

South Dakota Bird Notes

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SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION
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Whole No. 108



—Don Polovich, Rapid City Journal

Sage Grouse

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Vol. 28, No. 1

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In This Number . . .

President's Page	3
General Notes of Special Interest--Specimen Record for Sage Thrasher in Deuel County, Pine Siskins and Purple Finches at Yankton, House Finches at Yankton, Wintering American Robins, Townsend's Solitaires at Burke Lake, Ospreys Observed at Burke Lake, Mockingbirds in Perkins County, Adult Bonaparte's Gull in Brookings County, Grosbeaks at Pickerel Lake: Winter Record for Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Winter Birds at Pickerel Lake, Partial Albino Red-tailed Hawk in Sanborn County, Black-throated Blue Warbler in Faulk County, Red-bellied Woodpecker in Gregory County, A Winter Record for the Winter Wren, Cardinal at Burke Lake, House Finch Banded at Spearfish	4
Christmas Count Notes	8
Christmas Count, 1975	10
White-faced Ibis Records	12
Book Review, W.E. Lemons	19
Former SDOU President Honored at Madison	20

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President's Page

A project has been in operation for many years to acquaint people with the values of wildlife, and to gain public support. It is my view that this is slowly being accomplished and the popular attitude toward wildlife is changing to one of greater awareness. Increasing numbers of people are placing value in seeing the everyday activities of wildlife, in simply knowing wildlife exists, and in recognizing the role of wildlife in the ecological balance. With this awareness,



people's interest in wildlife is no longer regulated to just the hunting season; their interest is present the entire year.

It is interesting to list some of these increased signs of public awareness for wildlife, conservation and wilderness values.

For example, the Audubon Society boasts 3 million members; the recently formed Dakota Chapter of the Sierra Club grew quickly to 263 members. Other national and state organizations show similar gains. On the local level people are more conscious of wildlife needs, and many stores are now stocking the feeds and equipment for some of those needs. In the small town of Sinai, with a population of only 166, there are nine households feeding birds. The signs of change are also reflected in the local and national media. It is no longer unusual to read or hear news about wildlife.

How does this awareness benefit wildlife? First, consider a recent estimation of 15 million people who are interested in birds and another 15 million

generally interested in quality outdoor experiences and the protection of wildlife. These 30 million (about 13 percent of the population) spend money on bird seed, feeders, books, binoculars, spotting scopes, cameras and film. They join organizations, and they travel. Their travels require more dollars for gas, oil, food, shelter and camping gear. This adds up to at least \$100 annually per person, with a national total of 3 billion dollars. Because of this economic involvement, there is a potential for more control in what happens to wildlife.

This group has not been a silent one. In fact, it constitutes an effective vocal minority of considerable influence. In response to its efforts, the cities are developing green belts, nature centers and hiking trails; new laws are being enacted; and more habitats are being saved. The Nature Conservancy has now acquired almost a million acres, of which 8,200 are in South Dakota.

Yes, there is a voice, and it grows stronger, but the problems facing wildlife are also increasing. Too many people still do not understand that wildlife is necessary and that wildlife habitat must be maintained. Before 1776 wildlife was a survival kit for the pioneers; let us hope that in 1976 we may be on the verge of recognizing the benefits of wildlife for the future.

This is a time in our country when many people are demanding and struggling for equal rights. Perhaps we should also be conscious of the rights of wildlife and of how we can protect them. Join the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union, and let it be known that many people working together can benefit wildlife.—Nelda Holden, Brookings.

General Notes of Special Interest

SPECIMEN RECORD FOR SAGE THRASHER IN DEUEL COUNTY—On May 9, 1974, a Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) was found dead along a county road near the Crystal Springs Ranch, Deuel County. This location is three miles east and three miles north of Clear Lake. The bird had been observed and identified in the area earlier on the same date, thereby eliminating the possibility of its getting to the site on a car radiator, or by other means. The specimen is now in the W. H. Over Museum at the University of South Dakota, Vermillion.

There are apparently only two other South Dakota specimens for the Sage Thrasher, which is a rare bird that nests occasionally in our southwestern counties ("Bird Notes," 13:17). Whitney has a specimen taken in Fall River County on August 12, 1966; a very old record is a bird "taken in the Black Hills," probably about 1857, and misidentified as a Mockingbird by Visher in a 1909 publication. More recently the Sage Thrasher was observed at Edgemont, Fall River County, on July 2, 1970, and two birds were seen in Butte County on June 27, 1975 ("Bird Notes," 27:51).

There are few records for the Sage Thrasher east of its normal range, which extends to eastern Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado. According to the A.O.U. "Check-list of North American birds" (1957, fifth ed.), specimens have been taken in New York and southwestern Louisiana. And there is a sight record for Des Moines, Iowa, for December 1952 through January 10, 1953, observed by Bruce Stiles ("Iowa Bird Life," 23:22-23).—Bruce Harris, Clear Lake 57226.

