

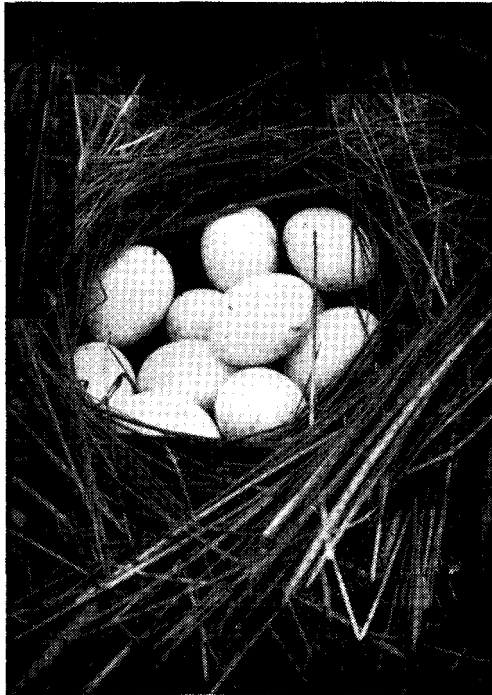
SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES

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South Dakota Ornithologists' Union

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President's Page



MY SINCERE greetings to each member of SDOU!

While looking forward and planning for an official year as president, I have been reviewing the many constructive acts which have been promoted for

SDOU by my predecessors in the office. It is my hope to add another solid rock to the firm foundation which they have built.

In the more than seven years of its existence, through the observations reported in South Dakota Bird Notes, SDOU undoubtedly has presented much data on South Dakota birds that is new and has real scientific value.

Many years ago, especially in the southeastern prairie counties of our state, we frequently heard the expression, "We don't have many birds in South Dakota." It was said by settlers from timbered parts of Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, or an eastern state, who missed some of their common arboreal species and did not have eyes to see our many prairie birds which were unknown to them. But the old myth, "We don't have many birds", has been pretty well exploded. The wide circulation of Bird Notes has helped to expose the untruth.

We have birds of the long-grass prairie and of the short-grass, of lake and river, of woodland, of low land and mountain, birds of swamp sandhills and badlands, for a total

of nearly 400 species.

With such a large field where there has been so little study, SDOU certainly needs no excuse for being.

The work of Bird Notes has just begun. Every member of SDOU is urged to help the editor by submitting all possible notes of interest to bird watchers and ornithologists.

* * * *

At the annual meeting in Watertown the constitution of SDOU was amended to add a new classification of membership to be known as "sustaining member".

The sustaining member contributes \$5 a year to the organization instead of the regular member's \$3 fee, and has all the rights and privileges of a regular member plus the additional satisfaction of contributing a small amount annually toward building up a fund for publishing our projected annotated bird list and for other similar projects.

* * * *

We are planning to hold a few regional meetings during the year in order that our members can get better acquainted and so they can discuss some of the problems for which there was no time at the annual meeting and also can discuss other matters of interest.

The first of these meetings will be held soon in Armour and perhaps the next will be somewhere in the Black Hills. Notices of the time and place will be mailed to members. We will be glad to get suggestions for the programs.

SDOU Needs 200 Sustaining Members.

—Charles P. Crutchett

Feeding Habits of The Ruddy Turnstone

Alfred Peterson

THE RUDDY TURNSTONE is a fairly common migrant through the Waubay region of South Dakota and was expected in numbers by the participants in the field trip of the second day of the SDOU annual meeting on May 27, 1956. The main points visited on that trip were the Ring-billed Gull colony on Bitter Lake, the Rush Lake embankment of Highway 12 which has always been a good place for Turnstones, and the Cormorant island of Waubay Lake. The trip was successful in all respects.

Early in the day Turnstones were seen in abundance at Rush Lake on the sand and gravel at the edge of the embankment on which the highway crosses the lake. They seem little disturbed by the passing traffic and are little noticed by anyone but the occasional bird watcher.

However, by the time most of the members of the field trip had reached Rush Lake after leaving Bitter Lake, many of the Turnstones had left; but they were found in an upland grain field beyond a back road that skirted the southwestern part of Rush Lake, an habitat very different from what we expected and a considerable distance from water. The grain had been drilled and there was a good stand with the young plants about two inches tall. 60 Turnstones were in one group and many others were seen to alight in the field.

All were very active on the ground with an occasional excursion a few inches into the air. A question was asked, "Are the Turnstones feeding or are they courting?" There was a good clue, ready at hand, pointing to the answer for the question. Forster's and Black Terns ranged back and forth over certain

areas of the field, feeding in a frenzied manner, and it was to such spots that the Turnstones seemed attracted. The warm sunshine had brought a crop of insects from the mellow earth. They were discovered by the Terns and accepted by the Turnstones.

