
SOUTH DAKOTA Ornithologists' Union

Yellow-crowned Night Heron

Minnehaha County, 5/22/10

Photo: Terry Sohl



S O U T H



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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

By the time you read this issue of *South Dakota Bird Notes*, the 2010 Spring Meeting in Sioux Falls will have taken place. All of us, the members of SDOU including myself, as President, am particularly aware that at each meeting we hear the treasurer's report and the costs of running the organization. The largest cost is *South Dakota Bird Notes*. Looking into the future, publishing costs will no doubt continue to rise and as the largest expense that our dues pay for, *Bird Notes* thus will continue to contribute significantly to the rise of those dues.

At the same time, technology has changed our lives with computers and telecommunications: in other words, the digital revolution. Cellular phones and computers are now in most homes. The computer has since led to e-mail and the web. With a cell phone you can access your e-mail and even search the web. The age of information has led to instant messaging, search engines to look for information and to research nearly anything without having to leave the comfort of your home. The new younger generation(s!), say under 40, now do almost everything digitally and have little to do with hard copies.

In addition, with Facebook, Twitter and You-tube for communicating and seeking out or sharing information, teens (and others!) rarely see a printed document and, indeed, will continually text message each other rather than talk to each other even when in close proximity. This explosion is likely to balloon even more exponentially in the future.

With all this in mind, I think that *South Dakota Bird Notes* should become a digital journal to be produced in electronic format only. It would cost nearly nothing to produce. Even though there are members who do not have computers, these few members could certainly go to their public library to browse or even to download a copy. Several other state birding organizations already produce their newsletters and journals in digital format only, or charge a substantial premium for mailed hard copies.

Presently, all previous issues of *South Dakota Bird Notes* can be accessed on the SDOU website, including the very first issue. Dan Tallman can be thanked for this time-consuming task. However, without a search engine, pinpointing a particular article or searching a particular word cannot be done. In the future, though, with the cost savings of "going digital" we could pay for a large enough server to house a vastly more intricate website, including a search engine and searchable, clickable hyperlinks.

Also, as the organization continues to grow and new members join they will be tuned into the information age while the use of hardcovers and copies will not be wanted. Even now, IPODs, MP3s and electronic books have gigabytes of information in very small and portable storage modules. Hard copies of journals, books, and CDs use volumes of space and require many natural resources to store. Thus, the younger generations who will be joining in the future will not only refuse to use hard copies, they will not have any idea how to access any other mode than digital.

As South Dakotans we are at times resistance to change, but we certainly understand frugality. So, as we head into the future, now is the time to take the leap and go digital with *South Dakota Bird Notes*.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the thoughts that I put before you.



FROM OUR PAST...

...IN *SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES*

L. M. BAYLOR

Vol. 4 No. 1

March 1952

While this first issue of *SD Bird Notes* for 1952 is rich with interesting information, this review will focus mainly on two charter members involved with bird banding.

The cover page features Dr. J. F. Brenckle and his specially developed warbler trap. Then, in the section "Pioneer Prairie Ornithologists", Dr. Brenckle's daughter, Beatrice Brenckle Davis, provides biographical details about her father.

Born in 1875 and raised in Milwaukee, WI, Brenckle graduated from Milwaukee Medical College in 1897 and opened his medical practice at Webster, SD. At this location, according to his daughter, "He was thrilled to find great abundance of plant and animal life on the seemingly empty prairies. His long trips to



*Blackburnian Warbler; South Padre Island, Texas.
Photo: Mike McDowell, 5/02/04*

isolated patients provided wonderful opportunities for observation.... Return trips were often enhanced by detours and explorations."

Subsequently, Dr. Brenckle moved his practice to Kulm, ND. Then during World War I, he served in the U. S. Army Medical Corps. After that service he returned to Kulm but in 1923 he moved his practice to Northville, SD and still later to Mellette, SD.

While at North Dakota, Brenckle developed a friendship with Dr. O. A. Stevens, a biologist at the university in Fargo. Through Stevens' sponsorship, Brenckle became a licensed bird bander. In his daughter's words, her father "banded with great interest and unlimited energy, always mindful of the welfare of the birds, observant of special markings and habits of all species, and taking great joy in the first banding of a species as well as in the many 'repeat' visits by birds he had banded before."

Dr. Brenckle has the distinction of having developed a unique water trap for warblers. As his daughter reported, "His design for a six-celled water trap was

developed from his observations of warblers and other birds which would not enter a trap horizontally. The traps themselves were developed under his expert, patient hands in his own workshop." With this device, where water drips into a pan and thus attracts birds that enter from the top, he caught and banded hundreds of warblers, including the Myrtle, Blackpoll, Magnolia, Yellow, Tennessee and Orange-crowned. Among less frequently occurring species, he banded the Blue-winged, Blackburnian and Black-throated Green.



Harris's Sparrow.
Photo: Terry Sohl

The daughter concluded her account with the comment that her father, as a charter member, welcomed SDOU's formation as a means to further organized bird study in South Dakota. In 1952, Dr. Brenckle kept "several traps in operation, all with undiminished interest and energy".



Blackpoll Warbler
Photo: Terry Sohl

Another charter member of SDOU, W. B. Mallory, the organization's first secretary, was also a bird bander. In the March 1952 issue of *SD Bird Notes*, Mallory contributed a lengthy article titled "The Harris's Sparrow in South Dakota". Drawing upon knowledge derived from his bird banding and from literature about the Harris's Sparrow, Mallory discussed its plumage phases and migratory occurrences at Lennox, SD. Mallory calculated that the Harris's Sparrow represented about 40% of all sparrows that he banded, with about 4.5 times as many individuals banded during

the fall migration compared to the number banded during spring migration.

Author note: *I had the privilege to see the Brenckle warbler trap in operation during the 1957 warbler migration at Harold Wagner's banding station in Winner, SD. The trap's success was phenomenal. While nets have largely replaced mechanical traps, the Brenckle trap would still work and probably would be less stressful for the birds than the entanglement in nets may cause. A plan for the Brenckle water trap is in the SDOU archives at the Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, Sioux Falls.*

WHOOPING CRANES SIGHTED NEAR GEDDES, SD

Ron Mabie, PO Box 182, Pickstown 57367

I observed a flock of Whooping Cranes (*Grus Americana*), from 5-10 April 2010, during a stopover northeast of Geddes, South Dakota. Eleven adults were seen on 5, 6 and 10 April: nine were seen on 8 and 9 April; and seven were seen on 7 April. One of these cranes had a solid green band on its left leg, above the knee. From information received from the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), I learned that this crane is a breeding female they identified as G-YbY (now known as G-nil as only the green band remains). The cranes



All eleven Whooping Cranes observed near Geddes South Dakota, April 2010. A rarely seen large group in migration.

Photo: Bill Bossman

had been seen in the area since 2 April and I believe they left the area on 11 or 12 April when the winds turned southerly. I wasn't there on the eleventh but I searched the area on 12 April for them without success.

