

Field Notes



1992 - 93 Winter

by Robert F. Danley

The 92-93 winter season appeared typical in terms of numbers and diversity of the usual wintering species, but was outstanding for lingering migrants and vagrants. Highlights were two first state records (pending Illinois Ornithological Records Committee approval): **Glaucous-winged Gull** and **Curve-billed Thrasher**. A **Pacific Loon** and **Solitary Vireo** were observed during December establishing first time state records for this month. A lingering **Swainson's Thrush** and **Northern Parula Warbler** were also outstanding finds; both were discovered on Christmas Bird Counts. A **Tree Swallow** was found in January, also a first time state record for this month.

Several other noteworthy species occurred during the early winter probably due to the above normal temperatures. Cool and wet could describe much of the winter with the harsh weather of cold and snow not arriving until mid-February. December temperatures averaged two degrees above normal and finished slightly above normal for precipitation. January magnified the warming trend and finished five degrees above normal with an additional 1.8 inches of precipitation above the norm. February brought a shift back to Cold weather with temperatures dipping below average by 1.7 degrees and slightly below normal precipitation. Snowfall also was heaviest in this month with the southern third of the state receiving up to

two feet. Much lesser amounts of snow, three to six inches, fell statewide during December and January.

Continuing a trend from last winter, open water conditions allowed many waterbirds to winter or linger late. Raptor reports were slightly above normal with both Northern Harrier and Rough-legged Hawk still being found in scattered pockets. Gulls seemed to be below normal in total numbers with the usual number of species being seen. Owl reports were normal with Snowies almost exclusively reported from Chicago's Meigs Field. The winter finches were absent or in low numbers.

Other noteworthy records (not previously mentioned above) this winter were: Eared Grebe, **Western Grebe**, **Brant**, **Eurasian Wigeon**, Virginia Rail, **Dunlin**, **Mew Gull**, **California Gull**, **Rock Wren**, House Wren, Orange-crowned Warbler, **Nashville Warbler**, **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** and **Dickcissel**.

This seasonal report contains the most significant observational records during the winter season statewide. Some records are not included here because they may be considered either late fall or early spring migrants. These will appear in the appropriate seasonal reports.

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Field Notes heading drawing of a Rock Wren by Leslie A. DeCoursey