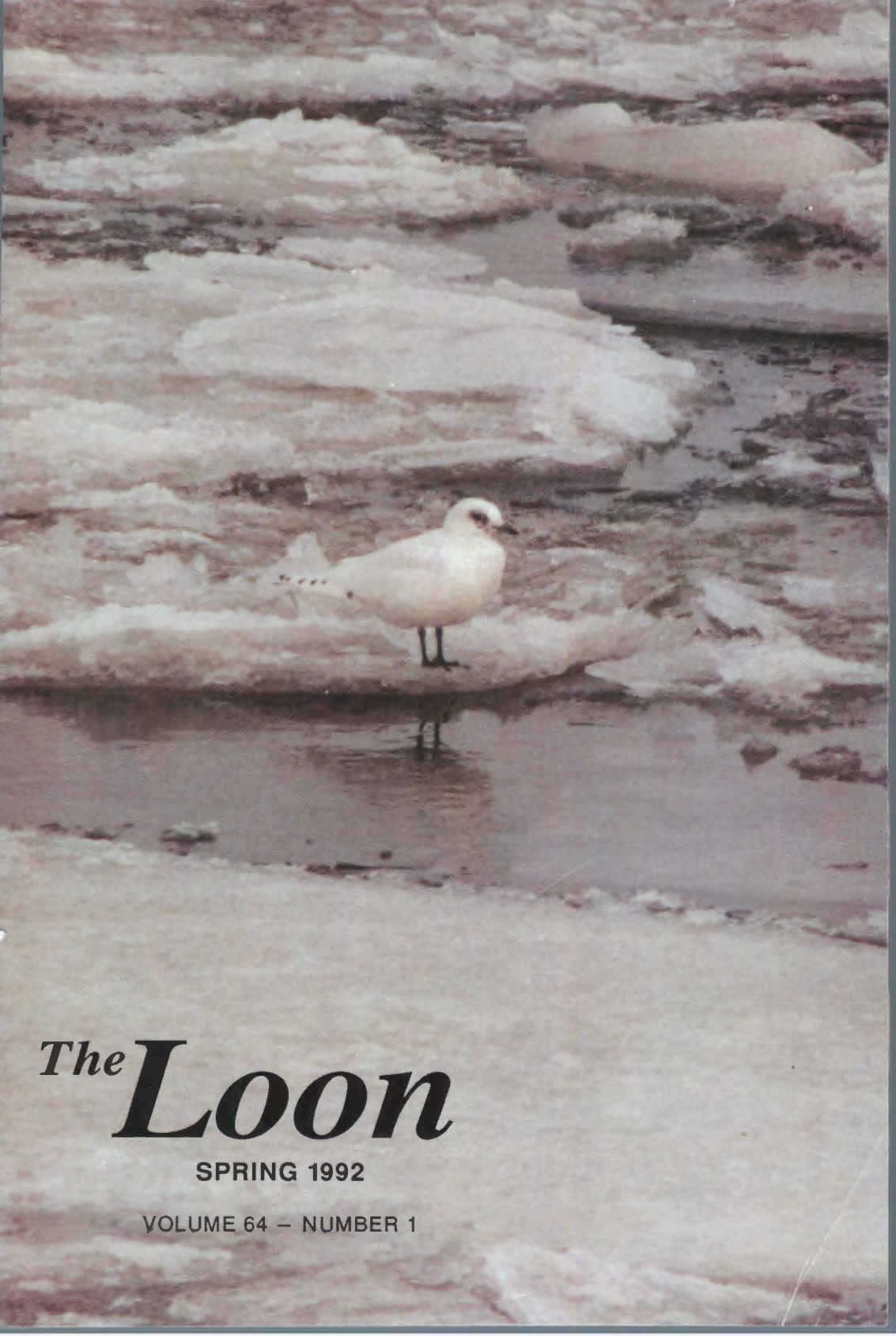

The Loon

SPRING 1992

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EDITOR OF *THE LOON*: Robert B. Janssen, 10521 S. Cedar Lake Rd., #212, Minnetonka, MN 55343 (phone 612-546-4220). The Editor invites articles, short notes and illustrations about Minnesota birds. See back cover for details. **ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Kim Eckert, 8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804; Dr. Harrison Tordoff, Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455; Peder Svingen, 151 Bedford St. SE., Minneapolis, MN 55414; Anthony Hertzel, 2509 Talmage Ave. SE., Minneapolis, MN 55414; Photo Editor: Warren Nelson, 603 2nd St., NW., Aitkin, MN 56431.**

"The Season" section of *The Loon* publishes reports of bird sightings throughout Minnesota. We particularly invite reports from parts of the state that have been neglected or covered lightly in past reports. To become a contributor to "The Season," request the report forms from the **EDITOR OF "THE SEASON," Peder Svingen, 151 Bedford St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414.**

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Ivory Gull in South St. Paul

Drew Smith

On 15 December 1991, I had gone to see the Great Black-backed Gull which had been reported along the Mississippi River, from the dike at Hardman Ave. and Concord St. After finding and observing the bird, I began looking around with my binoculars to see what else was in the area. Unexpectedly, I had a gleaming white bird fly into sight. My first impression of the bird was that it was a falcon because of its very short-necked appearance. It was diving towards open water on the river, where it plucked a fish or other morsel with its bill from the water without landing, and then flew up to reveal its white underside and all black legs. I realized that this wasn't a falcon, but a gull. I looked for speckling in the plumage, any indication of a gray tone on the back or under the wings, or any variation in the white, and there was none. The bird's plumage was solid white from head to tail. Its eye was a dark speck. I looked for, but wasn't able to make out, specifics on the bill because of the food in the bird's mouth. The bird flew in a wide arc with two other gulls in pursuit. I presumed they were Herring Gulls. They were significantly larger and gave me a scale to judge the white gull's size. Although these two gulls never got very close (at best 25 to 35 feet away), it was close enough to cause the white gull to drop its intended meal. Unfortunately, by this time the bird was headed upriver and I never did get a good look at the bill. I then lost sight of the bird. **1968 Shale Lane, Eagan, MN 55122.**

Ivory Gull

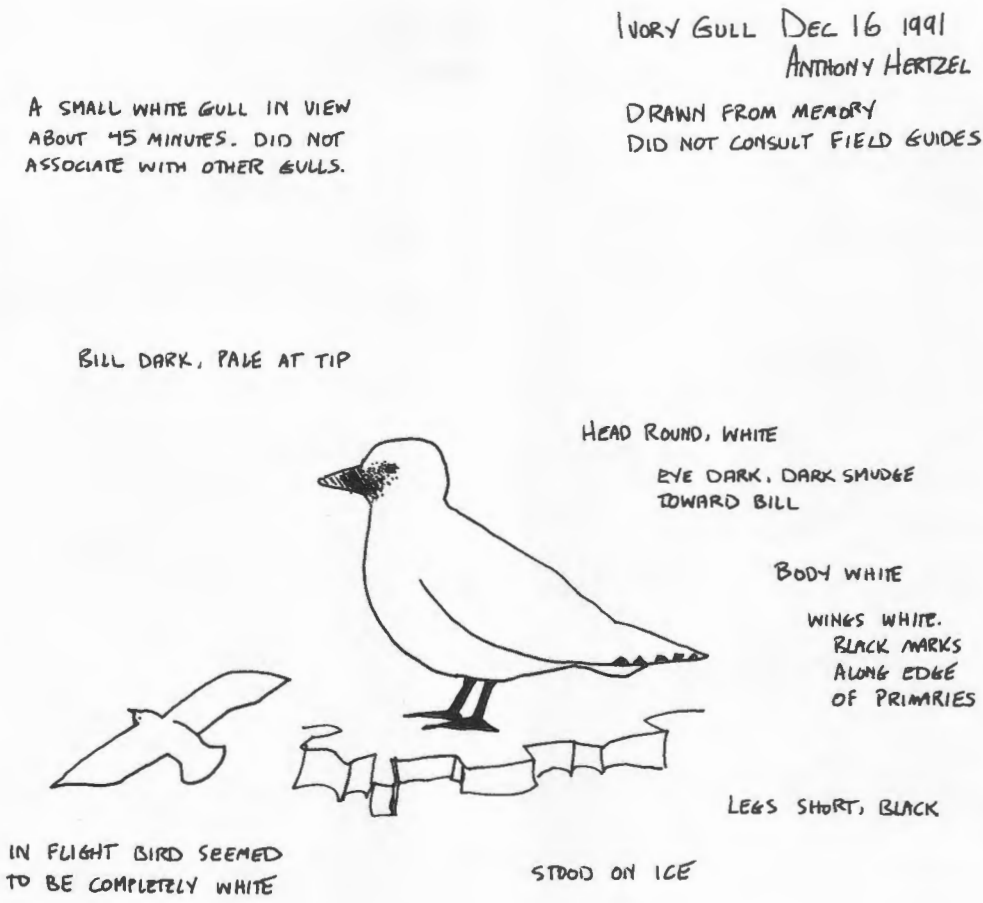
Anthony Hertzel

On 15 December 1991, the Minneapolis Rare Bird Alert received a message that an "all-white bird with black legs" had been seen along the Mississippi River near Pig's Eye Lake in South Saint Paul. At about 2:00 P.M. the following day, I arrived at the river but could not locate any bird that fit this description. Thinking that it may have moved down the river, I pointed my scope to the south. Almost immediately I saw an all-white gull with black legs standing on one of the many ice floes. I ran down the dike, set up the scope and watched the gull from a distance of about 200 feet. It had the habit of riding an ice floe down the river for a short distance, flying back upstream, finding another suitable chunk of ice and riding down the river again.

This was a medium-sized white gull, about as big as a Ring-billed Gull but more rounded in shape. From a distance, its head, body, wings and tail appeared entirely white. It had a dark bill, dark eyes, short black legs and an indistinct "smudge" about the eye. Its flight was light and easy and seemingly effortless.

A closer look revealed that most of the head was almost completely white except for a few irregularly located brownish specks which were barely visible under good light. The dark smudging between the eye and bill included, but was not confined to, the lower parts of the lores, extending downward about the chin and throat. The bill was small and steel blue becoming yellow toward the tip. The entire body, including mantle, belly, wings and tail, was white. Also present were several small, dark and somewhat evenly spaced triangular marks along the trailing edges of the primaries. The tail had a thin, brown subterminal band and a white terminal band.

I visited the river on several successive days and was eventually able to take various photographs that clearly identified this as an immature Ivory Gull. **2509 Talmage Ave. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414**



A Second Ivory Gull in St. Paul

Bruce A. Fall

After two unsuccessful trips, I finally was able to find the first-winter Ivory Gull along the Mississippi River in South St. Paul on 19 December 1991, four days after it was first reported. We watched it for an hour that day as close as 50m just north of the stockyards and south of Pig's Eye Lake. On the 19th, the gull was at the edge of nearly solid ice to the south and mostly open water upriver. We watched it fly upriver about a mile, eventually returning to the ice along the shore. Although there were a few Herring Gulls and a Great Black-backed Gull in the area, the Ivory Gull did not associate with them. The gull seemed to strongly prefer solid ice or ice floes. It did not feed in open water but instead scavenged whole fish or pieces of fish (including freshwater drum and gizzard shad, according to Jay Hatch) that were on top of or embedded in the ice. Only once did I see this gull alight on the water, and then only briefly.

On 23 December, I arrived north of the stockyard area about noon. One birder there told me that he had seen two Ivory Gulls at

that location earlier that morning, although neither was present at this time. Later, I drove to Holman Field, over four miles upriver near downtown St. Paul, arriving about 1:00 P.M. As I drove past the Wings, Inc. parking lot, I saw two small white gulls standing next to each other on a medium-sized ice floe floating down the river, about 150m away. Using binoculars and 40X spotting scope, I was able to confirm that both were first-winter Ivory Gulls. My main concern was to photograph the two birds together and so I was not able to take detailed notes comparing the plumages of the two birds. Unfortunately, I was able to take only one distant photograph of them together. However, three other observers who studied these two birds later that afternoon at close range for a longer period noted that one bird (presumably the new arrival) was distinguishable by having more extensive black spotting on the wing coverts and more dusky on the face. As I was setting up my camera equipment, the two gulls flew, disappearing upriver. Later they returned to the same area, landed about two feet apart on another ice floe, then flew downriver out of sight. I relocated them about 1/2 mile south, and then I saw them off and on over the next half hour. They moved frequently, and usually remained near each other. This behavior was quite different than that of the single individual on previous days, which never associated with other gulls. I lost track of them about 1:45 P.M., after which I drove to the stockyard area to alert other birders. The only person present there followed me back to Holman Field, where we stayed until 4:00 P.M., but we never saw the gulls again. Later, I learned that Howard Towle, Michael Steffes and W. Phillip Shively had seen these two Ivory Gulls together near the stockyards, four miles downriver, from 2:30 P.M. until 3:15 P.M.; the gulls were still present when those observers left. That was the last sighting of either gull. Thus, there were three independent sightings of these two Ivory Gulls on the 23rd, and each time the two birds remained in close proximity. During a four hour period, they moved more than four miles upriver, then four miles back downriver. The fact that one Ivory Gull, always alone, was seen daily by many people from 15 to 22 December, while two individuals were together for at least four hours on 23 December strongly suggests that the two gulls arrived here independently. One Ivory Gull at this inland location is remarkable enough, but two together is phenomenal. Warm weather resulted in rapid disappearance of ice in the river and after 23 December, there was little ice remaining in the areas that the gull had frequented during the previous week. It probably was not coincidental that the gulls disappeared from this area at the same time that the ice floes did.

4300 29th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55406

A Glossy Ibis in Minnesota

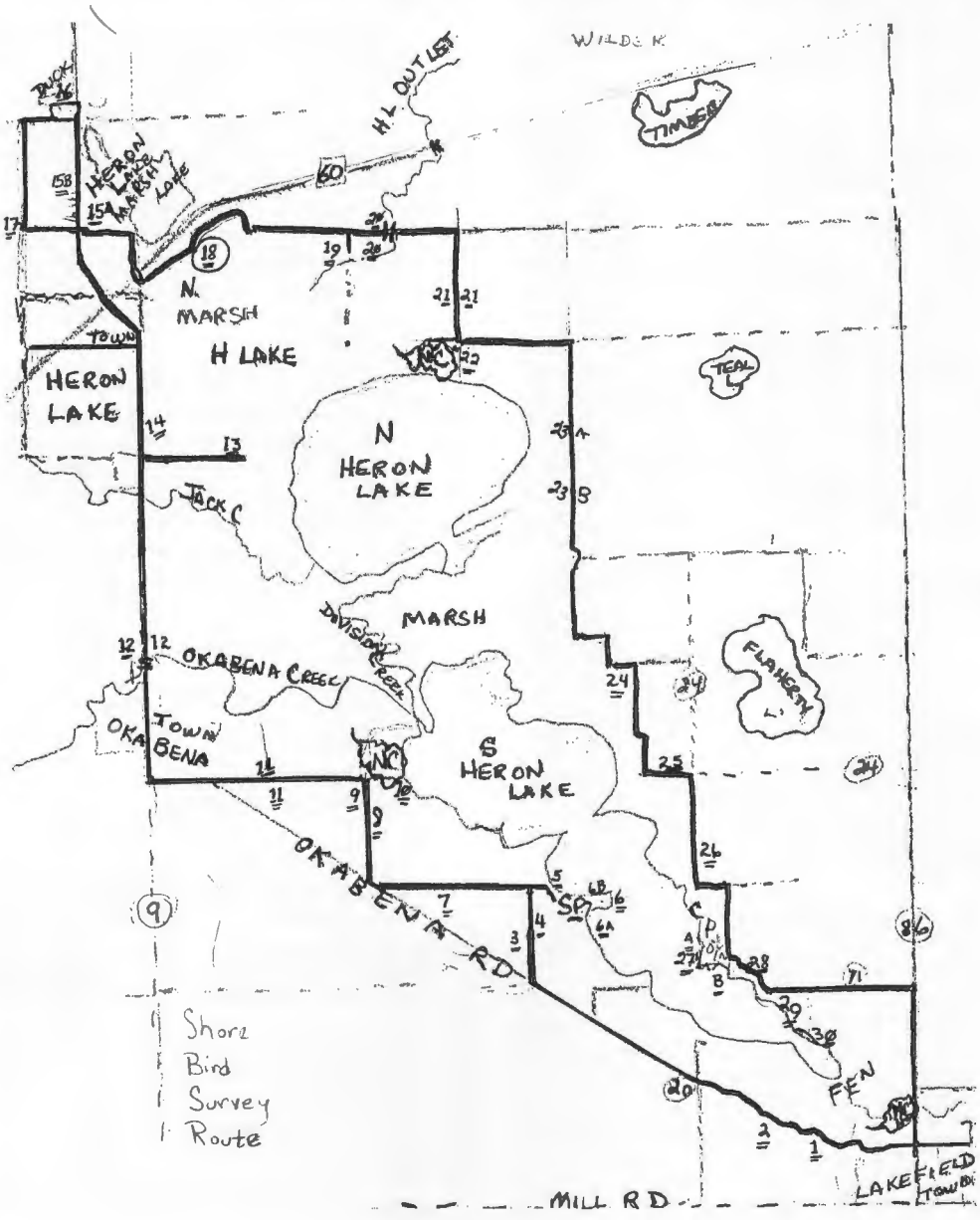
Robert B. Janssen

On 8 May 1991, I received a phone call from Gudrun Hodnefield of Lakeville, Minnesota, that a Glossy Ibis had been seen by members of the Jackson County Bird Club in the village of Heron Lake, Jackson County, on that day. The following is an account of that observation as written by Elaine Birkland, Route 1, Box 215A, Lakefield, Minnesota 56150.

"On 8 May 1991, my sister Kathryn Castello and I were about midway through our weekly shorebird survey route conducted in the Heron Lake area. At about 2:00 P.M., we were parked at check point #18 (see map) on the northeast side of Heron Lake.

I have never seen an ibis before; however, I had heard that they had been sighted in recent years on the Thompson property near Heron Lake. I was aware, from Heron Lake history, that this had at one time been the breeding area for numerous water and shorebirds, including the White-faced Ibis. I had no personal knowledge of either species of ibis. When my sister pointed out what she at first glance thought was a Great Blue *Heron*, I realized right away that this was something

different and a very unusual bird for this area. I didn't have any idea what I was looking at, but I noticed immediately the long, down-curved bill. This was especially striking to me because 30 American Avocets, with their upturned bills, had been recorded in this pond just one week before. We studied the bird intently for some time before looking at a field guide. We were so engrossed watching it feed and looking for identifying markings that I did not think to try to photograph the bird until after it flew up over our pickup truck, giving us an excellent view of the colors, and landed across the pond. I knew I would not get a good photograph without a telephoto lens because of the distance, but I took a photo anyway.



At the first sighting (before flying overhead), the bird was feeding in the shallow, grassy water of the pond. Needless to say, our shorebird census was cut short that day as we hastened to notify as many birders as we could. I returned, anxiously, with Gudrun Hodnefield to show her where we had seen the bird and was relieved to find it in the same location. At this time, I was unaware that the Glossy Ibis, as we had identified the bird, was not the species which had historically nested at Heron Lake.

The following is a description of the bird we saw: dark, long-legged bird with down-curved bill, bill looked to be gray to blue-gray close to the face, legs also gray; feathers on wings iridescent, black to green, while head, neck and body feathers appeared to be dark reddish-brown, almost maroon. The bird was approximately two feet tall using Blue-winged Teal and Canada Geese for comparison. I could see no evidence of white around the beak or red lores or legs".

From information I received from other observers in the area, the Glossy Ibis was occasionally joined by two other ibises, which have been subsequently identified as White-faced Ibis. The Glossy Ibis probably remained in the area until 17 May and the two White-faced Ibis until 25 or 26 May (see below). I attempted to gather further information on the ibises by writing to those who had observed the bird(s).

In the meantime, on 16 May 1991, Ray Glassel and I decided to spend the day in the Heron Lake area to look for the Glossy Ibis. We arrived in the area (where the bird had first been seen on the 8th) at 2:00 P.M., but did not see the ibis until 7:00 P.M. We saw the bird for only a fleeting moment, but long enough to note that the bird was an ibis, had a long, down-curved bill, was about two feet in height, and had dark red-maroon color over the whole body and head area. There was no noticeable white in the area of the eye and the face appeared dark. The bird was very skittish and flushed when a car passed by the pond. It flew by us, enabling us to confirm the facial markings mentioned above. The bird circled high overhead, disappearing to the north.

After the bird disappeared, we met Warren Sontag of Heron Lake. Warren informed us that he had video-taped three ibises at this pond the day before. Warren invited us to his home to view the tape. The tape was inconclusive as to positive identification of a Glossy Ibis, although it did show three individual birds, two of which showed white in the eye area, and a third, obviously larger, all dark bird, but the angle was such that it was difficult to see facial characteristics. Gudrun Hodnefield had given me the name and address of another birder in the area who had seen and photographed the three ibises. I contacted Kelly McDowell (Naturalist for the Nature Conservancy and the North Heron Lake Game Producers) and received the following information from him:

"I observed the birds with a spotting scope on 14 and 15 May 1991, from 30-40 yards for over 45 minutes. It is my opinion that two of the birds, with light indistinct marking around the face, were White-faced Ibis, while the bird in the center of the enclosed slide was a Glossy Ibis.

On 15 May 1991, the two White-faced Ibis flew off alone, leaving the Glossy Ibis. This same evening, I again saw the lone Glossy Ibis at this location, later flushing and flying north, landing on a point on Duck Lake.

On 17 May 1991, while giving a tour on South Heron Lake, we saw the two White-faced Ibis on a similar type grassy meadow shoreline, on the north end of South Heron Lake. I again saw the white indistinct markings around the bill.

I saw all three birds early on the morning of 18 May 1991. I observed what I again believe were two White-faced Ibis on the north end of South Heron Lake on 25 or 26 May 1991. This was the last observation I made of the birds.

The birds were seen on seven occasions between 14 and 26 May 1991. I first saw all three birds together on a restored wetland, just north of North Marsh on Jackson County Road 80. I viewed the birds through a pair of binoculars at about 80 yards. I observed two ibises and saw a narrow white line around the bill. At this point, I believed all three birds to be White-faced Ibis. I did not have a field guide and was unfamiliar with other possible plumage phases and wanted to consult the other field guides to confirm my observation. I returned to get a closer look that evening on 14 May 1991. The birds were at about 30 yards, all birds were a deep magenta with iridescent shades of green and purple on the wings and portions of the head. One bird appeared slightly larger, having a very thin

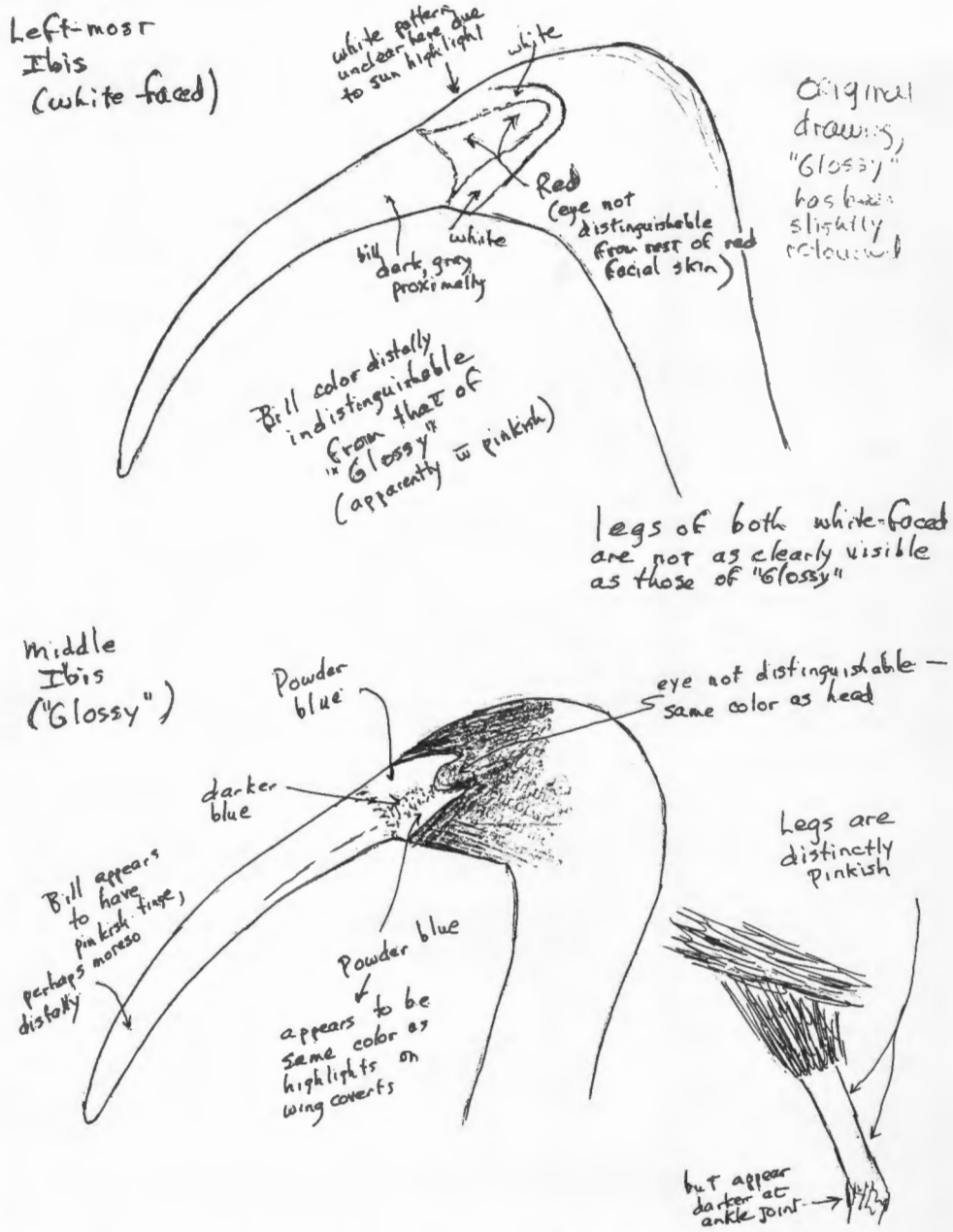
ring of tan feathers around the upper portion of the bill; with a dark gray, down-curved bill, it is the center bird in the slide. The other two birds had a distinct white band around the bill, with both birds having an indication of fleshy red area at the base of the curved bill. It appears to me that this can be seen on the bird which is in profile on the closed slide. The other bird as I observed it has the same plumage characteristics, but is facing away in the enclosed slide. The slide was taken on 15 May 1991, at the same location described above."

The slide provided by Mr. McDowell proved to be the most important piece of information in proving that the suspected bird was actually a Glossy Ibis. The slide, taken on 15 May 1991, by Mr. McDowell, was turned over to Bruce Fall for examination and his comments of 28 August 1991, after examining the slide under a compound binocular microscope, are as follows:

"I drew, without prejudice, I hope, the features that can be clearly seen under 40X and 100X magnification. In neither bird is the eye distinguishable. In the White-faced, the red facial skin is very evident; the fact that the eye cannot be distinguished from it suggests that the eye is also red. In the "Glossy," there is no red on the face. The eye, while not distinguishable, must be present where I drew the arrow; it is the same color as the rest of the head, indicating dark color. The facial skin of the "Glossy" is pale blue, appearing the same color under magnification as the highlighted areas of the wing coverts and back (Glossy on pg. 125 of Master Guide has similar pale greenish/bluish highlights on coverts). On the slide, this powder blue area is rather wide, and borders a darker bluish central area. The pale blue area does not extend posterior to the eye. The facial pattern of the "Glossy" in the slide as it appears under magnification is very similar to that described, drawn, and photographed (in various field guides) for Glossy Ibis, except that the pale blue area appears wider and more extensive in the slide (perhaps this is partly an artifact of sun highlights). Leg color of the "Glossy" appears pinkish, darker at the ankle joint. Legs of Glossy Ibis are described as dark, with red at the ankle joint during the breeding season (just the opposite of what the slide seems to show). However, the photo of adult Glossy Ibis in the Master Guide (pg. 125) shows leg color similar to that on the slide. At best, the legs are pinkish, definitely not red or reddish (as should be true of White-faced in breeding plumage). I no longer feel that leg color as it appears on the slide is necessarily damaging to the identification. Legs of the White-faced Ibis in the slide appear darker than the "Glossy," without pinkish; however, the true extent of any difference is unclear since the legs of both White-faced are partly obscured by vegetation all the way to the tarsal feathering. Bill color of "Glossy" and the left-most White-faced appear virtually identical. Both show shades of pinkish, but definitely are not red or reddish."

Additional comments by Bruce Fall on 12 September 1991 further clarify the bird as being a Glossy Ibis. Bruce continues: "Additional viewing of the ibis slide under 40X and 100X magnification with a good quality binocular microscope has left my initial impressions of color and pattern mostly unchanged. I touched up slightly my original "Glossy" sketch to reflect a somewhat narrower pale facial area than I drew initially. It is important to realize that due to film grain, limitations of resolving power of the lens, and probably slight camera motion, the image on film is not nearly as crisp as my interpretation of it in the sketch would indicate. On film, this fuzziness results in color and pattern from one area (e.g. facial skin) "bleeding" into that of another area (e.g. head feathering), and vice versa. Thus, while the facial skin of the "Glossy" appears somewhat broader in the slide than it should in life, if the bird is in fact a Glossy, the exact limits of this pale blue color are impossible to distinguish accurately. I believe that this bird is a Glossy Ibis, based on the considerable difference in face pattern of the two birds in the slide which clearly are both adults in essentially the same orientation with respect to the camera."

For further verification, Bruce Fall's comments and Mr. McDowell's slide were sent to J.V. Remsen, Director and Curator of Birds, Museum of Natural Science, and Adjunct Professor of Zoology at Louisiana State Uni-



versity in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He is also a known expert on both species of ibis. His comments in a letter dated 20 November 1991, are as follows:

Dear Mr. Janssen:

At last I've had an opportunity to go over your Plegadis record. Everything that I can see on the slide is consistent with Glossy Ibis:

a) the apparent extent, distribution, and coloration of the pale borders of the facial skin;
b) the apparent coloration of the

facial skin itself (some sort of dull grayish — unlikely to be reddish);
c) larger overall size.

My microscope apparently does not allow the degree of color resolution as described by Bruce Fall — I can't be as confident that there really is any blue in the apparent Glossy.

Although the identification looks unassailable from this one slide, I would make sure that the same features are visible in other photos as well — I'm sure you've had the experience that I've had of being bamboozled by examining just a single photo.

Steve Cardiff, Donna Dittmann, Curtis Marantz, and Ken Rosenberg, all of whom have extensive experience with identification, all agree that the bird is a Glossy. This species is a champion wanderer, and so I would expect that it will eventually be recorded from every state.

Sincerely,

J.V. Remsen
Director, Curator of Birds & Adj. Prof. Zoology

At a meeting of the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee (MORC) held on 8 December 1991, all 10 members of the committee reviewed all of the data that was available on this observation and by a 10-0 vote, the Glossy Ibis record was accepted, even though some on the committee could not discern the blue color on the face through the microscope, as explained by Bruce Fall.

A 1939 record from Heron Lake of what could have been Minnesota's first Glossy Ibis was dropped from the state list by MORC in 1987. In reviewing the file on the 1939 record, MORC decided the data as presented were not sufficient to positively confirm it as a Glossy Ibis. **10521 S. Cedar Lake Road, #212, Minnetonka, MN 55343.**

Late Fall Common Merganser Concentrations on the Mississippi River

Robert P. Russell

The late fall buildup of Common Mergansers (*Mergus merganser*) on Lake Pepin in the Mississippi River, Wabasha County, has frequently been noted in ***The Loon.*** Counts over the past 25 years have generally ranged between 1,000 and 5,000 birds with an unprecedented 35,000 seen in 1981 on 13 December (***The Loon* 54:153**). Robert Janssen (pers. comm., 1992) noted between 10,000 and 50,000 mergansers on 8 December 1990 in a flock difficult to count because of continual movement, but one which he felt was more likely in the 40-50 thousand range. Bruce Fall (pers. comm., 1992) noted 20,000 on 19 November 1988 and 8,000 on 9 November 1991, the latter an early gathering due perhaps to a severe Halloween blizzard and cold snap over southeastern Minnesota. These buildups have usually occurred between mid-November and mid-December, coinciding with ice formation on Lake Pepin and the Mississippi River backwaters and the freezing of interior lakes and rivers further north in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Charlotte Pryor and I visited the area on the afternoon of 18 November 1989 and found Common Mergansers stretched out across the entire southern half of Lake Pepin (a widening of the Mississippi River) as far as the binocular-aided eye could see. It was an incredible sight of avian activity with thousands of birds diving and feeding while nu-

merous smaller flocks were flying both up and down the river, landing and taking off with a great flurry of wings and patter of feet upon the water. The flock stretched eastward across the four-mile width of the lake almost to the Wisconsin shoreline. Additional mergansers were continually arriving from the north, flying down the river at high altitudes with almost all over 500 feet and many probably well over 1000 feet in height. We initially estimated 100,000 birds and other observers present that afternoon concurred with our initial count.

As the afternoon progressed, the birds began to fly northwest to a previously unoccupied portion of the river close to the Minnesota shore, offering us a chance to count them more carefully. A steady stream of mergansers from the southernmost portion of the flock arose and streamed by our observation point along U.S. Highway 61. We carefully counted approximately 54,000 birds in 45 minutes, at which point a passing train flushed that part of the flock *en masse* and they returned to the south end of the lake. The remaining birds further out on the river remained in place while we estimated their number at 25,000 for a total flock that we finally regarded as a minimum of 79,000 Common Mergansers.

Bruce Fall, leading a Bell Museum field trip that same day, estimated 16,000 mergansers between Lake City and the Camp Lacupolis overlook on Lake Pepin between 9:00 A.M. and 11:00 A.M. If our two estimates are roughly accurate, a massive daylight flight numbering approximately 63,000 birds occurred sometime between 11:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. when we arrived at the overlook.

How does this concentration compare to other major gatherings of this species? The highest National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count total ever was a flock of 32,856 birds found on Lake Michigan on the 1952 Chicago count. The highest Pt. Pelee, Ontario total was 15,000 birds (Spiers, 1985) while the highest Niagara River, New York total, a major concentration point for the species, was 15,000 on 21 January 1960 (Bull, 1974). Cramp et al. (1977) notes that 75,000 is the estimated total wintering population for all of northwestern Europe. Clearly, Lake Pepin is extremely important to this species. My precursory survey indicated that this gathering was likely North America's, and possibly the world's, largest concentration of Common Mergansers!

The North American winter population is an oft-quoted figure of 165,000 (Bellrose, 1980) based on projecting Christmas Bird Count ratios of the three merganser species upon a total long-term winter inventory average by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service of 235,000 total undifferentiated mergansers. Considering this allows for only 18,800 Hooded Mergansers and 60,000 Red-breasted Mergansers for their entire continental populations, one must conclude that the methodology used to survey wintering waterfowl is inadequate when applied to mergansers. For example, fall counts of Red-breasted Mergansers on western Lake Erie regularly number 50,000 and frequently approach or even exceed 100,000. This coupled with the fact that the species is a common migrant on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts points to the inaccuracy of a 60,000 continental population figure for this species. In my opinion figures for the Common Merganser should be looked at with equal skepticism.

Summer population estimates appear to better reflect the continental population of this species. Bellrose (Ibid) notes an early summer estimate by aerial survey of 641,000 Common Mergansers across Canada and the northern United States. The Lake Pepin gathering may represent somewhere between 8-12 percent of the continental population and, likely, a major but unknown portion of the interior population.

Local fishermen (pers. comm., 1989) told me that the mergansers were eating Gizzard Shad, a species reported to be running heavily in the river at that time. This species is a common local prey item for Bald Eagles which also forage in this area. In an Oklahoma study, Gizzard Shad made up 84 percent of the volume of all food items in 65 Common Merganser stomachs (Miller, 1973). The amount of fish necessary to feed the 1989 flock is staggering. Several authors have estimated that each merganser consumes a pound of fish a day. A two week stay by this flock would consume 1,106,000 pounds of fish and be an important factor in the ecology of this portion of the river. Fortunately for the merganser's sake, Gizzard Shad are rough fish not sought after by hook and line anglers.

The whereabouts of these merganser flocks

following fall departure from Minnesota is unknown. Nothing approaching these numbers has recently turned up in the Great Plains or lower Midwestern states. Lake Michigan numbers have sharply declined during the past two decades, but numbers still are high on Lake Erie and the Niagara River. Tundra Swans and Canvasbacks which also gather on Lake Pepin and on the Mississippi River at Weaver follow a southeastern route towards the eastern Great Lakes. Undoubtedly, some Minnesota mergansers follow this pathway and may account for some, if not most, of the migrant mergansers in south central Wisconsin such as occur on the major lakes around the Madison area. These lakes would be the first major water bodies a migrant merganser would encounter if they departed Lake Pepin on a southeasterly bearing. Peak numbers around Madison usually total only about 500-1,000 birds. Banding records indicate that Common Mergansers show more north-south tendencies so that the bulk of the Minnesota birds, I suspect, winter in southern Illinois, Missouri, and perhaps on many of the newly established reservoirs in the central Great Plains.

1990 and 1991 fall numbers on Lake Pepin did not approach the 1989 total. Overall, however, the Common Merganser flocks in North America appear to have greatly increased since the 1960s and '70s. What role the hundreds of recently created Great Plains reservoirs have played in this population buildup is difficult to assess. I suspect they have had a substantial effect by providing large areas of open water for foraging, unlike many of the brown sediment-filled prairie rivers. Until further banding studies are done to track the course of the mergansers that leave Lake Pepin, these scenarios will have to remain rather speculative.

In the meantime, further field observations are need to understand the ecology of this gathering. When do the first birds arrive on the scene? Are there other concentration points on the Mississippi River south of Lake Pepin? Is there a continual turnover in population as birds arrive and depart? Do the shad always run just before freeze-up and, if not, what other fishes compose the mergansers' diet?

Thanks to Bruce Fall and Kim Eckert for suggesting improvements in this article and to John J. Magnuson, Director of the Center for Limnology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison for explaining zooplankton and phytoplankton phenology and their relationship to water clarity.

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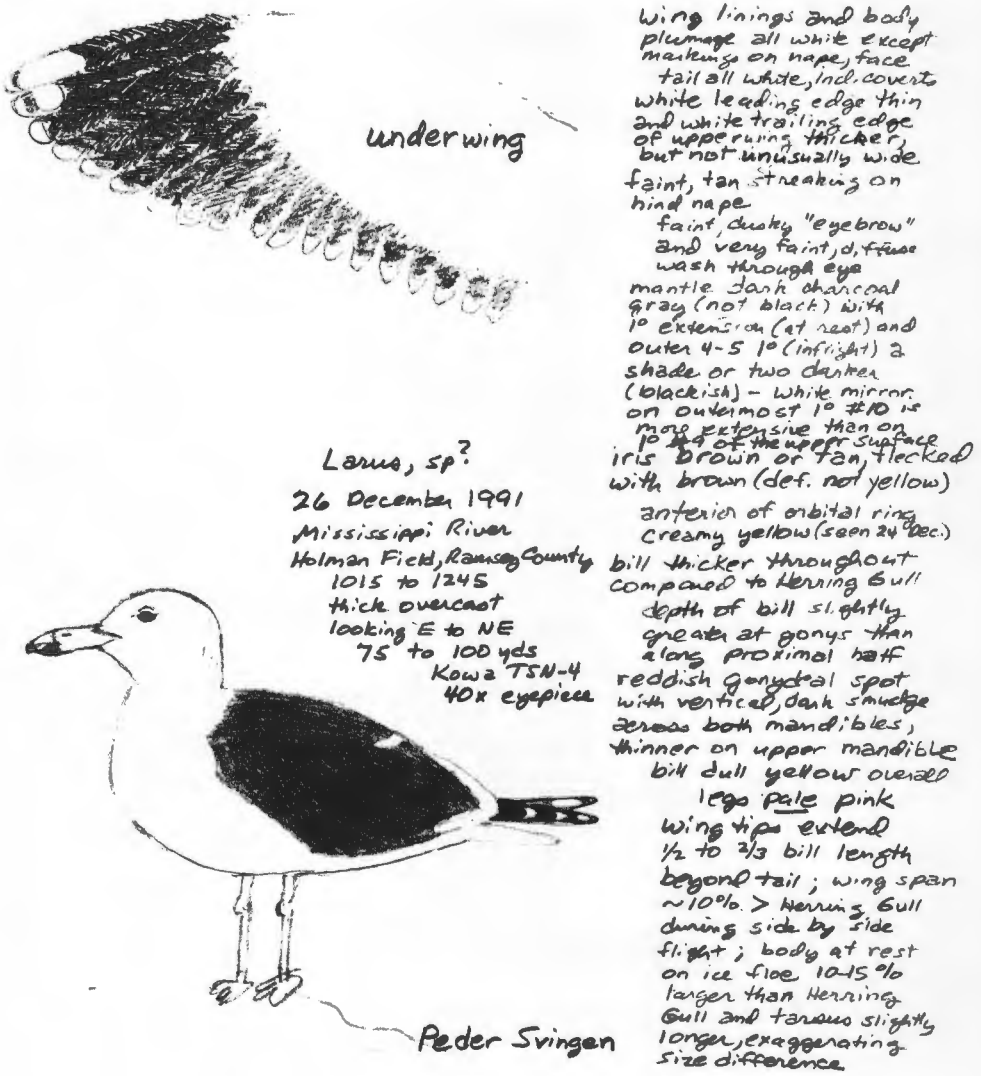
Notes on the Adult Great Black-backed Gull in the Twin Cities, December 1991

Bruce A. Fall

In late November 1991, an adult Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) was discovered at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co., and probably the same individual was subsequently found in the Pig's Eye area of the Mississippi River in South St. Paul, where

many people saw it. About 22 December, the gull moved 7km upriver to the vicinity of Holman Field, where it stayed at least until the end of December and many people saw it.

noticed that the gull had dark instead of the expected pale irides. At closer range they appeared brown with a dark amber tint. In comparison, the distinctly different pale yel-



low irides of several adult Herring Gulls (*L. argentatus*) present were plainly visible even at considerably greater distances. The orbital ring was difficult to see, but during my closest

Using a 40X Kowa TSN-4 spotting scope, I watched it for several hours during the period 22-29 December. Although at first the identification seemed routine, upon further study I

observation (75m) it appeared dull pinkish. The bill was dull yellow with a large reddish-orange spot on the gonys and a conspicuous dark vertical mark that bisected this spot and extended onto the upper mandible. Legs were grayish-pink, similar to those of adult Herring Gulls. The mantle was not black but rather dark slate, appearing a shade or two paler than the black primaries under sunny conditions although in cloudy weather the mantle seemed blacker. In flight, the distinction between black primaries and the remainder of the upper wing was less apparent. Each visible primary on the folded wing had a conspicuous white apical spot. In flight, the outer (tenth) primary appeared all white for at least the distal 5cm, while the ninth primary had both a large white tip and a white mirror separated by a subterminal black band. The wing showed a conspicuous but fairly narrow white trailing edge, and narrow white leading edge. The head and neck were mostly white, with some faint dusky markings on the side and rear of the neck, on the crown, and some smudging around the eye. The tail was white and unmarked, and I could detect no subadult feathers in the plumage. This gull stood about half of a head taller than nearby Herring Gulls, and had a larger chest and head, and longer, heavier bill. However, its larger size seemed more a result of greater bulk and longer legs than of overall body length. At rest, the primaries extended beyond its tail less than a bill length. In flight, it was not noticeably longer winged than Herring Gulls, and its flapping cadence was similar to that species or perhaps slightly slower.

Besides Great Black-backed Gull, there are at least four other species of large dark-backed gulls in North America: Lesser Black-backed (*L. fuscus*), Yellow-footed (*L. livens*), Slaty-backed (*L. schistisagus*) and Western (*L. occidentalis*). Three of these are readily eliminated. Lesser Black-backed Gull is smaller than a Herring Gull and has yellow legs, as does Yellow-footed Gull. In flight, Slaty-backed Gull shows a broader white trailing edge on the secondaries, as well as subterminal white spots (long tongue tips) on primaries 6-8 (Goetz et al. 1986), which were lacking in this gull. Western Gull, the only one of these five species with dark eyes as adults, warranted further consideration even though it has almost never been recorded inland from the Pacific coast. Although smaller than Great Black-backed, Western Gull averages larger and heavier than Herring Gull, and appears fiercer, more powerful and thicker-set (Harrison 1985, 1987), thus giving the impression of being a much larger bird (Grant 1986). Western Gull mantle color varies clinally, with individuals from the southern part of the range being darkest (Grant 1986, McCaskie 1983). Although the southern subspecies (*L. o. wymani*) is more than a shade paler than Great Black-backed Gulls (Goetz et al. 1986), some photos and illustrations of Western Gulls (e.g., Farrand 1983, National Geographic Society 1983) depict them to be nearly as dark as the St. Paul gull appeared. On the other hand, Great Black-backed Gull adults are not necessarily as black-mantled as sometimes shown (e.g., National Geographic Society 1983, Harrison 1987). Grant (1986) describes this species as having uniform blackish gray wings that contrast with the black wing tip. In the Bell Museum of Natural History (BMNH) there are three adult Great Black-backed Gull specimens from the east coast, and two adult Western Gull specimens from southern and central California. These Great Black-backed Gulls have blackish gray mantles somewhat paler than the black primaries, while mantles of the Westerns are about a shade paler than those of the Great Black-backeds. As noted by Goetz et al. (1986), accurate judgment of subtle differences in mantle color is difficult under field conditions, especially when similar species are not present for comparison.

Iris color in adult Great Black-backed Gull is very pale lemon (Dwight 1925) or cream-colored (Farrand 1983); the pale eye is usually acquired by the second summer (Grant 1986). Orbital ring color is described by these same authors as vermilion to red. Western Gull eye color varies clinally (in the opposite direction as mantle intensity), with adults of the northern subspecies (*L. o. occidentalis*) having darker, dull yellowish brown eyes (Grant 1986). Western Gull orbital ring color is yellowish-pink (Harrison 1985) or yellow to orange (Grant 1986). My own photos of Western Gulls from Monterey and San Francisco in March show individuals with eyes that appear dark amber with a pinkish orbital ring, similar to those of the St. Paul gull; however, these northern California birds have distinctly paler mantles. In summary, iris color of the St. Paul gull resembled that of

Western Gull from northern populations, while its mantle color was closer to that of the paler-eyed but darker-backed southern birds.

One characteristic that confirms the identification of this bird as Great Black-backed Gull, despite the dark eye, is the observed pattern of white in the wing tip, which is consistent with descriptions, illustrations and photographs of that species (e.g., Grant 1986, National Geographic Society 1983). This diagnostic pattern (Harrison 1985) also occurs in the three BMNH specimens: tenth primary tip white for about 5-8cm, ninth primary with a black band separating the white apical spot and large white mirror. In contrast, Western Gull has less white and a different pattern. The ninth primary has a small apical spot and usually lacks a mirror, while the tenth primary has both a mirror and small apical spot separated by black (Grant 1986). This pattern is also illustrated in Harrison (1985), McCaskie (1983) and National Geographic Society (1983), and occurs in the two BMNH specimens. Grant (1986) indicates that some fourth-winter Great Black-backed Gulls may exhibit signs of immaturity on innerwing coverts, tail and bill, and Dwight (1925) also notes that some fourth-winter individuals have traces of a dusky band on the bill. Thus, the presence of dark markings on this bird's bill, despite the otherwise full adult plumage, may indicate a fourth-winter individual. If so, perhaps the dark eye is also attributable to its relative immaturity, although this is unsupported by any of the above references.

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Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee

Kim R. Eckert

At a meeting of the Committee on 27 August 1991, among the topics covered were discussions on the status of Ross' Geese in Minnesota and on the origin of a Trumpeter Swan seen in Wabasha County in January 1991. First, because of the large number of Ross' Goose sightings recently in Minnesota, it was decided that a vote by the Committee is no longer necessary for all records. However, for the time being, this species is still on the Casual list and all records still need to be documented, but it is now up to the discretion of the Chairman which, if any, records should be voted on. Second, a "wildness" vote on the Trumpeter Swan individual with neck band 36FA (see ***The Loon*** 63:147-150) was taken,

and by a vote of 10-0 this was Accepted as an Accidental (a) species: i.e., it was unanimously decided that this swan was most likely a "wild and countable" bird from the established population at LaCreek N.W.R. in South Dakota. (Note, however, that all other Trumpeter Swans currently being seen in Minnesota are not yet "countable", since all such individuals are presumed to have originated from recent releases by the Minnesota D.N.R. and other local agencies, and this population is not yet "established" in the wild.)

The following records were noted on July-December 1991 and found Acceptable:

Curve-billed Thrasher, 4-9 May 1991, Eden Prairie, Hennepin Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:150-151).

Western Sandpiper, 21 May 1991, Agassiz N.W.R., Marshall Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:196-197).

Western Tanager, 11 May 1991, near Lake City, Goodhue Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:203).

Say's Phoebe, 1 May 1991, near Crookston, Polk Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:198-199).

Red-throated Loon, 1 July 1991, Stoney Point, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:210).

Plegadis, sp., 14 July 1991, near Wheaton, Traverse Co. (vote 7-0).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 15 July 1991, Ramsey, Anoka Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:208).

White-faced Ibis, 20 May 1991, near Morristown, Rice Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:206).

Ross' Goose, 28 March 1991, near Wheaton, Traverse Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:157-158).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 19 July 1991, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:199).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 10-11 July 1991, near Dawson, Lac Qui Parle Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:277).

Clark's Grebe, 27 July - 10 August 1991, Lake Traverse, Traverse Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:220-224).

Ruff, 31 July 1991, Carlos Avery W.M.A., Anoka Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:280).

Baird's Sparrow, 19 June - 9 July 1991, Roseau River W.M.A., Roseau Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:284-285).

Ferruginous Hawk, 24 July 1991, Felton prairie, Clay Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:279).

Black-throated Gray Warbler, 31 August 1991, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:272-273).

Fork-tailed Flycatcher, 6 September 1991, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 10-0; ***The Loon*** 63:217-220).

Pacific Loon, 22-24 September 1991, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:280-281).

Sprague's Pipit, 25 May 1991, Badoura Twp., Hubbard Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 62:284).

White-eyed Vireo, July-August 1991, Reno, Houston Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 64:50-52).

Rock Wren, 26 September 1991, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co. (vote 6-1; ***The Loon*** 63:282).

Black-legged Kittiwake, 26 October 1991, Tofte, Cook Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:279).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 4-22 October 1991, Knife River, Lake Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:278).

Red-throated Loon, 1-2 October 1991, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:273).

Mississippi Kite, 30 August 1991, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:282-283).

Lesser Black-backed Gull, 26-29 October 1991, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:275-276).

Baird's Sparrow, 1 June 1991, Felton prairie, Clay Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 63:275).

King Rail, 24 October 1991, near Appleton, Swift Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 64:64-65).

Vermilion Flycatcher, 13-14 October 1991, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 64:57,58).

White-faced Ibis, 8-26 May 1991, Heron Lake, Jackson Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 64:5-10).

Great Black-backed Gull, 23-30 November 1991, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 64:64,65).

Fieldfare, 3-10 November 1991, near Grand Marais, Cook Co. (vote 10-0; ***The Loon*** 63:215-217).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 18-22 October 1991, Lutsen, Cook Co. (vote 7-0).

Anna's Hummingbird, 11 November - 1 December 1991, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (vote 10-0; ***The Loon*** 63:225-231).

Red Phalarope, 26-28 September 1991, Claremont, Dodge Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 64:67-68).

Glossy Ibis, 8-17 May 1991, Heron Lake, Jackson Co. (vote 10-0; ***The Loon*** 64:5-10).

Purple Sandpiper,21-23 November 1991, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 64:56-57).

Iceland Gull, 9-10 November 1991, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 64:59-61).

Iceland Gull, 25 November 1991, Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 64:57,59).

Pacific Loon, 11-21 October 1991, White Bear Lake, Ramsey Co. (vote 7-0; ***The Loon*** 64:63-64).

The following records were voted on July-December 1991 and found Unacceptable:

Yellow-throated Warbler, 7 May 1991, Rochester, Olmsted Co. (vote 3-4). Because the bird was high in the tree canopy and difficult to see, only a partial description of the underparts was possible. This description mentioned that the upper breast was white, not yellow as it should be in Yellow-throated Warbler; it was also felt the description could fit a female Blackburnian. Also, the identification was largely based on the song heard and described by the observer; however, there was no evidence that the bird seen was actually doing the singing, and, in addition, the song description failed to mention the dropping-in-pitch quality which is characteristic of the Yellow-throated's song.

American Dipper, 2 August 1991, Big Falls, Koochiching Co. (vote 0-7). It was agreed the bird seen may well have been a dipper, especially since the observers had experience with this species and since the habitat was appropriate. However, the entire description only said it was a "small gray bird sitting on a rock". There was no mention of the bird's relative size in comparison with another bird, and nothing was said of its behavior (which is distinctive in a dipper). In addition, no binoculars were used. It was unanimously agreed that such an unusual species should be described much more completely.

Cassin's Finch, 9-11 July 1991, near Dawson, Lac Qui Parle Co. (vote 2-5). Although this bird was carefully studied and extensively described, and though it was agreed it may well have been correctly identified, the majority felt that this identification is so difficult and the species so unusual that even more thorough documentation - including photos and sketches as was the case with the 1987 Duluth record - was desirable. It was also felt that early July would be an extremely unlikely time for this bird to wander out of range. There were House Finches present at the same feeder for direct comparison and several differences were noted, but it was felt that all the plumage, size and shape differences noted are within the range of variation in House Finch. There was also uncertainty expressed about the sex, age and stage of molt of the bird, so that the features listed which would seem to preclude Purple Finch might possibly not be diagnostic unless these uncertainties were clarified.

Rufous Hummingbird, 5-6 August 1991, Peterson, Fillmore Co. (vote 3-4). The entire description of the bird only mentioned "distinct rust coloration", and the majority felt that such a description was too sketchy to be accepted. Nothing was said about where the rust was located on the bird's plumage nor about what exact color was meant by "rust" (which might simply indicate an immature male Ruby-throated's "golden cast on upperparts", as mentioned in the Geographic field guide). There was also uncertainty about the light conditions: a "full bright sun" was mentioned, but if it were in the observer's eyes it could have given a misleading impression of the bird's actual color.

Black-throated Gray Warbler, 25 August 1991, Lake Elmo, Washington Co. (vote 2-5). There were too many uncertainties about the documentation to accept a third state record, especially that the observer did not have binoculars as he viewed the bird at a distance of 30 feet. Exact details were supposedly seen and described about the bird's eye and bill colors, absence of eye ring, the number of back streaks, the gray rump color and other features which are very difficult if not impossible to see without binoculars at the distance involved.

Great Black-backed Gull, 20 April 1991, Palisade Head Wayside, Lake Co. (vote 1-6). Although it was agreed the identification of this adult gull was probably correct, the observer was unable to see leg color, and the size of the bird was uncertain since no other bird was present for direct size comparison. Therefore, the possibility of Lesser Black-backed was not eliminated.

Blue-winged Warbler, 20 October 1991, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co. (vote 3-4). The observers, who are well experienced with this and other warblers, were probably correct in

their identification; however, the majority felt the description was too sketchy to be accepted. The only plumage features mentioned were: "bright yellow breast...blue-gray wings with two whitish wing bars and the green back...black eye stripe". It was felt that such a description could also match Pine Warbler, among other species, and it was curious that only the breast, and not the entire underparts, was said to be yellow.

Pacific Loon, 26 October 1991, Lake Vadnais, Ramsey Co. (vote 2-5). This identification was based on the bird's "dark necklace", "more extensive" gray on the face, and the smaller bill and body size than a nearby Common Loon. However, these features were only briefly and vaguely described and, unless elaborated on, do not preclude Red-throated Loon or a small Common Loon. **8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

Young Wilson's Phalaropes in nest, 14 June 1991, Aitkin Township, Aitkin County. Photo by Warren Nelson.

The Summer Season
(1 June to 31 July 1991)
Terry Wiens

Following the cool and wet spring of 1991, June was relatively warm. Temperatures were about two to five degrees above average in all regions of the state. Rainfall, however, varied considerably. All western and most southern regions received above-normal precipitation. Many agricultural regions were declared disaster areas due to wet field conditions and

the Mississippi River remained near flood stage through mid-July. In contrast, the north central and northeast regions were relatively dry, and the southeast received only about half the usual average of four to five inches for the month.

The weather in July had very few extremes. Rainfall was slightly above normal in most of the state. Almost all regions averaged about four to six inches of rain for the month, the only exception being the southwest where the average was less than three inches. Temperatures were even more consistent statewide. All regions recorded temperatures only slightly below normal for the month. There were no extensive heat waves characteristic of the drought summers of recent years; only once did the thermometer reach 100 degrees in July, and only then in the southwest. Overall, conditions were pleasant for summer birding.

A healthy number of contributors chose to take advantage of the pleasant conditions. No fewer than 93 observers (a few more than last year but about the same number as in 1989) submitted seasonal reports and/or breeding information. A total of 273 species was observed, the highest total in many years and well above the average of 265 for the previous 10 years. The number of breeding reports was also up, following several seasons of decline. This year contributors sent in 680 nest or brood cards, 100 more than last year but still well shy of the 1000+ submitted in both 1985 and 1986. Despite the increase in breeding reports, however, nesting information was obtained for only 139 species, three fewer than last year and the lowest total in several years. Top nest/brood card contributors were Karl Bardon (82), Jean Segerstrom/Mark Newstrom (82), Hiawatha Valley Audubon (72), and Jack Sprenger (51). Special thanks go to the members of Hiawatha Valley Audubon for providing extensive breeding documentation from Winona County, and to Karl Bardon and others associated with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' County Biological Survey conducted in several northwestern counties. And, as always, a hearty thanks to all contributors for your fine work in the field!

Unlike last summer, when Eurasian Tree Sparrow was added to the state list, or the summer of 1989, when Black-necked Stilt was added to most Minnesota life lists, no single sighting stood out from the rest this summer. Perhaps most interesting were the two records of Clark's Grebe in western Minnesota. This species was "created" by a split from the Western Grebe in 1985, and these sightings represent the fifth and sixth acceptable state records. (The scarcity of records is misleading, however, since only recently has there been a concerted effort to distinguish Clark's from Westerns.) The grebes seen at Lake Traverse in Traverse Co. nested; although it is not known whether they were actually on the Minnesota side or South Dakota side of the lake, this represents one of the most easterly nesting records for this species.

A number of other sightings this summer were noteworthy. Waterbirds were well represented: a Red-throated Loon in alternate (breeding) plumage was found on Lake Superior, only the fourth July record for the state; two unidentified ibis made a brief appearance in Traverse Co.; a pair of male Harlequin Ducks were seen in early June at the Roseau city sewage ponds in Roseau Co. (there are only three previous summer records for this species); and a Ruff appeared in Anoka Co., one of about a half-dozen summer records for this casual species.

Several raptors that are casual or accidental in summer were observed: two separate reports of Ferruginous Hawks in western Minnesota, representing the first summer records in 10+ years; a mid-summer Rough-legged Hawk in Aitkin Co. (stragglers of this species may be present in the state more often than previously thought, as indicated by observations in four of the past eight summers); a Prairie Falcon in northwestern Minnesota, the first July record for the state; and the return of Barn Owls to their nesting site in Vermillion Township, Dakota Co. for the second consecutive year.

Also of interest were three separate reports of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers; Sprague's Pipits for the second consecutive year just north of Roseau in Roseau Co.; and Baird's Sparrows at two separate locations in western Minnesota (this species has been recorded in three of the past six summers).

In addition to the Barn Owl, two other noteworthy nestings were documented this summer. A pair of Mountain Bluebirds returned to Marshall Co. to nest for the second straight year, fledging six young (a Mountain/Eastern pair was also present in Kittson

Co.). In the opposite corner of the state, a pair of White-eyed Vireos were seen near Reno, Houston Co. in July and short-tailed young discovered in August; this represents the first nesting record for the state.

There are always some species each season for which reports are significantly up or down. This year, for whatever reason, the downs outnumbered the ups by more than two to one. For example, almost all of the swallows were scarce this summer. Many of the "common" species appeared to be less common; examples include Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Killdeer, Red-headed Woodpecker, Great Crested Flycatcher, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Common Yellowthroat, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, and Common Grackle. On the other hand, some waterbirds such as American White Pelican, American Bittern, Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, and Ruddy Duck were reported more than usual; other species for which reports were up included Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Broad-winged Hawk, Field Sparrow, Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Orchard Oriole. And, as always, there are a few species conspicuous by their absence. Missing this year were Tundra Swan (surprisingly enough, this species usually turns up somewhere in the summer!), Piping Plover, Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone, and Rusty Blackbird; all of these species have been recorded in seven or more of the past ten summers.

The format for the species accounts is the same as the past several years. The key to seasonal reports is located on page 70. Breeding records are classified based on the criteria found in ***The Loon*** 58:22 or in Green and Janssen (*Minnesota Birds*, p. 7). Counties for which positive breeding is documented for the first time since 1970 are in italics and identified as such according to updated versions of Janssen and Simonson's breeding maps (***The Loon*** 56:167-186,219-239, 57:15-34).

A final thanks to all of the summer season reporters who make it possible to document avian distribution and migration. Thanks also to Peder Svingen and Kim Eckert for their assistance in preparing this report.

RED-THROATED LOON
One in alternate plumage seen on 7/1 in St. Louis MDE (***The Loon*** 63:210).

Common Loon
Nested in *Roseau* KB, Becker, Crow Wing, Aitkin, Cook, Anoka; probable breeding in Cass, Kandiyohi. Seen in 23 other counties as far south as Blue Earth, Olmsted.

Pied-billed Grebe
Nested in Kandiyohi, Hennepin, Martin; probable breeding in eight counties. Seen in 25 additional counties statewide.

Horned Grebe
More reports than usual; seen in Kittson, Roseau, Marshall, Becker, St. Louis KE, Cook MK.

Red-necked Grebe
Nested in seven counties as far south as Steele, *Scott* AP; probable nesting in Clay, Rice. Seen in 10 other counties north of Scott.

Eared Grebe
Nested in Roseau, Yellow Medicine; probable nesting in Traverse. Seen in nine additional counties within range including Hennepin, Scott.

Western Grebe
Nested in *Hennepin* OJ, KB; probable breeding in Traverse, Renville. Seen in 12 other counties as far east as **Kanabec** RJ, Freeborn.

CLARK'S GREBE
One individual observed on 6/8 in Big Stone PS et al. (***The Loon*** 63:194-196); two adults with two young on 7/27-30 at Lake Traverse, Traverse Co. KE et al. (***The Loon*** 63:220-225).

American White Pelican
Sharp increase in reports over past two years continues, especially in eastern regions. No breeding reported, but seen in 39 counties as far east as St. Louis B. Rowe, Washington TBB, Wabasha HH, Houston EMF.

Double-crested Cormorant
Probable breeding in Roseau; seen in 33 other counties throughout state.

American Bittern
Most reports since 1986. Nested in *Polk* DBl; seen in 24 other counties as far south as Watonwan BB, RJ.

Least Bittern
Reported in Roseau, Clay, Becker, Clearwater, Big Stone, Lac Qui Parle, Sherburne, Hennepin, Houston.

Great Blue Heron
Nested in Hubbard, Anoka; seen in 51 other counties statewide.

Great Egret
Seen in 30 counties as far north as Clay, Becker in west and Sherburne in east.

Snowy Egret
After two-year summer absence, single birds seen 6/29 Rock RJ, 7/2 Kandiyohi SE, 7/9 Grant PS.

Little Blue Heron
One immature seen 6/14,24 Rock RDR, ND.

Green-backed Heron
Probable nesting in Cass; seen in 35 other counties as far north as Polk, Pennington, Aitkin.

Black-crowned Night-Heron
Probable nesting in Roseau, Kandiyohi; also seen in 13 southern counties plus Grant, Otter Tail, Marshall, 6/20 St. Louis PS.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
Only report; single bird observed on 6/10 Dakota PS.

IBIS species?
Two birds seen on 7/14 near Wheaton, Traverse Co. IL.

[Trumpeter Swan
Single immature (presumably from Twin Cities area reintroduction program) seen on 6/22 at Carlos Avery W.M.A., Anoka Co. DZ; swan observed 6/1 Becker BK most likely a Trumpeter from reintroduced group at Tamarac N.W.R.]

Great Egret and Snowy Egret, 2 July 1991, Lake Lillian, Kandiyohi County. Photo by Steve Erickson.

Cattle Egret
More reports than usual; 6/9-25 Martin BB, 7/6 Grant (four) PB, 7/18 Grant SDM, 6/9 Lac Qui Parle CMB, 7/13 Renville/Meeker Co. line RJ, 7/3 Lincoln KSS.

[Mute Swan
One adult observed 6/8 Goodhue PB; origin questionable.]

Snow Goose
Two reports; 6/23 Lac Qui Parle CMB, 7/27 Nobles KB.

Canada Goose
Nested in six counties, probable nesting in nine; seen in 27 additional counties statewide.

Wood Duck
Reports down, similar to last year. Nested in nine counties, probable nesting in 12; seen in 22 other counties statewide.

Green-winged Teal
Unusually common (most reports in 10+ years); seen in 20 counties in all regions of state.

American Black Duck
Seen in six northern counties plus Sherburne, Anoka, Hennepin.

Mallard
Fewer reports than usual. Nested in seven counties, probable nesting in nine; seen in 31 other counties statewide.

Northern Pintail
Reports from nine western counties plus Clearwater, Aitkin, Anoka.

Blue-winged Teal
Nested in eight counties including *Kittson* KB, *Mower* JM, *Winona* HVA; probable breeding in five. Seen in 27 other counties statewide.

Northern Shoveler
Increase in reports over past two years. Probable nesting in Aitkin; seen in 17 counties throughout the state except for eastern regions.

Gadwall
Seen in eight western counties plus 6/27 Cook MS, Meeker, Hennepin, Le Sueur.

American Wigeon
Reported in eight northern counties plus Lyon, Nicollet.

Canvasback
Nested in Roseau, Hennepin; probable nesting in Marshall. Seen in nine other western counties.

Redhead
Nested in Roseau, Hennepin; seen in 16 other counties within range plus Winona CSc.

Ring-necked Duck
Nested in Roseau, Crow Wing, Anoka; probable breeding in Cook. Observed in 15 other counties in all regions except southeast.

