

# BIRD FINDING GUIDE

## Little Known, Overlooked or Forgotten Birding Spots

Breeding Season in Central Illinois: Fox Ridge State Park, Lincoln Trail State Park, Mill Creek County Park and Fairmont Quarry.

by Robert Chapel

On one fine June day in 1999, I decided to go birding at Fox Ridge State Park in Coles County. I had stopped there several times during the middle of the day when returning from Breeding Bird Surveys, and was struck by its beauty, especially for east-central Illinois. Except for the fact the park had breeding Cerulean Warblers and an occasional Worm-eating Warbler, I did not know much about the bird life there and wanted to find out. That June day at the break of dawn I discovered a diverse and interesting bird life. I reported as such to the Illinois bird chat group, IBET, which elicited the following response from Sheryl DeVore, who had just completed the manuscript for *Birding Illinois*: "Uh-oh. Looks like I should have included that in my book."

It is apparent, from IBET or bird location guides, that birding in Illinois mostly occurs at relatively few tried-and-true locations. Yet, Illinois is a vast state with numerous small-to-medium state parks, county parks, and natural areas about which we rarely, if ever hear reports. The following descriptions of some of the lesser-known, yet excellent locations in east-central Illinois are not meant to be complete site guides but rather the beginning of a dialogue. In some cases I am hoping birders who are more familiar with some of these areas will be encouraged to write complete site guides, including

birds found during all seasons. In other cases, perhaps people will be encouraged to visit areas and gain further knowledge of some of these areas. Further, I am hoping people are encouraged to explore beyond their own home turf or visit some unfamiliar locations, and thus gain

a better knowledge of birding in all parts of Illinois. Who knows? Maybe there's another Lowden-Miller State Forest, or Arcola Marsh out there waiting to be discovered as a rich birding resource.

### I. FOX RIDGE STATE PARK.

"Pizza!" "Pizza!"

