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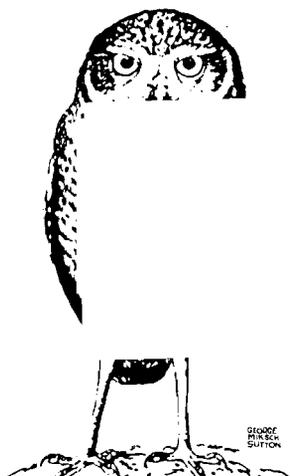
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Table of Contents on the Back Cover

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GREATER SCAUP IN LANCASTER COUNTY

On October 20, 1990, Paul and Karla Kaufman spotted a Greater Scaup in Lancaster County. The following is a report from Paul Kaufman regarding this occurrence:

The bird was a male, first spotted off Lieber's Point at Branched Oak Lake. It was a cloudy day with fair light, light rain, and north winds 15 to 20 mph, temperature 52° F. The sighting was in the early afternoon. We observed the Scaup with our 15-60 zoom spotting scope while looking for anything on the lake. After our initial sighting of it, it moved closer in to shore, which we felt was unusual. We were studying the bill shape trying to make out the large nail at the tip as we were already fairly convinced it was a Greater Scaup based on the head shape (profile with flatter forehead) and broad looking bill. As the bird neared shore, we became aware that the "nail" we were seeing on the end of the bill wasn't a nail at all. The tip of the Scaup's bill had been shot off, probably with a shotgun (it was during hunting season). The bird kept moving toward shore, and we kept watching it. At one point it raised its wings, revealing the white stripe on its secondaries, which extended well out into the primaries, which confirmed our identification of Greater Scaup.

The bird was alone and eventually came all the way up to shore. It weakly pulled itself out of the water and onto the bank. It preened for a short time, and we could see obviously bloody feathers on its breast and flanks. Before we left, it put its head over its back as if to roost. I do not believe it would have survived the night. We felt it was very sad that this beautiful bird had to die such an awful death.

---Paul Kaufman, 1101 No. 78th, Lincoln, NE 68505

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER IN BUFFALO COUNTY

On May 9, 1991, while doing a weekly least tern and piping plover survey, we observed two Black-bellied Plovers (*Pluvialis squatarola*). The birds were observed foraging along the shoreline of a sandpit near Elm Creek, Nebraska. The birds were viewed through a 30X spotting scope at approximately 25 yards. The white rump observed on one of the plovers characterizes the birds' summer phase. The white rump is one characteristic which helps distinguish it from the Lesser Golden Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*). The coloration of the other plover was a drab gray and brown.

---John Shadle and Ron Wagnitz, Nebraska Public Power District, 1414 15th Street, Columbus, NE 68601

**NOU FALL FIELD DAY
SEPTEMBER 13-15, 1991
MAHONEY STATE PARK NEAR ASHLAND, NE
SEE THE NOU NEWSLETTER FOR FURTHER DETAILS!**

THE AMATEUR: FINDING A NICHE IN ORNITHOLOGY*

The older branches of science were all pioneered by amateurs, but as they matured they have moved steadily away from the reach of the individual working alone with his own resources. As the need for laboratories, observatories, and support staff have grown, science has become increasingly the province of professionals and institutions.

In ornithology, however, the amateur is still a significant figure. Perhaps no other branch of science owes so much to the amateur, not only in current contributions, but also in continuing to produce the professionals of the future. Can we think of another field where we could make a similar statement? We should not forget that nearly all professionals in this discipline began as bird watchers. In other fields most eminent men did not meet the subjects of their ultimate specialization until they were launched in their professional careers. Even in biology, it would be hard to find a scientist who traces his origins to an early love of fruit flies or mice.

Throughout this discussion I am using the term amateur to mean someone who studies birds only as a part-time avocation while carrying on a full-time occupation in another field.

Instead of speculating about the roles that amateurs might play in ornithology, I will focus on actual people who have been in the forefront of ornithology while earning their livings at something else. For my selection, I have limited myself to people I have known personally in my own lifetime. Another author would have picked others. The possible examples are almost innumerable.

My first category[†] is the keeper of records. These are the people who chronicle bird life in each locality, and thus provide the record of changes over the decades. These are the monitors of bird populations, and without them historians, ecologists, public health specialists, and other scientists would be groping to appraise long-term trends in our environment.

For my prime example, I take my friend Louis W. Campbell. For more than 60 years he has presided as the acknowledged authority on birds of the Toledo, Ohio region. Through his own meticulous observations and the screening of reports of others, he has built up a comprehensive account of the birds of this locality. His more important observations were recorded in national journals, and items of local interest were published in newspapers, particularly the *Toledo Times*, where he wrote an outdoor column for 33 years. The public also knows him from 1,200 lectures before groups of all kinds. His bird records are summarized annually in the Toledo Naturalists' Association yearbook, and comprehensively in his monograph, *Birds of Lucas County*, in 1940, and followed up by *Birds of the Toledo Area*, in 1968. Both are models of completeness and accuracy. His grasp of the local scene is broad,

* This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Society held on 1 June 1990 in Boston, MA. It was reprinted in *The Loon* 62 (Summer 1990): 75-77. The author, Harold F. Mayfield, has graciously given the NOU permission to reprint the article in the *NBR*. The base text used is the one from *The Loon*, and substantive corrections are footnoted.

