
SOUTH DAKOTA

Ornithologists' Union

Yellow-throated Warbler

Walworth County, 5/16/09

Photo: Dan Streifel



SOUTH



DAKOTA

BIRD

NOTES

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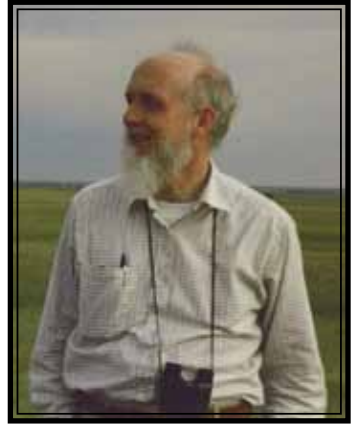
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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

The manuscript for my March President's Page and the *SD Bird Notes* editor's announcement that he had more submissions than he could print in the March issue of *SDBN* crossed in the mail, so to speak, so I can't claim that my harangue was responsible for the sudden increase in submissions. But I can be—and am—very pleased that there were more. This confirms my belief that we have interesting things to say about South Dakota birds and birding, and that authors can produce articles that deserve to be published in print and preserved. Let's keep it up! And even if you don't have something to write about at the moment, encourage your friends.



I've been asked to remind those of you who post to the SDOU listserv, sd-birds at Yahoo! Groups, that you should always include your name in the posting. Also, when posting bird observations, be sure to say where the observations occurred.

On a related matter, don't forget that posting to sd-birds does not automatically enter your observation data into the SDOU database; you need to do that yourself: go to www.SDOU.org and follow the Seasonal Reporting link. Don't be discouraged if an observation that you enter requires a Rare Bird Report Form. The South Dakota Rare Bird Records Committee consists of competent and conscientious members who work diligently to protect the integrity of the database. They want every valid record to be entered, so they will look thoughtfully at your report even if it is the first that you have ever submitted.

Speaking of building our South Dakota bird database, I'm happy to know that the effort to produce the second South Dakota Breeding Bird Atlas is well under way. As reported in the March 2009 issue of *SDBN*, the effort began in the summer of 2008. Many birders are already contributing, but more would be welcome. The field work runs through the summer of 2012, so there is plenty of time to get involved. If you would like to help, go to the Atlas web page www.rmbo.org/sdbba2 or send an email to <<<SDatlascoordinator@rmbo.org>>>.

What do you think about SDOU? Write to me at AddisonB@enetis.net or send regular mail to me at the address on page 2.

Addison Ball

FROM OUR PAST...

...IN *SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES*

L. M. BAYLOR

Vol. 3 No. 1

March 1951

For the March 1951 issue of *South Dakota Bird Notes*, President Spawn observed that the return of "spring tourists" and summer resident birds brings the opportunity to attract birds to one's yard. In addition to providing water and nesting boxes, he suggested other resources. For example, one may make a "robin rack" by "fastening several willow branches together in a cone about five inches deep, with an opening about six inches in diameter." Fastened to a tree, the rack serves as a "safe crotch for nest construction". Another technique is to provide a nest shelf—a simple board placed in a sheltered area such as under an eave. (Without being aware of Professor Spawn's suggestion, the late Alfred Hinds, built a shelf under an eave of his house in Perkins County in the late 1960s. For many years after that, a Say's Phoebe nested at this shelf.)

Claude A. Van Epps reported the results of the first Christmas Bird Count (December 1950) under the auspices of the SDOU. Members participated in counts at Sand Lake and Lacreek National Wildlife Refuges, Brookings, Canton, Hot Springs, Huron, Jefferson, Sioux Falls, Spearfish, and Springfield. Their efforts yielded a good beginning with the sighting of 61 species and 22,882 individual birds.

For distinctive information about an avian species, Editor H. F. Chapman reprinted an article from *The Wilson Bulletin*, March 1930: "Nesting of the White-winged Junco in the Black Hills," by W. H. Over and G. M. Clement. These authors gathered records during the breeding seasons of 1924-1927. In addition to typical ground nests in sheltered niches, they found some unusual nest locales, such as structural timbers in a sawmill, a discarded tomato can, and the roof plate of a blacksmith's shop.

The "General Notes" section in this issue presented twelve items involving members' observations from the previous winter. Several conversations stimulated this writer's interest. W. R. Felton, Jr. reported a Bald Eagle soaring over the Missouri River near Jefferson, SD (21 January 1951) and during the same winter E. R. Lamster observed two Bald Eagles along the Missouri River north of Pierre. Both contributors regarded the species as rare for the state. Today, since the dams along the river so radically changed the river's habitat, we commonly expect to see at least several Bald Eagles near the dams during the winter, sometimes many are present.

Somewhat in contrast to Felton and Lamster's view, Kenneth Krumm, in "Winter Notes from Southwestern S. D.," included the Bald Eagle among raptors "wintering or appearing occasionally" at the Lacreek Wildlife Refuge. Perhaps the difference is in what we mean by rare or uncommon for a species.

Dr. L. J. Moriarity's report in "Richardson's Owl in N. E. So. Dak." prompts interesting challenges. He wrote about a small owl in a low branch at his Watertown home, 16 August 1949. "Thinking it might be a Richardson's Owl, which the Eskimos call 'Blind One' because so blind or stupid or having seen man so seldom, it displays no fear, I slowly lifted it from the branch." Moriarity judged the owl's features—"length about ten inches instead of eight; more gray or less brownish than the Saw-whet; bill yellowish, not brownish black; facial discs framed by black; and forehead spotted"—distinguished the little owl from the Northern Saw-whet Owl. The challenges: (1) In a contemporary field guide, one likely will not find Richardson's Owl as a common name. We are reminded that it frequently is useful to append the scientific

name to an account. (2) As noted in *Birds of South Dakota, Third Edition* (2002) a young Eastern Screech-Owl may be misidentified as a Boreal Owl. Nonetheless, the authors of the 2002 edition included Moriarity's observation as one of four records for the Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*) in South Dakota.

