

With a few exceptions, puddle ducks again showed lower populations as compared to the recent past. There were, however, some noteworthy concentrations of Mallards and Northern Pintails in the south; see details below.

There were no reports of notably large numbers of any "diving ducks" this season. Nevertheless, three notable species were documented. An ongoing **Mottled Duck** in Springfield, an adult female **Harlequin Duck at Lake Decatur** overwintered, and three Harlequin Ducks were documented on Lake Michigan. A documentation of a female **Tufted Duck in Richland County** is pending IORC review.

Four species of upland gamebirds were noted this season, none in particularly good numbers. Northern Bobwhite went unreported from the central portion of the state. Only one report of Greater Prairie-Chickens was turned in from Prairie Ridge State Natural Area. There were no reports of Gray Partridge for the second consecutive winter.

There were no reports of Red-throated Loon this season, and Common Loon was found in sub-normal numbers. A single Eared Grebe at Rend Lake provided the sole noteworthy occurrence within its family. Both American White Pelican and Double-crested Cormorant were found in substantially lower numbers and were less widespread than in recent winters. Herons were also poorly represented, however, a Great Egret in northern Illinois in January was noteworthy. Only three reports for Black Vulture were submitted, while Turkey Vulture was found in fairly typical numbers.

DIURNAL RAPTORS TO GULLS.

Among the 13 species of diurnal raptors recorded this season, numbers were fairly typical. Although Bald Eagle concentrations were smaller this year, notable counts were obtained along the Mississippi River. Other noteworthy raptor numbers included good tallies of Northern Harriers at the Arklands Reclamation Area and Prairie Ridge State Natural Area, and up to 13 Cooper's Hawks in Champaign County.

American Coots were slightly more abundant this winter, but concentrations were confined to the south. Sandhill Cranes were considerably less numerous, especially in northeastern Illinois. The only sizable numbers were at the onset of spring migration.

Shorebirds were well represented during the period, with six species reported, with a rarely reported CBC species, **Spotted Sandpiper** (pending IORC review) being the most notable. Among these, Killdeer were substantially less common and widespread. There were no reports of Killdeer in the north, and five records of nine total American Woodcock, all in the south. By contrast, Wilson's Snipe was more numerous and widespread this winter. The only other relatively unusual shorebird identified this year was a late December **Dunlin** at Mermet Lake.

Gulls in general were in comparatively low numbers statewide, although Ring-billed, Herring, and Thayer's Gulls were found in respectable numbers in the north, and Carlyle Lake hosted up to **60,000 Ring-billed Gulls** at mid-winter. There were very few records of the scarcer arctic gulls outside northern Illinois, while Bonaparte's Gull went unrecord-

ed north of Clinton Lake in central Illinois. The most unusual species found this winter was **California Gull**, with singles at Carlyle Lake and Lake Michigan.

PIGEONS TO KINGLETS

Rock Pigeon numbers were somewhat lower this year, but this may not be significant for this under-reported species. Eurasian Collared-Doves showed essentially stable numbers, but with gradually expanding distribution. Mourning Doves occurred in greater abundance, particularly in the northern and central sections of the state. Reports of Monk Parakeets were confined to the Chicago region.

A **Burrowing Owl** at Pyramid State Park in Perry County since mid-October remained much of the winter. Snowy Owls staged an impressive showing, especially across central Illinois, bringing up the southern vanguard of a very large invasion to the north, east and west of Illinois. Other species of owls were noted in fairly typical numbers, but with some increase in Short-eared Owl populations. There were no reports of Barn Owls this season. Woodpeckers were found in typical to slightly above-average numbers, and Red-headed Woodpecker seemed more widespread this season.

A **Say's Phoebe** was documented at Crane Lake in Mason County 17-20 December. Another **Say's Phoebe**—possibly the same individual—came from Cass County, about ten miles distant from the Crane Lake sighting. Loggerhead Shrike numbers were somewhat down this winter, and confined to the south, while Northern Shrikes staged yet another impressive invasion, although most records were confined to the northern third of the state, especially the Greater Chicago region, with only a few birds making it to central Illinois.

American Crow and Black-capped Chickadee remained in somewhat reduced numbers this winter, saved for the large, annual roosts in central Illinois while numbers for allied permanent residents were typical (Carolina Chickadee) to above-average (Blue Jay, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch). However, all these common residents are doubtless under-reported. Red-breasted Nuthatch showed one notable count of 23 individuals at Champaign County.

One Tree Swallow was reported this season, but two extremely late **Barn Swallows** were in Union County on 30 December with one there 28 December. Carolina and Winter Wren numbers were healthy this winter. Since House Wrens often go entirely unrecorded in winter, a total of four individuals this season was high. Marsh Wrens have become almost annual in recent years, so this year's two reports come as no surprise, but the **Sedge Wren** at the Union County Conservation Area was somewhat rarer. Both Kinglets were in good numbers in southern Illinois but were sparingly reported elsewhere.

THRUSHES TO WEAVER FINCHES.

The three expected species of thrushes found this winter were widespread in good to excellent numbers. Hermit Thrush numbers were among the highest on record, and a