[†] Spelled "category" in *The Loon*.

embracing its history, geology, botany, and zoology generally. Needless to say, he has been an inspiration to generations of young naturalists. For fifty years, until retirement, he worked as transportation engineer for the local transit company. At no time was he employed as naturalist or biologist.

My second category is the life-history specialist. The focus and the pace of modern biology has pushed life history studies into the background among academic and institutional ornithologists. This is not a quick way to fame. The comprehensive study of a species is slow and often unexciting. It is usually beyond the time allotted for a graduate student and it does not always yield the profound insights esteemed in professional circles. Testing narrow hypotheses is quicker.

Still, there are famous names in this category. We cannot touch on it without mentioning Margaret More Nice and Arthur Cleveland Bent. And yet neither of them, exactly fit the model I am presenting. Mrs. Nice, the scholar and authority on the Song Sparrow, could hardly be called a part-time ornithologist. She herself bristled at being labeled a housewife. Although she was one, she was able to arrange her personal affairs so that she could spend endless hours and days in her field studies, and she did not provide the family livelihood. Bent at one time may have been a businessman, but, during the decades he devoted to *Life Histories of North American Birds*, he was financially secure and gave his full time to this task. These people are already celebrated, and their opportunities were unique.

Instead, I will single out Lawrence H. Walkinshaw, a full-time dentist with a flourishing practice in Battle Creek, Michigan. The first time I visited him it was in his office, and, the way I tell it, he came out to see me leaving a patient with a mouthful of instruments, but he denies this. He had a lifelong passion for the living bird. He was a genius at finding nests, and tireless in the field. His notes were models of thoroughness, and he published his findings completely. Much of his field work he accomplished before other people were up, and much of his writing was done after other people were in bed. He concentrated on birds near at hand. Perhaps his greatest study centered on an abandoned farm near his house, where in the course of many years he completed a definitive work on Field Sparrows. Within his county he found nesting Sandhill Cranes, and his attention to them led to four books on this species. Although at the very limit of the range of the Prothonotary Warbler, he was able to mount a study of the bird. On weekends and vacations he was able to give attention to the Kirtland's Warbler, and his nest records spanning more than 50 years provided material for two books on this rare creature.

Another category in which amateurs have left their mark is in the editing—perhaps I should say nurturing—of regional journals. If you will glance at a collection of state bird journals, I think you will find that nearly all of them are edited by dedicated amateurs. Any such modern list probably should be headed by George Hall, editor of the *Wilson Bulletin* for ten years. His adult life has been spent as a professor of chemistry at West Virginia University, but he will also be best remembered as the authority on the birds of that state and author of *West Virginia Birds*.

For my prime example here I am singling out Robert B. Janssen of Minneapolis. As editor of *The Loon*,[†] (formerly *The Flicker*), the journal of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union, for 32 years, he is probably the senior

[†] The journal title is in bold and italic type in the original.

ornithological editor in America. In that position he has provided leadership for a variety of activities. He has headed the state records committee, and he has initiated a hotline for spreading the news of notable events. The information he has gathered made possible his 1987 *Birds of Minnesota*. His lifetime fascination with birds has not prevented him from pursuing a successful career in business. He has worked as a salesman and executive in a company engaged in the manufacture of envelopes.

Few amateurs can travel to the ends of the earth in their studies, but many, especially those who are city dwellers, have access to fine libraries. This brings me to my next category, the library scholar. A sparkling example is the late A. W. Schorger of Madison, Wisconsin. Bill Schorger spent untold hours in late afternoons and evenings in the dusty shelves of the state historical society library, combing through old newspapers for eyewitness accounts of birds in pioneer days. A weary librarian once said to him, "I have moved more tons of paper for you than for any other person in the state of Wisconsin." Years of delving in the newspaper archives formed the basis for his definitive works on the Passenger Pigeon and the Wild Turkey, long after both species had been extirpated from his region. Among many of his associates he was known as a paper chemist and business executive in paper manufacturing. In that career also he was a distinguished member, with many patents to his credit.

A particularly valuable segment of amateurs in ornithology consists of those who are competent in the physical sciences and mathematics, talents that are in short supply among biologists generally. As among professionals, good ideas often emerge where disciplines intersect.

Here I think first of my friend, the late Frank W. Preston, of Butler, Pennsylvania. A glass technologist and mathematician, he approached every bird question from a novel, analytical angle, with conclusions that were always out of the ordinary. He was a problem solver, intrigued by statistical topics, like the mathematical representation of egg shapes, the commonness and rarity of species, the distribution of the heights of bird nests, and atmospheric phenomena among birds in long-distance flights. At the same time he established and directed a consulting firm that did research in glass technology and built testing devices used by the glass industry throughout the world.

Another distinguished example in this category is Crawford Greenewalt, a chemical engineer and business executive, whose inventive use of high-speed photography led to new insight into hummingbirds, which he treated in a beautiful and scholarly book that is a collector's item. His analysis of bird sounds led him to examine the mechanism by which birds produce those sounds, and his study of bird flight led him to consider the relationship between size and shape of birds and the aerodynamics of flapping flight. He addressed each of these topics in monographs that are highly respected by scientists. During a part of this time he was the president of DuPont de Nemours of Wilmington, Delaware.

