

The departure date for the East St. Louis male is consistent with Parmalee's report. At the time of his study, adult males had stopped singing by 6 August. I last recorded the East St. Louis male in full song on Saturday, 5 August. Parmalee lists a late date for an adult male as 9 August. The East St. Louis male was last seen 6 August.

A Summary of Records for Painted Buntings in Illinois

1993 April 20-22	Adult Male	Photo	Makanda
1996 October 10	Immature Male	Specimen	Chicago
1999 May 19-22	Adult Male	Photo	Bloomington
2000 April 21-22	Immature Male	Photo	Wadsworth
2000 July 29-August 7	Male/Female Nest with three young	Photo Nest & Young Specimens	East St. Louis

Females linger longer as they are likely still attending to the brood. Parmalee's late date for an adult female is 18 August. I last recorded the female on 7 August but, as mentioned previously, a secondhand report indicated the female was still present on 11 August.

As to the presence of the young after 2 August, one can only speculate. I'm hopeful they made it. According to Parmalee (1959), their absence is to be expected, "as the new brood fledged, the female and the brood left the territory which, until then, had been defended vigorously by the male. Then he too abandoned the area and followed. When last seen, four days after fledging, all were together, off territory, some 300 yards from the original nest site."

Few Records

The species' range extends into southern Missouri, so it's surprising Illinois has so few records. Based on this record, their habitat requirements seem less than remarkable. Front Street in East St. Louis was a warehouse district for the railroads and barge companies along the Mississippi River. Most of the area is now impoverished and has been cleared of old buildings and left to grow wild. The thicket of mostly mulberry, sumac, cottonwood and elm trees that comprised the nesting and foraging area for these birds seems to be growing on top of pavement. The grasses and forbs that make up the understory form an odd sort of stunted savanna or prairie. Notable nesting species for this area include, Blue Grosbeak, Orchard Oriole, Bell's Vireo, Willow Flycatcher, Indigo Bunting, Yellow Warbler, and Western Kingbird.

The utility poles also seem to be a factor as they provide prominent singing posts for the buntings and grosbeaks and most certainly for the Western Kingbirds. The nest site seemed an odd choice as it was right next to the road and railroad track. The constant noise of the trains and the proximity of passing vehicles seem less than ideal conditions. If I were to start looking in Illinois for other possible nesting areas for Painted Bunting, I would begin with reclaimed strip mines. Riparian areas that support Bell's Vireo, Blue Grosbeak,



Nestling Painted Bunting, East St. Louis, Illinois July 2000.

and Orchard Oriole would also be a good choice.

Literature Cited:

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Editor's Note: Just as we went to press, Dan Kassebaum reported that on 10 May 2001, he found two singing male Painted Buntings on Front Street in East St. Louis, Illinois in roughly the same place the pair nested in 2000. He did not see any females yet, but the two males appeared to be on territory.