Greater Scaup
Late migrant 6/17 Cook MS.

Lesser Scaup
Seen in seven western counties plus Hennepin, Blue Earth.

Harlequin Duck
Two males observed on **6/2** at Roseau City Sewage Ponds, Roseau Co. KB (***The Loon*** 63:211).

Surf Scoter
Immature male present from 6/23 to 7/30 at Paradise Beach, Cook Co. mob.

Common Goldeneye
Nested in St. Louis; probable nesting in Beltrami, Cook. Seen in seven other northern counties.

Bufflehead
Only report: **6/2** Roseau KB.

Hooded Merganser
Nested in Roseau, Crow Wing, Aitkin, *Le Sueur* EK; probable nesting in five counties. Seen in nine other counties in all regions except central and southwest.

Common Merganser
Nested in St. Louis; probable nesting in Cook. Also seen in Lake of the Woods, Lake.

Red-breasted Merganser
Probable breeding in Cook; also seen in Cass, Lake.

Ruddy Duck
For second straight year, more reports than usual. Nested in *Yellow Medicine* GS, *Scott*

AP, Hennepin; seen in 24 other counties as far east as Clearwater in north and Winona CSc in south.

Turkey Vulture
Many reports; numbers apparently increasing. Probable breeding in Aitkin; seen in 32 other counties in all regions of state.

Osprey
Fewer reports than previous year. Nested in *Winona* HVA, AP (First nesting record for southeast) Cass, Crow Wing, Aitkin; probable nesting in Mahnomen, Becker. Seen in nine other northern counties plus Hennepin, Anoka, Washington, 7/8 Rock ND, JP.

Bald Eagle
Reports gradually increasing over past five years; for status summary see ***The Loon*** 63:268-271. Nested in *Marshall* KSS, Beltrami, St. Louis, Anoka, *Hennepin* KB; plus a remarkable nesting on the ground in *Mahnomen* (***The Loon*** 63:155-157). Probable breeding in Otter Tail; seen in 16 other counties as far south as Lac Qui Parle, Wabasha, Houston.

Northern Harrier
Seen in 31 counties throughout state.

Sharp-shinned Hawk
Seen in six northern counties plus 6/6 Washington PC, 6/23 Rice TB, 6/21 Wabasha DWM, Fillmore GMD (no date), Houston EMF (throughout summer), all southern records noted here lack details - most probably Cooper's.

Cooper's Hawk
More reports than usual. Nested in *Kittson* KB, Anoka, Hennepin, Ramsey, Olmsted; seen in 14 additional counties in all regions except southwest, north central, and northeast.

Northern Goshawk
Observed in Roseau, Clearwater, Cook.

Red-shouldered Hawk
Fewer reports than previous two years. Nested in *Ramsey* KB; also seen in Lake of the Woods MK, Clearwater, Becker, Aitkin, Washington.

Broad-winged Hawk
More reports than usual. Probable nesting in Crow Wing, Hennepin; seen in 25 other counties in all regions except west central and southwest.

Swainson's Hawk
Nested in Fillmore; seen in 10 other counties within range but no farther north than Traverse.

Red-tailed Hawk
Fewer reports than previous four years. Nested in Washington, Olmsted, Winona; probable nesting in Crow Wing, Anoka. Seen in 40 additional counties statewide.

Ferruginous Hawk
Two reports, both from Felton Prairie in Clay Co.: one adult on **6/22** KE, one immature on **7/24** PS (***The Loon*** 63:279).

Rough-legged Hawk
One light-morph bird observed on **6/10** Kittson Co. RG and another on **6/28-30** near Aitkin, Aitkin Co. WN et al.

American Kestrel
Fewer reports for second straight year. Nested in Aitkin, Le Sueur; probable nesting in Olmsted. Seen in 44 other counties statewide.

Merlin
Nested in St. Louis; also seen in Clay, Cook, **6/8** Lyon HK.

Peregrine Falcon
Egg-producing pairs in Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington, Lake, *Cook*, St. Louis; additional non-breeding pairs in Hennepin, *St. Louis*, Olmsted (see ***The Loon*** 63:191-193 for nesting summary). Also seen in Dakota, Stearns.

Prairie Falcon
Only second summer record for state; one bird on **7/24** in Marshall MH/AJ (early migrant?).

Gray Partridge
Nested in *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in Clay, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Mower. Seen in 19 other counties within range.

Ring-necked Pheasant
Nested in Brown, *Winona* HVA; probable

breeding in seven counties. Seen in 24 other counties north to Clay, Wadena, Pine; plus Roseau DC (escapee?).

Spruce Grouse
Nested in St. Louis, *Roseau*; probable nesting in Cook. Also seen in Lake of the Woods.

Ruffed Grouse
Nested in *Roseau* KB, Koochiching; probable nesting in Clearwater, Washington. Seen in 17 other counties south to a line through Becker, Dakota, Fillmore.

Greater Prairie-Chicken
Observed in Norman, Clay, Hubbard.

Sharp-tailed Grouse
Nested in *Kittson* KB, Aitkin; also seen in Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Koochiching, Marshall, Clearwater.

Wild Turkey
Seen in Fillmore, Houston. Also reported from Rice, Goodhue, Mower (status in these counties unclear).

Northern Bobwhite
Seen near Wilmington, Houston Co.

Yellow Rail
More reports than in recent years. Observed at many locations in Roseau and Kittson KB, MH/AJ; at least ten heard at Swamp Lake, Cass Co. DH; also reported in Clearwater, Aitkin.

Spruce Grouse nest, 8 June 1991, Roseau Bog, Roseau County. Photo by Don Bolduc.

Virginia Rail
Seen in 11 counties in all regions except central and northeast.

Sora
Probable nesting in Roseau, Winona; seen in 26 other counties statewide.

Common Moorhen
Observed in Martin, Rice, Meeker, Winona.

American Coot
Nested in seven counties including *Chippewa* GS, *Le Sueur* EK; probable nesting in

Young Spruce Grouse, 7 July 1990, Itasca County. Photo by Warren Nelson.

five. Seen in 18 other counties in all regions except northeast.

Sandhill Crane
Nested in Kittson, Roseau, Polk; also seen in Marshall, Lake of the Woods, Aitkin, Sherburne, Anoka, 6/22 Lake SW/MS.

Black-bellied Plover
Only report: 6/5 St. Louis.

Lesser Golden-Plover
Only reports: 7/26&29 Traverse, 7/30 Yellow Medicine.

Semipalmated Plover
All reports: 6/8 Big Stone, 6/13 Polk, 7/24 Clay, 7/25 Marshall, 7/28 Traverse.

Killdeer
Fewer reports for second straight year. Nested in eight counties including *Kittson* KB, *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in four other counties. Seen in 40 other counties statewide.

American Avocet
Nested at Thielke L., *Big Stone* Co. mob and Crookston, Polk Co. PS; also seen in Marshall, Becker, Traverse, Lac Qui Parle, Lyon.

Greater Yellowlegs
Seen in 11 counties, with many mid-summer dates; **6/21** Lyon, **6/22** Marshall, **6/23** Winona, **6/26&27** Roseau, **6/29** Redwood.

Lesser Yellowlegs
Fewer reports than in recent years; seen in 22 counties. Many mid-summer dates; 6/11 Olmsted, **6/18** Roseau KB, **6/22** Nobles ND, **6/23** Winona CSc, 6/26 Martin and Olmsted.

Solitary Sandpiper
Seen in six northern counties; migrants reported in 12 southern counties. Mid-summer report **6/22** Nobles ND; all other reports early fall migrants.

Willet
Only reports: 7/29 Traverse, 7/30 Big Stone.

Spotted Sandpiper
Nested in *Roseau* KB, Anoka, Olmsted; seen in 29 other counties statewide.

Upland Sandpiper
Nested in *Roseau* KB; probable nesting in Clay, Aitkin. Seen in 12 additional western counties plus Lake of the Woods, Clearwater, Mille Lacs, Sherburne, Kandiyohi, Mower, Lake DPV.

Hudsonian Godwit
Only record: 6/9 McLeod.

Marbled Godwit
Nested in Pennington; also seen in Kittson, Roseau, Marshall, Polk, Red Lake, Clay, Lac Qui Parle.

Sanderling
All records: 6/4 Cook, 7/22 Hennepin, 7/26 Traverse, 7/27 Martin, (no date) Anoka.

Semipalmated Sandpiper
Seen in 11 counties; late migrant 6/16 Winona, early migrant 7/7 in Yellow Medicine.

Least Sandpiper
Seen in 17 counties; late migrant 6/9 Winona, early migrant **6/23** Winona CSc.

White-rumped Sandpiper
All reports: 6/1 Becker, 6/2 Wilkin, 6/8 Big Stone, 6/13 Polk, 7/25 Marshall.

Baird's Sandpiper
All reports: 7/10 Polk, 7/24 Clay and Cook, 7/28 Yellow Medicine.

Pectoral Sandpiper
Seen in 16 counties; all reports from July. Early migrants 7/7 Clay and Yellow Medicine.

Dunlin
All reports: 6/1 Becker and Wilkin, 6/4 Cook, 6/9 Winona.

Stilt Sandpiper
Early migrant **6/27** Roseau KB; plus July reports from eight other counties.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Only report: **7/20** Lake DPV.

RUFF
One female observed on 7/31 at Carlos Avery W.M.A., Anoka Co. PS (***The Loon*** 63:280).

Short-billed Dowitcher
Fall migrants seen in 11 counties; early migrants **6/26** Roseau KB, **6/29** Sibley RJ.

Long-billed Dowitcher
First summer report since 1987. All records: 7/10 Polk, 7/22 Hennepin, 7/25 Marshall.

Common Snipe
Seen in 19 counties in all regions except southwest and south central.

American Woodcock
Seen in 16 counties statewide including 6/24 Rock ND.

Wilson's Phalarope
Nested in Aitkin; seen in five western counties plus Anoka DZ, Winona CSc.

Red-necked Phalarope
Only reports: 7/24 Norman, 7/31 Anoka PS.

Franklin's Gull
Seen in 13 counties in all regions except northeast and southeast.

Bonaparte's Gull
Many reports. Seen in Roseau (no date); late migrants 6/1 Blue Earth, 6/9 Lac Qui Parle; early migrants 7/21 Becker, 7/27 Lake of the Woods, 7/29 Beltrami. Mid-summer records: 6/30 Crow Wing, 7/20 Mille Lacs.

Ring-billed Gull
Seen in 36 counties throughout state.

Herring Gull
Probable nesting in Cook; seen in seven other counties in northeast and north central plus Roseau.

Caspian Tern
Seen in nine northern counties plus 7/13 Washington TBB, 7/5 Ramsey KB.

Common Tern
Seen in Roseau, St. Louis, Lake, Aitkin, Mille Lacs.

Forster's Tern
Reports down from previous year. Probable nesting in Kandiyohi; seen in 18 other counties as far east as line through Roseau, Mille Lacs, Washington, Winona CSc.

Black Tern
Nested in Roseau, *Clearwater* DBl, *Scott* AP; probable nesting in Crow Wing, Aitkin, Kandiyohi. Seen in 35 other counties in all regions except northeast.

Rock Dove
Nested in *Roseau* KB; seen in 41 other counties statewide.

Mourning Dove
Nested in nine counties including Aitkin WN, *Martin* BB, *Steele* AP, *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in Olmsted. Seen in 46 other counties statewide.

Black-billed Cuckoo
Reported from fewer counties than in recent years, despite some observers noting an increase in numbers. Nested in Anoka and Washington Counties; probable nesting in Brown. Seen in 37 additional counties statewide.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Seen in 17 counties as far north as Clay, Crow Wing and Kittson 6/11 RG.

BARN OWL
Nested in Dakota for second consecutive year (***The Loon*** 63:255).

Eastern Screech-Owl
Twice the usual number of reports. Nested in Le Sueur, *Steele* FS; probable nesting in Olmsted. Seen in seven other southern counties plus Crow Wing.

Great Horned Owl
Nested in Kittson, Aitkin, St. Louis, Anoka, Ramsey, *Washington* WL; probable nesting in Mower. Seen in 19 other counties statewide.

Burrowing Owl
Only reports from Rock mob.

Barred Owl
Nested in Brown; probable nesting in Olmsted. Seen in 12 other counties as far west as Clearwater, Kandiyohi.

Great Gray Owl
Nested in Roseau, Lake of the Woods; also seen in St. Louis, Aitkin.

Long-eared Owl
Only report: nested in Kandiyohi.

Short-eared Owl
Probable nesting in Aitkin; also seen in Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Beltrami.

Boreal Owl
Only report: one calling 6/4 Cook KMH.

Northern Saw-whet Owl
Probable breeding in Hennepin (two adult with two young on 7/20, J. Futcher); also reported in Cook, St. Louis.

Common Nighthawk
Nested in *Aitkin* WN, *Blue Earth* LF, Rock; probable nesting in Kandiyohi. Seen in 29 other counties statewide.

Whip-poor-will
Seen in eight northern counties plus Anoka, Goodhue, Winona, Houston.

Chimney Swift
Observed in 42 counties statewide.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Probable nesting in Becker, Crow Wing, Olmsted; seen in 37 other counties statewide.

Belted Kingfisher
Nested in *Ramsey* KB; probable nesting in Olmsted. Seen in 47 additional counties statewide.

Red-headed Woodpecker
Fewer reports than in previous three years; several observers noted declining numbers. Nested in Aitkin, Rock; probable nesting in five counties. Seen in 32 other counties in all regions except northeast.

Red-bellied Woodpecker
Nested in *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in Lac Qui Parle, Kandiyohi, Anoka, Washington. Seen in 19 other counties as far north as Otter Tail, Aitkin.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Nested in Kittson, Cook, Crow Wing, Brown; probable nesting in Lake of the Woods, Lac

Eight Northern Flicker young in nest box, 4 July 1991, Mountain Lake, Cottonwood County. Photo by Loren Feil.

Qui Parle, Winona. Seen in 25 other counties statewide.

Downy Woodpecker
Nested in Clearwater, Brown, *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in 12 counties. Seen in 33 additional counties throughout state.

Hairy Woodpecker
Nested in *Kittson* KB, Lake of the Woods, Cook, Brown; probable nesting in five counties. Seen in 32 other counties statewide.

Three-toed Woodpecker
Nested in *St. Louis* SW/MS; also observed 6/19 Cook KE and throughout summer in Cook KMH.

Black-backed Woodpecker
Probable nesting in Lake, Cook; also seen in Roseau.

Northern Flicker
Nested in Cottonwood LFe; probable breeding in six counties; seen in 46 other counties statewide.

Pileated Woodpecker
Nested in *Kittson* KB, St. Louis, *Anoka* JH; probable nesting in Crow Wing, Lake, Hennepin. Seen in 33 other counties in all regions except southwest.

Olive-sided Flycatcher
Seen in six northern counties plus late migrants in six southern counties; latest date 6/6 Pipestone.

Eastern Wood-Pewee
Nested in *Crow Wing* JS/MN, Sherburne, Ramsey; probable nesting in Anoka, Blue Earth. Seen in 41 other counties statewide.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Late migrants 6/1 Faribault and Dakota; also seen in Roseau, St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

Acadian Flycatcher
Seen in Hennepin, Dakota, Scott, Houston.

Alder Flycatcher
Seen in 18 northern counties plus Kandiyohi, Sherburne, Anoka; late migrants 6/1 Faribault, 6/2 Pipestone and Brown, 6/11 Steele.

Willow Flycatcher
Probable nesting in Murray; seen in 13 other southern counties plus Mille Lacs RJ, Wilkin, Clay, Polk.

Least Flycatcher
Fewer reports than in previous seven years. Nested in Lake; seen in 33 additional counties statewide.

Eastern Phoebe
Nested in nine counties including *Kandiyohi* JR, *Winona* HVA; probable breeding in three. Seen in 31 other counties statewide.

Great Crested Flycatcher
Fewer reports than in previous five years. Probable nesting in five counties; seen in 40 additional counties throughout state including Lake DPV, Cook KMH, MS.

Western Kingbird
Nested in *Kittson* KB, *Marshall* KSS; probable nesting in Anoka. Seen in 21 other counties within range plus 6/17 Cook MS.

Eastern Kingbird
Nested in eight counties including *Kittson* KB, *Roseau* KB, *Clearwater* DBl, Cottonwood LFe; probable nesting in four. Seen in 44 other counties statewide.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER
Unusual number of reports: immature observed on 7/10-11 in Lac Qui Parle CMB (***The Loon*** 63:277); one seen on 7/15 in Anoka RK (***The Loon*** 63:208); adult male observed on 7/19 in Duluth KE (***The Loon*** 63:199).

Horned Lark
Fewer reports than in past seven years; seen in 32 counties in all regions except northeast.

Purple Martin
Fewer reports than in past five years. Nested in Lake of the Woods, Crow Wing; probable nesting in five counties. Seen in 35 other counties in all regions except northeast.

Tree Swallow
Nested in seven counties, probable nesting in five others; seen in 39 other counties statewide.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Relatively few reports. Probable nesting in Clearwater, Crow Wing; seen in 26 additional counties statewide.

Bank Swallow
Fewer reports than in previous five years. Nested in *Aitkin* WN; probable nesting in four counties. Seen in 25 other counties.

Cliff Swallow
Fewer reports than in previous five years. Probable nesting in seven counties; seen in 36 additional counties statewide.

Barn Swallow
Fewer reports than in last seven years. Nested in five counties including *Roseau* KB, *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in three. Seen in 46 other counties statewide.

Gray Jay
Probable nesting in St. Louis; also seen in Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Aitkin, Lake, Cook.

Blue Jay
Nested in three counties, probable nesting in four; seen in 45 other counties statewide.

Black-billed Magpie
Nested in Kittson, Aitkin; probable nesting in Polk. Also seen in Roseau, Marshall, Lake of the Woods, Pennington.

American Crow
Nested in Pennington, Olmsted; probable nesting in Clay, Crow Wing, Hennepin. Seen in 46 other counties statewide.

Common Raven
Nested in *Beltrami* KB, Koochiching, Isanti; probable breeding in Lake of the Woods. Seen in nine additional northern counties.

Black-capped Chickadee
Nested in six counties including *Aitkin* WN; probable nesting in seven. Seen in 36 other counties throughout state.

Boreal Chickadee
Reported in Roseau, Aitkin, St. Louis, Cook.

Tufted Titmouse
Observed in Houston.

Red-breasted Nuthatch
Nested in Clearwater, Crow Wing, Cook; seen in nine other northern counties including Clay MM.

White-breasted Nuthatch
Nested in *Aitkin* WN; probable nesting in seven counties. Observed in 36 other counties in all regions except northeast.

Brown Creeper
Nested in *Polk* PS, Brown; probable nesting in Cook. Also seen in Roseau, Clearwater, Hubbard, St. Louis, Lake, Winona, 7/14 **Lac Qui Parle** CMB.

House Wren
Nested in seven counties, probable nesting in six; seen in 38 other counties statewide.

Winter Wren
Probable nesting in Cook; seen in seven other northern counties plus Washington.

Sedge Wren
Observed in 41 counties throughout the state.

Marsh Wren
Nested in *Kittson* KB, Roseau; probable nesting in Polk, Clearwater, Aitkin. Seen in 25 other counties in all regions except northeast.

Golden-crowned Kinglet
Seen in Roseau, Clearwater, Hubbard, Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Reported in Roseau, Beltrami, St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Nested in Anoka, Brown, *Winona* HVA; seen in 13 other counties as far north as Sherburne and as far west as Renville.

Eastern Bluebird
Nested in eight counties, probable nesting in five; seen in 39 additional counties statewide.

Mountain Bluebird
Probable nesting of male Mountain with female Eastern in Kittson (***The Loon*** 63:207-208); Mountain pair nested for second

straight year in Marshall, producing six young (JRo).

Veery
Probable nesting in Crow Wing; seen in 24 other counties as far south as a line through Clay, Scott, Houston.

Swainson's Thrush
Seen in Roseau, St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus early migrant **7/26** Hennepin SC.

Hermit Thrush
Seen in ten north central and northeastern counties plus Roseau, Becker.

Wood Thrush
Seen in 15 counties as far west as Brown, Crow Wing, and as far north as Lake; plus Lac Qui Parle, Becker, **Kittson** KB.

American Robin
Fewer reports than in previous five years. Nested in ten counties including *Kandiyohi* JR, *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in eight additional counties. Seen in 35 other counties statewide.

Gray Catbird
Fewer reports than usual. Nested in seven counties including *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in six. Observed in 37 other counties statewide.

Northern Mockingbird
Observed in Lake BR, Murray ND and **Kittson** RG.

Brown Thrasher
Nested in Le Sueur; seen in 42 other counties throughout state.

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT
Reported for second straight year in Roseau mob.

Cedar Waxwing
Nested in five counties including *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in two. Seen in 35 other counties statewide.

Loggerhead Shrike
Probable nesting in Washington, Dakota, Rice, Goodhue; also seen in Clay, Hubbard, Lac Qui Parle, Renville, Le Sueur, Mower.

European Starling
Nested in Brown, Le Sueur; probable nesting in Hennepin, Washington. Seen in 43 other counties statewide.

WHITE-EYED VIREO
Probable nesting record for state near Reno, *Houston* Co. CSc (***The Loon*** 64:50-52).

Bell's Vireo
Nested in *Winona* (***The Loon*** 63:206-207); also seen in Dakota, 6/14 Rock ND.

Solitary Vireo
Seen in Roseau, Crow Wing, St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

Yellow-throated Vireo
Nested in Crow Wing; seen in 29 additional counties in all regions except southwest and northeast.

Warbling Vireo
Fewer reports than in previous five years. Probable nesting in Rock; seen in 36 other counties in all regions except northeast.

Philadelphia Vireo
Probable nesting in Cook. Also seen in Lake; late migrant **6/6** Lac Qui Parle CMB.

Red-eyed Vireo
Nested in Clearwater, Becker; probable nesting in Crow Wing. Seen in 43 other counties statewide.

Blue-winged Warbler
Seen in Washington, Scott, Dakota, Rice, Goodhue, Winona, Houston; also 6/5 Nicollet LFi.

Golden-winged Warbler
Probable nesting in Clearwater, Aitkin, Washington; seen in 11 other counties within range plus migrants 6/1 Scott, (no date) Carver.

Tennessee Warbler
Seen in Roseau, Itasca, Lake, Cook; plus migrants 6/1, 7/25 Hennepin, 7/31 Clay.

Nashville Warbler
Probable nesting in Clearwater. Seen in 11 other north central and northeast counties plus Roseau, Mille Lacs, Kanabec; plus migrants 7/29 Clay, **7/8** Hennepin SC, CCD.

Northern Parula
Seen in Becker, Clearwater, Beltrami, Hubbard, Itasca, Aitkin, Lake, Cook.

Yellow Warbler
Nested in *Pennington* KSS, *Pipestone* JP, *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in Becker, Crow Wing, Anoka. Seen in 42 other counties statewide.

Chestnut-sided Warbler
Nested in *Becker* TNWR, Crow Wing. Seen in 17 other counties as far south as Sherburne, Anoka; plus migrants 6/1 Scott, 6/11 Mower.

Magnolia Warbler
Probable nesting in St. Louis, Cook; also seen in Roseau, Lake.

Cape May Warbler
Only reports: Lake, Cook.

Black-throated Blue Warbler
Seen in Lake, Cook; plus 6/23 **Becker** TNWR.

Yellow-rumped Warbler
Probable nesting in Clearwater. Seen in nine other north central and northeastern counties plus Roseau, Marshall.

Black-throated Green Warbler
Observed in nine north central and northeastern counties plus Roseau, Becker.

Blackburnian Warbler
Probable nesting in Cook; also seen in Roseau, Marshall, Beltrami, Clearwater, Koochiching, Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake.

Pine Warbler
Seen in six north central counties plus Roseau, Becker, St. Louis, Lake, Washington.

Palm Warbler
Reported in Roseau, Beltrami, St. Louis.

Bay-breasted Warbler
Only seen in Cook; observers reported seeing fewer birds.

Cerulean Warbler
Seen in Brown, Washington, Dakota, Goodhue, Houston.

Black-and-white Warbler
Seen in 15 counties as far south as a line through Kittson, Becker, Anoka; plus 7/20 Hennepin SC.

American Redstart
Nested in *Clearwater* DBI; probable nesting in five counties. Seen in 33 other counties in all regions except southwest.

Prothonotary Warbler
Probable nesting in Winona; also seen in Hennepin, Ramsey, Dakota, Houston.

Ovenbird
Probable nesting in Clearwater, Anoka; seen in 30 additional counties in all regions except southwest.

Northern Waterthrush
Seen in Kittson KB, Beltrami, Itasca, St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus 7/20 Mille Lacs RJ, 6/4 Washington PC, 7/28 Brown JS.

Louisiana Waterthrush
Only reports from Houston.

Connecticut Warbler
Observed in Kittson MH/AJ, Roseau, Hubbard, Koochiching, Itasca, Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake.

Mourning Warbler
Fewer reports than usual. Probable nesting in Crow Wing; seen in 11 other counties north of a line through Kittson, Clearwater, Kanabec; plus late migrants 6/1 Hennepin, 6/4 Washington.

Common Yellowthroat
Fewer reports than in past seven years. Probable nesting in Clearwater, Crow Wing, Kandiyohi; seen in 48 other counties.

Hooded Warbler
Only report from Scott.

Wilson's Warbler
Only reports: 6/1 St. Louis, 6/22 Lake.

Canada Warbler
Seen in Clearwater, St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

Scarlet Tanager
Nested in Anoka; seen in 29 other counties

in all regions except southwest.

Northern Cardinal
Nested in Brown, Washington, *Mower* JM, *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in Le Sueur, Olmsted. Seen in 17 other southern counties plus Becker TNWR, Cass DH, St. Louis Co. (Eveleth) SW/MS.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Nested in Brown; probable breeding in seven counties. Seen in 35 other counties statewide.

Blue Grosbeak
Nested in Nobles. Seen in Rock, Murray, Pipestone; plus five birds at Lake Benton on 6/2 in **Lincoln** PS.

Indigo Bunting
Nested in Le Sueur, probable nesting in Clearwater; seen in 46 other counties statewide.

Dickcissel
Gradual decline in reports continues, following peak in 1988. Seen in 39 counties as far north as a line through Marshall, Wadena, Sherburne, Anoka.

Rufous-sided Towhee
Seen in 15 counties north of a rough diagonal from Kittson to Houston; plus Brown, Nicollet, Blue Earth.

Chipping Sparrow
Nested in seven counties including *Nobles* ND, *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in four. Seen in 40 other counties statewide.

Clay-colored Sparrow
Nested in Beltrami, *Washington* WL; probable nesting in Crow Wing, Kandiyohi. Seen in 31 other counties as far south as Pipestone, Murray, Rice, Goodhue.

Field Sparrow
More reports than usual, for second straight year. Nested in Anoka, Brown; seen in 29 additional counties as far north as Clay, Becker, Crow Wing; plus 6/14 **Pennington** RJ.

Vesper Sparrow
Sharp drop in number of reports compared to previous five years. Nested in *Kittson* KB, Anoka; seen in 37 other counties in all regions except northeast.

Lark Sparrow
Nested in Anoka; probable nesting in Clay, Washington. Also seen in Kittson, Roseau, Polk, Renville, Sherburne, Wabasha.

Lark Bunting
One male observed 6/23 Chippewa CMB.

Savannah Sparrow
Fewer reports than in previous five years. Nested in KB, St. Louis; seen in 39 other counties statewide.

BAIRD'S SPARROW
One observed on 6/1 in Felton Prairie area, Clay Co. KR (***The Loon*** 63:275); also singing male observed 6/19 to 7/9 within Roseau River WMA, Roseau Co. KB (***The Loon*** 63:284-285).

Grasshopper Sparrow
Decline in reports continues for second straight year. Seen in 26 counties north to a line through Roseau, Otter Tail, Sherburne, Washington; plus Aitkin, Itasca.

Henslow's Sparrow
Seen at O.L. Kipp State Park, Winona Co.; plus 6/1&5 Hyland Park, Hennepin Co. SC.

Le Conte's Sparrow
Seen in 11 northern counties plus 7/27 Traverse; also two birds present through early June in Anoka (***The Loon*** 63:203).

Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Twice the usual number of reports; seen in Kittson, Roseau, Marshall, Polk, Clearwater AB, Wilkin, Aitkin.

Song Sparrow
Fewer reports than in previous five years. Nested in Lake, Brown; probable nesting in six counties. Seen in 44 additional counties statewide.

Lincoln's Sparrow
Almost triple the usual number of reports; seen in Roseau, Marshall, Lake of the Woods, Beltrami, Clearwater, Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus late migrants **6/9** Lac Qui Parle

CMB, **6/23** Swift CMB.

Swamp Sparrow
Seen in 36 counties statewide.

White-throated Sparrow
Nested in Clearwater, Hubbard, St. Louis; seen in ten other counties as far south as Becker, Aitkin.

Dark-eyed Junco
Seen in Roseau, Pennington, Lake and Cook Counties.

Chestnut-collared Longspur
Several reports from traditional site in Clay (probable nesting).

Bobolink
Nested in **Roseau** KB, Brown; seen in 45 other counties statewide.

Red-winged Blackbird
Relatively few reports for second straight year. Nested in five counties including *Kittson* KB, *Kandiyohi* JR; probable nesting in three others. Seen in 50 other counties statewide.

Eastern Meadowlark
Nested in Winona HVA; seen in 21 additional counties as far west as Cass, Kandiyohi, Blue Earth.

Western Meadowlark
Fewer reports than in previous five years. Seen in 40 counties in all regions including Lake DPV in northeast.

Yellow-headed Blackbird
Relatively few reports. Nested in Kittson KB; probable nesting in Clearwater, Kandiyohi. Seen in 39 other counties statewide including Lake (fide KE).

Brewer's Blackbird
Observed in 28 counties as far south as Lyon, Hennepin; plus 6/1 Faribault RJ.

Common Grackle
Fewer reports than in past five years. Nested in four counties, probable nesting in four; seen in 43 additional counties statewide.

Brown-headed Cowbird
Breeding reported in Anoka, Brown, *Winona* HVA; probable breeding in Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hennepin. Parasitized species included Eastern Phoebe, American Robin, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal; plus Chipping, Field, Lark, and Song Sparrow. Seen in 44 additional counties statewide.

Orchard Oriole
More reports than usual. Probable nesting in Clay, Traverse, Lac Qui Parle; seen in 17 other southern counties plus Wilkin, Norman, Pennington, Reed Lake, Marshall, Kittson, Roseau.

Northern Oriole
Nested in Kittson, *Aitkin* WN, Brown; probable nesting in 12 counties. Seen in 38 additional counties statewide.

Purple Finch
Probable nesting in Lake of the Woods and Crow Wing counties. Seen in 16 other counties south to a line through Marshall, Becker, Mille Lacs; plus Washington, Hennepin, Kandiyohi JR.

House Finch
Number of reports similar to last year. Nested in *Otter Tail* SDM, *Mower* JM, *Fillmore* GMD, Winona; probable nesting in five southern counties plus Becker. Seen in eight other southern counties plus Clay, Pennington and Polk.

Red Crossbill
Nested in St. Louis; also seen in Lake, Clearwater, Becker, Crow Wing, Kanabec, McLeod.

White-winged Crossbill
Only report from Cook.

Pine Siskin
Seen in 11 northern counties plus Hennepin, Washington, Rice TB.

American Goldfinch
Nested in *Washington* WL, *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in Crow Wing, Lyon. Seen in 52 other counties statewide.

Evening Grosbeak
Probable nesting in Hubbard, Aitkin; seen in eight other north central and northeast counties plus Roseau, Becker.

House Finch at nest, June 1991, Perham, Otter Tail County. Photo by Kevin Scheidecker.

House Sparrow
Nested in six counties including *Becker* BB; probable nesting in three. Seen in 42 additional counties statewide.

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Addendum: The following record should be added to the Spring Seasonal Report ***The Loon*** 63:258 under Purple Martin: **3/20** Lyon HK.

Birds of the Lost Valley Prairie Scientific and Natural Area Washington County, Minnesota

Part Two: 1991

William H. Longley

Introduction

The physical and vegetative features of the Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) were described in ***The Loon*** 63:34-37. In addition to the natural succession taking place in the agricultural fields abandoned before 1990, another 3.3 acres of cornfield were not tilled in 1991 and grew to dense weedy grasses and herbs. In late May, in accordance with prairie management procedures, this small field and three ridges were burned, about 20 acres in all. American Plum thickets, patches of sumac, and about 65 medium to large Red Cedar were killed or severely damaged. By 7 June, the sumac had sprouted vigorously to about 18 inches high. Although to some extent, the tops of the plum thickets survived the fire, their value for birds was largely lost. SNA workers girdled some large Box Elder and Pin Cherry and cut out an acre or so of plum,

Table One
Nesting and Inferred Nesting — Birds Present During the 1991 Nesting Season

Red-tailed Hawk: One pair; on 9 May, downy chick visible in last year's nest and later it was flying with the adults.
Ring-necked Pheasant: Three territories (one or two in 1990); cocks crowing 25 March to 8 October.
Mourning Dove: Eight pairs (ten in 1990); only one nest found.
Black-billed Cuckoo: One pair (two in 1990); nest with two young on 6 July.
Downy Woodpecker: Two pairs.
Northern Flicker: Three pairs (one or two in 1990); female at nest hole on 9 May.
Willow Flycatcher: One territory; bird calling 9 and 30 May, two on 7 June, two on 16 August, last on 4 September.
Eastern Kingbird: Three pairs (one in 1990); adult with three young on 16 July.
Blue Jay: Six pairs (two less than 1990); nest with eggs on 9 May.
Black-capped Chickadee: Three pairs, possibly four (seven in 1990); pairs seen digging nest holes in two places in April.
White-breasted Nuthatch: One pair (none in 1990); nest hole located on 9 May.
House Wren: Eleven territories (down from 19 in 1990).
American Robin: Eight or nine pairs (12 in 1990); three nests found.
Gray Catbird: Apparently 22 or 23 pairs (25 in 1990).
Brown Thrasher: Eight or nine territories (ten in 1990); a group of ten on 25 June, all apparently adults — two were singing males.
European Starling: One pair (none in 1990); carrying nest material into hole on 17 April; probably unsuccessful nesting.
Common Yellowthroat: Eight or nine territories (six in 1990).
Northern Cardinal: Eight pairs (13 in 1990); female with young on 30 May.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Eight pairs (seven or eight in 1990).
Indigo Bunting: Five territories (eight in 1990).
Clay-colored Sparrow: Twelve pairs (same as 1990); two nests with eggs, 30 May and 25 July.
Field Sparrow: Fourteen pairs (same as 1990).
Vesper Sparrow: Four pairs (six in 1990).
Song Sparrow: Twenty-two territories (27 in 1990). At least two family groups seen plus one with a young cowbird.
Brown-headed Cowbird: Probably five females and at least five males (same as 1990).
Northern Oriole: Three pairs (four in 1990).
American Goldfinch: Five, possibly six pairs (six in 1990); two nests found, one under construction on 25 July, the other with only one egg and two just hatched on 16 August.

which they piled up for burning. Another habitat change was the conversion of last year's 13-acre oat field to Alsike Clover with some Timothy.

Methods

The spot-mapping method was used as described in ***The Loon*** 62:46-50. On 17 days from 25 March to 8 October 1991, I traversed the area, beginning near dawn on each trip. Excluding one trip that was aborted because of rain, I spent an average of seven hours per trip in the area.

Results

I recorded 95 species of birds on or over the SNA, six more than in 1990. The two-year total is 115 species. A total of 27 species apparently nested on the SNA, two less than in 1990 (Table 1). The two-year total is 32 species. Local species recorded on or over the area, but not nesting on the SNA, numbered 43, six more than in 1990 (Table 2). Transient species numbered 25, two more than 1990 (Table 3). Based upon a minimum of 178 pairs or inferred pairs on the 200 acres, the population density was 89 pairs per 100 acres (106 in 1990).

Discussion

In the 1930s and perhaps earlier, the Minnesota Department of Conservation campaigned against the agricultural practice of spring burning. Through the 4-H Club organization, the department asked farmers to sign a pledge that they would refrain from burning sloughs and ditches during the nesting season of game birds (Greater Prairie-Chickens, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Northern Bobwhite, Ring-necked Pheasants, and wa-

Table Two
Birds Recorded in 1991 but Not Apparently Nesting

Double-crested Cormorant: On 24 April 1991, 115 migrants flew over.
Great Blue Heron: On two dates in April, two and five flew over.
Great Egret: One flew over in April.
Canada Goose: One flew over in April.
Wood Duck: A pair flew over low on 5 April (cavity search?).
Mallard: A pair circled low over fields on 17 April.
Turkey Vulture: One to four soaring mostly over the central hills on eight trips, 25 March to 4 September. On the latter date, two immatures perched in a tall Cottonwood and twice circled low over me, as close as 25 feet. Nesting here is not improbable.
Northern Harrier: Seen coursing over on two April dates.
Cooper's Hawk: One in May, June, August, and September. On 30 May, a female scolded as if nest or young were near.
American Kestrel: Pair hunting on the area on 30 May.
Ruffed Grouse: Far from good habitat, one flushed, 5 April.
Killdeer: One or two on or over the area, 25 March to 19 June.
American Woodcock: Three singles flushed on 25 March.
Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Seen/heard 25 June, 4 and 25 July.
Great Horned Owl: One present on 24 April and 30 May.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: One on 4 September (migrant).
Red-headed Woodpecker: One on 9 May.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: One flew over on 17 March.
Eastern Wood-Pewee: Two on 4 July, one on 16 July.
Eastern Phoebe: One in September.
Least Flycatcher: Six present on 9 May, two on 16 August, and one on 4 September; probably were all migrants.
Great Crested Flycatcher: One present on 30 May, two on 19 June and 4 July, and three or four on 16 August.
Horned Lark: On 9 and 30 May, a singer larked over the west cornfield.
Tree Swallow: Four to eight flew over in April, May, August, and September.
Northern Rough-winged Swallow: A few in May and in September.
Cliff Swallow: Eight coursed over a field in September.
Barn Swallow: Two to eight individuals hunted over the area on eight dates from 9 May to 4 September.
American Crow: One to four birds in and around the area from March to September.
Sedge Wren: One singing on 9 May in long grass (later this field was burned).
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: One singing on 16 August.
Eastern Bluebird: Birds present from 25 March to 8 October on ten trips, but mostly passing by.
Cedar Waxwing: Birds seen on six dates, April through October, but not in May or June.
American Redstart: One singer only on 30 May and 16 August.
Ovenbird: Five singers on 9 May.
Rufous-sided Towhee: One singer on 9 May and 4 September.
Chipping Sparrow: Present on four dates—24 April, 9 May (seven birds, only one singer), 25 July, and 16 August.
Savannah Sparrow: One on 30 May.
Swamp Sparrow: Six birds on 9 May, only one singing; at least two on 8 October; were all probable migrants.
Eastern Meadowlark: One singing on 17 and 24 April, and 19 June.
Western Meadowlark: One sang on 30 May.
Red-winged Blackbird: Birds of passage this year, except a few fed in the cornfield in June.
Common Grackle: A few high flyers in spring and summer.
Orchard Oriole: One sang on 9 May.

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terfowl) and songbirds. Spring burning was recognized as a very destructive practice in those days, particularly in the case of the large single-brooded bird species. In these days, land management by the Department of Natural Resources should preclude burning during the spring months when bird nests contain eggs or precocious young, unless burning at other times will not accomplish the goal of maintaining the desired prairie veg-

Table Three
Transients (Migrants) Not Ordinarily Nesting in the Vicinity Recorded in 1991

Snow Goose	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Palm Warbler
Rough-legged Hawk	Blackpoll Warbler
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Black-and-White Warbler
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Northern Waterthrush
Brown Creeper	American Tree Sparrow
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Fox Sparrow
Veery	Lincoln's Sparrow
Hermit Thrush	White-throated Sparrow
Tennessee Warbler	Dark-eyed Junco
Orange-crowned Warbler	Rusty Blackbird
Nashville Warbler	Purple Finch
Magnolia Warbler	

etation.

On the Lost Valley Prairie SNA, the decline (16%) in the number of inferred nesting pairs from 1990 may be related to the prescribed burn that took place in late May. However, there is little assurance that other factors are not involved, including sample size and variation due to chance alone. The species which decreased include some year-round residents, some of which winter in central or southern states, and some of which winter in Mexico or Central or South America.

Nineteen species decreased from 1990 to 1991. Six of these were reduced by a total of 27 pairs: these were Black-capped Chickadee (-3), House Wren (-8), American Robin (-3), Northern Cardinal (-5), Song Sparrow (-5), and Indigo Bunting (-3). Excepting the Gray Catbird, which decreased by two or three pairs, the other 13 species decreased only by one or two pairs each.

I think the decrease in House Wren territories illustrates the effect of the fire in causing homeless males to move and to attempt to invade the territories of others of their species. This year, there were 20 singing males on 7 June, but at the end of the song period, I could identify only 11 territories, whereas last year I was able to plot 19. Many of the extra males seemed to have scattered. As an example, six wrens sang (three in each of two localities) on 7 June, but were not there on subsequent trips. These "extra" males probably were among the ones showing up later very close to other singing males on territories. Gray Catbirds, Brown Thrashers, and Clay-colored, Field, and Song Sparrows also exhibited similar movements, and I believe that successful nesting was less than the number of plotted territories would suggest.

Seven species increased by a total of nine to 13 pairs, but no species nested here in 1991 that was not present in 1990. The Yellow-billed Cuckoo was the only species presumed nesting here in 1990 that was not recorded in 1991.

It is also interesting to speculate what the population of the SNA might be without cultivation. Nearly half of the area has been devoted to production of corn, a particularly barren ecological desert having a value only for providing "edge." Presumably when cultivation is discontinued, the edge effect will continue but the fields will provide a variety of vegetation of greater use to animals. There was practically no use of the cornfields by birds; if the estimated 90 acres of corn were deducted, leaving 110 acres of bird breeding habitat, the total of inferred breeding pairs would nearly double.

But should the entire area be converted to prairie, the bird population would probably shrink rather than increase. Few of the present species could remain without the shrubs and the great amount of "edge". Very few new species would be gained; possible prairie species would be Horned Lark, Eastern and Western Meadowlarks, Grasshopper and Savannah Sparrows. **532 W. Broadway, Forest Lake, MN 55025.**

Birds of the Falls Creek Scientific and Natural Area Washington County, Minnesota, 1991

William H. Longley

I. Description of Area

The Falls Creek Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) is located in New Scandia Township in northeast Washington County, Minnesota. It occupies the NWNW and SWNW of Section 7, Range 20 West, and most of the SESE and NESE east of State Highway 95 in Section 12, a total area of about 135 acres. The area is steeply dissected by a dendritic drainage pattern, with two main branches of ravines leading to the St. Croix River about 1/4 mile to the east. There is a relief of about 190 feet from northwest to southeast.

There are four fields of 3.9, 6.6, 7.8, and 12.6 acres (totaling about 31 acres or 21% of the total area) on the relatively flat plateau at an altitude of about 950 ft. The lowest location, about 760 ft, is in the southeast corner of SWNW, Section 7, where Falls Creek flows a few yards across the corner (the only part of the permanent creek within the SNA).

Northern Red Oak, White Oak, Red Maple, and White Pine are dominant on the wooded 79% of the area. Basswood, White Birch, and Big-toothed Aspen are of secondary importance. Mainly, the individuals of these seven tree species are quite large, and evidence of larger trees shows in old stumps. The understory species of importance is Ironwood, with some very large specimens. Prickly Ash is unnecessarily and annoyingly abundant, especially at the forest edge. Otherwise, shrubbery of value to birds is relatively scarce. Only in the northernmost 40 acres is there any significant amount of varied underbrush and the accompanying variation of passerine species. Species of raspberry, blackberry, and currants, plus Red-berried Elder and Chokecherry, are important. Of herbs, the usual spring-flowering woodland species are found, although very few in number or species under the White Pines. White Snakeroot is quite noticeable in late summer and fall. One introduced species of unusual abundance is Dames Rocket, an escaped garden plant which blooms long into the fall. Kitten-tails, a rare midwest plant listed as endangered, also occur on the SNA.

Vegetation of the three fields that have not been cultivated for a few years is running to perennials, such as Quack Grass, goldenrods, and Daisy Fleabane, but the largest field still has large patches of annuals, mostly Horseweed, foxtails including Giant Foxtail, Lesser Ragweed, and some Giant Ragweed (from which I noted chickadees taking fruits to nearby trees to break open for the seeds). The southwest field (6.6 acres) is mostly Alfalfa and Smooth Brome Grass which was cut for hay until this year.

II. Methods

1. The spot-mapping method was used as described in ***The Loon*** 62:46-50.

2. On 20 days during the period 11 March - 21 October 1991, beginning near dawn, I walked the field edges, old logging and deer trails, and recorded locations of all birds noticed. The entire area was not traversed each day, owing to the rough terrain, or rising wind or rain, and in summer, the diminishing returns of continuing observations after about 10:00 A.M. In all, 115 hours were spent on the area, an average of 5.8 hours per trip.

III. Results

1. I recorded 98 species of birds in the SNA during 1991.

2. A total of 37 species nested or were suspected of nesting in the area (Table 1).

3. Species recorded on or over the SNA, but probably did not nest there, numbered 40 (Table 2).

4. Transient species (migrants) numbered 21 (Table 3).

5. Population density of all bird species, based upon a minimum of 100 nesting pairs and an area of 135 acres, was 0.74 pairs per acre.

IV. Discussion

Falls Creek SNA, because it has old growth forest and so much of steep ravine slope, does not have as great a density of breeding birds as Boot Lake SNA or Lost Valley Prairie SNA. In fact, it has only 53 percent and 70

Table One
Nesting and Inferred Nesting

Ruffed Grouse: One on 7 May. Female with two young on 2 July in same place.

Black-billed Cuckoo: One pair; present 20 May to 19 August.

Great Horned Owl: One pair; present 11 April to 31 August. Adult with one screaming young on 12 June.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Apparently two pairs; recorded on 14 trips, 2 April to 21 October.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: One pair; drumming on 18 April, 20 May, 22 June, and 23 July. Pair seen twice.

Downy Woodpecker: Two territories evident. Recorded on 15 trips.

Hairy Woodpecker: Two territories probable. Recorded on ten trips.

Northern Flicker: Two territories probable. Recorded on eight trips, 18 April to 19 August.

Pileated Woodpecker: One territory. Recorded on five trips, 11 March to 1 August.

Eastern Wood-Pewee: Five territories; pair with three young on 16 August. Recorded on 13 trips; seven "singers" on 12 June.

Least Flycatcher: One pair; one or two birds recorded on seven trips, 20 May through 11 September.

Eastern Phoebe: One pair. Nest with eggs on 20 May.

Great Crested Flycatcher: Three pairs. Two young with adult on 1 August. Birds present 7 May to 9 August; five "singers" on 4 June.

Blue Jay: Three pairs probable.

Black-capped Chickadee: Seven pairs. Family groups seen in five territories.

White-breasted Nuthatch: Four, possibly five, territories.

House Wren: Three territories, possibly four. Only two family groups seen.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: One territory, possibly two. One family group seen. Three singers on 22 June. Birds present 20 May to 9 August.

Wood Thrush: Four territories (one partly outside the SNA). Four singers on 20 May; four other temporary singers. Birds present 7 May to 31 August.

American Robin: Two territories. One nest found after young left. A third pair nested a few feet outside boundary.

Gray Catbird: Three territories probable with "extra" singing males on occasion.

Yellow-throated Vireo: One territory partly in the SNA. Birds present from 20 May to 31 August. A few scattered singers.

Red-eyed Vireo: Six territories, plus one partly in the SNA. Ten singers on 12 June. Young were detected only in two places.

Pine Warbler: One territory, possibly two. Four singers on 7 May, three on 20 May and 22 June. Young seen on 19 August may have been migrants.

American Redstart: Two territories likely. Three singers on 20 May and 4 June.

Ovenbird: Eleven territories. At least 15 singers on 20 May, ten on 12 June.

Scarlet Tanager: Four territories apparent. Four singers on 12 June; females seen in three territories.

Northern Cardinal: Three territories, including one with a nest on the boundary line. Females seen in all three.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Two territories, perhaps three, plus two straddling the north boundary line. Four singers on 4 and 12 June.

Indigo Bunting: Four territories; young produced in three of them. Five singers on 4 and 12 June, 13 July, and 1 August. Three or four "extra" males.

Chipping Sparrow: Two territories, possibly three; young Chippies produced in one and a cowbird in another. Six singers on 4 June, five on the 12th.

Field Sparrow: One territory. One singing 4 June to 9 July.

Vesper Sparrow: One territory. One singing 18 April to 2 July.

Song Sparrow: Six, possibly seven, territories. Several extra males sang on several dates, 10 on 12 June. Only one Song Sparrow was recorded on the five trips after 1 August. Also befuddling was the lack of signs of nesting, such as pairs protesting my intrusions or sightings of immatures.

Brown-headed Cowbird: Four females and seven males were the maximum number on any one day. This could be interpreted as four territories. Birds were recorded on nine trips, 18 April-13 July.

Northern Oriole: Apparently one pair. A young one was seen with an adult on July 9, but no orioles were seen thereafter.

American Goldfinch: Only one evident territory; young were seen there on 9 August. Singing males were recorded in several places.

Table Two
Birds Recorded at the Area but Probably Not Nesting

Great Blue Heron: Up to five flying over from St. Croix River.
Great Egret: One on 20 May (as above).
Canada Goose: Eight on 5 May (as above).
Mallard: Three overhead on 7 May; female alit on creek.
Turkey Vulture: Two over field on 7 May; one on 2 June.
Red-shouldered Hawk: One overhead on 11 March, 20 May, and 4 June.
Red-tailed Hawk: One seen on five days, 11 April-9 August.
Ring-necked Pheasant: One cock crowing on 7 May.
Wild Turkey: One probable escaped bird flushed from oak tree on 23 July.
Killdeer: One overhead 7 May.
Rock Dove: One or two flew over from adjacent barn.
Mourning Dove: Calling bird on 11 April and 20 May; pair seen in June and August.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: One seen on five dates, 20 May - 19 August. Probably nested just outside boundary.
Belted Kingfisher: One over creek in August.
Barn Swallow: One seen feeding over fields in May and June.
Tree Swallow: One flew over on two dates in June and August.
American Crow: One to nine were seen or heard on 11 dates; several times mobbing activity was heard. One carried sticks from the area in April.
Winter Wren: One seen among rocks and logs on 11 April, and one sang in the deep woods on 22 June.
Eastern Bluebird: Pair present on four days, 11 March - 18 April; one heard in May and July; three seen on 21 October.
Brown Thrasher: One singing on 20 May.
Cedar Waxwing: Four seen on 4 June.
Blue-winged Warbler: Males singing on 4 and 12 June in widely separated sites; one male on the 12th was highly agitated. Last seen on 27 August.
Golden-winged Warbler: Male seen with two young on 9 July; one singing just outside boundary on 4 and 12 June. Last seen on 27 August.
Cerulean Warbler: One singing on 20 May and 22 June.
Louisiana Waterthrush: One seen 27 August.
Mourning Warbler: One singing on 4 June. This date might represent a late migrant.
Common Yellowthroat: One seen on 20 May and 27 August.
Hooded Warbler: One seen singing on 20 May and 22 June at same site. Could this be considered a migrant?
Rufous-sided Towhee: One heard on 12 June.
Swamp Sparrow: One singing on 7 May in unsuitable habitat was a migrant.
Red-winged Blackbird: Seen only on 7 May (one) and 21 October (12).
Common Grackle: Seen only on 21 October (60).
Pine Siskin: Up to three singers present on six trips, 11 March to 20 May.
House Sparrow: Six seen on 18 April; many west of boundary in farmyard.

Table Three
Transients (Migrants) Not Ordinarily Nesting in the Vicinity

Acadian Flycatcher
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Brown Creeper
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Hermit Thrush
Solitary Vireo
Tennessee Warbler
Nashville Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Magnolia Warbler
Cape May Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler
Bay-breasted Warbler
Black-and-White Warbler
Wilson's Warbler
American Tree Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Lapland Longspur

percent, respectively (***The Loon*** 62:46-50 and 63:34-37). On the other hand, Falls Creek has a few percent more species and 21 percent more nesting species than Lost Valley Prairie. Boot Lake SNA, being larger and with more varied habitat including lake and marsh, had in two years an average of 27 more species (28 percent) and 23 more nesting or inferred nesting species (62 percent). **532 W. Broadway, Forest Lake, MN 55025.**

Notes on Wintering Northern Shrikes in Central Minnesota

Michael D. Lee, Mark A. Carroll and Raymond P. Marinan

Introduction

Northern Shrikes (*Lanius excubitor invictus*) were studied from 3 January 1991, to 10 April 1991. Observations were made in the central Minnesota counties of Aitkin, Benton, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Sherburne, and Wright. Efforts were concentrated in and around the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge (Sherburne NWR) in central Sherburne County. The 30,000 acre refuge, managed for waterfowl production, provides extensive habitat for wintering Northern Shrikes. This study was undertaken to increase understanding of this visitor on its wintering grounds.

Materials and Methods

For banding and field examination purposes, shrikes were trapped using a Balchatri trap baited with a laboratory-raised house mouse. Shrikes were marked using United States Fish & Wildlife Service bands, size 1A, which were painted red with fingernail polish. Overall condition of the bird, primarily feather and bill wear, as well as prominence of the keel, were checked at the time of banding.

Several strategies were employed to aid in examining feeding and associated behaviors. First, laboratory mice were set free on the ground in view of the shrike. Later, to aid in following the bird's activities after dispatching its prey, a colored streamer was attached to the tail of the mouse. Streamers of variable length (10-30 cm) were attached to the base of the tail using 10 lb. monofiliment line. Then, weight was similarly attached to the mouse to determine lifting capability. Eventually, a mouse was attached to a fixed object, using a three-meter length of 10-lb. monofiliment line, in hopes of watching the bird eat the mouse on the spot. We took this idea a step further, using as one of our fixed objects an artificial tree equipped with numerous nails to serve as thorns for impalement purposes. On one occasion, a previously captured House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), primary wing feathers clipped, was also streamered, but by the foot. Each time a prey item was placed out, we backed up the vehicle approximately 10-50 m and continued observation.

Prey selection was determined through pellet analysis and direct field observations. Pellets were obtained by search of an area below where a bird was observed casting a pellet. Pellets were allowed to dry prior to examination under a dissecting microscope. Contents of the pellets were identified based upon skull fragments and hair analysis.

Results and Discussion

Northern Shrikes were observed 56 times at 36 different locations during our study. For each observation, the habitat was described and the location of the bird was noted. On the basis of repeat sightings in the same location, we were able to make generalizations about a specific bird's habitat preference and the size of its home range.

Habitat

Shrikes were seen in a variety of habitats. Marshland was the dominant habitat type in 81% (29 of 36) of the locations where sightings occurred, with the remaining seven locations primarily upland in nature. Furthermore, although equal effort was put towards searching all open areas for shrike presence, the vast majority of our sightings, 75% (42 of 56), were made within varying types of marsh

habitats.

In an effort to determine more specific habitat preferences, we further classified marshland habitats based upon the amount of woody vegetation present. We defined three categories: thick brush, coverage over 50% woody vegetation; open/scattered brush, coverage under 50% woody vegetation; and open, little or no woody vegetation. Of the 29 marshland sightings, 11 (38%) were in the thick brush category, and nine (31%) each in the remaining two categories. This indicated that there was no habitat preference based solely upon amounts of woody vegetation present.

The remaining 19% (seven of 36) of our sightings occurred in upland habitats. Four of these occurred in areas composed mainly of grasslands. The three remaining areas were dominated by woodland vegetation.

Home Range

Shrikes on Sherburne NWR were more concentrated than those found elsewhere. Apparently, this was due to a combination of factors. First, the refuge contained large continuous acreages of favorable habitat. The size of these inter-connected habitats was large enough to allow for multiple bird use. Second, favorable off-refuge habitats were more widely scattered due to agricultural practices. These scattered habitat fragments were seldom large enough to support more than one wintering shrike.

Based on extended observations of specific birds, we were able to estimate some home range sizes. Off-refuge, a typical home range encompassed a square mile or more. With one exception, home ranges on the refuge were close to half this size.

Behavior

Shrikes were usually first spotted sitting on the uppermost portion of a tree or bush. Perch heights were variable, ranging from on the ground to more than 15m high. Several factors influenced perching heights. First, the height of available perch sites (trees, bushes, high wires, fence rows, etc.) obviously dictated limits of perch heights. In general, a shrike would sit atop the highest available perch within the area it was using. Second, various activities and behaviors (e.g. hunting, preening, and feeding) directly or indirectly influenced where a shrike would be sitting. Finally, weather conditions seemed to have an impact as to where the shrike would sit. During periods of strong wind and/or heavy snowfall, shrikes were often observed in slightly more sheltered locations among the lower branches.

Feeding

The sequence of behaviors associated with feeding was observed in whole or part on several occasions. Generally, the sequence consisted of: initial prey sighting (hunting), prey pursuit, dispatch of prey, transport of prey, prey caching (storage for later consumption), prey consumption. It should be noted, the latter two steps were not always consistent with the sequence since cached items may not have been eaten and some prey items were eaten without prior caching.

The initial sighting of prey items occurred from an elevated perch in virtually every instance we observed. Consistent with Bent (1950) and Cade (1962), we found this to be the predominant method of hunting. While holding its body rigid with tail parallel to the ground, the shrike would scan an area for several seconds and then rapidly turn its head to view another direction. Upon initial sighting, prey pursuit commenced.

Prey pursuit was generally initiated by a vertical drop from the perch with a simultaneous extension of the wings. On a few occasions, however, shrikes were observed pushing off the perch with wings and feet to gain altitude. Once airborne, the shrike would head directly to the prey, exhibiting the characteristic low semi-undulating flight described by Bent (1950). Upon nearing the prey, the shrike would begin a shallow, continuous swoop, approximately three undulations in length, terminating the pursuit by landing next to its prey. On several occasions, the shrike ended its pursuit flight by hovering above the prey before dropping next to it. This was most often witnessed when using the Balchatri trap, but also in more natural settings. On several other occasions, the shrike would end its pursuit flight by swooping upward to a perch overlooking the prey. In the above descriptions, the prey item was a mouse, most often one placed out by the researchers. In an isolated incident, we witnessed initial sighting and prey pursuit of what appeared to be an American Tree Sparrow (*Spizella arborea*). In chasing avian prey, the semi-undulating flight became an aerobatic display following

every twist and turn the sparrow made. After more than half a minute, the shrike broke off the chase and went to the nearest perch.

In all seven observed instances of prey dispatch, the method of killing was similar. In each case, the prey was a laboratory mouse placed in full view of the shrike. Landing beside the mouse, the shrike would take one or two steps toward the mouse, biting it with a quick, twisting motion at the base of the head behind the ears. Almost immediately, the shrike would back away one or two steps, look around, and prepare for another strike. The mouse always survived at least the first two attacks, but was noticeably weakened. The second and subsequent strikes followed the first in pattern, but the interval between strikes would vary, depending on the effectiveness of the previous strike. A mouse capable of escape after a strike elicited an immediate follow-up strike. As the activity level of the mouse decreased, the intervals between strikes increased. In normal situations, a motionless (dead) mouse brought about an end to the strike sequence. Upon death of the prey, the shrike began the transport phase of the feeding sequence.

Apparently, a dead or otherwise motionless victim serves as a major stimulus for a shrike to begin the transport phase. This was exemplified by several experiments with tethered mice. The shrike would dispatch the mouse as described above and then initiate prey transport. However, when the tether halted the bird's advance, it would drop the mouse and alight on a nearby perch. Interestingly, the shrike would soon return to the prey, repeat the killing sequence, and then attempt to fly away again. Repeatedly, the shrike met resistance from the tether, dropped the mouse, and returned again to "kill" it. During one experiment, this sequence was observed 67 times before the bird gave up and flew away. Apparently, the shrike interprets the tether's resistance as a struggling mouse and tries to "re-kill" it. Tinbergen (1958) noted a similar "re-kill" behavior in Philanthus wasps.

Prey transport has been described by several authors. Bent (1950) quotes Floyd (1928) as reporting from 23 observers: 13 observed shrikes using the bill, seven using feet, and three using both feet and bill. Cade (1967) and Mester (1965) both describe the shrike using the feet and/or bill in prey transport. In all seven instances where we observed prey transport, the shrike would grab the mouse's neck with its bill and fly away. At about the third wingbeat, the mouse was transferred to the feet through a simultaneous lowering of the head and forward extension of the feet. This transfer occurred without any interruption to the flight pattern. Mester (1965) mentions a bill-to-feet transfer of a mouse occurring after the shrike had flown across a pond and then stopped to hover while the transfer took place. We noted that a shrike would land with the prey still in its feet. Unless this was a temporary stop, prey caching or consumption was initiated.

Prey caching was observed twice. The same shrike was responsible for both caches. We offered this shrike a mouse which it readily dispatched and then placed in a crotch of a small willow bush approximately 50m from the kill site. The shrike then returned to its original roadside perch, whereupon we offered a second mouse. The shrike killed this mouse and cached it in a larger willow bush, 100m in the opposite direction. The shrike began to return to the original perch, but was disturbed by a passing vehicle and circled back towards the second cache site. Immediately after the vehicle had passed, the shrike changed direction again and continued toward the original perch. However, its attention was diverted by prey in the grass below. This ended the flight pattern and initiated a short period of hovering before dropping to dispatch the prey. After dropping out of sight for a few seconds, the shrike reappeared with the prey in its feet and flew 300m in yet another direction to a brush pile, where it was lost from sight. The shrike was seen again 15 minutes later. We could find no evidence that the third prey item was cached. In a time span of less than two minutes, two mice were killed and cached and a third prey item was killed and carried away. The two cached mice remained for ten days before they disappeared.

Prey consumption was observed on two occasions. The first of these was an experiment wherein we offered the shrike a lab mouse with a colored streamer attached to its tail. The bird immediately dispatched it and flew to a brushy fence row consisting of hazel and sumac. When we later searched the fence row, we found the inverted skin of the mouse hanging from the streamer which had become entangled in a low hazel. In the snow below

the cleanly picked skin, a portion of the mouse's digestive tract was found. The anterior end of the skin was mutilated — from the neck forward. There was a longitudinal, ventral slit from the neck to the base of the tail. Apparently, the streamer became entangled during transport and the shrike ate the mouse at that spot. In this instance, the entangled streamer took the place of the traditional impaling structure.

The second instance involved a more natural situation wherein another shrike killed and ate a Meadow Vole. We observed this bird in its initial prey sighting, prey pursuit, prey transport, and prey consumption stages of feeding. A few moments after prey pursuit, the shrike transported the vole in its bill to the top of a 10m oak. After about a minute, it carried the vole 100m to another similar-sized oak tree. Unlike the previous perch, it landed amongst the branches 3m from the top, where it quickly found a crotch, wedged the vole, pulled off the head, and ate it.

The shrike then hopped around to a spot 4m away, where it defecated and "bill-wiped." It flew to the top of the tree, where it scratched its head and defecated again. Following this, the bird expelled a pellet. After a few moments, the bird returned to its vole, took it in its bill, and flew lower in the tree. Again it found a crotch, wedged the vole, and began ripping off pieces from the head end. Most pieces were torn from the vole with a twisting, tugging motion of the head. Some pieces required additional leverage, with use of the whole body and legs. Manipulating the pieces of food with a chewing motion of the bill, the shrike swallowed its food without tilting its head. The vole was repositioned as necessary to ensure a secure anchor point. Periodically, the shrike would bill-wipe on a nearby twig. When all that remained of the vole was a rear leg and the tail, the shrike moved away, bill-wiped and defecated, and then returned and flew away with what was left of the vole. Examination of the impaling site revealed hair pieces stuck in the crotch and on some surrounding twigs. Unlike the earlier described feeding, this vole was not skinned but rather eaten in its entirety. This feeding lasted 25-30 minutes.

On several occasions, different shrikes were observed expelling a pellet. On one occasion, a shrike was observed from behind as it cast a pellet. With a motion similar to preening the breast feathers, the shrike extended its head down and forward, opened its bill unusually wide, and cast the pellet. All other pellet expulsions were observed from in front of the bird. Several minutes prior to the actual event, a shrike would give clues that it was about to cast a pellet. The best clue was a wide opening of the bill, as if to utter a note, but with no sound being produced. This would be repeated at irregular intervals, 30 seconds to two minutes prior to casting the pellet.

Four pellets were recovered and analyzed. The pellets measured 20-40mm in length and 14-15mm in width at the widest point. Two pellets contained fragments of Meadow Vole; one, the remains of a Deer Mouse; and the other, the remains of a Masked Shrew. Two pellets contained insect parts. The only identifiable parts were those of a Coleopteran. Other insect parts were possibly from a Lepidopteran and another Coleopteran.

Voice

Except for one notable exception, vocalizations were confined to single notes given at intervals of several minutes. On a mild day in late March (5° C, clear sky, wind 5 kph), a very vocal shrike was heard singing. Best described as a cross between an American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) and a Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Centurus carolinus*), the exuberant and highly varied vocalizations were clearly audible at 500m and still distinguishable at 1000m. Bent (1950) and Zimmerman (1955) describe in detail the highly variable nature of the shrike's song, comparing it to that of several other birds, even noting instances of mimicry. From its tree-top perch, the shrike ascended to a height of 50m, where it hovered for several seconds, sang a trilling tumble of notes, and then returned to its perch tree. In the perch tree, the bird hopped erratically from branch to branch, singing more or less constantly. After several minutes of this hopping activity, the bird returned to the top of the tree and sat silently before repeating the whole process a few minutes later. This active singing and display went on for over an hour before the shrike flew out of the area. Trautman (Zimmerman, 1955) describes a similar hopping/vocalizing activity in late February in Ohio.

Departure

Warmer weather at the end of March coin-

cided with a lower frequency of sightings in the study area. In the Sherburne NWR area, the last shrike was seen on 10 April. Janssen (1987) lists the record late departure date as 21 April for this part of Minnesota.

