

Most young in the Ontario study fledged after day 8 or 9. This places fledging at ~ 26 May, and young should then be well-grown by the end of the first week of June. If the nest were depredated, re-nests would likely be started within two days or so (pers. obs. most small passerines), and "replacement nests (would be) produced throughout June, with diminishing numbers through July" (Falls and Kopachena 1994). Wild pairs that successfully fledge a brood prior to the end of June will attempt a second brood (Falls and Kopachena 1994).

With future sightings, observers may find it interesting to note the head color patterns of paired adults. The White-throated Sparrow is a polymorphic species, in that adults have white or tan striped head patterns. Contrary to what some birders might think, these colors have nothing to do with age, and indeed each individual keeps its respective color throughout its life. White-striped males almost always mate with tan females and vice-versa. See Falls and Kopachena (1994) for a very interesting account of behavioral traits that correspond with these color matches. Ken Wysocki (pers. comm.) had four different pairs in the downtown area of Chicago in early June 2002 that were made up of one tan-striped bird and one white-striped bird at each of four locations!

#### **Comments on Non-breeding Summer Occurrences**

The term Non-breeding Summer Occurrence (NBSO) has become a sometimes overused "catch-all" phrase attributed to summering or summer season records of birds in Illinois that are not thought to be breeding, as delineated in the field breeding season notes section of this journal. Although this was, and still is, a good way of imparting important additional information to a summer season occurrence, to a species which either is a rare breeder in the state or one that has never bred in the state, and is not likely to do so, it is currently being used all too often.

Some or even many records now listed under NBSO could easily be actual instances of at least attempted breeding by an uncommon to rare Illinois breeding species. This is especially true for such species as White-throated Sparrow, Least and Alder Flycatchers, and several species of warbler, including Black-and-white, Canada, Black-throated Green, and Mourning to name a few (see Meadowlark 11:1 breeding seasonal report for 2001). Such species, and even a few other rarer species should best be left unclassified unless the reporting individual reports the bird as a non-breeding bird and has some basis in fact to do so, such as birds not present upon repeat visits, no female or young present despite intensive searches, etc. However, for many species such as arctic nesting waterfowl, shorebirds, or especially rare vagrants, the NBSO is still a very good descriptive term for species that are migrating or otherwise appear during the period generally

considered the breeding season (June-July).

Here are some suggestions when finding rare species lingering late in Illinois. (These suggestions are best applicable to species with known breeding ranges relatively close to Illinois.)

1. Assume the bird may be trying to nest.
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3. Return to the site at least one or more times in the following weeks to determine if the bird is still present.
4. Observe the bird(s) long enough to determine if it is mated. The length of time necessary to accomplish this varies depending on species, but in general will likely take a minimum of several hours and sometimes several visits to say with any certainty whether it is mated. Consider how many times you have seen a female of a given species, as opposed to a male of that species.
5. If this is a species that is not generally found breeding within Illinois, research the normal breeding habitat of this species in the rest of its range, and note whether there is anything comparable to that habitat in the location where you have found your bird.
6. Observe the bird at a safe enough distance so your presence does not create abnormal behavior or undue stress on the bird.

#### **Acknowledgments**

The impetus for this article came from Christine Williamson's account (in this issue) of the documentation of a first state breeding record for the White-throated Sparrow. This article would not have been possible without the bulk of the downtown Chicago summer/ breeding records (and dozens of hours associated with them) collected by Eric Walters and Ken Wysocki. Such anticipatory and investigative skills are to be commended. Richard Biss provided many other Chicago area summer records including new information for previously published records. Additional summer/breeding information was provided for areas outside of Illinois by Don Gorney (Indiana), Bettie Harriman (Wisconsin), and Gary Felton and Dr. George Hall (West Virginia). This paper also benefitted from the editorial skills of Sheryl De Vore.

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