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# SOUTH DAKOTA Ornithologists' Union

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*Cerulean Warbler*

*Clay Co., 05/07/14*

*Photo: Gary Small*



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

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SOUTH DAKOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION  
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For Term expiring 2014: Jennifer Fowler, Rapid City; Kent Jensen, Brookings; Ron Mabie, Pickstown; Duane Weber, Custer; and Mick Zerr, Sioux Falls.  
For Term expiring 2015: Bill Bossman, Pierre; Roger Dietrich, Yankton; Linda Johnson, Sioux Falls; Ricky Olson, Ft. Pierre; and Mark Otnes, Fargo, ND.  
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**STANDING COMMITTEES OF SDOU:**

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**Nathaniel R. Whitney, Jr. Memorial Research Grants:** Todd M. Jensen (chair), Linda Johnson, Duane Weber.  
**Rare Bird Records:** Todd M. Jensen, Ricky D. Olson, Jeffrey S. Palmer, David Swanson (chair), J. David Williams.  
**Scholarships and Awards:** Jocelyn L. Baker (chair), Nelda Holden, Galen Steffen.

## PRESIDENT'S PAGE

This will be a short President's Page, as the deadline is during the peak of spring migration.

The Aberdeen area has a new bird club, the Northeast South Dakota Birding Club. This is great news.

I have noticed on the listserv <sd\_birds> that the Sioux Falls Bird Club and Northern Hills Bird Club have been very active, having field trips and seeing many birds.



The South Dakota Birding Festival at Lake Andes was also held in early May, with many participants.

These activities are the areas, bird clubs, bird festivals etc., where SDOU will find our new members. As people go on these field trips and events and experience the joy of birdwatching, hopefully many will become hooked on birdwatching as we are. Some will soon want to see different birds and explore SD and beyond to go see them. They will come to SDOU meetings, meet other people who have an interest in birds and go on field trips. As our meetings occur around the state, they will be able to see different birds in the many habitats we explore. A percentage will want to learn more about birds: where they breed, their migration patterns, and many other aspects of avian life. These people could even become the ornithologists and collectors of the future, contributing new data to the study of birds in South Dakota.

My main point is that I encourage SDOU members to participate in bird events of all kinds, and spread the word that there is a South Dakota Ornithologists' Union and that all people are welcome to join!

*Ricky G. Olson*

## 2013 REPORT OF THE RARE BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

David L. Swanson. Department of Biology. University of South Dakota. Vermillion 57069.  
Email: david.swanson@usd.edu.

The SDOU Rare Bird Records Committee (RBRC) met on 19 May 2013 at Mobridge and 10 November 2013 at Pierre. The members of the committee were David Swanson (secretary), Ricky Olson, Todd Jensen, J. David Williams, and Jeffrey Palmer. All members attended both meetings or voted *in absentia*.

Springer (1988. *South Dakota Bird Notes* 40:67-70) outlined the purpose and voting procedures of the RBRC. The RBRC strongly encourages observers of rare or unusual birds in South Dakota to report their observations to the secretary of the RBRC (David Swanson of Vermillion, SD), preferably via e-mail at david.swanson@usd.edu. A *Rare Bird Report Form* is available in electronic format for this purpose from David Swanson, or a form can be downloaded from <http://www.sdou.org> by clicking on the *Seasonal Reporting* link and then clicking on the link for the *Rare Bird Report Form*. A summary of the type of information desired by the RBRC in a rare bird report can be found in Swanson (2004. *South Dakota Bird Notes* 56:88-95).

The RBRC requests rare bird reports for species listed as hypothetical or accidental in the state, including species reported from a portion of the state or time of year where that species is listed as accidental. A listing of birds belonging to these categories in South Dakota is provided in the latest version of the checklist of South Dakota birds, accessible at <http://www.sdou.org> by clicking on the *Seasonal Reporting* link and then clicking on the link for the *South Dakota State Checklist*). Information regarding species listed as accidental for only a portion of the state can be found in Tallman et al. (2002. *Birds of South Dakota*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, SDOU, Aberdeen, SD). The RBRC regularly adds or removes species from the review list, based on current data, and these changes to the review list are reported in the annual reports of the RBRC in *South Dakota Bird Notes*. In addition, reports are requested for observations listed in the "Species Requiring Acceptance by the Rare Bird Records Committee" section in the Seasonal Reports of *South Dakota Bird Notes*. Observers whose records are accepted (Classes 1 and 2) are encouraged to publish these records in *South Dakota Bird Notes*, so details of the observation can be communicated to a wider audience.

Following are the results of the committee's action since the last report in the June 2013 issue of *South Dakota Bird Notes*. The numbers included in parentheses along with some reports indicate the committee's vote. If no numbers are listed, the vote was unanimous (5-0 or 4-0 if a committee member submitted the report). The committee wishes to emphasize that a rating of Class 3 or 4 (non-accepted record) does not imply any personal criticism of the observer. Such a rating only means that the information provided in the report, in the opinion of the committee, did not conclusively eliminate other similar species.

### **CLASS 1 (Accepted - Specimen, photograph, or recording).**

Black-bellied Whistling Duck. 7 October 2013. One adult north of Stratford on the James River, Brown Co. Hunter kill, specimen photographed. Tim Ray. Second state record.

Black Scoter. 16 October 2013. One adult female at Wall Sewage Lagoons, Pennington Co. Lynn Barber and Jocelyn Baker. Accidental migrant West.

Neotropical Cormorant. 29 September 2012. One adult in Kingsbury Co. Photographed. Jeffrey Palmer. Casual migrant and summer visitor.

Neotropic Cormorant. 20 July 2013. One adult at Torrey Lake, Brule Co. Photographed. Kelly Preheim. Casual migrant and summer visitor.

Wilson's Plover. 20 August 2010. One adult at Hughes Co. Photographed. Ricky Olson. First state record.

Dunlin. 27 October 2013. One in basic plumage at Belle Fourche Reservoir, Butte Co. Photographed. Ingrid Arlton and Larry Putnam. Accidental migrant West.

Laughing Gull. 8 June 2013. One first-cycle bird at Pierre, Hughes Co. Photographed. Doug Backlund and Ricky Olson. Casual visitor.

White-winged Dove. 22-23 April 2013. One at Sioux Falls, Minnehaha Co. Photographed. Doug Chapman. Casual migrant and summer visitor.

White-winged Dove. 30 August 2013. One at Milbank, Grant Co. Photographed. Todd Koch. Casual migrant and summer visitor.

Anna's Hummingbird. 2 September 2013. One probable adult female at Rapid City, Pennington Co. Photographed. Richard Latuchie, m. obs. Second state record.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. 26 May 2013. One female at Slim Buttes, Harding Co. Photographed. Doug Backlund. Casual far west.

Alder Flycatcher. 24 June 2012. One singing male in Pennington Co. Sound recording. Jocelyn Baker and Jennifer Fowler. Accidental summer visitor.

Townsend's Solitaire. 31 August – 9 September 2012. One near Worthing, Lincoln County. Photographed. Alice Hill. Accidental in summer/early fall East.

Townsend's Warbler. 20 May 2013. One female at Oahe Downstream Recreation Area, Stanley Co. Silka Kempema and Casey Mehls. Photographed. 3<sup>rd</sup> Spring record. (Note: One female Townsend's Warbler was also reported on 24 May 2013 at Oahe Stilling Basin, Stanley Co. Ricky Olson [rated Class 2 by the RBRC] – This bird seems likely to be the same bird as the 20 May 2013 individual).

