

tions partnering to restore a wetlands and prairie there.

Dyer, a board member of the Friends of Chicago River, said during the spring of 1996, she discovered 15 Common Snipes one day. "Later on in the season, we saw lots of shorebirds," she said. "I kept going over there and looking usually between 6:30 and 8:30 p.m. after work. We saw Semipalmated Plover, Dunlins, Lesser Yellowlegs, one woodcock, and lots of Killdeer."

"One cool day in April, I saw the trees filled with Yellow-rumped Warblers and Golden-crowned Kinglets," said Dyer. "It was wonderful. When the warbler wave came through, I saw 20 species in the bushes along the river. Spotted Sandpipers and Killdeer bred there the summer of 1996," said Dyer, who observed the Spottie chicks peeping, pumping their short tails, and following their mother.

The property, which includes a branch of a Skokie River, contains some wooded edges along with prairie and wetlands that are being restored by removing drainage tiles to change the water table. Last spring, volunteers and forest preserve staff also planted 50,000 prairie plants and added a walking path. "It will be interesting to see what the future brings now that they have started working on the area," said Dyer.

She is compiling a data base of the birds seen there. Look for her data and more information about this great, new little hotspot in a future issue of *Meadowlark*.

## **Horseshoe Lake, Alexander County**

Compiling bird data about an area is what led Vernon Kleen, IOS member and Breeding Season Field Notes compiler for *Meadowlark*, to a back-road birding spot in southern Illinois. While running Breeding Bird

Survey routes in June for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and participating in Christmas Bird Counts, Kleen found an area particularly rich with bird life.

Part of one Illinois BBS route passes through the southern portion of the Horseshoe Lake CBC circle, an area that provides outstanding birding year-round, said Kleen.

Those coveting Red-shouldered Hawk, Barred Owl, and Pileated Woodpecker for their birding lists can find these species in the area "any time of the year," said Kleen, avian ecologist for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

This birding hotspot is off of Illinois Rt. 3 one mile west of where Illinois Routes 3 and 127 meet in the Horseshoe Lake Conservation Area, Alexander County. Roadside habitats along this portion of the conservation area include a large deciduous bottomland forest, a wooded roadside creek, cypress and tupelo gum trees, a small dam, wooded park, buttonbush swamp, and a shallow floodplain lake. Kleen has discovered a wealth of avian species in these diverse habitats.

In winter, he found diving ducks, Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, all seven species of woodpeckers, Carolina Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Brown Thrasher, and Fox Sparrow in appropriate habitats.

In summer, he found Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Wood Duck, Mississippi Kite, Least Tern, Acadian Flycatcher, Fish Crow, White-eyed Vireo, Northern Parula, Prothonotary and Yellow-throated warblers, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Orchard Oriole. "Of course, many other forest interior, edge, and wetland species are possible from these very interesting roadsides," said Kleen. "I've found from 50 to 100 species of birds in this area any day of the year."

## **Ryder's Woods, McHenry County**

IOS board member Renee Baade discovered 65 species in one day at a little-known 23-acre natural area in McHenry County. "I moved to the Woodstock area the summer of 1992 and saw in the local paper that the McHenry County Audubon Society led monthly walks in a place called Ryder's Woods, year-round," said Baade.

For the next four years, Baade birded the preserve, owned by the City of Woodstock.

She learned that 130 species have been documented at the preserve, and that a group of locally active residents helped save the area from being developed.

Ryder's Woods is west of Highway 47 off Lake St. and Kimball Rd. It contains a 1.7-acre wooded pond, small meadow, low marshy area, and meandering paths.

"Some of our best days have been in spring," said Baade, who now leads bird walks there each Wednesday. In the spring of 1996, Baade and area birders recorded all five vireos and 27 species of warblers, including the first Hooded and Connecticut warblers.

"Summers have brought nesting discoveries of Cooper's Hawk and Green Heron, along with Wood Thrush, Yellow-throated Vireo, and many regulars such as the Red-bellied and Hairy woodpeckers," said Baade. Also recorded in summer have been Indigo Bunting, Great-crested Flycatcher, and Wood Duck. A walk by the pond can be a treat when you hear the rattling call of a Belted Kingfisher.

In fall, Baade looks forward to a Broad-winged Hawk or Winter Wren, and in the winter of 1993, a group discovered evidence that a Pileated Woodpecker had been feeding there.