Our group seems to have come upon a method of feeding by Turnstones which is not mentioned in many of the prominent bird books. However, some other idiosyncrasies are mentioned.

In *Birds of Canada*, Taverner says, "A bird of the sandy, muddy or rocky shores, but preferring the sand."

Bent in his *Life Histories of North American Shore Birds* writes, "The Turnstone is mainly a maritime species and its favorite feeding grounds are the stony and sandy beaches along the seashore . . . But on its inland migrations it finds its food on the shores and beaches of the larger lakes and rivers . . . Their main food supply evidently consists of small crustaceans, small mollusks, insects and their larva, all of which they consume in large quantities and in great variety." Bent also says, "In Massachusetts it is sometimes called the 'horse-foot snipe' because of its fondness for the eggs of the horse-foot crab." Again from Bent there is this statement, "Mr. Audubon, in the neighborhood of St. Augustine, Florida, saw this Turnstone feeding on the oyster beds, searching for such oysters as had been killed by the heat of the sun, and plucking out the contents."

Bent also quotes many interesting observations from his correspondence with many other authorities; such as, from A. T. Wayne, "On

(Continued on Page 22)

A Few Spring Arrival Dates

Mrs. L. J. Moriarty

For nine years the students enrolled for Bird Study at General Beadle State Teachers College, Madison, South Dakota, have recorded the spring arrival dates as found in their semi-weekly field trips. The nine-year list now includes dates for nearly 200 species and for about half the list there are enough dates to show something of the average arrival dates.

In addition to the arrival of the migrants, the presence of several winter residents is recorded as is also that of the permanent residents. Some of the winter residents may occasionally become year-round species in the area. The winter residents most frequently seen are the Brown Creeper, Pine Siskin, Slate-colored Junco and Tree Sparrow.

The permanent residents listed are: Hungarian Partridge, Ring-necked Pheasant, Great Horned Owl, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Starling, House Sparrow, Cardinal.

There is still another group of 13 species which are half-hardy and are usually represented throughout the winter if conditions are not too unfavorable. However, we have tried to list the dates for the more numerous migrants of those species. Among these are: Mallard, Pintail, Red-headed Woodpecker, Flicker, Horned Lark, Crow, Red-winged Blackbird, Meadowlark, Grackle, Purple Finch, Goldfinch, Cedar Waxwing, and Robin.

SPECIES	Earliest Arrival	Average Arrival
Pied-billed Grebe	April 12	April 19
White Pelican	April 11	April 27
Double-crested Cormorant	April 7	April 15
Great Blue Heron	Mar. 25	April 10
Black-crowned Night Heron	April 7	April 22
American Bittern	April 15	April 20
Canada Goose	Mar. 21	Mar. 22
Lesser Snow Goose	Mar. 21	Mar. 26
Mallard	Mar. 8	Mar. 25
Pintail	Mar. 8	Mar. 22
Bluewinged Teal	Mar. 23	April 24
Redhead Duck	April 12	April 18
Canvasback	April 5	April 19
Lesser Scaup Duck	Mar. 2	Mar. 30
Ruddy Duck	April 4	April 28
American Merganser	April 6	April 23
Shoveller	Mar. 20	April 16
Marsh Hawk	Mar. 19	Mar. 26
Sparrow Hawk	Mar. 12	Mar. 18
Coot	April 3	April 14
Killdeer	Mar. 7	Mar. 14
Spotted Sandpiper	May 7	May 13
Greater Yellow-legs	April 4	April 9
Pectoral Sandpiper	April 5	April 28
Wilson's Phalarope	April 30	May 4
Herring Gull	Mar. 26	April 4
Franklin's Gull	Mar. 24	Mar. 29
Common Tern	April 23	April 28
Black Tern	May 9	May 12
Mourning Dove	April 6	April 20
Screech Owl	Mar. 20	Mar. 25
Nighthawk	May 4	May 11
Chimney Swift	May 1	May 6
Belted Kingfisher	April 3	April 18
Northern Flicker	Mar. 21	April 8
Red-headed Woodpecker	April 4	April 12
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	April 11	April 20

