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# SOUTH DAKOTA Ornithologists' Union

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*SDOU Bird Notes Quiz Bird*

*Harding Co. 6/08/07*

*Photo: Douglas Chapman*

*Send Answers to: [sfbirdclub@sio.midco.net](mailto:sfbirdclub@sio.midco.net)*



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S O U T H      D A K O T A  
B I R D   N O T E S

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# PRESIDENT'S PAGE

*Nancy Drilling*

The main goal of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union 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". So who exactly are these 'students' that study wild birds? In short, it could be anyone - anyone who wants to learn, study, report, and participate in gathering data about birds in the state. The list includes amateurs to professionals, people of all ages and walks of life and from all corners of the state. The SDOU web site elaborates: "birders, environmentally concerned individuals, ornithologists and other natural scientists all contribute . . ."



A few trained ornithologists research, survey, and monitor birds within the state. These professionals work for federal or state agencies, wildlife consulting firms, non-profit organizations, or universities. There are ornithologists at all four state universities with a variety of research interests, ranging from avian taxonomy, ecology, and behavior to conservation and management studies. All of these projects utilize a bevy of under-graduate and graduate students to collect data in the field. Recognizing that these young people are the future of professional ornithology in the state, SDOU has established three funds to give financial support - the Whitney Research Grants Program, the Husmann Memorial Scholarship, and the Alfred Hinds Memorial Award. We encourage you to donate to these funds to support our future scientists.

Professional scientists certainly contribute to our knowledge of South Dakota birds, but ordinary citizens play a major role as well. In part, this is because of numbers - bird-watchers outnumber professional ornithologists by at least 10 to 1! Also, bird enthusiasts often record their observations. If you write down the birds you see, take it one step further and enter your observations into the SDOU online database and e-Bird. You may think that your few observations are not important but they are! Accumulating observations from many observers in many locations over decades is a powerful tool to answer many broad-scale questions that cannot be answered by a handful of professionals or short-term studies. Of course, if you see a rare bird, please report it to the SDOU. These reports are vital to monitoring the status and distribution of our least-known species.

There are many other opportunities to contribute to our knowledge of South Dakota's birds. Some that occur once a year include the Christmas Bird Count, the Great Backyard Bird Count, Feeder Watch, West River Bird Migration Count, and the Waterbird Colony monitoring project coordinated by SD Game, Fish and Parks. Other projects ask for a bit more time or expertise - the Breeding Bird Survey, Nightjar surveys, and the second Breeding Bird Atlas. All of these projects are looking for volunteers and are a great way to contribute. Finally, many South Dakota citizen scientists have initiated their own studies, based on their personal interests. Some examples include nestbox projects, field surveys for particular species, or bird surveys of important bird areas. Both SDOU (Whitney Research Grant Program) and South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks (Small Grant program) may provide some funds to help defray the costs of these independent projects. So, as you enjoy the bounty of birds this summer in your yard or throughout the state, please step up to contribute to our knowledge of South Dakota birds. There is so much to learn and your help is vital.

SPECIES LIST • SPRING 2011 SDOU MEETING, LEMMON, SD

152 Species Observed

Canada Goose	Long-billed Dowitcher	Black-throated Green Warbler
Trumpeter Swan (ON)	Wilson's Phalarope	Palm Warbler
Wood Duck	Bonaparte's Gull	Blackpoll Warbler
Gadwall	Franklin's Gull	Black-and-white Warbler
American Wigeon	Ring-billed Gull	Ovenbird
Mallard	Caspian Tern	Northern Waterthrush
Blue-winged Teal	Common Tern	Common Yellowthroat
Northern Shoveler	Forster's Tern	Spotted Towhee
Northern Pintail	Rock Pigeon	Chipping Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Clay-colored Sparrow
Canvasback	Mourning Dove	Field Sparrow
Redhead	Barn Owl	Vesper Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Great Horned Owl	Lark Sparrow
Lesser Scaup	Burowing Owl	Lark Bunting
Bufflehead	Long-eared Owl (ON)	Savannah Sparrow
Ruddy Duck	Short-eared Owl	Grasshopper Sparrow
Gray Partridge	Belted Kingfisher	Baird's Sparrow
Ring-necked Pheasant	Downy Woodpecker	Song Sparrow
Sharp-tailed Grouse	Hairy Woodpecker	Lincoln's Sparrow
Greater Prairie-Chicken	Northern Flicker	White-throated Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Western Wood-Pewee	White-crowned Sparrow
Common Loon	Willow Flycatcher	McCown's Longspur
Pied-billed Grebe	Trail's Flycatcher	Chestnut-collared Longspur (N)
Horned Grebe	Least Flycatcher	Black-headed Grosbeak
Eared Grebe	Say's Phoebe	Lazuli Bunting
Western Grebe	Western Kingbird	Bobolink
Clark's Grebe	Eastern Kingbird	Red-winged Blackbird
American White Pelican	Loggerhead Shrike	Western Meadowlark
Double-crested Cormorant	Blue-headed Vireo	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Great Blue Heron	Black-billed Magpie	Common Grackle
Turkey Vulture	American Crow	Brown-headed Cowbird
Osprey	Horned Lark	Orchard Oriole
Bald Eagle	Tree Swallow	Baltimore Oriole
Northern Harrier	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	House Finch
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Bank Swallow	Pine Siskin
Cooper's Hawk	Cliff Swallow	American Goldfinch
Broad-winged Hawk	Barn Swallow	House Sparrow
Swainson's Hawk CB	Black-capped Chickadee	
Red-tailed Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	A rare dark morph Broad-winged Hawk was observed by several.
"Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk	Rock Wren	On trips to Lemmon, other birds of note observed:
Ferruginous Hawk	House Wren	Greater Scaup, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Black-bellied Plover, American Golden-Plover, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, Stilt Sandpiper, Yellow-throated Vireo, Marsh Wren, Wood Thrush, Northern Mockingbird, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, American Redstart, Wilson's Warbler, Canada Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Great-tailed Grackle.
Golden Eagle	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	
American Kestrel	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	
Peregrine Falcon	Eastern Bluebird	
Prairie Falcon	Gray-cheeked Thrush	
Sora	Swainson's Thrush	
American Coot	American Robin	
Killdeer	Gray Catbird	
American Avocet	Brown Thrasher	
Spotted Sandpiper	European Starling	
Solitary Sandpiper	American Pipit	
Willet	Sprague's Pipit	
Lesser Yellowlegs	Tennessee Warbler	
Upland Sandpiper	Orange-crowned Warbler	
Long-billed Curlew	Northern Parula	
Marble Godwit	Yellow Warbler	
Sanderling	Yellow-rumped Warbler	

