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# SOUTH DAKOTA

## Ornithologists' Union

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*Baird's Sparrow*  
*Harding County, 6/20/07*  
*Photo: Douglas Chapman*



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S O U T H



D A K O T A

B I R D

N O T E S

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## SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

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\*Douglas Chapman assumed duties of office from Eric Liknes in October, 2007.

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## PRESIDENT'S PAGE

The South Dakota Ornithologists' Union is one of the earliest members of South Dakota's Teaming with Wildlife coalition. What does that mean? It means that SDOU's members several years ago decided that the work of the national Teaming with Wildlife Coalition and South Dakota's relationship to it were important for birds and worth participating in.



So what is Teaming with Wildlife and where is the national effort today? I have asked Eileen Dowd Stukel, Wildlife Diversity Coordinator for South Dakota Game Fish and Parks to use this President's Page space, as my guest, to bring us up to date. Here is Eileen's report:

Teaming with Wildlife is a national coalition of more than 5,000 groups working to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered. Considered the largest conservation coalition in history, the coalition supports increased funding for wildlife conservation and associated recreation and education in every state. The Teaming coalition includes biologists, wildlife agencies, conservationists, hunters, anglers, birdwatchers, nature-based businesses, and many other citizen and governmental groups that support the goal of restoring and conserving our nation's fish and wildlife. South Dakota's Teaming with Wildlife coalition currently numbers 126 member groups representing hundreds of thousands of South Dakotans.

For decades, sportsmen and sportswomen have financed state wildlife agencies in wildlife management and restoration. Many state wildlife agencies are still funded primarily by hunting and fishing license fees. At the federal level, the Pittman-Robertson (PR) Act imposed a manufacturers' tax on hunting ammunition and firearms, with proceeds going to state fish and wildlife agencies for research, habitat protection, and species recovery. PR funds can only be spent on birds or mammals, and the highest priority has been on game species. Anglers supported passage of the Dingell-Johnson (DJ) Act, which places a manufacturers' tax on fishing rods, reels, and tackle to help state fish and wildlife agencies restore sport fish. While critically important, these two funding sources have left many species without a similar reliable funding mechanism to help fulfill state laws to manage for the needs of all fish and wildlife species.

*continued on page 33*

# FROM OUR PAST...

...IN SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

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L. M. BAYLOR

Vol. 1 No. 2

October 1949

The title page of *South Dakota Bird Notes*, Vol. 1, No. 2, October 1949 features a black-and-white photograph of a male Chestnut-collared Longspur with its beak filled with food for nestlings. Elsewhere in the issue Editor Lamster provides information about this longspur's song, nuptial flight and nesting habits. Even today we expect to encounter this longspur on our less-cultivated South Dakota prairies.

Sadly, this issue presented a memorial piece for charter member Charles S. Hills, who passed away 15 August 1949. Along with a business career in Sioux Falls, he promoted bird study by Boy Scout troops and was one of the organizers of the Sioux Falls Bird Club.

This memorial note and a recent perusal of the charter membership list, reminded this writer of the loss of so many SDOU friends who no longer hear bird songs in this world. The reminder is sharp that people before us created this organization and that members today have the privilege to sustain SDOU and its goal to foster knowledge of wild birds in South Dakota.

One of the charter members, Mrs. Irma Weyler, had a long association with the newspaper in Belle Fourche, SD. Frequently she shared information about birds through newspaper articles. For the October 1949 issue of *Bird Notes*, she wrote about widespread efforts of people in her area to feed birds during "six blizzarding weeks." In a touching passage Mrs. Weyler wrote: "There's a four-year-old boy who has not been well all winter. Early last fall his older brother built him a windowsill feeding tray. A flock of chickadees found it before the first winter storm, and every day since have provided a merry round of interest for the little boy—better than a tonic, his mother says."

Pages 30-31 of this issue provide underside markings of flying "Western Hawks"—the pictures credited as "Cut Courtesy of S. D. Conservation Digest." Nomenclature for various categories may be of interest: Broad-winged—Rodent Hawks, Short-winged Bird Hawks, Pointed-winged Falcons, Ring-tailed Mountain Eagle, White-headed—Fish-eating Eagle, White-headed—Fishing Hawk, and Small-headed Carrion Bird. (Have you guessed the names we use today for these raptors?)

Kenneth Krumm, in his article, "Sanctuary! Sanctuary!" delineates facts about three West River National Wildlife Refuges: LaCreek, Belle Fourche and Bear Butte. Only LaCreek remains under the federal refuge system management today. Krumm's account of the Bear Butte Refuge (now Bear Butte Lake State Park) may bring new information to some readers. The lake, a popular place to observe migrating waterfowl, came into existence through exceptional circumstances. Prospectors attempted to discover oil in the general area. Instead of oil, they found an artesian well at 800 feet. At first the well merely provided water for livestock. Eventually, the federal conservation agency that

*continued on page 32*

# BOOK REVIEW

DOUGLAS E. CHAPMAN

*THE HAWAIIAN HONEYCREEPERS*. Dr. H. Douglas Pratt, 2005. Bird Families of the World series. Published by Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK. 342 pp. Hardcover \$189.50, ISBN 0-19-854653-X

When first opening Dr. H. Douglas Pratt's volume *The Hawaiian Honeycreepers*, it is difficult to not be distracted by the magnificent illustrations in this book. I found myself turning to the plates again and again. A labor of love, Pratt has spent much of his adult life studying the birds of Hawai'i and the honeycreepers in particular. The book was over ten years in the making. This deep understanding is evident on every page.

From the first page, it is obvious that this is a family of birds in which Pratt has an overwhelming interest. (Well, to be accurate, honeycreepers have been made an *honorary* family by the *Bird Families of the World (BFW)* series, as they are really in the large *Fringillidae* family, most closely related to the *cardueline* finches.) It is easy to see why Pratt has this strong interest in these birds. What stories these birds have to tell! The volume on the honeycreepers of Hawai'i documents a group of birds important for both their beauty and the adaptations they evolved. Honeycreepers are typified by nectar feeding, their bright coloration and canary-like songs. They are considered one of the finest examples of adaptive radiation, even more diverse than Darwin's Galapagos finches, as a wide array of different species has evolved in all the different niches provided by the Hawai'ian archipelago. The book will therefore be of interest to evolutionary biologists and ecologists as well as professional ornithologists and amateur bird watchers. As with the other books in the *BFW* series, the work is divided into two main sections. Part One is an overview of the Hawai'ian honeycreeper evolution and natural history and Part Two comprises accounts of each species, usually 1-4 pages each.

