

South Dakota Bird Notes

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Least Bittern

Photo: Ron Spomer

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE



In recent years, many states have initiated programs in nongame species management. Often money for these endeavors comes from voluntary state income tax check-offs. The checkoff gives taxpayers the option of donating part of their refunds to nongame management programs. Since 1977, when Colorado initiated the first such tax checkoff, 12 more states have passed similar legislation.

Minnesota has a nongame wildlife checkoff; during the first year about \$569,000 was donated. This money was used to support more than 50 projects and activities. The information that follows was gleaned from the Winter 1982 issue of *Naturalist*, the beautifully illustrated and well written journal of the Natural History Society of Minnesota (Medical Arts Building, Minneapolis MN 55402).

Some of the donations supported status surveys of species, including Red-shouldered Hawks in southeastern Minnesota, prairie songbirds in the northwest, Yellow Rails and Sharp-tailed Sparrows in the northcentral region, and Prairie Chickens and Sandhill Cranes in Wadena Co. Other projects studied the status and ecology of breeding Piping Plovers in the Lake of the Woods. As a result, a new dredge-spoil island will be landscaped to be attractive to nesting plovers and Common Terns.

In another undertaking, an attempt to save Eastern Bluebirds, a design was perfected for drilling large holes in the tops of wooden fence post along interstate highway rights-of-way. Of 93 drilled posts, 70 contained nesting Tree Swallows and 9 housed breeding bluebirds. In yet another project, an effort was launched to reintroduce Trumpeter Swans to suitable habitat in Minnesota. Eight eggs, obtained from our own Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge, were incubated at Minnesota's Carlos Avery Wildlife Refuge. Five of these eggs produced cygnets. Finally, Peregrine Falcon chicks were released along the Mississippi River. Although 1 was injured and another was taken by a Great Horned Owl, 3 falcons were successfully fledged.

Plans call for the annual release of 20 chicks until this species becomes reestablished along the river.

The commitment of Minnesota's citizens to nongame management is clear. Total donations in the checkoff's second year increased to about \$631,000. Iowa also is initiating a similar program known as the Chickadee Checkoff, which is expected to raise perhaps \$200,000 in the first year. But what about South Dakota? Nongame programs in our state are dismally neglected. Essentially we have but one such endeavor, a raptor management project in the northwest. And that study receives only 25% of its funding from the state. We need to do much better. We can't go the route of a checkoff system because we don't have a state income tax. We must look towards a legislative appropriation. But, in the past, our legislature has been less than enthusiastic about nongame management. Clearly we need widespread public support for this cause. Corporately and individually, the SDOU membership should work hard to get significant nongame programs going in our state.

A REVIEW OF WINTER FINCH POPULATION CYCLES, 1980-1983, AND A 1982 BIRD BANDING REPORT

Dan A. Tallman
Northern State College
Aberdeen 57401

Introduction

With 3463 individuals of 68 species tagged, the 1982 banding year proved to be spectacular. Three reasons for this success were high numbers of siskins, a strong influx of Purple Finches in the fall, and a huge invasion of redpolls in the beginning of the year. This paper reviews population cycles since 1980 of Pine Siskins, Common Redpolls, American Goldfinches, and Purple Finches and presents the results of my other banding activities during 1982.

Methods and Materials

Methods and materials were similar to those used in previous years (see Holden and Tallman, SDBN 34:58-63, 1982). All the birds reported herein were banded at my residential backyard in Aberdeen, South Dakota. During 250 days of 1982 I banded at least 1 bird.

Results

In 1982 I banded an average of 13.9 birds/day, compared to 8.9 birds/day banded in 283 banding days in 1981. Table 1 contains a list of the birds banded during 1982. Figure 1 contains graphs of the monthly catch of Pine Siskins, Common Redpolls, Purple Finches, and American Goldfinches banded between 1980 and the spring of 1983.

Discussion

The 1982 banding year saw the largest number of birds to be processed at my banding station in the 4 years I have worked in South Dakota. The primary reason for this record was an invasion of Common Redpolls. Almost 30% of the 3463 individual birds banded were redpolls. One interesting pattern that can be seen in Figure 1 is an apparent displacement of siskins by the redpoll invasion. In the 1980/81 winter, without redpolls, siskins remained in the Aberdeen area in great numbers. Siskins began the 1981 fall in equally high numbers but then dropped until after the redpoll departed, when the siskins again appeared (and in record numbers). Where did the siskins go? Two retrapped siskins suggest that they moved farther south. Dr. Nonhof of Red Lake MN banded 1 near Salina KS on 24 February 1982 (band number 1600-72172) that I caught in Aberdeen on 14 May 1982. A second siskin, banded by me in Aberdeen on 21 June 1981 (band 1630-95083), was caught by a bander on 15 April 1982 at Baldwin City KS. Redpolls and siskins were absent or uncommon during the 1979/80 and 1982/83 winters; therefore low siskin populations do not necessarily assure influxes of redpolls into the area.

Unlike the siskins and redpolls, American Goldfinches in Aberdeen seem to have relatively predictable population cycles. Goldfinches are most abundant in the fall, generally tapering off from then until the following fall (this species was relatively abundant in the 1980 spring after my purchase of a thistle feeder). However, data (in press) collected during the 1982/83 winter suggest goldfinch populations rise if siskins are absent. Purple Finches also were fairly predictable until the 1982 fall. Previously they appeared in small numbers in the fall and spring. But, in the 1982 fall, they became the most common visitor to the feeder. Curiously, their numbers fell drastically with the coming of 1983, although perhaps a couple of dozen banded finches remained faithful to the vicinity. Banded Purple Finches also visited feeders in other areas of Aberdeen at least through April 1983.