PINE SISKINS AND PURPLE FINCHES AT YANKTON—In our yard the spring of 1974 was predominantly "siskin spring." Our first sighting was three siskins on March 9, and numbers continued low until March 29 when 33 kept the sunflower feeders occupied. Other days of high counts were April 10 (36), April 17 (51), April 27 (45). The last siskin was at the feeder on May 13.

Purple Finches were also present in the spring of 1974. The first one came on March 7, then one to three came almost daily until March 23 when there were six. On April 1 there were nine. The last, a female, was seen on April 25.

During the "finch spring" of 1975 we had no Pine Siskins, but we had regular visits of the Purple Finches beginning with one on February 19. Numbers were never high (usually five or six), but there were 11 on April 12. Males were absent from April 23 until April 26 and 27, when one male was present. The females remained regular visitors until May 3 when two were seen.

Not only did the female finches stay longer than did the males, but they alone had the ability to take food from the selective feeder. This feeder has one small hole where a bird can reach in and take the sunflower seeds from the clear plastic bin. Male finches were attracted to the feeder but none were seen to obtain seeds.

One female was apparently addicted to this feeder. For long periods of time she kept her head in the opening, cracked the sunflower seeds, and ate them there. This resulted in the feeding part of the bin becoming quite packed with hulls, thus stopping the flow of seeds. Then I would have to go out and remove the

accumulation. If only the male finches could have chanced on the secret of getting the seeds perhaps they would have cracked them outside and prevented this problem.—Willis Hall, 1111 Douglas Ave., Yankton 57078

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HOUSE FINCHES AT YANKTON—The "finch year" of 1975 was more notable because of the appearance on February 5 of a single finch which was considerably different from the Purple Finches I had known. My notes state: "Most striking are the lines along the sides and lower breast, which are narrow and distinct. The bird's appearance is that of a slimmer bird than the Purple Finch. The color of the crown and breast is bright. The rosy color is not through the back and wings, which are a dusky brown." With the exception of February 6, this bird came alone each day until February 12 when a similar bird accompanied it. On February 16 and 18 there were three of the birds. In March I saw only one bird on these days: 6, 7, and 13.

On five days (February 23 and 25 and March 6, 7, and 13), when the new birds were present, there were also Purple Finches at the feeders. After puzzling about them I could not help concluding that the three strange birds were House Finches, considerably east of their range.—Willis Hall, Yankton 57078.

(Bruce Harris collected a female House Finch in eastern South Dakota on 30 December 1966 (Bird Notes, 19:35, 19:63)—Ed.

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WINTERING AMERICAN ROBINS—Mr. and Mrs. Chester Sellevold are conservationists and bird lovers who operate a large farm in Day County. Mrs. Sellevold called me on January 21, 1976, to say they had seen large flocks of robins the day before. They were driving on Highway 212 about five miles west of Clark, Clark County, when they saw the first flock.

After Mrs. Sellevold insisted the birds were robins they stopped the car to make

a definite identification. They said there were at least 100 robins and the flock reminded them of the blackbirds in the fall. The Sellevolds continued on west to Highway 37 and then drove north. On a farm north of Groton, Brown County, they saw another large flock of robins.

Later that day I called Jim Johnson in Huron to tell him about the report and he said that two robins had stayed at their place all winter.

I also had a report from Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Birney of Waubay who sighted four robins just south of Webster on January 24.—Herman P. Chilson, Webster 57274.

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TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRES AT BURKE LAKE—During the winters of 1972-73, 1973-74 and 1974-75 I have observed the Townsend's Solitaire at Burke Lake, two miles east of Burke, Gregory County. These sightings have been published in past issues of "Bird Notes."

During November and December 1975 I again had observations of Townsend's Solitaires at Burke Lake, this time in unprecedented numbers.

The first sighting, of a single bird, was made November 8, which was also the earliest fall date. On November 9, two Solitaires were seen at one time, the first time I have seen more than a single bird.

On November 15, a sunny morning with the temperature in the 50 degree range, I observed four Townsend's Solitaires, all in sight at one time. I am sure there were several Solitaires in the area other than those I had in sight (it was not possible to keep track of all the birds). The Solitaires were catching flies and other insects which were in the air due to the warm weather.

During the rest of November and into December I observed at least one Solitaire on most of my visits to the Burke Lake area. On December 22, I saw three Solitaires in company with robins feeding on cedar berries.

The heavy plantings of conifers at

Burke Lake undoubtedly attract the Solitaires as they are moving east across the prairies during the fall and winter months. During the fall of 1975, there was apparently a heavier than normal eastward movement of Solitaires out of their normal habitat in the mountains to the west.—Galen L. Steffen, Burke 57523.