Golden-crowned Sparrow. 12 October 2012. One juvenile at Sioux Falls. Minnehaha Co. Photographed. Mick Zerr, Todd Jensen, Doug Chapman, m. obs. Third state record.

McCown's Longspur. 28 April 2013. Multiple migrating flocks in Butte and Harding cos. Photographed. Nancy Drilling, Charlie Miller and Doug Backlund. Casual migrant and summer visitor.

Hoary Redpoll. 13 January 2013. One adult male at Sioux Falls, Minnehaha Co. Photographed. Chris Anderson. Casual, but irruptive, winter visitor.

Hoary Redpoll. 7-21 February 2013. One at Sioux Falls, Minnehaha Co. Photographed. Mick Zerr, Todd Jensen, Doug Chapman, m. obs. (4 Class 1P – 1 Class 2). Casual, but irruptive, winter visitor.

Lesser Goldfinch. 14 January 2013. One adult male in Rapid City, Pennington Co. Photographed. Richard Latuchie. First winter record for the state; also Accidental away from Fall River Co.

Lesser Goldfinch. 15 September 2013. One male and 3 females/juveniles at Rapid City, Pennington Co. Photographed Addison Ball. Accidental away from Fall River Co.

**CLASS 2 (Accepted – Satisfactory written description).**

Brant. 23 November 2012. One in Stanley Co. Scott Stolz. Accidental migrant.

Neotropic Cormorant. 25 August 2012. One adult at Miner Co. Jeffrey Palmer. A photo was supplied with the report, but was quite distant, and some committee members felt that, while the photo was supportive of Neotropic Cormorant, a better photo was needed for a Class 1P rating. (2 Class 1P – 2 Class 2). Casual migrant and summer visitor.

Red Phalarope. 21-25 August 2013. One at Torrey Lake, Brule Co. Kelly Preheim, David Swanson, Doug Backlund, m. obs. (2 Class 1P – 3 Class 2). The dissenting committee members felt that the accompanying photographs supported the identification as Red Phalarope, but were not diagnostic. Eighth state record.

Red Phalarope. 22 August 2013. One in Douglas Co. Kelly Preheim (1 Class 1P – 4 Class 2). The dissenting committee members felt that the accompanying photographs supported the identification as Red Phalarope, but were not diagnostic. Ninth state record.

Lesser Black-backed Gull. 21 April 2013. One adult at Lemmon Lake, Perkins Co. Nancy Drilling. (4 Class 2 – 1 Class 3). Accidental West.

White-eyed Vireo. 13 May 2013. One adult at Aberdeen, Brown Co. Gary Olson. Casual spring migrant East.

Common Raven. 22-23 November 2012. One in Stanley Co. Ricky Olson. Casual migrant and winter visitor.

Common Raven. 2 December 2012. One in Charles Mix Co. Ron Mabie. Casual migrant and winter visitor.

Common Raven. 24 May 2013. One at Slim Buttes, Harding Co. Doug Backlund. Casual migrant and winter visitor.

Marsh Wren. 16 December 2012. One in Rapid City, Pennington Co. Michael Melius. Casual winter visitor.

Virginia's Warbler. 17 August 2013. One female/juvenile south of Pactola Reservoir, Pennington Co. Michael Cvetas. First Pennington Co. record.

Kentucky Warbler. 5 June 2012. One along Sage Creek Road, Badlands National Park, Pennington, Co. Michael Melius (4 Class 2 – 1 Class 3). Accidental West.

Summer Tanager. 8 May 2013. One adult male at Milbank, Grant Co. Doug Buri. Casual/rare migrant.

Hoary Redpoll. 14 November 2012. One male in Stanley Co. Mark Otnes and Ricky Olson. Casual, but irruptive, winter visitor.

Lesser Goldfinch. 17 July 2013. One male in Pennington Co. Addison Ball, Jocelyn Baker, Lynn Barber. Accidental away from Fall River Co.

**CLASS 3 (Not accepted – Identification possibly correct but description not completely convincing).**

Barrow's Goldeneye. 26 January 2013. One first-year male at Fort Randall Dam, Charles Mix Co. The photograph accompanying the report showed a bird with a rather large, thick-based bill and a sloping forehead, which are features typical for a Common Goldeneye. The white spot in front of the eye and the wing pattern were supportive of Barrow's Goldeneye. The committee felt that the possibility of a hybrid was not conclusively eliminated, which was the reason for the Class 3 rating.

Yellow-billed Loon. 12 November 2012. One at Cow Creek on Lake Oahe, Sully Co. The report concentrated on the absence of a pale tip on the bill in Common Loons as a reason for eliminating Common Loon from consideration, but Sibley states "beware, some Commons have pale tip to bill." No mention of the head shape, neck pattern, back pattern, or face pattern (with ocular spot) was provided in the report. Consequently, the committee felt that Common Loon was not conclusively eliminated.

Reddish Egret. 19 June 2011. One adult white phase bird at Blythe Slough, Codington Co. A diagnostic photo accompanied the report, but after careful examination of the photos by digital photo experts, sufficient concerns about the validity of the photo were raised for the committee to rate this record as Class 3. This record would have constituted a first state record for South Dakota.

Black Rail. 23-24 June and 17 July 2010. Two adults on first date; one adult with two young on second date. Flight Lake, Potter Co. Photographs and a sound recording accompanied this report and unquestionably identified the species as Black Rail. However, after careful consideration of the photos and recordings, with input on the photos from outside digital photo experts, sufficient concerns about the validity of the photos were raised to prevent the committee from accepting this record. This record would have constituted a first state record for South Dakota.

Mountain Plover. 10 May 2013. One at Rapid City, Pennington Co. (3 Class 3 – 2 Class 2). A drawing was submitted along with the report, and the drawing showed a very plain face and yellowish legs, which are not entirely consistent with a breeding-plumaged Mountain Plover in May. This, along with the mowed lawn habitat at the location of observation, did not conclusively eliminate Buff-breasted Sandpiper in the opinion of dissenting committee members. Thus, the Class 3 rating.

Williamson's Sapsucker. 25 July 2011. One adult male at Craven Canyon, Fall River Co. A diagnostic photo accompanied the report, but after careful examination of the photos by digital photo experts, sufficient concerns about the validity of the photo were raised for the committee to rate this record as Class 3.

Pacific Wren. 25 June 2013. One singing male at Ward Draw, Lawrence Co. The report was based entirely upon the song, and the song was not described in sufficient detail, in the opinion of the committee, to conclusively eliminate Winter Wren. Thus, the committee rated the report as Class 3.

Hoary Redpoll. 9 December 2012. One at Pickstown, Charles Mix Co. The report was suggestive of Hoary Redpoll, but did not specifically mention the appearance of the scapulars, greater coverts, rump and undertail coverts. The committee felt that all of this information is needed to be certain of the identification, so Common Redpoll was not conclusively eliminated.

Hoary Redpoll. 25 December 2012. One at Fort Randall Dam, Charles Mix Co. The report was suggestive of Hoary Redpoll. However, the report mentioned that “a few streaks” were present on the undertail coverts, which could occur in both species. In addition, no mention of the appearance of the scapulars, secondaries or rump was provided in the report, so the committee felt that Common Redpoll was not conclusively eliminated.

Hoary Redpoll. 23 February 2013. Six adult males in Sully Co. The description of the birds in the report was rather limited, and although it supports Hoary Redpoll, it does not conclusively eliminate Common Redpoll, so the committee rated the report as Class 3.

