mixed pine, cedar and hardwood tree planting. This nest was about 20 feet from the ground and well up in the top of the pine tree in a rather exposed position. I was apprehensive about the success of this nesting because the many grackles were also nesting in the park area. I did not check the contents of the nest on the above date nor on May 20 when the female was observed still on the nest. But on May 28 I found one tiny young and three eggs in the nest, flushing the female in order to make this check. The female was also observed on the nest June 8. On June 17 I observed an adult and one downy young in the nest, with another downy young in the nest tree about three feet below the nest. No other young were observed, and I concluded that only two were reared at this nest out of four eggs laid. One fledged young was observed near the nest on June 23, the last observation for this nesting.

A second nesting of Long-eared Owls

was observed in Roberts County during the spring of 1969. I located the nest on May 14 while working some heavily-wooded draws at Sodak Park along Big Stone Lake, hoping to find Coopers Hawks nesting in the area. The nest was in a large oak tree about 30 feet up. Associated trees were Green Ash, with Box Elder and Basswood in the nearby coulee. It was easily located because the trees were only beginning to leaf out, and because the female was on the nest, which contained six eggs. This bird was much disturbed at my climbing to the nest, unlike the reactions of the birds at the Sanborn County nests described above.

She did not fly until I had climbed to within four feet of the nest, when she moved about in nearby trees, giving various "caterwauling" cries. She flew at me three times while I was inspecting the nest and descending to the ground, hitting me on the head on one occasion. This nest was not checked again until June 18, at which time I found two small owlets in downy plumage, dead and in a decomposed condition on the ground directly below the nest. No adults were observed in the area and I did not check the nest itself, as it was evident that some disaster had taken place.

From my limited experience with nesting Long-eared Owls, I would have to conclude that mortality is high during all stages, and that the least disturbance possible is of the utmost importance to these birds in rearing their young. It is possible that my presence around the nests described here might have had some influence in attracting predators to the area.—Bruce Harris, Altamont

\* \* \* \*

EGG COLLECTION AT W. H. OVER MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA—The collection of eggs which was reported on by Whitney in the Vol.

7, No. 2, June, 1955 issue of "South Dakota Bird Notes" has now been transferred to the museum here from the School of Mines.—Lee Eberly

\* \* \* \*

NOTES ON SWAINSON'S HAWK IN WESTERN SOUTH DAKOTA—Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) is the most conspicuous raptor in the West River prairies. In the past few years, I have found three nests close enough to my home in Rapid City that I could watch them regularly. My observations are summarized below.

#### —SPRING—

The main population of Swainson's Hawk winters in Argentina (A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds, Fifth Edition, 1957). In western South Dakota, the earliest arrivals appear in late April. My earliest dates are April 21 in 1963 and 1968, April 22 in 1964, April 23 in 1969, and April 25 in 1961 and 1970. Usually I found only one or two individuals at a time, but on April 21, 1963, 10 were noted following a plowing farmer near Presho in Lyman County. The farmer, turning over the ground, disturbed either mice or insects, and thus provided a feast for the migrating hawks.

#### —NESTING—

Two nests were located in cottonwoods, and were placed about 30 feet above the ground. The other was in a box elder, 20 feet above ground. The earliest date of obvious occupancy was May 14, 1969, although I usually found the adults in the general area of the nest from the time of spring arrival. I have not attempted to climb to any of the nests, and thus have no information on dates of egg-laying, hatching, or length of incubation period. On July 16, 1969, however, one nest contained two well-feathered young, and on Aug. 19, 1970, I found a fledgling on the ground near the nest, attended by an

adult, and apparently unable to fly, since it permitted my close approach with only threatening posture.