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OSPREYS OBSERVED AT BURKE LAKE—During the spring and fall, 1975, I had several sightings of Ospreys at Burke Lake, Gregory County.

The first bird, seen on April 18, was perched on a dead tree stump at a distance of 200 yards. Identification was made with an 8x binocular and a 15 x 45 spotting scope. All field marks of the perching bird were carefully noted during the hour I was there.

Another Osprey, probably the same bird as above, was seen at this same area the next day.

During September and October, 1975, I again observed Ospreys at Burke Lake. The first sighting, of a single bird, was made on September 15, and an Osprey in flight was observed on October 12. There were single sightings at the lake on October 18 and 23. The bird seen on October 23 was perched on a dead tree stump during a heavy snowfall.

Burke Lake is surrounded by large trees and dead tree stubs which provide the migrating Ospreys with the perches they need when they are resting, or feeding on the fish they have caught.—Galen L. Steffen, Burke 57523.

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MOCKINGBIRDS IN PERKINS COUNTY—Since 1968, I have done the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Breeding Bird Census for Maurine Route No. 035. Stop number 50 on this route is at an open grove of trees about a mile and a half south of Zeona, S.D., in southwestern Perkins County. At this stop on 8 June 1972, during the three-minute count, two Mockingbirds (*Mimus polyblottos*) lit on the gravel road about 30 yards south of

me. Subsequently, the two birds flew, and one Mockingbird perched at the top of a nearby tree and began to sing. While I completed the records for the end of the route, my companions, Gertrice Hinds and Herb Krause, enjoyed the Mockingbird's varied song.

I believe the records on this species are rather scant for western South Dakota. In the past twelve years, I have seen only two Mockingbirds at Rapid City, and both occurred during the same winter season. Alfred Hinds, in his account of "Some Birds of Southwestern Perkins County" ("Bird Notes," 20:53-57), indicates that a single Mockingbird was at his ranch on 30 June 1958 and for a few days thereafter. The occurrence of the two Mockingbirds, about fifteen miles south of the Hinds Ranch, on 8 June 1972, is thus fairly exceptional, and their presence at the onset of the breeding season spurs one to hope that they remained to nest—a possibility, of course, that cannot be substantiated as a fact.—L.M. Baylor, SDSM&T, Rapid City

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ADULT BONAPARTE'S GULL IN BROOKINGS COUNTY—On April 18, 1975, Orena Cooper, Carol Peterson, Alice Chu, and I drove to Lake Campbell to observe what ducks might be back. We were looking over the ducks as well as three early Avocets when I noticed a bird with a black head acting very much like a tern as it flew over the slough by the lake. Then we saw the wedge of white in the primaries and this clearly identified the bird as the adult Bonaparte's Gull. Each of us had good views of the bird, and it was a life lister for the others in the group.

I believe this is only the second record of this gull in Brookings County. The other one was an immature bird observed on May 3, 1965 at Oakwood Lakes by Mrs. Thomas Murphy of Minneapolis and me ("Bird Notes" 18:21).—Nelda Holden, Rt. 4, Box 68, Brookings 57006.

SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES



—From Color Transparency by J.W. Johnson

Least Bittern at Huron

GROSBEAKS AT PICKEREL LAKE: WINTER RECORD FOR ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK—Grosbeaks are present at our lakeside home in Day County during most seasons of the year. The Pine and Evening Grosbeaks appear in the fall and winter, while the Rose-breasted Grosbeaks arrive in the spring and usually stay through the summer. We have reason to believe that the Rose-breasted Grosbeaks nest here but we have never seen a nest (never really searched for one either). The big surprise of 1974 was a female or immature Rose-breasted Grosbeak that stayed with us in the fall and winter.

On November 10, 1974, we had 15 Evening Grosbeaks (5 males) accompanied by what I first thought was the largest Purple Finch that I had ever seen. The weather was snowy and misty and I could not get a good view. The next

day I watched them with my 7 x 35 Bausch and Lomb binocular, and later with a 30 x scope. I could not help recalling the comparison between a Canvasback and a Redhead duck. The sloping head of the Canvasback to the rounded head of the Redhead seemed to be a good comparison between a Rose-breasted Grosbeak and a Purple Finch.

I studied my Peterson guide and looked the birds over again. There was definitely no dark jaw stripe, the wing bars were pronounced, and the size of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak was the same as that of the Evening Grosbeak. The bird had a large white streak above the eyes, and it was whitish below with buffy breast and stripes. It had a white throat and a white streak around the neck. The upper mandible seemed to be pale light blue and the lower one whitish. The

(Continued on Page 14)

Christmas Count Notes

A Christmas Count chart gives only the species and numbers observed on count day. Many of the count reports, however, contain some additional notes which, in many cases, are equally important. This article is a compilation of the supplemental information.

