

number of party miles walked and driven came close. We did, however, do better in 9 of the 16 listed categories than we did in 2001. The biggest improvements since last year were in the total number of species (+8), the total number of birds (+_ million) and the number of counties with 20 or more observers (+3).

Table 2 lists, in descending order, the 22 counties with 20 or more observers. Cook and Du Page counties (tied this year with 113 each) continue to be the only two that consistently field 100 or more participants. It's mind-boggling to me to comprehend how 50 or 100 birders can spend all day (or even

12 hours) in a small part of a single county without running into each other, or, worse yet, counting the same birds more than once. My vision has been restricted (perhaps "tunnelized") over the years to Union County where only 8-12 of us in 5-8 parties cover designated portions of the county yet seem to run out of new places to go before the end of the day and occasionally see each other at some of the more favorable birding locations; and Christmas Bird Counts, which, even with the shorter days, have the same problem when many birders are counting the birds in a finite area. Therefore, I certainly commend all of you who manage to avoid this problem.

[Assistance requested: As mentioned the last few years, it's great to have counties with so many participants; however, it's conceivable that the count results and records could be increased if only a few of the Cook and/or DuPage (or other) county observers would count in some of the counties with fewer observers (as has occurred recently in Bureau and Putnam counties); birders or birding parties who assist in new counties have the potential of birding all day without duplicating anyone else's efforts. Therefore, I encourage some of you from the

well-endowed counties to transfer your Spring Bird Count efforts to a new county and to use this opportunity to enhance your own birding endeavors as well as to benefit the total count.]

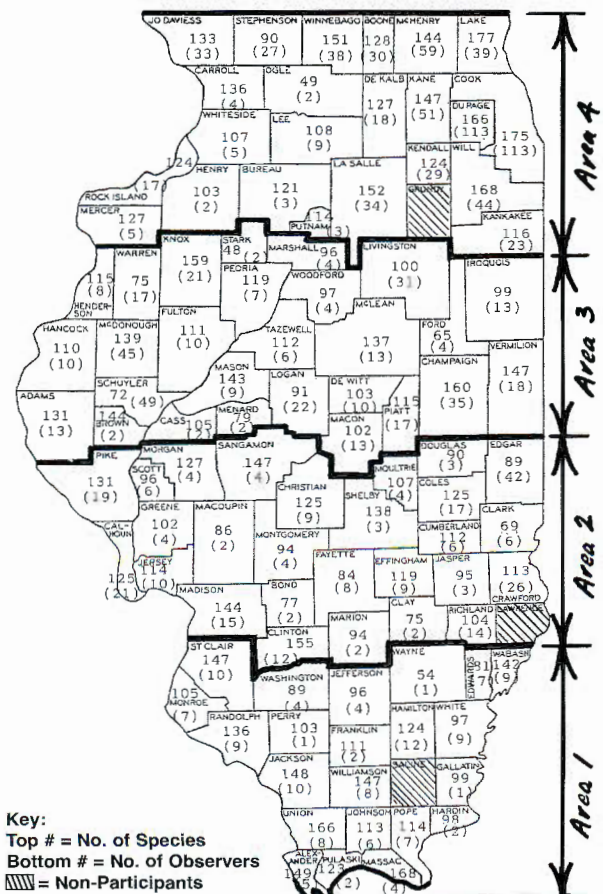
Figure 1 provides a good way of showing you all how well you did. It shows the number of species reported and the number of participants in every county and makes it easy to quickly compare the results for all counties. It also aids in identifying those counties where **more assistance might be useful** (including Grundy, Lawrence, and Saline, which were unable field any participants this year and may not again next year without outside help).

Table 3 provides the usual comparison of birding efforts in each quarter (south to north) of the state (identified as Areas 1 through 4 in Figure 1). In 2002, the average number of party hours was 52.82, about 2.5 hours per county better than in 2001, but still 1.7 hours less than the record set in 1997. The average number of party hours for Areas 2, 3 & 4 were all better in 2002 than they were in 2001.

Table 4 identifies the 47 species found in 90 or more counties. Fifteen (32%) of these were reported from all 99 participating counties; another 11 (including the Red-headed and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, the catbird, Brown Thrasher, yellowthroat and goldfinch) were missed from only a single county. The Table also shows that Rock Doves were not found in seven counties and House Finches were missed in six.

Table 5 presents the annual list of the 20 most "common" species in descending order. The top 13 species are species that most everyone can recognize whether they are a good birder or not and the Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, and American Robin remained on top of the list as they do most years. 2002 was a **record-**

Figure 1



County results for the 31st Annual Statewide Spring Bird Count 4 May 2002