Pratt illustrated the work with his own outstanding paintings of these birds to accompany his text. These illustrations, including a radiating plate showing the honeycreepers' classic "adaptive radiation" beautifully, are hymns to the souls of the many that are now extinct and as a kind of loving memorial to the ones nearly so. The few that remain in good numbers are celebrated as well.

A helpful section in the Introduction is a spelling and pronunciation guide to the Hawai'ian language which is vowel-rich and looks more tongue-twisting than it really is. The main themes in the very readable scientific text are adaptive radiation, insular evolution and conservation issues, particularly on avian disease. This last section is very important and also sad at the same time. Two diseases, avian malaria and pox virus were accidentally introduced to Hawai'i and spread by another non-native organism—the night-flying mosquito. As a result the low-lying honeycreeper species have all gone extinct much as most of the rest of native Hawai'ian avifauna. The remaining species are now confined to mountain tops. Pratt does an excellent job of describing this sad story in detail.

Often books of this nature are necessarily more about science and less about the live birds. Probably because only seventeen of the more than fifty species identified are still extant, in Pratt's *The Hawaiian Honeycreepers*, even the science—and there is much science—is presented in a fashion conducive to loving reading. The style is conversational and thoroughly readable.

*Note:* The cost of this book is very high, excluding many who might otherwise enjoy owning it. Many may remember Dr. Pratt discussing this book, which was not yet published, at the 2005 SDOU spring meeting in Vermillion, when he also offered signed copies.

# MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY FOR NORTHERN HILLS BIRD CLUB

*by Vic Fondy, President, NHBC*

The Northern Hills Bird Club celebrated its twentieth anniversary at the May 2007 meeting in Sturgis, SD. The organizational meeting of the club was held 2 April 1987 with thirty-four interested birders in attendance. The first field trip was 11 April 1987 and the first formal meeting of the club was 7 May 1987 with the featured speaker, Les Baylor, Secretary of SDOU, who presented a slide show of birds of the Black Hills. The club name was originally "Northern Hills Birding Society" which was later changed to Northern Hills Bird Club. Bylaws adopted by the group state the purpose of the club is "to promote the enjoyment of bird watching thru cooperative programs adopted by the membership...and that it is not the intent or plans to participate in environmental causes or issues." Officers elected at the May meeting were Vic Fondy, President; Ernie Miller, Vice President; and Lucinda Schuft, Secretary/Treasurer.

The NHBC has continued with the basic 1987 format and holds formal meetings October through May on the first Thursday of every month with social meetings June through September at members' homes. Field trips are held the second and fourth Saturday of each month with slight changes for meetings or field trips that conflict with national holidays. Dues are \$3 per year for those who wish to join.

Here are some of the accomplishments by the NHBC in the past 20 years:

- Established Christmas Bird Counts in Sturgis in 1988 and Piedmont in 1999.
- Christmas cookies have been provided by Anna Ginter at each December meeting. She hand paints birds on the cookies!
- Club members participated in the Breeding Bird Atlas from 1988-1992.
- Hosted the SDOU Spring meeting in Sturgis in May 1992 and Belle Fourche in May 2006.
- Established a Birding Hotline (the first in the state) and kept it running from 3/7/97 to 10/2002. Established the NHBC Yahoo Group for Internet reporting.
- Created birding checklists for Ft. Meade Recreation Area and Bear Butte State Park, Lawrence County and Booth Hatchery, and Spearfish Park in Spearfish. The Spearfish Park list is not yet published.
- Provided monthly programs (most months) with emphasis on birding.

- Conducted field trips twice a month: canvassing the local areas, the Black Hills, other areas of South Dakota, and parts of Nebraska and Wyoming.
- Ernie Miller set up swallow nest boxes at Bear Butte Lake and still maintains them.
- Provided *Birds of South Dakota, Third Edition*, to all the local Northern Hills libraries.
- Bud Shaykett made and donated gavels to the NHBC and SDOU.
- Donated a television set to the Meade County Extension Service in March 2004.
- Introduced Citizen Band radios, and later GMRS (personal) radios for communication on field trips.
- Started a "1-2-3-Club" in 2003 for sighting 100-200-300 different species of birds in SD with a badge awarded to members who submitted their lists.
- Helped Girl Scouts identify birds in Spearfish Park in April 2004 and on a field trip to LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge in April 2007.
- A bird count for "200 or More in 2004" species observed on field trips was planned as a goal. We ended 2004 with 201 species. We are continuing this count with a new goal of "207 in 2007".
- A newsletter "Chirp and Chatter" was edited and published by the Yuill's for the four years they were in office.
- Individual members have given educational birding programs for schools, church groups and Continuing Education.
- Participated in the West River Migration Count and compiled data since 1995.

These are some of the highlights of our activities, but of course, the greatest accomplishment has been getting out and viewing the birds and helping others view and identify the birds of the area. Individual members report area sightings to the SD Birds on-line Listserve and share our sightings at Bird Club.

Guests are always welcome at NHBC functions and there are no charges for field trips.

*From Our Past, continued from page 28*

later became the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service authorized a mile-long pipeline from the well to flood the land that became Bear Butte Lake.

In the first two issues of *Bird Notes*, Secretary W. B. Mallory wrote articles titled "I Remember." In the previous one he told of a fox's antics that so mesmerized a flock of geese that the fox would have enjoyed a goose dinner if a passing car had not scared the fox away.

In the second article, Mallory told about an experience with a Screech Owl that had utilized a hollowed out log for its nesting cavity. When he attempted to take an owlet out to photograph it, a parent attacked Mallory's eleven-year-old son. While the owl flew away with only the boy's cap, his talons scratched the boy's scalp.

