

South Dakota Bird Notes

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

Vol. 30, No. 2

June, 1978

Whole No. 117



Courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Photo by Kent Olson

American Avocet

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President's Page

Harmony with nature and its attendant brotherly feeling for nature's creatures "is found in the two extremes of society -- savages and people with cultivated minds and sensibilities," wrote J. Frank Dobie, the Texas writer, folklorist, scholar, and authority on the coyote, the mustang, and the longhorn. Such feeling is "dead or dormant in the great stretch of mediocrity lying in between." Exemplifying the first group for him was the American Indian, whose "sympathy for his fellow animals was not sentiment nor superstition; nor was it an expression of intellectual curiosity; it was a part of his harmony with nature."



The truth of this is so striking in Gilbert L. Wilson's paper "Hidatsa Eagle Trapping." Like many other tribes, the Hidatsa venerated the eagle and believed in its sacred power. For this reason they valued the bird's twelve tail feathers, used for war honor marks and arrows and as articles of barter, and its wings, used for fans in hot weather. Even the white feathers under the wings were valuable as offerings to the gods. The Golden Eagle's feathers were more esteemed than the "white-headed" eagle's, but the Bald Eagle was more dangerous, fought harder, and "never got excited" (i.e., never lost its self-control and, with it, its mystery power).

Although the Hidatsa generally were afraid to keep eagles as captives, Wolf Chief told Wilson of a very young Golden Eagle he had captured after its nest had fallen. "Feed your eagle," said his father; "remember he is a god. Do not let him get hungry. He needs food every day. Keep

him as something sacred." Wolf Chief fed his eagle until its feathers were ready to pluck (the Hidatsa did not believe that eagles drink water); then, after taking them, he released the bird.

In hunting mature eagles the Hidatsa rigidly followed elaborate ceremonies. They usually freed the birds after taking their feathers. If a large number were caught -- they used covered pits with fresh meat as bait -- some might be killed. Even then they were "put to sleep" ceremonially by a man with special power. He would place the dead birds in a line, facing east, and invite them to smoke the pipe, not to look backward as they traveled "home," and not "to feel badly against us, your friends." Then he would promise them that they would rest four times on their journey at places he would name and have fat animals to eat at each resting place.

As an example of the cultivated mind and sensibility that harmonizes with nature Dobie always singled out the young Englishman George Frederick Ruxton (1821-1848), a gentlemen-adventurer in the Renaissance tradition of honorable and courageous soldier, traveler, and man of letters who was also "as much at ease in the wilderness as a Blackfoot." Ruxton admitted to being one of the most "redhot of sportsmen," yet he revered wildlife. A "tomtit" (probably a chickadee) that perched on his Canadian hunting shanty and took breakfast meat from his hand he viewed as a "guest." He came to regard as an "old friend" a large gray wolf that followed him for days on the upper Arkansas River and squatted near his fire at night waiting for scraps and "little extras" Ruxton would leave. Any American hunter of that time would have shot the wolf, as Dobie said.

(Continued on page 32)

The Nesting Birds of LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge

Ren Lohofener and Charles A. Ely

LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge (LNWR), located in Bennett County, South Dakota, is approximately 10 miles (16 km) from Nebraska and 140 miles (224 km) from Colorado. Waterfowl and other game birds have been studied in the area, but no overall assessment of nesting birds has been done previously. We studied the nesting birds of LNWR on 1 and 2 June and from 27 June through 2 August, 1977. In addition, observations made by Refuge personnel during the 1977 season were a great aid. The Refuge does have a checklist that indicates nesting species. As a result of this study, several changes in the Refuge checklist can be made.

The Study Area

LNWR was established in 1935 and today it totals over 16,000 acres (6,475 ha). The Refuge lies in the Lake Creek basin with the Nebraska sandhills comprising its southern portion. Elevations range from 2800 to 3600 feet (853 to 1097 m) and annual precipitation averages 16 inches (40.6 cm). Average annual air temperatures vary from 45 to 48° F (7.2 to 8.9°C) and average frost depth is 25 inches (63.5 cm).

Since the vegetational aspects of an area are vital to an understanding of the breeding bird populations, terrestrial plants are dealt with in detail in this paper. Common and scientific names for plants were taken from: Anderson, K.L. and C.E. Owensby, 1969. Common names of a selected list of plants, Tech. Bull.: 117, Ag. Exp. Station, Kansas State Univ., Manhattan, Ks.

LNWR is composed of 4 broad botanical provinces (Figure 1). We estimate that approximately 31% of the area is uplands, 24% marsh, 23% lowlands, and 22% sandhills.

Uplands - Uplands are characterized by loamy soils, usually with a claypan.

A small percentage of this land on the Refuge is in cultivation; the remainder is in a grazing program. Houses (deserted and inhabited) and their associated windbreaks are limited to the uplands. Since wooded areas are scarce on LNWR, these plantings are important to many species of birds. The most common species planted were: American elm (*Ulmus americana*), Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*), honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*), Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) and American plum (*Prunus americana*). Other common, native woody species occurring on the uplands are chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*) and western snowberry (*Symphoricarpos occidentalis*).

Grasses of the uplands are of two types: native and introduced. Large acreages of formerly cultivated or disturbed land have been planted to crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*), smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*) and slender wheatgrass (*A. trachycaulum*). Dominant native grasses are western wheatgrass (*Agropyron Smithii*), needle and thread grass (*Stipa comata*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie sand reedgrass (*Calamovilfa longifolia*).

Another feature of the upland province is the presence of large colonies of the Black-footed Prairie Dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*). Prairie dogs, by keeping the grasses and forbs cropped to ground level and encouraging invader species, radically alter the vegetation within their towns and thus provide a different habitat.

Marsh - Marsh is the second most extensive botanical province on LNWR. It is confined largely to the dike and pool system and the three water courses and varies

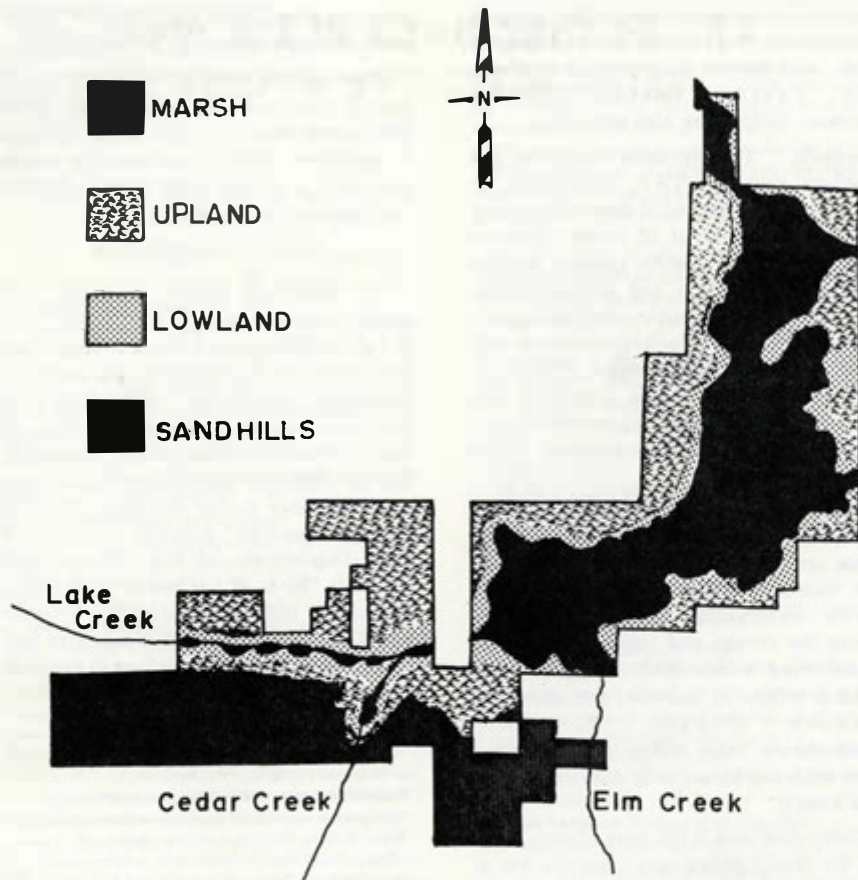


Figure 1. General botanical provinces occurring within the LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge, South Dakota, July 1977.

from bodies of open water to dense stands of cattails (primarily *Typha latifolia*) and rushes (primarily *Scirpus validus*). Sedges (*Carex* sp. and *Cyperus* sp.), common reed (*Phragmites communis*), and smartweeds (*Polygonum coccineum* and *P. pennsylvanicum*) approach dominance in some areas. In the drier areas large flats of inland salt grass (*Distichlis stricta*) are common. False indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*) lines most canals, creeks, and wet ditches.

