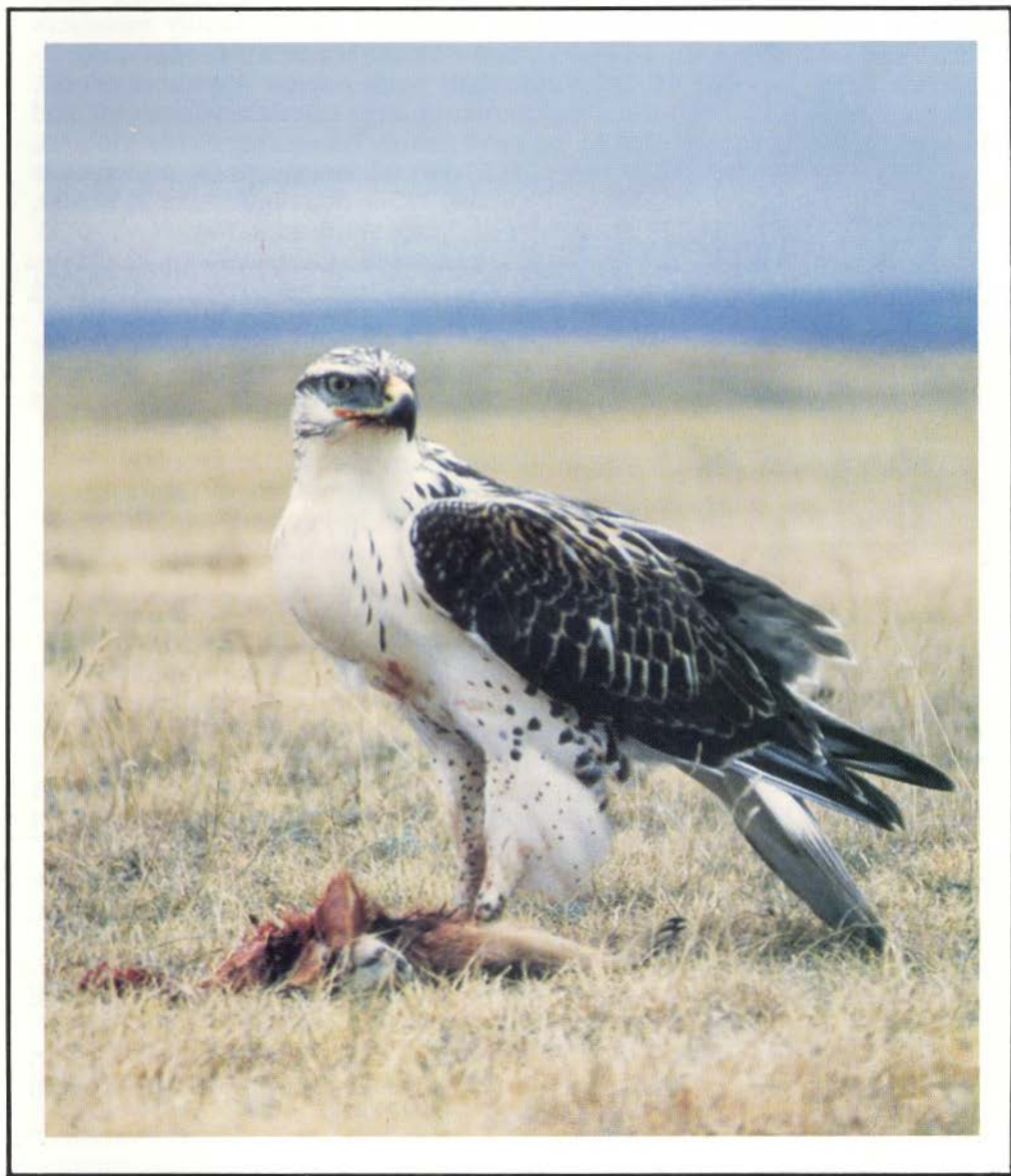


SOUTH DAKOTA
ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION



SOUTH
BIRD



DAKOTA
NOTES

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SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

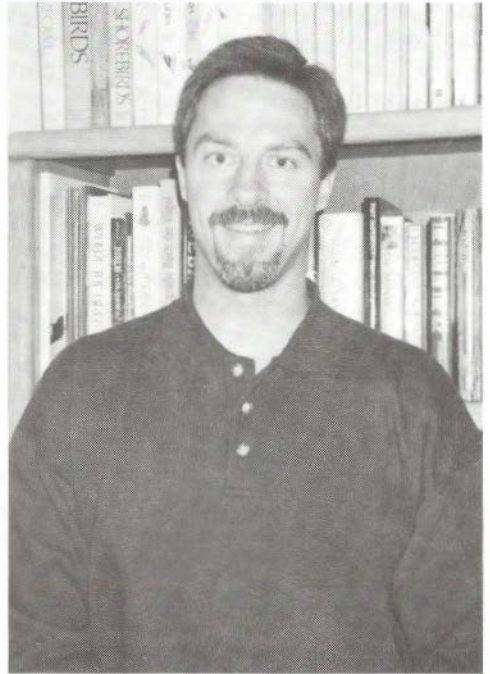
Let me begin my inaugural President's Page by thanking the SDOU membership for giving me this opportunity to serve as president. In beginning my term, I would like to review some of the SDOU's recent accomplishments and to share some of my ideas and goals that we might pursue. To start with, let's review the SDOU's mission: "to encourage the study of birds in South Dakota and to promote the study of ornithology by more closely uniting the students of the branch of natural science" (Baylor, 1990, SDBN 42: 81).

We have recently published a new edition of *The Birds of South Dakota* (1991) and *The South Dakota Breeding Bird Atlas* (1995). These excellent publications review the status and distribution of birds in the state. We

have also supported graduate students studying ornithology in South Dakota through the Husmann and Hinds memorial Scholarships. We were privileged to have two former Husmann Scholarship winners present excellent papers on their research at the recent fall meeting in Madison. Our publications and scholarships have done much toward meeting the "encouraging the study of birds in South Dakota" component of our mission statement.

However, much remains to be learned about South Dakota birds. One way that the SDOU can foster additional ornithological research is to establish a small grants program. I envision such a program as being open to anyone (professional or nonprofessional) interested in conducting ornithological research in South Dakota. We could fund projects such as ecological, natural history, or conservation research, starting or continuing MAPS stations, or a variety of other projects. I think that we could realistically allocate \$1000-\$1500 per year to such a program. This amount could fund several small (\$200-\$300) grants that could greatly assist in stimulating research projects. Starting such a program would require a committee (composed of SDOU members) to review research proposals. Supporting such a program over the long-term might require a dues increase of \$2-\$3 per year, but I think that this would be a worthwhile investment in South Dakota ornithology.