For historical reference, this issue presented the "By-Laws of South Dakota Ornithologists' Union" as adopted at Huron, SD, 16 January 1950. Annual dues at that time were \$3 for active members and \$1 for junior members. Lest we may be tempted by longing for the "good old days," we must acknowledge that SDOU cannot provide current issues of *Bird Notes* with annual dues at a level appropriate sixty years ago.

A SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER IN BROOKINGS CO., SOUTH DAKOTA

Kent C. Jensen • Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences
South Dakota State University • Brookings, SD 57007

The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) is a common breeding member of the Tyrannidae from the southern Great Plains. It is considered a short-distance migrant and spends the winter months in areas of southern Mexico and Central America [Regosin, J.V. 1998. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*), in *The Birds of North America*, No. 342 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.) *The Birds of North America, Inc.*, Philadelphia, PA.] The breeding range encompasses all of Texas and Oklahoma and includes a great majority of Kansas, and portions of New Mexico, Colorado, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Missouri. The northern limit of the breeding distribution reaches into the southern tier of counties in Nebraska (Regosin 1998). There have also been sightings of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in most states adjacent to the main breeding distribution, including South Dakota.

On 15 October 2008, I received a report (through Jocelyn L. Baker of Rapid City, SD) of an unusual bird near a rural residence approximately one mile east and one mile north of the South Dakota State University campus. Upon arriving at the site, I immediately recognized an adult Scissor-tailed Flycatcher perching on a top strand of barbed-wire and making frequent foraging flights over an adjacent alfalfa field. I also visited with the adjacent landowner who had reported the bird. She indicated that it had been present in the area for about 7 days prior to her report. Over the next week the bird was observed by several local students and bird enthusiasts from throughout South Dakota and adjacent areas of Minnesota and Iowa. The sighting also made front page headlines in *The Brookings Register* on 21 October 2008! The last sighting was recorded on 20 October. During the week-long observation period the bird was sighted utilizing fence-line perches within a one-mile radius of the intersection of 473rd Ave. and 210th St. northeast of the city of Brookings, Brookings Co., SD. A total of nine observations of this individual were reported to the SDOU Online Seasonal Bird Observation Reporting System (<http://www.sdou.org>) between 15 and 20 October 2008. There were also numerous photographs taken of the bird by a variety of photographers. The March 2009 issue of *South Dakota Bird Notes*, Vol. 61, No. 1, features SDOU member Terry Sohl's photo of this bird on the cover.

Between 1972 and 2007 there have been eleven previous sightings of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in South Dakota. This current record is the seasonal latest recorded sighting in South Dakota, with the previous latest date being on 14 October 2000 in Stanley Co. (SDBN 54:97). The earliest recorded sighting was on 18 May in Brookings Co. (<http://www.sdou.org>). The month with the most recorded sightings has been June (four observations) followed by May (three observations), July and October (two observations each), and September (one observation). There have been no recorded Scissor-tailed Flycatcher observations in South Dakota in August. The pattern of timing of the observations in South Dakota suggests that the majority (those occurring in May and June) may consist of birds dispersing from their core range in search of suitable habitat and available mates. The May and June dates correspond with the peak of territory establishment and pairing of Eastern Kingbirds (*Tyrannus tyrannus*), and Western Kingbirds (*Tyrannus verticalis*), which are similar in size to the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (excluding the elongated tail) and are common breeding birds in South Dakota.

NESTING OF LONG-EARED OWLS IN CENTRAL SOUTH DAKOTA

By Doug Backlund, 114 S. Poplar, Pierre, SD 57501

During the winter of 2007-08, the abundance of both Short-eared Owls and Long-eared Owls in the Pierre area was noted by local birders. By spring of 2008, it was apparent that this was going to be another year of high-density nesting by Long-eared Owls (Backlund and Olson, 1999). Since 2008 was the first year of the second South Dakota Breeding Bird Atlas, I took the opportunity to confirm as many Long-eared Owl nests as possible, with the assistance of Ricky Olson, Charlie Bessken, and Pat Buscher. In the previous SD BBA (1988-1993), only three confirmed nests were reported in the six-year atlas project (Peterson, 1995). Nesting of this cryptic species can be difficult to confirm, but during an episode of high-density nesting combined with experience in locating Long-eared Owls, good numbers of nests can be located.



*Long-eared Owl on basket nest.
Photo: Doug Backlund*

Nests were located by searching in woody draws, shelterbelts, and other forested habitats. Long-eared Owl roosts are easily located by searching in thickets for areas of heavy whitewash and deposits of pellets. During the nesting season, the male roosts near the nest. My technique for locating nests consisted of searching for males and then looking for nests or simply checking for obvious nests and the incubating female. Some nests were extremely well camouflaged: at least one eluded me for a week even though I had walked by it several times. Since the male was always present, I suspected a nest was also present and indeed it was. Other nests were relatively easy to locate. Ricky Olson, Charlie Bessken, and I placed a number of baskets in areas where Long-eared Owls were present during the late winter and early spring. The owls readily accepted the baskets. Long-eared Owls normally use the old nests of American Crows, Black-billed Magpies, and other larger birds, but the availability of nests seems to be decreasing, especially old magpie nests. The Black-billed Magpie has disappeared from the area and the old nests are mostly gone. Placement of nest baskets is an effective means of increasing Long-eared Owl nesting during high-density nesting events.

Nineteen active nests were located and six probable nest sites were found. At two locations, Long-eared Owl nests were found in close proximity to each other. At one site (known locally as Billy Goat Jump), three active nests were spaced no farther than 100 meters apart. At each nest, a male was present. Another site (the archery range) had two active nests located less than 100 meters apart, again with two males present. Table 1 lists each confirmed and probable nest.