Such examples ought to inspire birders to ask themselves if they have special talents in other fields that might be brought to bear on ornithological problems.

Finally, I mention with gratitude the legion of anonymous birders who are the foot soldiers of ornithology. No large cooperative project would be possible without them—censusing, banding, preparing of atlases, and building the historical records of each locality. Their names seldom occur in bibliographies. They are the unknown soldiers of this science.

Thus, in summary, I have enumerated some examples of amateurs who have found a niche in ornithology where they can perform valued service: (1) the keepers of the local records; (2) people who made particular birds their own through life history studies; (3) editors who have guided local and regional journals through decades; (4) library scholars combing the archives for historical information; (5) people with training in the physical sciences and mathematics who have turned this knowledge to the benefit of ornithology; and (6) the legion of anonymous helpers who make all large cooperative projects possible.

---Harold F. Mayfield, 1162 Nannette Drive,
Toledo, OH 43614

NOCTURNAL ROOSTING BY INTERIOR LEAST TERNS EARLY IN THE NESTING SEASON

Atwood (1986) described nocturnal communal roosting by the California Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum browni*). Such behavior has not been described in other Least Tern subspecies (Whitman, 1988).

Nocturnal roosting by Interior Least Terns (*Sterna antillarum athalassos*) was observed on each of three evenings between 23 and 31 May 1989 and once on 15 May 1990 when we observed a known nesting location. Least Terns congregated immediately before sunset and started flying in pairs or small groups with much vocalization. Occasionally all birds joined into one compact flock exhibiting synchronized flight as observed by Atwood (1986). With fading light, the birds joined in synchronized flight and made one to three low sweeps over the roosting area with individuals dropping out to land on each sweep. Least Terns were spaced from 0.3 to 1.0 m apart in the roosting area within loose groups. Upon landing birds began preening with continued vocalization. Approximately 1 to 2 minutes after the last bird landed, vocalizations and preening ceased. Silence and inactivity continued past dark. Examination of the roost in daylight revealed evenly spaced scrapes in the substrate. Least Terns were also observed roosting in depressions made by tire tracks within the roosting area.

Our observations of night roosting were at a group of inactive sand and gravel pits near Elm Creek, Buffalo County, Nebraska (NE¹/₄, N¹/₂, sec. 16, R1SW, T8N). The roosting area was located in a depression 42 m by 70 m, with the outer rim ranging from 0.25 to 1.5 m above the depression floor. The floor was relatively level and had a predominantly gravel substrate. The roost site may have afforded some degree of wind protection. Nesting occurred at other sites within the sand pit complex, but not within the area used for nocturnal roosting. Nests were located on sandy substrates, 115-460 m from the roosting location.

The number of Least Terns observed roosting exceeded the number of nesting birds that we observed in both the sand pit complex and on a nearby reach of the Platte River 1.5 km to the north. On 25 May 1989, we observed 52 Least Terns, including three in sub-adult plumage. Twelve nests were later seen within the sand pit complex; additionally, we found one nest on the river. These 13 nests accounted for only 26 birds. Because communal nocturnal roosting took place early in the nesting season, adult Least Terns not accounted for during nesting in the Elm Creek vicinity may have nested in other colonies or have been non-breeding birds.

Nocturnal roosting away from nesting areas before egg laying may reduce predation within colonies during nesting (Atwood, 1986).

Piping Plovers (*Charadrius melodus*) were also observed roosting with Least Terns in 1989 and 1990. The greatest number of Piping Plovers was observed on 31 May 1989 when six were dispersed among 30 roosting Least Terns. This was probably a significant proportion of Piping Plovers in the area, because only four Piping Plover nests were located within the sand pit complex, and none were located on the nearby reach of the Platte River. Piping Plovers and Least Terns require similar nesting habitat and frequently nest within the same colony. Use of the same night roost by both species further indicates similar habitat requirements.

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---Erika C. Wilson, Wayne A. Hubert, and Stanley H. Anderson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Box 3166, University Station, Laramie, Wyoming 82071.

CONFIRMED WHOOPING CRANE SIGHTINGS, 1942-1982

Since 1983, *The Nebraska Bird Review* has published the USFWS Whooping Crane migration report for both spring and fall. The following is data provided by Wally Jobman of USFWS on confirmed sightings of Whooping Cranes in Nebraska. The period covered is 1942 through 1982. It is hoped that the account of the sightings here will aid crane researchers.

The USFWS definition of a confirmed sighting is noted in *NBR* 56:79. Researchers interested in other crane data should consult issues of the *NBR* starting in 1983 for complete data since that period. For further information, interested parties should contact Wally Jobman, USFWS, Fish and Wildlife Enhancement, NE/KS Field Office, 203 W. Second Street, Grand Island, NE 68801.

Date	Number/Age	County	Exact Location Noted
4/7/42	3 birds	Dawson	Lexington.
4/4/43	1 birds	Buffalo	4 miles west of Kearney bridge on Platte River.
Fall 1946	not recorded	Dawson	3 miles east of Gothenburg.
11/13-14/46	not recorded	Garden	near Lewellen.
4/19-20/47	4 adults; 1 imm.	Lincoln	3 miles east of North Platte.
10/13-19/49	2 birds	Garden	Head of Lake McConaughy.
5/4/50	1 bird	Dawson	near Platte River at Overton.
5/20-6/18/50	1 bird	Phelps	Bertrand.
7/16-23/50	1 bird	Morrill	Bridgeport.
4/25/57	3 birds	Keya Paha	2.5 miles west of Meadville on Niobrara River.
4/28/58	3 birds	Lincoln	south and west of North Platte.
10/26/59	2 birds	Phelps	6 miles south, 5 miles east of Overton.

