



The 2000 (29th annual) Statewide Spring Bird Count was conducted on Saturday, 6 May; and unlike the past three years, it was a week earlier than (and therefore did not coincide with) International Migratory Bird Day. This year's 1,448 participants set 72 new species records and tied 31 others (see Tables 5 and 6).

The "wee" hours of count morning (before sunrise) were great; there was little breeze and, for those interested, the moon was about half way into its 1st quarter. By 9 a.m. things began to change, at least in southern Illinois. In Union County a steady rain (about 10 a.m.) interfered with prime-time birding for nearly an hour, and early afternoon showers were mentioned in Massac County. However, in Pulaski County (between Union and Massac) and, throughout most of Illinois, there was little or no rain encountered; the only exceptions were Calhoun County and a few other western counties where slight showers occurred after 6 p.m. Threatening clouds were reported from Boone County, but adjacent De Kalb County reported "clear" skies all day. Overall, count day skies ranged from mostly clear in the northeastern counties to clear to partly cloudy most everywhere else. Count day temperatures ranged rather evenly from morn-

A White-winged Crossbill was reported in Jacksonville, Morgan County, on the 2000 Illinois Spring Bird Count. Photo taken by Steve Tavender 6 May 2000.

The Illinois 2000 Statewide Spring Bird Count

by Vernon M. Kleen

ing lows in the low 60s to afternoon highs in the low 80s up and down the state. The winds, primarily from the south and southwest ranged from 1 to 5 mph in the south to more than 20 mph in scattered counties; the statewide average, though, was about 8 to 15 mph.

Since this year's count date was on the early side of the "count day window" (the window is the Saturday that falls on or between May 4th & 10th), southern Illinois birders thought this would be their chance to find more species in their counties than their northern counterparts. However, as has become tradition, the northern counties seem to end up with higher species totals no matter what the date. In 1999, 17 counties reported 150 or more species (12 were at 160 or more); this year only 12 counties reached the 150 species plateau: 6 in the northern quarter of the

state, 3 in the southern quarter of the state and 3 in the middle half of the state (see Table 7). Several other counties were close, and with more observers and additional walking time, other counties would have achieved 150 species or more. It's usually a toss-up whether Cook or Lake County will report the most species; this year it was Cook County with 190 species and Lake with 188. Winnebago County was a distant third with 169 species. The other high species totals were 168 (Knox), 166 (Clinton, Massac and Union), 165 (Du Page) and 161 (Will).

A visual record of each county's results appears in Figure 1. The two numbers in the figure identify the number of species and the number of participants in each county. One of the most useful features of this figure is that information for any county can be quickly compared with the results



The Rose-breasted Grosbeak is one of 53 species reported from 90 or more Illinois counties during the 2000 spring bird count. Only 6 counties in Illinois did not report this species during the count. Photo taken on 4 May 2000 in Springfield by Dennis Oelmke