## Louisiana vs. Northern Waterthrush



*Louisiana Waterthrush II*  
Photo: Dan Tallman

The differences between Louisiana and Northern waterthrushes are subtle. On 3 May, we saw both species in the western unit of the Cannon River Wilderness Area in Rice County MN. The first two photographs are of the Louisiana Waterthrush we saw; the second two are of Northern Waterthrushes, banded near Dundas, MN, in 2008 (third photo) and on 4 May 2011 (last photo).

So how do you tell these birds apart?

1) **Throat.** In these photographs, you can clearly see that the throat of the Louisiana Waterthrush is plain white, unlike the fine-

ly speckled throat of the Northern Waterthrush. This field mark is usually good, except these speckles can vary in both species.

2) **Eyestripe.** The Louisiana Waterthrush's eyestripe is white and broad (especially behind the eye). The Northern Waterthrush's eyestripe tapers to a point behind the eye and is often dusky.

3) **Flanks.** The flanks of a Louisiana Waterthrush are often buffy, contrasting with the white breast. This color may be subtle, as you can see in the photo above.

4) **Leg color.** The Louisiana Waterthrush has bright pink legs. The Northern Waterthrush tends to have dusky, horn-colored legs.



*Louisiana Waterthrush I.*  
Photo: Dan Tallman

4) **Size.** Most Louisiana Waterthrushes are at least a quarter of an inch larger than Northerns. Good luck discerning this size difference in the field.

Just to make this situation a bit trickier, Northern Waterthrushes vary in underpart color. Some are white, as is the bird to the right. Others are yellowish, like the bird below. Louisiana Waterthrushes are always white-breasted behind the streaks. Yellowish Northern Waterthrushes have yellowish eyestripes quite unlike the white eyestripes of all Louisiana Waterthrushes. The eyestripe of a pale Northern Waterthrush, however, can be similar to the color in the Louisiana.



*Northern Waterthrush I*  
Photo: Dan Tallman

The songs of the two waterthrushes are perhaps the best way to tell them apart. This field mark only works if the birds are singing! In Rice Co., MN, Louisiana Waterthrushes breed near limestone cliffs along the Cannon River. Northern Waterthrushes are migrants that breed



*Northern Waterthrush I*  
Photo: Dan Tallman

farther north and usually are not singing. The Northern Waterthrush song ends in a diagnostic "chew-chew-chew." The Louisiana song begins with three clear slurred whistles, followed by a number of twittering notes dropping in pitch (Peterson 1947). Thayer Birding Software graciously allowed me to use their copyrighted mp3 files of bird calls so that you can listen to the songs of the Louisiana Waterthrush and the Northern Waterthrush. [go to Dan's blog at <http://dantallmansbirdblog.blogspot.com/2011/05/louisiana-vs-northern-waterthrush.html>].

Thayer Birding Software produces the DVD *Birds of North America* (Mac and PC versions available), which is well worth the price. This disk contains multiple bird photographs, videos, and bird calls of North American birds.

## SDOU SPRING 2011 MEETING, 13-15 MAY • LEMMON, SD

The 2011 SDOU spring meeting in Lemmon was a great success. A total of fifty-five attended the meeting. Thanks go to Ricky Olson for organizing and sponsoring this meeting. All events, from field trips to speakers worked smoothly and splendidly. The lunches at Summerville store and the banquet at the Dakota Lodge went well.

Many thanks also to field trip leaders Dan Svingen, Ron Martin, Dave Swanson, Jeff Palmer, Todd Jensen and Ricky Olson.

Current SDOU President, Nancy Drilling, presented an evaluation she and SDOU Board member Jennifer Fowler formulated surrounding the economic impact of the birders from around the world who came to see Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush discovered last summer in Spearfish Canyon.

Their careful work will be of great help in aiding local and regional leaders in assessing the financial impact that birders can bring to an economy.

Dan Svingen, wildlife biologist for the USDAFS District 4 Dakota Prairie Grasslands offered an informative presentation of the problems facing the grassland biome of the northern Great Plains.

Among the topics discussed were: dealing with differing views on prairie dog management, the history of how the grasslands came to be after the dustbowl of the thirties and bird conservation in a disappearing biome. Several birds of concern are Baird's Sparrow, Ferruginous Hawk and Burrowing Owl.

Dan also involved the audience with several impromptu trivia quizzes\* for prizes: USDAFS tee-shirts and baseball hats. There were also several tubs of colorful paraphernalia for children. The two attendees under ten years old gladly shared their bounty with those of us who are merely young at heart.

The field trips covered Hugh Glass Memorial Campground (Northern Parula, Black-throated Green Warbler), Lemmon Lake Road and the "Pasture 7" allotment on the Grand River National Grasslands (displaying and singing Sprague's Pipit and very cooperative singing Baird's Sparrow) to Lemmon Lake (Trumpeter Swan [on a nest], Common Loon, Bonaparte's Gull, Horned Grebe) and an early morning trip to a Sharp-tailed Grouse lek.