I did not have time to monitor the success of each nest. Three nests were located on Farm Island and I did monitor these. Only one was successful; oddly it was a nest located only a few feet from the main hiking trail, with people and dogs passing by every day. This nest fledged five Long-eared Owls.

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Table 1. Date and Status of Long-eared Owl Nests

Species	Date	Status	Behavior	County	Observers	Nest
Long-eared Owl	03/12/2008	CO	ON	Hughes	Backlund and Bessken	natural
Long-eared Owl	03/22/2008	CO	ON	Stanley	Backlund	natural
Long-eared Owl	03/21/3008	CO	ON	Stanley	Backlund	natural
Long-eared Owl	03/21/3008	CO	ON	Stanley	Backlund	basket
Long-eared Owl	03/22/3008	CO	ON	Stanley	Backlund	basket
Long-eared Owl	03/21/2008	CO	ON	Stanley	Backlund	natural
Long-eared Owl	03/23/2008	CO	ON	Stanley	Backlund	basket
Long-eared Owl	03/25/2008	CO	ON	Hughes	Backlund and Bessken	natural
Long-eared Owl	03/25/2008	CO	ON	Hughes	Backlund and Bessken	natural
Long-eared Owl	03/30/2008	CO	ON	Stanley	Backlund	basket
Long-eared Owl	03/30/2008	CO	ON	Stanley	Backlund	basket
Long-eared Owl	04/05/2008	CO	ON	Stanley	Backlund and Bessken	natural
Long-eared Owl	03/30/2008	PR	P	Sully	Backlund	natural
Long-eared Owl	03/30/2008	PR	P	Stanley	Backlund	natural
Long-eared Owl	03/30/2008	PR	N	Hughes	Backlund	basket
Long-eared Owl	03/30/2008	PR	N	Hughes	Backlund	unknown
Long-eared Owl	03/30/2008	PR	P	Stanley	Backlund	natural
Long-eared Owl	03/30/2008	PR	N	Stanley	Backlund	natural
Long-eared Owl	04/11/2008	CO	ON	Stanley	Pat Buscher	natural
Long-eared Owl	04/11/2008	CO	ON	Stanley	Pat Buscher	natural
Long-eared Owl	04/13/2008	CO	ON	Hughes	Pat Buscher	natural
Long-eared Owl	04/20/2008	CO	ON	Stanley	Backlund	natural
Long-eared Owl	04/20/2008	CO	ON	Stanley	Backlund	natural
Long-eared Owl	04/20/2008	CO	ON	Stanley	Backlund	basket
Long-eared Owl	04/19/2008	CO	ON	Hughes	Pat Buscher	natural

Status and Behavior Codes:

Status: CO = Confirmed PR = Probable

Behavior: ON = Occupied Nest P = Pair observed N = Potential Nest Site

THE “WHITE-WINGED” DARK-EYED JUNCO OF THE BLACK HILLS

The Dark-eyed Junco, *Junco hyemalis*, is one of the most common and familiar songbirds of North America. It is a very well-studied passerine, having served as a model species in several areas of biological research. The species is widely distributed and varies geographically in plumage coloration, body size, migratory behavior and degree of sexual dimorphism and is represented by 5 groups, consisting of 15 subspecies. Of these, the aiken group consists of just one subspecies, the White-winged Junco (*J. h. aikeni*), which breeds almost exclusively in the Black Hills of South Dakota (Nolan *et al.* 2002). Little direct observation or research has ever been conducted on this unique subspecies; one notable exception is the careful work of Dr. Nathaniel R. Whitney, Jr., whose chapter for the Smithsonian Institution remains the most informative account of the life history of the White-winged Junco (Whitney 1968).

This subspecies is the subject of my current research as a graduate student at Indiana University, and it is with the deepest gratitude and respect that I follow in Dr. Whitney's footsteps. During the summer of 2007, fellow graduate student Kristal Cain and I first ventured to the Black Hills to establish a study population of White-winged Juncos. The Nature Conservancy generously provided us with housing at the Whitney Preserve, named for Nathaniel and Mary Whitney and located southwest of Hot Springs. Last year and again this spring, I was honored to receive the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union Nathaniel R. Whitney, Jr. Memorial Research Grant. In 2008, the funds were put toward housing near our field site in the post-wildfire pine forest of the Jasper Burn area, where breeding juncos are extremely abundant. This summer, the grant financed equipment which is currently being used in the field.

The research of my advisor, Dr. Ellen D. Ketterson, initially led me to study the Dark-eyed Junco. A marked population of the Carolina Junco (*J. h. carolinensis*), an Appalachian subspecies of the Slate-colored Junco, has been studied by the Ketterson lab group for many years. The focus of much of this research has been on the role of hormones in coordinating traits associated with different life stages. The adaptive responses of an organism to its environment are constrained by limited time, energy and nutrients which must be allocated among competing functions, such as somatic effort, mating effort, and parental effort. Physiological mechanisms such as hormones are often involved in managing these trade-offs. For example, in many vertebrate animals gonad size fluctuates seasonally, and the gonadal hormone testosterone (T) is secreted primarily during the breeding season. T has particular importance for traits related to reproduction, such as territorial aggression and sperm production. By simultaneously mediating numerous reproductive traits during the breeding season, T directs resources toward mating effort. In this way, hormones like T integrate organism-level responses to the environment.

Studies utilizing T implants in male juncos initially revealed that elevated T promotes traits associated with reproductive effort, such as aggression and sexual behavior, while directing resources away from somatic effort such as the immune system and

subspecies for comparison because males have the largest body size and highest levels of ornamentation as compared to any other population of Dark-eyed Junco (Nolan *et al.* 2002). My research is examining the degree to which T-mediated suites of traits identified in one population are maintained across populations.

