

**KEY:**  
Number of Species  
(Number of Observers in parentheses)

**FIGURE 1**  
County participation in the 26th Annual Statewide Spring Bird Count -- 10 May 1997

## Mediocre Year for Records

Every year new records are established; 1998 was, at best, a mediocre year.

Total species reported this year was 259, the lowest total in recent years and the first time there have been fewer than 260 species since 1993.

Total birds reported this year was 517,530, only 87% as many as the record number set two years ago.

The number of participating counties was 100. 1986 and 1997 remain the only years in the Spring Bird Count's history in which reports were received from all 102 counties.

Number of participants: 1,495, noticeably fewer than other recent years. Party miles walked: 2,257, also noticeably fewer than other recent years. Party miles driven: 23,774, exceeding last year's record by more than 700 miles. Total party miles: 26,035. Party hours walked: 2,969, the first time with fewer than 3000 hours in several years. Party hours driven: 2,140, a new record. Perhaps the new party hour and party mile guidelines established last year for birding while bicycling, boating, sitting, fishing, feeder-watching, played a role in the way figures were computed and reported. Total party hours: 5,109. Species in 90% or more counties: 49, 6 fewer than the record. Counties with 100 or more species: 69, considerably fewer than other recent years and 11 less than the record.

Counties with 20 or more observers: 18 Cook (105), DuPage (89), Lake (68), McDonough (65), McHenry (52), Kane (46), Schuyler (46), Will (45), Champaign (33), Pike (33), Edgar (32), Winnebago (32), La Salle (31), Livingston (29), Boone (28), Stephenson (27), Jo Daviess (24) and Crawford (21). Normally 20 or more counties meet this criteria

For number crunchers out there, two new figures are presented for the first time: the average number of species for participating counties, and the average number of species for all 102 counties. For 1998, those numbers are 112 and 110, respectively.

Another interesting comparison is the amount of birding time and effort in each quarter of the state; it is apparent that the farther north you go, the greater the birding effort (which could translate into more birds per county).

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