The SDOU Fall Meeting will be held in Brookings. Watch the SDOU listserv for dates. For a complete list of species seen, go to page 32.

\* Do you know why Spencer Baird was not along on Audubon's trip to South Dakota when the sparrow bearing his name was discovered for science?



"Sprague's Missouri Lark" was J. J. Audubon's name for Sprague's Pipit, discovered for science at the mouth of the Yellowstone River. We saw several in the Lemmon area. Several were singing skyward and one was singing from the ground!

# BOOK REVIEW

DAN TALLMAN

**Photographing Birds. Rulon E. Simmons with Bates Littlehales. 2006. National Geographic Society: Washington DC. 176 pp. \$19.95 (Softcover).**

**D**on't be fooled by this book's title. It is not a HOW-to book, but, rather, a series of essays about photographing birds. Early on, the book claims that "you will find excellent guidance on equipment, lighting and exposure" and "you'll find the secrets of bird photography." These topics are touched upon, but not clearly or in detail. Technical tidbits are to be found in the text, but they are not easily found. The book has a welcome emphasis on digital photography but also covers film photography. Curiously, digiscoping (taking digital pictures through a spotting-scope) is omitted. Color photographs of birds fill the book, yet only some half-dozen of these illustrate technical matters. Instead six essays serve to inspire would-be bird photographers.

"*What Makes a Great Bird Photograph?*" is the first essay. The answer depends on the esthetics of the viewer, I'd say. I would not agree that the photograph in this essay showing a backlit coot to be an example of a great bird photograph.

"*Getting Started*" is the next chapter. Here you learn that you need a 35 mm single-lens-reflex camera, lenses (400 and 70-300 mm) and perhaps a 1.4x tele-extender. You should field test your lenses before purchase. The authors mention, but do not adequately explain, the use or options for flash photography. For example, they write the puzzling statement, "a special light-focusing lens called a Fresnal Lens can be used with a flash to concentrate more light on the subject." One needs to search elsewhere for what they talking about. Other topics are mentioned. Film speed – although not listed in the index – is discussed but the reader basically is advised to experiment with it. The authors suggest purchasing a 256 mg memory card, but this seems of a low capacity. No mention of RAW file format is made. (Many digital photographers use RAW since these files give them maximum data.) "Make backups" seems like fairly rudimentary advice, as is "buy as many megapixels as you can afford" when buying a camera. The chapter concludes with diagrams of digital cameras, illustrations that seem to be to be superfluous to actually photographing birds.

The authors next warn about weather when using digital cameras in the field. Be sure to change lenses with your camera facing downward. Watch for dust. Bring extra batteries and memory cards. All of this is good, basic advice.

The next 30 pages are about attracting birds. I am sure that anyone interested in bird photography really does not need a chapter on bird feeders. They may be inspired by this book to manipulate the backgrounds at the feeders and, perhaps, to use multiple flashes to illuminate both fore and backgrounds. You can also copy backgrounds from either film-based photographs or digitally with Photoshop.

In a frustratingly short essay on "Printing Digital" the authors basically say to use Photoshop. But they fail to give but a couple of examples of how they use Photoshop (or other software). They mention the unsharp mask in Photoshop and calibrating their computer screen to their printer (although not, in either case, really how to do this). At the very least, I would have appreciated having an example of their work flow from camera to print.



“Stalking Birds” seems to me to be another superfluous chapter. I assume would-be bird photographers are already bird watchers, and thus know how to stalk birds. This section of the book does conclude with two interesting essays, one on remaining unseen and the other on building a blind. The second essay even gives directions for building a blind – if only the rest of the book had been so detailed! I have seldom used a blind, except, of course, for my car. Those few times I have used blinds, I have indeed taken excellent photographs.

“Photographing Nesting” is really a continuation of “Stalking Birds.” Again, although we are provided a few helpful hints on how to photograph near nests, the seasoned birder will not have much to learn. The authors do make the interesting observation that “unlike birding, bird photography is a solitary business...resist human companionship and concentrate on relating to the bird.” The authors end this chapter with the mandatory “tread lightly” statement.

The next four chapters contain relatively little information. “Courtship:” courting birds makes for interesting photographs. Who would have thought? “Photographing Flight:” Pre-focusing your auto-focus lens will reduce auto-focus time. “Light in Flight:” Kind of misleading. The light conditions of when you take your photos—noon, dusk—will affect the mood of your pictures. “Challenges:” you may find more or different species during migration; the four seasons bring different birds. Again, who would have thought? Taking photos of birds at night is discussed. The use of drip pools often results in stunning photographs. A couple of hints for cold-weather photography will be of interest to us northerners (avoiding battery drain and/or condensation on lenses).

“Ethics in Digital.” Does the manipulation of an image in Photoshop become unethical? Erasing distracting branches? Changing the background? The authors did not bring up this question when they suggested superimposing backgrounds in film photography. Nor do they bring up the ethics of luring birds, like owls, with mice tied to fishing poles and lines. What about audio lures? Earlier in the book audio playback is suggested, without caveats of either ethics or possible dangers to birds.

The book ends with a very short list of places to go to photograph birds. Sand Lake is the only site mentioned for South Dakota. Minnesota is not mentioned at all. California, on the other hand, has six sites described. You would think this section would be of little value; this information is at hand in many bird-finding publications and on the web. Nevertheless, if you happen to be near one of these locations, it is handy to be aware of them. Lists of ways to get closer to specific birds and food to attract other birds seem unnecessary. Of more interest is a list of equipment, though it is not sorted into film and digital uses.

