

Josh Engel noted a late lingering American Tree Sparrow in Chicago's Grant Park 10 May. There are few later records for the species, all from the northeast portion of the state. The latest was 27 May 2011 in Chicago's Lincoln Park, with another 21 May 1985 from Joliet (Will County), and the other later record 16 May 1996 in Palatine (Cook County).

Alex Bloss's Vesper Sparrow 11 Mar at Montrose tied the record early northern Illinois arrival date from 1985. There are only three Lark Sparrows known to have arrived in Illinois earlier than the two seen 9 Apr at Carlyle Lake (Dan Kassebaum) and in Fulton County (Larry Hood). The Grasshopper Sparrow photographed 14 Mar at Chicago's Montrose Point by Josh Engel, and presumably the same bird seen there three days later, provided record early arrival dates for the species. The previous record early date was set 22 Mar 1938, 74 years ago.

Before 2012, there had been 12 Henslow's Sparrows found in March in Illinois. Eleven of these were located in southern Illinois during the spring seasons from 2007 to 2010, so there has been a recent trend for earlier arrival of this species. However, the eight to 10 individuals found 21 Mar of this year at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area by Leroy Harrison was unprecedented, both in terms of the number of individuals for that time of year and also for 21 Mar besting the old record early arrival by four days. The Henslow's Sparrow that Josh Engel photographed at Chicago's Northerly Island is the second earliest for the state and the earliest for northern Illinois. The only other March record from northern Illinois comes from a specimen taken in DuPage County on 28 Mar 1910. Also notable were Keith McMullen's three Henslow's Sparrows 25 Mar in Johnson County, though these "only tied" the prior record early date.

Leroy Harrison's Nelson's Sparrow 4 Jun at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area set a record late date for southern Illinois. All the previous eight June records were from northern Illinois (with seven of those in Chicago). Just three were later than Harrison's bird: one 5 Jun 1983 in Chicago noted by Jim Landing, one 6 Jun 1971 at Goose Lake Prairie seen by Larry Balch and Charlie Clark, and the latest 11 Jun 1997 seen by John Purcell in Chicago.

A Harris's Sparrow in Logan County was seen on the exceptionally early date of 5 Mar by Andy Sigler and Mike Madsen. The only earlier date for Harris's Sparrow in at least the last 27 years was a bird 14 Feb 2010.

The Yellow-headed Blackbird found 18 Mar at Emiquon Preserve was exceptionally early. It is the fifth earliest on record, and one of only 11 for March.

This summary of the spring season would not be possible without the reporting of sightings in various venues by observers throughout the state. The information used to create this report came from seasonal field notes and sightings submitted to the author, from documentation submitted to the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee, from reports to eBird (Sullivan et al., 2009), from reports to the several birding list serves in Illinois, and from posts to the Illinois Birders' Forum internet bulletin board. The author expresses special appreciation to those 37 individuals who submitted field notes and commentary directly to him, as those submissions always prove especially helpful in preparing the seasonal summary and add context that is frequently not available through other sources such as eBird and posts to internet bulletin boards and list serves. With more than about 220 cited observers, less than 20% of the individuals are providing information this way. Of course, the effort made by observers to make information about sightings available through other means is also appreciated. However, I strongly encourage individuals to submit their

sightings to eBird and to submit their most notable observations with commentary directly to the seasonal report editor. Information reported in other venues is easily overlooked, and some significant information in eBird can easily evade notice in the volume of data appearing there without attention being brought to it by observer notes. Perspectives on the season as a whole or on parts of the season are also quite valuable.

The observers for individual records in the report are credited by including their initials immediately following mention of the record. The individuals cited are listed below, with the order of the list alphabetic in relation to the observers' initials. Where more than one observer shares the same initials, a modified set of initials is used to provide disambiguation, with this modification shown in the list of observers. In some cases, a citation pertains to an organization or institution. Abbreviations for these are listed separately.

List of Organizations and Institutions:

- BWBW = Busey Woods Bird Walks led by Greg S. Lambeth at Urbana's Busey Woods
- IORC = Illinois Ornithological Records Committee
- IOS = Illinois Ornithological Society field trips
- NPBW = North Pond Bird Walks led by Geoffrey A. Williamson at Chicago's Lincoln Park

List of Individual Observers:

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