

Figure 4. The number of species detected and participants (in parentheses) in Illinois Counties in 2011. The hatched counties were not censused.

tors appear to be in good shape. In 2011, Red-shouldered Hawk, Bald Eagle, Osprey, and Merlin set all-time county highs. Dickcissel (Figure 3) populations have an interesting cyclic pattern. One reason for the fluctuation from year to year could be related to what's happening on the species' Venezuelan wintering grounds. The variation of the annual bird count date could also be a factor.

Results and observations

The total number of species documented during the 2011 count was 263 (See Table 3), with nearly all of the counties reporting at least 100 species (Figure 4). Statistics including number of miles driven, hours walked, and observers, are included in Table 2. These statistics are important because observer hours can affect the significance of the data gathered. An interesting data set is one that shows the commonality of species through time. Though these data can be difficult to interpret because of different effort each year, one approach is to simply rank how common a species is in a given year and compare that rank to previous years. Red-winged Blackbird (Table 1) was the most abundant species detected for the fifth consecutive year. The 2011 count also appeared to be a very good year for White-crowned Sparrow, which ranked 16 or below in the previous four years, but ranked at No. 8 this year.

No new species for the count were found in 2011. In general there were not many rare species detected. Some exceptions include two White-winged Scoters in Cook County. This is only the eighth year in which they

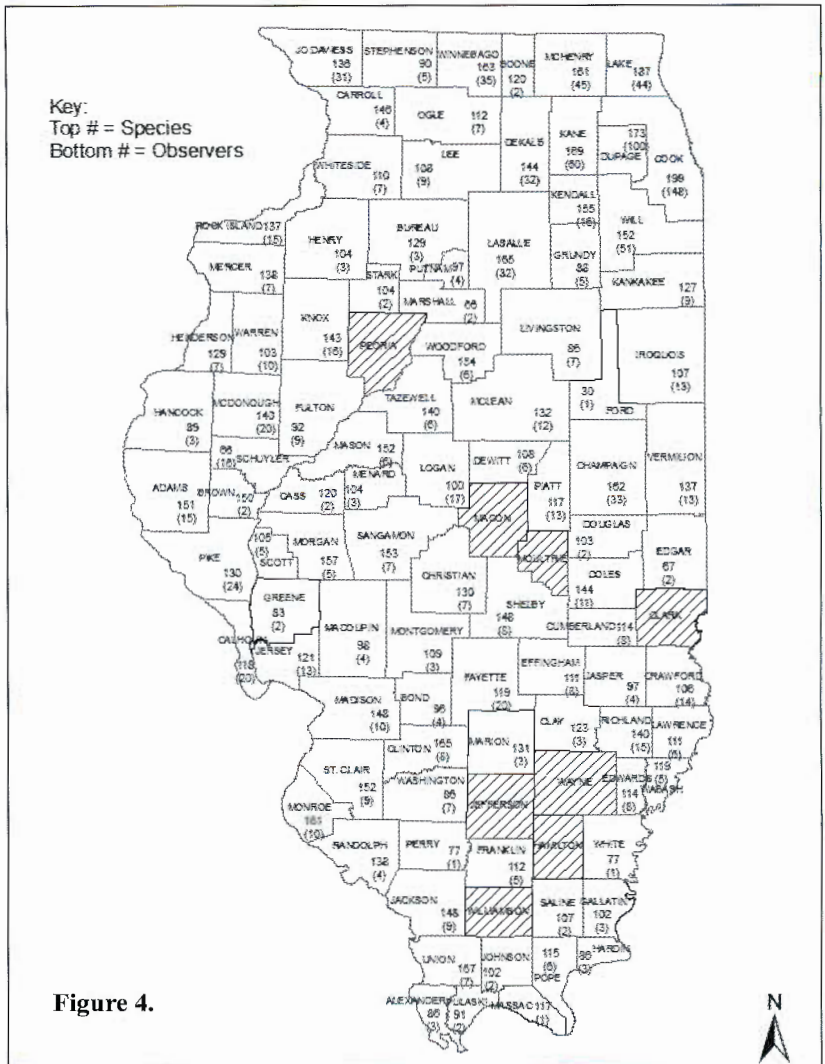


Figure 4.

Table 1. The relative rank of species in terms of abundance (top 20 in 2011) in a given year.

Species	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Red-winged Blackbird	1	1	1	1	1
American Robin	2	2	2	2	4
Common Grackle	3	6	3	3	2
European Starling	4	3	4	4	3
Canada Goose	5	7	5	5	6
American Goldfinch	6	10	10	7	8
Brown-headed Cowbird	7	12	9	8	5
White-crowned Sparrow	8	22	33	28	16
House Sparrow	9	9	7	6	7
Tree Swallow	10	5	6	13	15
Northern Cardinal	11	14	11	10	10
Barn Swallow	12	4	8	11	14
Blue Jay	13	26	18	16	19
Mourning Dove	14	15	12	9	9
Yellow-rumped Warbler	15	17	17	32	24
Chipping Sparrow	16	20	16	15	18
Ring-billed Gull	17	16	14	14	31
Mallard	18	19	21	20	37
American Crow	19	23	27	25	25
Indigo Bunting	20	18	13	12	11