This review may seem harsh. From my review, you can tell that I was disappointed that this book was not a more specific guide to bird photography. On the other hand, I am sure that its modest price will make the book a perfect gift, either to yourself or to a birding photographer. I am sure the recipient of the gift will be inspired to experiment with and obtain even better and more striking photographs. *Dan Tallman, 2120 Taylor Ct., Northfield MN 55057.*

# Among the Birds Seen at the SDOU Spring



**1. Northern Pintail. 2. Black-throated Green Warbler. 3. ...  
bler. 4. Lark Bunting. 5. Trumpeter Swan. 6. Chestnut-  
Clay-colored Sparrow. 8. Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle)**

*See the complete list of species seen at the meeting*



# ing Meeting in Lemmon, 13-15 May 2011



***Black-and-white Warbler (Black-collared Longspur. 7. (e ssp.).  
ing on page 32.***



*A heartfelt thank you to all the photographers in SD and elsewhere who allow us to print their incredible photos of birds in South Dakota Bird Notes.  
Thanks very much to all of you. ~ the editor*

## Two New Bird Books from Princeton

**The Crossley ID Guide: Eastern Birds. Richard Crossley. 2011. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. 544 pp. \$35 (Softcover).**

This book is, on first glance, very impressive indeed. There are some very good photographs of birds. And it's large – an even larger format than the full-sized Sibley – and weighty. It weighs in at over a hefty three and one-half pounds. This is really a reference work, intended for a coffee table or the birding desk for the luxury of studying and reflecting at one's leisure. And mind you, please note that this volume is just for Eastern Birds of North America. The promised guide covering America's west is still in production.

This book is also sure to impress with quantity: there are thousands of bird photos (10,000, according to Princeton; I didn't count). Many are very good, but more than a few are quite dark, some over-bright, some show birds at odd angles, some in shadow, some tiny and some even very fuzzy. Also, many birds' feet, and/or legs are cut off, depriving the reader of valuable information as to color and length. And, sadly, good bird photos are not necessarily good for bird identification.

A few photos show birds in the wrong habitat, i.e. Marsh Wren in weeds and Sedge Wren in a cattail marsh, thus appearing to be in each other's territory.

**Hawks at a Distance. Jerry Ligouri. 2011. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. 216 pp. \$19.95 (Softcover). \$49.50 (Cloth).**

This book seemed odd from the first glance. While it's quite true, as most experienced observers know, that the flight pattern a distantly flying hawk exhibits can often be definitive for identification, the static nature of the page seems at odds with this idea. This book attempts to show still photos of very distant flying hawks resulting in tiny images, each species introduced with a larger photo of the species. Even the explanatory text does not make identification easier. "*Adults may appear brownish on top,*" is not really of much use. If one is very experienced with raptor identifications, then this book could be used as a confirmation of what the raptor expert already knows. If one is not acquainted with raptors in their many differing plumages and at long distances, this book would be the next thing to worthless.

### A New Age – Post Gutenberg?

These two books have made me realize the following: that the age of Gutenberg (the last 500+ years), wherein printing and book-making were king, may be dead soon. Both of these volumes would be useful as electronic apps on iPad or some equivalent. A short, clickable film clip of those tiny hawk dots with a voice-over explanation of how flight patterns differ from similar species would be very helpful indeed. The Crossley, too, would be a fine study if each image were clickable: the ability to bring forward or lighten or darken, thus trying to match the view of the bird the birder saw or is seeing. "Interactive" in modern parlance, rather than the static printed page. These two books will benefit greatly, and thus be far more useful as identification guides, with such treatment. And they would weigh less, too.

For right now, these books are just fancy gifts to buy for the "Birder Who Has Everything" and will most likely never be used, or even be useful. But I look forward to the coming new age of information, where "books" are electronic and can be made to help much more than the static page is able. These will be the cutting edge.

# SEASONAL REPORTS

## The 2010-2011 Winter Season

Compiled By: Jeffrey S. Palmer, Madison, SD

### 01 December 2010 to 28 February 2011

**E**clipsing the previous high mark of 140 species reported during the 1999-2000 Winter Season, there were **147 species**, including 12 rarities, reported during the season this year. The ten-year (2000-2009) average is 133. Below, I have tried to highlight the more significant sightings (dates that are earlier/later than listed in *South Dakota Birds* by Tallman, Swanson, and Palmer, species that are out of range, and species that have been reported less than regularly over the last 10 winter seasons). Included at the end is a list of species (25) 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 indicate the number of consecutive years (up to 4) that the species has appeared on the list during the season.

**Greater White-fronted Goose** reported 01 Dec Spink BJU; 19 Dec Yankton RND; 23 Dec Hughes KM; 28 Dec Stanley RDO; 15 Feb Grant BJU; 18 Feb Yankton RND; 19 Feb Hughes KM

**Snow Goose** reported 18 Dec Lake JSP; 19 Dec Yankton RND; 23 Dec Hughes RDO; 01 Jan Stanley RDO; 18 Feb Yankton RND

**Ross's Goose** reported 01 Dec Spink BJU; 18 Dec Hughes RDO; 19 Dec Lyman RDO, KM; 23 Dec Stanley RDO; 25 Jan Stanley RDO; 23 Feb Pennington JLB

**Cackling Goose** reported 23 Dec Charles Mix RM; 24 Dec Hughes KM; 01 Jan Stanley RDO; 17 Jan Stanley KM; 30 Jan Yankton RND; 15 Feb Grant BJU; 23 Feb Pennington JLB

**Tundra Swan** Only Report: **01 Dec Spink BJU**

**Wood Duck** reported 14 Dec Minnehaha MRZ; 03 Jan Pennington JLB; 04 Jan Yankton RND; 07 Jan Charles Mix RM; 17 Jan Pennington JLB

**Gadwall** reported 01 Dec Spink BJU; 05 Dec Hughes DB; 03 Jan Pennington RDO, JLB; 04 Jan Yankton RND; 16 Jan Gregory RM; 16 Jan Pennington JLB; 30 Jan Yankton RND; 15 Feb Grant BJU

