

SOUTH DAKOTA
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NOTES

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

How long will it be before ornithologists, banders, and birders become the next target of "animal rights" organizations? Does this sound far-fetched to you?

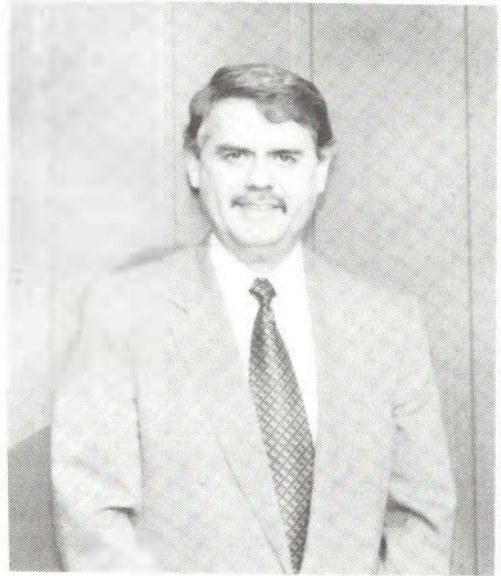
There seems to be no end to the lengths groups like People For the Ethical Treatment of Animals will go to promote their agenda. The leaderships of these groups operate under the pretense of conscience, while exhibiting none. By preying on the minds of their followers and prospective converts, with stories of horrid treatment of nature's creatures, they are able to work their way into your mind—and your pocketbook. These groups are very good at two things—fund raising and obtaining media attention.

I'm sure that each of you has been a target of some of these organizations' membership enrollment campaigns. They obviously have access to membership and subscription lists of some of the various birding and nature associations. Because of subscription list sales, you may be inadvertently aiding an animal rights group that in the future may attack some of the activities you enjoy the most.

Hunting and trapping were the first activities that felt these people's wrath, but they have branched out much farther. Examples are abundant of what the true goal of these organizations is—the total protection of all animal life from human interference of any kind. Clearly, any scientific work with birds that involves any type of capture, handling, or even flushing would be offensive to these zealots. Only time exists between now and when birders are another of their focuses.

As I was reading the financial section of the 1 August 1994 issue of *USA Today*, I came upon a small article that stated that Wal-Mart, the nation's leading retailer, will stop selling hamsters, gerbils, and birds, as soon as existing stocks are gone. One of the animal-rights groups said the action was due to their lobbying of Wal-Mart. If you want to buy a pet for your child or grandchild, you should do it soon. Cocker Spaniels may be next.

The 5 August issue of the same newspaper carried a story about animal protection advocates who signed a complaint against a New Jersey man for killing a rat with a broom handle in his garden. The advocates



said that the rat should have been humanely captured and "set free in the wild."

Ingrid Newkirk of the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals is known for her statement, "A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy." Her group says that there should be no distinction. A man who works for the same organization stated that, even if research resulted in a cure for AIDS, they would be against it, if any animals were used in the research.

Some of you may feel that I have deviated too much from the subject matter that you would expect to read on this page. I do not believe so, for I feel that these people are a serious threat to the science of ornithology. They are, and will continue to be, relentless in the pursuit of their total protection goal. Can you envision the day when our SDOU banquets consist of seaweed and rice? When we reach that point, you will have to excuse me from that dinner for a while. I'll be out in the parking lot, grilling a duck. *J. David Williams, Box 277, Ipswich SD 57451.*

PREPARATION AND EVALUATION OF RARE BIRD REPORTS

David L. Swanson

*Secretary, South Dakota Rare Bird Records Committee
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INTRODUCTION

The South Dakota Rare Bird Records Committee, hereafter RBRC, is charged with monitoring the status and distribution of rare and vagrant birds within the state. The RBRC maintains a review list of rare and vagrant birds for which reports are solicited. These review species are marked by an asterisk on the official Checklist of South Dakota Birds (copies available from Dan Tallman, NSU, Box 740, Aberdeen, SD 57401, 10 for \$3.50). The RBRC reviews reports on rare bird observations submitted to the committee by birders (Springer 1988). The RBRC evaluates all submitted reports to determine whether the description and details in the report provide an unquestionable identification of the species being reported or whether the information provided in the report is inconclusive.

After review, the RBRC assigns the report a rating based upon the information contained in the report. The rating system includes the following categories: 1S, 1P, 1R, 2, 3, and 4 (Springer 1988). The class 1 rankings apply to reports that are accompanied by supporting evidence (S for specimen, P for photograph, R for sound recording) that verifies the sighting claimed in the report. The class 2 ranking indicates that a satisfactory and convincing written description of the bird was provided in the report. Classes 1 and 2 comprise reports that are accepted into the official state bird records. Class 3 rankings indicate that the details and description presented in the report are not sufficient for positive identification and the record is not accepted on this basis. A rating of class 3 does not necessarily imply that an identification was incorrect; it simply means that the committee did not believe that the submitted materials provided an unquestionable identification. A rating of class 4 is re-

served for reports that the committee believes contain probable or certain misidentifications, and these records are not accepted on this basis.