Also included in this issue is Roger Tory Peterson's letter thanking President Herman Chapman for a complimentary copy of the July 1949 issue of *Bird Notes*. Peterson remarked: "*South Dakota Bird Notes* should serve an extremely important function in stimulating field work in the state and particularly in drawing attention to some of the problems of bird distribution that remain to be solved in the state."

With this letter, Peterson became a member of SDOU, and his name is among the reported additional sixteen active members and two junior members who joined after July 1949.

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## **Book Review...from *The Wilson Bulletin, 1927***

BIRDS AND MAMMALS OBSERVED by LEWIS AND CLARK IN NORTH DAKOTA. By Russell Reid and Clem G. Gannon. Published privately, Grand Forks, 1927. Pp. 1-24.

The authors here give us a list of the birds and mammals recorded by Lewis and Clark within the area now comprised within the state of North Dakota, and identify these species in terms of modern nomenclature. The work is well done, and is a useful piece of compilation, not only for North Dakotans but others, as well. A somewhat similar piece of work was done some years ago by Professor Sbímek and entitled, "Early Iowa Locality Records" (Proc. Ia. Acad. Sci. XXII, 1915, pp. 105.119); and also for South Dakota by Professor W. H. Powers (Proc. So. Dak. Acad. Sci., IX, 1924, pp. 16-33). Professor W. H. Over has also published a similar review of the records of birds and mammals observed in the Dakota Territory by Audubon in 1843 (Proc. So. Dak. Acad. Sci, VII, 1922, pp. 41.55). These correlations between early explorations and recent conditions become valuable and necessary as time passes. -T. C. S.



The Teaming initiative first identified a similar user-pay funding mechanism. The user-pay concept was identified as a tax by opponents and failed to generate enough support to overcome an anti-tax atmosphere. More recently, the legislative effort has become more flexible in identifying a reliable, long-term funding source that links wildlife funding to other environmental issues, such as climate change or mineral extraction.

During this long-term effort to find funding, Congress and the President invested in wildlife and natural resources by creating the State Wildlife Grants Program. These annual allocations provide federal funds to every state for conservation aimed at preventing wildlife from becoming endangered. These are matched with nonfederal funds. To make the best use of these funds, Congress charged each state with developing a statewide wildlife action plan. These proactive plans were tailored to each state's needs, but each needed to meet certain requirements before being approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. All plans have been approved, but significant funds are needed before they can be implemented. State Wildlife Grants funding is allocated annually, is not guaranteed, and represents only a fraction of what is needed. Congress also created a Tribal Wildlife Grants Program, although these grants are awarded competitively.

Some people have called the collection of state wildlife action plans a "greenprint" for our nation's wildlife and habitats. The focus of the Teaming with Wildlife campaign is to secure funds needed to implement wildlife action plans to start turning things around for South Dakota's full natural legacy.

To learn more about Teaming with Wildlife at the national level, visit <http://www.teaming.com/index.html>; at the state level, visit <http://www.sdgifp.info/Wildlife/Diversity/teaming.htm>; or South Dakota's Wildlife Action Plan, visit:

[http://www.sdgifp.info/Wildlife/Diversity/Comp\\_Plan.htm](http://www.sdgifp.info/Wildlife/Diversity/Comp_Plan.htm)

Thank you very much, Eileen. I hope SDOU members will talk to those who influence decisions at both state and federal levels about the need for regular, secure funding for wildlife and natural habitat protection. Our birds will be the beneficiaries.

See good birds.



## EXTINCTION OF OUR BIRDS

by Le Grand T. Meyer

*L*ike the once impenetrable forests which bedecked our prairies, protecting us from the varying temperatures and securing an uniform rainfall; like the once well-stocked lakes and rivers with fish, now comparatively barren; like the once common mammals that swarmed the woods; so, likewise, is the time rapidly approaching when our I present common birds will become rare or obsolete. What is the cause of this extermination, you are ready to ask? Let me enumerate the artificial causes, taken from trustworthy observations and statistics.

First the "Pot-Hunters." Those human fiends that from day to day tramp the happy feeding grounds of game birds. Let us take some of the common species which were once abundant and are now extinct in many localities, and see if my assertion or logic is defective.

The Pinnated Grouse and Quail (I might mention the Ruffed Grouse if it was not for its wonderful powers of flight), were once one of the most common game birds east of the Mississippi River. It is now nearly extinct among the New England and Middle States. For a market supported by bloated epicures and sensualists, they have done their work thoroughly.

The multitudes of Geese and Ducks have become so reduced that hunting them as a pursuit has become unprofitable. Where are the myriads of Pigeons, Wilson and Audubon give us such glowing accounts of, less than a century ago? With us even the old settlers remember flocks that would dim the sky for hours in passing; now we see a few straggling pairs paying pilgrimage to their ancestor's haunts.

Second, for Fashion. Those ladies (?) that from their ill-concealed vanity yearly sign the death warrants of millions of birds simply because they possess an attractive plumage. Recently, an item in an exchange read: "Lady Gemini appeared in the reception room with a dress decorated with patches of three thousand Brazilian Hummingbirds!"

Not long ago I saw a woman in a cable-car wearing a hat with the heads of, by actual count, twenty-one Quails. Do you think they were taken from those slaughtered for the market? Impossible!