**American Wigeon** reported 01 Dec Spink BJU; 22 Dec Gregory RM; 03 Jan Pennington JLB; 07 Jan Stanley KM; 16 Jan Charles Mix RM; 16 Jan Pennington JLB; 18 Feb Yankton RND

**American Black Duck** reported 01 Dec Spink BJU; 22 Dec Gregory RM; 13 Jan Charles Mix RM; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 24 Jan Charles Mix RM; 15 Feb Grant BJU

**Northern Shoveler** reported 01 Dec Spink BJU; 19 Dec Yankton RND, GJS; 23 Dec Stanley RDO; 28 Dec Pennington JLB; 18 Feb Yankton RND

**Northern Pintail** reported 14 Dec Minnehaha MRZ; 02 Jan Stanley RDO; 03 Jan Charles Mix RM; 12 Jan Yankton RND; 17 Jan Stanley KM; 15 Feb Grant BJU; 18 Feb Yankton RND

**Green-winged Teal** All Reports: 01 Dec Pennington JLB; 01 Dec Spink BJU; 12 Dec Fall River ND; 15 Dec Meade EEM; 12 Jan Yankton RND; 18 Feb Yankton RND; 22 Feb Yankton RND

**Canvasback** reported 01 Dec Spink BJU; 04 Dec Yankton RND, KM, JSP; 03 Jan Charles Mix RM; 03 Jan Gregory RM; 16 Jan Gregory RM

**Redhead** reported 01 Dec Spink BJU; 03 Jan Charles Mix RM; 03 Jan Gregory RM; 03 Jan Pennington JLB; 07 Jan Stanley KM; 16 Jan Gregory RM; 16 Jan Pennington JLB; 22 Jan Stanley KM

**Ring-necked Duck** reported 03 Jan Pennington JLB; 04 Jan Yankton RND; 07 Jan Stanley KM; 16 Jan Charles Mix RM; 16 Jan Pennington JLB; 16 Jan Stanley RDO

**Greater Scaup** reported 05 Dec Yankton RSL; 22 Dec Hughes RDO; 28 Dec Stanley RDO; 16 Jan Gregory RM; 16 Jan Stanley RDO; 29 Jan Charles Mix RM

**Lesser Scaup** reported 18 Dec Stanley RDO; 03 Jan Pennington JLB; 04 Jan Yankton RND; 16 Jan Gregory RM; 16 Jan Pennington JLB; 05 Feb Stanley KM; 15 Feb Grant BJU

**Black Scoter** All Reports: 02 Dec Buffalo DS, JSP; 05 Dec Lyman RDO

**Long-tailed Duck** reported 06 Dec Lyman DB; 03 Jan Gregory RM; 12 Jan Charles Mix RM; 16 Jan Gregory RM; 29 Jan Charles Mix RM

**Bufflehead** reported 03 Jan Charles Mix RM; 03 Jan Pennington RDO, JLB; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 16 Jan Charles Mix RM; 16 Jan Pennington JLB; 16 Jan Stanley RDO

**Hooded Merganser** reported 12 Jan Pennington MMM; 12 Jan Yankton RND; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 16 Jan Stanley RDO; 17 Jan Pennington JLB; 05 Feb Hughes JLB, RSL

**Red-breasted Merganser** reported 06 Dec Lyman DB; 03 Jan Charles Mix RM; 14 Jan Stanley KM; 17 Jan Stanley KM; 03 Feb Charles Mix RM; 18 Feb Yankton RND

**Ruddy Duck** reported 18 Dec Charles Mix RM; 18 Dec Lake JSP; 26 Dec Gregory RM; **22 Feb Yankton RND**

**Ruffed Grouse** All Reports: 04 Dec Lawrence SW; 16 Jan Lawrence AKB

**Sharp-tailed Grouse** reported 15 Dec Perkins (250) ND

**Northern Bobwhite** Only Report: 15 Dec Clay DS

**Common Loon** All Reports: 02 Dec Stanley RDO; 05 Dec Stanley RDO; 05 Dec Sully DB; **10 Dec Sully DB**

**Pied-billed Grebe** All Reports: 04 Dec Yankton JSP; 05 Dec Sully DB; 17 Dec Hughes KM; 18 Dec Hughes KM; 19 Dec Yankton RND

**Horned Grebe** reported 02 Dec Lyman MO; 05 Dec Hughes DB, KM; 05 Dec Sully DB; **10 Dec Hughes DB; 10 Dec Sully DB**

**Red-necked Grebe** All Reports: **05 Dec Hughes DB, KM; 05 Dec Sully DB**

**Eared Grebe** All Reports: 01 Dec Hughes BJU; 05 Dec Hughes KM; 08 Dec Hughes RDO; 12 Dec Hughes KM; **13 Dec Hughes RDO**

**Western Grebe** All Reports: 05 Dec Hughes KM; 05 Dec Sully DB; 10 Dec Hughes DB; 15 Dec Stanley DB

**American White Pelican** reported 06 Dec Lyman DB; 16 Dec Charles Mix RM; 19 Dec Yankton RND

**Double-crested Cormorant** reported 05 Dec Gregory RM; 05 Dec Yankton JLB; 14 Dec Charles Mix RM; 16 Dec Hughes DB

**Great Blue Heron** All Reports: 10 Dec Stanley KM; 17 Dec Yankton RND; 19 Dec Yankton RND; 13 Feb Lawrence EK; 26 Feb Lake JSP

**Ibis species** Only Report: **04 Dec Yankton BFH**

**Northern Harrier** reported 22 Dec Deuel BJU; 25 Dec Custer MMM; 25 Dec Stanley DB; 28 Dec Haakon MMM; 01 Jan Hughes RDO; 17 Jan Custer MMM; 12 Feb Potter DS, JSP; 16 Feb Lyman RDO; 19 Feb Brookings KCJ