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A County Big Year

Thomas H. Kent

Editor's Note: I was asked why I wanted to reprint the following article in ***The Loon***, an article on a County Big Year in Iowa, in a journal dealing with Minnesota birds. I think the answer will be rather obvious after you read the article. To record 255 species in one year in a rather ordinary county in east-central Iowa, in my opinion, is a monumental feat. This article demonstrates what can be done when a qualified observer makes an effort to study in depth the birds of his local area. It takes more effort, more planning and more skill than recording 300 species in the whole state (e.g. Minnesota) in one year. Tom Kent accomplished the amazing and I think his efforts are of interest and should be recognized by those of us in Minnesota who are interested in knowing where the birds are. The article was reprinted from *Iowa Bird Life* Vol. 61, No. 3 and my thanks to Tom Kent and Jim Dinsmore, editor of *Iowa Bird Life* for permission to reprint the article.

Many birders like to play games that involve finding species of birds in defined areas over defined periods of time. Games are a strong motivator of human behavior and tend to stimulate research, planning, and intensive activity. Personally, I get much more out of my birding activities if I have a plan or game involved. For 1990, I chose a project for which I could make maximum use of the time available and for which I could best use my own abilities. I set out to find as many species as possible in Johnson County in one year.

My first step in planning was to divide potential species into four categories and then estimate the number of each that I was likely to find: (1) expect to see, most without any special effort (181 species, all of which I should see); (2) good chance to see (35 of 52 species); (3) possible, but unlikely (10 of 46 species); (4) outside possibility (2 of 15 species). My goal was set for 228 species. Next, I plotted my available time against the dates

that I could look for the 98 species in categories 2 and 3. This gave me a month-by-month plan for species to look for. In order to add additional intensity to my efforts, I planned for a Big Day each month (two in May) and a week's vacation in May at the peak of migration. After the year began I added an additional goal: to drive all of the roads in the county.

January started out well. On a Big Day, alone, I found 45 species including six owls, six waterfowl, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Harris' Sparrow. During the rest of January and February, I covered about three-fourths of the roads and was rewarded by finding Northern Goshawk, Northern Shrike, and Gray Partridge. The latter species turned out to be present in all quadrants of the county. Intensive efforts to find Common Redpoll failed, but others (Tom Shires, Chuck Fuller) discovered Red and White-winged Crossbills near my office in the Medical Laboratories.

March also started out with a bang when I found a Ross' Goose with Greater White-fronted Geese near the Coralville Reservoir dam. Late in the month, high water brought large concentrations of waterfowl including Tundra Swan, American Black Duck, and Greater Scaup. An early Franklin's Gull and Lesser Golden-Plover were a welcome sight, and a large flock of Smith's Longspurs returned to the same field they were in the previous two years.

After a Big Day on 31 March, I went out on the afternoon of 1 April to look for and found Loggerhead Shrike and Brewer's Blackbird, the latter a difficult bird to find in Johnson County. On 7 April, I took a long, dull walk to Sand Point and was rewarded when a Sandhill Crane flew over. On 14 April, I finally flushed a Winter Wren after many hours of searching. On 15 April, my son-in-law's two dogs helped me flush a Le Conte's Sparrow from a grassy field. I usually find the sparrow in late April, but this year I would be birding in Texas at that time. On 16 April, it was raining when I got home from work, but I went out anyway and was rewarded with my first Osprey, American White Pelican, and Cattle Egret. My sister called about a wounded Cooper's Hawk the day before I was to leave for Texas, so after checking it out, I took her to the reservoir where we found 14 American Avocets and to Lake Macbride where we found three Eared Grebes.

May is usually my big birding month, and this year was no exception. I found 192 species in the county during the month. Some of the more unusual ones were Western Grebe, Clay-colored Sparrow, Northern Mockingbird (several locations), Ruddy Turnstone, Mississippi Kite, Alder Flycatcher, Connecticut Warbler, Prairie Warbler, and Peregrine Falcon. By the end of May, my year's list for Johnson County stood at 234 species, 6 more than my original goal. I set a new goal of 240 and reset my time priorities for the species that remained.

Summer is usually slow for new species, and I have less birding time. I added no new species in either June or July and only one in August, Little Blue Heron on the first. Water levels, which had been at flood levels in June and July, began to fall in August, leading to excellent fall habitat for shorebirds and herons.

Birding picked up in September, which turned out to be spectacular even though I took an 8-day birding trip to Newfoundland. Francis Moore and I found 104 species on 1 September, including Sanderling, which was new for the year. On the 2nd, when a passing car disturbed my shorebird watching, I noticed warblers moving in the roadside bushes. The first one in my binoculars was a Black-throated Blue Warbler, only my second one for the state (another was in my yard later in the month). Encouraged by the warbler movement, I went to Oakland Cemetery to look in the conifers for Cape May Warbler. Just as I was about to leave, I found two of them when I stopped to look at a flock of Chipping Sparrows. Later that same day, Jim Fuller reported Buff-breasted Sandpiper, which I was able to find the next morning. On the 8th, I added Snowy Egret, Red-necked Phalarope, and American Bittern at the Coralville Reservoir; a Merlin was there early the next morning. On the 22nd, I finally found my first American Pipit. One afternoon Jim Fuller suggested that we look for Sharp-tailed Sparrow. I picked the spot that seemed most likely and sure enough, it was there along with my two missing sure-fire species (Virginia Rail and Sedge Wren) as a bonus. Twelve new species for September brought my total to 246. Was 250 possible?

In October I had planned to look for rare diving ducks at the end of the month, but the

warm weather delayed the migration to November. The excellent water conditions at the Coralville Reservoir, however, produced the most spectacular finds of the year. After a Big Day on the 13th, which included a Western Sandpiper, I went out on the 14th to look over the Pectoral Sandpipers with the remote hope of finding a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Much to my surprise, I found a likely candidate and confirmed the field marks after it flew to a nearby pond. Fortunately, it was relocated late in the day and seen by many people. On the 27th, I listened to the second half of the Iowa football game while watching gulls at Babcock Access. I was about to leave when I saw a first-year gull that I thought would be my first Herring Gull of the fall, but repeated study over the next two hours convinced me that it was a first-year California Gull, a species that I had been able to study the week before in California. The bird was seen by many the next day. I was now at 250 for the year.

The first weekend in November produced one of the most spectacular fall fronts that I can remember. On Friday the 2nd, Dick Tetrault and I did a Big Day and found 10 shorebird, 10 sparrow, and 12 waterfowl species, the later heralding the first big influx of the fall. The front was stalled on Saturday with more waterfowl present. I anticipated Sunday would be better. The morning started out unexpectedly with a Red-throated Loon at the Coralville Lake dam area, and an hour later I found three White-winged Scoters at Mehaffey Bridge. The thousands of scaup were accompanied by many mergansers of all three species and all of the other common waterfowl. Even more impressive to me were 210 Common Loons in one sweep of the scope at Jolly Roger. This day also produced my luckiest bird of the year. Late in the afternoon, I was trying to relocate the Red-throated Loon for Ann Johnson and Beth Brown, when Jim Scheib came by and told us of a Varied Thrush found by Jim Fuller at the Macbride Nature Recreation Area. After driving around and re-evaluating the directions we had, I flushed the bird off the road, but it soon flew and was not seen again. Although the rest of November had nice weather, and I searched intensively, the only other new bird for the year was Snow Bunting.

In December I continued searching for a few missing species, but was only able to add Glaucous Gull, a bird that I found at Babcock Access by watching the gull flock for several hours. That brought my year's total for Johnson County to 255 species, 27 more than I had predicted. I finished the month driving the remaining roads that I had missed.

For the year, I found all of the 181 species that I had listed as expected. More surprising was my finding 49 of 52 species that I had listed as good possibilities. These are birds that I do not encounter every year, but with intensive effort and good water conditions I was able to find almost all of them. Among the possible, but unlikely species I found 19 of 46. As predicted, I got 2 of 15 outside possibilities (Varied Thrush, Prairie Warbler), but also added four accidental species that I had not listed (Mississippi Kite, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, California Gull, and Red-throated Loon).

There were 30 species that I saw only once (or the same bird over 1 to 3 days). Eight of these were found during my many trips (sometimes two or three in one day) to Babcock Access and would have been missed without persistent coverage. Several of these single sightings occurred when I made an attempt to overcome negative thinking. "There is nothing at Sand Point and it is a long walk" (Sandhill Crane). "Sandy Beach is a long drive and it is almost supper time" (Western Grebe). "I have not seen anything at Macbride lately" (Eared Grebe). Other sightings were due to a strong hunch and previous experience: White-winged Scoter with first big influx of diving ducks, Alder Flycatcher and Connecticut Warbler in Hickory Hill Park in late May, Cape May Warbler in conifers in fall. Some, but relatively few species were found by others (both crossbills, Prairie Warbler, Varied Thrush).

I was lucky to have an excellent year for shorebird and waterfowl habitat and good waves of warblers in both spring and fall. The year was only average for winter finches and rare waterfowl. I covered several large wooded tracts in an effort to find several species known to nest in wooded areas near Johnson County (Amana Woods and Palisades-Kepler State Park), but I could not find Acadian Flycatcher, Worm-eating Warbler, and Hooded Warbler and had only single sightings of Cerulean Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush. My biggest miss was Yellow-breasted Chat, a bird often found in Hickory Hill Park.

A pair was found at William's Prairie by Jim Fuller, but when I got there they were gone.

The biggest side effect of my Big Year in Johnson County, besides having a lot of fun in a relaxed atmosphere, was creating some new lists. I reviewed all my daily field lists back to 1949 and my father's notes (F. W. Kent kept a birding diary from 1949 to 1973) in order to create my county list, my list of early and late dates for Iowa, and my newly created monthly lists for Iowa. In Johnson County in 1990, I added two species to my state list (Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, California Gull). Five of 7 new species for my Johnson County list appear to be first records for the county (Red-throated Loon, Ross' Goose, Mississippi Kite, California Gull, and Varied Thrush). I saw 44 birds in months that I had not seen them before in Iowa. Personally for the state, I had 9 new early and 19 new late spring dates; 18 new early and 30 new late fall dates; and 24 new first calendar and 44 last calendar dates. Record early or late dates for the state included 3 first, 6 second, and 1 third.

County birding can be a lot of fun. Time can be used efficiently, because distances are not great. I can get to the best birding spots in 5 to 20 minutes. This makes early morning and late evening birding feasible. One of the most satisfying aspects of a county Big Year was that I found almost all of the birds myself. Included were many species I consider rare in the county and four accidental species. Although I have birded Johnson County all of my life, I found some good spots that I was unfamiliar with or had not visited in many years.

Dick Tetrault was my most frequent companion, especially on Big Days. Jim Fuller got me out several afternoons and kept me informed of what others were finding. Carl Bendorf and Francis Moore helped me with Big Days. Ken Lowder (an audiologist) lent me his ear in the deep woods for a couple of important finds. I thank these people and others who I met in the field during the year. My wife Ann was very supportive on the home front. The combination of goal setting and ease of access to local birding spots got me into the field a lot for relaxed, enjoyable birding that produced a number of good finds.

211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246

Probable Minnesota White-eyed Vireo Nesting Record

Houston County, 1991

Carol Schumacher

During July and August 1991, many birders viewed two White-eyed Vireos at the beginning of the Reno Trail in Houston County. This was the first sighting of two White-eyed Vireos in Minnesota. With recent experiences finding Bell's Vireos nesting in Winona County, I became interested in observing the birds and their behavior to see if they were nesting in Houston County.

My first sighting of the White-eyed Vireos was on 18 July 1991. One bird was more drab than the other. The singing male flew wildly and rapidly from one tree to another in the clearing. Most often, it landed in an apple tree or pine tree. The other bird seemed to follow him to the general location, but did not have the same agitated behavior and stayed out of sight, while he raced from tree to tree. I noticed the very thick, dark bill, thicker and longer than Bell's. Its yellow lores had a gold or orange tinge, while the yellow on the sides of the breast was more of a true yellow color. It was fidgety like the Bell's, but the White-eyed Vireo looked trimmer and had a more straight-line and speedy flight. Perching posture was very upright.

On 26 July 1991, I heard the bird at 8:15 A.M., 8:25 A.M., and 8:35-8:42 A.M., but did not see the birds. Gary Swanson arrived at the site and after introductions, we began to look for the bird near the second campsite. At 10:40 A.M. one White-eyed Vireo sang and

we saw the bird. We later heard what sounded to me like a wren call, harsh scolding notes. There was a flurry of activity. We followed the sound and then saw two birds move to one branch, approximately 20-25 feet away. It appeared that one bird was smaller than the other. While the birds were on the branch, we heard another vireo singing from behind us. One bird continued its song and ended each chorus with the wren-like scold. This was the only occasion that I have heard this scold at the end of singing. The birds moved past two wooded fence posts beyond the second campsite and we walked the trail in that direction. We heard at least one bird that was moving and singing among a stand of white pines and spruce trees. We heard and watched this bird for awhile. In between our observations, we scoured the underbrush near the second campsite, unsuccessfully looking for a nest.

On 29 July 1991, at 10:20 A.M. I heard a White-eyed Vireo singing three times on the east side of the two posts, in the second clearing on the trail. At 11:35 A.M., it sang almost continuously from the apple tree for eight minutes. At 11:50 A.M. it sang from the clearing beyond the apple tree. The bird dropped out of sight when I moved toward the edge of the mixed brush. It was heard again at 12:04 P.M. and 12:25 P.M.

On 5 August 1991, I did not see the bird immediately, but heard it and was able to follow the sound, then saw it briefly twice and recognized its call notes. I was joined by John and Chris Hockema from 11:15 A.M. to 12:10 P.M. and we got one very brief glimpse of the bird. This bird was becoming much more elusive and staying more hidden.

On 24 August 1991, Joanne Dempsey and I decided to go to Reno since she hadn't seen a White-eyed Vireo in Minnesota. Joanne spotted the bird in an elm tree at the second campsite. It was in view for 15 minutes, but then it went into the canopy of the plum thicket. I saw this bird making begging sounds and short hopping-like flights from branch to branch in the plum thicket. I believed this bird to be a juvenile. Another bird, an adult, landed in the tallest tree in the thicket and sang a few notes. I got a closer look at the juvenile. It had a short, fully-formed tail. The eye was very dark, very large, and very dominant. We noted the yellow spectacles and yellow sides. The young bird was shaking on the branch and looked and acted like a recently fledged bird with its constant begging. It was more plump than the adult. We lost sight of the bird and looked in the plum thicket for a nest, but found none. Later, we heard calling from the north side of the road about 20 feet away from the thicket. We could still hear soft noises in the plum thicket and finally, an adult called. Joanne remarked at this time that there could have been more than two birds; however, we saw only two birds at one time. At 12:10 P.M., we heard one song briefly and heard a two-note call. We saw an adult which was molting. The young bird was following this adult and begging.

At 7:30 A.M. on 30 August 1991, I heard a song that was a variation of a Rufous-sided Towhee, another song that was a variation of an Alder Flycatcher, and a White-eyed Vireo song. I suspected that all three songs were from the same bird. I couldn't find the White-eyed Vireo, but then it sang variations of its real song at 8:15 A.M., 8:25 A.M. and 8:30 A.M. I then saw the juvenile with its distinct, dark eye, fly into the plum thicket. I planted myself under the thicket and watched it hopping from branch to branch under the canopy. This bird had difficulty making smooth landings and balancing. It crouched into a begging posture and I clearly saw the short tail and yellow spectacles. The breast and flanks of this bird were tinged with a soft, pale yellow and deeper yellow on the sides. The tail was one-third to one-half length, forked, and dark on the underside.

The juvenile continued alternately begging and sitting perfectly still, until 8:45 A.M. The coloration of this bird so matched the muted undersides of the plum leaves in dappled light that when I moved my binoculars, it was impossible to find the bird again until it begged. From 8:45 A.M. until 9:00 A.M., I watched an adult White-eyed Vireo carrying food and feeding the young bird. Frankly, I was so intent on verifying the feeding that there could have been more than one bird carrying food. I watched the juvenile being fed three times by an adult. During the first two feedings, another adult was singing elsewhere in the immediate area. At 9:00 A.M., the juvenile flew out of the thicket and across the road, which was the last sighting of the birds.

Some final observations:

1) While I did not see the White-eyed Vireo sing anything but its song, mimic sing-

ing was strongly suspected. The call was a wren-like scold.

2) When the young and adult were together, the adult appeared smaller because of its trimmer posture and less "fluffy" plumage. The breast of the juvenile had a yellow wash. In some respects, this juvenile looked more like a juvenile Warbling Vireo, except for the yellow spectacles.

3) Now I understand why there's little information regarding juvenile plumage of White-eyed Vireos. This bird was almost impossible to find in the plum thicket.

4) Distinct changes in the male's behavior were observed. During early observations, the singing bird was much more agitated. During the final observation, I hardly saw it and had more sightings of the female feeding the juvenile. The female was definitely molting. **1411 Skyline Drive, Winona, MN 55987.**

1991 MOU County Big Day

Jerry Bonkoski

Twenty different county teams sent in their results for their 1991 County Big Day. This was the most reports that I have received for any single year. There were seven new counties and now 35 counties have done a Big Day. The new counties were Otter Tail, Marshall, Dakota, Murray, Clay, Roseau and Douglas. St. Louis, Olmsted, Steele and Cottonwood county teams reported results in all five years that the Big Day counts have been taken. In addition to the new counts from seven counties, ten additional teams established record high species counts for their county.

The overall composite list for species of birds seen during this year's Big Day counts was 245 species, up ten from last year and the best composite list that has been achieved so far. The only non-regular species reported this year was the House Finch reported from several counties.

The team of Sharon and Dave Lambeth and Peder Svingen had the best team total (146 species) again in 1991. They also had the best count last year when they saw 156 species. Both years they chose Polk County to do their Big Day. Mike Hendrickson and Kim Risen still hold the County Big Day record for the state, when they saw 159 species in 1989 in St. Louis County.

I challenge more of you to go out in 1992 and do a Big Day count in your favorite county. All but two of the current records are from the month of May, but you want to plan on doing it when you have the possibility of seeing the most birds.

Incidentally, a Birdathon or Big Day is an excellent way to raise money for your club projects. The Duluth and Rochester groups use their Big Day activities to raise money for their favorite projects; each has raised several thousand dollars. Participants get pledges from sponsors, usually a few cents for each species seen, and then after the results are compiled, the participants collect the pledged amount from their sponsors.

Steve Wilson has suggested doing a non-motorized (foot & bicycle) Big Day. This would become a different category of Big Day results, listed separately from the motorized Big Day results. This is your chance to do a less costly alternative, environmentally speaking, for your Big Day.

It is really very simple to do a Big Day count. All you need to do is see how many species you can find within one county during one calendar day. You can go out by yourself, as a team, or plan a club activity to do a Big Day. If you would like to get an official entry form and checklists for the Big Day, send a self-addressed stamped envelope (business size) to the address shown below.

When you have completed your Big Day, send a checklist of the birds seen, the date you did your Big Day, which county you birded and the members of your team. Send this

information, no later than Nov 1 1992, to:

Jerry Bonkoski
9022 Southridge St. S.W.
Byron, MN 55920

A special thanks to all of you who participated in Big Days, and took the time to send your results to me. I hope you will continue to do a Big Day in your county or other counties within the state. **9022 Southridge St. S.W., Byron, MN 55920**

	1991 Results		**County Record**		
County	Species	/Date	Species	/Date	Individual or Team
Polk	146	5/19/91	156	5/19/90	Dave & Sharon Lambeth, Peder Svingen
Otter Tail	144	5/15/91	144	5/15/91	Steve & Diane Millard
Aitkin	143	5/26/91	143	5/26/91	Warren Nelson
Lyon			142	5/14/88	Henry Kyllingstad, Paul Egeland
Roseau	132	8/15/91	132	8/15/91	Peder Svingen
Steele	131	5/11/91	131	5/11/91	Ken Vail, Gary Johnson, LeAnn Alt Johnson, Nells Thompson, Darryl Hill
Olmsted	130	5/09/91	130	5/09/91	Jerry Bonkoski, Bob Ekblad, Tony Casucci, Jerry Pruett, Dave Squillace
St. Louis	125	5/18/91	159	5/20/89	Mike Hendrickson, Kim Risen
Lincoln			122	5/14/88	Ray Glassel, Bob Janssen, John Schladweiler
Cottonwood	114	5/11/91	118	5/13/89	Henry Schmidt, Walter Harder, Ed Duerksen
Marshall	114	5/18/91	114	5/18/91	Shelly Steva, Darlene Kelly, Randi Hodny, Linda Welk
Beltrami			113	5/19/90	Doug Johnson, Tim Dawson
Cook	104	6/04/91	104	6/04/91	Ken & Molly Hoffman
Lake	96	5/26/91	96	5/26/91	Renner Anderson, Chuck Neil, Bill Tefft, Steve Wilson, Suzanne Winckler
Hubbard	96	5/11/91	96	5/11/91	Ralph & Jean Leckner, Cory & Terry Olson
Wabasha	95	5/19/91	111	5/21/89	Helen Tucker, Alice Searles
Carlton			104	5/21/88	Fran & Larry Weber
Freeborn			104	5/23/90	Anne Marie Plunkett
Houston			104	5/18/90	Anne Marie Plunkett
Dodge			100	5/14/88	Bob & Steve Ekblad, Jerry Bonkoski
Fillmore			97	5/13/89	Fillmore County Birders Club
Washington	95	5/11/91	95	5/11/91	Robert Holtz & four students
Rice			95	5/26/91	Rice County Bird Club
Wadena			94	5/21/90	Jerome & Karol Gresser
Dakota	93	5/29/91	93	5/29/91	Karol Gresser, Joanne Dempsey
Murray	93	5/16/91	93	5/16/91	Nelvina DeKam
Nobles			91	5/21/90	Nelvina DeKam
Clay	90	5/18/91	90	5/18/91	Terry & Cory Olson, Jean Leckner
Pipestone			77	5/14/88	Nelvina De Kam, Johanna Pals
Goodhue	72	5/14/91	73	5/14/88	Bob & Steve Ekblad
Sherburne			68	5/23/90	Barb Kull, Alice Schroeder
Douglas	58	5/16/91	58	5/16/91	Kristine & Sherryl Stramer
Anoka	56	5/13/91	56	5/13/91	Charlotte Wenger
Isanti	39	5/20/91	46	5/30/90	Daphne & Meyers Peterson
LeSuer			32	5/14/88	Mary Simon

BOOK REVIEWS

BIRDS OF PREY: NATURAL HISTORY AND CONSERVATION OF NORTH AMERICAN RAPTORS, by Noel and Helen Snyder. Voyageur Press, P.O. Box 338, Stillwater MN, 1991, 224 pages, 8-1/2 x 11, 185 color photos, maps, hardcover, $39.95.

Noel and Helen Snyder have studied every *Falconiformes* in North America in the field, almost all from blinds at nests. Their experience with American raptors is unequaled. In this book, they give us the highlights of three decades spent watching these dramatic birds in the wildest parts of our land. The book is organized by species accounts, starting with condors and ending with caracaras, 34 species in all. Each species account is an essay, following no uniform structure, that emphasizes the Snyders' own experience with that species and focuses on particular adaptations and conservation problems. The text is lively, with excellent discussions of mating relationships, predator-prey interactions, behavior, and hunting techniques. Any prospective student of raptors will find this book a rich source of questions for future research.

The accounts of the species reaching their northern range limits in south Florida, Texas, and the desert southwest were particularly interesting to me. How many northerners know, for example, that one southern buteo, the Short-tailed Hawk in Florida, is a specialist at catching birds by hanging high in the sky on steady winds and making long stoops on its prey? Or that the White-tailed Hawk in Texas uses a similar hunting strategy, riding the winds off the Gulf of Mexico, but concentrating on mammals. Or that another buteo, the Zone-tailed Hawk, uses its resemblance to the Turkey Vulture to approach avian prey unsuspected. Still another buteo, the Common Black-Hawk, is a specialist on aquatic prey, including fish, along streams of the southwest. Our northern buteos seem stodgy generalists by comparison.

Noel Snyder had a central role in the last free-flying years of the California Condor and in developing plans for its recovery. His account of condor biology and recent history is the best I have seen. The book is illustrated with color photographs, all taken by the Snyders. Most are excellent, some superb, only a few mediocre. Even having managed merely to photograph all species is impressive enough, much less to have done so elegantly.

The last section of the book is a useful list of a few dozen general references on raptors, as well as references to individual species, arranged by species. This is a beautiful book, full of entertaining observations and scholarly insights on raptor biology. If you are a hawk lover, buy it or at least read it. **Harrison B. Tordoff, Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455.**

A FIELD GUIDE TO ADVANCED BIRDING, by Kenn Kaufman; Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1990; 105 line drawings, 299 pages, $14.95.

Most of the time the birder can get by with one of the standard field guides - Geographic, Peterson or Robbins. Most, but not all, of the time. There still remain a lot of species and plumages that present difficulties which are beyond the scope of the guide tucked in the back pocket of your jeans. There simply isn't

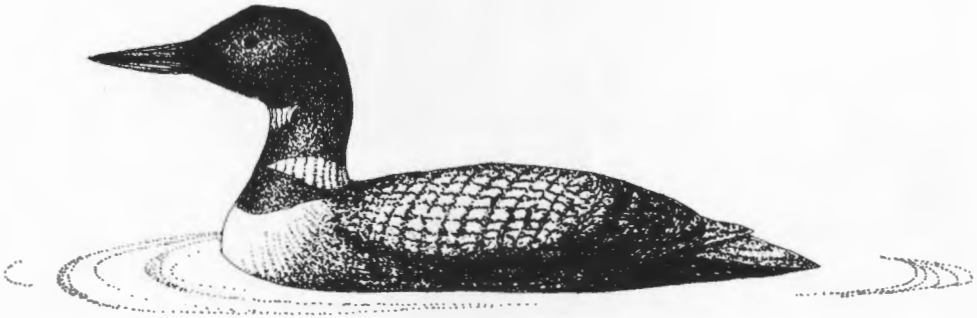
enough room in a portable field guide to adequately cover all the complexities bird identification has to offer. As a result, some birders are misled into misidentifications when confronted with such a challenging species or plumage not covered or overly simplified or even erroneously treated in their book. Other birders will choose a wiser course: they simply let that confusing bird remain unidentified rather than force an identification on it by choosing "the closest thing in the book". A bird left unidentified is always preferable to one misidentified. After all, not every bird you see can be - or even should be - identified; there's no law against just looking at and enjoying a bird's plumage and behavior without identifying it.

There is another option, however, and that is to put your Peterson aside and consult those references that specialize in difficult identifications: e.g., Peter Grant's book on gulls, Clark and Wheeler's hawk guide, plus those ID articles which frequently appear in journals such as *Birding*, *American Birds*, *British Birds* and others. It does take some effort, though, to keep track of all this state-of-the-art identification literature, and it's just as difficult to lug all those books and magazines into the field with you. Fortunately, much of this information has been gathered together by Kenn Kaufman into his convenient and portable *A Field Guide to Advanced Birding*. Kaufman is widely recognized as one of the elite few who is thoroughly skilled at solving virtually all of North America's difficult identification problems. This alone would qualify him to author such a guide, but in addition, like the legendary Roger Peterson of another generation, Kaufman is an accomplished artist (or illustrator, some would say), and his numerous drawings greatly enhance his text.

The 35 chapters each address a different group of birds, and the guide concludes with a useful bibliography of identification references, many of which were the sources for the material in *Advanced Birding*. In fact, as accurate and as useful as all the chapters are, many of them will not necessarily present anything new to the reader who has kept abreast of the body of identification literature cited in the bibliography. For example, while I liked what the book has to say about Clark's Grebe, ibis, scaup, Accipiters, dowitchers, Western Sandpiper, Thayer's Gull, woodpewees, Philadelphia Vireo, Blackpoll/Bay-breasted/Pine Warblers, waterthrushes, *Carpodacus* finches and other groups, I had encountered the information before. On the other hand, I was more impressed with the material I had not seen previously (or, if not original, material presented in a clarified and more useful way): especially revealing was the information on loons, herons, scoters, jaegers, terns, hummingbirds, sapsuckers, *Empidonax* flycatchers, Cassin's/Botteri's Sparrows and *Spizella* sparrows.

Advanced Birding includes more than specific analyses of complex identification problems, however. Beginning and intermediate birders will especially find useful the chapters on the methods of how to approach in general terms the identification of shorebirds, gulls, fall warblers and sparrows. And, as previously mentioned, Kaufman's numerous line drawings skillfully complement and clarify the text; they also serve to make the guide more readable and accessible, rather than a dry, scientific, potentially confusing collection of scholarly essays. The guide, however, is open to some criticism for its confusing layout of many of the illustrations' captions - on too many pages it is difficult to tell where the captions end and the main text begins.

Can the birder, therefore, head out into the field armed with only his Geographic field guide and *Advanced Birding* and be adequately prepared for anything that might appear? Unfortunately, no. As good as it is, Kaufman's book inexplicably omits as many relevant identification problems as it chooses to include. It was especially disappointing not to find coverage of immature night-herons, immature swans, Ross' Goose, female/immature ducks (especially teal, goldeneyes and eiders), Buteos, King/Clapper Rails, yellowlegs, several immature gulls (especially Lesser Black-backed and California), the yellow kingbirds, *Myiarchus* flycatchers, crows and ravens, gnatcatchers, *Catharus* thrushes, shrikes, *Oporonis* warblers, female/immature tanagers, Rose-breasted/Black-headed Grosbeaks, *Ammodramus* sparrows, female/immature longspurs, Rusty/Brewer's Blackbirds, female/immature orioles and redpolls. Clearly, an "*Advanced Birding II*" guide would be welcome, and, if it ever becomes a reality, let's hope Kenn Kaufman is its author and illustrator. **Kim Eckert, 8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**



NOTES OF INTEREST

PURPLE SANDPIPER IN GRAND MARAIS - We first encountered the sandpiper while walking our dog on the rock and concrete breakwater on the east side of the Grand Marais harbor on 21 November 1991 at 10 A.M. The sandpiper was standing in the bright warm sun, on rocks near the lake edge, 30 feet from us. We watched with binoculars and 40X scope, backing off to about 50 feet so we would not cause the bird to fly. We believed the bird to be a Purple Sandpiper. The sun was behind and slightly to the left of us as we looked west at the bird. The sandpiper repeatedly gaped its bill and swallowed, then preened and stretched one wing, holding it up long enough to provide us with an excellent look. After the gaping, preening and stretching, it started to move along the rocks and stepped into the water several times. The bird then flew low and disappeared around the concrete breakwater near the lighthouse. Our observation had lasted seven minutes. After checking both sides of the concrete breakwater near the lighthouse, we unsuccessfully searched the west side of the harbor. We then searched the entire harbor and east bay area for 1-1/2 hours without seeing the sandpiper. After completing our scheduled work, we looked again for the sandpiper and at about 3 P.M., found it in almost the exact location we had seen it in the morning. A friend, Lloyd Scherer, joined us and we again observed the bird from 30 to 50 feet with 40X scope and binoculars until, as before, it flew low and disappeared behind the concrete breakwall. Most note-taking and sketching had been completed immediately after our morning observation and before consulting any field guide. We did, however, add detail after observing the bird the second time. The sandpiper seemed Dunlin-sized, although we had no Dunlin or any other bird for direct comparison. The bill also resembled a Dunlin's in shape (down-curved), while in color it was yellow-orange at the base, blending to a dark tip. Most outstanding were the short, thick legs and large, long-toed feet. Even the toes seemed excessively thick. Both feet and legs were bright dandelion yellow. The eye was brown with a light eye ring. The head, face, neck, and chest were dark gray, ending in a smudgy bib on the breast. From this smudgy gray bib, the breast and belly were white with the marking of individual feathers strongest on the sides. The appearance of these feathers was as spots rather than streaking. The undertail coverts were also marked with a few dark feathers. The back was dark gray, darker than the head, as was that part of the rump that we could observe as the bird walked and fed. The wings and tail seemed short for the heavy-looking body. The tips of the wings and tail appeared close to the same length. What we could see of the tail was very dark. The wing coverts and flight feathers were very dark, but all were edged with white (bright white in the sunshine). The edging was very noticeable and especially prominent on the flight feathers. When the sandpiper stretched and held one wing up, we clearly saw a thin distinct white wing stripe. Our views of the sandpiper in flight on both morning and afternoon observations were very poor, as the bird flew low and nearly at our eye level and directly away from us. We could not see the wing stripe

as it flew, nor any white pattern on the tail. Except to say that the sandpiper did not have a white rump, we can offer little other detail. On the beach, the sandpiper walked up and over wet rocks and several times waded into the water. On one occasion, it lowered its head and with the bill open, moved the lower mandible along the shallowly submerged rock as if to scoop or scrape the rock surface. We have found no behavior description of this activity in the literature we have. Perhaps, however, our most lasting image is of this oddly comical sandpiper walking away from us on stout, bright yellow legs, looking to be very "pigeon-toed" and appearing at times to step on its own long toes. **Ken and Molly Hoffman, HC 64, Box 410, Grand Marais, MN 55604.**
Editor's Note: The Purple Sandpiper was seen by many other observers until 23 November, the last date it was seen.

MINNESOTA'S SECOND VERMILION FLYCATCHER - Early on the morning of 13 October 1991, our Wings tour found an immature female Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) on the baseball field at the end of Park Point in Duluth, St. Louis County. We had birded the woods around the beach house on the lake side of the ball field, not finding any birds. As we worked our way back across the ball field, we spotted a small flycatcher perched on the backstop. My first thought was Eastern Phoebe, but a quick look showed that the bird had streaking on the breast and underparts and a yellowish tinge to the underparts. In addition to the streaking, yellowish wash, and small size, we also noted the dark bill, tail and legs, grayish brown upperparts, and the faint whitish eyebrow. After watching and photographing the bird, we left to notify other birders. The only other record for a Vermilion Flycatcher in Minnesota is of a beautiful male in Otter Tail County on 6 and 7 November 1977. The author also saw this bird. I found it interesting that in 12 fall reports in *American Birds*, I could only find three records of out-of-range Vermilion Flycatchers, one each for South Dakota, Wisconsin, and North Carolina. These were also the second state records for these states. **Terry Savaloja, 2321 Pleasant Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55404.**

ADULT ICELAND GULL AT BLACK DOG LAKE - On 25 November 1991, Ray Glassel and I and several others watched a basic-plumaged adult gull that we identified as "Kumlien's" Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides kumlieni*) at Black Dog Lake, east of the power plant. A few hundred gulls (mostly Herring and a smaller number of Ring-billed) that were present when I arrived at 2:00 P.M. were joined by several hundred more, starting about an hour before sunset. We watched at least two adult Thayer's and two first-winter Glaucous Gulls in with the eventual assemblage of some 500 gulls. I discovered the Iceland Gull about 4:00 P.M., and we observed it through Kowa 40X and 25X spotting scopes at distances from about 150-250m until 4:45 P.M., shortly after sunset. The afternoon was clear and calm, with temperatures about 15-20° F. This gull was seen swimming and flying, but not standing. It appeared about as large as a medium-sized Herring Gull, with head and bill shape also similar to those of average Herring Gulls, but larger and coarser than one nearby, very small Thayer's Gull. At 150m (but in good light), the iris appeared as dark as those of the Thayer's Gulls nearby. Fine dusky markings on the head gave a "hooded" effect. The bill was bright yellow to greenish-yellow, with a conspicuous red spot on the gonys. The general body shape (including primary extension) was not noticeably different from that of Herring Gulls, but was distinctly less bulky and coarse, with longer primary extension, than that of a nearby first-winter Glaucous Gull. From most angles, the mantle appeared the same shade as, to somewhat paler than, those of nearby adult Herring Gulls. The visible primaries on the folded wing differed from those of adult Thayer's and Herring Gulls in that they were gray instead of black. The visible primaries were tipped with white spots, as large and conspicuous as those of adult Thayer's Gulls. The gray on the primaries was several shades darker than the mantle, but much paler in direct comparison than the jet-black primaries of adult Herring Gulls and one nearby adult Thayer's Gull, the shade of gray being about intermediate between those two extremes. When the bird flew, extensive white in the primaries (not visible on the folded wing) made the wing tips appear even lighter. The exact pattern of white could not be determined, but the bird was much paler in the outer wing than typical adult Thayer's Gulls. The gull spread its wings at least

Vermilion Flycatcher, 13 October 1991, Park Point, Duluth. Photo by Anthony Hertzel.

ten times while we watched, each time presenting a clear ventral view. The underwing was white to very pale, frosted gray. The only dark markings on the underwing were small medium-gray spots, about the same shade as the mantle, near the tips of the longest three or four primaries (apparently excluding the outermost). There was not a trace of black or even charcoal in the primaries, dorsally or ventrally. Field identification of the closely related (and possibly conspecific) Iceland and Thayer's Gulls has been greatly aided by several recent papers (e.g., Lehman 1980, Zimmer 1991). According to Zimmer (1991), the wing pattern shown by the Black Dog gull was that of "Kumlien's" Iceland Gull rather than Thayer's Gull. He states that adult Thayer's Gulls have jet-black outer primary pigmentation, thus differing from dark "Kumlien's" Iceland Gulls, which are charcoal gray rather than black (although a very few Icelands may show true black). The primaries of the Black Dog bird were paler than "charcoal," appearing similar to those of an adult Iceland Gull illustrated in Zimmer (1991:265, Fig. 16). Although Zimmer indicated no overlap in this trait, some earlier studies reported that Thayer's Gulls may not always have jet-black primary pigmentation in adult plumage. Smith (1966:64), illustrating the range of variation in both taxa, showed a pale Thayer's Gull with dark gray primaries paler than those of a dark Kumlien's. Lehman (1980) stated that a small number (less than 10%) of Thayer's Gulls have dark gray primaries that are quite similar to those of dark Kumlien's Gulls. Despite these different statements, the shade of gray in the Black Dog bird seems too pale to be even the palest of Thayer's Gulls, based on descriptions in the above references. Compared with Herring Gulls, Iceland Gulls generally are described as smaller-bodied, with a more delicate bill and rounded head, and thus most are smaller and more delicate than the Black Dog gull appeared. However, large (male) Iceland Gulls do approach Herring Gulls in these characters. Zimmer (1991) noted that large male Iceland Gulls routinely overlap Thayer's Gulls of both sexes in most structural characters, and can even approximate many female Glaucous Gulls quite closely. Grant (1986) noted that Iceland Gull resembled a long-winged small or average Herring Gull in general build. Finally, eye color is variable among adult Iceland Gulls. Most have amber eyes (which can appear brown at a distance), but some (less than 20%) have brown eyes (Zimmer 1991). At the distance we observed this bird, we could tell only that the eye was dark.

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Bruce A. Fall, 4300 - 29th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55406.

FIRST-WINTER ICELAND GULL IN GRAND MARAIS - A resurgence of commercial fish processing in autumn 1991 attracted multitudes of gulls to the Grand Marais harbor, which in turn attracted multitudes of gull watchers. Some lucky birders even made the front page of the Cook County News-Herald (see the photograph in the November 18 1991 issue). Among the hundreds of Herring Gulls in the harbor were Glaucous Gulls, several first-winter Thayer's Gulls, a fourth-winter or adult Lesser Black-backed Gull on 26-27 October, a first-winter Great Black-backed Gull on 22-30 November, and a first-winter Iceland Gull, reported here in detail on 9-10 November! It was truly a gathering of gull enthusiasts. Tim Schantz from Iowa and Ann Johnson had driven up on 9 November to see the Fieldfare in Grand Marais. In response to their queries while scanning the gulls in the harbor, I stated that Iceland Gulls cannot realistically be expected before the end of November in Minnesota. No sooner was this statement made than a pale, first-winter gull appeared in my scope. It was definitely smaller than the average Herring Gull, with a dark bill, which ruled out Glaucous Gull. Its primary extension was at least one bill length beyond the tip of the tail. We began to consider the possibility of Iceland Gull and sought to obtain closer views. Over the subsequent hour and intermittently thereafter, the bird was studied from distances between 30 and 100 feet, with Herring Gulls of all age classes for comparison. Its irides were dark brown and the legs were

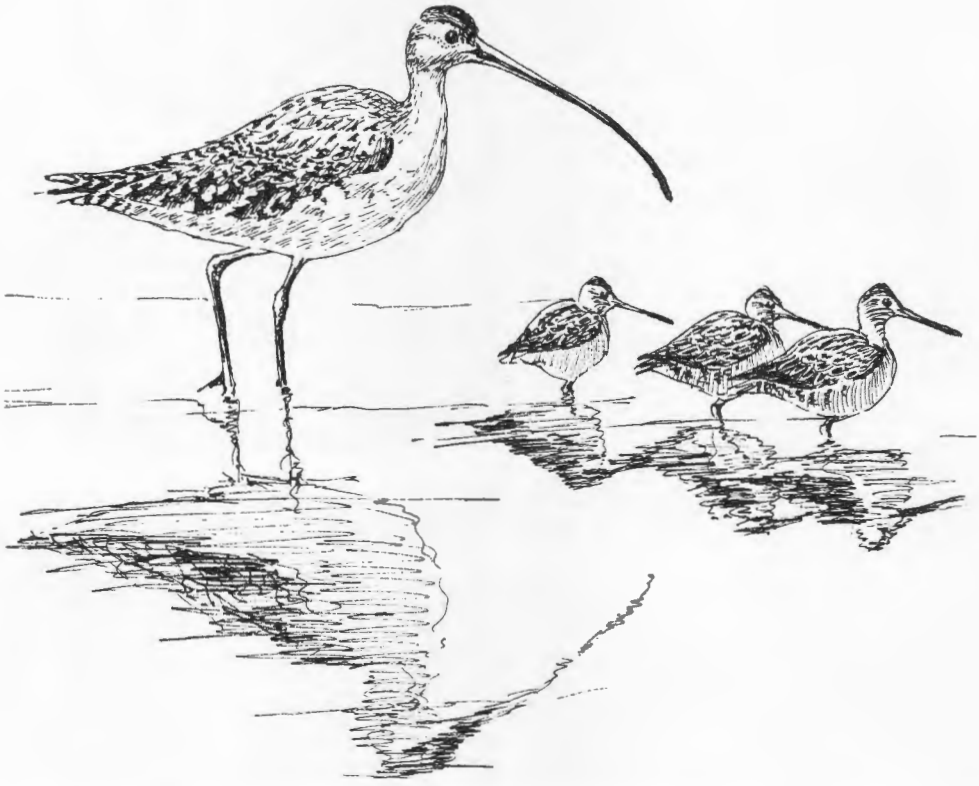
First winter Iceland Gull, 10 November 1991, Grand Marais, Cook County. Photo by Peder Svingen.

a dull, pinkish flesh. From close range, the bill was judged to be shorter and more slender than that of Herring Gull. Its head shape was also more rounded, which imparted a "gentle" appearance. Its face lacked the contrasting "eye patch" that is usually obvious on Thayer's Gull and feathering was nearly white around the base of the upper mandible. This gull's plumage was overall uniform, creamy tan with scalloping on the mantle and scapulars. The coarse pattern of tan and white scalloping on the back made this area appear lighter than the rest of the body and head plumage. The wing coverts were neatly marked, pale tan with frosty edges. The tertials were not darker than the coverts and were extensively barred and mottled internally, especially on the lateral vanes; this was seen from close range when they were exposed by the wind. The primaries were just a shade lighter than the tertials and wing coverts. Some of these finer details were recorded from a distance of 30 feet, while the bird was bathing and preening. Two small, tan notches were seen on the outer web of the outermost rectrices and a very thin, pale tan line (not band) could be seen along the tip of the tail. Similar tail markings may be present on first-winter Thayer's Gulls; however, this bird was repeatedly flushed from distances within 30 feet in order to examine the tail and wings in flight. There was no distinct tail band; the upper tail coverts and tail feathers were evenly marked and frosty buff in color. The wingtips were frosty, not quite as pale as those of the first-winter Glaucous Gull flying nearby for comparison, but very close. More importantly, the absence of a dark-light-dark pattern on the dorsum of the flight feathers produced on first-winter Thayer's Gull by a secondary "bar" and the contrast of the outer primaries with the inner ones, was specifically noted and repeatedly looked for in order to clinch the identification. This individual was seen by many observers through 10 November. On 12 November, a pale, first-winter gull in Grand Marais was the subject of a lively debate among observers. On the ground, its primaries did not appear obviously darker than the tertials, dusky subapical chevrons were

noted on the primary tips, and the tertials were not solidly colored; these characters have been considered supportive criteria for the separation of relatively dark first-winter Iceland Gulls from paler Thayer's Gulls by some authors. However, repeated views in flight, from close range, revealed a pale, buffy wash across the secondaries and on the outer primaries, that contrasted with the paler inner primaries. It was only after seeing this wing pattern in flight that I believed it was a different individual than the bird found three days earlier. Kim Eckert saw both birds and promptly dubbed the 12 November bird a "sea gull." Although currently considered separate species, my own opinion is that the 12 November bird represented an "intergrade" between Thayer's and Iceland Gull. Identification of some individuals, especially in Basic I plumage, clearly falls into "the impossible identification zone" as stated in an October 1991 review of this problem (see *Birding* 23:254-269). Unidentifiable or controversial birds (see ***The Loon*** 55:188-189; 56:18; and 58:18-20) will undoubtedly continue to occur in Minnesota, whether or not Iceland Gull (or at least *Kumliene*, the North American subspecies) becomes "lumped" with Thayer's Gull. **Peder Svingen, 151 Bedford St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414.**

ALBINO RED-TAILED HAWK IN WINONA COUNTY - On 10 November 1990, a Bell Museum birding group discovered a nearly pure albino adult Red-tailed Hawk along county road 248 about 3km west of Rollingstone, Winona Co. The hawk was first discovered on a hillside at a distance of over 1km, where it stood out as a gleaming white spot against the dark tree in which it was perched. We studied it for about five minutes with 40X spotting scopes; the late afternoon sun was behind us and the bird was fully illuminated. Briefly we thought it might be a Snowy Owl, but it clearly was a large buteo, identified tentatively at first (because of the distance) as a Red-tailed based on size and proportions. As we started to leave, the hawk flew toward us and eventually circled directly overhead at a height of about 75m or less, and we confirmed our identification. A week later (Nov. 17), another Bell Museum group and I found this bird in nearly the same location. Although it was late afternoon and overcast, we again got a good view for several minutes as the hawk soared toward us and then overhead. This time, the bird was flying with two normally plumaged Red-taileds. The albino hawk's plumage appeared pure white without any pigmentation, except for two or perhaps three rectrices that were at least partly rusty dorsally. These were visible when the bird banked, but were barely noticeable from below. The flight feathers appeared fresh and unworn. The tarsi were yellow, but I did not determine the color of the cere. Apparently partial or full albino Red-tails are rather regular (Clark and Wheeler, *A Field Guide to Hawks*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1987) and there have been many other reports of them in Minnesota. A completely white Red-tail was reported near MacGregor, Aitkin Co., in July 1987 (***The Loon*** 59:148-149). A partial albino, with several rufous rectrices and scattered pigmented feathers elsewhere, including some primaries, was seen near Winona, about 20 km SE of the location of the Rollingstone bird, from July through November, 1989 (***The Loon*** 62:114). That description indicates these were different individuals. I thank Parker Backstrom for informing me of these two references. **Bruce A. Fall 4300 29th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55406.**
Associate Editor's Note: A partial albino buteo, presumably a Red-tailed Hawk, was also documented from Yellow Medicine Co. in 1974 (***The Loon*** 46:126). In addition, one or more partial albino Red-taileds are recorded virtually every fall at Hawk Ridge in Duluth. KE

LONG-BILLED CURLEW IN MCLEOD COUNTY- While watching shorebirds at Glencoe, McLeod County on the afternoon of 3 October 1991, I was fortunate to see an unusual fall migrant: a Long-billed Curlew. The bird flew in from the west and landed among some Long-billed Dowitchers and Lesser Golden Plovers. I was able to view the bird from a distance of approximately 20 to 30 yards. There was no wind and the temperature was around 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The bird was roughly twice the size of the Lesser Golden Plovers, it had a very long, decurved bill that was a flesh/pink color at the base and black at the tip. The overall plumage color was light cinnamon. The crown was a darker brown and I did not notice any other facial markings, other than the prominent black eye. The back and wings of the bird appeared to have a mottled/barred dark brown color on a cinnamon background. The breast



Long-billed Curlew, 3 October 1991, Glencoe, McLeod County. Sketch by Scott Krych.

Long-billed Curlew, 3 October 1991, Glencoe, McLeod County. Photo by Scott Krych.

and belly were a cinnamon color with no distinct markings. The bird then flew to the south end of the flooded area and watered, preened, and fed briefly. As it flew and preened I noted the darker cinnamon color in the underwing and coverts and the dark brown primaries. The bird fed in deeper portions of the pond than the plovers and dowitchers. I was able to make some sketches and take some photographs of the curlew during the time I watched. After about 30 minutes, the bird flew off to the east. I tried to follow in my car but was unable to keep the bird in view. **Scott Krych, 1045 Hiawatha Ave., Hopkins, MN 55343.**

PINE SISKIN TRAVELS 1300 MILES - 1988 was a good year for Pine Siskins. Although I have banded only a handful of siskins in all other years combined, I banded 29 of them from 15 March to 11 May 1988 in my backyard. In June of 1991, a Bird Banding Laboratory report notified me that one of these little birds (No. 1030-10294, banded on 29 April 1988) was found on 19 August 1988 in Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada. This was a distance of nearly 1,300 miles from Forest Lake! **Wm. H. Longley, 532 W. Broadway, Forest Lake, MN.**

PACIFIC LOON IN RAMSEY COUNTY - On 11 October 1991, I identified a Pacific Loon on White Bear Lake in Ramsey County. All known field marks for this species were seen. Although no Common Loons were present for comparison, this loon appeared to be slightly smaller than a Common Loon, with a significantly different shape that allowed it to be identified at a great distance. The bill appeared shorter and less heavy than the larger bill of a Common Loon, and the neck appeared longer and slimmer. Most distinctive about the shape, however, was the arching, graceful curvature to the neck when the bird was in an alert posture. I have never seen a Common Loon hold its neck in this position. Also, when in an alert posture, this loon held its bill at an upward angle, a characteristic noted previously on some Pacific Loons. When seen close up, however, the bill was noted to be structurally straight with no upturning of the lower mandible as on a Red-throated Loon. The arching posture to the neck was dramatized by the very pale gray color of the hindneck, which contrasted with the much darker color of the back, and merged into a darker gray on the midneck. The gray area of the

Pacific Loon, 11 October 1991, White Bear Lake, Ramsey County. Sketch by Karl Bardon.

midneck and hindneck, and the white area of the foreneck were separated by a straight, unbroken line. There was no trace of a broken collar as seen on Common Loons. This bird did not show a distinct eye-ring, although when seen close up it showed an indistinct one. The diagnostic chin strap, a thin, dark gray line under the throat where the neck meets the head, was well developed on this individual, and could be seen when the loon was close. There were no spots or streaks on the back, which identified this individual as an adult, and there was a trace of fine black and white lines on the sides of the breast, which were probably left over from breeding plumage. Occasionally this loon had the suggestion of a white flank patch. The Pacific Loon swam within 50 feet, allowing me to do some sketches which I used to make the accompanying drawing. Many other observers were able to see this loon, with the last date of observation on 21 October 1991. This is the second record for this casual species in Ramsey County; the first was on Lake Vadnais in October 1986. **Karl Bardon, 8150 West River Road #346, Brooklyn Park, MN 55444.**

HIGH NUMBERS OF PRAIRIE FALCONS IN WESTERN MINNESOTA - During the fall of 1991, Prairie Falcons were easy to find in west central Minnesota. Between 18 September and 30 October, I saw 19 of them. The number of actual sightings was higher; 19 represents the number of potentially different individuals. Factoring in assumed duplicate sightings and "probables" brings the total to about 25. These sightings occurred in only eight days afield, with four days yielding one bird each. The other four days produced two, three, four, and six Prairie Falcons. The peak of six occurred on 9 October 1991. On that day Gerry Winkelman and I saw three in Clay, one in Wilkin, and two in Otter Tail County. Several birders working on year and/or life lists came to western Minnesota and saw Prairie Falcons during the fall of 1991. I spent quite a few days birding Duluth and the North Shore that season, which likely prevented me from seeing many more falcons. Were we just lucky, or were there more than usual? I think there were more. One possible explanation could be the good rains on the species' breeding grounds. That would produce a lush grass crop for ground squirrels, which in turn would raise larger broods, making more prey available to raptors. This could result in larger clutches for Prairie Falcons (and other raptor species), or at least a better survival rate among young even if clutch size were not increased. **Steve Millard, 630 W. Laurel, Fergus Falls, MN 56537.**

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL AT GRAND MARAIS - The bird in question was seen standing on a commercial fisherman's dock amid a large group of Herring Gulls of mixed plumage. First noticed was its size—substantially larger than Herring Gulls beside it and even noticeably larger than a Glaucous Gull some 20 feet away. The second striking feature was its massive, all-dark bill, again, definitely larger than bills of both the other species. The head and neck were white with some light streaking; the eye was dark. Breast plumage was light as were the back and most of the folded wings, but marked with dark spots which presented a checkered pattern quite different from that of the other gulls there. Wing and tail tips appeared dark, but no special notice was taken of them. Legs were light pinkish. Size of the body and bill combined with the light head and checkered plumage, quickly convinced us that this was an immature Great Black-backed Gull, probably in its first year. After 15 to 20 minutes, the birds flew and our gull disappeared in a kettle of several hundred others. **Richard Ruhme, 9655 Upton Road S., Bloomington, MN 55431.**
Editor's Note: This gull was also seen by many observers through 30 November 1991.

KING RAIL IN SWIFT COUNTY - While driving east on County Road 52 on the south side of section 29, Edison Township, Swift County, at about 3:30 P.M. on Thursday, 24 October 1991, I noticed a large bird about the size of a hen pheasant standing on the north edge of the gravel road adjacent to a cattail marsh. As we slowly proceeded down the road, we approached within about fifty feet of the bird. Then I could see the reddish brown color on the breast and belly, extending up onto the face. When we got even closer, the bird turned around to head back into the cattails just behind it. At this time, it was immediately very obvious that the bird was extremely laterally compressed (thin) as compared to what would be expected for any other

First winter Great Black-backed Gull, 23 November 1991, Grand Marais, Cook County. Photo by Kim Risen.

bird this size. In this profile view the bill size and shape also became very visible against the background. It seemed to be a heavy bill about six inches long with a slight droop toward the tip. The bill color was neither very dark nor light, being about the same as the plumage color. Also very noticeable was the very heavy dark barring with light, narrow stripes on the bird's flanks. The tail was very short and slightly upturned and the fairly long legs were again neither very dark nor light. The bird also had a dark brown cap that extended down the long neck to the back, where a light brown color surrounded the larger, dark brown spotting. The bird then darted into the cattails when we were about 25 feet away. We watched the area for awhile and returned several times but were never able to relocate the bird. **Al Bolduc, 4400 Oakland Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55407.**

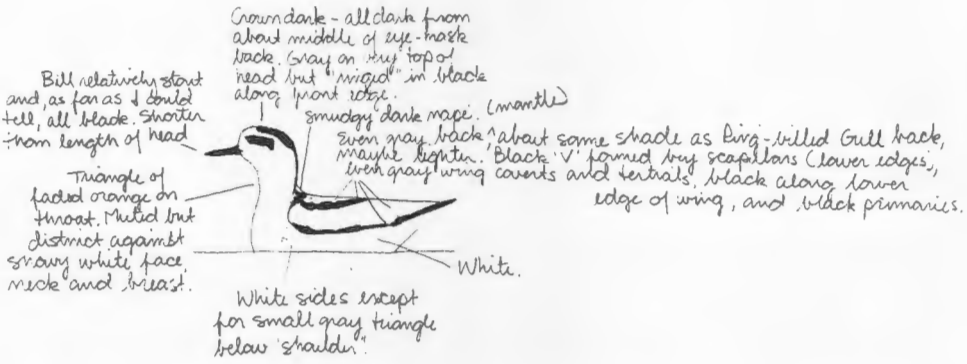
BROWN CREEPER NEST AT CROOKSTON - On 19 May 1991, the authors and Sharon Lambeth were doing a Big Day in Polk County. About 10:00 A.M. we were birding in the floodplain forest directly across the Red Lake River from Central Park in Crookston when a Brown Creeper was spotted. Within seconds it flew to and fed a second creeper. Immediately thereafter, the presumed female stripped inner bark from a tree and then flew to a six-inch diameter, dead elm that had a large slab of loose bark. The creeper disappeared behind the bark and remained there for the minute or two that we observed before moving on. Coarse vegetation was seen extending from behind the bark. Careful note was made of the location of the tree and surrounding landmarks so that the nest could be located later. We concluded that the second creeper was lining her nest and that a visit about 30 days later would allow observation of the adults feeding the young. As it turned out, one of us (PS) checked the nest site 13 June and found no creeper activity. The bark holding the nest, located about 12 feet above the ground on the northwest side of the tree, had become further detached to about a 45 degree angle, exposing the nest. A ladder and a saw were obtained from a nearby property

Brown Creeper nest, 13 June 1991, Crookston, Polk County. Photo by Peder Svingen.

owner, and the slab of bark and nest were removed and taken to the Bell Museum of Natural History. The nest's foundation was made from slender twigs and bits of bark stacked in a loose configuration. The nest cup, measuring approximately 3.5 x 6.5 x 2.5 cm. was woven from fine grasses and strands of vegetation. The floor of the cup showed evidence of fecal staining and a matted clump of fecal sacs were adhered to a portion of the bark which had partially split away. No egg fragments nor fledglings were found beneath the tree. The presence of fecal sac indicated that the nesting effort had proceeded to at least the nearly-fledged stage. The present record is west of the known breeding range in the state as shown in Janssen's *Birds in Minnesota* (1987) and to our knowledge this is the first nesting record for the plain of glacial Lake Agassiz. **David Lambeth, 1909 20th Avenue S., Grand Forks, ND 58201 and Peder Svingen, 151 Bedford St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414.**

Red Phalarope, 26 September 1991, Claremont, Dodge County. Photo by Anthony Hertzel.

RED PHALAROPE IN DODGE COUNTY - While birding in Dodge County on 26 September 1991, I decided to check the sewage ponds at Claremont to look for shorebirds. I arrived there about 4:30 P.M. and as I walked up over the dike, on the water about four feet from shore and 30 feet away, was a winter-plumaged phalarope. My first thought was of a somewhat late Red-necked Phalarope. As I studied it more closely I noted the heavy black bill and the soft gray plumage of the mantle and scapulars and realized it was a Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicaria*). After watching it for about 15 minutes, I returned to the car and made a drawing, then returned and studied it awhile longer. I then drove in to Claremont to call some Twin Cities birders. Several of them made it down before dark to see the bird. It remained in the area until the morning of the 29th and was seen by numerous birders and excellent photographs were taken to document the record. This observation was significant for three reasons. It was the sixth state record and the earliest fall date by five weeks (the previous early date was 15 October 1980 at Duluth). Also, this was the first observation from southern



Red Phalarope, 26 September 1991, Claremont, Dodge County. Sketch by Parker Backstrom.

Minnesota, the closest record to Dodge County being Mille Lacs County. **Raymond Glassel, 8219 Wentworth Ave. S., Bloomington, MN 55420.**

GYRFALCON OBSERVATION IN NORMAN COUNTY - At 3:40 P.M. on 13 November 1991, after searching unsuccessfully for hawk owls in the wildlife management areas of Norman County, I spotted a raptor perched on a telephone pole in Home Lake Township, approximately 3 1/2 miles southwest of Twin Valley. Initially, I assumed that it was another Rough-legged Hawk since its size appeared similar to one that had just been seen nearby. The bird looked uniformly dark in silhouette against the southern sky, as scattered clouds obscured the sun. Its long tail extended well beyond the wing tips, so Gyrfalcon became a possibility, and I drove closer, stopping at the adjacent telephone pole. The bird then took flight, permitting excellent views of the underparts and then the upperparts as it initially dropped low to the ground before continuing on toward the northwest. Its "humped back" profile, long squarish tail that narrowed near the tip, and powerful flight with flat glides clinched the identification. The plumage still looked uniform dark brown except that the underwings were mottled and the body heavily streaked. No other distinct markings were seen, including the face. Immediately afterwards, two sketches were drawn, one from the side depicting its profile as it crossed the road and the other depicting a a dorsal view as it began gaining altitude. The bird was identified as a Gyrfalcon, most likely a gray morph. The bird could not be relocated, neither that afternoon nor two days later. **Peder Svingen, 151 Bedford St. SE., Minneapolis, MN 55414.**

LITTLE BLUE HERONS IN LYON COUNTY - Having never quite given up on trying to find a shorebird habitat to match our departed sewage ponds, I was driving about the southwestern part of Lyon County on 18 August 1991. As I came to the north end of Wood Lake, Coon Creek Township, I saw two white herons standing in the shallow water to the west of the parking lot by the boat ramp. At first I thought, "Snowy Egret", as they were small and slender. Through 10 x 35 Nikon binoculars from about 30 feet I saw that their beaks were long and slender, dark bluish (gun metal) tips giving way to dull yellow bases. Their lores were yellow, also the eyes. They had greenish legs and the feet were similarly colored. In flight they showed slightly darker primary tips, not black but grayish. One immature Little Blue Heron would be unusual, but two of them together at this latitude is most unusual. **Henry C. Kyllingstad, 205 S. Sixth St., Marshall, MN 56258.**

PRAIRIE FALCON IN MINNEAPOLIS - On the afternoon of 14 December 1991, Joel Hessen and I were birding together during St. Paul Audubon's Christmas Bird Count. At approximately 2:00 P.M., we were stopped at a stop sign at 37th Avenue N.E. and Main St. in northeast Minneapolis, when Joel noticed a raptor in front of us, flying along a ridge that overlooks the Burlington Northern freight yards. He quickly pronounced it a falcon. The overall shape with slim, pointed wings was easy to see as it flew parallel to us at a distance of 50-100 yards. Using 10X binoculars, we were watching the falcon flying along the ridge, riding a stiff west wind of 10-15 mph, when it was suddenly being harried by a second falcon. This second falcon was easy to identify as a Peregrine by the bluish-gray back and black on the side of the face. We parked the car and jumped out to watch. As Joel watched the Peregrine, I followed the flight of the first falcon. As it flew in front of and above us, it occasionally bent its head down to tear at what appeared to be a mouse in its talons. Twice, the Peregrine dove past the first falcon, as if hoping to dislodge the mouse. After watching falcon #1 for a time, I thought we were watching a Prairie Falcon, and I called Joel's attention to the dark underwing. The color appeared black and was darkest next to the body and gradually became less dark as the area of darkness moved from the body to the edge of the wing. Both the leading and trailing edge of the underwing which surrounded these dark "wing pits" were much lighter in color. My overall impression was that the Prairie Falcon was smaller, less bulky, and slimmer than the Peregrine. The back and top of the wing seemed light in color, but, because it was above us and was flying the entire time we observed it, it wasn't possible to accurately describe this color. We also noted a slight darkness to the wing tips as seen from below. We had a view of this falcon for at least ten minutes before it was lost from view. We returned to the car and consulted Peterson, Robbins, and National Geographic Society field guides. We made no sketches or notes at this time, but discussed what we had seen. A few minutes later, the falcon returned and we were able to observe it again for about a minute as it flew directly above us. We later observed a falcon chasing after a large flock of pigeons over the train yard, but at a distance of 1/3 mile, we couldn't be sure if it was the Peregrine or Prairie Falcon. We consulted the Peterson hawk field guide and the *Audubon Master Guide to Birding* later in the day to reconfirm what we had seen. **Edwin Lins, 1426 Simpson St. N., St. Paul, MN 55108 and Joel Hessen, 2503 N. Lexington Ave., Roseville, MN 55113.**

PRAIRIE FALCON IN RENVILLE COUNTY - As I was returning to Marshall on 8 December 1991 following the M.O.U. Paper Session, I was happily surprised to see a large raptor alight on a telephone pole along Minnesota Highway 19, two miles east of Fairfax, Renville County. The bird sat quietly as I backed up for a better look through 8 x 30 binoculars. The bird was on the south side of the road, but broken, light overcast afforded good viewing conditions. The bird's general coloration was dark brown with the back feathers indistinctly edged with buff. Light buffy underparts were heavily streaked, not barred, with dark brown. A faint light line extended from the beak over the eye, almost joining at the back of the somewhat lighter crown. The space between the eye and the ear patch was white. Narrow moustache streaks were slightly darker than the the back. The folded wing tips were several inches shorter than the tail. Legs were yellow. When the bird flew, I noted the pointed wingtips, the dark centers of the underwings, and the long straight tail with indistinct barring and an inconspicuous terminal band of buff. I am thoroughly familiar with the Prairie Falcon from western North Dakota and have several records from Lyon County as well. **Henry C. Kyllingstad, 205 S. Sixth St., Marshall, MN 56258.**

GLAUCOUS GULL IN DOUGLAS COUNTY - On 26 November 1991, Gary Otnes called me to report two Glaucous Gulls that he'd seen near Alexandria, Douglas County. The following morning I drove to Lake L'Homme Dieu north of Alexandria and observed an immature bird. The sky was clear, wind west 10-20 mph, temperature in the teens. The sun was behind me and made viewing conditions excellent at distances of 50 to 80 yards with a 25X Kowa scope. An area of open water about 50 yards long next to the highway had attracted several Common Goldeneyes, Lesser Scaup, and Hooded Mergansers, which in turn had attracted the marauding gull, which was trying to pilfer food from the ducks. This was a very

large, robust gull, with light buffy plumage overlaid with brown flecks. In flight, in strong light, the primaries appeared lighter than the rest of the uniform wing and body color. This contrast was quite prominent and gave the wingtips a very light appearance. The legs were bright reddish-pink; the basal two-thirds of its bill was flesh-pink, the distal third black. The dark eye and bi-colored bill indicated a first-winter bird. This species occurs only rarely away from Lake Superior and the Twin Cities area. **Steve Millard, 630 W. Laurel, Fergus Falls, MN 56537.**

PRAIRIE FALCON AT BLACK DOG LAKE - On 21 December 1991, I decided to look for the Ivory Gull on the Mississippi River in South St. Paul. However, I visited Black Dog Lake first because it usually holds something of interest in the winter. When I arrived around 9:50 A.M. I spotted a raptor feeding on what turned out to be a duck, most likely a Mallard. These initial observations were made with Leitz 8 x 40 binoculars. I was looking northeast and the sky was clear with the sun in the southeast, so lighting was quite good. However, there was foggy vapor rising in puffs at various points, which clouded the view at times. I then set up a Questar spotting scope and used the 80X magnification to view the bird, which was sitting on chunks of concrete which protruded from the water. The raptor was a little over 100 meters away, but with an 80X scope the view was quite good. Even when I first used the binoculars, I felt I was viewing a falcon because I could faintly see "mustache" markings on the side of the head. When I observed the bird at 80X it was clear that it was a falcon. Peregrine Falcon crossed my mind first, but the bird was too buffy in color and had a light line above the eye. In addition, the "mustaches" were very thin. I hadn't seriously considered a female Merlin at first because the size seemed much too large. At that point, I consulted my *National Geographic Society Field Guide* and it seemed that in addition to the large size, the crown of the head was streaked as in Prairie Falcon, not the fairly solid color of a Merlin. Nor was it as dark as a typical Merlin head. After observing the bird for an estimated 10-12 minutes, it and most other birds in the area took flight. The one axillary area I could see seemed quite dark, but I caught only a brief glimpse and couldn't be sure if it was a dark color or if it was a shadow. (The birds all flew because an immature Bald Eagle flew over.) About 45 minutes later I had a close, about 40-50 feet view of a female Merlin in South St. Paul. Even at that close range, it did not appear nearly as large as the raptor I had seen at Black Dog Lake. When I got home in the early afternoon, I played my tape of western bird calls, because the Black Dog raptor called when it flew. The call definitely was not the high pitch of the Merlin. I'm not positive I could tell the difference between the Peregrine and Prairie Falcon calls in the field, but the thin "mustaches", the buffy color, and the light line above the eye seemed to rule out the Peregrine. I have observed Prairie Falcons previously on several occasions out west. This, however, was a Minnesota first for me. **Robert E. Holtz, 2997 N. Chatsworth, St. Paul, MN 55113.**

KEY TO SEASONAL REPORTS

1. Species listed in capital letters (**PACIFIC LOON**) indicate a Casual or Accidental occurrence in the state.
2. Dates listed in boldface (**10/9**) indicate an occurrence either earlier, later or within the earliest or latest dates listed in *Birds in Minnesota* (Janssen, R.B., 1987).
3. Counties listed in boldface (**Aitkin**) indicate either a first county record or an unusual occurrence for that county. City of **Duluth** also boldface when applicable.
4. Counties listed in italics (*Aitkin*) indicate a first county breeding record.
5. [ ] — species for which there is reasonable doubt as to origin or wildness.