Birds that were apparently included on the state's lists for the first time were the Western Grebe, Great Blue Herons, and Sandhill Crane; the Pied-billed Grebe, Glaucous Gulls, Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker, and Yellow-headed Blackbird were previously recorded only two or three times. Birds present in unusual numbers included Wood Ducks, Belted Kingfishers, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, and American Robins; Townsend's Solitaires along the eastern edge of the state were beyond their normal range. Pierre set a new record for birds observed on count day.

Noteworthy items in the reports that could not be included in the Christmas Count list were: birds observed during count period but not on count day; new birds; never before observed in an area count; comments; and explanatory remarks for unusual species. One or more of those items appeared in many of the reports. They are presented here along with the numbers of observers. The latter are in parentheses after the name of the area.

Aberdeen (10) had 5,007 individual birds for their highest number in the past five years (2,420 in 1974 was the previous high for the period). The unusual number of robins (339) is particularly notable.—E.C. Montgomery, compiler.

Brookings (17) had a Common Flicker during the count period. Townsend's Solitaire and Rufous-sided Towhee were

new birds.—Nelda Holden, compiler.

Deuel County (5) is a new count area, with plenty of potential for good counts, but they need more observers.—Bruce Harris, compiler.

Pierre (29) had 66 species on count day for a new state record. Birds observed during count period but not on count day were: Bohemian Waxwing, Yellow-headed Blackbird, and Cardinal. New birds were: Western Grebe, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Hoary Redpoll, and Rufous-sided Towhee.—B.J. Rose, compiler.

Rapid City (27) reported that five species frequently seen in other years were missing this time, but they did have five Great Horned Owls within a five-mile area, the most ever seen on any of their counts.—Esther Serr, compiler.

Sioux Falls (35) also had a new total (49, compared with the previous high of 45). An eagle was observed by Kim Eckert during the count period. The Great Blue Heron, Sandhill Crane, and Winter Wren were new birds. In his comments G.W. Blankespoor, compiler, said, "Particularly productive was an open-water stretch of the Big Sioux River east of the city. Kim Eckert, Glen Scott, Gerald Fauske and Dan Davis did an excellent job of "working" this area."

Watertown (3) is another good birding circle, with a need for field observers. Interesting species for 1975 were Bohemian Waxwings and Red-breasted Nuthatches.—Bruce Harris, compiler.

Waubay National Wildlife Refuge (1) had the Great Horned Owl, Blue Jay, and White-breasted Nuthatch in the count period.—Kent F. Hall, compiler.

Wilmot (6) had two new birds: Red-

breasted Nuthatch and Townsend's Solitaire, on its record-breaking list of 33 species. Some of the observers came from a distance of 80 to 150 miles.—Bruce Harris, compiler.

Yankton (2) had seven birds present during count period but not on count day. They were: Rough-legged Hawk, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Horned Lark, Northern Shrike, Purple Finch, and Lapland Longspur.—Willis Hall, compiler.

SPECIAL NOTES FOR UNUSUAL SPECIES

Great Blue Heron: The birds were observed flying along a stretch of open water on the Big Sioux River in good light at 50 meters. All identifying marks were noted (e.g., the large size, folded neck, and bowed wings).—G.W. Blankespoor.

Sandhill Crane: The observers, Glen Scott (an experienced birder) and Dan Davis, report the following:

"On 20 December 1975, during the Sioux Falls Christmas Bird Count, Dan Davis and I sighted a bird which I am certain was an immature Sandhill Crane. The bird was found along the Big Sioux River near the Sioux Falls Sewage Treatment Plant at about 8:30 a.m. The sun, what there was of it, was to our backs. The bird was sighted at a distance of about 25 meters directly across the river when it flew up from behind some low brush. Our initial reaction was that it was a Great Blue Heron because of its large size—3-4 ft. long, 6 ft. wingspan. However we immediately noticed it was of a fairly uniform brown coloration. As it flew it appeared to flap its wings in a full upward stroke as opposed to the "lazy flop" I have noticed in the heron. Most

distinguishing of all, however, was that this bird flew as far as we could see before rounding a curve with its neck fully extended. I approximate the total distance as 250 meters. I have seen Sandhill Cranes on only one other occasion two years ago. I have viewed at least 30 Great Blue Herons on various occasions this year and this bird was not a Great Blue Heron. The bird made no sound. Additionally we sighted a Great Blue Heron some 20 minutes later about two miles downstream which aided in our comparison. Later attempts to relocate the crane were unsuccessful. I have also learned that a Sandhill Crane was sighted by Bruce Harris, Clear Lake, So. Dak., during early December in northeast South Dakota."