Since the RBRC is charged with maintaining the official records on the status and distribution of rare birds within the state, the standards for evaluation employed by the committee must be rigorous to ensure scientific accuracy (see Baker 1986a, 1986b). This is particularly true for "sight" records that are not accompanied by supporting evidence. For these reports, the committee requires very complete details to classify the reports as class 2 and accept them into the official state records. Often, reports are submitted that lack sufficient details for the committee to rule out all other similar species. The committee must rate these reports as class 3 or 4, even though the observers submitting the reports may very well have been correct in their identifications. The purpose of this paper is to inform birders submitting rare bird reports to the South Dakota RBRC about the type of information and degree of detail necessary for the committee to make valid scientific judgments on submitted reports.

PREPARATION OF A RARE BIRD REPORT

One of the major problems faced by the RBRC is the evaluation of reports with scanty or incomplete details and descriptions. These reports often consist of a brief listing of one or two prominent field marks and nothing else. These reports usually fail to treat properly how the reported bird differs from similar species. For this type of report, the RBRC is left with no recourse but to reject the report, even if the observation is valid. Acceptable reports include careful and complete details and descriptions of the birds observed. Preferably, these descriptions should be made at the times of observation in the field, before consulting a field guide, rather than later from memory. If not in the field, notes should be prepared as soon after return from the field as possible, again without first referring to a field guide, before memory has a chance to fade (or enhance) details.

Birders observing a species on the review list are asked to file a report with the RBRC promptly. In this way the RBRC can speed up the process of reviewing reports without the delay of requesting the observer to submit a complete report. This is especially critical with unconfirmed reports of rare birds that are cited elsewhere, such as in the Seasonal Reports section of *South Dakota Bird Notes* or in the Regional Reports sections of *National Audubon Society Field Notes*. Without review by the RBRC, readers of these reports will not know if they have been reviewed and rated as to their acceptability.

On the South Dakota "Rare Bird Observation Form," (available from the RBRC or Dan Tallman), under the "description of bird" section, are listed the following characters: size, shape, colors, bill, feet, eyes, plumage, etc. A complete report will deal with most of these features and will describe the whole bird, rather than just one or two field marks. I will briefly deal with each of these characters, to provide some idea of the desires of the RBRC regarding details on rare birds.

SIZE

The size of a bird is often notoriously difficult to judge in the field, but a general indication of the size of the bird ("warbler-sized," "robin-sized," etc.) is appropriate. If possible, it is even better to report relative

size, if another bird or other object of known size is nearby. For example, suppose you observe a juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, foraging on the shore of a pond near a couple of Killdeer and some Least Sandpipers, with some Blue-winged Teal swimming just beyond the shore. Incidentally, a juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was observed and photographed in Minot, North Dakota, on 4 October 1991, for the first record for the Northern Great Plains region (Berkey 1992). A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper is about the size of a Pectoral Sandpiper, but this judgment may be tough to make, with no Pectorals around. However, you can say that the bird was slightly smaller than nearby Killdeer, substantially larger than nearby Least Sandpipers, and about half the size of Blue-winged Teal swimming just behind it. This description of relative size, using species observed in the same area as the reported bird, functionally establishes the size of the reported bird, within a narrow range, appropriate for the species claimed.

SHAPE

A good place to start in describing shape is to include a general statement regarding the overall appearance of the bird ("warbler-shaped," "duck-shaped," etc.). From there, other features can be treated—plumpness of the body, lengths of bill, neck, legs, wings, tail, posture, or additional physical characteristics (crest, webbing on feet, length of primaries, etc.). Of course, all of these features need not be included for every bird reported, but they are often of great help in arriving at a positive identification. For example, *Empidonax* flycatchers are difficult to identify, but the relative length of the tail and bill to the remainder of the body gives some species (Least, Yellow-bellied, Hammond's) a "large-headed look" that is a useful field mark (Kaufman 1990). Furthermore, length of primaries is an important field mark in *Empidonax* identification (Kaufman 1990).

COLORS

This feature is fairly self-explanatory, but care should be taken to denote subtleties in coloration and shading, especially between various parts of the body or between possibly confusing species. For example, female Common and Red-breasted Mergansers both have reddish-brown heads and necks, whitish breasts, and grayish flanks. However, in Common Mergansers, the reddish of the neck is sharply demarcated from the whitish breast, whereas, in the Red-breasted, the reddish of the neck rather gradually fades into the whitish breast. Another helpful hint for describing color is to provide precise descriptions of the shade. For example, in breeding plumage, both Long-billed Dowitchers and Red Knots are reddish on the face and underparts. However, the duller brownish-red of the dowitcher is quite different from the brighter red of the knot.

BILL AND FEET

General characteristics, such as length, color, webbing or partial-webbing on the feet, droop or upturn to the bill, and feathering around the base of legs or bill, can be important for identification. A useful method of reporting bill length is to use multiples of head width. For example, both Whimbrels and Long-billed Curlews have long, down-curved

bills. The Whimbrel's bill is about 2.5 times the width of the head, while the Long-billed Curlew's bill is about 4 to 5 head widths.

EYES

If possible, eye color should be noted, as this is important in some cases (e.g., White-eyed Vireo, juvenile and adult Red-eyed Vireos, female Rusty and female Brewer's Blackbirds). Another factor important in the identification of some species (e.g., Black-billed Cuckoo, certain gulls) is the color of the skin immediately surrounding the eyes.

