



# Field Notes

## The 2000 Fall Migration

by Robert Chapel

Normal temperatures and precipitation were the rule this fall through September. October was a little warmer than average, but there was a big cool-down in November that brought about a rapid winding down of migration. Despite this, lingering migrants were detected well into December. Notably late migrants include a Barn Swallow at Clinton Lake on 18 Nov (and two there a week earlier), a Wood Thrush in Urbana on 4 Nov, a Northern Waterthrush in Wilmette on 1 Nov, and several late Chipping Sparrows

The 2000 fall migration did not produce a great number of rarities, but it did have several of high-quality. The most amazing this fall, and perhaps one of the most amazing ever, was a **RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER** discovered at Illinois Beach State Park on 19 Aug and remaining to the end of the period, to the delight of many Illinois birders. (See separate article in this issue.) A second state record **LONG-TAILED JAEGER** spent 2 weeks in September at the cross-dike at Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge, entertaining dozens of birders as it cooperatively allowed many less-than-car-length views (and photographs). Article to come in *Meadowlark* 10:3. A **SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER** (see *Seasonal Highlights*) at Chautauqua proved less cooperative, as it eluded many observers, frustrated others with distant looks, but afforded still others excellent and long looks during its stay from 23 September to 1 October. The **PAINTED BUNTING** family in the Breeding Season report remained until at least 7 August. (See *Meadowlark* 10:1 for details on this species.)

**Loons - Pelicans:** Common Loons were somewhat scarce this fall. Very few large concentrations were reported, although they were found at the normal times and places. A few Red-throated Loons and one **PACIFIC LOON** were reported among them. Grebes, however, were found in good numbers. Only one **Western Grebe** was reported. American White Pelicans continue to show up in good numbers in the western part of the state, with a few making it to the northeast.

Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge continues to be the prime spot for them, with a peak of 4,500 seen. Chautauqua also had a large concentration, with a censused total of 2,347 at the peak and estimates slightly higher.

**Hérons - Waterfowl:** Southwestern Illinois, particularly near St. Louis, continues to be the prime area for herons, egrets, and ibises. August was the peak month, with 2 **GLOSSY IBISES** and a **WHITE-FACED IBIS**. A **TRICOLORED HERON** was also reported near Pere Marquette State Park. In September, two *Plegadis Ibises* were found on one day at Carlyle Lake. All of the more common herons and egrets were found in good numbers, also, including peak numbers of 900+ Great Egrets at Horseshoe Lake (East St. Louis) and 700 Little Blue Herons at Stump Lake in Jersey County. An amazing **5 WOOD STORKS** were reported from Massac County (pending review by IORC) on 20 September. The **158 Turkey Vultures** seen on 6 October in Lake Forest was an exceptionally good flight. The Chautauqua waterfowl censuses reported good, but not spectacular, numbers of waterfowl. The winter ducks were all reported, but indications are that peak numbers hadn't been reached by early December. Only one **Harlequin Duck** was reported all fall.

**Hawks - Cranes:** The hawk migration was fairly good. Notable were the numbers of **Golden Eagles** found, particularly in northeastern Illinois, where at least **10** individuals were reported. Also noteworthy were 42 Northern Harriers and 282 Red-tailed Hawks reported from Illinois Beach State Park on 3 November, and 33 Peregrines reported there on 2 October. The elusive **Gray Partridge** put in a brief appearance in DeKalb County where 6 were found on 24 November. Although most rails were scarce this fall, **5 Yellow Rails** were found, including four at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area, where they were located by workers while mowing and discing. Sandhill Crane migration seemed normal until 20 November, when a huge flight of **7,400+** cranes, witnessed all over the Chicago area, hinted at an abrupt end to fall.