*One human resemblance, living near the sea-coast of South Carolina, supplied, for a New York milliner, three thousand Roseate Terns; so that locality, once resoundant with happy parental cries of this graceful "Sea Swallow," is silent.*

*Among the lagoons of the Southern States, hunters from day to day kill scores of the Great White Herons, the Spoonbills and the Ibises simply because they possess a few plumes. The loss of these species would be a truly national loss. Verily, they are doomed, from the plebian Sparrow to the graceful Swan.*

*Third, our Amateur Naturalists, Many of the present embryotic Ornithologists believe that in order to become Audubons or Bairds, they must slaughter indiscriminately every species met, and every nest must be robbed, under the transparent veil of science. A prominent Ornithologist in our state asks, in speaking of shooting Herons for their plumes, whether it makes any real difference whether they are shot in the fall migrations, or in their colonies or heronries with nests of eggs or young. Plainly the difference is too obvious to enumerate.*

*A true Ornithologist is a bird's best friend; his aim should be to perpetuate every species, destroying their enemies rather than fostering them. The inspection of a collector's cabinet resulted as follows: six hundred insectivorous and graminivorous skins, while only thirty-eight specimens represented the order Raptores. A fair sample of one's work.*

*Let us all then, during the approaching season, not show too much greediness, and above all do not make marks of every bird found, simply for the sport of killing them. This law alone would save thousands every year.*

This cry for conservation is from the first edition of *The Wilson Bulletin*, January 1889, (now *The Wilson Journal of Ornithology*). With our constant battle with habitat destruction, etc., it seems little has changed in the minds of bird lovers and scientists alike.

It is very important that all of us keep perspective on these matters. This importance is highlighted by another article in this same first issue of *The Wilson Bulletin*. Mr. Meyer himself publishes another long article on his egg collecting all over the nation, including an arduous trip from his home up in the North to Georgia, where he had word of a Bald Eagle nest. He wrote with glee about the addition of those eggs to his large collection. Sometimes we do hurt the things we love the most. Often times without even thinking. ~Douglas Chapman, *Sioux Falls*



*Rusty Blackbird is quite easy to identify when seen in the rusty fall plumage they are named for. In breeding plumage the subtle blackbird differences may require a better look. Lake County, SD; 10/9/06*

*Photo: Terry Sohl*

*Rufous Hummingbird is being reported more often and in a wider range in South Dakota. Seen regularly for several years in the Black Hills in the fall, one was seen in Sioux Falls in July 2007. 8/14/05*

*Photo: James Ownby*



*Swainson's Hawks are a welcome sight when they arrive in SD in spring from their wintering grounds in Argentina. Seen most often on grasslands, they are more common in Central and Western SD. Brown County, SD. 7/20/05*

*Photo: Dan Streifel*



*Always graceful, the beautiful American Avocet in courting ritual presents a spectacular sight.*

*Brown County, SD. 5/16/05*

*Photo: Dan Streifel*



### DICKCISSEL

*A loud and bubbly “mini-meadowlark” of alfalfa fields and other weedy areas usually with a minimum of trees, Dickcissels are a welcoming sign of summer, as they arrive quite late in May or early June. As the meadowlark’s song heralds springtime, the Dickcissel announces that “Summertime is here!” on the prairie. Minnehaha County, SD. 6/5/06*

*Photo: Terry Sohl*



### GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER

*In eastern South Dakota, found in extensive tracts of large forest, never far from the dense cover of thick understorey, the male will pop out in summer to deliver his burry song from overgrown woodlands. Heard more often than seen.*

*When seen well, it is an elegant bird. Minnehaha County, SD. 5/27/07*

*Photo: Terry Sohl*

# SEASONAL REPORTS

## **The 2006-2007 Winter Season**

Compiled By: Jeffrey S. Palmer

01 December 2006 to 28 February 2007

College of Arts & Sciences  
Dakota State University  
Madison, SD 57042

**T**here were 137 species, including 5 rarities, reported during the season. This is just shy of the record high of 140 reported in 1999-2000! The ten-year (1996-2005) average is 130. Below, I have tried to highlight the more significant sightings (dates that are earlier/later than listed in *South Dakota Birds* by Tallman, Swanson, and Palmer and species that are out of range). Included at the end is a list of species (16) that were not reported this year and might be expected during the Winter Season. A species is placed on the list if it was not reported this year but had been reported during winter in at least 2 of the previous 5 years. Numbers in parentheses indicates the number of consecutive years (up to 4) that the species has appeared on the list during the season.

**Greater White-fronted Goose** All Reports: 30 Jan Hughes RDO; 18 Feb Hughes KM; 28 Feb Hughes RDO

**Snow Goose** reported 23 Dec Kingsbury JSP; 01 Jan Hughes RDO; 13 Jan Stanley RDO; 17 Jan Grant BU; 20 Jan Hughes KM; 27 Jan Lake JSP

**Ross's Goose** reported 28 Dec Pennington JLB; 01 Jan Hughes RDO; 13 Jan Stanley RDO; 20 Jan Hughes KM; 02 Feb Stanley RDO

**Cackling Goose** reported 05 Jan Yankton BFH; 06 Jan Hughes DB; 13 Jan Stanley RDO; 17 Jan Grant BU; 02 Feb Stanley RDO; 04 Feb Hughes DB

**Wood Duck** reported 29 Dec Pennington JSP; 01 Jan Hughes RDO; 23 Jan Pennington JLB; 04 Feb Hughes DB; 09 Feb Stanley KM

**Gadwall** reported 28 Dec Custer JSP; 29 Dec Pennington JSP; 23 Jan Pennington JLB; 25 Feb Hughes RDO

**American Wigeon** reported 13 Jan Stanley RDO; 13 Jan Hughes JSP; 29 Dec Pennington JSP; 23 Jan Pennington JLB; 25 Feb Stanley RDO

**Northern Pintail** reported 01 Jan Hughes RDO; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 09 Feb Stanley KM; 25 Feb Hughes DB, RDO

**Green-winged Teal** All Reports: 04 Dec Pennington MMM; 28 Dec Custer JSP; 25 Jan Custer JLB; 10 Feb Yankton DS

**Canvasback** All Reports: 16 Dec Hughes RDO; 31 Dec Stanley KM; 01 Jan Hughes RDO; 20 Jan Stanley KM

**Redhead** reported 29 Dec Pennington JSP; 01 Jan Hughes RDO; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 23 Jan Pennington JLB; 02 Feb Stanley RDO

**Ring-necked Duck** reported 07 Dec Pennington JLB; 28 Dec Fall River JSP; 23 Jan Pennington JLB; 25 Jan Fall River JLB; 29 Jan Lawrence JLB; 25 Feb Hughes DB

**Greater Scaup** reported 01 Jan Hughes RDO; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 20 Jan Stanley KM; 25 Feb Hughes KM, RDO