PLUMAGE

A careful description of the plumage is, arguably, the single most important feature in most rare bird reports. Yet it is often one of the most incomplete portions of the report. Great care should be taken in describing the various parts of the plumage. These descriptions should be as complete as possible, which means the entire body should be described. A "bright yellow, warbler-shaped bird" could be a Yellow, Prothonotary, Blue-winged, Wilson's, or possibly some other warbler, or even an American Goldfinch. Careful descriptions of the plumage color, shading, and appearance on the entire body are of great benefit to the Committee in reaching appropriate decisions on acceptance or rejection. A good place to start is by reviewing the bird topography section in the front of your field guide. Here you will find terms for various portions of bird anatomy that are useful in providing complete plumage descriptions. In addition, when describing plumage, be sure to note color changes and even subtle differences in shade between various parts of the body (head and nape, wings and back, throat and breast, belly and undertail coverts, etc.).

Furthermore, the pattern of coloration is often of great importance for proper identification. Features, such as facial pattern (superciliary stripe, eye lines, eye ring, crown stripes, etc.), wing pattern (plain, wing bars, wing tip pattern, scapular pattern, etc.), tail pattern (tail spots, bars across tail, outer rectrix pattern, etc.), breast, flank, and back streaking or lack of it, should always be noted. A complete plumage description, taking into account as many of these factors as possible, is integral to a good (and acceptable) rare bird report.

OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

So far, I have dealt primarily with physical (or morphological) characteristics. However, there are a number of other factors, such as behavior, voice, habitat or microhabitat, and overall impression (or "jizz") that can be as important (or even more important) than a careful description of morphological characters.

Behavior alone is not sufficient for identification of rare birds. Behavior can be very helpful in supplementing and supporting descriptions of birds. For instance, Cerulean Warblers tend to stay near the tops of trees, while *Oporornis* warblers are typically observed on or near the ground. Behaviors, such as wing and tail flicking, can be important supplementary information in the identification of *Empidonax* flycatchers. Also, a tendency for flocking or solitude can be useful in identification of some birds. Consequently, a rare bird's behavior should be carefully noted and included in any rare bird report submitted to the RBRC.

Another very important aspect of rare bird identification is the careful documentation of voice or other sounds, such as singing, calling, or making a noise by its actions (e.g., the drumming of a woodpecker). In fact, for identification of some similar species, such as Alder and Willow Flycatchers and Eastern and Western Meadowlarks, voice is the only reliable method for separation. In describing bird's voice, particular attention should be paid to the number of syllables uttered and on which syllable the accent (if it occurs) is placed. It is also useful to describe the call or song phonetically and to document the character of the notes given (clear, musical, *buzzy*, raspy, nasal, insect-like, etc.). In most birds, especially passerines, voice is as species-specific as plumage. This makes voice a very important component of rare bird reports. In all cases, the voice or other sound that a bird makes should be described in one's own terms, rather than stating that it is like the description given in a field guide.

The habitat or microhabitat in which a rare bird is found can also contribute to its identification (e.g., Pine Warblers are usually associated with pines). Thus, careful documentation of the habitat where the reported bird was located (open deciduous forest, mixed forest, shortgrass prairie, cattail marsh, etc.) should be included in the report. If possible, mention the particular species of vegetation present, especially those species that the reported bird was using. Microhabitat differences can also be useful as supporting details (e.g., did the bird stay in the understory, was it restricted to the tops of trees, or did it forage at a number of different levels in the canopy?).

A final piece of supporting information that can be useful in identification of rare birds is the "jizz" that a bird exhibits. Jizz is a somewhat nebulous term that denotes the actions, behavior and general appearance of a bird and gives the observer an impression of the bird's overall character (e.g., active, buoyant, energetic, powerful, shy, swift). Often, a rare bird acts or appears somehow different in overall character from normally observed birds, and this impression (or jizz) alerts the observer to look more closely. Since jizz is an abstract concept, it becomes useful for identification purposes only after considerable time is spent in the field. A good way to develop the ability to use jizz is to pay attention to the actions, behavior and general appearance of the more common birds. Then, when a bird appears that doesn't quite match the jizz of the common birds, this should alert the observer to make a more careful observation.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

While the verbal description and details of the rare bird are the foundation of the rare bird report, the clinching factors in acceptance or rejection of a report often are supplementary materials. These materials include physical evidence (specimens, photographs or vocal recordings), sketches prepared while in the field, and verification by other observers. I will briefly treat each of these types of supplementary materials.

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Of the types of supplementary materials mentioned above, physical evidence is the most useful to the RBRC. Documentation of first state

records ordinarily requires some form of physical evidence, although corroboration by one or more experienced birders can also suffice. A specimen is the best possible evidence supporting a rare bird report. However, the shotgun is no longer an acceptable ornithological tool, and specimen records are now quite rare. If a rare bird is found recently dead, the observer should notify appropriate authorities (South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks) or the RBRC, so that a specimen may be prepared from the dead bird. Such a scenario recently resulted in the first South Dakota record for the Ancient Murrelet (Williams 1994). Without proper permits, even the possession of a dead bird is against the law.

