

tion decline. For example, the Bird ESTAC will welcome new information that helps describe the status and trends of nightjars in Illinois, such as being generated by the new Monitoring of Owls and Nightjars (MOON) project led by the Illinois Natural History Survey.

The proposals to delist the Bald Eagle, Henslow's Sparrow, and Sandhill Crane generated substantial media attention and a number of formal comments. However, of the 97 comments submitted to the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board regarding birds, 88 were in opposition to the recommendation to not change the status of the Peregrine Falcon.

After considering public comments, the Board makes final approval to changes and starts a procedural chain to make the revised list official. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources conducts an internal review of the List, and submits Administrative Rule changes to the Secretary of State for publication in the Illinois Register and review by the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR). This first notice for Administrative Rule changes to the List published in the Illinois Register includes a 45-day comment period. If substantive comments are received during the 45-day comment period, the IDNR provides a response to JCAR.

JCAR approves the List at regularly scheduled meetings of its committee. Upon approval by JCAR, the IDNR will submit the final Administrative Rule changes to the List to the Secretary of State for publication in the Illinois Register. Changes become official on the date of publication in the Illinois Register.

The 2009, changes approved by the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board to the birds listed as threatened or endangered in Illinois were:



### Common Moorhen

– *change status from Threatened to Endangered.*

Recent analyses of data of the Common Moorhen from the Northeastern Illinois Wetland Bird Survey indicate a significantly declining population in the northeastern portion of the state. Similarly there has been a decline in the number of

Natural Heritage Database records and also a decline in the number of counties with recent records.

*Common Moorhen photo taken by Frank Holmes in Madison County on 18 May 2008.*

### Henslow's Sparrow

– *remove from Threatened.*

The number of locations in the Natural Heritage Database for Henslow's Sparrows continues to increase and data from the Illinois Spring Bird Count continue to show a significantly increasing population. The recently completed recovery outline for this species recommends consideration for removal from the state list when, within the last five years, there are records in the Natural Heritage Database from 40 or more Illinois counties, and 10 or more populations numbering 20 or more breeding pairs within protected habitats. Both criteria have been met, with records in the Natural Heritage Database from 46 counties between 2002-2006, and at least 15 populations in protected areas known to exceed 20 pairs.

A concern that has been raised by several individuals is the potential loss of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) within the state. Analyses of the potential impact of loss of CRP on Henslow's Sparrows within



Illinois have also been conducted. Farm Service Agency projections for Illinois indicate that nearly 172,000 acres of grassland CRP contracts will expire in the next five years. If no new grassland CRP contracts are established during this period, it would result in a 28% reduction of existing grassland CRP in the state, leaving more than 435,000 acres of CRP grassland intact.

*Photo of Henslow's Sparrow on a native rattlesnake master plant at Goose Lake Prairie taken 27 July 2009 by Brian Tang.*