

THE SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION SINCE 1949

L. M. Baylor

1941 Red Dale Drive, Rapid City, SD 57702

Initially presented on 30 May 1997, at the 29th Annual Dakota History Conference, Augustana College Sioux Falls, SD, this paper appears in the conference's proceedings, published by the Center for Western Studies. The Center has graciously permitted reprinting the article in *Bird Notes* as appropriate to marking the onset of SDOU's 50th year in 1998.

The South Dakota Ornithologists' Union's existence officially dates from 15 January 1949, when several individuals interested in promoting the study of wild birds met at the Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce. They created the organization with its stated purpose: "To encourage the study of birds in South Dakota and to promote the study of birds by more closely uniting the students of this branch of natural science." The matters of organization involved adopting a name, constitution and bylaws; setting annual dues; electing officers; establishing a quarterly journal, named *South Dakota Bird Notes*; and collecting dues from the founding members.

A year later, at SDOU's first annual meeting, 16 January 1950, the final technical phase of organization occurred as the group voted to incorporate as a nonprofit organization in the State of South Dakota. This action was expedited promptly, for the certificate of incorporation carries the date 27 January 1950.

Regular meetings have contributed to fulfilling SDOU's goal of uniting individuals interested in birds and promoting the study of ornithology in South Dakota. A decision at the January 1950 meeting set late spring for subsequent meetings. At these meetings, on Saturdays, members conducted the Union's necessary business, heard presentations about bird studies in the state, and devoted about a half day to local field trips. In the evening, after a banquet, members heard a special guest speaking on an ornithological topic. Additional field trips followed on Sunday until about noon.

At the meeting in Watertown, 20 May 1961, members responded to the difficulty of trying to accomplish so much during a weekend. They chose to have semiannual meetings with the spring meetings devoted to field trips and fall meetings focusing on presentation of technical or semitechnical papers and on conducting the business of SDOU. This pattern has continued since 1962, with both meetings retaining the tradition of a Saturday evening banquet and guest speaker. Typically, before a weekend meeting, members gather on Friday evening for fellowship, announcements from the host committee, and entertainment related to their interest in birds.

Appendix A presents the locations of all meetings to date. These places have ranged widely from major South Dakota cities, especially those with institutions of higher education, to smaller communities such as Webster, Highmore, Wall, Sisseton, Martin, Bison, Hot Springs, Custer, Waubay, Mobridge, Faulkton, and Kadoka. In addition to knowledge shared through paper sessions and fellowship associated with a common interest, the field trips at diverse locations have advanced information about wild birds in varied habitats throughout the state.

Publication has been a major contributor to SDOU's achieving the goal of encouraging the study of ornithology within South Dakota. The Union's various publications preserve the records attained through systematic field observations or laboratory investigations.

South Dakota Bird Notes is the organization's quarterly journal, published continually since July 1949. The four issues in 1997 constitute volume 49. A typical issue features a "President's Page," with commentary on an ornithological topic or a matter of concern about the Union's affairs; one or more technical or semitechnical articles; quarterly seasonal reports about birds in the state; general notes involving short reports about exceptional avian observations; book reviews; and miscellaneous announcements.

For many years the cover page of *Bird Notes* featured black and white photographs or drawings of birds, habitat scenes, or occasional portraits of prominent members. Then, starting in the early 1990's, the cover page was enhanced by color photographs of birds.

Prior to 1978, the reference book for birds in the state was *Birds of South Dakota*, rev. ed., 1946, by William H. Over and Craig S. Thoms. In 1978, the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union published *The Birds of South Dakota*, an annotated checklist compiled by Nathaniel R. Whitney, Jr., Byron E. Harrell, Bruce K. Harris, Nelda Holden, James W. Johnson, B. J. Rose, and Paul F. Springer. Next came the revised edition of *The Birds of South Dakota* in 1991, compiled by Jocelyn Baker, Gilbert Blankespoor, Byron Harrell, Bruce Harris, Nelda Holden, Paul Springer, Dan Tallman, and Nathaniel R. Whitney, Jr. Rather than single out one author, the committee cited the book as being written by the SDOU. The cover of this edition features H. Wayne Trimm's rendition of a Lark Bunting, the Union's official emblem.

SDOU's most recent special publication is *The South Dakota Breeding Bird Atlas*, 1995, edited by Richard A. Peterson. This work provides a compilation of birds breeding in the state, from 1988 to 1993, as systematically sought and observed by 64 volunteer field researchers. In a related matter involving breeding birds in South Dakota, since 1967, SDOU has sponsored participation in the U. S. Department of Interior's national breeding bird surveys, conducted each June.