G-nil was banded as a chick in Wood Buffalo National Park, Ontario, Canada, on August 8, 1987, which makes her 23 years old (the life span in the wild is estimated by FWS to be 22 – 24 years). She was observed in Saskatchewan, Canada, on three occasions: 3 May 1989; 18 – 29 September 1991, and 2 – 12 October 1991. She was also observed in the United States on three other occasions: 30 October 1995 at Cheyenne Bottoms State Wildlife Area in Kansas; 22 October 2005 south of Hazen, North Dakota and 11 April 2006 at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge in Kansas.

The Whooping Crane is the rarest of the world's fifteen crane species. They occur exclusively in North America, where there are two wild, migratory flocks. The Eastern migratory flock was reintroduced in 2001 from eleven captive-bred chicks and currently

numbers about 105 birds. The Western migratory flock, to which G-nil belongs, is a natural, self-sustaining flock which currently has about 263 birds. This flock was down to only fifteen wild, migratory cranes in 1941 and every Whooping Crane alive today is a descendent of them. Most of these cranes migrate singly, in pairs, or in very small flocks, which makes the Geddes flock unusual.

The nesting grounds of the Western migratory flock were accidentally discovered in June 1954 by a helicopter pilot who was on his way to a forest fire in Wood Buffalo NP. The nesting grounds are not restricted to Wood Buffalo NP and span the Alberta/Northwest Territories border. The wintering grounds are at Aransas NWR, approximately 40 miles from Corpus Christi, Texas. G-nil usually resides here in the Middle Pond. This migration is approximately 2,600 miles each way.

The Whooping Crane is accidental in summer in South Dakota and is classified as a rare migrant, with most observations in the central part of the state (Swanson , et al. 2002). Although no nesting records are known, Whooping Cranes probably nested in northeast South Dakota, since they bred within 25 miles of the state line in both southeastern North Dakota (Stewart 1975) and west central Minnesota (Roberts 1932) and, within seventy miles of South Dakota, in northwestern Iowa (Cooke 1914), (Swanson, et al. 2002). According to data retrieved from the SDOU Online Seasonal Bird Observation Report System, there have been forty-three Whooping Crane sightings in eighteen South Dakota counties since 1970. The median early and late spring sighting dates are 16 April.

It has been said that you never know when a gift will just drop out of the sky. For me, this crane sighting was one of those rare days.

Acknowledgements:

Natalie Gates, Martha Tacha and Dr. Karine Gil-Weir, of the FWS, for sharing their records of the Whooping Crane known as G-nil.

Literature Cited:

Tallman, D. A., Swanson, D. L. and Palmer, J.S. (2002). *Birds of South Dakota, Third Edition*, SDOU.



BOOK REVIEW

DAN TALLMAN

ILLUSTRATED BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA FOLIO EDITION. Jon L. Dunn and Jonathan Alderfer. (2009). National Geographic Society: Washington, DC. \$50.00. 503 pp.

Because most *SD Bird Notes* readers are very familiar with the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, I shall limit this review to a few important topics rather than a full description. For similar reasons, I will include only a few comparisons with this guide's closest competitor, Sibley's *Guide to North American Birds*.

What sets this book apart is its size. Based on the fifth edition of the Geographic guide, this version is about 9 x 12 inches: a field guide on steroids! The publisher hyperbolically gushes "in the grand-scale Audubon tradition, the book's generous page size showcases... meticulously rendered bird paintings—by 20 contemporary bird artists—in striking detail..." Well, maybe not as grand as Audubon, but the format does present the birds of North America in a new and refreshing format. There will be no argument that this folio edition is too large to take out into the field. Why would you need a bird guide this big? For studying and teaching! I have already used it in the back of my van to show visitors the salient field marks of the birds I am banding.

This folio edition approaches the Sibley's stated goal of showing all plumages of North American birds. Although he included more plumages than other guides, Sibley fell short of this goal. The National Geographic guide also depicts a wide variety of plumages. Therefore, birders interested in seeing the widest variety of plumages will do well to own both books. (The folio edition, for example, depicts ten Horned Lark races.) Furthermore, Sibley does not identify the scientific names of races. National Geographic often does.

The strength of Sibley is his uniformly excellent illustrations. In the National Geographic book, artwork varies from poor sparrows in front of too much habitat to spectacular warblers. There are color problems, especially with some of the blue hues (see, for example, the waxwing plate). The plate showing the Yellow Warbler and *Oporornis* species seems to me to be, of all things, way too yellow. This flaw may be the result of sloppy printing. Whatever your opinion of the talent of each artist, certainly the artists deserve more than just an index at the end of the book. It is difficult to connect the artists with their work. Surely there is room on the large plates for at least their initials next to the birds that they have painted.

The large range maps are simply delightful. The maps have been updated since the last edition of the National Geographic guide. Unfortunately, they lack the depictions of vagrant ranges included so imprecisely in Sibley's book, leaving me thinking that imprecision is better than nothing. Perhaps it is just my old eyes, but it is a relief to escape the very small range maps found in other guides. You could easily mark these maps with the locations of the birds you've checked on your life lists (and write down date and locations of your various sightings).

The folio edition is available at many larger bookstores; you should make an effort to check it out. I am sure you will enjoy studying it in the comfort of your den and using it to emphasize field marks to friends with whom you share your joy of birding. *Dan Tallman, 2120 Taylor Ct., Northfield MN 55057.*

BOOK REVIEW

DAN TALLMAN

SHOREBIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA, EUROPE, AND ASIA. Richard Chandler. (2009). Princeton University Press, Princeton. \$35.00. 192 pp, Softbound.

This photographic guide (hereafter referred to as Chandler) covers 134 shorebirds found in the northern hemisphere. It features more than 850 stunning color photographs and includes species accounts that describe field marks, status, habitat, taxonomic variation, calls, and distribution. Each account is accompanied by a color distribution map.

This volume will augment any birder's identification library. The book is, however, very similar to *Shorebirds of North America* by Dennis Paulson (or Paulson in this review), which I reviewed in the December 2005 issue of *South Dakota Bird Notes*. The books are so similar, in fact, that my review of Paulson's book probably well describes this book too. I previously wrote, "for birders of all abilities, this guide will aid shorebird identification....it should be brought into the field whenever you have a chance of seeing shorebirds."

However, I did find a few differences between the two books. First, of course, *Shorebirds of North America, Europe, and Asia* covers more species than does *Shorebirds of North America*. Yet, in the coverage of individual species, the more inclusive book does not seem to have sacrificed numbers of photographs. The Paulson book does include photographs of shorebirds that are not included (although mentioned) in Chandler: an Eskimo Curlew and a hybrid American x Black oystercatcher. On the other hand, with its larger coverage, the Chandler text treats many more species unfamiliar to North American birders.

Chandler has better introductory behavior and molt sections in the front of the book. Unlike the similar but much shorter passages in Paulson, these sections are illustrated with photographs in Chandler. Although both books contain references, neither cites them in their texts (although Chandler includes them after each species account).

Where Chandler falls short, however, is in the organization of the book. The groups of shorebirds are color-coded at the top of each page (e.g., "Calidris and related sandpipers") but the individual species of shorebird are only identified on the first page of each account. Chandler rarely identifies the species in each of his figure legends. Therefore, if you are not on the first page of a species account, it is often challenging to decipher what shorebird is being discussed. On the other hand, almost every photograph in Paulson is clearly labeled as to species.

