

Exotic Bird Species

There is a long history of exotic species in Illinois from Rock Pigeons to Gray Partridge to Eurasian Collared-Dove. These are often oddities for bird watchers but in some circumstances can pose significant challenges to native species. The data from the Spring Bird Count can help track the spread of these species. While some species appear to have fixed ranges, remember that many invasive plant species often reside in an area for decades before their populations explode. We choose to highlight four species.

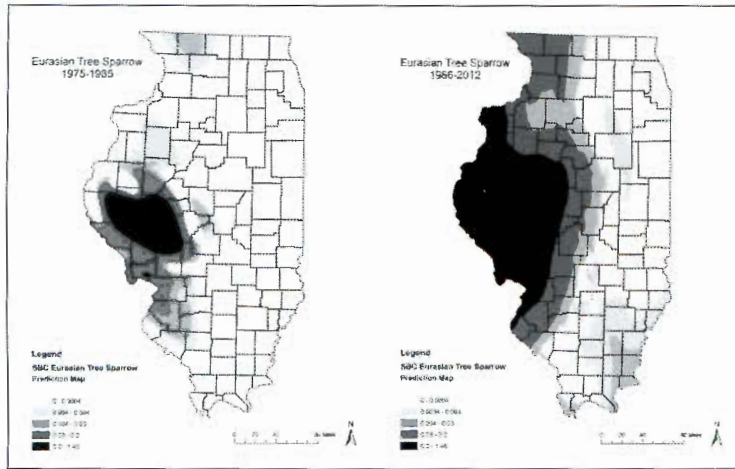


Figure 1:
Eurasian Tree Sparrow
1975-1985 & 1986-2012.

Although Eurasian Tree Sparrows were released in St. Louis in 1870 they have not spread at the rate of other species, notably their congener House Sparrow. While they are not spreading quickly, they appear to be steadily spreading northward along the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers.

Figure 2:
Eurasian Collared-Dove
A recent arrival to Illinois, it is spreading quickly from south to north.

Mute Swan
The stronghold of this invasive species is in northeast central Illinois along the Illinois River.

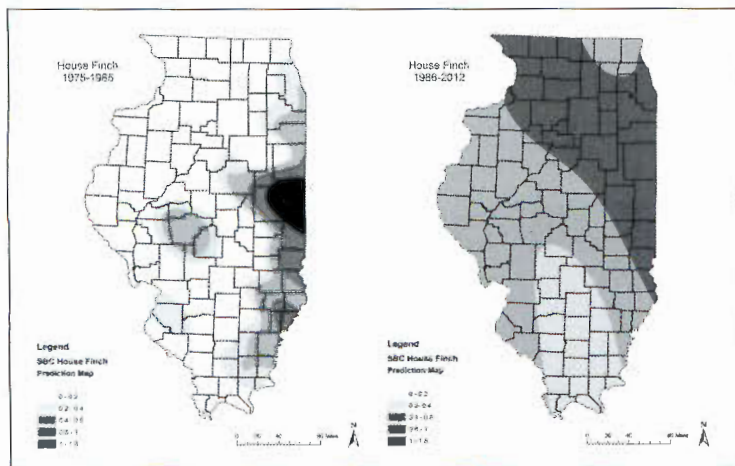
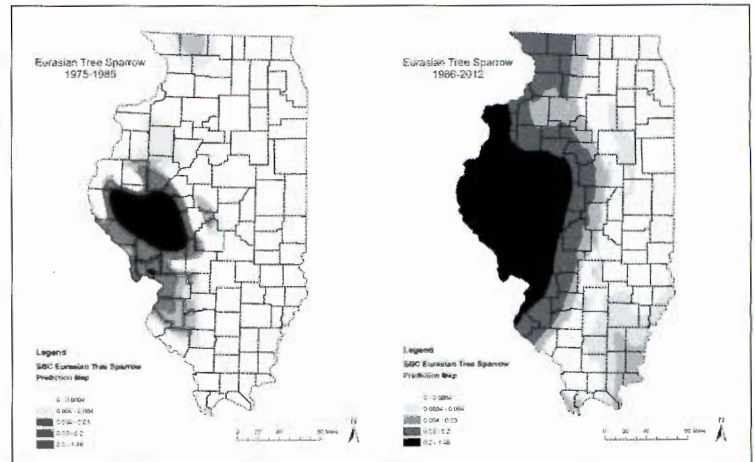


Figure 3:
House Finch
1975-1985 & 1986-2012.

House Finches are native to western North America, but were transported to New York as a caged bird. With the passing of the Migratory Bird Act pet stores in New York released the birds in 1918. The species quickly expanded west, as can be seen in the first map that shows the first arrivals in Illinois were on the eastern edge of the state.