Red-bellied Woodpecker: This bird was observed on the Wilmot count by Nelda Holden and Kenneth Husmann, both experienced birders familiar with the species in South Dakota and elsewhere. All field marks were noted, at close range, with binoculars.—Bruce Harris.

Winter Wren: It was observed in good light in mid-afternoon along the Big Sioux River at a distance of about 10 meters flitting among the roots of an overturned tree. The very short tail was turned upward. The lack of facial markings, the existence of barring below the edge of the wing, and the tannish breast were all noted.—G.W. Blankespoor.

Townsend's Solitaire (on the Wilmot count): This was observed in good light by Kim Eckert and Gordon Harris, at ranges up to 25 yards, with binoculars. They noted the wingbar, gray coloration, eye ring, and general contour. Kim Eckert has seen the species in the western states and the Black Hills.—Bruce Harris.

MARCH, 1976

11

Short-eared Owl						1	15	12						2
Belted Kingfisher						9	5	4	1					12
Common Flicker	17	2						6						1
Red bellied Woodpecker		1						6						1
Hairy Woodpecker	3	3	6	4	2	10	15	18	1	1	2			10
Downy Woodpecker	8	10	22	2	2	24	24	44	5	4	4			16
Black backed Three-toed Woodpecker								2						
Horned Lark	1344	100	29	18	150	57	1	12	36		65			115
Blue Jay	9	9	18	4	6	2	29	7			1			14
Black billed Magpie						16	88							
Common Crow		1	28	27			106	902	3					2
Pinyon Jay							185							40
Black capped Chickadee	15	43	130	28	4	105	264	342	13	5	6			73
White breasted Nuthatch	5	5	9	4	2	12	20	31	3		1			19
Red-breasted Nuthatch	6	1	7			7	11	2	5		2			1
Brown Creeper	1		2	1		6	6	3			1			7
Winter Wren								2						
Canyon Wren							5							
American Robin	339		6			59	1	2						4
Townsend's Solitaire			1			4	27							1
Golden crowned Kinglet						1		3						
Bohemian Waxwing			1				58		4	9				
Cedar Waxwing	25	1	29			17		28						5
Northern Shrike	1	2	1			6	3	2						2
Starling	296	214	268	8	100	2040	640	1580	120		21			590
House Sparrow	903	1339	1328	70	200	2173	582	1956	400	20				538
Western Meadowlark	3					7	1	4						
Red winged Blackbird	8	1				1587		21						1
Rusty Blackbird	38	4	3			45		24						1
Brewer's Blackbird	24	2				17		5						
Common Grackle	2		1	3		3		1		1	3			8
Brown headed Cowbird						4								
Cardinal	2	1	3		2			22						
Evening Grosbeak	36	15	25	4	1	14	582		16	6				2
Purple Finch	45	3	20	8		93	28	11	5	1	7			1
Cassin's Finch							12							
Gray crowned Rosy Finch							15							
Common Redpoll	106	115	72	63		508	88	48	129	42				148
Hoary Redpoll						1								
Pine Siskin	225	13	10			8	163	7	33					1
American Goldfinch	39	2	10			18	37							1
Red Crossbill			1					2	2					
White winged Crossbill								6						
Rufous sided Towhee			1			1								
Dark eyed Junco														
(White-winged)							521							
(Slate colored)	14	3	133	8		100	230	59	4		1			26
(Oregon)			4	2		13	55	1						
Tree Sparrow	3	5	7			243	94	18						26
Harris' Sparrow						30	7	3						2
White crowned Sparrow		1												
Fox Sparrow						2								
Song Sparrow			5			13	3	6						
Lapland Longspur	242								1					39
Snow Bunting	1015	132	100	325				17	240	40	6			45

White-faced Ibis Records

White-faced Ibis were observed frequently in 1975 at Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Brown County. The following chart gives the dates and numbers.

4-22	1
5-22	2
6-11	1
6-13	2
6-21	2
7-14	1
7-16	4
7-20	6
9-13	1
9-29	1
10-2	5

—Thad L. Fuller, Ass't Refuge Manager, Columbia 57433.

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Edited from a letter to the manager of Sand Lake Refuge:

The sightings I have had of White-faced Ibis at Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge began with my first visit on 22 July 1968 when I saw 2 ibis on the goose pond near headquarters.

My next visit was 22 August 1969, and I was delighted to find 21 ibis. As I remember it, they were in several groups in various parts of the refuge. I was also at Sand Lake on 15 August 1970 and 7 July 1971, but saw no ibis.

I did not have an opportunity to visit again until 11 August 1975. At that time I saw 2 adult ibis, as I indicated on the check-list which I mailed back to the refuge.—CMD. R.T. Larsen, 23 Stonybrook Road, Gales Ferry, Conn. 06335.

