



The Sandhill Crane is an endangered species in Illinois. Drawing by David Athans.

1994 CHANGES IN THE STATE LIST OF ENDANGERED AND THREATENED BIRDS

In January 1994, the second major revision of the Illinois list of endangered and threatened species was completed, adding another two bird species to and removing three bird species from the state list for a total of 42 endangered and threatened species in Illinois (Table 1). The Yellow-crowned Night-heron and King Rail were added to the state list as threatened species, and the Brewer's Blackbird, Clay-colored Sparrow, and Purple Gallinule were removed from the state list. The Yellow-crowned Night-heron and King Rail were added to the state list due to evidence of population declines and threats to their breeding habitat. The Purple Gallinule was removed from the state list on the basis that its breeding status in Illinois appears to be that of a vagrant, with Illinois occurring substan-

tially north of its typical breeding range. The Brewer's Blackbird was removed on the basis of its relatively recent addition to Illinois' bird fauna (first recorded as nesting in Illinois in 1930; Ford 1930, Lyon 1930) without a history of population decline, and because its disturbed habitats are not threatened in Illinois. The Clay-colored Sparrow was also removed from the list for similar reasons, lack of evidence of a significant population decline and a dependence on disturbed/artificial habitats. Nelson (1876) listed the Clay-colored Sparrow as a rare summer resident near the borders of the prairies but gave no specific nesting information. That was the only known reference to this species in the state until its discovery in 1972 in Lake County (Herkert 1992). The first documented Clay-colored Sparrow nest in Illinois was not discovered until 1983 (Pucelik and Pucelik 1984). Presently the only known breeding population in the state occurs on a Christmas tree farm in Winnebago County (see Pucelik and Pucelik 1984).

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF ENDANGERED AND THREATENED BIRDS

The distribution of endangered and threatened bird species in Illinois is shown in Figure 1. Areas of high concentration of endangered and threatened birds include the north-eastern part of the state (Chicago metropolitan area), the Mississippi and Illinois rivers and their associated wetlands, and the southern Illinois forested regions including the Shawnee National Forest. However, endangered and threatened bird species can be found throughout much of Illinois. The high concentration of endangered and threatened bird species in the Chicago metropolitan area may be due in part to the large number of people in this region that look for birds, particularly rare ones. However, the Chicago area also contains a very diverse assemblage of natural communities (White 1978) and is also