

Salle (154), Kane (153), McLean (153), McDonough (152), and Vermilion (150). Some of these were record high county counts. Of the 23 counties with 150 or more species, 11 (48% — almost half) were in the northern quarter of the state, 9 (39%) were in the central half of the state; and only 3 (13%) were in the southern quarter of the state. In 2004 five more counties achieved the 150 species level than did so in 2003. For the record, another nine counties were in the 140 (149 species range and the highest species count ever for a single county remains at 205 set in 1983).

Table 1 provides annual comparisons; it compares the 2004 results with those of the two previous years and the record year. Although 2004 was a reasonably good year, and the weather was conducive for good birding, it was not a record-setting year for any of the listings in the table. The 2004 efforts did, however, tie the high for the greatest number of counties (80) reporting 100 or more species and came very close to the

record for the two averages at the end of the table: the average number of species reported per county and the average number of species for all 102 counties combined. Although we fielded observers in all but one of the state's 102 counties, there was only a net gain of 12 observers over last year's 93 counties and a loss of more than 100 observers since 2002. This year's 261 species is 3 above the overall average for all 33 years, but nearly 3 below the average of the past ten years. Had some of the species reported this year not been disquali-

fied for inadequate (usually, lack of) documentation, the 2004 species total would have been near the ten-year average. (The number of species on a few county lists was also reduced because of insufficient documentation.) As noted in the table, nearly 560,000 birds were counted; this was only 34,000 short of the record. Because the 2004 count day was such a beautiful day, birders spent more time on foot searching for birds than they did from their vehicles and, with the return to 100 or more participating counties, it's not surprising that



A Black Vulture flies near Massac and Johnson County line. Record-setting numbers of Black Vultures were counted during the Illinois 2004 Statewide Spring Bird Count. Photo taken 9 May 2004 by Eric Walters.

there was a significant increase in the number of species reported in 90 or more counties Of the 16 categories listed in Table 1, 12 (75%) were higher than in 2003 and one tied the 2003 number. The three that were lower than the 2003 numbers were: total number of species, number of party hours driven, and the highest species total in a single county.

Table 2 lists, in descending order, the counties fielding 20 or more observers; 21 counties (one more than in 2003) made the list this year. As usual, Cook and Du Page both continue to field 100 or more observers. It's amazing (and very much appreciated) how the compilers of these counties are

TABLE 1 – Annual Comparisons

Criteria	2004	2003	2002	Highest Total
Number of Species	261	268	265	269(1996)
Number of Birds	559,486	519,342	545,759	593,680(1996)
Number of Participating Counties	101	93	99	102(2yrs)
Number of Observers	1362	1350	1473	1611(1997)
Number of Party Miles Walked	2424	2027	2227	2628(1995)
Number of Party Miles Driven	22,608	21,782	23,802	23,942(2001)
Total Number of Party Miles	25,032	23,809	26,029	26,401(2001)
Number of Party Hours Walked	2975	2647	3094	3457(1997)
Number of Party Hours Driven	1880	1919	2135	2140(1998)
Total Number of Party Hours	4855	4566	5229	5565(1995)
No. of Species in 90 or more Counties	48	33	47	55(1996)
No. of Counties with 100 or more species	80	69	70	80(2yrs)
No. of Counties with 20 or more observers	21	20	22	24(1998)
Highest Species Total in Single County	184	192	177	205(1983)
Average# of species/participating County	120	120	116	122(1999)
Average# of species for all 102 counties	119	110	113	120(1999)

TABLE 2

Counties with 20 or more Participants

Cook	109	Boone	26
DuPage	117	Knox	28
Kane	52	Pike	26
McDonough	45	Kankakee	25
McHenry	45	Logan	24
Lake	44	Coles	22
Will	38	Edgar	22
Champaign	36	Vermilion	22
LaSalle	32	Kendall	21
JoDaviess	31	Calhoun	20
Winnebago	31		