

derbrush, we soon found ourselves on the edge of the large wet prairie at the heart of Iroquois County. The wind did not seem to bother the Henslow's Sparrow. We almost immediately heard two of them singing. However, the Sedge Wrens, usually more numerous and vocal than the Henslow's, were silent. An American Woodcock began to peent softly, and we heard the twittering of wings as another one descended through the air in its display flight. But no Sedge Wrens. Not wanting to waste any more time, we retreated back through the woods. A Whip-poor-will finally re-awoke and sang a few distant notes as we reached the van.

A quick trip to the other side of the meadow proved fruitless. The wind was even more persistent and the Sedge Wrens maintained their silence. We raced north toward nearby St. Anne Woods hoping to hear the pair of mockingbirds that Bob had staked out earlier, and maybe to pick up a screech or Great Horned Owl. The wind had the same effect as down in Iroquois. The experience was too reminiscent of the previous year. We headed south to Danville.

It was nearly 3 a.m. when we reached the parking lot of the Danville Walmart, our stake-out spot for Common Nighthawk. There were no nighthawks. But the wind was beginning to subside. John and Bob heard thrush flight calls. We agreed on a few Swainson's Thrushes, but found the rest of the calls too fleeting for positive identification. Seb's keen ears picked out a couple of Bobolinks flying over, but the rest of us would have to wait for daylight for ours. After a quick chat with the confused but friendly night watchman we were on our way to Kennekuk Marsh.

We were not more than half a mile from the Walmart when Steve slammed on the breaks and pulled the van to the side of the road. "There they are," he yelled. Two nighthawks

gracefully hunted insects beneath the street lamp just in front us. After a quick look by all, Steve gunned the engine, and we continued on to Kennekuk.

By the time we got there, the weather had further improved. It was now calm and mild. We soon added Sora, Virginia Rail, and Yellow-breasted Chat. Feeling hopeful, we drove over to Old Newell Road. It was now time for Steve Bailey to work his magic.

"Who-Cooks-For-You," Steve howled.

"Who-Cooks-For-You," a Barred Owl bellowed back. Another joined in. The two owls continued their chorus back and forth as we sped off for Danville Airport.

The sky was already beginning to lighten and turn purple when we arrived. The grassland birds were in full song, and we soon added Savannah and Grasshopper Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, and Upland Sandpiper, as well as the first of our common birds including Common Grackle and American Robin. As we headed away from the airport Bob and I both glimpsed what looked like a Belted Kingfisher diving off of a telephone wire and into a ditch. We all agreed that the dawn was too precious to waste on a kingfisher. We were sure to get another one, so there was no point in turning back.

It was now 5:30 a.m. and we were back on Old Newell Road. Birds were everywhere.

"Yellow-throated Warbler and Parula singing off to your left," Bob called.

"There is a Prothonotary on the other side of the road. I also got a pileated working on a dead tree," yelled John.

"Did everyone catch the White-breasted Nuthatch and the Carolina Chickadee in the tree right above us?" Seb asked.

"No," Steve Molidinow answered, "but I got both Red-bellied and Red-headed Woodpeckers over here."

"There's a flock of Wood Ducks flying over," I chipped in.

In little over an hour we added close to 60 species, including 18 species of warblers. The next four hours were equally frantic. At Kennekuk, we added such goodies as Orchard Oriole, Kentucky Warbler, Willow Flycatcher, and Bell's and Philadelphia Vireo. We continued on through the Middlefork River Valley, picking up Cooper's Hawk, Lark Sparrow, and Dickcissel, and up through Midford, ticking off Western Meadowlark and Vesper Sparrow.

The team was also working well as a group. The previous year, cold and fatigue had broken down our discipline, and we had strayed apart one too many times. This year we were sticking together. John only had to chastise us once or twice for wandering. The great conditions and the great birds made easier, despite the lack of sleep, to keep alert.

There had certainly been a push of migrants the night before. Thrushes, vireos, and warblers were everywhere we stopped. Despite the great variety of birds, I was getting a little nervous. We were constantly adding new and unexpected species—a pair of Black-billed Cuckoos sitting in a bush right next to the van, unanticipated Orange-crowned and Mourning Warblers, a couple of White-rumped Sandpipers mixed in with a flock of Least Sandpipers, and, oddest of all, a mid-morning Great Horned Owl, flying over the road with a snake in its talons. However, we were still missing a number of birds that we were not going to get at all if we did not find them on the southern end of our route. We had almost finished the Danville area and still were without Summer Tanager, Louisiana Waterthrush, Cerulean and Prairie Warbler,