Lesser Goldfinch. 6 August 2012. One at Rapid City, Pennington Co. The report supported the identification of Lesser Goldfinch, but was incomplete and included very few details so the committee felt that American Goldfinch was not conclusively eliminated.

#### **CLASS 4 (Not accepted – Identification probably or certainly incorrect).**

White-winged Tern. 3 August 2012. One juvenile bird at Salt Lake, Deuel Co. (4 Class 4 – 1 Class 3). A photograph accompanied the report, and the photographed bird showed a relatively minor contrast between the mantle, upperwings and tail, characteristic of immature Black Tern. The dark marks on the sides of the breast also suggest Black Tern. Comments solicited from outside experts also identified the bird as a Black Tern, although the European *niger* subspecies is not ruled out. Thus, most committee members felt that this bird was a juvenile Black Tern. Thus, the Class 4 rating.

Loggerhead Shrike. 2-11 November 2012. One in Lincoln Co. (4 Class 4 – 1 Class 3). The identification of Loggerhead Shrike in the report was based largely on the bird being “smaller and darker” than a Northern Shrike. However, the photos provided with the report clearly showed a small mask and large bill, features characteristic of Northern Shrike. The committee also noted that the back of the bird in the photos was quite pale gray and that the feathering at the base of the bill was pale, without dark extending over the upper base of the bill. These features also favor an identification as Northern Shrike.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

In other business, the committee voted to remove Lesser Goldfinch from anywhere in the Black Hills (defined as Hot Springs to Belle Fourche and points west) from the review list.



# FLEDGLING TRACTS

JASON THIELE

## *Unusual Nest Materials*

**A**lthough the summer heat can sometimes make sitting in the shade with a glass of lemonade sound more appealing than birding, this season, like all the others, has its particular charms for a birder. For me, seeing birds at their nests tending eggs or young is one of the best things about summer. As most of you receive this issue of *SD Bird Notes*, the breeding season for most South Dakota bird species will be in full swing, and it is a great time to get out and marvel at the spectacular diversity of nest types, such as the simple scrapes in the sand created by Least Terns, the domed grass nests of Western Meadowlarks, the floating nests of Western Grebes, the hanging basket nests of Baltimore Orioles, the massive stick nests of Bald Eagles, or the globular mud nests of Cliff Swallows.

Much like human dwellings, birds' nests come in a dizzying array of shapes and sizes, and they are constructed from a variety of materials. Also like human houses (at least historically), birds' nests are generally made from materials that are readily available. Early settlers into the Great Plains states found few trees to utilize for building log cabins; therefore, many built "sod-dies" by stacking pieces of sod cut from the prairie. Likewise, grassland birds such as Grasshopper Sparrows would not be expected to build their nests with sticks, and indeed, Grasshopper Sparrows construct their nests from grass. A major advantage of using easy-to-find nesting materials is that the resulting nest blends into the surroundings, and anyone who has ever tried to locate a Grasshopper Sparrow's nest can vouch for the effectiveness of this natural camouflage. Some birds take extra steps to ensure their nests will not be easy to spot. For example, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird will often gather lichens and attach them to the outside of its tiny nest to make it look like nothing more than a bump on a branch.

Of course, there are very few actual "rules" in nature that don't have exceptions, and some birds seek out very specific materials to integrate into their nests that certainly don't help to disguise them. Great Crested Flycatchers and some of the other flycatchers in the genus *Myiarchus* often weave shed snake skins into their nests. They have also been known to use strips of cellophane in place of snake skins. A Piping Plover's nest couldn't get much simpler—it is just a scrape in the sand—but many plovers still "decorate" the nest by arranging small pebbles in the nest bowl. Since Great Crested

Flycatchers are cavity nesters and the entire nest bowl of a Piping Plover nest is covered by the incubating bird, the chosen nest materials must not serve as camouflage. Instead, they must have some other unknown purpose. Of all South Dakota birds, the Burrowing Owl may collect the most bizarre nesting material. Readers of this article are aware that Burrowing Owls nest underground in burrows created by prairie dogs, badgers, or other such mammals. However, some may not know about the Burrowing Owl's unusual habit of scattering material around the entrance of the nest burrow and often inside the burrow itself. Virtually all of the several hundred nest burrows I located during my master's project research in western and central South Dakota were lined with shredded pieces of dried cattle, horse, or bison manure. Michael Melius also recently commented on this strange practice in the June 2013 issue of *SD Bird Notes*.

Why do they do this? No one really knows, but perhaps the manure attracts beetles and other insects that Burrowing Owls like to eat, or it masks the scent of the nest from mammalian predators, or it absorbs rainwater to prevent the nest chamber from being flooded. Or, as suggested by one of the landowners I chatted with, maybe they spread manure around the burrow so that when Papa Owl is returning from catching a mouse for his mate, he can look down from the air and think, "Now, which burrow is ours again? Oh, right, it's the one with dung on it." Manure isn't used by all nesting Burrowing Owls, however. A while back, I spoke with someone who studied Burrowing Owls on the West Coast, and she saw nest burrows "decorated" with materials such as grass and pieces of broken glass. This may lend support to a hypothesis that the owls are simply signaling to other owls in the area that a burrow is already occupied.

Using nest materials to signal territory occupancy to conspecifics has been documented. An Old World raptor called the Black Kite has long been known to line its nests with strange materials—often bits of white plastic. A study in Spain found that the white plastic was used as a signal to other kites, and the most dominant pairs with the best territories tended to have more plastic in their nests. These dominant pairs were challenged by other kites less often than subordinate pairs whose nests contained less plastic.

So some birds use nest materials as camouflage, and others use them as a signal device. Either way can be an effective means to protect the eggs and nestlings from various threats such as predators or intruding competitors.

But there is still another way for a bird to increase the survival probability of its offspring, and that is to use the nest itself as a defensive countermeasure. The endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker from the southeastern United States is one bird that does just that. Like other woodpeckers, it bores a hole into a tree and creates a cavity for its nest. However, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers create their nest cavities in the boles of living pine trees. After excavation of the nest chamber is complete, a series of small sap wells is bored above and below the entrance hole, causing pine pitch to coat the trunk around the nest hole. While these sap wells are not a part of the nest *per se*, they provide an effective barrier to the main nest predator in the region, the rat snake. Researchers have hypothesized that the snakes avoid the sap-covered trees because the sticky sap fouls their belly scales, making climbing difficult. The chemicals in the pine pitch may also deter rat snakes.

However, I think the most interesting nest material of all is not gathered from the environment but is actually produced by the bird itself—saliva. Saliva is used by Chimney Swifts and several related species as a binding material. A Chimney Swift collects small twigs and then “glues” them together with its saliva. A number of similar species from Southeast Asia, collectively called cave swiftlets or edible-nest swiftlets, make their nests almost entirely of saliva. For many years, people have collected nests of these birds and used them as the key ingredient in “birds’ nest soup.” One has to wonder how someone ever got the idea to put a nest into a pot of soup. Let me say, writing this is not making me hungry.

Happy summer birding!

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# SEASONAL REPORTS

## The 2013-2014 Winter Season

Compiled By: Jeffrey S. Palmer

01 December 2013 to 28 February 2014

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

**T**here were 140 species, including 6 rarities, reported during the season this year. The ten-year (2003-2012) average is 140. Below, I have tried to highlight the more significant sightings (species that have been reported in 6 or fewer of the last 10 winter seasons, early/late dates, and species that are out of range). Finally, at the end is a list of species (27) that were not reported this year and might be expected during the Winter Season. A species is placed on the list if it was not reported this year but had been reported during winter in at least 2 of the previous 5 years. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of consecutive years (up to 4) that the species has appeared on the list during the season. Not reported during the Winter Season during the last 5 years, **Dunlin** was removed from this list.