Before the publication of the first issue of *South Dakota Bird Notes*, the Union offered a single newsletter, titled *Preliminary Bulletin of South Dakota Ornithologists' Union*, dated 15 April 1949. This document served to communicate with members prior to the first issue of *Bird Notes* and to solicit new memberships during the charter membership year. Then from 1986 through 1994, SDOU published *The Lark Bunting*, a biannual newsletter. It was discontinued due to lack of sufficient "news" to justify further production costs and effort.

Another way in which SDOU fulfills the goal to promote study of birds in the state involves scholarships, research grants, and awards. Currently, the organization administers two endowed scholarship funds: the David J. Holden Memorial Scholarship, awarded annually to a student majoring in biology or ecology at South Dakota State University, and the Kenneth H. Husmann Memorial Scholarship, awarded annually to a graduate or undergraduate student majoring in ornithology, ecology, or wildlife management, with no limitation as to the university attended by the recipient.

In 1996, SDOU established an endowment (now named to honor the late Dr. Nathaniel R. Whitney, Jr.) to support the awarding of small grants for research by college or university students in ornithology or closely related aspects of ecology. In addition, the Union administers the Alfred Hinds Memorial Fund that recognizes individual accomplishments in ornithology, preferably by students. This honor involves a modest financial award.

While SDOU has an admirable record in fulfilling its stated objectives, nothing could transpire without the dedicated loyalty and endeavors of many people. The process rests with the members. The core of SDOU founders led the effort to enroll charter members in 1949. A membership list in *Bird Notes* 1 (1):17-19 (July 1949), reveals one honorary member (W. H. Over), 150 active members, and 14 junior members (total: 165). The names of 16 additional active members and two junior members were published in *Bird Notes*, 1 (2):38 (October 1949). All these people were listed as charter members in the secretary's record for 1949 (total: 183). Then at the annual meeting in Huron, 16 January 1950, membership chairman J. Scott Findley reported 189 charter members. Probably the additional six members joined very late in 1949.

In 1951, the membership total was 135; in 1952, it was 127; and in 1953, it fell to 112. For comparison, in 1978, twenty years after SDOU's founding, the membership total was 265. In 1988, the treasurer reported 296 members, and the minutes for the annual business meeting on 12 October 1996 record 335 members. Annual dues for members cover the cost of printing and distributing *Bird Notes* and pay SDOU's miscellaneous expenses. Dues have remained modest. From 1949 through 1966, the regular active member's dues were at \$3 per year. The rate increased to \$4 for the years 1967 through 1976; then it became \$6 per year for 1977 through 1986. From 1987 to date the annual regular membership has been \$9. The masthead for *Bird Notes* indicates higher dues levels for life members, sustaining members, and family memberships.

Both nationally and internationally, ornithology is one of just a few sciences in which lay people are widely involved and make significant contributions to the discipline's knowledge. This fact is also reflected by SDOU's members, who represent diverse backgrounds. While SDOU has a modest number of professional ornithologists, biologists, ecologists, and wildlife managers among its members, the large majority of SDOU members represent backgrounds other than biological science.

Of course, from the membership have come the individuals who over the years have provided the leadership and service for the organization. At the onset, SDOU was served by a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, editor-librarian, and a three-member executive committee. At the first annual meeting, 16 January 1950, SDOU's constitution was amended to replace the executive committee with a 15-member board of directors with five directors elected to each of three staggered terms. Then, on 27 September 1980, the constitution was further amended to add a class of past-president directors. Appendix B provides a list of the 91 individuals who have served on the SDOU Board of Directors at various times between 1950 and 1997.

A critically important service comes to SDOU from the fully volunteer effort by the editor at *South Dakota Bird Notes*. Thus far, the Union has needed only eight editors. Their names and periods at service appear in

Appendix C, but two exceptionally long tenures merit special mention here. J. W. Johnson, from Huron, edited the issues of *Bird Notes* for March-June 1958 through June 1969, and Dan Tallman, biology professor at Northern State University, has edited all issues from September 1979 to date.

Publication of *Bird Notes* requires publication of five-year indexes. Herbert Krause edited the first index for volumes 1-5. Nelda Holden and Willis Hall collaborated to produce the index for volumes 6-10. Since then, Nelda Holden has created the subsequent seven indexes covering the contents of *Bird Notes*, volumes 11 through 45.

