

Recent Changes in South Dakota Bird Life.—Many South Dakota lakes are rather low at this time (1931), due to the dry summer of 1930. Other lakes are entirely dry and the effect on bird life is very noticeable. Lake Albert, in Kingsbury County, was formerly the home of a large colony of Double-crested Cormorants, but at present the lake is a huge flax field. The cormorant colony on Dry Lake, north of Lake Albert, is also gone, probably due to molestation. The remnants of the two colonies just mentioned selected a rocky island in nearby Lake Poinsett, and here several hundred birds are nesting. A fine colony of Western Grebes was, however, found on Dry Lake.

Roy Lake, northeast of the Waubay Lakes, was once the site of a fair-sized cormorant colony, but fishermen decided the birds were too fond of fish, and the colony was shot out during 1930. The remnants of this colony has evidently settled on Cattail Lake, near old Fort Sisseton, and has easily doubled the size of the old colony at this place.

The fine cormorant colony on South Waubay Lake is probably the largest colony left in the United States. This season Mr. Arthur Lundquist, of Webster, South Dakota, and the writer found nearly 700 nests on the two islands. The Ring-billed Gulls on the larger island seemed to be back in larger numbers, and several hundred nesting birds were seen. The large colony of Common Terns has, however, almost deserted this island, and less than a dozen pairs were there nesting this year (1931).

In general the water and shore birds are decreasing in this area. Duck nests were less numerous than usual this year. Holboell's and Eared Grebes seemed less numerous than in other years. Western Grebes appeared more abundant on Rush Lake, but this was no doubt due to the fact, that this species was not nesting on South Waubay Lake, or on other lakes and sloughs where it had formerly nested. The Western Grebes chose Rush Lake for a breeding ground this year and it appears that most of the grebes of this region have come to the above lake this summer.

Western Willets and Upland Plovers were not seen in the usual numbers, but the Marbled Godwit was apparently present in about its usual numbers. Clay-colored Sparrows were found nesting in several likely places. The Prairie Marsh Wren and the Short-billed Marsh Wren were seen in many marshy areas, the former being much the more common. A male Nelson's Sparrow, in breeding condition, was taken at Rush Lake, on June 7, 1931.—WILLIAM YOUNGWORTH, *Sioux City, Iowa.*

Woodcocks and Wood Ducks in Washington County, Iowa.—While patrolling on Skunk River on July 14, 1932, my spaniel flushed a Woodcock within fifteen or twenty yards of me, and another not over that far from the first one. They flew not over fifty yards and lit near each other. I called the dog in because they acted as if they had young there, and backed up for fear the dog would catch their young. It was in large elm timber on low, wet bottom ground and with some heavy cover, near the county line between Washington and Keokuk Counties, Iowa.

I am a great lover of the woods and of all birds, have a good dog, and get great pleasure in walking along the creeks and rivers. However, this was the first time in fifty-one years here that I have seen a pair of Woodcocks at that time of the year. I can find some in October every year, on the bottom, in moist low

places, and I actually believe there are more coming through here in the fall now than there were years ago.

There are not as many Wood Ducks hatching here as there used to be, but there are some remaining about the Pinoak Ponds whenever we have water to keep the ponds full. Last fall on the Conesville marsh the week before the twentieth of October, the open season, I estimated there were from 400 to 500 Wood Ducks on the upper part of the marsh, and I personally told all the club members there to be careful not to shoot any of them. Only a few of the old hunters know them by their flight any more.—E. L. BREITENBACH, *Washington, Iowa*.

The Swallow-tailed Kite in Pottawattamie County, Iowa.—It has now been about two decades since the Northern Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus forficatus*) has been reported from Iowa. Early in July of 1931 a farmer shot one of these birds along the West Nishnabotna River, a few miles southwest of Oakland, Pottawattamie County, Iowa, and brought it to Mr. Leo Lockhart, of Hancock (a few miles north of Oakland), for mounting. The bird was, however, subsequently sent to the shop of Karl Schwarz, the taxidermist at 419 South 13th Street, Omaha, Nebraska, who mounted it. I first learned of its presence in his shop on July 8, and some time later secured the specimen from Mr. Lockhart, and it is now in my collection. It is a good specimen, and from its size I should judge was a male, the measurements of the mounted bird being in millimeters as follows: Length, 556; wing, 400; tail, 263 (unusually short); tarsus, 30; exposed culmen, 20.5 (from feathers, 27); depth of bill at base, 13.5.—MYRON H. SWENK, *Lincoln, Nebr.*

An Experiment with Nesting Purple Grackles.—A great many Purple Grackles (*Quiscalus q. quiscula*) nest in the neighborhood of my yard at Lexington, Virginia. While taking a set of eggs during the spring of 1928, it occurred to me to try the experiment of changing eggs from one nest to another to see if a Purple Grackle would hatch eggs that were not her own. I took six eggs from a nest and replaced them with five eggs from another nest. The bird to which I gave the five new eggs had begun, I think, to incubate her original eggs. One factor that made me more doubtful as to whether my experiment would succeed was that I had kept the five eggs overnight before I decided to try the exchange. I did not, however, remove the original six eggs until I was ready to replace them with the five new ones. The exchange was made early in the afternoon of April 26. Later in the afternoon the bird was on the new set of eggs. She did not lay another egg to bring the number up to that of her original set of six. On May 7 she was still incubating normally. When I returned home on May 12, after an absence of four days, I found that she had hatched out the foster set. The nestlings appeared to be about three days old. The younger birds all lived to leave the nest. The adults, both male and female, were much excited each time that I visited the nest and at times alighted near me in the small tree, with much scolding, but the fact that they reared their young in spite of this exchange of eggs and of my frequent visits seems to show that Purple Grackles are not very sensitive as to nesting conditions.—J. J. MURRAY, *Lexington, Va.*