Lowlands - Lowlands are third in the estimated area covered. Lowlands are nearly flat, with poor drainage, and deep loamy soils. Vegetation on much of the lowland habitat is cut for hay once every three to five years. Vegetation characteristic of the lowlands includes both native and introduced plants. Introduced grasses include timothy (*Phleum pratense*), purpletop (*Tridens flavus*), and slender wheatgrass. Native vegetation

common to the lowlands includes western wheatgrass, white sweet clover (*Melilotus alba*), wild licorice (*Glycyrrhiza lepidota*), and Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*). Sedges are also common.

Sandhills - The sandhills comprise the southern part of LNWR. This habitat is characterized by wind-deposited sand dunes with slopes of 12 to 35°. Most of these are stable. Native grasses are the dominant vegetation and include needle and threadgrass, prairie sand reedgrass, prairie junegrass (*Koeleria cristata*), and sand bluestem (*Andropogon Hallii*). In some areas yucca (*Yucca glauca*) is conspicuous. Another woody plant (its fruit is important to birds) is Bessey's Plum (*Prunus Besseyi*).

Although never of sufficient magnitude to be termed a botanical province, native trees are present, usually near water. In the sandhills these include hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) and American elm. Along the creeks and impoundments are peachleaved willow (*Salix amygdaloides*), sandbar willow (*S. interior*), and plains cottonwood (*Populus Sargentii*). Chokecherry, false indigo, and American elms occasionally occur in dense stands in this habitat.

Cultivated land in the form of strip farming for cereal grains may comprise 5% of the uplands and offers yet another habitat type on LNWR.

METHODS

During July, birds on LNWR were assessed as to species present, numbers, and status. Breeding bird surveys were conducted almost daily from 1 through 15 July. Each began at sunrise and involved walking an approximate one-mile strip within a specific habitat and recording all individuals seen or heard enroute. From 15 July through 2 August daily observations were made in all habitats and specific attempts were made to locate nests. Additional data (especially on nesting) were ac-

cumulated coincident with the study of terrestrial plants and other field activities.

Observations were made by Ely on 15 and 16 July and by Burgess and other refuge personnel throughout the summer. A waterfowl survey conducted by refuge personnel provided most of the information included for those species.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

The following species accounts summarize available data on the nesting birds of LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge. Data presented are: status during summer 1977 (common, uncommon, not observed); preferred habitat; a summary of observations, with numbers when available. Unless otherwise stated, observations are by Lohofener during summer 1977. The "Refuge Checklist" referred to is the official Department of the Interior field checklist "Birds of LaCreek" published in September 1969. An asterisk following the scientific name of a species indicates that an egg (collected on the Refuge in previous years) is present in the Refuge collection.

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)*

Uncommon in marsh habitat; adults observed. Burgess has recorded young in previous years.

Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*)*

Common in marsh habitat; adults and young observed.

White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)*

Common on the impoundments; adults, young, and eggs observed. The local colony produces about 1000 young annually. It is the southeasternmost known breeding locality for the species.

Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)*

Common in marsh habitat. Adults, young, and eggs were observed in the local pelican-cormorant colony.

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)*

Common in marsh habitat; only adults observed. Burgess reports that nesting attempts on Pelican Island #2 in 1972 and 1976 were disrupted by wind. Fjetland reported 4 nests but only 1 egg and no successful nests in 1972 (South Dakota Nesting Season, 1972, E. Serr, Compiler, *SDBN*, Sept. 1972).

Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)*

Common in marsh habitat; adults observed regularly. One nest, with 1 egg and 1 hatchling on 14 July, was empty on 19 July.

American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*)

Common in marsh habitat. Adults were observed commonly; young birds fairly commonly during the latter part of July.

Trumpeter Swan (*Olor buccinator*)*

Common in marsh habitat; adults and young observed. This species is in intensive management at LNWR with an annual production goal of 10 young.

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)*

Common in marsh habitat; adults and young observed. The production goal for the refuge is 600 goslings annually.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)*

Common in marsh habitat; adults and young observed. LNWR produces over a thousand ducklings annually.

Pintail (*Anas acuta*)*

Common in marsh habitat; adults and young observed. Over 200 ducklings are produced annually.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)*

Common in marsh habitat; adults and young observed. Over 1000 ducklings are produced annually.

American Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*)

Uncommon in marsh habitat. One brood of four was observed. About 300 ducklings were produced in 1977.

Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*)*

This is the most common duck on LNWR. Adults, young, and a nest with 6 eggs were observed. About 4000 young are produced annually.

American Wigeon (*Anas americana*)

Uncommon in marsh habitat. One female and 4 ducklings were observed on 6 July 1977. Several broods are produced each year.

Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)*

Uncommon in marsh habitat. Two females and broods were observed in July 1977. Burgess reports that over 100 young were produced in 1977.

Redhead (*Aythya americana*)*

Uncommon in marsh habitat. Adults and a brood of three were observed. Burgess reported that about 100 ducklings were produced in 1977.

Canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*)

Uncommon in marsh habitat. We saw only adults, but 3 broods were observed in 1977 by Refuge personnel.

Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

Uncommon in marsh habitat. Only adults observed. Burgess considers it to be a common but irregular breeding species. Fjetland (E. Serr., op. cit.) reported 108 young in 1972.

Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)*

Uncommon; 2 adults observed, both in flight. No indications of nesting were noted, but suitable habitat exists. Included on the Refuge Checklist as a nesting species.

Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*)

Not observed in 1977. Burgess reports that it is common near the prairie dog towns except during the nesting season. Refuge records also indicate that a nest in the southeast sandhills section has been active annually since 1972.

Marsh Hawk (*Circus cyaneus*)*

Common over most of LNWR; adults observed regularly. A nest with 3 eggs was found 19 July in marsh habitat, and 3 immatures were seen on 21 July. Two adults were watched as they defended a nest from a coyote on 15 July.

American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)

Uncommon. Two adults were regularly observed in a

wooded area near Refuge headquarters in June and July. Suitable nesting habitat is present, but the species is not included as a nesting species on the Refuge Checklist.

Sharp-tailed Grouse (*Pedioetes phasianellus*)

Uncommon on the edge of the sandhills; adults observed twice, once (8 July) with 2 fledglings. Four broods were reported by Refuge personnel in 1977.

Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)*

Common over all of LNWR except the sandhills. Adults and young were observed commonly throughout July. Two nests were seen, 1 with 1 egg (deserted), the other with 11 eggs.

King Rail (*Rallus elegans*)

We did not see the species, but Refuge personnel reported young. Burgess also reported adult and young in the summers of 1973 and 1974.

Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*)*

Uncommon in marsh habitat. Single young birds were observed on 17 and 26 July.

Sora (*Porzana carolina*)*

Uncommon in marsh habitat. Adults were heard on several occasions, and an adult with 3 young was seen on 21 July.

American Coot (*Fulica americana*)*

Common in marsh habitat; adults and young commonly observed.

Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*)*

Common along the dike system and roads, adults and young observed regularly. A nest with 2 eggs was found along a dike on 6 July.

Common Snipe (*Capella gallinago*)

Uncommon in marsh habitat; only a single adult seen (July). Burgess reports that it nests each year. It is not listed as a nesting species on the Refuge Checklist.

Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*)

Uncommon in the lowlands; only adults were seen; no nesting observed in 1977. Listed as a nesting species in Refuge Checklist.

Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*)*

Common in the southern part of the refuge lowlands and on the uplands. Adults and fledglings were observed.

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*)

Common along the impoundments, especially along the lake in the Little White River Recreation Area (LWRR). An adult and 2 fledglings were observed in this area on 19 July.

Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*)*

Uncommon along the larger impoundments; adults seen in July. Young were reported by Refuge personnel in 1977 as in previous years.

Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*)

Uncommon in marsh habitat; adults observed in late July. Burgess reports that in 1976 a nesting godwit was photographed in a pasture on the Refuge by Dirk Hagemyer of Bellaire, Texas.

American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*)*

Common along upland pools and ditches. Adults were observed commonly. One adult with 3 young was seen regularly during the first half of July.

Wilson's Phalarope (*Steganopus tricolor*)*

Common in water-filled ditches and small pools; adults and young were observed in July.

Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipizcan*)

Uncommon over the impoundments; only three adults observed in July. Known to have nested in the past with a colony present as late as 1972.

Forster's Tern (*Sterna forsteri*)*

Common in marsh habitat; adults, young, and eggs observed. One nest contained 3 eggs on 22 July.

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)*

Common in marsh habitat; adults, young, and eggs observed. One nest on 16 July contained 2 young; a nest on 19 July contained 2 eggs.

Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*)*

Common over all the refuge; quite common in the sandhills. All stages of nesting were observed.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*)

Uncommon in the upland areas; adults were heard and observed in June and July. Richard Rosche reported a sighting on June 25, 1972 (E. Serr, op. cit.). Not listed as a nesting species on the Refuge Checklist.

Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*)

Common in the wooded upland and lowland areas; adults heard and observed in June and July. One nest examined on 17 July contained 2 eggs. It was first photographed and reported as a nesting bird by Hagemyer in 1975.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

Apparently uncommon; one bird heard nightly in the LWRRA seemed to be defending a territory. Not included on the Refuge Checklist as a nesting bird but suitable nesting habitat is present.

Screech Owl (*Otus asio*)

Not observed by us but Burgess reported 5 immatures in a wooded fencerow. He also reported them nesting in a Wood Duck box in 1973-1976.

Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*)

Common in wooded areas throughout the refuge; adults and young heard and observed regularly.

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*)

Common in prairie dog towns on upland sites; adults and fledglings observed. Twenty-five birds were counted on 11 July in a prairie dog town in the refuge. During the month of July, we found 10 immature owls dead on the road bordering this area, and one was found entangled in a barber-wire fence.

Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*)

Not reported in 1977 but Burgess reported nesting in 1976 in a wooded sandhill area.

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)*

Not observed in 1977 but an egg is present in the Refuge collection; included on Refuge Checklist as a nesting species.

Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*)

Uncommon over all of LNWR; adults observed throughout July; not listed as a nesting species on Refuge Checklist.

Belted Kingfisher (*Megasceryle alcyon*)

Uncommon along the creeks; adults observed in July.

Common Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)

Common in the upland wooded areas. Both Yellow-shafted and Red-shafted birds were observed, but the Yellow-shafted was much more common. A mixed pair was observed nesting on 1 June. A "hybrid" was observed on 11 July on the east side of pool 10.

Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*)

Uncommon in upland wooded areas. An adult was observed entering a cavity in a cottonwood near Refuge headquarters on 4 July.

Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*)*

Common over much of the Refuge; adults and fledglings commonly observed. Adults were feeding young on 19 July on the LWRRA.

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*)*

Common in the upland areas. Adults and fledglings were observed, and an active nest contained 4 young on 5 July.

Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*)

Uncommon in upland wooded areas. Ely found a nest near the Refuge headquarters on 15 July. Subsequent observation revealed 4 young, and on 21 July a fledgling was netted to confirm identification. Burgess reported the call to be of the "fitz-bew" type.

Western Wood Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*)

Uncommon in upland wooded areas and in willows along the dikes. Ely heard and identified this species on 15 July in the LWRRA. On 21 July adults were observed tending a nest in the LWRRA. One adult was observed in a willow on a Refuge dike on 24 July.

Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*)

Uncommon in upland areas; common in cultivated fields. Adults were observed in July; fledglings on 1 August.

Tree Swallow (*Iridoprocne bicolor*)

Uncommon in marsh habitat; adults observed in June and July. Burgess reported nesting near the headquarters in 1975.

Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*)

Common near earth banks in June; uncommon in July. A small colony was nesting in an earth bank on the LWRRA on 1 and 2 June, but the colony had been deserted when again observed in July.

Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*)*

Uncommon in upland areas. An adult was observed entering a burrow near a colony of Bank Swallows on 2 June. Adults were observed in July. Not listed as a nesting species on Refuge Checklist.

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)*

Common near buildings on the Refuge; adults, young, and eggs observed. A clutch completed on 6 July (4 eggs) hatched on 22 July and the nest was accidentally dislodged on 1 August.

Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)*

Common over much of the Refuge; adults, young, and eggs observed. Adults were feeding young on 1 July, and nesting seemed to be completed by 24 July.

Black-billed Magpie (*Pica pica*)

Uncommon in sandhills and upland wooded areas. Adults were observed on one occasion in a wooded area in the sandhills in July. Numerous old nests were found in a tree grove in the Cedar Creek area. Fjetland reported seven nests in 1972 (E. Serr, op. cit.).

Common Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)

Not observed but nesting habitat is present, and it is listed as a nesting species in the Refuge Checklist.

Black-capped Chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*)

Common in wooded areas. Adults were observed near

Refuge headquarters and in the Cedar Creek area. Not listed as a nesting species in the Refuge Checklist.

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*)

Common in wooded areas. Adults were observed near the Refuge headquarters, in the Cedar Creek area and in the Elm Creek area. Burgess reported nesting in nest boxes in 1977.

Long-billed Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus palustris*)*

Common along the marsh edges; adults, young, and eggs observed.

Short-billed Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*)*

We did not observe the species, but Burgess reports that birds arrived on 6 August and were common thereafter. He considers it to be an irregular nester on the Refuge.

Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*)*

Common near brush in the lowland and upland regions. Adults and one nest (4 eggs on 9 July) were observed.

Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*)*

Common in the upland and lowland areas; adults and fledglings observed in July. One nest in the LWRRR contained 1 egg on 3 July, but was empty on 5 July; another was present on 13 July, and the nest was again empty on 14 July.

American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*)*

Common in wooded areas. Adults, fledglings, and one active nest (3 young on 4 July) were observed.

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

Common in the lowlands and uplands especially along roads. Adults and one active nest (4 eggs on 30 June) in a plum thicket were observed; 4 nestlings were present on 4 July.

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Uncommon in upland wooded areas. Adults and young birds were observed during July; on 1 August, 15 juveniles were feeding on the headquarters lawn.

Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*)

Common in thickets in upland areas; adults and 2 nests observed. A nest in a western snowberry thicket held 3 eggs on 30 June, 3 nestlings on 5 July, and was evidently destroyed by a predator before 7 July. A second, in a Tartarian honeysuckle, held 3 nestlings on 13 July. Hagemyer photographed and reported the Bell's Vireo as a nesting species in 1975.

Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*)

Common in willows and cottonwoods in the upland areas. Adults were observed regularly in June, July, and August. It is listed as a nesting species on the Refuge Checklist.

Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*)

Common in willows along impoundments. Adults were observed in July, and an active nest was found in the LWRRR.

Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*)

Common in marsh habitat. Adults were common throughout July, and young birds were seen on 17 July. In addition, 2 vacated nests were found.

Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*)

Not observed but suitable nesting habitat is present; listed as a nesting species in the Refuge Checklist.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)

Common near dwellings on the Refuge. Adults and active nests were observed at the Refuge headquarters.

Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*)

Common in the lowlands. Adults were observed commonly, and a nest found on 2 July contained 4 eggs.

Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*)

Uncommon in the lowlands; adults observed throughout July; listed as a nesting species in the Refuge Checklist.

Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*)*

Common in the uplands; uncommon in the sandhills; adults and fledglings observed throughout July. One nest contained 3 young meadowlark and 1 cowbird fledgling on 30 June. Another nest examined on 5 July contained 5 young.

Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)*

Common in marsh habitat; adults and young observed. Four nests were examined: (1) 4 eggs on 1 July; (2) 4 eggs on 4 July; (3) 3 eggs on 4 July; (4) 4 young on 17 July.

Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)*

Common in marsh habitat and along creeks. Eggs were observed from 30 June to 24 July; young from 4 July to 1 August. Nearly all nests along the creeks had been parasitized by cowbirds.

Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*)

Common in wooded upland areas; adults observed throughout July. In the LWRRR birds were carrying nesting material on 3 July and were feeding young on 24 July.

Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*)

Common over all of Refuge. Parasitized nests of Western Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird and Lark Sparrow were found, and young cowbirds were seen in the nests of the first 2 species.

Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*)*

Common in lowland and upland wooded areas; adults and young observed. On 12 July adults were feeding young in the LWRRR.

Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*)

Uncommon in upland areas; adults observed in July, often near hayfields. Listed as a nesting species in the Refuge Checklist.

American Goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*)

Common in upland and lowland wooded areas. Adults and fledglings were observed in July with active nests observed in the LWRRR and at Refuge headquarters.

Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*)*

Common in upland areas; uncommon in sandhills. Adults were observed throughout July; fledglings during the last week of July.

Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*)*

Common in all grasslands; adults, young, and eggs observed. Two nests were found, an empty one on 7 July and 1 with 4 eggs on 9 July. A dead fledgling was found on 24 July.

Vesper Sparrow (*Poocetes gramineus*)*

Uncommon in the lowlands on the southern part of the Refuge; 3 birds observed in July.

Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*)*

Common in sandhills; adults, young, and eggs observed. A nest found on 7 July contained 3 sparrow eggs and 1 cowbird egg; 1 found 11 July had 2 young sparrows.

Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*)

Uncommon in lowland and upland wooded areas. One

adult and what may have been an immature were observed in the Cedar Creek area on 14 July. An inactive nest was found in a small elm on 1 August.

Swamp Sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*)

Uncommon in marsh habitat; adults observed occasionally, immature killed in mousetrap on 19 July. Listed as a nesting bird in the Refuge Checklist.

Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*)

Not observed; Burgess reported adults in the Elm Creek area. Listed as a nesting species in the Refuge Checklist.

Chestnut-collared Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*)

Not observed. Hagemyer reported it as a nesting species in refuge pastures in July 1975, and Burgess reports adults in uplands in past summers.

The following species were recorded by us on or near the Refuge on one or more occasions, but we have no definite evidence of their nesting on the Refuge.

Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*).

Northern Green Heron (*Butorides striatus*)

Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*).

Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*).

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*).

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*).

Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*).

Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*).

Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*).

Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*).

Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*).

Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*).

Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*).

Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodramus scolopaceus*).

Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*).

Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*).

Least Tern (*Sterna albifrons*).

Rock Dove (*Columba livia*).

American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*).

Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The study was in connection with an Earthwatch project directed by Dr. Jerry R. Choate, Fort Hays Kansas State University, and entitled "Ecogeographic relations of mammals and terrestrial plants on LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge, South Dakota." Since avian studies were not a funded part of the project study time was limited by higher priorities.

We thank Dr. Choate, developer and director of the overall project, and Dr. Robert A. Nicholson, supervisor in charge of botanical studies, for the opportunity to study birds at LNWR. Special thanks are due Mr. Harold H. Burgess, Refuge Manager, for his cooperation and

assistance and for the use of his personal records and refuge files. Thanks are due Robert Wilhelm, team leader of mammalogy studies, and Earthwatch participants Carol Corbat, Frank Day, and Zoe Mielke, who contributed to the avian studies and made the early morning hours more enjoyable.

Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762, and Department of Biology, Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas 67601.

Summer Observations of the Mountain Plover in Southwest South Dakota

The Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*) is a species that has experienced a reduction in its nesting range during this century. Bent (U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 146, 1928) records a nesting range of: Montana east to North Dakota; south through western South Dakota (Edgemont), Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas; west to Arizona (?); and north through Colorado and Wyoming. Graul (*The Living Bird*, 12:69-93, 1973) cites extensive correspondence and travel from 1969 to 1972 in attempting to delineate the Mountain Plover's present nesting range. He found small breeding populations in Montana, Wyoming, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. The stronghold of the bird appears to be Colorado, especially the north-eastern section.

I observed the Mountain Plover in South Dakota on four occasions: 1 bird the morning of 1 July, 1977, 2 birds the evening of 1 July, 1 bird on the mornings of 5 and 12 July. All observations were made just north of the Little White River, Bennett County (T. 37 N, R. 36W, SE ¼ Sec. 15).

The first observation was made shortly after dawn when I flushed a Mountain Plover from the grass. The bird passed near, landed about 40 m to the west and immediately ran a short distance into the

(Continued on page 38)

A Winter Birding Trip

Kenneth H. Husmann

On Saturday, February 11, 1978, Bruce Harris telephoned from Clear Lake to say he had just received a letter from Kim Eckert, Duluth, Minn., telling of the invasion of owls that the Duluth and North Shore areas were experiencing. We both love the North Shore's beauty, and the chance to also observe some birds not seen in our part of the country made the idea of a trip difficult to resist. The usual storm was moving through South Dakota, but it appeared likely that it would pass south of us. After some discussion we surprised each other by deciding to leave the next morning, weather permitting.

On Sunday morning, there were two inches of fresh snow, and it was still snowing lightly. Since we would apparently be driving away from the storm, I decided to take the chance. While Patsy prepared sandwiches and fried chicken for us to enjoy on the trip, I cleared snow from the sidewalks and driveway, and put my gear in the car. About 9:00 a.m., I started for Clear Lake, feeling a little uncertain and wondering if I had everything for a three-day trip. Bruce was ready when I arrived, and we were soon on our way. About a block from his home we saw a beautiful male Pine Grosbeak eating ash seeds in a tree at the edge of the street. Since we were so used to seeing these birds this winter, we never even stopped. We had a major irruption of Pine Grosbeaks, and they remained all season.

As we had hoped, we drove out of bad weather and into bright sunshine. Our first birds were Horned Larks and Snow Buntings, both of which had just moved in, in large numbers, since the temperature had moderated slightly. The Snow Buntings were common all through the prairie country, but they were replaced by redpolls when we began to see more trees. About

one hundred miles from Duluth we saw large numbers of crows. Could they already be migrating due to that slight warm-up? Closer to Duluth we started to see ravens.

We had to resist the temptation to stop and look at birds because Kim had told us to be there by five o'clock. We went through Duluth and up the scenic highway along the North Shore about seven miles to Kim's home overlooking Lake Superior. The lake seemed to be frozen over although an ore freighter had broken its way through to the docks that day. Kim was out birding, but a note on his door told where a Boreal Owl had been sighted. At that moment Terry Savaloja drove in, and told us to follow him if we wanted to see the owl. Then Kim and two more birders arrived. Kim and Terry decided we should drive to Stony Point where several Boreals had been seen that morning. We searched until it was nearly dark, seeing several Ruffed Grouse eating buds in the tree tops. Suddenly Terry called that he had a Boreal Owl. It was perched in a small tree at the edge of the road, where it remained while we all looked and talked. We even shined flashlights on it. That made our day, as neither Bruce nor I had ever seen a Boreal Owl. We returned to Kim's home, where we were regaled with nearly unbelievable stories of owl sightings in the past three weeks. After dinner we retired quite early after agreeing to start out at 7:30 the next morning.

Monday dawned cloudy with a light north wind, and we were surprised to see that the lake had opened up along the shore. Kim told us that the ice moves around all the time, depending on the wind direction. We drove north a little way along the shore and found another Boreal Owl. This one let us get to within a few feet

of it before it flew across the road. Kim told us that people have been able to walk up to the birds and pick them up. We then drove on a back road behind Kim's house to see a Hawk Owl that had been in that area all winter. We found him sitting at the top of a spruce tree that Kim stated was the owl's favorite perch. We then headed north toward Two Harbors and breakfast. On the edge of town we found another Hawk Owl sitting on a flag pole in the middle of a cemetery.

After a very satisfying breakfast, we drove back into the woods to the Two Harbors sanitary landfill where we found many Herring Gulls, ravens, and one second-year Glaucous Gull. We then started out on an earnest search for Great Gray Owls. A freezing drizzle reduced visibility and made the roads slippery. We drove a little beyond Silver Bay and made side trips to all the places where these owls had been sighted, but we found none. We did, however, see a few goldeneyes and mergansers, a Red-tailed Hawk, Bald Eagle, and a Boreal Chickadee. We worked our way back toward Kim's home, and about three o'clock we saw our Great Gray Owl sitting in a poplar tree beside the road. A little farther down the highway we saw a Barred Owl on a telephone pole. That was a bonus, and it made my fifth life bird for the trip. We had now seen more than we expected, and we were really feeling contented.

After a good sleep that night, we drove back home on Tuesday. What a perfect trip, and what a nice break in the long winter! -- Brookings.

President's Page
(Continued from page 23)

After leaving the Far West, Ruxton found a kind master for his horse, Panchito, "companion" of more than three thousand miles, before departing for St. Louis from Fort Leavenworth, "exacting in return for the

present, a promise that he should not be worked for the next three months." A year later, after deciding that he must return to the American wilderness, where "I must confess that the very happiest moments of my life have been spent," although "liable to an accusation of barbarism," he told his *Blackwood's* editor in England that he would ride Panchito there, if the animal were still alive.

The ideal life for Dobie was that of a civilized man with perspective (a knowledge of man's past, a love of the beautiful, "just ideas of values and proportions") and with his animal qualities alive dwelling in a primordial natural environment, as Ruxton did. Although he knew harmony with nature, Dobie never felt harmony with our American civilization because of our tradition of exploiting the land, a part of which was our pioneer heritage of killing wildlife rather than studying it (even Audubon wantonly killed the birds that he painted), and our uncritical acceptance of the Machine Age. When he went to England during World War II as a kind of official consultant on American history, Dobie found harmony with civilization for the first time. "The English dwell in the realm of naturalness," he wrote, and are critical of the scientific age. He discovered that cultivated nature in England gave him "freedom and joy," although he missed the wild nature he had known in parts of America and grew hungry for space. "Nature is supreme in two aspects," he decided: "in a wild, pristine state unmarred by man" and then "in a state of cultivation that only loving care, good taste, skill, science and rooted humanity can give it." He was encouraged by England's stubborn retention of her "pre-machine humanism" and her people's love of the earth and its creatures and vegetation. Perhaps machine civilization in American has "not yet had time to demonstrate whether it can create a culture that gives graciousness, charm, depth and tolerance to human life," he wistfully speculated. -- Bill Lemons, Meckling.