**Cooper's Hawk** reported 23 Dec Meade EEM; 29 Dec Marshall BJU; 02 Jan Hughes KM; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 19 Jan Pennington MMM; 21 Jan Sully KM; 24 Jan Yankton RND; 25 Jan Brookings KCJ

**Northern Goshawk** reported 10 Dec Sully KM; 26 Dec Day WS; 29 Dec Brown BJU; 29 Dec Faulk MMM; 06 Feb Stanley RDO; 12 Feb Hughes KM; 13 Feb Brown GO

**Ferruginous Hawk** reported 27 Dec Stanley DB; 06 Jan Custer MMM; 09 Jan Meade CEM; 15 Jan Lawrence RSL; 23 Jan Hughes RDO; 05 Feb Lyman RDO; 05 Feb Stanley JLB, RSL; 05 Feb Tripp RDO

**Golden Eagle** reported 01 Dec Spink BJU; 15 Feb Grant BJU

**Merlin** reported 09 Dec Custer MMM; 29 Dec Brown BJU; 29 Dec Marshall BJU; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 29 Jan Pennington JLB; 29 Jan Stanley KM; 04 Feb Sully KM; 15 Feb Grant BJU

**Gyrfalcon** All Reports: 22 Dec Butte SW; 28 Dec Haakon MMM; 17 Jan Pennington MMM; 29 Jan Hughes RDO; 27 Feb Jones DB

**Prairie Falcon** reported 01 Dec Spink BJU; 21 Dec Brown GO; 29 Dec Marshall GO

**American Coot** reported 03 Jan Pennington JLB; 06 Jan Hughes RDO; 12 Jan Yankton RND; 16 Jan Pennington JLB; 05 Feb Hughes JLB; 11 Feb Yankton RND

**Killdeer** reported 02 Dec Lyman MO; 16 Dec Meade EEM; 19 Dec Yankton RND; 10 Jan Pennington MMM; 16 Jan Pennington JLB; 11 Feb Meade EEM

**Wilson's Snipe** All Reports: 16 Dec Meade EEM; 06 Jan Brule JFR; 10 Feb Meade EEM

**Black-legged Kittiwake** reported 06 Dec Lyman DB; 12 Dec Hughes DB; 19 Dec Stanley KM

**Bonaparte's Gull** reported 14 Dec Charles Mix RM; 28 Dec Stanley RDO; **30 Dec Hughes RDO**

**Franklin's Gull** Only Report: 24 Dec Charles Mix RM

**Mew Gull** Only Report: 05 Dec Charles Mix RDO

**Ring-billed Gull** reported 30 Dec Charles Mix RM; 08 Jan Hughes RDO; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 16 Jan Hughes RDO; 16 Jan Stanley RDO; 19 Feb Charles Mix RM

**California Gull** reported 21 Dec Charles Mix RM; 07 Jan Stanley KM; 14 Jan Hughes RDO; 19 Jan Hughes RDO; 23 Jan Stanley RDO

**Thayer's Gull** reported 05 Dec Charles Mix RSL, RDO; 14 Jan Hughes RDO; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 16 Jan Stanley RDO; 19 Jan Hughes RDO

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** reported 02 Dec Hughes DS, JSP; 19 Dec Charles Mix RM; 09 Jan Stanley RDO

**Glaucous Gull** reported 03 Jan Gregory RM; 14 Jan Hughes RDO; 15 Jan Stanley RDO; 16 Jan Stanley RDO; 19 Jan Hughes RDO

**Mourning Dove** All Reports: 19 Dec Yankton GJS; 26 Dec Hughes DB

**Barn Owl** Only Report: 15 Dec Haakon ND

**Eastern Screech-Owl** reported 18 Dec Brookings KCJ; 19 Dec Yankton RND; 13 Jan Hughes KM; 14 Jan Stanley KM

**Snowy Owl** All Reports: 01 Dec Hand BJU; 02 Jan Lincoln KCJ; 03 Feb Clay DS

**Barred Owl** All Reports: **13 Feb Brookings KCJ; 15 Feb Grant BJU**

**Long-eared Owl** reported 15 Dec Perkins ND; 29 Dec Brown BJU; 29 Dec Faulk MMM; 02 Jan Lincoln MRZ; 14 Jan Stanley KM; 13 Feb Brookings KCJ; 27 Feb Harding CEM

**Short-eared Owl** reported 06 Dec Hughes DB; 02 Jan Faulk MMM; 05 Jan Pennington MMM; 13 Jan Harding CEM; 22 Feb Shannon MMM

**Northern Saw-whet Owl** reported **18 Dec Brookings KCJ**; 18 Dec Marshall GO; 18 Dec Stanley RDO; 13 Jan Hughes KM; 28 Jan Sully KM; 29 Jan Hughes KM; 27 Feb Harding CEM

**Belted Kingfisher** reported 08 Jan Lake JSP; 08 Jan Stanley RDO; 13 Jan Meade EEM, RDO; 16 Jan Pennington JLB; 11 Feb Meade EEM; 19 Feb Lake JSP

**Lewis's Woodpecker** Only Report: 15 Jan Lawrence RSL

**Pileated Woodpecker** All Reports: 28 Jan Roberts MO; 15 Feb Grant BJU

**Gray Jay** Only Report: 21 Feb Pennington JF

**Pinyon Jay** All Reports: 31 Dec Meade AKB; 08 Jan Meade AKB; 13 Jan Meade RDO; 26 Feb Meade AKB

**Black-billed Magpie** reported 01 Dec Hand BJU; 01 Dec Hughes BJU; 19 Dec Lyman KM, RDO; 21 Jan Sully KM

**Pygmy Nuthatch** Only Report: 27 Dec Pennington JLB

**Canyon Wren** All Reports: 31 Dec Meade AKB; 08 Jan Meade AKB; 12 Jan Pennington MMM; 13 Jan Pennington MMM; 15 Feb Fall River MMM

