

VOL. 75 | NO. 2 | SUMMER 2023



South Dakota

Bird  Notes

South Dakota Ornithologists' Union

*Photo Credit: Lonnie Weise*

Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Mitchell, July 11, 2023

**SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES**, the official publication of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union, is sent to all members whose dues are paid for the current year. Life membership: \$400; Family Life membership (one subscription to SD Bird Notes): \$500; Sustaining membership: \$40; Regular membership: \$20; Family membership (one household; one subscription to SD Bird Notes): \$25; Junior/Student membership: \$10; Library Subscription: \$30. Single and back copies: Members, \$5; non-members, \$6. All dues, contributions, and orders for back copies should be sent to the SDOU Treasurer, 8504 East 38th Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57110

SDOU website: <[www.sdou.org](http://www.sdou.org)>

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**VOL. 75**

**SUMMER 2023**

**No. 2**

# SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

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## President's Page

Mark Schmidtbauer

When seeing a bird, one can wonder why this particular bird is in this type of habitat at this moment in time. By quickly looking at a range map in a field guide or on an app on your phone, you can deduce if the bird is in migration, breeding here, wintering here, a year-round resident or a rarity. This knowledge is valuable to the birder as it can help determine the identification of the bird.

But where do field guides get this information from? Are there field guide employees wandering around South Dakota documenting birds? Probably not. The traditional way to make accurate range maps and species lists for an area started with organizations like SDOU. At the SDOU convention of 1963, president L. J. Moriarty appointed a committee to put together an annotated checklist of South Dakota birds. Annotate means, "to add notes giving explanation or comment;" basically, they wanted to make a complete list of South Dakota birds with notes on range, habitat, nesting, etc. Until then, there had been all sorts of incomplete bird lists. Some early lists were made by explorers, soldiers, naturalists, and museum curators. Many later lists were regional and did not encompass the whole state. Other lists were outdated by containing extinct species and birds that no longer inhabited the state. Inaccuracies were common, especially with the limited knowledge of bird life at the time.



With many obvious errors in identification and different names for the same bird depending on who made the list, SDOU knew a task that had been looming for years was to make an annotated checklist of the birds of South Dakota. The immense undertaking to have an accurate account of all the birds of South Dakota can be best explained by president Moriarty in the Sept. 1963 issue of *South Dakota Bird Notes*. He stated: "New knowledge, accumulated since the date of the earlier publications, justifies the step." He goes on to say, "The kind of checklist that the Committee turns out will depend on the amount and quality of data sent in by the entire membership." President Moriarty appointed members to be on the checklist committee and it was then broken into divisions by their expertise that best reflected each member's bird identification skills and the geographic regions of the state where they lived. They used authentic nesting documentations, reliable sight records and accurate field trip reports submitted by SDOU members for some of their data. Their research also used bird specimens from universities and museums that were collected many years previously in South Dakota, with the locality and date of the specimen collected of the utmost importance. They physically examined some of the 287 specimens they found in the collections to verify that the identification was correct to ensure an accurate checklist. For the Black Hills region, they relied heavily on the work of Dr. N. R. Whitney (who was the committee chair) and O. S. Pettingill's book *Birds of the Black Hills*. Another point was taken to emphasize the changes brought about by the impoundment of the Missouri River, both in extending water bird habitat and in reducing the extent of bottomland forest available to migratory land birds.

The annotated checklist that they started in 1963 finally got published in 1978 after many years of long hard work. The checklist is better known as SDOU's book, *The Birds of South Dakota*, which has been updated with many revisions and new editions over the years. It is a book that is essential for everyone interested in South Dakota birds. Many similar bird research books from other bird organizations na-

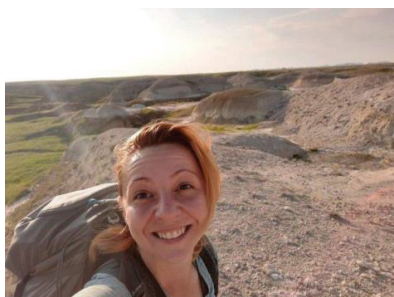
tionwide are used as resources by companies that make field guides. Our bird observations submitted to SDOU's observational report system continue to confirm or change a bird's range map depending on if a species is expanding or contracting its range. SDOU's Rare Bird Committee actively reviews, monitors, and confirms these observations as they are the "keepers" of the checklist of South Dakota birds. As climate change unfolds, it is important to document our bird sightings so updated range maps and migration routes can be made. eBird, by Cornell University, is one of the more modern ways in which range maps can be made. The maps are based on analytical results from eBird sightings, and with the new statistical modeling techniques, range maps are more accurate than ever.

Knowing what a bird is doing adds much more to bird study than just identifying it. Where it lives and where it might go is an important part of the bird's life and range maps can help tell its story. In the March 1970 issue of *South Dakota Bird Notes*, president J. M. Johnson is contemplating the future printing of the book and writes "With the new *Birds of South Dakota* in print, we can see at once if our observation fits, if the bird has any right to be where we see it."

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming Meetings: The 2024 Spring meeting will be in Custer, date TBD. Watch for upcoming announcements on the web site and in social media for more details.

INTRODUCING our newest *Bird Notes* team member!



Hello Everyone! As the new Assistant Editor for South Dakota Bird Notes, I'd like to briefly introduce myself. My name is Maggie Figura and I have been obsessed with birds for over 10 years now. As a kid, instead of tuning into a favorite cartoon every week I was always watching Animal Planet; I always knew when I grew up I wanted to be a wildlife biologist, except in 4<sup>th</sup> grade when I wanted to be a paleontologist. It took me forever to figure out exactly what within wildlife biology I wanted to focus my work on, and finally the answer hit me, BIRDS! And I have never looked back! Plus, with birds being modern dinosaurs, it's a bit like I fulfilled that 4<sup>th</sup> grade dream, too. I got my bachelor's degree at Montana State University in organismal

biology with a focus on ornithology and went on to South Dakota State University to get my master's in wildlife science and lead a study on *Evaluating avian use of cover crops in the Corn Belt*. This past year I had the wonderful adventure of working with the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies and conduct surveys all over the Northern Great Plains, and got to realize another dream of mine when someone called me "the bird lady". I am delighted to be joining you all in the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union and to begin working on Bird Notes, and I so look forward to getting to know you all as we come together to promote research and conservation of our state's birds!



## SDOU Spring Meeting in Marvin, South Dakota May 2023

Linda Johnson

For our spring meeting May 17-19 SDOU birders were treated to perfect weather, a peaceful setting at Abbey of the Hills near Marvin, South Dakota and great birds. Groups led by Todd Jensen, Cheryl Vellenga, and Barry Parkin birded Sica Hollow, the Abbey grasslands, creek and woodlands; La Bolt; Roy Lake; nearby property of Cheryl Vellenga; and Hartford Beach State Park. In total, 188 species were observed. Highlights included Pileated Woodpecker at its nest, Blue-headed Vireo, Blue Grosbeak, Sharp-tailed



Grouse, Ruddy Turnstone, Black-billed Cuckoo, Sandhill Crane, and multiple warblers (Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Black and White, Bay-breasted, Wilson's, Black-throated Green, Cape May, etc.) as well as expected species birders just enjoy—Eastern Bluebirds, Indigo Buntings, Western Meadowlarks, Eastern Kingbirds, and Bobolinks. The complete list of species follows the narrative.