Eastern Kingbird	May 8	May 15
Western Kingbird	May 6	May 12
Least Flycatcher	May 4	May 13
Horned Lark	Mar. 12	Mar. 30
Tree Swallow	May 7	May 14
Bank Swallow	May 1	May 11
Rough-winged Swallow	May 2	May 9
Barn Swallow	April 15	April 25
Purple Martin	April 17	April 26
Blue Jay	Mar. 13	Mar. 20
Crow	Mar. 15	
House Wren	April 17	May 2
Catbird	May 5	May 17
Brown Thrasher	April 28	May 3
Robin	Mar. 11	Mar. 17
Wood Thrush	April 4	May 1
Hermit Thrush	Mar. 13	May 5
Olive-backed Thrush	April 26	May 3
Veery	May 2	May 9
Golden-crowned Kinglet	April 9	April 15
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	April 27	April 29
Cedar Waxwing	April 10	April 30
Loggerhead Shrike	April 6	April 12
Warbling Vireo	May 13	May 18
Black and White Warbler	May 1	May 3
Myrtle Warbler	April 17	April 24
Yellow Warbler	May 1	May 8
Black-poll Warbler	May 10	May 18
Grinnell's Water Thrush	May 3	May 10
Yellow-throated Warbler	May 9	May 17
Redstart	May 7	May 14
Bobolink	May 8	May 12
Western Meadowlark	Mar. 8	Mar. 15
Yellow-headed Blackbird	April 15	April 19
Red-winged Blackbird	Mar. 7	Mar. 21
Orchard Oriole	May 17	May 21
Baltimore Oriole	April 22	May 4
Bronzed Grackle	Mar. 19	Mar. 25
Cowbird	April 13	April 16
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	May 9	May 14
Purple Finch	April 9	April 24
Goldfinch	Mar. 26	
Towhee	May 6	May 13
Vesper Sparrow	April 19	April 24
Chipping Sparrow	April 4	April 12
Harris' Sparrow	April 4	April 18
White-crowned Sparrow	May 9	May 10
White-throated Sparrow	April 25	May 5
Song Sparrow	April 18	April 24

In March a research grant was made to Herbert Krause, SDOU vice-president, by the American Association for the Advancement of Science through the South Dakota Academy of Science for the completion of 'An Annotated Bibliography of South Dakota Ornithology—1794-1954'. The grant covers one year but the work probably will be published before January.

THE COVER picture is another of J. O. Johnson's photos and shows the nest of a Ruddy Duck near Watertown. He first got a picture of the nest on May 24, 1941, when it contained two eggs and then took this picture with 10 eggs six days later.

Annual Meeting

THE ANNUAL MEETING of SDOU was held in Watertown on May 26-27, 1956, with a registered attendance of 74 from 15 different places. Before the formal sessions there was an early morning field trip to Horseshoe Lake where the committee had "staked out" a few birds. The day and the cooperation of the birds were perfect. The trip delivered about 50 species including a pair of Hutchin's Geese with young, Western Willets, Avocets, Marbled Godwits, Tennessee Warblers, and Savannah Sparrows.

After the trip the early risers returned to the hotel for the paper and business session. President J. O. Johnson welcomed everyone and turned the meeting over to program chairman Herbert Krause who had chosen speakers from among our own members to present various phases of ornithology or of their own hobbies relating to bird watching: Willis Hall's beautiful pictures that make you want to see more, Ted Johnson's color studies, Mrs. E. M. Drissen's excellent movies of backyard birding, N. R. Whitney's color slides of West River habitats, Scott Findley's slides of White Pelicans, Black-crowned Night Heron young and the hatching of a Western Grebe egg, Charles P. Crutchett's story and exhibit of his paintings. Robert Meyerding of the Fish and Wildlife Service gave an interesting talk and showed slides about Mourning Dove banding. Herman Chilson spoke on his experiences in feeding birds and providing nesting boxes. Art Lundquist told of the birds in the Webster-Waubay area and showed his movies.

In the evening an excellent dinner was served at tables decorated with tree branches with nests and

birds. The speaker was Dr. Dwain Warner, Curator of Ornithology, Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, who spoke interestingly on Dr. Elliot Coues' personality and work.

At the business session an amendment to the constitution was approved to provide for sustaining members. Herman Chilson, Webster, and Willis Hall, Yankton, were elected to the board of directors, and G. B. Spawn, Brookings, N. R. Whitney, Rapid City; Herbert Krause, Sioux Falls, were reelected. Later the board held its meeting at which it chose Charles P. Crutchett, Armour, president for the ensuing year, Herbert Krause, vice president; J. O. Johnson, secretary; L. J. Moriarty, treasurer, and J. S. Findley, editor.

