



We watched for about 10 minutes as the bird ambled along, dabbling in the water for food, yipping, ambling, and dabbling some more. Then came the moment! The bird stopped motionless in the water with the almost cloudless blue sky mirrored in it. Emily breathlessly whispered, "Oh look, Gram. There's two of them." It was magic.

A minute later, the bird waded to deeper water, walked onto dry land, preened, then slowly flew up over the road southwest, disappearing into an impenetrable part of the slough. Roger was too late with his camera.

I later learned that Rod Myers of Rockford had the privilege of seeing the bird in the same area that day. But Emily and I had, for a few moments, seen two.

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Editor's Note: 21 March is the earliest arrival date by nearly one month for Red-necked Stilts in northern Illinois. Few records exist from this part of the state.

Black-necked Stilt drawing by Arlene Brei

Purple Gallinule on Lake County Golf Course

A Purple Gallinule (*Porphyryla martinica*) was found dead on 10 April 1997 in Lake County. The discovery was made by a greenskeeper alongside a putting green at Steeplechase Golf Course in Mundelein, Illinois. The specimen was given to a Lake County Forest Preserve District employee who sent it to the Ryerson Woods Conservation Area, the environmental education headquarters for the Lake County Forest Preserves. At press time, the specimen was being held at the conservation area, with plans to present it to the Field Museum of Natural History's permanent bird collection in Chicago.

Cold conditions, lack of food and the long, strange trip to northern Illinois may have contributed to the bird's death.

Bohlen (1989) lists the Purple Gallinule as a rare vagrant in Illinois, and a very rare summer resident in southern Illinois. One of the last records closest to Lake County, Illinois, was a report of a bird in Evanston on 11 and 15 June 1977 (Bohlen 1989).

Literature Cited

Bohlen, H.D. 1989. The birds of Illinois. Indiana University Press. Bloomington, IN.

— Mark J. Hurley, Environmental Educator
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Western Tanager Visits Arlington Heights Puddle

On 18 May 1997, after birding Crabtree Nature Center in Cook County all morning, it started to rain quite heavily. So I started home. I had told my husband I would be gone for a couple of hours, but since I'd been gone all morning, I thought I would make him his favorite brunch - a ham and cheese omelet. We were out of eggs, so my husband offered to go to the store. While he was gone, the rain let up, so I decided to do a little birding on my front driveway. There was quite a fall-out. Warblers were everywhere. I was joined by my neighbor, Cindy Benchuck

at about 12:15 p.m. She also noticed the abundance of warblers flitting about. Just as Cindy walked up, I said: "Now what do we have here?" A bird, slightly larger than the warblers, flew out of the maple tree in my front yard down to a puddle of water at the end of the driveway. I watched this bird drinking at the curb, between 15 and 20 feet away. This beautiful yellow bird with a bright, orange-red head, black wings and white wing bar was a Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*). I had seen the species while birding in California.