**Greater White-fronted Goose** All Reports: 01 Dec Buffalo RDO; 23 Feb Stanley KM; 26 Feb Buffalo and Lyman ND

**Snow Goose** reported 01 Dec Buffalo RDO; 01 Dec Yankton RND; 04 Dec Minnehaha MRZ; 14 Dec Brown GO; 13 Jan Pennington CLG; 19 Jan Stanley RDO; 20 Jan Pennington CLG; 13 Feb Charles Mix RM; 20 Feb Grant BJU

**Ross's Goose** All Reports: 01 Dec Hughes DB; 22 Feb Hughes JSP; 28 Feb Hughes RDO

**Cackling Goose** reported 30 Dec Pennington JLB; 03 Jan Grant BJU; 09 Jan Hughes RDO; 11 Jan Charles Mix KP; 19 Jan Stanley RDO; 20 Jan Pennington CLG; 25 Jan Hughes RDO; 20 Feb Grant BJU

**Trumpeter Swan** reported **13 Jan Charles Mix RM; 22 Jan Charles Mix RM**

**Wood Duck** reported 14 Dec Brown GO; 28 Dec Brule SS; 09 Jan Hughes RDO; 15 Jan Pennington JLB; 20 Jan Pennington CLG; 25 Jan Brown GO; 01 Feb Hughes CA

**Gadwall** reported 01 Jan Hughes SS, RDO; 03 Jan Grant BJU; 04 Jan Pennington RSL; 20 Jan Pennington CLG; 16 Feb Yankton KP; 25 Feb Brule ND

**American Wigeon** reported 01 Dec Yankton RND; 20 Dec Charles Mix RM; 01 Jan Pennington ND; 20 Jan Pennington CLG; 13 Feb Charles Mix RM; 15 Feb Fall River JSP

**American Black Duck** reported **12 Jan Hughes RDO, KM; 01 Feb Hughes CA; 20 Feb Grant BJU**

**Northern Shoveler** All Reports: 01 Dec Yankton RND; 14 Dec Yankton RND; 18 Feb Hughes SS; 19 Feb Hughes RDO

**Northern Pintail** reported 17 Dec Perkins ND; 22 Dec Lawrence ND; 09 Jan Hughes RDO; 13 Feb Pennington JLB; 20 Feb Grant BJU; 20 Feb Hughes SS

**Green-winged Teal** reported 08 Dec Yankton KP; 09 Dec Meade EEM; 01 Jan Stanley RDO; 20 Feb Grant BJU; 21 Feb Hughes SS; 26 Feb Buffalo ND

**Canvasback** reported 18 Dec Yankton RND

**Redhead** reported 03 Jan Grant BJU; 03 Jan Hughes SS; 12 Jan Stanley RDO; 15 Jan Pennington JLB; 20 Jan Pennington CLG; 09 Feb Yankton RND; 17 Feb Charles Mix KP

**Ring-necked Duck** reported 18 Dec Yankton RND; 15 Jan Pennington JLB; 20 Jan Pennington CLG; 08 Feb Yankton DS; 20 Feb Grant BJU

**Greater Scaup** reported 01 Dec Grant BJU; 14 Dec Stanley RDO; 03 Jan Hughes SS; 10 Jan Charles Mix RM; 19 Jan Stanley RDO; 18 Feb Hughes SS

**Lesser Scaup** reported 01 Jan Charles Mix KP; 03 Jan Grant BJU; 09 Jan Hughes RDO; 29 Jan Pennington CLG; 13 Feb Charles Mix RND, RM; 18 Feb Gregory RM

**White-winged Scoter** All Reports: **01 Dec Charles Mix RM; 01 Dec Yankton RND; 02 Dec Charles Mix KP**

**Long-tailed Duck** reported 01 Dec Yankton RND; 12 Jan Charles Mix SS; 17 Jan Charles Mix RM

**Bufflehead** reported 01 Dec Yankton RND; 26 Dec Charles Mix KP; 15 Jan Pennington JLB; 20 Jan Pennington CLG; 31 Jan Charles Mix RM; 26 Feb Lyman ND

**Common Goldeneye** reported 03 Jan Grant BJU; 09 Jan Hughes RDO; 12 Jan Charles Mix SS, KP; 15 Jan Pennington JLB; 19 Jan Minnehaha CA, MRZ; 19 Jan Stanley RDO; 20 Jan Pennington CLG

**Hooded Merganser** reported 03 Jan Grant BJU; 09 Jan Hughes RDO; 15 Jan Pennington JLB; 20 Jan Pennington CLG; 01 Feb Hughes CA; 16 Feb Yankton KP; 20 Feb Grant BJU

**Common Merganser** reported 03 Jan Grant BJU; 09 Jan Hughes RDO; 12 Jan Charles Mix SS; 13 Jan Pennington CLG; 19 Jan Minnehaha CA, MRZ; 19 Jan Stanley RDO; 20 Jan Pennington CLG

**Red-breasted Merganser** reported 05 Dec Hughes DB; 12 Jan Charles Mix SS; 17 Jan Charles Mix RM; 16 Feb Yankton KP; 22 Feb Hughes JSP

**Gray Partridge** All Reports: 11 Dec Pennington JLB; 03 Jan Roberts BJU

**Ruffed Grouse** All Reports: **11 Jan Lawrence DGP; 14 Feb Lawrence DGP; 17 Feb Lawrence DGP; 26 Feb Lawrence SW; 27 Feb Lawrence DGP**

**Common Loon** reported **11 Jan Charles Mix RDO, KP; 15 Feb Yankton KP**

**Pied-billed Grebe** reported **01 Dec Yankton RND; 07 Dec Gregory JSP; 13 Jan Pennington CLG; 20 Jan Pennington CLG**

**Red-necked Grebe** Only Report: **01 Dec Hughes DB**

**Western Grebe** All Reports: 01 Dec Hughes and Sully DB; 05 Dec Hughes DB; 10 Dec Hughes DB

**American White Pelican** All Reports: **11 Dec Charles Mix RM; 13 Dec Charles Mix RM**

**Double-crested Cormorant** All Reports: 02 Dec Charles Mix KP; 03 Dec Charles Mix RM; 18 Dec Charles Mix RM; 19 Dec Charles Mix RM

**Great Blue Heron** reported 13 Dec Yankton RND; 14 Dec Fall River ND; 13 Jan Pennington CLG; 23 Jan Lawrence KP

**Northern Harrier** reported 01 Jan Pennington RSL; 03 Jan Marshall BJU; 11 Jan Charles Mix KP; 01 Feb Hughes KM; 01 Feb Lyman CA; 09 Feb Charles Mix KP; 15 Feb Fall River JSP; 15 Feb Lawrence RSL

**Cooper's Hawk** reported 26 Dec Stanley RDO; 30 Dec Pennington JLB; 11 Jan Lincoln KCJ; 15 Jan Minnehaha MRZ; 18 Jan Brown BP; 20 Jan Lake JSP; 21 Jan Charles Mix RM; 23 Jan Lawrence KP

**Northern Goshawk** reported 03 Jan Marshall and Day BJU; 10 Jan Hughes KM; 17 Jan Charles Mix RM; 25 Jan Brown GO; 19 Feb Marshall GO; 23 Feb Pennington ND

