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## SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS

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### Western Grebe at Wilmette / Evanston

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On the morning of 17 November 1992 I parked at the end of Evanston's Dempster Street in Cook County to obtain a good view of Lake Michigan. Upon arriving at the rock edge, I immediately noticed a large waterbird about 20 yards away. My first impression was a Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) since the bird had a very long, thin yellow bill as well as long neck and large body. As the bird swam away, I confirmed the identification with binoculars and scope.

The most reliable mark was the very long yellow bill with a greenish tinge and no hint of orangish coloration on the bill which would be present on a Clark's Grebe; the dark cap also extended down to cover the lores and feathers above and behind the eyes. (Birders should be careful not to confuse basic plumaged (winter) Horned Grebe with Western Grebe. Both birds have a dark crown and nape with a white chin and throat. Body and neck length are more exaggerated in Western. Observers should concentrate on looking for a very long yellow bill on the Western Grebe to clinch identification.)

Two hours later, I relocated the Western Grebe just east of the Evanston boat launch. Despite attempts, no one saw it later that day or the morning of the next day. In the late afternoon of 18 November; however, I relocated the Western Grebe approximately 1 mile to the north at the south end of Wilmette's Gillson Park. This Western Grebe stayed in the Evanston/Wilmette area until 21 November when a cold snap drove it away. Birders then relocated the bird 5 miles south along Chicago's lakefront edge from 23-27 November. Finally, the grebe was relocated 16-19 December when it reappeared in Evanston near the lakefront Arts Center. At that time a cold front drove nearly all the lingering waterbird species away from the western shore of Lake Michigan.

Western Grebes are very rare in fall in northeastern Illinois along Lake Michigan. Although Mlodinow (1984, *Chicago Area Birds*) said Western Grebe is seen most years in late October and November, this sighting is one of two documented records in the last 10 years for the Lake Michigan shoreline in Illinois (IB&B, 3:35). ➤

— Eric Walters, 720 Reba Place, Evanston, Illinois 60202.

### Wood Stork at Sanganois Conservation Area

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On 6 August 1992 I observed and photographed an immature Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) at Sanganois Conservation Area, Mason County, in west-central Illinois. I found the bird at the same location where the site superintendent, Dan Collins, and his staff had discovered the bird on 4 August 1992, about 3 1/2 miles from the refuge headquarters at the entrance to Knapp Island.

The stork was foraging with a Great Blue Heron and a Great Egret on the main refuge road which was covered with about 1 foot of water. These birds were catching fish which appeared to have become momentarily stranded on the submerged gravel road while passing between Chain and Crane lakes.

The Wood Stork appeared less wary of my presence than the other foraging birds. I was able to wade to within 125 feet of the stork and leisurely observe and photograph it for 15 minutes until the bird eventually flew off toward Crane Lake.

Kevin Richmond relocated the Wood Stork on 31 August across the Illinois River in Schuyler County at Long Lake, a backwater area near Browning. The last reported observation of the immature Wood Stork occurred on 5 September 1992 when Al Stokie and Andy Sigler observed the bird early in the morning.

An immature Wood Stork was also found at Sanganois C.A. on 18 August 1989 (IB&B, 6:42). This bird also discovered by the same refuge staff, was located at the north end of Ash Swale, only one mile away from Knapp Island (pers. comm. Dan Collins).

In light of the Wood Stork's historical decline in the United States these Sanganois C.A. records are especially remarkable. Formerly, the Wood Stork bred along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts from South Carolina to Texas with Florida supporting an estimated population of 150,000 in the early 1900s (Terres, 1991 *The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds*) Presently, breeding colonies are restricted primarily to peninsular Florida (a few are also located in Georgia and South Carolina) where the Wood Stork population has stabilized at 5,000 to 6,000 pairs according to Graham (*American Birds*, 44:1074-1081, 1194-1199). Toops and Dilley (1986, *Birds*