Photographic documentation can be almost as good as a specimen, if the photos are of decent quality. Even poor quality or long-range photos can assist identification. Thus, anyone observing a rare bird, should try to get photos of the bird to accompany the rare bird report. If you don't have a camera with you at the time of observation, take careful field notes; then try to come back later for a photograph. If you don't have a camera (and preferably a telephoto lens), try to get someone who does to accompany you to relocate the rarity. Color 35 mm slides are probably best for supporting rare bird reports. Showing them on a screen greatly enlarges the photo. Any color or black-and-white photo, however, can assist in documentation. A good photograph can make the job of the RBRC much easier.

For species difficult to distinguish by sight, a tape recording of its vocalizations can be very helpful in verifying the bird. This is particularly true for nocturnal or secretive rarities such as Yellow Rails, Chuck-Will's-widows or various owls. In such cases, a tape recording of the bird's vocalization is of utmost value as a supplement to the rare bird report. A good, albeit brief, discussion of the necessary equipment for documenting rarities by photograph or tape recorder can be found in Dittmann and Lasley (1992).

SKETCHES

A helpful alternative to photography is a sketch of the bird produced while in the field. This does not require that the observer have any artistic ability, as crude sketches can still illustrate important field marks. I speak from experience here as anyone viewing any of my sketches will immediately recognize my lack of artistic ability! Sketches do not need to include the entire bird. Sketches of important features (i.e., tail pattern, wing tip pattern, facial pattern, etc.) can be very useful. One way to compensate for a lack of artistic ability is to carry a small field notebook with outlines of bird bodies traced from a field guide (Dittmann and Lasley 1992). When a rare bird is observed, it is then a simple matter of filling in the blank spaces with the plumage pattern of the observed bird. You need not carry outlines for every possible bird family with you, only those you are likely to encounter in the habitat you are birding. For instance, if you are going to visit the Oahe Dam in mid-October to mid-November, you might carry outlines of gulls, but not of vireos. Likewise, if you are going to Sica Hollow State Park in mid-May, you would want to carry warbler outlines in your field notebook. Simple sketches like these can greatly improve or add to a description and are of great benefit to the RBRC.

VERIFICATION BY OTHER BIRDERS

Another important aspect of documenting rare birds, especially for "sight records," is verification by other observers, especially by experienced birders. This verification may involve independent reporting of the rare bird or additional signatures from birders observing the bird but not reporting separately. Single observer sight records always require more careful scrutiny, particularly if the report represents a new species for the region or state (see, for example, Watson 1987). Therefore, if you are alone and have seen an especially rare bird, after carefully describing it and photographing or sketching it, proceed to the nearest phone and call a nearby experienced birder. This is not only a good practice for verification of the rare bird, but it is a favor to other birders who would appreciate seeing the rare bird. Thus, not only will you be strengthening your rare bird report, you will be providing a service to the birding community.

Inexperienced birders, or birders unfamiliar to the RBRC, should make an effort to get to know other birders in their area. This does not imply that sight records submitted to the RBRC from unknown birders will be rejected as out-of-hand. Familiarity to the RBRC is not a prerequisite for observing rare birds, and the RBRC must act objectively on all submitted material. However, reports from birders with established reputations for careful documentation often proceed through RBRC action with greater speed than reports from unknown observers. This may be interpreted by some as favoritism. Actually the RBRC is simply making an effort to ensure accuracy of accepted reports. For a current discussion of this rather delicate matter, see Contreras (1994). A good way for inexperienced or new birders to become familiar with the RBRC is to attend the Spring and Fall meetings of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union, since most experienced birders within the state attend these meetings. However, if you are a new or unfamiliar observer within the state, do not let this dissuade you from submitting rare bird reports; just carefully describe the rare bird and try your best to provide supplementary materials. In addition, if your records are not accepted by the RBRC, do not take this personally or let it prevent you from submitting future reports. Even members of the RBRC have had reports rejected for lack of sufficient details.

Hopefully, this review of the type of information desired in rare bird reports by the RBRC will allow persons observing birds within South Dakota to more carefully document records of rare species. This, in turn, will ensure the greatest scientific accuracy in monitoring the status and distribution of such birds within the state. To make information on the occurrence of rare species in South Dakota more widely known, persons whose records are accepted (Classes 1 and 2) are encouraged to publish them as notes in *South Dakota Bird Notes*.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Kurt Dean and the members of the RBRC (Paul Springer, Nat Whitney, Bruce Harris and Jeff Palmer) for providing valuable comments on earlier versions of this manuscript. In addition, I would like to thank all those observers who have submitted rare bird reports to the RBRC in the past and those who will in the future. It is

through your efforts that we will gain an ever improving knowledge of the status and distribution of birds within the state of South Dakota.

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GENERAL NOTES

BLACK-NECKED STILT NESTS NEAR ABERDEEN. George Prisbe and Tallman first discovered two Black-necked Stilts on 16 May 1994. The birds waded in a flooded field 6 miles north of the Brown County Fair Grounds on County Road 10. We surmised that heavy south winds blew these vagrants (only seven previous records are listed for South Dakota in *The Birds of South Dakota*, SDOU 1991) into the area and that it was unlikely that we would see them again. But one or two birds were seen here over the next several weeks by local birders, including Williams, on 17 May.

Williams returned to the area on 11 June. A stilt flew over the area, so Williams stopped. He saw another individual take flight. Both birds called excitedly. This behavior prompted further investigation, which uncovered two more stilts, for a total of four. All called and flew nearby. Their actions were very similar to those of the American Avocet.