**Ferruginous Hawk** reported 25 Dec Stanley RDO; 29 Dec Harding CEM; 11 Jan Lyman RDO; 17 Jan Meade RSL; 17 Jan Sully KM; 22 Jan Lyman KP, ND

**Virginia Rail** Only Report: 15 Feb Fall River JSP

**American Coot** reported 01 Jan Hughes SS, RDO; 03 Jan Grant BJU; 15 Jan Pennington JLB; 20 Jan Pennington CLG; 01 Feb Hughes CA

**Killdeer** All Reports: 02 Dec Pennington JLB; 04 Dec Pennington MMM

**Wilson's Snipe** All Reports: 13 Dec Meade EEM; 13 Dec Yankton RND; 22 Feb Pennington JLB, RSL

**Bonaparte's Gull** Only Report: 01 Dec Hughes DB

**Ring-billed Gull** reported 08 Dec Yankton KP; 03 Jan Hughes SS; 12 Jan Charles Mix KP

**California Gull** reported 09 Jan Hughes RDO; 18 Jan Hughes RDO; 19 Feb Charles Mix RM

**Herring Gull** reported 01 Dec Grant BJU

**Thayer's Gull** reported 14 Dec Yankton RND; 01 Jan Hughes SS; 02 Jan Charles Mix RM

**Iceland Gull** reported 10 Dec – 28 Feb Hughes DB, RDO

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** Only Report: 06 Dec Yankton RND

**Glaucous Gull** reported 11 Dec Charles Mix RM; 12 Jan Hughes KM; 28 Feb Hughes RDO

**Mourning Dove** reported 17 Dec Perkins ND; 03 Jan Brown BJU; 11 Jan Charles Mix KP; 25 Jan Turner CA; 04 Feb Minnehaha MRZ

**Eastern Screech-Owl** reported 18 Dec Charles Mix RM; 29 Dec Jackson ND; 01 Jan Lake JSP; 03 Jan Day BJU; 01 Feb Hughes KM; 02 Feb Custer ND; 16 Feb Brown ND

**Snowy Owl** reported 05 Dec Charles Mix KP; 03 Jan Roberts, Marshall, Grant, Day, and Brown BJU; 17 Jan Sully KM; 19 Jan Charles Mix KP; 20 Jan Kingsbury JSP

**Barred Owl** All Reports: **14 Dec Minnehaha CA; 28 Dec Lincoln ND; 01 Jan Brookings KCJ**

**Long-eared Owl** All Reports: 01 Dec Grant BJU; 01 Dec McPherson BP; 14 Dec Fall River ND; 14 Dec Minnehaha CA; 03 Jan Marshall BJU; 19 Jan Charles Mix KP

**Short-eared Owl** Only Report: 03 Jan Brown BJU

**Northern Saw-whet Owl** All Reports: 17 Dec Perkins ND; 28 Dec Lincoln ND; 03 Jan Day BJU

**Belted Kingfisher** reported 13 Dec Yankton RND; 24 Dec Meade AKB; 28 Dec Lincoln MRZ; 01 Jan Pennington RSL, ND; 20 Jan Pennington CLG; 23 Jan Lawrence KP

**Lewis's Woodpecker** All Reports: 15 Dec Pennington JLB; 09 Feb Pennington RSL; 16 Feb Pennington JLB; 23 Feb Pennington ND

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** All Reports: **31 Dec Charles Mix RM; 11 Feb Charles Mix RM**

**American Three-toed Woodpecker** All Reports: **02 Jan Lawrence DGP; 19 Jan Lawrence DGP; 09 Feb Lawrence DGP; 14 Feb Lawrence DGP**

**Black-backed Woodpecker** All Reports: 04 Jan Lawrence DGP; 07 Jan Lawrence DGP; 09 Jan Lawrence DGP; 14 Feb Lawrence DGP; 25 Feb Lawrence SW

**Pileated Woodpecker** All Reports: 01 Dec Grant and Roberts BJU; 03 Jan Grant BJU; 20 Feb Grant BJU

**Merlin** reported 25 Dec Meade ND; 12 Jan Charles Mix SS; 12 Jan Douglas KP; 12 Jan Hughes RDO; 17 Jan Hughes KM; 18 Jan Pennington RSL; 25 Jan Charles Mix RM; 25 Jan Turner CA

**Gyr Falcon** All Reports: 11 Jan Lyman RDO; 01 Feb Hughes KM, SS; 17 Feb Haakon KM

**Prairie Falcon** reported 01 Dec Edmunds BP; 14 Dec Minnehaha CA; 03 Jan Brown BJU

**Gray Jay** reported 29 Dec Custer RSL; 01 Jan Pennington JLB; 15 Jan Lawrence DGP; 17 Jan Lawrence DGP

**Clark's Nutcracker** All Reports: **19 Jan Pennington ND; 03 Feb Pennington RDO**

**Black-billed Magpie** reported 23 Feb Dewey SS

**Pygmy Nuthatch** reported 17 Dec Pennington JLB; 18 Jan Pennington RSL; 02 Feb Fall River RDO

**Canyon Wren** All Reports: 17 Dec Pennington JLB; 24 Dec Meade AKB; 31 Jan Lawrence DGP; 16 Feb Pennington JLB

**Marsh Wren** All Reports: **14 Dec Fall River ND; 15 Feb Fall River JSP**

**Carolina Wren** All Reports: **15 Dec Yankton CA, RND; 08 Feb Yankton DS**

**American Dipper** Only Report: 01 Jan Pennington JLB, RSL

**Eastern Bluebird** All Reports: 20 Dec Charles Mix RM; 24 Dec Gregory RM; 07 Feb Charles Mix RM; 13 Feb Charles Mix RND, RM; 28 Feb Charles Mix RM

**Townsend's Solitaire** reported 03 Jan Day BJU; 09 Jan Brown GO; 15 Feb Brown GO; 17 Feb Edmunds BP

**Hermit Thrush** All Reports: 01 Jan Brookings KCJ; 17 Feb Union DS

**Brown Thrasher** Only Report: **18 Dec Yankton RND**

**Bohemian Waxwing** reported 22 Dec Lawrence and Butte ND; 22 Dec Pennington RSL; 01 Jan Stanley SS, RDO; 03 Jan Marshall and Day BJU; 25 Jan Brown GO; 31 Jan Pennington ND; 01 Feb Fall River ND; 01 Feb Stanley CA

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** reported 26 Dec Union GJS; 27 Dec Davison SS, KP; 12 Jan Charles Mix KP; 20 Jan Union DS; 13 Feb Charles Mix RND, RM

**Spotted Towhee** All Reports: **18 Dec Yankton RND; 31 Jan Stanley KM**

**Fox Sparrow** All Reports: **07 Dec Minnehaha CA, MRZ; 12 Dec Minnehaha CA**

**Song Sparrow** All Reports: 06 Dec Hughes KM; 02 Jan Meade EEM; 25 Jan Stanley RDO; 31 Jan Stanley KM; 11 Feb Sully SS; 17 Feb Dewey ND; 23 Feb Minnehaha CA

**White-throated Sparrow** reported 07 Dec Minnehaha CA; 18 Dec Yankton RND; 01 Jan Clay GJS; 27 Jan Clay GJS; 31 Jan Hughes KM; 08 Feb Yankton DS