General Notes of Special Interest

HAWK OWL: FIRST SOUTH DAKOTA RECORD

Several bird watchers in Brookings, South Dakota, observed an unusual bird on January 12 and 13, 1978. Lillian Taylor first sighted it in her yard in the mid-afternoon of January 12, and she identified it as a Hawk Owl. The bird stayed at least an hour, and then disappeared.

On the following morning, Gladycy Froiland and I flushed the bird from an evergreen tree as we walked into the Taylor yard. It alit on a nearby tree where we were able to make a careful study of it. As it flew off, another smaller and lighter colored bird was spotted in the same tree. It was studied from back and front and was also identified as a Hawk Owl. Lavisia Haddow and Nelda Holden saw the bird briefly before it left the vicinity.

In *Birds of North America* the Hawk Owl is described as "A tame diurnal owl of the muskegs of northern Canada, rarely moving south in winter into northern U.S." It has never before been verified as being seen in South Dakota. It is a true owl, about 15 inches long, but looks more like a hawk. Its head is the characteristic owl shape, with yellow eyes and beak, but its barred tail is long and slender. There are large white spots on its dark back. Unlike most owls, it is fully active in the daytime. From its perch in the top of a tree, it swoops to the ground for food, which includes rodents, smaller birds, and insects.

Following publicity in the *Brookings Register*, three people phoned in to report sightings of a bird meeting the description of the Hawk Owl. All were seen within Brookings.

On January 15, Joyce Ulmer watched a bird digging in a pile of leaves under her apple tree. She studied it for 45 minutes as

it flipped leaves from a hole, with its tail spread on the snow, and her description fits that of the Hawk Owl.

Ray Linder reported seeing a Hawk Owl at 1:30 p.m. on January 16. It was perched high in a tree, and he studied it for a time before it flew.

On January 26, Lois Haertell saw a hawk-like bird with white spots on its dark back, and a long barred tail, on a cottonwood tree in her yard. -- Carol Peterson, 221 17th Ave., Brookings, 57006.

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GRAY-CROWNED ROSY FINCH IN PERKINS COUNTY

-- During the last days of December 1977, we noticed a small flock of perhaps 20 dark birds about our place, but, because of the blowing snow, we could not identify them.

On the morning of January 2, 1978, Alfred found a Gray-crowned Rosy Finch in the garage. The door of the building was open the previous afternoon and evening, and the bird apparently sought shelter there for the night.

Alfred brought the bird indoors for closer examination, as we had never seen one here before. It had a yellow conical beak; white nasal tufts; a gray head with black frontal patch; black throat; brown back and breast; rosy wing edges, abdomen, and rump; and black legs. The bird was 6¼ inches long.

We called the Holdens to verify our identification and learned that Gray-crowned Rosy Finches are seen in the Black Hills. Perhaps the stormy weather drove this bird out onto the prairie. -- Gertrice Hinds, Prairie City.

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THE 1977-78 WINTER SEASON

December 1 - February 28

Compilers: G.L. Steffen, B.K. Harris,
J. Harter

The winter of 1977-78 and its effect on humans, livestock, and wildlife will be recounted many times. Below normal temperatures were particularly unpleasant in the eastern half of the state from mid-December through most of February when, for more than 60 days, the thermometer never reached 32°F. Snow covered most of the state during the reporting period, with deep snow and strong winds being common problems in the northern counties. It was difficult and sometimes impossible to keep roads open. There was some consolation, however, in the realization that the snow run-off in the spring would fill the arid lakes, ponds, and wetlands.

An invasion of some northern bird species into the United States gave South Dakota its first confirmed record of the Hawk Owl -- two birds observed in Brookings and unprecedented numbers of Pine Grosbeaks. Redpolls were common statewide, and Snow Bunting numbers were estimated to be in the hundreds and thousands in several areas.

Other sightings of special interest include ten duck species that wintered on Capitol Lake in Rapid City, a Gyrfalcon in the Pierre area, Saw-whet Owls in Pierre and Highmore, Hoary Redpolls, Rufous-sided Towhees, and White-throated Sparrows.

In the following list, the numbers of species individuals are parenthesized. County representatives and contributors initials may be identified in the list at the end of this report.

Species List

WATERFOWL

- Western Grebe** -- (1) still present south end of Big Stone L., Grant Co., on 12/12, BKH.
- Whistling Swan** -- (11) still present end of Dec., LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.
- Trumpeter Swan** -- (135) still present end of Dec., LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.
- Canada Goose** -- 12/12 (50) wintering south end of Big Stone L., BKH; small flock at Gavin's Pt. in Jan.-Feb., peak 2/20 (64), WH; four races totaling (4500) wintered at LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.
- White-fronted Goose** -- (1) during Dec.-Jan., LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.
- Ross' Goose** -- (1) present during Dec., LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.
- Mallard** -- Less than (3000) in Dec., (550) in Feb., LaCreek N.W.R., HHB; 12/12 (50) wintering south end of Big Stone L., BKH; several hundred all period Canyon L., Rapid City, BHAS; 12/12 Waubay N.W.R. (1) DSW; several thousand present all period, peak 1/9 (7000) Gavin's Pt., WH; 1/19 (100's) below Gavin's Pt., KJH.
- Black Duck** -- 2/26 Gavin's Pt. (1) WH.
- Gadwall** -- Several all period, Canyon L., Rapid City, BHAS.
- Pintail** -- Several all period, Canyon L., BHAS; 12/11 (1), 1/2 (1) Pierre area, RLH; 2/26 Gavin's Pt. (2) WH.
- Green-winged Teal** -- Several all period, Canyon L., BHAS; 2/28 Oahe Dam, Pierre (2) RLH; (8-10) all winter, LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.
- American Wigeon** -- Several present all winter, Canyon L., Rapid City, BHAS.
- Wood Duck** -- 12/20 Canyon L. (1)JLM; 1/2 Pierre (1) RLH.
- Redhead** -- 12/20 Canyon L. (2) JLM.
- Canvasback** -- (1) through Dec., LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.
- Lesser Scaup** -- (15) through Dec., LaCreek N.W.R., HHB; several during period at Canyon L., BHAS.
- Common Goldeneye** -- Peak 12/16 (95), more than (15) all winter, LaCreek N.W.R., HHB; present all period, Canyon L., BHAS; 12/21 (9), 1/18 (6), 2/26 (4) Gavin's Pt., WH, JMW.
- Bufflehead** -- (15) during Feb., LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.
- Hooded Merganser** -- (1) during Feb., LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.
- Common Merganser** -- 12/12 (5) south end Big Stone L., BKH; 12/4 (200), 1/20 (62), 2/8 (50) Gavin's Pt., WH, JMW; (10) present all period, LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.



Photos by Wallace L. Larson

Hawk In Pierre

This hawk, identified as a probable immature Sharp-shinned, was first observed and photographed about 9:00 a.m. on January 2, 1978, as it fed on a junco atop a bird feeder in the Larsen yard. It then flew to another part of the yard where it remained until 11:30 a.m.

HAWKS, EAGLES

- Goshawk** -- 2/9 LaCreek N.W.R. (1) HHB.
- Sharp-shinned Hawk** -- 12/6 (1) in yard, took sparrow at feeder, Burke, GLS; at least (6) haunted feeder stations, Rapid City, BHAS; 12/21, 1/7, 2/14 (1) in yard, Yankton, WH; 1/14 Pierre (1) RLH; (2) during Dec.-Jan., LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.
- Red-tailed Hawk** -- Reports from Deuel, Roberts, Yankton, Bon Homme, Penn., and Gregory Counties.
- Rough-legged Hawk** -- (25) present on 12/30 remained through rest of period, LaCreek N.W.R., HHB; more sightings than usual in northeast counties, BKH; reports also Meade, Penn., Custer, Lawrence, Lyman, Brookings, Yankton, Bon Homme, Butte, and Lake Counties.
- Ferruginous Hawk** -- 1/9 (1) dark phase, s.w. Yankton Co., WH; 1/18 Penn. Co. (2) VBV; (3) through Dec., (1) rest of period, LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.
- Golden Eagle** -- Reports from Meade, Custer, Penn., Fall River, Yankton, Gregory, and Clay Counties, and LaCreek (17-23), Waubay (1), Sand Lake (3) Refuges.
- Bald Eagle** -- More reports than usual from Black Hills areas, and lingering later than usual in northeast. Reports from Penn., Fall River, Perkins, Hughes, Brookings, and Yankton Counties, Sand Lake N.W.R., and LaCreek N.W.R.
- Marsh Hawk** -- 12/10 Gavin's Pt. (1) WH; 12/30 LaCreek N.W.R. (10) HHB; 1/12 Tripp Co. (3) RLH.
- GYRFALCON** -- 2/25 (1) near Oahe Dam north of Pierre, Fred June (*vide* RLH). Had several reports of a Gyrfalcon preying on Mallards wintering below Oahe Dam during Jan.-Feb., RLH.
- Prairie Falcon** -- Reports from Penn., Meade, Lawrence, Yankton, and Bennett Counties.