—FALL DEPARTURE—

In reviewing my notes for the past 17 years, I find that I have observed Swainson's Hawks after the first of September for five years. Apparently September is the month of fall migration. My latest observations are Oct. 9, 1966, and Oct. 14, 1962, both at Belvidere in Jackson County.—N. R. Whitney

\* \* \* \*

**BREEDING SEASON RECORDS FOR THE COMMON SNIPE**—Several sight records for the Common Snipe during the breeding season seem noteworthy, particularly because we have no nesting records for this species in South Dakota. On June 26, 1969 I saw a bird that I am quite sure was a Common Snipe on a small island created by a flooded dugout in a pasture in Jerauld County three miles south and two miles east of Lane. Observation was made at a distance of about 100 yards, and vegetation was quite dense surrounding the bird, so only the head and neck could be seen clearly. Visibility was poor even with binoculars, and I was unable to obtain a better view of the bird, which was acting rather strangely, with considerable bobbing of the head. When I moved to a better position the bird could not be located; subsequent trips to the area did not result in further sightings of this particular bird. It is possible, but unlikely, that I was seeing a very early migrant Dowitcher.

On June 23, 1969 I flushed a snipe from the edge of a small slough in Miner County, about a mile east of Carthage. Only a glimpse of the bird was obtained as it flushed, but the characteristic call was heard. This slough had been grazed by cattle, leaving cover

along the edges that would not be thought of as typical nesting cover for this species. I was unable to locate the bird during subsequent visits to this locality.

A much more interesting encounter with this species during the breeding season came on June 2, 1970, when I found a single bird at a sedge marsh bisected by South Dakota Highway No. 34, about two miles east of Artesian. When first observed the bird was evidently just coming down from a flight that probably included the nuptial display for which this species is famed. The bird was dropping down from a position over the highway, coming down at quite a steep angle from left to right of the car. It was uttering a harsh "yak, yak" call that immediately attracted my attention as I was driving slowly, with the windows of the car open. The bird alighted on a post near a cattle watering trough on the edge of a wetland that was formed by a flowing artesian well. The major portion of the wetland was a small sedge marsh, but the immediate vicinity about the watering trough had grown up to cat-tails. The snipe remained posed on the post only long enough for me to stop the car and pull off to the side of the road. When I got out of the car to check the bird closer it flew off across the road. It had disappeared before I could tell more than the general direction it took, or if it landed again in another location. This area was so promising a habitat for the breeding grounds of the snipe that I spent a considerable amount of time walking along the edge of the marsh where I supposed the bird had alighted, but it was not flushed again. The time was 9:00 a.m. in the morning, a calm, cool day with traces of fog still in the air. I returned to the vicinity on three occasions during the week, checking it both at sunrise and dusk, but I could not find the snipe again. A thorough search of the



sedge marsh near the watering trough was also made, with the assistance of my two sons, but we found no snipe in the area. It is possible that the bird was a non-breeding male, but there is nothing in the literature to suggest that this sort of thing occurs, without a nest or female nearby.

On July 28, 1970 I flushed a Common Snipe from the edge of a heavily grazed slough in Marshall County, about two miles north of Sieche Hollow. I did not work about the location to check for more birds, and I did not have the opportunity to come back to the spot at a later date during the summer. These observations give some reason to believe that the Snipe nests in South Dakota. It is possible that it might occur regularly in the northeast where there is a variety of habitat suitable for nesting.—**Bruce Harris**

\* \* \* \*

**WORM-EATING WARBLER IN TRIPP COUNTY**—On May 5, 1970 I was in Tripp County conducting a booming ground survey of prairie grouse. As the morning was unsuitable for grouse survey work I investigated a rather heavily wooded area about one-half mile from the White River, three miles west and 10 miles north of Ideal.

The day was quite chilly, with a strong wind blowing, but the grove of mixed ash and boxelder was quite protected from the wind, and a number of birds had taken shelter in the area. Orange-crowned and Myrtle warblers were found in numbers, along with Chipping and Clay-colored sparrows. I was glassing the many warblers for some other species when I came upon a slightly larger bird that I at first took to be a Red-eyed Vireo. Careful study of the bird for nearly 15 minutes, with various views up to a range of 20 yards convinced me that I was seeing my first Worm-eating Warbler. My field notes,

written on the spot, read as follows: "Warbler slightly larger than Orange-crowned; bill larger and more pointed, a light color (yellowish); feet flesh or pale orange; general color yellow-brown; dingy underparts with golden-yellow wash on the throat and about cheeks; narrow black line through eye with two darker streaks through the top of head; actions warbler-like, but the bird spends much time on the ground foraging around and under small logs; observed to pick up Boxelder seeds." I was quite impressed with the similarity between this warbler and the Red-eyed Vireo, as mentioned above; it did not crawl along the tree trunks or limbs, as might be expected, and this was also misleading to me in identifying the bird. Instead it foraged rapidly among the newly-leaved branches with the other two species of warblers, except for a considerable amount of time spent on the ground, as described above.

