

The 2013 Illinois Statewide Spring Bird Count

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Spotted Towhee.

Montrose, Chicago, Cook County.

5 May 2013. Photo by Matthew Cvetas.

A Spotted Towhee was documented on the Illinois Statewide Spring Bird Count in 2013.

The 2013 Illinois Statewide Spring Bird Count marks the 42nd Illinois Spring Bird Count.

In 2013, we changed the Spring Bird Count protocol and gave birders the option of a two day count. This was primarily to increase coverage in counties that have very few volunteers or no coverage at all. We are happy to announce that all 102 Illinois counties were counted in 2013, despite the poor weather that almost all of us had to go out in. Thank you to all volunteers that took part in the count, and special thanks to all of the compilers.

The 2013 Illinois Spring Bird Count was held on Saturday 4 May and Sunday 5 May. Again, we ask that counties with more than 10 participants and several parties maintain Saturday as the primary count day. We also encourage people in those counties to only survey birds on the Saturday, and then on Sunday visit one of the less visited counties. While every county in Illinois has good habitat, certain counties have a bit more. While you may think that the counties with less habitat are the ones that are not being monitored, that is not correct and anyone interested in counting an undercounted county for 2014 let us know. Finally, many people took advantage of entering their data directly into our Excel worksheet this year, and we continue to encourage that in the future. However, to those that prefer snail mail, we will of course continue to accept that form of submission as well.

As people sign up to volunteer for counties that need compilers we will try and update the SBC website that Urs Geiser was generous enough to put together and maintain at http://home.comcast.net/~ugeiser/birds/index_sbc.html.

2013 Results

A total of 544,583 birds were detected, a jump from last year's 471,597 birds. The total number of species detected was 277, up from 272 species in 2012.

Some interesting observations to note from this past year are listed below. There were many records surpassed or tied, however many numbers were also low, most likely due to persistent bad weather throughout the day in most counties.

- The following species were detected in all 102 counties within Illinois; Canada Goose, Turkey Vulture, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Eastern Kingbird, American Crow, Barn Swallow, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Chipping Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, and Brown-headed Cowbird.
- A record number of American Coots were detected (15,344).
- A record number of American Wigeon were recorded in DeKalb County (259).
- Black Vultures were detected in a record 16 counties.
- It was a scoter year with Surf Scoter (2) and White-winged Scoter (2) detected in Lake County and Black Scoter detected in Cook (1).
- American White Pelican not only broke the number of county records (39), but also the total number (2,909), and the most detected within a county, Rock Island (458).
- There were few Yellow-billed Cuckoos detected (49) in few counties (27).
- Two Long-eared Owls were detected in Whiteside County.
- In Winnebago County, Golden Eagle and King Rail were detected.
- A Red-necked Grebe was found in Sangamon County.
- A record number of Tree Swallows were detected (28,528) in a record number of counties (99).
- A record number of American Pipits were detected (476) in a record number of counties (34), with Hamilton County breaking the record for most detections in a county (210).
- A record number of Northern Harriers were detected (92) in a record number of counties (52).
- Lastly, Bald Eagle continues to break records with 374 detections in 82 counties.