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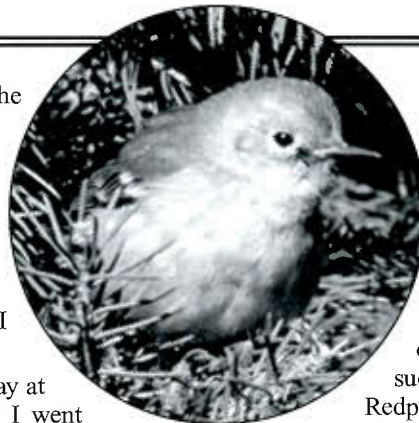
## Illinois' first Hermit Warbler

by Eric Secker

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I headed to the Morton Arboretum 8 December 2002 in search of a rare bird. What I found was much rarer, however, than the bird for which I was looking.

It was a Sunday at about 1 p.m. and I went out with my dad to search for a bird I had heard the day before. Taking advantage of the warmer than average weather, we covered all the evergreens around Frost Hill at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, DuPage County, on Saturday morning, 7 December. On the way back to the car, I heard a trilling call coming from up in the trees that sounded similar to a Cedar Waxwing. I returned Sunday hoping to locate the bird, which in all likelihood was a Bohemian Waxwing. I scanned all the evergreens once again. I didn't hear anything in the trees until I came upon a flock of Black-capped Chickadees that I had seen the day before. I began looking



through the chickadees again. Then I approached a yew bush where a number of chickadees were congregating. I began pishing, in hopes of drawing out something good such as a Common Redpoll.

Immediately, a small gray bird with a bright yellow head popped out in the open less than six feet away. It perched in the bush briefly then flew up into a pine tree. I knew that I had just seen something good, but I was not certain what it was. A non-breeding plumaged American Goldfinch is the only bird with a yellow head that is seen regularly in northeastern Illinois during the winter months. I began thinking of other birds with these field marks. Pine Warbler came

*Hermit Warbler at Morton Arboretum, DuPage County. First state record. Photo taken in the winter 2002/2003 season by Jeff McCoy.*