All birds were particularly active, due to the chilly temperatures. There are four other records for this species in South Dakota, including a bird banded and photographed by the Rogge's at Farm Island (SDBN's, V 17: 69) on the Missouri River, but this constitutes the first west-river record.—**Bruce Harris, Altamont**

# Book Review

J. W. Johnson

**BIRD Vocalizations.** Their relations to current problems in Biology and Psychology. Essays presented to W. H. Thorpe. R. A. Hinde, Editor. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1969. xvi + 400 pp., illustrated. \$13.50.

This is an important book. *Science*, which is not prone to waste space with the second rate, has given three full pages to its review by W. John Smith, Department of Biology, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. (*Science*, Jan. 2, 1970).

Smith notes that one purpose of the book is to provide a tribute to W. H. Thorpe, F.R.S., University of Cambridge, who has done much to stimulate wide research with bird songs, and with whom most of the contributors have worked. His two criticisms are of particular interest: "By no means all areas of active research with bird vocalization are represented and almost half of the papers are reviews only of the work of their authors and their students.

"But these are not important criticisms," he adds. "The breadth of the collection is stimulating." He concludes his review: "Hinde has chosen well and edited well and all of us are in his debt."

Perhaps the most striking aspect of this book is the advanced use of sonograms for analysis of bird sounds, making visible the pitch and quality with time to a degree beyond anything to be detected by ear. They are revealing even to casual inspection. The entire work is liberally illustrated with them. Their meaning and uses are explained in some detail in: Part A The Physical

Analysis of Avian Vocalizations. From this as a foundation, other parts of the book follow in order.

- Part B Developmental Aspects
- Part C Physiological Aspects
- Part D Functional Aspects
- Part E Evolutional Aspects
- Part F Literary and Asthetic Aspects

Each part has an introduction and consists of two or three papers by different authors, each followed by a list of references. In spite of Smith's reservations the detail is considerable—and the new questions suggested correspondingly greater.

The first words of the Editor's Preface set the tone for the whole book: "The sounds of birds have long been a source of pleasure to mankind, but only recently have scientists recognized that they provide a wealth of material pertinent to many problems of biology and psychology."

Space limits prevent more than brief extracts from a couple of widely different fields to suggest the scope of uses of this new tool of graphical analysis in the various concepts. Throughout, unfamiliar items of information enhance the attraction of nearly every paragraph.

The common question of why birds sing is given an answer I paraphrase briefly: birds sing to advertise two things: their species, by the form of the song, and the individual singing, by its variations within the form. Another author believes: "A songbird's identity is expressed in musical form by limited deviation from a norm; in human musical expression a singer's individuality

by the same means, whether creatively or recreatively . . . adaptability is essential to music as it is to life . . . so far as known, the form of music remains the privilege of birds and man.

“Repetition is common in human music as in bird song and the discrepancy in the musical memories of man and bird is more apparent than real. Until the advent of musical notation it is unlikely that exactly reproducible melodies (i.e. not improvisatory) exceeded 30 seconds in duration; familiarity gained by the aid of a written record is man’s advantage.”

A further purpose discovered to be served by bird vocalization is a common fact with many species of birds: synchronization in hatching. This too has its complexities brought out by study. Work detailed in this book shows the method by which the result is accomplished, at least in some species: by sound communication between embryos. Quail embryos cut around the shell and emerge within an hour of each other and may do so at the same time in a tray of eggs in an incubator; hatching may begin at one side and an hour or two later will have spread across the tray to the other side.

“This occurs only when the eggs are in contact with each other and this was demonstrated . . . in eggs isolated about 48 hours before the expected time of hatching, embryos may emerge from the shell at different times over a day or two. This effect suggests that the embryos stimulate each other . . . the time of hatching could be accelerated by contact with the more advanced embryos . . . ”

“ . . . from the time when membranes were pierced and the embryo begins to breath through its lungs, it may respond differently to signals from outside the eggs and where the

responses result, in the adjustment of hatching time in the synchronization, there must be a considerable exchange of information . . . as the adjustments in hatching time affect vital development stages including the establishment of lung ventilation, some quite intricate problems are raised by this specialized mode of embryonic activity.”

