

Northern Rough-winged Swallow lingering in Richland County provided Illinois's first December record for this species.

Numbers for most of the chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, creepers, wrens, and kinglets were somewhat reduced over last winter, and particularly so for Carolina Chickadee, Brown Creeper, and Carolina Wren. By contrast, Red-breasted Nuthatches showed wide distribution and good numbers.

Thrushes to Sparrows

Thrush populations were unimpressive this season, with no noteworthy concentrations, although the always rare **Varied Thrush** and **Townsend's Solitaire** were located. A total of nine Gray Catbirds is among the highest ever recorded during the winter season and included three birds in nearby Chicago parks, while numbers for other mimids were weak. European Starling counts were also below those of most recent years.

American Pipits remained in strong numbers in southern Illinois well into December and even into early January. The wintering population of Cedar Waxwings was weak at best, with few reports after December.

Four species of warbler were reported this winter, including a photographed **Northern Waterthrush** lingering into early Dec. Yellow-rumped Warblers were in small numbers and went unreported over most of the state after December.

Eighteen species of sparrows were reported this season. Scarcer wintering species included a **Spotted Towhee** in far southern Illinois; **Chipping Sparrows** throughout the

Acknowledgments

The foundation of this summary is the detailed information regarding wintering avian populations submitted to the compiler by field observers throughout the state. Maximum counts are provided, where available. Additional data reflecting the progress of the season are noted, when available, for species and areas of special interest.

I gratefully acknowledge and thank all the contributors who made this report possible. These observers are credited for each record, and cited observers are arranged here by initials/citation forms: Amar Ayyash, Cindy Alberico, David Antieau, Edward A. Anderson, Jill S. Anderson, Les Allen, Aaron Boone, Arlene E. Brei, Dale E. Birkenholz, Frank K. Bennett, H. David Bohlen, Joan Bruchman, Linda Boardsen, Lawrence G. Balch, Maurice Brucker, Margaret L. Baker, Michael J. Baum, Richard G. Bjorklund, Steven D. Bailey, Sigurd N. Bjorklund, Vonna Bley, William A. Bertrand, Joan Bade (JBd), Judy Bates (JBt), Richard Biss, Roger Bates (RBt), Ron Bradley (RBr), Sam Burckhardt, Elizabeth J. Chato, John Cecil, Jeff D. Chapman, Karin M. Cassel, Marilyn F. Campbell, Matthew Cvetas, Paul R. Clyne, Robert Cecil, Carl Daubach, Danny Diaz, Donald R. Dann, Jon Duerr, Michelle Devlin, Myrna F. Deaton, Pen Daubach, Paul K. Doughty, Roger Digges, Sheryl L. DeVore, Stephen J. Dinsmore, Tim J. Dever, Mary Jane Easterday,

season at five sites; Vesper Sparrow at two central Illinois locations; a **Lincoln's Sparrow** in northwestern Illinois; and **Harris's Sparrows** at three locations. Numbers for most species were fairly typical, with healthy numbers among the hardiest species (American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, and Lapland Longspur) and the largest influx of Snow Buntings in over two decades. An impressive concentration of over 700 individuals of five species of sparrows was noted at the Union County Conservation Area on 29 December.

Blackbirds to Weaver Finches

No unexpected species of blackbirds were reported this season. Populations were mostly average to low, although a tally of **20 Western Meadowlarks** at Carlyle Lake in late February is among the highest of Illinois winter counts and a record high for southern Illinois. Rusty Blackbirds and Common Grackles showed some increase over last winter, while numbers for Red-winged Blackbirds and Eastern Meadowlarks were lower. All major concentrations of blackbirds were confined to southern Illinois.

Winter finches showed a noticeable influx this winter, with good numbers of Purple Finches and Pine Siskins and the largest invasion of Common Redpolls in fourteen years. One **Hoary Redpoll** was documented at Chicago. Numbers of American Goldfinches were down overall, although a tally at Rockford was the highest for winter in over a decade.

House Sparrow populations appear to be declining throughout Illinois, while Eurasian Tree Sparrows showed measurable increases in northwestern Illinois.

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