The other component of the mission statement is to "promote the study of ornithology by more closely uniting the students of the branch



of natural sciences." I believe that there are several ways that we can help accomplish this goal. One is to initiate a statewide rare bird alert hotline. We are currently, according to the American Birding Association, one of four states without a rare bird hotline (the others are Hawaii, Mississippi, and North Dakota). As secretary of the SDOU Rare Bird Records Committee, I have received several reports from out-of-state birders that have birded in South Dakota. Several of these have mentioned a desire to contact a rare bird hotline before their visit, and surprise that there was none available. Thus, I think a rare bird alert hotline is a great way to advertise birding in South Dakota, and will be beneficial to traveling birders, as well as to SDOU members who want to improve their state lists. The initial investment in getting a hotline started is small (\$100 or so), so SDOU could easily afford this, but we do need a volunteer who could handle the reports. Other states usually update the rare bird alert message weekly.

Another way that we can unite students of ornithology is to bring in nationally recognized outside speakers for our spring and fall banquets, and possibly for other SDOU-sponsored meetings throughout the year. If we advertise to the general public that nationally recognized speakers will be addressing our banquets, this could increase attendance at our meetings, and increase public awareness of our organization. In addition, nationally recognized speakers will broaden our thinking about ornithology and increase our awareness of current issues in ornithology. It is certainly important for us to keep abreast of ornithological trends within South Dakota, but these are often greatly impacted by activities or conditions on a broader geographic scale. Thus, we need to be cognizant of the "big picture" to properly interpret what is happening in South Dakota.

Finally, we can unite students of ornithology in South Dakota by holding some informal "SDOU weekends" where we will visit various areas of the state for weekend-long field trips. Jeff Palmer tells me that such a program has been very well-received and well-attended in Minnesota. I envision such weekends as taking place on a quarterly or bimonthly schedule until we see what kind of response they generate, and then we can modify the schedule accordingly. This would be a great way to get to know other SDOU members, and to experience the "infinite variety" that South Dakota offers.

These are a few of my thoughts about projects that the SDOU can undertake to continue to address our mission. If any of you has other ideas, or would like to let me know your thoughts about some of the ideas that I have proposed, give me a call, drop me a letter, or (for you computer junkies) send me an e-mail (dswanson@charlie.usd.edu). Your ideas and efforts make the SDOU a vigorous and effective organization! *David Swanson, SDSU, Vermillion SD 57069*

1994 REPORT OF THE RARE BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

David L. Swanson

Department of Biology, University of South Dakota, Vermillion 57069.

The SDOU Rare Bird Records Committee (RBRC) met on 22 May 1994 at Pierre and on 9 October 1994 at Enemy Swim Lake. The members of the committee are Nathaniel Whitney, Jr. (acting chair), David Swanson (secretary), Paul Springer, Bruce Harris, and Jeffrey Palmer. All members either attended each meeting or voted *in absentia*.

The purpose and voting procedure of the committee are outlined by Springer (1988. SDBN 40:67-70). Observers of rare or unusual birds in South Dakota are encouraged to report their observations to any of the following: the secretary of the RBRC (David Swanson of Vermillion, SD) or other Records Committee members, compiler of the quarterly Seasonal Reports in *South Dakota Bird Notes* (Jeffrey Palmer of Madison, SD), or the editor of *Bird Notes* (Dan Tallman of Aberdeen, SD). A *Rare Bird Observation Form* is available for this purpose from any of the people to whom these reports should be sent. **Reports should be as detailed as possible and should describe the entire bird, as well as vocalizations or behaviors exhibited by the bird at the time of observation. Notes on the observation for rare bird reports should be prepared during the observation or as soon afterward as possible, preferably before consulting a field guide. Complete descriptions are necessary to provide the committee with the greatest amount of information on which to judge their acceptance or rejection.** A summary of the type of information desired by the RBRC in a rare bird report can be found in Swanson (1994. SDBN 46:64-71).

A listing of those species for which rare bird reports are requested is given on the latest version of the checklist of South Dakota birds (available from Dan Tallman or David Swanson). Species for which descriptions are no longer required include: Clark's Grebe, Whooping Crane, Red-naped Sapsucker, Alder Flycatcher, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Varied Thrush, Philadelphia Vireo, Le Conte's Sparrow, and Sharp-tailed Sparrow. Observers are asked to submit reports of any species that is rare or unusual at a particular time or at a particular location within the state. Persons whose records are accepted (Classes 1 and 2) are encouraged to publish these records in *South Dakota Bird Notes*, so that details of the observations can be communicated to a wider audience. Citations are provided in this report for records that have been published.

Following are the results of the committee's action since the last report in the June 1994 issue of *South Dakota Bird Notes*. The numbers included in parentheses along with some reports indicate the committee's vote. If no numbers are listed, the vote was unanimous (5-0), or 4-0 if the report was submitted by a committee member. The committee wishes to emphasize that a rating of Class 3 or 4 (non-accepted record) does not imply any personal criticism of the observer. Such a rating only means that the information provided in the report, in the opinion of the committee, did not conclusively eliminate similar species.

CLASS 1 (Accepted - Specimen, photograph, or recording).

- Clark's Grebe. 21 June 1994, pair near Webster, Day Co., photographed, J. David Williams.
- Barrow's Goldeneye. 10 November 1988, 1 male near Arlington, Kingsbury Co. Shot while duck hunting, mounted specimen (viewed by Bruce Harris), Charles D. Dieter.
- Black-necked Stilt. 11 June 1994, 5 near Aberdeen, Brown Co., plus nest with one egg, both birds and nest photographed, J. David Williams. SDBN 46:45, 46:61, 46:72-73.
- Whimbrel. 24-25 May 1992, 1 at Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Brown Co., photographed, Everett Montgomery.
- Ancient Murrelet. 13 November 1993, 1 at Ipswich, Edmunds Co. Emaciated bird grounded during snowstorm, found by LeRoy Kilber. Bird later died, specimen prepared by Dan Tallman, now in collection of National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C., J. David Williams. SDBN 46:34.
- Carolina Wren. 10 August 1993, 1 juvenile banded near Vermillion, Clay Co., observed by Eric Liknes, photographed by Kurt Dean.
- Prothonotary Warbler. 18 June - 4 July 1994, 1 male near Hudson, Lincoln Co., videotaped by Jon Little.
- Kentucky Warbler. 30 May 1994, 1 male at Newton Hills State Park, song recorded by Jon Little.
- Le Conte's Sparrow. 30 April 1994, 1 at Rehfelt Slough, Minnehaha Co., observed by Lee A. Shoenewe, photographed by Jon Little.

CLASS 2 (Accepted - Satisfactory written description).