Specifically, I am examining whether known relationships between T and traits such as aggression, ornamentation, and immunity uncovered in the Carolina Junco population are consistently expressed in the divergent White-winged Junco. Thus far, I have focused on the relationship between T and ornamentation, including an examination of both tail white and the amount of white present in the distinctive wing bars of the White-winged Junco. Findings to date suggest similar relationships between these plumage ornaments and T across subspecies, despite significantly higher amounts of ornamentation in the White-winged Junco (Bergeon Burns *et al.* unpublished). This summer, the research is focused primarily on quantifying aggressive behavior in the highly ornamented White-winged Junco. I will relate this aggression to variation in individual T levels and ultimately compare these relationships to other Dark-eyed Junco subspecies.

It is my hope that research on this common songbird will enhance scientific understanding of hormone system evolution, which has important implications for the conservation of many different species.

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"White-winged" Dark-eyed Junco. Near Sylvan Lake, SD. 05/31/04
Photo: Terry Sohl

Look for These Birds

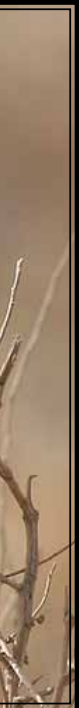
Currently listed as “Hypothetical”



There are currently five bird species listed as Hypothetical on the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union's official list of Birds of South Dakota.

Keep your eyes open and you may be the person to provide additional evidence of these birds' occurrence in South Dakota.

Birds in South Dakota: "Hypothetical" on the state checklist.



The Rare Bird Records Committee of the SDOU allows for several definitions for a hypothetical species in South Dakota. "The two most common are the origin unknown (wild or escaped captive) and single observer sight record without corroborating evidence that would constitute a first state record. Some hypothetical species also are classified if they stem from unsuccessful introductions or if they were on an old list, but are likely in error." ~ Dr. David Swanson, RBRC Chair

RECENT RECORDS OF NESTING SANDHILL CRANES (*GRUS CANADENSIS*) IN WESTERN SOUTH DAKOTA

By Scott Weins and Elizabeth Krueger

Every spring as many as 500,000 Sandhill Cranes follow the central fly-way through South Dakota as they travel from their wintering grounds in Texas, New Mexico, and Northern Mexico to breeding grounds in the Canadian Arctic, Alaska, and Northeastern Siberia (Forsberg 2004). In South Dakota, peak spring migration numbers are usually seen in March and April while in the fall most cranes pass through in mid-September to mid-November (Tallman, Swanson, and Palmer 2002). Some cranes may fly up to 10,000 miles on this journey (Forsberg 2004).

Historic records indicate that pre-settlement nesting in the Black Hills was common. The Zoological Report from the 1874 Custer Expedition describes Sandhill Cranes being occasional on the plains but abundant in the Black Hills. "There however, it was numerous, breeding, the young being about two-thirds grown late in July" (Grinnell 1875). Until recently, the last reported Sandhill Crane nest in South Dakota



Sandhill Cranes. Yellowstone National Park. 06/08/07
Photo: Terry Sohl

was from Sanborn County in 1910 (Tallman, Swanson, and Palmer 2002). The latest spring date for Sandhill Cranes in Butte County was 2 May 2005 (SDOU Online Database).

In 2005, Sandhill Cranes nested successfully at the LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge in Bennett County (SDOU Online Database). As a follow-up, Jocelyn Baker passed on this information from the Refuge Manager: The cranes raised two colts in 2005. One of the adults was found dead late in the sum-

mer, probably from a powerline collision or possibly hit by a vehicle. The remaining adult and colts were present until early October.

In 2006 the adult returned and paired with a Lesser Sandhill Crane. No colts were observed in 2006.

In 2007 and 2008 a lone adult returned and was heard occasionally throughout the summer. There was no evidence of nesting (Koerner).

On 19 May 2008, the authors were traveling west on US Highway 212 between

Newell and Belle Fourche, South Dakota. As we drove past the slough just east of Nisland, we noticed two large, rust-colored birds standing in a field near a band of Russian olive and cottonwood trees on the west end of the slough. A



Sandhill Cranes, Platte River NE. 3/30/06

Photo: Scott Weins

quick look through the binoculars confirmed that the birds were Sandhill Cranes. Due to this observation being so late in the spring, and the rusty color of the birds, we were curious if this could be a nesting pair.

The reddish plumage in breeding Sandhill Cranes is a result of mud preening, in which the cranes paint iron-rich wetland soils into their feathers. This mud preening behavior may camouflage the birds while on the nest (Forsberg 2004). We have observed this behavior in Sandhill Cranes in Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming.

Over the next few weeks we made several trips to the slough and periodically observed the cranes. We stayed in our vehicle on the road shoulder,

about 200 meters from the cranes' usual location, but they were secretive and generally disappeared into the marsh or the long grass soon after we arrived. On 8 June we stopped to observe the adults. After watching them for a few minutes we noticed another tiny reddish body moving about. Moments later a lone fledgling stuck its head up out of the long grass. We observed and photographed the adults and the colt on 14 June and 20 June. The last report we heard of the crane family was on 24 June. We stopped by the slough several times in July, August, September, and October, but did not observe the cranes again. The field was hayed sometime in July but cover remained in the marsh. In the fall, we observed hundreds of migrating cranes at and over the slough.

Sandhill Crane eggs hatch in 28 to 32 days and the young reach adult size in about nine weeks. If the juvenile we saw hatched sometime in mid- to late May, the parents would have been on the nest when a severe snowstorm occurred on 1-2 May 2008. The storm resulted in twelve inches of snow at Newell accompanied by strong winds. The remainder of May and early June were unusually cold, with light snow in the upper Black Hills on 12 June. In addition, there was an intense rain event on 5-6 June which resulted in four to eight inches of rain in Butte and Lawrence counties and widespread flooding of small creeks.

