

**11,000, and 10,000 Ring-billed Gulls** at Carlyle, Horseshoe, and Shelbyville Lakes, respectively; an adult **California Gull** in Lake County on 5 January; a **Little Gull** at Rend Lake on 10 February; and a **Black-legged Kittiwake** at Lake Shelbyville on 2 December.

**Doves - Kinglets:** The Eurasian Collared-Dove and Monk Parakeet, where established, seemed to increase slightly this past winter, while Mourning and Rock Doves were reported in fairly normal numbers. The latter two species are most likely overlooked and under-reported across the state. Likewise, the numbers of Eastern Screech, Great Horned, and Barred Owls reported this year increased slightly, however they are still undoubtedly under-reported. Among the "northern" owls, Snowy Owls were slightly more numerous while Northern Saw-whets were a little more scarce. Long-eared and Short-eared Owls occurred in their typical small numbers and were sporadically distributed across Illinois. Once again, only a single **Barn Owl** was reported, predictably from Union County.

In general, the Belted Kingfisher along with the expected woodpeckers were encountered in fairly good numbers. Nevertheless, the common woodpeckers (Red-bellied, Downy, and Hairy) are more than likely still under-reported. **Larger numbers of Loggerhead Shrikes** were observed almost exclusively in the southern 1/3 of the state, while **far fewer Northern Shrikes** were reported, mostly from northeastern Illinois. Surprisingly, **no Eastern Phoebes** were reported in Illinois during the 2001-2002 winter. (But see the Christmas Bird Count in this issue). This was most likely due to the limited amount of data submitted from the central and southern regions.

Despite the lack of snow cover, Horned Larks were still relatively abundant this year. Likewise, Carolina Wrens occurred in fairly good numbers throughout the state. Several migratory species (e.g., Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, and Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets) were widely distributed in good numbers. Exceptional species encountered included: a single migrant **Tree Swallow** at Mermet Lake (26 February); **2 Barn Swallows** (one each at Lake Chautauqua and Carlyle Lake) on 22 February and 22 December, respectively; as well as Illinois Beach State Park's celebrated **Brown-headed Nuthatch**, present since July and seen throughout the winter.

Overall, the common permanent residents (corvids, Tufted Titmouse, chickadees, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, House Finch, and House Sparrow) were all observed in fairly typical numbers. However, I once again suggest that these birds are substantially, if not greatly, overlooked and under-reported throughout Illinois during all seasons of the year.

**Thrushes - Sparrows:** The Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, and Cedar Waxwing occurred in greater numbers and were more widely distributed, while the Hermit Thrush was less numerous. Especially noteworthy were counts of **8000, 3000+, and 1000 American Robins** at Rend Lake, Johnson Sauk Trail State Park, and Lake Shelbyville, respectively. Amazingly, **a pair of robins attempted to nest from mid December through mid January** in Chicago. See article in this issue. A **Townsend's Solitaire** in Cook County on 17 December was the rarest thrush reported. The Northern Mockingbird and Brown Thrasher were reported in relatively normal numbers. A tally of **150 American Pipits** at Carlyle Lake on 27 December and a wintering Pipit at Chicago were noteworthy.

**Five warbler species** were encountered in Illinois during the 2001-2002 winter. The Yellow-rumped Warbler was substantially more abundant, particularly in the south. An especially large concentration, **180 Yellow-rumped Warblers**, was reported from Jackson County on 24 February. The other exceptional warblers included: an **Orange-crowned Warbler** at Union County, single **Pine Warblers** in Lake County and at Rend Lake, **2 Palm Warblers** in Urbana in the first half of December, and **3 Common Yellowthroats** (2 in the north and 1 in the south).

Most of the sparrow species were reported in relatively typi-

cal numbers for an Illinois winter. However, the American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, and Snow Bunting were substantially less numerous, as large populations of these species likely remained further north during the unusually mild winter. By contrast, Fox and Swamp Sparrows were more common than usual. Again, these "semi-hardy" species undoubtedly benefitted from the milder conditions. A couple of noteworthy accounts include a **Spotted Towhee** at Urbana (1-2 December), and **6 Chipping Sparrows** scattered throughout Illinois. **Four sparrow species (Vesper, Le Conte's, Lincoln's, and Harris's) were not reported** in Illinois this winter. Again, this is most likely due to the limited amount of data from the central and southern regions.

**Blackbirds - Finches:** Overall, wintering populations of blackbird species appeared to be somewhat normal, with the exception of Red-winged Blackbird and Common Grackle concentrations. These two species typically congregate in enormous numbers at certain central and southern locations. However, in 2001-2002 these concentrations were substantially reduced. Perhaps the mild winter allowed more wide dispersal. Nevertheless, Rend and Carlyle Lakes in the south and Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area in the north still maintained large numbers of **Red-winged Blackbirds (38,500, 20,000, and 10,000, respectively)**, and Common Grackles (14,320, 50,000, and 10,000, respectively). By comparison, the Brewer's Blackbird slightly increased in abundance. The most notable blackbird was a single **Baltimore Oriole** in Jo Daviess County on 12-29 December. Migration began so early this winter (late January to early February), it was difficult to determine if flocks of blackbirds were migrants or overwintering populations.

During the 2001-2002 winter, Illinois experienced a minor invasion of "winter finches." Purple Finches and Pine Siskins were somewhat more common and widespread, while both species of crossbills and the Common Redpoll occurred in substantially greater numbers distributed through the north and central regions of the state. The American Goldfinch also appeared to be slightly more numerous this winter, however this species is almost certainly under-reported. The Eurasian Tree Sparrow was reported in fairly typical numbers.

#### Acknowledgments

The foundation of this summary is the detailed information regarding avian wintering populations as submitted directly to the compiler, or indirectly via the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, by field observers throughout the state. Maximum counts are provided, where available, from each of the three 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. The species accounts follow the taxonomy and nomenclature of the seventh (1998) edition of the American Ornithologists' Union's Check-list of North American Birds, along with recent revisions and supplements.

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