*Birders gather outside the main Abbey for the spring meeting. Photo by Kelly Preheim*

Our Friday evening speaker was Tracy Rosenberg, 2022 Conservationist of the Year and recipient of several awards for grassland stewardship and range management. Tracy has an MFA degree, is a writer, educator, and land steward who is passionate about preserving and restoring native prairie. She presented her methods for restoring and reconstructing the 950-acre tract of tallgrass prairie which she owns on the Prairie Coteau near Marvin, South Dakota. Tracy purchased the land around the former Blue Cloud Abbey in 2013 and set out to reconstruct the grasslands using controlled burns, grazing, and invasive species removal. In the fall, she burns one-third of the grassland area. Invasive plants are removed by hand and tool, a labor-intensive process. She explained that she and her team have removed 6,000 red cedars, along with other invasive species. Her grazing method of managing the prairie is to host a 135-head herd of cattle. Tracy calls the cattle her “rock stars” for their ability to restore the grasses. She and her small team move the cattle every two or three days between 45 pastures fenced with polywire, which is removed in the fall. The result of these efforts is evident in the multiple species of wildflowers, native grasses, insects, butterflies and birds that abound.

The fruits of Tracy's labor were enjoyed by our SDOU birding groups who birded the woods, creek, and grasslands on her property. The restored habitat attracts grassland, wetland, and eastern deciduous woodland species of birds.

Tracy's vision is to not simply preserve the biotic community of tallgrass prairie but to share her discoveries: she hosts many groups of students and educators, in particular, Native American students. She also hosted the Grassland Coalition and our spring 2014 SDOU meeting.

Saturday evening's speaker was our own past president, Kelly Preheim, kindergarten teacher from Armour, South Dakota who received a 2020 National Geographic Grosvenor Teacher Fellow award, one of 50 educators in the US awarded that honor. As an award recipient, Kelly is expected to share her experiences and be an ambassador for nature. Kelly reported on her trip to the Galapagos Islands. On the five islands she visited, she saw 138 species of animals, including 35 species of birds. She shared slides of some of her favorites including Oystercatchers, Blue-footed Boobies, Magnificent Frigatebirds and Brown Pelicans. Kelly explained that many species arrived on the islands by getting off course. As a result, they have adapted to the absence of predators, and many of the creatures are unafraid of humans, a term called “ecological naïveté.” Other adaptations include a “skinnier” Galapagos Penguin, which has less need of fat than other penguin species and the Galapagos Cormorant, which is smaller than other cormorant species.

When she returned to her classroom, Kelly had to share particular lesson plans which promote and teach her students how to value nature and be aware of the importance and role of habitat. Kelly's style of teaching involves students in nature activities such as keeping nature journals and learning to identify bird

species. She frequently leads her students on bird outings, and also leads an after school bird club. This year her students have learned 239 species of birds.



*Looking for birds at Abbey of the Hills (left) and La Bolt Dam (right). Photos by Nancy Drilling*

SDOU owes grand thank you's to Cheryl Vellenga and Barry Parkin for an expertly coordinated and successful meeting.

Species observed during the spring meeting

- |                        |                           |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Canada Goose           | Common Nighthawk          | Common Tern               |
| Trumpeter Swan         | Chimney Swift             | Black Tern                |
| Wood Duck              | Ruby-throated Hummingbird | Forster's Tern            |
| Blue-winged Teal       | Virginia Rail             | Double-crested Cormorant  |
| Bufflehead             | Sora                      | American White Pelican    |
| Northern Shoveler      | American Coot             | American Bittern          |
| Gadwall                | Sandhill Crane            | Least Bittern             |
| American Wigeon        | Semipalmated Plover       | Great Blue Heron          |
| Mallard                | Killdeer                  | Great Egret               |
| Northern Pintail       | Upland Sandpiper          | Snowy Egret               |
| Canvasback             | Ruddy Turnstone           | Cattle Egret              |
| Redhead                | Stilt                     | Green Heron               |
| Ring-necked Duck       | Sanderling                | Black-crowned Night-heron |
| Lesser Scaup           | Dunlin                    | Turkey Vulture            |
| Hooded Merganser       | Least Sandpiper           | Osprey                    |
| Common Merganser       | Pectoral Sandpiper        | Bald Eagle                |
| Ruddy Duck             | White-rumped Sandpiper    | Northern Harrier          |
| Ring-necked Pheasant   | Semipalmated Sandpiper    | Cooper's Hawk             |
| Sharp-tailed grouse    | Short-billed Dowitcher    | Broad-winged Hawk         |
| Wild Turkey            | Wilson's Snipe            | Swainson's Hawk           |
| Pied-billed Grebe      | Spotted Sandpiper         | Red-tailed Hawk           |
| Horned Grebe           | Lesser Yellowlegs         | Eastern Screech-Owl       |
| Eared Grebe            | Willet                    | Belted Kingfisher         |
| Red-necked Grebe       | Wilson's Phalarope        | Red-headed Woodpecker     |
| Western Grebe          | Franklin's Gull           | Red-bellied woodpecker    |
| Rock Pigeon            | Ring-billed Gull          | Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  |
| Eurasian Collared-Dove | Herring Gull              | Downy Woodpecker          |
| Mourning Dove          | California Gull           | Hairy Woodpecker          |
| Black-billed Cuckoo    | Caspian Tern              | Northern Flicker          |

Pileated Woodpecker  
 American Kestrel  
 Olive-sided Flycatcher  
 Eastern Wood-pewee  
 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher  
 Traill's Flycatcher  
 Least Flycatcher  
 Willow Flycatcher  
 Eastern Phoebe  
 Great Crested Flycatcher  
 Western Kingbird  
 Eastern Kingbird  
 Loggerhead Shrike  
 Yellow-throated Vireo  
 Blue-headed Vireo  
 Philadelphia Vireo  
 Warbling Vireo  
 Red-eyed Vireo  
 Blue Jay  
 American Crow  
 Horned Lark  
 Purple Martin  
 Tree Swallow  
 N. Rough-winged Swallow  
 Bank Swallow  
 Cliff Swallow  
 Barn Swallow  
 Black-capped Chickadee  
 Red-breasted Nuthatch  
 White-breasted Nuthatch  
 House Wren  
 Winter Wren  
 Sedge Wren  
 Marsh Wren

Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
 Eastern Bluebird  
 Veery  
 Gray-cheeked Thrush  
 Swainson's Thrush  
 Wood Thrush  
 American Robin  
 Scarlet Tanager  
 Gray Catbird  
 Brown Thrasher  
 Northern Mockingbird  
 European Starling  
 Cedar Waxwing  
 House Sparrow  
 House Finch  
 American Goldfinch  
 Chestnut-collared Longspur  
 Spotted Towhee  
 Chipping Sparrow  
 Clay-colored Sparrow  
 Field Sparrow  
 Vesper Sparrow  
 Lark Sparrow  
 Savannah Sparrow  
 Grasshopper Sparrow  
 LeConte's Sparrow  
 Song Sparrow  
 Lincoln's Sparrow  
 Swamp Sparrow  
 White-throated Sparrow  
 White-Crowned Sparrow  
 Harris's Sparrow  
 Yellow-headed Blackbird  
 Bobolink