- Common Moorhen. 22 June 1993, 1 near Groton, Brown Co. (4 = class 2, 1 = class 3), Jerry C. Stanford. SDBN 47:13.
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird. 17 May 1994, 1 male near Farmingdale, Custer Co., Michael Melius. SDBN 47:14.
- Alder Flycatcher. 23 May 1993, one calling at Sioux Falls, Minnehaha Co., Nathan Pieplow.
- Carolina Wren. 12-15 May 1994, 1 at Sioux Falls, Minnehaha Co., Jon Little.
- Carolina Wren. 27 July 1994, 1 at Clay County Park, Clay Co., David Swanson.
- White-eyed Vireo. 25 April, 1 male at Union County State Park, Union Co., David Swanson.
- Philadelphia Vireo. 16-24 May 1991, 4 at Sioux Falls, Minnehaha Co. (1 at a time), Jon Little.
- Prairie Warbler. 16 June 1994, 1 at Austin Property, Union Co., Kurt Dean.
- Palm Warbler. 2-3 May 1992, 3 males near Aberdeen, Brown Co., Jerry C. Stanford.
- Palm Warbler. 30 April 1994, 1 male at Rapid City, Pennington Co., Michael Melius.
- Kentucky Warbler. 9 May 1993, 1 at Sioux Falls, Minnehaha Co., Jon Little. SDBN 46:35-36.
- Common Yellowthroat. 18 December 1993, one immature at Sioux Falls, Minnehaha Co., David Swanson.

- Hooded Warbler. 23 May 1992, 1 male at Aberdeen, Brown Co. (4 = class 2, 1 = class 3), Jerry C. Stanford. SDBN 47:13.
- Western Tanager. 2 May 1992, 1 male at Aberdeen, Brown Co. (4 = class 2, 1 = class 3), Jerry C. Stanford. SDBN 47:34.
- Field Sparrow. 29 February 1992, 1 at Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Brown Co., Jerry C. Stanford. SDBN 47:14.
- McCown's Longspur. 14 July 1991, 2 near Camp Crook, Harding Co., Gordon Berkey.
- Hoary Redpoll. 23 January 1994, 2 near Hot Springs, Fall River Co., Richard and Juanita Peterson.
- Lesser Goldfinch. 23 June 1994, 1 at Hot Springs, Fall River Co., Paul Lehman.

CLASS 3 (Not accepted - Identification possibly correct but description not completely convincing).

- Common Moorhen. 12-29 July 1993, 3 downy young in Brown Co. Incomplete description and lack of attending adult did not eliminate American Coot. This would represent a first nesting record for the state, so more conclusive documentation is necessary.
- Mew Gull. 4 December 1992, 1 in first-year plumage below Oahe Dam, Stanley Co. (2 = class 2, 2 = class 3). Description did not provide details of wing coloration, head pattern or tail pattern. Also, 2-toned bill of juvenile Mew Gull was not apparent. This record would represent a first state record, so the committee felt that more conclusive documentation was necessary.
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird. 16 August 1991, 1 female at Badlands National Park, Jackson Co. Description did not eliminate female or juvenile Black-chinned Hummingbird.
- Rufous Hummingbird. 26 July - 5 September 1988, 3 juveniles at Custer, Custer Co. Description and photographs indicated a *Selasphorus* hummingbird, but did not rule out Broad-tailed or Calliope Hummingbirds.
- Rufous Hummingbird. 19-28 October 1993, 1 juvenile at Watertown, Codington Co. (2 = class 2, 3 = class 3). Description and photographs indicated a *Selasphorus* hummingbird, but did not eliminate Broad-tailed or Calliope Hummingbirds.
- Three-toed Woodpecker. 2 July 1992, 1 near Aberdeen, Brown Co. Description does not conclusively eliminate Hairy Woodpeckers, which may also have yellow caps, or immature Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Both of these latter species are much more likely at this site at this time of year, as Three-toed Woodpeckers are not known to wander widely.
- Black-throated Gray Warbler. 22 May 1993, 1 male at Aberdeen, Brown Co. (1 = class 2, 4 = class 3). Description did not mention streaking (or lack of it) on the back or the yellow loreal spot characteristic of Black-throated Gray Warblers. Consequently, in the opinion of the committee, the description did not conclusively rule out Black-and-White Warbler.
- Eastern Meadowlark. 14 June 1990, 1 male near Blunt, Hughes Co. No plumage description was provided with the report, only a rather brief description of the song. This description did not conclusively eliminate a Western Meadowlark giving a variation of the normal song.

Hoary Redpoll. 28 December 1992, 4 at Mina Lake, Brown Co. The description provided no mention of the small bill and unstreaked undertail coverts diagnostic for Hoary Redpoll, and therefore failed to conclusively eliminate light-colored Common Redpolls.

CLASS 4 (Not Accepted - Identification probably inaccurate).

White-tailed Kite. 2 April 1994, 1 near Ortley, Roberts Co. The description did not eliminate a male Northern Harrier, which is far more likely in this area in early April.

Connecticut Warbler. 17 May 1993, 2+ males in Aberdeen, Brown Co. (3 = class 3, 2 = class 4). The description provided was sketchy and does not eliminate the much more likely Nashville Warbler. In addition, the birds were described as feeding high in trees, which is atypical for Connecticut Warblers, but normal for Nashvilles.

Chipping Sparrow. 18 December 1991, 1 male at Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Brown Co. (1 = class 3, 4 = class 4). The description of a bird in breeding plumage was sketchy, but mentioned a rusty cap. Winter-plumaged Chipping Sparrows lack the rusty cap of the breeding birds. The regular winter range of the Chipping Sparrow in the central United States extends only as far north as Oklahoma. The description did not eliminate American Tree Sparrow, which is much more likely at this date.

SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION

Common Moorhen. 14 June 1994, 2 at Winter Haven Game Production Area, Brookings Co.

Whooping Crane. 5 October 1994, 1 east of Mitchell in Hanson Co.

Whooping Crane. 23 October 1994, 2 near Bowdle, Edmunds Co.

Sabine's Gull. 1 September 1994, 1 juvenile at Deerfield Lake, Pennington Co.

Flammulated Owl. 24 August 1994, 1 at Lower Woodcock Spring, Custer Co.

Common Nighthawk. 22 October 1994, 1 near Buffalo, Harding Co.

Vermillion Flycatcher. 25 June 1994, 1 male near White Lake, Aurora Co.

Great Kiskadee. 13 June 1994, 1 at Benson Waterfowl Production Area, Moody Co.

Western Wood-pewee. 30 May 1994, 1 at Newton Hills State Park, Lincoln Co.

Black-throated Blue Warbler. 14 October 1994, pair at Aberdeen, Brown Co.