Some controversy seems to exist about the regularity of

winter finch population irruptions. Evening Grosbeak numbers are said to be tied to conifer seed crops and on a 2-year cycle (Terres, *The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds*, New York: Knopf, 1980). However, the birds in this report are primarily angiosperm seed eaters (alders and birches). Nevertheless, food shortages do seem to be the reason for winter finch invasions. Baird ("The Irruptive Phenomenon", *Audubon Field Notes* 18:5-6, 1964) reports that these population irruptions are not predictably cyclic, at least over the short term.

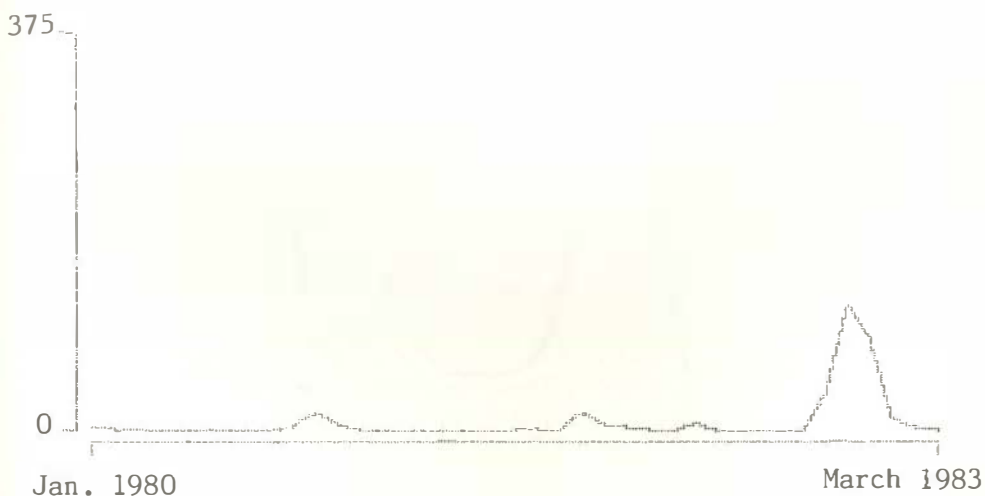
Future study will shed light on the regularity of these invasions in northern South Dakota. Of particular interest will be the dynamics of the siskin populations during the next redpoll influx in Aberdeen. Apparently few past redpoll invasions have been even documented in the literature (Mewaldt, pers. comm.). Mewaldt, who banded birds in Aberdeen in the 1930's, wrote me that he does not recall a redpoll invasion during that decade. Finally, the lack of redpolls and siskins during the 1982/83 winter seems to coincide with a better than average food crop, both in South Dakota (Harris, pers. comm.) and in other areas of the northern United States (Brien and Mitchell, *Sanctuary* 22:23, 1983). But this good food crop makes the Purple Finch influx of this period all the more unexpected.

Table 1. Summary of birds banded at Tallman's banding station in residential Aberdeen.

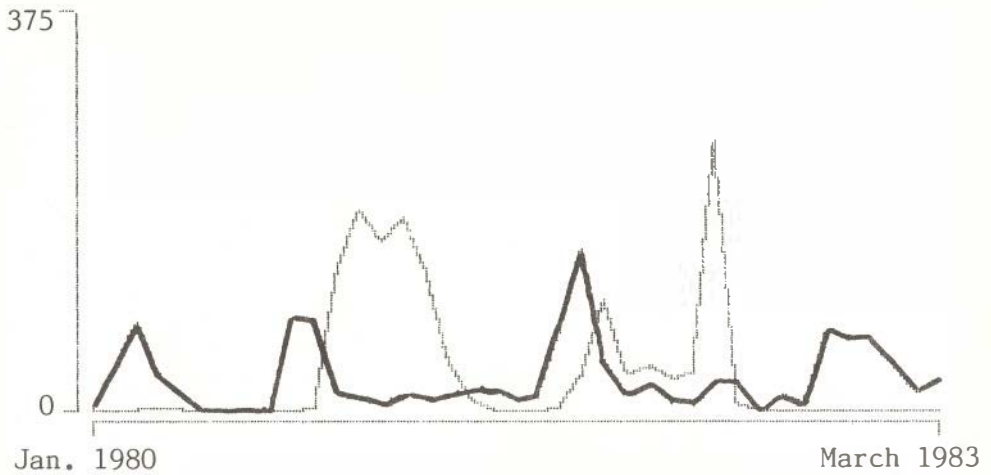
7	Mourning Dove	27	Swainson's Thrush
5	Downy Woodpecker	9	Hermit Thrush
5	Hairy Woodpecker	143	American Robin
7	Yellow-shafted Flicker	7	Gray Catbird
23	"Traill's" Flycatcher	7	Brown Thrasher
2	Empidonax sp.	105	Cedar Waxwing
42	Least Flycatcher	4	European Starling
1	Blue Jay	1	Solitary Vireo
15	Black-capped Chickadee	9	Warbling Vireo
1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	3	Red-eyed Vireo
4	White-breasted Nuthatch	13	Tennessee Warbler
3	Brown Creeper	26	Orange-crowned Warbler
16	House Wren	3	Nashville Warbler
9	Golden-crowned Kinglet	11	Yellow Warbler
16	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	Magnolia Warbler
2	Veery	32	Myrtle Warbler
11	Gray-cheeked Thrush	1	Blackburnian Warbler

