

## Acknowledgments

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# A Rare Central Illinois Record for Bohemian Waxwing



Although rare anywhere in the state, the appearance of a Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*) in Rochester, Illinois (Sangamon County) from 22-26 January 2000, and briefly again 21-24 February 2000, created a flurry of excitement among central Illinois birders, as well as many others statewide. Dave Bohlen found and reported the bird to the state's birding list serve, IBET. Peter Weber, who lived in Rochester at the time, maintained tabs on the bird, and was one of two other observers who saw the bird in February.

Bohemian Waxwings are exceptionally rare outside of the Chicago region in Illinois, where most historical as well as recent records have been reported. This bird was one of three records from Sangamon County in the last 30 years; the other records being a specimen from Springfield, 22 December 1972, now in the Illinois State Museum (Bohlen 1989) and another from Springfield, 21 February 1991 (Robinson 1991). Other central Illinois records gleaned from a few Illinois references include a flock of 14 at Forest Glen County

*Bohemian Waxwing, Rochester, Illinois (Sangamon County). 25 January 2000. Photo by Dennis Oehmke.*

Park in Vermilion County on 28 December 1985 (Goetz and Robinson 1988), one at Decatur (Macon County), 23 December 1972 (Bohlen 1989); one at Danville (Vermilion County), 28 February 1978 (Bohlen 1989); and one at Jacksonville (Morgan County) in November 1959 (Fawks and Lobik 1975). Two older central Illinois records are both from Champaign County, including a bird seen at Rantoul, 15 February 1917 (Kendeigh et al. 1976), and 12 birds seen in Philo, 26 February 1914 (Hess 1914).

Other recent sightings statewide include up to four birds, 17-10 December 1995 at Highland Park in Lake County (Danley 1996); one, 20 February 1993 at Rockford in Winnebago

County (Branhagen 1993); and one at Glencoe in Cook County, 1-2 January 1990 (Robinson 1990). The winter of 1961/62 was the last large invasion of this species into Illinois and the Midwest (see Mlodinow 1984).

As with most sightings of this species in Illinois, the Rochester bird was feeding and flocking with Cedar Waxwings (about 50-150) and was eating the fruits of

the numerous planted hawthorns lining a road next to a city park. Several American Robins and House Finches were also feeding on the hawthorn fruit with the waxwings. The flock of waxwings, including the Bohemian, frequently moved from tree to tree. Several birders also observed an American Kestrel harassing the waxwings and other birds.

While Wes Serafin and I were following the flock of waxwings, the Bohemian flew into a tree and landed 6 feet above my head in a small hawthorn where it then swallowed a couple of fruits. I noted the reddish brown undertail coverts, overall much grayer body plumage than Cedar Waxwing, and bright white, yellow,