While directors are elected at the annual business meeting, officers of SDOU are elected by the Board of Directors, and the officers must be members of the Board. The offices of SDOU include president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, editor, and librarian. If necessary, the offices of secretary and treasurer may be held concurrently by one person, as may be the offices of editor and librarian. Each officer is elected for one year, but in practice, presidents and vice presidents typically are re-elected to second terms, and often the vice president advances to the presidency. Though also elected annually, individuals serving as secretary, treasurer, editor, and librarian typically attain tenures much longer than just two years. Nelda Holden, for example, has devoted 35 1/2 years to the role of SDOU's treasurer. Appendix D lists the members who have served as vice presidents, secretaries, and treasurers.

Appendix E records the individuals and terms of tenure for members who have served as presidents of SDOU. By way of emphasizing the factor of varied backgrounds of SDOU members, I shall mention here the careers of the Union's presidents: attorney, biology professor (seven persons), personnel manager, national wildlife refuge manager, telephone company manager, businessman and well-regarded nonprofessional historian, pharmacist, English professor (three persons), medical doctor, dentist, civil engineer, Game, Fish and Parks biologist, homemaker, librarian, forensic chemist, high school science teacher and coach, business employee, and banker.

Beyond these relatively objective facts about the nature of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union and people who have served it in various ways, perhaps a few members deserve somewhat more detailed recognition. First, by tradition, SDOU members regard Herman F. Chapman as the founding father of the organization. Herbert Krause's article about Chapman in the September 1961 (13: 60-63, 73) issue of *Bird Notes* indicates that following experiences in 1948 with the Iowa and Nebraska Ornithologists' Unions and with the national American Ornithologists' Union, Chapman pursued the passion to establish a similar organization to serve South Dakota. Primarily through this Sioux Falls attorney's efforts, SDOU's organizational meeting transpired at Sioux Falls on 15 January 1949, and Chapman naturally became the Union's first president. As Krause observes about Herman Chapman, "Other individuals there were who nurtured the dream and assisted in its formation. . . . But his was the intense, unselfish devotion which insisted upon a statewide unified study and recording of avian species in the state. His determination to preserve for future students the records of South Dakota bird life constituted the cornerstone of the organization."

Krause also asserts that Chapman in effect was the first editor of *Bird Notes*, despite a different person's having the editor's credit in the first three issues. The elected editor became too busy, and timely production of the journal was critical to establishing awareness of the new organization in South Dakota. Thus, Herman Chapman edited *Bird Notes* during its first five years, and in Krause's words, "set high standards to challenge succeeding editors." Truly, SDOU members have a fundamental debt to Herman F. Chapman.

While not one of SDOU's founding group, Herbert A. Krause became a charter member and served the Union in distinctive ways. A professor of English at Augustana College, author of novels, poetry and other artistic literature, essayist in ornithology and history, and founder of Augustana's Center for Western Studies, Herbert Krause (1905-1976) approached being a modern renaissance personality. He twice served as SDOU's president, including during the year when SDOU hosted the annual meeting of the national Wilson Ornithological Society at Sylvan Lake in the Black Hills. At that occasion Krause was the banquet speaker on the topic "History of the Northern Great Plains with Special Reference to Ornithology." Further indications of Krause's accomplishments and contributions to SDOU are available in my memorial article for him, *South Dakota Bird Notes*, 29 (1):4-7, 14-15 (March 1977).

Even though this recognition of prominent SDOU members could continue seemingly indefinitely, only one more will receive attention at this time. Dr. Nathaniel R. Whitney, Jr., a pediatrician at Rapid City, served as a director of the Union from 1955 until his death on 27 April 1997, and he is the only person thus far elected four times as the organization's president. He was a frequent contributor of items published in *Bird Notes*. Above all, Dr. Whitney provided exceptional service and leadership as chairman of SDOU's Checklist Committee. In this role he was centrally instrumental in the creation of the two editions of *The Birds at South Dakota* (1978 and 1991).

