

darker flight feathers contrasting with lighter colored tan wing linings.

Swainson's Hawks, like Broad-winged Hawks, migrate in large flocks. Occasionally they appear in a large flock of Broad-winged Hawks. Interestingly, although no other large flights of Broad-winged Hawks were reported from Illinois in the fall of 1996 and Duluth had fewer than usual Broad-winged Hawks, there were very

large flights in the east. This may have been a flight of hawks that normally passes farther west.

Although Swainson's Hawks bred in Champaign County in the 19th century, there has only been one other recent sighting in Champaign County.

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## Pacific and Red-throated Loon Invasion

During the late fall of 1996, a veritable invasion of Red-throated (*Gavia stellata*) and Pacific Loons (*G. pacifica*) occurred along Lake Michigan in Illinois. Most of these birds were seen in Lake and northern Cook Counties, uncharacteristically swimming and feeding close to shore. On 18 November 1996, while searching for Snowy Owls, Bob Hughes found a Pacific Loon in Lake Michigan off the end of Navy Pier in Chicago.

It was a small and rather elegant loon, with a proportionately sized, even-sided bill. There was a sharp division between the dark and light areas in the neck and no white above the eye. The nape was paler than the rest of the head. Also, the bird was a juvenile as evidenced by the pale edges to the back and scapular feathers.

Interestingly, after Hughes' initial discovery, several birders reported seeing two Pacific Loons from Navy Pier. Hughes saw a juvenile Pacific Loon off Montrose Beach on 10 November 1996.

Other Pacific Loon sightings were reported into December from Waukegan and Illinois Beach State Park. Until these sightings this fall, the species was unrecorded along Lake Michigan in Illinois.

According to available literature, the invasion of rare loons in the fall of 1996 was unprecedented. The Chicago Audubon Society's Rare Bird Alert between 1 November and 13 December 1996 reported more than 53 separate observations of Red-throated Loons from Zion in the north to New Buffalo, Michigan. Pacific Loon sightings for the same period totaled 11. Note that these are reports of occurrence and may include sightings on different days of the same bird. The highest single day count of Red-throated Loons together was five from Miller Beach, Indiana, on 9 November (pers. comm. Ken Brock). Two, three, and four individual birds were seen at the same site on numerous days.

Red-throated and Pacific Loons are both rare, but fairly regular visitors to the Midwest, especially during fall migration, with a peak occurrence in mid-November (Brock 1986). High counts of Red-throated Loons have come most often from the Miller Beach area of northwest-

ern Indiana where Brock listed nine on 12 October 1955 and from southeastern Michigan where Mlodinow listed a spring day high count of 18 at Grand Mere on 1 May 1965.

Chicago has had, in the past, only single Red-throated Loon sightings in the fall, all from Lake Michigan and nearly all from the north shore. No Red-throated Loons were seen in the fall of 1992, 1994, or 1995, according to Audubon Field Notes. The same source listed 10 single Lake Michigan sightings in 1993. *Meadowlark's* Field Notes listed only single birds in 1992 and listed no Red-throated Loon sightings in 1993, 1994, or 1995.

Until the fall of 1996, the Pacific Loon was unreported from Chicago and its surrounding area according to all available records. Bohlen listed 12 records, all immatures and all from lakes located mid to downstate. Mlodinow (1984) listed Pacific Loon as hypothetical in the Chicago area, in the context of Arctic Loon, with which it was once lumped as a single species.

Pacific Loons were present in other parts of the Midwest in the winter of 1992 and 1993 and in the fall of 1994 and 1995. They were absent from the region in the winters of 1994 and 1995 and the fall of 1992 and 1993, according to Audubon Field Notes.

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