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On October 14, 1975, Bill Bradwisch of the Game, Fish, and Parks Department told us he had seen and identified a White-faced Ibis in the vicinity of Grass Lake. We went to look for the bird and found it in a slough one-half mile north of

the intersection of Highways 16 and 159, about 12 miles west of Sioux Falls.

From 11:30 a.m. until noon we observed the bird carefully with binoculars and scope from distances as close as 50 yards. It flew across the slough once and we heard the typical raucous call.

Our daughter Dr. Janet Dugle of Pinawa, Manitoba was with us and also identified the bird, which was still feeding busily when we left.

We called August Hoeger who went out immediately and saw the ibis. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Trusler saw it the next day at the same place.—Gladyce and Charles Rogge, 2012 S. Grange Ave., Sioux Falls 57105.

Western Grebes at Sand Lake

During the July 1975 brood count for waterfowl I recorded the number of Western Grebe broods along the transect which runs the length of the refuge from north to south. The distance is 16.5 miles. Only the birds observed within 75-225 feet on each side of the canoe are recorded for waterfowl broods. I used the same distance for recording grebe broods even though broods were seen beyond those limits.

Date	Area	No. Broods Observed
7-16	N½ of refuge	117
7-18	S½ of refuge	170

The brood size ranged from 1-4, with the majority having two young per brood.—Thad L. Fuller, Ass't Refuge Manager, Sand Lake N.W.R., Columbia 57433.

URGENT REMINDERS

SDOU Spring Meeting, May 28-30, 1976

Bob Marshall Organizational Camp, Custer State Park

Headquarters for the SDOU Spring Meeting, May 28-30, 1976 will be the Bob Marshall Organizational Camp, Custer State Park, about five miles east of Custer, South Dakota, U.S. Highway 16-A. Camp services will include meals and men's and women's dormitories—all at a cost of \$8.50 a day per person. Each camper must provide personal bedding and towels and campers will need to take a turn with minimal K.P. duties. Camp services will be available from 3 p.m., May 28 to 3 p.m., May 30. The first meal will be served at 6 p.m. on Friday, and the last meal will be at noon on Sunday. Saturday and Sunday field trips will feature areas of the southern Black Hills and the sagebrush plains of Fall River County.

Due to contractual arrangements concerning the number of participants using the camp's facilities, the Host Committee requests early preregistrations and a preregistration deposit. No later than May 15, 1976, please send an indication of the number of persons in your party and a preregistration deposit of \$8.00 per person to:

L.M. Baylor, SDOU Treasurer
1941 Red Dale Drive
Rapid City, South Dakota 57701

Please make your deposit check payable to the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union.

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General Notes of Interest

(Continued from Page 7)

Peterson illustrations do not show as much white as I saw; the Audubon guide displays a little more white on the throat. Then I turned to Bent's LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS, BUNTINGS, TOWHEES, FINCHES, SPARROWS, AND ALLIES, and Gromme's BIRDS OF WISCONSIN. Neither of these books showed the white streak around the neck, but all of the other characteristics were identical with what I had seen. (The immature male Rose-breasted Grosbeak illustrated in "Birds of North America," Robbins et al., has a pale light blue upper mandible and a whitish lower mandible.—Ed.)

We saw the bird three or four times a week during November and December, in company with two or three Evening Grosbeaks. Our best sighting was December 15, 1974, when we saw two Evening Grosbeaks, one sparrow, and the Rose-breasted Grosbeak at the same feeder.

We asked two birder friends to drive out to see the bird, but it was during the busy Christmas season and neither one found the time to come. I took twelve pictures with my wife's Instamatic camera but they did not turn out well for detail.

On January 11, 1975, we had a severe blizzard. It must have killed a lot of birds; only one-half of the chickadees and about one-third of the Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers survived, while the White-breasted Nuthatches, grackles and grosbeaks disappeared completely.

On April 26, 1975, the first Rose-breasted Grosbeak returned. We then saw three on May 7 and seven on May 8. From that day on we either heard them or saw them all summer.—Herman P. Chilson, Webster 57274.

WINTER BIRDS AT PICKEREL LAKE—On November 1, 1975, two Red-breasted Nuthatches appeared. This is the first time we have had more than one at a time. They were followed on November 4 by seven Purple Finches, whose numbers increased to 13 on November 7 and to 15 on January 16.

Pine Grosbeaks were present from November 10, when we had 16, to November 30, when 3 were sighted.

As of this date January 22, 1976, we still have 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches, 2 grackles, 13 Purple Finches, 2 Common Redpolls, the usual assortment of chickadees and White-breasted Nuthatches, plus the single junco that has been with us since last November.—Herman P. Chilson, Webster 57274.

