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# SOUTH DAKOTA Ornithologists' Union

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*Anna's Hummingbird*  
*Pennington County, 10/24/08*

*Photo: Bob Druckrey*



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SOUTH            DAKOTA  
BIRD      NOTES

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## SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

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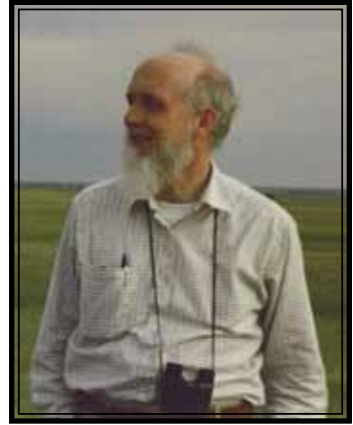
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## PRESIDENT'S PAGE

The aim of SDOU, as stated simply (and clearly, I think) in the SDOU Constitution is "...to encourage the study of birds in South Dakota and to promote the study of ornithology by more closely uniting the students of this branch of natural science".



The 2008 fall meeting of SDOU, held in Pierre in October, provided a superb example of how SDOU helps to closely unite students—in the broad sense—of ornithology. As many readers already know, the fall meeting traditionally focuses on the presentation of scholarly papers on ornithological subjects. The meeting just past featured papers that ranged, in one dimension, from the broad to the very specialized. In another dimension, the presentations ranged from serious expositions of ecological issues to entertaining speculations about historical bird observations. But do not be put off by my use of the term "scholarly". The presenters of these papers were college students, professors, and skilled, persistent amateurs. And even the specialized papers were accessible to a careful listener. Anyone, whether professional or amateur, with a serious interest in birds and birding will have learned a great deal by taking in these presentations.

One subject covered in detail at this meeting was the use of the SDOU Seasonal Bird Observation Report System. I want to emphasize the importance of reporting South Dakota bird sightings (and hearings) using this on-line computer system. Having a searchable database of South Dakota bird observations is essential to the study of populations and migration, as well as being a great aid to birders who are looking for information about finding specific species at specific times. The SDOU Seasonal Bird Observation Report System offers many ways to look at the data, and was in place with greater capability sooner than most comparable systems. But—and this is the critical point—it is no better than the data that observers enter into it. It's great to have our own lists and to post interesting sightings to our Yahoo! Group listserve, "sd-birds", but that information won't be in the database unless each of us goes to the trouble of entering our observations. If you are not already using the system, point your Internet browser to [www.SDOU.org](http://www.SDOU.org) and follow the Seasonal Reporting link. You can access data without being a registered observer, but to do the most good, sign up as an observer by following the instructions at the site—and then enter your observations!

What about future SDOU meetings? Again as many readers already know, each spring SDOU meeting traditionally focuses on field trips. Field trips are, of course, another way to encourage the study of birds and to promote the exchange of ornithological information. Mark your calendars: the Spring 2009 meeting will be held in Custer, SD, May 15-17, and the field trips should be exciting. We will also celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SDOU at this meeting. More information will be provided as May gets closer.

What do you think about how SDOU is fulfilling its mission? Write to me at [AddisonB@enetis.net](mailto:AddisonB@enetis.net).

*Addison Ball*

# FLEDGLING TRACTS

CAITY REILAND-SMITH

*URBAN BIRDING* by Guest Columnist Jacob Drucker, 16, New York City

The bird was a young male Scott's Oriole. After a summer in its southwestern USA breeding grounds, a bird which is usually residing comfortably in sunny, warm Mexico by early January. This bird was an exception. For reasons unknown, he had ended up in the heart of one of the most urbanized, crowded cities in the world, with skyscraper canyons echoing with the sound of honking cars, sirens blaring and the constant rush of the city.



*Jacob Drucker on Jones Beach, NY 11/28/08  
Photo: Doug Chapman*

My heart was beating furiously as I rushed out of the subway and along the edge of Union Square in downtown Manhattan, New York City. I could see my breath in the cold as I headed straight for the crowd of birders nearly surrounding the statue of Mahatma Gandhi, which some of us birders joked had drawn in this bird to this very odd location. "Scotty," as we soon began to call him, stuck around for over a month. He was first found in this small city park at 14th Street and Broadway, living off oranges and bagels people would leave for him. Then he began venturing to fire escapes and other locations in the East Village in southeastern Manhattan. This first New York State record turned into a winter New Yorker, wandering around the city. This is the perfect example of how fantastic, productive, intriguing, and addicting urban birding can get.

Whenever I hear people say to me, "Really? You can see birds in New York City?" I often just shake my head; but then I try to explain. It may be surprising to some, but I, and many others, consider New York City the birdiest city in America. This may not be what you have read from the American Birding Association, but, located on the Atlantic Flyway (a major path for migratory birds), the thousands of migrants that come through have to pass over the Big Apple and its vicinity. When you combine the aspects of superb habitat (marsh, old-growth forest, oceanfront), lots of migrating birds and limited places to land (with all the buildings and man-made structures), you have yourself a series of birding hotspots. One of the perfect examples is the famed Central Park. To a bird flying over the city, seeing mostly unsuitable city habitat, Central Park is an oasis. On a peak day in spring or fall, one can rack up over twenty species of warblers, plus tanagers, thrushes, sparrows, grosbeaks, and other passerines. Other city parks, such as Riverside Park in northwestern Manhattan, Prospect Park in Brooklyn, and Forest Park in Queens have all turned up equally impressive numbers, and New York has had spectacular regional rarities including Boreal Owl, Black Throated Gray Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, Western Tanager, and Tufted Duck. Even away from these places birds may turn up in downtown Manhattan, such as the already mentioned Scott's Oriole, only the third accepted record east of the Mississippi.



*Western Tanager, Central Park, New York County (Manhattan), NY 03/29/08*

*Photo: Jacob Drucker*

Warblers such as cerulean and yellow-throated have been seen on cross-streets in the middle of the city. Some mornings before school, I'll watch migrants from woodcocks and sapsuckers to bluebirds and sparrows re-orienting themselves at dawn. You might ask, "Can you see these birds migrating, even with all these high-rises around?" The answer is a resounding yes.

One of the most tantalizing birding experiences I've ever had in New York City is watching birds as they migrate past the Empire State Building at night. In late September/early October, with good northwesterly winds, the lights from the building illuminate the birds as they fly by. It can be like watching a meteor shower, as the warblers, sparrows, woodpeckers, catbirds, thrushes, grosbeaks, and even herons and owls shoot by, glowing whatever color the lights happen to be that night (though this can make ID difficult). As it gets later, and more people begin to leave, you can hear the birds chipping. To enhance things even more, the local Peregrine Falcons use the light of the building to chase these songbirds, and it is quite a spectacle to see them do so.



*Scott's Oriole, Union Square, New York County (Manhattan), NY 01/25/08*

*Photo: Jacob Drucker*

There is current research on the role in the Empire State Building's role in bird migration. And on rainy nights, it acts as an island in the sky. Migrants will actually land on it for refuge. A visit to the Empire State Building during migration is an unforgettable experience.

New York City also has some of the finest coastal birding in the country as well. Known throughout the country, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge in Queens, part of Gateway National Recreation Area, though away from Manhattan is...is...I struggle to put it into words! Hundreds of thousands of shorebirds and waterbirds use the refuge for staging, wintering, and as a major stopping point in migration. It has also harbored many rarities. Last summer, on the same pond at the same time both Red-necked Stint and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper occurred. Other jewels it has attracted include Broad-billed Sandpiper, Fulvous Whistling-Duck, American White Pelican, Wilson's Plover, Eared Grebe [rare in the East], Curlew Sandpiper, Eurasian Wigeon, and Ruff are just some of the birds attracted by this extensive wetland near JFK airport. Also regular are loads of wintering ducks and thousands of Brant that cover the bay and the sky. Other places in Gateway National Recreation Area should not be neglected. Fort Tilden and Jacob Riis Park provide fantastic barrier island birding (they are the western most part of Long Island).

And the migrant fallouts in New York can be mind-blowing. This can also be a good place for western rarities as well as seabirds. Also of note is Plum Beach, a little, run-down beach and estuary along the Belt Parkway in Brooklyn, which can be good for fallouts and rarities, and recently—for barely one hour—, hosted where the East Coast's first Eastern Yellow Wagtail was spotted! Plum Beach is also a short drive from the location of the fourth North American record of Western Reef Heron. There is no doubt about the area's birding aura, which continues to amaze, even all of us in New York. It is in a way a huge relief to know that birds, some of the most inspiring, fascinating and incredible creatures, can indeed survive, adapt and in many cases, thrive in urban areas like New York City. I ♥ New York! And its seemingly endless variety of birds.