**Harris's Sparrow** reported 01 Jan Clay GJS; 10 Jan Minnehaha CA; 12 Jan Stanley RDO; 25 Jan Stanley RDO; 27 Jan Clay GJS; 24 Feb Minnehaha CA

**White-crowned Sparrow** All Reports: 15 Dec Yankton MRZ; 20 Dec Charles Mix RM  
**Red-winged Blackbird** reported 04 Jan Butte JLB; 11 Jan Charles Mix KP; 12 Jan Stanley RDO; 14 Jan Brookings KCJ; 16 Jan Brookings KCJ; 19 Jan Charles Mix KP; 19 Jan Clay DS; 12 Feb Jones SS  
**Western Meadowlark** reported 18 Dec Jones ND; 28 Dec Lincoln MRZ; 03 Jan Roberts BJU; 12 Jan Stanley RDO; 01 Feb Lyman CA; 08 Feb Hughes KM, RDO; 11 Feb Hyde SS; 17 Feb Douglas KP  
**Rusty Blackbird** reported 04 Jan Butte JLB; 05 Jan Brookings KCJ; 12 Jan Stanley KM; 22 Jan Lyman ND; 25 Jan Hughes RDO; 25 Jan Turner CA  
**Brewer's Blackbird** All Reports: **16 Dec Brown GO; 23 Dec Turner KP; 17 Feb Douglas KP**  
**Common Grackle** All Reports: 01 Dec Stanley RDO; 21 Dec Potter RDO, SS; 03 Jan Marshall BJU; 17 Feb Potter RDO, SS  
**Brown-headed Cowbird** All Reports: **18 Dec Gregory RM; 13 Feb Charles Mix RND, RM**  
**Purple Finch** reported 17 Dec Perkins ND  
**Red Crossbill** All Reports: 14 Dec Meade JLB; 17 Dec Pennington JLB; 29 Dec Pennington RSL  
**Common Redpoll** Only Report: 03 Jan Marshall BJU

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

**Barrow's Goldeneye** 11 Jan Charles Mix RDO  
**Great Black-backed Gull** 20 Feb Hughes SS  
**Peregrine Falcon** 17 Dec Perkins ND; 23 Feb Harding CEM  
**Common Raven** 14 Dec Charles Mix KP  
**Pacific Wren** 31 Dec Pennington RSL; 01 Jan Pennington RSL  
**Common Yellowthroat** 04 Dec Pennington MMM

**Species Expected But Not Reported**

Tundra Swan, Blue-winged Teal, Ruddy Duck, Greater Sage-Grouse (4), Northern Bobwhite, Horned Grebe, Eared Grebe, Sandhill Crane, Black-legged Kittiwake (2), Franklin's Gull, Mew Gull, Barn Owl (3), Red-headed Woodpecker, Pinyon Jay, Winter Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet (3), Mountain Bluebird, Varied Thrush (2), Gray Catbird (4), Vesper Sparrow (2), Swamp Sparrow, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Great-tailed Grackle (3), Gray-crowned Rosy Finch (2), Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill, Evening Grosbeak

**Contributing Observers**

CA	Chris Anderson	JSP	Jeffrey S. Palmer
DB	Doug Backlund	BP	Barry Parkin
JLB	Jocelyn L. Baker	KP	Kelly M. Preheim
AKB	Anna K. Ball	DGP	D. George Prisbe
RND	Roger N. Dietrich	MS	Mark Schmidtbauer
ND	Nancy Drilling	GJS	Gary & Jan Small
CLG	Canyon Lake Group	WS	Waubay NWR Staff
AH	Alice Hill	SS	Scott Stolz
KCJ	Kent C. Jensen	EDS	Eileen Dowd Stukel
RSL	Richard S. Latuchie	OCW	Outdoor Campus West Survey
RM	Ron Mabie	DS	David Swanson
PM	Peggy McNamara	BJU	Bill J. Unzen
MMM	Michael M. Melius	SW	Scott Weins
CEM	Charlie Miller	MRZ	Mick Zerr
EEM	Ernest E. Miller		
KM	Kenny Miller		
GO	Gary Olson		
RDO	Ricky D. Olson		

# BOOK REVIEW

DAN TALLMAN

**Rare Birds of North America.** Steve N. G. Howell, Ian Lewington and Will Russell. 2014. Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ. 428 pp. Hardcover.

**R***are Birds of North America* by Steve N. G. Howell, Ian Lewington and Will Russell, is a fascinating book that most birders will enjoy. The bulk of the book consists of large, lavish, color illustrations of the approximately 262 birds that have appeared in North America five times or fewer. This total is a tad confusing, since the authors consider a flock of rare birds seen but once as a single occurrence. The book also includes a few records that are not officially accepted by the ornithological community.

This coverage presents something of a conundrum since most birders are unlikely to encounter such rare species. But browsing this book presents a perfect opportunity for armchair birders to daydream about rare birds and about traveling to where the birds might be found. Presumably by knowing what rare birds look like, birders will be prepared to identify them if the birds are found. On the other hand, having all these illustrations may make it easier for birders to make mistaken identifications.

Species accounts include a summary of where these rare birds have been seen, their taxonomy, and their distribution. Field marks and similar species are also discussed. Finally short statements about the birds' habitat and behavior are included.

The 41-page introduction (out of 428 pages in the book) makes for interesting reading. Highlights include a long discussion of the definition of a vagrant bird. Vagrants may be typed into seven classes (e.g., drift or overshooting). These definitions come complete with world maps with hypothetical routes rare birds may have taken to North America. The result is illustrations of paths that look eerily like routes taken by lost jetliners.

Another fascinating graphic indicates those areas in which vagrants are most likely to be encountered. Best areas to look for rare birds? Alaska, British Columbia, and the Pacific Coast of the United States. The Northeast Coast is good for rarities too, but, surprisingly second to the Upper Midwest and the Canadian provinces. Where do these rare birds originate? If you answer "Latin America," as I did, you would be wrong! Fifty-one percent come from the Old World, almost twice as many as the 33% from the New World. Pelagic species come in at a distant 16%.

This hardbound book costs \$35.00, but can be bought on-line at a substantial discount. An eBook version is also available.



# NOTABLE SIGHTINGS

RICKY D. OLSON

This last late winter/ early spring was quiet with the only rarity reported was **Great Black-backed Gull**, in Pierre and at Clear Lake, Minnehaha County—both adults.

In April, a **White-winged Dove** showed up in Rapid City.

In May a **Black-throated Gray Warbler** near Pine Ridge SD started a rare warbler parade. A **Louisiana Waterthrush** was seen in Stanley County. Then a **Cerulean Warbler** was photographed in Clay County, soon followed by a **Prairie Warbler** in Rapid City. And— a feeder in Sisseton gave us South Dakota's first record of **Hermit Warbler**.

A male **Painted Bunting** appeared briefly near Madison and a **Green-tailed Towhee** was reported near Whitewood.