The next morning everyone was up early again for a field trip in the Waubay area. It also was very successful starting with the Ring-billed Gull colony at Bitter Lake where an Avocet's nest was also discovered, followed by a remarkable demonstration by Ruddy Turnstones, a look at a colony of Double-crested Cormorants, the nest of a Red-necked Grebe, and finally the picnic lunch arranged by Mr. and Mrs. Art Lundquist. Carl Johnson demonstrated bird banding and even produced a Black-billed Cuckoo and a Canada Warbler. Not the least, was the unannounced visit of a full plumaged Scarlet Tanager that stayed around until everyone had had a good look. The combined list of birds for the day was 102.

(Note.—All local arrangements for the field trips and the meeting were made by J. O. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. L. J. Moriarty, and Art Lundquist, who deserve much credit.—Editor)

Turnstones

(Continued from Page 24)

Capers Island it frequents live oak trees which are covered with small mussels, upon which it eagerly feeds"; and A. L. V. Manniche, "Just after their arrival in Greenland the Turnstones feed mainly on vegetable food"; from Dr. Paul Barsch in referring to his visit to Midway Island, "It was a decided surprise to us to find waders in bushes feeding upon berries, and yet this was the case here. Again and again we flushed bunches of turnstones from the dense *Scaevola* thickets and watched them circle about for some time, only to realight in the tops of another clump of bushes"; from C. J. Maynard, "They sometimes resort to marshes and feed on grasshoppers"; and from Dr. Alexander Wetmore who said, "The greatest surprise came when on Laysan Island it was found that these (turnstones) and other shorebirds were persistent enemies of sooty and gray-backed terns, as they destroy the eggs of the terns at every opportunity."

In this discussion it is very interesting to note Forbush's statement in *Game Birds*, *Wild Fowl*, and *Shore Birds*: "Dawson states that near the shores of Lake Erie he has seen it (Ruddy Turnstone) on the ploughed lands turning over clods bigger than itself with such force as to roll them a foot or more." Forbush also says, "The habit of turning objects is not constant, however, with this bird, and is sometimes the exception, as I have watched it when it was occupied entirely in probing the sand, or searching for food, like a sandpiper, along the strand."

* * * *

Photographers had a day when they got pictures of nests of an Avocet, Ring-billed Gulls, Marbled Godwit and a nest with green eggs in the Ring-billed Gull colony. Hope all the pictures turned out well.

A. O. U. Meeting

The American Ornithologist's Union will hold its next annual meeting in Denver, September 4-9, 1956. The business sessions will be held on the opening day. The sessions on the 5th and 7th are to be held in the Natural History Museum and those on the 6th at Boulder. A field trip into the mountains is scheduled for the 8th and one in the prairies for the 9th. It is seldom that SDOU members have opportunity to go to nearby meetings of the AOU.

* * *

SDOU-member Herbert Krause, with Sven G. Froiland, of Augustana College, Sioux Falls, published a fine article on "Distribution of the Cardinal in South Dakota" in the June, 1956, number of the *Wilson Bulletin*. They showed that over 52 years the Cardinal had extended its breeding range from the extreme southeastern part of the state to now occupy the eastern one-fourth; to appear as a wintering bird in various places outside the breeding range; the extension parallels the major rivers; and the cardinal has been reported in the West River only recently, perhaps because of scarcity of suitable habitat.

* * *

ERRATUM — The White-throated Sparrow was omitted from the Check-list of South Dakota Birds published in the March, 1956 number of *South Dakota Bird Notes*. It should have been listed on page 19 immediately after White-crowned Sparrow and the indications of its distribution and status should be the same as those for the White-crowned Sparrow.

* * *

Ruddy Turnstones feeding on the ground in a grain field. Something new!

General Notes of Special Interest

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS IN SOUTHEAST SOUTH DAKOTA—Late in March, 1956, we experienced storms of such general nature that they covered most of South Dakota. Soon following the storms there were reports of unusual birds. One appeared in a daily paper and two came to Bird Notes from alert bird-watchers. The others will have to remain as rumors until more work can be done on them.

Apparently there was an irruption of Mountain Bluebirds in the southeastern part of South Dakota where they are seldom, if ever, seen although they are abundant in the Black Hills 300 miles to the west.

Mrs. D. S. Baughman, Madison, S. D. wrote: "March 28, 1956, was a very stormy day with a near blizzard. The gusts of snow-filled wind whisked the birds in every direction, but their hunger seemed to bring the birds to our sheltered feeding places. We saw 40 birds of 14 species, including 2 species that were new to us. One was a sparrow that remained unidentified, and the other was represented by 4 individuals that sent us to our bird books and the telephone.

