

### *Loons through Hawks*

There was a fine migration of Common Loons, especially downstate. An above-average number of Pacific Loons (four) and several Red-throated Loons were found downstate. American White Pelicans continue to increase in Illinois and were found in extraordinary numbers along the Illinois River and at Carlyle and Horseshoe Lakes. A record **7,200 Pelicans** were at Hennepin Lake, and six sites reported maxima of over 1,000 birds. (The first report of over 1,000 pelicans at a time in Illinois dates from only 1995.) The timing and geography of the high counts suggest that at least 20,000 pelicans moved through Illinois this fall. Two Neotropical Cormorants spent much of the fall at Carlyle Lake. Herons were in close to normal numbers except for Great Egret, which had good concentrations through much of the state, culminating in an extraordinary **7,700 Great Egrets** at Swan Lake in early August. There were no Tricolored Herons and only a single ibis, much below recent autumns. Waterfowl were generally late in arriving, but the cool November seemed to hurry birds through. Mergansers and goldeneyes were still only present in small numbers when December arrived. The hawk migration at Illinois Beach State Park seemed close to normal, with impressive Merlin counts. Unfortunately, we lack any other sites that are regularly covered for comparison.

### *Pheasants through Woodpeckers*

Illinois observers did not provide much information on gamebirds this fall. Pheasants and prairie-chickens went completely unreported, and only a couple of observers commented on Northern Bobwhite and Gray Partridge. Similarly, there were few rails reported of any species; whether this indicates low numbers or little attention by observers is not clear. A Purple Gallinule was at Mermet Lake, the only site in Illinois where it is reported with any regularity. A tally of 28,000 American Coots at Hennepin Lake did not seem to reflect higher than usual numbers in the state, but rather the local attractiveness of that site to coots. The Sandhill Crane migration was poor by recent standards, but still two different observers reported over 1,000 birds on different days in November. Shorebird migration was good with impressive numbers of several species from several sites. Dry conditions created good habitat in many areas. Although the numbers couldn't compare with Lake Chautauqua, Horseshoe Lake (Madison County) and Carlyle Lake, the Chicago area had a good diversity of migrants, especially at Lake Calumet. Red Knot, Western Sandpiper, and Wilson's Phalarope stood out among the less common species as being unusually well-reported. The Long-tailed Jaeger at Carlyle Lake was the only jaeger reported this fall—quite a comedown from the last few years. Winter gulls were just beginning to arrive at the end of the season; Lesser Black-backed was the most widely reported of the large gulls. Laughing Gulls were well-reported downstate, but Franklin's Gulls were down from recent autumns. Eurasian Collared-Doves continued their march north, reaching La Salle County. A count of **46** individuals across multiple small towns in Montgomery County suggests the species is consolidating its gains more widely. Flickers showed fairly typical numbers, but it was another poor sapsucker migration.

### *Passerines*

The migration of passerines was generally poor, with below-average diversity at many sites and few reported fall-

outs. An impressive **47 Winter Wrens** were at Jackson Park in late October, and 5 October brought 102 Eastern Bluebirds, and an amazing **4,730 American Goldfinches** to Illinois Beach State Park. Other observers reported good numbers of goldfinches elsewhere on the lakefront on the same day. 16 October brought good counts of kinglets, Brown Creepers, Hermit Thrushes and the common sparrows to Grant Park. Especially notable for fall was 260 White-crowned Sparrows there. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and two reports of Western Kingbirds enlivened things for a few lucky observers. However, *Empidonax* flycatchers were very poorly reported. Large counts of Tree Swallows included 50,000 at Carlyle Lake and 26,000 at Hennepin Lake. American Pipits were found in good numbers at several sites, led by 200 at Chautauqua. Warbler migration was generally poor. Sparrow migration was better, but still not outstanding, although both Le Conte's and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows were found in good numbers downstate. Three Spotted Towhees were reported, all from Cook County's lakefront.

### *Irruptive Species*

This was one of the worst years in recent memory for irruptive species. The only Goshawks (four singles) came from Illinois Beach State Park. There were no Snowy Owls reported, and only three Northern Shrikes. A few Red-breasted Nuthatches at Morton Arboretum were all that were seen this fall. The winter finches were especially poorly represented, with no reports of White-winged Crossbills or Evening Grosbeaks, three records of Pine Siskin, and one record each of Red Crossbill and Common Redpoll. Purple finches, usually more consistently reported even in non-flight years than the others, were represented by only a smattering of records, and no high counts. Although this was expected to be a non-flight year for winter finches and Red-breasted Nuthatches, this was still a notably poor showing.

A special thanks to all contributors, who are listed here in full, and by initials following the observations. Observers are alphabetized by their initials or as cited in the report, rather than by alphabetization of the last names. Alan Anderson, Cindy Alberico, Douglas Anderson, Jill Anderson, Louise Augustine, Frank Bennett, Joan Bruchman, Robert Bradley, Richard & Sigurd Bjorkman (R&SBj), Steve Bailey, Todd Bugg, Vic Berardi, Victoria M. Buchwald, Brian Chandler, Jeff Chapman, Karin Cassel, Lynne Carpenter, Melinda Born-Chapman, Peter Cruikshank, Paul R. Clyne, Robert Chapel, Scott Carpenter, Donald Dann, Glyn Dawson, Karl David, Myrna Deaton, Sheryl DeVore, Sue Douglas (SDo), Josh Engel, Darlene Fiske, Matt Fraker, Robert & Karen Fisher, Sue Friscia, Steve Freed (SFd), Glenn Giacinto, Urs Geiser, Brian Herriott, Cathie Hutcheson, Frank Holmes, Leroy Harrison, L. Barrie Hunt, Larry L. Hood, Robert Hughes, Steve Huggins, Dave Johnson, Rhetta Jack, Dan Kassebaum, John Koch (JKo), Jerry Kumery (JKu), Craig Litteken, John Leonard (JLd), Joe Lill (JLl), Tom Lally, Greg Lambeth, Vicki Lang, Charlene Malone, Carolyn A. Marsh, Cindy & John McKee (C&JMc), D. James Mount-joy, Jim Malone, Keith McMullen, Travis Mahan, Vince Moxon, Walter Marcisz, Beryl Nelson, Link Olson, Jeff Reiter, Kevin Richmond, Mary Kay Rubey, Michael Retter, Rhonda Rothrock, William C. Rowe, Al Stokie, Bob Shelby, Douglas F. Stotz, Darrell J. Shambaugh, Illinois Ornithological Society (field trips),

**Meadowlark**