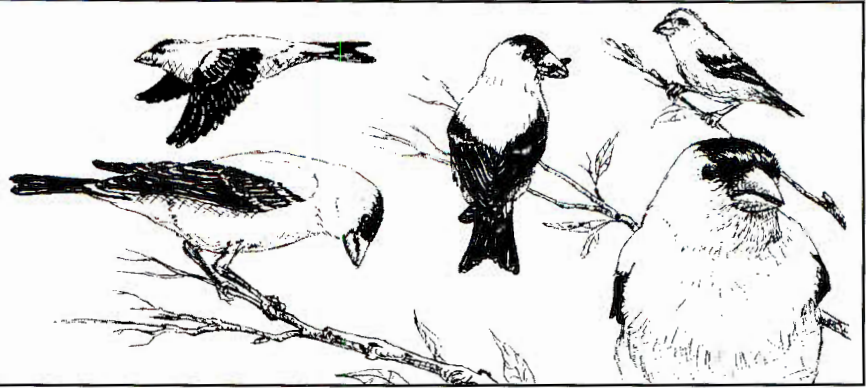


Field Notes



D. Athans

Field Notes drawing by David Athans.

The 1996 Breeding Season Report

By Vernon M. Kleen

The 1996 breeding season, like 1995, was another good one for nesting herons and grassland species. It was also an excellent season for many wetland species including grebes, bitterns, rails, coots, and moorhens. It is possible that White-faced Ibises and Yellow-crowned Night-Herons may have nested with other herons in the East St. Louis area. Cormorants continued to become more widespread and the American White Pelican may be a new species added to our list of nesters in the not-too-distant future. Turkey Vultures were reported in larger numbers and more places than usual in north-eastern Illinois counties.

The 1996 breeding season was a record-setting one for nesting Bald Eagles. Cooper's Hawk nests were reported more frequently this year helping to substantiate its announced removal from the state's endangered species list and Swainson's Hawks continued to 'hang-on' in northern Kane and southern McHenry counties. The Greater Prairie-chicken flocks of southeastern Illinois were enhanced once again with birds from Nebraska, and Sandhill Cranes continued to expand. Young Black-necked Stilts fledged from a Madison County site and a family of Western Kingbirds was found only a short distance farther down the Mississippi River. A summary report of Illinois' Eastern Bluebird Project should be available soon.

Lowden-Miller State Forest continued to be a 'hot-spot' for interesting warbler records.

As expected, there were numerous June and July occurrences of non-breeding birds. During the past two

years these records were listed separately at the end of the main report under the heading of "Non-Breeding Summer Occurrences"; however, beginning with this report, these records, still identified as "Non-Breeding Summer Occurrences" (but abbreviated to NBSO), are incorporated into (and placed at the end of) the individual species accounts.

This was another excellent year for the Breeding Bird Survey Program; long-term and short-term population data have been collected for breeding Illinois species for 31 consecutive years. Of the 81 Illinois routes, 80 were adequately surveyed. Many thanks to the dedicated volunteers who continue to faithfully monitor these routes every year.

Available weather information for this report is rather sketchy; however, June was definitely wet and windy.

As usual, this compilation is the result of field efforts from dozens of dedicated professionals and volunteers. Without their continued support we would have little record to pass on to future generations. Persons responsible for records in the following species accounts are acknowledged individually after their records. Considerable effort has been made to be sure that all information is correct and properly credited. All printed records can be substantiated by original source documents in the permanent record file.

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