

Evening Grosbeak or Pine Siskin, although some were later reported on CBCs.

The species accounts below were submitted by 115 observers. Unfortunately, very few seasonal summaries were provided from the central section of the state.

The avian community during the 2002-2003 winter included records of nine species requiring review by the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee (IORC)—viz., Pacific Loon, Gyrfalcon, Prairie Falcon, California Gull, Glaucous-winged Gull, Rufous Hummingbird, Hermit Warbler, Painted Bunting, and Great-tailed Grackle. See the ninth IORC report in the preceding issue of *Meadowlark* for published acceptance of records for Pacific Loon, Gyrfalcon, Hermit Warbler, and Painted Bunting. Many additional species meriting documentation were also observed within the state. Some of the more interesting species include: Harlequin Duck, Solitary Sandpiper, Dunlin, Barn Swallow, House Wren, Swainson's Thrush, Gray Catbird, Orange-crowned Warbler, Pine Warbler, Palm Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Harris's Sparrow, Dickcissel, and Yellow-headed Blackbird. A well-studied (and photographed) Blue Grosbeak found at a feeder on 1 March had doubtless been present during the winter season. The only exotic/released species reported this winter were Trumpeter Swan and Ringed Turtle-Dove.

WATERFOWL TO NEW WORLD VULTURES. The winter of 2002-2003 showed a large diversity of waterfowl and other waterbirds throughout Illinois. However, with a few exceptions, most of these species appeared to be substantially less abundant this winter. Wintering waterfowl included **4 species of geese, 3 swans, 8 "puddle ducks," and 16 "diving ducks"**. In general, most of these species were relatively less abundant. Greater White-fronted, Ross's, and Canada Geese were all considerably less numerous, while the Snow Goose was still fairly abundant at traditional southern and central wintering locations. Noteworthy **Snow Goose concentrations included 300,000 and 100,000** at Carlyle Lake, **50,000** at Rend Lake, and **14,000** at Lake Springfield. Overall, "puddle ducks" were considerably less abundant throughout Illinois. However, fairly large numbers of Mallards were reported at the typical southern and central wintering sites. For instance, **50,000 Mallards** were encountered at Carlyle Lake, **30,178** were reported at Chautauqua, and **14,300** were present at Rend Lake. Similarly, "diving ducks" were, for the most part, less abundant throughout the state. Exceptions included more Canvasbacks present in the south, and fairly normal numbers of Greater Scaup, Long-tailed Ducks, and Hooded Mergansers statewide. **Two Harlequin Ducks** were observed on Lake Michigan. Overall, **no exceptionally large concentrations of "diving ducks" were encountered.**

Among the upland gamebirds, the Wild Turkey was more abundant throughout the state, as was the Northern Bobwhite in the south. By contrast, Ring-necked Pheasant populations remained very low and **Gray Partridge was completely absent.**

A single **Pacific Loon** was present at Rend Lake, while a **Red-throated Loon** was observed at Chicago's Grant Park. Considerably fewer Common Loons, Pied-billed, Horned, and Red-necked Grebes, American White Pelicans, and Double-crested Cormorants overwintered. Among these species, there were no notable concentrations. The Great Blue Heron was relatively abundant and widespread throughout the state, and the two vultures were also more numerous, but restricted almost exclusively to the southern region. Noteworthy concentrations included: **174 Great Blue Herons** at Chautauqua, and **105 Black Vultures** along with **85 Turkey Vultures** in Massac County. As usual very few Great Egrets or Black-crowned Night-Herons were reported

this season.

DIRUNAL RAPTORS TO GULLS. During this past winter, **14 species of diurnal raptors were reported.** Generally, these raptors were present in fairly typical numbers. The colder winter, with more ice on the major rivers, resulted in slightly higher numbers of Bald Eagles. Red-shouldered Hawks were also slightly more numerous, while Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks, along with Merlins, were somewhat less common. **Three Northern Goshawks** were observed (2 in the north and 1 in the south), and **2 Golden Eagles** were recorded (both in the south). The most extraordinary raptors this winter were a **Gyrfalcon** in La Salle County and reports (pending IORC review) of **2 Prairie Falcons.**

Both the American Coot and the Sandhill Crane were substantially less numerous this winter. This was undoubtedly the result of the more typical colder winter, and therefore their numbers were probably more normal for Illinois during this time of the year.

Five shorebird species were identified. Two exceptional shorebirds this winter were a **Solitary Sandpiper** in Lee County and a **Dunlin** at Carlyle Lake.

The 2002-2003 winter produced **11 species of gulls.** Bonaparte's and Ring-billed Gulls were less abundant in the northern 2/3 of Illinois, but still occurred in large numbers in the south. Herring Gulls were relatively scarce throughout Illinois. The typical "winter gull" community appeared to be more numerous this season. Several noteworthy concentrations were reported in the north. Starved Rock State Park hosted **36 Thayer's, 11 Iceland, 6 Lesser Black-backed, and 4 Glaucous Gulls.** The Lake Calumet area produced **8 Thayer's, 5 Iceland, 5 Lesser Black-backed, 4 Glaucous, and 12 Great Black-backed Gulls.** The southern Illinois gull highlight was a **Black-legged Kittiwake** at Carlyle Lake. Two exceptional gull accounts included an adult **California Gull** at Lake Calumet, and a **Glaucous-winged Gull** at Starved Rock.

PIGEONS TO KINGLETS. The Eurasian Collared-Dove and the Monk Parakeet, where established, seemed to be increasing and were more widespread. Mourning Doves were substantially more abundant this year, although this species, along with the Rock Pigeon, is most likely largely under-reported across the state. Although somewhat more numerous this year, the Eastern Screech, Great Horned, and Barred Owls are also undoubtedly under-reported. Long-eared and Short-eared Owls were considerably less common this winter, with Short-eared Owls being found only in the south. Only one **Snowy Owl** and **4 Northern Saw-whet Owls** were recorded.

A **Rufous Hummingbird** was present through the early winter in Kane County. The Belted Kingfisher and woodpecker species appeared to be more numerous this winter. However, permanent resident woodpeckers (Red-bellied, Downy, and Hairy) were probably greatly under-reported statewide. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers seemed to be more numerous and widely distributed. Notable concentrations of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were observed at Oakwood Bottoms in Jackson County and at the Union County Conservation Area.

The Red-breasted Nuthatch was extremely scarce in all regions of Illinois. However, the Brown Creeper and both kinglets occurred in substantially greater numbers. Impressive groups of **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were found in Jackson and Pulaski Counties. A remarkable **5 species of wrens** were observed this winter. Both Carolina and Winter Wrens were relatively abundant and widespread. **Two Marsh Wrens** were detected in the south, along with