However, two intriguing questions remain unanswered: 1) why do the central Illinois reservoirs attract more Sabine's Gulls than the Great Lakes (Table 1 reveals that both Indiana and Ohio have far more Sabine's Gulls on the Great Lakes than at inland sites); and 2) why do central Illinois impoundments produce more birds than reservoirs in other Midwestern states? Little evidence is available upon which to formulate answers; however, several ideas have emerged. In addressing the first question Keith McMullen (pers. comm.) hypothesized that lake size is an important factor, noting that Sabine's Gulls can easily be missed on the Great Lakes, whereas, all portions of the inland reservoirs are within telescope view. Thus, there may actually be more Sabine's Gulls on the Great Lakes, but most remain too far from shore to be seen; this species is more pelagic than most gulls. Dan Kassebaum (pers. comm.) explains the high Sabine's Gull concentration in central Illinois by proposing that this area lies on a regular flyway. Also, Sabine's Gulls might occur regularly on all large Midwestern reservoirs, but birders outside Illinois fail to detect them regularly.

Interestingly, as first noted by Bohlen (1989), Sabine's Gull movement through the inland reservoirs

precedes the Great Lakes flight. Migration envelopes for the two areas are as follows:

na han dia s	Inland	Great Lakes
EARLIEST	3 Aug 89	2 Sept 95
ARRIVE	12 Sep	13 Sep
PEAK	27 Sept	14 Oct
DEPART	22 Oct	10 Nov
LATEST	23 Nov 79	12 Dec 54
Ν	92	61

If we disregard the earliest reports, the birds apparently arrive in both areas about the same time. The Great Lakes peak, however, is more than two weeks after the inland peak. In addition, Sabine's Gulls linger almost



Sabine's Gull photos taken on 14 Sept. 1997 at Carlyle Lake, Clinton Co. by Albert Seppi.



three weeks later on the Great Lakes than on inland reservoirs (compare departure dates). This delayed Great Lakes flight seems to support the McMullen hypothesis, suggesting that unseen birds linger on the Great Lakes until autumn gales, which intensify in October, drive them toward shore (where they are sometimes seen) and ultimately southward.

The Wintering Ohio Bird

Perhaps the Region's single most extraordinary Sabine's Gull was an immature that wintered on the Lake Erie waterfront. During the winter of 1988-1989 (and following summer) this bird was seen regularly along the Cleveland - Lorain lakefront (Rosche & Hannikman, 1989). Most Sabine's Gulls winter at sea off the western coasts of Africa and South America. and virtually all depart the northern latitudes by early December. Consequently, the lingering Lake Erie bird may well represent the first documented record of a winter-period Sabine's Gull in the northern hemisphere. The lengthy visit of this bird also provided observers a rare opportunity to study the first-winter plumage and molt cycle of this maritime species (excellent photographs are included in Rosche & Hannikman, 1989).

Ages of Middlewestern Birds

Nine out of ten Midwestern Sabine's Gulls have been in juvenile plumage. Of the birds aged in this study, 98 were juveniles and only 13 were adults. Based on the migration patterns of other Arctic-nesting species, adult Sabine's Gulls probably move southward before the juveniles; however, the low number of adults precludes a quantitative comparison. The earliest reported adult was 6 September 1995 at the Rice Lake Conservation Area, IL (Meadowlark 5:74) and the latest was 4 November 1989 at Lake Monroe, IN (AB 44:99). Disregarding the wintering Ohio bird, extreme dates for juveniles are 3 August 1989 at Decatur, IL (AB 44:99) and 12 December 1954 at Gary, IN (Brock 1986).