



Field Notes

2004 Breeding Season

by *Vernon M. Kleen, Compiler*

Clay-colored Sparrow drawing by Eric Secker

The 2004 Breeding Season was somewhat cooler and drier than usual with average statewide temperatures one to two degrees and rainfall one or more inches below normal. However, the more than normal spring moisture was adequate to retain the quality of nesting vegetation and, as Larry Hood noted, the weather was "...quite good for nesting birds." He also noted that in west-central Illinois "...breeding success, based on singing males or young birds seen, was good... for the Northern Bobwhite, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Chimney Swift, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Chipping Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark and Common Grackle. Species that did not seem to do well this year included: Black-capped Chickadee, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow and Grasshopper Sparrow." Alan Anderson chimed in noting that 2004 was the "year of the Henslow's Sparrow."

Some of the most interesting breeding records this year included: Gadwalls (Hennepin-Hopper Lake), Northern Shovelers (Prairie Ridge State Natural Area), Redheads (Hennepin-Hopper Lake), Ruddy Ducks (several locations), Pied-billed Grebes (several locations), Ospreys (Lake Calumet, Carlyle Lake and Lake Mermet), Peregrine Falcons (traditional Chicago-area locations and Madison County), King Rails (Prairie Ridge State Natural Area), Virginia Rail and Sora (northeastern counties), Common Moorhen and American Coots (several locations), Black-necked Stilts (attempted nesting in at least two locations), Spotted Sandpipers (northeastern counties), Ring-billed Gulls (roof-tops at Des Plaines), Black Terns (Lake County), Barn Owl (Franklin County), Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (St. Clair and Union counties), Sedge Wren (widespread in large numbers), Henslow's Sparrow (large numbers in many locations), Blue Grosbeaks (expanding range), Painted Bunting (St. Clair County - return of banded male) and a major range expansion of the Clay-colored Sparrow (DuPage, Cook, Lake and Kane counties). *See article in this issue.*

Some of the more disappointing accounts because of the lack of nesting records were for: Swainson's Hawk (nests, but no fledglings), Forster's Tern (both nesting colonies failed), Sandhill Crane (fewer than expected numbers reported), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (none reported), and Brewer's Blackbird (nesting not reported).

In regards to NBSO (non-breeding summer occurrence) records, the following deserve special mention: American White Pelicans (several locations - still waiting to be con-

firmed as a nesting species), Black Vulture (Kane County), Swallow-tailed Kites (St. Clair and Brown counties), Merlin (Lake Chautauqua NWR), Laughing Gulls (at Chicago's KFC restaurant and two other locations), Franklin's Gulls (three locations including attempted nesting at Hennepin-Hopper Lake), other gulls (Lake Michigan sites), Caspian Terns (several northeast locations - still not confirmed as a breeding species), Black Skimmer (Springfield), Black-throated Green and Blackburnian warblers (Lowden-Miller State Forest), Swainson's Warbler (Heron Pond Nature Preserve - first observation during breeding season in many years), and Mourning Warbler (Illinois Beach State Park).

As has become traditional, the quantity and quality of notes submitted for the annual Breeding Season report continues to be extraordinary. Had more of the traditionally regular contributors made their notes available as well, it would have been even more phenomenal. This continues to prove that Illinois' field observers desire to provide a detailed record of Illinois ornithological history. So, as always, MANY THANKS to all of you who took the time to prepare and submit notes for inclusion in this Report. I urge you to continue doing so every year. I also wish to thank and congratulate the dozens of you who completed your assigned Breeding Bird Survey routes again this year; I hope you are pleased with the outcome of those results as they appeared in The Illinois Breeding Bird Atlas. 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 Anderson, Barb Anderson, Jill Anderson, Steve Bailey, Arlene Brei, David Bohlen, Dale Bowman (DBw), John Berstrom, Rebecca Blazer, Richard Bjorklund (RBj), Sigurd Bjorklund (SBj), Steve Bailey (SB), Elizabeth Chato, Melinda Chapman, Scott Cohrs, Al Dierkes, Donald Dann, Sheryl De Vore, Jon Duerr, David Enstrom, Bob Fisher, Matt Fraker, Urs Geiser, Frank Holmes, Leroy Harrison (LH), Larry Hood (LHo), Mary Hennen, Roger Hotham, Tharron Hobson, Rhetta Jack, Betty Kannapel, Dan Kassebaum, Vernon Kleen, Tom Lerczak, Charley Marbut (ChM), Carolyn Marsh (CaM), Keith McMullen (KM), Judy Mellin, Robert Montgomery, Tom May (TomM), Travis Mahan (TM), Walter Marcisz, Carol Nelson, Judy Pollock (JP), Sharon Parmet, Bill Reddinger, Kevin Richmond, Lee Ramsey, Michael Retter, Phil Reyburn, Rhonda Rothrock, Brad Semel,