# WHAT COLOR SHOULD I WEAR WHILE BIRDING?

by Byron K. Butler

*The following article was a response by the author to a question asked on the Internet discussion group BIRDCHAT. The question was, "What is the best color clothing to wear while birdwatching". The author is a Ph.D. graduate student in ornithology and a regular contributor to BIRDCHAT. This article is adapted and edited from his response and he has graciously allowed it to be shared with the Horned Lark readers. Thank you Byron!*

*(This was originally published in the March 1996 issue of the Horned Lark, the quarterly newsletter of the Kansas Ornithological Society. Reprinted with permission, with further adaptations for South Dakota Bird Notes.) ~ Douglas Chapman, editor*

What color should I wear while birding? This question has been considered before by birders and professional field ornithologists. This question has been speculated upon, but never answered satisfactorily. Some of the responses posted by others have been good. The reason there is no adequate answer to this question is because we (humans) do not understand the perceptual world of any non-human animal. In fact, we frequently have a tough time understanding the perceptual world of humans different from ourselves. For example, it is hard to imagine what being blind, or even color blind, is like if you have normal vision. It may even be harder to imagine how other sensory modalities can be enhanced over our normal experience. Blind humans "switch" to their sense of hearing and can perceive their surroundings better with their ears than can sighted people. Dogs place a lot of importance on their sense of smell and make olfactory maps as well as visual maps. It is exactly this line of thinking that led me to work on sensory systems in birds to begin with. While studying avian ecology and behavior I realized that many of the questions I wished to answer concerning communication in birds could not be properly addressed until we understood the visual perceptual world of birds. We still do not have this understanding, but we are slowly getting there.

Birds see color, i.e., they have color vision. Their color vision is not only good, but it is actually better than our own. These two definitive statements describe what vision researchers are pretty sure is true—however, at the highest levels of scientific rigor they have not been firmly established. Up until the early 1970s it was widely thought that birds had trichromatic (three photoreceptor) color vision comparable to that of humans, or perhaps a bit inferior to ours. Then, around 1972, it was discovered that birds can see light in the near-ultraviolet (UV) range and a series of new studies began. Today it is widely accepted that the avian eye, not the human eye, is the quintessential color vision system. It is now believed that birds see more colors (hues) than we do and the colors also appear more saturated to birds than do ours to us. They are able to do this because they have four (or more!) cones and pigmented oil droplets in those photoreceptors. Whereas we have short, middle and long (also called blue, green, & red, respectively) cones, they not only have short, middle, and long cones, but also a UV cone.

When we talk about what colors we wear (or *should* wear) in the field, we assume these colors look the same to birds as they do to us. This assumption may not always be correct. Birds probably do see colors similar to the way we see them, but they are most likely never exactly the same, and may indeed be quite different. To clarify, a flower that is red to us is probably also red to most diurnal birds, but is probably seen by them as a different hue of red. If the flower (or other object) reflecting the red light is also reflecting UV light, the color (hue) seen by birds will almost certainly be different than anything we see. Imagine you are standing in a forest or field looking at a bird that is, say, thirty yards away. What are

you thinking? Most birders will be thinking about getting the correct ID, or may be trying to record a description (in memory or in writing) of an observed behavior. Either way, the birder is treating the bird as an object; i.e., you are over here looking at something over there. I call this the “aquarium syndrome” because the bird is viewed just like a goldfish in a bowl, something in another world to be looked \*at\*. That other world is not understood by the observer, who is not a part of it.

When I teach birdwatching, I try to get students to think about how the world looks from the bird’s point of view. That is, get into the aquarium with the fish and try to understand what it is like to be in the aquarium looking out into the room. With the bird that is thirty yards away, try to get a piece of your mind transported into the bird’s head. Then, through the bird’s eyes, look from its perch back at yourself. From its vantage point what would be the view? This exercise isn’t restricted to colors of birders’ clothing but is something to develop into a general practice -- do this anytime you are in the field. Birds are living entities and possess highly developed brains. Like you, they experience life and have individual perceptions. It is fun to not only see birds, but to see the birds’ world. You then feel a closer communion with them.

“Okay,” you ask, “so what is that world like?” Again, no human knows. My best guess is that birds see colors slightly differently than we do in most cases and significantly different in some cases. Further, I assume colors appear even more saturated to birds than they do to us. Following these assumptions, earth tones should appear more natural to birds than bright colors that are not part of their normal environment. Since most of my birding is well away from human activity, I wear subdued earth tones except for dark blue jeans. Bright colors not only make us more conspicuous, but they amplify all our movements. For example, if you are wearing a white shirt with long sleeves and you move your arms, that movement will be magnified against a natural background. Any other color that stands out against the background will have the same effect. The effect will be greater yet if the white also reflects UV.

Having said that, I must recall some bird photographers I saw in Florida a couple of years ago who were wearing bright yellow parkas. (I forget their names, but I believe they are well known.) I overheard a woman ask these photographers why they were wearing such bright colors and they replied that the yellow was the best color they found to permit them close approach to the birds. This makes no sense based on what I know of bird color vision. What I think is happening is this: the photographers were at the water’s edge photographing long-legged waders. Yellow permitted close approach because it contrasted highly with the background. The birds were able to clearly see all their movements and with minimal vigil could know when to move away from threatening actions. Camo clothing in such situations increases the degree of uncertainty of the intention of each movement visible to the birds.

While this might work at a beach that gets a high number of human visitors, I don’t think it would work in the woods. Bright yellows, hunter orange vests, and other conspicuous objects are not normally part of such environments, and so are novel items to forest birds. Many birds are understandably neophobic (wary of anything new). A well-known exception is small patches of red. As has been pointed out, a red hat can actually attract hummingbirds if the wearer is sitting still. The key is to sit still, a skill rarely employed by most birders. An alternative for fidgety birders is to carry a handkerchief-sized piece of red cloth and to hang it on a limb when in hummer country. Just about any red object will work. In the Arizona desert I hang a red hummer feeder from my pick-up truck - I can stop just about anywhere in suitable habitat and attract hummers in a few minutes.

It was observed that aside from bird photographers few birders wear camo clothing. I hypothesize this is related to the fact that few birders ever sit still for any length of time. These are hunting techniques. Apart from the list-and-run activity which generally defines competitive birding, in which time for sitting is not allotted, birders today tend to regard hunters as their enemies. And no one wants to look and behave like their enemy. This is really unfortunate because hunting has much to teach birders about how to stalk their quarry. Many other hunting techniques can be employed as well that I never see birders use. You don't have to kill the animal in order to find these techniques valuable, as bird and nature photographers know. If a birder is to sit and/or move slowly, I think camo is very effective. The Florida photographers who were wearing yellow were constantly moving, an important point. Hawkwatchers who man a station all day long would benefit from wearing cryptic clothing and restricting their movements.

I also always wear a hat—a baseball cap—so I can hide my face and eyes from birds. If you are a nice morsel for a predator, as most birds are, you are in constant danger of predation. You know you are in trouble if a predator has focused his stare on you. Think about the last time you noticed someone staring at you in a singles bar (Fatal Attraction)! Or on a bus, or at any other public place. You feel more comfortable when you look around and there are no eyes looking at you. This is the case for birds also—they look to see who is looking back. They know to watch for peering eyes and the ones that are still alive are good at it. The bird on a branch looking back at you is looking at your eyes to see what you are up to. It is no coincidence that our eyes are our best birding tools, and we go to great lengths to enhance them with fancy optics. The bill of the baseball cap provides a shield (an ultra-mini blind) by which I can hide my eyes and break up the outline of my face. I frequently turn my head and body away, looking off to the side of the bird, and then peek out from under my cap in a Princess Di fashion to try to sneak a candid camera view - another hunting tip. The point of this is that no matter what color clothing you have, if your big ole round face is sticking out like a neon sign then you've failed to pay attention to the part of you that has the most salience to birds.

