



Drawing of Lawrence's Warbler by Michael L. P. Retter

Field Notes

2005 Breeding Season

by Vernon M. Kleen, Compiler

The 2005 Breeding Season was hot and dry! Peoria data, perhaps representative of the entire state, indicate that June and July temperatures averaged approximately 5 degrees and 3 degrees above normal, respectively. June and July rainfall, at least in central Illinois, averaged from 1' to 2' below normal both months. Arlene Brei of Boone County indicated that the drought there was "beyond severe." Richard Bjorklund reported that "drought continues. Water level now 1.0 ft in the Goofy Ridge Ditch at the North Water Control. Many parts of the ditches are reduced to mud flats or completely dry and dewatering continues at the Chautauqua [National Wildlife Refuge] South Pool while the drought has drawn adjacent Clear Lake very low."

On the positive side of the drought, Richard Bjorklund also reported that at Chautauqua NWR and Clear Lake, "trapped fish were attracting pelicans, wading birds, and gulls" and that "egrets and Ring-billed Gulls are finding living easy at both sites as fish are trapped. The Clear Lake basin has emptied more slowly, and consequently is now attracting more Great Egrets and shorebirds." In addition, the lack of serious rain and thunder-storms in June made it possible for the annual Breeding Bird Survey routes to be completed without fear of being rained out; as a result, nearly all were completed on time and with good results (my sincere appreciation to all of you who run these extremely important annual routes).

Some of the most interesting 2005 breeding records included: fair numbers of Blue-winged Teal, Hooded Mergansers and Ruddy Ducks, a good season for the prairie-chickens and Pied-billed Grebes, more nesting Ospreys (including the fledging of three young at Banner Marsh), an inland record of nesting Mississippi Kites, more nesting Bald Eagles, Cooper's Hawks and Peregrine Falcons, fledgling Soras and Virginia Rails, nesting stilts, Spotted Sandpipers and Wilson's Phalaropes, close-by nesting of Caspian Terns, successful nestings of Common and Forster's Terns, more Yellow-billed Cuckoos than usual, plenty of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, the continuing presence of Alder Flycatchers and Western Kingbirds, nestling Cliff Swallows in mid-August, potential nesting of Red-breasted Nuthatches, successful nesting of Golden-crowned Kinglets, lots of Cedar Waxwings, a successful nesting of Lawrence's Warbler paired with a Blue-winged Warbler, the first summer records of Pine Warblers in northeastern Illinois, lots of Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows, continued expansion of nesting Blue Grosbeaks, and the return of the banded male Painted Bunting at East St. Louis.

A few of the disappointing accounts, for lack of nesting records or because of nesting/breeding problems, were for Swainson's Hawk, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, the Caprimulgids (including nighthawks), and Red-headed Woodpecker.

Some of the most noteworthy NBSO (non-breeding summer occurrence) records were for: Trumpeter Swans, dabbling and diving ducks, Pacific and Common loons, large numbers of pelicans, Glossy and White Ibises, Purple Gallinule, Wilson's Snipe, several species of gulls (including Chicago's KFC Laughing Gull), Sooty and Bridled Terns. Did someone mention frigatebird?

For the record, the quality and quantity of reports submitted for this annual compilation still continues to increase every year—so, again, many thanks to all of you for taking both the time and initiative to submit your notes. I know that there are still more useful and valuable records "out there" that were not provided for this compilation—it's too bad they cannot be included in this compilation. Finally, the following persons are responsible for the data in this compilation and are individually acknowledged after the records they provided. As usual, considerable effort was made to be sure all printed information is correct, properly acknowledged and can be traced to the original source documents (now in the permanent record file) from which it was obtained. (Please accept my apologies if your name was inadvertently omitted or misspelled.) Cited observers: Alan B. Anderson, Jill S. Anderson, Arlene E. Brei, Frank K. Bennett, Melissa Brookens, Richard G. & Sigurd N. Bjorklund, Steven D. Bailey, Elizabeth J. Chato, Karin M. Cassel, Melinda Born Chapman, Paul R. Clyne, Alfred G. Dierkes, Donald R. Dann, Sheryl L. De Vore, David Enstrom, Matthew Fraker, Steven M. Freed, Cathie Hutcheson, C. Leroy Harrison, James R. Herkert, L. Barrie Hunt, Larry L. Hood, Mary Hennen, Ralph Herbst, Robert D. Hughes, Lynette Miller Ishmael, Rhetta L. Jack, Dan M. Kassebaum, Vernon M. Kleen, Thomas V. Lerczak, Wade Louis, Carolyn A. Marsh, Keith A. McMullen, Lynn McKeown, Travis A. Mahan, Walter J. Marcisz, Carolyn Noble, Sharon Parmet, Bill Reddinger, David Ramsden, Phil Reyburn, Alan F. Stokie, Douglas F. Stotz, Darrell J. Shambaugh, Eric Smith, James O. Smith, Robert E. Shelby, Randy L. Shonkwiler, Wesley S. Serafin, Larry Thorsen, Charles A. Westcott, Dan G. Wenny, Daniel T. Williams, Eric W. Walters, Geoffrey A. Williamson, Jeffrey W. Walk, Laraine Wright, and Michael P. Ward.