2	Blackpoll Warbler	14	Fox Sparrow
2	Black-and-White Warbler	2	Song Sparrow
1	American Redstart	37	Lincoln's Sparrow
1	Worm-eating Warbler	43	White-throated Sparrow
24	Ovenbird	18	White-crowned Sparrow
4	Northern Waterthrush	25	Harris' Sparrow
1	Connecticut Warbler	301	Slate-colored Junco
15	Morning Warbler	3	Oregon Junco
1	MacGillivray's Warbler	19	Red-winged Blackbird
6	Common Yellowthroat	79	Common Grackle
10	Wilson's Warbler	1	Brown-headed Cowbird
1	Canada Warbler	1	Orchard Oriole
1	Scarlet Tanager	7	Baltimore Oriole
1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	242	Purple Finch
2	Spotted Towhee	1019	Common Redpoll
44	American Tree Sparrow	4	Hoary Redpoll
103	Chipping Sparrow	529	Pine Siskin
13	Clay-colored Sparrow	321	American Goldfinch

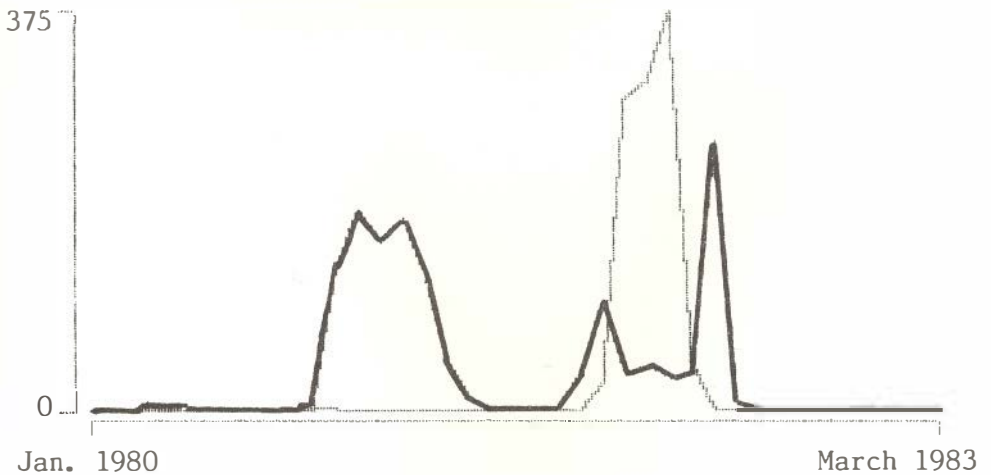
Figure 1. Graph of winter finch population cycles at Aberdeen, South Dakota, 1980-1982.



A) Purple Finches: highest peak in November 1982.



B) Goldfinches (thick line) and Pine Siskins (thin line): goldfinch peaks in winters, highest siskin peak in May 1982.



C) Siskins (thick line) and Common Redpolls (thin line): redpolls peaked January-March 1982.

GENERAL NOTES

UNUSUAL NUMBERS OF GOSHAWKS IN GREGORY COUNTY.--During late November and throughout December 1982, I recorded unusual numbers of Northern Goshawks in the Burke area of Gregory Co. I made my first sighting on 21 November 1982 when I observed an adult goshawk at Burke Lake Recreation Area near Burke. In the days that followed, until the second week in December, I made several more sightings of a single goshawk. On 8 December I suspected that 2 goshawks might be present because, in a matter of minutes, I had records of single birds from widely separated areas.

Then on the morning of 13 December, as they flew across the road in front of my car, I observed the incredible number of 4 goshawks, all in view in less than 1 min. The hawks were observed at a distance of no more than 30 yd on a clear and sunny day. The first to cross my path was a beautiful adult, followed closely by another. I then glanced in the direction from which the hawks had come and saw 2 more goshawks, an immature and another adult, leave their perches in a tall cottonwood tree. Apparently the birds were all sitting together in the tall cottonwoods below the Burke Lake dam grade and were startled into flight by my car's approach. After crossing in front of me, the goshawks all disappeared into a dense stand of Red Cedar and Ponderosa Pine.

I am certain of my identification--the white eye stripes of the adults were plainly visible. The eye stripe of the heavily streaked immature, although paler than those of the adults, could be clearly seen through 8-power binoculars. The characteristic accipiter shape and flight pattern of each of the birds were also noted.

Later that same day I again saw 2 adults together in the area. During the remainder of December I observed 1 and sometimes 2 goshawks on nearly all my visits to Burke Lake. Also during December, Conservation Officer Dennis Lengkeek of Burke sighted goshawks north and east of Burke. On 19 December, he observed 2 adults together in a bushy draw in the Missouri River breaks some 15 mi N and E Burke. On 21 December, Lengkeek observed a single adult goshawk about 10 mi east of his original sighting.

My sightings of goshawks at Burke Lake continued through January 1983, although the records were not as frequent as during December. My last sighting was of a single bird on 29 January.--Galen L. Steffen, Burke 57523.

GOSHAWK LATE SPRING DATE.--Late in the afternoon of 8 April 1982, I observed an immature Northern Goshawk at Burke Lake Recreation area near Burke. When first seen, the bird was perched in a dead tree across the lake from me, a distance of about 150 yd. I was able to get excellent views of the hawk with my spotting scope. The goshawk then flew out over the lake, at which time I noted the characteristic accipiter shape and flight pattern. The hawk made several low passes at the many ducks resting on the water, but made no strikes. This sighting ties the goshawk's latest date, a bird observed by Harris in Deuel Co. on 8 April 1973, listed by Whitney et al. (*The Birds of South Dakota*).--Galen L. Steffen, Burke 57523.

