

In terms of quantity, the shorebird migration was fairly typical, but as a group, shorebird arrival was about five days earlier than the median, with several species logging exceptionally early dates. Black-necked Stilts were 11 days ahead of the typical arrival date, but this year's 5 Apr arrival is in keeping with the norm over the prior four years. Benjamin Murphy and Shanin Abreu spotted the second earliest Black-bellied Plover on record for the state with a bird 15 Apr in Livingston County, improving on the prior second earliest record of 16 Apr 1985. The record early arrival remains 27 March 1998, when 10 were observed in Massac County. A Solitary Sandpiper photographed 25 March at Carlyle Lake was notable for its arrival ahead of schedule. Marbled Godwits also arrived early, with this year's 14 April date tied for the fourth earliest ever. The record early date is 7 April 1980 and there are two 13 April sightings from 1987 and 2008. This year's 31 March arrival for Baird's Sandpiper joins seven other March dates for the species, the earliest being 8 March 2006. Tim Dever spotted two Semipalmated Sandpipers on the very early date of 19 April only two earlier records exist, both on 18 Apr in 2004 and 2009. Dan Kassebaum photographed a Wilson's Phalarope at Carlyle Lake 7 April; only two earlier records exist, one from 6 April 1986 and the other last year's 19 March 2012 record from the Frank Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve in Pulaski County.

The shorebird migration was also notable in other ways. Black-necked Stilts continue to occur in good numbers with four counts in excess of 20 birds. The species is moving northward as well, with many noted from the central tier and two being seen in Will County in the northern tier. The estimated 20,000 American Golden-Plovers at Carlyle Lake 7 April provided the largest tally since 1994. The two Piping Plovers in Sangamon County provided a rare inland sighting of this species, which more regularly occurs along Lake Michigan. No Red Knots were observed during the prior three springs, but this year there were six, with five of those located by Wes Serafin on a beach in Chicago's Jackson Park 28 May. A Ruff was a nice find in Whiteside County 3 May, and a Buff-breasted Sandpiper in McLean County 19 May was unusual as the species is observed only in one out of seven springs. Most interesting was a possible Little Stint photographed 13 April that is under review by the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee.

The pattern of having a White-winged Dove appear during spring continued. This year there were three reports, one substantiated by a photo. Since 1999, there have been only two spring seasons that have lacked a White-winged Dove report. Not all of these, however, have been documented, though most have. Quite a surprise given the northern location was a Chuck-will's-widow found in Chicago's Columbus Park. Notable flycatchers included two Say's Phoebes (one of which is as yet undocumented) from opposite ends of the state. Most of the records of this species are from fall or winter, making these especially unusual. Also of note among flycatchers were two Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in the northern tier: one in Lake County and one in Grundy County.

The Northern Rough-winged Swallow that Leroy Harrison observed 16 March at East Fork Lake in Richland County tied the earliest arrival date for the species set in 1996. Other swallow species arrived on the normal schedule, though Purple Martins were a touch early. Bewick's Wrens are now expected at Siloam Springs State Park in Adams County; however, the two different

Bewick's Wrens located by Dave Bohlen in Sangamon County were not. This species is rare in the state, and documentation of all sightings away from Siloam Springs State Park is requested by the records committee.

The Veery seen 20 April in Marion County tied the fourth earliest arrival date for this species. Earlier arrivals include birds 15 April 1981, 16 April 1995, and 18 April 1992. Evanston's wintering Varied Thrush lingered to 6 April, which is the third latest spring date on record.

As a group, the warblers arrived more or less on time with the average difference between this year's arrival dates and the median arrival being one day ahead of schedule. However, there were eight species that posted exceptionally early arrival dates. Though just six days ahead of the median arrival date, the Ovenbird found 13 April in Urbana provided the second earliest arrival date for the species, with the only earlier date coming from all the way back on 4 April 1969. The 14 March arrival of Louisiana Waterthrush tied the third earliest date, with the two earlier observations being 11 March 1986 and 12 March 2011. Also early was Northern Waterthrush, with this year's 10 April arrival being the fourth earliest on record. The Nashville Warbler seen 9 April provided the second earliest arrival date for the species, with only the 7 April 2001 date being earlier. Mourning Warbler arrived record-early this year, with the 28 April bird from Monroe County pushing the prior record-early arrival back by one day. Tying the second earliest arrival for Cape May Warblers was the bird seen on 19 April; the record-early arrival date for this species is 15 April 2003, with the other 19 April arrival set in 1977. Another early warbler arrival was for Blackburnian Warbler. The 17 April bird seen in Champaign set the second earliest date, with the only earlier record from 12 April 1995. Finally, another observation from Champaign, this one of a Wilson's Warbler on 14 April, tied the earliest date for the species set 14 April 1977. The one rare warbler species that was found was a Swainson's Warbler that seemed to be trying to attract a mate to a territory in Quincy in Adams County during mid-May. Also, on the Spring Bird Count, Craig Stettner established a new record high count for Black-throated Blue Warblers as he spotted 11 while birding along the Des Plaines River from Northwestern Woods to Touhy Avenue in Cook County. He commented that the delayed leaf out made it easier to observe arboreal feeders, many of which were foraging low.

Having three Spotted Towhees found in one spring season, as happened this year, is quite unusual. In the prior 28 springs, this happened only twice, and in none of those seasons were more than three seen. Large numbers of American Tree Sparrows lingered late, staying well into March. Matt Fraker's observation of 479 of them at Clinton Lake 1 March and Dan Kassebaum's total of 300 at Carlyle Lake 25 March were quite unusual; previously the high count for March or later was 250. Dave Bohlen's 175 in Sangamon County 26 March was also notable for this reason. However, the species' departure in the first week of May was par for the course. An excellent total of 13 Harris's Sparrows was reported for the season, which is much greater than the median total of four and which was the largest since 17 were seen in 2002. Four were seen together at a La Salle County feeder 11 May. The only higher counts on record include six at Lost Mound National Wildlife Refuge 14 May 2002 (and five there 11 May the same