So, to summarize my answers: Avoid anything that reflects in the UV. Avoid bright colors as a general rule. You may wish to experiment with your own success in wearing bright colors in situations similar to that of the Florida photographers. Avoid wearing white. Do wear camo and subdued colors that match natural surroundings, especially when you intend to sit still. Sitting still means not only that you are seated, but also that you make yourself appear as small as possible and your arms and head are also still. Restrict your body movements at all times. Keep this in mind when hawkwatching, too. When you do move, move slowly and smoothly. Avoid jerky and fast movements. Disrupt the outline of your face and eyes. Hide your eyes as much as possible. Use your peripheral vision to sneak peeks. Never stare at a bird unless it is a species that is known to "accept" stares, e.g., eagles. Look off to the side of the bird about thirty degrees and pan across to thirty degrees on the other side of it, stopping only long enough to capture a look. Then look away, and do it again. Learn "intention" movements and stop for a while if the bird is behaving as if it might fly. After it settles down, pan again. Too many birders see intention movements and then think they have to get a good look before the bird is gone. They don't realize that in doing so they are actually pushing the bird to fly. Learn to be patient. We take up birding because we want to stop to smell the roses, then we get so caught up in list-and-run birding we still never take time to smell the roses. Birdwatching is the activity that encourages us to use our time to look closely at birds for more than their field marks. ▼



# SEASONAL REPORTS

## The 2008 Summer Season

Compiled By: Jeffrey S. Palmer

01 June 2008 to 31 July 2008

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

**T**he primary goal of the Summer Season compilation is to report confirmed breeding records observed during the season. There were 81 species reported as confirmed breeding this year. However, this does not include numerous records reported to the current South Dakota Breeding Bird Atlas Project. These will eventually be reported elsewhere and the data will hopefully make its way into the online database as well. The secondary objectives of the Summer Season summary include sightings of rare (or at least infrequently reported) species, late spring and early fall migration dates, and species that are reported from unusual locations. There were 256 species - the ten-year (1998-2007) average is 251 - including 6 rarities, reported during the season. A full listing of reported sightings can be obtained from the online database. This report contains those sightings and species which seem to be consistent with the objectives of the Summer Season as described above.

**Snow Goose** All Reports: 07 Jun Minnehaha JSP; 13 Jun Kingsbury JSP; 30 Jun Kingsbury DS; 05 Jul Miner JSP

**Canada Goose** Confirmed Breeding: 07 Jun Minnehaha (PY) JSP; 13 Jun Kingsbury (PY) JSP; 16 Jun Bennett (PY) JSP; 05 Jul Miner (PY) JSP

**Trumpeter Swan** All Reports: 14 Jun Tripp RDO; 20 Jul Bennett JLB; 20 Jul Harding CEM; KM

**Wood Duck** Confirmed Breeding: 17 Jun Pennington (PY) JLB; 27 Jun Hughes (PY) KM

**Gadwall** Confirmed Breeding: 04 Jun Potter (NE) SS; **28 Jul Meade (PY) JLB; 31 Jul Pennington (PY) JLB**

**American Wigeon** All Reports: 08 Jun Stanley RDO; 14 Jun Meade JLB; 16 Jun Fall River JSP; 20 Jul Harding KM; 28 Jul Meade JLB

**Mallard** Confirmed Breeding: 09 Jun Potter (PY) SS; 14 Jul Pennington (PY) JLB

**Blue-winged Teal** Confirmed Breeding: 04 Jun Potter (NE) SS

**Cinnamon Teal** Only Report: 28 Jun Sully GO

**Northern Shoveler** Confirmed Breeding: 04 Jun Potter (NE) SS; 23 Jul Pennington (PY) JLB; **28 Jul Meade (PY) JLB**

**Northern Pintail** Confirmed Breeding: 04 Jun Potter (NE) SS; **28 Jul Meade (PY) JLB**

**Canvasback** All Reports: 04 Jun Harding CEM; 16 Jun Bennett JSP; 09 Jul Hughes SS; 20 Jul Bennett JLB

**Ring-necked Duck** Only Report: 01 Jun Hughes DB

**Bufflehead** All Reports: 16 Jun Bennett JSP; 20 Jul Harding CEM, KM

**Gray Partridge** Only Report: 15 Jun Minnehaha MRZ

**Ring-necked Pheasant** Confirmed Breeding: 05 Jul Miner (PY) JSP

**Ruffed Grouse** All Reports: 04 Jun Lawrence DGP; 13 Jun Lawrence DGP

**Greater Sage-Grouse** Confirmed Breeding: **20 Jul Harding (PY) CEM** ... also reported 20 Jul Harding KM

**Sharp-tailed Grouse** Confirmed Breeding: **26 Jul Sully (PY) KM**

**Greater Prairie-Chicken** All Reports: 01 Jun Hughes DB; 01 Jun Stanley DB; 08 Jun Jones DB; 08 Jun Stanley DB, RDO

**Northern Bobwhite** All Reports: 12 Jun Charles Mix RM; 15 Jun Tripp RDO; 02 Jul Gregory RM; 12 Jul Gregory RM

**Common Loon** reported 27 Jun Marshall DB

**Pied-billed Grebe** Confirmed Breeding: 13 Jul Harding (PY) CEM; 23 Jul Pennington (PY) JLB; 28 Jul Meade (PY) JLB

**Red-necked Grebe** Confirmed Breeding: 27 Jun Marshall (NE) DB

**Eared Grebe** Confirmed Breeding: 10 Jul Pennington (NE) JLB; 13 Jul Hughes (PY) DB; 23 Jul Pennington (NE) JLB

**Clark's Grebe** Only Report: 29 Jun Brown JLB

**Great Blue Heron** Confirmed Breeding: 12 Jun McCook (ON) DC

**Snowy Egret** All Reports: 13 Jun Kingsbury JSP; 15 Jun Marshall GO; 16 Jun Bennett JSP; 02 Jul Marshall GO; 05 Jul Day GO; 05 Jul Roberts GO

**Cattle Egret** All Reports: 14 Jun Minnehaha DC; 15 Jun Marshall GO; 02 Jul Marshall GO; 09 Jul Hughes SS; 14 Jul Hughes KM; 20 Jul Minnehaha DC

**Green Heron** Only Report: 20 Jul Minnehaha DC

**Bald Eagle** Confirmed Breeding: 04 Jun Pennington (NY) JLB; 21 Jun Dewey (FL) RDO

**Sharp-shinned Hawk** All Reports: 02 Jun Lawrence DGP; 13 Jun Lawrence DGP

**Cooper's Hawk** Confirmed Breeding: 12 Jul Hughes (NY) DB; 12 Jul Stanley (NY) DB

**Broad-winged Hawk** All Reports: 07 Jun Lincoln MS

**Ferruginous Hawk** Only Report: 04 Jun Harding CEM

**Golden Eagle** Confirmed Breeding: 08 Jun Harding (NY) CEM; 16 Jun Pennington (CF) MMM

**Prairie Falcon** Confirmed Breeding: 29 Jun Harding (FL) CEM ... also reported 20 Jul Harding KM

**Virginia Rail** All Reports: 24 Jun Aurora BFW; 29 Jun Brown JLB; 12 Jul Hughes DB; 13 Jul Hughes KM; 13 Jul Harding CEM; 20 Jul Harding CEM, KM; 20 Jul Hughes RDO

**American Coot** Confirmed Breeding: 05 Jul Miner (PY) JSP; 10 Jul Pennington (NE) JLB; 13 Jul Hughes (PY) DB; 23 Jul Pennington (PY) JLB

**Sandhill Crane** All Reports: **08 Jun Butte SW; 20 Jul Bennett JLB**

**Semipalmated Plover** All Reports: **28 Jun Sully GO**; 31 Jul Hughes KM

**Piping Plover** reported 15 Jun Marshall GO; 29 Jun McPherson JLB; 30 Jun McPherson DB

**Killdeer** Confirmed Breeding: 09 Jun Custer (PY) MMM; 13 Jun Kingsbury (PY) JSP; 15 Jun Harding (PY) CEM; 02 Jul Pennington (PY) JLB; 05 Jul Miner (PY) JSP; 23 Jul Pennington (PY) JLB

**Black-necked Stilt** All Reports: 09 Jun McPherson LDI; 29 Jun McPherson JLB; **30 Jun Kingsbury DS**; 30 Jun McPherson DB