(See pages 18 through 36)

Obituary
Isabelle Elwell

On 24 April 1990, Mary Isabelle Elwell of Duluth, Minnesota, died at the age of 97 years. Miss Elwell was born in Anoka County, Minnesota, and was graduated from high school in Minneapolis, graduated from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, in 1915, as a mathematics major and was honored for academic achievement by election to Phi Beta Kappa. Following her college years, she attended Columbia University in New York and completed her master's degree in mathematics at the University of Minnesota in 1932. She began her teaching career with service in North Dakota; Ely, Minnesota; and Duluth Normal School, which evolved into the University of Minnesota, Duluth.

Miss Elwell was a charter member and first president of the Duluth Bird Club, which was created on 24 April 1937. Shortly thereafter, George Rysgaard, while visiting the University of Duluth for a talk, met with Miss Mary Elwell and Dr. Olga Lakela to discuss possible merger plans with the Minnesota Bird Club and the T.S. Roberts Bird Club, along with the Duluth Bird Club, to create the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union. This endeavor became a reality on 13 April 1938 at a meeting of representatives from the three organizations at St. Cloud, Minnesota. The charter officers were, namely: George Rysgaard, president; Mary Elwell, vice president; Richard Voth, secretary-treasurer; and Charles Evans, editor.

Miss Elwell served as secretary-treasurer from 1939 through 1941. In 1942, she assumed the presidency and continued in that capacity through most of 1945, guiding the organization throughout the war years and serving as president longer than any other. It was largely due to the dedicated service of Mary Elwell and Arnold B. Erickson, who edited *The Flicker* during the war years, that the M.O.U. remained viable.

Mary Elwell was active in many social and scientific organizations and is remembered by many former students as an inspirational teacher - not only in her field of mathematics, but as a most capable amateur ornithologist who instilled a love and appreciation of all things natural into the lives of her students and friends alike. She and Dr. Olga Lakela hiked the areas of the north country of Lake Superior in their pursuit of their botanical and ornithological interests.

Mary Elwell's life and teaching career touched and strongly influenced many during her dedicated years, and now we who were her friends during those years pause to express our thanks for her life which contributed much. **George N. Rysgaard, 913 E. 4th St., Northfield, MN 55057.**

PURPOSE OF THE MOU

The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union is an organization of both professionals and amateurs interested in birds. We foster the study of birds; we aim to create and increase public interest in birds; and to promote the preservation of birdlife and its natural habitat.

We carry out these aims: through the publishing of a magazine, ***The Loon;*** sponsoring and encouraging the preservation of natural areas; conducting field trips; and holding seminars where research reports, unusual observations and conservation discussions are presented. We are supported by dues from individual members and affiliated clubs and by special gifts. The MOU officers wish to point out to those interested in bird conservation that any or all phases of the MOU program could be expanded significantly with gifts, memorials or bequests willed to the organization.

SUGGESTIONS TO AUTHORS

The editors of *The Loon* invite you to submit articles, shorter "Notes of interest," and color or black/white photos. Photos should be preferably 5x7 in size. Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced and on one side of sheet with generous margins. Notes of Interest should be generally less than two typewritten pages double-spaced. Whenever possible, include a copy of your manuscript on a 3½ inch MS/DOS or Macintosh disk saved in text (ASCII) file format. If reprints are desired, the author should so specify indicating the number required. A price quotation on reprints will be sent upon receipt of information.

Club information and announcements of general interest should be sent to the Newsletter editor. See inside front cover. Bird-sighting reports for "The Season" should be sent promptly at the end of February, May, July and November to Peder Svingen. See inside front cover.

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The Loon

SUMMER 1992

VOLUME 64 – NUMBER 2

The Loon Minnesota's magazine of birds, is published four times each year by the **Minnesota Ornithologists' Union,** the statewide bird club. Permanant address: J.F. Bell Museum of Natural History, 10 Church St. S.E., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455-0104. Anyone interested in birds may join. Any organization with similar aims may affiliate. All MOU members receive our two quarterly publications: ***The Loon*** and the **MOU Newsletter.**

MEMBERSHIPS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS: Jerry Bonkoski, 9022 Southridge St. S.W., Byron, MN 55920. To join the MOU and receive both MOU publications, donate $15.00 for a regular yearly membership. Other classes of membership that you may choose are: Youth (through age 17) $10.00 yearly; Family $25.00 yearly; Supporting $50.00 yearly; Life $300.00. Canadian and Foreign Subscriptions, $20.00 yearly. **All memberships are on a calendar year basis.** Also available: back issues of ***The Loon*** ($3.00 each ppd.) and MOU checklists of Minnesota birds (minimum lots of 20 for $5.00 postage paid).

Gifts, bequests and contributions to the MOU Endowment Fund should be sent to the Treasurer.

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"The Season" section of ***The Loon*** publishes reports of bird sightings throughout Minnesota. We particularly invite reports from parts of the state that have been neglected or covered lightly in past reports. To become a contributor to "The Season," request the report forms from the Editor of **"The Season,"** Peder Svingen, 151 Bedford St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414.

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A Survey for Breeding Horned Grebes in Minnesota

Janet Boe

Horned Grebes (*Podiceps auritus*) are small waterbirds that closely resemble Eared Grebes (*Podiceps nigricollis*) in size and coloration. However, they are more closely related to Red-necked Grebes (*Podiceps grisegena*) (Fjeldsa 1973) and, like Red-necked Grebes, they tend to be territorial, nest solitarily, aggressively defend their nest, and vocalize conspicuously during the breeding season (Cramp and Simmons 1977). Their over-water nests are built of available vegetation and are anchored to emergents or supported by submergents. Clutches consist of three to six (usually four to five) whitish eggs that stain tan with age. Parents share incubation duties during the 24 to 25 day incubation period, and chicks are tended and fed by both parents (Palmer 1962). The diet of Horned Grebes consists of insects (about half of diet), fish (about one-third), and crustaceans (about one-sixth) (Wetmore 1924).

In North America, the breeding range of Horned Grebes extends throughout most of western Canada and into Alaska. The range dips south of the border in northwestern Minnesota, North Dakota, and the extreme northern plains of other western states (Ratti 1983). The *Checklist of North American Birds* (American Ornithologists' Union 1983) extends the breeding range south, to northern South Dakota.

Horned Grebe nesting occurs locally in northeastern South Dakota (Johnsgard 1979); three Horned Grebe nests were observed during 1972 in north-central South Dakota by Duebbert and Lokemoen (1973). Stewart (1975) reported that breeding Horned Grebes were common or fairly common locally in North Dakota, north and east of the Missouri River. In recent years, sightings of nesting Horned Grebes in North Dakota have become unusual, although wetland numbers since 1988 have been well below normal and no systematic records are kept for these grebes (J. Lokemoen, pers. comm.). In Minnesota, the Horned Grebe is considered a species of special concern. Its breeding range is restricted to the northwestern part of the state, and grebes have been observed recently only on Roseau River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) (Bird Group of Minnesota Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee 1988).

Wetlands used for nesting by Horned Grebes usually have extensive beds of submergent vegetation (Stewart 1975) and from 40% to 60% open water (Faaborg 1976). These wetlands may be small ponds less than 18 acres (7.3 ha) in size. Less commonly, several pairs may nest, well separated, on larger wetlands (Faaborg 1976). In North Dakota, 35 of 37 Horned Grebe pairs studied were found on wetlands of < 80 acres (32 ha) and 27 of 37 pairs were found on wetlands < 18 acres in size (Faaborg 1976).

A decline in sightings of Horned Grebes during the breeding season in Minnesota prompted concern about the species in the state. The major objectives of this study were to chronicle the decrease in the breeding range of Horned Grebes in Minnesota and to determine the status of Horned Grebe breeding in the state by surveying selected wetlands within the species' historical breeding range for nesting pairs.

Method

To document Horned Grebe breeding range reduction in the state, I visited the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) library in St. Paul and checked issues of *The Flicker* and ***The Loon*** from 1929 through 1989, reviewed and recorded information in the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union (MOU) file on Horned Grebes, and verified reports of breeding (nests or young observed) by checking, when available, the nesting records submitted to MOU by observers. In addition, I consulted Roberts' (1932) *The Birds of Minnesota* and other ornithological literature for Horned Grebe nesting reports.

I used maps on file at the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) office in Minneapolis to select wetlands for survey. I selected wetlands classified as palustrine emergent, rat-

ings of F (semipermanent), G (intermittent), or H (permanent). Wetlands were selected in Kittson, Roseau, Marshall, Pennington, Red Lake, and Polk counties, the northwestern most counties in the state, covering an area usually included in Horned Grebe breeding range maps. Unfortunately, NWI maps available for this area of the state were limited to enlargements (1:24000) of 1982 aerial photographs which had not yet been field checked and digitized. No information on depth or vegetation was available except that indicated by classification and permanency ratings. Wetland size was estimated using the map scale. Since most reports suggest that Horned Grebes use small wetlands, I selected 85 wetlands ranging in size from < 1 acre (.4 ha) to, with a few exceptions, about 80 acres (32 ha). I omitted wetlands with the suffixes x (excavated) or d (partially drained or ditched).

In April 1991, I sent letters to Audubon Society chapters in northwestern Minnesota and the Twin Cities area, to managers at Tamarac NWR, Agassiz NWR, Roseau River WMA, and Thief Lake WMA, to DNR Area Wildlife Managers in northwestern Minnesota, and to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Wetlands District offices at Morris and Fergus Falls, requesting reports of Horned Grebe nesting attempts or sightings during the coming summer.

Upon starting field work on 1 June, it became apparent quickly that some wetlands selected using NWI maps were not wetlands that were likely to be used by Horned Grebes. To ensure the efficient use of time and other resources, I then turned to DNR and USFWS field personnel, who were a reliable source of current information about the wetlands I had selected. Prior to checking wetlands in an area, I discussed wetland conditions with the wildlife manager responsible for the area, described the conditions that I was looking for (< 1m of standing water, emergent and/or submergent vegetation, < 32 ha in size), solicited suggestions of wetlands that might meet those criteria, and asked about particular wetlands on the list constructed at NWI.

With information from area wildlife managers in hand, my field assistant and I checked wetlands during June by canoe and from shore. Usually, wetlands were checked by canoeing the periphery of the wetland at the edge of the emergent fringe. On occasion, due to wetland size or shape or weather conditions, wetlands were only partially checked by canoe. On other occasions, usually due to weather or wetland conditions, wetlands were checked only from shore.

Results

Historical Distribution in Minnesota:

Horned Grebes may be seen throughout the state during fall and spring migrations. The Lake Superior shore near Duluth has been an especially attractive location during spring; hundreds to thousands of Horned Grebes have historically been observed in that area at the time of the smelt run (late April - early May) (Janssen 1987). However, in *The Flicker*, ***The Loon***, and MOU files, I found only 17 reports of Horned Grebe nesting in Minnesota from 1931-1989 (Fig. 1). Roberts (1932) listed seven additional reports (Fig. 1) from 1885 to 1930, including nests at Mud Lake in Marshall County (now Agassiz NWR) and Twin Lakes in Kittson County. In addition, reports of summer observations of nonbreeding birds were not common (Fig. 2).

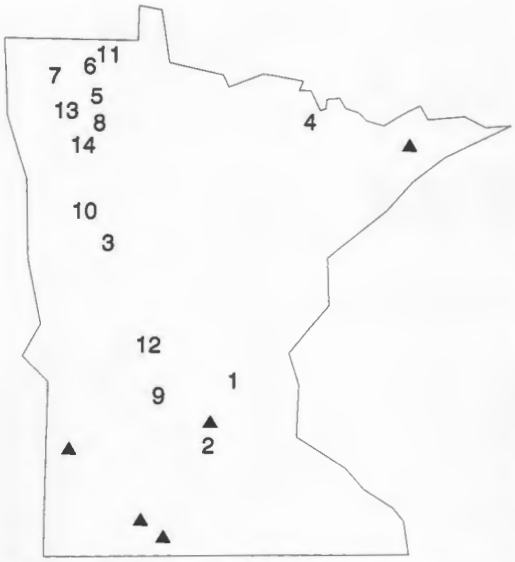
Survey of Wetlands 1991:

Only one Horned Grebe was observed during a survey of 76 wetlands in northwestern Minnesota during June 1991 (Fig. 3). The grebe was observed on 5 June in Pool 1 at Roseau River WMA. No reports of Horned Grebe nesting in 1991 have been received from Audubon chapter members, DNR personnel, or USFWS personnel.

Discussion

Although the distribution of reported Horned Grebe nesting attempts (Fig. 1) suggests a broader breeding distribution in the state in the past, the relatively few reports over a span of 90+ years also suggest that the species has not been a common breeder here. In some years, summer passes without a report of an observation of a breeding or nonbreeding Horned Grebe in the state. This evidence, coupled with the results of the survey this year, suggests that Horned Grebes should be considered uncommon summer residents and rare breeders in the state.

In Minnesota, which is already on the fringe of the Horned Grebe breeding range in North America, the widespread and enduring practice of wetland drainage has very likely contributed to further contracting of the



1. 1931, Cedar Lake, Wright County.
2. 1936, Brownton area, McLeod County.
3. 1936, Becker County.
4. 1936, Lac La Croix, St. Louis County.
5. 1938, Thief Lake, Marshal County.
6. 1941, Roseau County.
7. 1942 and 1966, Twin Lakes, Kittson County.
8. 1942 and 1984, Agassiz NWR, Marshall County.
9. 1944, Willmar area, Kandiyohi Couny.
10. 1958, Waubun area, Mahnomen County.
11. 1971, Roseau River WMA, Roseau County.
12. 1977, Lake Amelia, Pope County.
13. 1980 and 1984, marshall County.
14. 1984, Theif River Falls, Pennington County.

Figure 1. Map of all Horned Grebe nesting attempts reported in *The Flicker*, *The Loon*, MOU files, or Roberts (1932). Filled triangles = breeding wetlands reported in Roberts (1932).

Horned Grebe breeding range in the state. Draining most wetlands in an area not only decreases the total pool of available wetlands, but it makes that area less attractive to waterbirds by decreasing the variety of wetlands available there. Wetland drainage probably has forced Horned Grebes (and other waterbirds) into those areas with large wetlands that provide a reliable water supply or those areas with enough small wetlands remaining to provide variety and, thus, a measure of habitat reliability. Perhaps the most effective management activity benefiting Horned Grebes in Minnesota would be to improve the quality and increase the number of wetlands in the northwestern part of the state.

Management of remaining wetlands for waterfowl should benefit Horned Grebes by increasing the overall productivity of the wetland. However, since Horned Grebes select wetlands with large patches of open water (Faaborg 1976), management for interspersion may not benefit these grebes.

Baitfish harvesting is a serious threat to Horned Grebes and other *piscivorous* overwater nesting birds. Not only does baitfish harvesting probably reduce the prey base for these birds, but the disturbance caused by frequent checking of traps using boats with motors, may result in nest abandonment or the temporary or permanent disruption of family groups. Information on the effects of baitfish harvesting on the prey base in wetlands should be obtained, and regulations that curb the disturbance caused by baitfish harvesting should be developed and enforced.

Meanwhile, we should add the Horned Grebe to waterfowl brood survey forms and continue to encourage documentation of observations of summer nonbreeding birds and nesting attempts.

Acknowledgements

I thank Kim Morrill for her help in the field. Ron Erickson at NWI generously gave me advice, access to maps, and space to work. Financial support for this survey was provided by the Minnesota Nongame Wildlife Tax Checkoff through the Nongame Wildlife Program of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. DNR wildlife managers George Davis and Martha Marquardt in Karlstad, Gordon Forester in Thief River Falls, Terry Wolfe and Ross Heier in Crookston, Paul Telander at Thief Lake WMA, and Stan

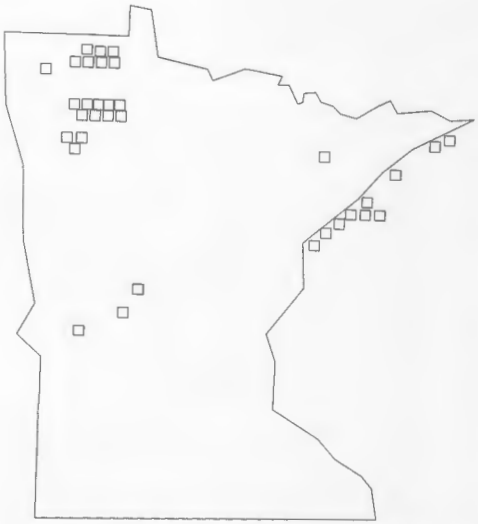


Figure 2. Summer (June - August) Horned Grebe observations in Minnesota 1931-1989, excluding nesting attempts, reported in *The Flicker*, *The Loon* and MOU files. One personal observation made in 1989 is included. Each square = one report.

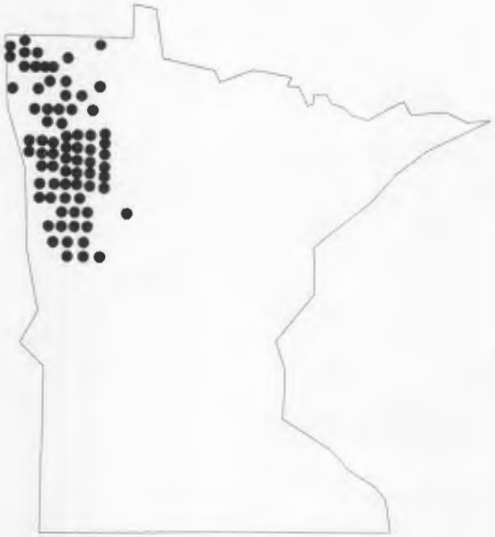


Figure 3. Map of Minnesota showing wetlands searched for Horned Grebes in June 1991. Each dot = one wetland.

Wood and Randy Prachar at Roseau River WMA, and USFWS managers and biologists Joe Kotok and Alan Bennett at Agassiz NWR and Lowell Deede and Betsy Beneke at Tamarac NWR provided helpful information. MOU records were compiled by Janet Green, Robert Janssen, and Nestor Hiemenz.

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The House Finch in Minnesota

Robert B. Janssen

The first mention of a House Finch in Minnesota is in Roberts' *The Birds of Minnesota* (1932), in which he states, "A male of this western species was shot at Minneapolis in the spring of 1876 by Mr. Robert McMullen and the skin was preserved but has since disappeared (Cantwell, et. al., *Ornithologist and Oologist* 15:134, 1890). It was, of course, a far straggler or an escaped captive bird."

It took a little over a hundred years before any more mention was made of a House Finch in Minnesota. During the early 1980s, a few unconfirmed reports came to my attention. These reports were rather vague and lacked sufficient detail to make a positive separation from the more common and similar Purple Finch.

Serious birders knew that eventually the House Finch would make an appearance in Minnesota, but when and where could only be contemplated. Since the release of the House Finch in New York City in 1940, the spread of the House Finch westward has been one of the most interesting bird phenomena of the 1980s and 1990s.

From the first few released pairs, the population remained relatively stable at about 250 birds through the 1950s. By 1960, the birds had spread to nearby Connecticut, the southern counties of New York, and into New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania. The increase in population gained momentum in the 1970s, as the House Finch spread over most of southern New England, southward through Maryland, Virginia, and into North Carolina. The spread to the north into northern New England and southern Canada was a slower process, as the birds seemed to find it more difficult to establish themselves in colder climates.

There was nothing to stop the spread to the south and west, and the House Finch reached Georgia to the south and the Mississippi River to the west by the early 1980s. It is here that we pick up the story in Minnesota.

It appeared, from looking at a map, that Minnesota and the Dakotas would be the last places in the lower United States for the House Finch to put in an appearance. We are the farthest points from the expanding eastern and southwestern populations, and not on a direct line from either expansion. The westbound movement of the eastern population was taking place to the south of us, across Indiana, Illinois, and into Iowa. The southwestern population expansion was taking place into Colorado, Oklahoma, and Nebraska, leaving Minnesota and the Dakotas on the far periphery of this expansion.

In spite of this biogeographical position, on 21 November and 15 December 1980 a male House Finch showed up at the feeder of David Burggers, in Minnetonka, Hennepin County. He confirmed the identification of the bird by observing it for short intervals on both of the above dates (***The Loon*** 53:109).

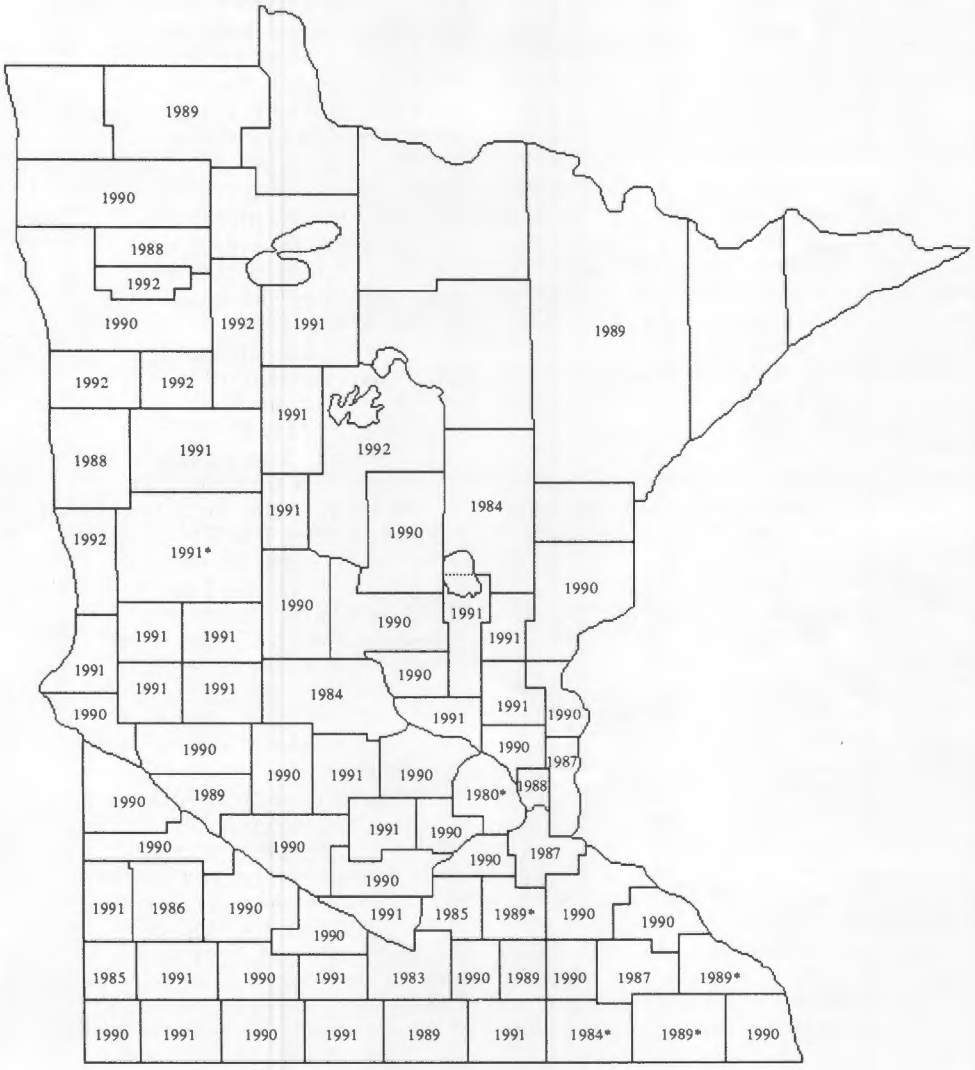
It took three more years for the second male to show up in the state; this bird was seen in north Minneapolis on 9 December 1983, and even though it remained at the feeder only a short time, it was photographed by Dr. Walter Breckenridge (***The Loon*** 56:64). Also in December 1983, the first confirmed female House Finch in the state was recorded at Mankato, Blue Earth County, on 3, 4, 6 and 8 December 1983 by Karen and Merrill Frydendall (***The Loon*** 56:130- 131).

The spring of 1984 produced three more records of male House Finches at widely separated localities: one at St. Cloud, Stearns County, on 18 March (***The Loon*** 56:194); another at Austin, Mower County, on 25 April (***The Loon*** 56:198-199); and most unusual, one at Ripple Lake in Aitkin County in northern Minnesota, first seen on 11 May and last seen on 14 June 1984 (***The Loon*** 56:189-190).

During 1985, three more records were added, one from the southeast in Winona County (***The Loon*** 57:137), one in LeSueur County (***The Loon*** 57:134), and one from the southwest in Pipestone County, a female seen by Ray Glassel on 30 August 1985.

In 1986, records began to increase rather dramatically. More individuals were seen in St. Cloud, birds were seen during May in Fergus Falls for the first Otter Tail County

THE HOUSE FINCH IN MINNESOTA
Year of first reported occurrence by county



* - Confirmed nesting

records, and several were seen in late December in Marshall, Lyon County. Also in late December, several males and females started visiting a feeder regularly in Minneapolis (***The Loon*** 59:212), they were at the feeders daily until late April 1987.

The spread of House Finches continued slowly in 1987 with new records in Rochester, Olmsted County; Hastings, Dakota County; and at Forest Lake, Washington County. On 16 May 1988, a female House Finch was seen at Jim Mattsson's feeder in Thief River Falls, Pennington County (***The Loon*** 60:131) for the farthest north that House Finches had been recorded in the state. During 1988 a slow but continuing expansion was recorded in the state, especially in southern and central regions. The first record for Moorhead, Clay County, was obtained on 17 May 1988.

By early 1989, the range expansion picked up momentum. The first recorded nesting took place in Winona, Winona County in May (***The Loon*** 61:93), and two nests were discovered in Faribault, Rice County, in June 1989. By mid-1989, House Finches were regularly seen in many locations in and around the Twin Cities. One area of concentration was the Midway district of St. Paul, just north and south of University Avenue. The first record for Duluth occurred in 1989 when Kim Eckert had one at his feeder on 12 May. Unusual was the occurrence of a male House Finch at a feeder in Greenbush, Roseau County, on 26 October 1989. Greenbush is near the Canadian border and this observation represents the most northerly record in the state. Male House Finches were seen intermittently at this same feeder during 1990 and 1991. During May 1992, at least three males were present at the feeder. The presence of females could not be confirmed.

Numbers of House Finches literally "exploded" during 1990 in the southern half of the state. Logarithmic increases were recorded as far north as Otter Tail County in the west, Todd County in the central region, and Anoka and Washington Counties in the east. I personally recorded House Finches in 35 of Minnesota's 87 counties during 1990.

This fantastic increase in numbers continued into 1991 with birds spreading northward into Pine County in the east, and Wadena, Hubbard, and Becker counties in central and northwest regions. Nesting was recorded as far north as Fergus Falls, and nesting was suspected or documented in all counties in the lower two-thirds of the state during 1991. Males could be heard singing in most of the larger towns and cities in these areas during April and May. During August, adults brought juveniles to feeders in these areas. Nesting was suspected as far north as Bemidji, Beltrami County, during 1991.

I think it is only a matter of another year or two before the House Finch is recorded in almost every county in the state. There are no records, as of May 1992 from Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Koochiching, Lake or Cook counties, which are along the Canadian border, and just to the south from Itasca and Carlton counties. It will be interesting to see if they ever reach the north shore of Lake Superior in Cook and Lake counties. Lake Superior is noted for attracting rarities, but only time will tell whether or not this boreal forest area will attract House Finches. Another interesting question, is whether birds in these northern areas become migratory or permanent residents, as they are in their native habitats. Can they survive the intense cold winters of northern Minnesota?

Minnesota birders have had, and are experiencing at present, a unique opportunity in being able to witness and participate in the phenomenon of the rapid range expansion of the House Finch into Minnesota. **10521 S. Cedar Lake Road, #212, Minnetonka MN 55305.**

Correction: ***The Loon*** 63:266 under Bobolink delete early north 5/5 Aitkin JK.

The Fall Season

(1 August to 30 November 1991)

Steve Carlson, Oscar Johnson, Kim Risen and Dick Ruhme
Foreword by Peder Svingen

Fall 1991 was among the most outstanding seasons ever for rarities in Minnesota, although some birds lingered only briefly. Highlights included three first state records, two of which occur only as casual species throughout most of North America! The total migration at Hawk Ridge in Duluth was 85,796 hawks, the highest ever. By the end of the period, a record invasion of Northern Hawk Owls was well underway and an unprecedented "double" invasion of Great Gray Owls in two consecutive winters had begun.

Not since 1974, when **four** first state records appeared that fall, have so many species been recorded in Minnesota for the first time during a single season (***The Loon*** 56: 165-66 and 63: 286). In addition, the total number of casual/accidental species was more than twice the average number recorded in fall during the previous decade. Several of these (Pacific Loon, Iceland Gull, and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, e.g.) were represented by multiple individuals. An "unofficial" review of all records for casual/accidental species during the previous decade reveals the magnitude of this season's influx of rarities.

Season	Total Species	Total Casual/ Accidental
Fall 1991	**308**	**22**
Fall 1990	293	10
Fall 1989	289	7
Fall 1988	296	13
Fall 1987	299	12
Fall 1986	294	11
Fall 1985	292	13
Fall 1984	302	13
Fall 1983	293	7
Fall 1982	289	12
Fall 1981	293	4
Average 1981-90	294	10

Attempts to correlate specific records of rare birds with weather phenomena are filled with uncertainty. The weather in Minnesota during the fall of 1991 was certainly bizarre. Temperatures were just below average during most of the season until heavy snow cover throughout eastern Minnesota held November temperatures well below normal in many areas; for example, November was 8.7 degrees below normal in the Twin Cities.

Precipitation was generally above average, although isolated pockets of low moisture persisted. Duluth experienced flooding after a series of storms in early September. October and November were both the "snowiest" ever recorded in the Twin Cities. Still, it was a relatively mild season until a cold snap in mid-October. A variety of warblers and Chimney Swifts could still be found along Lake Superior's North Shore during the last weekend in October. However, birds and birders were confronted with seasonal reality when an intense Halloween storm dumped record amounts of snowfall across much of the state. The Twin Cities received over two feet of snow and northeastern Minnesota more than three feet of snow, while areas to the south were clobbered by freezing rain and sleet. Overnight temperatures were suddenly near zero. Although a gradual warming trend melted most of the snow by Thanksgiving, "Son of Mega Storm" dumped another one to two feet of snow across a wide swath of eastern Minnesota in late November. The Twin Cities had received over 55 inches of snow by the end of November, well above the average of 49.2 inches for an entire winter!

Some of the casual species recorded this season may eventually prove to be welcome additions to the list of regular species in the state, such as Pacific Loon, Ross' Goose, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. It is also interesting to consider some of our records within a regional or continental context. Reviewing reports of Red

Phalarope and Vermilion Flycatcher from other states for example, in *American Birds*, actually enhances the importance of such outstanding discoveries in Minnesota, since impressive numbers of individuals were recorded out of range. Regional reports do sometimes suggest that a species may have been "missed" by observers (e.g., many Sabine's Gulls were recorded in nearby regions this season, but not in Minnesota).

It is difficult to single out records for special comment this season and impractical to discuss them all. The Mississippi Kite at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve in Duluth was the first for northern Minnesota and especially rewarding for the observers, all of whom have contributed endless hours to the educational and scientific endeavors there. Similarly, Steve Carlson's dedication to a daily census of warbler migration through the Twin Cities was justly rewarded on 31 August when he discovered the third state record of Black-throated Gray Warbler at Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis. One of the first state records this season, a Fork-tailed Flycatcher in Duluth, was "expected" (to the extent that accidental species can be anticipated) but was most uncooperative since it remained there for only two minutes. The Hoffmans' discovery of a fourth state record Purple Sandpiper in Grand Marais culminated an incredible season there, during which they made the initial identification of two first state records (Fieldfare and Anna's Hummingbird) and established these records with solid documentation. The steady appearance of rarities in Grand Marais set into motion a steady stream of observers, migrating up and down the North Shore of Lake Superior in October and November. It was a memorable season in many respects and the litany of this season awaits your study and pleasure.

RED-THROATED LOON
Reported 10/1-2 Duluth KE, PS. (***The Loon*** 63:273).

PACIFIC LOON
Reported 9/22-24 Duluth PS et al. (***The Loon*** 63:280-281), 10/11 Ramsey KB et al. (***The Loon*** 64:63-64), 10/22 Ramsey/Washington EL.

Common Loon
Late north 11/3 Becker BB, Red Lake KH, 11/15 Lake DPV, 11/24 Otter Tail SDM; late south 10/31 Lac Qui Parle AB, Hennepin DC, SC, 11/14 Olmsted JB, 11/22 Ramsey KB.

Pied-billed Grebe
Late north 10/13 Clay LCF, Otter Tail MO, 11/1 Becker BB, 1116 Aitkin WN; late south 11/22 Ramsey KB, 11/25 Hennepin SC, 11/28 Dakota DZ.

Horned Grebe
Late north 10/27 St. Louis SS, 10/29 Pine AB, 10/30 Beltrami DJ; late south 11/16 Goodhue RB, 11/25 Olmsted JB, 11/26 Hennepin KB.

Red-necked Grebe
Late north 10/15 St. Louis TW, 10/28 Otter Tail DS, 11/4 Lake DPV; late south 10/31 Hennepin SC, 11/3 Cottonwood ED.

Eared Grebe
Late north 8/4 Traverse AB, 9/26 Wilkin KE; late south 9/14 Stevens KB, 10/24 Chippewa AB, **11/14** Hennepin SC.

Western Grebe
Late north 10/10 Polk PS, 10/23 Todd KB, 10/28 Otter Tail DS; late south 10/7 Rice TB, 11/1 Chippewa AB, **11/20** Hennepin SC.

CLARK'S GREBE
Reported 8/14 Traverse DB.

American White Pelican
Late north 9/22 Otter Tail MO, 10/2 Grant SDM, 10/25 Becker BB, KB; late south 10/12 Dakota DZ, 10/22 Hennepin KB, 11/1 Lac Qui Parle AB.

Double-crested Cormorant
Late north 10/25 Clay LCF, 10/27 Becker MO, 10/29 Pennington KSS; late south 11/25 Olmsted JB, 11/27 Kandiyohi CJ, 11/29 Dakota SC.

American Bittern
Late north 8/25 Carlton AB, 9/7 Aitkin WN, 9/14 Roseau MO; late south 10/12 Hennepin DZ, 10/22 Swift AB, 11/3 Cottonwood ED.

Least Bittern
Reported 8/4 Traverse AB, DB, 8/25 Jackson TEB, KE, 9/17 Clearwater KB.

Great Blue Heron
Late north 11/8 Cook SOL, 11/10 Aitkin WN, **11/30** Otter Tail MO; late south 11/27 Hennepin DC, Kandiyohi CJ, 11/29 Dakota SC, Goodhue LS, MS.

Great Egret
Late north 10/4 Aitkin WN, **10/19** Duluth KE, **10/25** Clay MO; late south 10/29 Olmsted AP, Sherburne SWR, Wabasha DWM.

Snowy Egret
Reported **8/1** Lyon HK, **8/14** Traverse DB.

Little Blue Heron
Reported **8/18** Lyon HK (***The Loon*** 64:68).

Cattle Egret
Reported 8/1-11 Traverse AB, JP, PS, 10/26 Cook, Lake mob, Lac Qui Parle BL, 10/27 Becker MO.

Green-backed Heron
Late north 9/12 Becker BK, 9/14 Roseau MO, 10/5 Itasca DB; late south 10/13 Hennepin AB, Washington DS, 10/22 Ramsey KB.

Black-crowned Night-Heron
Reported north 10/23 Duluth KE, TW; late south 10/20 Rice TB, Washington TEB, 10/22 Swift AB, 11/19 Hennepin SC.

Tundra Swan
Early north 10/2 Wilkin SDM, 10/19 Aitkin PS; early south 10/16 Wabasha TEB (1,000), 10/18 Hennepin KB; late north 11/1 Becker BB, 11/23 Beltrami DJ; late south 11/25 Wabasha DWM, 11/30 Olmsted JB.

[TRUMPETER SWAN
One banded individual reported 8/13 Hennepin DB.]

Greater White-fronted Goose
Reported 10/12 Lac Qui Parle AB, **11/2** Cook SOL.

Snow Goose
Early north **8/2** (summering bird) Pennington PS, 9/14 Todd KB; early south 9/26 Olmsted JB, 9/27 Washington WL; late north 10/31 Chippewa AB, Cook KMH, Beltrami DJ, 11/16 Grant MO; late south 11/21 Rice FKS, 11/26 Dakota KB.

ROSS' GOOSE
Reported 10/10 Roseau PS.

Canada Goose
Reported from 26 counties south, 16 counties north.

Wood Duck
Late north 10/27 Becker MO, 10/28 Clay MM, **11/30** Otter Tail SDM; late south 11/13 Rice FKS, 11/16 Goodhue RB, 11/24 Nicollet LF.

American Black Duck
Early south 8/1 Hennepin SC, 8/20 Washington DS, 10/7 Sherburne AB; late north 10/9 Pennington KSS, 11/23 Cook DB.

Mallard
Reported from 26 counties south, 14 counties north.

Northern Pintail
Late north 10/21 Otter Tail RJ, 10/26 Becker MO, 10/28 St. Louis AB; late south 10/22 Chippewa AB, 10/26 Hennepin SC, 11/22 Olmsted JB.

Blue-winged Teal
Late north 10/16 Beltrami DJ, 10/25 Becker BB, 10/27 Otter Tail DS; late south 10/27 Houston EMF, 10/22 Chippewa AB, Hennepin KB.

Northern Shoveler
Late north 10/28 Becker BB, 10/20 Polk KSS, 10/21 Clay RJ; late south 10/30 Meeker AB, 11/4 Cottonwood ED, 11/27 Hennepin SC.

Gadwall
Late north 10/25 Becker BB (250), 10/28 St. Louis AB, **11/17** Otter Tail MO; late south 11/20 Olmsted JB, 11/28 Dakota KB, 11/29 Hennepin SC.

American Wigeon
Late north 10/13 Clay LCF, 10/27 Becker MO, 10/28 St. Louis AB; late south 10/29 Washington TEB, 11/13 Rice FKX, 11/22 Hennepin SC.

Harlequin Ducks, 27 October 1991, Grand Marais, Cook Co. Photo by Kim Risen.

Canvasback
Late north 11/5 Beltrami DJ, 11/12 Cook KMH, RJ, 11/17 Otter Tail MO; late south 11/17 Washington TEB, 11/25 Hennepin KB, 11/27 Wabasha WDM.

Redhead
Late north 11/1 Becker BB, 11/6 Beltrami DJ, 11/30 Otter Tail SDM; late south 10/30 Cottonwood ED, Meeker AB, Winona CS, 11/16 Hennepin SC, 11/22 Washington KB.

Ring-necked Duck
Late north 11/3 Pennington KSS, 11/10 St. Louis SS, 11/12 Cook RJ; late south 11/22 Hennepin SC, Washington KB, 11/24 Olmsted JB, 11/30 Meeker AB.

Greater Scaup
Reported 10/26 Beltrami DJ, 10/29 and 28 Cook AB, PB, 11/14 Cook KMH; 11/9,11 Hennepin KB, SC.

Lesser Scaup
Late north 11/23 Aitkin WN, St. Louis TW, 11/29 Cook KMH, 11/30 Otter Tail SDM, MO; late south 11/22 Washington KB, 11/29 Hennepin SC, Olmsted JB.

Harlequin Duck
Reported 9/26 Mille Lacs KE, 10/18-**11/24** Cook KR, PS, mob.

Oldsquaw
Reported north 10/21-11/24 Cook mob, 10/20 Lake PB, 10/26-11/18 St. Louis mob; south 11/11 Dakota KB, 11/16 Wabasha TEB.

Black Scoter
Reported **10/8**-11/18 Cook KB, PB, MH, 10/19 Kanabec RJ, 10/16-20 Lake PB, KR, PS.

Surf Scoter
Reported **9/22** Duluth mob, 10/16-20 Lake PB, KR, PS, 10/16-27 Cook PB, PS.

White-winged Scoter
Reported 10/19 11/8,9 Cook PB, KMH, RJ, 10/19,28 Lake AB, PB, 10/20 Duluth PB, SDM.

Common Goldeneye
Early south 10/15 Ramsey KR, 10/18 Hennepin SC, 10/30 Meeker AB, Washington TEB.

Bufflehead
Early north 9/21 Mille Lacs RJ, 10/4 Beltrami DJ; early south 10/3 Hennepin KB, 10/11 Chippewa AB; late north 11/26 Lake DPV, 11/29 Cook KMH; late south 11/25 Hennepin KB, 11/27 Kandiyohi CJ.

Hooded Merganser
Late north 11/17 Otter Tail SDM, MO, 11/22 Becker BK, 11/27 Douglas SDM; late south 11/25 Hennepin SC, 11/29 Dakota SC, 11/30 Washington TEB.

Common Merganser
Early south 11/2 Ramsey KB, 11/3 Hennepin SC, 11/10 Goodhue DZ.

Red-breasted Merganser
Late north 11/9 Cook RJ, 11/17 Aitkin WN, 11/24 St. Louis AB; late south 11/16 Goodhue RB, 11/25 Hennepin KB, 11/30 Wabasha WDM.

Ruddy Duck
Late north 10/13 Clay LCF, 10/26 Norman MO, 10/28 St. Louis AB; late south 11/15 Hennepin SC, 11/16 Goodhue RB, 11/26 Olmsted JB.

Turkey Vulture
Hawk Ridge count: 1,175; late north 9/24 Cook KMH, 9/28 Becker MO, 10/6 Aitkin WN; late south 10/9 Houston EMF, 10/11 Ramsey KB, 10/23 Winona CS.

Osprey
Hawk Ridge count: 316, a new high; late north 10/13 Clay LCF, 10/28 Otter Tail HJF, 10/29 Duluth, Hawk Ridge; late south 10/4 Ramsey KB, 10/6 Rice TB, 11/5 Cottonwood fide ED.

MISSISSIPPI KITE
Reported 8/30 Duluth, Hawk Ridge, first record for northern Minnesota (***The Loon*** 63:282-283).

Bald Eagle
Hawk Ridge count: 582, a new high; highest

Eleven Bald Eagles, 16 November 1991, near Lake City, Wabasha Co. Photo by Bruce Fall.

day count 11/7 Hawk Ridge 126; late north 11/29 Itasca KB, 11/30 Aitkin WN, Otter Tail SDM.

Northern Harrier
Hawk Ridge count: 648; late north 10/26 Pennington KSS, 11/23 Becker MO, **11/30** Aitkin WN; late south 11/16 Goodhue KB, 11/18 Olmsted JB, 11/30 Wabasha WDM.

Sharp-shinned Hawk
Hawk Ridge count: 18,524; late north 10/14 St. Louis DC, 10/18 Carlton AB, 10/26 Norman MO; late south 11/15 Martin BBo, 11/16 Nicollet MF, 11/27 Houston EMF.

Cooper's Hawk
Hawk Ridge count: 210, a new high; late north 9/29 Norman MO, 10/7 Becker BK, 10/9 Wadena AB; late south 10/27 Olmsted JB, 11/7 Washington WL, **11/28** Hennepin JF.

Northern Goshawk
Hawk Ridge count 1,107; early north 9/10 Hawk Ridge, 9/20 Marshall KSS, 10/7 Becker BK; early south **9/21** Pipestone JPa, 11/3 Hennepin KB, 11/24 Stearns DO.

Red-shouldered Hawk
Late north 9/1 Aitkin WN, **11/19** Becker BB; late south 10/15 Ramsey KB, Martin BBO, 11/1 Washington DO.

Broad-winged Hawk
Hawk Ridge count: 53,190; late north 10/6 Aitkin WN, 10/18 Duluth SDM, **10/31** Cook SOL; late south 9/28 Pipestone RJ, 10/17 Rice TB, 10/23 Ramsey RH.

Swainson's Hawk
Late north 9/18 Grant SDM, 9/22 Wilkin SDM, 9/29 Norman MO; late south 9/28 Lincoln, Pipestone RJ.

Red-tailed Hawk
Hawk Ridge count: 7,486; reported from 29 counties south, 41 north.

Rough-legged Hawk
Hawk Ridge count: 431; early north 9/20 Marshall KSS, 9/25 Becerk BB; early south 9/26 Rock PS, 10/7 Houston EMF, 10/12 Anoka KB, 10/12 Anoka KB.

Golden Eagle
Hawk Ridge count: 32; early north 9/23 Hawk Ridge, 10/19 Crow Wing RJ; early south **9/14** Stevens KB; late north 11/20 Pennington KSS, 11/27 Becker BB.

American Kestrel
Hawk Ridge count: 1,819; late north 11/9 Marshall KSS, 11/17 Aitkin WN, **11/30** Otter Tail SDM.

Merlin
Hawk Ridge count: 339, a new high; late north 11/20 Marshall, Roseau SDM, 11/24 Clay MO, 11/25 Hawk Ridge; late south **11/12** Rice TB, **11/18** Blue Earth BBo, **11/30** Kandiyohi CJ.

Peregrine Falcon
Hawk Ridge count: 28; late north 9/27 Cook KMH, 9/28 Wilkin PB, 10/27 Hawk Ridge; late south 10/10 Olmsted AP, 10/12 Hennepin DZ, 10/30 Sherburne DO.

Gyrfalcon
Reported 11/7-14 St. Louis Bill Teft, SS, TW, 11/14 Duluth Hawk Ridge banded, 11/13 Norman PS (***The Loon*** 64:68), 11/30 Cook KE.

Prairie Falcon
More reports than usual (***The Loon*** 64:64). Late north 10/12 Norman MO, Kanabec RJ, 10/21 Otter Tail RJ, 10/23 Clay KR; late south 9/8 Pipestone ND, 9/27 Olmsted AP.

Gray Partridge
Reported from 13 counties south, seven counties north.

Ring-necked Pheasant
Reported from seven north and 26 south counties.

Spruce Grouse
All reports: 8/13 Cook KMH, 10/4-5 Itasca AB,DB, 10/26 Lake SW/MS, 10/30 St. Louis and Cook KB, 11/16 Cook KMH.

Ruffed Grouse
Reported from 14 north and eight south counties.

Greater Prairie-Chicken
All reports: 9/29 Norman MO and Wilkin

(40) PB, 11/14 Clay MM.

Sharp-tailed Grouse
Reports were up. Reported from Aitkin, Beltrami, Koochiching, Marshall and St. Louis.

Wild Turkey
Reported throughout the season in Houston EMF.

KING RAIL
10/24 Edison Township, Swift County AB (***The Loon*** 64:64-65).

Virginia Rail
Only reports: 8/5 Cass (with young) RJ and 8/31 Hennepin DZ.

Sora
Late north 9/1 Becker MO, 9/4 St. Louis TW; late south 9/28 Yellow Medicine RJ, 10/2 Pipestone ND, 10/11 Chippewa AB.

Common Moorhen
All reports: 8/3-11 Anoka (two adults, two young) TT, KB, EL, 8/24 Winona CS, 9/4 Sherburne N. W. R.

American Coot
Late north 10/28 St. Louis AB, 10/31 Beltrami DJ, 11/17 Otter Tail MO; late south 11/27 Hennepin SC, 11/30 Winona CS, Kandiyohi CJ.

Sandhill Crane
Reported from nine counties; late north 10/12 Becker BK, 10/18 St. Louis AB, 10/23 Wilkin KB; all south reports 8/3 Anoka TT, 8/13 Anoka RH.

Black-bellied Plover
Early north 8/23 Wilkin MO, 9/7 St. Louis RJ, 9/8 Lake DPV; late north 10/6 Wilkin MO, 10/20 St. Louis PB, SDM, 10/26 Beltrami DJ; only south reports Rock PS, 9/30 Pipestone JP, 10/5 Kandiyohi RJ.

Lesser Golden-Plover
Early north 8/22 Clay LCF, 9/2 Wilkin MO, 9/7 Lake DPV; early south 8/10 Dakota KE, 9/5 Hennepin KB; late north 9/29 Itasca AB, 10/13 Clay MO, 10/21 Otter Tail RJ; late south 10/5 Rock (200+) JPa, 10/12 Hennepin SC, 10/22 McLeod AB.

Semipalmated Plover
Early north 8/2 Clay MO, 8/4 Grant AB, 8/25 St. Louis AB; late north 9/6 Cook KMH, 9/22 Wilkin MO, 9/14 St. Louis KR; all south reports 8/4 Anoka EL, 9/14 Stevens KB, 9/28 Rock PS.

Killdeer
Late north 10/14 Lake DPV, 10/18 Becker BB, 10/21 Wilkin RJ; late south 10/22 Chippewa AB and Blue Earth LF, 10/23 Ramsey RH, 10/30 Olmsted AP.

Greater Yellowlegs
Late north 10/21 Clay RJ, 10/26 Beltrami DJ, Mille Lacs MB and Norman MO, 10/31 St. Louis KE; late south 10/31 Chippewa AB, 11/3 Ramsey KB, 11/5 Houston EMF.

Lesser Yellowlegs
Late north 10/18 Becker BB, 10/22 Wadena RJ, 10/27 Becker MO; late south 10/22 Meeker AB and Pipestone JPa, 10/24 Brown JS, 10/30 Olmsted AP.

Solitary Sandpiper
Late north 9/16 Clearwater KB, 9/19 Clay MO, **10/19** Polk BB; late south 9/10 Brown JS, 9/24 Nobles TEB, 10/7 Hennepin SC.

Spotted Sandpiper
Late north 9/26 Clay LCF, 10/4 Lake DPV, 10/12 Cook PS; late south 9/21 Pipestone JPa, 9/30 Cottonwood ED, 10/1 Hennepin KB.

Upland Sandpiper
All reports: 8/1-3 Clay LCF, MO, 8/4 Traverse AB, DB, **8/24** Rock KE, TEB.

Whimbrel
Only report: 8/22 Tofte, Cook County MH.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW
10/3, Glencoe, McLeod Co. SK (***The Loon*** 64:61-63).

Hudsonian Godwit
All reports: **9/23** Hawk Ridge, St. Louis County KE, 10/1-2 Hennepin KB, SC.

Marbled Godwit
Only report **9/22** Lyon HK.

Ruddy Turnstone
All reports from Duluth, St. Louis County

8/25 AB, 9/13 KR, 9/17 DB.

Sanderling
Late north 9/17 Clearwater KB, 9/22 Wilkin MO, 10/29 St. Louis KE; late south 9/7 Rock JPa, 9/12 Yellow Medicine HK, 9/14 Stevens KB.

Semipalmated Sandpiper
Late north 8/24 Beltrami DJ, 8/25 St. Louis AB, 9/1 Becker (200+) MO; late south 9/30 Pipestone JP, 10/4 Le Sueur PS, 10/11 Chippewa AB.

Least Sandpiper
Late north 10/13 Clay MO, **10/18** Becker BB, **10/26** Mille Lacs MB; late south 9/14 Stevens KB, 10/6 Brown JS and Le Sueur PS, 10/11 Chippewa AB.

White-rumped Sandpiper
All reports: 8/10 Hennepin OJ, 8/13 Traverse DC, 9/12 Lyon HK, **10/18-26** Lake KR, PS, mob.

Baird's Sandpiper
Late north **10/26** Becker MO and Beltrami DJ, **10/29** Lake AB; late south 9/12 Lyon HK, 9/30 Dodge AB, 10/11 Chippewa AB.

Pectoral Sandpiper
Late north 10/26 Becker MO and Beltrami DJ, 10/28 Cook AB, 11/4 Lake DPV; late south 10/24 Brown JS, 10/25 Anoka DS and Hennepin SC, 10/30 Meeker AB.

PURPLE SANDPIPER
Minnesota's fourth record appeared at Grand Marais, Cook County 11/21-23 KMH et al. (***The Loon*** 64:56-57).

Dunlin
Early north 9/14 St. Louis RH, 9/17 Beltrami KB; late north 10/20 Lake KR, 10/21 St. Louis KE, 10/23 Polk PS; only south reports 10/18 Hennepin SC, 10/30 Meeker AB.

Stilt Sandpiper
Early north 8/1 St. Louis KE, 8/2 Clay (200+ on 8/15) MO; early south 8/1 Mower RRK, 8/15 Hennepin TT, 8/24 Rock KE; one late north report 9/1 Becker MO; late south 9/12 Lyon HK, 9/30 Dodge AB, 10/1 Hennepin KB.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper
All reports: 8/1 Cook (30) JW, 8/1-13 St. Louis KE, KR, 8/2 Dakota TT, Lake DPV and Ramsey BL, 8/16 Itasca AB, DB, 8/22 Hennepin OJ, 8/24 Chisago PS, 9/10 Cook KMH, **9/28** Rock PS, **10/6** Wilkin MO, **10/10** Pennington PS.

Short-billed Dowitcher
All reports: 8/23 Wilkin MO, 8/3-4 Martin BBo, 8/11 Big Stone AB, 8/25 Cottonwood KE, **9/30** Dodge AB.

Long-billed Dowitcher
Early north 8/14 Marshall PS, 9/8 St. Louis KE; early south 9/13 Lyon HK, 9/27 Dodge RJ; late north 10/22 Wilkin RJ, 10/23 Clay KR; late south 10/20 Winona (7) CS, 10/22 Meeker AB.

Common Snipe
Late north 10/26 Norman MO, 11/4 Meeker BB, **11/13** Cook SOL; late south 11/6 Mower RRK, 11/9 Hennepin KB, 11/13 Rice TB, FKS.

American Woodcock
Late north 10/20 Itasca AB, 10/26 St. Louis TW, 11/2 Cook SOL; late south 10/17 Ramsey KB, 10/22 Rice FKS, 10/23 Swift AB.

Wilson's Phalarope
All reports: 8/24 Mower RRK, 9/2 Wilkin MO, **10/13** Clay LCF.

Red-necked Phalarope
Late north 9/1 Becker MO, 9/22 Wilkin MO, 9/26 Wilkin KE; all south reports 9/7 Rock JPa, **10/2** Murray ND.

RED PHALAROPE
9/27-29 Claremont sewage lagoons, Dodge County RG, et al. Only the sixth state record for Minnesota, also the first southern record and a record early date! (***The Loon*** 64:67-68).

Parasitic Jaeger
All reports: 9/5 St. Louis (one adult, one imm.) PS, 9/14 St. Louis (adult) KR, 9/5 - **10/28** St. Louis (fide KE).

Franklin's Gull
Late north 10/1 St. Louis KE, 10/6 Aitkin WN, 10/13 Otter Tail MO; late south 10/24

Jackson LF, 10/27 Martin BBo, 10/30 Meeker AB.

Bonaparte's Gull
Late north 10/25 Otter Tail SDM, 10/26 Beltrami DJ and Mille Lacs MB, 10/27 Aitkin WN and Becker MO; late south 11/9 Hennepin KB, 11/10 Hennepin SC.

Ring-billed Gull
Reported from 15 north and 23 south counties; late north 11/15 Hubbard HJF, 11/17 Aitkin WN, 11/19 Becker BK.

Herring Gull
Reported from 11 north and 13 south counties.

Thayer's Gull
Reports were up with the increased coverage from Grand Marais; 10/26 - 11/24 Grand Marais, Cook County (max five) mob, **10/20** - 11/28 Dakota (max 3) PS, SC, TT, KB.

ICELAND GULL
11/9-10 Grand Marais, Cook County PS et al. (***The Loon*** 64:59-61); 11/25 Black Dog Lake, Dakota County RG, BF (***The Loon*** 64:57-59), 11/28 Grand Marais, Cook County (one adult) KMH (***The Loon*** 64:59-60).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL
10/26-27 Grand Marais, Cook County (one adult) PS et al. (***The Loon*** 63:275-276).

Glaucous Gull
More reports than usual: 10/27 Lake PB, KR, 10/27 - 11/24 Grand Marais, Cook County (max four) mob, 11/27 **Douglas** MO, SDM (***The Loon*** 64:69-70) all south reports 11/6 Hennepin (two imm.) SC, 11/7 Hennepin KB, 11/9 Dakota (one adult) KR, 11/16 Hennepin (one adult) SC, 11/16 Dakota (one adult) KR.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL
11/22-30 Grand Marias, Cook County (first winter) Dick Rhume et al., 11/29 Black Dog Lake, Dakota County BL, et al. (***The Loon*** 64:64).

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE
Two reports: 10/26 Cook KE et al. and 11/3 St. Louis MO. Possibly the same individual,

Glaucous Gull, 9 November 1991, Grand Marais, Cook Co. Photo by Warren Nelson.

Snowy Owl, 8 November 1991, Grand Marais, Cook Co. Photo by Anthony Hertzel.

as both were in first winter plumage (*The Loon* 63:279).

Caspian Tern
Late north 9/21 Clearwater DZ and Hubbard RJ, 9/30 Crow Wing SW/MS, 10/6 Aitkin WN; early south 8/2 Hennepin SC, 8/3 Carber RB; late south 9/22 Ramsey EL and Winona CS, 9/24 Sherburne N.W.R., 9/30 Hennepin KB.

Common Tern
All reports: 8/5-23 Washington WL, 8/24 Beltrami DJ, 8/25 St. Louis AB, 9/7 St. Louis TW, 9/7-22 Aitkin WN, 10/13 Chippewa AB, **11/19-20** (latest date on record) Black Dog Lake, Dakota County RG et al.

Forster's Tern
Late north 9/18 Clearwater KB, 9/22 Aitkin WN, 9/23 St. Louis BK; late south 9/21 Goodhue EL, 9/28 Lincoln RJ, **10/14** Ramsey KB.

Black Tern
Late north 8/23 Becker BB, 8/31 Traverse DC, 9/8 Aitkin WN; late south 9/4 Rice TB, 9/14 Stevens KB, 9/30 Cottonwood ED.

Rock Dove
Reported from 11 north and 28 south counties.

Mourning Dove
Reported from 14 north and 26 south counties; late north 11/15 Pennington KSS, 11/17 Otter Tail SDM, MO, 11/30 Koochiching GM.

Black-billed Cuckoo
All north reports: 8/4 Aitkin WN, 8/5 Cass RJ, 8/17 Becker MO; late south 9/6 Winona CS, 9/12 Rice TB, 10/1 Houston EMF.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo
All reports: Cottonwood ED, 8/17 Rice TB, 8/29 LeSueur EK, 9/8 Hennepin SC, TT, 9/20 Brown JS.

Eastern Screech-Owl
Reported from Chippewa, Cottonwood, Grant, Hennepin, LeSueur, Lyon, Martin, Nicollet and Ramsey.

Great Horned Owl
Reported from eight north and 19 south coun-

ties.

Snowy Owl
An invasion year with good numbers reported from the northeast, including no fewer than 22 individuals in November alone! Early north 11/7 Aitkin WN, 11/8 Cook PB, KR and St. Louis KR, 11/14 Cook (3) KMH.

Northern Hawk-Owl
As with the other northern owls, an invasion year with reports from most of the northern counties, totaling 71 individuals by 30 November! Early north 10/11 - 11/30 Sax-Zim Bog, St. Louis County (max 11 on 11/10 SS), 10/29 - 11/30 Aitkin County (max nine on 11/16 WN), 10/26 Lake of the Woods DJ, 10/31 Cook KMH; only south report 10/31 - 11/9 Sherburne N.W.R., **Sherburne Co.** mob.

Burrowing Owl
Only report was the nesting pair from previous years, 8/13 - 9/7 Rock (max five on 8/13 DC) mob.

Barred Owl
Reported from six north and 12 south counties.

Great Gray Owl
Reports were up from most of the north/northeast with 23 individuals counted by 30 November. All reports: 10/29 Itasca KB, 11/24 Cook AB, 11/27 Cook KMH, 10/26-11/30 St. Louis mob.

Long-eared Owl
Several found dead along the north shore of Lake Superior after the early and heavy snowstorms. All Reports: 10/20 Hennepin PS, St. Louis TW, 10/13 Chippewa AB, 10/17 Washington DS.

Short-eared Owl, 8 August, 1991, Aitkin Co. Photo by Warren Nelson.

Short-eared Owl
All reports: 8/6 Aitkin RJ, 8/15 Aitkin WN, 11/1-2 Murray ND, 11/5 Beltrami DJ, 11/9 Cook SDM, 11/10 Aitkin WN, 11/11 St. Louis SDM, 11/15 Hennepin SC.

Boreal Owl
All reports: 10/10 Hawk Ridge, Duluth TW,

11/16 **Becker** (found dead) BB, 11/26 Beltrami (found dead) DJ.

Northern Saw-whet Owl
All Reports: 11/16 Lyon HK, Hawk Ridge, Duluth mob.

Common Nighthawk
Late north 9/10 Pennington KSS, 9/14 St. Louis KR, **9/28** Clay MO; late south 9/30 Ramsey RH, 10/1 Brown JS and Martin BBo, 10/7 Rice TB and Washington TEB; major movements 8/22 Hennepin (705) KB, 8/27 Becker (200) BB and Park Point, Duluth (10,800 in 1 1/2 hours!) TW.

Whip-poor-will
All reports: 8/1-30 Cook SOL, 8/1-7 and 9/22 Houston EMF.

Chimney Swift
Late north 9/1 Aitkin WN, Clay LCF and Clearwater AB, 9/8 Otter Tail MO, **10/26-27** Two Harbors, Lake County (five) PB, KR, PS.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Late north 9/20 Becker BK, 9/21 Otter Tail MO, 9/25 Cook KMH; late south 9/25 Olmsted AP, 9/27 Nicollet MF, 10/20 Washington TEB.

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD
11/11 -12/1 Grand Marais, Cook County Peggy Heston, KMH et al. First record for Minnesota and another coup for Grand Marias! Documented by videotape, photographs, field notes and taped call notes, this adult female was seen by many and survived below freezing temps! (***The Loon*** 63:225-231)

Belted Kingfisher
Late north 10/17 Beltrami DJ, 11/7 Cook KMH, **11/14** Lake SW/MS.

Red-headed Woodpecker
Reported from ten north and 18 south counties; late north 10/1 Cook KMH, 10/9 Wadena AB, **10/20** Roseau SDM.

Red-bellied Woodpecker
Reported from four north and 25 south counties; late north 11/14 Carlton (fide KE), 11/23 Aitkin WN, **11/26** Becker BB.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Late north 9/29 Itasca AB, 10/4 Lake DPV, 10/6 Cook SOL; late south 10/2 Winona CS, 10/6 Pipestone JP, 10/8 Hennepin SC.

Downy Woodpecker
Reported from 15 north and 24 south counties.

Hairy Woodpecker
Reported from 16 north and 26 south counties.

Black-backed Woodpecker
All reports: Cook (throughout period) KMH, 8/1 - 11/16 St. Louis KE, KB, SW/MS, 10/4 - 11/19 Itasca AB, 10/13 Beltrami DJ.

Northern Flicker
Reported from 13 north and 24 south counties. Late north 10/26 Pennington KSS, 11/3 Norman MO, 11/17 Cook RJ.

Pileated Woodpecker
Reported from 13 north and 19 south counties.

Olive-sided Flycatcher
Early south **8/3** Anoka TT, 8/8 Hennepin TT; late north 8/27 St. Louis TW, 8/30 Becker BB, 9/2 Wilkin MO; late south 9/18 Hennepin TT, 9/30 Cottonwood ED, **10/6** Lyon HK.

Eastern Wood-Pewee
Late north 9/13 Roseau MO, 9/17 Cook TEB, 9/19 Lake DPV; late south 9/23 Winona CS, 9/25 Hennepin SC, 9/26 Houston EMF.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Early south 8/9 Ramsey KB, Rice FKS and Washington WL; late north 8/19 Cook PS, 9/7 Wilkin MO; late south 9/8 Hennepin KB, **10/6** Lyon HK.

Acadian Flycatcher
All reports: 8/8 Hennepin KB, 8/9 Washington WL.

Alder Flycatcher
Late north 8/18 Beltrami DJ and Cook KMH, 8/22 St. Louis TW, 8/31 Lake DPV; late south 8/21 Rice FKS, 9/1 Brown JS, 9/4 Washington WL.

Willow Flycatcher
One north report 8/3 Norman MO; late south 9/4 Rice FKS and Washington WL, **9/30** Houston EMF.

Least Flycatcher
Late north 9/8 Aitkin WN and Wilkin MO, 9/29 Itasca AB, 10/1 Cook KMH; late south 9/30 Dodge AB, 10/2 Rice FKS, 10/4 Hennepin SC.

Eastern Phoebe
Late north 9/27 Becker BK, 10/6 Aitkin WN

Western Kingbird
Late north 9/8 Otter Tail MO, 9/12 Clearwater PS, **9/17** Duluth TW; late south 8/3 Hennepin SC, 8/11 Swift AB.