**Lesser Scaup** reported 16 Dec Hughes RDO; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 20 Jan Stanley KM; 06 Feb Pennington JLB; 25 Feb Hughes DB

**Long-tailed Duck** reported 23 Jan Hughes KM; 23 Jan Stanley RDO

**Bufflehead** reported 29 Dec Pennington JSP; 14 Jan Stanley RDO; 23 Jan Pennington JLB; 17 Feb Charles Mix RM

**Barrow's Goldeneye** reported 09 Jan Pennington JLB; 23 Jan Pennington JLB

**Hooded Merganser** reported 29 Dec Pennington JSP; 06 Jan Hughes DB; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 20 Jan Stanley KM; 23 Jan Pennington JLB; 04 Feb Hughes KM

**Red-breasted Merganser** reported 18 Jan Stanley RDO; 10 Feb Hughes RDO

**Ruddy Duck** Only Report: **15 Dec Pennington JLB**

**Gray Partridge** All Reports: 29 Dec Harding CEM; 29 Jan Meade EEM; 10 Feb Moody JSP; 17 Feb Lake JSP

**Western Grebe** Only Report: **16 Jan Stanley RDO**

**American White Pelican** Only Report: **21 Dec Hughes RDO**

**Great Blue Heron** All Reports: 01 Dec Charles Mix RM; 03 Dec Minnehaha MRZ; 13 Feb Meade EEM

**Northern Harrier** reported 06 Jan Miner JSP; 12 Jan Buffalo JSP; 13 Jan Haakon KM; 13 Jan Stanley JSP; 19 Jan Hughes KM; 29 Jan Meade JLB; 03 Feb Minnehaha JSP

**Cooper's Hawk** reported 11 Jan Charles Mix RM; 17 Jan Charles Mix RM; 23 Jan Stanley RDO; 28 Jan Sully RDO; 03 Feb Stanley KM; 10 Feb Sully RDO

**Northern Goshawk** reported 31 Dec Hughes RDO, KM; 13 Jan Stanley RDO; 15 Jan Sully DB; 19 Feb Brown RDO

**Ferruginous Hawk** reported 01 Jan Custer MMM; 01 Jan Hughes RDO; 06 Jan Sully KM; 28 Jan Sully KM; 05 Feb Custer MMM; 18 Feb Hughes RDO

**Golden Eagle** reported 08 Dec Roberts MO; 17 Jan Grant BU

**Merlin** reported 15 Dec Brown GO; 07 Jan Sully KM; 12 Jan Hughes JSP; 13 Jan Charles Mix RM; 14 Jan Stanley DB; 28 Jan Sully RDO; 10 Feb Moody JSP; 10 Feb Yankton DS

**Gyrfalcon** reported 12 Jan Hughes JSP; 13 Jan Haakon KM; 15 Jan Sully KM; 28 Jan Sully RDO; 11 Feb Butte EK; 18 Feb Hughes RDO

**Prairie Falcon** reported 23 Dec Kingsbury JSP; 06 Jan Miner JSP; 02 Feb Beadle JSP; 17 Feb Lake JSP

**Virginia Rail** All Reports: 28 Dec Fall River JLB; **10 Feb Yankton DS**; 18 Feb Lawrence DB

**American Coot** reported 03 Dec Minnehaha MRZ; 28 Dec Fall River JSP; 29 Dec Pennington JSP; 13 Jan Hughes JSP; 20 Jan Stanley KM; 23 Jan Pennington JLB; 10 Feb Hughes RDO

**Killdeer** reported 08 Dec Lawrence EK; **09 Dec Codington BU**; 10 Dec Pennington RDO; 23 Jan Pennington JLB; 18 Feb Lawrence DB

**Wilson's Snipe** All Reports: 04 Dec Pennington MMM; 13 Dec Meade EEM; 28 Dec Fall River JSP; 29 Jan Lawrence JLB; 10 Feb Meade EEM; 19 Feb Fall River JLB

**Franklin's Gull** Only Report: **05 Jan Yankton BFH**

**Bonaparte's Gull** Only Report: 18 Dec Charles Mix RM

**Mew Gull** Only Report: **16 Dec – 16 Jan Hughes and Stanley RDO, KM, JSP**

**Thayer's Gull** reported 02 Dec Yankton DS; 07 Jan Hughes RDO; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 16 Jan Stanley RDO; 25 Feb Hughes RDO

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** Only Report: 16 Dec Hughes RDO

**Glaucous Gull** reported 02 Dec Yankton DS; 03 Dec Hughes KM; 18 Dec Stanley RDO; 13 Jan Charles Mix RM; 17 Jan Charles Mix RM; 19 Jan Hughes KM; 20 Jan Stanley KM, RDO

**Mourning Dove** All Reports: 16 Dec Minnehaha MS; 03 Jan Charles Mix RM; 27 Jan Lake JSP; 10 Feb Moody JSP; 25 Feb Union BFH

**Snowy Owl** reported 15 Dec Edmunds GO; 05 Jan Charles Mix RM; 09 Jan Pennington JLB; 12 Jan Hughes JSP; 15 Jan Sully DB; 24 Jan Hughes KM; 07 Feb Pennington JLB

**Long-eared Owl** All Reports: 16 Dec Stanley KM; 06 Jan Stanley DB; 13 Jan Stanley DB; 20 Jan Stanley KM, RDO; 28 Feb Stanley KM

**Short-eared Owl** reported 12 Dec Day WS; 03 Jan Custer MMM; 10 Jan Hughes DB; 13 Jan Hyde JSP; 13 Jan Stanley KM; 21 Jan Sully KM; 03 Feb McCook JSP; 03 Feb Minnehaha JSP; 17 Feb Custer MMM

**Northern Saw-whet Owl** All Reports: 15 Dec Stanley KM; 23 Dec Harding CEM; 06 Jan Sully KM; 21 Jan Sully KM; 02 Feb Stanley RDO; 18 Feb Hughes KM

**Belted Kingfisher** reported 15 Dec Lake JSP; 28 Dec Pennington JLB; 31 Dec Hughes KM; 19 Jan Hughes RDO; 20 Jan Pennington MMM; 18 Feb Lawrence DB