—Huron

## Ducks on the Hot Springs

(Continued from Page 46)

steps then lift their wings and come flying in with their feet just skimming the surface.

Around the first of June the eggs begin to hatch and soon there are more ducklings on the water than old ones. The eggs are laid in nests along the river banks where hardy plants provide natural cover.

Many of the mallards leave each year to find nesting sites in more isolated areas. But the flock of wild ducks that remain, afford the stopping tourist and local citizen alike, a pleasant show with sound effects of soft, breathy mutterings of hens on the wild, raucous quacking of mallards as they make their wobbly flight into the setting sun.—Hill City

# By-Laws of South Dakota Ornithologists' Union

## ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Any student of ornithology who is 16 years of age or older is eligible for membership as an Active Member of this Union.

Section 2. Any person who is 12 years of age and less than 16 years of age is eligible for membership as a Junior Member of this Union.

Section 3. Honorary members may be elected for their eminence in ornithology or from among the members of the Union for distinguished service in furthering the aims of the Union.

Section 4. Membership shall date from the approval of the application for membership by a majority of the Directors or by an officer of the Union designated by the Directors and the payment of dues. Honorary Memberships shall date from their approval by a two-thirds vote of the Directors.

Section 5. Active members may vote at annual meetings, hold office and serve on the committees.

Section 6. All members shall receive gratis one copy of periodicals which this Union may publish for distribution to its members.

Section 7. Any member may be dismissed from membership for cause by a two-thirds vote of the Directors.

## ARTICLE II—OFFICERS-COMMITTEES

Section 1. The officers of this Union shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Editor-Librarian, chosen from among the directors.

Section 2. The duties of the President shall be to preside at meetings of the Union and of the Board of Directors, to appoint Committees as provided by these By-Laws, to call necessary meetings of the Directors, and to perform such other duties as customarily pertain to the office.

Section 3. The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President in his absence or incapacity, and shall assist the President and perform such duties as are delegated to him by the President.

Section 4. The Secretary shall keep a record of the meetings of the Union and of the Directors, conduct the general correspondence of the Union and shall perform such other duties as customarily pertain to the office.

Section 5. The Treasurer shall collect dues, receive and have charge of all moneys of the Union, pay such bills as are approved for payment by the President and Secretary, and perform such other duties as customarily pertain to the office.

Section 6. The Editor-Librarian shall edit and superintend the printing of publications of the Union and preserve the books, publications and the papers presented at meetings of the Union.

Section 7. The duties of the Directors shall be to select Honorary Members, to fix the date and place of the annual meeting, to perform such duties as are given to them by these By-Laws, to confirm the action of the President in appointment of standing committees, to fill by temporary appointment offices which

become vacant, to audit the books of the Treasurer, and to perform such other duties as may be necessary for the furtherance of the aims of the Union.

Section 8. The Directors may act by correspondence upon questions that properly come before them.

### **ARTICLE III—MEETINGS**

Section 1. The annual meeting of the Union shall be at such time and place as is selected by the Directors.

Section 2. Such special meetings of the Union or of the Board of Directors as are necessary may be called by the President with the approval of a majority of the Directors.

Section 3. The quorum for transaction of business shall be nine active members.

### **ARTICLE IV—ELECTIONS**

Section 1. Directors shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Union by a majority vote of the active members present.

Section 2. The term of office of Directors shall be three years and shall extend from the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected; except that at the first election following the adoption of these By-Laws five directors shall be elected for a term of one year, five for a term of two years, and five for a term of three years, and thereafter five shall be elected annually for a term of three years.

Section 3. Immediately following each annual meeting and election of Directors, the Directors shall meet and select the officers of the Union for the ensuing year from among the Directors as hereinbefore provided.