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## THE MYSTERY OF THE 1913 JOURNAL: PART ONE

by John Triana

*This is Part One of an article I am submitting to SD Bird Notes. It recounts the search for the author of a journal dated 1913. The summer entries are of birds observed by the author in the northern Black Hills and surrounding plains.*

*The first part concerns the trials encountered by John Triana of the New Haven Bird Club in solving the mystery of who authored the journal, as it was unsigned. The New Haven Bird Club, established in 1907, is located in New Haven, CT.*

*I thought people would enjoy the article as it appeared in The Chickadee, the newsletter of the New Haven Bird Club, in the October 2011 issue. Part Two will include both the bird species seen and the locations. ~ Ricky D. Olson*

In March 2011, I received notice through Patrick Comins of Audubon Connecticut about a notebook filled with bird observations around the New Haven area from 1913. The book was in the possession of Don Beimborn of Minnesota. Don scanned the cover and a couple of the pages with notes. He also noticed that there were notes from the author's trips to New Hampshire and South Dakota. Don said that a friend gave him the notebook a few years ago since they knew he was a birder. The friend was more interested in the glass case that held the journal. From what they recalled, the glass case and notebook were not originally together. Finally, he noted that there were no names in the journal. As the historian of the New Haven Bird Club, I was immediately interested in seeing more and digging into the mystery of whose it was. Don agreed to send me the notebook and I eagerly gave him my address.

Once I received the journal, I started combing through the details. The journal didn't just have a few notes about some hikes to look for birds. This was a complete daily record of each and every bird the author saw in 1913. It also listed the author's location each day and the weather. In addition to the observations from New Haven, the author went to Middletown (CT), South Dakota, New York, and Tilton (NH). Some patterns emerged from looking at his travels. The author

started the year in Tilton, then came down to Connecticut where he would spend weekends in Middletown and weekdays in New Haven. Once the summer arrived the author took the trips to South Dakota and New York. He made a quick trip back to New Hampshire in September before returning to the Middletown/New Haven pattern. Finally, the author made his way back to Tilton for Christmas.

My first instinct was to assume that a NHBC member was the author. This seemed logical since so many of our members took trips looking for birds. I started looking through our archives and elsewhere for clues about where likely candidates were in 1913. If they were in one or more of the locations mentioned in the journal, that would be a good sign. However, if they were in a place NOT mentioned in the journal, it would be even better since I could eliminate that person from contention. That was the beauty of a notebook with so much detail.

I ran through the big names...Herbert K. Job – took pictures in Manitoba in July... nope. Dwight Pangburn – rode his motorcycle out to Buffalo and Kansas City.... not him. Louis Bishop, Freeman Burr, Clifford Pangburn, Edgar Stiles, Orville Petty, Philip Buttrick, Aretas Saunders, Albert Honywill, William Prentiss....none of them could be the author since there was evidence they were in other places during 1913 that were not mentioned in the journal. While I was going through the NHBC names, I was also reaching out to people in South Dakota to see if I could attack the problem from another angle. Several people responded, but it was clear that they were either interested in history or birds, but not both. Finally, I found someone who had an interest in both fields. Ricky D. Olson of Ft. Pierre, SD, didn't just express a general interest in the topic. He put in many hours looking through old hotel ledgers, newspapers, and other records. I promised that I would supply him a copy of all the South Dakota records in the journal.

By mid-April we couldn't find any solid lead in Connecticut or South Dakota. When it looked like all roads were blocked, I had thought...if this guy was so into birds, did he participate in the 1913 Christmas Bird Count? And if so, where? I checked the journal's December 25<sup>th</sup> record. He was in Tilton, New Hampshire. I checked the 1914 Bird Lore edition that gave the 1913 CBC results and....there was one record for Tilton, NH. Ding! Next, I cross-referenced that record with the journal....Canadian Ruffed Grouse...CBC-3, Redpoll...CBC-6, Journal-6, and on it went. Perfect matches. There was no doubt. The 1913 Tilton, NH CBC was done by three men – George L. Plimpton, Ernest R. Perkins, or Edward H. Perkins. In an instant, I whittled down the list of possible authors from millions to three.

Now that I had these names, I had to learn more about these men. They were all in Tilton, NH at Christmas 1913, but could I figure out if one of them went to South Dakota that summer? Could I determine if one of them attended Yale, but stayed with family in Middletown over the weekends?

First I tried to track down George L. Plimpton. He was not the famous author. That George Plimpton would not be born until 1927. Through census records, I found that George Lincoln Plimpton was a teacher and head master at a seminary/prep school in Tilton. In 1913 he had a wife and three kids. Lastly, one more important fact...he was an 1891 graduate of Wesleyan. That was a nice connection to Middletown, but I couldn't find any connection to Yale and New Haven. Next was Ernest R. Perkins and Edward H. Perkins. Again from the census records, I learned that Ernest and Edwards were brothers living in Tilton. In 1913, Edward would

have been 26 and Ernest would have been 19. Both were good indicators that they were at or near college age. I couldn't find any link to Wesleyan through online records for either brother. However, I did find a record of an Edward H. Perkins getting a graduate degree from Yale in 1919.

After more effort on Ernest turned up nothing, I aimed my sights on Edward. Could the Edward who earned a degree in 1919 have been the same guy from Tilton? My first find was that this Edward got his degree in geology and then went briefly to Rhode Island State College. After that, I found him teaching geology at Colby College in Maine. I found an article in the May-June 1922 edition *Bird Lore* from the same Edward H. Perkins. The author spoke about a chickadee taking a dust bath in an old robin's nest in Tilton, NH, several winters previous. That cinched it! The Edward who got a degree in geology at Yale in 1919 was the same guy who grew up in Tilton, NH.

All signs now pointed to Edward, but what about the Middletown connection? George had a Middletown connection through Wesleyan. Maybe the Perkins brothers did as well. I sent an email inquiry to the Wesleyan alumni office. That was forwarded to Suzy Taraba, the Head of Special Collections and University Archivist. Her email closed the case:

Dear Mr. Triana,

Your inquiry to the alumni office was forwarded to me.

As luck would have it, all three men you name are Wesleyan alumni. We don't have much information about any of them, but I can tell you what each was doing in 1913.

1. George L. Plimpton, Class of 1891 – from 1896 on, he was the principal of the Tilton Seminary, Tilton, NH.
2. Edward H. Perkins, Class of 1912 – in 1913, he was a graduate student at Yale; he spent his whole career teaching geology.
3. Ernest R. Perkins, Class of 1917 – in 1913, he was a freshman at Wesleyan; after graduation he went into the army and later became a journalist and, later still, after receiving a master's degree from Clark University, taught history and economics.

Edward was definitely the author of the journal. In 1913 he was a graduate student at Yale, but spent the weekends, probably with his brother, in Middletown. In the summer of 1913, he took a trip out to South Dakota. During the holidays, he went back to see his family in Tilton, NH. On Christmas Day 1913, he participated in the Christmas Bird Count in Tilton with his brother and the headmaster of a local school.

Since I could never find any connection between Edward and the NHBC, I decided that the journal should go back to the family.....if I could find them. I got back into the genealogical research searching for any living descendants. I hit paydirt when I found the obituary of Elizabeth Perkins Stanley, daughter of Edward. Unfortunately, she passed away in July 2003. However, her obituary noted that she was survived by a husband and five kids. Current information seemed to indicate that her husband, Walter C. Stanley, was still alive in Maryland with a couple of their kids. I wrote letters to them. No response. I tried again. A few days later I was

rewarded with a phone call from Walter C. Stanley of Gaithersburg, Maryland. We had a great and long conversation. He stated that he never met his father-in-law, since Edward died in 1936 and he didn't meet Elizabeth until 1949. Walter noted that he had Connecticut roots, growing up in Connecticut and attended Yale. He also mentioned that there was a bird sanctuary at Colby College named after his in-laws.

Having found everything I needed to find, all the mysteries were solved. I put the journal into the mail, heading back to the family of Edward Perkins. The circle was now complete.