Date	Number/Age	County	Exact Location Noted
10/17/60	3 birds	Harlan	2 miles south, 2 miles west of Wilcox. T4N, R17W, S2 & 3. Family group.
10/23-25/64	2 adults; 2 juvenile	Keith	5.5 miles east of Lewellen, head of Lake McConaughy.
4/14-19/65	2 adults; 2 juvenile	Logan	2.5 miles south, 1 mile east of Gandy. Roost T17N, R26W, S35; fed T17N, R27W, S28.
10/19/65	3 birds	Rock	north of Bassett on Niobrara River.
10/6/66	2 birds	Custer	6 miles west, 2.5 miles south of Merna. T17N, R22W, S18. Geiser farm.
10/20-21/66	3 adults; 2 juvenile	Hamilton	6 miles northeast of Phillips, Platte River. T12N, R7W, S29 and T11N, R8W, S14.
10/11/67	2 birds	Gosper	3 miles south of Bertrand, Peterson WPA. Probable T6N, R21W, S13.
4/10/68	2 birds	Rock	16 miles south, 2 miles east of Bassett (wet meadow).
10/3/69	1 bird	Rock	.5 mile west of Carns, flying east along Niobrara River. Likely T32N, R19W, S24.
4/10/70	2 birds	Franklin	4 miles south of Upland.
10/31/71	5 birds	Sherman	4 miles west of Rockville.
10/26-11/10/71	2 adults; 1 juvenile	Kearney	3 miles south, 5 miles east of Axtell. T6N, R15W, S19, SE 1/4.
11/3/72	2 adults; 1 juvenile	Kearney	2 miles south, 4 miles west of Minden.
4/11/73	2 birds	Franklin	3 miles south, 1 mile east of Upland. T4N, R14W, S35 or 36.
5/3/73	2 birds	Blaine	6 miles east of Purdum, North Loup River. T24N, R25W, S15, NE 1/4.
10/19/73	3 birds	Adams	1.5 miles south, 1 mile east of Kenesaw. T17N, R12W, S2.
4/8/74	4 birds	Buffalo	4 miles north, .5 mile west of Shelton. T10N, R13W, S2 and 11.
10/25/74	2 birds	Phelps	3 miles north, 1.5 miles east of Funk. T6N, R17W, S2.
10/29/74	8 birds	Brown	13 miles north, 5 miles east of Ainsworth on Niobrara River. T32N, R20W, S19.
10/29/74	3 adults; 1 juvenile	Thomas	3 miles west of Halsey on Middle Loup River. T22N, R25W, S8.
10/31-11/1/74	2 birds	Kearney	2 miles east of Minden I-80 exchange on Platte River. T8N, R14W, S16.
4/12-14/75	2 birds	Blaine	9 miles east of Brewster on North Loup River. T23N, R21W, S25.
4/17-19/75	9 birds	Phelps	Funk Basin, 3 miles north 1.5 miles east of Funk. When hazed 7 to Platte River, other 2 went back near Funk Basin. Two hazed again, went to Platte River.
4/20/75	5 birds	Phelps	.5 mile east of Odessa bridge on Platte River. T8N, R17W, S22.
4/4-5/76	2 birds	Hitchcock	West end of Swanson Reservoir.
10/23/76	2 adults; 1 juvenile	Frontier	Hugh Butler Reservoir, 10 miles north, 2 miles west of McCook.
3/29/77	1 bird	Buffalo	2 miles east of Hwy. 10 Platte River Bridge. West end of Audubon Sanctuary.
10/23-27/77	2 birds	Buffalo	T11N, R13W, S33. 7 miles north, 2.5 miles west of Shelton.
11/3/77	3 adults; 1 juvenile	Rock	T32N, R20 W, S22, SE 1/4, NE 1/4, on Niobrara River.
11/4-7/77	1 bird	Cherry	T30N, R28W, S22, SW 3/4, Valentine NWR.
10/17/78	4 birds	Furnas	4 miles north, 5 miles west of Oxford. T4N, R21W, S7, SE 1/4.
10/22-23/78	2 birds	Cherry	14 miles west, 2 miles south of Merriman. T34N, R40W, S23, NE 1/4, SE 1/4.