Eastern Kingbird
Late north 9/10 Pennington KSS, 9/14 Lake DPV, 9/18 Cook KMH; late south 9/5 Ramsey EL, 9/7 Rice OR and Rock JPa, 9/20 Pipestone JP.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER
10/4-22 Knife River, Lake Co. KE, MH, mob

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 18 October 1991, near Lutsen, Cook Co. Photo by Kim Risen.

10/7 Morrison AB and Pennington KSS; late south 10/20 Brown JS and Winona CS, 10/30 Houston EMf, **11/17** Hennepin PS.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER
Second state record. 10/13-14 Park Point, Duluth (imm. female) TS et. al. (***The Loon*** 64:57).

Great Crested Flycatcher
Late north 8/28 Lake DPV, 9/1 Clearwater AB, 9/7 Wilkin MO; late south 9/24 Hennepin SC, 9/28 Pipestone RJ, **9/29** Winona CS.

(***The Loon*** 63:278), 10/18-20 Lutsen, Cook Co. BL, mob, **10/26** Gooseberry Falls State Park, Lake Co. FN.

FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER
First state record. 9/6 Duluth PS (***The Loon*** 63:217-220).

Horned Lark
Reported from nine counties north and 16 counties south ; late north 11/10 Cook SDM, 11/15 Pennington KSS, **11/24** Clay MO.

Purple Martin
Late north 9/4 Moorhead, Clay Co. (several thousand migrating at dusk) SDM, 9/5 Pine BB, 9/8 Aitkin WN and Clay LCF; late south 9/6 Pipestone JP, 9/12 Washington WL, 9/14 Nobles RJ.

Tree Swallow
Late north 9/16 St. Louis KR, 9/21 Wadena RJ, 9/22 Wilkin MO; late south 10/6 Goodhue KB, 10/12 Winona CS, 10/13 Rice TB.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Late north 9/15 Clay LCF, 9/22 Otter Tail MO; late south 9/4 Washington WL, 9/6 Pipestone JP, 9/29 Wright KB.

Bank Swallow
Late north 8/25 St. Louis AB, 9/8 Aitkin WN and Clay LCF, 9/21 Grant MO; late south 8/24 Cottonwood TEB, 9/3 Washington WL, 9/6 Pipestone JP.

Cliff Swallow
Late north 9/29 Clay LCF, **10/14** Hawk Ridge, Duluth FN, **10/19** (latest date on record) Lake SDM (***The Loon*** 63:277); late south 9/6 Pipestone JP, 9/7 Rock JPa, **9/19** Olmsted AP.

Barn Swallow
Late north 9/23 Cook KMH and Marshall KSS, 9/29 Clay LCF and Norman MO; late south 9/30 Dodge AB and Pipestone JP, 10/6 Goodhue KB and Olmsted CS.

Gray Jay
Reported from ten north counties, including 10/12 and 26 **Norman** MO.

Blue Jay
Reported from 18 north and 31 south counties.

Black-billed Magpie
Reported from Aitkin, Beltrami, Clay, Itasca, Norman and St. Louis Counties.

American Crow
Reported from 16 north and 31 south counties.

Common Raven
Reported from eight north counties; one south report 8/1-10/20 **Anoka** JH.

Black-capped Chickadee
Reported from 19 north and 29 south counties.

Boreal Chickadee
Reported from Aitkin, Clearwater, Cook, Itasca, Lake and St. Louis Counties.

Tufted Titmouse
All reports: 8/1-11/30 Houston (one or two daily) EMF, 11/19 Olmsted (6) AP.

Red-breasted Nuthatch
Reported from 14 north and 12 south counties; early south 8/18 Hennepin SC, TT, 8/28 Murray ND.

White-breasted Nuthatch
Reported from 13 north and 27 south counties.

Brown Creeper
Reported from nine north and 18 south counties; late north 11/1 Koochiching GM, 11/3 Norman MO, 11/13 Becker BB.

ROCK WREN
9/26 Minneapolis EW (***The Loon*** 63:282).

House Wren
Late north 9/28 Becker MO and Clay LCF, 10/6 Itasca AB; late south 10/8 Hennepin SC, 10/9 Winona CS, 10/18 Houston EMF.

Winter Wren
Early south 9/4 Blue Earth LF, 9/13 Anoka JH; late north 10/6 Itasca AB, 10/11 Cook KMH and Lake DPV; late south 11/2 Hennepin TT, **11/11** Houston DZ.

Sedge Wren
Late north 9/15 Roseau MO, 9/28 Itasca AB, 10/5 Clay LCF; late south 10/6 Anoka DS, 10/7 Rice TB, 10/10 Winona CS.

Marsh Wren
Late north 9/15 Clay LCF, Roseau MO and St. Louis TEB, 9/23 Marshall KSS; late south 10/7 Rice TB, 10/15 Pipestone JP, 10/22 Chippewa AB.

Golden-crowned Kinglet
Early south **8/20** LeSueur EK, **9/19** Hennepin SC, 9/24 Anoka KB; late north 11/7 Cook KMH, 11/11 Norman MO; late south 11/24

Martin BBo, 11/30 Brown JS and Cottonwood ED.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Early south 9/4 Hennepin SC, 9/5 Houston EMF, Murray ND and Winona CS; late north 10/22 Clay LCF, 10/29 Lake AB; late south 10/26 Washington WL, 11/3 Hennepin SC.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Four north reports 8/11 Becker BB, 8/21 Clay MO, 8/25 OtterTail MO, 8/31 Douglas RJ; late south 9/10 Hennepin SC, 9/12 Winona CS, 9/21 Dakota TT.

Eastern Bluebird
Late north 11/8 Cook KMH, 11/11 Norman MO, 11/16 Becker BB; late south 11/13 Brown JS, 11/15 Houston EMF, 11/20 Lac Qui Parle CMB.

Mountain Bluebird
One report: 11/7 Hawk Ridge, Duluth (1) FN.

Townsend's Solitaire
All reports: 11/12 Duluth (2) KE, 10/26 Lake (1) KR, PB, 10/28 Cook (2) AB.

Veery
Late north 8/6 Lake DPV, 8/19 St. Louis TW, **9/29** Cook SOL; late south 8/17 Anoka RJ, 8/25 Hennepin SC, 9/4 Ramsey KB.

Gray-cheeked Thrush
Early south 9/7 Ramsey EL, 9/10 Hennepin KB; late north 9/13 Roseau MO, 9/17 St. Louis TW, 9/18 Lake DPV; late south 9/29 Hennepin TT and Rock PS, 10/11 Mower RRK.

Swainson's Thrush
Early south 8/7 Anoka KB, 8/19 Hennepin SC; late north 10/16 Koochiching GM, **10/27** Aitkin WN, **10/28** Cook AB; late south 10/4 Ramsey KB and Washington EL, DS, 10/19 Hennepin TT.

Hermit Thrush
Early south **9/2** Houston EMF, 9/25 Brown JS; late north 11/4 St. Louis KE, 11/11 Cook AB, 11/13 Becker BB; late south 11/6 Ramsey KB, 11/8 Martin BBo.

Wood Thrush
All reports: 8/19 Washington WL, 8/30-9/12 Hennepin KB, SC, DZ.

FIELDFARE
First state record. 11/3-10 Grand Marais, Cook Co. R. and A. Randklev, KMH, mob (***The Loon*** 63:215-217).

American Robin
Reported from 17 north and 28 south counties; late north 11/24 Norman MO, 11/28 Cook KMH, 11/30 Aitkin WN.

Varied Thrush
All reports: 10/18 and 21 Roseau NJ, 11/19 and 22 Washington PC, 11/30 Beltrami KH.

Gray Catbird
Late north 10/12 Aitkin WN, 10/18 Cook PS, **11/3** Otter Tail SDM; late south 10/6 Rice TB, 10/9 Winona CS, **11/9** Dakota KR and Hennepin TT.

Northern Mockingbird
One report: 10/27 Lake (1) DBe.

Brown Thrasher
Late north 9/15 Clay LCF and Pennington KSS, 10/22 Otter Tail MO, 10/26 Lake KR; late south 10/30 Pipestone JP, 11/8 Hennepin SC, 11/15 Brown JS.

American Pipit
Early north 9/6 St. Louis PS, 9/10 Cook KMH; early south 9/26 Hennepin KB, 9/28 Dodge AP; late north 10/22 Clay and Polk RJ, 10/28 Lake AB; late south 10/21 Cottonwood ED, 10/30 Hennepin SC.

Bohemian Waxwing
Early north **9/28** St. Louis KE, **10/1** Cook KMH, 10/16 Beltrami DJ; two south reports **10/19** Hennepin (one) TT, 11/14 Ramsey KB.

Cedar Waxwing
Reported from 11 north and 26 south counties; late north 11/8 Lake DPV and Pennington KSS, 11/14 Cook KMH, 11/24 Norman MO.

Northern Shrike
Early north 10/8 Polk KSS, 10/16 Cook PS, 10/17 Beltrami JPa and St. Louis TW; early south 10/12 Hennepin TT, 10/20 Winona CS, 10/24 Blue Earth BBo.

Cape May Warbler, 18 October 1991, Tofte, Cook Co. Photo by Kim Risen.

Loggerhead Shrike
All reports: 8/3 Dakota (1) EL, 8/4 Dakota (3) PB and Rice (7) TB, 8/9 Becker (1) DO, 8/25 Jackson (1) TEB, KE, 9/22 Otter Tail (1) MO, 10/13 Clay LCF, 10/14 Murray ND.

European Starling
Reported from 16 north and 32 south counties.

WHITE-EYED VIREO
Birds discovered in July near Reno, Houston Co. present until 8/30 (two adults, one short-tailed juvenile) CS, mob (***The Loon*** 64:50-52).

Bell's Vireo
All reports: 8/9 - **9/3** Prairie Island, Winona Co. CS, **8/22** Mud Lake, Winona Co. fide CS.

Solitary Vireo
Early south **8/17** Hennepin SC, 8/27 Murray ND and Rice TB; late north 9/27 Lake DPV, 10/1 Cook KMH, **10/29** Lake AB; late south 10/3 Hennepin KB, 10/4 Rice TB, 10/8 Houston EMF.

Yellow-throated Vireo
Late north 9/8 Aitkin WN, 9/11 Clay MO, 9/13 Becker BB; late south 9/5 Winona CS, 9/14 Murray RJ, 9/20 Hennepin TT.

Warbling Vireo
Late north 9/7 Aitkin WN, 9/8 Otter Tail MO, 9/14 St. Louis KR; late south 9/14 Cottonwood RJ, 9/17 Winona CS, 9/20 Hennepin SC.

Philadelphia Vireo
Early south **8/17** Ramsey RH, 8/20 Anoka KB; late north 9/15 Douglas KB and St. Louis TEB, 9/22 Clay LCF; late south 9/19 Hennepin SC, TT, 9/24 Anoka KB.

Red-eyed Vireo
Late north 9/18 Lake DPV, 9/21 Aitkin WN, **10/19** Cook PB; late south 9/14 Cottonwood RJ and Washington WL, 9/17 Rice TB, 10/1 Hennepin SC.

Blue-winged Warbler
All reports: 8/3 Anoka TT and Dakota EL, 8/20 - 9/4 Houston EMF, 8/27 Washington WL, 8/29 Nicollet LF, 9/4 Ramsey KB, 9/6 Winona CS.

Golden-winged Warbler
Late north 9/2 Beltrami DJ, 9/7 Aitkin WN, **9/**

14 St. Louis KR; late south 9/3 Brown JS, 9/7 Dakota RB, 9/14 Hennepin SC and Murray RJ.

Tennessee Warbler
Early south 8/8 Hennepin TT, 8/9 Brown JS and Ramsey KB; late north 10/19 St. Louis KR, **10/26** Cook KMH, PS; late south 10/15 Houston EMF, 10/23 Hennepin SC.

Orange-crowned Warbler
Early north 8/14 Clay LCF, 8/18 Itasca AB; early south **8/19** Ramsey KB, 9/2 Hennepin mob; late north 10/17 Clay LCF, **10/21** Lake KE; late south 10/23 Houston EMF, 10/25 Hennepin SC.

Nashville Warbler
Early south 8/1 Hennepin SC, 8/9 Ramsey KB; late north 10/6 Aitkin WN, **10/27** Cook PB, KR; late south 10/8 Winona CS, 10/10 Hennepin SC.

Northern Parula
Early south **8/19** Hennepin SC, 9/3 Le Sueur EK; late north 9/30 Beltrami DJ, **10/23** Aitkin WN, **10/26** Cook BS; late south 9/14 Murray RJ, 9/28 Hennepin TT.

Yellow Warbler
Late north 9/8 Aitkin WN, 9/10 Cook KMH, 9/14 Roseau MO; late south 9/14 Washington WL, 9/24 Anoka KB and Hennepin SC, TT, 9/27 Houston EMF.

Chestnut-sided Warbler
Late north 9/13 Roseau MO, 9/14 St. Louis KR, **10/1** Cook KMH; late south 9/16 Washington WL, 9/28 Hennepin TT.

Magnolia Warbler
Early south **8/9** Ramsey KB, **8/12** Hennepin SC, TT; late north 9/14 Lake DPV and St. Louis TEB, KR, 10/1 Cook KMH; late south10/5 Hennepin SC, **10/16** Winona CS.

Cape May Warbler
Early south 8/10 Hennepin SC, 8/24 Cottonwood KE; late north 10/20 Pennington KSS, 10/21 Lake KE, **10/27** Cook KR; late south 9/25 Rice TB, **10/19** Goodhue BL.

Black-throated Blue Warbler
All reports: 8/4 and 9/8 Cook KMH, 9/6 Becker BB, 9/10 Lake DPV, 9/12 Ramsey KB, 9/15 Marshall MO, 9/26 Otter Tail SDM, **10/24** Ely, St. Louis Co. SS.

Yellow-rumped Warbler
Early south **8/14** Rice OR, 9/3 Olmsted AP; late north 10/28 Lake AB, 11/24 Norman MO; late south 10/31 Hennepin SC, 11/3 Martin BBo.

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER
Third state record. 8/31 Lakewood Cemetery, Minneopolis SC, TT (***The Loon*** 63:272-273).

Black-throated Green Warbler
Early south **8/12** Ramsey KB, **8/15** Hennepin TT; late north 9/15 Marshall MO, 9/24 Cook KMH; late south 9/16 Ramsey EL, 9/22 Hennepin SC, TT and Murray ND.

Blackburnian Warbler
Early south 8/5 Hennepin SC, 8/9 Brown JS and Ramsey KB; late north 9/11 Cook KMH, 9/14 St. Louis KR; late south 9/14 Murray RJ 9/27 Hennepin TT.

Pine Warbler
Late north 9/14 St. Louis KR, 9/23 Beltrami DJ, **10/27** Aitkin WN; late south 8/30 Hennepin DB, 8/31 Washington WL, 9/23 Houston EMF.

Palm Warbler
Early south **8/19** Hennepin SC, 8/31 Winona CS; late north 10/24 Beltrami DJ, 10/27 Cook PB, KR, PS and Lake KR; late south 10/15 Hennepin SC, 10/16 Olmsted JB.

Bay-breasted Warbler
Early south **8/9** Hennepin SC, **8/12** Ramsey KB; late north 9/21 Cook KMH, 9/28 Itasca AB; late south 9/16 Washington WL, 9/26 Hennepin SC.

Blackpoll Warbler
Early north 8/18 Clay LCF, 8/21 St. Louis PS; early south **8/12** Brown JS, **8/17** Hennepin SC; late north 9/28 Itasca AB, **10/18** Cook BL; late south 9/15 Brown JS, 9/23 Hennepin SC, TT.

Cerulean Warbler
One report: 8/11 Brown JS.

Black-and-white Warbler
Late north 9/22 Otter Tail MO, 9/24

Koochiching GM; late south 9/24 Anoka KB, 9/25 Hennepin TT.

American Redstart
Late north 9/23 Cook KMH, 9/27 Lake DPV; late south 9/29 Hennepin TT, **10/22** Hennepin SC.

Prothonotary Warbler
Late south 8/27 Winona CS.

Ovenbird
Late north 9/15 Pennington KSS, 9/17 St. Louis TW; late south 10/7 Hennepin SC, 10/11 Washington DS.

Northern Waterthrush
Early south **8/3** Traverse JPa, 8/8 Hennepin SC; late north 9/28 Itasca AB, 9/29 Cook KMH; late south 9/30 Dodge AB, 10/3 Brown JS.

Louisiana Waterthrush
Late south 8/27 Washington WL.

Connecticut Warbler
Early south **8/12** Hennepin SC, **8/17** Ramsey RH; late north 9/14 St. Louis KR, **9/24** Lake DPV; late south 9/1 Olmsted AP, 9/4 Blue Earth LF.

Mourning Warbler
Early south **8/12** Brown JS, **8/13** Anoka KB; late north 9/13 Becker BB, 9/14 St. Louis KR; late south 9/24 Anoka KB, 9/28 Hennepin TT.

Common Yellowthroat
Late north 10/1 Cook KMH, **10/26** St. Louis TW; late south 10/6 Ramsey KB, 10/7 Olmsted AP, Winona CS.

Wilson's Warbler
Early south **8/9** Hennepin SC, 8/13 Ramsey KB; late north 9/14 St. Louis KR, 9/25 Clay LCF; late south 9/27 Hennepin SC, 9/30 Cottonwood ED, Pipestone JP.

Canada Warbler
Early south **8/10** Hennepin SC, **8/12** Brown JS, Hennepin TT; late north 9/10 Cook KMH, 9/14 St. Louis TEB, KR; late south 9/6 Hennepin DC, 9/16 Hennepin SC.

Scarlet Tanager
Late north 9/10 Becker BB, 9/20 Pine TEB; late south 9/29 Hennepin TT, 10/1 Houston EMF.

Northern Cardinal
Reported from Aitkin, Becker, Koochiching, Otter Tail, Pennington and St. Louis (Duluth) as well as 19 counties south.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Late north 9/9 Cook KMH, 10/31 Becker BB; late south 10/6 Ramsey KB, 10/9 Washington TEB.

Blue Grosbeak
Late south 9/5 Nobles ND, **10/4** Rock ND.

Indigo Bunting
Late north 9/15 St. Louis TEB, 9/24 Clay LCF; late south 10/2 Winona CS, 10/6 Hennepin SC.

Dickcissel
Late north **10/4** Cook KMH (***The Loon*** 63:285); 8/16 Pipestone JP, 9/7 Rock JPa.

Rufous-sided Towhee
Late south 11/6 Rice FKS, **11/28** Cottonwood ED.

American Tree Sparrow
Early north **9/13** Becker BB, 9/29 Aitkin WN; early south **9/19** LeSueur EK, 10/4 Olmsted AP, 10/8 Hennepin SC, Winona CS.

Chipping Sparrow
Late north 10/12 Kanabec RJ, Norman MO, 10/23 Cook KMH; late south 10/23 Houston EMF, 10/27 Olmsted JB.

Clay-colored Sparrow
Late north **10/20** Cook KE, **10/26** Lake KE; late south 9/23 Hennepin SC, 10/10 Ramsey KB.

Field Sparrow
Late north 9/13 **St. Louis** RH, 9/15 **St. Louis TEB**; late south **10/29** Houston EMF, **11/30** Kandiyohi (at feeder) CJ.

Vesper Sparrow
Late north 10/6 Clay LCF, 10/7 Wadena AB; late south 10/18 Martin BBo, 10/19 Olmsted JB.

Lark Sparrow
Late north **8/30** Becker BB.

Savannah Sparrow
Late north 10/13 Clay LCF, **11/9** Cook KMH, RJ, BL, SDM; late south **11/6** Sherburne PS, **11/18** Hennepin SC.

Grasshopper Sparrow
Late north 8/3 Norman MO; late south 8/9 Brown JS.

Le Conte's Sparrow
Late north 9/8 Aitkin WN, 9/15 Clay LCF, Roseau MO; late south 9/28 Lincoln HK, Yellow Medicine RJ, 10/11 Pipestone JP.

Fox Sparrow
Early north 9/22 Clay LCF, 9/23 Koochiching GM; early south **9/2** Washington WL, 9/23 Hennepin SC; late north 11/3 Aitkin WN, 11/4 Koochiching GM; late south 11/15 Houston EMF, 11/22 Olmsted JB, Washington WL.

Song Sparrow
Late north 11/15 Aitkin WN, Pennington KSS, **11/27** Wilkin SDM.

Lincoln's Sparrow
Early south 8/31 Ramsey KB, 9/4 Hennepin SC, Washington WL; late north 10/26 Cook KMH, **11/3** Beltrami DJ; late south **11/13** Rice TB, **11/14** Hennepin JF.

Swamp Sparrow
Late north 10/7 Wadena AB, 10/23 Cook KMH; late south Winona CS, 10/31 Hennepin SC.

White-throated Sparrow
Early south **8/26** Houston EMF, **8/30** Hennepin SC; late north **11/27** Clay LCF, Pennington KSS; late south 11/23 Martin BBo, **11/30** Houston EMF, Kandiyohi CJ, Washington WL.

White-crowned Sparrow
Early north 9/11 Lake DPV, 9/13 Roseau MO, St. Louis SS; early south 9/16 Hennepin SC, 9/24 Anoka KB, Lyon HK, Sherburne SWR; late north 10/26 Beltrami DJ, Cook KMH, 11/10 Cook SOL; late south 11/13 Murray ND, **11/30** Olmsted JB.

Harris' Sparrow
Early north 9/12 Koochiching GM, 9/13 Becker BB; early south 9/24 Lyon HK, 9/25 Pipestone JP; late north 11/2 Clay MO, 11/7 Becker BK; late south 11/22 Olmsted JB, **11/29** Brown BBo.

Lapland Longspur
Early north **9/4** Cook KMH, **9/6** Duluth KE; early south 9/29 Hennepin SC, 10/5 Renville RJ; late north 11/11 Cook KMH, **11/23** Becker MO.

Smith's Longspur
All reports: 10/3 Cook PS (1), 10/23 Clay KR.

Chestnut-collared Longspur
Late north 8/31 Clay MO.

Snow Bunting
Early north 10/5 Polk KSS, 10/7 Otter Tail SDM; early south **10/11** Ramsey KB, 10/23 Chippewa AB.

Bobolink
Late north 9/7 Aitkin WN, 9/15 Roseau MO; late south 8/17 Anoka RJ, 9/5 Hennepin KB.

Red-winged Blackbird
Late north 11/24 St. Louis AB, 11/26 Clay LCF.

Eastern Meadowlark
Late north 11/15 Lake DPV, **11/28** Aitkin WN.

Western Meadowlark
Late north 11/15 Clay MO, 11/19 Marshall KSS.

Yellow-headed Blackbird
Late north 11/3 Beltrami KH, 11/4 Becker BK; late south 10/25 Martin BBo, 10/27 Meeker RB.

Rusty Blackbird
Early north 9/13 Roseau MO, 9/18 Lake DPV; early south 9/25 Sherburne N.W.R., 10/5 Hennepin TT; late north **11/28** Cook KMH, **11/30** Otter Tail SDM; late south 11/10 Olmsted AP, 11/23 Houston EMF.

Brewer's Blackbird
Late north 11/8 Otter Tail WL, **11/11** Aitkin SDM; late south 11/2 Lac Qui Parle FE, 11/6 Mower RRK.

Common Grackle
Late north 11/18 St. Louis KB, 11/30 Aitkin WN.

Brown-headed Cowbird
Late north 9/7 Aitkin WN, 10/10 Otter Tail MO; late south 11/2 Brown JS, 11/12 Cottonwood ED, Winona CS.

Orchard Oriole
Late north 8/21 Clay LCF.

Northern Oriole
Late north 9/11 Clay LCF, 9/12 Becker BK; late south 9/16 Hennepin TT, **10/11** Anoka JH.

Pine Grosbeak
Early north **10/8** Cook KMH, **10/18** Cook KR, PS; early south **10/27 Olmsted** JB.

Purple Finch
Reported from 14 counties north and 19 counties south.

House Finch
Reported from Duluth and 15 counties south.

Red Crossbill
Reported form Aitkin, Anoka, Lake and St. Louis Counties.

White-winged Crossbill
Reported from Anoka, Cass, Cook and St. Louis Counties.

Common Redpoll
Early north **10/6** Polk KSS, **10/15** Duluth KE; early south **10/15** Dakota KB, 10/25 Anoka JH.

Hoary Redpoll
Early north **10/16** Aitkin WN, 11/8-9 Cook PB, KR, PS.

Pine Siskin
Reported from 13 counties north and 13 counties south.

American Goldfinch
Reported from 16 counties north and 25 counties south.

Evening Grosbeak
Early south 11/6 Rice FKS, 11/13 Sherburne SWR.

House Sparrow
Reported from eight counties north and 28 counties south.

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mob	many observers

KEY TO SEASONAL REPORTS

1. Species listed in upper case (**PACIFIC LOON**) indicate a Casual or Accidental occurrence in the state.
2. Dates listed in boldface (**10/9**) indicate an occurrence either earlier, later or within the earliest or latest dates on file.
3. Counties listed in boldface (**Aitkin**) indicate either a first county record or an unusual occurrence for that county. City of **Duluth** also boldface when applicable.
4. Counties listed in italics (*Aitkin*) indicate a first county breeding record.
5. [ ] — species for which there is reasonable doubt as to origin or wildness.

Nineteen Ninety-One: A "Big Year" in Minnesota

Parker Backstrom

"Is 310 possible in one year in Minnesota?" It was an intriguing question and one that occupied a number of daydreams for me. That was the question posed by Kim Eckert in his article of the same name (***The Loon*** 55: 47-50.) The article was the account of Eckert's record-setting 1982 "big year" in Minnesota when he recorded 308 species of birds (adjusted downward from 309 by the subsequent removal of Anhinga from the state list.) I was among the birders who agreed with the author's conclusion that under the right circumstances 310 species of birds in one year was not only possible but, with enough planning, skill, dedication and luck, probable — eventually. Still, 1982 had been probably the best year ever for rarities in Minnesota; the thought that someone realistically would eclipse such a remarkable record seemed optimistic. It has been the 300-species plateau that has really been the goal for which to aim, a very good total but still realistically within reach. Through 1990, only three birders had ever reached that level (Kim Eckert - 300 in 1977 and 1984, 308 in 1982; Kim Risen - 300 in 1989; Peder Svingen - 305 in 1990.) As a result of Peder's success, questions about what it would take to record 310 species of birds in Minnesota within one year took on a fresh perspective in my mind. It was clear that 310 was possible. The real questions were when would it be accomplished and by whom? I hoped to provide the answers by attempting to set a new big year record in 1991. As luck would have it, 1991 was the best year ever for birding in Minnesota.

Unlike Eckert in 1982, I planned my big year in advance. The most important factor affecting my big year was my effort to recruit as many birders as I could from across the state to my cause. It was important to hear about rarities as soon as they showed up, not days or weeks afterward. I planned trips to a number of specific locations across the state to pick up those very local species that are found nowhere else with regularity. Increasing my chances of finding unusual species meant being in certain areas at specific times of the year, so I made sure I was in western Minnesota in early spring and summer, Duluth and the North Shore in mid-May and again in October, etc. Finally, going into my big year there were three "rules" that I felt would be important to adhere to: 1) to record as many species as early in the year as possible (when my enthusiasm was still high); 2) chase everything that it was possible to chase; and 3) maintain dedication to the effort through the entire year. The rest would be up to the birds. With enthusiasm high and a sound game plan to follow, I began my adventure.

Two chases of a couple of rare Regular species, a Harlequin Duck in Washington County (Co.) and a Three-toed Woodpecker on the Gunflint Trail early in January, ended in success and got the year off to a good start. A Carolina Wren in Hennepin Co. became my first Casual species for the year, and a wild and countable Trumpeter Swan on the Mississippi River in Wabasha Co. (***The Loon*** 63:147-150) was my first Accidental bird. A trip to southeastern Minnesota paid off with the addition of Golden Eagle, Tufted Titmouse, and Wild Turkey. As January wound down, I made my way to northwestern Minnesota. As exciting as it was to find six Great Gray Owls, I was disappointed at being unable to refind any of the three Gyrfalcons seen the weekend before in Roseau Co. and Beltrami Co. The disappointment was lessened somewhat by a Varied Thrush seen at a feeder in Hubbard Co.

February was slow, but as the Ides of March descended upon us, so too did the first migrants of spring. A few unusual species also began to show up as the number of birders venturing afield increased. Mountain Bluebirds were found in Kandiyohi Co. and Norman Co. and the state's earliest ever Cinnamon Teal was seen in Chippewa Co. on 26 March. The month ended with two unusual spring records: a Brant discovered in Cottonwood Co. on 28 March and a Black-legged Kittiwake in Winona Co. two days later. Perhaps the surprise of the spring was an extremely early Yellow-throated Warbler in

Brown Co. on 7 April. Unfortunately, I didn't tally any of these birds. But in mid-April I made my way to Marshall Co. through a late season snowstorm to add to my list the Mountain Bluebirds returning to nest near Florian as they had in 1990. A jaunt to Isabella in Lake Co. a few days later resulted in excellent looks at singing Boreal Owls and displaying Spruce Grouse. Crisscrossing the state again on the last weekend of April, I recorded several dozen year birds including three Snowy Egrets, a Cattle Egret and a lost White-winged Scoter in Big Stone Co. The biggest surprise of the trip was a Western Tanager that turned up at a feeder in Becker Co. A trip to Rothsay Wildlife Management Area in Wilkin Co. one week later produced terrific looks at Smith's Longspurs. Other good birds that I recorded during the month of April included an early Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Dakota Co. and a Little Blue Heron in Anoka Co. I chased but missed Ferruginous Hawks in western Minnesota, a Townsend's Solitaire in Duluth, and the state's earliest ever White-eyed Vireo in Rice Co.

May picked up right where April left off, producing a number of unusual birds among one of the better passerine, especially warbler, migrations in recent years. On 4 May Minnesota's second **Curve-billed Thrasher** was found at a small park in Eden Prairie, Hennepin Co. where it remained for several days. The excitement of that find had barely died down when the report of a first state record **Glossy Ibis** and two White-faced Ibises came from Heron Lake in Jackson Co. Unfortunately, they weren't as cooperative. But on a trip to Duluth in mid-May I added a number of rare and local species to my growing list including Whimbrel, Little Gull, Parasitic Jaeger, and Northern Mockingbird. It was back up to northwestern Minnesota on Memorial Day weekend for Sharp-tailed Sparrows and, especially exciting, three Sprague's Pipits that had returned to Sprague Creek (!) in northern Roseau Co. Twelve year birds added during this trip raised my big year total by the end of May to 272 species. Other May highlights included a record late (May 1) Gyrfalcon in Clay Co., a Say's Phoebe in Polk Co., a Great Black-backed Gull in St. Louis Co., Worm-eating Warblers in Watonwan Co. and Hennepin Co. and a Lazuli Bunting in Hennepin Co. Although I managed to miss all of them, with seven months to go it was shaping up to be the kind of year I hoped for, with many unusual birds appearing at a consistent pace and good numbers of our "regular" birds.

Summer consisted almost entirely of tracking down species I'd missed in migration and traveling across the state in search of local breeding species. Weekend trips to O.L. Kipp and Beaver Creek Valley State Parks in southeastern Minnesota added Northern Bobwhite, Acadian Flycatcher, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Henslow's Sparrow, while trips to Rock Co. and Aitkin Co. added Burrowing Owl (nesting near Blue Mounds State Park for the fourth straight year), Blue Grosbeak, Bell's Vireo (only casual at Blue Mounds) and Yellow Rail. The highlight of the summer came during a visit to a rural farmstead in Dakota Co. where a wait at dusk was rewarded with nice looks at a pair of Barn Owls that had returned there to nest for the second year in a row.

While summer is not usually the prime time of the year for vagrants, June did contribute its share to an already impressive state year list. I decided against chasing a Baird's Sparrow in Clay Co. and I chased but missed a Clark's Grebe that put in a brief appearance at Thielke Lake, Big Stone Co. I unsuccessfully chased two Scissor-tailed Flycatchers that briefly appeared on opposite sides of the state as well as a Lark Bunting found in Chippewa Co., all in July, but I did add White-eyed Vireo (a pair in Houston Co.) and eventually added Clark's Grebe (a family group in Traverse Co.). Summer "officially" ended in grand fashion. On 30 August, the banders at Hawk Ridge in Duluth caught a rare dark-morph Broad-winged Hawk, only the third Prairie Falcon ever seen at the Ridge sailed overhead, and these sightings were overshadowed by the Mississippi Kite that drifted past several surprised observers. As though to prove that my good luck had (temporarily) waned, a third state record Black-throated Gray Warbler was seen for a short time just two blocks from my home in Minneapolis on 31 August - I had left for Duluth.

As summer ended, so began a fall perhaps unrivaled for the number and variety of vagrants to the state and the regularity at which they occurred. Arguably the bird of the year, Minnesota's first **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** was found in Duluth on 6 September. Unfortunately, this South American stray was present for just a couple of minutes and couldn't be

relocated. Birding stayed hot throughout the month of September: yet another Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was found, this one in Traverse Co. on the 4th; two White-faced Ibises were found in Grant Co. on the 11th; a Pacific Loon was found near Duluth on the 22nd; and a Rock Wren was found in Minneapolis on the 26th. None of these birds made their way onto my list, but I was able to see the Red Phalarope that was found in Dodge Co., also on the 26th.

October is thought of by many as the most exciting birding month of the year and 1991 proved why. I chose not to chase a Red-throated Loon that was found in Duluth on the 1st, thinking (erroneously) that it wouldn't be refound, but I did finally add Pacific Loon to my list when I saw one found in Ramsey Co. on 11 October. I also saw two of the three Scissor-tailed Flycatchers (the best year ever for this species in Minnesota) that appeared along the North Shore. But the crowning jewel of the month was Minnesota's second **Vermilion Flycatcher**, found in Duluth on 13 October . It was especially sweet because it was my 300th species for the year. On the weekend of 26 and 27 October 26, I accompanied a group of birders along the North Shore to Grand Marais. Aside from the expected scoters, Oldsquaws, Thayer's and Glaucous Gulls and crossbills, we found three Harlequin Ducks and two lost Cattle Egrets. Unexpectedly, we found a Townsend's Solitaire in Knife River, but even more unexpected was a Lesser Black-backed Gull in the Grand Marais harbor. As spectacular as the weekend was, at least some of the luck I had was of the bad variety: I became separated from the rest of the group and missed seeing a Black-legged Kittiwake that flew past them at Tofte.

Although the number of rarities in November wasn't as great as it was in October, the quality of rarities was even *greater* (if that was possible). A record-setting snowfall on Halloween day which sealed much of the state beneath three feet of snow surprised everyone. But it didn't stop the birds. On 3 November word came of an unusual "gray-cheeked robin" that was visiting some fruit trees near Grand Marais. When the report was checked out on the 7th, word of Minnesota's first **Fieldfare** (and one of the few records from the interior of North America) spread like wildfire. This ultimate rarity remained for several days, thrilling scores of birders. The Fieldfare was species #308 for me and a "classic" Hoary Redpoll near Lutsen was #309. I barely had time to catch my breath when #310 appeared, again (sigh) in Grand Marais. On 12 November Minnesota's first **Anna's Hummingbird** was identified coming to a forgotten-about hummingbird feeder in town! If two first state records within four days wasn't enough to convince people that Grand Marais was the place to be, the Purple Sandpiper found in the harbor on 21 November might have helped. I missed the sandpiper but I did tally #311, an immature Great Black-backed Gull found in the harbor on the 22nd.

By the time December arrived it appeared that the flood of rarities had finally ended. There was still good birding to be had, however. As the month began, at least 75 Northern Hawk Owls had been reported from across northern Minnesota. Great Gray Owl numbers were on a record-setting pace (just north of Duluth a birder saw 23 Great Grays in just two hours!) and Snowy Owl numbers were also the best they'd ever been. Then, on 15 December the first of TWO Ivory Gulls to appear (within days of one another) on the Mississippi River near downtown St. Paul was found, a dream come true for most Minnesota birders and species #312 for me. I could hardly ask for more but I did record one final new species, a Gyrfalcon that was "setting up shop" for the winter in Duluth's Port Terminal (species #313.) Thus ended a long but very exciting year of birding for me.

I learned that recording 313 species of birds in Minnesota in one year was even harder than I thought it would be. I bettered the previous record total by five species but it required driving over 27,000 miles. I recorded 294 of the 303 birds currently considered to be Regular in Minnesota (missing Cinnamon Teal, Ferruginous Hawk, Piping Plover, Red Knot, Western Sandpiper, Long-eared Owl, Kentucky Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Lark Bunting). I tallied ten Casuals during the year (not previously mentioned were Ross' Goose and House Finch) and nine Accidentals.

Statistically, 1991 was the best birding year ever in Minnesota. There were a combined total of 338 species recorded during the year including 300 Regular species, 23 Casuals and 15 Accidentals. Compare that to 1982 when birders recorded a total of 330 species; 303 Regulars, 15 Casuals, and 12 Accidentals.

Year	Total	Reg.	Cas.	Acc.
1991	338	300	23	15
1990	328	298	18	12
1989	325	298	18	9
1988	328	302	18	8
1987	331	301	14	16
1986	335	302	17	16
1985	319	299	10	10
1984	331	303	16	12
1983	328	302	17	9
1982	330	303	15	12
1981	320	301	12	7
1981-90	327.5	300.9	15.5	11.1

It is interesting to note that the total of 338-species reported in 1991 was about ten more than the decade average. Also, the 38 Casual and Accidental species recorded in 1991 were 11 more than the decade average.

While it's clear that Minnesota birders experienced a year like few others, one of the most remarkable aspects of the year was the number of Casual and Accidental species represented by multiple individuals. Twenty-two of the Casual species sightings (not counting House Finch which is now widespread across the state and will soon become Regular) were represented by at least *88* individuals! There were 23 Ross' Geese, nine White-faced Ibises, seven Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, seven Barn Owls (including five young), six Sprague's Pipits, at least five Carolina Wrens, four White-eyed Vireos (including a juvenile), at least four Iceland Gulls, three Great Black-backed Gulls, three Western Tanagers, and two each Red-throated Loon, Pacific Loon, Black-legged Kittiwake, Yellow-throated Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, and Baird's Sparrow (also recorded were one each Brant, Mississippi Kite, King Rail, Say's Phoebe, and Lazuli Bunting.) During the year Minnesota recognized *four* species never before seen here: Glossy Ibis, Anna's Hummingbird, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, and Fieldfare. Also in the Accidental category were five Clark's Grebes (including a family group of four), two Ivory Gulls, two Lesser Black-backed Gulls, the first 20th century (wild) Trumpeter Swan, the second state records of Vermilion Flycatcher and Curve-billed Thrasher, a third state record Black-throated Gray Warbler, a fourth state record Purple Sandpiper, and a sixth state record Red Phalarope. Many of the state's Regular but rare species were also well represented. Among them were at least 13 Gyrfalcons, 13 Snowy Egrets, ten Harlequin Ducks, seven Ferruginous Hawks, seven Northern Mockingbirds, and six Mountain Bluebirds.

Nineteen ninety-one proved that it's possible for a birder to record more than 310 species of birds in Minnesota in one year. It wasn't too many years ago that the idea of an individual being able to record 300 species of birds in one year was considered far-fetched optimism. But today, almost any dedicated birder has a realistic shot at the 300-species plateau (six people broke 300 in 1991). Nineteen ninety-one did indeed see Minnesota's new big year record set. But it wasn't me who achieved the feat. In fact, I finished with the *fourth* highest list among people attempting big years in 1991. Peder Svingen followed his 305-species total from 1990 by recording a remarkable **317** species in 1991! Right on his heels were Tony Hertzel and Ray Glassel with equally as impressive totals of 315 and 314 species respectively. As much as I wanted to hold the new Minnesota big year record, coming in fourth behind such skilled and dedicated birders isn't too tough to take or to understand.

Tallying a 310+ species year list takes decent birding skills, a good game plan, very good communication between fellow birders, more success than failure chasing "stake-outs", a fair amount of time, an overabundance of dedication and, above all else, lots of good birds showing up. But if everything falls into place at the right time it seems clear that recording 320 species or even more is possible.

Acknowledgements

A successful big year depends on the contributions of many people and my sincere appreciation goes out to all those who helped me during the year. I especially want to thank Steve Carlson, Kim Eckert, Ray Glassel, Tony Hertzel, Steve Millard, Warren Nelson, Kim Risen and Peder Svingen for their consistent "bird news", their encouragement, occasional lodging, and delightful companionship during the course of the year. Much thanks also goes to Susan Turner and Gregg Jauert for allowing me many more short-notice reprieves from work to chase birds than could have been hoped for. I would like to thank Kim Eckert and Kim Risen for reviewing earlier drafts of this paper. Most of all, I want to thank Nancy Veverka for the sacrifices she made and the abundant patience, understanding, and support she showed me all through the year. **3409 Emerson Ave. S. #4, Minneapolis, MN 55408.**

1991 Bird Surveys in Kittson and Roseau Counties

Steven P. Stucker

Bird surveys were conducted in Kittson and Roseau Counties in June 1991, as part of the Minnesota County Biological Survey (MCBS). As a cooperative effort between the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Natural Heritage and Nongame Wildlife programs, the MCBS systematically surveys remnant natural plant communities, and rare plants and animals on a county-by-county basis.

Kittson and Roseau counties encompass portions of three major biomes: tallgrass prairie, deciduous forest, and coniferous forest. A number of important plant communities occur within each of these biomes. Much of the native tallgrass prairie of the Red River Valley in western Kittson County is all but gone due to conversion to agricultural lands. Prairie in this region was historically very important for grassland species such as the Long-billed Curlew, Sprague's Pipit and Baird's Sparrow, all of which are now extirpated or endangered in Minnesota. The few tracts of prairie that remain today are much too small to support viable populations of these species.

The deciduous forest biome in northwestern Minnesota and adjacent Canada is represented by aspen parkland, a complex mosaic of brush prairie, sedge fen, and aspen groves. Fire has played a very important role in maintaining open habitats within aspen parkland. Large expanses of brush prairie are still present, but many have become overgrown with aspen and shrubs due to prolonged fire suppression.

Found in both the aspen parkland and boreal forest region, sedge fens are a wetland community dominated by narrow-leaved sedges, growing on peat soil. Large tracts of sedge fen remain in Kittson and Roseau counties, providing important habitat for many bird species.

The boreal forest, while more representative of northeastern Minnesota, reaches its western limit in the state in Roseau County. Boreal forest plant communities represented include mixed coniferous-deciduous forest, jack pine forest, and black spruce-tamarack swamp.

Method

Target species

MCBS bird surveys document the occurrence and breeding status of state-listed birds (Coffin and Pfannmuller 1988). We concentrated survey efforts on those listed species that potentially occurred in Kittson and Roseau counties, based on species' distribution and the presence of suitable habitat (Table 1). These species were prioritized based on their federal and state status and the likelihood of detection during the survey. Relative effort directed toward each species was based upon this rating. Higher priority was given to species for which there is little distributional information, but whose range and habitat occur within the survey counties. Lower survey priority was given to species that are that have been recently or are currently under study (e.g., Bald Eagle, Sandhill Crane), and species whose current range does not fall within the survey counties (e.g., Burrowing Owl, Baird's Sparrow).

Site selection

Survey efforts were concentrated on sites with habitats most likely to support targeted bird species. In Kittson and Roseau counties the key habitats for state-listed birds were: (1) sedge fen and wet meadow; (2) grasslands (e.g., brush prairie, pasture); and (3) cattail and mixed emergent marsh. In addition, representative habitats characteristic of the region were sampled. These included habitats such as black spruce-tamarack swamp, mixed coniferous-deciduous forest, and aspen forest. Selection of survey sites was based on habitat information obtained from interpretation of aerial photography by MCBS plant ecologists and discussions with DNR wildlife managers, and verified by field reconnaissance.

Species	MN Status	Survey Priority
Horned Grebe	Special concern	high
American White Pelican	Special concern	low
American Bittern	Special concern	high
Osprey	Special concern	low
Bald Eagle	Threatened	low
Greater Prairie-Chicken	Special concern	low
Yellow Rail	Special concern	high
Sandhill Crane	Special concern	low
Piping Plover	Threatened	low
Upland Sandpiper	Special concern	high
Marbled Godwit	Special concern	high
Wilson's Phalarope	Special concern	high
Common Tern	Special concern	low
Forster's Tern	Special concern	high
Burrowing Owl	Endangered	low
Short-eared Owl	Special concern	high
Sprague's Pipit	Endangered	low
Loggerhead Shrike	Threatened	low
Baird's Sparrow	Endangered	low
Sharp-tailed Sparrow	Special concern	high
Chestnut-collared Longspur	Endangered	low

Table 1. State-listed bird species potentially present in Kittson and Roseau counties.

Survey techniques

Surveys were conducted from 31 May to 2 July 1991. The primary survey method used was a modified fixed-radius point count (Wetmore et al. 1985, Hutto et al. 1986). At each point all birds seen or heard during a six minute interval were recorded. Points were kept within a given habitat when possible, and spaced 200-250 meters apart. The number of points surveyed at a particular site was dependent on the size of the area, ranging from 2 - 10 points per site. Counts were generally conducted from sunrise to 0930 hours.

Small grassland fragments within largely agricultural areas were scanned from roadsides. Birds were also detected while driving between sites, as well as during afternoon and evening reconnaissance of potential survey sites.

Surveys for species that vocalize most reliably at night, particularly Yellow Rails and Sharp-tailed Sparrows, were conducted either by listening from roads, which was rarely possible, or by walking into suitable habitat.

Results and Discussion

By virtue of the high diversity of habitats in these counties the potential for documenting a large number of breeding species was perhaps higher here than anywhere else in the state. A total of 190 species was documented during the 1991 MCBS bird survey, with 151 and 181 species found in Kittson and Roseau counties, respectively. All state-listed bird species that were realistically expected to occur in these counties were documented during MCBS bird surveys, as well as two species, Sprague's Pipit and Baird's Sparrow, that were not expected.(Table 2).

A variety of habitats were surveyed with point counts, providing much information on the region's avifauna. Many prairie bird species were well-represented in the large tracts of native grasslands within the aspen parkland region of eastern Kittson and western Roseau counties.

The species most commonly detected in grassland habitats were Savannah Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat, Western Meadowlark, and Sandhill Crane. Other characteristic species included Upland Sandpiper, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Brewer's Blackbird.

Deciduous forest birds typically found in

Species	Kittson	Roseau	Total
Baird's Sparrow	0	1	1
Sharp-tailed Sparrow	10	13	23
Sprague's Pipit	0	2	2
Short-eared Owl	0	6	6
Upland Sandpiper	59	23	82
American Bittern	9	37	46
Yellow Rail	15	14	29
Marbled Godwit	43	40	83
Wilson's Phalarope	8	2	10
TOTAL RECORDS	144	138	282

Table 2. Number of locations where state-listed birds were found in Kittson and Roseau counties during the 1991 breeding season. Separate occurrences within one-quarter mile were lumped into a single record.

aspen groves, as well as other forest tracts, included Least Flycatcher, Mourning Dove, Red-eyed Vireo, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Great Crested Flycatcher. Eastern Wood-Pewee, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Yellow-throated Vireo were also found in this habitat type.

The extensive black spruce-tamarack swamps of eastern Roseau County supported many characteristic bird species, including White-throated Sparrow, Nashville Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, and Hermit Thrush. Other species commonly encountered included Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Winter Wren, and Golden-crowned Kinglet.

Birds encountered in sedge fen included widespread species such as Common Yellowthroat, Sedge Wren, Savannah Sparrow, and Red- winged Blackbird. Species restricted to this habitat were Yellow Rail, Le Conte's Sparrow, and Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

Cattail marshes in Kittson and Roseau counties supported many common species, including Red-winged Blackbird, Marsh Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Black Tern, and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Other typical marsh species present were Swamp Sparrow, Tree Swallow, and Blue-winged Teal.

In addition to these relatively widespread species, a number of state-listed birds are still fairly common in the large areas of native vegetation that remain in Kittson and Roseau counties. Following is a discussion of state-listed species that were detected during 1991:

Horned Grebe - Although the primary breeding range of this species in the state encompasses portions of Kittson and Roseau counties, only three individuals were seen. Suitable habitat for this species was present at various state wildlife management areas (WMAs), such as Twin Lakes and Roseau River (RRWMA), as well as other localities scattered throughout the region. It is likely that the extended drought in northwestern Minnesota was an important factor in the rarity of this species.

American White Pelican - Individuals and small groups of birds were seen at a number of wetlands with open water, particularly Twin Lakes WMA in Kittson County and RRWMA in Roseau County. This species is known to nest at nearby Lake of the Woods, and non- breeding birds are commonly seen in western portions of the state (Janssen 1987).

American Bittern - This species was found in wetlands ranging from cattail marshes to roadside ditches and willow shrub swamps. Almost 50 percent of the total occurrences of this species in Kittson and Roseau Counties were at RRWMA.

Yellow Rail and Sharp-tailed Sparrow - These species were fairly well-distributed in a variety of sedge wetlands in Kittson and Roseau counties (Figures 1 and 2, respectively). Habitats ranged from isolated fens within an aspen parkland matrix to wet meadows (coarse-leaved

sedges) bordering Lake of the Woods . At most locations where Yellow Rails were found, Sharp-tailed Sparrows were also present. The most important habitat components appeared to be vegetational structure and water depth. Typically this consisted of fine-leaved sedges (*Carex lasiocarpa*) with dead previous years' growth and optimal water depths ranging from approximately three to eight inches. These habitat characteristics are consistent with those reported by Stalheim (1974) and Stenzel (1983). Sharp-tailed Sparrows frequently sang from exposed perches at or near the tops of willow shrubs within fens. Many sites with suitable vegetational structure for these species were dry due to a serious drought in the region. In some of these dry fens, the only birds of both species found were located in wet pockets dominated by phragmites, cattails, or bulrushes. After heavy rains in late June, Yellow Rails were suddenly heard in a number of areas that apparently had been unoccupied earlier in the season.

Sandhill Crane - This species was common, if not abundant, in these counties, except in extensive areas of agricultural land. They were widespread in or near a variety of marshes, sedge fens, and brush prairie, as well as agricultural fields adjacent to these natural habitats.

Upland Sandpiper - This species was common and widespread in a variety of grasslands, including brush prairie, dry sedge fen, hayfields, and pastures. Short vegetation adjacent to taller grasses seemed to be an important habitat characteristic. Although this species was often found in fairly disturbed areas, the proximity of large tracts of grassland seemed to be important. This species was very rare to absent in areas of intensive agriculture of the Red River Valley.

Marbled Godwit - This species was found in habitat very similar to that used by Upland Sandpipers. However, godwits were generally found near somewhat wetter habitats. Godwits seemed more likely than Upland Sandpipers to be found in agricultural fields and disturbed areas such as roadside ditches and flooded gravel pits.

Wilson's Phalarope - A total of ten individuals were found, mainly in sedge fens. Many tracts of what appeared to be suitable wetland habitat for this species were present in Kittson and Roseau counties, and therefore we expected phalaropes to be more common. Drought may have negatively affected the suitability of wetlands for this species in the survey counties.

Forster's Tern - This species was observed eight times during survey efforts, with all but one located in Roseau County. However, no evidence of nesting was detected.

Short-eared Owl - This species was found at six localities, all of which were in Roseau County. It is surprising that no individuals were found in Kittson County. There are vast tracts of suitable grassland and wetland habitat in both Kittson and Roseau counties, and this species can be fairly conspicuous when hunting. Short-eared Owls are known to be irruptive corresponding to high rodent populations, and this may have been a factor in our failure to locate more individuals of this species.

Sprague's Pipit - This species was present for the second consecutive year at the site discovered near Sprague Creek (Otnes 1990). The habitat at this site consisted of a sedgy, mowed hayfield with short vegetation. Another Sprague's Pipit was found approximately 15 miles west of the Sprague Creek site, in a hayfield of alfalfa and timothy. Both sites are not the typical Sprague's Pipit habitat of short prairie vegetation. Historically this species occurred in northwestern Minnesota, east into areas of scattered aspen groves intermingled with large tracts of prairie (Roberts 1932). It is not clear why the pipits selected these particular sites when there were numerous tracts of what seemed to be much better habitat in both Kittson and Roseau counties.

Baird's Sparrow - One individual was found in an extensive wet, sedgy, moderately-grazed pasture at RRWMA (Bardon 1991a.). As with the pipit locations, this site did not have the typical prairie habitat usually associated with this species.

Because of the large amount of time spent in the field, MCBS fieldworkers were in a good position to document the presence of rare, local, or out-of-range species. The following unusual occurrences in 1991 are arranged by county, date, and general locality.

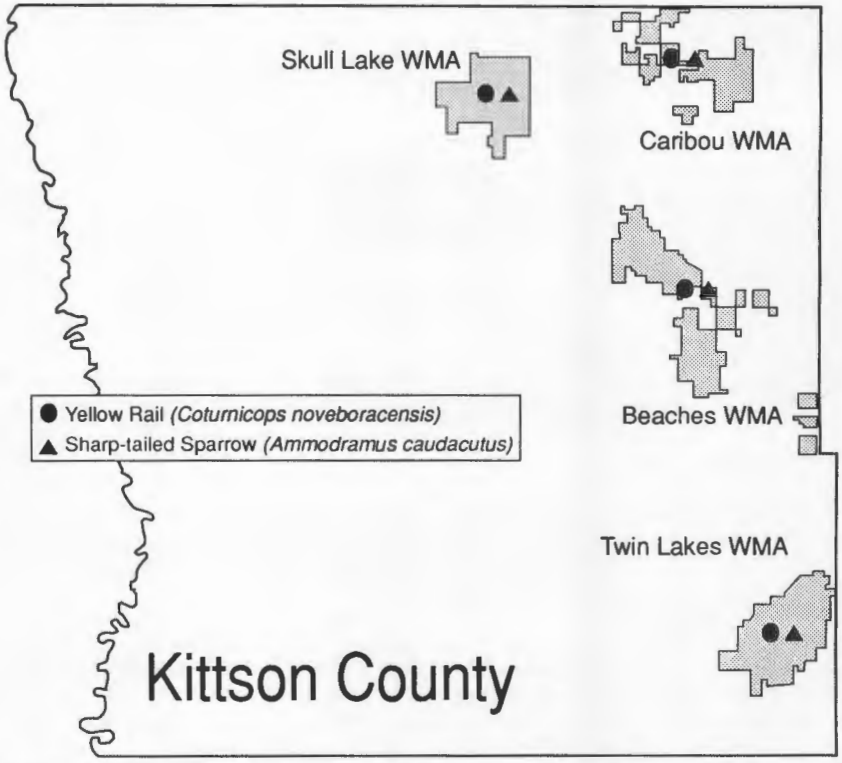

Figure 1. General Locations of Yellow Rails and Sharp-tailed Sparrows in Kittson County, MCBS 1991.

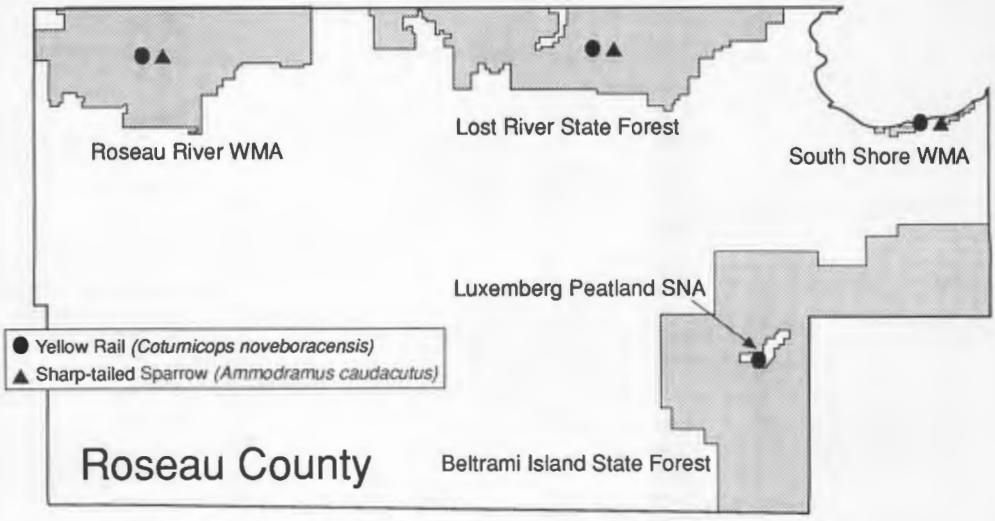

Figure 2. General Locations of Yellow Rails and Sharp-tailed Sparrows in Roseau County, MCBS 1991.

Least Bittern - Kittson: 5/15, 5/18, 6/5 Twin Lakes WMA. Roseau: 5/17, 5/23, 6/14 RRWMA.
Great Egret - Roseau: 5/18 Greenbush sewage ponds.
Black-crowned Night-Heron - Roseau: 6/14, 6/17 RRWMA; 6/17, 6/18 Luxemberg Peatland SNA; 6/27 Poplar Grove Township; 6/30 Palmville Township.
Harlequin Duck - Roseau: 6/2 Roseau sewage ponds (Bardon 1991b.).
Bufflehead - Roseau: 6/2 Roseau sewage ponds.
Rough-legged Hawk - Kittson: 6/10.
American Avocet - Kittson: 5/19 Joe River WMA. Roseau: 5/23 Greenbush sewage ponds.
Little Gull - Kittson: 5/16 Karlstad sewage ponds (Bardon 1991c.).
Great Gray Owl - Roseau: 5/17 RRWMA; 4/20 Pine Creek Peatland SNA; 5/23 Hwy 310 bog — nest with two young (6/18).
Black-backed Woodpecker - Roseau: 6/12 two miles NE of Pelan, (also elsewhere in county).
Common Raven - Kittson: 6/6, 6/7, 6/10 Caribou WMA; 6/29 Pelan Township; 6/5 Twin Lakes WMA; 6/3 Beaches WMA. Roseau: 6/12 Dewey Township. (also elsewhere in county).
Northern Mockingbird - Kittson: 6/6 One mile NE of Halma.
Mountain Bluebird - Kittson: 6/29 (Bardon 1991d.).
Wood Thrush - Kittson: 6/17, 6/28 three miles W of Halma.
Nashville Warbler - Kittson: 5/31 Beaches WMA; 6/5 Skull Lake WMA.
Northern Waterthrush - Kittson: 6/28 three miles W of Halma; 6/3, 6/5 Twin Lakes WMA.
Connecticut Warbler - Kittson: 6/10 Beaches WMA; 6/3 Twin Lakes WMA. Roseau: 6/12 two miles NE of Pelan. (also elsewhere in county).
White-throated Sparrow - Kittson: 6/4 Twin Lakes WMA.
Orchard Oriole - Kittson: 6/9 two miles N of Orleans; 6/24 Kennedy; 6/24 four miles E of Kennedy.
Purple Finch - Kittson: 6/5 Twin Lakes WMA.

Conclusions

High habitat diversity, in conjunction with the presence of large expanses of native vegetation, make Kittson and Roseau counties very important for birds. However, these areas are still threatened by conversion to agriculture and other changes in land use practices, including the suppression of fire.

Many prairie species that were once common in these counties have been eliminated from the region as a result of the destruction of native tallgrass prairie. Sedge fens and aspen parkland have not suffered from as much destruction as many other native plant communities, and many of the tracts remaining occur in state ownership. However, a number of large, important tracts are subdivided between public and private ownership making the integrity of these areas of uncertain future. There are tremendous opportunities for preserving relatively intact native landscapes in these counties.

Acknowledgements

Funding for the MCBS has been provided by the Minnesota Legislature as recommended by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR), from the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, and by the Department of Natural Resources Nongame Wildlife Program.

The 1991 MCBS bird survey staff (Karl Bardon, Mike Hedemark, Arlyne Johnson, Ray Glassel, Bruce Harris, and Gwen Brewer) worked many long days in the field. Personnel at Roseau River WMA and the Karlstad Area DNR-Wildlife Office provided valuable assistance. Gerda Nordquist provided useful comments on this manuscript.

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Scientific Collecting

Letter to the Editor From the Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

This is a comment on the article in the Winter 1991 issue of ***The Loon*** by K. Winker, B.A. Fall, J.T. Klicka, D.F. Parmelee, and H.B. Tordoff titled, "The Importance of Avian Collecting and the Need for Continued Collecting."

The authors present well-reasoned, clearly-stated and convincing arguments for past, present, and future collections of birds for museums and other scientific purposes. They document the great value collections have as historical reference material and how museum specimens were used in preparation of some early books on birds and for modern popular field guides. Likewise, the authors explain how recent scientific advances in genetics and taxonomy mean that museum collections are becoming important in bird conservation efforts by contributing to better understanding of population structure and diversity.

Once beyond explaining the value of bird collections, however, the discussion of legal protection of birds and the permit process suffers from overstatements, incorrect information, omissions, and exaggerations.

Indeed, the thrust of the presentation on permits appears to be an argument for unrestricted bird collecting, with few, if any, controls.

The authors express concerns about legal restrictions and criticize the permitting process.

* DNR does not consider current restrictions on scientific collecting as being too severe. It is routine for the Department to issue collecting permits to scientists at museums, educational and research institutions throughout the state. Very few permits for legitimate research projects are turned down. While individual researchers may rightly assert that their collecting efforts will have no significant effect on populations, it is DNR's legal responsibility to evaluate the cumulative impacts of all such actions relative to the status of the species in the state.

* Whereas in the past it may have been true that DNR collecting permits were issued to individuals without institutional affiliation, my search of records revealed that for at least the past ten years, DNR has, with few exceptions, issued collecting permits only to named individuals at an institution.

* It is true that DNR collecting permits issued to the Bell Museum up to the mid-1980s were, in effect, "open ended," with essentially no restrictions placed on the number of each species which could be collected (except threatened and endangered species). At this time, we feel that mutually agreed

upon limits are necessary to assure conservation of Minnesota's wildlife species. This was also recognized by the Museum and as a result, discussions were undertaken which led to more restrictions on Museum permits in recent years. Thus, the language in the current permit restricts the total annual take to three specimens of each bird species and ten specimens of each mammal species. These figures were negotiated between the Museum and DNR, not mandated by DNR.

* Even the permit limit of three birds of each species did not appear to have much of an impact on museum collecting activities, at least in 1991. The Museum reported to DNR that in 1991, they obtained a total of 97 bird specimens for their collections, either from salvage, shooting, or trapping. Fifty-six different species of birds were included in the 97. Of the 56 species collected, the Museum reported taking the permit maximum of three specimens of only 13 species, two specimens of 15 species, and one specimen of 28 species. In other words, the permit maximum of three was attained for only about 23% of the species, and was not attained for about 77% of the species.

It should also be pointed out that the current permit allows for unrestricted salvaging of all birds and mammals with no limits on numbers.

* The general limit of three birds per species and ten mammals per species is not an inflexible maximum. There is also an understanding between the Department and Museum that additional permits allowing the take of greater numbers of a particular species or group of species may be issued on a case-by-case basis. Thus, in 1991, the senior author, acting in his capacity as a Museum employee at the time, requested a permit to collect five each of 27 species of shorebird. A permit was subsequently issued for 23 of the species, but because of concerns raised by DNR staff over the population status and possible deleterious impacts of collecting on four of the shorebirds, these were not included in the permit. An invitation was also issued for museum staff to meet with DNR staff to discuss how some accommodation could be reached regarding the Department's conservation concerns and Museum needs to add these four species to their collections.

* I am not sure what is meant when the authors state that "...over- restrictive regulations of collecting probably arises from a misguided attempt to safeguard avian populations." In restricting collections, the Department is exercising its mandates under Minnesota law to protect and manage the state's natural resources, including birds. In this context, we do not consider our actions misguided.

* It does not take "months" for the DNR to issue scientific collecting permits. Indeed, most such permits are issued within a few days after the request is received. The Bell Museum has always requested permits in a timely manner, leaving reasonable time for processing. However, processing can be delayed if researchers fail to include enough information or the proper information to allow preparation of the permit. Also, it is not realistic to expect issuance of a permit on the same day the request is received.

Sources of Avian Mortality

It's a gross exaggeration of reality to relate the number of birds which the Museum can collect to the nearly 5,200 game birds that an individual hunter can theoretically take during a hunting season. Such an argument detracts from the legitimate points that the article makes regarding collecting, and also confuses the issue.

Let's take the example given for Spruce and Ruffed Grouse in Table 1 of the article. The table shows that for 1990, the theoretical season limit for a single hunter for these two species was 535 birds - this number being derived from multiplying the allowed daily limit of five grouse times the 107 days of the season. However, missing is any mention that there is a possession limit of ten grouse. In other words, an individual hunter can possess no more than ten grouse at any one time. This means that if a hunter did indeed manage to kill his/her limit of five per day, every day of the season, after the second day of the season, the hunter would either have to eat or give away five grouse every day for the next 105 days through the end of the season to stay within the ten possession limit! Scientific sampling of those hunting in 1990 showed that the average hunter's take of Ruffed and Spruce Grouse for the entire season that year was 8.3 birds - less than 2% of the exaggerated figure of 535 theoretical season maximum presented in the article. It's probably safe to say that no hunters out of the

estimated 148,000 who hunted grouse in 1990 killed anywhere near 535 birds.

Readers knowledgeable about hunting will recognize that the conclusion that a single hunter can take almost 5,200 game birds in a season is based on unrealistic assumptions. It is possible, however, that many readers will not understand how far such numbers are from reality.

Although the authors may have a point about the current Museum permit restricting the collecting of game birds (and all other birds) to three, while many thousands of these birds are killed by regulated sport hunting each fall, the point seems to be made purely for the sake of argument rather than for any legitimate collecting need. Here again, though, if the Museum has a legitimate scientific need to collect more than the three allowed by their permit, DNR would give serious consideration to such a request.

Referring again to the birds reported collected by the Museum in 1991, of the 56 species and 97 birds collected that year, they obtained only one specimen of one hunted species (a Common Snipe). No other game birds were collected in 1991. Thus, the concerns expressed in the article about hunters being able to take large numbers of game birds while the Museum was restricted to "only" three of each game bird are unfounded. The permit did not in any way restrict their collection of game species. They took only the one snipe or less than 1% of what they were allowed.