Section 4. Nominations for Directors shall be made by a Nominating Committee of three members appointed by the President at the opening session of the annual meeting. This Nominating Committee shall meet immediately after the close of the opening session of the annual meeting, to select candidates for the office of Director. Active members of the Union may propose names of members to the Committee. The Nominating Committee shall report its nominations and others proposed to it for nomination. Nominations may also be made from the floor before or during elections. If there is more than one candidate for any office, voting shall be by secret ballot.

### **ARTICLE V—DUES**

Section 1. The annual dues for Active Members shall be \$4.00.

Section 2. The annual dues for Junior Members shall be \$1.00.

Section 3. Dues are due on January 1st of each year, or at election to membership. All memberships are due on the basis of a calendar year.

### **ARTICLE VI—MISCELLANEOUS AND GENERAL**

Section 1. The officers shall be reimbursed the actual amount expended by them in carrying on their necessary official duties.

Section 2. All papers presented at meetings shall be the property of the Union and shall be filed with the Editor-Librarian.

### **ARTICLE VII—AMENDMENT**

Section 1. These By-Laws may be amended by two-thirds vote of active members present at annual meeting.

## Notes from Sparks' Mini-Ranch

**"A**ND what is so rare as a day in June?

Then, if ever, come perfect days;  
Then Heaven tries the earth if it be in tune,

And over it softly her warm ear lays.

Whether we look, or whether we listen,  
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;  
Every clod feels a stir of might,

And instinct within it that reaches and towers,

And, groping blindly above it for light,  
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;"

James Russell Lowell wrote "The Vision of Sir Launful" in 1848 from his Massachusetts home but surely whatever plot of ground you call home would answer the description in this month of June.

This has been a wet spring. Tourists, in campers, trailers, pickups and top-pers and others, motel and hotel hopping, all saw the Hills through a screen of rain during the long Memorial week end. I hope they can come back later and enjoy the usual beautiful weather.

South Dakota is known as the Land of Infinite Variety and the Hills have certainly exemplified that variety this spring. Our 30-mile trip each morning has taken us from early spring into summer. When our crocus and snow drops came into bloom the tulips and daffodils were in bloom in Spearfish. Now, as our tulips bloom, iris, lilacs and roses are blooming in the valley and our trees are just greening as the apple and plum blossoms drop from the trees in the Queen City.

One man can change the course of mankind, even today, especially if that one man is a crusader such as Ralph

Nader. Mr. Nader has waged war against everything from unsafe cars to pollution. "National Wildlife" for June-July, 1971, highlights an interview with Nader entitled, "This Country is on Fire." He blames the corporations for our present problems in ecology. The chemical plants, steel mills and utilities are "tearing down the natural resources of our country," he says. And yet how many of us are willing to do without utilities, a second car, detergents. Often it has been the big corporations that have spearheaded the drive toward conservation. Homestake owns a sizeable portion of the Black Hills and maintains it as parkland, preventing individuals and businesses from turning it into tourist attractions.

In Florida Disney World will open in October and of the 43 square miles comprising the amusement park only 100 acres will be given over to the park itself. Some 7,500 acres are being set aside as a conservation area with sanctuaries for all kinds of birds and wildlife. Five leading conservationists have advised and guided the planning of this park. The above issue of "National Wildlife" has an article by Elliott McCleary on the new park and its contribution to conservation.

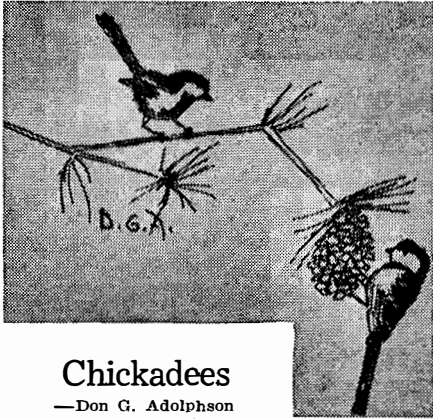
If you are wondering what to do with your accumulation of bacon grease, next winter try my idea. I partially filled a plastic bowl with the melted grease and then added as much bird seed as it would take, then chilled the mixture, turned it out on a board, threaded a wire with a piece of cardboard the size of the bowl on the bottom and covered the resulting seed ball with a small nylon sack, such as grapes and cherries come in. When hung on

the branch of the tree the birds flocked to it and could be seen swinging and eating almost anytime of day.