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SEASONAL REPORTS

The 2008-2009 Winter Season

Compiled By: Jeffrey S. Palmer

01 December 2008 to 28 February 2009

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

There were 134 species, including 4 rarities, reported during the season. The ten-year (1998-2007) average is 134. Below, I have tried to highlight the more significant sightings (dates that are earlier/later than listed in *Birds of South Dakota* by Tallman, Swanson, and Palmer, species that are out of range, and species that are less than regular during the previous 10 winter seasons). Included at the end is a list of species (24) 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 reported 06 Dec Charles Mix RM; 12 Feb Stanley RDO; 13 Feb Charles Mix RM; 21 Feb Yankton DC; 28 Feb Lake JSP

Snow Goose reported 05 Dec Minnehaha DC; 06 Dec Charles Mix RM; 28 Dec Yankton RM; 11 Jan Stanley KM; 21 Jan Charles Mix RM; 05 Feb Stanley RDO; 15 Feb Yankton RND; 28 Feb Lake JSP

Ross's Goose All Reports: 06 Dec Stanley RDO; 14 Feb Stanley RDO; 21 Feb Stanley RDO

Cackling Goose reported 18 Dec Pennington JLB; 20 Dec Hughes DB; 26 Dec Charles Mix RM; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 17 Jan Hughes DB; 24 Jan Stanley JSP, RDO; 13 Feb Charles Mix RM; 28 Feb Lake JSP

Trumpeter Swan Only Report: **13 Dec Yankton DS**

Wood Duck reported 27 Dec Minnehaha DC; 28 Dec Yankton RM, BFH; 03 Jan Hughes RDO; 12 Jan Pennington JLB; 17 Jan Hughes DB; 05 Feb Stanley RDO; 25 Feb Pennington JLB

Gadwall reported 10 Jan Stanley RDO; 12 Jan Pennington JLB; 16 Jan Lawrence JLB; 18 Jan Yankton RND; 24 Jan Pennington RSL

American Wigeon reported 01 Jan Gregory KM; 02 Jan Charles Mix RM; 12 Jan Pennington JLB; 16 Jan Lawrence JLB; 26 Jan Pennington RSL; 28 Feb Yankton RND

Northern Shoveler All Reports: **06 Dec Stanley RDO; 25 Dec Meade JLB; 06 Jan Meade (3) EEM; 11 Jan Meade JLB; 28 Feb Yankton RND**

Northern Pintail All Reports: 02 Dec Custer JLB; 08 Feb Yankton RND; 21 Feb Clay MRZ; 21 Feb Yankton DC; 28 Feb Yankton RND

Green-winged Teal reported 06 Dec Stanley RDO; 03 Jan Hughes RDO; 06 Jan Meade EEM; 21 Jan Hughes DB; 05 Feb Stanley RDO; 08 Feb Yankton RND

Canvasback All Reports: 15 Feb Yankton RND; 21 Feb Yankton DC; 28 Feb Yankton RND

Redhead reported 11 Jan Stanley KM; 12 Jan Pennington JLB; 24 Jan Pennington RSL; 24 Jan Stanley JSP, RDO; 08 Feb Charles Mix RM; 28 Feb Lake JSP

Ring-necked Duck reported 02 Dec Custer JLB; 28 Dec Yankton RM; 12 Jan Pennington JLB; 24 Jan Pennington RSL; 07 Feb Stanley RDO; 28 Feb Yankton RND

Greater Scaup reported 12 Dec Pennington JLB; 20 Dec Hughes KM; 01 Jan Charles Mix RM; 11 Jan Stanley KM; 24 Jan Stanley JSP, RDO; 21 Feb Yankton DC, MRZ

Lesser Scaup reported 12 Dec Pennington JLB; 28 Dec Stanley DB; 30 Dec Charles Mix DC; 08 Feb Yankton RND

White-winged Scoter Only Report: **07 Dec Charles Mix TJ, RM**

Long-tailed Duck reported 06 Dec Hughes TJ; 01 Jan Gregory KM, DGP; 05 Jan Charles Mix RM; 16 Jan Charles Mix RM

Bufflehead reported 07 Jan Charles Mix RM; 12 Jan Pennington JLB; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 24 Jan Pennington RSL; 21 Feb Yankton DC

Barrow's Goldeneye reported 31 Dec Pennington RSL

Hooded Merganser reported 13 Dec Yankton DS; 03 Jan Hughes RDO; 12 Jan Pennington JLB; 17 Jan Hughes DB; 24 Jan Pennington RSL; 25 Jan Yankton RND

Red-breasted Merganser reported 02 Jan Charles Mix RM, DC; 01 Jan Gregory DGP; 28 Dec Stanley RDO; 16 Jan Charles Mix RM; 18 Jan Yankton RND; 22 Jan Hughes RDO

Ruddy Duck Only Report: **28 Feb Lake JSP**

Greater Sage-Grouse Only Report: **08 Jan Butte (36) DGP, JLB**

Western Grebe All Reports: 06 Dec Buffalo JSP; **11 Jan Hughes KM**

Double-crested Cormorant All Reports: **02 Dec Charles Mix RM; 06 Dec Stanley DB**

Great Blue Heron All Reports: 03 Dec Stanley RDO; 06 Dec Stanley KM, RDO; 18 Dec Lake JSP; 28 Dec Yankton BFH, RM; 28 Feb Yankton RND

Bald Eagle reported 15 Feb Beadle (39) *vide* BFW

Northern Harrier reported 04 Jan Hughes DB; 10 Jan Meade RSL; 10 Jan Sully KM; 16 Jan Sully KM; 17 Jan Lyman DB; 18 Jan Stanley RDO, CEM; 24 Jan Pennington RSL; 07 Feb Miner JSP