Finally, the archival records of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union are in the custody at the Center for Western Studies at Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Appendix A. SDOU Meeting Locations

Date	Location	Date	Location
15 Jan. 1949	Sioux Falls	20 May 1961	Watertown
16 Jan. 1950	Huron	27 Jan. 1962	Sioux Falls
20 May 1950	Brookings	26 May 1962	Pierre
5 May 1951	Vermillion	19 Jan. 1963	Brookings
30 May 1952	Chamberlain	25 May 1963	Webster
23 May 1953	Pierre	18 Jan. 1964	Huron
30 May 1954	Spearfish	16 May 1964	Pierre
14 May 1955	Sioux City, IA	23 Jan. 1965	Sioux Falls
26 May 1956	Watertown	17 June 1965	Sylvan Lake
18 May 1957	Martin/Lacreek	9 Oct. 1965	Huron
17 May 1958	Sioux Falls	14 May 1966	Brookings
29 May 1959	Yankton	26 Nov. 1966	Vermillion
29 May 1960	Rapid City	20 May 1967	Belvidere
18 Nov. 1967	Madison	18 Sept. 1982	Vermillion
18 May 1968	Highmore	21 May 1983	Pierre
23 Nov. 1968	Sioux Falls	8 Oct. 1983	Madison

17 May 1969	Webster	19 May 1984	Aberdeen
15 Nov. 1969	Huron	6 Oct. 1984	Rapid City
6 June 1970	Bison	5 May 1985	Canton
14 Nov. 1970	Pierre	12 Oct. 1985	Pierre
22 May 1971	Aberdeen	24 May 1986	Hot Springs
13 Nov. 1971	Vermillion	27 Sept. 1986	Watertown
3 June 1972	Mobridge	16 May 1987	Valentine, NE
4 Nov. 1972	Brookings	26 Sept. 1987	Rapid City
26 May 1973	Martin/Lacreek	21 May 1988	Waubay/NE-SO-DAK
10 Nov. 1973	Sioux Falls	10 Sept. 1988	Pierre
25 May 1974	Vermillion	20 May 1989	Kadoka
7 Dec. 1974	Pierre	7 Oct. 1989	Madison
17 May 1975	Webster	19 May 1990	Bison
4 Nov. 1975	Madison	6 Oct. 1990	Vermillion
29 May 1976	Custer State Park	25 May 1991	Brookings
6 Nov. 1976	Brookings	5 Oct. 1991	Pierre
21 May 1977	Bison	16 May 1992	Sturgis
11 Nov. 1977	Vermillion	12 Sept. 1992	Aberdeen
20 May 1978	Leola/Ordway Prairie	22 May 1993	Faulkton
10 Nov. 1978	Rapid City	9 Oct. 1993	Sioux Falls
19 May 1979	Pickstown	21 May 1994	Pierre
29 Sept. 1979	Sioux Falls	8 Oct. 1994	Waubay
17 May 1980	Sisseton	20 May 1995	Vermillion
27 Sept. 1980	Brookings	7 Oct. 1995	Madison
23 May 1981	Spearfish	18 May 1996	Custer
26 Sept. 1981	Aberdeen	12 Oct. 1996	Brookings
28 May 1982	Wall	17 May 1997	Sioux City, IA

Appendix B. SDOU Directors: 1950 through 1997

Don Adolphson	Kenneth Graupman	Eric Liknes
Leon Anderson	Ruth Habeger	Jon Little
Jocelyn L. Baker	John Haertel	A. R. Lundquist
L. M. Baylor	Cecil P. Haight	W. B. Mallory
Harry C. Behrens	Willis Hall	Michael Meltus
Dan Bjerke	Byron Harrell	Ernest Miller
Gilbert Blankespoor	Joyce Harrell	Everett Montgomery
Barbara Brown	Bruce Harris	L. J. Moriarty
Robert Buckman	June Harter	Carol Oleson
M. E. Burgl	Travis Hills	Jeffrey Palmer
Herman F. Chapman	Nelda Holden	Alfred Peterson
Lois Chapman	Gertrice Hinds	Richard Peterson
Herman Chilson	C. A. Hughlett	George Prisbe
Lauretta Cole	W. R. Hurt	S. H. Rames
Charles P. Crutchett	Kenneth Hussmann	Daniel Reinking
Louise Crutchett	Mary Hyde	Rex Riis
Eileen Dowd	Todd Jensen	Linda Riner
Dale Droge	Clyde Johnson	Bob Rogers
Lee Eberly	J. O. Johnson	Charles Rogge
Esther Edie	J. W. Johnson	B. J. Rose
Lowly Elliott	Jean Jonkel	Willard Rosine
Keith Evans	James Kimball	Jean Russell
W. R. Felton, Jr.	Herbert A. Krause	Robb Schenck
J. Scott Findley	Kenneth Krumm	Gay Simpson
Conrad Fjetland	Kelly Lane	Dennis Skadsen
Sven. G. Froiland	William E. Lemons	Mark Skadsen

