

a **single Sedge Wren**. **One House Wren** occurred in the north (Rock Island County). **Two Barn Swallows** were observed on 20 December in Union County.

Overall, the "common" permanent resident passerines (Blue Jay, American Crow, both chickadees, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, House Finch, and House and Eurasian Tree Sparrows) occurred in typical to somewhat more abundant numbers. Nevertheless, I continue to suggest that these species are substantially, if not greatly, overlooked and under-reported throughout Illinois during all seasons of the year.

**THRUSHES TO NEOTROPICAL BUNTINGS.** During the 2002-2003 winter season, the Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, and Northern Mockingbird were somewhat more numerous and widespread, particularly in the southern region. However, the only notable concentration was **18 Northern Mockingbirds** in Marion County. The American Robin and Cedar Waxwing were considerably less abundant, while the Brown Thrasher and American Pipit were typically scarce and largely restricted to the southern section of the state. Two exceptional species from northern Illinois included a **Swainson's Thrush** in Chicago's Jackson Park in December and single **Gray Catbirds** from Winnebago and Cook Counties.

**Six warbler species** were identified. The Yellow-rumped Warbler was less numerous, but still widely distributed state-wide. Other noteworthy warblers included a January **Orange-crowned Warbler** at Horseshoe Lake (Madison Co), **3 Pine Warblers** (1 in the north and 2 in the south), a **Palm Warbler** in McLean County, and a **Common Yellowthroat** in Massac County. The extraordinary highlight of the warbler community was a first confirmed state record of **HERMIT WARBLER**.

The **16 recorded sparrow species** (towhees through Snow Bunting) were relatively more abundant this winter. Notable concentrations included up to **9 Eastern Towhees**, counts of **65 & 33 Field Sparrows**, **124 Swamp Sparrows**, and **384 & 254 White-throated Sparrows**. **Two Vesper**, **3 Le Conte's**, and **1 Lincoln's Sparrow** were encountered in the south. The Savannah

Sparrow was more numerous this year, but was also confined almost completely to the southern region. **Three Harris's Sparrows** were recorded this winter. Dark-eyed Juncos and Lapland Longspurs tended to be more abundant and widespread. The most noteworthy sparrow concentration was **3,000 Lapland Longspurs** in Lawrence County.

Exceptional species accounts included a **Blue Grosbeak** in Cook County reported on 1 March a **Dickcissel** in LaSalle County, and a **male Painted Bunting** in Jasper County.

**BLACKBIRDS TO WEAVER FINCHES.** A total of **9 species of blackbirds** were recorded this season. In general, these species were more numerous with relatively large numbers typically occurring in the south. For example, **102,790, 63,630, 15,000, and 10,000 Red-winged Blackbirds** were observed at Rend Lake, Pulaski County, Starved Rock State Park, and St. Clair County, respectively. Union County Conservation Area and Crab Orchard produced **90 and 57 Eastern Meadowlarks**, respectively. The largest concentrations of blackbirds involved **Common Grackles, with an incredible 900,000 observed at Horseshoe Lake and 518,500 at Rend Lake**. Rusty and Brewer's Blackbirds were substantially less abundant this winter. Only **3 Western Meadowlarks** were reported in the state. The highlight among blackbirds was **4 Yellow-headed Blackbirds**, including one in the north.

Although slightly more abundant, the American Goldfinch was probably still under-reported. The Purple Finch, which was considerably less numerous this season, was the only "winter finch" noted. **Red and White-winged Crossbills, Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin, and Evening Grosbeak all went unreported in Illinois** during the 2002-2003 winter. Pine Siskins were only reported on CBCs.

#### Acknowledgments

The foundation of this summary is the detailed information regarding avian wintering populations as submitted directly to the compiler by field observers throughout the state. Maximum counts are provided, where available, from each of the three

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regions of Illinois (north, central, and south) as mapped out in Bohlen's (1978) *Annotated Check-list of the Birds of Illinois*. Additional data reflecting the progress of the season are noted, when available, for species and areas of special interest.

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