Sitting down in a grassy area, Williams waited for the birds to settle down. One landed about 60 yards to his right. After waiting for about ten minutes, Williams rose and walked directly to the area where the bird was last seen. It flushed almost immediately, and again began calling. When he reached the area where the stilt had been, Williams began searching for a nest. Within a few minutes, he located a nest containing one egg in a small depression (see cover photograph).

The nest consisted of a few one to two-inch pieces of dry bulrush placed in the slight depression. The nest was in an area of very sparse vegetation that had been under water earlier in the spring. The nest and egg blended in very well with the ground and vegetation. Williams photographed the nest and the excited stilts. He then drove to Aberdeen and returned with Jon and Dan Tallman. They observed a total of five adults, so possibly more nests existed.

On 1 July, Dan, Erika and Jon Tallman searched the area for further evidence of successful nesting. They were greeted by two pairs of avocets, a pair of Wilson's Phalaropes, and a single Black-necked Stilt. Water in the area had further receded after about two weeks without significant rain. The vegetation was knee high around the lake and could have easily hidden young. The avocets continually dive bombed the observers and killdeer in the area gave broken tail behavior. The stilt flew a short distance and landed. It repeatedly acted as though it was brooding on a nest, nestling its breast to the ground. Then it flew up, called repeatedly, and loosely shook its wing tips to the ground. Next, it flew a few feet away and repeated the performance. A few times the stilt landed in the water. Upon landing, it would make one sweep of the water with its bill and then run forward while calling. The behaviors of the stilt, killdeer, and avocet indicated that there were young of all three species in the area, but no nests were located.

On 9 July, Tallman and Amy Frink returned to the site. They were greeted by a single agitated stilt. The bird was only somewhat calmer than on 1 July. As they watched, a single, half-grown Black-necked Stilt

flew out of the heavy undergrowth to the far end of the pond and landed a short distance away in open, shallow water. The bird was about half the size of the adult. The back was brown, the head was dusky, with a white throat, and an indistinct eye spot. Although fully exposed, it remained motionless. The adult continued calling on the observers' side of the pond for the several minutes.

After 16 July, Tallman found no stilts in the area. Stilts were also observed in other areas in Brown County. In July, Scott Glup, a biologist at Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge, saw a pair of stilts in a flooded field just east of the Highway 12 bridge across the James River. Ed Mitzel, SDOU member and a former ornithology student of Tallman's, saw stilts at a cattle feedlot about 6 miles SSE of the original area. *Dan Tallman, Northern State University, Aberdeen SD 57401 and J. David Williams, Box 277, Ipswich SD 57451.*

SAGE THRASHER NEST. On 17 June 1994, while exploring well-known Sage Thrasher habitat about 6 miles west of Edgemont, SD, I flushed a Sage Thrasher from its nest, which contained one egg. The egg was glossy and a slightly darker blue than a robin egg, with dark blotches over the entire surface. On 21 June 1994, the nest was revisited and found to contain three eggs. The nest was photographed by Richard Peterson.

This nest was only 100 feet from where I discovered a used nest in 1989. Both nests were about a foot off the ground in the lower portion of a Big Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) shrub. Both nests were large cups constructed of small sagebrush twigs. The active nest was lined with grass. This observation constitutes only the second record of this species' breeding in the state (*The Birds of South Dakota*, SDOU 1991). *Juanita L Peterson, Box 116, Wewela SD 57578.*

FRANKLIN'S GULLS NEST ON SAND LAKE NWR IN RECORD NUMBERS.

Over 300,000 Franklin's Gulls made the marshes of Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge their home during the summer of 1994. High water levels provided ideal nesting habitat for the birds. The Franklin's Gull colony, which was located in the northern part of Sand Lake, contained approximately 155,325 nests. The gulls could be observed swarming over the colony just south of State Highway 10, where it crosses the refuge.

Joanna Burger, from the Department of Biological Sciences at Rutgers University, visited the colony in July, and confirmed that it was the largest colony ever recorded for the species. *Bill Schultze, Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge, RR 1 Box 25, Columbia SD 57433.*

SISKINS BANDED IN ABERDEEN RECAPTURED ON SAME DATE IN NEBRASKA AND MANITOBA AND OTHER SISKIN BANDING RECORDS.

After I banded about 1716 Pine Siskins between 15 October and 31 December 1993, I hoped for one or two foreign recoveries. The recovery rate for small birds is less than one percent. To date, two of these siskins have been found away from Aberdeen (see Figure 1): one banded on 7 November 1993, the other banded on 20 November 1993. Both birds were recovered on the same date: 23 April 1994. The earlier-banded bird was found by Betty Peterson in North Platte, Nebraska, the later bird was reported by John Miller of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Apparently these birds moved through South Dakota in the fall and were recovered on their northward, spring migration. Both birds were just over 300 miles from

Aberdeen. These recoveries are fairly typical for Pine Siskins as reported in *The Birds of South Dakota* (SDOU, 1991, NSU Press).

