

crow the week before. Like the robin, the juvenile White-throated Sparrow seemed to be able to fly awkwardly only for brief distances.

When we left, the birds were still feeding on the north side of the raised bed of yews with the juvenile still in plain sight.

Doug Stotz visited the site later that day and did not find any White-throated Sparrows in the bed by the Gleacher Center, but did report finding two adult and one juvenile (and possibly a second juvenile) in the low shrubbery along the lower level of this plaza, at the level of the Chicago River, just south of the Gleacher Center. The juvenile Stotz saw did not have

downy feathers and had a complete tail, which suggests a different bird than the juvenile White-throated Sparrow I observed.

I was unable to relocate this family of White-throated Sparrows after 31 July, but they could have moved to some of the many beds of shrubs in the immediate vicinity of the Gleacher Center or to foraging sites along Lake Michigan in Olive Park and Grant Park that are less than one-half mile to the east and south.

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# Unusual Breeding Season Status of the White-throated Sparrow in Illinois with Comments on Other Unusual Summer and Breeding Records for the Eastern U.S.

by Steven D. Bailey

Although many would relate the song of the White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) with the mostly wilderness, boreal forest region of the northern United States and Canada during the breeding season, such "wild" areas are not always chosen by this species. Clark et al (1983) showed that White-throated Sparrows can adapt well to development along lakeshore habitat planned for cottage development. "The species' preference for open canopy with a well-developed understory makes it well-suited to inhabit cottage lots in coniferous woods where most of the tree layer has been removed. If some predominately coniferous vegetation is left, this species will occur in such habitat" (Clark et al 1983). Such areas seem to fall somewhere along a transitional zone of acceptable habitat between the species' "normal" mixed coniferous/deciduous breeding areas (including bogs in many areas), and the unusual downtown or urban areas where they have bred in Chicago (see Williamson 2002, this issue) and Buffalo, N.Y.

Bohlen (1989) describes this species as a "common migrant" and a "common winter resident in southern Illinois decreasing northward." He does not mention any possible or potential breeding of this species. The Checklist of Illinois State Birds (1999) shows this spar-

row as a "regular" migrant, again with no reference to breeding status. As you will see, evidence in this article points to this species likely having bred in the state prior to both of the above publications.

## The Summer Records

In his book, *Birds of Northeastern Illinois*, Nelson (1876) considered the White-throated Sparrow a rare summer resident in the state, while Woodruff (1907) in *The Birds of the Chicago Area*, only reiterates Nelson's statement with no further comment. Ford (1956), in *Birds of the Chicago Region*, apparently disregards these records as he makes no mention of summering or breeding status. However, he does mention two summer season records, 9 June (said to be very late) and 2 July 1949 by M. Nice. Mlodinow (1984) gives three July records including several (apparently four), Evanston, summered 1979; 2-3 Evanston, summered 1980; 1, Loyola Campus (Chicago lakefront), late July 1979. Bohlen (1989) gives the average spring departure date from the Chicago area (from Ford 1956?) as 26 May. Any June records are always worth noting for this species. Bohlen (1989) summarizes a few June and July records including: Chicago, 9-24 July, 1986; a subadult singing male, Lake Shelbyville, 14 June 1985; Spring-