NORTHERN PARULAS AT BROOKINGS.--A pair of Northern Parula Warblers visited our yard in Brookings on the morning of 17 September 1982. For perhaps 15 to 20 sec I watched through my binoculars the first bird, a blue-headed warbler with an interrupted yellow throat, as it flitted in the mostly defoliated backyard ash. When it departed, I went into the house and identified the bird as a male Northern Parula. I went back out hoping to relocate it. From the south, what appeared to be a female parula flew into the same ash. The bird stayed in the tree for 1 or 2 minutes, allowing for confirmation of field marks. After flying to a nearby basswood (where the parula fluttered and hovered while descending into the foliage), the bird disappeared into the depths of the tree and presumably out the other side. No more Northern Parulas were observed.--Steve Van Sickle, Brookings 57006.

THREE-TOED WOODPECKER AT BROOKINGS.--The Three-toed Woodpecker (formerly called the Northern Three-toed Woodpecker) is a bird that "never" occurs in eastern South Dakota. But on 9 January 1983, in our hackberry and in our neighbor's weeping willow, a male Three-toed Woodpecker was plainly visible. I noted the bird's yellow crown and white-barred back. Seeming very nervous, the woodpecker remained in the area only about 2 min. It moved about among only the upper branches of the trees, not stopping to inspect the trunk or lower branches. The sky was darkly overcast, raining, with a faint NNW wind at 33 degrees F. After this brief visit, the bird flew south southeast.--Charles A. Taylor, Brookings 57006.

1982 BANDING AT BURKE.--My banding totals for 1982, both in

numbers of species and individuals, were down drastically from previous years. This decline was due to a combination of a lack of time to spend banding and a lack of birds when I had the time. I did manage to band the following birds: Purple Martin (116), Black-capped Chickadee (1), Brown Thrasher (3), American Robin (3), Common Grackle (3), Myrtle Warbler (1), Chipping Sparrow (5), and Slate-colored Junco (1).--Galen L. Steffen, Burke 57523.

WINTERING YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS IN GREGORY COUNTY.--Occasionally during January 1983 I heard Yellow-rumped Warbler call notes coming from the heavy growth of cedar trees near 1 of my banding stations at the Burke Lake Recreation Area near Burke. I was unable to confirm my identification until 4 February 1983, when I finally saw, at close range, 2 Yellow-rumped Warblers. The birds fed on the many berries present on a cedar tree. After several minutes both warblers moved out of sight into the heavy cover. Several days later, in the same area, I saw another warbler, perhaps 1 of the original 2. This record is the second winter one that I have for this species at the Burke Lake area. My previous sighting was of a single bird on 23 December 1976 (SDBN 29:41).--Galen L. Steffen, Burke 57523.

PROBABLE ARCTIC HORNED OWL AT ABERDEEN.--While walking along Moccasin Creek just south of the 12th Avenue bridge, I was startled when I flushed a large owl from about eye-level in the poplars that edge the creek. Fortunately I am in the habit of carrying binoculars, because the owl landed near the top of tall poplars about 50 yds further downstream. I discovered the bird to be an incredibly plumaged Great Horned Owl. The bird lacked the ochraceous color common to resident birds of this species; this owl was completely barred dusky-gray and white. I have seen Snowy Owls darker than this Great Horned Owl. The bird's most striking features were a large white scapular streak and bright yellow eyes that peered from behind an almost pure white facial disc.

This owl was almost certainly the Arctic Horned Owl, Bubo virginianus wapacuthu, that breeds in northcentral Canada and winters south, in our area, to Nebraska and Colorado. The Birds of South Dakota says only that "individuals of the pale arctic race may occur in the winter."

Because Great Horned Owls are early nesters, I suspect my record is late for this visitor from the subarctic. Although Bent ("Life Histories of North American Birds of

Prey," *USMN Bull.* 167, 1937) claims that no behavioral differences are known between races of Great Horned Owls, the bird I observed seemed tamer than normal for the species. The bird seemed to have trouble balancing on its high perch. I speculate that one reason for the bird's late occurrence may have been due to the possibility that it was crippled.--Dan A. Tallman, Northern State College, Aberdeen 57401.

CHRISTMAS COUNTS, 1982/83

compiled by Dan A. Tallman
Northern State College
Aberdeen 57401

Eleven Christmas Bird Counts were reported in this year. Here follows some of the base data included in the reports.

Pierre, 18 December 1982, 26 observers, Bob Summerside, compiler, light rain and snow, wind 54 mph.

Spearfish, 2 January 1983, 12 observers.

Rapid City, 19 December 1982, 10 observers, Esther Serr, compiler, mild temperatures.

Wilmot, 30 December 1982, 8 observers, Bruce Harris, compiler, 10-28 degrees, wind 5-10 mph.

Deuel Co., 2 January 1983, 6 observers, Bruce Harris, compiler, 10-20 degrees.

Yankton, 1 January 1983, 6 observers, Willis Hall, compiler, 21-27 degrees.

Waubay, 21 December 1982, 21 December 1982.

Aberdeen, 19 December 1982, Everett Montgomery, compiler, 29-37 degrees.

Brookings, 18 December 1982, Nelda Holden, compiler, 48 degrees.

Sand Lake, 20 December 1982, 7 observers, Bob Edens, compiler, 25-27 degrees.