**American Avocet** Confirmed Breeding: 20 Jul Pennington (PY) JLB; **24 Jul Hughes (PY) KM**

**Greater Yellowlegs** Early: 30 Jun Kingsbury DS; 05 Jul Hughes RDO; 12 Jul Charles Mix RM; 20 Jul Bennett JLB

**Lesser Yellowlegs** Late: Early: 30 Jun Hyde BFW; 30 Jun Kingsbury DS; 05 Jul Hughes DB, RDO; 28 Jul Meade JLB

**Solitary Sandpiper** Late: **07 Jun Charles Mix RM** ... Early: 05 Jul Miner JSP; 06 Jul Hughes RDO; 19 Jul Lincoln DC; 28 Jul Meade JLB

**Upland Sandpiper** Confirmed Breeding: 02 Jul Custer (PY) MMM

**Long-billed Curlew** All Reports: 14 Jun Tripp RDO; 16 Jun Fall River JSP; 18 Jun Custer JLB; 01 Jul Custer MMM; 10 Jul Pennington JLB; 13 Jul Harding CEM; 20 Jul Harding CEM, KM

**Sanderling** All Reports: 20 Jul Sully RDO; 27 Jul Sully RDO

**Semipalmated Sandpiper** reported 01 Jun Hughes DB; 16 Jun Bennett JSP; **22 Jun Sully RDO**; 05 Jul Hughes RDO; 20 Jul Lake DC; 24 Jul Deuel BU

**Least Sandpiper** Early: 03 Jul McPherson DS; 09 Jul Hughes SS; 11 Jul Sully KM

**White-rumped Sandpiper** reported 27 Jul Charles Mix RM; 20 Jul Brookings DC; 22 Jun Sully RDO

**Baird's Sandpiper** Early: 06 Jul Hughes RDO; 19 Jul Charles Mix RM; 20 Jul Brookings DC; 23 Jul Pennington JLB

**Pectoral Sandpiper** Early: **03 Jul McPherson DS**; 13 Jul Hughes KM; 24 Jul Deuel BU

**Stilt Sandpiper** Early: 03 Jul McPherson DS; 06 Jul Hughes RDO; 20 Jul Minnehaha DC

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper** Only Report: 29 Jul Minnehaha DC

**Short-billed Dowitcher** All Reports: 19 Jul Charles Mix RM; 20 Jul Charles Mix RM; 20 Jul Hughes RDO

**Long-billed Dowitcher** Early: **30 Jun Kingsbury DS**; 05 Jul Hughes RDO; 12 Jul Charles Mix RM

**Red-necked Phalarope** Only Report: 24 Jul Deuel BU

**Bonaparte's Gull** Only Report: **08 Jun Butte JLB**

**Herring Gull** All Reports: 28 Jun Sully GO; **24 Jul Deuel BU**

**Caspian Tern** reported 30 Jun Clark DS; 02 Jul Charles Mix RM; 13 Jul Yankton DS; 13 Jul Harding CEM

**Common Tern** Confirmed Breeding: 21 Jun Dewey (ON) RDO

**Mourning Dove** Confirmed Breeding: 13 Jun Hughes (NE) KM; 14 Jun Meade (ON) JLB; 28 Jun Harding (NE) CEM; 29 Jun Hughes (NE) KM; 31 Jul Meade (NE) JLB

**Black-billed Cuckoo** All Reports: 08 Jun Stanley RDO; 20 Jun Buffalo BFW; 09 Jul Harding CEM; 21 Jun Pennington DB; 19 Jul Harding CEM, KM; 20 Jul Bennett JLB; 22 Jul Stanley RDO

**Barn Owl** Confirmed Breeding: 01 Jun Potter (ON) KM, RDO; 21 Jun Dewey (ON) RDO; 15 Jul Corson (ON) RDO; 23 Jul Sully (NY) RDO

**Eastern Screech-Owl** Only Report: 08 Jun Stanley DB

**Great Horned Owl** Confirmed Breeding: 17 Jun Hughes (NY) KM

**Burrowing Owl** Confirmed Breeding: 20 Jul Bennett (FY) JLB; 20 Jul Harding (FL) CEM; **29 Jul Minnehaha (FL) DC**

**Barred Owl** All Reports: 13 Jul Lincoln TS; 19 Jul Lincoln DC

**Long-eared Owl** All Reports: 01 Jun Hughes DB; 01 Jun Stanley DB; 08 Jun Sully KM; 12 Jun Lawrence DS

**Northern Saw-whet Owl** Confirmed Breeding: 01 Jun Harding (NY) CEM

**Common Poorwill** All Reports: 14 Jun Meade JLB; 22 Jun Harding CEM

**Whip-poor-will** All Reports: 04 Jun Charles Mix RM; 20 Jun Charles Mix RM; 06 Jul Charles Mix RM; 19 Jul Charles Mix RM

**Chimney Swift** All Reports: 01 Jun Hughes DB; 12 Jun Charles Mix RM; 20 Jun Charles Mix RM; 05 Jul Hughes DB; 07 Jul Charles Mix RM

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird** All Reports: 02 Jun Lake JSP; 07 Jun Lincoln MS; 07 Jun Minnehaha JSP; 18 Jun Minnehaha MRZ; 20 Jul Clay GJS

**Broad-tailed Hummingbird** All Reports: 01 Jun Custer JLB; 10 Jun Custer RDO; 13 Jun Custer DS; 14 Jun Lawrence DGP; 15 Jun Lawrence DGP; 17 Jun Custer JSP

**Rufous Hummingbird** reported 21 Jul Pennington JLB

**Lewis's Woodpecker** Only Report: 17 Jun Custer JSP

**Red-headed Woodpecker** Confirmed Breeding: 20 Jul Harding (CF) KM; 20 Jul Harding (NY) CEM

**Red-bellied Woodpecker** All Reports: 07 Jun Charles Mix RM; 14 Jun Charles Mix RM; 12 Jul Charles Mix RM; 30 Jul Charles Mix RM

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** All Reports: 07 Jun Lincoln MS; 14 Jun Minnehaha MS; 13 Jul Minnehaha MS; 20 Jul Lincoln DC

**Red-naped Sapsucker** Confirmed Breeding: 14 Jul Pennington (NY) JLB

**Downy Woodpecker** Confirmed Breeding: 26 Jun Pennington (NY) JLB

**Hairy Woodpecker** Confirmed Breeding: 12 Jun Pennington (ON) JLB; 13 Jun Hughes (CF) KM

**American Three-toed Woodpecker** All Reports: 01 Jun Lawrence DGP; 12 Jun Lawrence DGP; 13 Jun Lawrence DGP; 15 Jun Lawrence DGP

**Black-backed Woodpecker** All Reports: 10 Jun Meade DGP, AKB; 13 Jul Meade AKB, RDO

**Northern Flicker** Confirmed Breeding: 16 Jun Lawrence (ON) DGP; 14 Jul Pennington (FY) JLB

**Olive-sided Flycatcher** All Reports: 06 Jun Hughes KM; 07 Jun Minnehaha JSP

**Western Wood-Pewee** Confirmed Breeding: 19 Jul Harding (NY) CEM, KM

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** Only Report: **06 Jun Edmunds JDW**