In summary, DNR believes that permit arrangements with Bell Museum are working well and serve both the conservation concerns of the Department and the legitimate collecting needs of the Museum. There are very few restrictions on the species which may be collected - only endangered and threatened species are restricted. Also, there is no evidence that permit restrictions as to numbers of animals which can be collected are unduly restrictive. In addition, permitting procedures in DNR are flexible enough to allow for special collecting needs which may arise at the Museum. DNR looks forward to working with the Bell Museum in the future regarding permit matters.

These comments are intended to contribute towards a constructive dialogue on the legitimate concerns of scientific collecting and conservation, and to set the record straight on DNR's commitment to fulfilling its responsibilities in both areas. **Blair Joselyn, State of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul MN 55155.**

BIRDS IN JEOPARDY: THE IMPERILED AND EXTINCT BIRDS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA INCLUDING HAWAII AND PUERTO RICO, by Paul R. Ehrlich, David S. Dobkin, and Darryl Wheye.

As the human population skyrockets and the toxic impact of human society spreads, the natural habitats of birds degrade and diminish and the bird populations decline. Two hundred years ago, when the United States and Canada were home to less than five million people, they were also home to some 650 species of birds. Today, more than 280 million people live there, and 33 birds have already been driven to extinction and well over 150 are in danger of extinction in all or parts of their range.

This book, organized and written by the authors of *The Birder's Handbook*, and enriched by 191 strikingly beautiful color paintings illustrating all of the birds treated, is the first concise, authoritative review of the status of the birds currently imperiled in the United States and Canada - those that are federally listed as endangered or threatened, those that are listed by the National Audubon Society as suffering local or regional or widespread decline, and nine others that are not listed at all. It also treats the birds that have been driven to extinction in the past two centuries, since the stories of their somber fates can help us learn how to save the birds that are in jeopardy today. Because bird watchers and others are showing increased interest in the tropical birds that survive in Hawaii and Puerto Rico, the book includes separate sections on the imperiled and extinct birds of those areas. Hawaii is of special importance; because it has seen so many extinctions just in the years since Cook's arrival (23 species and subspecies), it provides a laboratory for studying the impact of civilization on birds in the wild.

The individual texts - written in clear, nontechnical language - cover requirements for successful nesting and feeding; worldwide and North American breeding range, wintering range, and imperiled portions of range; current population estimates (for threatened and endangered birds); behavioral and other factors pertinent to conservation; former and/or current threats associated with decline; current status of imperilment; federally funded recovery plans; and the date of last sighting, in those desperate cases where extinction is imminent or already a fact.

In the last century, coal miners took canaries into the mines, reasoning that if poisonous gases were present, the birds would give warning by succumbing first. Now birds are serving as miners' canaries once again. In the language of ecology, they are good indicator species, warning us that too many people, unbridled consumption of wildlands and other natural resources, faulty technologies, and irresponsible disposal of chemical and other wastes threaten not just birds but ourselves and every other living thing. In our daily lives, we seldom see the terrible effects of these forces, but they are demonstrated every day by scientific surveys of the environment around the world, and the reasons for the decline are seldom obscure.

THE BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE: BEHAVIORAL ECOLOGY AND NATURAL HISTORY, by Susan M. Smith. Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY, 1991; 362 pages, 113 figures, 31 b&w photographs, softcover, $16.95

Susan M. Smith has written this book with the objective of compiling everything published on the Black-capped Chickadee. Smith also cites numerous studies on related species, notably the Carolina Chickadee and the European tits.

For a variety of reasons, the Black-capped Chickadee is probably the best-studied North American passerine. The birds are permanent residents, tame, easily observed, easily caught, and live near large universities. Unlike the most familiar European species, the Great Tit and Blue Tit, Black-capped Chickadees seldom nest in nest boxes. Despite this drawback, many questions can be answered with respect to the Black-capped Chickadee that cannot as yet be answered for other species.

Smith addresses the natural history of the Black-capped Chickadee, techniques of studying the birds, feeding behavior, communication, the breeding season, the non-breeding season, winter survival, and population dynamics. Smith cites all the major published works on chickadees, especially her own extensive work. She has done a superb job of combing the literature and distilling some difficult material down to a level that the reader with little background in science can understand, while still retaining scientific validity.

I think that this is an absolutely fabulous book, but of course I am biased by my own fascination with chickadees. As this book makes clear, chickadees do remarkable things. They store food items and apparently remem-

ber where they hid them. Chickadees manage to survive severe winters despite a meager food supply. Black-capped Chickadees have a large repertoire of vocalizations in addition to the familiar "chick-a-dee" call and the easily imitated, whistled song. Researchers are just beginning to unravel the meanings of these various calls.

This book will be of value to those studying other species, because a quick check can reveal whether or not a given phenomenon has been found in chickadees. In this regard, it is like Val Nolan's now classic *Ecology and Behavior of the Prairie Warbler Dendroica discolor*.

In the preface, Smith states, "Although I have tried to present all the information published so far, as fairly and clearly as possible, I am well aware that not all my interpretations or conclusions are necessarily correct - just that they do fit the data currently available to me." Many aspects of the Black-capped Chickadee ecology appear to hold throughout its vast geographic range; e.g., exclusive use of cavities for nesting, incubation exclusively by the female, and formation of flocks during the non- breeding season. However, many aspects of the Black-capped Chickadees that Smith has studied in Massachusetts and British Columbia simply are not valid in the Upper Midwest. In Minnesota and Wisconsin, Black-capped Chickadees do not defend flock territories; territoriality is not the main determinant of breeding density; flocks do not consist solely of mated pairs; and the sex ratio is not 1:1, but rather there are always more males than females. These differences make this book all the more interesting. From this book, one can see a much more complete picture of what is going on in Smith's chickadee study population than one can from her series of smaller papers.

Smith closes her book by posing some of the major unsolved questions about the Black-capped Chickadee. Among these is what I consider to be the most intriguing question about chickadees: how the birds can identify each other. The birds can almost instantly tell the age, sex, and individual identity of all the other chickadees in the area. We brilliant humans need to have color bands on the birds or we hardly have a clue.

I recommend this book to anyone interested in finding out what can be learned about a bird species when a small army of investigators spend the better part of their lives studying one of the most cooperative and captivating of birds. **James Howitz, Huron University, Huron SD 57350.**

AUTHOR'S COMMENT ON WISCONSIN BIRDLIFE REVIEW.

I want to express my appreciation for the many favorable comments Kim Risen included in his review of *Wisconsin Birdlife* (***The Loon*** 63:234-236). His review shows great insight into the purpose of this volume, and the place it holds in relation to other Wisconsin ornithological literature.

However, there is one point that needs clarification. Mr. Risen implies that the records of rarities that preceded the emergence of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology Records Committee went through no screening process other than the author's individual judgment. I was acutely aware of the need of a screening process in the earliest stages of my work on this volume. In the book's introduction (p. xvi) I described this procedure.

"The assignment of a species to confirmed or hypothetical status was done by an ad hoc "records evaluation committee" (G.W. Foster, J.J. Hickey, W.L. Hilsenhoff, and D.D. Tessen), which I selected to help determine the status of the rarest Wisconsin species...A shadow of doubt in a committee member's mind led to rejection of the record." This ad hoc committee later became the first WSO Records Committee.

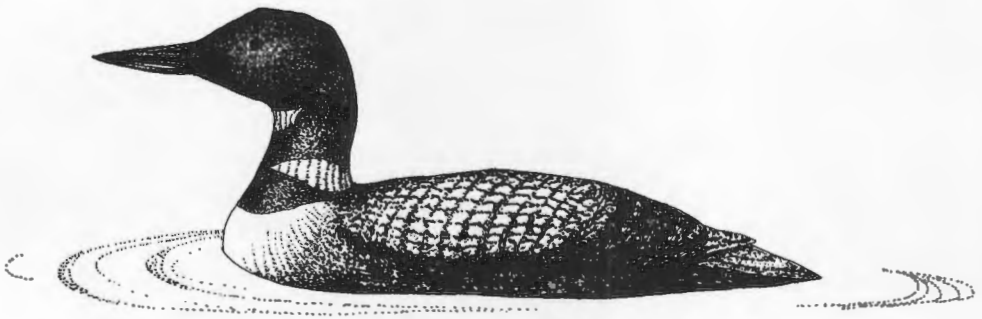
I agree with the reviewer that the absence of such a screening process would be a serious flaw, casting a shadow of doubt over many important sightings. So I wish to reassure Mr. Risen and everyone else who delves into *Wisconsin Birdlife* that the process was there. **Samuel D. Robbins, 14 S. Ruby Road, Madison, WI 53705.**

Reviewers Comment: I thing that a clarification should be made regarding Samuel D. Robbins comments on my review of *Wisconsin Birdlife*. Mr. Robbins states that I implied there was **no** screening process for some of the rarity records. This is not so. My comments were correct. "As many of the species accounts were written before the "official" records committee was established, many of the records cited have never been formally accepted by the committee." Additional com-

ments were lost due to editing, they may have clarified my point a bit. "In light of the treatment of Minnesota's Anhinga records, I believe few of these would be accepted by any [records] committee."

My comments were meant to address the fact that the details as published ("distinctive behavior of flapping and soaring in circles; long neck and fairly long rounded tail; the long slender neck and long fanned tail were obvious as the bird circled at ever increasing altitude") would, I believe, not be formally accepted by the "official" records committee were these records to be presented for a vote.

I was aware of the safeguards (i.e. the ad hoc records committee) that the author had established, and his methods, and he is to be commended for yet another pioneering effort on behalf of Wisconsin ornithology. **Kim W. Risen, 5756 Brunswick Ave. N., Crystal, MN 55428.**



NOTES OF INTEREST

MINNESOTA'S SECOND FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER - I first saw the bird perched on a branch of a bush, facing me. Most noticeable was a long (6"-8") tail, hanging straight below the bird. When it flew, the tail opened into a V, with one side longer than the other. The bird flew somewhat erratically and for only a short distance. It landed on the beach sand and sat with its body resting on the sand. It had a light underside, dusky-dark top, a small black head, and a short, straight, pointed bill. The bill was dark. Eyes appeared small and dark. Forked tail was held together when the bird was perched or sitting. **Dave Ekhof, Grand Marais, MN 55604.**

Editor's Note: The above observation by Mr. Ekhof, the first to be made of the bird, was on 3 May 1992. The bird remained in the area until 14 May 1992 and was seen and photographed by numerous observers. The following write-up by Parker Backstrom was completed on 6 May 1992.

A dramatic black, gray, white, and brown flycatcher with a very long tail. The bird had a black "cap" that ran from the top of the bill back to the hindcrown, sloped down and forward, encompassing the "cheek," then sloped back up and met the gape of the black, kingbird-like bill. It was often possible to see the golden yellow patch on the top of the head, although this patch was often hidden or hard to see. The bird showed white extending up onto the side of the neck from the white underparts. This gave it the appearance of having a partial "collar." Each extension was separated by the gray hindneck; they did not meet. The back of the neck,

the back, the scapulars, and the upper rump were a smooth, pearly gray. The uppertail coverts were dark. The chin, throat, sides of the neck, flanks, breast, belly, vent, and undertail coverts were clean, snowy white. The wings (in their entirety - tertials, all coverts, and all flight feathers) were composed of old, mostly dark brown feathers, almost all showing signs of feather wear, some quite heavily. The edges of the tertials and greater secondary coverts appeared especially ragged. The secondaries were worn at the tips and the primary tips, especially the outermost two or three, were heavily worn (see sketch). The smaller tertials were lighter brown than the rest of the wing. The tail was dark brown and also showed heavy wear. It was asymmetrically shaped. The left-most rectrix was extremely long (perhaps three times the length of the body). There were two gaps in the left rectrix where portions of the feather had been broken out; one gap was just past the halfway point of its length, and the other was halfway between the first gap and the tip of the rectrix. The outermost right rectrix was

just less than half the length of the left. It showed a whitish outer edge. There were about three or four pairs of inner rectrices visible, stacked with the shortest, innermost feathers on top; they were visibly graduated and appeared more of "normal" tail length. The eye and feet were blackish. During the approximately 75 minutes that I watched the bird, it spent almost the entire time perched on and sallying forth from lake shore rocks. These perches were ground level to about three feet. Twice, I saw it fly up into spruce trees, but it seemed to me to be in response to observer presence/activity. It would sit perched for up to several minutes before quickly flying down to pick an unseen prey item off a rock and then returning to its previous or another nearby perch. I did identify one prey item as some sort of wasp or hornet. Its direct flight was straight and swift. While it sat perched, it held its wings drooped down over its sides and its head pulled in, perhaps in response to the cool (40s?) temperatures. It occasionally cocked its long tail up above the plane of its body and head. It appeared very alert, quickly moving its head in search of food. No vocalizations were heard. **Parker Backstrom, 3409 Emerson Ave. So., #4, Minneapolis, MN 55408.**

GREAT BLACK-BACKED AND ICELAND GULLS AT KNIFE RIVER - During the last couple of winters, most of the gulls wintering in the Duluth- Superior area have concentrated at the Superior, Wisconsin, landfill, located at the south end of Wisconsin Point. In the winter of 1991-92, among the few hundred Herring Gulls, there were sightings at the

landfill by various observers of 30-40 Glaucous Gulls, one second-winter Thayer's Gull (plus a possible first- winter bird), a first-winter Iceland Gull, one first-winter Great Black-backed Gull, and an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull. On the Minnesota side of the lake, from late December through late February, all of these species except for the Lesser Black-backed were seen on occasion, with most of the sightings from Knife River, Lake County. Knife River is located about 21 miles NNE of the Superior landfill, and the gulls were attracted to the small pasture behind Kendall's smoked fish store, where fish scraps were occasionally discarded. The Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) was seen there on 3 and 15 February 1992, and it was also seen on 28 February as it flew northeast past my yard, which is located on the north shore 9.5 miles SW of Knife River. The Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*) was first observed at Knife River on 29 December 1991, and it was subsequently reported on a few other dates until the last sighting on 8 February 1992. The identification of the first-winter Great Black-backed Gull was straightforward. On the two occasions I observed this individual, it was standing, flying and/or swimming on Lake Superior in the company of Herring and a few Glaucous Gulls. It was overcast on both days; I was using 8X42 Elite binoculars and a 40X TSN-4 Kowa spotting scope; total observation time was about 15 minutes at distances between 30 and 80 yards; and no field guides were used or needed to make the identification. Its overall size was clearly larger than all the Herring Gulls, and it was even slightly larger than the Glaucous Gulls swimming next to it. The bill was also obviously larger than all the other gulls, especially in its thickness, and it appeared all dark. Its back and upper wing coverts were much darker overall than all first-winter Herring Gulls present, with the blackish-brown feathers more broadly tipped with white, giving a more "checkerboard" appearance than a first- winter Herring Gull. This darker mantle color also contrasted more with its mostly whitish head, neck, and underparts, which appeared whiter overall than a first-winter Herring Gull. In flight, the upper tail coverts and basal half of the tail were whiter overall than on a first-winter Herring, and there was a broad blackish sub- terminal tail band. I was not able to clearly note iris or leg colors. The light conditions and optics involved with the Iceland Gull were the same, but I was able to approach as close as about 50 feet and, because the identification was more difficult, total observation time was closer to 30 minutes. This gull was photographed on 29 December by Mark Schubert of Omaha, who was with me when it was first discovered, and Peder Svingen also photographed it on 16 January. When seen standing or swimming in direct comparison with Herring Gulls and the second-winter Thayer's Gull, its bill, head, and overall length were essentially the same as the Thayer's and slightly, but clearly, smaller than all adjacent Herring Gulls. This size plus its all-dark bill - mostly black, but slightly paler on the base of the lower mandible - precluded the possibility of it being a Glaucous Gull. Separation of darker first-winter Icelands from paler first-winter Thayer's Gulls is more difficult and sometimes impossible, especially on a standing or swimming bird, but two features were carefully noted on the dorsal surface of this Iceland Gull as it flew nearby. First, as shown in the photographs, the tips of all the spread flight feathers from above were uniformly white, with no evidence of darkening on the outer primaries or secondaries; on a typical first-winter Thayer's, there is a "dark-light-dark" pattern of whiter inner primaries between slightly darker outer primaries and secondaries. Second, although there was a hint of a sub-terminal band on the upper tail surface, as shown in the photos, a careful and close look at the tail showed the "band" was not solid, but a broken and diffuse pattern of grayish-brown smudges on the rectrices. Such a tail pattern is entirely consistent with Iceland Gull, while a typical first-winter Thayer's has more of a solid, continuous sub-terminal band. The iris appeared dark and the legs dull pinkish. Also noted when the gull was standing at rest were checkered rather than solidly- colored tertials; this feature and the slightly paler area noted on the bill are sometimes cited as characteristics of first-winter Icelands rather than Thayer's. However, I have observed both these characteristics on first-winter gulls that otherwise appeared to be typical Thayer's Gulls, and it is obvious that the identification and taxonomy of these two gulls remain controversial. **Kim Eckert, 8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

HOODED WARBLER IN BROOKLYN PARK - On Monday, 11 May 1992, I was cautiously following the trails in my little three-acre "mini-wilderness" by the Mississippi

River, straining my eyes to make some warbler identifications high up in the 80-foot trees, against an overcast sky. Finally, to rest my eyes as well as my aching neck, I brought my gaze down to the surrounding underbrush, where the light was excellent. Immediately, a bit of action caught my eye. A quick glimpse of the actor revealed a bright yellow and black flash before it flitted away. Fortunately, it remained in the area for some minutes and I soon got a good view of the brilliant yellow face, set off strikingly by its jet black hood, which ended abruptly on the breast. Later, I got more excellent views of the whole bird, with its dark wings and back, and no evident wing bars, and I was left with no doubt as to its identity as a Hooded Warbler. I have no recollection of ever having seen this species before and certainly not in Minnesota. A real red letter day for my "mini-wilderness" list. **W.J. Breckenridge, 8840 W. River Road N., Minneapolis, MN 55444.**

HENSLOW'S SPARROW IDENTIFIED IN DULUTH - On 14 May 1992, at about noon, as I hiked along the main dike at 40th Ave. West in Duluth, I saw a small sparrow running through the sparse vegetation ahead of me. It ran a distance of about 15 feet before flying to the bottom of a shrub, always staying ahead of me. As it flew, I was struck by its small size and short, spiky tail, and immediately thought it might be one of the *Ammodramus* species. It landed on the bottom branch of a shrub about 20 or 25 feet away from me, in good light. There were cumulus clouds in the sky and I saw it first in shade and then, briefly, in full sun. Through my 10-power binoculars, I could clearly see its olive brown face with dark moustachial and malar stripes, very flat head with large (almost oversized) pale beak, chestnut brown wings, and dark streaks on a buffy breast. I concluded that it must be Henslow's Sparrow. Although I have not observed this species before in Minnesota, and certainly did not expect to see it in Duluth, I am familiar with it from the years I lived in Michigan and southern Wisconsin. The bird remained in full view about a minute and then scurried, mouse-like, further down the dike. I got one more satisfactory look and a couple of quick glimpses as it skulked ahead of me. During this brief time of observation, I did not hear it make any call notes or other sounds. Finally, it ran behind a shrub and that was the last I saw of it. In spite of circling around the shrub and searching the area, I could not locate it again. There were three or four Savannah Sparrows in the vicinity, and although they were close enough to notice their larger size, they did not seem to associate with this individual. I presume that the recent warm weather and strong southerly winds pushed this little migrant north of its normal range. I was pleased that as long as it had to be lost, it found its way into my binoculars' field of view. **Laura L. Erickson, 4831 Peabody St, Duluth, MN 55804.**

A WINTER MEADOWLARK IN AITKIN COUNTY - Following the 1991 Halloween snowstorm, several stranded birds started showing up at feeders in the area. One of the more unusual visitors at my feeders was a meadowlark that was first seen on the morning of 7 November. It appeared fairly dark and my guess was that it was an Eastern Meadowlark, but I wasn't absolutely sure. It left the next day, without my making a positive identification. I assumed it had migrated out, but on 28 November, as I left for work, the unmistakable call of an Eastern Meadowlark came from my neighbor's maple tree. A short time later, it landed on the ground under my feeders. From then until 20 December, it was a daily visitor at the feeders, staying for hours at a time, picking through the mixture of cracked corn and sunflower seeds that I left on the ground for it. Again it disappeared and I assumed that with all the cats in the area, it had died. But on 30 January 1992, there it was again, calling from my neighbor's maple tree. This was the last time I saw it. Even though I periodically checked all the feeders in the neighborhood, I didn't know where it had been for over a month, nor do I know where it went after that. **Warren Nelson, 603 - 2nd St. N.W., Aitkin, MN 56431.**

ANOTHER CONCENTRATION OF ROSS' GEESE - As previously reported in ***The Loon*** (63:157-158), at least 11 individual Ross' Geese (*Chen rossii*) were found on 28 March 1991 in Traverse County. Although this represented the largest number of this species ever recorded in Minnesota, the article speculated that this "Casual" species was probably a regular migrant in western Minnesota, and that such a concentration was not unexpected since it

represented about 1% Ross'. (About 5,000 geese in all were present, but the Ross' Geese were found among an estimated 1,000 geese that were close enough to examine.) Then on 29 March 1992, an even larger group of Ross' Geese was found in Nobles County just southwest of Worthington (T102N, R40W, Section 34). A group of 24 observers on a Minnesota Birding Weekend tour on the previous day had briefly seen two or three distant Ross' Geese among an estimated 3,000 geese, mostly Snow Geese, in this vicinity, and we returned on the 29th to try for a better look. This time the flock was much smaller, but more cooperative as they rested on a small wetland about 75-80 yards from the road, and we had excellent views through Kowa TSN-4 and other spotting scopes. I counted a minimum of 13 Ross' Geese among the 133 "white" geese (i.e. Snow and Ross' geese combined) counted by Dennis Martin, and about 50 Canada and Greater White-fronted Geese were also present. All the Ross' Geese were identified only if their diagnostic bill features could be seen in direct comparison with Snow Geese: i.e., shorter and "stubbier" shape, straighter line where base of bill meets the face, lack of "grinning patch," and on most of them, the bluish gray color on the basal half of the bill was also visible. It is likely that there were actually more than 13 Ross' present, perhaps as many as 20; some smaller-looking geese were left unidentified because they were asleep or flew off before their bills could be studied. As impressive as this concentration of 13+ Ross' Geese was, even more significant was that these Ross' made up roughly 10% of the flock, a much higher percentage than expected. It should be noted, however, that many more Snow Geese may have been present in the vicinity (again, an estimated 3,000 were in the area the day before), and that the Ross' Goose percentage would be much lower if they were taken into account. If this were the case, it might suggest that within a migrant Snow Goose flock, the Ross' Geese tend to gather together in one part of the flock or at one location, such as at the wetland we found. Incidentally, later that day near Heron Lake in Jackson County, we identified yet another Ross' Goose, the 14th individual of the day; it was a lone white goose among an otherwise pure flock of about 200 Greater White- fronted Geese. **Kim Eckert, 8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

A WINTERING OLDSQUAW IN THE TWIN CITIES - During the winter of 1991-92, an immature male Oldsquaw wintered on the Mississippi River in St. Paul. I first saw what may have been this individual on 11 November 1991 at Black Dog Lake in Bloomington, when a female or immature Oldsquaw was seen with an adult male Oldsquaw, but the two individuals were not seen associating. The wintering individual was first discovered in St. Paul on 11 December 1991 within a large flock of 300 Common Goldeneyes feeding on the Mississippi River adjacent to Holman Field. This bird was seen virtually every day at this location by the many birders who came to the area to watch the Ivory and Great Black-backed Gulls. It was most often seen with the flock of up to 1,400 Common Goldeneyes feeding at this location during the day, but occasionally it was observed half a mile downstream, outside the main flock of goldeneyes. My observations of this Oldsquaw were incidental to the informal study I have been doing on the daily feeding and roosting movements of Common Goldeneyes in the Twin Cities. The flock of goldeneyes which feed at the Holman Field location fly to roost in the evening, heading either toward Black Dog Lake in Burnsville or four miles downstream to a location on the Mississippi River at the outlet from Pigs Eye Lake. At first, in mid-December, the flock apparently split equally between the two roosts, but in late December, the flock began roosting entirely at the Pigs Eye Lake location. Evidence that the Oldsquaw at least occasionally flew to roost with the goldeneyes comes from the observations of it at the Pigs Eye Lake location, with 2,700 goldeneyes on the evening of 30 December 1991, and at Black Dog Lake with 285 Common Goldeneyes on the evening of 31 January 1992. Except for these two observations, the Oldsquaw was not located on my frequent observations of these and other Common Goldeneye roosts. In early January, the river began opening up in areas where it had been previously frozen, and the flock of goldeneyes that had been feeding at Holman Field disappeared, leaving the Oldsquaw there by itself. In mid-January, the river refroze completely, including at Holman Field, and the Oldsquaw also disappeared. It was not seen again until 30 January, when the river reopened at Holman Field., and it was seen there through February, feeding by itself. The flock of goldeneyes which had used the Holman Field

area earlier in the winter never returned. I observed the Oldsquaw twice in the spring away from Holman Field while watching other waterfowl on local water areas. On 24 March 1992, I observed it at Spring Lake near Hastings with a mixture of scaup, goldeneyes, and other ducks. I observed it once again on 6 April 1992 on Pigs Eye Lake with a concentration of 8,000 scaup. Oldsquaws are occasionally seen in the Twin Cities and other areas, especially in late fall, but I am unaware of any other wintering records away from Lake Superior. **Karl Bardon, 1430 - 100th Ave. NW, #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**

A CHRISTMAS DAY CAROLINA WREN IN ANOKA COUNTY - Every year, Christmas presents are a source of mental anguish for my husband. He searches for the perfect gift for me and this year, without having to set foot into a store or mall, he gave me the perfect present - a Carolina Wren. We had dinner, opened the presents, and were enjoying a pleasant afternoon when my husband excitedly said, "Look, Char, on the feeder!" There on our small platform feeder on the deck was a large wren. We stood watching the bird for several minutes. (The binoculars were on the other side of the deck window and we did not dare walk over there for fear of frightening the bird away.) The wren flew over to the neighbor's suet bag and we were able to grab the binoculars. The bold, white eyestripe, buffy breast, and darker brown back led us to believe it was a Carolina Wren. It stayed in the area for some time, flitting between our suet bag and the neighbor's fence. My husband attempted to get a picture of the wren, but his telephoto lens chose that moment not to work. Of course, the wren posed just beautifully in the late afternoon sun in our basswood tree. I may not have a photograph of the wren, but I have a mental picture of it and the memory of the perfect Christmas present. **Charlotte Wenger, 1019 - 93rd Lane NW, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**
Editor's Note: The bird returned to the feeder for one day on 13 February 1992.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE AT DULUTH - At about 10:00 AM on 3 November 1991, I saw a first-winter Black-legged Kittiwake off Park Point in Duluth. It was a morning with low clouds, occasional light flurries, and a moderate wind off the lake. I noticed the gull flying parallel to the peninsula at a distance of about 100 yards, heading west. I made the following notes: medium size; bold black "M" on upper wings; outer primaries solid black, no flashy white; no trailing black on primaries or secondaries; black collar on back of neck; black spot behind eye; rest of wings and back white/gray; and wing beats somewhat shallow, much slower than that of a Bonaparte's Gull. By the time I got around to checking out the tail, the gull was disappearing into a snow squall and all that I could make out was a white rump and an apparently white tail. I feel that with the markings I noted, the gull had to have been a Black-legged Kittiwake. **Mark Otnes, 1602 - 47th St. SW, #106, Fargo, ND 58103.**

ADULT ICELAND GULL AT BLACK DOG LAKE - An adult Iceland Gull was observed at Black Dog Lake in Dakota County on 9 November 1991. The gull in question was seen feeding with two adult Thayer's Gulls and numerous Herring and Ring-billed Gulls of all ages, at the east spillway at about 8:00 AM. The lighting was excellent, with the morning sun at my back, and the gulls were close enough to clearly see eye color. I easily picked out the two Thayer's Gulls by their slighter body build, smaller bill, reduced black on the wing-tips, and dark eyes - all in comparison to adjacent Herring Gulls. The third individual had a distinctly light-colored iris in comparison to the dark eyes of the Thayer's Gulls, and a pale gray pattern on the wing-tips which matched the color of the mantle. The color of the eye was a brownish yellow with no visible dark flecking. It was darker than the eyes of the Herring Gulls, but still distinctly lighter than the eyes of the adult Thayer's Gulls. The gray color on the upper surface of the wing-tips was very pale, several shades paler than the black on the wing-tips of the two adult Thayer's Gulls, and large white areas were visible in the folded wing, although the exact pattern of gray on each primary was not distinguished. This bird appeared to be in fresh fall (definitive basic) plumage, and so it is unlikely that feather wear accounts for this frosted gray color on the upper surface of the wing-tips. When seen in flight, the thin, dark line on the undersurface of the tips of the primaries seen on the typical Thayer's Gulls was virtually absent on this individual. The mantle was only slightly lighter than the mantles of the Herring Gulls,

but in the same bright light, the mantles of the two Thayer's Gulls did not appear significantly darker than the Herring Gulls (bright sunlight tends to wash out subtle shades of gray; overcast conditions are actually better for determining actual differences in mantle color). This gull had the same gentle, smaller-billed, rounder-headed appearance in comparison to Herring Gulls as the two adult Thayer's Gulls. It was possibly even smaller and gentler looking than the two Thayer's Gulls, but this gull never actually stood next to either of the two Thayer's Gulls. Its bill color was the same bright yellow (no greenish tint) with a reddish spot at the gonys, and the legs were basically the same shade of pink as the two Thayer's Gulls (although Thayer's leg color is said to be a darker pink than Herring Gull, this was not seen). This was possibly the same individual seen by Bruce Fall on 23 November 1991 on Black Dog Lake, but see ***The Loon*** 64:57-59 for observed differences in size, eye color, and wing-tip color. **Karl Bardon, 1430 - 100th Ave. NW, #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE IN COOK COUNTY - On 18 November 1991, Steve Stucker and I observed an immature Black-legged Kittiwake on Lake Superior, at the mouth of the Temperance River in Temperance River State Park, Cook County. We first spotted this gull as it flew by the mouth of the river where several Herring Gulls were feeding. As we followed it with binoculars, it was seen to wheel around and dive toward the surface of the water, displaying its distinctive W or M-shaped upper wing pattern. This upper wing pattern was formed by black wing-tips which extended inward along the leading edge of the primaries, and long black stripes extending at a diagonal across the secondary coverts to the base of the wing. The rest of the mantle was a dirty gray, except for large, triangular white patches behind the W-shaped upper wing pattern. There was no black border on the rear edge of the wings, but there was a nearly complete tail band that appeared thickest in the center. As the bird flew away from us, the head and nape were not seen distinctly, but when the bird returned to the mouth of the river, we noted a large, vertical black patch on the nape. There was an additional spot on the head, but at the time we were not sure if this was the eye or an extra spot. Steve saw the kittiwake land on the water briefly, and he stated that the nape patch and the black stripe on the secondary coverts were visible. The kittiwake's flight was buoyant and graceful, and it flew easily into the strong winds that were blowing in off the shore. We estimated that the bird was about the size of a Ring-billed Gull. Additional sites farther up the north shore toward Grand Marais were checked, but the kittiwake could not be relocated. There was an additional sighting of a first-winter Black-legged Kittiwake near Tofte three weeks earlier, on 27 October 1991 (***The Loon*** 63:279). **Karl Bardon, 1430 - 100th Ave. NW, #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**
Editor's Note: See record from Duluth (p. 123) for this species by Mark Otnes. The above record may be of the same individual.

HOODED WARBLER AT CARLETON COLLEGE ARBORETUM IN DAKOTA COUNTY - Date: 10 May 1992 Time: 11:15 AM Observers and Optics: Brett Moyer (Leitz 10X40), Susan Beittel (Leitz 7X35), and Clifford Beittel (Zeiss 10X40) Weather: Sunny and warm Location: Section 29, T112N, R19W, Dakota County, MN. In the Lower Arboretum of Carleton College. At J14 of the Carleton College Arboretum Map. Ten meters after the trail intersection, on the north side of the trail that leads southward to Kettle Hole Marsh. Habitat: Upland Forest Notes: The male Hooded Warbler was foraging less than a meter above the ground in some small saplings right beside the trail in the understory of the Upland Forest. The bird was 4-6 meters to the east of us. It remained in clear view for about 40 seconds. I identified the bird a few seconds after first seeing it, without needing to reference a field guide. Susan and Cliff Beittel immediately agreed with the identification and we watched it forage in excellent light for 30 seconds afterwards. We clearly saw the complete black hood, yellow face, olive back, and yellow underparts. Susan, Cliff, and I each have 15 years of birding experience. I have previously seen the Hooded Warbler in swamps of Virginia and in tropical forests of Belize and Guatemala. Susan and Clifford have also seen it several times previously on the east coast and in the tropics. I am completely certain of the identification. **Brett Moyer, c/o Susan and Clifford Beittel, 287 Brookwood Dr. N., York, PA 17403.**

CALIFORNIA GULLS AT BRECKENRIDGE - I was birding Lake Breckenridge, Wilkin County, with Bob Janssen early on the morning of 7 April 1992, when we saw two adult gulls fly in and circle over the lake. My first thought was Herring Gulls because they both looked larger than Ring-billed Gulls and I couldn't see any marks on the bill. They landed on a mud bar in the middle of the lake, where we observed them with binoculars and 20X scopes. We could only see a dark mark on the lower mandible of their rather large bills with binoculars. Through scopes, we were able to better observe the dark spot on the lower mandible, the dark eye, and the mantle seemed darker than a Ring-billed Gull or Herring Gull, although we had no direct comparison. The head shape was round (not a flat forehead). The legs were yellow-green, eliminating the Herring Gull. We could not see any red on the lower mandible, but the combination of size, no ring on bill, head shape, leg color, and mantle color identified the birds as California Gulls. The birds remained on the mud bar only a minute or so, then flew down-river and could not be relocated. **Raymond Glassel, 8219 Wentworth Ave. So., Bloomington, MN 55420.**

American Avocet nest, 18 May 1991, Thielke Lake, Big Stone County. Photo by Martin Gunderson.

NESTING AMERICAN AVOCETS IN BIG STONE COUNTY - On 19 May 1991, Martin and Ellen Gunderson, Ellen Lease, and Pat Moriarty found a pair of nesting American Avocets at Thielke Lake in Big Stone County. Ellen Gunderson first spotted a nesting avocet at the southwestern corner of the lake with another adult avocet nearby. The nest, containing four eggs, was located on dried mud near some tall grass, about 20 yards from the lake. The eggs were olive drab, mottled with black spots and lines. As we approached the nest to photograph the eggs, the avocets went into an alarm display and moved away from the nest. The behavior of the avocets was much like the broken wing display of the Killdeer. On 21 May, Martin Gunderson returned to spend the day observing the avocets from a distance of about 150 yards.

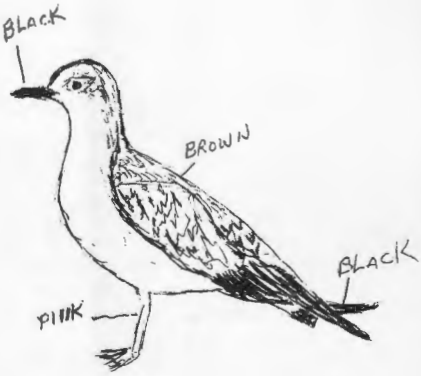
The adults took turns sitting on the nest. The Gundersons also returned to observe the nesting on 24 May, 1 June, and 8 June. On 13 June, the avocets were off the nest and had two chicks, which were walking about freely. The chicks were mostly downy gray, but they had some white underneath and a black stripe along their wings. The behavior of the adults had changed dramatically. When approached, even at a distance of 100 yards, they flew directly at us, at a height of ten to 30 feet, and then veered off when about 20 yards away from us. They also drove off other birds which approached the chicks. Several times, the adult nearest the chicks would place a chick under each wing. Although the adult remained standing, the chicks were then completely hidden. Sometimes, however, one of the chick's legs would be visible below the adult's wing. On 22 June, the four original observers returned to Thielke Lake. At this time, we were able to spot only one of the chicks. We never again saw a second chick. There had been severe rain storms during the preceding week. There was standing water in farm fields surrounding the lake and Thielke Lake was slightly higher than it had been. The avocets still engaged in their threat displays, but they were far less aggressive than they had been. The Gundersons returned to Thielke Lake on 29 June and again on 4 July. As of 29 June, the chick had lost its down and looked like a miniature adult. Its wings, however, were not well formed and it looked like it would be some time before it could fly. The adult avocets still engaged in defensive threat displays, but they were not as aggressive as before. The Gundersons returned to Thielke Lake on 21 and 27 July, but did not see any of the avocets either time. **Martin and Ellen Gunderson, 463 Marshall Ave., St. Paul, MN 55102; Ellen Lease and Pat Moriarty, 7164 Foxboro Lane, Woodbury, MN 55125.**

GREAT GRAY OWL IN KANDIYOHI COUNTY - On the morning of 24 February 1992, I received a call from Steve Erickson of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Litchfield. Steve told me that he lives near Long Lake just north of Willmar in Kandiyohi County, and that for at least a week, a Great Gray Owl had been seen near his residence. Great Grays had never been

Great Gray Owl, 23 February 1992, Long Lake, Kandiyohi County. Photo by Steve Erickson.

recorded in this area of Minnesota, but Steve's description of the bird was perfect. I was very interested in out-of-range Great Gray Owls, especially since an unprecedented invasion of the species was occurring across northern areas of the state. I decided to confirm the record and drove to the area with Ray Glassel later that day. The bird was normally being seen near sunset, hunting over a large area of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land that was on the east side of Long Lake. We arrived at the area about 4:00 PM and at approximately 5:15 PM the bird suddenly appeared on a small bush along a fence row on the south side of the large field. Over the next half-hour, we watched the bird hunt over the open field and perch in various areas surrounding the field. This observation represents a first record for Kandiyohi and surrounding areas for the Great Gray Owl and was one of the most southerly records in the state for the species during the winter of 1991-92. **Robert B. Janssen, 10521 S. Cedar Lake Rd., #212, Minnetonka, MN 55305.**

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL IN WASHINGTON COUNTY - On 31 March 1992, I was looking over about 200 gulls in the gravel pits on Gray Cloud Island, Washington County, trying to find a Thayer's Gull that Bill Litkey had seen there the day before. As I scanned the flock, I kept seeing this bird that was the size of a Herring Gull, but with a slimmer body, proportionately longer and darker wings, a smaller black bill, a smudge of dark near the eye, and a distinct tail-band and white rump. I suspected it might be an immature Lesser Black-



backed Gull. When I returned home and made a sketch of what I had seen, I consulted many books and realized it was a tough identification. I returned the next day with Bob Janssen to get another opinion. We had no trouble relocating the bird, even though it was lying down asleep. When it finally awoke and stood up, we watched it long enough to note the characteristics explained above. In addition, we saw it swimming with Herring Gulls and were able to note its slimmer shape, its buoyancy, with its rear end riding higher in the water, and the long wing-tips which crossed well beyond the tail. All this was compared with the "jizz" of the nearby Herring Gulls. **Raymond Glassel, 8219 Wentworth Ave. S., Bloomington, MN 55420.**

PURPOSE OF THE MOU

The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union is an organization of both professionals and amateurs interested in birds. We foster the study of birds; we aim to create and increase public interest in birds; and to promote the preservation of birdlife and its natural habitat.

We carry out these aims: through the publishing of a magazine, ***The Loon;*** sponsoring and encouraging the preservation of natural areas; conducting field trips; and holding seminars where research reports, unusual observations and conservation discussions are presented. We are supported by dues from individual members and affiliated clubs and by special gifts. The MOU officers wish to point out to those interested in bird conservation that any or all phases of the MOU program could be expanded significantly with gifts, memorials or bequests willed to the organization.

SUGGESTIONS TO AUTHORS

The editors of *The Loon* invite you to submit articles, shorter "Notes of interest," and color or black/white photos. Photos should be preferably 5x7 in size. Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced and on one side of sheet with generous margins. Notes of Interest should be generally less than two typewritten pages double-spaced. Whenever possible, include a copy of your manuscript on a 3½ inch MS/DOS or Macintosh disk saved in text (ASCII) file format. If reprints are desired, the author should so specify indicating the number required. A price quotation on reprints will be sent upon receipt of information.

Club information and announcements of general interest should be sent to the Newsletter editor. See inside front cover. Bird-sighting reports for "The Season" should be sent promptly at the end of February, May, July and November to Peder Svingen. See inside front cover.

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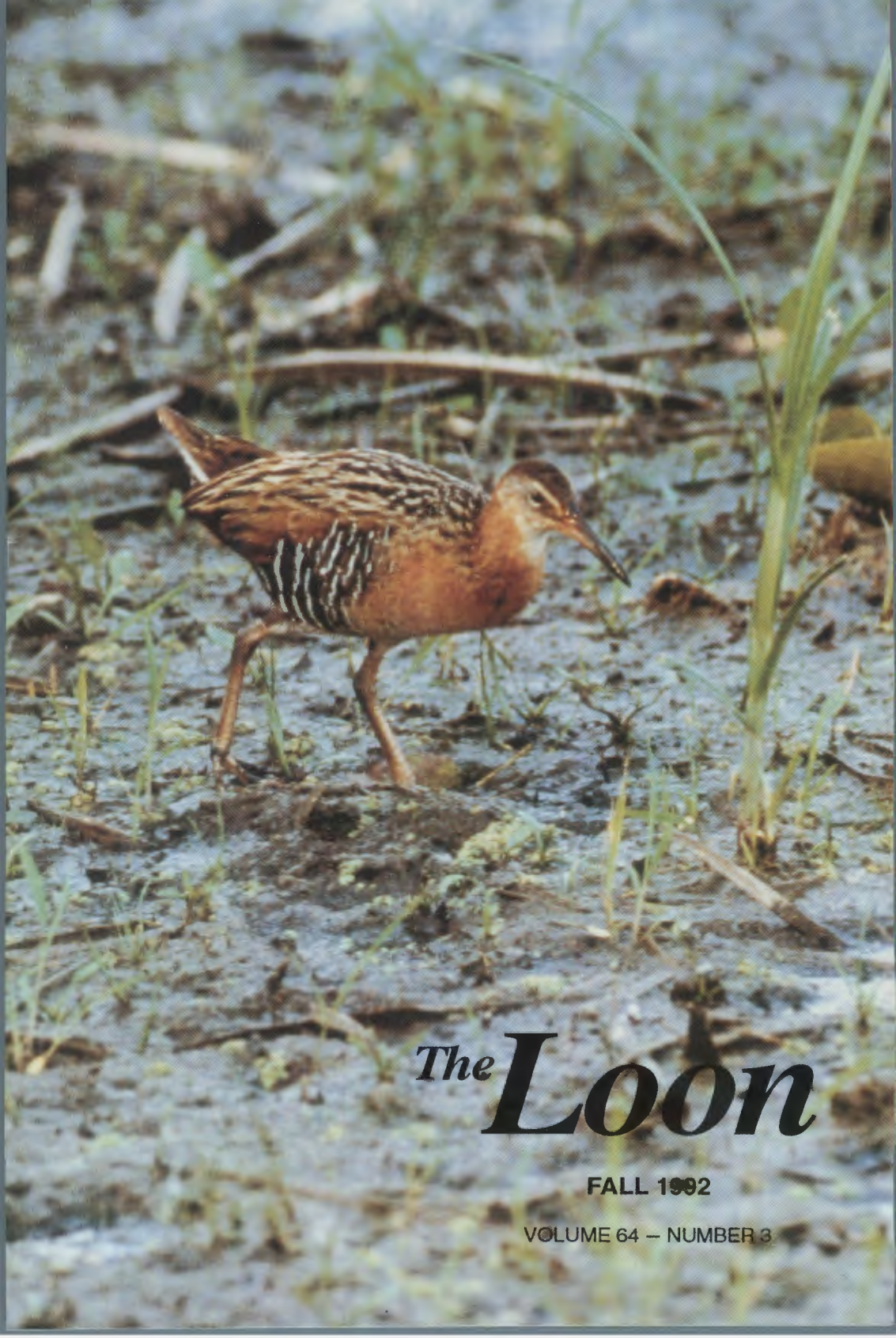

The Loon

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EDITOR OF *The Loon*: Robert B. Janssen, 10521 S. Cedar Lake Road, #212, Minnetonka, MN 55305 (phone 612-546-4220). The Editor invites articles, short notes and illustrations about Minnesota birds. See back cover for details.

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"The Season" section of ***The Loon*** publishes reports of bird sightings throughout Minnesota. We particularly invite reports from parts of the state that have been neglected or covered lightly in past reports. To become a contributor to "The Season," request the report forms from the Editor of "The Season," Peder Svingen, 151 Bedford St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414.

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Timing of Songbird Migration in the St. Croix River Valley, Minnesota, 1984 – 1986

K. Winker, D. W. Warner, and A. R. Weisbrod

"It must be kept constantly in mind...that no complete and scientific study of the..[speed at which birds migrate]...is as yet possible, and that the present records are given merely because they are the best now obtainable, and because they may furnish some material for the use of the future student." Cooke (1888:13).

Introduction

Despite more than a century of interest, we still know little about the nonbreeding movements of nearctic songbird migrants. Timing of passage in particular has received little more than casual attention since the early days of nearctic migrant research. The early work of Wells W. Cooke (1888) synthesized a large effort to map the passage of migrants northward through the Mississippi Valley in spring. Cooke presented data showing the rates of movement for many species for the first time but, as he recognized, the timing of arrival of the first individuals of a species or the dates of the last departures really tell us little about the timing of individual movements.

Ideally, the timing of migratory movement should be investigated by following specific individuals throughout their migratory journeys. At present, this is not feasible for small passerines (but see Cochran et al. 1967). Secondarily, timing of seasonal movements could be investigated by monitoring all individuals passing particular geographic points and then comparing timing among these points. Although this is difficult to implement, one approach to this goal is to place mist nets in the same position season after season to sample migrants as they pass. Mist nets, in effect, are observers with a relatively constant bias, especially when set in the same places and kept open for as much time as possible. The strength of this approach lies in capturing large numbers of passing individuals by maximizing sample effort. One can have most confidence in the results generated by the most commonly captured species.

Why is timing so important? Consider these questions: How fast are birds traveling? Where are the demands for resources being met? Long distance migrants are generally unable to carry enough fat to migrate the complete distance between breeding and wintering grounds, and are therefore dependent upon "refueling" stops along the way (see Tucker 1974, Bairlein 1987, Winker et al. 1992a). Species showing very rapid movement are likely to place a high demand on the resources at daily stopover sites (most of these birds migrate at night). Little is known about "refueling" strategies, timing, or route selection in migrant songbirds. Understanding these things will help in conservation efforts as well as in addressing an array of evolutionary questions.

Techniques

Mist nets and the aluminum band are two important tools for studying migration, despite having proven largely ineffective in addressing long distance questions because band recoveries in nongame species are so rare. Capture allows birds to be measured, sexed (when possible), aged, weighed, and examined for fat level and molt status. These data allow us to address various demographic and physiological questions regarding birds in passage. What are the age and sex ratios of the transient populations? Are they feeding? Are they molting? How much fat are they carrying? Capture also allows an estimate of abundance when captures are standardized for sample effort. In studies using mist nets, the sample unit is the "net hour": one 12m x 2.6m net open for one hour. Banding enables the investigator to determine which birds are new to an area and which are remaining. By disregarding recaptures, we can look more certainly at the movements of transients—birds that will neither breed nor winter in an area.

Species	SPRING S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	Range	Median	AUTUMN A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	Range	Median
American Woodcock	2	1	1	0	2	2	121-147	-	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	1	233-264	-
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	0	1	12	23	32	18	128-148	140	0	34	79	83	70	54	48	17	2	227-265	241
Olive-sided Flycatcher	0	0	0	1	1	0	135-140	-	0	3	8	20	15	6	0	0	0	229-251	241
Eastern Wood-Pewee	0	0	0	2	2	4	137-147	142-3	0	5	15	24	18	12	8	6	9	229-264	243
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	0	0	0	1	3	24	138-148	146	0	12	45	79	56	22	5	10	7	229-264	240
"Traill's" Flycatcher	0	2	3	9	7	20	125-149	143	0	20	26	74	44	27	5	6	5	229-264	240
Least Flycatcher	4	26	141	97	36	22	118-148	133	0	11	18	29	41	21	13	10	10	229-265	242
Eastern Phoebe	2	1	0	1	0	0	119-138	-	0	0	2	2	6	2	3	0	6	232-266	247
*Great Crested Flycatcher	0	2	0	4	3	5	127-147	140	0	10	12	2	3	4	1	1	1	227-262	235-6
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	1	2	3	0	0	119-138	-	0	0	3	1	6	7	3	8	7	235-265	-
Brown Creeper	3	2	3	1	0	0	122-134	-	0	0	0	0	1	8	1	4	13	242-267	-
*House Wren	15	18	17	24	17	4	118-148	-	2	26	18	11	21	11	6	4	6	226-266	238
Winter Wren	3	0	0	0	0	0	118-123	-	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	7	23	248-267	-
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	121	31	62	26	1	0	118-139	-	0	0	0	0	1	1	14	34	47	243-267	-
Golden-crowned Kinglet	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	9	255-265	-
*Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1	1	2	3	2	1	121-147	134-5	0	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	229-244	-
Veery	2	2	1	23	11	6	120-146	136	0	6	11	12	11	13	4	5	5	229-267	243
Gray-cheeked Thrush	0	23	71	23	27	5	124-148	132	0	0	0	4	2	6	12	12	12	238-265	256-7
Swainson's Thrush	1	53	71	59	111	51	119-148	138	0	9	19	49	52	138	140	176	80	229-267	254
Hermit Thrush	6	1	3	2	0	0	119-137	-	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	232-264	-
*Wood Thrush	0	1	13	7	15	7	125-147	139	0	1	1	10	2	2	7	5	3	231-266	251
*American Robin	9	2	8	4	7	8	118-147	134	0	7	10	8	7	7	2	2	10	229-266	243
*Gray Catbird	0	7	22	84	82	38	125-148	-	7	39	69	62	60	68	35	29	32	222-267	-
Cedar Waxwing	49	149	59	5	6	23	119-148	-	0	18	26	47	19	12	5	2	7	229-266	-
Solitary Vireo	2	2	47	44	3	1	122-145	133	0	0	1	7	15	19	31	31	33	233-267	255
Yellow-throated Vireo	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	2	2	1	5	1	0	1	1	230-266	242

Table 1. Distribution of migrants through time in the lower St. Croix River Valley (Valley Creek, Washington Co., Minnesota), displayed as total individuals captured during particular time periods (summed, 1984–1986). Recaptures are excluded. All migrant species with more than ten individuals captured are included. Spring (Julian Days 118–149) is divided into six periods, and autumn (Julian Days 222–268) into nine. The first and last periods of each season have six days, the rest have five. In non-leap years, 15 May = Day 135 (second day in S4), and 1 Sep = Day 244 (third day in A5). An asterisk indicates a species with a resident breeding population. Median dates are given only when the data suggest that the majority of the migratory period was sampled. Common names follow AOU (1983).

Species	SPRING S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	Range	Median	AUTUMN A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	Range	Median
Warbling Vireo	0	1	2	1	5	1	127-146	140	0	0	1	2	5	1	1	1	1	235-263	244
Philadelphia Vireo	0	1	3	4	2	1	127-145	135	0	1	3	24	19	52	26	27	14	230-266	249
*Red-eyed Vireo	0	0	2	8	11	16	130-148	142	0	10	40	230	199	144	52	35	35	229-267	243
Blue-winged Warbler	0	1	8	7	2	6	127-146	134-5	0	2	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	229-250	236
Golden-winged Warbler	0	1	4	6	1	0	127-140	135	0	0	7	9	12	11	1	4	2	234-263	244
Tennessee Warbler	0	7	10	15	11	1	127-144	134	1	56	120	238	233	73	14	21	21	226-266	240
Orange-crowned Warbler	11	14	12	11	0	0	118-135	-	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	7	251-266	-
Nashville Warbler	3	38	29	66	6	1	120-147	134	0	28	63	118	120	108	71	84	123	229-267	248
Northern Parula	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	1	3	6	3	0	0	239-253	249
Yellow Warbler	0	1	5	13	5	2	124-147	135	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	230-244	-
Chestnut-sided Warbler	0	0	6	11	11	3	130-147	138	0	16	52	99	112	53	23	15	16	229-267	242
Magnolia Warbler	0	1	27	43	21	13	126-149	137	0	25	56	199	238	149	42	32	37	229-267	242
Cape May Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	2	11	25	7	1	0	0	1	229-262	238
Black-throated Blue Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	1	4	0	3	3	0	240-261	252
Myrtle Warbler*	25	14	35	10	0	0	118-135	-	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	8	229-266	-
Black-throated Green Warbler	0	0	3	4	0	0	132-137	135	0	0	6	18	25	20	6	4	3	233-264	244
Blackburnian Warbler	0	0	0	2	0	1	135-145	-	0	1	10	14	25	3	2	0	2	229-265	242
Palm Warbler	5	5	5	0	0	0	118-133	-	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	250-263	-
Bay-breasted Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	7	24	28	44	44	11	7	19	229-266	245
Blackpoll Warbler	0	0	0	8	0	0	135-138	136-7	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	0	249-261	255
Black-and-white Warbler	0	3	42	34	3	2	125-146	133	1	2	29	63	100	39	18	13	10	226-265	242
American Redstart	0	3	16	24	31	20	125-148	139-40	0	19	65	134	167	91	18	13	20	229-267	242
*Ovenbird	4	35	27	64	27	8	120-148	135	0	31	54	111	117	141	69	72	63	229-267	247
Northern Waterthrush	45	116	98	121	42	9	118-148	132	0	15	16	34	58	53	22	22	13	227-265	245
Connecticut Warbler	0	0	0	0	2	2	141-146	-	0	1	6	13	9	9	3	3	3	230-263	243
Mourning Warbler	0	0	0	15	38	35	135-148	142-3	0	4	14	41	27	19	2	7	9	230-264	242
*Common Yellowthroat	1	13	28	68	87	48	121-148	139	11	20	37	37	34	34	22	12	10	222-267	242
Wilson's Warbler	0	2	28	50	24	15	126-147	138	0	10	9	45	45	20	19	5	5	229-264	243
Canada Warbler	0	1	1	9	16	18	124-148	145	0	15	46	58	54	27	12	6	4	229-266	240
*Scarlet Tanager	0	0	0	4	8	5	134-148	140	0	0	1	4	7	2	2	2	3	233-267	245
*Rose-breasted Grosbeak	0	9	15	29	19	11	125-148	135	1	8	42	40	61	49	26	17	17	226-267	244
*Indigo Bunting	0	4	2	13	29	24	125-149	142	2	4	17	6	2	4	2	2	4	226-265	236
*Chipping Sparrow	1	6	6	9	6	4	121-149	-	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	-	-

(Table continued on page 137)

Aside from Cooke's early efforts (1888, 1915), very little has been done to illuminate broad geographic patterns of passerine migration in both time and space. This lapse in activity is probably due to a lack of adequate data: there are very few detailed summaries of bird movements at specific sites. This paper was developed in part to address this problem, and it is hoped that others studying migration will find it useful to compare their data with ours.

Study Site and Methods

This study was conducted near Afton, Minnesota (Washington Co.), in the St. Croix River Valley, approximately 2 km from the river itself (44°55'N 92°48'W) for three years (1984–1986). Mist nets were placed in five wooded habitat types and kept open as much as possible during the peaks of spring and autumn migration. Birds were captured, examined, banded, and released. Netting periods for all years combined spanned Julian days 118–149 (spring) and days 222–268 (autumn). In non-leap years, these days correspond to 28 April – 29 May and 10 August – 25 September. These periods encompass the bulk of woodland associated migration in this area (see Winker et al. 1992b). Although many songbird species show considerable movements at this latitude outside of these periods, these species tend to be short-distance (nearctic-nearctic), rather than long distance (nearctic-neotropic) migrants. The study accumulated 71,398 net hours in spring and 65,799 net hours in autumn.

Work on the timing of migration was part of a larger project in which we examined habitat preferences, individual performance, species-level differences in daily mass gain, and regional differences in migration routes (see Winker et al. 1991, 1992a,b). Here we report on the temporal distributions of most of the migrants captured.

Considering Temporal Distributions

When examining individuals out on the edges of a distribution—the few first or last birds passing—there is a danger in attributing characters to a species (in this case timing) based on only a few individuals. When the bulk of the passage of common species has been sampled, however, missing a few individuals on either end of the temporal distributions will have little effect on the placement of the median individual because the overall distribution of a large number of sample points is hardly affected by the addition or subtraction of a few. The median date of passage is therefore more robust than the first or last date of passage, although its "firmness" in time is related to the number of individuals it describes. Stone (1889) recognized this, and suggested that graphing daily censuses of birds would illuminate arrival times and peaks. Cooke (1908) later dealt with the vagaries of arrival dates by averaging them. His methods still relied, however, on the appearance of one or a few individuals.

Preston 1966 considered passage to be largely normal in distribution ("normal" in this case is a mathematical expression; see Preston 1966:376). From normal curves one can calculate "peaks" (in this case essentially population means) and standard deviations. While Preston's (1966) technique may be useful for some purposes, it does have problems. First, there is a considerable degree of annual variation in the distributions of migrant individuals. Preston (1966:376) noted this problem in passing; it was strikingly evident when examined statistically in migrant flycatchers in south Texas (Winker and Rappole 1992). Secondly, even several years of data often reveal strikingly non-normal distributions (skewed, bimodal, and multimodal), for which discerning a "peak" is often not possible. For example, see Fig. 1, which shows a skewed, bimodal distribution in Gauss' Nightjar, a fictitious migrant in which males precede females in spring. Real examples can be found in the spring and autumn passage of Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) at our study site in Minnesota (Winker et al. 1992a).

When distributions are not normal, the median can be a more representative statistic of the movements of the entire sampled population than the mean (see Sokal and Rohlf 1981:44). Fig. 2 demonstrates why peaks, first, and last days of passage are not as useful for describing migratory movements as median dates. Median dates denote when half of all captured individuals have occurred. Note that Gauss' Nightjars (Fig. 1) and the equally fictitious Dark Barstanders (Fig. 2) have different temporal distributions, but the same first and last dates of occurrence, the same number of captured

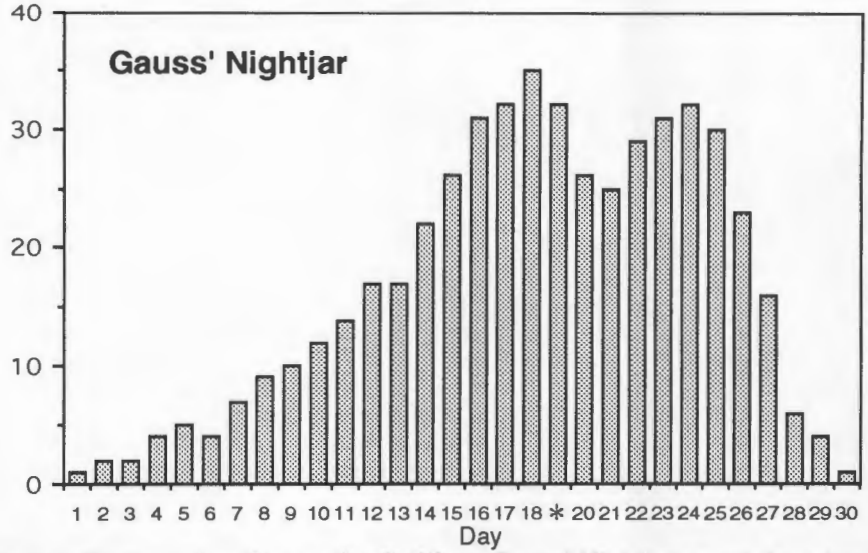

Figure 1. Spring migration in the fictitious Gauss' Nightjar, a species where males precede females. The species shows no "peak", but is rather skewed and bimodal in temporal distribution. Its timing of passage is best described by its median date of passage, which occurs on day 19 (*).

individuals, and the same median dates. Because of the advantages of median dates over other descriptors of temporal distribution, we have chosen to represent migratory movements as median dates of passage. In cases where samples are small we can have less confidence in the temporal rigidity of this figure as a species-level characteristic at this site. For those species or seasons where we do not feel that the migratory period was adequately sampled we do not give a median date.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 gives the temporal distribution of migrants at our study site for those species with more than ten individuals captured. Another aspect of movement important in the development of a geographic summary of migration can be derived from this table. The mean "density" of migrants occurring at this site during the sample periods can be estimated by dividing the total number of birds by sample effort (given above). Each season is the sum of three years' work (this has a damping effect on between-year variability).

The median dates of passage of all birds captured at our site occurred on Julian days 134 and 243, which correspond to 14 May and 31 August in non-leap years (see Winker et al. 1992b). Once again, although migratory movements occur outside of our sample periods, these individuals tend to be short distance (largely nearctic-nearctic) migrants. These dates, then, are roughly the median dates of nearctic-neotropic woodland passerine migration at this site. Four species showed a difference between spring and autumn median dates of 95 days or less: Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Canada Warbler, and Indigo Bunting. Eighteen species showed a difference of 105 days or less. This means that approximately 53% of the migrants whose movements were adequately sampled by our study spend less than 30% of their annual life cycle on their breeding grounds. For these species, about 70% of each year is spent on neotropical wintering grounds and in migration. It is no wonder, then, that conservation and research efforts are beginning to focus on these parts of the migrant's annual cycle.

Acknowledgments

The James Ford Bell Foundation funded our study. We received additional support from the David Winton Bell Foundation, the Nongame Program of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Mr. Goodrich

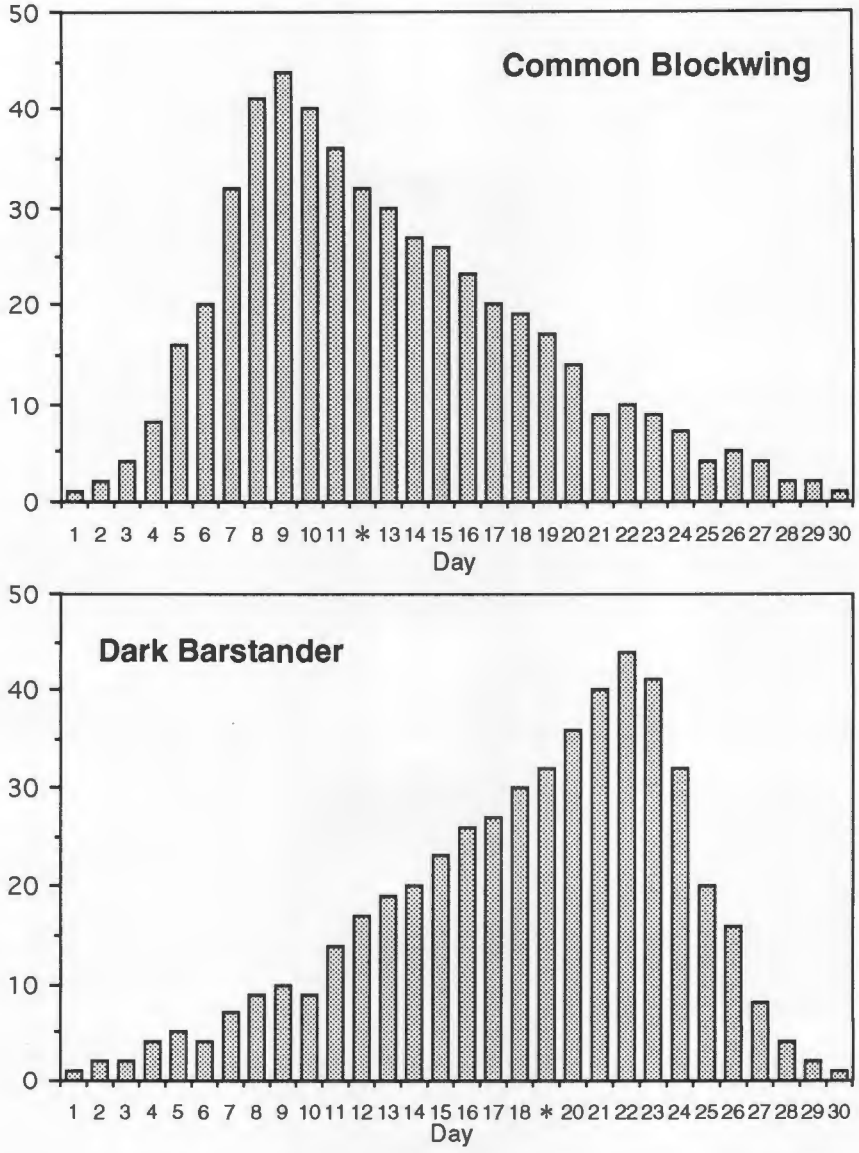

Figure 2. The passage of two hypothetical migrant species, the Common Blockwing and Dark Barstander. They have the same date of first arrival and last departure (days 1 & 30), and the same number of individuals are encountered or captured (505). They have different passage timing, however. Their respective peaks occur 13 days apart (days 9 vs. 22), but peaks can be altered by the movements of relatively few individuals, and are thus not reliable species-level characteristics. Median dates (days 12 & 19, marked with " * ") occur seven days apart, and in these cases are the best descriptors of movement at the species level. We conclude from these samples that Common Blockwings pass through this site one week earlier than both Dark Barstanders and Gauss' Nightjars (Figure 1).

Species	SPRING S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	Range	Median	AUTUMN A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	Range	Median
*Field Sparrow	1	2	0	1	1	0	121-141	-	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	6	235-267	-
*Song Sparrow	14	14	6	5	8	11	118-148	-	5	21	26	27	12	15	7	6	3	222-264	-
Lincoln's Sparrow	2	7	15	5	2	1	122-146	131-2	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	1	9	250-267	-
Swamp Sparrow	41	43	40	11	2	1	118-145	-	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	1	3	250-265	-
White-throated Sparrow	80	66	58	16	4	0	118-141	-	0	1	0	3	0	31	29	30	61	229-267	-
*Brown-headed Cowbird	0	1	5	2	2	2	127-148	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-
*Baltimore Oriole[b]	0	0	1	9	6	6	133-149	140-1	0	2	8	8	2	0	0	0	0	230-244	237
Purple Finch	1	2	0	0	0	0	122-128	-	0	2	7	52	40	53	19	19	11	231-264	-
*Pine Siskin	5	1	0	13	1	1	119-145	-	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	3	0	249-259	-

*Denotes migrants with resident breeding populations.
[a]*Dendroica c. coronata*; [b]*Icterus g. galbula*.