Date	Number/Age	County	Exact Location Noted
10/23-25/78	5 birds	Grant	2 miles east, 2 miles north of Whitman. T24N, R36W, S10, SW ¹ / ₄ .
4/8-9/79	4 birds	Phelps	6 miles northwest of Holdrege. Moses Hill Basin. T6N, R19W, S3.
4/16/79	2 adults; 1 juvenile	Cheyenne	4 miles south, 9.5 miles east of Gurley. T15N, R48W, S14, S ¹ / ₂ .
10/30/79	7 birds (1 young)	Cherry	.25 mile upstream from Cornell Dam on Niobrara River. T34N, R27W, S34, NW ¹ / ₄ , NW ¹ / ₄ [sic].
4/2/80	2 birds	Kearney	5.5 miles south, 2 miles west of Minden. T5N, R15W, S11, W ¹ / ₂ .
4/7/80	7 birds	Phelps	1.5 miles north, .5 mile east of Funk. T6N, R17W, S15.
4/13/80	7 birds	Cherry	Along eastern boundary of Valentine NWR. T29N, R26W, S23, NW ¹ / ₄ .
4/17/80	2 birds	Buffalo/ Kearney	Audubon Refuge on Platte River southeast of Kearney.
4/18/80	2 birds	Buffalo/ Kearney	1 mile east of Minden exchange (I-80) on Platte River.
4/19/80	7 birds	Buffalo	Flying along Platte River straight south of Kearney.
4/3/81	3 birds	Cherry	2 miles west of Wood Lake
10/19-20/81	2 birds	Sherman	3 miles east of Rockville on Middle Loup River.
10/22-23/81	3 birds	Cherry	Gordon Creek. T29N, R31W.
10/23-24/81	3 birds	Custer	Pond on Wood River drainage near Oconto.
10/23/81	2 birds	Cherry	Duck Lake. T26N, R29W, S1.
10/23-24/81	2 birds	Buffalo	9 miles west of Pleasanton on South Loup River. Possibly same 2 as Duck Lake sighting. T12N, R17W, S26, NW ¹ / ₄ , NW ¹ / ₄ , SE ¹ / ₄ .
4/15-17/82	2 birds	Custer	8 miles south, .5 mile west of Arnold. T16N, R25W, S32, NW ¹ / ₄ , SE ¹ / ₄ .
10/12/82	1 bird	Adams	5 miles west of Hastings with Sandhill Cranes.
10/29/82	3 birds	Rock	Niobrara River, 3 miles west of Carns.
10/29/82	3 birds	Clay	1 mile northeast of Fairfield, Hissinger Lagoon, T6N, R7W, S34.
10/29/82	not recorded	Rock	3.5 miles east of Bassett north of Hwy. 20.
10/29-30/82	4 birds	Brown	Niobrara River, 2 miles upstream from Norden bridge.
10/30-11/1/82	3 birds	Holt	45 miles north of Burwell near Dora Lake. Family group.
11/1-2/82	5 birds (1 juvenile)	Brown	12 miles south of Ainsworth.

FALL 1990 OCCURRENCE REPORT: UPDATE

The following provides an update of avian occurrences between July 1 and December 31, 1990. Sources used include additional reports from NOU members; the "Southern Great Plains Region" report in *American Birds*, Winter 1990 and Spring 1991 issues; *Iowa Bird Life* field reports (for those boundaries which the states share; and two NOU Newsletters (J/F/M 1991 and August 1990 [which was overlooked in March]).

This compilation of materials, as well as the main body of the occurrence report, is meant as a resource for all who wish to do scientific research on Nebraska avifauna. I invite all those keeping records in Nebraska to send reports to me (see address on front cover) for inclusion in the Spring Occurrence Report in the September *NBR*. Records of numbers, breeding, and commenting on regularity of occurrence are very welcome. In the following report, which follows the same

structure as the county-by-county report in the March *NBR*, full scholarly documentation is provided where appropriate. Any new addition to the occurrence report, whether a county visited or a species, is denoted by this symbol: ◇.

In-state—Grzybowski (1991) listed one Rufous Hummingbird (◇) sighting in the state for this period. Further information will be sought. This is the only record for the state for this period.

Dawes County—The following species were reported in *American Birds* by Richard C. and Dorothy J. Rosche of Chadron: Common Loon, July 20; immature Mississippi Kite, July 26; Marbled Godwit (◇), "an adult rigorously defending two downy young" may be the first nesting record in the state (no date given); Caspian Tern, July 18; immature, male Broad-tailed Hummingbird, September 18; Evening Grosbeak, overwintered in county, apparently still present in November (Grzybowski, 1990; Grzybowski, 1991).

Box Butte County (◇)—The Rosches found Cassin's Sparrow on June 29, and singing Savannah Sparrows in late June (Grzybowski, 1990). Though not in the specific time frame, these sightings are noted because of their rarity.

Morrill County (◇)—The Rosches reported a Cinnamon Teal with 4 young on July 26 (Grzybowski, 1990).

Sheridan County (◇)—In late June, the Rosches reported singing Savannah Sparrows (Grzybowski, 1990). On October 27, they noted a Surf Scoter (Grzybowski, 1991).

Garden County (◇)—The following species were reported in *American Birds*: Richard and Dorothy Rosche reported two downy young Western Grebe on July 7; many Eared Grebe nests found in early July; and a Canvasback with eight downy young on July 6 (Grzybowski, 1990). Graham Chisholm reported a Snowy Egret on August 22 (Grzybowski, 1991).

Cherry County—The Rosches reported many Eared Grebe nests in early July and identified a Clark's Grebe (◇) "at close range" on July 12 (Grzybowski, 1990).