**Alder Flycatcher** All Reports: 07 Jun Clay DS; 07 Jun Minnehaha JSP  
**Eastern Phoebe** All Reports: 07 Jun Lincoln MS; 07 Jun Minnehaha JSP; 14 Jun Minnehaha MS; 17 Jun Fall River JSP; 20 Jun Charles Mix RM  
**Say's Phoebe** Confirmed Breeding: 29 Jun Harding (CF) CEM; 12 Jul Harding (ON) CEM ... also reported 01 Jun Hughes DB; 01 Jun Stanley DB; 28 Jun Stanley GO; 19 Jul Harding KM  
**Western Kingbird** Confirmed Breeding: 18 Jul Meade (CF) JLB  
**Eastern Kingbird** Confirmed Breeding: 21 Jul Custer (NY) MMM  
**Loggerhead Shrike** Confirmed Breeding: 16 Jun Bennett (FL) JSP; 21 Jun Pennington (FY) DB  
**Yellow-throated Vireo** Only Report: 07 Jun Lincoln MS  
**Plumbeous Vireo** All Reports: 01 Jun Custer JLB; 10 Jun Custer RDO; 11 Jun Custer JLB; 14 Jun Meade AKB; 17 Jun Custer JSP; 03 Jul Fall River MMM  
**Blue Jay** Confirmed Breeding: **29 Jul Charles Mix (FY) RM**  
**Pinyon Jay** reported from Harding CEM, KM and Meade AKB counties  
**Clark's Nutcracker** Confirmed Breeding: **11 Jun Custer (FY) JLB** ... also reported 01 Jun Custer JLB  
**American Crow** Confirmed Breeding: 21 Jun Pennington (ON) DB  
**Horned Lark** Confirmed Breeding: 04 Jul Meade (CF) AKB  
**Tree Swallow** Confirmed Breeding: 16 Jun Lawrence (CF) DGP  
**Violet-green Swallow** Confirmed Breeding: 13 Jul Pennington (FY) JLB; **21 Jul Pennington (NY) JLB**  
**Cliff Swallow** Confirmed Breeding: 15 Jul Meade (ON) JLB; 16 Jul Pennington (ON) JLB  
**Barn Swallow** Confirmed Breeding: Custer, Harding, Meade, Pennington, and Sully counties  
**Black-capped Chickadee** Confirmed Breeding: 03 Jul Fall River (CF) MMM; 13 Jul Pennington (CF) JLB  
**White-breasted Nuthatch** Confirmed Breeding: 14 Jul Pennington (FY) JLB  
**Pygmy Nuthatch** All Reports: 01 Jun Custer JLB; 11 Jun Custer JLB  
**Brown Creeper** All Reports: 04 Jun Lawrence DGP; 06 Jun Lawrence DGP; 07 Jun Lawrence DGP; 09 Jun Lawrence DGP; 13 Jun Lawrence DGP  
**Rock Wren** Confirmed Breeding: 12 Jul Harding (CF) CEM  
**House Wren** Confirmed Breeding: 19 Jul Harding (CF) KM  
**Winter Wren** All Reports: 01 Jun Lawrence DGP; 10 Jun Lawrence DGP  
**American Dipper** Confirmed Breeding: 07 Jul Lawrence (CF) TS  
**Golden-crowned Kinglet** All Reports: 04 Jun Lawrence DGP; 07 Jun Lawrence DGP; 09 Jun Lawrence DGP; 13 Jun Lawrence DGP  
**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** Confirmed Breeding: 07 Jun Minnehaha (NB) JSP ... also reported 11 Jun Custer JLB; 13 Jun Custer DS; 19 Jul Lincoln DC  
**Eastern Bluebird** Confirmed Breeding: 03 Jul Brown (FY) GO  
**Mountain Bluebird** Confirmed Breeding: 04 Jul Meade (CF) AKB; **16 Jul Pennington (CF) JLB**  
**Swainson's Thrush** Late: 01 Jun Hughes DB  
**Wood Thrush** All Reports: 07 Jun Lincoln MS; 07 Jun Minnehaha JSP; 19 Jul Lincoln DC  
**American Robin** Confirmed Breeding: 08 Jun Pennington (ON) JLB; 24 Jun Pennington (NE) JLB; 15 Jul Meade (CF) JLB; 16 Jul Pennington (CF) JLB; 23 Jul Pennington (CF) JLB  
**Gray Catbird** Confirmed Breeding: 18 Jun Minnehaha (NB) MRZ  
**Northern Mockingbird** All Reports: 15 Jun Tripp RDO; 22 Jul Stanley RDO; 27 Jul Stanley KM  
**Sage Thrasher** All Reports: 08 Jun Butte JLB; 17 Jun Fall River JSP  
**Brown Thrasher** Confirmed Breeding: 13 Jun Hughes (CN) KM; 02 Jul Brown (FY) GO  
**European Starling** Confirmed Breeding: 27 Jun Pennington (CF) JLB; **15 Jul Meade (CF) JLB**  
**Sprague's Pipit** All Reports: 24 Jun Hyde BFW; 29 Jun McPherson JDW; 20 Jul Harding KM  
**Blue-winged Warbler** Only Report: 19 Jul Lincoln DC  
**Tennessee Warbler** All Reports: 01 Jun Clay DS; 01 Jun Hughes DB; 05 Jun Hughes KM; 07 Jun Edmunds JDW

**Virginia's Warbler** All Reports: 01 Jun Custer JLB; 11 Jun Custer JLB; 13 Jun Custer DS

**Yellow Warbler** Confirmed Breeding: 11 Jun Hughes (NB) DB; 27 Jun Hughes (CF) KM; 19 Jul Harding (CF) CEM

**Magnolia Warbler** Only Report: **07 Jun Edmunds JDW**

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** Late: **07 Jun Edmunds JDW**; ... Confirmed Breeding: 02 Jul Pennington (CF) JLB

**Blackpoll Warbler** Only Report: 01 Jun Hughes DB

**Black-and-white Warbler** All Reports: 07 Jun Edmunds JDW

**Ovenbird** Confirmed Breeding: 12 Jul Harding (CF) CEM; **19 Jul Harding (CF) KM**

**Mourning Warbler** Only Report: 06 Jun Edmunds JDW

**Common Yellowthroat** Confirmed Breeding: 02 Jul Pennington (CF) JLB

**Canada Warbler** Only Report: 03 Jun Brown GO

**Scarlet Tanager** All Reports: 02 Jun Minnehaha MRZ; 07 Jun Lincoln MS; 07 Jun Minnehaha JSP; 14 Jun Minnehaha MS; 19 Jul Lincoln DC

**Western Tanager** Confirmed Breeding: 26 Jun Pennington (CF) JLB

**Chipping Sparrow** Confirmed Breeding: 24 Jun Pennington (NB) JLB; 03 Jul Fall River (CF) MMM; 13 Jul Pennington (FY) JLB; 19 Jul Harding (FY) CEM, KM

**Clay-colored Sparrow** All Reports: 19 Jun Jerauld BFW; 20 Jun Hand BFW; 24 Jun Aurora BFW; 05 Jul Miner JSP; 24 Jul Deuel BU

**Brewer's Sparrow** Confirmed Breeding: 18 Jun Fall River (CF) JLB ... also reported 08 Jun Butte JLB; 17 Jun Fall River JSP; 21 Jul Harding KM

**Field Sparrow** Confirmed Breeding: 19 Jun Pennington (CF) MMM; 12 Jul Harding (FY) CEM

**Lark Sparrow** Confirmed Breeding: 29 Jun Harding (CF) CEM; 12 Jul Harding (CF) CEM

**Lark Bunting** Confirmed Breeding: 17 Jun Fall River (NE) JSP; 25 Jun Custer (FL) MMM; **31 Jul Pennington (CF) JLB**

**Savannah Sparrow** Confirmed Breeding: 30 Jun Walworth (NE) DB

**Grasshopper Sparrow** Confirmed Breeding: 14 Jun Sully (NE) KM; 15 Jun Tripp (CF) RDO; 20 Jun Hand (NE) BFW; 16 Jul Pennington (CF) JLB

**Baird's Sparrow** Only Report: 08 Jun Harding JLB

**Le Conte's Sparrow** Only Report: 29 Jun Brown JLB

**Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** All Reports: 23 Jul Sully RDO; 27 Jul Sully KM, RDO

**Song Sparrow** Confirmed Breeding: 02 Jul Pennington (CF) JLB

**Swamp Sparrow** All Reports: 13 Jun Kingsbury JSP; 05 Jul Miner JSP; 19 Jul Lincoln DC

**White-throated Sparrow** Only Report: **06 Jun Edmunds JDW**

**Dark-eyed Junco** Confirmed Breeding: 02 Jul Pennington (CF) JLB; 14 Jul Pennington (NE) JLB

**Chestnut-collared Longspur** Confirmed Breeding: 30 Jun Hyde (NY) BFW; 15 Jul Meade (CF) JLB; **31 Jul Pennington (CF) JLB**

**Northern Cardinal** Confirmed Breeding: 21 Jun Charles Mix (FY) RM ... also reported 25 Jun Pennington JLB

**Black-headed Grosbeak** Confirmed Breeding: 13 Jun Hughes (ON) KM; 28 Jun Harding (NY) CEM

**Red-winged Blackbird** Confirmed Breeding: 31 Jul Meade (CF) JLB

**Eastern Meadowlark** Only Report: 16 Jun Bennett JSP

**Western Meadowlark** Confirmed Breeding: 14 Jun Sully (CF) KM; 15 Jun Tripp (CF) RDO; 12 Jul Custer (CF) MMM; 15 Jul Meade (CF) JLB