Cooper's Hawk reported 27 Dec Brookings KCJ; 27 Dec Tripp RDO; 28 Dec Sully KM; 16 Jan Stanley RDO

Northern Goshawk reported 20 Dec Stanley DB; 28 Dec Grant TJ; 29 Dec Minnehaha MRZ, DC; 18 Jan Hughes KM, CEM; 15 Feb Stanley RDO; 24 Feb Lawrence DGP

Ferruginous Hawk reported 08 Jan Butte JLB; 08 Jan Harding JLB; 10 Jan Sully KM; 11 Jan Lyman DB; **16 Jan Aurora RSL**; 16 Jan Lawrence JLB; 17 Jan Lyman DB; 17 Jan Sully KM, RDO

Golden Eagle reported 06 Dec Miner JSP; 26 Jan Roberts BU

Merlin reported 10 Jan Stanley RDO; 11 Jan Lyman DB; 13 Jan Custer MMM; 16 Jan Sully KM; 18 Jan Stanley KM, CEM; 19 Jan Minnehaha DC, MRZ

Gyrfalcon reported 12 Dec Sully DB; 25 Dec Stanley DB; 11 Jan Hughes RDO; 18 Jan Stanley KM, CEM; 14 Feb Lyman DB; 15 Feb Butte SW

Prairie Falcon reported 31 Jan Brown GO; 01 Feb Brown GO; 21 Feb Miner JSP

Virginia Rail Only Report: **16 Jan Lawrence JLB**

American Coot reported 30 Dec Charles Mix DC; 03 Jan Hughes RDO; 12 Jan Pennington JLB; 21 Jan Hughes DB; 24 Jan Pennington RSL; 25 Jan Yankton RND

Sandhill Crane reported **06 Dec Hughes TJ; 06 Dec Stanley RDO; 27 Dec Stanley RDO**

Wilson's Snipe All Reports: 28 Dec Yankton DS; 16 Jan Lawrence JLB

Bonaparte's Gull Late: 13 Dec Yankton DS; 13 Dec Charles Mix RM; 07 Dec Stanley RDO

Mew Gull All Reports: **05 Dec Stanley RDO; 06 Dec Hughes TJ; 06 Dec Stanley RDO; 07 Dec Stanley RDO**

California Gull reported **20 Dec Hughes DB; 10 Jan Stanley RDO; 18 Jan Hughes RDO; 28 Jan Stanley RDO**

Thayer's Gull reported 01 Jan Gregory RM; 02 Jan Charles Mix RM; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 24 Jan Stanley JSP, KM, RDO

Lesser Black-backed Gull All Reports: **04 Dec Stanley RDO; 06 Dec Hughes TJ; 15 Dec Stanley RDO; 20 Dec Hughes DB; 28 Jan Stanley RDO**

Glaucous Gull reported 01 Jan Gregory RM, KM; 04 Jan Sully RDO; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 18 Jan Hughes RDO; 24 Jan Stanley JSP, RDO

Mourning Dove All Reports: 06 Dec Minnehaha DC; 27 Dec Minnehaha DC; 14 Feb Charles Mix RM

Barn Owl All Reports: **07 Dec Sully KM; 12 Dec Sully DB; 13 Dec Sully KM; 10 Jan Sully KM; 17 Jan Sully CEM; 30 Jan Sully KM; 07 Feb Sully KM**

Eastern Screech-Owl reported 01 Dec Meade EEM; 27 Dec Brookings KCJ; 28 Dec Yankton BFH; 01 Jan Lake KB; 04 Feb Yankton RND; 06 Feb Meade EEM; 12 Feb Lake JSP; 16 Feb Hughes RDO

Snowy Owl reported 17 Dec Day WS; 23 Dec Butte SW; 01 Jan Stanley RDO, KM; 17 Jan Stanley KM, RDO, CEM; 01 Feb Brown GO; 07 Feb Kingsbury JSP; 28 Feb Butte DGP

Long-eared Owl reported 27 Dec Brookings KCJ; 02 Jan Pennington MMM; 09 Jan Hughes KM; 10 Jan Sully KM; 17 Jan Sully RDO, CEM; 31 Jan Stanley KM; 31 Jan Harding CEM; 14 Feb Minnehaha JSP

Short-eared Owl reported 17 Dec Day WS; 02 Jan Pennington MMM; 07 Jan Stanley KM; 10 Jan Sully KM; 17 Jan Sully KM, RDO, CEM; 21 Jan Mellette RAP; 24 Jan Hughes JSP; 26 Jan Grant BU

Northern Saw-whet Owl reported 06 Jan Hughes DB; 10 Jan Sully KM; 18 Jan Sully KM, CEM; 31 Jan Stanley KM; 01 Feb Hughes KM

Belted Kingfisher reported 28 Dec Yankton BFH; 07 Jan Minnehaha DC; 13 Jan Lawrence DGP; 18 Jan Yankton RND; 21 Jan Hughes DB; 05 Feb Pennington JLB; 21 Feb Minnehaha DC

Lewis's Woodpecker All Reports: **01 Dec Meade EEM; 04 Jan Lawrence DGP; 28 Feb Lawrence JLB**

American Three-toed Woodpecker All Reports: **01 Jan Pennington AKB; 13 Jan Lawrence DGP; 21 Feb Lawrence DGP; 24 Feb Lawrence DGP; 28 Feb Lawrence DGP**

Black-backed Woodpecker All Reports: **22 Dec Meade AKB; 01 Jan Pennington AKB; 31 Jan Meade DGP**

Pileated Woodpecker Only Report: 28 Dec Roberts TJ

Gray Jay All Reports: **22 Jan Lawrence JLB; 21 Feb Lawrence DGP; 24 Feb Lawrence DGP; 28 Feb Lawrence DGP**