GENERAL NOTES

BRAMBLING—A NEW SPECIES FOR SOUTH DAKOTA. In the Fall of 1995, my son Tom called, regarding the sighting of a rare bird to the Hecla, SD, area. It's taken us a while to follow through, even though it's been exciting. Tom takes pictures at our backyard feeding station and usually uses only 12 exposure rolls. As he is not an avid photographer, it took some time to process each roll. The "mystery bird" was an early photo in a roll taken in the Fall of 1993 (unfortunately we did not record the exact date, although the photo does show snow on the ground). When the film was finally developed, he sent the photo to his Aunt Catherine Stehly Bertucci, a birder in Madison, WI.

We have sent to the SDOU Rare Bird Records Committee copies of notes and letters that various people wrote as the photos made the rounds. The photos clearly show an adult-plumaged Brambling, a bird of Europe and Asia and rare in Alaska. There are scattered records for this species in the continental United States, including North Dakota and Minnesota. *Donna Stehly, Rt 1 Box 129, Hecla 57446.*

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER IN LINCOLN COUNTY AND COMMENTS ON REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION. On 16 June 1994, I was birding an area along the Big Sioux River, 1.5 mi N, 0.5 mi W of Hudson, SD. At about 9 AM, I heard a bird singing that I did not recognize. The bird sang repeatedly as it foraged among the trees about 50 yards ahead of me. As I got closer, I saw it flitting about in a typical warbler fashion, but I could not find it with my binoculars. All of a sudden, it landed on a tree about 15 ft away and hopped around in plain sight for about 10 seconds, singing a series of 5 - 7 notes. It was a male Prothonotary Warbler. The song was the "zweet, zweet, zweet..." described by field guides. The most striking features were the jet-black eye and bill set against the bright golden-yellow of the head and breast. The wings were bluish-gray with no bars. The tail was blue-gray and showed white patches at the tip when it was fanned. I watched the bird for a few minutes until it flew off into an inaccessible region. About 4 PM the same day, I returned with my camcorder and got some pictures of the bird as it ranged over this area. Evidently it was establishing a territory. I never saw another bird, male or female. On subsequent trips on 26 June and 4 July, I heard the bird only in the distance (the river had flooded, so I could not approach).

The area is a wooded floodplain of about 100 acres (roughly 0.25 mi E to W and 0.75 mi N to S). The area is bordered on the west by steep banks and ravines and, on the north, east, and south by the river, making it somewhat of a peninsula. Most of the trees are typical for this type of habitat: cottonwood, willow, and Silver Maple. Due to frequent flooding, the understory is fairly barren, made up mostly of perennial weeds. The grade slopes slightly from north to south, so that, at the south end, there is a mud-bottom swamp, normally under 2 - 6 in of water (1 - 3 ft when flooded).

The Prothonotary's preferred habitat (swampy, humid, riparian, lowland, usually with standing water) is similar to the area where I

found it. I first found the bird near the south end, a very muddy area with many snags.

The historical breeding range of this species is the southeastern United States, where this habitat is more common. There are only a few fragmented areas of this type of habitat in South Dakota.

The Prothonotary Warbler is the only cavity nesting warbler in eastern North America. They choose nest sites in any available hole, often in snags. They particularly like old Downy Woodpecker holes. They are attracted to nest boxes and other human made cavities. A description by Hal H. Harison (1984, *Wood Warblers' World*, Simon and Schuster) tells of their using "a paper sack, a mailbox, a coffee can, a cheese box, old hornets' nests, even the pocket of a pair of pants hung on a clothes line." One study found that nests were placed over water three out of four times. My bird had quite a few potential nest sites. The male selects territory and the nest site. The female, upon her arrival, does most of the building and lining. Males are known to sing constantly throughout the nesting period, which is just what my bird was doing on 18 June.

Table 1. South Dakota Prothonotary Warbler sightings.
Summer reports are in bold print.

Date	Location	Observer
6 Sept 1917	McCook Lake	Hayden
4 June 1922	Union Co.	Taylor
11 May 1929	McCook Lake	Kubicheck
21 May 1931	Union Co.	Youngworth
25 May 1931	Union Co.	Youngworth
18 June 1931	Union Co.	Youngworth
28 June 1932	Union Co.	Youngworth
21 May 1950	Oakwood Lake	Rollings
24 May 1950	Madison	Habeger
4 May 1953	Sioux Falls	Krause
28 Sept 1954	Sioux Falls	Krause
15 - 18 May 1956	Union Co.	Youngworth
11 June 1982	Hot Springs	Murdock
1 Sept 1984	Rapid City	Husmann
2 May 1988	Deuel Co.	Harris
14 May 1989	Brookings Co.	Holden
20 May 1989	Brookings Co.	Kindermann
14 May 1994	Minnehaha Co.	Hoeger
18 June 1994	Lincoln Co.	Little
26 June 1994	Lincoln Co.	Little
4 July 1994	Lincoln Co.	Little

The Birds of South Dakota (1978 and 1991) lists the Prothonotary Warbler as a rare visitor to southeastern South Dakota. Listed are 15 sightings, ranging from 1917 through 1988, with only four breeding season records (Table 1). Two of these, by W. M. Youngworth, were in the McCook Lake area of Union Co., where it was reported to breed, although he found no nests. W. H. Over and C. S. Thomas, in *Birds of South Dakota* (1946), state that the bird was "a summer resident...that nests here...and a rather common bird of the eastern side of the state." This may be a spu-

rious report, because they are now rather rare. Or it may be evidence that they were more common then.

Of the nine reports in recent years, one is of a male found dead in Hot Springs on 11 June 1982 along the Fall River. Another West River record exists from Rapid City. One at Clear Lake, Deuel Co., is also out of range and a long way from any river. It may have been a vagrant migrating up either the Big Sioux or Minnesota rivers.

Most recent records have been in the late spring or early summer. This may be evidence that this species is expanding into the state. In comparison, summer records in Minnesota show that this species has progressively moved up the Mississippi and Minnesota river valleys. Nests have been found on the Minnesota as far up river as New Ulm, Brown Co. (Janssen in *Birds in Minnesota* 1987, U of Minn Press).

Late spring records in Minnesota also correspond to those in South Dakota, in that a number of sightings have been far north and west of typical breeding ranges, along corridors of suitable habitat or within counties where this habitat exists. Records in northwestern Iowa, eastern Nebraska, and North Dakota also show this to be the case (see *American Birds*, Seasons Reports). There have been sporadic nesting records in the upper Midwest.

Is the species' range expanding? In South Dakota, the lack of breeding evidence could easily be explained by the small number of observers and the inaccessible nature of the bird's habitat. Most late spring records have been of singing males. It is too early to tell if the species is spreading into the state: only more frequent records can establish a trend. The bird is to be looked for along the river systems of eastern South Dakota. *Jon Little, 2017 W 16th Street, Sioux Falls 57204.*

SEDGE WREN NEST IN MOODY COUNTY. On 9 July 1994, I was with the Sioux Falls Bird Club at Sioux Prairie, a Nature Conservancy preserve in Moody Co. The area is a native prairie of mixed grasses, wild flowers, sedges, and lowland marsh vegetation.