"Those which we assumed were the male were all blue, lighter on the breast, and the females were lighter blue. With our books and the help of Miss Ruth Habeger, Biology Department of Beadle State Teachers College, we identified them as Mountain Bluebirds.

"They were fluffed out by the cold and the wind, and seemed rather large. They arrived at near dusk and took shelter in the crevices between the rocks of the outer wall of our house and clung there until morning. We were up early to watch them.

Just as it was getting light they moved into the nearby trees and then flew away without visiting our feeders. They seemed to be in good condition.

"In our weather reports we heard of that storm coming in from the Rockies and we think perhaps it blew our visitors to us in the eastern part of the state."

Mrs. J. H. Hutchinson, Hurley, S. D. wrote: "On the day after the bad snow and ice storm on March 28, 1956, Mrs. E. C. Breen asked whether we wanted to go out to the Tom Woodward farm about ¾-mile west of Hurley to see 2 Mountain Bluebirds. Of course we did. Mrs. Breen took her books with her. We agreed they were Mountain Bluebirds but the first we had ever seen. They were beautiful."

The bluebird made the newspapers somewhat left handedly. On April 2 a Sioux Falls paper printed a paragraph about a bird that had been found in the Wall Lake neighborhood during the storm "last week." Through the use of a calendar picture the bird was identified as an Indigo Bunting. The next day it was pointed out by SDOU-member Herbert Krause in a letter to the editor that perhaps the bird was a bluebird, which might be expected to appear about that time of year under normal conditions while the Indigo Bunting probably would not come until May. The all-blue bird could be a Mountain Bluebird whose presence in the southeastern part of the State would be much more noteworthy than that of an Eastern Bluebird, or even an Indigo Bunting in March.

These reports and other unconfirmed rumors of Mountain Bluebirds be-

ing seen in this general area during March leave little doubt there was a very unusual irruption of the birds. Our recollection of the severe snow storms experienced about that time leads us to think the birds may have been driven far from their normal route and range by the storms.

Mountain Bluebirds in eastern South Dakota are noteworthy at any time. Any correlation between their off-course migration and the storms will make a very interesting study.

—J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, S. D.

* * *

UPLAND PLOVERS AND OTHERS

—I had a great experience one day recently when I was south and a little west of Winner. On section 22 of Willow Creek township I saw 11 Upland Plovers, and 5 more about a mile from there, while usually I see only one or two in a summer.

Their whistle is a very wonderful one which I have remembered ever since my small-boyhood days in southern Minnesota.

So far this year I have seen only one Bobolink out here where I thought there might be many. But it is fine to see so many Lark Buntings.

My bird banding is taking a setback this year because of our church building program. My traps are just too near all the hammering! However, I have banded 15 different species: Brown Thrasher, Baltimore Oriole, Orange-crowned Warblers, Black-capped Chickadee, 2 Yellow-breasted Chats, Western Yellowthroats, Lincoln's Sparrow, Robins, Eastern Towhees, House Wren, Catbird, Olive-backed Thrush, Gambel's Sparrow, Yellow Warbler, and 4 fledgling Western Tanagers.

The Western Tanagers were from a nest about 20 feet up in a pine tree on the grounds of the Wheaton College Science Station about 12 miles west of Rapid City. One of the college boys helped me with the job.—**Harold W. Wagar, Winner, S. D.**

TURTLE GETS DUCK—Lake Onahpe is a small lake of about 2½ acres at the edge of Armour. This Spring a flock of about 1000 Redhead ducks stopped at the lake for a week. They covered nearly every square yard of it. When they moved on north one pair remained and nested on the shore, but early in the summer the nest was destroyed and the female duck disappeared. The drake remained, and, although rather wild at first, he became quite tame and accustomed to the fishermen who were constantly coming and going.

At 6:30 p. m. July 2, 1956, we were on the shore of Lake Onahpe watching a vireo nest when Dick Macy came by with his fishing equipment and told us this story:

"I just saw something kind of odd. I was fishing there on the shore. That redhead drake was sitting on the water about 15 feet out. Suddenly a turtle reached up and grabbed the duck by the leg." (From the description the turtle seized the duck just above the tarsus, by the heel.)

"The duck and turtle put up quite a battle. I tried to throw my fish line over them to drag them to shore but couldn't make it. The turtle was about a foot and a half in diameter, a big one. They battled over the pond for a distance of a hundred and fifty feet. The weight and strength of the turtle settled the issue. The duck disappeared for good."—**Mr. and Mrs. C. P. Crutchett, Armour, S. D.**

* * *

ALBINO KINGLET—On May 10, 1956, for several hours we observed a partial albino Ruby-crowned Kinglet. It was a female, presumably, since it was in close company with a male that displayed the ruby crown clearly.

