

BIRD NOTES FROM SPRING VALLEY

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I would like to share the following bird observations made during 1982.

On Sunday 5 September 1982 at 10:00 a.m. it was a beautiful sunny morning. I was out for a walk when a white bird appeared overhead; my first thought was "that's an odd looking gull". Then, as it sort of hovered and tilted its wings (as though to let me have a better look) I noticed its facial markings, the falcon-like bill and the long tail — also I thought the head was a bit oversize; the flight was falcon-like — smooth gliding. It appeared to be hunting.

I kept my binoculars focused on it until it got out of sight behind the trees, to where our partridges are usually found. Then I hurried back to the house to check with the books. There was no doubt about it — it was a white Gyrfalcon. Since it was too early for migration it must have been one that escaped from captivity. Whose Gyrfalcon was it?

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We recorded our first Piping Plover

nest in June 1982. The nest was first located 20 June — it contained 4 eggs. On 5 July we were asked to show a Vancouver birder (a lady) around and, of course, we were delighted to have this special nest to show her (Piping Plovers were new to her) but the nest only had two eggs. As we stood there wondering what happened to the other eggs the adult plovers were piping loudly, almost at our feet. Then a newly hatched wee chick was noticed a foot or so away from the nest, blending so well with the sand and pebbles we decided not to look around any further. Carefully we stepped away.

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On 19 September 1982 among a flock of Red-winged Blackbirds, roosting in bullrushes, was a strange looking bird. Upon closer examination we found it to be a Red-winged Blackbird with a white throat and neck, with the white extending down the front of the neck. Is this a common thing? We haven't seen one like it before, but then, we don't always take time to examine the blackbirds too closely. This flock was roosting just a stone's throw away from the hen house when I went to gather the eggs. I usually carry my binoculars with me and when I don't, I end up being sorry for not doing so.



Red-winged Blackbird.

Fred Lahrman