

It took all the rest of the day to spread the word, but with the help of Jim and Kate Frazier, managers of the DuPage birding hotline, by evening, many birders had begun arriving from the Chicago area.

An occurrence of note for a birder can be a disaster for a vagrant bird. An Anhinga in DuPage County in April was a bird seriously out of its normal environment, so there was substantial anxiety whether the bird would be able to survive so early in the season and so far north. However, the Anhinga stayed at McKee until 1 May, was photographed, and joined the life and Illinois lists of many birders.

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## Chicago's First Anhingas

The Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) had no place in the avifauna of northern Illinois until 22 April 1995, when a female was found in DuPage County. Since I lacked a car and felt quite possessive of my available birding time in my usual turf of Jackson Park on Chicago's south side, I did not pursue this remarkable discovery. Rather, I invoked my standing half-jest rhetoric: "I'll wait till I catch up with it in Jackson Park."

My joke turned to fact twice over just one week later on 28 April, when I spotted two Anhingas flying southeast behind the Museum of Science and Industry.

The Jackson Park Anhingas would have been a cinch to identify in the Florida Everglades, but in the confines of a Chicago lakefront park, I was unprepared for them despite the DuPage County record. The birds were coasting at a considerable height, about that of a 20-story building, though low enough to catch the attention of the naked eye.

I got my binoculars and in a few seconds, I absorbed what I could of details of shape and pattern on the departing birds realizing these were indeed Anhingas.

My total viewing time was no more than four to six seconds before the birds coasted directly into blinding sunlight. Fortunately, this species' utterly distinctive shape allowed me to rule out all other North American birds.

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**Editor's Note:** Bohlen (1989, *The Birds of Illinois*) said the Anhinga, a southern species, is a very rare vagrant in Illinois, adding that the numbers of state records seem to be increasing, although he notes no northern Illinois records. Bohlen does say that, "Anhingas soar on thermals like hawks when migrating; with the right winds they can be drifted northward."

Female Anhinga, McKee Marsh, DuPage County, first northern Illinois record. 24 April 1995.  
Photo by Dennis Oehmke.

## White-faced Ibis Near Goose Lake Prairie in Grundy County

Late 15 May 1995, I decided to go for a walk at Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area in northeast Grundy County. At 7:15 p.m. I turned onto Jughandle Road to the park's entrance. About one-half mile down on the east side of the road, I noticed a flooded field. Driving slowly, I noted the usual puddle ducks, a few Great Blue Herons, and many shorebirds. Then I spotted a brownish bird with a long decurved bill in the taller vegetation.

I stopped the car, got out my spotting scope, and noted as many field marks as I could. The bird stood about 2 feet tall and seemed to be about the size of a Snowy Egret or Little Blue Heron. It was a deep chestnut color with an iridescent green coloring on the wings. The bill was long and decurved and it had a well-defined white border which began at the top of the bill, went around the eye, and under the chin. I had found a White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) in breeding plumage, a state bird for me.

Unfortunately, I was only able to observe the bird a few minutes before it flew east into Goose Lake Prairie. I was not able to relocate the bird that evening, though I searched until it got dark. Fortunately, the bird was relocated and photographed the next day by Joe Milosevich