

**The 30 Most Frequently Encountered Summer Birds  
at Pyramid SRA**

- |                         |                                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Red-winged Blackbird | 16. Northern Rough-winged Swallow |
| 2. Eastern Meadowlark   | 17. Canada Goose                  |
| 3. Dickcissel           | 18. Brown-headed Cowbird          |
| 4. Common Grackle       | 19. Bell's Vireo                  |
| 5. Northern Bobwhite    | 20. Common Yellowthroat           |
| 6. Indigo Bunting       | 21. Willow Flycatcher             |
| 7. Mourning Dove        | 22. Henslow's Sparrow             |
| 8. American Goldfinch   | 23. Eastern Kingbird              |
| 9. Field Sparrow        | 24. Northern Cardinal             |
| 10. European Starling   | 25. Yellow Warbler                |
| 11. American Robin      | 26. Song Sparrow                  |
| 12. Grasshopper Sparrow | 27. Mallard                       |
| 13. Killdeer            | 28. Horned Lark                   |
| 14. Barn Swallow        | 29. Gray Catbird                  |
| 15. Brown Thrasher      | 30. Yellow-breasted Chat          |
- (From surveys in 2001, 2002, and 2003 by J. Walk and J. Hoover)



*Bell's Vireo nests in shrublands at Pyramid State Recreation Area. Photo by Mary Kay Rubey.*



*Henslow's Sparrow is a state-threatened species that nests in grasslands at Pyramid State Recreation Area. This sparrow is one of the most frequently encountered summer birds at the park. Photo by Robert Hughes.*

the park, this is the area to go to pad your site list, scooping up woodpeckers and flycatchers, wrens and thrushes, warblers and sparrows. Carolina Chickadee is a bonus bird for those visiting from the northern half of the state, that can be easily found in the local woodlots.

**When to visit...** Like birding itself, the best time to go is when you can, and depends on what you want to see. Waterfowl concentrations are typically most impressive from late January to early March. Raptor activity runs high from November through March. Peak singing activity of the grassland and shrub-nesting birds comes from mid-May to mid-June. Songbird migration is best in southern Illinois from late April to mid-May. Though Pyramid isn't a rock star des-

tinuation for warbler-ing like the more extensive and diverse forests elsewhere in southern Illinois, the birding is likely to be very good.

**How to get there...** For most of us who live well away from Pyramid SRA, the most direct path is via I-57. Exit onto Illinois Highway 14 at West City-Benton, and head west to DuQuoin. Join U.S. Highway 51 north a few miles to Illinois Highway 152, and drive west to the junction with Illinois Highways 13/127. Follow the Pyatt-Cutler Road (well-marked with signs) to the headquarters of Pyramid SRA. From St. Louis and the metro east area, take I-64 and exit onto Illinois Highway 127, and go south through Nashville and Pinckneyville. From Carbondale, Pyramid is an easy half-hour trip north on Illinois 127

**The 30 Most Frequently-Encountered Birds  
on the Pyramid Christmas Bird Count**

- |                                 |                        |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Snow Goose                   | 16. Song Sparrow       |
| 2. Red-winged Blackbird         | 17. Eastern Meadowlark |
| 3. Common Grackle               | 18. House Sparrow      |
| 4. Mallard                      | 19. American Crow      |
| 5. European Starling            | 20. Horned Lark        |
| 6. Canada Goose                 | 21. American Robin     |
| 7. American Coot                | 22. Carolina Chickadee |
| 8. Gadwall                      | 23. Mourning Dove      |
| 9. Ring-necked Duck             | 24. Blue Jay           |
| 10. Greater White-fronted Goose | 25. American Wigeon    |
| 11. Brown-headed Cowbird        | 26. American Goldfinch |
| 12. Dark-eyed Junco             | 27. Northern Harrier   |
| 13. White-throated Sparrow      | 28. Cackling Goose     |
| 14. Northern Cardinal           | 29. Ring-billed Gull   |
| 15. American Tree Sparrow       | 30. Green-winged Teal  |
- (From the 2004 and 2005 Christmas Bird Counts, compiled by J. Merkelbach)

from Murphysboro. If time is on your side, consider a slower-paced back road trip to enjoy the southern Illinois countryside. Chances are, you'll see something you'll never forget.

**If you go...** Camping is permitted in the original portion of Pyramid, located just off the Pyatt-Cutler Road. The rest of the site is limited to day use. Lodging, food and fuel can all be found nearby in Pinckneyville and DuQuoin. For the non-birding companion, virtually every form of outdoor recreation is accommodated at Pyramid. Nearby small towns are great for looking for antiques and visiting one-of-a-kind shops. The DuQuoin State Fair runs from Aug. 26 to Sept. 4, 2006.