I was walking along a fenceline and heard a Sedge Wren chattering. As I approached, the bird flew ahead of me, scolding as it went. Suddenly, a bird flushed just below my knee, landing about ten yards away, and scolding. I looked down to find a very distinct, compact nest.

I knew it had to be a Sedge Wren nest. It was about the size of a softball, though elongated at the top (3 - 4 in diameter x 5 in tall), composed of woven grasses. It had an entrance hole on the side of about 1 in diameter at about the 2:00 position. It looked like a Marsh Wren nest, and was about 1 ft off the ground. The surrounding vegetation, unlike that in most areas that I have found Sedge Wrens, was rather short and sparse, which made the nest more visible.

As I stooped down to look at it, I turned to call Bob and Nancy Buckman. Nancy reached inside and confirmed that there were 4 - 5 eggs in the nest. We quickly left, so as not to further disturb it. I came back later to photograph the nest and found that a bird had returned.

On 21 August, I returned to the site and found the nest lying on the ground. I collected it and noted that there was gray downy material protruding from the entrance hole, which is typical lining. I donated the nest to the USD museum.

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On 21 August, I returned to the site and found the nest lying on the ground. I collected it and noted that there was gray downy material protruding from the entrance hole, which is typical lining. I donated the nest to the USD museum.

Although Sedge Wrens are a common species in South Dakota, and apparently are common breeders, this is the first record for the state of a nest with eggs. However, nest building by a bird has been documented before by Williams and Zimmer (*Bird Notes*, December 1993). *Jon Little, 2017 W 16th Street, Sioux Falls 57204.*

CAROLINA WRENS AT ABERDEEN. Returning home at noon on 6 March 1992, I noticed some wren-like movements under a pine tree in my back yard in Aberdeen. The ground was lacking snow cover, since it was an open winter in northern South Dakota. From my kitchen window, I observed a pair of large, rusty-colored wrens eating from a suet feeder hanging from a tree about 20 feet from the window.

Immediately I identified the pair as Carolina Wrens. The size (larger than a House Wren), color, and the time of the year helped with their identification. Distinctive features included the broad white eye stripe and the rufous back. The undersides were also bright and buffy.

I observed the pair on three separate occasions (every other day). After about a week, they were gone. This record has been categorized as a Class 2 record by the SDOU Rare Bird Records Committee. *Jerry Stanford, 108 15th Ave., Aberdeen SD 57401.*

SABINE'S GULL IN PENNINGTON COUNTY. At the end of the summer of 1994, Janet Holzworth and I traveled to South Dakota, where we birded primarily in the Badlands and the Black Hills. Despite generally poor weather, including rain in the Badlands and temperatures in the forties in the Black Hills, we had excellent birding.

On 1 September 1994, we arrived at Deerfield Lake in Pennington Co. We were birding along a road, which runs along the edge of the reservoir near the point where Castle Creek enters the lake. We saw a solitary gull feeding on the wing and diving in this area. The first thing we noted was the clear, bold pattern on the gull's wings: they showed black primaries *completely* separated from the brown on the wing coverts by a broad, white triangle. The underwing showed a similar pattern, but more muted — the underwing coverts were more dusky than brown. The bird's tail was notched with a dark terminal band.

The gull landed and walked along the muddy, rocky shoreline, where we got much closer views. It had a distinct brownish-gray wash on its head and on the sides of its upper breast. A white circular area was evident where the leading edge of the wing connected to the bird's body. This feature separated the brown of the bird's wing from the brownish gray wash on its upper breast. The bird's back was finely scalloped. The tips of the wings were black and appeared to be separated from the brown part of the wings by a narrow white band. The gull's bill was black and small — not heavy. Its legs were light-colored and somewhat grayish. Our closer views confirmed what our initial sighting of the gull in flight suggested: this was an immature Sabine's Gull.

Although Peterson's book, *A Birdwatcher's Guide to the Black Hills and Adjacent Plains*, indicated Sabine's Gulls are accidental in South Dakota, it wasn't until we returned home and did some further research that we realized the true impact of our sighting. We filed a rare bird report with the SDOU (which rated this as a Class 2 sighting), drawing on the notes and sketches we made while observing the bird. We carefully eliminated similar species: wintering and immature Bonaparte's Gulls

(which are common in winter in Ohio) as well as immature Black-legged Kittiwakes (which are occasional winter visitors to Ohio). Our previous experiences with Sabine's Gulls on a pelagic trip out of Santa Barbara served us well in our efforts to identify the bird. *Connie Wolcott, 223 West Dunedin Road, Columbus, OH 43214.*



BOOK REVIEWS

THE SECRET LIVES OF HUMMINGBIRDS—David Lazaroff. 1995. The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. 24 pp. Soft bound \$6.95 (includes postage and handling).

This booklet, written on shiny paper with color photographs, is a very inexpensive introduction to hummingbirds. The text is written for the amateur nature-lover and would make a fine gift for a beginning naturalist. More advanced birders can probably find most of the hummingbird information in more technical, and more expensive sources (some on which are listed in the back of the book). However, at this bargain price, even a professional ornithologist would probably enjoy this booklet. A surprisingly large range of topics are covered in the book, including (to list but a few) anatomy, breeding, coevolution of hummingbirds and flowers, migration, and how to attract the birds.

This book can be ordered directly from the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, 2021 North Kinney Road, Tucson AZ 85743 (1-800-969-9558). *Dan Tallman, Northern State University, Aberdeen SD 57401.*

BIRDS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA—Ian Sinclair, Phil Hockey and Warwick Tarboton. 1995. Princeton University Press, Princeton. 426 pp. Hard bound, \$35.00.

The goal of this book is to be a user-friendly field guide to birds of South Africa. Without a doubt, the goal has been met with success. The book has very little text. For the most part, open the book, and you will find color illustrations on the right hand side, and brief identification descriptions (plumage, habitat, song, status) on the left. Despite the range of information covered, the descriptive paragraphs are all only about ten lines long.

The book begins with a very brief discussion of South African ecology and a list of local bird clubs. It continues with short descriptions of South African bird families and a glossary.

The illustrations are excellent. Although a few plates are a bit crowded, most are not, and all should be more than adequate for identification of species.

