

standard shorebird sites, with excellent counts of Black-bellied and American Golden-Plovers. Black-necked Stilts had another strong showing in the Illinois River Valley and Mississippi River floodplain in southern Illinois, but there were few reports away from these strongholds compared to 2010. Avocets had a good showing with good counts from the Illinois River and Montrose Harbors. Two reports in November were notable but not unprecedented. Godwits and Whimbrels were all in above average numbers and Whimbrels were well represented along the Lake Michigan lakefront. The multiples of Hudsonian Godwits at Chautauqua NWR, Lake Shelbyville and Monroe County, as well as a scattering of singles across the state, contrasts with last fall's lack of records. Similarly Red Knots were found in small numbers at a number of sites after a poor migration in 2010. Peep migration was fairly typical in numbers and extent this fall. Buff-breasted Sandpipers were well-represented this fall, especially along the Illinois River. Two October birds in McLean and Clinton Counties and one in November at Clinton Lake were notably late. Short-billed Dowitchers were reported in smaller than average numbers, but there were some good counts of Long-billed Dowitchers. Phalaropes were all well-represented, but there were especially good counts of Red-necked on the Illinois River and at Carlyle Lake.

A Black-legged Kittiwake at East Fork Lake in Richland County was the only report, while a Little Gull at Lake Charleston was the only report of that species. Sabine's Gulls were at Carlyle Lake in good numbers in September, but there were few other reports. Franklin's Gulls were scattered across the state in small numbers with a high count of 62 from Madison County in early October. A maximum of four Laughing Gulls were at Carlyle Lake in late October, but there were only a handful of other records. Herring Gulls were slow to arrive in numbers this fall, yet rare winter gulls were present in typical numbers by the end of the period. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were the most widespread of the rare winter gulls. Jaegers were poorly reported this fall, with only two, identified as Parasitics, in mid-October and early November from Gillson Park. Short-eared Owls arrived on time in mid-October; they were widely reported from grassland habitats, but fewer than usual birds were found along the Lake Michigan lakefront. Only three Long-eared Owls were reported by the end of the period, while Saw-whet Owls were represented by a number of records. Yellow-billed Cuckoos were reported in fairly typical numbers, but Black-billed were represented by only scattered reports. Common Nighthawks had a fairly typical migration with peak counts at the end of August and early September; these high counts were not particularly impressive. Only two reports of migrant Whip-poor-wills were received. Chimney Swifts moved in good numbers, and the last records as usual were in mid-October; however, a Chaetura swift very late in mid-November in Chicago was intriguing. Rufous Hummingbirds attended feeders in Oak Park and Sterling beginning in late November and lingered into winter. The Oak Park bird was something of a celebrity and taught many Illinois birders a lot about hummingbird biology and identification. First tentatively identified as a Broad-tailed, much commentary and photography preceeded its capture and banding in early December, when measurements and DNA samples established it as unquestionably a female Rufous. Many of us will be more cautious in identifying hummingbirds that are not adult males in the future because of this bird. There were good Red-headed Woodpecker counts downstate, but the Chicago area migration was poor. Sapsucker and flicker counts were also generally poor. A very good count of 21 Pileated Woodpeckers came from Mercer County in September.

Landbird migration overall was reasonably good, but there were few good fallouts. Migration was slow to get started, with little movement in August, but September and October were both strong months. It was a generally poor migration for Empidonax flycatchers. Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were particularly in short supply, but a window casualty in mid-October was late. Kingbirds did not make much of an impression this fall. A long-staying Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was in Mason County. Vireo migration was generally poor with Blue-headed seldom reported. For a second year, Bell's Vireos were more widespread and common than normal, lingering through late August and early September. A late White-eyed Vireo was at Northerly Island in Chicago in early November. Swallow concentrations in August and September were generally good, and Tree Swallows were in large numbers on downstate reservoirs in October. The only lingering swallow reported was a December Northern Rough-winged at Kankakee. Brown Creepers had a strong migration, at least through the Chicago area. Kinglets and Winter Wrens were not particularly well-represented this fall. This fall's thrush migration was generally poor, although there were some good pre-dawn flights of Swainson's. No particularly large roosts of American Robins were reported this fall. There were good Lapland Longspur counts, but Snow Bunting movement was weak. Multiple reports of Smith's Longspurs in northern Illinois were unusual. Migration of warblers was weak in August, and most species did not arrive until the last week of the month. Other than some impressive numbers of American Redstart, Tennessee and Magnolia Warblers at Carlyle Lake in mid-September, high counts were not very impressive. Eight species of warbler were reported into November. Unexpected warblers continuing into December included an Ovenbird at an underground parking garage in Chicago, a Palm Warbler at Northerly Island, and especially a male Black-throated Blue Warbler feeding dailey from Yellow-bellied Sapsucker sap wells with the sapsucker, in a downtown Chicago park!

A Spotted Towhee at Lake Renwick in early November was the only one reported. American Tree Sparrows arrived in good numbers by mid-November. Chipping Sparrows were widespread in good numbers, and a number of birds lingered into November. Clay-colored Sparrows were found in better numbers than 2010, but it was still a poor migration for this species. Other than a count of 20 plus in northwestern Illinois in mid-September, Vesper Sparrows were poorly reported. There were several good counts of Savannah Sparrows, and Nelson's and LeConte's Sparrows were reported in above average numbers for a second consecutive year. One wonders whether numbers have increased with improving habitat, or whether observers are searching their habitats more thoroughly. Six Harris's Sparrows were reported, with a spike in records just after mid-October. White-crowned, White-throated and Swamp Sparrows are the dominant migratory sparrows in Illinois. All were widespread across a broad range of dates, but, peak counts of each of these species were modest. Tanagers had a fairly typical migration, but there were several good counts of Scarlet Tanagers. Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles and Brown-headed Cowbirds all had good-sized migrant flocks reported, but it was a poor year for Rusty and Brewer's Blackbirds. There were several flocks of multiple hundred American Goldfinches reported in mid-October.