Sioux Falls, 18 December 1982, 26 observers, Gil Blankespoor, compiler, temperatures in the 40's.

	Pierre	Spearfish	Rapid City	Wilmot	Deuel Co.	Yankton	Waubay	Aberdeen	Brookings	Sand Lake	Sioux Falls
Great Blue Heron			1								1
Tundra Swan										3	
Snow Goose	5		1							30	
Canada Goose	11015	3					200	10		500	
Green-winged Teal	3		28								
Mallard	3965	14	835			1446	150	80	1	850	236
Northern Pintail	1		1								
Gadwall	10		52			8					
American Wigeon			43								
Canvasback										1	
Redhead	4										
Ring-necked Duck	4										
Lesser Scaup	14		3							1	
Common Goldeneye	14		38			10					
Barrow's Goldeneye			1								
Bufflehead	11		1								
Hooded Merganser	1										
Common Merganser	134		7			25					
Bald Eagle	18	4				0					
Northern Harrier	7	1	8								
Sharp-shinned Hawk								1		1	1
Cooper's Hawk						1					
Northern Goshawk			1	1		1	1		1		
Red-tailed Hawk	3	2	10			3					1
Ferruginous Hawk		2									
Rough-legged Hawk	4	30	11								
Golden Eagle	4									1	
American Kestrel	2	1	3	1	1	10		5	1	1	9
Peregrine Falcon	1										
Prairie Falcon	1	2					1	2			
Gray Partridge					11	25			6	27	
Ring-necked Pheasant	96	25	25	9	11	139	4	260	6	9	41
Greater Prairie Chicken						3					
Sharp-tailed Grouse	13	9	16								
Wild Turkey	3	22	159			7					
Northern Bobwhite						23					
American Coot			3								
Killdeer			1								1
Common Snipe		4									
Bonaparte's Gull	2										
Ring-billed Gull	21										
Herring Gull	46										
Rock Dove	130	183	69	132	58	172	1	202	136	29	445
Mourning Dove				1							3
Eastern Screech Owl			1			1					
Great Horned Owl	11		2	8	5	7	1	5	9	7	
Snowy Owl							1	1		2	
Long-eared Owl	2										
Belted Kingfisher	2	2	3		1	1					
Lewis' Woodpecker		2									

	. Pierre	. Spearfish	. Rapid City	. Wilmot	. Deuel Co.	. Yankton	. Waukey	. Aberdeen	. Brookings	. Sand Lake	. Sioux Falls
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1			3	1	1					13
Downy Woodpecker	15	5	24	22	13	16	7	12	26	2	55
Hairy Woodpecker	14	2	10	12	5	5	5	7	6		
Common Flicker	14	10	8	4				7	10		
Yellow-shafted Flicker						9				5	36
Horned Lark	118	15		164	320			1556	29	2	5
Gray Jay			2								
Blue Jay	2	67	57	17	17	28	3	20	39	6	47
Pinyon Jay		4	39								
Black-billed Magpie	14	21	63			4					
American Crow		34	61	35	18	32		2	76		300
Black-capped Chickadee	86	147	226	49	45	39	31	14	134	11	210
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2	3	92			1			10		3
White-breasted Nuthatch	10	1	46	25	14	2	1	8	26		73
Pygmy Nuthatch			2								
Brown Creeper	4		16		1	2	2	1	5		3
Canyon Wren			12								
American Dipper			2								
Golden-crowned Kinglet	9		18			2			12		2
Townsend's Solitaire	2	15	62								
American Robin	320	58	83			11		87	2	1	
Bohemian Waxwing	10	794	1								
Cedar Waxwing	87	79	13	4		11		46	28		21
Northern Shrike	4	4	3	1			1		2	2	2
European Starling	817	245	1046	302	86	252	34	294	439	52	1312
Northern Cardinal	1					7			5		18
American Tree Sparrow	63	328	48	124	82	142	28	2	172	53	382
Song Sparrow	1	2	1								
White-throated Sparrow									1		
Harris' Sparrow		7				1					17
Dark-eyed Junco					12			3			
Slate-colored Junco	64	108	159	75		126			87	9	337
White-winged Junco		42	293								
Oregon Junco		4	62	2					4		2
Lapland Longspur				25	5						8
Snow Bunting					1						
Red-winged Blackbird	195			1	39		2		17	275	
Yellow-headed Blackbird									2		
Rusty Blackbird	1			2							
Brewer's Blackbird	1							1		19	
Common Grackle	9			6	8	1	11	3	3	42	7
Brown-headed Cowbird	2										
Purple Finch	10	14	4	11		19	1	66	32		19
Red Crossbill			10						1		
Common Redpoll			1								
Pine Siskin	26	57	56						6		15
American Goldfinch	109	151	121	42	10	25	35	33			155
Evening Grosbeak		34	1		4						
House Sparrow	585	257	347	583	325	411	212	903	509	470	806

BOOKS ABOUT GREAT BIRD ARTISTS

Reviews by Dan A. Tallman
Northern State College
Aberdeen 57401

A Celebration of Birds: The Life and Art of Louis Agassiz Fuertes by Robert McCracken Peck. 1982, Walker and Co., New York. 178pp. Hardbound, \$30.00.

John Gould *The Bird Man* by Gordon C. Sauer. 1982, University of Kansas Press, Lawrence. 416pp. Hardbound, \$65.00.

When the subject of great bird artists comes up, most people first think of Audubon. However, aficionados of bird art will mention at least with two other names ahead of John James: Louis Agassiz Fuertes and John Gould. Recently 2 books, covering the lives and art of these men, were published.

