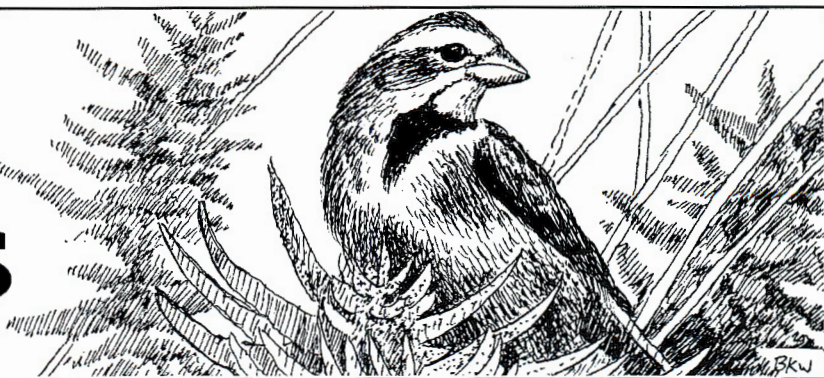


Field Notes



Dickcissel drawing by Brian K. Willis.

The 1994 Breeding Season

by Vernon M. Kleen

The 1994 Breeding Season will be historically remembered as the year of new discoveries of significant breeding populations of several typically northern U.S. species at four northwestern Illinois sites. What else is out there just waiting to be discovered?

Weatherwise, June and July were fairly close to "normal" in contrast to the serious extreme rains of 1993. The official records indicate that June temperatures averaged about one degree above normal; July temperatures averaged one degree below normal; June precipitation averaged two-thirds of an inch above normal; and July precipitation averaged one inch below normal.

1994 marks the second year for the completion of all 81 of Illinois' Breeding Bird Survey routes; data from these routes have been used for nearly 30 years to detect the short-term and long-term population changes of Illinois' breeding species. Many thanks to the numerous volunteers who faithfully conduct these surveys every year.

Brief highlights of the 1994 breeding season include the discovery of new Double-crested Cormorant colonies; Illinois' first and second nest records of Black-necked Stilt; nesting Western Kingbirds; first confirmed hybridization attempt between Violet-green Swallow and Tree Swallow; and the Scott Robinson-led team discoveries at Castle Rock State Park (Ogle Co), Lowden-Miller State

Forest (Ogle Co), White Pines State Park (Ogle Co.) and Sugar River Forest Preserve (Winnebago Co) in the northwest part of the state. Nests found include Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Least Flycatcher, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Pine Siskin, plus significant breeding populations of Acadian Flycatcher, Veery, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, American Redstart, and Ovenbird, and, possible nesting for Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Solitary Vireo, Golden-winged Warbler (one paired with a Blue-winged Warbler), Mourning Warbler, Canada Warbler, and several more typical southern Illinois species. In addition, there were sporadic numbers of opportunistic breeders such as Blue-winged Teal, Ruddy Duck, and American Coot.

As usual there were numerous June and July occurrences of non breeding birds throughout the state. Many of those records were obvious spring or fall migrants and were appropriately sent to the editors of those seasonal reports. Traditionally, the left-overs have been included in the body of the Breeding Season Report. This year, however, the left-overs have been given special attention and appear in the Non-Breeding Summer Occurrences supplement at the end of the report. This supplement specifically separates the June and July non-breeding records from the more pertinent breeding (or potential breeding) records of the Breeding Season Report.