

had a productive day with 57 species and 6,938 individual birds (Table 1) including singles of Northern Shrike, Marsh Wren, Eastern Towhee and Lincoln's Sparrow, along with 4 Fox Sparrows. (Editor's Note: By this time I would have been home tucked into bed, but the intrepid and unbelievable Kelly McKay kept on! As they say in the commercials, we do not recommend anyone attempt this craziness. Unless your name happens to be Kelly McKay. And remember, ask your doctor first before embarking on this or any other exercise program.)

## 29 December

(Horseshoe Lake, Illinois)

I departed home at 11 p.m. for the 7-hour, 388-mile drive to extreme southern Illinois, where I would spend the next four days. I continued coughing uncontrollably, which probably helped keep me awake during this long overnight drive. A good friend, Catherine Bland, joined me. During most of the night, we drove through light to moderate rain squalls, which ended within an hour of beginning the count. The weather was noticeably mild, which is typical for southern Illinois. The temperature varied from the low 40s to the low 50s, and the wind was light (0-10 mph). We had a very good day identifying 71 species and 6,785 individual birds. We had 15 species of waterfowl as well as 7 Ruby-crowned Kinglets, 18 Field Sparrows, 10 Fox Sparrows, and 20 Eastern Meadowlarks. During the day, I started coughing up some blood, and by night I was feeling very sick again. The fear of not being able to continue the CBC marathon, brought about a decision to end my sleepless streak. I finally went to bed at 10 p.m. after being awake for 398 consecutive hours. The marathon was now 2/3 complete. However, as I slept for the first time in 16 days, I wondered if I would be able to successfully achieve this odyssey.

## 30 December

(Union County, Illinois)

After 7 very restful hours of sleep, I awoke refreshed and feeling much better. Steve Dinsmore and I



*A Lincoln's Sparrow is a nice find for an Illinois CBC. Kanae Hirabayashi photographed this Lincoln's Sparrow 2 October 2002 at Montrose, Cook County.*

departed for the 26-mile drive to this count at 5:15 a.m. We enjoyed another mild day, with the temperature varying from the mid 20s to the mid 40s and light winds. My group recorded 74 species and 24,940 total birds. This number included 17 species of waterfowl. Among the many highlights of this count were 931 Greater White-fronted Geese, 6,100 Snow Geese, 53 Ross's Geese, 1 Golden Eagle, and a single Gray Catbird.

## 31 December

(Mermet Lake, Illinois-Kentucky)

Once again, Catherine Bland and I formed a field party. We had a 62-mile drive to the count circle, and departed at 5 a.m. Mild temperatures and almost nonexistent winds along with my improving health made me really enthusiastic about the count. Thanks to a remarkable variety of waterfowl at Mermet Lake (18 species), my group had an absolutely extraordinary day 90 species and 32,068 individuals. This was the best CBC that I had ever

participated on, in terms of diversity. The entire count was a highlight! For instance, we recorded 9 Black and 10 Turkey Vultures, 3 Loggerhead Shrikes, 12 Northern Mockingbirds, 1 Common Yellowthroat, single Vesper and Savannah Sparrows, and 5 Indigo Buntings. We spent New Year's Eve at Cathie Hutcheson's house (another southern Illinois CBCer). Cathie and her husband Lou put us up for the night and dished out a heaping helping of southern Illinois hospitality, along with a very delicious meal.

## 1 January

(Jackson County, Illinois)

Catherine Bland and I departed the Hutchesons at 4:45 a.m. on this New Year's Day morning to make the 61-mile drive to the count circle, where we joined Vicki Lang and Steve Juhlin. Once again, mild weather persisted with temperatures in the mid 40s to mid 50s and light to moderate winds (5-20 mph). Fewer waterfowl than expected resulted in the least number of species among the 4 southern Illinois counts. Nevertheless, we still had a very good day observing 69 species and 51,621 birds. Noteworthy species included 17 Red-shouldered Hawks, a single Golden Eagle and American Woodcock, 44 Red-headed Woodpeckers, 4 Brown Thrashers, 26,682 Red-winged Blackbirds, and 19,257 Common Grackles.

## 2 January

(Adams County, Wisconsin)

We departed Carbondale, Illinois at 7 p.m. and drove 11.5 hours covering 612 miles north into central Wisconsin. I worked alone for the first half of the day, and then helped Eric Howe during the latter half. The weather was much more inclement than what I had experienced over the past 4 days, 600 miles to the south. Late in the afternoon it began to rain heavily, making the roads icy for the first