

only mid-winter record) 29 January-5 February 2000 at Rend Lake (Stotz 2001). It is interesting that three of the four latest records are all from far southern Illinois, and three of these are Pomarines. Peak Pomarine migration trails Parasitic by about two weeks, with early juvenile Pomarines being very rare; any September Pomarine sighting should be documented with extreme care (Sherony and Brock 1997).

Best Times: Where, When, and How Many

The best time to view jaegers in Illinois and in the Midwest is September through November. There is a noticeable buildup of all jaeger species beginning about 1 October, with a peak from about 15 October through 7 November, with many jaeger records continuing to the end of November.

Table 2 summarizes the known arrival dates of 225 jaeger records statewide. Again, due to the lack of specific age data in the literature for many birds, it is difficult to show a separation of adult vs. juvenile migratory periods. Of the 286 all-time Illinois jaeger records, only 32 were specifically noted as adults. And although several authors including Olsen and Larsson (1997), Sherony and Brock (1997), and Lee (1999), suggest adults, in general, migrate south in fall ahead of juveniles, this observation is not borne out in Illinois records. This phenomenon may simply be the result of some of the more inexperienced juvenile birds using an overland or "inland" route to their wintering locations, while adults take the more traditional eastward deflection following the Great Lakes to a shorter overland crossing to the East Coast.

The overwhelming majority of September jaeger sightings in Illinois are Parasitic. In fact, the state has only two Pomarine Jaeger records for this month. From the records with specific dates, the Pomarine Jaeger appears, on average, to be a later fall migrant than Parasitic in Illinois. A jaeger seen in November in Illinois is just as likely to be a Pomarine as it is to be a Parasitic, and even more likely if the bird is at a large, downstate reservoir.

The most likely place to observe jaegers in Illinois is the Lake Michigan shoreline in Chicagoland, especially for Parasitic. This location is also the best place to see a jaeger in adult plumage. The single best location to look for jaegers along the Lake Michigan shoreline is the 2.5 mile strip of land that juts into the lake between Gillson Harbor in Wilmette and the Northwestern University former landfill site in Evanston (see Mlodinow 1984).

Of 214 all-time jaeger records from the Lake Michigan shoreline, 82 or 38 percent come from this small area. Other nearby areas mentioned in the literature include Glencoe, Winnetka and Kenilworth, all in Cook County. Before the 1970s most records from Chicagoland were simply given as "Chicago" with no specific location noted. Exactly 50 percent (107 of 214) of all jaeger reports are from the Chicago lakefront, with specific reports from Montrose Harbor (8), Lincoln Park (1), Jackson Park (5) and Navy Pier (2). Almost all (16 of 18) of the jaeger reports from the Lake County portion of the Lake Michigan shoreline come from the 9-mile stretch between Waukegan Harbor north to Illinois Beach State Park; the only other reports are from Highland Park (1) and the Great Lakes Naval Training Center (1). The Gillson/ Evanston and Montrose regions where most sightings occur are also good places for gulls and terns,

and feature prominent topographical landmarks for the jaegers to work around as they fly south along the shoreline. Chicagoland birders tend to favor the Gillson/Evanston and Montrose areas for birding locations, increasing the chances of jaeger observations there — over other seemingly good vantage points such as Waukegan Harbor, the Park Avenue overlook in Glencoe, the Tower Road overlook in Winnetka or Rainbow Beach on Chicago's south side.

Birding intensity also likely plays a large part in the many observations of downstate jaegers. Although jaegers are very likely attracted to large bodies of water where large numbers of gulls and terns congregate, it is also probably no coincidence that most downstate jaeger reports come from areas like these that are most heavily birded, notably Lake Chautauqua, along the Illinois River in Mason County, Lake Springfield in Sangamon County, and Carlyle Lake in Clinton/Bond Counties. There are a few reports of jaegers from some of Illinois' other large reservoirs including Lakes Shelbyville, Clinton, Rend, and Crab Orchard, but these lakes receive far less birding pressure than the aforementioned areas, especially within the past 10 to 15 years.

Fully 30 percent of all downstate jaeger sightings have come from Carlyle Lake (20 of 66) including all three species. Next comes Lake Chautauqua with 9 birds (13.6 percent), also including all three species, followed by Lake Springfield with 8 birds (>12 percent). Other locations with numbers of jaeger sightings include the Illinois River valley with 16 (including Peoria Lake, Powerton Lake at Pekin and the Lake Chautauqua birds), and the Mississippi River valley with 10 including 6 in the Alton area. Other downstate records have occurred at Clinton Lake (3), Lake Decatur (2), Crab Orchard (2), Olney (2), Rend Lake (1), LaSalle Power Plant cooling lake (1) and Lake Mattoon (1). The only jaeger record not occurring near a large body of water was the specimen (thought to be a Long-tailed; see Bailey 2001) from Nashville in Washington County in 1893. It is very likely jaegers are going undetected most years from the La Salle Nuclear Power Plant cooling lake near Seneca, Pool 13/Spring Lake on the Mississippi River (Carroll/ Whiteside counties), Lake Shelbyville (Shelby/Moultrie counties), Clinton Lake (DeWitt County), Lake Decatur (Macon County), and especially Rend Lake in Franklin and Jefferson counties.

Following a breeding season in the Arctic when lemmings are plentiful, the number of juvenile jaegers is also high, especially for Pomarines and Long-taileds, which are especially dependent on them as a food source (Andersson 1976; Olsen and Larson 1997, Wiley and Lee 1998). In western Europe, large numbers of juvenile jaegers have occurred at three-year intervals, with noticeable influxes in 1976, 1982, 1985, 1988, and 1991 (Olsen and Larsson 1997), apparently in response to peak lemming years. Although lemmings do not necessarily have peak years all across their range, many jaeger migratory influxes correspond well with lemming outbreaks.

Table 3 shows jaeger high, good, and low count years for Illinois. Many, if not all the years with high numbers, correspond well with either regional or national high counts in those years (Peterjohn 1992, Brock 1997, Sherony and Brock 1997, and Contreras 2000).