If you need a gift for a birdwatcher or for someone you think could become interested in birds, then you should take a serious look at *A Celebration of Birds*. You might even buy it for yourself!

Fuertes was the greatest bird artist of all time. His drawings have a stunning vitality to them. Even a painting of two dead Rose-breasted Grosbeaks has more life than do many pictures by other accomplished artists. You will not be surprised to learn that the late George Sutton was Fuertes' student. Looking at Fuertes' Slate-colored Junco, one sees where Sutton got much of his inspiration. In short, Fuertes' work is simply nonpareil.

The book about Fuertes costs \$30.00, a decent price considering it contains 150 illustrations, a third of them in color, printed on high quality shiny paper. The text is well written and makes for interesting reading. I found it somewhat distracting that the pictures and biography are not presented chronologically, but rather in 3 parts entitled *The Man, The Artist, and The Naturalist*. Aesthetically the result makes understanding the development of Fuertes as an artist difficult and the text slightly repetitious. But in no way does this problem distract from Fuertes' glorious art!

The title of the next book, *John Gould the Bird Man* promises a lively and entertaining biography. What a disappointment. The University of Kansas describes the book as "a great range of material on the life, works, family

associates, and times of this major natural history artist. It offers a complete genealogy of Gould and his wife, a bibliography of Gould's major published works, a detailed chronology of his life, and an extensive bibliography and commentary on over 540 works on or about Gould."

This volume is more like the unedited research notes of a compulsive graduate student studying Gould (the author is, in fact, an M.D.). Could anyone possibly be interested in old London maps showing the neighborhoods where Gould lived, genealogies showing Gould's descendants born through the 1970's (Gould was born in 1783), or photographs of the unillustrated covers of some of Gould's publications?

These criticisms are not to imply that a wealth of information does not exist in this book. I was amazed to learn that Gould was not the actual artist for all of the Gould prints. He planned the paintings but had underlings execute the actual products. But what is lacking in this book is any apparent editing of trivia; this text is not an armchair biography of Gould. The subtitle under *John Gould the Bird Man* is "a Chronology and Bibliography" and that is exactly what this book is. No doubt an informative and entertaining biography could be easily produced from this material.

Finally, I was disappointed in the paucity of reproductions of Gould's prints. For \$65.00, I expected more than the few dozen color plates contained in the book. Undoubtedly this book is perfect for someone who wishes to devote his life to studying John Gould, his times, or associates but the rest of us probably ought to wait for the author to produce Gould's definitive biography.



Red Crossbills

Photo: Jocie Baker

THE 1982/83 WINTER SEASON

by Bruce Harris
Box 605, Clear Lake 57226

Despite some rather heavy snowstorms during mid-December and January, especially in the southeast, this winter was one of the mildest on record. Temperatures fell to zero on fewer than 6 days and reached 40-55 degrees on many others, although some days saw very strong winds. By mid-February, in the southeast, Willis Hall found pussy-willows blooming. West-river weather was similar to that in the east, although with much less snow.

Birding was very dull in the east, less so in the west. Except for goldfinches, we found practically no winter finches. Relatively hardy species that would be expected to winter were either absent or found only in small numbers. For example, very few blackbirds or grackles were found in northern South Dakota and species were not in flocks in the south. The only explanation I can offer is that severe storms in October and November encouraged these birds to move south early. Although the northeast and Gregory Co. had a good goshawk flight, Rough-legged Hawks and Snowy Owls were not numerous.

Contributors cited in this season's report are: Leon J. Anderson (LJA), Dan Bjerke (DB), Gilbert Blankespoor (GB), Kenneth Graupman (KG), Willis Hall (WH), Bruce K. Harris (BKH), Mark C. Harris (MCH), Augie Hoeger (AH), Kenneth H. Husmann (KHH), Douglas E. Kreger (DEK), John W. Koerner (JWK), Dennis Lengkeek (DK), James D. McLaird (JDM), Ernest E. Miller (EEM), Richard A. Peterson (RAP), Robert G. Rogers (RGR), Dennis R. Skadsen (DRS), William A. Schultze (WAS), Gary J. Stava (GJS), Galen L. Steffen (GLS), Dan A. Tallman (DAT), Juli E. Wilcox (JEW), Nat R. Whitney (NRW). CBC = Christmas Bird Count.

COMMON LOON--1 DECEMBER, Yankton Co. (WH). 14 FEBRUARY, Davison Co. (JDM, RGR). FIRST SOUTH DAKOTA WINTER RECORDS.

Double-crested Cormorant--6 DECEMBER, Ft. Randall Dam (KHH). Very seldom winters.

Great Blue Heron--22-24 JANUARY, Yankton Co. (WH). Sioux Falls and Rapid City CBC.

Tundra Swan--Sand Lake CBC.

Snow Goose--30 WINTERED at Sand Lake (WAS). Pierre CBC. 28 February, Turner Co., 1000 migrants (LJA).

Canada Goose--Grant Co., Big Stone City power plant, 6000 wintered (DRS). Sand Lake, 350 wintered. 13 February, Jackson Co. (KG). 20 February, Meade Co. (EEM). 19 February, Miner Co. (RGR). 27 February, Waubay NWR (JWK). The February dates indicate a very early migration.

Green-winged Teal--4 January, Pennington Co., 4 on Canyon Lake (NRW). 28 February, Yankton Co., 2 (WH). Rapid City CBC.

