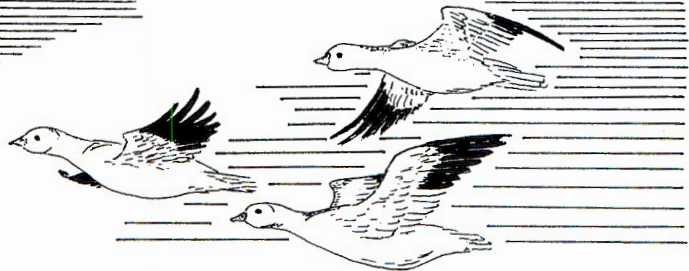


Field Notes



D. KANIA

Ross' Geese drawing by Denis Kania.

The 1994 FALL SEASON

by Robert Chapel

Statewide, temperatures were below normal in early fall and near normal in late fall. Precipitation was below normal for September and October but slightly above normal in August and November. The dry summer created extensive mudflats; the fall rainfall did little to decrease them. Consequently, there was good shorebird habitat in many parts of the state.

Many observers found the fall season exciting. Land birds arrived early and many moved through quickly. While there were a number of peak days, landbirds, for the most part, were not present in numbers for a great deal of time. The few exciting rarities lingered long enough for just a few observers to see them. The exceptions were Ruffs, Red Phalaropes, and plegadis ibises. Both White-faced and Glossy Ibis were identified, although most sightings were at a distance that precluded identification. Another rarity seen was a Tricolored Heron.

Black-billed Magpies and Harris' Hawk of unknown origin were also reported. The rufous-phase female Eurasian Wigeon seen by many at Lincoln Park was captured by zoo personnel and found to have clipped wings thus precluding any chance of it being a wild bird.

There were very large numbers of shorebirds, perhaps the best fall since 1988. Many avocets were seen statewide, sometimes in good numbers. Marbled Godwits and Piping Plovers also appeared in unusual numbers. Black-necked Stilts lingered after the breeding season, despite

their nest failures. Ducks appeared in greater than normal numbers, especially in the Illinois River Valley. Check out Lake Chataqua totals! White-fronted Geese also appeared in unusual numbers, and lingered later than usual.

Documentations of species difficult to identify or where observers disagreed are awaiting evaluation by the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee and if accepted, will be added as an addendum.

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