Birders will probably want to own both books so that they have a larger library of photographs on which to base their identifications. The Long-toed Stint is an Asian bird theoretically possible to find in South Dakota (it is occasionally seen in winter along the Pacific Northwest coast). Chandler clearly shows that its longest toe is longer than the tarsis (and its bill is shorter than the tarsis). In the field, I always have trouble seeing much of anything about sandpiper toes. On one superb Chandler photograph you can see the webbed toes of a Semipalmated Sandpiper. Some birders have told me to identify Semipalmated Sandpipers by their webbed toes. Reading Chandler taught me that Western Sandpipers also have semipalmated toes!

Shorebirds of North American, Europe, and Asia will be a welcome volume to any birder's library of identification guides. The book is relatively inexpensive and has a lot to offer any shorebird enthusiast.

SDOU Spring Meeting in Sioux Falls

21-23 May, 2010 • Douglas Chapman, Sioux Falls, SD

The 2010 SDOU Spring Meeting was held 21-23 May, 2010, in Sioux Falls. Hosted by the Sioux Falls Bird Club, over fifty attendees were treated to some very good birding, conversation, programs and a hearty, tasty banquet meal at the Sertoma Butterfly House next door to the Outdoor Campus building.

Sioux Falls Bird Club member and retired ornithology professor at Augustana College in Sioux Falls Dr. Gilbert Blankespoor started the conference on Friday evening, speaking on *Sioux Falls Vicinity Birds; Then: Early 20th Century and Now: Early 21st Century*. This presentation concentrated on which species had declined and which had increased due to habitat changes and various weather and farming practice changes over one hundred years.

The bird of the weekend was undoubtedly an adult, breeding-plumaged Yellow-crowned Night-Heron found at the Outdoor Campus by SDOU member Pat Dunn [see front cover of this issue]. His new scope really paid off! Most all of the meeting participants were treated to excellent views of this rare vagrant to South Dakota. Previous South Dakota sightings are from Yankton Co. (1984), Brown Co. (1991, 1999, 2000 and 2006); Charles Mix Co. (2003); Sanborn Co. (2005). This Minnehaha County sighting makes the fifth county where Yellow-crowned Night-Heron has been observed in South Dakota.

Chris Wood, one of four project Leaders for the eBird Project of the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology was the Saturday banquet speaker. His presentation on the uses and value of participation in the eBird Project to conservation efforts worldwide was not only fascinating, but should generate a great deal of new reporting by South Dakota birders. Conservationists helping with efforts involving the present BP oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico are being aided by data collected by eBird.



Hudsonian Godwit

Photo: Terry Sohl



Mourning Warbler, Magee Marsh, Ohio

Photo: Michael Retter

For information on eBird contact any of the local Regional Editors (yours truly is the Regional Editor for South Dakota) or the web site: www.ebird.org. This site is easy to use and contains nearly anything a birder could hope for by way of information regarding birds.

Saturday and Sunday morning field trips were well-attended. Dr. Gilbert Blankespoor led a group to the potholes area west of Sioux Falls. His aim was to combine sighting the birds with what their surroundings told about them: a complete story. This way, birders can learn to spot which habitats may be likely for which avian species. Gil's extensive knowledge of both the birds and botany led to an informative interdisciplinary trip.

SDOU President Todd Jensen led a group to the City Parks of Sioux Falls, which included the Outdoor Campus, Elmwood Park, Great Bear Recreational Area, Perry Nature Area and private land. The Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was found on this tour [see front cover of this issue]. Cooper's Hawk showed well, Scarlet Tanager at Outdoor Campus and at Great Bear Recreation Area. Perry had nesting Yellow-throated Vireo. Chestnut-sided Warbler, Bobolinks, Northern Waterthrush, and other birds were among the highlights seen and heard.

Doug Chapman led a third group to Newton Hills State Park, with a stop at a pre-scouted flooded field. At this field, participants were treated to very good looks at shorebirds, including Hudsonian Godwit (11), White-rumped (35), Least (21), Baird's (1) and Pectoral (42) sandpipers and resplendent breeding-plumaged Dunlin (13). A lone Semipalmated Plover was among the many Killdeer feeding. Once we arrived at Newton Hills State Park, we heard Yellow-throated Vireo, and then saw them very well. Baltimore Oriole, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Indigo Bunting and Rose-breasted Grosbeak sang from nearly every available tree or shrub. Warblers were the main targets and did not disappoint! Over forty Tennessee Warbler and over forty American Redstart were seen and heard! An American Redstart nest was found by Kenny Miller and Mark Otnes right on the Sargeant Creek Trail. Five Blue-winged Warblers were seen and heard—the largest number of this rare South Dakota species



Blue-winged Warbler, Central Park, NYC

Photo: Lloyd Spitalnik

seen in the state and were life birds for most participants. Singing Ovenbird provided the chorus for the drive through the high slopes of Newton Hills.



Bay-breasted Warbler, Magee Marsh, Ohio

Photo: Michael Retter

Scarlet Tanagers, always a participant favorite, were seen well and elicited sighs of delight at their incredible beauty. A duetting pair of Barred Owls were seen perched together for a time. So were Ruby-throated Hummingbirds; one male was on the same perch both trips! Black-billed and Yellow-billed cuckoos were heard, though neither showed themselves.

For a grand weekend of birds and learning and meeting area birders, thanks go out to the Sioux Falls Bird Club for a well-planned and executed meeting and to the membership of SDOU for great bird spotting and sharing those sightings.

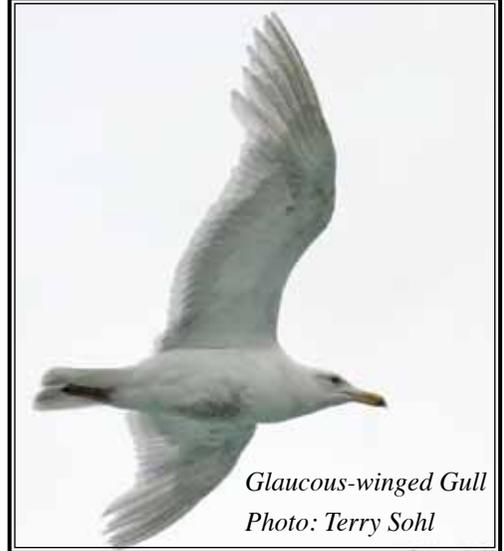
The SDOU Fall meeting was set for 8-10 October, 2010. The 2011 Spring Meeting of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union is scheduled to be held in Lemmon, South Dakota. Dates as well as more details will be available as soon as details are determined. See you in Vermillion this fall. See page 44 for a complete list of species seen at the meeting.

Birds in South Dakota

New on the state checklist since 2002

Anna's Hummingbird

Photo: Robert Druckrey



Glaucous-winged Gull

Photo: Terry Sohl

Great Black-backed Gull

Photo: Jerry Acton



Yellow-billed Loon

Photo: Doug Backlund

There are currently nine bird species accepted by the Rare Bird Records Committee not in the *Birds of South Dakota, Third Edition (2002)* book.