Birders planning to attend the 1998 International Ornithological Congress in South Africa or those collecting bird books from around the world will definitely enjoy this guide. *Dan Tallman, Northern State University, Aberdeen SD 57401*



SEASONAL REPORTS

The 1995 Summer Season

01 June 1995 to 31 July 1995

Compiled By : Jeffrey S. Palmer
College of Natural Sciences
Dakota State University
Madison, SD 57042

It was literally and figuratively a very hot summer. Record high temperatures were set in many locations and there were some "hot" birds around too. Reports were received for 229 species; 89 were confirmed breeding (compared with 219 during the Breeding Bird Atlas Project). Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge was certainly the place to visit as many birders did in July. Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, and Common Moorhen were all nesting in the area. These three species were not confirmed breeding during the Breeding Bird Atlas Project. The highlight of the season, also from Sand Lake, was a White Ibis; this is the fourth report ever for the state and only the second this century! Below, I have tried to highlight the more significant sightings (out of range species, dates earlier/later than listed in The Birds of South Dakota, and confirmed breeding in counties other than those reported in The South Dakota Breeding Bird Atlas). For species reported as confirmed breeding, listed in parenthesis is the breeding code reported by the observer. These codes are explained on page 4 of The South Dakota Breeding Bird Atlas. If you are out birding in South Dakota, please consider contributing to these seasonal reports!

Common Loon All Reports: all season Fort Randall Dam (1 below spillway) RM; 02 Jun Roberts (1 calling) PFS

Pied-billed Grebe Confirmed Breeding in Brown JCS, **Codington PFS**, **Day DRS**, and McPherson JSP counties; also reported all season Custer DCW; 20 Jul Douglas RM

Horned Grebe All Reports: 03 Jun Charles Mix RM; 22 Jun McPherson JSP

Red-necked Grebe Confirmed Breeding: 04 Jun Waubay NWR, Day County (NB 3 pair) NB, RB; **16 Jun Codington (FL 3) PFS**; also reported 02 Jun Roberts (1) BKH; 21 Jun Mud Lake, Marshall County (2) JSP; **more reports this year than during the entire Breeding Bird Atlas Project**

Eared Grebe Confirmed Breeding: 23 Jul Fall River (PY) RAP, DCW; also reported 31 Jul Brookings (2) JAK, JRK

Western Grebe Confirmed Breeding: 17 Jun Kingsbury (FL) JSP; **01 Jul Hamlin (FL) BH**; 12 Jul Day (ON) DRS; also reported 03 Jun Charles Mix RM; 17 Jun Brookings BH; **numbers down at many locations due to high water levels**

Clark's Grebe Only Report: 21 Jun Sand Lake NWR, Brown County (1) JSP

American White Pelican Confirmed Breeding: 29 Jun Day (ON) DRS; also reported 13 Jun Jackson (2) NRW; 16 Jun Codington (800 at Grass Lake) PFS

Double-crested Cormorant Confirmed Breeding: 24 Jun Kingsbury (NY) BH; 12 Jul Day (ON) DRS

American Bittern Only Report: Day County (numbers down) DRS

Least Bittern Only Report: 03 Jul Waubay NWR, Day County (1) BH

Snowy Egret All Reports: 01 Jun Brown (100+) JCS; 24 Jun Charles Mix RM; 18 Jul Brown DAT

Little Blue Heron Confirmed Breeding: **23 Jun T126N R60W S31, Brown County (~10 nests in rookery) SLS; very unusual numbers, even for Brown County**

TRICOLORED HERON Confirmed Breeding: **23 Jun T126N R60W S31, Brown County (1 nesting with a Snowy Egret) first reported by William Meeks, subsequently by many observers**

Cattle Egret reported from Brown JCS, Charles Mix RM, Codington (1000 at Grass Lake) PFS, and Day DRS counties; **numbers up in Brown County SLS**

Green Heron reported 15 Jun Grant (2) PFS

WHITE IBIS reported **14 Jul T127N R62W S26 Sand Lake NWR, Brown County (1 remained in area through the end of July) first reported by William A. Schultze, subsequently by many observers**

White-faced Ibis reported 21 Jul Walworth (3) DAT; **higher than usual numbers at Sand Lake NWR, Brown County SLS**

Greater White-fronted Goose Only Report: **03 Jun Kingsbury (1) JSP**

Snow Goose All Reports: **03 Jun (54) and 17 Jun (4) Kingsbury JSP**

Wood Duck Confirmed Breeding: **25 Jun Fall River (PY) and 26 Jun Custer (PY) RAP, JLP**; 03 Jul Day (FL) BH

Mallard Confirmed Breeding: 01 Jul Brookings (FL) BH; 07 Jul Meade (NE 9) EEM

Blue-winged Teal Confirmed Breeding in Brookings BH, Day DRS, Hamlin RWK, McPherson PFS, and Meade EEM counties

Northern Shoveler Confirmed Breeding: **25 Jun Brookings (FL) BH**

Gadwall Confirmed Breeding: **17 Jun McPherson (NE 11) PFS**

Canvasback Confirmed Breeding: 12 Jul Day (FL) DRS

Bufflehead Only Report: 06 Jul Waubay NWR, Day County (28) DRS

Hooded Merganser Only Report: 13 Jun Brown (1) SLS

Red-breasted Merganser All Reports: **03 Jun Charles Mix RM; 24 Jun Lake Preston, Kingsbury County (1 female) BH**

Turkey Vulture Confirmed Breeding: 18 July Meade (NY 2) EEM; also reported 14 Jun Codington BKH

Osprey Confirmed Breeding: 19 Jun - 23 Jul Pennington (NY 2) RAP, JLP, DCW; also reported 13 Jun Deuel BKH

Bald Eagle Confirmed Breeding: Brown County (NY 1) SLS; also reported 08 Jun (1 immature) and 13 Jul (1 adult) Charles Mix RM; 23 Jun Harding (1 immature) PFS

Sharp-shinned Hawk Confirmed Breeding: 23 Jul Meade (CF) RAP, JLP, DCW; **24 Jul Custer (CF) RAP**; also reported 17 Jun Charles Mix RM (Cooper's ?)

Northern Goshawk Confirmed Breeding: 20 Jun Custer (NY 2, adult incubating on 02 Jun) DCW

Broad-winged Hawk Only Report: 03 Jun Marshall (2) PFS

Ferruginous Hawk Confirmed Breeding: Meade (6 nests and 12 young) EEM

Golden Eagle Confirmed Breeding: 03 Jun Meade (3 nests and 6 young) EEM

Prairie Falcon Confirmed Breeding: 21 Jul Custer (CF) RAP; also reported 06 Jun Brown DAT

Gray Partridge Confirmed Breeding: 07 Jul Meade (FL) EEM; also reported 01 Jul Hamlin (4) BH