GROUSE, GULLS

- Greater Prairie Chicken** -- 12/22 (2), 1/29 (1) Sand Lake N.W.R., SW; 12/23 (1) Deuel Co., first record in eight years, BKH.
- Sharp-tailed Grouse** -- Apparently wintered well in all West River areas. 1/5 (4) Sand Lake N.W.R., SW; 1/21 (98) on one hillside, LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.
- Sage Grouse** -- 2/1 (2), 2/5 (7) s. Slim Buttes, Harding Co., JS.
- Bobwhite** -- 1/10 (12) Gavin's Pt., 2/25 (13) Yankton Co., WH; 2/23 (15) Gregory Co., GLS.
- Ring-necked Pheasant** -- Moderate weather-related losses in northern counties; many concentrations of (50-100) birds in central Gregory Co. during Jan. and Feb., GLS; several thousand wintered well on LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.
- Gray Partridge** -- Many coveys sighted during period, Brookings Co., NJH, GHF; possibly at peak population, averaged about 1 covey per mile of driving in Deuel Co., 41 coveys averaged (9) per covey during period, BKH; fairly common in small flocks in n. Perkins Co., JS; 12/15 Roberts Co. (16) HOS; 12/20 (32), 1/2 (11) Waubay N.W.R., RRJ, DSW; 1/10 w. Meade Co. (13) EEM.
- Turkey** -- Flock of (20-30) all period west of Sturgis, EEM; 1/8 Custer Co. (5) NFT.
- Merlin** -- (1) present in Feb., LaCreek N.W.R., HHB; 1/8 Penn. Co. (1 f.) JLM; 1/15 Yankton Co. (1) WH.
- American Kestrel** -- 2/11 Brookings (1) with junco in claws; GHF; reports also from Yankton, Bon Homme, Penn., Meade, Grant, Clay, Union, and Gregory Counties, and LaCreek N.W.R.

American Coot -- 12/12, 12/17 (1) Canyon L., Rapid City, JLM.

Killdeer -- 12/11 Fall River Co. (1) JLM; 12/26-1/15 Canyon L. (1) JLM, NRW.

Common Snipe -- (1) all period, Bear Butte Creek east of Sturgis, EEM; 12/24, 1/6 (1) City Springs, Rapid City, NRW; (3) flushed in Dec., and no doubt a few wintered on the Refuge's spring-fed streams, HHB.

Glaucous Gull -- 12/8 (1) Missouri R., Yankton Co., JMW; 12/10 (1) Gavin's Pt., WH.

Herring Gull -- 12/4 (11) Gavin's Pt., WH; 12/30 (1 imm.) LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.

Ring-billed Gull -- 12/4 Gavin's Pt. (220) WH; 12/17 Missouri R., Yankton (6) JMW.

Mourning Dove -- 12/3 near Pierre (2) D. Driscoll (*vide* RLH); 12/28 c. Deuel Co. (1) H. Hildebrandt (*vide* BKH).

OWLS, WOODPECKERS

Scraech Owl -- 12/25 s. Brookings Co. (1) LIW; 2/26 Pierre (1) K. Jacobs (*vide* RLH); (1) occasionally in flicker house during period, Burke, GLS.

Great Horned Owl -- Pair usually present in suitable habitat throughout state; (12) resided at LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.

Snowy Owl -- Not a good flight year, and late in arriving. 12/2 (1), 2/19 (1) Sand Lake N.W.R., SW; (3) sightings during period, Brookings Co., NJH; 12/15 Codington Co. (2) GF&P personnel; 1/16 Codington Co. (1) J. Reidel; 1/20 (1) Deuel Co., 2/19 (2) s.e. Hamlin Co., J. Bucholz (*vide* BKH).

HAWK OWL -- 1/12 (1), 1/13 (2) in Brookings, NJH, GHF, CMP, and Lillian Taylor. Details in "General Notes."

Long-eared Owl -- (1) sighted several times, LaCreek N.W.R., HHB; 12/23 (2) Brookings Co., BKH.

Short-eared Owl -- Up to (4) present during period, LaCreek N.W.R., HHB; 12/2 (3) Deuel Co., 12/28 (4) s. Roberts Co., BKH; 1/13 Gavin's Pt. (1) WH.

SAW-WHET OWL -- 1/14 (1) in yard, photographed, Hyde Co., JH; 1/14 (1) good view, several observers, Pierre, RLH.

Belted Kingfisher -- 12/5 (1) Rimrock Hwy., w. of Rapid City, LRP; 12/11 (1) Fall River Co., JLM; 12/12-1/31 (14 total) Rapid City, BHAS; 12/14, 1/4 (1) Gavin's Pt., WH; 1/17 (1) Oahe Dam, RLH; (1) regularly observed on spring-fed streams, LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.

Common Flicker -- Reported from Brookings, Yankton, Deuel, Gregory, Bennett, Fall River, Penn., and Butte Counties.

Red-bellied Woodpecker -- (1 m.) at feeder all period, s. Clay Co., KJH; 12/24 (1) s.e. Yankton Co., Evander (*vide* WH); 1/14 (1) s.w. Yankton Co., 2/11 (1) Gavin's Pt., WH.

Lewis' Woodpecker -- 12/17 s.w. Meade Co. (2) JLM; 2/14 n.w. Lawrence Co. (2) NRW.

Hairy Woodpecker -- Average of two to three pairs daily at feeders.

Downy Woodpecker -- Average of two to three pairs daily at feeders.

LARKS TO WRENS

Horned Lark -- Reported from all areas. Heavy snow cover in fields forced thousands to roadsides.

Gray Jay -- 1/4 Penn. Co. (2) NRW.

Blue Jay -- The unusual numbers reported from the Black Hills area included up to (12) at Sturgis feeder at one time, EEM; (7) at Belle Fourche feeder, IW; and an average of (5) at Rapid City feeders. Reports also from Clay, Yankton, and Gregory Counties, and Waubay N.W.R.

Black-billed Magpie -- Reported from Penn., Fall River, Meade, Lawrence, Perkins, Yankton, and Bon Homme Counties, and LaCreek N.W.R.

Common Crow -- 12/14 Roberts Co. (2) HOS; 12/14 (6), 1/28 (350), 2/25 (193) Yankton Co., WH; 1/9 Hyde Co. (2) RLH; total (26) Black Hills area, BHAS; 2/25 Deuel Co. (15) D. Kreger (*vide* BKH); 12/4 flock of (50) migrating, Burke, GLS; 12/3 (9), 2/11 (56) Lake Co., RB.

Pinon Jay -- Fewer flocks reported during period. Totals: Fall River Co. (15) JLM; Penn. Co. (115) JLM, AMB, NRW; Meade Co. (40) DAD.

Black-capped Chickadee -- Present at most feeders. Numbers ranged from 2 to 20.

White-breasted Nuthatch -- One or two present at most feeders.

Red-breasted Nuthatch -- (7) feeders all period, Brookings, GHF; (1) in yard almost daily, Yankton, WH; average (2) at most Rapid City feeders, BHAS; (6) all period, Burke L., 12/3 (1) in yard, Burke, GLS; 12/22 (1) Brookings Co., BKH; 2/5, 2/18 (1) Lake Co., RB.

Pygmy Nuthatch -- 1/19, 1/28 (1) Piedmont, Meade Co., DAD

Brown Creeper -- Reported from Penn., Brookings (1) banded, (NJH), Clay, Yankton, Deuel, and Roberts Counties.

Dipper -- 12/5 (1) seen about twice a week, w. of Rapid City, LRP; 2/3 (2) Lawrence Co., JLM.

Winter Wren -- 12/21 Fall River Co. (1) JLM.

THRUSHES, ICTERIDS

American Robin -- Small flock present all period, Rapid City, BHAS; (2) present all period, Hyde Co., JH; 12/12 Roberts Co. (1) BKH; (250) present all period, Burke L., adverse weather, food shortage, and an *Accipiter* taking a toll at the end of the period, GLS; 12/10 (130), 1/21 (60), 2/11 (105) Yankton Co., WH; 1/18 Belle Fourche (22) IW; 1/30 (50) LaCreek N.W.R., HHB.

