

flushed a Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*) from a barn. Since Snowy Owls would probably not be present in Vermilion County during June, Westfall investigated on 24 June. What she found was a Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) at roost in the darker portion of the hay loft of an old red barn. Falconer had seen it on the same perch earlier in the week.

Westfall called Bob Schifo who called me. We arranged to see the owl and obtain photographs for 6 p.m. on 25 June. Also in the party were my wife Eleanor, Bob's wife Susie, the farmer of the land, Gene Bell and Falconer.

When we arrived at the farmstead, we saw the Barn Owl perched on the metal rail running the length of the hayloft through the door. I took several photos of the owl with a 500 mm lens and a flash. Bell flushed the owl from the loft and more photos were taken by Bob as his wife took a video of the bird as it left the barn.

Westfall and I searched a second barn on the farm and found pellets, indicating the owl or owls had been living there for an extended period. Bell and I searched inside all the rest of the farm building for evidence of a nest, but found none.

On 30 July 1995, Bell reported to Westfall that two Barn Owls were present. Then at 8 p.m. on 20 Aug., the farm house tenant, Terry Trosper, called Falconer to report that their two dogs had caught and were mauling a fledgling Barn Owl. Trosper put the injured baby owl into a box. Falconer drove out to the farm, got the owl, and took it to his home and called Westfall, who in turn contacted Mark Pittman, a naturalist for the Vermilion County Conservation District. Pittman took the owl, but it died that night.

The following week, Trosper reported seeing two baby owls peering out of a small cavity in a silver maple tree.

On 31 Aug. 1995 Westfall and I visited the farm and found one adult Barn Owl roosting on the rail at the peak of the hayloft. It tolerated only a few photos before exiting the barn and was not seen again. On 3 Sept. Westfall, her husband, Bob, and Falconer checked on the owls. A mature owl flushed from one barn and flew into the second barn where it flushed out a pigeon. A short time later, the owl flew out of the barn into the darkness.

Steve Bailey of Danville checked on the owls once in late summer and found one roosting in a silver maple along the roadside. On 13 Sept. 1995 Marianne Hahn and I found two adults roosting at the peak of the hayloft in the red barn. Neither owl stayed long enough for photos or even for good observation even though we never entered the barn. They were becoming ever more skittish.

We searched the farm and nearby groves of trees in vain for any sign of fledged young. I had brought a ladder from home and used it to climb into the silver maple tree to look into the cavity where the two young Barn Owls had been seen, then drove to the farm to check again on the owls, which were not found. Nearby are grain bins that had been filled during the early fall harvest. The activity and operating machinery probably created more disturbance than the owls could tolerate. The location of the farm will not be revealed. The owners are apparently not interested in wildlife and might raze the buildings if too many birders were to come to the farm.

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Editor's Note: We again reiterate that confirming the nesting of a rare species, indeed, any bird species, in Illinois must be done carefully with the least amount of disturbance to the bird.

A Remarkable Killdeer Nesting at Chicago

Birders in Chicago's lakefront parks enjoy some of the most dramatic birding in interior North America during migration seasons, but learn to humble their expectations when it comes to breeding avifauna. I was thus duly surprised to record a Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) nesting at Jackson Park on Chicago's south side which proved of significance not only to Illinois, but also to North America.

The nesting was remarkable for its date of occurrence. On 5 Aug 1996, I discovered three eggs being brooded by a Killdeer on the beach at 6400 South. Bohlen (1989) cited the latest Killdeer Illinois egg date as 27 June - nearly six weeks past. The latest egg date for all of North America supplied in Bent (1928) is 17 July. While Bent's work is dated, it was published after the heyday of egg-collecting, so much of the information on nesting limits therein remains valid.

The following morning I returned to the beach to find two barely hatched, helpless young in the nest. On 7 Aug. these young were active on the beach, while the third egg remained intact. By 8 Aug., the lone parent had completely abandoned the final egg, which I then collected and deposited at Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History.

Karin Cassel and I monitored the young's development daily for the next few weeks. Their growth proceeded normally until one of the chicks was found weak