

can Pipits, and other birds that feed on small mammals and assorted invertebrates disturbed by the machinery.

Hayfields have yielded some surprises, too. Smith recalled the day a Black Rail flushed four times as he mowed rounds of alfalfa. Driving down the last uncut strip, Smith anticipated a final look at the tiny bird, but when it failed to fly out again, he was sure the rail had been killed by the mower. The next Black Rail was luckier. Smith kept his eyes on the bird as it flew to cover in the unmowed area. Then he stopped the tractor, walked over and grabbed it. After a close examination of this most seldom seen marsh bird, Smith carried it to safety and drove the mower to a different field. Black Rails have interrupted Smith's hay operation four separate years. These remarkable sightings all took place near the end of May, usually during the first cutting of the crop.

Smith flushed a Least Bittern only once but he has seen Sora and Virginia Rail several times. His only Yellow Rail was recorded in August, also while he was mowing hay.

Smith declares there is no shortage of House Sparrows on the farm, but even that has a kind of benefit. During severe winter weather any bird activity seems to attract the notice of the field birds. During the bitter winters of the 1970s, Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs,

a few Chipping Sparrows, and even a Dickcissel came to the backyard feeders. January 1994, when the temperature dropped to 30 below zero, redpolls visited the yard feeders for the first time.

Another exciting find was two Barn Owls that moved into a cedar tree near the house one year in March. Nest boxes in the barns had been ready for Barn Owls for years, but these birds moved on after roosting for a month in the cedars.

The most recent addition to Smith's yard list was a flock of noisy Sandhill Cranes that flew over the yard during the 1993 fall migration. With 221 species counted in 45 years of looking up, Smith anticipates the changing seasons, hoping to add a Northern Goshawk, Snowy Owl, or maybe a cooperative Alder Flycatcher to his list.

Thousands of birds enjoy the Smiths' hospitality during the year and Smith offers this advice to birders with country homes. Resist mowing; the slightly neglected roadside may be a well-stocked avian buffet. Permit a few thickets to grow up for additional food and shelter. Build brush piles and do not burn them. Provide winter shelter in the form of dense cedars and spruce trees. And by all means, look up often and keep the binoculars handy.



#### Species ..... Total ..... Observer

American Woodcock .....	7 .....	JD
Bonaparte's Gull .....	15 .....	MS
Ring-billed Gull .....	30 .....	TF
Herring Gull .....	10 .....	JS
Rock Dove .....	50+ .....	JS
Mourning Dove .....	122 .....	SF
Black-billed Cuckoo .....	2 .....	JS
Yellow-billed Cuckoo .....	4 .....	JS
Common Barn Owl .....	2 .....	JS
Eastern Screech Owl .....	6 .....	JS
Great-horned Owl .....	4 .....	JS/S
Barred Owl .....	2 .....	JS
Long-eared Owl .....	1 .....	JS
Short-eared Owl .....	3 .....	JS
Northern Saw-whet Owl .....	2 .....	TF
Common Nighthawk .....	697 .....	KH
Chuck-will's Widow .....	2 .....	TF
Chimney Swift .....	100+ .....	JS
Ruby-throated Hummingbird .....	4 .....	JS
Rufous Hummingbird .....	1 .....	ES
Belted Kingfisher .....	2 .....	JS
Red-headed Woodpecker .....	8 .....	JS
Red-bellied Woodpecker .....	4 .....	JS
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker .....	4 .....	JD

#### Species ..... Total ..... Observer

Downy Woodpecker .....	4 .....	JS
Hairy Woodpecker .....	2 .....	JS
Northern Flicker .....	9 .....	JD
Pileated Woodpecker .....	3 .....	TF
Eastern Wood-pewee .....	8 .....	TF
Alder Flycatcher .....	1 .....	KH/JS
Least Flycatcher .....	2 .....	JS
Eastern Phoebe .....	1 .....	JS
Great-crested Flycatcher .....	4 .....	JS
Eastern Kingbird .....	6 .....	JS
Horned Lark .....	1000+ .....	JS
Purple Martin .....	4 .....	JS
Tree Swallow .....	100+ .....	JS
North. R-winged Swallow .....	25+ .....	JS
Bank Swallow .....	1 .....	JS
Cliff Swallow .....	2 .....	JS
Barn Swallow .....	12 .....	JS
Blue Jay .....	12 .....	JS
American Crow .....	4000+ .....	JS
Black-capped Chickadee .....	5 .....	SF
Carolina Chickadee .....	6 .....	JS
Tufted Titmouse .....	6 .....	JS
Red-breasted Nuthatch .....	2 .....	JS

*continued on next page*