Keith County—The Rosches reported the following sightings: JULY 27—1 Snowy Egret, 1 Greater White-fronted Goose, 1 or 2 Snow Geese, 2600 Baird's Sandpipers (at Lake McConaughy), Red-eyed Vireo; JULY 28—16 California Gulls; SEPTEMBER 13—Great Egret; OCTOBER 12—Fox Sparrow; NOVEMBER 9—9 California Gulls and a late Gray Catbird; NOVEMBER 24—50 Greater Scaup at Keystone Lake in a larger flock of Lessers, a Black Scoter (◇), and a late Virginia Rail (Grzybowski, 1990; Grzybowski, 1991).

Hooker County (◇)—A male Ring-necked Duck was spotted by the Rosches on August 10 (Grzybowski, 1990).

MacPherson County (♠)—The Rosches reported 18 Trumpeter Swans on October 12 (Grzybowski, 1991).

Lincoln County—The Rosches reported two Bohemian Waxwings (♠) on November 9 (Grzybowski, 1991).

Logan County (♠)—A Winter Wren was reported on October 13 by the Rosches (Grzybowski, 1991).

Harlan County (♠)—Mr. and Mrs. Russell Smith reported an Inca Dove (♠) frequenting their yard in Orleans starting in early December 1990. Further details will be forthcoming (Johnson-Mueller, 1991).

Howard County (♠)—Bill Lemburg sighted an American Woodcock (♠). The bird was seen on his farm, near the pen where geese are kept. He saw the bird seven times between July 6 and July 18. This was Lemburg's first sighting of Woodcock in Howard County.

Hall County—Tom Labeledz reported a Great Egret on August 11 (Grzybowski, 1991). Gary Lingle spotted a Common Loon and a Little Blue Heron near the Alda/I-80 interchange on August 1 (Johnson-Mueller, 1990).

Boone County (♠)—Mitzi Fox reported Rock Wren near Albion from October 16 to 23. Identification confirmation was made by Wayne Mollhoff (Johnson-Mueller, 1991).

Cedar County (♠)—Surf Scoter was spotted by B.J. Rose on October 23 at Gavin's Point Dam (Grzybowski, 1991).

Wayne County (♠)—Two reports of Gyrfalcon (♠), one by Duane Wolff on November 23, 1990, six miles north of Hoskins, and one by Doc and Isolde Cutshall about two weeks before this date and about a mile from this site (Johnson-Mueller, 1991).

Seward County—John Andersen of the Army Corps of Engineers sighted two Black-billed Magpies in the last week of December at Twin Lakes (Johnson-Mueller, 1991).

Dodge County (♠)—Tom Labeledz spotted a Red-shouldered Hawk and Great Egrets on August 11 (Johnson-Mueller, 1990)

Lancaster County—B.J. Rose sighted a flock of 150 Great-tailed Grackles on October 19 and 20 (Grzybowski, 1991). Norma Johnson-Mueller reported two Least Terns and more than 100 Black Terns at Branched Oak Lake on August 3 (Johnson-Mueller, 1990).

Washington County—210,000 Snow Geese were reported at DeSoto NWR by Erv Klaas on November 14 (Kent, Fuller, and Bendorf, 1991).

Douglas County—B.J. Rose reported a Prairie Falcon on November 18 (Grzybowski, 1991).

Sarpy County—Jim and Sandy Kovanda reported a Great Egret in Fontenelle Forest on September 3 (Grzybowski, 1991). Ione and Al Werthman had Acadian Flycatcher most of the summer in the Forest, the last one reported on September 3 (Grzybowski, 1990; Grzybowski, 1991). Ross Silcock reported a Gray Catbird on October 20, and also found a MacGillivray's Warbler in Fontenelle Forest (no date noted). This would be an outstanding record, and more information is being sought.

Rick Wright reported the following sightings, which do not include any Christmas Count data, for the last days of December: Mallard—2000+ on the 25th near Ashland; Common Goldeneye, 10-14 on the 31st in Fontenelle Forest (FF); Sharp-shinned Hawk—adult, probably male, on the 23rd; American Kestrel—up to 10 between Bellevue and Ralston in the period from the 22nd through January 2nd, Rick also noted that Kestrels "seem[ed] uncommon"; Mourning Dove—2 on the 31st near Springfield; Belted Kingfisher—one on the 31st in FF; Brown Creeper, one on the 27th; Winter Wren—one on the 31st in FF; Carolina Wren—two on the 31st in FF; American Robin—up to 50 per day in FF during last week of December; Oregon Junco—6 on the 23rd in FF [Rick noted the need for more careful recording of Oregon Juncos in Nebraska; I concur. Any notes on their occurrence are appreciated]; Swamp Sparrow—one on the 27th and two on the 31st, all in FF.

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1991 NOU ANNUAL MEETING

The 90th Annual Meeting of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union took place in Grand Island, Nebraska, on May 17 to 19, 1991. Activities, hosted by the Grand Island Audubon Society, centered around the Holiday Inn in Grand Island where programs, meetings, and the annual banquet were held.

Friday night of the meeting the usual slide show took place, followed by a showing of the Nebraska PBS program *Last of the Rainwater Basins*, which featured NOU members Lee Morris and Paul Johnsgard. Saturday's highlight was the banquet speaker Toby Lemburg, who presented a paper on the game bird operations run by his family. Toby, 13 years old, showed slides of the birds, equipment, and operations of his father's and grandfather's farms. Tours of the farms were

conducted as part of the weekend's activities, which were held under overcast and misty conditions.