**Winter Wren** reported 06 Jan Pennington JLB; 26 Jan Pennington JLB, RDO

**American Dipper** All Reports: 02 Jan Lawrence SW; 12 Jan Pennington MMM; 05 Feb Pennington MMM

**Eastern Bluebird** reported 14 Dec Yankton RND; 16 Dec Gregory RM; 13 Jan Charles Mix RM; 26 Jan Charles Mix RM; 11 Feb Yankton RND; 19 Feb Gregory RM

**Mountain Bluebird** All Reports: 18 Dec Perkins ND; 28 Dec Jackson (60) MMM

**Townsend's Solitaire** reported 27 Dec Brown GO; 29 Dec Brown BJU

**Bohemian Waxwing** reported 12 Dec Stanley RDO, KM; 29 Dec Brown BJU; 29 Dec Day GO; 29 Dec Marshall BJU; 01 Jan Harding CEM; 29 Jan Pennington RSL; 15 Feb Grant BJU; 22 Feb Meade EEM

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** reported 21 Dec Pennington MMM; 02 Jan Lincoln KCJ; 14 Jan Stanley KM

**Fox Sparrow** Only Report: 24 Jan Charles Mix RM

**Song Sparrow** reported 19 Dec Yankton DS; 30 Dec Hughes KM; 08 Jan Pennington MMM; 21 Jan Pennington MMM; 30 Jan Yankton RND

**Swamp Sparrow** Only Report: 19 Dec Yankton DS

**Harris's Sparrow** reported 02 Jan Lawrence JLB; 02 Jan Lincoln KCJ; 03 Jan Minnehaha MRZ; 15 Jan Stanley KM; 31 Jan Harding CEM

**Northern Cardinal** reported 20 Dec Pennington JLB

**Red-winged Blackbird** reported 01 Jan Brookings KCJ; 02 Jan Lawrence JLB; 02 Jan Stanley KM; 06 Jan Butte JLB; 22 Jan Harding CEM; 15 Feb Grant BJU; 16 Feb Lyman RDO; 16 Feb Stanley RDO

**Western Meadowlark** reported 02 Jan Lincoln KCJ; 04 Jan Yankton RND; 06 Jan Custer MMM; 13 Jan Charles Mix RM; 24 Jan Yankton RND; 25 Jan Shannon MMM; 16 Feb Lyman RDO

**Rusty Blackbird** reported 19 Dec Yankton RND; 02 Jan Butte JLB; 02 Jan Lawrence JLB; 08 Jan Lake JSP

**Common Grackle** reported 30 Dec Clay GJS; 04 Jan Yankton RND; 13 Jan Brookings KCJ; 30 Jan Brookings KCJ; 15 Feb Grant BJU

**Brown-headed Cowbird** Only Report: 18 Dec Brookings KCJ

**Gray-crowned Rosy Finch** Only Report: 21 Feb Harding EK

**Red Crossbill** reported 18 Dec Brookings KCJ; 15 Feb Grant BJU

**Common Redpoll** All Reports: 29 Dec Brown BJU; 29 Dec Marshall BJU; 01 Jan Brookings KCJ; 13 Jan Brookings KCJ; 23 Jan Brookings KCJ; 21 Feb Lake JSP

**Evening Grosbeak** All Reports: 31 Dec Meade AKB; 02 Jan Lawrence JLB; 27 Jan Pennington JLB; 03 Feb Pennington JLB

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

**Barrow's Goldeneye** 02-06 Dec Buffalo JSP, MO, RDO, KM, DB; 22 Dec Hughes RDO

**Ruddy Duck** 11 Feb Yankton RND

**Horned Grebe** 15 Dec Stanley DB

**Peregrine Falcon** 25 Dec Custer MMM; 25 Jan Shannon MMM

**Sabine's Gull** 02-06 Dec Lyman JSP, MO, RDO, DB

**Little Gull** 01-10 Dec Stanley and Hughes RDO, DS, JSP, KM

**Ross's Gull** 01-05 Dec Yankton DC, RM, BFH, TJ, DS, JSP, KM, RND, JLB, RDO, RSL, MRZ; 04-13 Dec Charles Mix and Gregory RM, KM

**Glaucous-winged Gull** 02-05 Dec Hughes and Stanley DS, JSP, RDO, KM

**Great Black-backed Gull** 04-06 Dec Buffalo KM, RDO, DB; 04 Dec Yankton BFH, TJ, DS, JSP, RND; 05-09 Jan Stanley RDO, KM

**Common Raven** 10 Feb Potter and Sully RDO

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** 10-29 Jan Pennington MMM, JLB, RSL, RDO

**Yellow-throated Warbler** 23-26 Jan Pennington JLB, RSL

**American Redstart** 16 Dec Yankton RND

**Smith's Longspur** 25 Jan Brookings KCJ

### **Species Expected But Not Reported**

Trumpeter Swan (2), Surf Scoter (5), White-winged Scoter (2), Greater Sage-Grouse, Virginia Rail (2), Sandhill Crane, Dunlin (2), Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, American Three-toed Woodpecker (2), Black-backed Woodpecker, Clark's Nutcracker (4), Carolina Wren (2), Marsh Wren (4), Hermit Thrush, Varied Thrush (2), Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher (4), Spotted Towhee, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird (2), Pine Grosbeak (2), White-winged Crossbill

### **Contributing Observers**

DB	Doug Backlund	CEM	Charlie Miller
JLB	Jocelyn L. Baker	EEM	Ernest E. Miller
APB	Addison & Patricia Ball	KM	Kenny Miller
AKB	Anna K. Ball	GO	Gary Olson
DC	Doug Chapman	RDO	Ricky D. Olson
RND	Roger N. Dietrich	MO	Mark Otmes
ND	Nancy Drilling	JSP	Jeffrey S. Palmer
JF	Jennifer Fowler	MS	Mark Schmidtbauer
JFR	Jack Freidel	GJS	Gary & Jan Small
BFH	Bill Huser	WS	Waubay NWR Staff
KCJ	Kent C. Jensen	DS	David Swanson
TJ	Todd Jensen	BU	Bill Unzen
EK	Elizabeth Krueger	BFW	Bridgette Flanders-Wanner
RSL	Richard S. Latuchie	SW	Scott Weins
RM	Ron Mabie	MRZ	Mick Zerr
MMM	Michael M. Melius		