Mallard--Sand Lake NWR, 850 wintered (WAS). 21 December, Waubay NWR, 150 (JWK). Observed on 8 of 11 CBC. Early migrants: 16 February, Jackson Co. (KG); 19 February, Miner Co. (RGR); 27 February, Gregory Co. (GLS).

Northern Pintail--Pennington Co., 1 wintered (NRW). 1 December, Davison Co. (JDM). Pierre CBC. Early migrants: 17 February, Haakon Co., 17 (DB); 19 February, Miner Co. (RGR); 19 February, Jackson Co. (KG); 27 February, Gregory Co. (GLS); 27 February, Yankton Co. (JEW).

Northern Shoveler--January-February, Meade Co. (EEM). 27 February, Gregory Co., migrants (GLS).

Gadwall--Wintered, Yankton Co., Gavin's Point, and Pennington Co., Canyon Lake. 28 February, Turner Co., migrants (LJA).

American Wigeon--1 December, Davison Co., Lake Mitchell (JDM). Wintered, Yankton Co., Gavin's Point Dam (WH). Rapid City CBC. 28 February, Turner Co., 15 migrants (LJA).

Canvasback--1-6 DECEMBER, Yankton Co. (WH). Sand Lake CBC. 26 February, Yankton Co. (WH). 28 February, Turner Co. (LJA).

Redhead--6 DECEMBER, Charles Mix Co., Fort Randall Dam, 6 (KHH). 1-13 DECEMBER, Yankton Co., 49 (WH). Pierre CBC. Early migrants: 26 February, Jackson and Yankton Co.; 27 February, Gregory Co., 40 (GLS).

Ring-necked Duck--Pierre CBC. 1 FEBRUARY, Pierre, 3 (NRW).

10 DECEMBER, Yankton Co., 12 (WH). Early migrants: 26 February, Yankton Co. (WH); 28 February, Turner Co., 25 (LJA).

Lesser Scaup--Pierre and Rapid City CBC. 20 DECEMBER, Yankton Co., 49 (WH). 11 February, Pennington Co., 3 (NRW). Early migrants: 25 February, Davison Co., 6 (JDM); 25 February, Yankton Co., 12 (WH); 27 February, Gregory Co., 10 (GLS); 28 February, Turner Co. (LJA).

White-winged Scoter--6 December, Charles Mix Co., Fort Randall Dam (KHH).

Common Goldeneye--Early migrants: 24 FEBRUARY, Davison Co., 4; 28 February, Turner and Hutchinson Co. (LJA).

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE--Pennington Co., 1 male for 5th consecutive winter at Canyon Lake (NRW).

Hooded Merganser--4-5 December, Yankton Co. (WH). Pierre CBC.

Red-breasted Merganser--Yankton Co., female wintered at Gavin's Point Dam (LJA).

Ruddy Duck--2 December, Yankton Co. (WH).

Bald Eagle--4-10 January, Gregory Co., 49 on eagle survey (GLS, DL). A total of 36 individuals reported from Brown, Hughes, Meade, Fall River, Lawrence, and Butte Co. (20 of these observed near Pierre). 63 adults, 26 immatures, and 13 of uncertain age reported from Yankton Co. (WH).

Northern Harrier--Wintered, Jackson and Yankton Co. Migrants: 27 February, Roberts Co. (DRS); 27 February, Sandborn (RGR) and Davison Co. (JDM). Pierre and Rapid City CBC.

Sharp-shinned Hawk--Reported from Minnehaha, Gregory (2), Pennington, and Fall River Co., (3); more than usual in winter. Also Aberdeen and Sand Lake CBC.

Cooper's Hawk--Reported from Fall River Co. (RAP) and Gregory Co. (GLS). Also Yankton CBC.

Northern Goshawk--See General Notes in this issue for Gregory Co. report. A fine flight in NE with reports from

- Yankton, Roberts, Brookings, Pennington, and Day Co. 19 January, Brown Co., goshawk taking pigeons within city limits of Aberdeen (DAT).
- Red-tailed Hawk--Wintered, Davison, Yankton, Hutchinson, and Jackson Co. "Harlan's" form reported 1 December, Shannon Co. (RAP).
- Ferruginous Hawk--11 birds reported from Lawrence, Gregory, Aurora, Brule, Stanley, Hughes, and Hyde Co.
- Rough-legged Hawk--Not common except in Jackson Co. (KG). Spearfish and Rapid City CBC.
- Golden Eagle--Gregory Co., 61 counted during eagle survey (GLS, DL). 28 more observations in Tripp, Jackson, Lawrence, Meade, Fall River, Pennington, Brown, and Lyman Co.
- American Kestrel--Reported on 9 of 10 CBC.
- Merlin--Reported from Jackson and Fall River Co.
- Peregrine Falcon--20 November, Turner Co., immature dead on road (LJA). Pierre CBC.
- Prairie Falcon--19 birds reported from Haakon, Gregory, Pennington, Day, Yankton, Hughes, Lawrence, Brown, Hanson, Hutchinson, Davison, and Jackson Co.
- Greater Prairie Chicken--5 January, Gregory Co., 15 (GLS). 31 December, Yankton Co. (WH).
- Sharp-tailed Grouse--January, Gregory Co., 300 during eagle survey (GLS, DL).
- American Coot--20-24 January, Yankton Co., Gavin's Point (WH). 5 December-17 February, Yankton Co. (WH).
- Killdeer--18 December, Minnehaha Co. (GB). 1 December, Meade Co. (EEM). 15 January and 4 February, Lawrence Co. (DB).
- Common Snipe--Lawrence Co., 3 wintered (DB).
- FRANKLIN'S GULL--27 February, Yankton Co. (WH, JEW). 28 February, Bon Homme Co. (WH). 1-3 March, Gavin's Point

Dam, 3, photos taken (WH).

