**Dakota Farm Talk – Private Lands and Migrating Birds**

**Pam Geppert**

South Dakota is blessed with abundant natural resources which migrating birds depend on for habitat. From the smallest marsh birds to ducks, geese and raptors. Wetlands provide a stomping ground for migrating birds to rest, eat and continue their journey. Management of private lands has a great impact on birds living here and migrating through. Audubon Dakotas Working Lands program manager Joshua Laffer is explains.

**Joshua Laffer**

Having cover out there on the ground, whether it's through cover crops or through just leaving your crop residue so that there's some cover for your upland birds, those are obviously really important making sure you don't overgrazing your pastures that you leave cover out there for the birds to get out of the weather, to hide from predators. We think about those things, particularly during nesting, but they're just as important this time of year as those birds are making their way south.

**Pam Geppert**

But management, which allows sediment, nutrients and pesticides to run off the land, can degrade wetlands and water quality. Laffer says it's not only detrimental to wildlife but can be costly while limiting ag productivity.

**Joshua Laffer**

It's something that can pretty readily be addressed just by adopting some pretty straightforward conservation minded practices around manage grazing, crop rotation, no till cropping, cover crops.

**Pam Geppert**

These conservation concepts align with practices proving effective across South Dakota. Audubon Dakota stands ready to work with landowners to implement strategies, enhancing soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat. Visit Dakota dot Audubon dot org or any and NRCS center to learn more on natural resource stewardship. I'm Pam Gabbert reporting for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, helping People Help the land.