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** All Reports: 09 Dec Union BFH; **17 Dec Yankton DS**

**Black-backed Woodpecker** All Reports: 02 Dec Meade AKB; 17 Dec Meade AKB; 22 Dec Meade AKB; 09 Jan Meade EEM; 25 Feb Meade JLB

**Pileated Woodpecker** All Reports: 08 Dec Roberts MO; 26 Dec Roberts GO; 31 Dec Grant BU

**Gray Jay** Only Report: 24 Dec Meade EEM

**Pinyon Jay** reported 30 Dec Meade AKB; 21 Jan Meade AKB

**Clark's Nutcracker** Only Report: 10 Dec Pennington JLB

**Black-billed Magpie** reported 04 Feb Sully KM

**Pygmy Nuthatch** All Reports: 12 Dec Meade EEM; 03 Jan Meade APB; 10 Jan Meade APB; 30 Jan Meade APB; 07 Feb Custer JLB; 22 Feb Meade APB; 25 Feb Meade APB

**Canyon Wren** All Reports: 22 Dec Meade AKB; 27 Dec Meade AKB; 28 Dec Fall River JSP; 07 Feb Custer JLB; 18 Feb Lawrence DB; 19 Feb Fall River JLB

**Carolina Wren** Only Report: **16 Dec Minnehaha MS**

**Winter Wren** Only Report: 19 Dec Meade EEM

**Marsh Wren** All Reports: 28 Dec Fall River JSP; **25 Jan Fall River JLB**

**American Dipper** Only Report: 18 Feb Lawrence DB

**Golden-crowned Kinglet** reported 16 Dec Hughes KM; 18 Jan Hughes KM; 24 Jan Pennington JLB; 04 Feb Meade AKB

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** All Reports: 20 Dec Pennington MMM; **24 Jan Pennington JLB**

**Eastern Bluebird** All Reports: 10 Dec Gregory RM; 13 Jan Charles Mix RM; **10 Feb Hughes RDO**; 18 Feb Charles Mix RM

**Mountain Bluebird** Only Report: 24 Feb Butte SW

**Townsend's Solitaire** reported 01-13 Dec Brookings LH

**Hermit Thrush** All Reports: **18 Dec Pennington MMM**; **09 Jan Pennington MMM**

**Gray Catbird** Only Report: **21 Feb Pennington MMM**

**Brown Thrasher** Only Report: **02 Dec – 16 Dec Pennington TBW**

**Bohemian Waxwing** All Reports: 04 Dec Meade JLB; 16 Dec Hughes KM; 11 Jan Hughes KM; 19 Jan Hughes RDO; 28 Jan Stanley KM; 23 Feb Hughes KM

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** Only Report: 17 Dec Yankton DS

**Spotted Towhee** Only Report: **23 Dec Hughes DB**

**Song Sparrow** All Reports: 04 Dec Pennington MMM; 11 Dec Pennington MMM; 16 Dec Hughes KM; 28 Dec Fall River JSP; 21 Jan Charles Mix RM; 18 Feb Charles Mix RM

**Swamp Sparrow** All Reports: **17 Dec Yankton DS**; **28 Dec Fall River JSP**

**White-throated Sparrow** Only Report: 19 Jan Lake JSP

**Harris's Sparrow** reported 01 Jan Meade AKB; 02 Jan Stanley RDO; 09 Jan Pennington MMM; 21 Jan Meade AKB; 29 Jan Lawrence JLB; 31 Jan Charles Mix RM; 19 Feb Clay GJS

**White-crowned Sparrow** All Reports: 04 Dec Meade JLB; 25 Dec Stanley RDO; 03 Jan Charles Mix RM; 10 Feb Minnehaha TS

**Red-winged Blackbird** reported 28 Dec Fall River JSP; 02 Jan Stanley RDO; 06 Jan Miner JSP; 06 Jan Roberts MO; 20 Jan Charles Mix RM; 25 Jan Fall River JLB; 27 Jan Lake JSP; 28 Jan Clay DS

**Western Meadowlark** reported 09 Dec Deuel BU; 23 Dec Tripp RDO; 28 Dec Fall River JLB; 14 Jan Stanley DB; 20 Jan Charles Mix RM; 28 Jan Clay DS; 10 Feb Stanley RDO; 17 Feb Lake JSP

**Rusty Blackbird** All Reports: 09 Dec Deuel BU; 16 Dec Minnehaha MS; 02 Jan Stanley RDO; 09 Feb Roberts MO

**Brewer's Blackbird** All Reports: 13 Jan Charles Mix RM; 15 Jan Charles Mix RM

**Common Grackle** All Reports: 09 Dec Deuel BU; 27 Jan Lake JSP; 10 Feb Clay DS; 10 Feb Moody JSP; 19 Feb Clay GJS

**Great-tailed Grackle** Only Report: **10 Feb Lake JSP**

**Brown-headed Cowbird** All Reports: 27 Jan Lake JSP; 10 Feb Lake JSP

**Gray-crowned Rosy Finch** Only Report: 29 Jan Lawrence JLB

**Pine Grosbeak** All Reports: 01 Jan Brown GO; 19 Feb Brown RDO



**Common Redpoll** reported 09 Dec Kingsbury JSP; 06 Jan Roberts MO; 06 Jan Sully RDO; 18 Jan Lake JSP; 19 Jan Hughes KM; 19 Feb Clay GJS  
**Pine Siskin** reported 28 Dec Fall River JSP; 01 Jan Stanley RDO, KM; 13 Jan Brown GO; 13 Jan Hughes JSP; 16 Jan Charles Mix RM; 27 Jan Lake JSP; 29 Jan Lawrence JLB; 04 Feb Hughes DB

**Reports Requiring Acceptance By The Rare Bird Records Committee**

**Iceland Gull** 15 Jan Stanley KM, RDO  
**Inca Dove** 17 Dec Gregory RM  
**Field Sparrow** 17 Dec Yankton DS  
**Black-headed Grosbeak** 02 Dec – 04 Dec Pennington TBW  
**Hoary Redpoll** 06 Jan Sully RDO

