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Birds of the Oak Lake Field Station

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Recommended Citation

Bakker, Kristel K. and Troelstrup, N. H. Jr., "Birds of the Oak Lake Field Station" (1998). *Oak Lake Field Station Research Publications*.
2.
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Esther was diagnosed with lung cancer and pneumonia on 8 February and died in Rapid City on 22 February 1998.

Acknowledgements. We thank Esther's niece, Marilyn Alva Dancsisin, for basic biographical material, and L. M. Baylor and Paul F. Springer for appropriate corrections.

BIRDS OF THE OAK LAKE FIELD STATION

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The Oak Lake Field Station is a 570 acre (232 ha) facility located in northeastern Brookings County, South Dakota (Latitude 44° 30' N, Longitude 96° 31' W) on the eastern ridge of the Coteau Des Prairie. Field station property sits adjacent to the Oak Lake basin with approximately 66% in grassland, 13% in woodland, 12% in cropland, 8% in wetlands and 1% in farmstead and building land uses. Vegetation consists of species common to tall grass prairie habitats (e.g., Bur Oak, Green Ash, Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem, Indiangrass). The facility is managed for instruction, research and public service activities, supporting 3,500 to 3,700 user-days of activity and 60 to 70 groups per year.

A preliminary check-off list of avian species was compiled using regional field guides shortly after the establishment of the field station (Northern Plains Biological Field Station Committee 1987). While this list has been a useful reference, little observational data have been available to establish accuracy. Field observation data were collected to verify this checklist and establish a baseline inventory of resident and migratory avifauna for the station. Observations were collected January 1994 through August 1996 during bird watching expeditions and research activities. In addition, formal bird counts were conducted at eight sites along 100 m transects of 30 m fixed width from 16 May to 23 June 23 1995 (Emlen 1977). Birds were tallied, based upon sight and call, along each transect on twelve dates. Most of the observations were conducted from 0600 to 1200 hrs during spring, summer and fall. Biological attributes of each species were acquired from literature (Harrison 1975; Peterson 1995; South Dakota Ornithological Union 1991; Stokes 1979; Stokes and Stokes 1983, 1989, 1996; Terres 1995).

A total of 147 species have been observed at Oak Lake Field Station. These include nine species not previously recorded (Eared Grebe, Sora, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Say's Phoebe, Sedge Wren, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Swamp Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco). Based upon observations and regional ornithological literature, 53% of these birds were categorized as breeding species and 47% were categorized as migratory species. The Say's phoebe was observed on a nest with eggs during the summers of 1995 and 1997. This species has rarely been observed nesting east of the Missouri River and no nesting observations have been made in Brookings County (Peterson 1995).

These observations provide a baseline to support future research and

recreational studies of avifauna at Oak Lake Field Station. Additional check-off sheets are under development for vegetation, mammals and aquatic fauna. Printed copies of these check-off sheets may be obtained by contacting the author or downloading from the Oak Lake homepage (<http://www.abs.sdstate.edu/bio/Oaklake.index.htm>).

References

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Birds Observed During the Breeding Season

Eared Grebe	Black Tern	Brown Thrasher
Pied-billed Grebe	Mourning Dove	Cedar Waxwing
American White Pelican	Great Horned Owl	European Starling
Double-crested Cormorant	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Yellow Warbler
American Bittern	Belted Kingfisher	Common Yellowthroat
Great Blue Heron	Downy Woodpecker	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Great Egret	Hairy Woodpecker	Indigo Bunting
Canada Goose	Red-headed Woodpecker	Dickcissel
Mallard	Northern Flicker	Chipping Sparrow
Gadwall	Say's Phoebe	Clay-colored Sparrow
Blue-winged Teal	Willow Flycatcher	Field Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Western Kingbird	Vesper Sparrow
American Wigeon	Eastern Kingbird	Song Sparrow
Wood Duck	Cliff Swallow	Swamp Sparrow
Ruddy Duck	Barn Swallow	Bobolink
Red-tailed Hawk	Tree Swallow	Red-winged Blackbird
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Blue Jay	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Swanson's Hawk	American Crow	Western Meadowlark
Northern Harrier	Black-capped Chickadee	Common Grackle
American Kestrel	White-breasted Nuthatch	Brown-headed Cowbird

Ring-necked Pheasant	Marsh Wren	Orchard Oriole
Sora	Sedge Wren	Baltimore Oriole
American Coot	House Wren	American Goldfinch
Killdeer	American Robin	House Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	Eastern Bluebird	
Common Tern	Gray Catbird	

Birds Observed During Migration

Common Loon	Ring-billed Gull	Wilson's Warbler
Snow Goose	Franklin's Gull	Northern Waterthrush
Northern Shoveler	Eastern Phoebe	Ovenbird
Green-winged Teal	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Blue Grosbeak
Redhead	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Rufous-sided Towhee
Canvasback	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Hermit Thrush	Lark Sparrow
Lesser Scaup	Swainson's Thrush	American Tree Sparrow
Bufflehead	Red-eyed Vireo	Harris's Sparrow
Common Goldeneye	Magnolia Warbler	White-crowned Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Black-throated Green Warbler	White-throated Sparrow
Common Merganser	Black-throated Blue Warbler	Fox Sparrow
Red-breasted Merganser	Blackburnian Warbler	Lincoln's Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Bay-breasted Warbler	Baird's Sparrow
Northern Goshawk	Blackpoll Warbler	Henslow's Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Pine Warbler	Le Conte's Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Palm Warbler	Dark-eyed Junco
Osprey	Mourning Warbler	Lapland Longspur
Rough-legged Hawk	Canada Warbler	Smith's Longspur
Ferruginous Hawk	American Redstart	Snow Bunting
Broad-winged Hawk	Black-and-white Warbler	Brewer's Blackbird
Common Snipe	Orange-crowned Warbler	White-winged Crossbill
American Woodcock	Chestnut-sided Warbler	Red Crossbill
Forster's Tern	Yellow-rumped Warbler	

REPORT OF THE RARE BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

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The SDOU Rare Bird Records Committee (RBRC) met on 18 May 1997 at Vermillion and on 11 October 1997 at Rapid City. The members of the committee for the spring meeting were David Swanson (secretary), Paul Springer, Bruce Harris, and Jeffrey Palmer, with a position vacant due to the passing of Nathaniel Whitney, Jr. J. David Williams, who began serving at the fall meeting in 1997, filled the vacant position. All members either attended each meeting or voted *in absentia*. The purpose and voting procedure of the committee are outlined by Springer (1988, SDBN 40:67-70). Observers of rare or unusual birds in South Dakota are