Western Meadowlark  
 Orchard Oriole  
 Baltimore Oriole  
 Red-winged Blackbird  
 Brown-headed Cowbird  
 Common Grackle  
 Ovenbird  
 Northern Waterthrush  
 Black and White Warbler  
 Tennessee Warbler  
 Orange-crowned Warbler  
 Nashville Warbler  
 Mourning Warbler  
 Common Yellowthroat  
 American Redstart  
 Cape May Warbler  
 Northern Parula  
 Magnolia Warbler  
 Bay-breasted Warbler  
 Blackburnian Warbler  
 Yellow Warbler  
 Chestnut-sided Warbler  
 Blackpoll Warbler  
 Palm Warbler  
 Yellow-rumped Warbler  
 Black-throated Green Warbler  
 Wilson's Warbler  
  
 Northern Cardinal  
 Blue Grosbeak  
 Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
 Indigo Bunting



## The Third Annual SDOU Collective Big Day – 13 May 2023

*David Swanson*

*Department of Biology, University of South Dakota*

SDOU initiated a collective Big Day on 15 May 2021 to take the place of the Spring 2021 SDOU meeting, which was canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The response to this event was positive, so the SDOU Board of Directors voted in Spring 2021 to make the SDOU Collective Big Day an annual event, loosely associated with Endangered Species Week and World Migratory Bird Day, which occur during the second or third week of May. SDOU hosted the second annual SDOU Big Day on 14 May 2022 and conducted the third, the results of which are reported herein, on 13 May 2023. The basic rules for the Collective Big Days are that every participating person or group keeps a list of all species observed (seen or heard) during the day, which they submit to the compiler, David Swanson of Vermillion. The lists also include all locations visited during the 24-hour period, but not separate bird lists for each location visited. Counts of individual bird species observed are also not recorded, only the species list. Participating

individuals or groups are allowed to bird any area within South Dakota, and most often, although not exclusively, participants have submitted lists from areas near their residences.

The 2021 SDOU Collective Big Day resulted in 26 lists submitted and 236 species observed (Swanson 2021 SDBN 73:25-26). For the second Collective Big Day in 2022, lists from 29 different individuals or groups produced a total species count of 230 species (Swanson 2022 SDBN 74:4-6). In 2023, I received lists from 21 participating individuals or groups, resulting in a total of 209 bird species observed (Table 1). Locations of observations ranged across the state from the Black Hills to northeastern and southeastern portions of the state, although I received few reports from the central portion of the state this year. Rain was prevalent throughout many parts of South Dakota on the Collective Big Day this year, which probably limited participation as well as bird species observed in 2023 relative to the first two years of the Collective Big Day.

Table 1. Species list for 2023 SDOU Collective Big Day

Snow Goose	Ruddy Turnstone	Great Horned Owl
Ross's Goose	Stilt Sandpiper	Burrowing Owl
Canada Goose	Dunlin	Belted Kingfisher
Wood Duck	Baird's Sandpiper	Red-headed Woodpecker
Blue-winged Teal	Least Sandpiper	Red-bellied Woodpecker
Northern Shoveler	White-rumped Sandpiper	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Gadwall	Pectoral Sandpiper	Red-naped Sapsucker
Mallard	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Downy Woodpecker
N. Pintail	Spotted Sandpiper	Hairy Woodpecker
Green-winged Teal	Solitary Sandpiper	Northern Flicker
Canvasback	Lesser Yellowlegs	Pileated Woodpecker
Redhead	Willet	American Kestrel
Ring-necked Duck	Greater Yellowlegs	Olive-sided Flycatcher
Lesser Scaup	Wilson's Phalarope	Eastern Wood-Pewee
Bufflehead	Franklin's Gull	Western Wood-Pewee
Hooded Merganser	Ring-billed Gull	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Common Merganser	California Gull	Alder Flycatcher
Ruddy Duck	Herring Gull	Willow Flycatcher
Ring-necked Pheasant	Least Tern	Least Flycatcher
Sharp-tailed Grouse	Caspian Tern	Western Flycatcher
Wild Turkey	Black Tern	Eastern Phoebe
Pied-billed Grebe	Forster's Tern	Say's Phoebe
Horned Grebe	Common Loon	Great Crested Flycatcher
Eared Grebe	Double-crested Cormorant	Eastern Kingbird
Western Grebe	American White Pelican	Loggerhead Shrike
Rock Pigeon	American Bittern	Bell's Vireo
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Great Blue Heron	Yellow-throated Vireo
Mourning Dove	Great Egret	Blue-headed Vireo
Common Nighthawk	Snowy Egret	Philadelphia Vireo
Chimney Swift	Cattle Egret	Warbling Vireo
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Green Heron	Red-eyed Vireo
Virginia Rail	White-faced Ibis	Blue Jay
Sora	Turkey Vulture	Clark's Nutcracker
American Coot	Osprey	Black-billed Magpie
American Avocet	Bald Eagle	American Crow
American Golden-Plover	Northern Harrier	Purple Martin
Piping Plover	Cooper's Hawk	Tree Swallow
Killdeer	Broad-winged Hawk	Violet-green Swallow
Upland Sandpiper	Red-tailed Hawk	N. Rough-winged Swallow
Long-billed Curlew	Eastern Screech-Owl	Bank Swallow



Cliff Swallow	Eastern Towhee	Black-and-White Warbler
Barn Swallow	Chipping Sparrow	Prothonotary Warbler
Black-capped Chickadee	Clay-colored Sparrow	Tennessee Warbler
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Field Sparrow	Orange-crowned Warbler
White-breasted Nuthatch	Vesper Sparrow	Nashville Warbler
Pygmy Nuthatch	Lark Sparrow	Mourning Warbler
Canyon Wren	Lark Bunting	Common Yellowthroat
House Wren	Savannah Sparrow	American Redstart
Marsh Wren	Grasshopper Sparrow	Cape May Warbler
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Song Sparrow	Northern Parula
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Lincoln's Sparrow	Magnolia Warbler
Eastern Bluebird	Swamp Sparrow	Bay-breasted Warbler
Mountain Bluebird	White-throated Sparrow	Blackburnian Warbler
Townsend's Solitaire	Harris's Sparrow	Yellow Warbler
Veery	White-crowned Sparrow	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Gray-cheeked Thrush	Dark-eyed Junco	Blackpoll Warbler
Swainson's Thrush	Yellow-headed Blackbird	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Hermit Thrush	Bobolink	Pine Warbler
Wood Thrush	Eastern Meadowlark	Yellow-rumped Warbler
American Robin	Western Meadowlark	Black-throated Green Warbler
Gray Catbird	Orchard Oriole	Wilson's Warbler
Brown Thrasher	Bullock's Oriole	Scarlet Tanager
European Starling	Baltimore Oriole	Western Tanager
Cedar Waxwing	Red-winged Blackbird	Northern Cardinal
House Sparrow	Brown-headed Cowbird	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
House Finch	Brewer's Blackbird	Black-headed Grosbeak
Red Crossbill	Common Grackle	Blue Grosbeak
Pine Siskin	Ovenbird	Indigo Bunting
American Goldfinch	Northern Waterthrush	Dickcissel
Spotted Towhee	Golden-winged Warbler	

A number of regular species for South Dakota for the middle of May were missed. As per usual, some of the western breeding species hadn't arrived yet by mid-May, which accounted for some of the missed species. I list below the bird species (70 total) that I consider to be regular migrants or breeding species (excluding species classified as rare) that were missed on the 2023 Collective Big Day (Table 2), perhaps providing areas or bird species to target for next year. The 2024 SDOU Collective Big Day is tentatively scheduled for 11 May 2024, along with World Migratory Bird Day.