Pinyon Jay reported from Meade County AKB

Black-billed Magpie reported 07 Dec Sully KM; 18 Jan Yankton RND; 07 Feb Sully KM

Pygmy Nuthatch All Reports: 21 Jan Pennington DGP; 04 Feb Pennington MMM; 22 Feb Pennington MMM

Canyon Wren All Reports: 22 Dec Meade AKB; 17 Jan Pennington JLB; 19 Jan Lawrence DGP; 24 Feb Lawrence DGP

Winter Wren Only Report: **22 Dec Meade AKB**

American Dipper All Reports: 22 Jan Lawrence JLB; 24 Feb Lawrence DGP

Golden-crowned Kinglet All Reports: 10 Dec Hughes KM; 13 Dec Hughes KM; 22 Dec Meade AKB; 09 Jan Hughes KM; 26 Jan Lawrence DGP

Eastern Bluebird reported 25 Dec Charles Mix RM; 28 Dec Hughes DB; 28 Dec Yankton RM, BFH; 18 Jan Yankton RND; 20 Jan Gregory RM; **26 Jan Grant BU**

Mountain Bluebird Only Report: **21 Jan Jackson RAP**

Townsend's Solitaire reported 31 Dec Minnehaha NS; 01 Feb Beadle *fide* BFW

Hermit Thrush All Reports: **28 Dec Yankton DS; 30 Dec Yankton TJ**

Varied Thrush reported **18 Dec – 21 Feb Pennington JLB, RSL, APB, DGP**

Bohemian Waxwing All Reports: 08 Dec Meade EEM; 05 Jan Lawrence DGP; 16 Jan Lawrence JLB; 01 Feb Lawrence RSL

Spotted Towhee Only Report: **28 Dec Yankton RM**

Song Sparrow All Reports: 20 Dec Hughes KM; 12 Feb Hughes KM

White-throated Sparrow All Reports: **17 Dec Day WS; 27 Dec Lawrence JF; 21 Jan Lawrence DGP; 22 Jan Lawrence JLB; 25 Feb Day WS**

Harris's Sparrow All Reports: 06 Dec Hughes RDO; 19 Feb Jones RDO

White-crowned Sparrow All Reports: 28 Dec Yankton BFH; 11 Jan Hughes KM

Snow Bunting reported **19 Jan Minnehaha (4000 – 4500) MRZ, DC**

Red-winged Blackbird reported 02 Jan Sully KM; 04 Jan Lawrence DGP; 14 Jan Minnehaha DC; 28 Jan Butte JLB; 31 Jan Beadle *fide* BFW; 31 Jan Moody JSP; 08 Feb Yankton RND

Western Meadowlark reported 29 Dec Minnehaha MRZ, DC; 01 Jan Pennington MMM; 11 Jan Hughes KM; 11 Jan Meade JLB; 17 Jan Kingsbury JSP; 17 Jan Lyman DB; 26 Jan Roberts BU; 11 Feb Custer MMM

Rusty Blackbird All Reports: 07 Dec Charles Mix RM; 04 Jan Lawrence DGP; 28 Jan Butte JLB; 31 Jan Butte APB

Brewer's Blackbird All Reports: **04 Jan Lawrence DGP; 28 Jan Butte JLB**

Common Grackle reported 10 Jan Hughes DB; 17 Jan Hughes DB; 26 Jan Grant BU; 26 Jan Roberts BU

Pine Grosbeak Only Report: **02 Feb Grant BU**

Red Crossbill reported 17 Dec Day WS; 01 Jan Charles Mix RM; 12 Jan Brown GO; 12 Jan Minnehaha DC; 26 Jan Roberts BU

White-winged Crossbill All Reports: **01 Dec Stanley RDO; 13 Jan Lawrence DGP; 22 Jan Lawrence JLB; 26 Jan Grant BU**

Common Redpoll reported from **21 counties statewide**

Evening Grosbeak Only Report: 11 Jan Lawrence RSL

Reports Requiring Acceptance By The Rare Bird Records Committee

Yellow-billed Loon 29 Dec – 04 Jan Charles Mix and Gregory RM

Black-crowned Night Heron 28 Dec Yankton DS, RM

Carolina Wren 05 Jan Lawrence DGP, JLB

Hoary Redpoll 11 Jan Stanley RDO; 12 Jan Minnehaha DC; 19 Jan Lyman DB; 20 Jan Minnehaha DC; 07 Feb Meade AKB; 28 Feb Lawrence DGP

Species Expected But Not Reported

Tundra Swan (4), American Black Duck, Surf Scoter (3), Ruffed Grouse, Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe (3), Horned Grebe, American White Pelican (2), Killdeer, Franklin's Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Barred Owl (3), Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Clark's Nutcracker (2), Marsh Wren (2), Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher (2), Yellow-rumped Warbler, Fox Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Yellow-headed Blackbird (3), Brown-headed Cowbird (2), Gray-crowned Rosy Finch (2)

Contributing Observers

DB	Doug Backlund	RAP	Richard A. Peterson
JLB	Jocelyn L. Baker	DGP	D. George Prisbe
KB	Kristel Bakker	NS	Nancy Schaefer
APB	Addison & Patricia Ball	MS	Mark Schmidtbauer
AKB	Anna K. Ball	GJS	Gary & Jan Small
DC	Doug Chapman	WS	Waubay NWR Staff
RND	Roger N. Dietrich	SS	Scott Stolz
JF	Jennifer Fowler	EDS	Eileen Dowd Stukel
BFH	Bill Huser	DS	David Swanson
KCJ	Kent C. Jensen	BU	Bill Unzen
TJ	Todd Jensen	BFW	Bridgette Flanders-Wanner
RSL	Richard S. Latuchie	SW	Scott Weins
RM	Ron Mabie	MRZ	Mick Zerr
MMM	Michael M. Melius		
CEM	Charlie Miller		
EEM	Ernest E. Miller		
KM	Kenny Miller		
GO	Gary Olson		
RDO	Ricky D. Olson		
JSP	Jeffrey S. Palmer		

BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA, VERSION 5: GOLD EDITION DVD. THAYER BIRDING SOFTWARE. <http://www.thayerbirding.com>. \$169.95.