The business meeting took place Saturday night following the banquet. Officers' reports were given, and Scott Purdy announced the initial plans with regard to the Fall Field Day. The following increases in dues and subscriptions, made to defray increased costs in printing the Newsletter and the *NBR*, were announced (old rates in parentheses):

Dues: Student, \$8.00 (\$3.00); Active, \$10.00 (\$7.00); Family, \$15.00 (\$10.00); Sustaining, \$20.00 (\$15.00); Family Sustaining, \$25.00 (\$20.00); Life, \$150.00 (\$100.00)
Subscription Rates: Single Copy—In USA, \$4.00 (\$3.00); all other countries, \$5.00 (\$4.00); Annual Rates—USA, \$12.50 (\$10.00); Canada and Mexico, \$15.00 (\$12.50); subscriptions to all other countries will be handled on a case-by-case basis at present. All dues and subscription changes are effective January 1, 1992

Much debate centered on the by-laws revision sent to NOU members. Amendments to the revised by-laws were suggested and made, and further discussion with regard to the proposed changes will take place at the next Annual Meeting.

The final item of the evening was election of new officers. The following officers have been selected: President, Norma Johnson-Mueller; Vice President, Scott Purdy; Treasurer, Alice Kenitz; Secretary, Scott Jensen; Librarian, Tom Labeledz. Gary Lingle continues to serve on the Board of Directors as Past President. The position of Editor of the *NBR* for the volume starting January 1, 1992, is currently vacant; Ray Korpi will serve out his term to year's end, and all materials for the *Review* should be sent to him [Ed.'s note: I will happy to discuss this position with any interested parties].

The meeting concluded Sunday noon with a bird tally and door prizes. A list of 131 species was tallied in seven different counties during the meeting. An afghan crocheted by Janet Korpi was raffled off and won by Pearl Lemburg.

This report was compiled from information provided by R. G. and Margaret Cortelyou, meeting minutes provided by Secretary Alice Rushton, and the bird tally provided by Scott Purdy (due to space limitation, the lists will be printed with the fall occurrence report). It is hoped that the minutes of the Business Meeting will be printed in a later issue after final proofing.

NOTES

Some Nest Box Observations. The following are some observations on nests of species who use bluebird boxes in the Gering area. Anyone else working on a bluebird project who would like to add their observations in a future *NBR* is invited to do so.

Bluebirds make a nest that consists primarily of grasses. There are seldom any feathers. Well-used ones are plastered with droppings, although I suppose the droppings could also come if they use the box for roosting in bad weather. As far as I know there is no way to tell the difference between Mountain and Eastern Bluebird nests, and we do have both species here—could even have hybrids, I suppose. Chickadees have the neatest nest that is rather flat but very soft, made of a lot of mosses and animal fur and hair. Again, seldom a feather.

Then there is the House Wren. From what I have read, the male arrives first and fills available holes full of sticks. Then the female arrives and picks the site she

wants. She may build the actual nest on top of the sticks, or she may take all of the sticks out and start over again—even using the same sticks. So we find a lot of houses with what I call 'dummy nests' that are just a bunch of sticks. Sometimes the whole house is full and some of the sticks are surprisingly large—you wonder how the bird can manage to get the stick into the right position to get it into the hole. The actual nests can be quite lovely things made of hair and grasses and many times containing feathers. The feathers aren't usually wren feathers, many I have found appear to be small turkey feathers, but I could be wrong in that. It is always fun to see what is in the houses. Once in a while we find a wren nest built on top of a bluebird nest, and we have found a bluebird nest built on top of another bluebird nest.

---Alice Kenitz, HC 50, Box 38-B, Gering, NE 69341

Red Crossbill Behavior. Red Crossbills are common here in central Nebraska, but I thought the following interesting. 8 Red Crossbills (possibly more) choose to feed at my niger finch feeder. With the tiny holes on the feeder and the bulky crossbills, the birds had to open its mouth and get the tiny seeds out with their pink tongues. About half of them feed by hanging upside down on the posts of the feeder. I felt that this was unusual as a larger feeder with larger bird seed was available some 10 feet away [Ed.--note dated April 13, 1991].

---Helen Seim, 415 E. 20th, Grand Island, NE 68801

Turkey Vulture Behavior. On Sunday, April 14, 1991, we saw a large Turkey Vulture on a fence post right along Highway 92, about 4 miles east of Rising City, Nebraska. He had his wings spread in a draped effect. I figure he was sunning himself. He kept looking at us over his shoulder. I had my camera and snapped three quick photos. He wasn't too excited about us. He then folded his wings and just looked at us. A dead skunk lay on the slow lane of the road. It was a fresh road kill, but he never ate it. The skunk was still there when we came back late in the day.

---Carol Krupicka, Box 185, Rising City, NE 68658

Editor's note: Turkey Vultures will sun themselves using wing spreading like this to help warm themselves on cooler days. Davis (1983) also notes that that wing spreading is also part of the Turkey Vulture's pre-mating ritual around the nest site.

If you observe interesting bird behavior, send in a note. It is observations like Carol Krupicka's and Helen Seim's that give biologists clues to bird behavior.

Source: Davis, D. Breeding behavior of turkey vultures. *Vulture biology and management*. Eds. S. R. Wilbur and J. A. Jackson. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983. p. 271-286.

