

Note

BIRDS SIGHTED WITHIN ONE HOUR FROM ONE OBSERVATION POINT IN BURLEIGH COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA. On June 17, 1971 between the hours of 9:00 and 10:00 on a rainy morning, I parked my car on a bridge which spans Burnt Creek just off River Road about four miles north of Bismarck and observed twenty-six species of birds in a small stand of Missouri River bottom woods.

To one side of the bridge there appeared to be a small dam which might have been started by a beaver but later abandoned. On a telephone wire above this unfinished dam was a Red-winged Blackbird singing his "Cheer-ee-o's" as he occasionally fluttered to a nearby willow and back to the wire again. On the dam below, his mate was flitting from twig to twig, examining each one very carefully for choice morsels. Here, also, a pair of Grackles were hopping on the branches which held back the water, picking food off the foam which collected there. About one hundred feet downstream on a partially submerged log perched a male Blue-winged Teal, while his mate bathed nearby. Suddenly the female took off and was immediately followed by the drake, who apparently escorted her to her nest because within a minute or so he was back again on the log all by himself.

A wet Meadowlark flew in from a field, lit high up on a branch of a half-dead Cottonwood tree, and immediately proceeded to shake off the moisture from its feathers. Below, two Barn Swallows kept diving out from under the bridge, apparently building a nest underneath. Nearby, a pair of Redstarts were darting in and out of a thicket. On the other side of the bridge, a Robin was carrying nesting material into a small Ash tree while her mate sat on a nearby stump, chasing away all other Robins intruding into the area. They paid little attention to other birds unless they landed directly in the nest-bearing tree. Not far away both Western and Eastern Kingbirds sat silently on dead branches, occasionally soaring up to catch insects. On either side of the bridge, pairs of Yellow Warblers were chasing each other through the underbrush, and high above in a dead tree trunk a pair of Yellow-shafted Flickers were making frequent trips to a hole. Along the edge of the water a female Cowbird was sneaking in and out of the sparse sedge.

Above and through the tree tops, Starlings flew back and forth, as did also a Hairy and Downy Woodpecker. Somewhere out of sight could be heard a cooing Mourning Dove. Seemingly from nowhere a Black-headed Grosbeak landed in a small tree nearby, stretched out his head several times as if to see who was inside the car, and then flew to the top of the tallest tree and competed in a song fest with a Baltimore Oriole. All this time a Song Sparrow sat at the top of a small Chokecherry tree merrily singing away, only now and then going down into the grass for a moment and then back up again to the same tree top. A Blue Jay made his appearance a number of times, always scolding, as did also some curious Catbirds. All of a sudden, from upstream came a rattling sound produced by two Kingfishers, one in pursuit of the other. A Spotted Sandpiper also paid a visit to the dam, took a few bows, and then with a few "tswit, tswit" calls was off again.

In addition to the above, a Yellowthroat, a House Wren, and a Warbling Vireo were also heard. In all, twenty-six different species were observed from this point within one hour, all undoubtedly nesting in the immediate area. Many additional species have been seen at this spot on other occasions. One does not have to go far to observe and to enjoy birds. —*William A. Buresh, 1527 N. 19th St., Bismarck, North Dakota 58501.*