Table 2. Regular migrants or breeding species not observed on the 2023 SDOU Collective Big Day.

Trumpeter Swan	Marbled Godwit	Barn Owl
American Wigeon	Sanderling	Barred Owl
Northern Bobwhite	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Long-eared Owl
Greater Sage-Grouse	Short-billed Dowitcher	Short-eared Owl
Greater Prairie-Chicken	Long-billed Dowitcher	Northern Saw-whet Owl
Gray Partridge	American Woodcock	Lewis's Woodpecker
Ruffed Grouse	Wilson's Snipe	Am. Three-toed Woodpecker
Red-necked Grebe	Red-necked Phalarope	Black-backed Woodpecker
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Bonaparte's Gull	Merlin
Black-billed Cuckoo	Common Tern	Peregrine Falcon
Common Poorwill	Least Bittern	Prairie Falcon
E. Whip-poor-will	Black-crowned Night-Heron	Dusky Flycatcher
White-throated Swift	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Western Kingbird
Black-bellied Plover	Swainson's Hawk	Plumbeous Vireo
Semipalmated Plover	Ferruginous Hawk	Canada Jay
Hudsonian Godwit	Golden Eagle	Pinyon Jay

Horned Lark  
Rock Wren  
Sedge Wren  
American Dipper  
Golden-crowned Kinglet  
Sage Thrasher  
Sprague's Pipit  
Evening Grosbeak  
Cassin's Finch  
Lesser Goldfinch  
Chestnut-collared Longspur

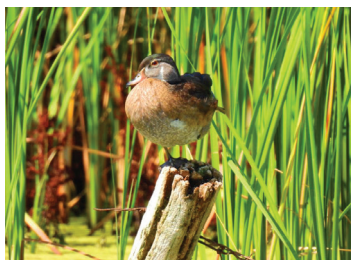
Brewer's Sparrow  
Baird's Sparrow  
LeConte's Sparrow  
Nelson's Sparrow  
Yellow-breasted Chat  
Great-tailed Grackle  
Blue-winged Warbler  
Virginia's Warbler  
MacGillivray's Warbler  
Canada Warbler  
Lazuli Bunting



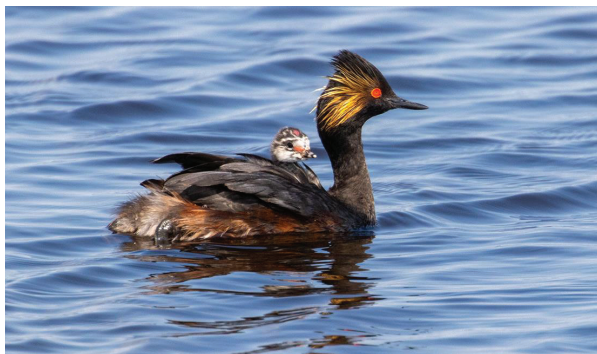
## Summer Season Bird Photos

*Compiled by Kelly Preheim*

In addition to our cover photos, the following are a selection of photos taken in South Dakota during summer 2023, with an emphasis on photos that document breeding. All photos reproduced with the permission of the photographers.



Wood Duck, Nine-mile Creek, Lincoln Co., 8-17-2023. Photo by Mick Zerr



Eared Grebe with chick, Walworth Co., 7-24-2023. Photo by Christian Begeman



Pectorial Sandpiper, Scott Lake, Minnehaha Co. Photo by Mick Zerr



Caspian Terns with chick, Gull Island, Lake Oahe. Photo by Ricky Olson



Common Gallinule and chick, east of Hecla, Brown Co., 7-14-2023. Photo by Theressa Hurley



Sandhill Crane with chicks, Grant Co., 6-11-2023, Photo by Christian Begeman



Mississippi Kite, Sioux Falls, 8-11-2023. Photo by Mick Zerr



Burrowing Owl brood, central South Dakota, 6-26-2023. Photo by Aileen Brunner





Barred Owl, Good Earth State Park, 7-19-2023. Photo by Steve Johnson



Loggerhead Shrike, Pennington-Meade Co. line, 7-27-2023. Photo by Mark O'Loughlen



Juvenile Red-headed Woodpecker, Minnehaha Co., 8-17-2023. Photo by Mick Zerr



Oriole juveniles, Minnehaha Co., 7-19-2023. Photo by Mick Zerr



Indigo Bunting, Bon Homme Co., 6-9-2023. Photo by Randy Hoeck



Lazuli Bunting, Custer State Park, 8-23-2023. Photo by Kelly Preheim



Western Meadowlark with food, Lincoln Co., 7-28-2023. Photo by Mick Zerr



## Recent Range Expansion of Eastern Meadowlark to Southeastern South Dakota

David Swanson  
*Department of Biology, University of South Dakota*

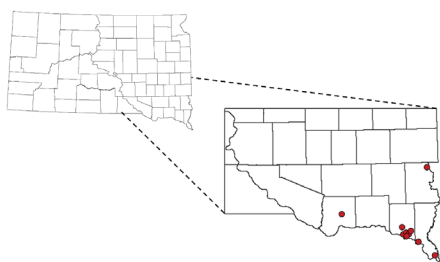
The breeding range of the Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*) extends across eastern North America from Maine through southern Ontario and the Great Lakes states west to extreme south-central South Dakota (southern portions of Todd, Bennett, and Oglala Lakota counties) and west-central Nebraska south to the Gulf Coast and eastern Mexico (Jaster *et al.* 2022). Within this range, it occupies native grasslands, but also pastures, savannas and other open areas with grass (Jaster *et al.* 2022). Eastern Meadowlark appears to prefer areas with substantial grass and litter cover and usually selects poorly drained lowland grasslands in areas of sympatry with Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) (Jaster *et al.* 2022), including a preference for wet lowland grasslands in South Dakota (Drilling *et al.* 2018).