Some of the siskins banded in the last quarter of 1993 were recovered by me at the banding station. Examples include siskins banded and recovered at the following intervals (5 November 1993—20 March 1994; 11 November 1993—12 May 1994; 24 November 1993—10 June 1994). Siskins bred in unusually high numbers in the Aberdeen area in the early summer of 1994. Finally, I have a record of a siskin from the previous year, banded on 13 December 1992 and recovered in Aberdeen by Mary Bryant on 17 May 1993. *Dan Tallman, Northern State University, Aberdeen, SD 57401.*



Figure 1. Pine Siskin recoveries.

SUCCESSFUL BALD EAGLE NEST IN BROWN COUNTY. Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge personnel confirm that a pair of Bald Eagles successfully raised two eaglets in Brown County during 1994. The nest was located in a cottonwood tree, on private land. The eaglets hatched sometime between 14 and 20 April. Two immature birds were observed perched by the nest on 14 July. The landowner greatly contributed to the success of the nest by minimizing any disturbance near the nest site. *Bill Schultze, Sand Lake national Wildlife Refuge, RR 1 Box 25, Columbia SD 57433*



BOOK REVIEWS

BIRDS OF BRITAIN AND EUROPE.—Roger Tory Peterson, Guy Mountford, and P. A. D. Hollom. 1993. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 292 pp. Soft bound \$19.95.

Dr. Peterson has brought this edition of this field guide into the format now present in the new editions of his North American guides. Thus, the book has a familiar look for those who use the other guides. Compared to previous editions, the plates appear to be mostly new, with many fewer birds per page. Other plates are simply mirror images of those in former editions. The overall impression is one of much more color. The difference between the current edition of Peterson's European guide is like the change in the recent two editions of the Eastern and Western American guides. The older guides look like antiques.

I would take this book and Lars Jonsson's *Birds of Europe* in my suitcase. Peterson's plates are a superbly executed drafting of the birds portrayed—each has arrows pointing to pertinent field marks. Surprisingly, although the format is generally less crowded than in previous editions, and, unlike the new North American guides, many plates are relatively crowded. One warbler plate contains 12 species, and there are 14 buntings on another. The same plates in Jonsson's book contain only 6 warblers and three or four buntings. By comparison, then, Peterson's birds appear small. Overall, Jonsson's birds are more like works of art, while Peterson's represent works of superb draftsmanship. On the other hand, the difference in style may be the result of a difference in philosophy. I have heard Dr. Peterson describe his field guide art as representing birds seen from a distance—thus subtle details become less important and gross field marks are emphasized. Thus, without a doubt, both texts will be indispensable; whichever is better probably depends on the situation in which unknown birds are seen.

In both books, the range maps are about the same small size. However, Peterson's maps are in a separate section at the end of the book, whereas Jonsson's are near or at the same page with the portraits. Peterson's maps show national borders, which are lacking in Jonsson's. The boundaries are a big help for those of us who are geographically challenged.

One big advantage to the Peterson field guide is that, in each species account, the reader is supplied with common names in Dutch, French, German, and Swedish (and American, when the common names differ, as in Common Loon for Great Northern Diver). This lexicon is useful even back home, when talking about birds with Europeans. The major disadvantage of Peterson's guide, in my opinion, is that the plates, range maps, and species accounts are all in separate sections of the book. This setup is very frustrating if you have many unknown birds to identify quickly.

Introductory remarks are brief and mostly contain a section on how to identify birds—probably of little use to even moderately skilled birders. Jonsson's introduction contains much more information

(identification and ornithology) and is in color, unlike Peterson's black and white. Peterson's book also contains a checklist and a directory of European ornithological societies.

Finally, the coverage of Jonsson's text is larger, including North Africa and the Middle East. These territories are not necessarily an advantage, however, since it only adds more, and unlikely, species with which to deal. Extralimital species probably will result in incorrect identifications by the unwary. *Dan Tallman, Northern State University, Aberdeen SD 57401.*

THE BIRDS OF SOUTH AMERICA: The Suboscine Passerines.—Robert S. Ridgely and Guy Tutor. 1994. University of Texas Press, Austin. Hard bound. 814 pp. \$85.00.

"Awesome" continues to describe the second volume of this work, first reviewed in the March 1990 *Bird Notes* (42:18-19). Anyone remotely interested in the birds of South America should own this text. University libraries should have it on their shelves.

This second volume is half again bigger than the first, although there is less introductory material. For example, except for two short paragraphs, sections on habitat and biogeography are not repeated. As in the first volume, a list and short description of threatened species is included. Both volumes are indexed and have bibliographies.

As in the previous volume, species accounts cover descriptions, similar species, habitat, behavior, and range. The book covers some of the most fascinating of South American birds—the ovenbirds, antbirds, flycatchers and cotingas, to name but a few. More attention to bird song is paid in the second volume. Accounts often end with fascinating taxonomic and systematic notes.

One of the greatest appeals of the book continues to be the artwork of Guy Tutor, one of the premier bird illustrators of our time. The 52 color plates almost double the 31 in the first volume. These illustrations are simply stunning, although some people comment that the birds appear to be somewhat angular. I think this is the result of Tutor's style—the paintings are distinctive, which is what one would expect from a great artist. It seems almost petty on my part to point out that this lavishly illustrated book would have been even more spectacular if it had black and white line drawings in the text.