The pair spent the time in a cotton-aster hedge at 325 Simmons Avenue, S. E. They had little fear of people and were observed closely by all of our party which also included Dr.

and Mrs. Ketele, Miss Kettle and Mrs. Johnson.

The bird had a white head and a white shawl that covered the nape and breast. The beak and legs were light yellow. The rest of the coloring was normal for a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. A few scattered feathers were dark,—an indication of the short observing distance, in fact she came within less than a foot of Mrs. Johnson's hand as she made notes of color detail. No tinge of pink could be seen in the eyes that appeared black, or dark blue, possibly because of the cloudy weather.—**J. W. Johnson, Huron, S. D.**

* * *

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER—In the December, 1955, Bird Notes Carl M. Johnson listed the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher as one of the birds we might look for in South Dakota. Now, we have a letter from Dr. Stephen S. Visher, Indiana University, in which he comments on the Checklist of South Dakota Birds published in the March, 1956, Bird Notes and says, "To your list of accidental visitors you can add the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, one of which I saw clearly in Sanborn County in August, 1915. I had become well acquainted with them in the South in previous years. I never published this record."

Dr. Visher is a charter member and an honorary member of SDOU and an authority of long standing on South Dakota birds. (See Bird Notes, I: 4-7). We are very glad for the opportunity to publish this record of the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in the State.

* * *

NASHVILLE WARBLER—Two sight records of this warbler stand in my note books: May 12, 1954, at Lake Cochrane, and May 18, 1956, here at home. The concealed color on crown showed quite clearly in the latter instance, as the bird busied itself on the ground.—**Alf. Peterson, Brandt, S. D.**

BLUE GROSBEAK—You may be interested in another note on the Blue Grosbeak in South Dakota. Yesterday, June 7, 1956, I noted one male Blue Grosbeak along the highway about four miles east of Mobridge. Unfortunately I did not have time to stop to see whether there were others in the area. This was near the place where I saw a pair in 1950. I wonder whether there may be nesting birds in that area.—**Robert N. Randall, Bismarck, N. D.**

(See South Dakota Bird Notes VIII:7. March 1956.)

* * *

SCARLET TANAGER—My first Scarlet Tanager record is dated Oct. 13, 1920, at Pipestone, Minn. Never again during the following 35 years had I been lucky enough to add another sight record to my list. May 24, 1956, came along in the procession of years. Then, right here at home, a fine male appeared. He was not at all shy—only cautious—and worked from a wire fence apart from trees or cover, thus giving me full opportunity for observation at a very reasonable distance. Just three days later a male in full plumage was found by members of the S. D. O. U. field trip at the Recreation area of Wauabay Game Refuge, and was pointed out to me.—**Alfred Peterson, Brandt, S. D.**

* * *

WILLET GOES TO TOWN—On April 28, 1956, we got about 6 inches of wet snow. The next morning about half of it had melted and had left many pools of water on the streets and side roads.

When I went to work about 9:00 a. m. there was a large shore bird in a pool at the road near my house in the center of town. A nearby Mourning Dove gave me a convenient comparison for judging the size of the much larger shore bird.

About 6:30 that evening I walked down Main Street and was so fortun-

ate as to find the shore bird again in a garden patch near the railroad depot, only half a block from the business district. The garden had many pools of water from the melted snow. The bird was picking up worms and was closely followed by 6 Bronzed Grackles which seemed to be watching it closely although I did not see them get any food. Twice the shore-bird reached over to pull long worms from almost under the feet of the grackles.

The shore bird worked the garden systematically, from the north end to the south and back again. I kept edging closer. It was larger than a Greater Yellowlegs, and no yellow legs.

Finally, it reached the south end of the garden and turned to go north again. But that would mean approaching me. It stopped to think it over. The question seemed to be whether to approach me or to fly.

It flew. There was the chance I wanted. The wing pattern told the story. It was a Willet.

Imagine a Willet in the middle of town, 50 feet from a railroad station!
—Charles P. Crutchett, Armour, S. D.

* * *

WATERFOWL DECLINE WITH WATER SUPPLIES . . . An item in "Conservation News", National Wildlife Federation, relates to South Dakota waterfowl and is of considerable interest to ornithologists and bird watchers as well as to hunters because of the effects of water supplies on the numbers of shore birds, waders, and other birds needing habitats dependent on water, as well as the always interesting game birds. The item reads:

Beginning their annual spring survey of breeding ducks and nesting areas, biologists of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks predicted a new low for recent years. Past surveys indicate the number of ducks nesting in the state is directly

proportional to the amount of available water and water conditions are the poorest since extensive breeding ground surveys were started in 1950.