Bald Eagle Hatchling. On May 18, 1991, the *Omaha World-Herald* reported the hatching of a single eaglet in a Bald Eagle nest on the Platte River somewhere between Fremont and Ashland. Nebraska Game and Parks officials had been keeping a close eye on the nest for several weeks and are keeping the precise location a secret so that the nest is not disturbed. It is hoped that a further report can be obtained for future publication.

References

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- Joy soars for native Nebraska eaglet. (May 18, 1991). *Omaha World-Herald*, editorial page.

BOOK REVIEWS

Dr. Scott Nielsen. *A Season with Eagles*. Stillwater, MN: Voyageur Press. 96 pp., 70 color photographs, index. \$21.95 hardcover.

This is a photographic record, with textual commentary, of a Bald Eagle's nest in Wisconsin, from the arrival of the pair in the spring to the departure of the birds in the fall. Dr. Nielsen gave up dentistry for taxidermy and photography. In pursuit of the latter, he obtained the necessary permissions and built a blind in a tree 220 yards from a known nest, installed a 50-pound telephoto lens, and memorized the climb to the blind (he had to get in and out in the dark). Fortunately, the Eagles elected to use the nest that year, so we have a very interesting photographic and textual record of an Eagle's nest. It should be of particular interest to members of NOU because of this year's hatching of a Bald Eagle in Nebraska—the first hatching in Nebraska in this century, and one of the few on record in all time (Ducey, *Nebraska Birds, Breeding Status and Distribution*).

---R. G. Cortelyou, 5109 Underwood Ave., Omaha, NE
68132

Jane L. Dorn and Robert D. Dorn. *Wyoming Birds*. Illustrated by Jane L. Dorn. 140 pp. Index, some illustrations and charts. Cheyenne, WY: Mountain West Publishing, [publisher address: PO Box 1471, zip 82003].

Wyoming Birds is the Dorns' guide to finding birds in Wyoming. Using their own observations while doing both plant and bird research since 1960, and researching sighting information from other sources, the book gives distribution and migration data on all species which regularly occur in the state.

The book is divided up into three primary parts, starting with an introduction outlining the Dorns' methods and purposes and including a map of rattlesnake distribution in the state provided for birder safety. The second section, which encompasses the majority of the book, gives information about each species. These accounts are divided up by family with some information given about the typical traits of a family, much in the same way that other guides do. Common and scientific names are given at the top, and a distribution "map," a graphic table which shows a species' status within each latilong is provided (a latilong is an area approximately 70 by 50 miles, partitioned according to longitude and latitude; there are 28 in Wyoming with some authorial adjustments for geopolitical boundaries). Once deciphered using the code in the introduction, this graph can be helpful, though constant reference to the map on the back cover is needed. A brief note on identification in each section is provided, and similar species are also discussed (the Dorns have warned in the first sentence of the book that their guide should be used with a more comprehensively illustrated field guide). The next part of the species breakdown deals with status and seasonality. This section uses the latilong

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Table of Contents

Greater Scaup in Lancaster County	38
Black-bellied Plover in Buffalo County	38
The Amateur: Finding a Niche in Ornithology	39
Nocturnal Roosting by Interior Least Terns Early in the Nesting Season	42
Confirmed Whooping Crane Sightings, 1942-1982	43
Fall 1990 Occurrence Report: Update	45
1991 NOU Annual Meeting	48
Notes	49
Book Reviews	51

system, so it does correspond to the graphic illustration above it, and some overall general comments are made. Dates are given for migrants and migration peaks. The habitat of the species is then noted, and a brief section on the best places in Wyoming to find the bird concludes each section. Interspersed within this section are illustrations and charts which provide useful information about identification.

The last section deals with good places to bird in Wyoming. This is divided up in several ways: hotspots for each county (with some good directions and a list of birds to be found provided), hotspots in winter, locations of specific habitat, and several general categories (i.e., waterfowl, shorebirds). This section of the book comprises of only about 10 percent of the book, and given the book's stated purpose, more emphasis on this type of information would have been welcomed.

This book is the initial product of the Dorns' work on birds in Wyoming, and some portions of this fine effort still need refining. On the question of accidental species, the Dorns note that determining what is accidental is "somewhat arbitrary" (3); no further note is given on this argument. Those species which are determined to be accidental are given only cursory acknowledgment: date of sighting and latilong number. For example, the entry for Mississippi Kite states "4(6/11/1987)" (25). Further specific information on where to find out about accidentals is not given in text. The Dorns do make some effort in the introduction and throughout the text to correct mistakes or question ambiguities they have found in identification of rare species. This is certainly a valuable item to have in any guide to an area's bird life. The use of both latilong and county designation used does provide some confusion (I found myself doing a bit of flipping to the map on the back cover), but given their explanation of atlas projects in Wyoming, this is unavoidable. Overall, *Wyoming Birds* does provide thorough details and directions, and the Dorns' work should be appreciated by those interested in Wyoming avifauna.

Note: In an effort to update their text, the Dorns have requested that readers send information about Wyoming birds, especially rare or *winter* sightings, to them care of the publisher (address above). Careful documentation is requested for those species of less regular occurrence.

---Raymond T. Korpi, NW 1340 State #6, Pullman, WA 99163