**Species Expected But Not Reported**

Tundra Swan (2), American Black Duck (2), Northern Shoveler, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Ruffed Grouse, Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Barn Owl (2), Barred Owl, Lewis’s Woodpecker, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Varied Thrush (2), Yellow-headed Blackbird, Evening Grosbeak

**Contributing Observers**

DB	Doug Backlund	RDO	Ricky D. Olson
JLB	Jocelyn L. Baker	MO	Mark Otnes
APB	Addison & Patricia Ball	JSP	Jeffrey S. Palmer
AKB	Anna K. Ball	MS	Mark Schmidtbauer
LH	Lois Haertel	GJS	Gary & Jan Small
BFH	Bill Huser	TS	Terry Sohl
EK	Elizabeth Krueger	WS	Waubay NWR Staff
RM	Ron Mabie	DS	David Swanson
MMM	Michael M. Melius	BU	Bill Unzen
CEM	Charlie Miller	TBW	Tom & Brenda Warren
EEM	Ernest E. Miller	SW	Scott Weins
KM	Kenny Miller	MRZ	Mick Zerr
GO	Gary Olson		



*Sedge Wren chattering his peculiar song in the Nature Conservancy’s Ma-koce Washte Natural Prairie, Minnehaha County, SD. 7/28/06  
 Photo: Terry Sohl*



*Chestnut-collared Longspurs are a summer delight on the grasslands. McPherson County, SD. 5/9/07  
 Photo: Daniel Streifel*

# CASPIAN TERN, COMMON TERN, LEAST TERN AND CALIFORNIA GULL NESTING COLONY ON LAKE OAHE

Ricky D. Olson  
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The first confirmed Caspian Tern nesting record in South Dakota was on 15 July 1996 by Bruce Harris (Harris and Betts 1998). The location was a Missouri River island in Dewey County. The island had been found inhabited by California and Ring-billed Gulls in 1995 by Barry Betts. In 1996 Harris and Betts also documented breeding by California Gulls on this island. This appears to be the first record of California Gulls breeding on Lake Oahe.

The only other confirmed South Dakota Caspian Tern nesting record I could find was a Day County record by Bardon. (Tallman, Swanson, and Palmer 2002).

Several years ago Doug Backlund and I had searched the Little Bend area for nesting California Gulls and Caspian Terns, inspired by Bruce Harris's earlier records. We were able to find California Gulls present on an island, but not Caspian Terns.

In the summer of 2005, Carol Aron, while conducting Least Tern and Piping Plover surveys on Lake Oahe, reported seeing gulls apparently nesting on islands in the Peoria Flats area. But the gull species were not identified at that time, as her focus was on locating Least Terns and Piping Plovers.

I decided to venture out and locate these islands. I was hoping to find nesting California Gulls and just possibly Caspian Terns. On 3 July 2005, I coerced a friend with a boat to take me fishing in the area, promising to pay any fuel cost if he would take me to the islands.

We located three islands (the largest approximately three acres in size, one about an acre, and the third less than an acre). The islands were covered with sand, rocks and the occasional boulder. There was sparse vegetation.

On the largest island were approximately seventy-five adult California Gulls, with young ranging from recently hatched to individuals that were almost fledged. The smaller islands had several Common and Least Terns on nests.

About 1 June 2006, Nancy Drilling (SD Colonial Breeding Waterbird Surveyor) contacted me. She inquired whether the gull and tern breeding sites were still active on the islands where I located them in 2005.

Nancy wanted to visit the area. So, not wanting Nancy to make a wasted trip, I decided to check the islands. I asked my neighbor Josh Keisow (Lower Brule Sioux Tribe Wildlife Biologist) to take Kenny Miller and me in his boat to the islands. He gladly agreed.

On 4 June 2006, Josh ferried Kenny and me to the islands. We were all very pleasantly surprised!

On the large island were 300-plus adult California Gulls. Many were on nests. Young California Gulls were abundant in all stages of development. But the biggest surprise were twenty Caspian Terns in a group on nests. There were also many Caspian Tern mates in the area. This was by far the largest Caspian Tern nesting group ever documented in South Dakota.

On the middle-sized island were approximately twenty Common Terns on nests.

On the middle-sized and smallest islands were several pairs of Least Terns. None were on nest, but several were on territory and displaying courtship behavior.

The three islands were more vegetated this year. There were even young cottonwood trees growing on them.

On 10 June 2006 Nancy Drilling, her technician and I checked the Little Bend area for colonies. We checked the island where Doug and I had previously located California Gulls and about six places which maps and aerial photos showed to be islands. But only one was an island now. The others were just points of land. The one island we found was heavily vegetated. Many Common Terns and several Least Terns were present and flushed from the island. They were severely agitated at our presence and mobbed our boat. The island was so heavily vegetated we could not see birds on nest. But because of the number of terns and their behavior, I'm positive they were nesting.

Nancy and I also checked an island in Okoboji Creek where in years past I had observed nesting Least Terns and Piping Plovers. But nothing appeared to be nesting on this island. It was heavily vegetated.

It was thrilling to document that Lake Oahe is continually being utilized for nesting by several tern species and California Gulls, especially in such large numbers, but it is also a little distressing. Several of these species usually prefer a rocky/gravelly/sandy island with little to no vegetation to nest on, while here they were using marginal nesting habitat because of the amount of vegetation. They prefer islands because of less chance of nest and young predation by mammals and snakes. The terns nesting so close to the gulls greatly increases the

chances that the gulls might predate the nests and young of the terns. The nesting in one area also increases the competition for food resources, which could cause stress on the adults having to travel farther in order to feed their young, thus, perhaps contributing to a higher rate of nest/young abandonment. The concentration of gulls and terns increases the chance of an avian disease, which would greatly impact the breeding population of gulls and terns of Lake Oahe.

My theory for why these birds were nesting in large numbers and in close proximity to each other is the lack of suitable island nesting habitat on Lake Oahe. Because of several drought years Lake Oahe is at historically low water levels. What were once islands are now peninsulas. Since island habitat is at a premium it will be used for nesting by many species in larger than normal numbers until the drought cycle breaks and higher water levels restore peninsulas to islands.

