

we are most likely to see in Illinois. Published by the NorthEast Hawk Watch (NEHW), a regional chapter of HMANA, the art and text are by Paul Carrier, the same artist who created that widely used hawk silhouette guide of similar content 30+ years ago. The guide shows soaring silhouettes and key field marks for adults of all of the migratory hawks regularly seen east of the Mississippi, as well as Gyrfalcon and Swainson's Hawk.

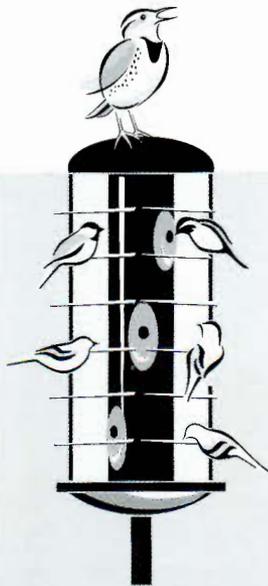
Not so coincidentally, HMANA's home page features a beautiful photo of a soaring Rough-legged Hawk, taken by IOS member and raptorophile extraordinaire, Vic Berardi. We see migrating Rough-legged Hawks fairly regularly over our yard beginning in late October, as this Arctic breeder and very late migrant (which also winters in northern and central Illinois) moves south. IOSers living south of Effingham know it's a rare event to see a Roughleg in the southern third of the state. But you never know...unless you're looking...

Several other excellent references exist in aid of migrating raptor identification. *Hawks of North America*, by Clark and Wheeler (part of the Peterson Field Guide series) is an excellent pocket-sized reference to tote along when you're hawk watching in the field. But one of the great things about backyard hawk watching is the ability to have a whole bunch of references handy, without having to worry about weight, or whether they fit in a pocket. *Hawks in Flight* (now more than 20 years old) by Dunne and Sutton, with illustrations by Sibley, is considered by many hawk watchers to be the essential reference for field ID of hawks in flight. More recently, Liguori authored *Hawks From Every Angle*, an excellent large format photo guide intended to aid in those difficult flying raptor IDs. It has become a well used addition to our raptor ID library.

Put your eyes on the sky this autumn. When a cold front passes by, with the wind from the west/northwest, drag out that lawn chair (an

adjustable chaise lounge is preferred by many experienced hawk watchers), sit back, and watch the sky. It's a timeless, relaxing feeling to watch the clouds drift overhead, but you'll feel a sudden adrenaline rush when you spot a distant speck, wondering will it be a Red-shouldered Hawk or just a local resident Redtail? As the fall season advances relentlessly toward winter, you can almost sense the urgency in the raptor migration; even the Red-tailed Hawks spend less time soaring and looking down for prey. They seem to be on a mission: To get to their wintering grounds as quickly as possible.

Around Thanksgiving, I'll sit outside (Karen wisely saying "Too cold!") hoping to spot a very late Redtail or eagle, sometimes skywatching through snowflakes. Surrendering to the elements, folding up the lawn chair for the last time, my momentary feeling of loss quickly subsides. In only four or five months, they'll be coming back. All we'll have to do is rotate our chairs by 180 degrees.



Artwork by Jenny Vogt.

## Yard Birds

I'd welcome your feedback on this column, as it may become a regular feature in the *Meadowlark*. I'd especially like your yard and feeder bird stories and observations, which we can build into future columns. The editor and I both hope we can make this column a place where IOS members who enjoy backyard birding can share their experiences. Send me your observations, interesting visitors and the like. That's why the column subtitle is: Reflections on backyard birding throughout Illinois.

You can reach me at: [bfisher928@aol.com](mailto:bfisher928@aol.com) or by phone at 630-985-2956. Tell me your story and I'll write it down. I look forward to hearing from you.