*Edward Perkins, '12  
Author of the Journal*

*Courtesy Wesleyan University*



1913 Journal – cover

1913 Journal ~  
page 12

## THE FROZEN RABBIT

by Alice Hill, Worthing

As I returned from work, I saw the rabbit. It was lying on the high side of our ditch next to the road, the victim of a passing car. As I have gardened for forty years, I was not immensely upset. However, I did not want any more victims, so I grabbed a shovel. I moved the rabbit to the north side of an island bed, in the middle of our yard. Admittedly, I was interested to see what would come to eat the rabbit—free range cat, crow, coyote? There it lay, untouched and frozen for five days.

On April 9, my husband came in from getting the paper and said ice covered the ground and walking was risky at best. The freezing rain continued off and on all day, along with our electricity. We could see the tree branches cracking and breaking under the weight of the ice. Some of the tree branches held our bird feeders. We had a lot of birds, as winter visitors had not all left and spring birds had started to arrive. To try and feed as many birds as possible, we scattered seed on the ground under anything that would afford them some cover.

We had seen a female Northern Harrier across the road for two days before the ice started. She would fly low over the fields rocking back and forth, hunting. We have also seen males in the spring over the same field.

On April 10, the second day of the ice storm, the harrier looked very wet and hungry. I was surprised when I saw her land in our yard. I had forgotten about the rabbit and it was completely covered with ice now. Could she see it through the ice, or had she seen it before the ice and remembered it was there? We watched through the window, while she used her beak and claws to chip the ice away. I wanted to help her, but knew if I went outside she would leave. Luckily, this window was only half covered with ice and I was able to take some pictures, without disturbing her. She returned many times that day to feed on the frozen rabbit.

On Friday before dark, I walked out to take a look at the rabbit. There was nothing left but fur and bones. We hope our determined Northern Harrier survived and maybe we will see her again this April—in better weather.

The ice storm of 2013 was devastating for people, wildlife and trees. I know we will never forget it. Not only for the full month it took to cut and clear broken tree branches, but also the great pictures it provided.

I added two new native sparrow pictures to our list, Field and Vesper. We had an amazing eight native sparrows at the same time in our yard. Awesome !!!

Now in prayers, I include the rabbits — occasionally.

## THE 2014 SDOU SPRING MEETING IN MILBANK

by Nancy Drilling

The Spring 2014 meeting of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union was held at the Lantern Inn and Motel in Milbank, 23-26 May. There were 46 attendees, who enjoyed the excellent field trips and evening activities. The meeting started off Friday evening with a presentation by local biologist Dennis Skadsen on the tallgrass prairie of northeast South Dakota. Dennis pointed out that prairie fragmentation and destruction not only impacts birds but also other wildlife such as butterflies. At least two butterfly residents of the area – the Poweshiek Skipperling and Dakota Skipper – are threatened and have become species of special concern. The Saturday night program was given by Minnesotan Al Batt, a nationally-known writer, humorist, birder and conservationist. Al's humorous stories on birders, Midwesterners, and life in general kept the audience laughing and nodding in recognition. Al was also able to join one of the Sunday morning field trips and everyone enjoyed the opportunity to bird with a new friend.

Saturday and Sunday field trips went to Hartford Beach State Park and surrounding wetlands, the private prairie and coulees at the former Blue Cloud Abbey near Marvin, Salt Lake (Deuel County, SD/Lac Qui Parle, Minnesota), LaBolt Lake and several Grant County wetlands. Optional field trips on Sunday afternoon and Memorial Day went to Sica Hollow State Park and Waubay National Wildlife Refuge/Pickerel Lake. In general, while Saturday produced many migrant warblers, it seemed that on Sunday migration was winding down, even though the weather was excellent. Observers found a few migrant shorebirds, but songbird migration clearly was nearing an end. Nevertheless, a respectable total of 160 species was observed, including four species seen only in Minnesota at Salt Lake (the lake is mostly in Minnesota, but the "best" birding is along the South Dakota shore). One highlight was the Pileated Woodpecker, a species which has an extremely limited range in the state. At least one bird was seen or heard at Hartford Beach State Park and at the former Blue Cloud Abbey grounds with fresh sign found at LaBolt dam in Grant county. The list of species seen during the meeting is at the end of this article, on page 55.

The SDOU Fall 2014 Meeting will be held in Vermillion, SD, 3-5 October, 2014. The 66th Annual SDOU Spring 2015 Meeting will be in Spearfish. More details will be available in the upcoming months.



*Looking for Veery in Mysterious Sica Hollow*

SPECIES LIST: SDOU SPRING MEETING 23-26 MAY 2014

Greater White-fronted Goose	Hudsonian Godwit	Sedge Wren
Snow Goose	Sanderling	Marsh Wren
Canada Goose	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Wood Duck	White-rumped Sandpiper	Eastern Bluebird
Gadwall	Pectoral Sandpiper	Veery
Mallard	Dunlin	Swainson's Thrush
Blue-winged Teal	Wilson's Phalarope	Gray-cheeked Thrush
Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal	Wilson's Snipe	Wood Thrush
Hybrid	Franklin's Gull	American Robin
Northern Shoveler	Ring-billed Gull	Gray Catbird
Northern Pintail	Black Tern	Brown Thrasher
Canvasback	Rock Pigeon	European Starling
Redhead	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Cedar Waxwing
Ring-necked Duck	Mourning Dove	Tennessee Warbler
Lesser Scaup	Great Horned Owl	Nashville Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Eastern Screech-Owl	Yellow Warbler
Ruddy Duck	Common Nighthawk	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Ring-necked Pheasant	Chimney Swift	Magnolia Warbler
Wild Turkey	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Canada Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Red-headed Woodpecker	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Eared Grebe (MN only)	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Blackburnian Warbler
Horned Grebe (MN only)	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Blackpoll Warbler
Western Grebe	Downy Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler
Clark's Grebe	Hairy Woodpecker	American Redstart
American White Pelican	Northern Flicker	Ovenbird
Double-crested Cormorant	Pileated Woodpecker	Northern Waterthrush
American Bittern	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Mourning Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Common Yellowthroat
Great Egret	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Scarlet Tanager
Snowy Egret	Least Flycatcher	Spotted Towhee
Cattle Egret	Willow Flycatcher	Chipping Sparrow
Green Heron	Alder Flycatcher	Clay-colored Sparrow
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Eastern Phoebe	Field Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Great Crested Flycatcher	Vesper Sparrow
Bald Eagle	Western Kingbird	Lark Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Eastern Kingbird	Savannah Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Loggerhead Shrike	Grasshopper Sparrow
Broad-winged Hawk	Yellow-throated Vireo	Song Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Warbling Vireo	Swamp Sparrow
Swainson's Hawk	Philadelphia Vireo	Northern Cardinal
Cooper's Hawk	Red-eyed Vireo	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
American Kestrel	Blue Jay	Indigo Bunting
American Bittern	American Crow	Dickcissel
Virginia Rail (MN only)	Horned Lark	Bobolink
Sora	Purple Martin	Red-winged Blackbird
American Coot	Tree Swallow	Western Meadowlark
Sandhill Crane (MN only)	Northern Rough-winged	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Killdeer	Swallow	Common Grackle
American Avocet	Bank Swallow	Brown-headed Cowbird
Spotted Sandpiper	Cliff Swallow	Orchard Oriole
Greater Yellowlegs	Barn Swallow	Baltimore Oriole
Lesser Yellowlegs	Black-capped Chickadee	House Finch
Upland Sandpiper	White-breasted Nuthatch	American Goldfinch
Marbled Godwit	House Wren	House Sparrow



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