**Brewer's Blackbird** Confirmed Breeding: 24 Jun Pennington (CF) JLB; 14 Jul Pennington (FY) JLB; 16 Jul Pennington (CF) JLB

**Common Grackle** Confirmed Breeding: 15 Jun Tripp (CF) RDO

**Great-tailed Grackle** All Reports: 06 Jun Tripp RDO; 09 Jun McPherson LDI; 20 Jun Charles Mix RM; 05 Jul Miner JSP

**Orchard Oriole** Confirmed Breeding: 14 Jun Minnehaha (ON) DC; 29 Jun Charles Mix (FY) RM;  
13 Jul Harding (FY) CEM  
**Bullock's Oriole** All Reports: 13 Jun Custer DS; 17 Jun Fall River JSP; 18 Jun Custer MMM; 21 Jun  
Pennington DB; 01 Jul Pennington JLB  
**Baltimore Oriole** Confirmed Breeding: 10 Jul Charles Mix (FY) RM  
**Cassin's Finch** All Reports: 03 Jun Lawrence DGP; 10 Jun Lawrence DGP  
**White-winged Crossbill** All Reports: 27 Jul Lawrence JLB; 28 Jul Lawrence JLB  
**Pine Siskin** Confirmed Breeding: 08 Jun Pennington (FL) JLB  
**Lesser Goldfinch** All Reports: 17 Jun Fall River JSP; 21 Jun Fall River JLB

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

**Horned Grebe** 05 Jul Hughes DB  
**Peregrine Falcon** 22 Jun Sully RDO; 24 Jul Fall River RAP  
**Ruddy Turnstone** 22 Jun Sully RDO  
**Ruff** 05 Jul Hughes RDO  
**White-winged Dove** 03 Jun Brown DST, GO  
**Rufous Hummingbird** 07 Jun – 31 Jul Charles Mix RM  
**Common Raven** 15 Jun Lawrence DGP  
**Cassin's Sparrow** 17 Jun Fall River JSP; 21 Jun Pennington (CF) DB  
**Brewer's Sparrow** 10 Jun McPherson LDI

**Contributing Observers**

DB	Doug Backlund	MO	Mark Otnes
JLB	Jocelyn L. Baker	JSP	Jeffrey S. Palmer
KB	Kristel Bakker	RAP	Richard A. Peterson
AKB	Anna K. Ball	DGP	D. George Prisbe
DC	Doug Chapman	MS	Mark Schmidtbauer
BFW	Bridgette Flanders-Wanner	GJS	Gary & Jan Small
LDI	Lawrence D. Igl	TS	Terry Sohl
BK	Brian Kringen	SS	Scott Stolz
EK	Elizabeth Krueger	DST	Daniel Streifel
RM	Ron Mabie	DS	David Swanson
MMM	Michael M. Melius	BU	Bill Unzen
CEM	Charlie Miller	SW	Scott Weins
KM	Kenny Miller	JDW	J. David Williams
GO	Gary Olson	MRZ	Mick Zerr
RDO	Ricky D. Olson		

*Cassin's Sparrow*  
*Pennington County, SD. 6/21/08*  
*Photo: Doug Backlund*

*If accepted by the Rare Bird Records Committee, this will be the first documented breeding of Cassin's Sparrow in South Dakota.*



# FROM OUR PAST...

...IN SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

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L. M. BAYLOR

Vol. 2 No. 4

December 1950

For this issue of *South Dakota Bird Notes*, President Spawn discussed the practice of feeding wild birds during the season of deep snows and cold temperatures. In his era, making birds overly dependent on artificial feeding apparently was not a concern. Rather, he regarded the practice as a humane act of supplying fuel to “gastric furnaces” so that the birds could survive the ardors of winter. To this end, he encouraged use of window feeders, which provide not only food for the birds but also enjoyment for the observers.

“Identifying Birds Afield,” by A. F. Ganier appeared in this issue as a reprint from the *Wilson Bulletin*, December 1923. Ganier discouraged identification effort based merely on color and song. He encouraged instead identification through observing typical actions, habits, habitats and other characteristics. This approach, Ganier claimed, will open to the observer a “wide field of bird study” with “interest unending.”

In the early part of the twentieth century, Austin P. Larrabee regarded the Red Crossbill as an irregular rare visitor to Yankton, SD, usually occurring in fall and winter seasons. However, on 15 March 1920, he discovered a female crossbill on a nest in a pine tree. Subsequently the nest suffered predation. Larrabee believed this attempted nesting by crossbills was the first instance recorded for southeastern South Dakota.

In an article titled “Sandhill Cranes in South Dakota,” H. F. Chapman reviewed nesting records for that species in our state. The earliest record came from McChesney’s report from Fort Sisseton (1870s). Two eggs at the University of South Dakota’s museum came from a nest in Miner County, 22 May 1887. By mid-twentieth century, however, reports about Sandhill Cranes involved only spring and fall migrations, primarily in western South Dakota.

Among the “General Notes of Special Interest” an exceptional item involves the observation by Bruce Harris of a Lewis’s Woodpecker on 6 April 1940 in Roberts County, an occurrence far to the east of the normal range for this species. It rarely occurs far from the Black Hills in South Dakota.

Professor Spawn reported a specimen of a female American Eider (current name: Common Eider) shot by a hunter, 7 November 1940, at Lake Poinset, Hamlin County, SD. The specimen came to the South Dakota State University at Brookings for identification. At the time of Spawn’s writing, this specimen was the only preserved record for the species in South Dakota. *Birds of South Dakota* (2002) lists the above eider as one of only three records for the Common Eider in South Dakota as of the book’s date of publication.

The Board of Directors met at Sioux Falls, 16 December 1950, and decided to hold SDOU’s annual meetings in the spring rather than in winter. In response to an invitation from W. R. Hurt, director of the W. H. Over Museum, the SDOU directors scheduled the next annual meeting for 5 May 1951 at Vermillion, SD.

As we proceed with reviews of *Bird Notes*, it will be interesting to note when the change came to hold the annual business meeting in the fall and a field-trip meeting in the spring.

One of the ensuing contributors to SDOU’s achievements was Willis Hall, noted for his exceptional bird photography, among his many talents. In the final issue of *Bird Notes* for 1950, the editor briefly commented: “Willis Hall and his charming wife, Rosamund [Burgi], of Yankton, are conducting a winter bird population study in the Missouri River flood plain near their home.”

## FIRST STATE RECORD OF ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD

Jocelyn Lee Baker, 3220 Kirkwood Drive, Rapid City 57702  
Jennifer Fowler, 23225 Clear Creek Road, Rapid City 57702

A hummingbird appeared at a feeder on the west side of Rapid City on 19 August 2008 and was originally identified as a Ruby-throated (*Archilochus colubris*) by homeowners, Cathy and Bob Druckrey. The hummingbird continued to nectar feed daily at the feeder and garden flowers throughout August, September and most of October. The Druckreys became concerned that the hummingbird was remaining due to the presence of the feeder and they feared that the bird might freeze and die due to increasingly colder temperatures. On 22 October they contacted Vic Fondy of Whitewood to ask him whether the feeder should be removed to possibly force the bird to leave the area. Vic called Jocie Baker of Rapid City, asking her to observe the bird, verify the identification and advise the Druckreys as to whether the feeder should remain in place.

Jocie visited the feeder on the morning of 23 October 2008, observed the bird, and knew it was not a Ruby-throated Hummingbird. After careful observation through her spotting scope, she identified it as an immature male Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*). This was based on observing rose-pink coloration on the gorget and similarly colored spots above and behind the eyes, extending to the forehead and crown. The bird was of medium size with a green back and grayish-green underparts. The wings and notched tail were dark. The tips of the folded wing fell well short of the tail tip when the bird was perched. The gorget protruded slightly at the corners towards the sides of the neck. There was a partial narrow white eye-ring above and at the back of the eye. A thin narrow diagonal white line extended from the back of the eye towards the nape. Jocie telephoned Todd Jensen in Sioux Falls during her morning viewing and Todd stated that based on the description it appeared to be an Anna's. Jennifer Fowler met Jocie at the Druckreys' home in the late afternoon and agreed that the bird was an Anna's Hummingbird.

After consulting several birding computer web sites about the advisability of leaving the feeder up, it was decided to do just that. Thus, the bird continued to visit the feeder daily until 29 October when it was last seen by Cathy Druckrey in the late afternoon. The bird visited the feeder daily every fifteen or twenty minutes in the early morning and late afternoon and every half-hour to forty-five minutes in the late morning and early afternoon. On 29 October, the weather was warm and sunny with moderate winds so it can be speculated that adverse weather conditions did not cause the bird to leave.

