

Swainson's Hawks are still the same, continuing pair near Burlington. However, there seems to be an increasing number of summer detections of Broad-winged Hawks, usually an uncommon to rare breeder in Illinois. Ring-necked Pheasant numbers remain at what for them must be their low ebb, as they continue to lose many small areas of nesting grassland and other agricultural grasslands that are harvested for hay even more often. There are also fewer Northern Bobwhites left to breed in their southeastern and western Illinois strongholds.

There were a small numbers of summer/nesting Pine Siskins staying on after the very large winter influx of this species with other "winter finches" from the previous winter.

## A better understanding of migratory movements – in summer?

Besides the unusual movements of drought-stricken species abandoning their normal breeding locations in the state this summer, the restoration of several large marsh habitats like the Emiquon Preserve and Hennepin-Hopper Lake as well as increased reporting of bird sightings through today's modern media advances and computer data bases is providing us with an ever-increasing body of information for a number of species which we have had little of in years past. Although I always noticed the hundreds and sometimes thousands of migrating swallows lining the utility lines at Lake Chautauqua on an August day there while looking for migrant shorebirds, I never thought of them much as being well into their migratory movements even by late-July or earlier. A maximum count of Barn Swallows during the breeding season of 50-75 birds can be quite a tally for local birds still tending nests, but pales in comparison to the 2,000 noted last year in Monroe County on 21 July by Dan Kassebaum. Often referred to as migratory staging congregations, such a large number did not likely represent a gathering of local breeding birds, but were more likely from much more distant locales from much farther north. Most maximum counts for migratory flocks of swallows are often seen in July and August and far outnumber numbers of these species that one could come up with for local breeding birds.

Similarly, one can now discern that most of the tern species found in Illinois have migratory movements in late May, throughout June, and throughout July as well, with Caspian Terns routinely feeding begging fledglings/juveniles over Illinois lakes hundreds of miles from their nest sites. This has been a well-known phenomena involving Caspian Terns, but at such oft-birded areas now as the Emiquon Preserve in Central Illinois (where no terns have or currently nest), Forster's, Common, Black and even the occasional, rare Arctic Terns are now being reported, either as wandering summer birds, unsuccessful breeders from much farther north, or possibly as over-summering birds that decided not to continue north to nest. However, the regularity with which numbers of both Black and Forster's Terns are being noted by mid to late July (and even late June) insinuates that some are regularly in southbound, "fall" migration at that time.

This summer, most early-arriving, southbound shorebird migrants were detected between one to two weeks ahead of their usual arrival times of approximately 4-15 July. Many of these species arrived this summer between 20 June – 1 July. You will find most of these data in the upcoming fall migration report in the next issue of the *Meadowlark*, though there were several arctic shorebird species that I placed in this report because their dates of occurrence fell within a narrow

time frame in mid-June when their presence was difficult to discern between an exceptionally late spring migrant or an especially early fall migrant. I'm not sure if there were drought conditions in the Arctic as there was in Illinois which may have induced tundra-nesting shorebirds into early southbound migration this summer... but who says that summer birding in Illinois is boring?!

## Literature Cited

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Climate summaries for the period leading up to and during the summer 2012 breeding season were provided by the Illinois State Climatologist's Office, a part of the Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS) located in Champaign and Peoria, Illinois, and accessed via the web at <http://www.isws.illinois.edu/warm/climate.asp>.

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