



This spring a total of eight species (American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Wilson's Snipe, Forster's Tern, Philadelphia Vireo, Sedge Wren, Hooded Warbler, and Grasshopper Sparrow) went undetected.

Since Jackson Park is primarily a showcase for migrant passerines, I assembled data on high counts for migratory passerine species that had been recorded in all of the preceding 12 years and compared these data with the 2006 season. Among the 97 species of migrant passerines of annual occurrence, 84% showed below-average high counts in 2006; 55% had high counts that fared no better than half their 12-year average highs; and 42% set or tied their worst-ever high counts. The worst showings were for Palm Warbler and Blue Jay, both of which are conspicuous species that normally peak at a few score birds or more, but this spring logged in at 88% and 87%, respectively, below average. Other passerines appearing at 75% or below their average numbers were Gray-cheeked Thrush, Bay-breasted Warbler, Common Grackle, Least Flycatcher, Swamp Sparrow, and Red-winged Blackbird.

No species attained new Jackson Park high counts in the spring of 2006, but Purple Martin set a new

spring high. This, however, was not due to a strong migratory movement, but rather to a growing breeding population following the erection of martin houses in 2002. Overall, only 16 of the 97 species of annual passerines met or bettered their 12-year average high counts.

Despite the weak turnout of birds, migration dates were fairly typical for the season overall, although late stragglers were notably few. I had previously calculated the 25-year average arrival and departure dates for the 97 annual passerines for the years 1979-2004. The composite 2006 average arrival works out to precisely the same date as the 25-year average, while the 2006 departure falls three days short of average.

Just why the 2006 spring migration was so terrible at Jackson Park is open to speculation, but it does not appear that weather patterns were much at fault (see Travis Mahan's overview in this issue's Field Notes). I wrote in my daily log of 12 April, "A disturbingly disap-

pointing day under blustery SSW winds to 28 mph; no arrivals; no passage worth mentioning of robins or blackbirds." Similarly, on 24 April, I noted, "Continued painfully dull for late April, despite light WSW winds;" and I boldfaced comments in my log for 24 May: "...inexplicable dearth of thrushes and warblers under mild weather and SW winds." Let us hope that 2006 remains the worst spring here for years to come.

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Sedge Wren went undetected at Jackson Park the spring migration season of 2006; this species was detected every year the previous 12 years at Jackson Park. Photo at top left by Emil Martinec taken at Montrose, Cook County, 2 October 2005.