Ruffed Grouse Only Report: 07 Jun Custer (male drumming) DCW

Greater Prairie Chicken reported 06 Jun McPherson (1) SLS
Sharp-tailed Grouse reported 24 July Beadle (3) JRK, JAK
Wild Turkey Confirmed Breeding: **06 Jun Custer (NE 13) DCW**; 22 Jun Meade (FL) EEM
Virginia Rail reported 17 Jun Brookings (1) BH
COMMON MOORHEN Confirmed Breeding: **03 Jul T127N R62W S12 Sand Lake NWR, Brown County (04 Jul NE 8 photographed, 16 Jul chick in nest BKH) first reported by William Meeks, subsequently by many observers**
Semipalmated Plover Only Report: 22 Jul Brown (1) DS
Piping Plover All Reports: 08 Jun east spillway Oahe Dam, Hughes County DAT; 14 Jul North Unit Lake Andes NWR, Charles Mix County RM
BLACK-NECKED STILT Only Report: **10 Jul north half of Section 6, Kassel Township, McPherson County (1) Dave Nangle**
Greater Yellowlegs Only Report: 30 Jun Brown (8) JCS
Lesser Yellowlegs Early Fall: 24 Jun Kingsbury (2) BH; 28 Jun Bennett JSP; 08 Jul Clay (6) DS
Solitary Sandpiper Early Fall: 08 Jul Clay (1) DS; 13 Jul Day (1) DRS; 15 Jul Brown JSP
Willet Confirmed Breeding: **21 Jul Brown (ON) DS**; also reported 16 Jul Pennington (1) RAP, JLP
Upland Sandpiper Confirmed Breeding: 20 Jul Custer (DD) MMM; 23 Jul Meade (FL) NRW
Marbled Godwit reported 17 Jun Brookings (1) BH; 23 Jul Fall River (1) RAP, DCW
Sanderling Only Report: 03 Jun Kingsbury JSP
Semipalmated Sandpiper Early Fall: 13 Jul Clay (3) DS; 13 Jul Day (1) DRS; 16 Jul Kingsbury (1) BH
Least Sandpiper Early Fall: 13 Jul Clay (4+) DS; 16 Jul Kingsbury (6) BH; 18 Jul Brown DAT
Pectoral Sandpiper Early Fall: 18 Jul Brown DAT; 24 Jul Spink (2) BKH
Stilt Sandpiper Only Report: 24 Jul Spink (8) BKH
Short-billed Dowitcher Only Report: **24 Jul Spink (15) BKH**
Common Snipe reported 17 Jun Brookings BH
Franklin's Gull Confirmed Breeding: Sand Lake NWR, Brown County (**over 120,000 nests**) SLS; also reported 24 Jun Kingsbury (4) BH
Ring-billed Gull Confirmed Breeding: 29 Jun Day (ON) DRS
Herring Gull Only Report: **17 Jun Lake Thompson, Kingsbury County (2) JSP**
Common Tern All Reports: 13 Jul Charles Mix RM; Day County DRS
Rock Dove Confirmed Breeding: **07 Jul Fall River (CF) RAP, JLP**
Black-billed Cuckoo Confirmed Breeding: 01 Jul Day (PE) DRS
Eastern Screech-Owl Confirmed Breeding: **11 Jun Roberts (FL) BKH**
Burrowing Owl Only Report: 22 Jun Harding (2) PFS
Common Nighthawk Confirmed Breeding: **08 Jul Roberts (NE 1) DRS**
Chimney Swift Confirmed Breeding: 29 Jul Edmunds (NY 3) MZ; also reported **07 Jul Hot Springs, Fall River County (5, first seen in Hot Springs since 1987) RAP, JLP**
Ruby-throated Hummingbird Confirmed Breeding: 11 Jun Roberts (female building nest) BKH; also reported from Charles Mix and 8 East River counties

Belted Kingfisher Confirmed Breeding: 20 Jul Pennington (CF) MMM; also reported Day County DRS

Lewis' Woodpecker reported all season Fall River (at least 4 pair in 1985 Flint Hills Wildfire area) DCW; 10 Jun Fall River (4) RAP, JLP

Red-headed Woodpecker Confirmed Breeding: 20 Jul Custer (FY) MMM

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker reported 03 Jun Lincoln DRS

Red-naped Sapsucker Confirmed Breeding: 26 Jun and 27 Jul Pennington (NY) RAP; 04 Jul Custer (NY) JSP

Hairy Woodpecker Confirmed Breeding in Custer RAP, Day DRS, Pennington RAP, and Roberts DS counties

Three-toed Woodpecker Only Report: 30 Jun Hanna Campground, Lawrence County JSP

Black-backed Woodpecker Only Report: 14 Jun Custer (1 female) RAP, JLP

Pileated Woodpecker All Reports: 02 Jun Sodak, Roberts County BKH; 15 Jun Big Stone City, Grant County (1 female) PFS

Olive-sided Flycatcher Only Report: **02 Jun Roberts (1) PFS**

Eastern Wood-Pewee Confirmed Breeding: 02 Jun Roberts (NB) PFS

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher Only Report: **04 Jun Brown (banded) DAT**

Willow Flycatcher Confirmed Breeding: 01 Jul Day (PE) DRS

Least Flycatcher reported 19 Jul Union (probable early migrant based on moderately heavy fat loads) DS

Say's Phoebe Confirmed Breeding: **Oak Lake, Brookings County *fide* BKH**

Western Kingbird Confirmed Breeding: 16 Jun Day (ON) DRS; 04 Jul Brown (CF) JCS

Horned Lark Confirmed Breeding: 13 Jul Meade (FY) EEM

Purple Martin Only Report: Day County DRS

Tree Swallow Confirmed Breeding: 20 Jul Custer (FY) MMM; **27 Jul Meade (FY) EEM**

Violet-green Swallow Confirmed Breeding: 30 Jun Custer (NY 3) DCW

Northern Rough-winged Swallow Confirmed Breeding: **20 Jun Day (ON) DRS**

Barn Swallow Confirmed Breeding in Custer NRW, McPherson PFS, Meade EEM and Turner LRL counties

Clark's Nutcracker All Reports: all season Harney Peak and Black Elk Wilderness, Custer County DCW; 11 Jun Custer (50+) RAP, JLP

Black-billed Magpie reported 13 Jun Jackson (2) NRW; 13 Jul Charles Mix RM

Black-capped Chickadee Confirmed Breeding: **05 Jun Fall River (NY) RAP, JLP**; 01 Jul Brookings (NY 3) RWK

Red-breasted Nuthatch Confirmed Breeding: 06 Jun Custer (NY) RAP

White-breasted Nuthatch Confirmed Breeding: 21-29 Jun Fall River (NY) RAP; 01 July Meade (FY) EEM

Brown Creeper reported **03 Jun Sica Hollow State Park, Marshall County (1 singing) PFS**

Rock Wren Confirmed Breeding: **10 Jun (CN) and 29 Jun (CF) Fall River RAP**

Sedge Wren reported 18 Jun Brown (**Sand Lake NWR has nest records this summer**) DAT; Day County DRS

Golden-crowned Kinglet Confirmed Breeding: **20 Jun Lawrence (FY) RAP**; also reported 06 Jun Custer DCW