Only one problem, if you have more grease than seed when the hot sun hits the seed ball it starts to melt and drip. The birds don't seem to mind but you may not like it on your lawn, so it is better for winter feeding.

Have a safe summer and a happy vacation.

That's "30" for now.



Chickadees

—Don G. Adolphson

## Winter Season

(Continued from Page 42)

in mid-March and in Perkins County March 16; many in Minnehaha County March 13 and 400+ on March 30. This seemed the peak and did not seem to be connected with weather (HK).

**Harris' Sparrow**—2 at Belle Fourche wintered and still present Feb. 12; 1 at Huron Dec. 26.

**White-throated Sparrow**—Late straggler in Rapid City Dec. 1.

**Song Sparrow**—2 on Dec. 27 at Rapid City; they usually winter at LaCreek but none sighted this year.

**Lapland Longspur**—A single male at LaCreek on March 12; a flock of several thousand at Wall Lake March 13—probably the peak of the migration (HK).

**Snow Bunting**—12 at Webster in Dec. (HPC); 3 at Huron Dec. 26; 20 at Humboldt, Minnehaha County Feb. 13 (GB).—Esther Serr, Compiler, Black Hills Audubon Society

## COVER PICTURE

Robert A. Gossel, a young Black Hills artist, shared his sketch book with us for the June cover. Mr. Gossel specializes in sketching and painting birds and animals of the Hot Springs area, where he lives. His listing of birds for the Hot Springs area will be found on page 33 of this issue of "Bird Notes." We will have another article of his in a later issue of "Bird Notes."

## 'Acres for Wildlife'

Mr. Jim Johnson  
South Dakota Ornithologists Union  
1421 Utah Avenue Southeast  
Huron, S. Dak. 57350  
Dear Mr. Johnson:

March 26, 1971

The Department of Game, Fish and Parks and the State Extension Service is launching a new program designed to increase and improve wildlife habitat conditions in South Dakota. The program will be called "Acres for Wildlife."

This program hinges on the fact that many thousands of acres in South Dakota, acres that are of no tangible value for commercial production, are rapidly being scalped of their cover each year. These idle acres can produce wildlife that will serve as a sensitive indicator to the status of a local environment.

All it takes is an acre of land a person or group that can look at it and envision the wildlife crop it might help produce. It may be a roadside ditch, small woodlot, pond border, weed patch surrounding an abandoned farmstead, or simply a small corner that is difficult to cultivate.

The only conditions for a plot to be considered for the "Acres for Wildlife" program is that the site be at least one acre in size, and not be property within the limits of cities or towns.

In preventing the destruction of existing cover, the landowner or tenant must agree not to burn, graze or mow cover on the plot for a minimum of one year. Mowing may be permitted where required for control of objectional weeds or to reduce fire hazards.

A free, one-year subscription to the "Conservation Digest" will be sent to each landowner who has land enrolled in the program.

A pamphlet is being prepared outlining the program and explaining the importance of cover for wildlife. Included will be a list of concerned organizations which endorse the "Acres for Wildlife" program.

The purpose of this letter is to solicit your organization's endorsement of the "Acres for Wildlife" program.

Because the pamphlet is about to go to press, a prompt reply is requested. You also may want to comment on the program.

Sincerely,  
Robert A. Hodgins, Director

☆ ☆ ☆

Mr. Robert A. Hodgins, Director  
South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks  
Pierre, S. Dak. 57501  
Dear Mr. Hodgins:

April 1, 1971

Your new program "Acres for Wildlife" strikes a responsive chord indeed for all of us of South Dakota Ornithologists' Union. The steady decline in numbers and even species to be seen in the state over the years has been tragic; much of it from the needless and expensive destruction of cover by land owners and highway departments.

Your program, "Acres for Wildlife" will have the enthusiastic support of our organization as well as our members individually and their friends of other groups.

Your letter, with copy of this reply, is being sent to the editor of our magazine, "South Dakota Bird Notes," Don Adolphson, for such action as he feels may be of help.

Sincerely yours,  
Jim Johnson, President  
South Dakota Ornithologists' Union