Historically, although some records of Eastern Meadowlark in southeastern South Dakota exist, it is not confirmed as a breeding species there and has been decidedly rare. For example, Agersborg (1885) mentions that there were no records for Eastern Meadowlark in Union, Clay and Yankton counties, although Western Meadowlark was common. Visher (1915) and Stephens *et al.* (1955) also mention that Eastern Meadowlark records were not available in Clay and Union counties, respectively. Over and Thoms in *The Birds of South Dakota*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (1946) mention that they have “never knowingly seen a specimen” of Eastern Meadowlark in the state but note two specimens taken in southern Bennett Co. in May 1938. More recently, Whitney *et al.* (1978) list the species as fairly common at Lacreek NWR and in southern Bennett Co. and as present in summer in Clay Co., but without further details. SDOU (1991) lists Eastern Meadowlark as fairly common at Lacreek NWR, but a rare visitor elsewhere. Tallman *et al.* (2002) considered Eastern Meadowlark as uncommon in sandhill areas in extreme south-central South Dakota, but accidental in the southeast, listing only four spring, summer, or fall records prior to the first *South Dakota Breeding Bird Atlas* (SDBBA) from 1988-1993. Two records were listed for the southeast during the first SDBBA (Peterson 1995), both from Union County, with a “probably breeding” record from the

Union Grove State Park area, although three confirmed breeding records occurred in the sandhills area of south-central South Dakota. The second SDBBA (Drilling *et al.* 2018), from 2008-2012, listed two records for the southeastern part of the state, with one “probably breeding” record from Union County (Adams Homestead Nature Preserve) and one “possibly breeding” record from Yankton Co. Collectively, the picture emerging from these studies is that Eastern Meadowlark was only a rare visitor and not a regular breeding species in the southeastern part of the state. The purpose of this paper is to compile recent records of Eastern Meadowlark in the southeastern part of the state, particularly in Union and Clay counties, where this species has recently (since the second SDBBA) expanded its breeding range to become an uncommon, but regular, species throughout the summer.

## RECENT RECORDS

I extracted all Eastern Meadowlark records since the second SDBBA (beginning 1 January 2013) from the SDOU database (<https://research.dsu.edu/sdoubor/explore-sightings.aspx>) on 29 May 2023. From 2013 through 2016, only two records away from the established breeding population in south-central South Dakota are present in the database, one from 23-26 May from Roberts Co. (Cheryl Vellenga) and one from 15 May 2016 from Aurora Co. (Kelly Preheim). Starting in 2017, however, Eastern Meadowlark observations in the southeast (from Union and Clay cos.) began to proliferate. Many of these records have not been formally included in the SDOU database, but include my own personal observations and records gleaned from eBird data for rare birds listed on the SDOU web site. On 8 April 2017, on a University of South Dakota Ornithology class field trip, we heard and saw three singing Eastern Meadowlarks at the Adams Homestead Nature Preserve (hereafter Adams) in Union Co. (Swanson 2018), a location where multiple birds have been present every year since (personal observations, eBird records). I also heard and saw an additional singing bird at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers North Alabama Bend property (hereafter Alabama Bend) in Clay Co. in May and June of 2017 (pers. obs). Eastern Meadowlarks have been regularly observed at this location since 2017 as well (pers. obs., eBird records). In 2018, Eastern Meadowlark records came from these two locations, as well as from a small grassland at Bolton Game Production Area in Union Co. (pers. obs.). In 2019, records of Eastern Meadowlark occur from Adams and Alabama Bend (pers. obs., eBird records) and from a location along Saginaw Road in southern Clay Co. (Jan and Gary Small). In 2020, records exist from six locations in Clay Co., including Spirit Mound Historic Prairie (pers. obs., eBird records). Several locations in Union and Clay cos. produced records of Eastern Meadowlark in 2021 and 2022 (pers. obs., eBird records), and an additional record came from Bon Homme Co. in 2022 (Kelly Bauder). In 2023, a 29 May record, which is within the nesting season for South Dakota (Tallman *et al.* 2002), from Good Earth State Park in Lincoln Co. was reported to eBird (Peter Binstock). The Adams Homestead, North Alabama Bend and Spirit Mound sites have had multiple individual Eastern Meadowlarks vocalizing every summer since at least 2019, suggesting breeding at these locations (pers. obs., eBird records). In summary, from 2017-2023, Eastern Meadowlark records have occurred at several places in Clay and Union cos. and in 2022 and 2023, records have also occurred in Bon Homme and Lincoln cos. (Figure 1), suggesting that the range expansion into southeastern South Dakota is still in progress.



**Figure 1.** Records of Eastern Meadowlark from southeastern South Dakota from 2017-2023.



## REGIONAL RANGE EXPANSION IN A LARGER CONTEXT

How does this range expansion of Eastern Meadowlark into South Dakota fit with national and regional population trends for this species? Sauer et al. (2020) summarized *Breeding Bird Survey* trends for Eastern Meadowlark in North America and noted significant survey-wide population declines over both the 1966-2019 (2.56% decline per year) and the more recent 1993-2019 (2.99% decline per year) periods. The Prairie Pothole region, however, showed significant increases in Eastern Meadowlark populations over the 1993-2019 period at an average rate of a 5.51% increase per year (Sauer et al. 2020). For nearby states, Iowa is showing a significant recent increase in Eastern Meadowlark abundance at 1.44% per year, Nebraska is showing population stability, with no significant trend, and Minnesota is showing significant decreases at -2.22% and -2.03% for 1966-2019 and 1993-2019, respectively (Sauer et al. 2020). Similarly, Kansas populations of Eastern Meadowlarks are also showing population declines at an average rate of about -1.40% per year (Sauer et al. 2020). Consistent with these regional data, eBird observations of Eastern Meadowlark in northwest Iowa and southeast SD have also expanded greatly since 2010, and especially since 2017 (eBird 2023), although differences in observer effort may somewhat confound these eBird comparisons. These data suggest that the recent range expansion in southeastern South Dakota is part of a regional (Prairie Potholes, but especially in Iowa and South Dakota) increase in Eastern Meadowlark populations, despite continent-wide population declines. Defining the factors driving such population increases will require further research. Changes in temperature and precipitation associated with climate change, and their impacts on grassland birds (Baltensperger et al. 2020, Goljani Amirkhiz 2023), might be involved, but the precise relationships between local range changes in Eastern Meadowlark and climate or land use change remain to be determined.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Jeff Palmer for constructive comments on an earlier version of this manuscript. Thanks, also, must go to SDOU members and other birders for reporting observations that made this analysis possible.

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## Annotated list of recent research publications on South Dakota non-game waterbirds

*Compiled by Nancy Drilling*

In this article, we highlight recent scientific publications that used, at least in part, data collected on non-game waterbirds in South Dakota. Follow the links to access the original publication or type the name of the article into a search engine such as Google Scholar. Note that some publications are free to download while for others, you must pay for access to the full article.

### **Impacts of extreme environmental disturbances on piping plover survival are partially moderated by migratory connectivity**

Kristen S. Ellis, Michael J. Anteau, Francesca J. Cuthbert, Cheri L. Gratto-Trevor, Joel G. Jorgensen, David J. Newstead, Larkin Powell, Megan M. Ring, Mark H. Sherfy, Rose J. Swift, Dustin L. Toy, and David N. Koons. *Biological Conservation* 264 (2021): 109361

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ncfwrustaff/308/>

This study used 17 years of sightings of banded Piping Plovers to determine plover survival during extreme environmental events on the wintering grounds and mid-continent plover migratory pathways. The researchers found that winter hurricanes and harmful algal blooms, but not oil spills, were negatively correlated with winter survival. They also found that individuals from breeding areas across the Midwest intermingle at wintering sites, i.e., have low migratory connectivity. This mixing ensures that an extreme event, such as a hurricane, has less of an impact on any one breeding population.

