

Field Notes



Prairie Falcon drawing by Brian K. Willis.

Fall Migration 1993

by Robert Chapel

Rain dominated much of the fall season and records for annual precipitation were broken in many Illinois locations. Falling on top of already saturated soil, the rainfall hampered the recovery from last summer's floods and created soggy conditions throughout the state. Overcast skies kept the temperatures on the cool side.

Usual shorebirding areas were flooded out or inaccessible; discovering new areas became a challenge which was sometimes met. Nevertheless, shorebird sightings were well below their usual totals. Few shorebirds of special note were found after July. Waterfowl were also reported as low throughout the state. Aerial surveys supported this trend.

Birders in the right spot, however, reported a number of unusual sightings and good numbers of most birds. Rarities continue to be reported for gull species including a good number of Sabine's Gulls in September.

Hawk migration was less than spectacular, although Cook County birders were thrilled by the occurrence of two Prairie Falcons, possibly different birds. Snowy Owls were beginning to show signs of an invasion. Loons and grebes appeared in good numbers but did not linger.

In addition to the common species, a Red-throated Loon and a couple of Red-necked Grebes were seen. While only a few Western Grebes were reported, a documentation for the much rarer **Clark's Grebe** was also submitted (only one accepted sighting exists for Illinois; this, and a documentation by the same observer from 1992 await review by the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee). The flooded Mississippi and Illinois river valleys had large numbers of pelicans (especially in Henderson County), herons, and egrets. With them was a rarely occurring **White-faced Ibis** at Rice Lake.

Invasion species put on a good show. Northern Goshawks were seen in the northern and central counties. Red-

breasted Nuthatches appeared in good numbers statewide. Common Redpolls were found in sizeable flocks in northeastern and central Illinois. Evening Grosbeaks and Red Crossbills appeared in a number of areas.

The most cooperative rarities were the **Reddish Egret**, only the second report for Illinois, and two **Rufous Hummingbirds**, one in northeastern, the other in southern Illinois which represent the first and second state records including a specimen. (See separate articles in this issue for details.) A male **Vermilion Flycatcher** also thrilled many observers. However, an elusive **Northern Gannet** (a second state record) proved more frustrating, offering only a few birders good looks during its brief sojourn in northeastern Illinois.

A special thanks is extended to all contributors to this report, who are listed here in full and by initials following each observation: Doug Anderson, Louise Augustine, Steve Bailey, Carl Becker, Laurence Binford, Richard Biss, David Bohlen, Ron Bradley (RBr), Alan Branagan (ABr), Arlene Brei, Mike Carpenter, Karin Cassel, Robert Chapel, Elizabeth Chato, Paul Clyne, Carol Cox, Donald Dann (DDa), Robert Danley, Larry David, Myrna Deaton, Danny Diaz, Mike Donahue (MDo), Jeff Donaldson, Ralph Eiseman, Bob Erickson, Scott Farrell (SFa), Todd Fink, Sue Frisia, Michelle Georgi (MGe), Marianne Hahn, Hugh Hillebrand, Kanae Hirabayashi, Philip Haebler (PHa), Robert Hughes, Barrie Hunt, David Hultgren (DHu), Doris Johansen (DJo), Dave Johnson, Peter Kasper, Vernon Kleen, John Koch, Jim Landing, Larry LaPre, Fran Lowman, David Mandell, Walter Marcisz, Cynthia McKee (CMc), John McKee (JMc), Lynn McKeon (LMc), Keith McMullen, Margaret Mechtenberg (MMb), Margo Merrick (MMe), Don Miller (DMi), Joe Milosevich, Robert Montgomery, Rod Myers (RMy), Grace Oakley, John O'Brien Dennis Oehmke, Helen Parker, Richard Palmer, Chris Phillip, Judy Pollock (JPo), John Purcell, Jennette Rader, Lee Ramsey, Prashant Rao, Elaine Regehr (ERg), Adam Reyburn, Kevin Richmond, Doug Robinson,

Meadowlark