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—Drawing and Etching Courtesy
E. W. Steffen

Long-eared Owl

SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

PARTIAL ALBINO RED-TAILED HAWK IN SANBORN COUNTY—On April 5, 1974, David Holden and I observed a beautiful Red-tailed Hawk in Sanborn County. The bird was first seen sitting in a cottonwood tree near the junction of Highways 34 and 37. It was facing us, and its white breast, noted at a distance, gave the impression that the bird was a Ferruginous Hawk. When it flew we could see that the tail was a dark pink, and that two or three primary feathers on each wing were completely black. The bird was snowy white except for these areas, although we did not get close enough to distinguish the color of the feet, eyes or bill.

We had a good view of the hawk as it flew diagonally from us, about 300 yards away. It settled in another large tree a quarter of a mile away where we again flushed it after watching it through binoculars. It was certainly one of the most beautiful birds I have ever seen.

Definitions of four kinds of albinism are given in Pettingill's "Laboratory and Field Manual of Ornithology" (1961). They are:

Total albinism—when the pigment is completely absent from the plumage, irises, and skin.

Incomplete albinism—when the pigment is completely absent from the plumage, or the irises, or the skin, but not from all three.

Imperfect albinism—when the pigment is reduced (diluted) in any or all three areas, but never completely absent from any one.

Partial albinism—when the pigment is completely or partially absent from parts of any or all three areas.

The Red-tailed Hawk we saw conformed with the definition given for partial albinism.

Albinism among birds of prey is evidently quite rare, although lack of pigmentation is recorded regularly among robins, House Sparrows, and blackbirds. Some years ago in New Mexico I observed a pure albino hawk

that I took to be a Red-tail, judging by size and contour. There was a fine photo of a full albino Broad-winged Hawk published some years ago, but I do not recall the name of the journal. These are the only records of albinism in hawks to come to my attention, but I have observed the condition in many other species of birds.—Bruce K. Harris, Clear Lake 57226.

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BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER IN FAULK COUNTY—About 11:00 a.m. on May 14, 1974, I saw a male Black-throated Blue Warbler at Lake Faulkton. It was below and about 200 yards east of the dam that forms the lake.

I was parked on a trail, watching some Black-and-white and Yellow Warblers, when I noticed a small bird land about 30 feet from me on a low tree branch. I observed him with 6 x 30 Bausch and Lomb field glasses until he came down and landed on the ground within 5-10 feet of my vehicle. Observation time was approximately ten minutes. It was the only time I saw the bird, and there were no other witnesses to the sighting.

I was unable to do any bird watching in the Lake Faulkton area in 1975 but I hope to go there again soon. Its wide variety of cover makes it an excellent place to see birds.—Wilbert Morlock, Conservation Officer, Beadle County, Huron 57350.

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RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER IN GREGORY COUNTY—On December 31, 1975, I observed a single Red-bellied Woodpecker along a wooded creek bottom six miles south of Burke.

The woodpecker flew across the road in front of my car and came to rest in a large tree about fifty yards from the roadside. The bird was clearly seen with the 8x binocular, and all field marks were noted.

This is my fifth record of a Red-bellied Woodpecker in Gregory County in the past several years.—Galen L. Steffen, Burke 57523.



—Photo Courtesy of South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks

Great Blue Heron

A WINTER RECORD FOR THE WINTER WREN—Contrary to its name, the Winter Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) is only a casual winter resident in South Dakota. The species is an uncommon to rare migrant in the state, sometimes lingering in the fall as late as October 25 (my latest record), but it has been observed during the winter months on only five occasions: three dates for the Black Hills (Pettingill and Whitney, "Birds of the Black Hills"), and twice along the Missouri River at Pierre (B.J. Rose) (Since this article was written a more recent record occurred on the Sioux Falls 1975 Christmas Count.—Ed.) For this reason I was especially pleased to find a Winter Wren at Hartford Beach State Park, on Big Stone Lake, while checking my Wilmot (Roberts County) Christmas Count area.

The bird was closely observed for nearly 15 minutes on December 19, 1974. Light conditions in the woodland along Hartford Creek were ideal. The bird was found in an extensive patch of horsetail or scouring brush (*Equisetum* sp.) that bordered the stream, where I was hoping to find a Common Snipe, sometimes flushed from the locality on other Christmas Counts. The Winter Wren hopped about in the rank horsetail for some time, giving its chirping call repeatedly—the call that is so much more like a Song Sparrow's than that of a wren.

I worked the area over carefully on the 26th, 27th and 28th, but could not locate the bird on the day of the Christmas Count. Ironically, I could not add the bird to the Christmas Count period because the dates for the count period had been restricted, beginning with the 1974 count.

