

Sue Friscia found the state's first documented Reddish Egret at the Big Marsh (Lake Calumet) in Cook County in 1992. Then, Robert Hughes found another one, this time at Montrose Harbor in Chicago (Cook County) 6 September, 1997. Photo by Robert Hughes. See Meadowlark 3:45 for details.

Dave Johnson, Dan Kassebaum, Walter Marcisz, Keith McMullen, Michael Retter, Justin Rink, Eric Walters, and Geoff Williamson.

Our scoring method assigned five points for each first place vote, four points for each second place, and on downward. A preliminary list consisting of 61 species was considered with 29 receiving at least one vote. At least 20 species had two or more votes, but the following only garnered two votes tallying five or less points: Shiny Cowbird, Wilson's Plover, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Red-necked Stint, Great Gray Owl, White-winged Tern, Great Cormorant, and Black-chinned Hummingbird.

Roseate Spoonbill received three votes from downstate voters who were quick to remind that this species was present in Missouri in late summer of 1999 as well as in the northern part of the state during August of 2000 (Pelikan 2000). It was also photographed in August of 1997 in Iowa (Brock 1998). Postbreeding wanderers could occur in late summer after strong southwesterly winds.

Illinois first Northern Wheatear in Coles County 12 September 1990. This bird was photographed by Greg Schaefer and published on the cover of Illinois Birds and Birding 6:3. See IB&B 7:12-13 for an account of this species.

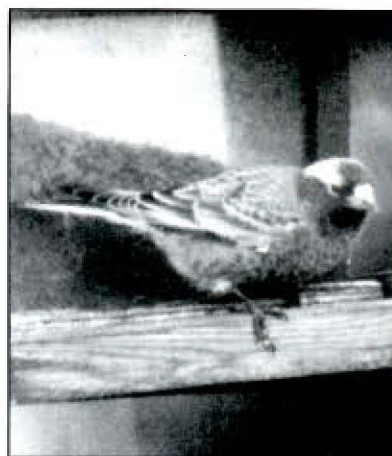


The Inca Dove also attracted attention from three voters largely because it spends most of its time near people (at feeders, parks, and gardens), thus increasing its chances for even a beginner to stumble upon it. There is even one undocumented recent report of this species in southeast Illinois along with a recent record from Columbus, Missouri (R.Chapel, personal communication). The remaining 10 species really separated themselves from the pack in terms of overall points.

Trends in choosing

Our panel commented on two trends that played a role in their choices—birds at feeders and easily identifiable species. Birds most likely to be found at a feeder were represented by three birds in the top five and seven in the top 20. Five hummingbirds were in the top 27.

Birds found at feeders, including hummingbirds, typically remain for a number of days allowing close observation by many observers as well as offering the opportunity for photographic documentation. Both confirmation by many birders and neces-



Illinois' first Gray-crowned Rosy Finch was found at the home of Sandy and David White in Will County. Dennis Oehmke took this photo 19 November 1990, and it was published on the cover of Illinois Birds and Birding 6:4. See IB&B 7:78 for an account of this species.

sary documentation significantly increase the chance of the bird being added to the state list. Feeding birds has long been extremely popular and the more times a bird puts itself in front of a pair of human eyes, the better the odds of it being seen and identified, even if the observer is a beginner birder. Of the birds on our list that could appear at a feeder, the species easiest to identify were rated higher. A more easily identifiable bird would not likely be passed over, even by a beginner, and that likely explains part of why three of the top five birds on our list were easy-to-identify feeder birds.

Family Laridae (gulls and terns) had two representatives in the top 12 with five overall receiving votes. The reasons noted for the large number of Gull/Tern representatives had to do with this family's behavior of ranging far and wide. These genera likely would have had the most representation in our list if it weren't for the fact that so many of them have already been added to the state checklist in the last couple decades includ-