Ruby-crowned Kinglet Confirmed Breeding: 12 Jul Pennington (FY) RAP

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher All Reports: 04 Jun (3) DRS and 11 Jun DAT Newton Hills State Park, Lincoln County

Eastern Bluebird Confirmed Breeding: 17 Jul Brown (CF) JCS; 20 Jul Brookings (FL) RWK

Mountain Bluebird Confirmed Breeding: 01 July Meade (FY) EEM

Townsend's Solitaire Confirmed Breeding: 07 Jun Custer (NY 4) DCW

Veery reported 26 Jun Spring Creek, Pennington County (south of known range) Rob Hoelscher *vide* RAP; 08 Jul Lawrence BKH; 08 Jul Sica Hollow SP (5) DRS

Swainson's Thrush Confirmed Breeding: **26 Jun Custer (ON incubating adult, NB on 05 Jun) DCW**

Gray Catbird Confirmed Breeding: 07 Jul Day (PE) DRS

Sage Thrasher Confirmed Breeding: 03 Jul west of Edgemont, Fall River County (NE 4) JSP; 23 Jul Fall River (NE 4) DCW, RAP

Cedar Waxwing Confirmed Breeding: **22 Jun Harding (NB) PFS**; 01 Jul Day (PE) DRS

Loggerhead Shrike Confirmed Breeding: 19 July Meade (ON) EEM

Yellow-throated Vireo Confirmed Breeding: 12 Jun Clay (PE) DS; also reported 04 Jun Newton Hills SP, Lincoln DRS

Warbling Vireo Confirmed Breeding: 28 Jun Pennington (NE 4) NRW

Tennessee Warbler All Reports: 01 Jun Brookings, 03 Jun Marshall, and **15 Jun Grant** (single singing birds) PFS

Yellow Warbler Confirmed Breeding: **09 Jul Fall River (FY) RAP**; 01 Jul Day (PE) DRS

Yellow-rumped Warbler Confirmed Breeding: 06 Jul Lawrence (FY) RAP

Cerulean Warbler All Reports: 04 Jun DRS and 20 Jun JSP Newton Hills State Park, Lincoln County

American Redstart reported 29 Jun Roberts (1 immature) BKH

Ovenbird Confirmed Breeding: Jul Union (PE) DS

Mourning Warbler Late Spring: **08 Jun Brown (1) JCS**; 03 Jun Union (1 female) DS

Common Yellowthroat Confirmed Breeding: 19 Jul Day (PE) DRS

Western Tanager Confirmed Breeding: 26 Jul Pennington (FY) NRW

Rose-breasted Grosbeak reported **01 Jun 3 miles SE of Custer, Custer County (1 male reported by June Johnston at her feeder) vide DCW, RAP**

Black-headed Grosbeak Confirmed Breeding: **01 June Meade (FY) EEM**; 25 Jun Fall River (NB) RAP; also reported 09 Jun Charles Mix RM

Blue Grosbeak Only Report: 01 Jun Lyman (1) BKH

Rufous-sided Towhee Confirmed Breeding: 25 Jun Fall River (FL) RAP

Clay-colored Sparrow Confirmed Breeding: **03 Jun Grant (CF) PFS**; **01 Jul Day (PE) DRS**

Field Sparrow Confirmed Breeding: **21 Jun Roberts (NY 3) JSP**

Baird's Sparrow Only Report: 22 Jun Ordway Prairie, McPherson County (1 singing) JSP

LeConte's Sparrow All Reports: **22 Jun and 15 Jul Bitter Lake, Day County (3-4) JSP**

Sharp-tailed Sparrow Only Report: **15 Jul Bitter Lake, Day County (1) JSP**

Song Sparrow Confirmed Breeding: 01 Jul Day (PE) DRS

Dark-eyed Junco Confirmed Breeding: 25 Jun Fall River (FY) and 26 Jun Meade (NE 4) RAP

Chestnut-collared Longspur Confirmed Breeding: **10 Jun Fall River (NB) RAP**

Bobolink Confirmed Breeding: **29 Jun Day (CF) DRS**; also reported Jun - mid Jul Custer City, Custer County (2 singing males and 1 female) DCW

Brewer's Blackbird Confirmed Breeding: 08 Jun Pennington (ON) NRW; also reported 11 Jun Charles Mix RM

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE Only Report: **01 Jun Vermillion, Clay County (last known observation of the birds first reported in the Spring Season Report) BKH, DS**

Brown-headed Cowbird Confirmed Breeding: 30 Jun Brown (Orchard Oriole feeding cowbird young) JCS; 04 Jul Day (Yellow Warbler feeding fledged cowbird) DRS

Orchard Oriole Confirmed Breeding: **17 Jul Custer (FL) MMM**

Cassin's Finch Confirmed Breeding: **14 Jun Pennington (CN and NB) RAP, JLP**

House Finch Confirmed Breeding: **01 June Meade (FY) EEM**; also reported 01 Jun Charles Mix RM; all season Pennington NRW

Red Crossbill reported **11 Jun and 27 Jun Pickerel Lake, Day County (2) DRS**

Pine Siskin reported 01 Jun Charles Mix RM; 24 Jul Brown (immature banded, first since a breeding male and female were banded on 14 May, may not have been of local origin) DAT

Evening Grosbeak reported all season Custer (individuals and pairs, no breeding activity noted) DCW

Species Expected But Not Reported

Cinnamon Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Common Merganser, Merlin, Sage Grouse, Baird's Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, American Woodcock, California Gull, Least Tern, Barn Owl, Long-eared Owl, Northern Saw-Whet Owl, Pygmy Nuthatch, Northern Mockingbird, Sprague's Pipit, Black-and-white Warbler, McCown's Longspur (22 Jun no birds seen in careful search along road from Marmath, ND to Camp Crook, SD from the state line to 4 miles south PFS)

Corrections/Additions from Past Reports

Least Tern 12 Apr Yankton SVS [delete from 1995 Spring Season Report]

Contributing Observers

NB	Nancy Buckman	SLS	Sand Lake NWR Staff
RB	Robert Buckman	DRS	Dennis R. Skadsen
BKH	Bruce K. Harris	PFS	Paul F. Springer
BH	Bill Huser	JCS	Jerry C. Stanford
JAK	Jan Kieckhefer	DS	David Swanson
JRK	Jon R. Kieckhefer	DAT	Dan A. Tallman
RWK	Robert W. Kieckhefer	DCW	Duane C. Weber
LRL	Lester R. Lauritzen	NRW	Nathaniel R. Whitney
RM	Ron Mabie	MZ	MyRon Zimmer
MMM	Michael M. Melius		
EEM	Ernest E. Miller		
JSP	Jeffrey S. Palmer		
JLP	Juanita L. Peterson		
RAP	Richard A. Peterson		

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Tallmand@wolf.northern.edu