

reported 1,186 birds from 76 localities in 15 states in 1994-95, while they had reported a mere 33 birds in 1975-76. Most of the Monk Parakeet (1,463 or 80.6%) sightings in 1994-95 came from two states, Florida and Texas. These data fit the standard equation of exponential growth (Van Bael & Pruett-Jones 1996).

Chicago population

The winter of 1998, I counted 48 nests in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago, and the summer of 1998, I noticed many new nests as well as previously existing nests that had grown. There were 83 active chambers in these nests, but the number is certainly larger now. Since Monk Parakeets are monogamous and roost in their stick nests year-round (Forshaw 1989), a fair estimate of the Hyde Park population the winter of 1998 would be 170 Monk Parakeets (although one or two young often stay

in the chamber with the parents until the next spring). However, several large nests were removed from utility poles in late October and early November. One of these nests contained at least 20 nesting chambers and rivaled a large appliance in size. These nests could have harbored from 60-90 more individuals, bringing the total population of Monk Parakeets in Hyde Park closer to 240.

While Monk Parakeets have bred continuously in Hyde Park for almost 20 years, they have also appeared in several other Chicagoland locations. Nesting has been confirmed in 1998 in Carol Stream (although nests have repeatedly been removed by the electric company), Bensenville, Berwyn, North Riverside, Calumet Park, and Burnham. Most nesting colonies outside of Hyde Park contain only one or two nests, but in Burnham there are at least seven (unpub. data, pers. comm. from Chicago- area birders). It is not

known whether the parakeets in Hyde Park are a source population for these other sites.

I suspect that there has been more than one escape or release, as one study in Argentina documented a median dispersal from natal nest to first breeding location as only 1,230 meters (Martin & Bucher 1993). At least two locations are obvious points of introduction: O'Hare Airport and Hyde Park. Additionally Monk Parakeets have been observed in free-flight in Addison, at Fermi Laboratory (DuPage County), in Zion (Lake County) where they nested, in Blue Island, and in downtown Grant Park.

Clearly the Monk Parakeet has established itself in Chicago. Only a vigorous, sustained effort could dislodge this species; that is, if you could win the sympathies of the general public that adores its parakeets. When the U. S. Department of Agriculture announced plans to eradicate the



Monk Parakeets roosting in a tree in Hyde Park on an extremely cold afternoon. Photo taken by Jason South on 9 March 1998 when the temperature was 17 degrees F.