

low 70s statewide. There couldn't have been a balmier day for the Spring Bird Count.

Illinois birders were out in record force. Table 1 compares the 1997 observer efforts with those of the past two years and identifies the current state records. New records (highlighted in boldface) were established for number of observers, number of party miles and hours, counties with 100 or more species, and counties with 20 or more observers. Counties with 20 or more observers appear in Table 2; Cook and Du Page both fielded more than 100. This year marked the second time, in the Count's 26-year history, that results were received from all 102 counties (the first time was in 1986). The 268 accepted species was only one short of last year's record high (269) and the 569,000+ birds was also second best (only 25,000 more were needed for the record).

A new procedure for recording party miles and party hours was put into effect this year; it provides a better guideline of and how to record party miles and party hours listed as "other". We now have a meaningful and realistic standard on how to record the amount of birding effort done while boating, canoeing, bicycling, fishing, sitting, feeder watching, and other activities.

The miles and hours submitted as "other" on this year's count have been included in Table 1 as part of Total Party Miles and Total Party Hours.

Another comparison (Table 3) shows the amount of birding effort in each quarter of the state (the 4 quarters, identified as Areas, are delineated in Figure 1). The information presented for each Area includes the number of participating counties (100% this year), the total number of party hours, and the average number of party hours per county (including the "other" party hours).

TABLE 1 – Annual Comparisons

Criteria	1997	1996	1995	Highest Total
Species	268	269	266	269 (1996)
Individual Birds	569,014	593,680	554,828	593,680 (1996)
Participating Counties	102	96	97	102 (2 yrs)
Observers	1,611	1,521	1,548	1,611 (1997)
Party Miles Walked	2,620	2,525	2,628	2,628 (1995)
Party Miles Driven	23,070	21,446	22,052	23,070 (1997)
Total Party Miles	25,690	23,971	24,680	25,690 (1997)
Party Hours Walked	3,457	3,300	3,378	3,457 (1997)
Party Hours Driven	2,050	2,025	2,042	2,050 (1997)
Total Party Hours	5,565	5,325	5,420	5,565 (1997)
Species in 90% or more Counties	49	55	47	55 (1996)
Counties with 100 or more Species	80	76	76	80 (1997)
Counties with 20 or more observers	24	22	23	24 (1997)

(New Records in **Bold**)

**TABLE 2 –
Counties with 20 or more participants**

Cook	125	Champaign	29
Du Page	101	Kendall	29
McDonough	74	Crawford	28
Will	57	La Salle	28
Schuyler	56	Boone	25
Lake	51	Edgar	23
Kane	48	Ogle	23
McHenry	45	Randolph	23
Livingston	37	Coles	22
Winnebago	34	Adams	21
Stephenson	31	Pike	21
Jo Daviess	30	Vermilion	21

Most Common Species

This year 49 species (Table 4) were reported from 92 (90%) or more counties; 26 were reported from 100 or more counties and, perhaps, had more time and effort been possible in the counties where those species were "missing", more than just 10 species would have been recorded from all 102. Table 5 identifies the 20 "most common species". The first five have remained the same for several years; however, as a result of the delayed spring migration, the Yellow-rumped and Palm Warblers, although not new to the list, were the 6th and 8th, respectively, most common birds reported this year. Except for the White-throated Sparrow (which made the

list for the 10th time), all other species are among the top 20 at least half the time. It's interesting to note that the Canada Goose was the 7th most common species this year (less than 6,000 birds, making it as common as the House Sparrow and more than 3 times as common as the Rock Dove—which didn't make the list at all).

Significant Species

In contrast to being very common, 14 species (highlighted in boldface in Table 6) were reported from just one county. Cook County's Ross's Goose was a first-time occurrence for the Spring Bird Count which now brings the grand total up to 319 species. Other significant singles were the Harlequin Duck (2nd occurrence), Western Tanager (3rd occurrence), Great Black-backed Gull (4th occurrence), Red-necked Grebe, Cinnamon Teal, and Least Tern (5th occurrences). It was only the 2nd occurrence for the Lesser Black-backed Gull, but 8 were reported in Cook (2) and Lake (6) Counties. Five expected species not reported this year were Merlin, Black-necked Stilt, Short-eared Owl, Fox Sparrow, and Lapland Longspur (and we were just two species short of a new state record). It was also surprising to find that there