

tant? Who knows what birders and ornithologists will be interested in, in the future? Many aspects of species' natural history have gone unrecorded or unstudied, and something you consider minor could be very useful to people in the future, possibly to help a declining species recover. Although it is always fun seeing what species are breeding in your favorite birding areas, it is even more important when some of those species are declining (or increasing/spreading their ranges). Just in the last 10-20 years, birders have documented a variety of species nesting in Illinois for the first time or first time in recent memory (including Trumpeter Swan, Red-breasted Merganser, American White Pelican, Osprey, Purple Gallinule, Black-necked Stilt, Laughing Gull, Caspian Tern, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Violet-green Swallow, Black-throated Green Warbler, Painted Bunting and White-throated Sparrow), not to mention new records or populations of previously rarely reported or expanding breeding species (Mississippi Kite, Black Rail, Common Tern, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Veery, Mourning Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Brewer's Blackbird, Eurasian Tree Sparrow). It is one thing to see a Blue Grosbeak in Lake County, but much more exciting to see one incubating on a nest or feeding fledged young! Also, the "Threatened or Endangered" statuses designated by the federal or state government are issued due to their breeding status, so noticing and keeping track of some of what I mention above can be quite important in helping a species recover/establish itself in your area, or in the state as a whole.

Ducks through Hawks

Although observers did not report Trumpeter Swans nesting in their usual locations in northwest Illinois this year, they were likely either unsuccessful due to high water, or possibly moved across the river to other areas to try and nest. It also appeared to be a banner year for breeding Gadwall in northeastern Illinois. At least two nesting pairs of GREEN-WINGED TEAL were found at two northeastern Illinois locations, as well as many other records of single birds from a variety of locations statewide. Hooded Mergansers have established themselves as relatively common statewide breeding birds. Although Hooded Merganser was considered only an "occasional summer resident" as recently as 1989 by Bohlen (1989), not only has it increased to the point where it is now a regular summer resident, but it also can be expected to be fairly regularly encountered in the breeding season for those who make it out on a frequent basis. Apparently the adult males gather somewhere outside of Illinois (north or southward?) after performing their duties as only the adult females and young are usually seen. Ring-necked Pheasants have dramatically declined over much of their range, especially in central Illinois. Ironically, Wild Turkey has replaced Ring-necked Pheasant and Northern Bobwhite as the most common, or at least the most com-

monly encountered gallinaceous species in many areas of the northern half of the state. AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS were once again successful raising a large number of young on their newly colonized nest islands in the Mississippi River. ANHINGAS bred for the second year in a row at their newly discovered breeding site within a heron rookery in far southern Illinois. Interestingly, American Bitterns were detected at several northern and southern Illinois locations. Breeding pairs of Osprey seem to be increasing yearly, especially in Chicagoland. A pair of Black Vultures was seen with a young bird somewhat north of their normal breeding range, in Monroe County. A few more records of nesting Broad-winged Hawk surfaced this year including breeding evidence in at least two locations, while there were numerous June and July (migrants?) reports of Northern Harriers; none were noted breeding. A pair of Peregrine Falcons nested and fledged young from a new nest (in a nestbox equipped with a video camera!) in Savanna this summer. Rockford's outlier breeding Mississippi Kites continue at their now regular breeding area, and two other sightings north of this species' normal range were reported in July. As has been typical in recent years, new Bald Eagle breeding sites continue to be found and reported, while Illinois' breeding Swainson's Hawks are likely down to just two pairs. How much longer will they breed in Illinois?

Rails through Woodpeckers

A BLACK RAIL was detected singing in excellent breeding habitat in central Illinois and due to the date, habitat, and calling behavior was likely attempting to breed. The breeding range of Sandhill Crane was not only a 1st county nesting record (at least in modern times) but extended this species' breeding range in Illinois another 85 miles southward and into central Illinois, which caused quite a bit of excitement with local birders in the "corn and soybean desert" of east-central Illinois. The pair lingered, then surprisingly built a nest and laid eggs, before floodwaters washed the nest away. While Upland Sandpipers continue to hang on in Illinois in very slim breeding numbers, Black-necked Stilts continued to build up impressive breeding concentrations and found new areas to nest this summer. Illinois' sole Common Tern breeding colony continues to suffer from a variety of setbacks, usually predation, and once again failed to produce many, if any young. Ironically, the state and federal critically endangered Least Tern now seems to be about the most productive tern species in the state, among the five historically breeding here. Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to be found statewide in small numbers, and can now be found in just about every small, rural town with a grain elevator. An African Collared-Dove was identified and photographed this year in southwestern Illinois. Only small numbers of either species of cuckoo were reported again this season. Due to a systematic search of nest boxes placed up for them, mostly in the 1980s, state biologists this summer found record numbers