Black-bellied Whistling Duck

Lincoln Co.; 7/2009

Yellow-billed Loon

Charles Mix Co.; 12/2008

Ivory Gull

Hughes Co.; 2/2008

Great Black-backed Gull

Sully Co.; 4/2006

Glaucous-winged Gull

Stanley Co.; 1/09

Magnificent Hummingbird

Meade Co.; 6/2005

Costa's Hummingbird

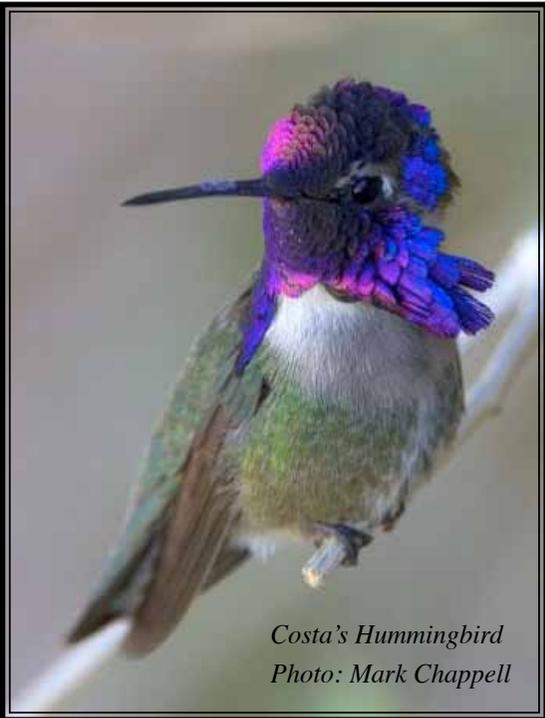
Lawrence Co.; 9/2005

Anna's Hummingbird

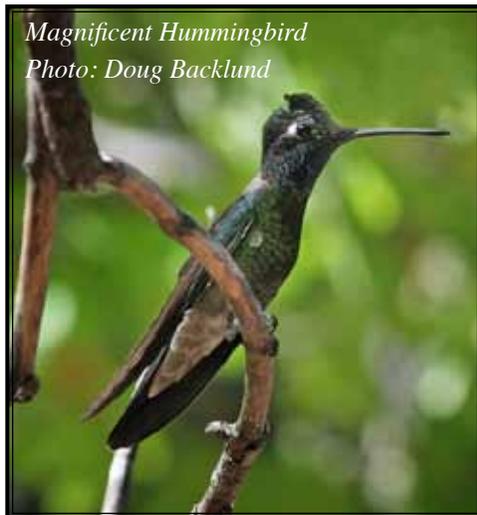
Pennington Co.; 10/2008

Flammulated Owl (Hypothetical previously)

Custer Co.; 5/2002



Costa's Hummingbird
Photo: Mark Chappell



Magnificent Hummingbird
Photo: Doug Backlund

This list does not include those species accepted as Hypothetical in South Dakota (see SDBN, June 2009).

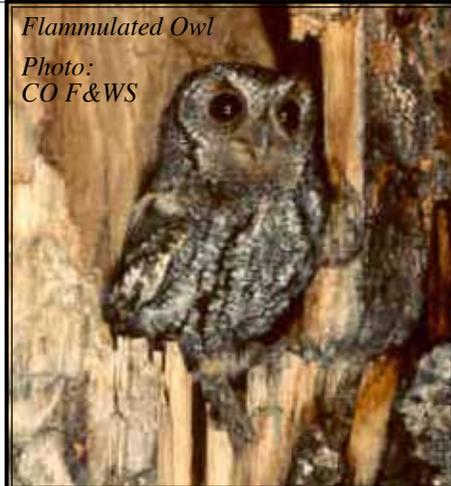


Black-bellied Whistling Duck
Photo: Douglas Chapman

Keep your eyes open and you may be the next birder to provide additional documentation for a species new to the South Dakota checklist.



Ivory Gull
Photo: Doug Backlund



Flammulated Owl
Photo:
CO F&WS

A Great Day on the Birding Train

Mick Zerr, Sioux Falls

What the heck is a birding train? An offer from my brother, who is an environmental scientist for the Lower Chippewa River Alliance in Wisconsin, to go on a birding train was more than I could pass up. The birding train, I learned, is a motor car train that takes birding folks into an inaccessible wilderness, with guidance by master birders, geologists, historians, etc. It is run by a non-profit group, the Chippewa Valley Motorcar Association.

In this case, the wilderness area was the Tiffany Bottoms in southwestern Wisconsin. Located at the confluence of the Chippewa and Mississippi rivers, it is around 13,000 acres of continuous bottomland hardwood riparian forests surrounded by mixed deciduous and coniferous forest on large, unglaciated hills reminiscent of the Black Hills of South Dakota. The area is 290 miles from Sioux Falls. No motorized vehicles are permitted, so the only access is the train. The cost ranges from \$25 to \$40, depending on which group is sponsoring the trip. The 2 May trip was for birders to see early migrants and watch the Sandhill Cranes' mating ritual. The late May trips see over eighty species, including fifteen species of warbler.

Arriving at Durand, we drove a few miles south to the train embarkment area. As we pulled in, the area was swarming with birders, as the train can accommodate up to sixty birders. Binoculars jingled everywhere, and every morph of bird field guide was present. Many folks were carrying pads to sit on. As we found out, they were the wise, as we were the unwise, since the train bumps on the rails a lot.

The little train sat waiting, with seven open gang cars, three cars with roofs, and two motor engines. The caboose consisted of a porta-potty on a flat car. Each car held eight birders. Following the train was a medical car, which was a fast motor car that could rush a sick person back to the entrance for medical treatment or evacuation. The conductor greeted us, giving a brief outline of the day, and introduced us to our guides, including Steve Betchkal, columnist for *Birders' World* magazine, as our birding guide, and Sean Hartnett, of the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, as our geography/geology guide. We were told to watch out for Black Bears, but no one ever saw one.

We were informed that the train would travel at about ten mph. Thus, it can make numerous stops, allowing birders to hike to specific hot spots, including prairie areas, marshes, and wooded areas. We were told to expect a minimum of forty species, which we exceeded. Each stop had different species and beautiful scenery. At our first marsh spot, we found nesting Sandhill Cranes, our major target bird. Each pair was nesting quite far apart, and would sound very loud calls when something entered their



The Birding Train at a Stop
Photo: Mick Zerr



The Birding Train Caboose
Photo: Mick Zerr

territory. A pair would stand ten feet apart and “talk” to each other, no doubt making fun of the birders. Ruffed Grouse called in the background as Eastern Bluebirds landed all around us. When a loud, tinny sound erupted, a binocular investigation showed it to be a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker drumming on a metal fence to impress a mate, or maybe to impress birders. Singing in the trees was a Warbling Vireo, and squawking behind us was a Pileated Woodpecker.

As we passed over a deep trestle, a Bald Eagle swooped down into its nest, carrying food for the nestlings. Its mate soared over us. A hawk was soaring with the eagle, and we hoped it was a Red-shouldered, which was one of our target birds, but it was too far distant to be sure. Pileated Woodpecker sculpture was seen on

endless trees and, rarely, one of these giants of the family would be seen flying away.

