

the highest count (7). Forty-three Blue-winged teals were noted statewide (in 5 count circles); 30 individuals were at Cypress Creek, seemingly the CBC waterfowl capitol of Illinois this season. Three Harlequin Ducks were tallied all on Lake Michigan where they are expected: one at Chicago Lakefront and two at Calumet--Sand Ridge. The only scoters were a count week White-winged at Carlyle Lake and a Surf at Western Mercer. Three Golden Eagles were seen, one unusual record of an immature north at Rockford, one at Chautauqua NWR and the last at Mermet Lake, Massac Co. Eleven Peregrine Falcons, mirroring that species reintroduction success, were tallied statewide (in 8 count circles) and four well-described Merlins were seen at Evanston, Fermilab, Kishwaukee and Champaign. Union County had the only Sora.

Most surprising were the numbers of Sandhill Cranes (157 in 9 count circles; and 182 count week in Barrington) perhaps reflecting a burgeoning population to the north. During the 1997 CBC there were only two in the state. Least Sandpipers lingered just long enough to be noted at Rend Lake (52), Carlyle Lake, Horseshoe Lake (8), and Collinsville (count week). In the unusual gull department were solitary Great Black-backed Gulls at Waukegan, Evanston, and Muscatine, IA. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were at Evanston, Barrington, Calumet--Sand Ridge, Springfield, and Rend Lake with count week birds at Carlyle Lake and Collinsville. Glaucous Gulls were at Waukegan (2), Evanston, Princeton, and Davenport, IA. Two Barn Owls were at Cypress Creek. Waukegan and Schapville reported the only Snowy Owls, both count week birds. Evanston recorded 2 Pine Warblers, an unusual rarity for northern Illinois in winter. The female is still under review by IORC. Warbluff Valley tallied the only other Pine Warbler in the state. Rockford, for the second

consecutive year, recorded a Common Yellowthroat. Union County tallied the only Palm Warbler.

Carlyle Lake and Union had the only American Pipits, both with 2. Solitary Spotted Towhees were noted at Carlyle Lake and Union County. Sixteen well-described Brewer's Blackbirds were at Carlyle Lake. Unusual was the single Le Conte's Sparrow in central Illinois at Middlefork Valley, plus 67 on 10 other counts all in southern Illinois. The only Vesper Sparrows reported were 2 at Jackson and 1 at Horseshoe Lake. Rare in winter, the only Harris's Sparrows reported were at Fermilab and Muscatine, IA. Three Lincoln's Sparrows were rather well-described, all in southern Illinois, at Rend Lake, Jackson, and Horseshoe Lake.

Regularly Occurring Species

In addition to the aforementioned rare loons, 23 Common Loons were recorded (in 8 count circles. Great Blue Herons continue to boom: 1,572 individuals in 49 count circles (see histogram). One compiler commented the herons were obviously moving in advance of cold freezing weather since they were uncharacteristically standing in cornfields. Away from the Mississippi River the 36 Bald Eagles were noted on Starved Rock, 20 adults and 16 immatures were an all-time high for that count and mirrors the species general population success (966 were recorded statewide including Iowa, a bit down from the '97 season, 49 less to be exact, but generally numbers are better with a harsher winter; see histogram). Northern Shrikes made it down as far south as central Illinois circles; Middlefork River Valley and Bushnell (17 in eight count circles) rather amazing considering it was not a big flight year. Red-headed Woodpeckers (612 in 47 count circles) seems like an alarmingly low number especially when 1,141 Red-headed Woodpeckers were tallied last year in 52 count circles statewide.

Eastern Bluebirds and American Robins certainly put on a good showing statewide with many compilers remarking on record numbers for their respective count circles: 1,734 bluebirds in 37 count circles and 17,200 robins in 53 count circles). The 8 Northern Mockingbirds at Decatur and 10 at Springfield seemed like good numbers for a species that is generally confined in winter to southern Illinois.

With the heavy snows, some counts tallied good numbers of birds driven to roadsides such as larks, longspurs, and Snow Buntings. Most amazing, was the solitary Snow Bunting that made it to Carlyle Lake. The larger numbers were clearly north with Illini having the highest count of 194; Kishwaukee came in second with 80. The highest Horned Lark numbers went to DeKalb, 1,786 and Middle Fork River Valley, with a record count of 923. Finally the highest Lapland Longspur count went to Clinton Lake, 815. Other good high counts were the 674 at Kishwaukee and 570 at DeKalb.

Not often seen in northern Illinois were 5 Savannah Sparrows tallied independently by 3 separate parties at Waukegan. The number of Eurasian Tree Sparrow is ever increasing along the Mississippi and Illinois River valleys; compilers farther north might scout for this bird that seems to be expanding its range. The highest total for this species, 180, was recorded at Chautauqua NWR in the middle of our state.

Irruptive Species

Red-breasted Nuthatches were down (69 in 23 count circles, see histogram). Winter finches were almost nil with just a few Pine Siskins (36 in 9 count circles) and Common Redpolls (6 in 4 count circles). Waukegan had the only crossbills, 2 White-wings on the count and reds during count week.