"Figures from the surveys of the past three years emphasize this relationship," according to a Department news release. "In 1953, when an average of seven and one-quarter potholes were counted per square mile, more than one million ducks were counted, the highest total since the surveys were started. Diminishing water supplies in 1954 reduced the pothole number to four and one-half and the duck count to 820,000. Last year only two and one-third potholes were noted per square mile and the nesting duck population has dropped to 360,000. This represents the lowest figure since 1950."

The South Dakota survey is part of a continent-wide program in which both state and federal agencies cooperate. Two pilot-observer teams were scheduled to fly more than 3,000 miles in censusing ducks and water conditions in eight strips, one-quarter mile wide and spaced at 24-mile intervals, across South Dakota from the Minnesota border to the western state line. The statewide estimates are based on this "strip census."

* * *

CANADA WARBLER—A male Canada Warbler was among the very interesting birds found on the field trips of the SDOU meeting May 25-27, 1956, at Watertown and Waubay. On the second day SDOU-member Carl M. Johnson demonstrated bird banding to interested field trippers very successfully in as much as he had 11 individuals of 8 species.

The Canada Warbler was one of the birds and was a "first" for many of the members present. It was also very satisfactory to have a chance to examine the unusual bird "in hand" and to see the yellow-white "spectacle" eye-ring, the

bright yellow underparts with the necklace of black spots, black sides of head and neck, the gray upper parts and the lack of wing bars.

On reading about the bird, we find that Roberts says it is seen as a migrant in southern and western Minnesota, which was only 30-35 miles away. Bent says it is "a rare migrant from eastern Texas, eastern Kansas, eastern Nebraska, through the valley of the Red River of the North to Manitoba." Our bird was found very close to that route.

Bent also gives a South Dakota date of early spring arrival at Sioux Falls on May 18,—10 days earlier and about 130 miles farther south than Waubay.

There is also a question whether there may have been other Canada Warblers at Waubay on May 27. Herbert Krause had a sight of one and called Herman Chapman and Alfred Peterson to "come quickly" but the bird left quickly. It may have been the one Carl Johnson banded.

Alfred Peterson has a sight record of one at Pipestone, Minnesota, only a few miles from South Dakota several years ago.—**J. S. Findley, Sioux Falls, S. D.**

* * *

NOTES IN A MINOR KEY . . .

This seems to have been a good year for Brown Thrashers in the southeastern part of the state.

A Burrowing Owl was sighted a few times near Sioux Falls on July 1 and 2, 1956, an uncommon bird in that area nowadays.

The first of the shorebirds (Lesser Yellowlegs) were back to the Sioux Falls latitude about the middle of July.

Bird-watchers in Sioux Falls are always interested in the Night-hawks that can be seen "shagging" bugs down town at 11th and Phillips.

This summer the Fish and Wildlife Service has had a dove banding

program in which perhaps some members of SDOU have been able to give appreciable aid.

On July 8, 1956, a Redwinged Blackbird nest in a roadside wild chicory plant had two eggs in it. On the 10th there were three. A late nesting or a second nesting?

Immature Lark Sparrows were seen at Grass Lake on July 1.

Dickcissels "all over the place" (in this case southeastern So. Dak.) with fledged young July 10.

—**J. S. F.**

* * * *

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT—May 12, 1956, dates the first Chat that I have seen in eastern South Dakota. This bird showed itself well, perching quietly on a brush heap, and even coming nearer to give me the once-over. (A case of reciprocal curiosity). Two weeks and two days later (May 28) a Chat again was found at the same place, but it was more active than the first and a poorer subject. One can only ponder as to whether a single bird made these two appearances.—**Alfred Peterson, Brandt, S. D.**

* * *

SKEPTICISM

You won't believe me when I say
That somebody whistled at me today.
Now I'm neither young nor glamorous,

That anyone should be so amorous,
But he whistled and whistled and I
turned to see

A Cardinal perched in the top of a
tree.

—**Muriel Hargreaves, Sioux Falls.**

(Skepticism is from Pasque Petals, the publication of the South Dakota State Poetry Society, and is rited here through the courtesy of the editor, Miss Adeline M. Jenney, Valley Springs, S. D.)

* * * *

A Scarlet Tanager and a Black-billed Cuckoo made sure of getting on the list by appearing at the lunch for field-trippers at Waubay.

Constitution of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union

Article I—Name, Object

Section 1. This association shall be known as the South Dakota Ornithologists Union.

Section 2. Its aim shall be 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.