### **Irruptions: evidence for breeding season habitat limitation in Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)**

Samantha G. Robinson, James Fraser, Daniel Catlin, Sarah M. Karpanty, Jon Altman, Ruth Boettcher, Kevin Holcomb, Coral Huber, Kelsi Hunt, and Alexandra Wilke. *Avian Conservation and Ecology* 14(2019):19.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/usarmycomaha/177/>

Using data from the Missouri River below Gavins Point Dam, as well as coastal populations, the authors tested the hypothesis that the imperiled Piping Plover is limited by lack of available breeding habitat. They estimated the amount of habitat available before and after four significant hurricane and flooding events and then evaluated population changes after the resulting habitat alterations. The 2010-2011 floods on the Missouri River increased the amount of bare sand nesting habitat from 119 ha in 2009 to 1251 ha in 2014. The number of nesting plover pairs increased from 119 pairs in 2009 to 285 pairs in

2016; pair density decreased from 1 pair/ha to 0.095 pair/ha in 2009 and 2014 respectively, and number of chicks produced per pair increased to above the level needed to sustain a stable population. They found similar results on the U.S. East Coast. They state that their results support the hypothesis that these plover populations are habitat limited and conclude that if managers were “to create and improve nesting habitat, plover populations would likely reach higher average numbers and the potential for achieving recovery goals would be increased.”

### **Asymmetric benefits of a heterospecific breeding association vary with habitat, conspecific abundance and breeding stage**

Rose J. Swift, Michael J. Anteau, Erin A. Roche, Mark H. Sherfy, Dustin L. Toy, and Megan M. Ring. *Oikos* 129 (2020): 1504–1520

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/usgsnpwrc/429/>

This analysis examined what benefits individuals may gain by nesting in mixed Least Tern – Piping Plover breeding colonies (heterospecific breeding association) on the Missouri River. Least Terns actively attack potential predators while Piping Plovers do not. The authors used nine years of breeding data on two sites in North Dakota and below Gavins Point Dam in South Dakota. Overall, Piping Plover nest and chick survival improved with the presence and abundance of Least Terns. At Gavins Point, Least Tern chicks survived better when other Least Terns nested in the colony. The authors state that the results suggest that management focused on one species may restrict benefits to that species if nest site requirements for other species are not also included.

### **Conspecific density and habitat quality affect breeding habitat selection: Support for the social attraction hypothesis**

Rose J. Swift, Michael J. Anteau, Kristen S. Ellis, Megan M. Ring, Mark H. Sherfy, and Dustin L. Toy. *Ecosphere* 14, no. 5 (2023): e4524

<https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ecs2.4524>

Bird species can use a variety of cues to select an area in which to breed. These cues fall into three categories: habitat quality, amount of suitable habitat in the area, and presence of other birds of their species. In this study, the authors explored the cues that Piping Plovers (*Charadrius melodus*) use to select breeding areas along the Missouri River in North and South Dakota. Between 2014 and 2019, researchers recorded 2034 uniquely marked adults breeding at 326 breeding locations along Lake Sakakawea, the Garrison Reach, and Lake Oahe. They found that plovers selected habitats with intermediate levels of plover density, suggesting that they are using social cues to select breeding sites. In addition, they selected habitats of high quality, as defined by plover and Least Tern nest survival. The amount of available habitat did not affect habitat selection. These patterns were the same, whether the plover was returning to its previous breeding area or immigrating from another area. The results, according to the authors, have implications for the conservation of this endangered species.

### **Diurnal habitat selection of migrating Whooping Crane in the Great Plains**

Patrick D. Farrell, Aaron T. Pearse, David A. Brandt, Andrew J. Caven, Mary J. Harner, Greg D. Wright, and Kristine L. Metzger. *Avian Conservation and Ecology* 14.1(2019): article 6

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/usgsnpwrc/407/>

This study used locations from 42 radio-tagged Whooping Cranes to assess daytime habitat selection during migration. The authors found that migrating cranes select wetlands and lowland grasslands for their daytime activities and avoid roads. The next step, according to the authors, is to focus on specific wetland complexes and rivers for targeted management actions.

### **The relative importance of wetland area versus habitat heterogeneity for promoting species richness and abundance of wetland birds**

Lisa H. Elliott, Larry D. Igl, and Douglas H. Johnson. *The Condor* 122: 1–21 (2020).

<https://academic.oup.com/condor/article/122/1/duz060/5678805>

During 1995 – 1997, 1,097 wetlands were surveyed for 38 wetland-dependent bird species in the Prairie

Pothole region of North and South Dakota. Using the database of results, the authors examined whether there is a relationship between number of wetland bird species (species richness) and area versus habitat diversity (heterogeneity) of the wetland. In theory, a larger wetland should have more species, and up to a point, a wetland with more habitat heterogeneity should have more species. The researchers found that the primary driver of species richness and abundance was wetland size, with larger wetlands having more species and more individuals. However, habitat diversity within wetlands was also a contributing factor. In addition, wetland bird species richness and abundance differed among wetlands depending on ownership, restoration status, and wetland type. However, all wetlands supported wetland-dependent bird species and protection of all types contributes to species conservation. The authors conclude that their results “support conventional wisdom that protection of large wetlands is a priority but also indicate that maintaining habitat heterogeneity will enhance biodiversity and support higher populations of individual species.”



## The 2022-2023 Winter Season 01 December 2022 to 28 February 2023

*Compiled By: Chris Anderson*

There were 122 species, including 1 rarity (Brant), reported during the 2022-2023 winter season. The ten-year (2013-2022) average is 141. In the following report, I have not included all reported species but have tried to highlight the distribution of expected winter-only species, unusual early/late dates, species that are out of range, and new county records (found in bold). If there were 8 or fewer reports of a species, all reports are included. Otherwise, the number of reports and counties are listed to show the prevalence of reports of that species across the state. In some cases, if a particular bird or group of birds were observed in the same county repeatedly during the season, those dates and observations have been summarized to represent the length of stay. At the end is a list of 36 species that were not reported this season but might be expected during the Winter Season. A species is placed on the not-reported 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 that the species has appeared on the list during the previous 5 winters. Having not been reported in the last 5 winters, Blue-winged Teal has been removed from this list.