The train took us seven miles into the Bottoms. As flocks of Wild Turkeys scurried off the tracks, a group of Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs with a lone Wilson’s Phalarope flew by toward a large sand bar on the river. The Chippewa River has many large sandbars and islands, as it is fast flowing and a thousand feet wide. It is 185 miles long and pristine. Living up to its name, a Solitary Sandpiper foraged in the sand. An eagle was spotted grabbing a fish from the river while a jealous Great Blue Heron watched. Hiking to the prairie edge to see the Lark and Field Sparrows, Towhees, and early warblers, we had to be careful not to step on the Wild Ginger and other protected native plant species.

After six hours with binoculars at our eyes, we rounded up those who had drifted a bit far, and watched as the caboose porta-potty was turned around so it could be hooked up at the end. As we sped back to our starting point at twenty miles per hour, across the river from the train we could see the beautiful Five-Mile Bluff Prairie hills. Located on 300-foot high river bluffs, Five-Mile Bluff Prairie contains an excellent dry prairie overlooking the Chippewa and Mississippi Rivers. The area is great for migrating hawk watching. The Tiffany Bottoms is part of a large, connecting system of natural areas and refuges surrounding the Mississippi and Chippewa confluence. On the southwest edge of Tiffany Bottoms is the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge. Just over 240,000 acres of wooded islands, marshes, and backwaters comprise the Refuge. It includes the largest delta floodplain forest in the upper Midwest. Some of the other connected areas are the Driftless Area National Wildlife Refuge and Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge. In total, there are more than 300,000 acres of protected natural areas.

For a brief photo journal of the trip, go to:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/siouxfalls/sets/72157623882170931/show/>

To see trip schedules, go to:

<http://www.chippewavalleymotorcarassociation.ellawisc.com/>

All organizations involved are non-profit.

SDOU Spring Meeting Checklist • 21-23 May 2010 Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Snow Goose	Wilson's Phalarope	Gray Catbird
Cackling Goose	Franklin's Gull	Brown Thrasher
Canada Goose	Least Tern	European Starling
Wood Duck	Black Tern	Cedar Waxwing
Gadwall	Common Tern	Blue-winged Warbler
Mallard	Rock Pigeon	Golden-winged Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Tennessee Warbler
Northern Shoveler	Mourning Dove	Nashville Warbler
Northern Pintail	Black-billed Cuckoo	Yellow Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Redhead	Great Horned Owl	Magnolia Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Barred Owl	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Lesser Scaup	Common Nighthawk	Black-throated Green Warbler
Ruddy Duck	Common Poorwill	Blackburnian Warbler
Gray Partridge	Whip-poor-will	Bay-breasted Warbler
Ring-necked Pheasant	Chimney Swift	Blackpoll Warbler
Wild Turkey	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Black-and-White Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Belted Kingfisher	American Redstart
American White Pelican	Red-headed Woodpecker	Prothonotary Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Worm-eating Warbler
American Bittern	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Ovenbird
Great Blue Heron	Downy Woodpecker	Northern Waterthrush
Great Egret	Hairy Woodpecker	Connecticut Warbler
Snowy Egret	Northern Flicker	Mourning Warbler
Cattle Egret	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Common Yellowthroat
Green Heron	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Canada Warbler
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Yellow-breasted Chat
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Alder Flycatcher	Scarlet Tanager
Turkey Vulture	Trail's Flycatcher	Spotted Towhee
Osprey	Least Flycatcher	Eastern Towhee
Northern Harrier	Eastern Phoebe	Chipping Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Say's Phoebe	Clay-colored Sparrow
Broad-winged Hawk	Great Crested Flycatcher	Field Sparrow
Swainson's Hawk	Western Kingbird	Vesper Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Eastern Kingbird	Lark Sparrow
American Kestrel	Yellow-throated Vireo	Savannah Sparrow
Peregrine Falcon	Blue-headed Vireo	Grasshopper Sparrow
Sora	Warbling Vireo	Le Conte's Sparrow
American Coot	Philadelphia Vireo	Song Sparrow
Black-bellied Plover	Red-eyed Vireo	Lincoln's Sparrow
American Golden-Plover	Blue Jay	Northern Cardinal
Semipalmated Plover	American Crow	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Piping Plover	Horned Lark	Blue Grosbeak
Killdeer	Purple Martin	Lazuli Bunting
American Avocet	Tree Swallow	Indigo Bunting
Greater Yellowlegs	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Bobolink
Lesser Yellowlegs	Bank Swallow	Red-winged Blackbird
Willet	Cliff Swallow	Western Meadowlark
Spotted Sandpiper	Barn Swallow	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Upland Sandpiper	Black-capped Chickadee	Common Grackle
Hudsonian Godwit	White-breasted Nuthatch	Great-tailed Grackle
Semipalmated Sandpiper	House Wren	Brown-headed Cowbird
Least Sandpiper	Sedge Wren	Orchard Oriole
White-rumped Sandpiper	Marsh Wren	Baltimore Oriole
Baird's Sandpiper	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (Eastern)	House Finch
Pectoral Sandpiper	Eastern Bluebird	American Goldfinch
Dunlin	Veery	House Sparrow
Stilt Sandpiper	Gray-cheeked Thrush	
Long-billed Dowitcher	Swainson's Thrush	TOTAL = 179
Wilson's Snipe	Wood Thrush	
American Woodcock	American Robin	

SEASONAL REPORTS

The 2009-2010 Winter Season

Compiled By: Jeffrey S. Palmer

01 December 2009 to 28 February 2010

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

There were 135 species, including 5 rarities, reported during the season. The ten-year (1999-2008) average is 133. Below, I have tried to highlight the more significant sightings (dates that are earlier/later than listed in *South Dakota Birds* by Tallman, Swanson, and Palmer, species that are out of range, and species that have been reported less than regularly over the last 10 winter seasons). Included at the end is a list of species (25) that were not reported this year and might be expected during the Winter Season. A species is placed on the list if it was not reported this year but had been reported during winter in at least 2 of the previous 5 years. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of consecutive years (up to 4) that the species has appeared on the list during the winter season.

Greater White-fronted Goose All Reports: 05 Dec Lake JSP; 19 Dec Lake JSP

Snow Goose reported 04 Jan Stanley RDO; 20 Dec Yankton RM; 19 Dec Lake JSP

Ross's Goose All Reports: 05 Dec Day GO; 06 Dec Hughes KM

Cackling Goose reported 05 Dec Lake JSP; 20 Dec Pennington JLB; 30 Dec Lyman JSP; 31 Dec Hughes BJU; 04 Jan Stanley RDO; 17 Jan Stanley DB

Wood Duck reported 29 Dec Hughes JSP; 09 Jan Pennington RSL; 13 Jan Charles Mix RM; 23 Jan Hughes RDO; 23 Jan Yankton DS; 31 Jan Stanley DB; 04 Feb Pennington JLB

Gadwall reported 05 Dec McCook JSP; 07 Jan Stanley RDO; 14 Jan Pennington JLB; 22 Jan Hughes RDO; 22 Jan Yankton RND; 28 Jan Pennington JLB

American Wigeon reported 04 Jan Hughes SS; 10 Jan Stanley DB; 14 Jan Pennington JLB; 18 Jan Stanley JLB; 23 Jan Pennington RSL