# FLEDGLING TRACTS

TUCKER J. LUTTER

*BBA (Breeding Bird Atlas)*

**A** Lark Bunting carrying nesting materials, a Blue Grosbeak singing away loudly, a Killdeer performing a distraction display – these are all common sights and sounds that birders may see while out and about in South Dakota this summer. These things become all the more important as we see that the next to last summer for participating in South Dakota’s Second Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) approaches.



With Iowa’s Second Breeding Bird Atlas also currently underway, I have been busy trying to cover as many blocks as I can in my home state and have found it to be a very rewarding, but tiring, thing to do. I am sure there are many people out there reading this article that would rather stay inside during the heat of the summer, sitting in the air conditioning and sipping lemonade. If you are one of those people, look past the scorching heat and dusty gravel roads and you will see many neat sights and hear many neat sounds you never even knew about.

The current South Dakota Breeding Bird Atlas is a five year project, going from 2008-2012. The purpose of the atlas is to find out the status of breeding birds in the state, so that they may be properly protected in order to make sure they remain as a part of the environment and so that future generations may continue to observe and enjoy them. With one atlas already completed in the state, the current atlas project, when completed, will show how the status of breeding birds has changed: whether the species is declining, increasing, or has remained at the same population levels. As you can see, this information is crucial in protecting the birds we love, and it is important that everyone participates.

I know that the future of the birds we love is a good enough reason to do the BBA, but, as it is with pledge drives, it always helps to be given another “incentive” to give of your time and money. Imagine the inter-

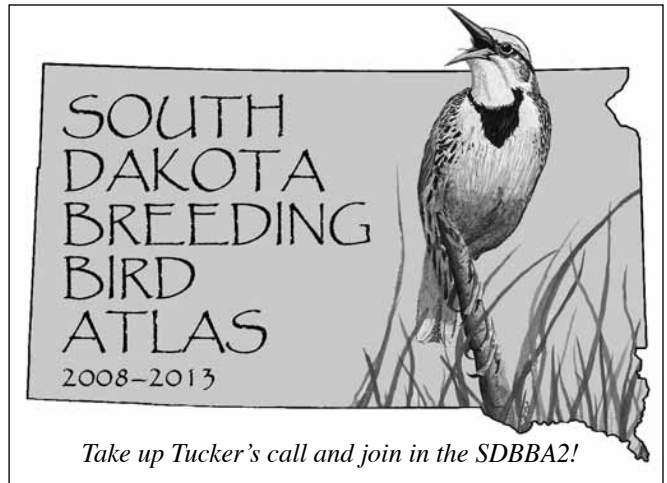
esting things you may see while you are out there observing the common birds. Have you ever seen a group of young Upland Sandpipers running along the road, a Gray Jay on its nest, or a Swainson's Hawk carrying food back to its fledglings? You could have a chance to if you participate in the BBA. Also, imagine the possibilities of finding something really unusual. Perhaps a nesting Pileated Woodpecker or McCown's Longspur? If these possibilities sound appealing to you, maybe you should get out and give it a try.

In addition, my own experience doing the Iowa BBA has helped me become a better birder. Many a birder stops observing the common birds at one point or another. With participation in the BBA, one's focus returns to the common birds and really makes a person take time to watch them. I have found that watching the common birds has helped me to easily know when I am looking at a more unusual one. Just recently I found a rare bird for Iowa, a Ruff (still pending acceptance as of this writing), while doing the BBA. Although I couldn't count it as a breeding bird, it illustrates nicely the point I am trying to make.

By extensively observing the common shorebirds over the past few years, when I saw the Ruff, I knew not only because of the plumage that it was different, but

also by its behavior. I just knew it was "different", because I knew how the common species behave. If you get out in the field and actively participate in the BBA you will find that it includes much observing of common birds, which may help you to identify a rare bird in the future.

My final word is: let's get out there and make this the best BBA ever – for the birds and for birding!



SD Breeding Bird Atlas Website: <http://www.rmbo.org/sdbba2/>

# EDITORIAL

## *South Dakota Bird Notes* Identification Quiz

For both a little enjoyment and to help hone a few identification skills at the same time, on the front cover you will find the second *South Dakota Bird Notes* bird identification quiz photo. The rules are simple. Any species used in a photo for the *SD Bird Notes* Quiz will:

- 1) Be a bird found in South Dakota, though the photo may have been taken elsewhere,
- 2) Include the date that the photo was taken, as well as the location,
- 3) Have at least one definitive, identifiable field mark present, though you may have to look closely.

The photo is also available to view at my Flickr Page: <<<<http://www.flickr.com/photos/8110372@N06/5771858053/in/set-72157626708669055/lightbox//>>>>.

The first person to correctly identify the species will receive a small gift. All correct identifications will be credited in the following issue of *SD Bird Notes* in the order they were received.

**This photo was taken on 20 June 2007 in central Harding County, SD.**

Please send your identifications to Douglas Chapman, SDOU *SD Bird Notes* Editor (address on page 30); or, preferably, by e-mail to: [sfbird-club@sio.midco.net](mailto:sfbird-club@sio.midco.net).

While the bird featured in the photograph may be difficult to identify, the photo will show at least one identifiable field mark on the bird. If a reader has a bird photograph suitable for the quiz (using the guidelines noted above), please submit it for a future quiz.

Thank you, good luck and let the detective work begin.



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