

black bill donfirmid that it was indeed a Dovekie.

We were a little troubled by the fact that we could find very little white in its black scapulars until a later review of George Harrison's "Seabirds" indicated that first winter birds have "duller" wings.

For about five minutes the Dovekie continued to forage under a flock of Bonaparte's Gulls that was hovering and diving around it. Then, when the gulls left, its dives became more prolonged and it surfaced farther from us until we lost sight of it. About one half hour later we relocated it far out in the lake in the neighborhood of several Horned Grebes and Common Loons, again making short duration dives under a flock of Bonaparte's Gulls.

The Dovekie was a life bird for Cindy and me and we knew it was a rare find in Illinois. We didn't know how rare, however, until we returned home and found it unmentioned in H. David Bohlen's "The Birds of Illinois." We realized that we had just

experienced what would probably be the once-in-a-lifetime accomplishment of discovering a first for the state.

According to John K. Terres, the Dovekie "nests north of the Arctic Circle in millions in vast colonies on sea cliffs of N. American and N. Eurasia." Terres states that the Dovekie winters "in ice-free waters south of breeding range to Southampton Island, Ungava Bay, along Gulf of St. Lawrence, off shore of S.E. Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Bay of Fundy, south to New England." Terres also notes that "on Nov. 19, 1932, a tremendous flight along Atlantic coast reached s. Fla. and Cuba." The species has also strayed to Ontario, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and the interior northeastern United States, according to Terres.

While I took a great deal of pleasure from the moment I also felt impaled on the horns of a dilemma. LaSalle Lake and its associated nuclear plant was closed to the public

at this time and during the winter of 1990/91, when a Gyrfalcon was found in the area and announced on the Chicago hotline, flagrant trespassing by a number of overzealous birders created some very serious problems. I wanted to share this Dovekie with the birding community and yet could not envision any way that it could be done without jeopardizing the relationship I had cultivated with the site authorities over the past 15 years.

For better or worse this dilemma quickly resolved itself. Thorough searches of the lake under ideal weather conditions on Friday and Sunday (27 and 29 November) proved fruitless. Our lost Dovekie had apparently realized that north central Illinois was not the north central Atlantic Ocean, and moved on to try to find its way home. ♪

Editor's Note: Documentation of this sighting is on file with the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee. If approved, it represents the first state record.

GRACKLE

by Hugh Moore

His tail's a rudder
On the dipping branch.
He rides it into sunlight
Where the contour of his back
Displays a peacock sheen.

Watching with his lemon eye
The ladybug alone a point of grass,
He seems obscure,
Unsettled as the half-remembered dream.