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*Caspian Tern adult feeding chick. Caspian Terns have recently been found in South Dakota in ever-increasing numbers. The first confirmed nesting record was by Bruce Harris in 1996. Ricky D. Olson documented twenty nests in 2006.*

*Photo: Courtesy Oregon State University*

# In Memoriam

Paul F. Springer  
1922 - 2007

**B**orn in Illinois, 25 April 1922, Paul F. Springer passed away 2 May 2007, at Eureka, CA. After growing up in La Grange, IL, and serving as a landing craft commander in the southwest Pacific during WW II, Paul earned a Ph.D. in wildlife conservation at Cornell University. As a research biologist, he worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from 1947 through 1984.

While assigned to a Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at South Dakota State University, Paul became affiliated with SDOU. After retirement from his last assignment at Arcata, CA, Paul and Virginia Springer traveled widely in the nation often so that they could attend the SDOU meetings, especially the spring meetings.

Paul's interest in, and service to SDOU continued after his assignments sent him to North Dakota and California. Paul served as a member of SDOU's Check-List Committee for the compilation and publication of the 1978 and 1991 editions of the *Birds of South Dakota*. Paul also served as a member of SDOU's Rare Birds Records Committee from its inception in 1987 to October 2003.

SDOU is profoundly grateful for Paul's many contributions to the organization and to the advancement of knowledge of birds in South Dakota. Members who knew Paul will miss him and his abiding concern for birds.

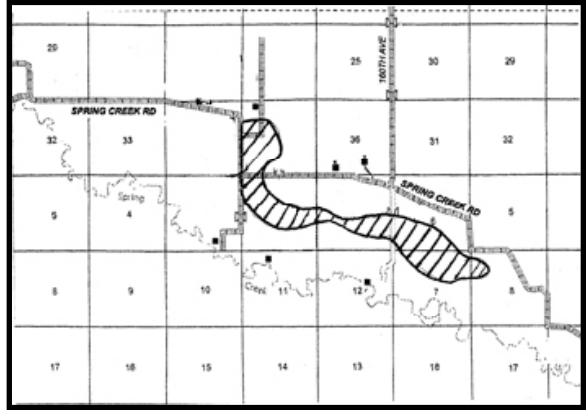
—L. M. Baylor, Rapid City.

# GENERAL NOTES

## *I. BURROWING OWL SURVEYS IN SOUTHWEST SD*

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Hermosa, SD 57744

In recent years I've conducted a count of Burrowing Owls near my home in northeast Custer County, near the community of Folsom. The birds are nesting in prairie dog towns that can be surveyed both from my home and along Lower Spring Creek Road using binoculars and a spotting scope. I travel approximately six miles along the road in making the count, but have no formal methodology other than making sure I survey the same land area every year, which I have mapped. Within that area, natural population changes and poisoning efforts by humans have caused the actual acreage of prairie dog towns to fluctuate over the years.



*Northeastern Custer County Map showing Prairie Dog Colony. Michael Melius, 2007.*

The counts are made in July when the young of the year are emerging from the burrows. I start just before sunrise. At this time of day there are very few Prairie Dogs out, making it easier to spot the owls. I don't attempt to count adults and young separately, as it can be easy for nearby birds but nearly impossible for distant ones.

Here are my results to date:

1998:	July 28:	31	2005:	July 22:	36
2003:	July 18:	56	2006:	July 20:	39
2004:	July 31:	26	2007:	July 5:	45

In 2007, the young apparently fledged earlier than in previous years. This is especially curious because the owls arrived later than usual, being first observed on 17 April, whereas my usual first dates are in the first week of April. It is best to count the birds early in their fledgling period, as they stay close together at their burrows, making for easy and accurate counts. Dispersal of the birds may partly account for lower count totals on later dates in previous years. In 2007, I also attempted to count the broods, and counted nine.

I will continue to make these counts in future years, and report periodically on my results. I expect prairie dog poisoning efforts to become more aggressive in the near future, so I will be curious to see how Burrowing Owls respond to a reduction in prairie dog acres.

These surveys do not include any recent data showing that prairie dog colonies in South Dakota are showing evidence of the sylvatic plague first found in states west of South Dakota. For more information see: <http://www.sdgfp.info/Publications/PrairieDogMonitoringReport2006.pdf>

## II. GRAY CATBIRD BANDING RECOVERY

David Swanson,  
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Vermillion, SD 57069

A Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) that I banded in my backyard, about 4 miles northeast of Vermillion, Clay County, South Dakota, on 19 May 2000 was recaptured on 12 June 2007 at Iowa Lakeside Laboratory on West Lake Okoboji, Dickinson County, Iowa. At the initial banding, I aged and sexed the bird as an adult male, so this catbird was at least 8 years old when recaptured this past June. The age of this individual, however, does not approach the longevity record for catbirds, which is 17 years, 11 months (Klimkiewicz 2007).

I calculated the distance between banding and recapture sites from the latitude and longitude of the sites, according to the online latitude-longitude distance calculator program provided at:

<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~cvm/latlongdist.html>.

The distance between the banding site northeast of Vermillion (42°48'35" N 96°51'52" W) and the recovery site at Iowa Lakeside Lab (42°22'44" N 95°10'55" W) was 93.7 miles. Given that breeding catbirds arrive in South Dakota by late April and initiate nesting by late May (Tallman *et al.* 2002), it seems likely that this individual bred locally in 2000. The recapture seven years later during the breeding season suggests an eastern displacement of breeding locations for this individual. Between-year site fidelity of Gray Catbirds to breeding sites ranges from 12-40% (Johnson and Best 1980, Cimprich and Moore 1995). Given that breeding localities were unknown for the six breeding seasons between banding and recapture, I can't estimate between-year breeding site fidelity on this bird, but it is clear that this individual was not site-faithful to particular breeding locations throughout its lifetime. Previous Gray Catbird banding recoveries for South Dakota show northwestern to southeastern migration patterns, but no previous recovery shows a similar eastward shift in breeding range (Tallman *et al.* 2002).

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