American Black Duck All Reports: **10 Jan Stanley KM; 11 Jan Charles Mix RM**

Northern Shoveler reported 20 Dec Pennington JLB; 03 Jan Stanley KM; 19 Jan Meade EEM; 23 Jan Stanley RDO

Northern Pintail reported 31 Dec Hughes BJU; 03 Jan Stanley KM; 18 Jan Stanley RDO; 19 Jan Charles Mix RM

Green-winged Teal All Reports: 05 Dec Brookings BFH; 19 Dec Fall River ND; 23 Jan Yankton DS

Canvasback All Reports: 19 Dec Stanley RDO; 29 Dec Hughes JSP; 31 Jan Stanley KM

Redhead reported 04 Jan Hughes SS; 10 Jan Stanley DB; 14 Jan Pennington JLB; 17 Jan Stanley DB; 28 Jan Pennington JLB; 28 Feb Charles Mix RM; 28 Feb Yankton RND

Ring-necked Duck reported 05 Dec McCook JSP; 04 Jan Stanley RDO; 14 Jan Pennington JLB; 23 Jan Stanley KM, RDO; 28 Jan Pennington JLB; 28 Feb Yankton RND

Greater Scaup reported 04 Jan Hughes SS; 05 Jan Stanley KM; 18 Jan Stanley RDO

Lesser Scaup reported 01 Dec Meade EEM; 02 Dec Beadle *fide* BFW; 04 Jan Hughes SS; 10 Jan Stanley KM, DB; 17 Jan Stanley DB

Long-tailed Duck reported 10 Jan Stanley RDO, KM; 12 Jan Charles Mix RM; 14 Jan Hughes RDO, KM; 17 Jan Stanley DB; 18 Jan Hughes KM; 19 Jan Charles Mix RM

Bufflehead reported 02 Dec Beadle *fide* BFW; 11 Jan Charles Mix RM; 13 Jan Stanley RDO; 14 Jan Pennington JLB; 18 Jan Stanley RDO; 28 Jan Pennington JLB; 02 Feb Hughes KM

Hooded Merganser reported 05 Jan Minnehaha MRZ; 10 Jan Stanley DB; 11 Jan Charles Mix RM; 14 Jan Pennington JLB; 18 Jan Hughes JLB; 18 Jan Stanley RDO; 26 Jan Charles Mix RM; 15 Feb Pennington JLB; 27 Feb Minnehaha TJ, MRZ

Red-breasted Merganser reported 31 Dec Hughes BJU; 11 Jan Charles Mix RM; 13 Jan Stanley RDO; 19 Jan Charles Mix RM; 22 Jan Hughes RDO; 22 Jan Yankton RND

Ruddy Duck All Reports: 01 Dec Meade EEM; 11 Dec Stanley KM; **19 Dec Stanley RDO**
Greater Sage-Grouse Only Report: **08 Jan Butte CEM**
Greater Prairie-Chicken reported 16 Jan Kingsbury JSP
Western Grebe All Reports: 01 Dec Meade (3) EEM; 04 Dec Hughes DB; 05 Dec Hughes KM; 06 Dec Hughes RDO; **04 Jan Hughes SS**
American White Pelican reported 06 Dec – **23 Jan Stanley KM, RDO, DB, JSP**
Double-crested Cormorant reported 05 Dec Charles Mix RM; 20 Dec Stanley DB
Great Blue Heron Only Report: 04 Dec Faulk MMM
Northern Harrier reported 02 Jan Brown GO; 05 Jan Lyman RDO; 10 Jan Butte RSL; 17 Jan Stanley DB, KM, RDO; 23 Jan Meade RSL; 24 Jan Pennington RSL
Cooper's Hawk reported 01 Jan Hughes RDO, KM; 02 Jan Brown GO; 03 Jan Meade EEM; 13 Jan Minnehaha TJ; 10 Feb Meade EEM; 20 Feb Brown GO; 27 Feb Minnehaha MRZ
Northern Goshawk reported 02 Jan Brown GO; 02 Jan Stanley RDO; 08 Jan Charles Mix RM; 17 Jan Hughes KM; 20 Feb Brown GO
Ferruginous Hawk reported 09 Jan Pennington JLB; 10 Jan Jones DB; 10 Jan Stanley DB; 16 Jan Hughes KM, RDO; 17 Jan Stanley DB; 29 Jan Jones DB
Golden Eagle reported 06 Dec Faulk MMM; 15 Dec Beadle BFW
Merlin reported 17 Dec Lake JSP; 31 Dec Hyde BJU; 10 Jan Sully KM; 11 Jan Hughes KM; 17 Jan Stanley DB; 22 Jan Hughes RDO; 29 Jan Jones DB
Gyrfalcon reported 05 Dec Stanley DB; 10 Jan Lawrence JLB; 14 Jan Hughes RDO; 17 Jan Stanley DB, KM, RDO; 23 Jan Hughes KM; 29 Jan Jones DB
Prairie Falcon reported 10 Dec Faulk MMM; 16 Jan Kingsbury JSP
American Coot reported 29 Dec Hughes JSP; 05 Jan Stanley KM; 09 Jan Pennington RSL, JLB; 22 Jan Yankton RND; 28 Jan Pennington JLB
Sandhill Crane Only Report: **05 Dec Stanley DB**
Wilson's Snipe All Reports: 14 Dec Meade EEM; 18 Dec Pennington MMM; 19 Dec Fall River ND; 23 Jan Yankton DS
Bonaparte's Gull reported 19 Dec Stanley RDO; 19 Dec Charles Mix RM; 13 Dec Hughes DB
Mew Gull Only Report: **31 Dec Hughes and Stanley BJU**
Ring-billed Gull reported 30 Dec Gregory RM; 06 Jan Stanley RDO; 08 Jan Hughes RDO; 28 Feb Yankton RND
California Gull reported 05 Dec Charles Mix RM; 31 Dec Stanley BJU; 31 Dec Hughes BJU; 17 Jan Stanley RDO
Thayer's Gull reported 31 Dec Hughes BJU; 06 Jan Stanley RDO; 27 Jan Stanley RDO
Lesser Black-backed Gull All Reports: **05 Jan Stanley KM; 06 Jan Stanley RDO**
Glaucous Gull reported 30 Dec Gregory RM; 03 Jan Stanley KM, DB; 08 Jan Hughes RDO; 27 Jan Stanley RDO; 30 Jan Hughes JLB
Mourning Dove All Reports: 05 Dec McCook JSP; 19 Dec Minnehaha MS
Eastern Screech-Owl reported 19 Dec Fall River ND; 19 Dec Hughes KM; 20 Dec Stanley DB; 05 Feb Lake JSP; 20 Feb Meade EEM
Snowy Owl All Reports: 08 Jan Potter MMM; 26 Feb Stanley KM; 27 Feb Stanley KM; 28 Feb Stanley DB
Long-eared Owl All Reports: 06 Dec Faulk MMM; 16 Dec Custer MMM; 19 Dec Fall River ND; 19 Dec Lawrence RSL; 31 Dec Minnehaha DB; 31 Jan Sully KM
Short-eared Owl reported 12 Dec Miner JSP; 15 Dec Custer MMM; 29 Dec Pennington MMM; 02 Feb Hughes KM; 06 Feb Pennington JLB; 27 Feb Custer MMM
Northern Saw-whet Owl reported 07 Dec Hughes DB; 02 Jan Stanley RDO, KM; 16 Jan Stanley DB; **27 Feb Minnehaha TJ**
Belted Kingfisher reported 05 Dec Brookings BFH; 19 Dec Fall River ND; 03 Jan Pennington RSL; 04 Feb Pennington JLB; 07 Feb Custer RSL; 27 Feb Lawrence JLB; 27 Feb Meade EEM
Lewis's Woodpecker All Reports: **12 Dec Lawrence JLB; 16 Dec Pennington JLB; 20 Dec Pennington JLB; 03 Jan Lawrence JLB; 15 Feb Pennington JLB**

