



Two immature male Red Crossbills feast on Austrian pine cone seeds at Illinois Beach State Park, south of the Dead River; one of the most reliable places in the state to find this species. Matthew Fletcher took this photo in November 2007.

The state's first Red-cockaded Woodpecker was often seen feeding and roosting in the Austrian pines at Illinois Beach State Park. Dennis Oehmke took this photo on 7 September 2000.

Charles Douglas saw an "immense" flock of Bohemian Waxwings feeding on juniper berries in the Beach area on 15 March 1876, after the winter of 1875-76 when they were particularly numerous (Nelson 1876). Sanborn (1922a) relates an exceptionally large movement of Bohemian Waxwings that he and noted ornithologist Herbert L. Stoddard witnessed on 30 November 1919, with birds migrating down the Lake Michigan shoreline at Beach and near the Dead River. Flocks of 50-100 birds passed steadily every five or ten minutes between 6:30 a.m. and noon. Sanborn (1922a) said that he and Stoddard estimated about 1,500 birds passed that day, "during which time flocks of fifty to one hundred passed steadily every five or ten minutes...A flock stopped now and then to feed but for the most part the birds were migrating, following the edge of the lake, for none were seen more than a quarter of a mile from the beach."

The author and other birders witnessed a very similar occurrence of migrating White-winged Crossbills during November and early December of 2008 at the nearby Lyons Woods Forest Preserve, although the total number of birds seen on one day was likely smaller than the total number of Bohemian Waxwings Sanborn and Stoddard saw. Both Red and White-winged Crossbill flocks were also seen in the pines south of the Dead River by others during approximately the same time-period, mostly in flight heading south.



Sanborn (1922a) mentioned sighting and collecting several specimens from large flocks of the "Newfoundland" Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostris percna*), which is now endangered in Canada, during the fall and winter of 1916-1917 at Beach, as well as a few White-winged Crossbills. Ferry (1907) also relates a good flight of both crossbill species at Beach and points southward during the fall and winter of 1906. Sanborn also mentions numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Shrike, Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin, and Snow Bunting, regularly encountered in the dune areas at what is now Illinois Beach State Park, and which are often encountered there today as well.

## Rare subspecies and breeding records

Several interesting birds, most rare (at least the subspecies) for Illinois, were collected at Beach by Sanborn and others. Included in such a list would be the "Sierra" Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus sequoiensis*); four birds were collected 15 April 1927 and 14 and 28 April 1928; "Western" House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon parkmani*) collected by Sanborn on 24 April 1921 (Coale 1922, see Bohlen 1989); Bachman's Sparrow (*Aimophila aestivalis*) "found in one of the pine groves" on 23 April 1922 by Sanborn (1922b); two different "Oregon" Dark-eyed Juncos (*Junco hyemalis shufeldti* and *J. h. montanus*) (Brodkorb 1930, see Bohlen 1989); and "Greater" Common Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea rostrata*) collected by Sanborn on 7 December 1919 (Brodkorb 1930).

The dunes at Illinois Beach State Park have also been home to rare breeding species, including Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) since at least 1929 (Lyon 1930), and the area still remains one of the very few places where this species can regularly be found breeding in the state. The sand and beach areas north of Waukegan were also formerly one of the few places where the state and federally endangered Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) could find refuge along the lakefront to successfully breed. Nelson (1876) wrote that this plover was a "very common summer resident along the Lake Shore," with some thirty pairs breeding along the beach at Waukegan within the space of two miles. This species has since become extirpated from Illinois as a