Birders from the Black Hills area who observed this bird included Patricia and Addison Ball, Anna Ball, George Prisbe, Norma Eckmann, Dick Latuchie, Caroline Stafford and members of the Northern Hills Bird Club: Mike Michaels, Sandy Baer, Dick Latuchie, Gene Hess, Sally Shelton and Donna and Vic Fondy. Birders who traveled from East River towns included a group from Sioux Falls led by Douglas Chapman (Mick Zerr, Chris Anderson and Pickstown birder Ron Mabie), Todd Jensen (also from Sioux Falls), Jeff Palmer (Madison), Dave Swanson (Vermillion), and Pierre area birders Kenny Miller and Ricky Olson.

Some observers wondered how a bird as small as this hummingbird could survive the cold nights which occurred occasionally during October. Hummingbirds, including Anna's, regularly enter a state of nocturnal torpor during periods of energetic stringency (e.g., cold temperatures), which reduces overnight energy expenditure (Lasiewski 1963, Vleck 1981). During nocturnal torpor their heart beat slows down, body temperature drops and their metabolism rate falls to a fraction of their daytime



rate. It seems likely that this Anna's Hummingbird used nocturnal torpor to survive nighttime temperatures which reached into the low twenties Fahrenheit during the later part of October. One day the sugar water in the feeder was frozen in the early morning, preventing the hummingbird from feeding until later when the water thawed; it then fed vigorously throughout the remainder of the day.

Anna's Hummingbird is a West Coast resident from western Washington south to northwestern Baja California in Mexico and also southern Arizona. Its range has been expanding with numerous sightings far north and east of its regular range. It is also known to disperse after breeding as records from various states surrounding South Dakota indicate. Minnesota has four records, one of which is from the North Shore with three others from the Twin Cities area (Peder Svingen, pers. comm.); Montana, where the bird is listed as "transient," has twenty-two records, two of which occurred at the same time as the Rapid City observation. The majority of the others occurred in October and November (Dan Casey, pers. comm.); Colorado has eight accepted records and one sighting in Fort Collins in early November 2008 (Larry Semo, pers. comm.). These Colorado records extend from May through December in eight different counties. Wyoming has one record from Story (Sheridan County) in August-September 1973 (Doug Faulkner, pers. comm.). Other states in the region (Iowa, Nebraska and North Dakota) have no reported sightings to date (Ann Johnson, Ross Silcock, Ron Martin, pers. comm.). The official report of this bird sighting, which would constitute a first state record for Anna's Hummingbird in South Dakota, has been submitted to the Rare Bird Records Committee for review. Bob Druckrey submitted several photographs of the bird to the committee.

#### **Acknowledgements:**

We thank Dr. David Swanson and Bruce H. Anderson for reviewing an early draft of this paper and offering helpful suggestions.

We also thank Bob and Cathy Druckrey for sharing this lovely bird with the many birders who visited their yard. They are superb hosts.

#### **Literature Cited:**

- Lasiewski, R.C. (1963). *Oxygen consumption of torpid, resting, active and flying hummingbirds*. *Physiological Zoology* 36:122-140.
- Vleck, C.M. (1981). *Hummingbird incubation: female attentiveness and egg temperature*. *Oecologia* 51:199-205.

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#### **FROM THE SCHOLARSHIP AND GRANT COMMITTEE**

The recipient of the Alfred Hinds Memorial Award for 2008 was Bethany Cook who is a lead teacher with the Black Hills Education Connection in Spearfish. This award is presented to an individual or organization that has contributed to the advancement of ornithology in South Dakota. Bethany planned and brought to fruition a festival in which high school students presented birding education to various groups of elementary students for a day.

The 2008 Kenneth H. Husmann Memorial Scholarship of \$400 was awarded to Mitch Greer, a graduate student at South Dakota State University. Mitch is working on a project examining important native grassland habitats and attempting to determine landscape, patch size and vegetative characteristics of areas used by grassland birds of conservation concern. Mitch presented a paper on his project at the SDOU meeting in October, 2008.

*Jocelyn L. Baker, Rapid City*

# GENERAL NOTES OF INTEREST

## ...AS SEEN ON THE SDOU LIST SERVE

----- Original Message -----

From: douglas chapman

To: sd-birds@yahoogroups.com

Sent: Saturday, October 25, 2008 10:19 PM

Subject: Re: [sd-birds] PENNINGTON CTY.: ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD

TO ALL OF SDOU:

Let me first thank Jocie Baker for immediately calling me when she saw the Anna's Hummingbird off Jackson Blvd. in Rapid City. Second, on behalf of all of us (Mick Zerr, Chris Anderson, Doug Chapman, all from Sioux Falls; Ron Mabie from Pickstown who joined us at the Stickney ramp near Plankinton) who drove to Rapid this morning from Sioux Falls and Pickstown, let me associate us with heartfelt thanks to Bob and Cathy Druckrey for being exceptional hosts and making sure their neighbors knew that, although we were a pretty strange bunch, we were generally harmless.

We arrived at the location about 11 AM and waited for the bird to appear for 45-60 minutes with a good group of Rapid & Northern Hills birders, who had been waiting for over two hours. After exchanging phone numbers in case the Anna's made an appearance, we decided to go check out Canyon Lake. In a few minutes, with the weather changing (windy), we decided to go back. But we did see many American Wigeon, Bufflehead, Wood Duck, a single Horned Grebe and a single female Common Merganser. Several wanted the Barrow's Goldeneye, but we didn't even see Common Goldeneye. Just a bit early, I suppose. What is the early date for either Common/Barrow's, Jocie?

The Anna's showed up right after we came back. With several stellar views under our belt and happy faces all around, we decided to go to Anna Ball's for the Pinyon Jays that frequent her home. Seemed reasonable, after an Anna's Hummingbird.

We met Anna and within a few minutes with junco, chickadee, House Finch and Blue Jay, we saw a single Pinyon Jay. He was quite cooperative. A few minutes later we saw a magpie. After trying for Black-backed Woodpecker upslope for a short time, seeing nothing, and hearing a shotgun blast up ahead, we started back. There were no birds there at all anyway. Not a crow, or a junco, or a nuthatch. Still, a great haul from the Rapid City/Piedmont folks. Thanks again Anna.

On the drive out, best birds seen at 75 mph on I-90 were 3-4 Ferruginous Hawks,

45 (not a typo!) Red-tailed Hawk, 6 N Harrier, 1 Bald Eagle, and a pair of Sharp-tailed Grouse. We also saw and got great ID marks on a perched Harlan's Hawk.

Thanks again to all.

Doug Chapman  
Sioux Falls, SD



## NORTHERN CARDINAL BACK AGAIN

In the "General Notes" section of *South Dakota Bird Notes*, volumes 53:4, 55:1, 55:4 and 57:4, I reported the presence of a single singing male Northern Cardinal in my Red Dale Drive neighborhood during the spring/summer seasons of 2001 through 2005. Additionally a female cardinal appeared at my yard in 2005. Subsequently, during the seasons for 2006 and 2007, cardinals were not present in my neighborhood. Then, during the spring and summer of 2008, a male cardinal sang frequently near my home. More often, however, the songs seemed somewhat more distant as they came from the forest to the south and southwest.

Personal communication from Mrs. Jeanette Hill has revealed that she and her husband Ronald have been aware of a singing male Northern Cardinal at their home in the 100 block of South Berry Pine Road (about a mile northwest of Red Dale Drive, as a "cardinal flies") during the spring/summer seasons of 2006, 2007, and 2008. The Hills also reported occasional observations of a female cardinal near their home. *L.M. Baylor, Rapid City, Pennington Co.*

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### A MESSAGE FROM MEMBERSHIP

Dear SDOU member:

Thank you for your continued support of SDOU! This is a reminder about your membership renewal for 2009.

The membership year is from January through December. For 2009, please send dues before March 31, 2009 in order to continue receiving your *SD Bird Notes* without interruption.

In addition to enjoying *Bird Notes*, join fellow birders at our fall and spring meetings. It's a great way to bird with experts in different sites across the state. This spring in Custer, our organization will be celebrating 40 years, so put 15-17 May 2009 on your calendar. Also, note that you may submit your bird sightings to the SDOU database available at the SDOU website: <<<<http://www.sdou.org>>>>

*Linda Johnson*

Please see the outside cover for more detailed information and subscription rates.