Bob Rogers
 Charles Rogge
 B. J. Rose
 Willard Rosine
 Jean Russell
 Robb Schenck
 Gay Simpson
 Dennis Skadsen

Mark Skadsen
 Gerald R. Spawn
 Ron Spomer
 Paul Springer
 Galen Steffen
 Mrs. H. B. Stevens
 David Swanson
 Dan Tallman

George Vandell
 C. A. Van Epps
 Stephen Van Sickle
 Duane Weber
 N. R. Whitney, Jr.
 Clara Yarger

Appendix C. Editors, *South Dakota Bird Notes*

E. R. Lamster, 1 (1) July 1949 — 1 (3) December 1949
 Herman F. Chapman, 2 (1) March 1950 — 6 (1) March 1954
 J. Scott Findley, 6 (2) June 1954 — 10 (4) December 1958
 J. W. Johnson, 11 (1-2) March-June 1959 — 21 (2) June 1969
 Don Adolphson and Winona Sparks, 21 (3) Sept. 1969 — 25 (1) March 1973
 June Harter, 25 (2) June 1973 — 30 (2) June 1979
 Dan Tallman, 30 (3) September 1979 — to date

Appendix D. SDOU Vice Presidents, Secretaries, Treasurers.

* indicates the individual chose not to advance to the SDOU presidency.

Vice Presidents	Secretaries	Treasurers
Gerald B. Spawn	W. B. Mallory	S. H. Rames
J. Scott Findley		
Kenneth Krumm		M. E. Burgi
Harry C. Behrens*		
	J. Scott Findley	Ruth Habeger
Charles P. Crutchett	Gerald B. Spawn	
		L. J. Moriarty
Herbert A. Krause	J. O. Johnson	
H. R. Whitney, Jr.		
Willis Hall*	L. J. Moriarty	
C. A. Hughlett*	Nelda Holden	Nelda Holden
Lowry Elliott*		
Herbert A. Krause		
Herman Chilson		
L. M. Baylor	Jean Jonkel	
Byron Harrell	June Harter	
Bruce Harris		
William E. Lemons	William E. Lemons	L. M. Baylor
	Esther Edie	
Robert Buckman		Nelda Holden
Everett Montgomery*	L. M. Baylor	
Galen Steffen*		
Jocelyn L. Baker		
Rex Rits		
Dennis Skadsen		
J. David Williams		
David Swanson		
Jeffrey S. Palmer		
	J. David Williams	

Appendix E. Presidents of SDOU

Herman F. Chapman	attorney	Jan. 1949	Jan. 1950
Gerald B. Spawn	biology prof.	Jan. 1950	May 1951
J. Scott Findley	personnel mgr.	May 1951	May 1952
Kenneth Krumm	refuge manager	May 1952	May 1953
Cecil P. Haight	biology prof.	May 1953	May 1954
J. O. Johnson	phone co. mgr.	May 1954	May 1956
Charles P. Crutchett	pharmacist	May 1956	May 1957
Herbert A. Krause	English prof.	May 1957	May 1958
N. R. Whitney, Jr.	pediatrician	May 1958	May 1960
Ruth Habeger	biology prof.	May 1960	May 1962
L. J. Moriarty	dentist	May 1962	May 1964
Herbert A. Krause	English prof.	May 1964	June 1965
Herman Chilson	businessman	June 1965	Nov. 1967
L. M. Baylor	English prof.	Nov. 1967	Nov. 1969
J. W. Johnson	civil engineer	Nov. 1969	Nov. 1971
Byron Harrell	biology prof.	Nov. 1971	Nov. 1973
Bruce Harris	GF&P biologist	Nov. 1973	Nov. 1975
Nekda Holden	homemaker	Nov. 1975	Nov. 1977
William E. Lemons	English prof.	Nov. 1977	Sept. 1979
Robert Buckman	biology prof.	Sept. 1979	Sept. 1981
Gilbert Blankespoor	biology prof.	Sept. 1981	Oct. 1983
N. R. Whitney, Jr.	pediatrician	Oct. 1983	Oct. 1985
Jocelyn L. Baker	librarian	Oct. 1985	Sept. 1987
Rex Rlls	forensic chemist	Sept. 1987	Oct. 1989
Kenneth Graupman	biology teacher	Oct. 1989	Oct. 1991
Dennis Skadsen	business employee	Oct. 1991	Oct. 1993
J. David Williams	banker	Oct. 1993	Oct. 1995
David Swanson	biology prof.	Oct. 1995	to date
