

as birds are rarely seen inland east of the St. Lawrence River (Sherony and Brock 1997, Sherony 1999).

Landing (1966) was one of the first to suggest that the birds passing westward from points such as Michigan City and Gary (Miller Beach) in Indiana, may be taking an overland route to the Gulf. As records have begun to increase at several inland locations in Illinois and at sites such as Millwood Lake in Arkansas (see Jones and Neal 1986; Jackson 1993, 1998, 2000), a pattern seems to be emerging, especially in regard to Pomarine and Long-tailed Jaegers. Mounting evidence from observations in the Gulf of Mexico suggest that Pomarines are by far the most common jaeger there, at least in late fall (Jackson 2000, Sexton et al 2000a, 2000b). Although not likely a result of massive overland migration, the inland migration through Illinois and other midwestern and central southern states (including Arkansas) seems to suggest a regular movement of these birds from the Great Lakes to the Gulf (see Cramp 1983 and Leukering 2000). Another interesting sidebar to downstate birds is that multi-day visits by individual birds not only seems to be the rule in Illinois, but also among other inland records I was able to find from the lower 48 states. In records gleaned from North American Birds (and its predecessors, Field Notes and American Birds) from the fall (and a few other records) issues of the 1990 to 2000 field seasons, Pomarines and Long-taileds, again average longer lengths of stay than Parasitics. Thirty-three Long-taileds (from 15 states at "inland" sites) averaged 3.9 days per bird, with visits 10 days or longer not uncommon (6 birds), including birds remaining 15 and 17 days.

Much of the inland jaeger migration could be in the form of one long, non-stop flight with occasional birds brought down during severe weather or when energy reserves become depleted. This would explain many of the long duration stays for Pomarine and Long-tailed Jaegers that are reported inland (away from the Great Lakes). Of 18 downstate Illinois Pomarine records between 1962 to 1999, the average length of stay was 5.8 days with only 7 of these birds being "one-day wonders." Six birds stayed 10 days or more, the longest being 17 and 23 days. Illinois' only two accepted Long-tailed records averaged 14.5 day stays, with one bird staying 14 and the other 15 days. Of 17 downstate Parasitics, the average stay was only 3.7 days, but without one bird, which seemed to be an anomaly (with an exceptional stay of 25 days), the average is only 2.3 days.

## Summary

A minimum of 286 jaegers have been seen in Illinois between 1876 and 2000. Jaegers have been found every year in Illinois between 1970 and 2000. As with virtually all Midwestern regions, fall sightings predominate. With increased identification skills and documentation of birds, both Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers are likely to be found as "regular" migrants in the state, whereas current status is now "casual" (IORC 1999). Long-tailed Jaegers are likely more common in the state than records indicate. A clear dichotomy exists as to which species is more often found on Lake Michigan (Parasitic) and which species is more likely to be found on large, downstate reservoirs (Pomarine). Also jaegers that appear at downstate locations (usually large rivers or reservoirs) tend to stay several days as opposed to birds on Lake Michigan, which are virtually

always fly-bys. Illinois birders should continue to document all jaegers to increase the understanding of patterns regarding age, timing of migration, routes used, and the true status of each species both downstate and on Lake Michigan.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Kevin Richmond and James Landing for providing some additional unpublished jaeger sightings from their records. Thanks also go to David B. Johnson and Vernon Kleen for providing a summary of all jaeger records, including some unpublished, that have been voted on by the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee. Thanks also to Ken Brock for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article. Special thanks go to Sheryl De Vore for her excellent skills at helping with the tables and editing this article.

## Literature cited

- Andersson, M. 1976. Population ecology of the Long-tailed Skua (*Stercorarius longicaudus*). *Ornis Scandinavica* 2:35-53.
- Bailey, S.D. 2001. Illinois' second confirmed Long-tailed Jaeger with notes on the species' identification, behavior, status, and inland migration. *Meadowlark* 10:84-92.
- Bohlen, H.D. 1989. The birds of Illinois. Indiana University Press, Bloomington. 222 pp.
- Brock, K. J. 1997. Middlewestern prairie region. *Field Notes* 51:64.
- Chapel, R. 1997. Field Notes: The 1996 Fall Season. *Meadowlark* 6:74.
- Chapel, R. 1998. Field Notes: The 1997 Fall Season. *Meadowlark* 7:73.
- Contreras, A. 2000. Changing seasons. *North American Birds* 54:16-17.
- Cramp, S., and K.E.L. Simmons. 1983. The birds of the Western Palearctic. Vol. III. Oxford University Press, New York. 913 pp.
- Danley, R. 1997. Field Notes: The 1996-97 winter season. *Meadowlark* 6:115.
- Eiseman, R.M., and M.C. Shank. 1962. Birds of the Chicago Navy Pier area. *Illinois Audubon Bulletin* 122:5.
- Ford, E.R. 1956. Birds of the Chicago region. Chicago Academy of Sciences Special Publication 12. 117 pp.
- Gault, B.T. 1922. Checklist of the birds of Illinois. Illinois Audubon Society, Chicago. 80 pp.
- Goetz, R.E., and J.C. Robinson. 1988. First report of the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee. *Illinois birds and birding* 4:57-63.

**Table 3. High Count Years for Jaegers in Illinois**

High Year	Number	Good Year	Number	Low Year	Number
1951	25+	1997	12	1976	1
1986	21	1999	12	1971	2
1991	19	2000	12	1980	2
1996	15	1966	10	1989	2
1985	14	1982	10	1994	2
1974	13	1973	9	1970	3
		1988	9	1979	3
				1981	3
				1990	3