**Snow Goose** 16 reports across 9 counties (Brookings, Brown, Buffalo, Charles Mix, Clay, Douglas, Hamlin, Stanley, Yankton) 01 Dec – 28 Feb

**Ross's Goose** All Reports: 07 Dec Minnehaha CA; 08 Dec Buffalo RDO; 14 Feb Hughes KM; 17 Feb Stanley RDO

**Greater White-fronted Goose** All Reports: 04 Dec Charles Mix KP; 08 Dec Buffalo RDO; 23 Jan Pennington CLG; 08 Feb Yankton RND; 28 Feb Clay GJS

**Cackling Goose** 28 reports across 8 counties (Brown, Buffalo, Charles Mix, Hughes, Minnehaha, Pennington, Stanley, Yankton) 02 Dec – 28 Feb

**Trumpeter Swan** All Reports: 19 Dec Minnehaha CA; 08 Jan Lyman RDO; 11-19 Feb Yankton CA, RND, DS

**Tundra Swan** Only Report: 16 Dec Yankton RND

**Wood Duck** All Reports: 30 Dec Brown GO; 19 Jan Brown GO; 01 Feb Brown GO; 19 Feb Hughes CA; 20 Feb Hughes JSP; 28 Feb Hughes RDO

**Northern Shoveler** All Reports: 26 Dec Pennington CLG; 18 Feb Hughes JSP; 19 Feb Hughes CA; 20 Feb Hughes Km, RDO; 28 Feb Hughes RDO

**Gadwall** 25 reports across 5 counties (Charles Mix, Hughes, Pennington, Stanley, Yankton) 04 Dec – 27 Feb



**American Wigeon** 14 reports across 3 counties (Pennington, Stanley, Yankton) 04 Dec – 27 Feb

**Northern Pintail** 17 reports across 5 counties (Charles Mix, Hughes, Pennington, Stanley, Yankton) 04 Dec – 28 Feb

**Green-winged Teal** 13 reports across 4 counties (Minnehaha, Pennington, Stanley, Yankton) 05 Dec – 17 Feb

**Canvasback** 13 reports across 3 counties (Hughes, Pennington, Yankton) 04 Dec – 27 Feb

**Redhead** 39 reports across 7 counties (Buffalo, Charles Mix, Hughes, Lyman, Pennington, Stanley, Yankton) 02 Dec – 28 Feb

**Ring-necked Duck** 26 reports across 3 counties (Hughes, Pennington, Yankton) 05 Dec – 28 Feb

**Greater Scaup** 19 Reports across 4 counties (Hughes, Lyman, Stanley, Yankton) 09 Dec – 28 Feb

**Lesser Scaup** 14 reports across 4 counties (Brown, Hughes, Lyman, Yankton) 02 Dec – 19 Feb

**Long-tailed Duck** 8 reports across 2 counties (Charles Mix, Yankton) 03 Dec – 18 Feb

**Bufflehead** 37 reports across 7 counties (Charles Mix, Gregory, Hughes, Minnehaha, Pennington, Stanley, Yankton) 04 Dec - 27 Feb

**Common Goldeneye** 92 reports across 9 counties (Brown, Charles Mix, Gregory, Hughes, Lyman, Minnehaha, Pennington, Stanley, Yankton) 04 Dec – 28 Feb

**Barrow's Goldeneye** Only Report: 10 Jan Lyman RDO

**Hooded Merganser** 34 reports across 8 counties (Brown, Buffalo, Charles Mix, Hughes, Lyman, Pennington, Stanley, Yankton) 04 Dec – 21 Feb

**Common Merganser** 74 reports across 7 counties (Bufalo, Charles Mix, Hughes, Lyman, Pennington, Stanley, Sully, Yankton) 04 Dec – 28 Feb

**Red-breasted Merganser** 16 reports across 5 counties (Charles Mix, Gregory, Hughes, Stanley, Yankton) 03 Dec – 19 Feb

**Ruddy Duck** Only Report: 03 Dec Yankton DS

**Gray Partridge** Only Report: 16 Dec Custer MMM

**Horned Grebe** Only Report: 03 Dec Yankton DS

**Western Grebe** All Reports: 05 Dec Hughes KM; 11 Dec Stanley RDO; 14-18 Dec Hughes KM

**Mourning Dove** All Reports: 02 Dec Clay GJS; 02 Dec Hughes KM; 04 Dec Yankton CV; 29 Dec Clay GJS; 31 Dec Lincoln CA; 01 Jan Minnehaha CA

**Virginia Rail** Only Report: 29 Dec Lawrence EK

**American Coot** 41 reports across 6 counties (Brown, Hughes, Minnehaha, Pennington, Stanley, Yankton) 01 Dec - 27 Feb

**Killdeer** Only Report: 02 Dec Minnehaha CA

**Wilson's Snipe** All Reports: 18 Dec Yankton CA; 20 Feb Pennington CLG

**Bonaparte's Gull** All Reports: 06-14 Dec Stanley KM, RDO

**Franklin's Gull** Only Report: 06 Jan Hughes KM

**Short-billed Gull** All Reports: 05-14 Dec KM, RDO

**Ring-billed Gull** 15 reports across 3 counties (Hughes, Stanley, Yankton) 02 Dec – 19 Feb

**California Gull** 9 reports across 2 counties (Hughes, Stanley) 07 Jan - 25 Feb

**Herring Gull** 37 reports across 4 counties (Hughes, Minnehaha, Stanley, Yankton) 02 Dec – 28 Feb

**Iceland Gull** 14 reports across 2 counties (Hughes, Stanley) 07 Dec – 25 Feb

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** All Reports: 06 Dec Stanley RDO; 11 Dec Hughes RDO; 25 Dec Stanley RDO

**Glaucous Gull** All Reports: 24 Feb Hughes KM, RDO; 25 Feb Hughes KM; 25 Feb Stanley RDO

**Double-crested Cormorant** All Reports: 10 Dec Yankton RND; 12 Dec Yankton DS

**Great Blue Heron** 12 reports across 3 counties (Hughes, Pennington, Yankton) 05 Dec – 17 Feb

**Golden Eagle** 31 reports across 9 counties (Haakon, Hughes, Jackson, Jerauld, Lawrence, Lyman, Pennington, Stanley, Sully) 09 Dec – 19 Feb

**Northern Harrier** 8 reports across 5 counties (Charles Mix, Gregory, Kingsbury, Lincoln, Lyman) 04 Dec - 20 Feb

**Sharp-shinned Hawk** 38 reports across 11 counties (Brown, Charles Mix, Clay, Douglas, Gregory, Hughes, Lawrence, Lyman, Roberts, Stanley, Union) 05 Dec - 28 Feb

**Cooper's Hawk** 19 reports across 7 counties (Brown, Charles Mix, Clay, Hughes, Minnehaha, Pennington, Stanley) 09 Dec – 26 Feb

**Northern Goshawk** All Reports: 20 Dec Hughes KM; 24 Dec Hughes KM; 17 Jan Hughes KM; 21 Jan Sully RDO

**Rough-legged Hawk** 37 reports across 15 counties (Aurora, Brown, Charles Mix, Douglas, Gregory, Haakon, Hutchinson, Lawrence, Lincoln, Lyman, Minnehaha, Pennington, Stanley, Sully, Tripp) 08 Dec – 19 Feb

**Ferruginous Hawk** 20 reports across 12 counties (Aurora, Buffalo, Charles Mix, Hughes, Hutchinson, Jackson, Lyman, Pennington, Stanley, Sully, Todd, Tripp) 01 Dec – 20 Feb

**Eastern Screech-Owl** 9 reports across 6 counties (Hughes, Lincoln, Minnehaha, Roberts, Stanley, Yankton) 18 Dec – 16 Feb

