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Letter of Information' Excerpts

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"Letter of Information" Excerpts

In the early years of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union, which was founded in 1899, the organization published its *Proceedings*, yearly through 1902 and less frequently for the following 13 years. Beginning in 1916, the NOU allied itself with the Wilson Ornithological Club, and its annual proceedings were published by that organization for the next nine years. In 1925, distribution of a mimeographed "Letter of Information" began, with NOU Secretary-Treasurer Myron H. Swenk acting as editor. These Letters, which contain announcements, accounts of meetings and field trips, and notes on bird sightings from members, were published through 1932. They bridged the gap between the more formal publication of the Wilson Ornithological Club and *The Nebraska Bird Review*, which began in 1933.

A few original sets of the Letters of Information are preserved in the NOU Archives in Nebraska Hall at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. The Letters range from serious to whimsical and provide a fascinating glimpse into birding in Nebraska in the 1920s and 1930s. In upcoming issues of *The Nebraska Bird Review*, we will reprint excerpts from the Letters, as space allows, for a view of what our organization was like 75+ years ago.

February 10, 1927 Letter of Information #20

Rev. J. H. Bates of Red Cloud reports under date of January 19 that for the past month or so, large flocks of the Saskatchewan Horned Lark have been feeding on cane seed and similar seed in that vicinity. Rev. Bates sends a specimen of these birds that was brought to him on January 18 to enable accurate identification. He reports that the birds are quite shy. Also, Rev. Bates makes mention that Miss Emma Smith of Franklin, Nebraska, reports that eight Pinyon Jays are wintering in that vicinity. Rev. Bates has rather made a special study of the Pinyon Jay in Nebraska, and says that these are the first birds of the species to be reported from that part of the state for several years.

October 6, 1930 Letter of Information #53

Under date of September 24, Mrs. A. H. Jones writes that Mr. Lockwood, who lives along the Platte River north of Hastings and makes a specialty of growing melons, lost his entire crop of early melons because of depredations by the Ring-necked Pheasant. Lack of water, the Platte River being entirely dry at that time, is considered by Mr. Lockwood to be the cause of these attacks on his melon patch. By actual count the pheasants destroyed 482 of Mr. Lockwood's melons. In a 40-acre field he counted 17 coveys of pheasants, which indicates the abundance of these birds in his locality.

November 15, 1932 Letter of Information #68

Under date of November 1, Mr. Wilson Tout of North Platte sends in a fine specimen of Double-crested Cormorant shot near that place. Mr. Tout reports that there are a great many Lesser Canada Geese (= "Hutchins Goose") migrating through there this year, even more than of the larger form, the Common Canada Goose, though he observes that it may be a little early for the main flight of the latter birds.