

The 2011 Illinois Statewide Spring Bird Count

By Michael P. Ward and Tara Beveroth

The 2011 Illinois Statewide Spring Bird Count held 7 May marks the 41st Spring Bird Count in the state. We thank the contributors who counted in 94 counties. The next count is Saturday 5 May 2012. Certain counties need compilers for the 2012 count. These include Christian, Clark, Hamilton, Jefferson, Livingston, Macon, Peoria, Wayne, and Williamson. If interested please contact beveroth@illinois.edu.

Population trends

One of the scientific reasons for conducting this count is that birds are among the easiest taxa to monitor, plus birds move easily providing a correlation to the condition of a given habitat. Population trends for three species illustrate the annual variations. First, the decline in Red-headed Woodpeckers (Figure 1) has been documented by various censuses in many parts of the species' range. While many counties still detect the species (90 in 2011) only a couple individuals are detected per county. In contrast, Red-tailed Hawk populations (Figure 2) have steadily increased in the state. In general, Illinois' diurnal rap-

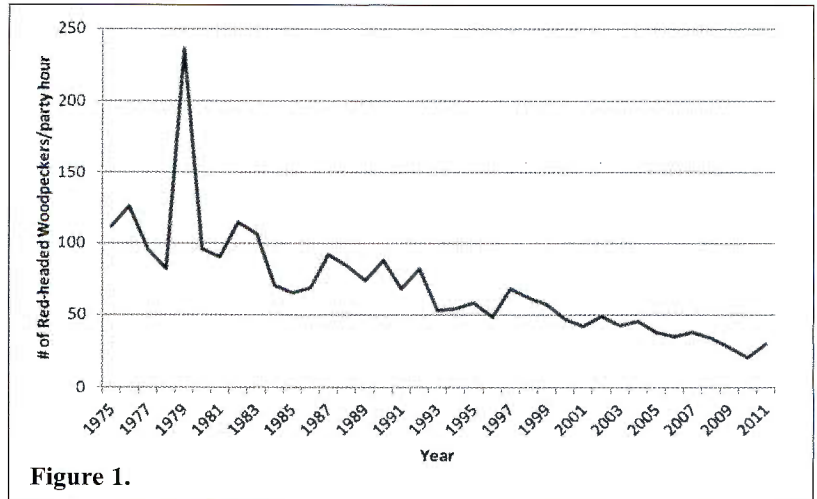


Figure 1.

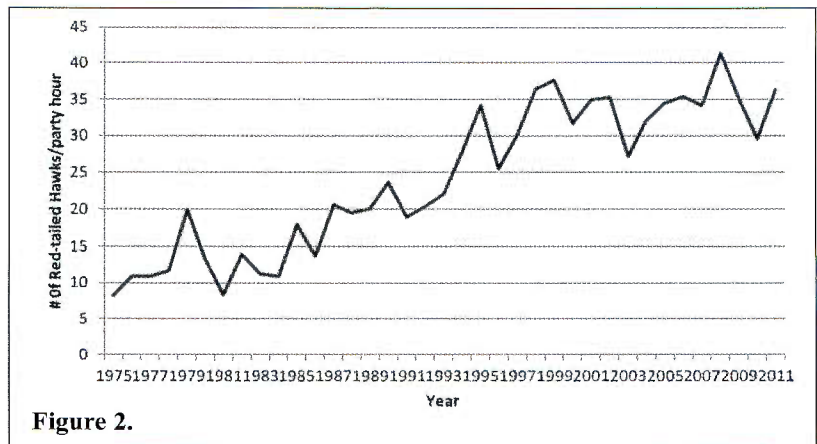


Figure 2.

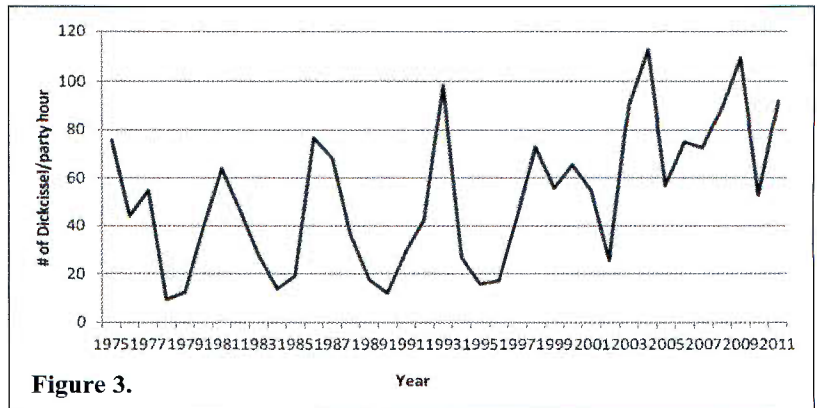


Figure 3.

Figure 1. The population of Red-headed Woodpeckers over the last 35 years in Illinois.

Figure 2. The population of Red-tailed Hawks over the last 35 years in Illinois.

Figure 3. The population of Dickcissels over the last 35 years in Illinois.