Eastern Bluebird -- 12/24 s.e. Yankton Co. (3) Evander (*vide* WH); 1/21 Gavin's Pt. (1) WH.

Mountain Bluebird -- 1/31 (1) near Rapid City, Carol Johnson (*vide* EMS).

Townsend's Solitaire -- 12/26 Belle Fourche (2) IW; fewer numbers, just an occasional sighting during period, Rapid City, BHAS.

Golden-crowned Kinglet -- (6) present at Burke L. first two weeks of Dec., GLS.

Bohemian Waxwing -- Good flight, especially in Black Hills: flocks of up to (250) around Rapid City, LAW, WO, CY, NRW; 2/14 Custer Co. (100) BMN; flock of (30-50) in Perkins Co., AH. Reports also from Brookings, Yankton, and Gregory Counties.

Cedar Waxwing -- Good numbers reported: 12/27 Belle Fourche (50) IW; up to (90) in Vermillion, KJH; 2/19

Yankton (77) WH. Reports also from Gregory, Brookings, Hyde, Penn., Fall River, and Lake Counties.

Northern Shrike -- Total of (11) during period in Black Hills area, BHAS; sighted regularly during period, with (7) on 1/30, LaCreek N.W.R., HHB; 2/27 Brookings Co. (1) banded, NJH; reports also from Roberts, Hyde, Gregory, Yankton, and Bon Homme Counties.

Western Meadowlark -- Wintering in Fall River, Meade, Hughes, Bennett, Hyde, Gregory, Bon Homme, and Yankton Counties.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD -- 1/14 (1 imm. or fem.) Hughes Co., Doug Backlund (*vide* BKH)

Red-winged Blackbird -- 1/21-1/24 flock of (50) LaCreek N.W.R., HHB; reports also from Brookings, Yankton, Deuel, and Roberts Counties.

Rusty Blackbird -- 12/24 Burke L. (1) GLS; 12/28 Roberts Co. (5) BKH.

Common Grackle -- (8) observations during period, Deuel, Brookings, and Roberts Counties, BKH; (2) at feeder in Brookings all period, CAT.

FINCHES, SPARROWS

Cardinal -- Increased numbers. From (1 to 7) daily at feeder, Yankton, WH; (5 to 10) daily at feeder all period, peak 1/25 (7 m., 9 f.) Yankton, JMW; reports also from Clay, Hughes (banded 2, RLH), and Roberts Counties.

Evening Grosbeak -- Good numbers, especially in Black Hills. Many in small flocks all period, Rapid City, BHAS; 12/2 (26), 12/20 (16), 2/20 (4) Perkins Co., AH; (2) all period, Highmore, JH; many all period, Sturgis, EEM; 12/12 (16) Vermillion, H. Steinbach (*vide* KJH); 12/20 (6), 1/2 (12) Waubay N.W.R., RRR, DSW; (8) at feeder all period, Brookings, CAT; (30) at feeder all period, 2/5 (60) Belle Fourche, IW; 12/24 (7), then daily at feeder, peak 2/6 (23) Yankton, WH; 2/12 to 2/28 small flock daily at feeder, peak 2/25 (21) Yankton, JMW; 2/11 Deuel Co. (1) BKH; 1/21 Burke L. (1), only sighting all winter, GLS; 12/28 to 2/25 (10) Huron, JWJ.

Purple Finch -- Good flight. Reports of (3 to 7) birds from Lake, Brookings, Yankton, Deuel, Gregory, Lawrence, and Penn. Counties, and Waubay N.W.R.

Cassin's Finch -- 1/14 (2 m.) at feeder, Rapid City, NRW; 2/3 (2) Lawrence Co., JLM.

PINE GROSBEAK -- The invasion of this species was probably the largest to ever occur in So. Dak., with (30) observations reported from 14 counties: Deuel, Roberts, Grant, Yankton, Brown, Day, Brookings, Hyde, Huron, Madison, Codington, Hand, Lawrence, and Meade. Dates ranged from 12/5 in the Black Hills to 3/16 in Deuel Co. A report in a later issue will give details and credits.

Gray-crowned Rosy Finch -- A few present all winter, Rapid City, BHAS; 1/2 (2) near Sturgis with a flock of redpolls, EEM; 1/2 (1) caught by hand in garage and brought in house where it was compared to illustrations in field guide - a new bird for us, Perkins Co., AH.

Hoary Redpoll -- Identified at Rapid City by N.R. Whitney and other observers. Jocie Mortimer estimated there was an average of 3 Hoarys in every flock of 150 Common Redpolls. 1/17 to 2/15 Hyde

Co. (2) at feeder with Common Redpolls, Mr. and Mrs. Reher (*vide* JH); 2/8, 2/24 (1) Clear Lake, BKH; 2/18 (3) Sand Lake N.W.R., SW; banded (4) during Feb., Brookings Co., NJH.

Common Redpoll -- Invasion year for this species, with large numbers in many areas: 2/27 Rapid City (estimated 1000) BLG; flocks of up to (200-300) all period, EEM; 2/14 Belle Fourche (50) at feeder, IW; 1/15 (150), 2/11 (520) Yankton Co., WH; common in Jan. and Feb., banded (148) in Feb., Brookings Co., NJH; many flocks of (15-20) during period, Deuel Co., BKH; 1/1 (150) Reliance, WCT; 2/7 (100) Sand Lake N.W.R., SW; 12/30 (508), estimated 1500 stayed all winter, LaCreek N.W.R., HHB. Reports also from Hughes, Clay, Perkins, Gregory, and Hyde Counties, and Waubay N.W.R.

Pine Siskin -- Reports from Penn., Meade, Hyde, Bon Homme, Hughes, Brookings, Bennett, and Gregory (banded 65, GLS) Counties.

American Goldfinch -- Reports from Yankton, Bon Homme, Moody, Penn., and Gregory Counties. Birds beginning to show yellow the third week of Feb. at Rapid City, LAW, JLM, BLG.

Red Crossbill -- 2/11 Lake Co. (1) RN; 2/23 Rapid City (1 f.) with (2 imm.) that were heavily streaked, Horace Jackson (*vide* EMS).

White-winged Crossbill -- (12) all period, Brookings, GHF; 12/3 (19), 2/18 (3) Lake Co., RB; 1/14 Waubay N.W.R. (1) at feeder, RRR; flock of (25) all period, heard in full song on two occasions, Clear Lake, BKH.

Rufous-sided Towhee -- 12/17 to 1/1 (1 m.) at Deuel Co. feeder, Harry Leshner (*vide* BKH); 12/24 rural Yankton (1) in yard, Dr. Sattler (*vide* WH); 1/3 Reliance (1 m.) clearly observed, able to fly well, WCT; 1/7 to 1/29, 2/5 (1) in yard, Gavin's Pt., D. Unkenholz (*vide* WH).

Dark-eyed Junco (W.-w.) -- Average (15) at most Rapid City feeders.

Dark-eyed Junco (Sl.-col.) -- Present in small numbers at most feeders.

Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon) -- Occasionally one or two in flocks of Slate-colored.

Tree Sparrow -- (1000's) wintered at LaCreek N.W.R., HHB. In most of the other areas the numbers appeared to be below normal, with (2-12) at most feeders.

Harris' Sparrow -- More reports than usual, with as many as (6-7) at feeders. Reports from Hyde, Butte, Clay, Yankton, Lake, Penn., Lawrence, Brookings, Deuel, Gregory, and Beadle Counties.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW -- (1) all period at feeder in Gary, Deuel Co., Jim Cole (*vide* BKH); 2/2 to 2/28 Yankton (1) daily at feeder, JMW.

Song Sparrow -- 12/11 (1) Fall River Co., 12/19, 1/15 (1) Rapid City, JLM; 12/18 to 2/28 Yankton (1) occasionally at feeder, JMW; 1/15 n.e. Yankton Co. (1) WH.

Lapland Longspurs -- 12/30 LaCreek N.W.R. (7) rarely sighted thereafter, HHB; reported from all areas; many along roadsides with Horned Larks and Snow Buntings.

Snow Bunting -- (1000's) in the area in Jan. and Feb. although they favored neighboring over-grazed pastures over the LaCreek Refuge grasslands, HHB; good numbers in most areas, including flocks of several hundred throughout w. Perkins Co. from 1/1 to 2/12 (AH); disappeared from Deuel Co. during severe Jan. weather, but reappeared in Feb.; they usually remain in the northeast in numbers throughout the winter; reports from Hyde, Brookings, Lyman, Penn., Meade, Yankton, Gregory, Roberts, and Grant Counties, and Waubay N.W.R.

