

Gray Partridges (Van Patten, the only 2 recorded in the state!); 3 Least Sandpipers (Union County); Lesser Black-backed Gull (a count first for Springfield); **6 Barn Owls** including a nest at Cypress Creek, 1 adult with 3 young and 2 other adults at another site (all-time state high count); a solitary Fish Crow (Horseshoe Lake); American Pipit (Rend Lake, 7 and Horseshoe Lake, 1) which is seemingly being ferreted out more often for the state by keen observers; unusual lingering warblers included 7 Common Yellowthroats (1 male at Barrington, a count week bird at Joliet, and 5 at Union County); Nashville (Union), Cape May (Quincy), Palm (Lisle), Black-and-white (Springfield), and 4 Pine (a new state high count, Crab Orchard NWR) Warblers. A single Indigo Bunting was recorded at Rend Lake; which seems to be an annual occurrence lately on Illinois CBCs. Unusual sparrows included lone Vesper Sparrows at Forest Glen and Western Mercer; Lincoln's Sparrows (1, Horseshoe Lake, 1, MUIA, and 1, Forest Glen); 12 LeConte's Sparrows at Rend Lake, plus 3 at Carlyle Lake, and finally a lone Harris Sparrow at Carlyle Lake.

Additional unusual sightings included 3 Virginia Rails (Waukegan); Pileated Woodpecker, a first for Evanston North Shore in 32 years; and Yellow-headed Blackbird (Clinton Lake). Bloomington recorded its first Bald Eagle, Northern Saw-whet Owl, and Gray Catbird.

Dan Williams, Rockford count compiler, said the 5 Bald Eagles recorded on his count were unusual. The increase in eagle numbers outside of traditional locations such as the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers poses some interesting questions. While some of these eagles are migrants pushed into our state from freezing rivers and lakes to the north, it appears we are truly seeing an increase in wintering numbers of Bald

Eagles in Illinois (see Bald Eagle histogram).

Irruptive winter finches were represented by Pine Siskins and good numbers of Common Redpolls, particularly in the northern counts. Only 7 redpolls were recorded on central counts. There were also scattered reports of Evening Grosbeak, in very small numbers, as far south as Rend Lake (a count first there). Crossbills were only conspicuous by their near absence (1 on Waukegan and 2 at Quad Cities, both Red Crossbills).

Also irruptive, Snowy Owls made a good showing along the Chicago lakefront with 9 individuals recorded. There were also 2 inland occurrences (Illini and a count week bird at Schapville).

Compiler Analyses

Many compilers submitted analyses of their counts. For instance, Denis Kania, compiler of the Fermi Lab count, mentioned an all-time high count for Great Blue Heron

(21 individuals). The author also recorded an all-time high for this species on the Evanston count (9 individuals). Was this in part due to an increase in lingering birds from a good breeding season in northeastern Illinois? In any event, statewide numbers have been increasing (see histogram). Also, many compilers noted an increase in Canada Geese numbers. Was this due, in part, to the species staging in northern and central Illinois just before the mid-January 1994 deep freeze?

Compilers also remarked on the record high counts of Red-breasted Nuthatch. In fact, the 878 individuals recorded almost triples the previous statewide high of 303 in 1986 during the last 10 years (see histogram). Was this wintering explosion due to a very successful breeding season or a major influx due to a bad cone crop in the northern pine and coniferous forests, or both?

Chuck Wescott (Barrington) and Dick Palmer (Decatur) recorded all-time highs for Cedar Waxwing. Other berry-eating species including Brown



Part of a flock of 100 Common Redpolls tallied on the Joliet, ILCBC, Will County, 18 Dec. 1993. Photo by Joe B. Milosevich.