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Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee

Kim R. Eckert

There was a meeting of the Committee on 9 August 1992, and the agenda included discussions and decisions on four species: all Mute Swan records, a photographic record of a Ruff, a published Barn Owl record, and a previously accepted Williamson's Sapsucker record.

—Most Mute Swan records will no longer require a vote on "wildness": all birds "in the vicinity of" Lake Superior are considered Acceptable and "wild", the assumption being they most likely came from the established populations in northwestern Wisconsin; all birds in a "park-like" location are considered Unacceptable escapes or releases; and birds in all other areas, assuming nothing in their appearance or behavior suggests captive origin, are considered Acceptable (c) records on the Regular list. A wildness vote in now needed only with ambiguous situations for which a member requests a vote. (For an explanation of wildness votes and the (c) annotation, see ***The Loon*** 58:42–43.)

—A record of a Ruff (9 May 1992, near New Germany, Carver Co.) documented only by photographs was discussed and found to be Acceptable (vote 6–1).

—The Committee decided to reaffirm its Unacceptable vote on a 1985 Barn Owl record from St. Louis Co. (see ***The Loon*** 59:72–76). After the original vote, additional information about the record was received, including a tape recording of the owls' vocalizations and some opinions from owl researchers on this tape. Although these researchers did not agree on the identity of these vocalizations, the record was published. Since publication of a record implies that it was Accepted, this record was discussed, and it was agreed that our original Unacceptable vote was correct and should remain since there was still uncertainty about the taped vocalizations.

—A previously Acceptable and published Williamson's Sapsucker (***The Loon*** 53:232–234) was discussed and found to be Unacceptable (vote 0–7). The most convincing part of the documentation had been the published sketch; however, this sketch was apparently made from memory two months after the sighting and after field guides had been consulted, so that it might not have been accurate. And all the features included in the written details—two white head stripes, white wing stripe, red under the bill, black on the breast, yellow on the belly—are also Yellow-bellied Sapsucker field marks.

The following records were voted on January – July 1992 and found Acceptable:

—Long-billed Curlew, 3 October 1991, Glencoe, McLeod Co. (vote 7–0; ***The Loon*** 64:61–63).

—Carolina Wren, 25 December 1991, Coon Rapids, Anoka Co. (vote 7–0; ***The Loon*** 64:123).

—Black-legged Kittiwake, 3 November 1991, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 6–1; ***The Loon*** 64:123).

—Great Black-backed Gull, 3–28 February 1992, Knife River, Lake Co. (vote 7–0; ***The Loon*** 64:119–120).

—Iceland Gull, 29 December 1991 – 8 February 1992, Knife River, Lake Co. (vote 7–0; ***The Loon*** 64:119–120.

—Lesser Black-backed Gull, 31 March – 1 April 1992, Grey Cloud Island, Washington Co. (vote 7–0; ***The Loon*** 64:127).

—California Gull, 7 April 1992, L. Breckenridge, Wilkin Co. (vote 7–0; ***The Loon*** 64:125).

—Red-throated Loon, 29 April 1992, Rice Lake S. P., Steele Co. (vote 7–0; ***The Loon*** 64:165).

—Black-legged Kittiwake, 18 November 1991, Temperance River S. P., Cook Co. (vote 7–0; ***The Loon*** 64:124).

—Iceland Gull, 9 November 1991, Black Dog L., Dakota Co. (vote 7–0; ***The Loon*** 64:123–124).

—Ruff, 29 April 1992, near Rosen, Lac Qui Parle Co. (vote 7–0; ***The Loon*** 64:169).

—Iceland Gull, 30 April 1992, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 7–0).

—Ross' Goose, 12 May 1992, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 7–0).

—Worm-eating Warbler, 11 May 1992,

Minneapolis, Hennepin Co. (vote 7–0).

—Ross' Gull, 16 April 1992, Goose L., Pennington Co. (vote 7–0; ***The Loon*** 64:156–158).

—Worm-eating Warbler, 12 May 1992, Faribault, Rice Co. (vote 7–0).

—Worm-eating Warbler, 9 May 1992, Rice Lake S. P., Steele Co. (vote 6–1).

—Fork-tailed Flycatcher, 3–14 May 1992, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (vote 7–0; ***The Loon*** 64:118–119).

—Ruff, 16 May 1992, Hegleland Twp., Polk Co. (vote 7–0; ***The Loon*** 64:167–169).

—Green-tailed Towhee, 12–15 May 1992, Lowry Nature Center, Carver Co. (vote 7–0; ***The Loon*** 64:156,157).

—Tricolored Heron, 25 May 1992, Winona, Winona Co. (vote 5–2; ***The Loon*** 64:171–172).

—Gyrfalcon, 11 January 1992, near Eyota, Olmsted Co. (vote 6–1).

—Ruff, 16 May 1992, near New Germany, Carver Co. (vote 6–1; ***The Loon*** 64:173–174).

—King Rail, 7–14 June 1992, Bloomington, Hennepin Co. (vote 7–0; ***The Loon*** 64:170).

—Sharp-tailed Grouse, 12 April 1992, Skree Twp., Clay Co. (vote 5–2).

—Prairie Warbler, 6 June 1992, Blue Mounds S. P., Rock Co. (vote 7–0; ***The Loon*** 64:174–175).

The following records were voted on January – June 1992 and found Unacceptable (note that several of these records had previously been voted on, accepted and/or published):

—Chestnut-collared Longspur, 21 March 1976, near Cascade R., Cook Co. (vote 1–6); previously voted on, accepted and published (***The Loon*** 48:79). The identification was based on the bird's "chestnut collar... black cheek stripes, a black breast... a beige throat"; the tail pattern was not seen. However, this description also fits Lapland Longspur, especially a male molting into breeding plumage.

—Kentucky Warbler, 4 June 1978, Itasca S. P., Hubbard Co. (vote 2–5); previously voted on, accepted and published (***The Loon*** 50:169). Although the observers' composite description is consistent with this species, viewing conditions were difficult and none of the observers was apparently able to independently identify the bird. The identification was also largely based on the song, but the description on this song does not fit Kentucky Warbler.

—Brant, 21 April 1984, near Grand Marais, Cook Co. (vote 1–6); previously voted on, accepted and published (***The Loon*** 56:194). The flock of five birds was seen only in flight and at a distance, and the only description was of "blackish" heads and necks, "light grayish" belly and "dark brown" wings. Such a description could also fit immature blue-morph Snow Geese, scaup, or Ring-necked Ducks.

—Sharp-tailed Grouse, 12 May 1979, near Barnesville, Clay Co. (vote 1–6); previously voted on and accepted. The description was not written until more than a year after the observation, light conditions were unclear, and field guides were consulted in order to make the identification, which seemed to be based entirely on "very light outer tail feathers". These uncertainties now suggest this record should be considered doubtful.

—Swainson's Hawk, 26 March 1989, near Sauk Centre, Todd Co. (vote 0–7). The written description included in the published documentation (***The Loon*** 61:119–121) only mentions a "dark brown breast patch", hardly enough to identify a Swainson's Hawk, and one of the sketches shows the folded wing tips stopping far short of the end of the tail, contrary to what a Swainson's should look like. While another sketch certainly suggests Swainson's Hawk, it is unknown when it was made and how so much detail could have been seen since viewing conditions were unfavorable due to fog and since no binoculars were used.

—Whooping Crane, 12 October 1985, near Bejou, Mahnomen Co. (vote 2–5); previously voted on, accepted and published (***The Loon*** 58:45). The entire description of the three birds flying in the distance mentioned "very long neck and outstretched legs... black wing tips (primaries) in contrast to the white wings and body." However, as several observers learned while looking for a Whooping Crane in Polk Co. in October 1990, in certain light conditions Sandhill Cranes in flight can often appear whitish with black wing tips.

—Worm-eating Warbler, 24 May 1985, Rochester, Olmsted Co. (vote 2–5); previously voted on, accepted and published (***The Loon*** 57:142–143). The entire description

only mentioned "an unstreaked breast, black eyestripe and light eye-brow", and that the bird had a song "similar to a Chipping Sparrow". While it is possible the bird was correctly identified, the documentation submitted still does not preclude Chipping Sparrow.

—Red-throated Loon, 20 October 1990, Good Harbor Bay, Cook Co. (vote 3–4); previously voted on, accepted and published (***The Loon*** 62:228). The observer based the identification on the lack of "white near the rear flank", an upturned bill, and the eye "visible within the white boundaries of the side of the face." However, Pacific Loons also lack flank patches and often hold their bills up at an angle, and, while the face pattern would seem to fit Red-throated rather than Pacific Loon, there was no indication of the distance and light conditions involved or how well the face pattern was actually seen.

—American Dipper, early 1970's, Big Falls, Koochiching Co. (vote 3–4). The appearance, behavior and habitat were all consistent with this species, but the documentation was not submitted until about ten years after the observation, suggesting that the description was based entirely on memory. To accept such an unusual species, more timely documentation, preferably based on notes taken at the time of observation, would be needed.

—Osprey, 27 December 1975, Rochester, Olmsted Co. (vote 1–6); previously voted on and accepted. The identification was apparently based on the "mostly white wings with black or very dark patches at the front or wrist". However, the underside of an Osprey's wings are darker and more heavily marked than described, and the possibility of Rough-legged Hawk is not precluded.

—Osprey, 25 February 1984, Black Dog L., Dakota Co. (vote 3–4); previously voted on and accepted. The entire description only mentioned "white" underparts and "dark brown and white striped head and the crooked narrow wings." Since the under wing pattern was not noted, sub-adult Bald Eagle, which can have white on the underparts, a brown and white head and which often glides on "crooked" wings, is not precluded.

—Broad-winged Hawk, 16 March 1980, Becker, Sherburne Co. (vote 1–6); previously voted on and accepted. The identification was based on its "wide tail banding" and "buteo features in flight". However, the description of the tail is not specific enough to preclude other species; in addition, it does not preclude accipiters which often appear buteo-like when circling in flight.

—Broad-winged Hawk, 16 March 1980, Anoka, Anoka Co. (vote 1–6); previously voted on and accepted. The entire description was: "Circling hawk with characteristic buteo shape, with wide black and white tail bands on its tail." As with the previous record, such a description of the shape of the tail is not specific enough to eliminate other species.

—Broad-winged Hawk, 10 March 1985, Rochester, Olmsted Co. (vote 2–5); previously voted on and accepted. After the original vote, a sketch of the tail belatedly became available, and it shows a pattern of narrow black bands and much wider white bands, which is inconsistent with Broad-winged Hawk.

—Gyrfalcon, 18 December 1977, Eden Prairie, Hennepin Co. (vote 1–6); previously voted on and accepted. The entire description was: "very large bird... light underparts and darker on top of head and near eye... long pointed wings, yellow legs, long tail." Such a description does not preclude Northern Goshawk, which often appears pointed-winged in flight, or Peregrine Falcon.

—Fieldfare, 12 April 1988, Whyte Road, Lake Co. (vote 0–10; all 10 members vote on potential first state records). The observer had only a brief view and was only able to describe a robin-sized bird with a "pale butterscotch" breast with "something of a necklace across this" and with "a stripe or perhaps a spectacle" at the eye. It was felt that such a description is insufficient to accept such an unusual species.

—Painted Bunting, 17 May 1992, Faribault, Rice Co. (vote 0–7). The entire description was: "It had a bright red breast, and eye ring, the head was blue." This brief description is also insufficient to document such an unusual species.

—Red-throated Loon, 30 May 1992, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 3–4). The description of this small loon clearly shows a bill shape perfectly consistent with Red-throated Loon; however, the description and sketch also suggest the bird had a partial "chinstrap" and a dark line along the side of the neck separating the gray hindneck from the white foreneck, which are features of the Pacific Loon. It was therefore felt this bird is best considered an unidentified small loon.

8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.

First winter Iceland Gull, 16 January 1992, Knife River, Lake Co. Photo by Peder Svingen.

The Winter Season
(1 December 1991 to 29 February 1992)
Karl Bardon

After the snowiest November on record, a particularly long winter was expected, but instead this season was one of the warmest ever, and very little additional snowfall was received. December began cold in the state with the Twin Cities recording a record low temperature for the date (-11°) on the 4th, but the following week was warmer, with temperatures as much as 5–10° above normal all across the state. After freezing rain across much of the state on the 12th, the weather turned cold and windy, just in time for many of the CBC's (lowest temperature on a CBC was -20° at Bemidji). The rest of the month was above average, with temperatures as much as 10–20°+ above normal. Although Christmas Day was sunny in the Twin Cities, a record setting 14 sunless days (350 hours) followed as fog and thick clouds blanketed most of the state and temperatures hung in the 30s. This unseasonably warm weather continued until mid January when a period of below zero readings set in, with a low of -14° in the Twin Cities on the 15th, and -29° at International Falls. These were the lowest temperatures all season. Despite this cold spell, the average temperature in January in the Twin Cities was 21.9°, 10.7° above normal. During early February, temperatures were again as much as 10–20° above normal, and as high as the mid 50s in southwestern Minnesota. Although the second week in February was more "normal" with lows in the 0s in the south and as much as -29° at International Falls in the north, by the third week temperatures were once again 10° or more above normal. Weekly highs throughout the state and throughout most of the winter were generally in the 30s and 40s.

A total of 140 species were reported this season, similar to the 138 and 141 recorded the past two years, but less than the 144 and 146 reported 3 and 5 years ago. No doubt the early winter weather accounted for the absence of many birds, including such normally late lingering waterbirds as Common Loon and Northern Shoveler. Also missed were the thousands of Common Mergansers and Tundra Swans which are often still present at the beginning of the period in the lower Mississippi River Valley. Conversely, this weather probably accounts for the record number of White-throated Sparrows in the state in December, since the early snows caught many birds off guard. Other unusual winter species lingering into December included Chipping Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Hermit Thrush, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Brewer's Blackbirds and Common Grackles were both reported overwintering unusually far north.

The 1991 record fall for rarities in Minnesota continued with that first state record Anna's Hummingbird lingering until December 1st in Grand Marais. The highlight of the season came in December on the Mississippi River in St. Paul where one, and then (remarkably) two, Ivory Gulls were found, attracting interested birders from all

over the state. The many birders in this area were also treated to an adult Great-blacked Gull, two Thayer's Gulls, an Oldsquaw, and a concentration of nearly 3,000 Common Goldeneyes. Of the large numbers of gulls of six species wintering in Superior, Wisconsin, Minnesota managed to record the first-winter Iceland and Great Black-backed Gulls later in the period. Fergus Falls once again turned up a rare winter find with a wintering Harlequin Duck.

After the Ivory Gulls disappeared, birding in the south was notably slow, with many observers reporting a general lack of birds, especially at feeders, and several observers even stated that this was their poorest winter ever for birds. Many normally common species were reported in record or near record low numbers, including American Tree Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, American Robins, Cedar Waxwings, and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Some have suggested that the early snows forced most of these birds farther south.

But observers traveling into northern Minnesota were treated to this winter's second highlight, the simultaneous invasion of Great Gray, Snowy, and Northern Hawk Owls. This unprecedented invasion was especially noteworthy since all three species appeared in record numbers during the same season, and since Great Gray Owls were seen in record numbers for the second year in a row. Most observers who traveled into the northeastern and northcentral regions were treated to multiple sightings of all three species. In past invasions, other avian predators have invaded at the same time, but very few reports of Boreal Owls were received, and only average numbers of Barred Owls were reported. A record number of Gyrfalcon reports were received, including one overwintering at Duluth for the first time in seven years. Also noteworthy were the record number of stray Golden and wintering Bald Eagles, both unusually far north of their normal winter ranges. Rough-legged Hawks and Northern Shrikes were also widespread in above average numbers all across the state.

Most winter finches that occurred this season were confined to the north. Only here were Pine and Evening Grosbeaks seen in any numbers, and the redpoll invasion was also mostly confined to the north. A record number of Hoary Redpolls were reported in the north, while only two south reports were received. Other winter finches were scarce statewide, with virtually no crossbill reports, and near record low numbers of Pine Siskins and American Goldfinches, even in the south. The only winter finches of note were the large number of House Finches wintering in some localities.

Early spring migration was noted for many species during the warm weather in late February. Red-winged Blackbirds, Killdeer, Eastern Bluebirds, Herring Gulls, thousands of Lapland Longspurs, and many of species of waterfowl including a flock of Snow Geese (over Coon Rapids on the 29th), were all recorded moving north at this time.

This report was prepared from the reports of 65 seasonal contributors, 46 CBC's, and a few other individuals. Although this report would not be possible without the many observers that took the time to fill out seasonal reports, no matter how brief, it is unfortunate that some of Minnesota's most active birders did not send in reports, and that many records of unusual species did not provide sufficient details to be included in this report. In the interest of making this report even more complete, and learning more about our winter avifauna, contributors are encouraged to be more specific on their report forms and include information on number of individuals, early or late migrant status, and overwintering status if known. Local observers are in a much better position to judge a species' status in their area than this compiler. The many reports of individual birds on CBCs and not in seasonal reports suggest inadequate coverage from many areas. Although most of the counties in the far north were at least partially covered this season, virtually no reports were received from the entire band of counties on either side of the boundary between the north and south regions, and most of the central and west central regions continue to be inadequately covered. Many common species were recorded in far fewer counties than normal, and some of this winter's invaders (such as Northern Shrike and Rough-legged Hawk) were probably more widespread than the records indicate. Despite these "complaints," all contributors can be proud of the following report of a remarkable season.

Pied-billed Grebe
Two late migrants Wabasha 12/8 KB and Dakota 12/13 DZ.

Horned Grebe
Only report on the Grand Marais CBC.

Red-necked Grebe
Only report St Louis **1/6** KE.

American White Pelican
Two on Albert Lea CBC.

Double-crested Cormorant
Two or three overwintered at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. KB, mob.

Great Blue Heron
Record number of reports. Overwintered in Hennepin, Winona and Ramsey (the **12** on the St. Paul CBC all overwintered near Pigs Eye Lake, KB). December and early January reports from seven additional counties south, including Dakota where 9 were seen on 12–7 KB. Two north reports on Fergus Falls CBC and Becker 12/9 BBe. CBC total of **25** individuals.

Tundra Swan
Reported in Winona 1/4 ASM & 2/5 CS (1 imm.), and in Wabasha 2/5 & 29 DWM (3). Four also reported on **Fergus Falls CBC**, and two on the St. Paul NE CBC. None of these reports have details; observers are reminded that swans in winter are just as likely or more likely Trumpeters.

[TRUMPETER SWAN]
Reported from Dakota KB, PS (2 overwintered), Goodhue 1/26 PS (1), and Sherburne/Wright DO (20–30 overwintered at Monticello).

Snow Goose
Overwintered in Dakota mob (1 blue morph and 1 imm white morph) and Olmsted BSE, HH, KB (1), plus a report of a returning flock of 60+ migrants in Anoka **2/29** SC (second earliest spring arrival date). Also one on **Grand Marais CBC, 12/14**.

Canada Goose
Reported from a total of 23 counties (41 l.y.) with only two north reports: Otter Tail and **Beltrami** (overwintered, DJ). Many late February reports of returning migrants in the south. CBC total of 86,818 (110,376 l.y.; second year of significant decrease), of which 60,000 were on Lac Qui Parle CBC, 19,000 on Rochester CBC, and 5,050 on Fergus Falls CBC.

Wood Duck
Reported on Bemidji, Excelsior, Faribault, Fergus Falls, LaCrosse, Minneapolis, St. Paul and St. Paul NE CBC's. Overwintered in Anoka 1/8 onward KB, PS, Otter Tail SDM, MO, **Clay** MO; plus single reports from Houston 12/2, 6 EMF, Nicollet 1/11 LF, Mower 2/11 RRK, and Olmsted 2/22 BSE.

Green-winged Teal
Reported Dakota 2/8 TT and one on Bloomington CBC (same bird?).

American Black Duck
Reported from 12 counties (13 counties l.y. and 17 two years ago). Overwintered in eight southeast and east central region counties mostly along the Mississippi River, plus Cook in the northeast. December reports on Cloquet CBC, and Otter Tail 12/12 & 12/14 (CBC). Early migrants in Rice 2/16, St Louis 2/25. CBC total of 131 (63 l.y. and 77 two years ago).

Mallard
Reported from 30 counties (38 l.y.) statewide as far north and west as Beltrami (to early January, DJ) and Pennington 2/9 KSS. Statewide CBC total of 15,846 (14,643 l.y.). Large numbers of up to 12,000 (1/3 KB) wintering in St. Paul near Pigs Eye Lake.

Northern Pintail
Early migrants Martin 2/6–2/24 Martin BBo, Dakota 2/19 KB, and Faribault 2/29 RJ.

Gadwall
Eighteen on Excelsior CBC and five on St. Paul NE CBC. Overwintered in Scott as usual. Also reported in Dakota 1/4 TT (13), and up to 23 in February influx, KB; possible early migrants in Winona 2/16 & 29 CK, and Mower 2/11 RRK.

American Wigeon
Reported on Mankato CBC and Nicollet 12/18 & 1/11 LF. Early migrants in Faribault 2/29 RJ.

Canvasback
Only report Dakota 1/23 onward KB, mob.

Redhead
Reported Otter Tail 12/1 SDM, Martin 2/7–2/24 BBo, Olmsted 1/31 KB, and Mower 2/11 RRK.

Ring-necked Duck
Overwintered in Olmsted. Early migrant in Wright/Hennepin 2/24 KB.

Lesser Scaup
Late lingering migrants reported Otter Tail 12/1 & 1/5 SDM, Winona 12/9 CS and Ramsey 12/12–1/1 KB, DZ Early migrants in Rice 2/17 OR, Wabasha 2/19 DM, Kandiyohi 2/20 CJ, and Le Sueur 2/29 CK.

Harlequin Duck
Overwintered in **Otter Tail** 12/23–2/28 SDM, MO, mob.

Oldsquaw
Reported as usual on Grand Marais CBC (97). Also overwintered in **Ramsey** 12/11–2/27 KB, mob (***The Loon*** 64:122/23), and reported Dakota 1/31 KB (same bird).

Common Goldeneye
Overwintered in the three counties along the North Shore including in the interior at Birch Lake Dam, Lake Co., in ten counties along the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers as far north as Sherburne/Wright, plus Olmsted (Silver Lake), and Otter Tail (Fergus Falls). Additional reports from five south counties as early migrants in February, and three additional counties on CBC's (Lac Qui Parle, Itasca, and Carlton; do these represent overwintering birds or late migrants?). The 1,350 reported on the St. Paul CBC increased to an amazing record **2,700–3,000** birds in late December KB, DZ. CBC total 1,665.

Bufflehead
Late lingering migrants reported Grand Marais and Duluth CBC's, Lake 12/2 DPV, and Ramsey 12/27–1/1 KB, mob. Early migrants Cook 2/25 KMH and Le Sueur 2/29 CK.

Hooded Merganser
Overwintered in Twin Cities region in Ramsey, Dakota and Anoka, in Goodhue, and in **Otter Tail**, plus reports from **St. Louis** (Virginia) 1/27 & 2/12 SW/MS, St. Paul NE CBC, Olmsted 2/3 JB, and Wright 2/24 KB.

Common Merganser
Reported from 19 counties (23 l.y.). Overwintered in seven counties along the Mississippi River as far north as Sherburne/Wright, in two counties along the North Shore, plus December migrants in Otter Tail 12/4 SDM and Becker 12/9 BBe. Reported from eight additional south counties during February influx. CBC total only 241 with birds gone at Lake Pepin area by beginning of period due to early freeze-up.

Red-breasted Merganser
Reported Goodhue 1/1 AB (injured), Lake 1/11 & 27 DPV, and Duluth CBC.

Ruddy Duck
Only report Otter Tail 12/8 SDM.

Bald Eagle
Reported from a total of 42 counties (38 l.y.) in all regions of the state. Many reported wintering unusually far north including Cook, Lake, St. Louis (11 on the Duluth CBC), Koochiching, Beltrami, Aitkin, Otter Tail, and Kanabec, plus January dates in Marshall (1/4) and Becker (1/16, 22). Overwintered in 11 other counties in the south along the Mississippi River and two counties in the west on the Minnesota River (Lac Qui Parle and Chippewa, no date, overwintering?). Many isolated reports from an additional 18 counties, mostly in December and February, representing early and late migrants. Many reports in mid-February from as far north as Cass and Pennington. CBC total of 101 (136 l.y.). Peak of **76** in Wabasha 12/29 OJ.

Northern Harrier
Reported on Marshall CBC, Cottonwood 1/16 EL, Rock 2/6 ND, Sherburne 2/7 SNWR, and **Clay** 2/16 KB.

Sharp-shinned Hawk
Reported from 17 counties (17 l.y.) in the southeast, south central, east central, central, and the following north reports: Duluth CBC, Beltrami 12/10 DJ, and Aitkin 12/15 AB. CBC total of 19.

Immature Sharp-shinned Hawk, 27 December 1991, Byron, Olmsted Co. Photo by Bob Ekblad.

Cooper's Hawk
Nine reports (eight l.y.) from Hennepin mob, 12/12 Houston EMF, 12/16 Washington WL, 1/3 Olmsted BSE, 1/4 Winona CS, plus the Excelsior, Faribault, Rochester, and Willmar CBC's.

Northern Goshawk
Reported from only 21 counties (23 l.y.) indicating that the invasion has yet to come. Only south reports were Anoka (no date), Chisago 1/1 RJ, Dakota 2/3 KB and St. Paul NE CBC in the east central, and Olmsted 12/15, 1/1, & 2/27 BSE, JB in the southeast. Statewide CBC total of only 31, 15 of which were on the Duluth CBC (a record high).

Red-shouldered Hawk
Overwintered in Winona mob, plus reports in **Becker 12/1** BBe (a very late date for the north), Anoka 12/29 DJ, Blue Earth 1/6 BBo, and Washington 2/1 KB. Two on the Excelsior CBC and three on St. Paul NE CBC.

Red-tailed Hawk
Reported from 19 counties in the south central, southeast, east central and central regions, plus Aitkin, Lake 1/4 DPV, and the Crosby and Duluth CBC's in the north. Only reports in western regions were Lac Qui Parle and Lamberton CBC's, and Rock 2/27. Statewide CBC total of 290, up from 3 years of decline (212 l.y.).

Rough-legged Hawk
Reported from 34 counties (33 l.y.) in all regions, but absent from the far western tier of counties except Lac Qui Parle CBC. This species was especially numerous in Pine, Aitkin and nearby counties in December, with as many as **39** reported Aitkin 12/28 WN, but these large numbers were gone in January. Statewide CBC total of 93 (60 l.y.), 26 of which were on Sax Zim CBC.

Golden Eagle, 8 February 1992, Queen Twp., Polk Co. Photo by Peder Svingen.

Golden Eagle
Eleven reports (four l.y.). Overwintered as usual in Winona mob. Many more than usual additional reports, especially in the north where it is casual. December reports on Duluth (first CBC record), Roseau (2, marginal details), Lac Qui Parle (no details), and Tamarac NWR (no details) CBC's, plus Le Sueur 12/22 PS (adult), Lake 12/22 DPV (adult), and Koochiching 12/22 KB (imm.) (all on 12/22!). One mid-winter report Aitkin 1/19 KB (adult), plus two February reports Polk 2/8 PS (overwintering?) and Hubbard 2/15 RJ (early migrant?).

Gyrfalcon, 25 December 1991, Duluth. Photo by Dudley Edmondson.

American Kestrel
Reported from 38 counties (44 l.y.; **fifth** straight year of decline), plus individuals overwintering as far north as Todd, Morrison, Aitkin, Otter Tail, and Clay. Also reported Hubbard 12/8, Crookston CBC, Polk 2/2, Pennington 2/2, and Becker 2/19. CBC total 94 individuals (96 l.y.).

Merlin
Twelve reports of probably 13 individuals (19 individuals from 15 counties l.y.), with birds again overwintering in northwest in Polk KSS, plus reports from Roseau 12/28 (CBC) & 1/4 KB, SSt. Additional reports on St. Paul NE and New Ulm CBC's, Kandiyohi 12/1 CJ, St Louis 12/13 fide KE, Ramsey/Dakota 12/21 SC, RH, TT, Hennepin 1/1 PS & 1/4 PB, Ramsey 1/2 KB, and Clay 2/22 MO.

Prairie Falcon
Three reports in Twin Cities: **Hennepin** 12/8 AB, **Hennepin** 12/14 EL (***The Loon*** 64:69), and **Dakota** 12/21 RH (***The Loon*** 64:70). Also reported from Nobles 12/26 ND and Renville 12/8 HK (***The Loon*** 64:69).

Peregrine Falcon
Probably overwintered in the Twin Cities area with reports from Hennepin 1/7 TT & 2/3 KB, Ramsey 12/8, 14, &17 mob, and Dakota 12/17 RJ & 12/19 DC. Also reported from the Fairmont and Rochester CBC's.

Gyrfalcon
Nine individuals reported, two more than last year's record of seven individuals. An imm. gray morph female overwintered in Duluth beginning 12/22 DE for first time since 1984–85, and a white morph was seen on Duluth CBC. Also reported on Hastings (Dakota Co.) and Lac Qui Parle (Chippewa Co) CBC's, plus Olmsted 1/11 RF, Anoka 12/25 KB, Roseau 1/5 KB, SSt, Carleton 2/17 SSt, and Kittson late January KL.

Gray Partridge
Reported as scarce from only 16 counties (36 l.y.) in the south and west as far north as Roseau. Statewide CBC total 136 (619 l.y.).

Ring-necked Pheasant
Reported from 33 counties (41 l.y.) as far north as St. Louis in the northeast and Clay and Becker in the northwest. CBC total 536 (1,332 l.y.).

Spruce Grouse
Reported from Lake mob with 10–20 along Co. Road 2 several miles south of Hwy 1. Also reported from Cook 12/23 KMH (6), St Louis (found dead near Babbitt fide KE), Beltrami 1/4 KB, SSt (1), Koochiching 12/22 KB (5), and on Beltrami Island CBC (3).

Greater Prairie-Chicken
Reported from Wilkin 2/15 KB (60), mob, Norman 1/1 (Syre) & 2/2 (Gary) MO, Clay 2/22 (Bluestem Prairie) MO & 2/23 (Felton Prairie) LCF, and Crookston CBC (42).

Sharp-tailed Grouse
Reported from Kittson, Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Beltrami, Koochiching, Clearwater, St. Louis, Aitkin, and **Kanabec** 1/20 TT. Statewide CBC total 43.

Ruffed Grouse
Reported from 29 counties (20 l.y.) in all regions except southwest, mostly in the north and in the southeast along the Mississippi River south to Houston. Statewide CBC total of 149 (152 l.y.).

Wild Turkey
Reported from Houston, Fillmore, Olmsted and the Wabasha and Winona CBC's. Many others on additional CBC's outside the southeast region were escapes or recent releases.

American Coot
Reported from Kandiyohi 12/1–14 CJ, and the Albert Lea, Fergus Falls, St. Paul NE, and Willmar CBC's.

Killdeer
Returning migrant reported in Hennepin 2/29 fide RJ.

Common Snipe
Overwintered in Hennepin at the Bass Ponds mob, up to three seen, TT. Also reported on the Crosby, Excelsior, and St. Paul NE CBC's.

Ring-billed Gull
Reported Ramsey/Dakota 12/21 RH, and 147 on St. Paul CBC (but number seems high since very few known to be present).

Herring Gull
CBC counts of 1 on Bloomington, 1 on Rochester, 34 on St Paul, 37 on Duluth and 220 on Grand Marais. Overwintered in Cook at Grand Marais, and in Lake at Knife River (but most individuals apparently wintering in Superior, WI). Seen in Ramsey until 1/3 KB, and in Olmsted from 12/14–1/18 BSE & 2/11 KB (injured). Returning migrants in Hennepin **2/18** KB (earliest migrant on record) and in Dakota, Goodhue, and Wabasha on 2/29 mob.

Thayer's Gull
Reported at Knife River, Lake Co. 2/3–3/1 (second winter) fide KE, and in St. Louis 1/17 DPV (same bird); plus Dakota 12/5 KB and Ramsey 12/7–11 KB.

Glaucous Gull, 10 December 1991, Winona, Winona Co. Photo by Howard Munson.

Glaucous Gull
Overwintered in Lake at Knife River (but most individuals, up to 30–40, wintered in Superior, WI fide KE), and in Cook at Grand Marais (3 on CBC). Only south report in **Winona** 12/10–14 CS et al. (seen on CBC).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL
Adult present on the Mississippi River *near* Pigs Eye Lake in Ramsey, Dakota and Washington Counties from 12/7–1/1 mob, flying

Great Black-backed Gull, 23 December 1991, Holman Field, St. Paul, Ramsey Co. Photo by Bruce Fall.

daily to roost at Black Dog Lake in Dakota County KB, and thereafter present only at Black Dog through at least 2/27 mob (***The Loon*** 64:12/15). One first-winter individual reported from Knife River, Lake Co. 2/3 & 15, Duluth 2/28, and at Stony Point, St. Louis Co. 2/29 KE (***The Loon*** 64:119–20).

ICELAND GULL
One first winter bird seen at Knife River in Lake Co. 12/29, 1/26, and 2/3–8 KE, PS et al. (***The Loon*** 64:119–20), and same bird in St. Louis 1/17 DPV.

IVORY GULL
One present from 12/15–23 on the Mississippi River near Pigs Eye Lake in St. Paul, Ramsey/Dakota/Washington Counties DS, mob, and then by a **second** individual (apparently arriving independently) 12/23 BF, mob (***The Loon*** 64: 3–5).

Rock Dove
Reported from 48 counties (74 l.y.) throughout the state. Statewide CBC total of 11,790.

Mourning Dove
Reported from 22 counties (34 l.y.) in the south as far west as Cottonwood, plus Becker 12/13 BBe, Carlton 2/22 RJ, St. Louis, and **Koochiching** GM (overwintered). Statewide CBC total of 238 (936 l.y.).

Eastern Screech-Owl
Reported from 17 counties (20 l.y.) with only north reports on Long Prairie CBC and 1/18 **Pennington** KSS. Statewide CBC total of 21 (27 l.y.).

Great Horned Owl
Reported from 33 counties (41 l.y.) throughout the state with a statewide CBC total of 74 (115 l.y.).

Snowy Owl
Record invasion year. Total of **105** individu-

Snowy Owl, 8 February 1992, Peirz, Morrison Co. Photo by Peder Svingen.

als (fide KE) reported from at least 17 counties. Most reports in northeast and northcentral, plus Roseau, Polk, Wilkin and Morrison in the north. Only south reports Cottonwood, Dakota, and Rice.

Northern Hawk Owl
Record invasion year. Total of **142** individuals (fide KE) reported from at least 12 counties as far west as Roseau and Marshall, and as far south as Pine (near Grasston).

Barred Owl
Reported from 22 counties (21 l.y.) in eastern and central regions, plus Detroit Lakes CBC, Tamarac NWR CBC, and Pennington 1/14 KSS as the only reports in the west. CBC total 29 (35 l.y.).

Great Gray Owl
Record invasion year. Total of **196** individuals (fide KE) reported from 12 counties. Seen as far west as Roseau and as far south as Aitkin, plus **Kandiyohi** SE, RJ (***The Loon*** 64:126–27), and **Hennepin** in late December fide RJ.

Short-eared Owl
Only report on St. Paul NE CBC.

Long-eared Owl
Only reports Clay 12/29 LCF, St. Louis 12/29 fide KE (found dead).

Boreal Owl
Only reports Roseau (Hwy 310 bog)1/5 KB, SSt, Itasca 2/16 SW/MS (found dead), and Cook 2/25–26 SOL. No invasion discovered despite record numbers of other northern owls.

Northern Saw-whet Owl
Reported overwintering in Winona mob (3 on the Winona CBC) and Otter Tail MO (2), plus Murray 1/3 ND (found dead), Cook 12/16 KMH, Lake 2/29 SW/MS, and on Minneapolis CBC.

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD
First state record originally found 11/11 (***The Loon*** 63:225–231) lingered until 12/1 Cook KMH.

Belted Kingfisher
More widely reported on CBC's with a total of 23 individuals (22 l.y.). Reported from 14 counties south (15 l.y.) mostly in December, plus January reports from Goodhue 1/28 KB, Hennepin mob, Sherburne 1/16 SNWR, and Winona 1/4 PS. Overwintered in Houston. Report from Mower 2/25 probably an early migrant.

Red-headed Woodpecker
Reported from 17 counties (7 l.y.), but more widely reported on CBC's with a total of 43 individuals (8 l.y.). Overwintered in Winona, Rock, Olmsted, and Houston in the south, plus north reports from Aitkin 1/6 WN, Clay 1/1 LCF, and Crosby and Detroit Lakes CBC's.

Red-bellied Woodpecker
Reported from 31 counties (40 l.y.), with north reports from Long Prairie and Detroit Lakes CBC's, Otter Tail, Aitkin, and Marshall 2/24 fide KSS. Statewide CBC total of 382 (424 l.y.).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Reported from Jackson **late Dec**, fide GH.

Downy Woodpecker
Reported from 51 counties (57 l.y.) throughout the state with a CBC total of 1,638 (1,834 l.y.).

Hairy Woodpecker
Reported from 50 counties (51 l.y.) throughout the state with a CBC total of 967 (984 l.y.).

Three-toed Woodpecker
Only reports at Lace Lake, Cook Co. 12/13 & 2/16 KMH, and on Beltrami Island CBC.

Black-backed Woodpecker
Reported as scarce but seen in eight counties (five l.y.). Reported throughout period in Cook KMH, during February in Lake mob, plus Aurora (3) and Baudette CBC's, Koochiching 12/20 KB, Lake of the Woods 1/4 KB, SSt, Aitkin 1/19 & 1/29 KB, Marshall 2/2 MO, Beltrami 2/23 & 2/29 DJ, and St Louis 2/29 KB.

Northern Flicker
Reported from 22 counties (28 l.y.). Overwintered in Wabasha, Nicollet, Lyon, Cottonwood, Martin, and Kandiyohi in the

south, with reports from additional counties south in December and early January. Only north reports Otter Tail SDM (overwintered), Wilkin 1/12 MO, Clay 12/14 LCF, and Warren CBC. CBC total 22 (34 l.y.).

Pileated Woodpecker
Reported from 41 counties (48 l.y.) in all regions except the southwest. The report in Lac Qui Parle FE was unusual. Statewide CBC total 173 (223 l.y.).

Horned Lark
Reported from 45 counties (record 60 l.y.) with a statewide CBC total of 675 (1,973 l.y.). Only northeast region report was Cloquet CBC. Only overwintering reported was in southwest. Timing of arrival into south regions unknown, but many migrants in southwest on 1/16 KL, and by 2/2 and 2/3 many were noted as far north as Hennepin and Anoka. Possible early migrants were reported in Otter Tail **1/12** PS, and Becker 1/28 BBe, plus mid-to-late February dates as far north as Roseau and Lake of the Woods.

Gray Jay
Reported from 11 counties (9 l.y.) in the north including Carlton (Cloquet CBC) and Aitkin, and as far west as Becker 12/7 BBe, Polk 2–8 PS and Roseau. Statewide CBC total of 132 (107 l.y.).

Blue Jay
Reported from 51 counties (67 l.y.) statewide with a CBC total of 5,040 (3,053 l.y.).

Black-billed Magpie
Reported from 16 counties (11 l.y.) in the northwest, as far east as Koochiching and as far south as Wilkin, plus an apparently small but separate population in Aitkin , St. Louis, and **Carlton** KL in the northeast. CBC total 83 with 32 on the Warren CBC.

American Crow
Reported in 55 counties (72 l.y.) throughout the state with large numbers overwintering unusually far north into Cook, Lake, Koochiching, Itasca, Beltrami, Roseau (CBC), and Marshall (Warren CBC). CBC total 12,850 (13,088 l.y.).

Common Raven
Reported from 19 counties north (19 l.y.) including Pine (100 on 1/12 KB), Mille Lacs (1/18 KB), and Crow Wing (Crosby CBC), and as far west as Becker, Marshall and Kittson. South reports from Chisago 2/1 EL, and Sherburne NWR mob. Statewide CBC total of 1,281 (higher than previous years) including impressive numbers on Roseau (329) and Grand Marais (314) CBC's.

Black-capped Chickadee
Reported from 51 counties (62 l.y.) statewide with a CBC total of 9,674 (10,206 l.y.).

Boreal Chickadee
Very scarce with reports from only five counties (7 l.y.) including Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake, Cook, and Lake of the Woods. CBC total 15 (17 l.y.).

Tufted Titmouse
Reported from Winona, Olmsted, and Houston.

Red-breasted Nuthatch
Scarce again with reports from only 31 counties (32 l.y.) with a CBC total of 459 (232 l.y. and 1,087 two years ago). Most reports in the north and east. Only reports south and west of a line drawn from Otter Tail to Hennepin to Freeborn were Brown and Cottonwood.

White-breasted Nuthatch
Reported from 47 counties (56 l.y.) with a CBC total of 2,101 (2,657 l.y.).

Brown Creeper
Reported from 27 counties (25 l.y.) throughout the state with the following north reports: St. Louis (Duluth and Hibbing CBC's, and Sax Zim 2/22), Clay LCF (probably overwintered), Aitkin 1/21–27 SC, Otter Tail 12/14 (CBC), 1/13 MO & 2/9 SDM, and Roseau 1/6 AJ/MH. CBC total 81 (same as l. y.). **Nine** on the Lamberton CBC.

CAROLINA WREN
A wintering bird reported from Hennepin 1/6 PS, 2/29 SC, and Excelsior CBC. Another report from Coon Rapids, Anoka Co. 12/25 CW (***The Loon*** 64:123).

Golden-crowned Kinglet
Only eight reports (10 l.y.) including Brown JS, Anoka JH, and the Lac Qui Parle,

Varied Thrush, 14 December, 1991, Lino Lakes, Anoka Co. Photo by Bobbie Weihrauch.

Marshall, New Ulm, and St. Paul CBC's in the south, plus north reports from Duluth CBC, Otter Tail 2/23 SDM, and **Roseau** 1/11 PS (probably the farthest north this species has ever been recorded in winter). Statewide CBC total only 13 (104 l.y.).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Reported in Brown **12/21 & 30** BBo, and Lyon **12/11** HK.

Eastern Bluebird
Reported on Bloomington and Lac Qui Parle CBC's. Early migrants Washington 2/28 PC, Hennepin 2/29 SC, and Brown 2/29 JS.

Townsend's Solitaire
Reported from Carver (overwintered?) DM, mob, and Ramsey in early January RG, et. al.

Hermit Thrush
Reported in Hennepin **12/7** SC, plus two addtional reports in January fide RJ.

American Robin
Very scarce for second year in a row with only 25 reports (21 l.y.), 8 of which were from the north. Many counties represented by only a single date or on CBC. Early migrants in Pipestone 2/28 and Nobles 2/29. CBC total 81 (92 l.y.).

Varied Thrush
Reported from Otter Tail late November to 1/29 SDM et al., Carver 12/23 (killed by cat) fide DK, Wright 1/25 RJ, 2/5 SC, Cottonwood 1/18 through mid-March ED et al., and Anoka through December BW et al.

Gray Catbird
Reported on the **St. Paul NE CBC**.

Brown Thrasher
One reported on the **New Ulm CBC**, and at Afton, Washington Co. in early December fide RJ.

Bohemian Waxwing
Again very scarce with reports from only 14 counties north (14 l.y.), but 1,800 seen in Duluth on 1/25 KE. Only south reports on Fairmont CBC and Cottonwood 12/20 ED. CBC total 1,437 (867 l.y. and 4,947 the year before), 887 of which were on Duluth CBC.

Cedar Waxwing
Very scarce with only 19 counties reporting (30 l.y.), many by apparently only a single date or on CBC. Only overwintering birds were in southwest, plus Hennepin. More widely reported on CBC's with a total of only 348 (2,325 l.y.).

Northern Shrike
Invasion year. Reported from **56** counties (43 l.y.) in all regions, with an above average CBC total of 96 (80 l.y.).

European Starling
Reported from 48 counties (67 l.y.) statewide with a CBC total of 14,058.

Northern Cardinal
Reported from 37 counties (36 l.y.), 8 of which were north (6 l.y.), including the Long Prairie, Grand Forks, and Grand Rapids CBC's, plus Otter Tail mob, Becker 1/5 BE, Aitkin WN, St. Louis (Duluth CBC and in Ely fide SSc), and Lake 12/4 DPV. CBC total 2,194 (1,963 l.y.).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Lingering individual last seen Becker **12/3** BBe.

Rufous-sided Towhee
Overwintered in Cottonwood ED (female, western race) and Olmsted fide JB (no details, also reported on Rochester CBC). Also reported in Rice 1/15 OR & 2/15 FKS, and Jackson 1/1 fide GH (no details), and New Ulm (no details) and St. Paul NE CBC's (male, western race).

American Tree Sparrow
Very scarce. Reports from only 31 counties (44 l.y.). Only north reports were from Otter Tail, Clay, Polk, and Tamarac NWR and Long Prairie CBC's. No northeast or northcentral reports. Statewide CBC total only 368 individuals (5,032 l.y.).

Chipping Sparrow, 16 February 1992, Aitkin, Aitkin Co. Photo by Warren Nelson.

Chipping Sparrow
Reported in Aitkin **2/16–22** HL, et al., and in Ramsey at the Cunningham feeder until **early January**.

Fox Sparrow
Reported in Hennepin at the Bass Ponds 12/14–2/22 TT, and in Washington 12/5 PC. Also two each on New Ulm and Rochester CBC's.

Song Sparrow
Reported in Olmsted JB, and on the Austin, Faribault, Lamberton, La Crosse, St. Paul, and Lac Qui Parle CBC's for a total of 16 individuals.

White-throated Sparrow
Many at feeders after the snow storms in November. Overwintered in Hennepin (up to 7 at OJ's feeder 2/13), Washington WL, Olmsted BSE, JB, and in Houston EMF. All other reports were in December only. More widely reported on CBC's with reports from Austin, Excelsior, Fairmont, Owattonna, St. Paul, and Willmar CBC's in the south, and on the **Baudette**, **Grand Marais**, **Bemidji** (count week) and **Roseau** CBC's in the north. Grand CBC total of **48**, with an amazing **21** on Rochester CBC.

White-crowned Sparrow
Reported on Rochester and Marshall CBC'S, and in Olmsted 1/4 BSE (no details for any of these).

Harris' Sparrow
Only reports Martin 12/3–15 BBo and Rice 1/23 FKS.

Dark-eyed Junco
Reported from 46 counties (51 l.y.) throughout the state as far north as Cook, Koochiching and Roseau, but generally very scarce with a CBC total of only 2,369 (7,199 l.y.), and many of these apparently did not overwinter since they were reported only in December or on CBC's.

Lapland Longspur
Reported from 19 counties (record 21 l.y.) with reports north on Warren, Crookston, Detroit Lakes, and Fergus Falls CBC's plus Wilkin 1/12. February reports suggested movement into the state at this time (with the Horned Larks?); as many as 200 were in Nobles 2/1 RJ. Heavy migration noted in Pipestone and Murray 2/28 **(2,000)** ND, JP. CBC total 45 (666 l.y.)

Snow Bunting
Reported from 35 counties (44 l.y.) statewide with a CBC total of 5,111 (5,574 l.y.).

Eastern Meadowlark, 16 February 1992, Aitkin, Aitkin Co. Photo by Warren Nelson.

Most reports except in the northwest and perhaps northcentral represented by apparently only a few dates or on CBC (although no pattern is decipherable).

Red-winged Blackbird
Reported from 17 counties (21 l.y.) including reports north from Roseau 12/10, Crookston CBC, and Otter Tail 2/23, but only overwintered in Houston. Many reports of migrant flocks in late February, and two reports of flocks in early February, Kandiyohi 2/4 (15+) and Winona 2/3 (45), suggesting an even earlier movement. Statewide CBC total 99.

Eastern Meadowlark
One overwintered in Aitkin WN.

Meadowlark, sp.
Olmsted 1/18 BSE.

Rusty Blackbird
Reported from nine counties (16 l.y.) with overwintering records from Marshall KSS, Otter Tail SDM, and Clay MO, LCF. More widely reported on CBC's including Duluth, Crosby, Sherburne NWR, Faribault, and Rochester CBC's.

Brewer's Blackbird
One overwintered at Sax-Zim, **St. Louis Co.** fide MS. Also reported **Roseau** (details barely acceptable), **Crookston** (8!), and **Baudette** (count week, well documented) CBC's. Other reports were undocumented and unacceptable.

Common Grackle
More widely reported than usual on CBC's with a total of 99 individuals. Reported from 31 counties (40 l.y.) throughout the state as far north as St. Louis (2/3 and thereafter, KE), Cook (overwintered KMH, SOL), **Lake of the Woods** 12/14 PS (3 birds, Angle Inlet), Roseau 2/15 PS, and Pennington 2/16 KSS.

Brown-headed Cowbird
Reported in Ramsey (photographed) 2/2 PS, Le Sueur 1/5 AB and Dakota 1/4 TT. Reported without details on at least seven CBC's; the species is only casual in winter and all winter reports should be documented.

Pine Grosbeak
Reported from 16 counties north with a CBC total of 1,659 (577 l.y. and 2,936 the year before during invasion). No reports south but numbers high in north.

Purple Finch
Reported from 35 counties (35 l.y.) statewide with a CBC total of 275 (498 l.y.). More widely reported on CBC's, but many counties represented by apparently only a single date.

House Finch
Fewer reports than last year. Reported from only 19 counties (23 l.y.), but more individuals with 262 on CBC's (148 l.y.). High numbers of **67** on St. Paul NE and **62** on Fergus Falls CBC's, plus a peak of **39** in Rice 1/13 TB. Only reports north in Otter Tail and on Detroit Lakes CBC. Reports on CBC's and not in seasonal reports suggest not all observers are being careful to report this species.

Red Crossbill
Only reports from Itasca AB (no date), St. Louis 12/2 SW/MS & 2/29 KB, Lake of the Woods 1/4 KB, SSt, and Pine 1/12 KB. Also reported on Beltrami Island and Fergus Falls CBC's for a dismal total of 3 (34 l.y.). Only report south in Hennepin 12/8 DZ.

White-winged Crossbill
Only reports north from Duluth CBC, Aitkin 1/8 SC, 2/9 & 15 WN, Hubbard 2/16 KB, and Beltrami 2/29 SDM. Reported south on St. Paul NE and Cedar Creek CBC's. CBC total 51 (5 l.y.)

Common Redpoll
Invasion year, coinciding with this species' two year cycle. Reported from 44 counties (27 l.y. and 82 two years ago) throughout the state, but abundant only in the north where as many as **7,497** (a record?) were reported on the Baudette CBC feeding on unharvested sunflower seeds. Statewide CBC totaled 13,092 (545 l.y. and 10,795 two years ago.). Most reports south apparently only represented by a single date, some southeast counties reported no redpolls at all.

Hoary Redpoll
About 25 reports from 17 counties, a near record number. Aitkin 12/26 WN, 1/13 KE, 2/5 PS, & 2/8 WN, Marshall 12/4 AJ/MH, Becker 12/29 BBe, St. Louis 1/7 KE, Pennington 2/10 KSS, Roseau 2/14 PS, Carlton 2/22 BJ, Lake 2/23 DPV, SSc. Most reports of one or two individuals, but at least 10–15 in Kittson 2/16 SSt, and Koochiching 2/8 KB. CBC reports from Baudette, Bemidji, Crookston, Crosby, Detroit Lakes, Grand Marais, Hibbing, Roseau, Sax Zim, and Warren (8) for a total of 24 individuals. Only south reports in Washington and Anoka in January fide RJ. As usual, very few of these were well documented.

Pine Siskin
Reported from only 29 counties (39 l.y. and 62 two years ago) but in all regions. Many

KEY TO SEASONAL REPORTS

1. Species listed in upper case (**PACIFIC LOON**) indicate a Casual or Accidental occurrence in the state.

2. Dates listed in boldface (**10/9**) indicate an occurrence either earlier, later or within the earliest or latest dates on file.

3. Counties listed in boldface (**Aitkin**) indicate either a first county record or an unusual occurrence for that county. City of **Duluth** also boldface when applicable.

4. Counties listed in italics (*Aitkin*) indicate a first county breeding record.

5. [ ] – species for which there is reasonable doubt as to origin or wildness.

counties represented by only a single date or on CBC. Statewide CBC total only 652 (1,141 l.y. and 3,548 two years ago).

American Goldfinch
Reported from only 33 counties (46 l.y.) with many observers reporting scarcity. CBC total only 1,721 (3,518 l.y.). North reports from Crosby, Long Prairie, Fergus Falls, Detroit Lakes, Tamarac NWR, Crookston, Roseau, and Bemidji CBC's plus Pennington. None in northeast as usual.

Evening Grosbeak
Reported from only 12 counties north (17 l.y.) and a CBC total of 752 (1,102 l.y.). Only reports south on Cedar Creek and St. Paul NE CBC's.

House Sparrow
Reported from only 45 counties (73 l.y.) statewide, with a CBC total of 34,459.

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CS/KC	Carol Schmidt and Kim Claypool
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ED	Ed Duerksen
KE	Kim Eckert
FE	Fred Eckhardt
BSE	Bob and Steve Ekblad
SE	Steve Erickson
DE	Dave Evans
RF	Ray Faber
LCF	Lawrence and Carol Falk
BF	Bruce Fall
LF	Lawrence Filter
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A Green-tailed Towhee Visits Lowry Nature Center

Sue Buettgren and Kathy Heidel

"Quick! What's that bird?" A small, sparrow-like, olive-green bird with a rusty red cap, white throat, and gray breast was scratching in the seeds under a bird feeder at Lowry Nature Center in Carver Park Reserve at noon on 12 May 1992. Sue Buettgren, Gregg Thompson, and Kathy Heidel (Hennepin Parks naturalists) studied the unusual bird and rapidly called out field marks, drew a sketch, and tried to find its picture in a bird book. They had about five minutes to do all this before they headed back into the field with the school children who were visiting the Center that day. Because the bird was in the company of White-throated Sparrows, they suspected it was also a sparrow. Actually, it was a Green-tailed Towhee, a third state record for the species. By the time the bird left on 15 May over 200 people had come to view it.

Here are the notes done in those first few minutes: "Seen on ground feeding with White-throated Sparrows, hopping and scratching in sparrow behavior. Seemed to chase other sparrows away from its small feeding area. Flew or ran back into brushy undergrowth at woods' edge. Plain-bodied bird, olive on upper body (seen in low light) and light gray beneath, belly slightly lighter. No wing bars, no eye ring. Light legs. Head distinctive — very white throat with dark lines bordering it at the sides. Light gray line above eye and hint of dark line through the eye. Bright rusty cap. Olive tail a bit longer than White-throated Sparrows' tails."

Most of the time the towhee stayed with the White-throated Sparrows very close to the building. When not in view it was very hard to find. On 15 May the weather deteriorated — winds switched from the northwest to south. The towhee began moving around the Nature Center, appearing at different feeder areas. That night it rained and the next day both sparrows and towhee were gone. **Lowry Nature Center/Hennepin Parks, P.O. Box 270, Victoria, MN 55386**

Minnesota's Second Ross' Gull

Steven P. Stucker

On 16 April 1992, I was conducting fieldwork for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' County Biological Survey at Goose Lake Wildlife Management Area in western Pennington County. I had been at this site for about two hours when I noticed what appeared to be a tern flying over a patch of open water approximately 150 meters away. After viewing the bird with binoculars, I determined it was actually a gull. Due to its small size and tern-like flight, I thought at first it was a winter adult Bonaparte's Gull. However, the upperwings and mantle were a uniform light bluish-gray from wingtip to wingtip, without the Bonaparte's white wedges along the outer wings. I then checked the undersurface of the wings, which were a uniform light gray (about the same color as the mantle), rather than the black underwings of an adult Little Gull. Also, the wings were relatively long, narrow, and pointed, unlike the Little Gull's shorter, slightly rounded wings.

As the gull began quartering toward me, I noticed that the underparts were pinkish in color, contrasting strangely with the pale

Green Tailed Towhee, 13 May 1992, Lowry Nature Center, Victoria, Hennepin County. Photo by Anthony Hertzel.

bluish-gray mantle. However, the most unique features of the gull were its wing shape and pattern, as well as the distinctive, tern-like flight. These characteristics were somewhat reminiscent of an Ivory Gull, another long-winged arctic species. I realized that this was a Ross' Gull, and I scrutinized the tail as the bird flew past me at a distance of 50-60 meters. Instead of the classic wedge-shaped tail typical of Ross' Gull, the tail of this individual was rounded to slightly wedge-shaped. There was a white trailing edge on the wings, and although the exact width was not clearly seen, I carefully noted that the white trailing edge did not extend onto the outer primaries. The white head lacked discernible markings, although there was possibly a faint dark mark behind the eye. The bill was relatively short, but the exact color was not noted.

Based on plumage characteristics, this individual appears to have been a fairly typical winter adult Ross' Gull. Identification of Ross' Gull in most plumages is relatively straightforward, with uniformly pale gray upperwings and underwings; long, pointed wings; and white, wedge-shaped tail. However, considerable individual variation in field marks, as well as the appearance of certain characteristics in the field, can make identification more difficult. For example, the typical light gray underwings of Ross' Gull may appear dark due to shadow effects (Grant 1986). In fact, the first Ross' Gull seen in the contiguous United States, in Massachusetts (Miliotis and Buckley 1975), had abnormally dark underwings (Balch et al. 1979). The classic white, wedge-shaped tail is diagnostic when seen clearly, but this can be difficult to discern in the field (Harrison 1983, Grant 1986). Both the Massachusetts Ross' Gull and an individual seen in Illinois (Balch et al. 1979) had obvious wedge-shaped tails, but the bird seen in Minnesota at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge (Mattson 1984) had a ragged, notched tail, probably due to wear or irregular molt.

Further variability is expressed in facial plumage characteristics. The Ross' Gull's characteristic black neck-ring is usually absent in winter (Gabrielson and Lincoln 1959, Dementev et al. 1969, Farrand 1983, Na-

tional Geographic Society 1983). However, Grant (1986) states that the neck-ring may be partial or full, and that the eye-crescent and ear spot can be very faint or lacking. Harrison (1983) notes that a full or partial neck-ring is sometimes retained in the winter, and also mentions the variability of the eye-crescent and ear spot. The Massachusetts Ross' Gull lacked any trace of a neck-ring, but had dark smudges (possibly oil?) on the left rear side and back of the head (Miliotis and Buckley 1975); the Illinois bird had no apparent neck ring, with a dark ear spot (Balch et al. 1979); and the Agassiz bird had a very faint, gray neck-ring, and no ear spot (Mattson 1984). The bird seen at Goose Lake had no visible neck-ring or ear spot.

Ross' Gull in winter plumage is most likely to be confused with the Little Gull (Harrison 1983, Grant 1986). A classic Ross' Gull has pink underparts and a white wedge-shaped tail. However, Little Gull may have pink underparts in winter, and the tail may sometimes appear wedge-shaped. Also, as previously mentioned, Ross' Gull may have relatively dark underwings, similar to adult Little Gull. Conversely, the Little Gull's underwings may appear light in juvenile, first-winter, and second-winter birds (Grant 1986). However, Little Gulls in these plumages have blackish tips on the outer primaries, as well as a black leading edge on the outer primary (a characteristic also typical of Ross' Gull). Both species have a white trailing edge on the wing, but Ross' has a broad, white trailing edge that is restricted to the secondaries and inner primaries, while the Little Gull's white trailing edge is thinner and complete (i.e., on all secondaries and primaries, including the wingtips). Little Gull also has a prominent gray cap, while Ross' may have a gray hindneck (Grant 1986).

On the morning of 17 April, Karl Bardon and I checked sewage ponds in the towns of Warren, Stephen, and Karlstad, flooded fields, and other areas in the flight line (northwest) of Goose Lake, but we failed to relocate the bird. In winter, Ross' Gull is often associated with ice edges (Divoky 1976, Farrand 1983, Mattson 1984). The Goose Lake gull may not have remained in the area because the ice on most area wetlands and sewage ponds had gone out a day or two earlier.

It is very interesting to note that Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge, where the first Minnesota Ross' Gull was seen, is only 25 miles northeast of Goose Lake. It is also significant that the Agassiz bird was present from 4-14 April 1984 while the Goose Lake bird was seen on 16 April. Recurrence of this species might be expected at this time of year in northwestern Minnesota.

Acknowledgments

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MCBS Avian Ecologist, Minnesota DNR, Box 7, 500 Lafayette Rd., St. Paul, MN 55155

CRANE MUSIC: A NATURAL HISTORY OF AMERICAN CRANES, by Paul A. Johnsgard, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C., 1991, 136 pages, $19.95.

Described on the dust jacket as "lyrically written" and offered to "nature lovers, birdwatchers, and ornithologists," this is the latest work from Paul A. Johnsgard, a prolific writer on American birds. Although I can't speak for all nature lovers, I don't think birders or ornithologists will miss much by passing on this one. It is, at best, a curious collection of basic information, surrealistic narratives and dreamy sermons that suggest a real confusion about the intent and direction of the book. Included are several clumsy crane drawings that capture neither the essence nor the dignity of the birds.

What can I say? This is a strange book. It opens with a discussion on the history of cranes, including their impact on various civilizations, peoples and languages. In fact, the first thirty pages deal very little with North American cranes. The book finally gets around to its intended subject in chapter two, which concerns itself with the Sandhill Crane. Chapter three is devoted to the Whooping Crane, and the last chapter looks at the world's thirteen other crane species.

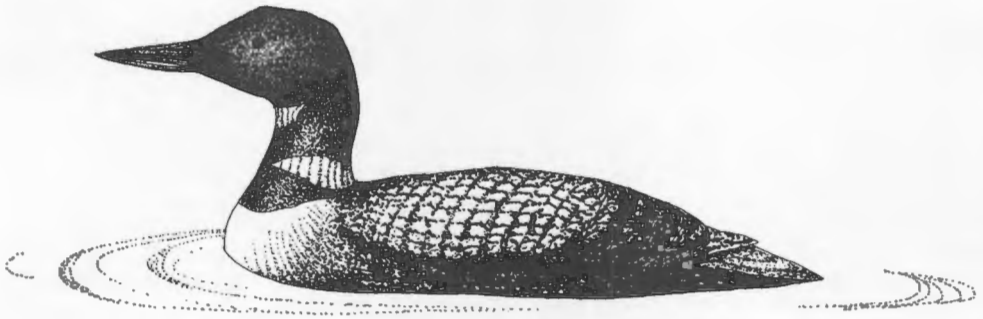
Throughout the book the text goes on well enough for a while, discussing a crane's history, status or behavior, then suddenly goes off on some wild tangent, completely out of character with whatever may have preceded. For example, early in the book, three pages of text on Sandhill Crane mating, pair-bonding and nesting habits are followed by an odd series of sentences beginning with: "The dawn drumroll of a displaying Ruffed Grouse softly penetrates the stillness of the dense evergreen woods, scarlet gilia flowers begin to blossom at the edges of woodlands, attracting bees and especially calliope hummingbirds, and in more open sunlit areas early summer flowers begin to give dashes of color to the grayish green sagebrush-dominated upland flats." (p. 49). This is then followed by more information on the crane's nesting habits. So out of context and disconnected are these interruptions that it occurred to me that several people might have been involved in the book's writing. Occasionally these peculiar ramblings tended toward the bizarre: "The cranes of Europe ignored the human repression and Black Death of the Middle Ages..." (p. 28). The writing style varies so much and the topic skips back and forth so randomly that the reader is left wondering if perhaps he missed a page somewhere.

Even Johnsgard's crane illustrations are

difficult to appreciate. They are flat, wooden and seem so casually drawn that my impression was that they might have been done on the back of an envelope during a quick coffee break. It appears more likely that their purpose is to pad the book's pages, since they certainly do not enhance them. It may well be that this is their only function as the actual length of this book, with its widely spaced text and generous margins, is already suspect. In addition to the drawings, the true length is further reduced by overly numerous section headings — sort of mini-titles accompanied by small drawings — with each one occupying another quarter of a page. Toss in a few maps, the oversized 3/4 page chapter titles and 3 completely blank pages, and the already thin 136 page book is reduced by another 28 pages.

As mentioned earlier, Johnsgard includes a 27 page chapter about rest of the crane species entitled "A Gathering of the World's Cranes." Considering he authored a book in 1983 titled "Cranes of the World," and this chapter is subtitled "The World's Cranes," I wonder if its inclusion is necessary or appropriate for a book on American cranes.

I cannot, for any reason, recommend this book. Although not completely without substance, it lacks continuity, forgets its audience, occasionally wanders painfully far from the subject at the oddest places and contains little real information that is not available from other sources. It is poorly written and seems badly edited. My first and last impression was that the author had not nearly enough material to justify the book and the reader will soon realize that his twenty dollars could have been better spent on a good field guide. **Anthony Hertzel, 2509 Talmage Ave. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414.**

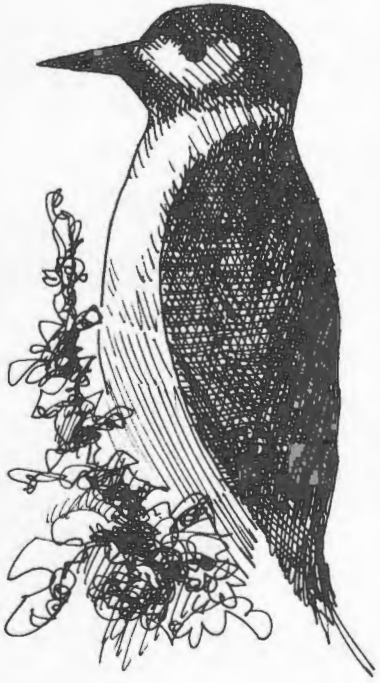


NOTES OF INTEREST

LEWIS' WOODPECKER IN GRAND MARAIS — While driving with Ann Vogel near Grand Marais on 10 May 1992, I spotted a large woodpecker near the top of a tall spruce tree. What initially caught my eye was the bright reddish color on the face and belly on an otherwise black bird. I pulled over and we had just about a minute to view the bird before it flew. Through binoculars, it was immediately obvious that this was a Lewis' Woodpecker. The brief observation time permitted only a quick check of the bird's field marks, but the following was noted. About the size and shape of a flicker (which were relatively common in the area) but smaller bill, not as clumsy looking; a large red patch on each cheek; a thin, well-defined, grayish collar that appeared to completely encircle the neck—fading in

back—and widening in front into a pale, gray throat patch and blended downward into a pinkish red belly—about the color of a Pine Grosbeak; otherwise entirely black. The red on the face looked much brighter than is shown in most field guides, but this was probably due to the time of day, being early morning with the bird in full sunlight and the sun just above the horizon. After a moment, the bird suddenly took off and swooped down toward the road. As it neared the ground it leveled off and passed directly over the hood of our car. Both Ann and I noted that, although overall its profile in flight resembled a woodpecker, it did not fly like a woodpecker, and Ann commented that it looked almost like a crow. If there was any undulation to its flight, it was minimal. As it crossed over the front of the car, we noted no other coloration or obvious field marks on the bird's back, tail or wings. From our vantage point it appeared all black. The collar was difficult to see in flight and as the bird passed in front of the sun our view was quickly reduced to a black silhouette. As it reached the other side of the road, it rose suddenly and settled near the top of another spruce. It was facing away from us now and again no other field marks were visible. It remained perched there for only a few seconds, then flew off. We searched the area for a short while then left without success in refinding it. We returned a few hours later but again failed to relocate the bird. We did have good looks at this bird, however short, from both front and back as well as in flight. **Anthony Hertzel, 2509 Talmage Ave. SE., Minneapolis, MN 55414.**

Editor's note: This is only the second record for a Lewis' Woodpecker in Minnesota. The first record was of a bird present in Sherburne County from 28 December 1974 to 1 May 1975 (***The Loon*** 47:39–40).



