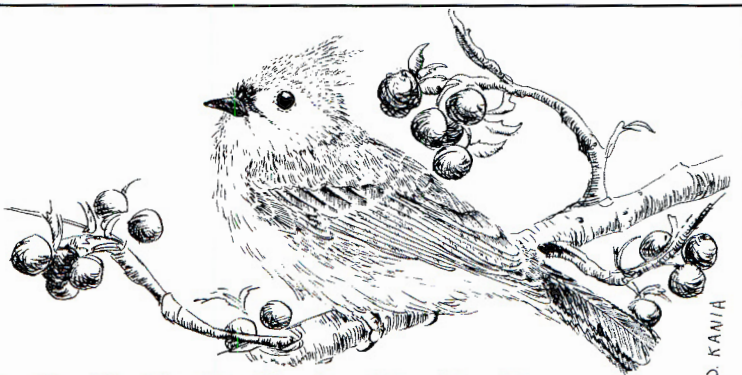


Field Notes



Drawing of Tufted Titmouse by Denis Kania.

1994-95 WINTER

by Robert Danley

This was the nation's second warmest winter in 100 years and milder temperatures in Illinois made for some interesting birding. State temperatures in December were 6 to 7 degrees Fahrenheit above normal. January was 2 degrees above normal, while February readings were more seasonal, about .9 degree above normal. Precipitation was .6 inch below normal for December as well as February. January had above normal amounts of precipitation (1.8 inches). Heavy snowfall amounts were recorded in January; 22 inches fell on Moline, for example.

The warmer conditions didn't inhibit Northern Shrikes from a major (perhaps the state's largest) invasion. Lingering shorebirds included both yellowlegs, Sanderling, two peep species, Ruff, and Long-billed Dowitcher. Thirty-four waterfowl species were observed, representing the largest number detected in a winter. Highlights included a male King Eider and breeding males of Harlequin Duck and Barrow's Goldeneye.

Hawk numbers were typical. Cold fronts in early February in northern Illinois may have induced brief appearances by Gyrfalcon and Prairie Falcon. Gull numbers were below normal although a wider variety of species than usual was observed.

All expected owl species were recorded, but in low numbers. Only two Snowy Owls were observed. Red-breasted Nuthatch, Cedar Waxwing, and the winter finches were either absent or found in very low numbers. Many passerines lingered past usual departure dates. Wintering longspurs and Snow Buntings were observed in concentrated pockets at scattered locations.

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1994-95 Winter Field Notes

Red-throated Loon

1 Jan., Vermilion Co (*RC). IL's first Jan. record this century.

Common Loon

MC: 8, Spfld, 8 Dec. (DB); 6, Rend L, 17 Jan. (LS). Others: 12 Feb., La Salle L (CMc, JMc); 2 Jan., New Athens (St Clair Co) (DKa); 18 Dec., Clin.L (RC); 14 Dec., Powerton L (Tazewell Co) (KR, LA).

Pied-billed Grebe

MC: 99, CONWR, 8 Jan. (TF); 25, Spfld, wintered (DB); 15, Braidwood, 29 Dec. (JM); 8, La Salle L, 3 Dec. (JMc, CMc); 4, O'Fallon (St Clair Co), 1 Jan. (KM). LD: 8 Jan., Yorkville (Kendall Co) (DS); 1 Jan., Wauk (LB).