CONTRIBUTORS

EAST RIVER

- (CB) - Carol Breen, Hurley, Turner Co.
 (RB) - Robert Buckman, Madison, Lake Co.
 (GHF) - Gladycy H. Froiland, Brookings
 (WH) - Willis and Rosamond Hall, Yankton, Yankton Co., Bon Homme Co.
 (BKH) - Bruce K. Harris, Clear Lake, Deuel Co., Grant Co., Roberts Co.
 (JH) - June Harter, Highmore, Hyde Co.
 (RLH) - Richard L. Hill, Pierre, Hughes Co.
 (NJH) - Nelda J. Holden, s. Brookings Co.
 (KJH) - Karolyn J. Hoover, s. Clay Co.
 (JWJ) - J.W. Johnson, Huron, Beadle Co.
 (CMP) - Carol M. Peterson, Brookings
 (CAT) - Charles A. Tavior, Brookings
 (SW) - Sam Waldstein, Mgr., Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Brown Co.
 (LIW) - Lois I. Wells, n. Moody Co.
 (JMW) - Juli M. Wilcox, Yankton
 (RRJ, DSW, HOS) - Robert R. Johnson, Mgr.; David S. Wiseman and Harvey O. Smith, Waubay National Wildlife Refuge, Day Co.

WEST RIVER

- (BHAS) - Black Hills Audubon Society, Rapid City, Penn. Co. Members: Adelaide Brodsky (AMB); Darnelle Dunn (DAD); G.L. DeFord (DeF); Norma Eckmann (NJE); Bonnie Green (BLG); Tom and Nancy Hays (TMH); Verna Hellman (VMH); Doris Knecht (DHK); Richard D. Michael (RDM); Dorothy F. Mikkelson (DFM); Jocie Mortimer (JML); Wayne and Carol Olson (WO); Leighton and Ruth Palmerton (LRP); Helen Schweigert (HLS); Esther Serr (EMS); Elizabeth Southmayd (EAS); Norma Thomson (NFT); Virgil Van Heuvelen (VBV); N.R. Whitney (NRW); Leota Williams (LAW); Clara Yarger (CY); Lenord Yarger (LY).
 (HHB) - Harold H. Burgess, Mgr., LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge, Bennett Co.
 (AH) - Alfred and Gertrice Hinds, Prairie City, w. Perkins Co.
 (EEM) - Ernest E. Miller, Sturgis, w. Meade Co.
 (BMN) - Barney Nordstrom, Fairburn, e. Custer Co.
 (GLS) - Galen L. Steffen, Burke, Gregory Co.
 (WCT) - Walter C. Thietje, Reliance, Lyman Co.
 (IW) - Irma Weyler, Belle Fourche, Butte Co.
 (JS) - Jan Sailer, Hettinger, No. Dak. -- reported observations from Harding and Perkins Counties.

Summer Observations of the Mountain Plover in Southwest South Dakota (Continued from page 30)

grass. I returned later that evening (19:00) and again flushed a Mountain Plover and, shortly thereafter, another. Both flew short distances, landed, and ran, keeping about 30 m away from me. While the birds were flying I heard two calls. The most frequent was a single, short note. The other was a series of blended, seemingly questioning notes. The birds were silent when on the ground. The observations on 5 and 12 July were similar to those of the morning of 1 July.

The topography and vegetation of the area were not typical of Mountain Plover nesting habitat such as described by Bent (1928) and Graul (1973). Both characterize the expected nesting habitat as flat plains with a very low vegetation cover. The Bennett County area has a topography of a gentle south slope ending in the floodplain of the river. The vegetation of the hillside was predominantly western wheatgrass (*Agropyron Smithii*) and prairie sand reedgrass (*Calamovilfa longifolia*). As the area was not being grazed, the grasses were not short. Scattered forbs were present.

On 17 July I attempted to show the birds to Dr. C.A. Ely (Fort Hays State University, Hays, Ks.) but we failed to find them. The previous week had been unusually hot and windy. Also, for the first time that summer, the pasture was being grazed. Two other species that had been nesting in the area (Bobolinks, *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*, and Upland Sandpipers, *Bartramia longicauda*) were also absent where they had previously been common. Whether all, any, or none of these factors were responsible for the birds being absent, I do not know. Although I continued observations in this area and in the adjacent LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge until August, I did not observe Mountain Plovers again.

I thank Dr. Charles A. Ely for his help and advice during and after the summer of 1977, Dr. J. Choate and Dr. R. Nicholson for the opportunity to study birds in South Dakota, and Dr. Jerome A. Jackson for his critical review of this note.

--Ren Lohofener, Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Ms. 39762.

Least Tern at LaCreek NWR

On 1 June 1977, I observed one Least Tern in a flock of Forster's Terns (hence, the size difference was readily apparent). It was foraging over a pool directly south of the Refuge headquarters. This was not surprising to me since Least Terns are known to nest on the Platte River in Nebraska, south of LaCreek NWR (John W. Hardy, 1957, *The Least Tern in the Mississippi Valley*, Pub. of the Mus. of Michigan State University 1:1). In fact, Hardy has an arrow designating probable migration routes that would pass through the LaCreek area. I feel that this is a valid report and am quite sure of my identification. -- Ren Lohofener, Dept. of Zoology, Mississippi State Univ., Mississippi State, Ms. 39762.

Sharp-tailed Sparrows at LaCreek NWR

On 30 and 31 July 1977, Sharp-tailed Sparrows were observed in a pure stand of salt grass in the LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge area. But, because I was the only observer and because of the few reports of this bird in the west, I have not included it in our LNWR species list in this issue of *Bird Notes*. I believe, however, that South Dakota bird watchers should be informed of the observations. Perhaps they will be able to substantiate my records in the future. -- Ren Lohofener, Dept. of Zoology, Mississippi State Univ., Mississippi State, Ms. 39762.

General Notes of Special Interest (Continued from page 33)

BOREAL CHICKADEE IN ABERDEEN
Between February 19 and March 7, 1978, a chickadee that was different appeared several times at the feeder at Margerey Arbogast's home. When she saw it on March 4, she again noted that the bird was too brown for a Black-capped. After comparing it with the illustration in *Bird of North America*, she identified it as the Boreal Chickadee. She then called me, and I went to observe the bird on March 6.

From a window, at a distance of 12-15 feet, we had a clear view of the bird, noting the brown cap and back, and the brown below the wings. The brown on the back was not the chestnut color of the Chestnut-backed Chickadee. The color and markings were those of the Boreal Chickadee. The day of the observation was calm, clear, and mild.

The last day that the bird was seen at the feeder was March 7. -- Larry Lynch, Aberdeen.

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COMMON GALLINULE IN CUSTER COUNTY -- In September, 1977, we toured the Black Hills with Dwight and Marge Lynch of Homosassa, Florida, and then separated at Custer on September 18. They proceeded south and we returned to Sioux Falls. They later wrote to say they had stopped at the Buffalo Gap rest area in Custer County, and observed a Common Gallinule on a small pond that was ringed with cattails. The Lynches are experienced birders and, being from Florida, they are familiar with both gallinules. -- Gladyce and Charles Rogge, Sioux Falls.

Published by
SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION
Editor: June Harter
P.O. Box 236
Highmore, S.D. 57345

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MECKLING, S.D. 57044

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112 West 42nd
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

FALL MEETING AT RAPID CITY November 10 and 11, 1978

Headquarters: Surbeck Center, School of Mines Campus, Rapid City

Tentative Schedule:

Friday, November 10, 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.
Registration, social time, and informal program.

Saturday, November 11
8:00 to 9:00 a.m. - Registration
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon - Paper session
12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. - Lunch
1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. - Paper session
3:30 p.m. - Business meeting
4:30 p.m. - Board of Directors' meeting
6:30 p.m. - Banquet and program

Call for Papers:

Send title of presentation, estimated number of minutes required for presentation, and audio visual equipment needs to Les Baylor, 1941 Red Dale Dr., Rapid City, SD 57701

Banquet reservations:

Send reservations for banquet by November 6 (so the caterer may be informed) to Les Baylor (address above) or call 342-0211.

Accommodations:

	Distance from campus	Rates	
		Single	Double
Imperial 400 Motel 125 Main 800-531-5300 (Reservations)	6 blocks	16.50	22.50
Tip Top Motel 405 St. Joseph 343-3903	9 blocks	17.50 19.50	22.50 24.50
Lamplighter Motel 27 St. Joseph 342-3385	5 blocks	14.50	16.50
Golden Pagoda Motel 206 Main 342-6232	6 blocks	12.88	16.88

Other motels include the Holiday Inn, Super "8", Town and Country, and Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge. They are two to three miles from the campus.