Red-headed Woodpecker All Reports: **06 Dec Hughes DB; 03 Jan Lawrence JLB; 27 Feb Lawrence JLB**

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker Only Report: 19 Dec Charles Mix RM

Black-backed Woodpecker Only Report: **21 Dec Meade AKB**

Pileated Woodpecker reported 27 Feb Day GO

Gray Jay All Reports: 20 Dec Pennington ND; 02 Jan Meade AKB; 26 Feb Pennington MMM; 27 Feb Lawrence RDO

Pinyon Jay All Reports: 07 Dec Meade APB; 17 Jan Meade APB; 08 Feb Meade APB

Black-billed Magpie reported 04 Dec Hughes DB; 05 Dec Stanley DB

Pygmy Nuthatch All Reports: **11 Feb Pennington JLB; 15 Feb Pennington JLB; 20 Feb Pennington RSL; 21 Feb Pennington RSL**

Canyon Wren All Reports: 16 Dec Pennington JLB; 18 Dec Meade APB; 20 Dec Pennington JLB; 15 Feb Pennington JLB

American Dipper Only Report: 27 Feb Lawrence RDO

Eastern Bluebird reported 01 Jan Tripp RAP; 09 Jan Gregory JSP; 11 Jan Charles Mix RM; 31 Jan Charles Mix RM

Hermit Thrush All Reports: 02 Dec Stanley RDO; 11 Dec Hughes KM; 30 Dec Pennington JLB; 31 Dec Pennington RSL

Gray Catbird Only Report: **11 Dec Charles Mix RM**

Yellow-rumped Warbler All Reports: 19 Dec Hughes KM; **06 Feb Lake JSP; 07 Feb Lake JSP; 18 Feb Lake JSP**

Spotted Towhee Only Report: **11 Dec Hughes KM**

Fox Sparrow Only Report: **19 Dec Minnehaha MRZ**

Song Sparrow All Reports: 14 Dec Meade EEM; 19 Dec Hughes KM; 30 Dec Pennington JLB

Swamp Sparrow Only Report: **12 Dec Yankton DS**

White-throated Sparrow All Reports: 03 Dec Lake JSP; 12 Dec Lake JSP; 15 Dec Lake JSP

Harris's Sparrow All Reports: 11 Dec Clay GJS; 19 Dec Meade JLB; 06 Jan Clay GJS; 20 Jan Clay GJS; 12 Feb Clay GJS

White-crowned Sparrow Only Report: 04 Jan Charles Mix RM

Red-winged Blackbird reported 02 Jan Brookings JSP; 03 Jan Lawrence JLB; 04 Jan Charles Mix RM; 10 Jan Butte RSL; 16 Jan Kingsbury JSP; 17 Jan Hughes KM; 20 Jan Clay GJS

Western Meadowlark reported 19 Dec Meade EEM; 05 Jan McCook RDO; 10 Jan Stanley DB; 10 Jan Sully KM; 28 Feb Yankton RND

Yellow-headed Blackbird Only Report: **27 Dec Hughes DB**

Rusty Blackbird All Reports: **17 Dec Stanley RDO; 19 Dec Lake JSP; 26 Dec Clay DS; 02 Jan Brookings JSP**

Common Grackle reported 24 Dec Lake JSP; 27 Dec Charles Mix RM; 01 Jan Clay GJS; 01 Jan Hughes RDO, KM; 23 Jan Hughes RDO; 07 Feb Lake JSP; 12 Feb Clay GJS

Brown-headed Cowbird All Reports: **12 Dec Miner JSP; 31 Dec Beadle BJU; 07 Jan Clay GJS**

Gray-crowned Rosy Finch Only Report: **07 Jan Pennington RSL**

Cassin's Finch All Reports: **20 Feb Pennington RSL; 21 Feb Pennington RSL; 22 Feb Pennington RSL**

Red Crossbill reported 11 Feb Codington BJU

White-winged Crossbill All Reports: **27 Feb Minnehaha TJ; 28 Feb Minnehaha MS, MRZ**

Common Redpoll All Reports: 03 Dec Minnehaha MRZ; 15 Dec Beadle BFW; 31 Dec Hyde BJU

Evening Grosbeak All Reports: 21 Dec Meade ND; 03 Jan Lawrence (65) RSL; 28 Feb Pennington RSL

Reports Requiring Acceptance By The Rare Bird Records Committee

Harlequin Duck 31 Dec – 07 Jan Hughes and Stanley BJU, KM, RDO, DB, SS

Black-legged Kittiwake 10-31 Dec Hughes and Stanley SS, DB, KM, RDO, JSP, BJU

Iceland Gull 23 Dec Stanley RDO

Pileated Woodpecker 05 Dec Brookings BFH; 13 Feb Brookings JSP

Field Sparrow 15 Dec Beadle (13) BFW

Great-tailed Grackle 02 Jan Lincoln (5) TJ

Species Expected But Not Reported

Trumpeter Swan, Surf Scoter (4), White-winged Scoter, Barrow's Goldeneye, Ruffed Grouse (2), Common Loon (2), Pied-billed Grebe (4), Horned Grebe (2), Virginia Rail, Killdeer (2), Dunlin, Franklin's Gull (2), Barn Owl, Barred Owl (4), American Three-toed Woodpecker, Clark's Nutcracker (3), Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren (3), Mountain Bluebird, Varied Thrush, Brown Thrasher (3), Bohemian Waxwing, Brewer's Blackbird, Pine Grosbeak

Contributing Observers

DB	Doug Backlund	GO	Gary Olson
JLB	Jocelyn L. Baker	RDO	Ricky D. Olson
APB	Addison & Patricia Ball	JSP	Jeffrey S. Palmer
AKB	Anna K. Ball	RAP	Richard A. Peterson
RND	Roger N. Dietrich	MS	Mark Schmidtbauer
ND	Nancy Drilling	GJS	Gary & Jan Small
BFH	Bill Huser	SS	Scott Stolz
TJ	Todd Jensen	EDS	Eileen Dowd Stukel
RSL	Richard S. Latuchie	DS	David Swanson
RM	Ron Mabie	BU	Bill Unzen
MMM	Michael M. Melius	BFW	Bridgette Flanders-Wanner
CEM	Charlie Miller	SW	Scott Weins
EEM	Ernest E. Miller	MRZ	Mick Zerr
KM	Kenny Miller		



Northern Shrike
Photo: Terry Sohl

FLEDGLING TRACTS

TUCKER J. LUTTER

Other Creatures Along the Way

When I was trying to think of a birding story to write for this issue, I had a hard time finding something “different” to write about. I eventually decided to write about something that I am sure many other birders can relate to—the interest in many different aspects of nature that birding often brings as a sideline.