I have observed Winter Wrens in South Dakota on eleven occasions during the past nine years: three spring dates that range from April 9 to 25 and eight fall dates from October 4 to 25. (The author now has another record, Oct. 12, 1975 in Deuel Co. (Dec. 1975 "Bird Notes").—Ed.) So it is apparent that the tiny bird is

a hardy creature that migrates early and late, despite freezing temperatures at night. Look for it in the spring in heavy undergrowth, preferably along watercourses, about the time that Fox Sparrows can be expected. It is one of the earliest migrants, coming in considerably ahead of the main wave of arrivals in April and lingering late into October.—Bruce Harris, Clear Lake 57226.

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CARDINAL AT BURKE LAKE—On November 9, 1975, I had my first observation of a Cardinal in Gregory County. The bird, a male, was seen at Burke Lake, two miles east of Burke. At a distance of about 40 feet, it was studied through an 8x binocular for several minutes before it flew to a heavy growth of cedar trees.

Another observation of a male Cardinal occurred at the same site on December 22, 1975. It may have been the same bird that was seen earlier.

I have heard of several sightings of Cardinals by other persons in the Burke area during past years, but the status of the bird in Gregory County is probably rare.—Galen L. Steffen, Burke 57523.

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HOUSE FINCH BANDED AT SPEARFISH—On 27 January 1974, I noted a strange finch feeding with the Purple Finches at my feeder in Spearfish. The red on the head, breast, and rump of this bird was more of a brick red than that of the other male birds, and the sides of the stomach area were fairly heavily streaked. A couple of hours later the same bird was back, this time in my banding trap, and I had the opportunity to examine the bird in my hand. Using my field guide by Robbins et al., I determined the bird to be an adult male House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*). The bird was banded with band number 840-00350 and was released as probably

Book Review

W.E. Lemons

BIRD FINDING IN ILLINOIS: A GUIDEBOOK TO 79 BIRDING AREAS PLUS PARKS AND PRESERVES, compiled by Elton Fawks, edited by Paul H. Lobik, Illinois Audubon Society, 1017 Burlington Avenue, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515, 1975, 98 pp., \$3.95.

This new booklet clearly explains where the best bird-watching areas in Illinois are, how to get to them by automobile, and what species are most likely to be seen in each region, with special references to uncommon species that may be sighted. Many tables tell what species may occur at certain seasons in particular locales. Existing restrictions or hazards to birding are mentioned. Published sources of data are given whenever possible, but most of the information is previously unpublished and has been supplied by local birders who have spent many years in the fields they discuss. Naturally, the data is fuller for some regions than for others. For example, the editors cannot explain why so little is known about the birds of Shawnee National Forest (over 240,000 acres) in southern Illinois.

For organized description the editors divided the state into five sections. Each chapter of the guide begins with a map of one of these, containing marked and numbered birding territories within counties, followed by reports on each with highway maps, when necessary, and special detailed maps of many habitats. Drawings by several artists enliven the format. Supplements index all Illinois state parks (65), conservation areas (28), and nature preserves (54) and give their locations, acreage sizes, and addresses of headquarters. Another supplement lists Illinois Audubon chapters (16) and affiliates (24).

Some special features of Illinois bird

life appear to be the "purple Martin town" of Griggsville, where the well-known aluminum houses are manufactured, but also where the citizens have cooperated in protecting and studying the species; Dr. T.E. Musselman's "bluebird trails" near Quincy—America's first; "The Goose Capital of the World" in Horseshoe Lake Wildlife Refuge; Cave Creek Canebrake, where many warblers breed, including Swainson's and the Prairie Chicken sanctuaries of Bogota and Farina.

The overall impression received from a perusal of this guidebook is that Illinois is doing more, possibly, than some other states in studying its bird life and encouraging it to thrive, although Editor Lobik warns darkly that Illinois bird habitats too are threatened by "dam building, drainage, or urban sprawl" and that the chief significance of this book in years to come may be "as a historical record of birding as it once was in Illinois."—Meckling 57044.



—Drawing by E. W. Steffen

Marsh Hawk

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Former SDOU President Honored at Madison

On 25 February 1976, the new science and mathematics building at Dakota State College in Madison was dedicated and named the Ruth Habeger Science Center. Miss Habeger, a charter member of South Dakota Ornithologists' Union, was president of SDOU from June 1960 to June 1962.

Ruth Habeger has been associated with the college at Madison for some 40 years—31 as a student and instructor and the past nine years as President Emeritus. She began her formal education at the campus grade school in 1901 under the institution's founder and first president, General W.H. Beadle. Miss Habeger later majored in biological sciences at the University of Nebraska where she received both her bachelor's and master's degrees. She then taught at schools in South Dakota and Iowa before her return to the Madison school in 1947. Miss Habeger served as the head of the Science and Mathematics Department from 1961 until her retirement in 1967.

SDOU unites with the many friends of Ruth Habeger to extend congratulations to her for this outstanding honor.

—Adapted from a Madison Daily Leader article.