Curiously, the book's cover does not continue to bear the imprint of the World Wildlife Fund. The Philadelphia Academy of Science now seems to be the main supporter of the work. The list of project supporters has grown from four to seven or eight. In any event, these magnificent books will undoubtedly contribute, through public education, to the conservation of Latin America's threatened avifauna. *Dan Tallman, Northern State University, Aberdeen, SD 57401.*



SEASONAL REPORTS

THE 1994 BREEDING SEASON

Compiled by
Dennis Skadsen
RR 1 Box 113 Grenville, SD 57239

Observers cited:

JLB - Jocelyn L. Baker	PL - Paul Lehman	DRS - Dennis R. Skadsen
NB - Nancy Buckman	EL - Eric Liknes	MSS - Mark S. Skadsen
KD - Kurt Dean	JL - Jon Little	JCS - Jerry C. Stanford
J&DD- Jerry and Donna Dump	MMM - Michael M. Melius	GS - Gary Stava
BKH - Bruce K. Harris	EM - Ernest Miller	DS - Dave Swanson
JRK - Jon R. Kieckhefer	MM - Morris Moon	DAT - Dan A. Tallman
RWK - Robert W. Kieckhefer	JSP - Jeffrey S. Palmer	NRW - Nat R. Whitney
LRL - Lester L. Lauritzen	JP - Juanita Peterson	JDW - J. David Williams
	RAP - Richard A. Peterson	KW - Kristeen Williams
	MP - Marti Porter	MZ - MyRon Zimmer

Abbreviations used: NHSP - Newton Hills State Park, Lincoln Co.;
PLSRA - Pickerel Lake State Rec. Area - Day Co.; SFBC -Sioux Falls
Bird Club; UCSP-Union County State Park; WNWR- Waubay National
Wildlife Refuge, Day Co.

Horned Grebe - 28 May, McPherson Co., nest w/2 eggs (JDW).
Red-necked Grebe - 28 April, WNWR, nest building (WNWR).
Clark's Grebe - 21 June, Day Co., Waubay Lake, nest photographed (JDW, KW).
Little Blue Heron - 25 June, Sanborn Co. (JSP). White-faced Ibis - 10 June, Clark
Co., 4-6 pair nesting in egret colony (BKH). 30 June, Codington Co., 1
(WNWR).
Snow Goose - 27 June, Day Co., 3 (WNWR).
Wood Duck - 9 April, Roberts Co., nest with egg, very early (MM).
Cinnamon Teal - 10 June, Faulk Co., male (BKH).
Ring-necked Duck - 10 July, Minnehaha Co., adult with 2 young (JL).
Bufflehead - 20 June, WNWR, flock of 18 (WNWR). 23 June, Meade Co., Bear Butte
Lake (PL).
Hooded Merganser - 6 June, Lake Co. (JSP). 10 June, Faulk Co., male (BKH).
Common Merganser - 19 July, Pennington Co., Canyon Lake, 15 (JLB). 22 July,
Pennington Co., female w/5 young (MMM).
Turkey Vulture - 4 June, Lincoln Co. (JSP).
Osprey - 8 May, Pennington Co., Pactola Dam, adult at nest (NRW). 19 July,
Pennington Co., Canyon Lake (JLB).
Bald Eagle - 9 June, Union Co., immature (KD, DS).
Northern Goshawk - 21 July, Pennington Co., nest w/2 young (NRW)
Virginia Rail - 9 July, Minnehaha Co., adult w/young (SFBC).
Black-bellied Plover - 7 June, Roberts Co., 1, late (BKH).
American Avocet - 16 May, Edmunds Co., nest w/4 eggs, earliest ever reported
nesting (JDW).
Lesser Yellowlegs - 13 July, Grant Co., 30+ (BKH).
Solitary Sandpiper - 11 June, Lincoln Co., late (JL).
Willet - 11 June, McPherson Co., pair w/downy young (JDW).
Long-billed Curlew - 7 June, Meade Co., flock of 15 (EM).

