

An immature from 3-29 Nov 2001 in New Brunswick was, "unanimously accepted... The fact that this bird was a wary immature accompanying Canada Goose migrants from the north increased the possibility of its wild origin" (<http://homepage.mac.com/marystp/BRCreports/NBBRC2004.html>).

The best supporting evidence for wild origin of many records comes in the form of wild, banded Barnacle Geese shot in North America. One of a pair of Barnacle Geese shot in Newfoundland in the fall of 1981 was banded on the breeding grounds on Spitsbergen [Svalbard] in 1977. Profoundly more interesting to Illinois birders is the record of a juvenile bird banded on the wintering grounds in western Scotland in 2004 (and thus, a Greenland breeder). It was shot in Ontario in fall 2005. (<http://www.refugenet.org/birding/marSBC06.html#TOC02>) This bird was following the same migration route that many of Illinois's Richardson's Geese follow every fall. There are also historic records of Barnacle Geese being shot in North Carolina, Maryland, and New Jersey from before and during the turn of the 20th century.

#### Illinois Records

late Oct 1998	Winnebago Co.
1-7 Nov 2006	LaSalle Co.
7 Nov 2003	Cook Co.
8 Dec 1968 (a pair)	DuPage Co.
22 Dec 1961	Williamson Co.
30 Dec 1987-Feb 1988	Vermilion Co.
31 Dec 1988	Lake Co.
winter 1988-1989	Cook Co. (same as previous bird?)
3 Jan 1981	Union Co.
1-30 Jan 1983	Winnebago Co.
7 April 1986	St. Clair Co.
3 May 1981	Madison Co.

Of over 130 records in North America, all but four occur between late September and early May. Most occur from late October into mid-March. (Mlodinow & O'Brien 1996). All of the Illinois records I located fit into the October-May window, though the May record may be suspect. However, consider the occurrence of wild Snow, Ross's, and Richardson's Geese routinely found on Spring Bird Counts. As for the others, this pattern of temporal occurrence surely supports a wild origin for some if not all. The pattern seems little different than that of other accepted vagrant waterfowl in this region, like Eurasian Wigeon and Brant. It's worth noting that the 1983 Winnebago Co. bird arrived with a flock of Richardson's Geese, just like the La Salle Co. bird. Similar data on the other birds was not available since *B. hutchinsii* was not split from *B. canadensis* until 2004.

#### More on the LaSalle Co. Bird

Weather conditions also seem to have been favorable for the occurrence of a genuine vagrant in LaSalle County. A series of slow-moving, back-to-back low pressure systems over southeastern Canada created persistent easterly winds over upper Quebec and Baffin Island for most of 18-25 October. On 29 October a particularly strong and windy system again passed over southern Quebec, producing strong easterly winds to its north. Finally, another low passed over Wisconsin on 31 Oct, sending winds whipping around counterclockwise from Hudson Bay, and the associated cold front passed through northern Illinois. The LaSalle Co. bird was found the next day.

It was scrutinized and photographed by dozens of people over its weeklong stay, and never was a band or missing toe noted.

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It is my hope that the information presented here will convince people to take another look at Midwestern Barnacle Goose records. Most records certainly seem to fit a pattern of natural vagrancy, but we simply cannot know the true origin of most birds. Perhaps the best answer is to employ a system such as Connecticut's, an "Origin Uncertain" category for state lists. This tool allows committees to accept that we simply cannot know the origin of many birds conclusively, while at the same acknowledging that there is also no evidence against wild provenance.

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**Meadowlark**