Bonaparte's Gull--21 November, Davison Co. (RGR). 1 December, Yankton Co., photo taken (WH). Pierre CBC.

Ring-billed Gull--4 December, Davison Co. (RGR, JDM). More than usual at Pierre and in Yankton Co. Gulls seen 4 December, Fall River Co., 15, were probably this species (RAP).

Herring Gull--4 December, Davison Co., 12 (RGR, JDM). More than usual at Pierre and in Yankton Co.

GLAUCOUS GULL--3-24 December, Yankton Co., 25, photos taken (WH). 12 February, Oahe Dam, 1st year bird (BKH, KHH, NRW). 4 December, Davison Co. (RGR, JDM).

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE--1 December, Yankton Co., 2, photos taken (WH).

Great Horned Owl--19 February, Roberts Co., nesting (DRS).

Snowy Owl--Deuel Co., 3. Sand Lake, 5. Also Minnehaha and Day Co.

Long-eared Owl--Pierre CBC.

Short-eared Owl--4 December, Deuel Co. (MCH).

Belted Kingfisher--Reported from Roberts, Deuel, Hughes, Fall River, Pennington, Yankton, and Lawrence Co. Recorded on 5 CBC.

Lewis' Woodpecker--Meade Co., 10 observations during winter (EEM). 2 January, Lawrence Co., 2 (NRW).

Red-headed Woodpecker--Reports from Minnehaha, Meade, and Yankton Co.

Red-bellied Woodpecker--30 December, Roberts Co., 3 (DRS). Wintered at Hartford Beach State Park (DRS). Pierre and Yankton CBC.

Gray Jay--Rapid City CBC.

CLARK'S NUTCRACKER--11 February, Wind Cave National Park, 4 (RAP).

- Black-billed Magpie--Gregory Co., big decrease (GLS). 21 December, Yankton Co., 5 (LJA). Rapid City CBC.
- American Crow--9 December, Brookings Co., 200 (DEK).
- Red-breasted Nuthatch--Reported from Brown, Brookings, Deuel, Lake Co., and 5 of 11 CBC.
- Pygmy Nuthatch--6 February, Fall River Co. (RAP). Rapid City CBC.
- Canyon Wren--All winter, Fall River Co., singing 15 February (RAP).
- Marsh Wren--21 JANUARY, Sanborn Co. (RGR, JDM). Located at same site in late November; very few winter records for species.
- Eastern Bluebird--22 February, Lawrence Co. (DB).
- American Robin--very few in northern counties despite mild winter and good berry crop.
- Northern Mockingbird--8 JANUARY, Jackson Co. (KG).
- Bohemian Waxwing--Reported only from Lawrence (470) and Pennington Co. (30) (NRW).
- Northern Shrike--Not common except in Davis, Jackson, and Fall River Co.; also reported in Roberts, Deuel, Brookings, Gregory, Day, Lake, Yankton, Lawrence, and Haakon Co.
- Loggerhead Shrike--3 December, Davison Co., details lacking. This species needs close scrutiny in winter.
- Orange-crowned Warbler--15 NOVEMBER, Sanborn Co. (RGR); LATEST EVER.
- Yellow-rumped Warbler--15 November, Sanborn Co. (RGR). See also General Notes, this issue.
- Black-throated Green Warbler--13 NOVEMBER, Sanborn Co. (RGR); LATEST EVER.
- Northern Cardinal--Good numbers in Brookings, Davison, and

- Minnehaha Co.; also reports from Lake, Sanborn, and ROBERTS Co.
- Rufous-sided Towhee--Wintered, Minnehaha Co., Sioux Falls (LJA).
- American Tree Sparrow--Good numbers from most reporters and all CBC's.
- VESPER SPARROW--1 DECEMBER, Deuel Co. (GJS, BKH); LATEST EVER.
- Song Sparrow--12 December and 5 January, Fall River Co. (RAP). 21 December, 11 and 23 February, Yankton Co. (WH). 25 February, Pennington Co., singing (NRW). Wintered, Spearfish (DB). Pierre CBC.
- Lincoln's Sparrow--29 OCTOBER, Sanborn Co. (RGR); LATEST EVER.
- White-throated Sparrow--Brookings CBC.
- WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW--20 JANUARY, Waubay NWR (JWK).
- Harris' Sparrow--Not common in northern South Dakota; reports from Minnehaha, Day, Gregory, and Davison Co. 15 January, Lawrence Co., 7 (DB).
- Snow Bunting--Not common anywhere but 20 February, Deuel Co., 1000 migrating (BKH). Reported on only Deuel Co. CBC.
- Western Meadowlark--In the north, only reported from Brown Co. despite mild weather.
- Yellow-headed Blackbird--Brookings CBC.
- Rusty Blackbird--Pierre and Wilmot CBC.
- Brewer's Blackbird--Pierre, Sand Lake, and Aberdeen CBC.
- Brown-headed Cowbird--Pierre CBC.
- Purple Finch--Fair numbers from most reporters and CBC.
- Red Crossbill--Very few in Black Hills; only eastern report was from Brookings Co.

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******Please report address corrections to Editor******

American Goldfinch--Definitely a good year, large numbers at some feeders.

Evening Grosbeak--Only report was from Minnehaha Co. (AH).
None in Rapid City (NRW) or Spearfish (DB).

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SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES