

wire until the group was gone. Every 2,000 hawks or 50 lines of 40 hawks I reverified the width of the band. Using this method, a total of 300 lines of hawks 40 hawks wide and narrowing slightly as the group ended passed through the field of the telescope. The single flight which ended at 5:20 p.m. numbered 10,000. I then began to count the kettles I could see with the naked eye. I counted another 800 hawks, bringing the total to 10,800.

Moving closer to the Heller Nature Center on Ridge Road in Highland Park, I noticed the hawks flying much lower. Hawks soon landed in the trees of the nature center and I counted an additional 3000 hawks between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m.

I went to the nearest phone to report the flight count to Richard Biss, who operates the Chicago Audubon Society rare bird alert. Between 6 and 6:30 p.m., I counted more hawks bringing the total to just over 14,000! During the entire counting period of two hours and 15 minutes, I did not observe any other raptor species.

The winds blew north to northwest at 15 miles per hour. Cloud cover was 15 percent. The temperature was 58 degrees Fahrenheit.

Interestingly, Bohlen (1989, *The Birds of Illinois*) listed the previous all-time maximum fall count for the species as 4,395 individuals on 19 September 1982 at Bensenville in Du Page County. I would be remiss if I did not mention that I could have missed as many hawks as I saw. I spoke to Richard Biss later in the evening and he indicated that during this same period David B. Johnson had counted over 3,650 Broad-winged Hawks in Waukegan, Lake County from 5 to 6:30 p.m., just 12 miles north of the Routes 22 and 41 intersection. ♣

— Allen H. Siegle, 756 Linden Ave., Lake Forest, IL 60045.

---

## Jefferson County's First Black-necked Stilt

---

On 3 July 1992 Todd Fink, Dan and Nancy Kasselbaum, and I were birding the mudflats in the Ward Branch area at the northwest side of Rend Lake in Jefferson County. The day was sunny and warm after an overnight thunderstorm. A preliminary glance at the island opposite the mudflat showed the storm had brought new birds: large shorebirds, terns, a dark-headed gull, an assortment of small shorebirds, and a long legged, slender black-and-white shorebird. Before I could say, "Todd, take a look at this Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus*

*mexicanus*)," the actively foraging bird slipped behind some willows. Returning to his own scope, Todd continued to scan. Suddenly he said, "Judy, I think you're right! That's a Black-necked Stilt! Come on, we've got to wade to the island."

I waded in ankle deep water even though I was wearing my best pair of gym shoes. The species would be a lifer for me and the first Rend Lake, Jefferson County record as well as the second sighting for southern Illinois.

Once on the island, we could see the long, slender, slightly upturned black bill and a small white crescent above the eye interrupting the black area of the face. The forehead, feathers around the bill base, and underparts were white. In good sunlight at close range we could see the back was brownish in comparison to the black crown and neck, identifying it as a female. When the bird flew we could see the white tail and rump. The white extended to the middle of the back where it narrowed to a point. Pink legs of exaggerated length trailed well beyond the tail.

Bohlen (1989, *The Birds of Illinois*) listed only six recent sightings of this bird for the state. Illinois Birds and Birding (6:43-44; 7:49) and *Meadowlark* (1:138) listed three additional sightings for the state. Our observation represents at least the 10th recent sighting for the state. On 8 July, a second (or possibly the same individual, also a female) was discovered by Jim Herkert at Easter Slough near the Cache River in Pulaski County. ♣

— Judy K. DeNeal, P.O. Box 61, Herod, Illinois 62947.

---

## California Gull in Cook County

---

On 26 November 1992 Andy Sigler and I found a basic (winter) plumaged adult California Gull (*Larus californicus*) along the Chicago lakefront in Cook County. The bird stood on the breakwater that forms the southern boundary of Chicago Harbor, approximately one mile south of Navy Pier, easily visible from the Shedd Aquarium. We viewed the gull leisurely with a Questar 40x spotting scope. Other observers included Catherine Monday, Jim Landing, and Richard Biss.

The bird was slightly smaller and its mantle was slightly darker than the accompanying Herring Gulls. It had yellowish legs, dark eyes, and a yellow bill with a black and red spot on the gonys.

The California Gull in Illinois is a rare vagrant according to Bohlen (1989, *The Birds of Illinois*). Mlodinow (1984, *Chicago Area Birds*) lists only one record from