Article II—Membership

Section 1. Any student of ornithology who is 16 years of age or older is eligible for membership as a sustaining member or as an active member of this Union. The sustaining member is to have all the rights and privileges of the active member.

Section 2. Any person less than 16 years of age is eligible for membership as a junior member of this Union.

Section 3. Honorary members may be elected for their eminence in ornithology or from among the members of this Union for distinguished service in furthering the aims of the Union.

Section 4. Membership shall date from the approval of the application for membership by a majority of the Executive Committee and the payment of dues. Honorary memberships shall date from their approval by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee.

Section 5. Active members may vote at annual meetings, hold office, and serve on the committees.

Section 6. All members shall receive gratis one copy of periodicals which this Union may publish for distribution to its members.

Section 7. Members may be dismissed from membership for cause by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee, or for non-payment of dues.

Article III—Officers, Committees

Section 1. The officers of this Union shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Editor-Librarian.

Section 2. The duties of the President shall be to preside at meetings of the Union, to appoint committees as provided by this constitution, to call necessary meetings of the Executive Committee, and to perform such other duties as customarily pertain to the office.

Section 3. The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President in his absence or incapacity, and shall assist the President and perform such duties as are delegated to him by the President.

Section 4. The Secretary shall keep a record of the meetings of the Union and of the Executive Committee, conduct the general correspondence of the Union, and shall perform such other duties as customarily pertain to the office.

Section 5. The Treasurer shall collect dues, receive and have charge of all moneys of the Union, pay such bills as are approved for payment by the President and Secretary, and perform such other duties as customarily pertain to the office.

Section 6. The Editor-Librarian shall edit and superintend the printing of the publications of the Union and preserve the books, publications, and papers presented at meetings of the Union.

Section 7. The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the Union and three other members of the Union elected at the annual meeting.

Section 8. The duties of the Executive Committee shall be to select honorary members, to fix the date and place of the annual meeting, to perform such duties as are given to it by this constitution, to concur with the President in the appointment of standing committees, to fill by temporary appointment offices which

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become vacant, to audit the books of the Treasurer, and to perform such other duties as may be necessary for the furtherance of the aims of the Union.

Section 9. The Executive Committee may act by correspondence upon questions that properly come before it.

Article IV—Meetings

Section 1.—The annual meeting of the Union shall be at such time and place as is selected by the Executive Committee.

Section 2. Such special meetings of the Union as are necessary may be called by the President, with the approval of the Executive Committee.

Section 3. The quorum for transaction of business shall be nine active members.

Article V—Elections

Section 1. All officers, including members of the Executive Committee, shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Union by a majority vote of the active members present.

Section 2. The term of office of all officers and members of committees shall extend from the close of the annual meeting at which they were elected, or from their appointment, to the close of the next annual meeting.

Section 3. Nomination for officers and members of the Executive Committee shall be made by a nominating committee of three members appointed by the President at the opening session of the annual meeting. This nominating committee shall meet immediately after the close of the opening session of the annual meeting to select candidates for offices. Active members of the Union may propose names of members to the committee as candidates for offices. The nominating committee shall report its nominations and others proposed to it for nominations to offices. Nominations may also be made from the floor before or during elections. If there is more than one candidate for any office, voting shall be by secret

ballot.

Article VI—Dues

Section 1. The annual dues for sustaining members shall be \$5.00.

Section 2. The annual dues for active members shall be \$3.00.

Section 3. The annual dues of junior members shall be \$1.00.

Section 4. Dues are due on January 1 of each year, or at election to membership.

Section 5. Subscriptions shall be available to institutions at the rate of \$3.00 per calendar year.

Article VII—Amendment

Section 1. This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the active members present at any annual meeting, provided all members have been given at least thirty days advance notice of the proposed amendment.

By-Laws

Section 1. The officers shall be reimbursed the actual amount expended by them in carrying on their necessary official duties.

Section 2. All papers presented at the meetings shall be the property of the Union and shall be filed with the Editor-Librarian.

Section 3. The order of business at the annual meeting shall be as follows: 1, Reports of officers; 2, Reports of committees; 3, Proposal of names and election of members; 4, New business; 5, Announcement of election of officers and committees; 6, Presentation and discussion of papers and remarks; 7, Installation of officers; 8, Reading of minutes; 9, Adjournment.

Section 4. Application for membership must be made to the Secretary and such application must have the endorsement of at least one member in good standing, which shall be expected to be a proper recommendation of the candidate.

Section 5. Any of the by-laws may be amended or repealed by vote of a majority of the active members present at any annual meeting.