# First Documented Snowy Plover Breeding in South Dakota

by Ricky D. Olson

**P**rior to 2007 there had been four documented observations of Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) in South Dakota (Tallman, Swanson, and Palmer 2002) (SDOU Online Database). The observations were reported in the following years, counties and by the following observers:

1976 – Fall River – Richard Rosche

2001 – Hughes – Ricky Olson

2005 – Lake – Jeffrey Palmer

2005 – Hughes – Ricky Olson

In the summer of 2007, I observed Snowy Plovers successfully nesting at Stone Lake (N44° 86.7854' W99° 75.3549') in Sully County South Dakota. Following is the sequence of events that led to the documentation.

The first week of June 2007, I received a call from Nancy Drilling stating she had recently observed Piping Plovers at Stone Lake in Sully County. Nancy thought I should check to see if they were nesting, as it was late in the season for the plovers to be migrating. I replied to Nancy that I had also observed late Piping Plovers at the lake next to Stone Lake and was planning to check for breeding pairs. We agreed that I should check both lakes for indications of breeding.

The afternoon of 10 June 2007 I hiked the south shoreline of Stone Lake searching for Piping Plovers. To my surprise I observed an adult male Snowy Plover.

On 11 June 2007 I returned to Stone Lake with Doug Backlund and Charlie Bessen. While they photographed several Snowy Plovers, I hiked the shoreline farther east. I observed a total of eight adult Snowy Plovers on that day.

I decided with this many adults that the Snowy Plovers might attempt breeding. I assumed that they would behave like Piping Plovers; if I left them alone and they had successful breeding that I could return to the area in a few weeks and the family group would still be in the nesting area.



*Snowy Plover at Stone Lake, Hughes Co.  
6/24/06.*

*Photo: Doug Backlund*

In early July I returned several times and could not locate any young. When I approached the assumed nesting area, the males would give an alarm call and the females would run out from the grass and join their mates on the shoreline. The females always were observed emerging from

the same area. Since the suspected nest sites were in a 100-200 yard stretch of shoreline, I decided to stay and monitor the plovers for signs of any nesting. In order to monitor the Snowy Plovers I had to sit in one place, because of the many breeding American Avocets in the area. If you stood up the avocets would fly around giving an alarm call and dive-bomb you. With all this commotion going on the Snowy Plovers would not return to their nesting sites. So, after sitting on the muddy shoreline in 100° F. heat for several hours observing the Snowy Plovers, I felt confident that three, possibly four, females were sitting on nests. The males did perform some distraction display during this period.

On 15 July 2007 I returned to the area with Jocie Baker, Jen Fowler and Anna Ball. We observed distraction display and found a deserted egg but could not locate a nest or young.

After talking to Jen Fowler, who thankfully asked many questions, I finally decided to look up Snowy Plover life history facts, instead of assuming that they were the same as Piping Plovers. I found out some startling differences. The Snowy Plover frequently raises two broods a year, and sometimes three in places where the breeding season is long. The female deserts her mate and brood about the time the chicks hatch and initiates a new breeding attempt with a different male.

Young Snowy Plovers leave their nest within three hours of hatching. They flatten themselves on the ground when a parent signals the approach of people or potential predators. They walk, run, and swim well and forage unassisted by parents, but require periodic brooding for many days after hatching. Snowy Plovers usually only perform the distraction display when the eggs are hatching or have just hatched. Piping Plovers and many other birds will conduct distraction displays at all times of nesting.

With this new knowledge I returned to Stone Lake on 16 July 2007. I observed a distraction display but could not locate a nest or chicks. I did find some more deserted eggs. Stone Lake received at least three major downpours of rain in late June and early July. I am surmising the lake level rose and some nests were flooded out, thus the deserted eggs were probably from these flooding events.

But now, armed with the knowledge that any chicks would be on the move the same day of hatching and not stay in the nesting area like Piping Plovers, I returned to the lake on 18 July 2007. I was scanning the shoreline with my spotting scope when I observed a male Snowy Plover with a fluffy white chick. This was about one mile west of the nesting area. When I attempted to get close enough to take a photograph of the chick to document breeding, the male and chick ran down the shoreline. After several attempts to get close, I decided to change my strategy. I made a loop to get about one quarter mile ahead of the plovers. I sat there waiting for them to come down the shoreline to me. The male arrived, but had hidden the chick. I searched for the chick without success. I finally had proven breeding, but had no picture of a nest or chick for documentation.

On 19 July 2007 I returned to Stone Lake. During this visit I observed a lone male and a lone female at different locations. Then I observed two unattended chicks running down the shoreline at about the same location where I had observed the earlier male and chick. When I attempted to get close, they hid in the vegetation and I could not locate them. It was becoming very frustrating trying to obtain a photograph.

## SUCCESS!

On 25 July 2007 I returned to Stone Lake once again. I observed a male with a chick about one quarter mile east of the nesting site. They were moving east along the shoreline. I followed the plovers staying about 100 yards out from the shoreline, paralleling it. I could not always see the plovers because of vegetation, so about every quarter mile I would get close to the shoreline hoping to get a picture. They were always already past me. About one and a half miles from the starting point, I proceeded to the shoreline and there was the chick out on a point wading in the water. I was able to take some pictures. They were not great because of the sun, but discernable. Finally, I had solid proof of breeding. I was very elated! I had not searched very hard for nests, because of fear that the birds would abandon their nests and leave the area. Early on I had decided that a photo of a chick was the evidence of breeding I was going to strive to attain.



*Snowy Plover at Stone Lake, Hughes Co., SD.*  
7/5/07

Photo: Dan Streifel

My last observation of a Snowy Plover at Stone Lake was of a male on 8 August 2007.

One side note is that there were also at least two pairs of Piping Plovers nesting at the same site. I observed the two plover species co-mingling many times along the shoreline. There were never any signs of aggression toward the other species.

From 19 April–15 May 2008 Kenny Miller and I searched Stone Lake again for Snowy Plovers. One or two male Snowy Plovers were present, but on subsequent searches no Snowy Plovers were found.

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## In Memoriam

Gertrice B. Hinds  
1915 – 2008



On 28 January 2008, longtime South Dakota Ornithologists' Union member Gertrice B. Hinds passed away at her ranch home in southwestern Perkins County. And thus her wish, that her life might end at home rather than at a care center, was fulfilled.

Gertrice Breidenbach was born on 24 April 1915. She graduated from high school in 1933 and then fulfilled teacher certification requirements and began teaching elementary grades in 1939. By attending summer sessions at Black Hills State College she in time earned a Bachelor's Degree in Education. During her career, she taught at rural schools in southwestern Perkins County. Her last assignment involved only three students whom she taught at the children's family home on a ranch south of the Hinds ranch.

Gertrice married Alfred Hinds on 27 May 1941 and thereafter lived continuously at the Hinds ranch until her death.

In 1966, Gertrice and Alfred learned about SDOU from a promotional display at a community event in Belle Fourche, SD. They joined SDOU and attended the Spring Meeting of 20 May 1967, held at Belvidere, SD. Thereafter, they frequently attended both spring and fall meetings.

The shelterbelt surrounding their ranch home attracted birds to the woodland habitat—birds not readily observed in the arid prairie grasslands. Gertrice and Alfred welcomed SDOU members and other friends to see these birds. As hosts, the couple manifested the essence of western hospitality. Visitors will remember Gertrice and Alfred's frequent parting words: "The best way to thank us is to come again!"

Gertrice and Alfred hosted two SDOU Spring Meetings on 6 June 1970 and 12 May 1977. Both meetings were headquartered in Bison, SD. Members attending these meetings will fondly remember and appreciate Gertrice and Alfred's organizing of such successful meetings in such a very remote setting, even for South Dakota.

Gertrice served as a Director of SDOU for twenty-one years, 1981–2001. She was in attendance at the meeting in Pierre, 12 October 2007. After Alfred's death in May 1982, Gertrice endowed the Alfred Hinds Memorial Award to recognize any individual or organization that makes exceptional contributions to ornithology in South Dakota. Members have many reasons to salute Gertrice Hinds and her many contributions to SDOU and to the birds she and Alfred loved. As we lament her passing, her life will be long remembered through the Hinds Award.

*~L. M. Baylor, Rapid City*



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