

My group had a good day, recording 50 species. Noteworthy finds included a single Pied-billed Grebe, 1 Snow Goose, 1 Winter Wren, 5 Carolina Wrens, and 11 White-throated Sparrows. During this CBC, the weather was seasonably cold and we had a moderately strong wind to contend with all day. But the weather became a real difficulty during the drive home. Near both Peoria and Galesburg, I encountered sleet, snow, and freezing rain. The interstate was so slippery, I could not drive more than 25 mph from Galesburg to the Quad Cities. The drive home lasted six hours!

January 5 - This day marked the end of the CBC count period and my 20th count of the year (Van Petten, Illinois CBC). This was my second "state-only" count of the year, and the seventh CBC I compiled. Steve Hager and Brad Cosentino joined me in my final episode of my 2002-2003 CBC marathon. At 3:15 a.m., we began the nearly two-hour drive to our territory of almost exclusively open agricultural fields. The exception is the woodlands and old fields of the Green River Wildlife Management Area. The weather was very damp and dreary, but we had little wind. Overall, with waterfowl being fairly scarce, we were only able to record 45 species.

But it was on this, the last CBC I would do this season, that we got what I think was perhaps the best bird of the entire CBC season. Shortly after dawn, we stopped along the Green River. As soon as we stepped out of the car, we flushed a shorebird from a small mudflat within the river. As it flew downstream, it gave several sharp distinctive two-note calls. A Solitary Sandpiper! The other interesting species identified during this count were Greater White-fronted Goose, Northern Gos-hawk, Thayer's Gull, Long-eared and Northern Saw-whet Owls, Hermit Thrush, and Northern Shrike.

As darkness fell and the count ended, the approaching night was deathly still with not a breath of air moving. As we scanned the darkening grassland at the Green River State Wildlife Area, trying to locate



Northern Shrike photo by Kanae Hirabayashi.

a Short-eared Owl, I reflected on the incredible and amazing adventure which I had just endured. Some of my fondest memories of this CBC odyssey, other than the birds them-

selves, will be the friendship and comradeship shared with all of the dedicated birders I met and worked with along the way. These folks certainly made this an enjoyable experience for me, and I thank them all.

As far as I could find at the beginning of this CBC season, 16 NAS counts was the most that had ever been conducted by one person in a single season. If this is true, then my 18 NAS counts and 20 total would represent a new all-time record. During this marathon, the number of species identified by my field parties ranged from a low of 31 to a high of 77 and averaged 52.4 per count (53.1 per NAS count). The total number of birds recorded ranged from 909 to 19,653. Overall, my groups observed 115 total species and 101,066 individual birds throughout the 20 CBCs (113 species and 97,119 individuals on the 18 NAS counts) See Tables 1 and 2. The

Table 1:
2002/2003 CBC results from field parties in which Kelly J. McKay participated

Count	Date	# Species	# Individuals
Cedar Rapids	12-14-02	53	909
Davenport	12-15-02	60	11,591
Green Island	12-16-02	51	2,449
Lost Nation *	12-17-02	47	1,437
Clinton-Savanna	12-18-02	53	2,874
Horseshoe Lake	12-19-02	66	5,676
Union County	12-20-02	77	15,727
Lake Chautauqua	12-21-02	61	8,634
Muscatine	12-22-02	46	3,418
Princeton-Camanche	12-23-02	44	1,909
Chicago Lakefront	12-25-02	31	2,973
Andalusia	12-26-02	61	4,522
Western Mercer County	12-27-02	56	2,281
North Linn	12-28-02	45	1,631
Thorn Creek	12-29-02	33	3,126
Mermet Lake	12-31-02	66	5,873
Jackson County	01-01-03	60	19,653
Yellow River	01-03-03	43	1,839
Middle Fork	01-04-03	50	2,034
Van Petten *	01-05-03	45	2,510
TOTAL 20 CBCs		115	101,066
TOTAL 18 NAS CBCs		113	97,119

* = State Counts only. Data was not submitted to the National Audubon Society.