Birding is for the most part an outdoor sport, and when the birds are few and far between, the attention is sometimes turned towards the other creatures inhabiting the forest, prairie, or wetland that we are visiting. Our curiosity gets roused when an unknown butterfly flies by, or a mink runs across the road, or when we stumble across a beautiful flower or tree. Wanting to be able to put a name to every bird we see and wanting to be able to know more about them often rubs off on many other aspects of nature. And it even helps with discovering bird’s habitat needs.

One group of animals that is very popular with young and old birders alike are the creatures of the order Lepidoptera, also known as butterflies and moths. For some reason, the study of these creatures has seemed to have caught on in the world of birders. South Dakota has around 170 species of butterflies, many of which, such as the Canyon Wren, can be found within the state only in the Black Hills region. Whether it’s the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, the Regal Fritillary, or the Dakota Skipper, the state is blessed with a nice variety of butterflies which can keep someone busy for years trying to identify these tiny and often skittish creatures. Whether you are birding at Custer State Park, Makoce Washte Native Prairie, Sica Hollow State Park, Spirit Mound Historic Prairie, or any other place and it is summer, there are sure to be a few butterflies around. And, best of all, the hotter and sunnier the better—not always the best birding weather, but great for butterflies.

A group of animals that I personally enjoy very much as well are mammals. Birding often puts people in close proximity with creatures such as coyote, red fox, and mule deer, which are just a few of South Dakotas many native fur-bearers. The best chance for people to see mammals is usually at night, so it comes as no surprise that owling might be a good way to catch some of the more nocturnal mammals such as striped skunk, northern raccoon, and various bats. Black-footed ferret and swift fox are also thrilling mammals to sight in South Dakota.

Last fall my dad and I were sitting on a fishing pier at 2:00 am on the north side of Spirit Lake in Iowa when a chilling north wind started up. As the light breeze pushed southward, along with it came a flight of warblers. As I sat there and listened, I heard a number of other animals including northern raccoon, coyotes, and a weird late night talk show about aliens. On the drive back to the campground after not hearing any owls, I saw something scurry onto the road—a raccoon which was lucky to be alive since we almost hit it! And then came another animal—a striped skunk and then yet another raccoon! A productive night indeed! This is just one instance when looking for birds turned into looking at a different part of nature.

Butterflies and mammals are just two examples of the many amazing discoveries to be seen while out birding. Don’t forget to stop and take a look from time to time at the amphibians, reptiles, flowers, and all other plants and animals when you’re out looking for birds; you might be surprised at what you see.

MEET A SOUTH DAKOTA BIRDER:

ROSEMARY DRAEGER, SIOUX FALLS

Rosemary Draeger is a Southern California product. She grew up in Pasadena, but spent her summers right on the beach in Long Beach. Her first memories of birds are a few species seen with her father and three uncles. “We kids thought they were weird, with their binoculars and get-up.” One uncle, Agee Shelton, was a long-serving National Audubon Society Board Member. Two uncles also raised exotic pheasants, including Golden and Lady Amherst’s. Her favorite birding spot in California is Huntington Beach’s Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve where she still thrills to see her favorite California bird in action—the Black Skimmer.

Southern California provided interesting birds, though she did not really start noting them intensely until moving to South Dakota. Soon after, at the Lake Oahe Marina camping site north of Pierre, she noticed a group of birds from a picnic table and focused on them. From the colorful, sleek, upright posture she was able to identify the bird in a guide book. The bird was a Cedar Waxwing, and she was hooked. This was the spark which led to her deeper interest in birds.

This awakening occurred after she and husband Bill moved to SD in 1974. Bill is “interested in birds” as well, but “is less avid.” He usually is one of her team for the Sioux Falls Audubon Christmas Bird Count.



*Rosemary Draeger in her back yard,
Sioux Falls.*

Joining the South Dakota Ornithologists’ Union in 1991, she is the current SDOU treasurer. Before this important function, she served as SDOU vice-president from 2004-2006 and then as president from 2006-2008.

Rosemary and fellow SDOU board member Linda Johnson have worked together on several studies as part of the citizen science programs for the state. Of particular note are the Breeding Bird Surveys she and Linda did for Newton Hills State Park, Sica Hollow State Park, the Oak Ridge/Wilson Savannah area and the Adams Preserve. Previous to these surveys, they worked together on an American Dipper breeding bird search in the creeks of the Black Hills. “We spent a lot of time wading deep in cold, rushing water,” she says with a fondness only a bird lover could muster (or understand).

Rosemary has travelled extensively to enjoy the birds in several US states, Mexico, and in the Caribbean: Belize, the Cayman Islands and Bonaire. In February, 2010, she and husband Bill travelled to Costa Rica for a Central American

birding adventure and saw nesting Resplendent Quetzals. But she says with heart-felt conviction that her favorite place to bird is still South Dakota. Her favorite birding spot remains Newton Hills State Park in southeast South Dakota.

The Draegers have nine bird feeders in their yard: three sunflower, two thistle, two suet, an “owl table” feeder and a peanut feeder. Rosemary credits the peanuts for her success in attracting Red-breasted Nuthatches in winter. The “owl-table” is a small platform table which features owls on the base; Rosemary gives her grandchildren bird seed to set out on this kid-sized table. An enviable yard list of seventy-seven bird species (includes Rose-breasted Grosbeak), plus nine more fly-over species, is a sure indication of success. She keeps the squirrels out of her bird feeders (it’s “mostly effective”) by setting out dried ears of corn on a tree stump on the far side of her yard.

Her once most desired to see bird was a Whooping Crane which she and Bill saw recently and very well in Nebraska. She has a strong desire for a “better view of a Least Bittern than a fast fly-by” which she barely had the opportunity to glimpse.

Rosemary is tireless in her pursuit for the protection and appreciation of birds and has accomplished much for South Dakota’s birds. For the South Dakota Department of Tourism she produced three excellent South Dakota Birding Trail guides. Locally, on the Sioux Falls Bike Trail one icy New Year’s Day, she met another person coming the opposite way, and, as he also had binoculars around

his neck, they stopped and spoke. The man was Jon Little, who, with Rosemary and the help of Jon’s friend Dr. Gilbert Blankespoor of Augustana College, re-launched the then dormant Sioux Falls Bird Club. The club has been growing ever since, with such important accom-



Whooping Cranes, “Dancing”

plishments as funding a birding blind at Dewey Gevik Natural Area west of Sioux Falls which was featured on a field trip at the SDOU Spring Meeting 21-23 May 2010 at the Sioux Falls Outdoor Campus. The club hosted this event.

Thank you from all of us, Rosemary, as you keep focused on SDOU and the world of birds. *Douglas Chapman, Sioux Falls.*



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Yellow Warbler Minnehaha Co., 06/20/09	Back Cover
Photo: Suzie Rusch	