**Snowy Owl** Only Report: 06 Jan Lyman RDO

**Long-eared Owl** All Reports: 18 Dec Yankton CA; 12 Jan Sully KM; 12 Feb Sully KM; 17 Feb Hughes KM; 27 Feb Stanley KM

**Short-eared Owl** All Reports: 17 Dec Pennington MMM; 06 Jan Lyman RDO; 19 Feb Pennington CA

**Northern Saw-whet Owl** 12 reports across 5 counties (Hughes, Lincoln, Meade, Stanley, Yankton) 01 Dec - 17 Feb

**Belted Kingfisher** 10 reports across 2 counties (Pennington, Yankton) 05 Dec – 27 Feb

**Red-headed Woodpecker** Only Report: 31 Dec Lincoln CA

**Merlin** 12 reports across 9 counties (Brookings, Buffalo, Charles Mix, Gregory, Hughes, Hutchinson, Lyman, Stanley, Yankton) 09 Dec – 19 Feb

**Prairie Falcon** 11 reports across 7 counties (Buffalo, Haakon, Hughes, Jackson, Lyman, Meade, Stanley) 13 Dec – 18 Feb

**Northern Shrike** 32 reports across 14 counties (Brown, Butte, Charles Mix, Clay, Douglas, Gregory, Haakon, Hughes, Lawrence, Lyman, Minnehaha, Pennington, Roberts, Stanley) 04 Dec – 22 Feb

**Pinyon Jay** All Reports: 01 Feb Butte KM, RDO

**Black-billed Magpie** 15 reports across 11 counties (Butte, Haakon, Hughes, Jackson, Lawrence, Meade, Oglala Lakota, Pennington, Stanley, Sully, Todd) 03 Dec -28 Feb

**Golden-crowned Kinglet** All Reports: 01 Dec Stanley KM; 02 Dec Hughes KM; 11 Dec Stanley KM; 18 Dec Yankton CA

**Red-breasted Nuthatch** 86 reports across 13 counties (Brookings, Brown, Clay, Douglas, Hughes, Lake, Lawrence, Minnehaha, Pennington, Roberts, Stanley, Tripp, Yankton) 01 Dec – 27 Feb

**Pygmy Nuthatch** 6 reports from 1 county (Pennington) 05 Dec – 13 Feb

**Brown Creeper** 20 reports across 7 counties (Brown, Clay, Hughes, Lincoln, Minnehaha, Pennington, Roberts) 05 Dec – 20 Feb

**Brown Thrasher** Only Report: 03 Jan Hughes KM

**Northern Mockingbird** Only Report: 09 Dec Lyman RDO

**Eastern Bluebird** 8 reports across 5 counties (Charles Mix, Gregory, Hughes, Stanley, Yankton) 04-18 Feb

**Mountain Bluebird** Only Report: 18 Feb Jackson CA

**Townsend's Solitaire** 45 reports across 8 counties (Gregory, Haakon, Hughes, Jackson, Lawrence, Pennington, Stanley, Sully) 01 Dec – 27 Feb

**Hermit Thrush** All Reports: 06 Dec Stanley KM; 11 Dec Stanley KM

**Varied Thrush** All Reports: 05-19 Dec Stanley KM

**Bohemian Waxwing** All Reports: 02 Dec Pennington ND; 04 Dec – 03 Jan Hughes KM;

**Evening Grosbeak** Only Report: 18 Dec Lawrence VDF

**Purple Finch** 46 reports across 9 counties (Brookings, Douglas, Hughes, Lincoln, Minnehaha, Roberts, Stanley, Union) 01 Dec – 27 Feb

**Lapland Longspur** All Reports: 19 Dec Stanley RDO; 31 Dec Lincoln CA; 04 Jan Jackson ND; 30 Jan Jones KM

**Snow Bunting** 25 reports across 15 counties (Brookings, Gregory, Hughes, Hutchinson, Jackson, Jones, Kingsbury, Lincoln, Lyman, Meade, Minnehaha, Roberts, Stanley, **Todd (first county record)**, Union) 17 Dec – 13 Feb

**American Tree Sparrow** 71 reports across 16 counties (6 East River, 2 West River, 8 Missouri River corridor) 01 Dec – 28 Feb

**Fox Sparrow** 8 reports across 2 counties (Minnehaha, Hughes) 17 Dec – 21 Feb

**Dark-eyed Junco** 186 reports across 19 counties (6 East River, 5 West River, 8 Missouri River corridor) 01 Dec – 28 Feb

**Song Sparrow** Only Report: 18 Dec Yankton CA

**Swamp Sparrow** Only Report: 18 Dec Yankton CA

**Harris's Sparrow** 18 reports across 6 counties (Clay, Hughes, Lincoln, Minnehaha, Stanley, Yankton) 09 Dec – 13 Jan

**White-crowned Sparrow** 10 reports across 3 counties (Clay, Douglas, Stanley) 16 Dec – 12 Feb

**White-throated Sparrow** Only Report: 12 Dec Hughes KM

**Spotted Towhee** 12 reports from 1 county (Hughes) 09 Dec – 13 Feb

**Western Meadowlark** 12 reports across 8 counties (Charles Mix, Clay, Douglas, Hutchinson, Lincoln, Lyman, Stanley, Tripp) 01 Dec – 17 Feb

**Red-winged Blackbird** 23 reports across 8 counties (Charles Mix, Clay, Hughes, Lyman, Minnehaha, Roberts, Stanley, Tripp) 01 Dec – 28 Feb

**Brewer's Blackbird** All Reports: 12 Dec Brown GO; 16 Dec Brown GO

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** 11 reports across 4 counties (Hughes, Lincoln, Stanley, Union) 04-20 Dec

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

**Brant** reported 08 Dec Buffalo RDO; 09 Dec Lyman RDO

### Species Expected But Not Reported

White-winged Scoter (2), Black Scoter (2), Northern Bobwhite (2), Pied-billed Grebe (2), Black-legged Kittiwake (3), Great Black-backed Gull, Common Loon, American White Pelican, Barred Owl, Barn Owl (4), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (2), American Three-toed Woodpecker, Black-backed Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker (2), Gyrfalcon, Peregrine Falcon (2), Canada Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Canyon Wren, Winter Wren (2), Marsh Wren, Carolina Wren (2), American Dipper, Gray Catbird (3), Pine Grosbeak (3), Gray-crowned Rosy Finch (2), Cassin's Finch (2), Common Redpoll, Red

Crossbill, White-winged Crossbill, Pine Siskin, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle

**Contributing Observers**

CA	Chris Anderson
CLG	Canyon Lake Group
RND	Roger N. Dietrich
ND	Nancy Drilling
VDF	Vic & Donna Fondy
EK	Elizabeth Krueger
MMM	Michael M. Melius
KM	Kenny Miller
GO	Gary Olson
RDO	Ricky D. Olson
JSP	Jeffrey S. Palmer
KP	Kelly M. Preheim
GJS	Gary & Jan Small
JSS	Jackie Stucky-Strom
DS	David Swanson
CV	Cheryl Vellenga







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**Western Kingbird brood**  
*Photo Credit: Kelly Preheim*