Western Sandpiper - 10 July, McCook Co., very early (JL). 23 July, Meade Co., Bear Butte Lake, 30+ (EM).
 Least Sandpiper - 9 July, Brown Co., very early (DAT).
 California Gull - 23 June, Meade Co., Bear Butte Lake, 7 adults (PL). Common Tern - 1 June, Butte Co. (PL).
 Least Tern - 11 June, Kingsbury Co. (JSP).
 Black-billed Cuckoo - 13 June, WNWR, female w/brood patch (WNWR). 2 July, UCSP, adult carrying food (JL).
 Yellow-billed Cuckoo - 10, 26 June, Lincoln Co. (JL).
 Burrowing Owl - 31 July, Deuel Co., young at nest site (GS).
 Short-eared Owl - 12 June, Custer Co.; and 23 June, Faulk Co. (MMM).
 Northern Saw-whet Owl - 22 June, Custer Co. (PL).
 Chimney Swift - 22 May, Edmunds Co., nest building (MZ). 23 July, Edmunds Co., young fledged from nest (MZ). Reported entering chimney, Turner Co. (LRL).
 Ruby-throated Hummingbird - 25 June, Roberts Co., Sodak Park, adult on nest (MP).
 Red-bellied Woodpecker - 6 July, Brown Co. (DAT).
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - 30 May, NHSP, occupied nest (JL). 25 June, Brown Co. (JCS).
 Red-naped Sapsucker - 7 July, Pennington Co., adult feeding young in nest hole (JLB).
 Hairy Woodpecker - 5 June, Brookings Co., nestling fledged (RWK). 5 June, NHSP, nest w/young; and 2 July, UCSP, nest w/young (JL).
 Black-backed Woodpecker - 23 June, Custer Co., adult feeding fledgling (PL).
 PILEATED WOODPECKER - 26 May, Roberts Co., Linden Beach-Big Stone Lake, young heard in cavity, first confirmed nest record for state, fledged sometime after 8 June (BKH, J&DD).
 Olive-sided Flycatcher - 2 June, Lincoln Co., late (BKH, JL).
 Eastern Wood-Pewee - 12 June, NHSP, nest (JL, MSS).
 Willow Flycatcher - 11 June, PLSRA, female carrying food (DRS).
 Least Flycatcher - 13 June, WNWR, female w/brood patch (WNWR). 18 June, PLSRA, female w/brood patch (DRS).
 Dusky Flycatcher - 9 July, Lawrence Co., adult on nest (JLB).
 Say's Phoebe - 23 June, Faulk Co. (MMM).
 Great Crested Flycatcher - 30 June, WNWR, female w/brood patch (WNWR). 9 July, Marshall Co., adult carrying food (JCS).
 Clark's Nutcracker - 11 June, Custer Co. (JCS).
 Black-capped Chickadee - 25 May, Brookings Co., young left nest box (RWK).
 CAROLINA WREN - 27 July, Clay Co. (DS).
 Sedge Wren - 9 July, Moody Co., nest w/5 eggs, first observation of active nest in SD (JL, fide NB).
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - 26 May, NHSP, female on nest w/1 egg (JL).
 Wood Thrush - 24 July, Lincoln Co., fledgling (JL).
 Northern Mockingbird - 28, 31 July, Custer Co., immature (MMM). Also observed in Marshall Co. (fide BKH).
 SAGE THRASHER - 17 June, Fall River Co., nest w/1 egg, first confirmed nest record in state (JP, RAP).
 Loggerhead Shrike - 2 July, Union Co.; and 10 July, McCook Co. (JL).
 Yellow-throated Vireo - 4 July, NHSP, (JL). 9 July, Marshall Co., Roy Lake (JCS).
 Warbling Vireo - 21 May, Hughes Co., nest building (JDW). 25 May, Stanley Co., nest building (RAP). 9 July, Marshall Co., Roy Lake, adult on nest (JCS).
 Tennessee Warbler - 2 July, Marshall Co., Sica Hollow, singing (JSP). 28 July, Brown Co., earliest ever fall (DAT).
 Yellow-rumped Warbler - 7 July, Custer Co., adult on nest (JLB).
 PINE WARBLER - 9 June, Union Co., latest ever, rare migrant (DS, KD).
 Blackpoll Warbler - 9 June, Brown Co. (DAT).

- Cerulean Warbler - 4 June, NHSP (JSP). 12 June - 4 July, NHSP, total of 3 singing males (JL).
- Black-and-white Warbler - 13 July, Pennington Co. (JLB). 16 July, Brown Co., banded (DAT). 29 July, Union Co., hatching year bird banded (DS, KD). American Redstart - 22 June, Hughes Co., 2 (JCS).
- MacGillivray's Warbler - 9 July, Lawrence Co., adult carrying food (JLB).
- Scarlet Tanager - 2-18 June, Lincoln Co., NHSP & Wilson Savannah (JL). 2 July, Roberts Co. (JSP).
- Rufous-sided Towhee - 21 May, Hughes Co., female on nest (JL). Also reported nesting at NHSP (SFBC)
- Lark Sparrow - 4 June, Lincoln Co. (JSP). 18 June, Lincoln Co., 4 birds; and 1 July, Union Co. (JL).
- Le Conte's Sparrow - 25 June, Sanborn Co., singing (JSP).
- McCown's Longspur - 20 June, Harding Co. (PL).
- Bobolink - 27 July, Meade Co., flock of 30 (JLB).
- Western Meadowlark - 25 May, Stanley Co., 2 nests w/5 eggs each (RAP). 11 July, Pennington Co., flock of 100+ feeding on grasshoppers (MMM).
- Evening Grosbeak - 1 July, Meade Co., adults feeding young (EM). 8 July, Pennington Co., pair (JLB).
- Reports requiring acceptance by the Rare Birds Records Committee:
- BLACK-NECKED STILT - 11 June, Brown Co., nest with one egg photographed, if accepted first confirmed nesting of species in state of SD (JDW, DAT). 9 July, Brown Co., half grown young (DAT).
- Pileated Woodpecker - 22 June, Marshall Co., Sica Hollow (JRK).
- Western Wood-Pewee - 4 June, NHSP (JSP).
- Sprague's Pipit - 9 July, Marshall Co. (JCS).
- PRAIRIE WARBLER - 16 June, Union Co., singing male (KD, EL, DS).
- PROTHONOTARY WARBLER - 18 June through 4 July, Lincoln Co., singing male (JL).
- HENSLOW'S SPARROW - 25 June, Sanborn Co., singing (JSP).
- Lesser Goldfinch - 23 June, Fall River Co. (PL).

Published by
SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION
EDITOR: DAN TALLMAN
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