

been favored by management practices. Although cool season grasses dominate, one 40-acre tract reverted to prairie when more than 60 species of 19 families emerged following prescribed burning and brush and tree removal. Seed grown on this tract is collected and used in restoration planting on other tracts (Westemeier 1991).

Far-sighted members of the Greater Prairie-Chicken Foundation

of Illinois and the Illinois Chapter of the Nature Conservancy likely never anticipated their conservation efforts on behalf of the prairie-chicken would have so positive an effect on so many of Illinois' threatened and endangered species. Good grassland management and further habitat enhancement on the sanctuaries are vital to maintaining the prairie-chicken, but will also benefit various grassland species.

Work done on the sanctuaries goes beyond merely maintenance of a single species; it is a restoration of an increasingly rare ecosystem. As the needs of many grassland species are met on the sanctuaries, Yeatter's claim in 1943 that southeastern Illinois has held on to its native species better than any other area in the state may still hold true 50 years later.



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## AVIAN ANNALS

An historic look at spring birding in Illinois by Eric Walters

### 75 years ago:

One of the stated aims of a local bird society was to "discourage the wearing of any feathers except those of the ostrich and domestic fowls" (Audubon Bulletin 4:47).

### 55 years ago:

The strong early spring winds brought an amazing 2,000 Lapland Longspurs to Cook County's McGinnis Slough during mid-February (Bird Lore 40:224).

### 40 years ago:

A mid-April freeze apparently killed many male Purple Martins which reduced the number of this species "as much as 50 percent near Chicago" (Audubon Field Notes 7:276).

Gradual north/northeastern range

expansions were noted for the Summer Tanager and European Tree Sparrow (Audubon Field Notes 7:276).

### 35 years ago:

An article on optics was titled, "Advantages of 6X30 Binoculars." The heavy wartime binoculars sold for \$25. "These binoculars are superior to the cheap imports now flooding the market," the author wrote (Audubon Bulletin 103:15).

### 25 years ago:

A Chicago reporter traveled downstate to report on the "advancing spring" where his "happiest experience of all was meeting a nesting Wood Duck at Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge" (Chicago Tribune, April 24, 1968 editorial).

Yellow-headed Blackbirds ap-

peared at some new Illinois locations: Quincy, East Moline, and two areas in McHenry County (Audubon Field Notes 22:533).

### 20 years ago:

Record spring rains caused the Little Meredosia Levee near Hillsdale to break creating a 12-mile long lake extending toward Lake Michigan. The resulting habitat attracted numerous birds including "300 to 600 Sora Rails" during the first three days of May (Illinois Audubon Bulletin 166:25).

### 10 years ago:

The Cattle Egret was located in a record 44 counties on the Spring Bird Count. The previous record was 12 counties (Illinois Audubon Bulletin 206:19).