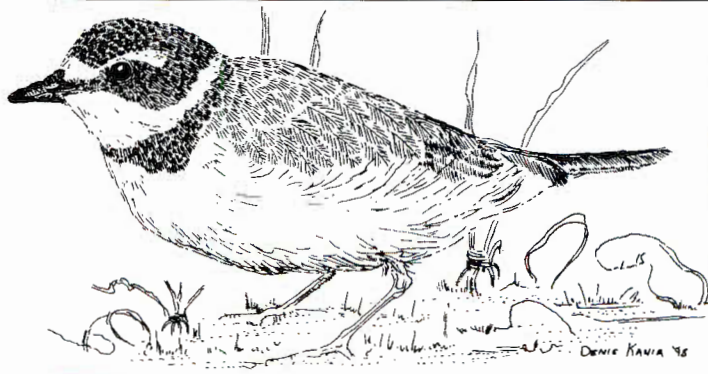


Field Notes



Field Notes Heading: *Semipalmated Plover*. Drawing by Denis Kania.

The 1997 Fall Season

By Robert Chapel

As in 1996, late fall brought unusual hummingbirds, or, as they say, it's *deja vu*. Illinois' unofficial Emergency Hummingbird Identification Squad of Vernon Kleen, Dave Bohlen, and Myrna Deaton made two visits this year to identify unusual and late hummingbirds. In Edwardsville (Madison County), they located the first adult male **Rufous Hummingbird** (and fourth identified Rufous) for Illinois. A probable **ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD** graced a feeder in Niantic (Macon County) until November 19. Kleen, Bohlen, and Deaton netted the bird and removed and measured retrices. Subsequent observers photographed the bird, whose identity is being examined by the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee.

Other unusual fall season sightings included an adult **Neotropic Cormorant** in Alexander County, a **Reddish Egret** at Chicago's Montrose Harbor (see seasonal highlights), several **Black Rails** (see seasonal highlights) in one field in Vermilion County, Illinois' first inland **Purple Sandpiper** in Winnebago County (see seasonal highlights), a **Mew Gull** in Springfield, and a cooperative **Townsend's Solitaire** at Northwestern University's landfill. Several other single-observer rarities await review by the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee.

Ross's and White-fronted Geese continue to appear in good numbers statewide. The Illinois River Valley hosted large numbers of American White-Pelicans. Fair numbers of Red-throated Loons, Red-necked Grebes, and Western Grebes were found. Western Grebe sightings were most numerous along the Lake Michigan shore, while *Red-necked Grebes* appeared downstate in good

numbers in November. An excellent waterfowl movement occurred on 10 November in northeast Illinois. Waterfowl also were concentrated in the Illinois and Mississippi River Valleys. Although the concentrations of waterfowl at Lake Chautauqua were very impressive, not all news about waterfowl from there was good. A major outbreak of avian botulism killed nearly 6,000 birds there in early October. The major victim of botulism was Green-winged Teal. Others sites, such as McGinnis Slough in Cook County, had similar outbreaks but not the extent of loss.

Hawks staged an excellent movement on 14 October although it was missed by most observers due to its weekday occurrence.

Passerine migration did not elicit any special comments, except from an observer who did a three-hour, aural predawn survey. The high numbers of birds found may only reflect a normal passage, as daytime reports indicated normal amounts of sightings. Some species that appeared in above normal numbers were American Pipits, Orange-crowned Warblers, Black-throated Green Warblers, and Lincoln's Sparrows. On the other hand, usually common species such as kinglets, Nashville and Tennessee Warblers seemed scarce.

Fall held promise for a good winter for irruptive species. The first species to appear in good numbers were Red-breasted Nuthatches. By late October, a number of Pine Siskins had also arrived. Observers also reported scattered accounts of redpolls, both crossbills, and Evening Grosbeaks.

Meadowlark