

Species, Highest Species Total in a Single County and the Average Number of Species per participating County) were higher than those of 2002; the first and third were very close to the records.

Table 2 lists, in descending order, the 20 counties with 20 or more observers. As usual, Cook and Du Page both continue to field 100 or more observers. Special accolades go out to the coordinators and compilers of these counties since it certainly must be challenging to not only assign designated birding areas to the counters, but also to get their results back in a timely manner. Obviously, those counties with 0-4 observers would not appear in this table; however, had just one observer been counting in any of the nine counties from which no reports were

received, the count totals would have been enhanced and, perhaps, more records would have been established. As in the past, I encourage some of you to participate in one of the more distant counties which could, obviously, benefit from your assistance. (Special thanks to those of you who already help in one of these counties.)

Table 3 provides the usual comparisons of birding efforts in each quarter (south to north) of the state (identified as AREAS 1 through 4 in Figure 1). In 2003, the average number of party hours was 49.1, about 3.9 hours fewer per county than last year and 5.6 fewer than the record set in 1977. In addition, the average number of party hours in each of the four AREAS was fewer than those recorded in 2002.

Table 4 lists the 51 species reported from 84 (90%) or more counties. Fourteen (27%) of these were reported in all 93 counties; another 9 (including Killdeer, flicker, crow, and cowbird) were reported from all but one county. The Rock Dove, Chimney Swift, Red-headed Woodpecker, and House Finch were not reported from 5, 3, 2 and 7 counties, respectively.

Table 5 shows, in descending order, the 20 most commonly reported species. The top ten are pretty much the same year after year with the Red-winged Blackbird and Common Grackle nearly always in first and second position. The next eight positions often change from year to year; this year the starling moved ahead of both the robin and House Sparrow and the Ring-billed Gull (thanks to the 14,000+ in Cook County) also moved ahead of the House Sparrow. The Canada Goose continues to be almost as common as the House Sparrow. This year was a **record-setting year** for the **Mourning Dove** (always in the top 20, but increased by a mere 19 birds), **Indigo Bunting** (nearly half the time in the top 20, increased by 800 birds) and **Common Yellowthroat** (a first time appearance, increased by 1100+ birds). With the addition of the Common Yellowthroat, a total of 42 species have now been recorded in the Top 20 list; nine of these have been on the list only one time. The three species on last year's list that were not on it this year are American Coot, American Golden-Plover, and Chipping Sparrow.

It's interesting to compare the 2003 totals with those of 2002 and the "record" year. By looking strictly at the printed numbers and not taking into account important annual variables, especially total number of observers and party hours, the populations of all **Top 10** species except for the Ring-billed Gull and Mourning Dove apparently declined since 2002—some by small percentages, but others by substantial percentages such as the Robin (-23%), House Sparrow (-48%), American

TABLE 3 – Area Coverage

AREA	Possible # of Counties	# Counties Participating	# Party Hours	Average # Party Hours Per County
1	23	20 (87.0%)	636	31.8
2	28	26 (92.9%)	753	29.0
3	27	24 (88.9%)	1034	43.1
4	24	23 (95.8%)	2143	93.2
TOTAL	102	93 (91.1%)	4566	49.1

TABLE 4 – Species Reported from 84 (90%) or more Counties

Great Blue Heron	92	Eastern Kingbird	91	Common Yellowthroat	92
Turkey Vulture	91	Warbling Vireo	85	Eastern Towhee	88
Canada Goose	93	Red-eyed Vireo	84	Chipping Sparrow	92
Mallard	84	Blue Jay	93	Field Sparrow	89
Red-tailed Hawk	91	American Crow	92	Song Sparrow	91
Killdeer	92	Tree Swallow	85	White-crowned Sparrow	84
Rock Dove	88	Barn Swallow	93	Northern Cardinal	93
Mourning Dove	93	Tufted Titmouse	91	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	88
Chimney Swift	90	White-brsted Nuthatch	90	Indigo Bunting	93
Ruby-thr Hummingbird	86	House Wren	90	Red-winged Blackbird	93
Red-head Woodpecker	91	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	84	Eastern Meadowlark	92
Red-bell Woodpecker	93	Eastern Bluebird	90	Common Grackle	93
Downy Woodpecker	89	Wood Thrush	84	Brown-headed Cowbird	92
Northern Flicker	92	American Robin	93	Baltimore Oriole	92
Eastern Wood-Pewee	88	Gray Catbird	89	House Finch	86
Eastern Phoebe	89	Brown Thrasher	93	American Goldfinch	93
Great Crested Flycatcher	86	European Starling	93	House Sparrow	93