The PC version of this outstanding birding DVD is a great leap above previous ones, including the Mac version, which I reviewed in the September 2008 issue of *South Dakota Bird Notes*. Unfortunately Thayer Birding does not plan to produce a Gold Edition for the Mac in the immediate future.

There are so many improvements that the program now comes in two disks rather than one, offering a wealth of information on 957 species of birds. The new species total is the result of adding 32 accidental birds not previously covered. The species are displayed in 2,850 photos and 708 songs, including alarm calls, chip notes and mating songs with sonograms. The photos themselves are of uniformly high quality and include many plumages of the species in question. As in previous editions, bird photos can be enlarged and even printed out. Birders could therefore make a notebook of target species.

Major enhancements of this update are the enhanced quality and great increases in the number of videos and maps. While only about 80 videos were available in previous editions, the Gold Edition provides 551 action videos of birds, 957 detailed range maps and 837 abundance maps. The range maps are greatly improved over maps in the older editions as they now include state boundaries (for Canada, USA, and Mexico) and Central American winter ranges. The range map for the Kirtland's Warbler also depicts the Michigan counties in which this species breeds. I am told that these improved range maps are one of the major reasons Thayer Birding produced this new version of the software.

Another great feature of this (and previous) edition(s) is the ability to easily import the program's bird calls into your iPod or other MP3 song player. The bird song is identified on your iPod, but does not have interfering voice-over identifications in the audio, which might scare birds in the field. Imported with the songs is a thumbnail portrait of each species. In my previous review I complained about the small size of these photos—but I have since learned that clicking on the center circle of an iPod enables you to enlarge the photos. Furthermore, many of the bird calls have upgraded quality, an improvement available in free updates to the previous editions as well.

Amazingly, the Gold Edition allows you to import your own photos, videos, and song recordings, which integrate seamlessly, appearing everywhere—in quizzes, the field guide pages and even in side-by-side comparisons! Previously

I mentioned that I used to build quizzes of the birds my students saw during my ornithology classes. Quizzes can be in several formats: flash card, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, or random. (The program also comes with ready-made quizzes.) With this edition you can also make bird call quizzes.

Imagine quizzes of wildflowers, butterflies, birds of areas of the world you plan to visit, or even people! A new feature is the ability to find species accounts by using banding species codes, those four-letter words that often irritate listserve readers. You can make quizzes and learn the codes if you wish. Quizzes can also incorporate the new range maps.

Beginning and intermediate birders will find the Identification Wizard very useful. By entering an unknown bird's color, size, habitat and location the user will be shown a photo gallery of all the birds matching the entered data. The zoom-in feature and side-by-side photos facilitate accurate identification. Even if you never see the bird, you can identify it just by its song. For any bird, two very useful button clicks give you a page with similarly plumaged species or a page of closely related species. Advanced birders will enjoy being able to see photos of similar species side by side.

Using this software you can also keep your life list of when and where you see birds. I have not used this feature, having become wary of the possibility of losing a lot of work due to crashes of other list-keeping computer programs. Be sure to back up any such list or use a simple spreadsheet program (and back that up too)!

According to the Thayer website the system requirements include "Windows Vista, XP and 2000; 1 Gig RAM; DVD drive; 6 GB free space on hard drive; plus hardware and software required to support multimedia applications. Technical support requires Internet access. Works on 32-bit computers only. 64-bit version coming in 2009." Loading the program into my computer was easy. I did notice that the program speed was greatly improved the second time I used it.

This review hardly begins to describe the usefulness and robustness of the Thayer Birding Software Gold Edition. I find myself in complete agreement with Thayer Birding when they claim "...this DVD is a must-have for your birding library. This is the definitive edition of birding software!" The retail price of \$169.95, therefore, is not outlandishly high. A comparable product covering European birds costs almost twice as much. This program is certainly worth the cost of a couple of nights at a fancy restaurant! *DAN TALLMAN, 2120 TAYLOR CT., NORTHFIELD, MN 55057.*

TWO SOUTH DAKOTA RAPTOR INCIDENTS

Last fall I enjoyed two raptor events in South Dakota.

The first was on 23 September 2008, a few miles north of Aberdeen. I witnessed a Swainson's Hawk capture something on the ground along a side-road. The bird carried its prey to a nearby fence post. I took photos of the bird as it perched and as it flushed, still carrying



Swainson's Hawk with salamander in left talons. 9/23/08 Brown Co.

Photo: Dan Tallman

ing the prey. I was surprised to see that the hawk was eating a rather large Tiger Salamander. My photographs verified this field identification. Upon researching



Swainson's Hawk with salamander in right talons. 9/23/08 Brown Co.

Photo: Dan Tallman

Swainson's Hawk prey in *The Birds of North America* and in Bent's *Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey*, I discovered that, although Swainson's Hawks are known to be opportunistic feeders, neither reference cites this species consuming salamanders.

The second incident involved a Sharp-shinned Hawk that I banded in Aberdeen on 9 September 2007. This bird was found on 12 September 2008 by Benjamin Koehler seven miles north of Watertown. During my nearly 30 years of banding in South Dakota, this recovery is the only one for a raptor from my banding station. **DAN TALLMAN, 2120 TAYLOR CT., NORTHFIELD, MN 55057**



These two warblers both have bred in South Dakota: the Cerulean Warbler (right) at their extreme range to the northwest in Lincoln Co. and the Virginia's Warbler (left) at their extreme range to the northeast, in Custer Co.

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Photo 1: Doug Backlund; Photo 2: Chris Kellner.	