INITIAL POSE OF BIRD WHEN FIRST SEEN. MAY 10 1992

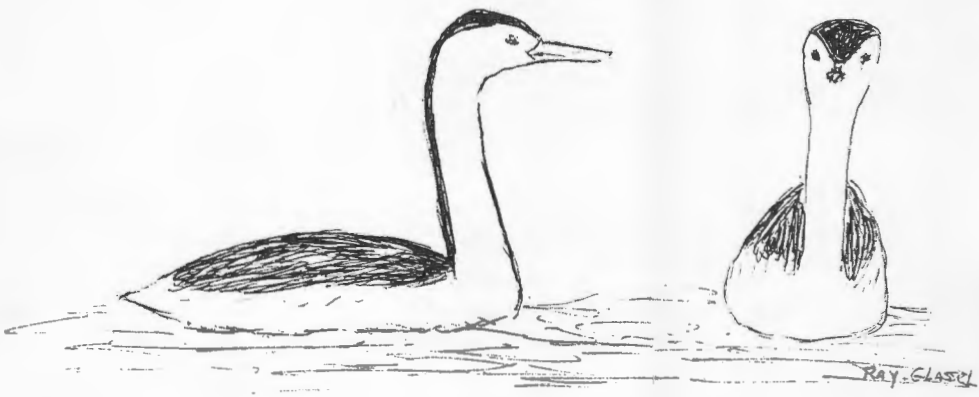
FLIGHT PATH TAKEN

ANTHONY HERTZEL

UNUSUAL FEEDING BEHAVIOR OBSERVED FOR KING RAIL — While watching the King Rail present at the Minnesota River Valley National Wildlife Refuge near the Cedar Ave. bridge in Bloomington, Hennepin County, on 9 June 1992, I was able to observe a startling and unique feeding behavior. The King Rail was spending much of its time feeding along a more shallow backwater area, sometimes foraging in water as deep as its belly. Its actions included walking forward with its bill in the water and opening and closing it rapidly, interspersed with periodic stabs into the mud, similar in action to a dowitcher. During a foray into deeper water, it pulled a small Painted Turtle (approximately the diameter of a silver dollar) out of the vegetation. The rail, with the turtle in its mouth, ran to a dry area of shore and attempted to swallow the turtle whole. It would transfer the turtle in small jerky motions up the length of its rather long bill until it reached the gape. As it attempted to swallow, the width of the turtle would prevent it from being swallowed and the rail would repeat the process. After several attempts, the rail gave up trying to swallow it whole and carried the turtle, still encased in its shell, to an area of dead cattails. After wedging the turtle up-side-down between two stalks, it began to hammer at the bottom of the turtle's shell with its bill. After several blows, the turtle must have been stunned or killed as its head, legs, and tail became limp and trailed from the shell. The rail then picked up the turtle by an appendage, grasping it at the base near the shell and rapidly twisted its head, causing the body of the turtle to fly back and forth around the bill of the rail, until the force was sufficient to tear the appendage loose. As the appendage broke free, the turtle would fly several feet from the force that was generated, and the rail would swallow its hard-earned morsel before walking over to pick up the turtle again. This process was repeated six times, once each for the four legs, tail, and head. After the rail had eaten the legs, head, and tail, it picked the turtle up again and returned to the area of dead cattails. It wedged the turtle, sideways this time, between two dry cattails and began to hammer at the junction of the upper and lower parts of the turtle's shell. At times, it must have broken loose pieces of flesh, as it would pause its hammering to pull something into its bill and swallow it and then resume beating upon the shell with its bill. The motion of the rail's head and bill was similar to that of a Pileated Woodpecker hammering on a tree. The body would tense up and the head and neck would fly forward toward the target and just prior to striking, the rail would snap its head to give it an even greater striking force. The bill striking the turtle would give an audible "pok" that could be heard by observers standing behind me (approximately 30 yards from the rail) as well. After limited success on the joint of the upper and lower shell halves, the rail turned the turtle over onto its back and began to peck away at the underside. This went on repeatedly, with momentary pauses to pick the turtle up to attempt to swallow it once again, until the underside was pierced by the rail's bill. Once the rail had punctured the underside, it spent a few minutes picking out as much flesh as it could reach, mingled with a few jabs to break loose new items. It soon resumed its repeated hammering of the underside of the turtle until it had punctured the shell completely. It continued to work at the opening it had created and at times, the turtle would be pushed up onto the bill of the rail like a donut on your finger. Eventually it enlarged the opening enough to cause one side of the shell to give way, forming a C shape. At this point, the rail began attempting to swallow the turtle once again. After several attempts, with the turtle once again being stopped at the gape, the rail turned the turtle in its bill and swallowed. The turtle, as a result of the opening created by the rail, actually folded up as it neared the gape, allowing it to be swallowed nearly whole! The entire feeding episode lasted approximately 30 minutes. As I checked resources for more information on the feeding habits and prey items of King Rail, I was surprised that none of the sources I checked mentioned turtles as a prey item, let alone described an encounter like this one. Bent (Life History of North American Marsh Birds, 1963) lists a number of prey items as follows: "...they feed principally on 'fiddlers,' small fish, and mullosca;" "The food of the (King Rail) consists of insects, slugs, leeches, tadpoles and small crayfish, besides a goodly proportion of seeds from aquatic and palustral plants." While Terres (*The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds*, 1980) states, "...favors crustaceans—crayfish, fiddler and other crabs — also small fishes, frogs,

grasshoppers, crickets, weevils, beetles, seeds of weeds and aquatic plants; during winter eats large amounts of rice, wheat, oats, also takes wild berries..." It appears that this type of behavior may not be that common and we were fortunate to not only observe the bird at close range, but to experience and document this unusual type of prey gathering. **Kim W. Risen, 5756 Brunswick Ave. N., Crystal, MN 55428.**

CLARK'S GREBE IN KANDIYOHI COUNTY — While Ray Glassel and I were counting Western Grebes, there were 75–80 in sight on Diamond Lake, Kandiyohi County, on 25 June 1992. I came across a different bird through my 25X Spacemaster scope. This is what I saw: similar to Western Grebe; body mottled gray, whiter/lighter on sides at water's edge; long neck appeared longer and thinner than Western; narrow black stripe up back of neck; narrower than on Western by direct comparison; less extensive black cap; lores white, white extended above eye; red eye completely in white; bill bright orange color, very different from Western, which were yellow-green, dull, not bright; some Westerns were antagonistic to this individual; this bird did "skittering over water display" once while in view with a Western Grebe. **Robert B. Janssen, 10521 Cedar Lake Rd., #212, Minnetonka, MN 55305.**



CLARKS GREBE - KANDIYOHI CO.
25 JUN 1992

SUMMER RECORD FOR ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER — On 6 July 1992, I saw a male Orange-crowned Warbler foraging in a brushy area with 10–15 ft. tall willow and birch. The area where I saw it is approximately one mile north of Sucker Bay and one mile east of Sucker Bay Creek in section 13 of township 144N, range 30W, in Cass County. I watched this bird for about an hour as it foraged within five feet of the ground. It was landing on the very tips of tiny branches and feeding on the ends. I was using Nikon 8X30 binoculars, and my naked eye when the bird was too close to observe with binoculars. The bird was grayish above, with an orange spot on the head, a streaked pale yellow chest, yellow undertail coverts, and a darker eye stripe. The bird responded very well to pishing. I watched the bird from a distance of a few meters six or seven times. After I got a good look at the bird the first time, I thought it was an Orange-crowned Warbler, but I decided

to look it up in my National Geographic bird guide to make sure. The field marks of the Orange-crowned Warbler in the book corresponded with those on the bird I was watching. I saw on the range map that this was a little bit south of the usual summer range, so I tried to think of other birds it could be. It was not a Tennessee Warbler because this bird had yellow undertail coverts and a rusty spot on its head. It is possible to mistake Tennessee Warblers and Orange-crowned Warblers for vireos in poor lighting; however, I can rule out vireos as well since I had excellent lighting. The sun was almost directly overhead, so the field marks I mentioned earlier were quite distinct. It also was not a Ruby-crowned Kinglet because of its lack of wing bars, its eye stripe, and its tail length. The bird did not vocalize. **Diane Bond Larson, c/o Sunset Beach Resort, Bena, MN 56626.**

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER RECORD FROM CLAY COUNTY — Our 11–12 July 1992 Minnesota Birding Weekend trip to Clay County included a stop at Ulen City Park on the 12th. This park is a riparian-type woodland oasis in the northeastern corner of the largely agriculturalized Clay County. While walking a series of nature trails that run parallel to the Rice River, a meandering stream that cuts through the park, a distant bird song caught my ear. I was surprised to recognize the diagnostic, rather explosive "pit-SIP" song as that of an Acadian Flycatcher, a species that I am very familiar with, but only from the very southeastern corner of the state. I was so surprised that I did not believe my own ears. Upon investigation, however, we had no trouble locating the bird, singing from the vicinity of a swampy backwater along the river. Although we never did see the bird, we could hear it moving around, actively singing from perches on both sides of the river. A group of us found the bird in the same area the following weekend and this time got leisurely looks at it as it sang from exposed perches in response to a tape. The Acadian Flycatcher was present in Ulen through at least 25 July, the last time birders looked for it. This species is well-established only in Beaver Creek Valley State Park, Houston County, but it is occasionally encountered in other counties throughout the southeastern corner of the state. Individuals or pairs of Acadian Flycatchers have been recorded regularly in several counties around the Twin Cities metropolitan area during the past few years and they have been recorded very rarely as far north as Chisago County and as far west as Wright and Kandiyohi Counties. This Clay County record is the farthest north and west that this species has been found in Minnesota. **Parker Backstrom, 3409 Emerson Ave. S., #4, Minneapolis, MN 55408.**

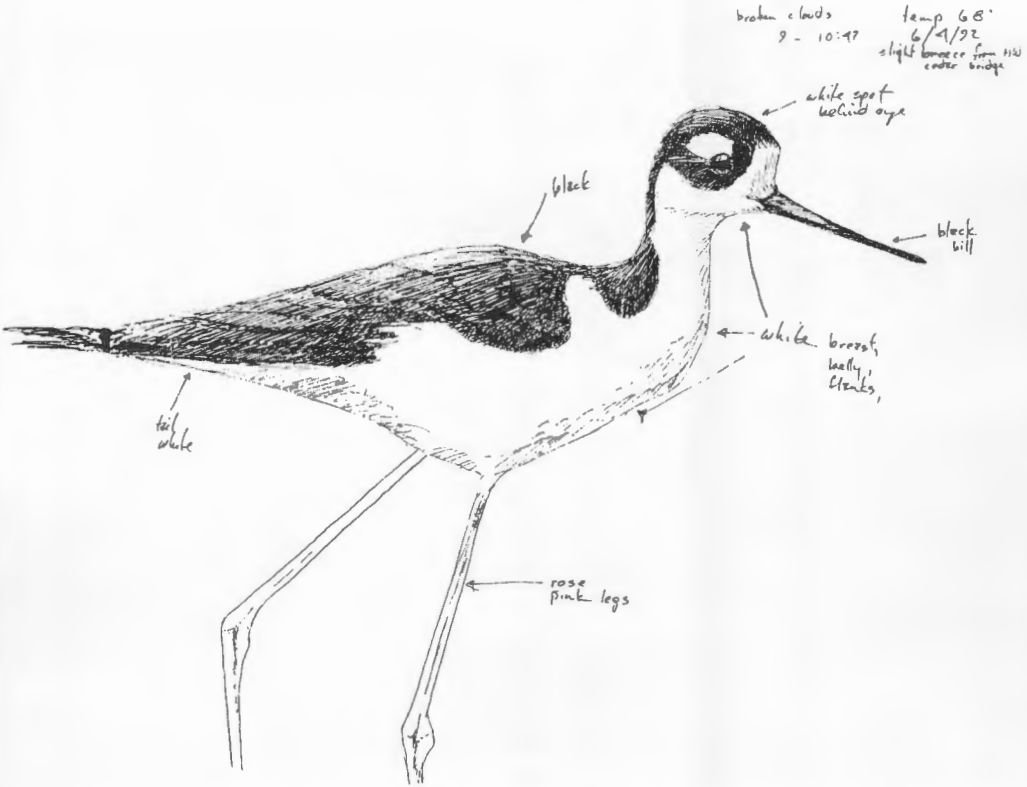
THERE IS SOME JUSTICE — On Saturday morning, 11 April 1992, I was intently watching my birdfeeders. There were at least 150 birds covering my 10 feeders and the ground below them. There were Common Redpolls, Evening Grosbeaks, Purple Finches, Blue Jays, Black-capped Chickadees, Red-winged Blackbirds, Dark-eyed Juncos, American Tree Sparrows, Mourning Doves, two House Finches and two American Robins in the bird bath, just to mention a few. It was a wonderful sight and it kept me from getting anything done around the house. As I watched, two European Starlings landed in the middle of this feeding frenzy. Less than a minute after they landed, the entire flock exploded in every direction as a hawk shot through the feeding area. As chaos turned into total quiet, I noticed a truly beautiful sight. There sat an adult Cooper's Hawk with one of the starlings firmly pinned to the ground below one of the platform feeders. I spent the first 10 minutes applauding and yelling, "Encore!" as it plucked its prey. I have had several species of hawks catch birds at the feeders over the years, but this was the first time one had actually dispensed with a starling. They have usually gone after the more unusual or more brightly colored birds. It took over an hour to completely pluck and eat the bird and nothing was going to make it move. Not my opening the window to take pictures, not the kids walking through the alley, not my brother running in the back door, which was less than 15 feet away, and certainly not the Blue Jays that had returned to scream at it. It did leave the feeders pretty devoid of birdlife for a couple days, but they gradually returned. I didn't see another starling at the feeders for over a month. "Encore, encore!" **Warren Nelson, 603 - 2nd St. N.W., Aitkin, MN 56431.**

RED-THROATED LOON AT RICE LAKE STATE PARK — While watching a winter-plumaged Common Loon at Rice Lake, Steele County, on 29 April 1992, a much smaller winter-plumaged loon surfaced nearby. I was immediately impressed by the "tiny" upturned bill and extreme whiteness of the bird's face and neck, the pale gray back, nape, and top of the head. Both birds began diving extensively and my looks were brief for the next 15 minutes; however, I was convinced the one bird was a Red-throated Loon. I lost sight of both birds, but about an hour later, I relocated them. They were not diving as frequently, so I was afforded excellent views of the birds. The Red-throated Loon kept moving closer until it was about 200 yards from shore, still too far to see the exact back pattern (it looked solid light gray), but the white-edged flank feathers presented an interesting pattern (see sketch). There was a dark mark on the lower throat that may have been the beginning of the red throat. Most impressive was the light over-all color that made the bird resemble a Western Grebe with a short neck. The bird could not be relocated the next day, even though the lake was scanned by numerous observers. **Raymond Glassel, 8219 Wentworth Ave. S., Bloomington, MN 55920.**

ATYPICAL FOOD CAPTURE BY BALD EAGLE — On 25 April 1992, Don and Al Bolduc, my son Brad, and I observed a most unusual food procurement technique by an immature Bald Eagle. As we were leaving the Marsh Lake Dam Area (Swift County side), we had stopped to view a variety of waterfowl in some of the backwater areas. Al first noticed an eagle across the river on the Lac Qui Parle County side, which was harassing a Great Egret while it was feeding in the area. We all quickly identified the eagle as a two-year-old immature Bald Eagle, based on the amount of white on the belly and underwing coverts. The eagle made two or three shallow stoops on the egret, which the egret successfully avoided by hopping or flying to the side. The egret then started a spiraling upward flight to escape. The eagle immediately began to pursue in the same manner. Initially, the egret was able to gain altitude more quickly by keeping the smaller spiral and seemed to gain more lift from a strong N–NW wind by turning sharply into the wind as the eagle came near. This escape-pursuit routine continued until an altitude of several hundred yards was reached, at which time it appeared that the eagle was no longer maintaining close pursuit. At this time, the egret assumed level flight and the eagle made two additional upward spirals. From this position, the eagle made a direct swift flight toward the egret and literally picked the egret out of the air. During the ensuing kill, the eagle closed its wings, bit the egret, and repositioned the egret in its talons. During this time of a few seconds, the birds were undergoing a spiraling free-fall. With the egret repositioned, the eagle resumed normal flight and flew (mostly glided) to the ground. Other observers saw the eagle land with its prey. From their information regarding the landing spot, we established the distance from capture to landing to be between one-quarter and one-half mile. **Oscar L. Johnson, 7733 Florida Circle, Brooklyn Park, MN 55455.**

WORM-EATING WARBLER IN WASHINGTON COUNTY — On 12 May 1992, Missy Patty, a bird-bander at Lee and Rose Warner Nature Center in Washington County, caught a Worm-eating Warbler in one of her nets. The net was near a well-used fire road in a wooded area. I was at the nature center, so she brought the bird, in the banding bag, to show me. When she removed the bird, I could see that it was indeed the Worm-eating Warbler, a warbler with brownish-olive back and wings, no wing bars; pale yellow head with prominent black stripes, under-parts buffy yellow. I have been looking for my first Minnesota Worm-eating Warbler for years! It was exciting to see this bird, even if I will still have to look for one! It is interesting to note that this is the same area in the nature center where a Worm-eating Warbler had been seen about 20 years ago. **Elizabeth Campbell, 5267 W. Bald Eagle Blvd., White Bear Lake, MN 55110.**

MINNESOTA'S THIRD RECORD OF BLACK-NECKED STILT — On 4 June 1992 at 9:00 A.M., I decided to drive over the Old Cedar Avenue bridge in Hennepin County to check on a past Prothonotary Warbler nest site. As I drove across the bridge, I noticed a slender shorebird standing in shallow water next to some cattails about 40 yards to the west of the bridge. I passed it off as just another yellowlegs without looking at it closely. After finding the nest site unoccupied, I turned around and headed back across the bridge. Upon looking at the shorebird again, I saw that it was feeding and I watched it a little more closely. At this point, I looked through my Bushnell 10X50 binoculars and identified the shorebird as a Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*). I quickly drove home to get my camera and call some other birders to let them know what I had seen. After leaving messages for them, I returned to the bridge at 10:00 A.M. to take pictures and sketch the bird. At this time, I observed the bird through a Bushnell Spacemaster spotting scope with 20X–45X eyepiece. Lighting was good, as the sun periodically broke through clouds from behind where I was standing and illuminated the bird. I watched as it probed just under the surface of the water and occasionally stopped to preen. It was feeding alone, but was near enough to Green-winged Teal to allow me to compare its size. Its body length was roughly the same as the teal. The bird was solid black above; the legs were bright rose red and disproportionately long; a white spot was located slightly above and behind the eye; the forehead and chin were white, and the white continued down the throat to the breast, belly,



and onto the flanks. The bill was straight and black. After observing and sketching the bird for over 40 minutes, it flew off to the west and landed about 200 yards west of the bridge. As the bird flew, I noted that the back and tail were white, the under-sides of the wings were solid black, and the legs extended well past the end of the tail. I began to pack up my gear and walk to my car, but as I turned to the east, I saw a second Black-necked Stilt about 50 yards east of the bridge. After returning from work that evening, I spoke with Ray Glassel and Bob Janssen, who had both spent considerable time looking for the stilts, but had been unable to locate them. On the following day, the areas around the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge were thoroughly searched by many observers, but no stilts were found. **Scott Krych, 1045 Hiawatha Ave., #310, Hopkins, MN 55343**.

RUFFS IN POLK COUNTY — On 16 May 1992, in Hegleland Township, Polk County, four Ruffs were seen along County Road 69. Only two birds were seen well enough to be described. The two birds, while obviously the same species, were somewhat different; I will therefore describe them differently. They were about the size of a Killdeer or Lesser Yellowlegs. One bird had a yellow beak, a darker brown-gold patch on its head, and a golden neck. The feathers in the wing were edged with gold. There were darker markings on the bird's side and some darker markings on the breast. The legs were yellow-brown, not the bright yellow of the yellowlegs. The only white seen (when the bird was not flying) was directly under the tail. The second bird was browner over-all. It had a brown tip on a yellow beak. Its neck was brown. The feathers on the wings were brown, edged with a lighter brown. The legs were yellow with blotches of darker color. Whether that was mud or the legs changing color, I am not sure. The four birds were first seen at a distance of 40 yards in the middle of a muddy field. At this distance, it was difficult to

distinguish many details clearly. All I had were 8X23 binoculars. It was very frustrating, for I knew immediately that I had never seen these shorebirds before. After 20 minutes, the birds flew to the south side of the road at a distance of 15–20 yards. Once or twice, the birds would puff out their neck feathers (see picture). Finally, after 50 minutes, the two

birds flew away and we could see the distinctive "vee" of white, characteristic of the Ruff. **Shelley Steva, Route 2, Box 51, Thief River Falls, MN 56701.**

FEMALE RUFF IN LAC QUI PARLE COUNTY — From about 11:30–11:45 A.M. on 29 April 1992, Jeff Dains and I had an excellent opportunity to study a female Ruff (Reeve) in Lac Qui Parle County. The bird was feeding with a group of about 75 shorebirds, primarily Pectoral Sandpipers, on a small mudflat near County Road 7, just west of Rosen. We watched the Reeve from less than 50 feet with 7X and 10X binoculars and a 20X–45X spotting scope. Lighting conditions were ideal, with the sun high and at our backs. The bird superficially resembled a large Pectoral Sandpiper. It stood a little more than a head taller than any of the surrounding pectorals, and its body was much plumper, with a pronounced pot-bellied and hunch-backed shape. The head and neck were disproportionately small and elegant. The entire bill was black. It was a little longer than the bird's head, thickest at the base, tapering toward the tip and just slightly drooped. The legs were an eye-catching bright orange, much brighter than the greenish-toned, dusky orange legs of the pectorals. We noted that its legs were stockier than the pectorals' and later, that they extended beyond the tail when the bird was flying. The head was an almost uniform, light grayish-brown, a little paler around the base of the bill. The breast and upper belly were also a light grayish-brown, but they were heavily marked with scattered, black smudges. These smudges extended from the lower neck down to about the legs, with the lower markings confined to the sides. They were most heavily concentrated on the sides of the upper breast. The largest smudges (almost chevrons here) were those farthest down the sides. The rest of the under-parts were white. In general, the upper-parts were darker than the pectorals', mostly brownish and black. When the bird tipped toward us, a thin, off-white "V" was visible on its back. The area inside the "V" was brownish. The area outside the "V" (most of the wings) was darker, with white-tipped, grayish-brown and black feathers. Unlike the pectorals, the Reeve did not have rusty-tipped feathers on its upper-parts. After we'd watched the bird awhile, it flew by us from one side of the road to the other and we had a great look at its tail. Two prominent, long, white ovals, one on each side of the dark tail, joined or nearly joined posteriorly. Later, as we watched the Reeve wheel around the mudflat with about 40 pectorals, we could easily pick it out from the group by looking for its different tail pattern. The orange legs and black markings on the under-parts also set this bird apart in flight. A faint whitish wing stripe was visible when the bird was flying. The Reeve fed by wading in the water, at times up to its belly, and repeatedly submerged its head, neck, and upper shoulders. Our observation ended when a large truck appeared, flushing most of the birds. Once again, the Reeve wheeled around the mudflat with the pectorals, but this time it broke away from the group and flew off alone toward the south. Its flight was direct, its wingbeats slow and steady. **Steve Carlson, 2705 Dupont Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55408.**

A HOODED WARBLER IN ROCK RIVER PARK, PIPESTONE COUNTY — The first weeks in May, I spent an hour almost every day checking the Rock River Park on the west side of Edgerton for warblers. On 2 May 1992, I spotted this yellow and black warbler which I had never seen before. I noted its brilliant yellow face outlined with black; the black throat and black head were connected by black lines. Below the throat, it was a bright yellow on the chest and belly. It spread its tail somewhat like the American Redstart does. I didn't have a reference book with me and was excited to see that it was a Hooded Warbler when I checked the Golden Field Guide. I couldn't return to the park then, but did go back at 3:00 P.M. This time, I found the warbler in a little hollow where it was protected from the strong wind. For about 30 minutes, I had very clear observations of it, as it sat on the path or in low shrubs in plain view, several times at a distance of 20 to 30 feet. I viewed it through my Bushnell binoculars and with my eyes as well. Nelvina De Kam looked two days later, but did not find the warbler, and I didn't see it again either. I was happy to add the Hooded Warbler to my life list as well as the county and state lists. **Johanna Pals, Route 1, Box 132, Edgerton, MN 56128.**

KING RAIL RECORD — On 7 June 1992, at 10:30 A.M., Bonnie Mulligan, Mike Mulligan, Dick Sandve, and I met to look for the reported Black-necked Stilts at the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge in the Minnesota River Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Bloomington. There were no shorebirds, so we decided to walk the gravel path that leads under the new Highway 77 bridge and on to the Isaak Walton League Bass Ponds. About 200 yards past the new bridge, there is a drainage culvert emptying into the marsh. With my Zeiss 10X40 binoculars, I scanned the edge of the three to five foot tall grasses. I noticed a large, partially obscured rail slowly feeding near the edge of the grasses. I looked up to point out the location, relocated the bird, thought for a moment that it was a duck because of its large size, but then clearly saw its long, rail-like bill. On and off for the next two hours, we observed the bird, joined later by Jim and Jude Williams. It was a clear day and with the help of a Kowa TSN–4 with a 20X eyepiece, we got excellent views from as near as 15 feet. We all called out field marks to be recorded. The rail's size was estimated at 12–15" in length, with a bill one and a half times longer than the head. The cheek was a dull brown, not gray like a Virginia Rail. There was no contrast between the cheek and the nape. We saw a slight gray at the back of the eye, a short buffy eyeline, and a light eye ring, incomplete at the front and top part of the eye. The crown was darker than the sides of the head. The throat was white, the chest and neck a rich brown. The mantle and scapulars showed black on brown feathering. The under-parts were barred brown and white all the way to the tip of the tail. A creamy white area was seen in the ventral area. Both Golden and National Geographic Society field guides were consulted in the field. The bird stayed in the area all day and many other observers were able to see the first Hennepin County King Rail in over 10 years. **Peter Neubeck, 1504 S. Tyrol Tr., Golden Valley, MN 55416.**

FIRST DOCUMENTED RECORD OF PROTHONOTARY WARBLER IN SHERBURNE COUNTY — While participating in a "bird-a-thon" for the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis on 9 May 1992, a male Prothonotary Warbler was observed behind the headquarters of the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. Our team of Patrick Leacock, Marge Cross, Martha Honetschlager, and I were hoping to pick up those last few species of the day when a male Prothonotary Warbler was spotted by Pat. As he gave directions to the bird, easily seen perched on dead branches overhanging the slow-moving water, I noted the following marks before consulting any field guide: a warbler, by bill and body shape, with a bright golden head, face, and breast; large and prominent dark eye and bill; plain blue-gray wings; in flight and while hopping from perch to perch, the tail showed extensive tail spots; the bright yellow faded on the lower belly; and the undertail coverts were white. The absence of dark lores, combined with plain blue-gray wings, eliminated Blue-winged Warbler. Janssen (unpublished list) shows this to be the first Sherburne County record of Prothonotary Warbler. Although Prothonotary Warbler is on the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge bird list, there is no documentation to support the sighting (Jay Hammernick pers. comm.). The Prothonotary Warbler was our team's 150th bird of the day and we finished with 156, raising more than $2,500.00 (with 20% to go for the forest songbird study in northern Minnesota) for our chapter. **Kim W. Risen, 5756 Brunswick Ave. N., Crystal, MN 55428.**

WORM-EATING WARBLER IN HENNEPIN COUNTY — At about 8:00 A.M. on 11 May 1992, I saw a Worm-eating Warbler on the east side of Cedar Lake in Minneapolis. After two consecutive weeks of clear skies, it had finally begun to rain during the early hours of the 11th. Skies were still heavily overcast that morning and there were lingering showers. The woods around the lake were teeming with birds. Besides many flycatchers, thrushes, and vireos, I saw 22 species of warbler in the area within a few hours. My attention was drawn to the Worm-eating Warbler when I heard a fairly loud, flat trill repeated at brief intervals. On a good morning in May, it isn't unusual to hear a variety of trills, but this stood out as something different. I was immediately reminded of the Worm-eating Warbler I had heard the previous spring at William Berry Park in south Minneapolis

(*The Loon* 63:203). The bird continued to sing, and I soon pinpointed its location near the base of a low, wooded slope. A twig moved and when I put my 7X binoculars on the movement, a Worm-eating Warbler was perched in the open, about three feet above the ground. Because the lighting was poor and the bird was about 70 feet away, my view, while adequate for identification purposes, was far from perfect. I saw a small, warbler-billed bird, plain buff-brown above and below (the upper-parts a little darker), with four blackish stripes through the head. Within 15 seconds, it dropped out of sight. I heard the song only a couple more times before losing track of the bird completely. **Steve Carlson, 2705 Dupont Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55408.**

WORM-EATING WARBLER IN RICE COUNTY — On 12 May 1992 at 2:50 P.M., it was clear, warm, and very windy, so I decided to do my birding in a ravine with a small creek, out of the wind. I was looking at a Common Yellowthroat when another bird landed nearby. I could see the eyebrow on this bird. Upon using my binoculars, I recognized it as a Worm-eating Warbler. It was approximately 25 feet away on a bare branch, three feet above the stream. What I noticed about the bird was that it had four dark stripes on its head, with tan stripes in between. The dark stripes were placed one through each eye, and two placed fairly evenly in between. The bird otherwise was brown on top with some light yellow over a whitish breast; no wing bars, and no spots or stripes on its breast. The legs were neither black nor red, but were perhaps flesh-toned. The bill was straight, narrow, and came to a point. I watched the bird for about two to three minutes, during which the bird faced me and then turned away. It finally walked down the branch into the grass, appearing again on a log for about 15 seconds. It was still about 25 feet away from me. It came into view briefly once again, about 20 feet away, before flying across the stream into some grass. This was the first time that I have seen a Worm-eating Warbler, but I was somewhat familiar with its appearance because in April of 1990, one was seen in Rice County (*The Loon* 62:118) and before looking for it myself, I looked it up in several field guides and reference books in case I did find it. I viewed it with 7X35 Steiner binoculars and the lighting was very good. I did see the bird again on 17 May 1992 at 1:20 P.M. in approximately the same location. **Tom Boevers, 217 N.W. 2nd St., Faribault, MN 55021-5110.**

TRICOLORED HERON FROM WINONA COUNTY — On 25 May 1992, while slowly driving through the park at the east end of East Lake in the City of Winona, I noted a heron in steep descent from a height of 500+ meters. The bird rapidly descended with the wings half-folded until it was less than one meter off the water, but over a very deep area near the aerators. It then banked sharply left and flew toward the shore I was on. It paralleled that shore for roughly 200 yards before crossing the lake. I drove along near it for that distance, about 50 yards from it and slightly above it. From the moment it first banked and turned toward shore, I was aware that this was not the Great Blue Heron I had expected it to be. I followed it in hopes that it would land for better observation. When it was down against the water, the white belly was very striking, as were the two or three white feathers seen in the innermost position of the secondaries of each wing. The over-all size was estimated about two-thirds that of a Great Blue Heron. The back and neck were deep slate blue, as were the dorsal wing coverts and primaries. The middle and outer regions of the secondaries were all medium gray. I returned to my office at the university and checked through all my bird guides. None showed the white feathers I had seen. I finally turned to my "Baby Elephant Folio," Audubon's Birds of America (Peterson 1981). Plate 36 showed the "Louisiana Heron" and it indicated white feathers at the base of the wing which corresponded roughly to those I saw on the bird in flight. Since Audubon worked from specimens, I assume those feathers are present on the species. All other aspects of the bird are in agreement with the general photos/pictures and descriptions for this species as listed in other references I used. Since no other species has the prominent white belly and dark back, I concluded that this was a Louisiana Heron. I notified Carol Schumacher, but to the best of my knowledge, the bird was not seen again. I never actually

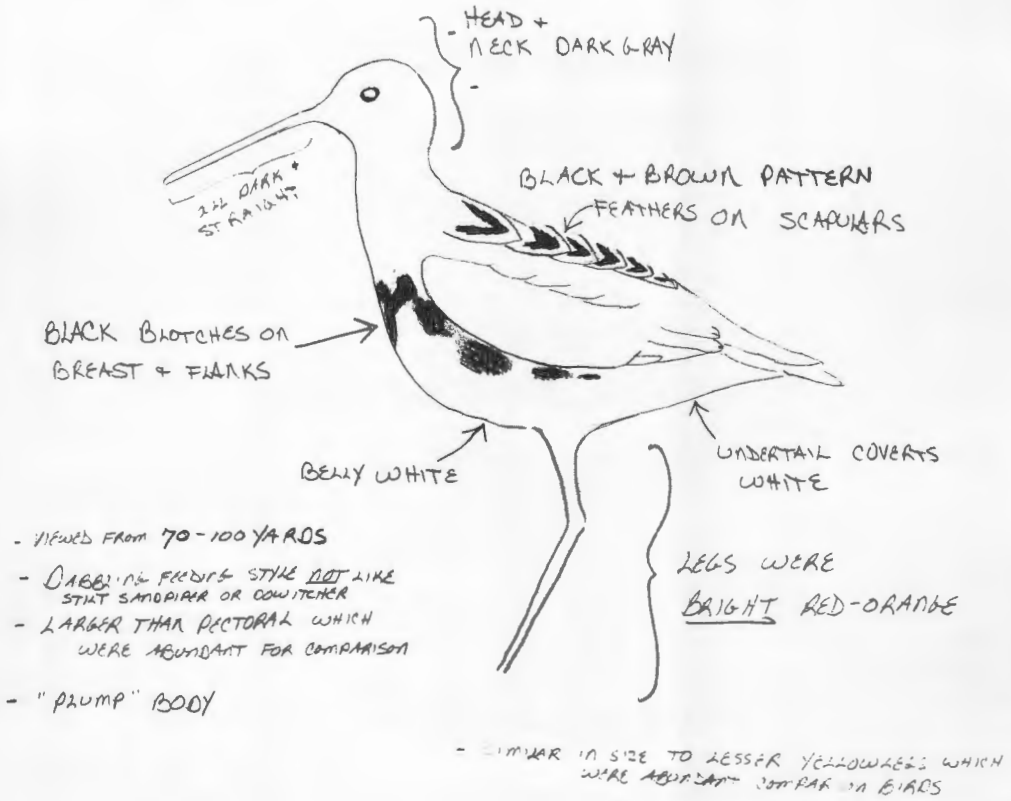
saw it land after it crossed the lake; it flew away northwest until lost from sight. Thus, it may not have stopped on the lake for any length of time, but only passed through the area. **Philip C. Whitford, Biology Dept., Winona State University, Winona, MN 55987.**

SNOWY OWL IN YELLOW MEDICINE COUNTY — On 14 June 1992, Linda Curtler phoned from Cottonwood to report a Snowy Owl at a farmstead northwest of town. My granddaughter, Deanne, and I searched the area and sighted the bird, perched atop a mound next to a sandpit, just to the south of the farm. The location of the sandpit where the bird was seen is in section 23 of Sandnes Township, Yellow Medicine County. The bird sat quietly as we drove to the edge of the pit, some 25–30 yards from it. We watched it from about 10 minutes with 10X35 binoculars and a Bushnell spotting scope with a 25X eyepiece. The bird was almost pure white, with a few dark markings on the crown and nape. Its eyes were a bright yellow and the beak dark. I made several photos with a

Snowy Owl, 13 June 1992, Sandes Township, Yellow Medicine County. Photo by Henry Kyllingstad.

300mm lens and 1.6X extender, then drove into the sandpit, attempting to get a closer view, whereupon the bird flew off to the west. This was apparently the first June record of a Snowy Owl in Minnesota in more than a hundred years. Roberts notes in *Birds of Minnesota* (1932), "There are several records of this owl occurring here in the summer months: 22 July 1820, a few miles north of where St. Cloud now stands (Schoolcraft); 3 June 1890, one shot near Litchfield, Meeker County, and another seen at the same time (Dart); first week of August, 1927, one caught alive in a hen-house near Stillwater, Washington County (reported by Rosenwinkel and seen by Roberts). There was no indication that either the Litchfield or Stillwater bird was injured or had been in captivity." Our bird, evidently a male (Bent: "The whitest birds, sometimes practically pure white, are always males."), appeared to be in good condition and flew strongly. **Henry Kyllingstad, 205 S. 6th St., Marshall, MN 56258.**

RUFF IN CARVER COUNTY — I wasn't able to join Dennis Martin, Bill Marengo, Jim Williams, and Mike Mulligan for 16 May 1992 Carver County big day, but I was able to go out to western Carver County about 6:30 P.M. to see what shorebirds were at the wet area on 62nd Street, 3/4 mile west of New Germany. Mike Mulligan had scouted this area and said that there were many species of birds. The area was indeed teeming with shorebirds, including Short-billed Dowitchers, Semipalmated Plovers, a Wilson's Phalarope, numerous peeps, Pectoral Sandpipers, and Lesser Yellowlegs.



I looked for ten minutes, using my 10X40 Zeiss binoculars and my Bushnell Spacemaster scope. From 70–100 yards with the sun at my back, a very unusual shorebird with bright orange-red legs caught my eye. I had never seen a shorebird with legs this color before and I knew I was seeing something different. It was feeding in the matted, laid-down grasses. I noted its similar size to the Lesser Yellowlegs, the bold pattern made by the rich black centers on the scapulars, the dark splotches on the breast and flanks, the white under-parts, and the all-dark, straight bill. After two or three minutes of observation, I noticed Jim Williams' van approaching and I motioned for the Big Day boys to "get on" this bird. With the help of additional eyes and optics, including Mike's Kowa TSN–4 (20X) and Denny's Kowa TSN–2 (30X), we saw that its head and neck were dark gray and

the eye had a slight white edging to the supercilia. The bird had a big body and a long, tapering neck. It was half again larger than a Pectoral Sandpiper feeding close by. A Least Sandpiper did not come up to the belly of the Ruff. Bill noted that its posture "suggested unbalanced, as if it were going to tip over." Our combined notes revealed that its bill was longer than a pectoral's, slightly smaller than or similar to a Lesser Yellowlegs. The bird flushed after seven to eight minutes and could not be relocated. No field marks were noted as it flew. We looked at National Geographic Society field guide after the bird flew, but it wasn't until the next day after consulting Hayman, Marchant and Praters' *Shorebirds – An Identification Guide* that we determined we had seen a Ruff. None of the books we consulted showed a plate like the bird we saw. The Ruff's leg color, so bright and obvious in the field, looks dull in the guides. Also, its deeply toned and patterned upper-parts seemed much more contrasting. **Peter Neubeck, 1504 S. Tyrol Trail, Golden Valley, MN 55416.**

CLARK'S GREBE IN JACKSON COUNTY — On 3 May 1992, I was birding along South Heron Lake when I stopped at the Community Point County Park on the southeast side. As I scanned the lake, I noticed a grebe come into view around the point. The bird was about 200 yards out in the lake, but it was immediately recognizable as a Clark's Grebe. The bright white head and neck, except for a small black cap, and the bright yellow-orange bill were unmistakable in the bright sun with 10X binoculars. After a few minutes of observation, I set up my 30X scope and relocated the bird as it swam and dove, heading away from me in a south and westerly direction. I reconfirmed the obvious field marks (white face with eye well below the dark cap and yellow-orange bill) and looked over the rest of the bird. The small, dark cap barely extended forward to an imaginary vertical line above the eye. The dark stripe down the back of the neck was almost pencil thin, as compared to Western Grebes seen earlier in the day. Also, the Western Grebes had been easily identified, even at a much greater distance, by their yellow-green bills and dark caps extending below the eyes and forward to the bills. The flanks and back of this grebe were similar to the Western Grebes. I watched the bird for about 20 minutes. It headed, diving and swimming, toward the other side of the lake. I did some other birding in the area and tried, unsuccessfully, to relocate the bird. **Al Bolduc, 4400 Oakland Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55407.**

PRAIRIE WARBLER IN ROCK COUNTY — On 6 June 1992 at about 2:40 P.M., while walking on the Bur Oak Trail about one-quarter mile southeast of the Interpretive Center at Blue Mounds State Park, I heard a thin, buzzy song that rose up the scale on three distinct levels. The song came from 20 to 30 feet up in the canopy of a bur oak. The bird sang intermittently, with tantalizing infrequency. After looking intently for several minutes, a warbler with bright yellow under-parts emerged from behind the leaves and my suspicions were confirmed: a Prairie Warbler! Over the next 15 minutes, I was able to see the bird three times for periods of 20–30 seconds, from distances of 20–40 feet, with 7X binoculars. It was about the size of a Yellow-rumped Warbler and wagged its tail persistently in a way similar to that species. The bird had a bright yellow throat and breast, fading to yellowish-white on the lower belly. Its undertail coverts and the underside of its tail were white. The bird's crown, back, and wings appeared to be olive-green, with a slightly yellowish cast. I never obtained a good look at the warbler's back or the upper-side of its tail. There were two prominent yellowish-white wingbars on each wing. Its face was bright yellow, with a distinctive black line just above the eye and another black line slightly below the eye. There were a series of distinct, individual black lines down the bird's neck and sides, but only in a single row and restricted to the far right and far left sides of the neck and breast. The above description was written immediately following the observation, before I consulted a field guide. The initial song I heard was similar to Prairie Warbler songs in the New Jersey Pine Barrens and the Philadelphia area, where I have seen and heard this species scores of times. The warbler also sang a second song unlike any I had heard before, which rose throughout but especially at the end, in the pattern of a Field Sparrow song. The song

was shorter, softer, and more buzzy than a Field Sparrow song, however. I was unable to relocate the warbler on the morning of 7 June. Janssen's Birds in Minnesota (1987) lists three Prairie Warbler records for Minnesota, one in Houston County and two in Hennepin County, the most recent in 1975. Teri and Steve Carlson also observed this species in Hennepin County on 13 May 1989 (***The Loon*** 61:82–83). This Rock County record appears to be the fifth Prairie Warbler for the state, the first in western Minnesota. **David C. Zumeta, 4720 E. 34th St., Minneapolis, MN 55406.**

92 SPECIES COUNTED IN ST. LOUIS COUNTY ON NON-MOTORIZED BIG DAY — On 29 May 1992, Steve Wilson of Embarrass, Minnesota organized a big day in Minnesota that used no motor vehicles. The unwitting volunteers on the team were Ellen Fuge of St. Paul, Steve Piragis and Steve Johnson of Ely, John Eckfeldt and Nancy Schultz of Shoreview, and, of course, Steve. The only rule added to those usually used for most big day events was that no motorized vehicles could be used during the counting period. With the arrival of Steve Piragis and Steve Johnson from Ely, the official big day began at about 4:30 A.M. at Steve Wilson's house in Embarrass where Ellen, John, and Nancy had spent the night. The weather report was almost perfect: predawn temperatures in the low 40s warming to the mid–60s during the day with clear skies and low winds. After a quick breakfast, with intermittent poking of heads out the door in hopes of hearing an owl, the team left on their mountain bikes to catch the "sunrise chorus" of song birds. As is usual in most big days, the number of species "heard, but not seen" mounted up quickly. By 6:00 A.M. about 40 species had been identified by sound. About that time some novice members of the team were beginning to wonder if we were ever going to really see any birds on this adventure. I use the word adventure with good reason, because the day really turned out to be one! After cruising many of the back roads of Embarrass, and waking up nearly every dog in town, about 7:00 A.M. Steve decided we should ride up tot he top of "the ridge" for a change in habitat. After climbing gradually, but steadily for several miles, the members of the team realized that we were riding up the back side of the Giants Ridge ski slopes. However, the climb was not wasted, as about 15 more species were added to the list, plus a great view. What the climb to the top took out of us, the trip down returned in excitement. About halfway down the old Highway 135, which had been abandoned about 25 years ago, Steve mentioned the bottom section of the roadway on the south side of Embarrass rice paddies might be "a bit wet". What an understatement! The roadway had been a corduroy log road over bog. With the years of neglect, many of the logs had rotted away leaving gaps 10 to 20 feet wide with uncertain depths of water to cross by bikes. To Steve's credit, in most cases he was the first across. The other members figured if he disappeared below the surface of the water they could always consider another route, because 6' 4" is a deep hole! However, the thought of backtracking up the two-mile downhill stretch, which we had just traversed did not seem very appealing to anyone. Although wet to the thighs and covered with sprayed mud, the team made it through the mile or so "bog stretch" of the trip. The extremely high density of mosquitoes gave everyone motivation to pedal faster too. By now the team had covered about 10 miles and recorded about 60 species. At the end of the bog ride we came to the Embarrass rice paddies, which produced five species of ducks, three swallows, but disappointingly no lingering shorebirds. At about 13 miles, the team then made a short stop at Steve's house to refuel. After this short break, the team took off for a loop to the southeast of Embarrass, again stopping by the rice paddies. This time a Black-bellied Plover and a flock of peeps were located. About noon, after a stop at Heikkella Lake, Steve Johnson and Steve Piragis left because of previous commitments for the afternoon and evening. The total count at this point was 82 birds. The team was now reduced to the hard-core of four members. After a lunch stop the team returned again to Steve's house now having logged about 23 miles. The original plan called for a canoe trip along the Embarrass River. However, because this involved a three-quarter mile portage and energy levels were running low, everyone, even Steve, opted for a few hours nap in preparation for the final push as the birds became more active in the evening. About 5:00 P.M., the team was off again on their bikes, this time to the west of

Embarrass to cover several of the few remaining stands of tall White and Red Pines for Pine Warbler and nuthatches, and the Tower forest fire burn area which was only a few weeks old for possible woodpeckers. Despite covering several stands of 80- to 100-year-old pines, the Pine Warblers and nuthatches would not cooperate. Shortly after getting into the burn area, and seeing several houses that had been burned to the ground only weeks before, we did spot a Black-backed Woodpecker. We did pick up number 91, a Common Nighthawk at about 7:30 P.M., and number 92, a Gray Jay at about 8:30 P.M.. We finally returned to Steve's house about 9:45 P.M., after a short detour by the rice paddies again hoping to hear some rails. However, no additional birds were heard or seen, due to the extremely loud chorus of frogs. With little energy remaining, the team decided to call it a day about 10:00 P.M. after having covered about 40 miles on bike. Our total number of species was 92 and we did have a few obvious "holes" in our list; we just could not find a Common Grackle, any nuthatches, a Great Blue Heron, or even a House Sparrow. Overall it was the most memorable, albeit somewhat exhausting day. Steve noted that he does tend to push his (and his companions') physical endurance limits at times. He also noted that he seems to have had a few repeat team members from year-to-year, on his similarly arduous and adventurous Christmas bird counts. We do believe that the use of no motorized vehicles for a big day makes a statement about ecological problems which all environmentally conscious bird watcher should be concerned. **John Eckfeldt, 748 Amber Drive, St. Paul, MN 55126.**

Associate Editor's Note: As impressive as this effort was, there have been higher "non-motorized" Big Days in Minnesota and elsewhere. Twice at Park Point in Duluth more than 100 species have been seen with the observers on foot the entire time and staying within an area one mile in length: Steve Millard and I recorded 102 species on 26 May 1978, and on 25 May 1981 Paul Egeland and I improved on this with 111 species. As far as I know, the record for a Big Day all on foot is 154 species recorded by two observers who covered a total of 28 miles in the Pt. Pelee, Ontario area on 11 May 1978. Also, on 31 October 1982, a team of observers at Elkhorn Slough, Monterey Co., California, had 116 species while sitting at one spot for the entire day. — Kim Eckert.

COMMON RAVEN NEST IN PINE COUNTY — On 23 May 1992 I discovered a Common Raven's nest at the top of an approximately 25 foot Red Pine tree. The nest was located at just about the center of a 40–60 acre tree farm in a remote area about one mile northwest of Rutledge in Pine County. The tree was at the sunny edge of a logging cut through the trees. At least two young were present in the nest on two separate occasions and watched over by one of the adults as the other flew about overhead calling and croaking excitedly. The nest would probably have gone unnoticed but for the noisy attention getting behavior. The nest appeared to be built of dead pine branches which littered the forest floor along with hundreds of moccasin flowers. **Don Wanschura and Cheryl Dodge, 2511 Girard Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55405.**

Editor's Note: The Common Raven occurs regularly in northern Pine County, mainly in the fall, winter and spring. As far as I know this is the first documented nesting record for the species in Pine County.

FIRST STATE RECORD NEOTROPIC CORMORANT — At 4:00 P.M. on 16 July 1992, I located a Neotropic Cormorant at Lake Vadnais in St. Paul, Ramsey County. At the time, I was making a routine check of the sandbar at the southwest end of the lake on my way home from work in St. Paul, as I often do once or even twice a day. This is an interesting place to view birds, since many waterbirds such as cormorants, gulls, terns, and sometimes even a few shorebirds take advantage of the sandbar to loaf during the day. I have always expected (or at least hoped for) a rarity here, and I figured that if I kept checking, sooner or later something would turn up. And so when I noticed that one of the cormorants was distinctly smaller than the others, I just assumed this was an artifact of the viewing angle. But when I watched the bird with 22X as it walked alongside several adult and immature Double-crested Cormorants, I was careful to note that it was always distinctly

smaller than any of the 16 or so Double-crested Cormorants on the sandbar, independent of the viewing angle. I immediately switched to 40X on the scope, and was stunned to note that the bird had the white, V-shaped line at the base of the bill of a Neotropic Cormorant. This individual even had white plumes on the side of the blackish head, making it unmistakable as an individual in breeding plumage. At this point, after viewing the bird for only a few minutes at the most, I turned away to begin taking notes. Imagine my frustration when I turned back to see that the cormorant was gone! I was sure of what I had seen, however, so I made a few phone calls to local birders before returning to the lake to try and relocate the bird. The cormorant finally showed up again at the sandbar around 5:00 P.M., and I was able to make the field notes that I had started earlier. In a normal, semi-alert posture, the Neotropic Cormorant's head stood only as tall as the shoulder on a Double-crested Cormorant in the same posture. Its entire head, body, tail, and most of the wings

Neotropic Cormorant (left, with Double-crested Cormorant), 23 July 1992, Lake Vadnais, Ramsey County. Photo by Anthony Hertzel.

were a blackish brown, with subtle lighter brown mottling seen on the upper surface of the folded wing. The tail of this distinctively smaller bird was as long as the larger Double-cresteds, giving this individual a longer-tailed look. It lacked the bright orange color on the throat pouch and the base of the bill that is always present on all immature and adult Double-crested Cormorants. In good light it could be seen that the bill was actually a bluish gray color, and there was even a subtle orangish hue at the very base, but this could only be seen with 40X in good light (as when the sun came out on this partly cloudy day). This orange color was not normally visible at the distance that the bird was being seen, in contrast to all the Double-cresteds, which were generally so orangish on the base of the bill that this color could be seen from as far away as the other side of the lake. The thin, white line at the base of the bill, forming a sideways V-shaped mark on the side of the face, was visible with 22X. There was another series of whitish lines on the side of the

face below and behind the eye, apparently plumes as part of the bird's breeding plumage. The eye color could not be seen, but the legs were a dark grayish color similar to the Double-crested Cormorants. The cormorant stayed in view for the next hour, leaving the sandbar at around 6:00 P.M., after which it was not seen again that evening. Fortunately, the Neotropic Cormorant was most cooperative, allowing all interested birders the chance to see it. The cormorant kept a tight schedule similar to what it had on the day I found it. Apparently it never showed up on the lake before about 9:00 A.M., and was never seen on the lake after about 6:00 P.M. On several occasions the bird was seen flying south from the lake in the evening. At the time of this writing, the lake was being used by about 50–60 Double-crested Cormorants during the day. The flock did not roost on the lake at night, but could be seen arriving from the south in the mid-morning hours (around 7:00 A.M.), presumably coming from Pigs Eye Lake (where there was an active cormorant colony earlier in the season), but this speculation was not field checked. Presumably the Neotropic Cormorant also made these daily flights. The sand or mud bar on the southwest end of the lake was the best place to view the bird, but some observers apparently had success finding it perched in the trees on the east side of the lake with the Double-crested Cormorants. This was apparently an alternative loafing area for the cormorants when not feeding on the lake. The Neotropic Cormorant was seen through at least 4 August (fide Bob Janssen). I checked the lake on numerous occasions from 10–20 August, but the Neotropic Cormorant was not seen again. According to Kim Eckert, the occurrence of a Neotropic Cormorant was not totally unexpected in Minnesota. Although this species is normally native to only coastal Texas and Louisiana, there are records from South Dakota, Illinois, and Nebraska, and apparently several possibly correct Minnesota sightings (***The Loon*** 59:18). A possible explanation for the occurrence in Minnesota of an adult Neotropic Cormorant in breeding plumage is post-breeding dispersal. Many species, such as herons, egrets, pelicans, and even eagles are known to wander far northward after the breeding season, especially coastal species moving farther north along the coast. **Karl Bardon, 1430 100th Ave. N.W. #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**

LAUGHING GULL IN PIPESTONE COUNTY — Bob Janssen phoned me at about 8:00 P.M. on 28 June 1992 to report the sighting of a Laughing Gull at the sewage ponds in Ruthton, Pipestone County. My wife and I drove out almost at once and arrived at the ponds in good light before 9:00 P.M. There were about 25 Ring-billed Gulls resting on the roadway between the ponds. With them was one gull with a black head. Viewed at about 50 yards through a 25X scope it proved to be a Laughing Gull. Almost as large as the

Laughing Gull, 30 June 1992, Ruthton, Pipestone County. Photo by Peder Svingen.

Ring-billed Gulls, it had a black head and solidly black primaries and uniformly dark gray mantle. The rear-most scapulars were tipped with white. Its beak, dark, almost dead black-tipped, was deep red at the base. Its dark eye with white crescents above and below making an interrupted ring was well noted. We watched it for about ten minutes and then it took off with the Ring-bills and flew to the northwest. We noted the white trailing edge of the wing and the all white rump and tail. We could make out no color on the legs, but they were quite dark. Unfortunately, the bird was never quite close enough to allow a good photograph even with a 300mm lens. (A few days earlier I had driven past these ponds on my way to and from Sioux Falls. I noted the black head of one gull but assumed it to be a Franklin's. Just goes to show you that one should investigate all possibilities and assume nothing!) **Henry Kyllingstad, 205 S. 6th St., Marshall, MN 56258.**
Editor's Note: The Laughing Gull was last seen at the Ruthton sewage ponds on 2 July 1992.

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE IN ROSEAU COUNTY — A Western Wood-Pewee was located at Hayes Lake State Park in Roseau County on 21 June 1992. I heard the bird when pulling into the contact station at the entrance to the park off Roseau County Road 4, and immediately recognized the call as this species from listening to bird tapes. The bird was easily located singing from the Jack Pines around the contact station, and I was able to walk up virtually underneath it and record its song. The bird was heard calling the classic Western Wood-Pewee vocalization, a slightly descending "pee-you" type note that had a distinctive burry quality to it, especially on the very emphatic first syllable. The bird alternated this call with a much stranger note that resembled the loud screech of a Swainson's Hawk. This call was slightly rising in tone, and had the same distinctive burry quality to as the typical call. Of the many Western Wood-Pewees that I heard in the Black Hills in early August 1992, none duplicated this second note (although could this be the note Kim Eckert describes as a rolling "pr-r-reet" whistle similar to one of the Say's Phoebe's calls? ***The Loon*** 61:148). The pewee was noticeably darker than an Eastern Wood-Pewee (although no Eastern Wood-Pewees were present for direct comparison); the dark coloration on its breast had a subtle, yellowish hue, and the thin, lighter stripe down the center of the breast recalled the look of an Olive-sided Flycatcher (I noted this characteristic without prior knowledge of it). The bird had no eye ring, strong wing bars, a pale base to the lower mandible of the relatively small bill, and I noted that the wingtips reached about midway down the undertail coverts when perched. In the 20 minutes that I watched the bird, it maintained a consistent territory only about 50m in diameter. Within the area, the pewee's song could be easily heard loud and clear. When I informed the park personnel in the contact station of the Western Wood-Pewee's presence, they stated that they had been hearing the strange bird for about a week, but could not identify it. The bird was singing from a stand of mature Jack Pine with an open understory. This habitat strongly resembles the Ponderosa Pine forest in which Western Wood-Pewees can be heard commonly in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Interestingly, this species also occurs in mature, open deciduous forest, such as cottonwoods along rivers, and this is the habitat it occupies in North Dakota and Manitoba, the closest regular breeding range to Roseau County. This is also the type of habitat used by the pair of Western Wood-Pewees which nested at Pelan Park in Roseau County in 1977–78 (***The Loon*** 49:169–170). The pewee was heard again on 24 June by Abby Powell, who was doing a survey of the birds in the park at the time, but the people who came up to look for it over the weekend could not relocate it. However, Jon Peterson and Ann and Elaine Mckenzie located the bird on 28 June 1992. They stated that the bird had moved closer to the ranger station, although it was moving around throughout the area. When they observed the bird at 9:00 A.M., it was apparently singing much less than it had been previously when I heard the bird in mid-day. This is the sixth record of this accidental species in Minnesota. Of the four other records beside the Pelan Park birds, three of them were migrants heard for a day only in August or September, while the fourth was a bird heard on 22 June 1989 at the Sax Zim bog in St. Louis County. **Karl Bardon, 1430 100th Ave. N.W. #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**

PURPOSE OF THE MOU

The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union is an organization of both professionals and amateurs interested in birds. We foster the study of birds; we aim to create and increase public interest in birds; and to promote the preservation of birdlife and its natural habitat.

We carry out these aims: through the publishing of a magazine, ***The Loon***; sponsoring and encouraging the preservation of natural areas; conducting field trips; and holding seminars where research reports, unusual observations and conservation discussions are presented. We are supported by dues from individual members and affiliated clubs and by special gifts. The MOU officers wish to point out to those interested in bird conservation that any or all phases of the MOU program could be expanded significantly with gifts, memorials or bequests willed to the organization.

SUGGESTIONS TO AUTHORS

The editors of *The Loon* invite you to submit articles, shorter "Notes of Interest," and color or black/white photos. Photos should be preferably 5x7 in size. Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced and on one side of sheet with generous margins. Notes of Interest should be generally less than two typewritten pages double-spaced. Whenever possible, include a copy of your manuscript on a 3½ inch MS/DOS or Macintosh disk saved in text (ASCII) file format. If reprints are desired, the author should so specify indicating the number required. A price quotation on reprints will be sent upon receipt of information.

Club information and announcements of general interest should be sent to the Newsletter editor. See inside front cover. Bird-sighting reports for "The Season" should be sent promptly at the end of February, May, July and November to Peder Svingen. See inside front cover.

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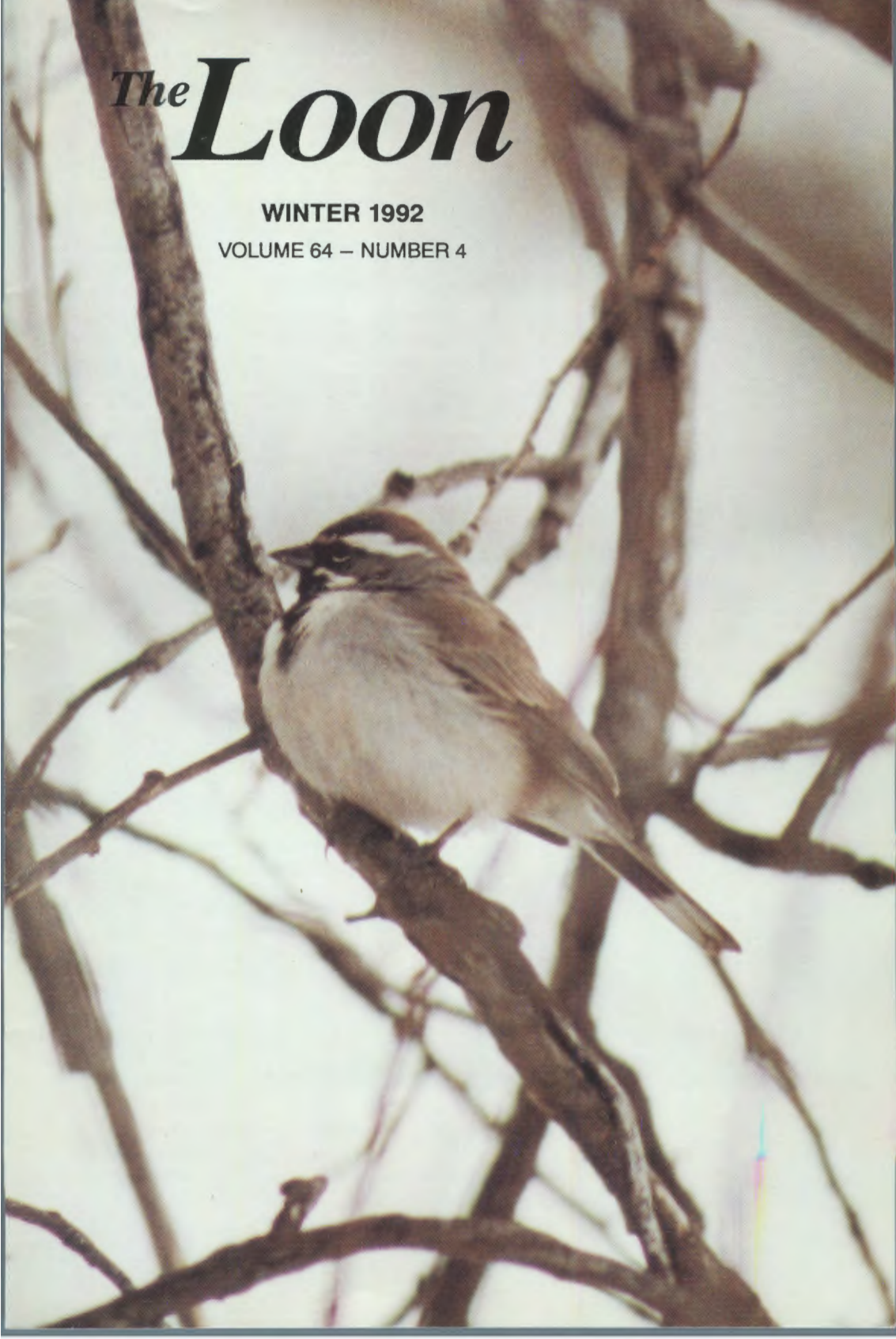

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Observations on a November 1992 Meeker County Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Parker Backstrom

On 5 November 1992 I traveled with Kim Risen to Meeker County, Minnesota to make observations on a hummingbird that had been visiting a feeder in the town of Dassel since mid-October. Because of the late date (considerably past the normal departure period for Ruby-throated Hummingbird) I felt it possible that the bird could be a vagrant species and therefore deserved detailed study. The following is a synopsis of my field notes and sketches from observations on 5 and 7 November, followed by an examination of the evidence I used to identify this late-season hummingbird.

Physical Description

The bird appeared "normal" hummingbird size. The bill was all dark, decurved only slightly toward the tip and relatively short, about the length of the head. The forehead (the feathering above the bill) was an iridescent bronze-green. The crown and nape were iridescent green. The back, rump, and uppertail coverts were iridescent green as well, although the back showed a distinctly blue cast under certain conditions.

The bird had a rather plain face. The eyes were dark and the lores were dark. There was a relatively small, white post-ocular spot that had a vertical orientation with the posterior being rather straight-edged. Under close observation there appeared to be one row of slightly paler feathers just above the eye, forming a weak partial superciliary. The area behind the eye was iridescent green but with very fine white feather edgings that suggested fresh feathering in this area. This gave the bird the appearance of slightly paler lower cheeks.

The ground color of the throat was white. There were four areas on the throat that contained iridescent gorget feathers. The largest and most obvious such feathering was on the lower left side of the throat (Fig. 1). The shape and extent of this patch of gorget feathers led me to believe that it would form the lower edge and left corner of what would become a full gorget. The second largest patch of gorget feathers was centered on the bottom middle of the throat. It was made up of several overlapping feathers in its center with the bottom edge of a feather on either side appearing as upturned "hooks" protruding outward from the bottom of the patch. It appeared that this patch would also define the bottom edge of the gorget. The third patch of gorget feathers was centered directly above the second patch, about halfway between the second patch and the bill. It was comprised of three or four smaller feathers in the shape of a broad, squat triangle. The fourth area of gorget was in the lower right corner of the throat — a single feather, perhaps two. I got repeated looks at the iridescent color(s) of these gorget feathers. To my eye, the color was a slightly orange, ruby red that often showed gold or even vibrant lime yellow-green at certain angles. The rest of the throat had a spotted appearance due to the rays of dark-centered, white feathers that ran along the length of the throat. These "spots" (actually crescents) were largest toward the bottom of the throat, smallest on the chin. They were boldest and most uniform toward the center of the throat and fewer toward the malar line showing "cleaner" white in those areas.

The area of the upper breast directly below the throat was clear white or off-white. This band extended just a bit onto the sides of the neck. The flanks were a diffuse dull green on off-white. The upper edges of the green flanks projected across the breast, becoming more diffuse and tinged with gray. This effect set off the cleaner band across the upper breast a bit. The center of the breast and the belly were white or off-white tinged just slightly with pale gray and perhaps a tiny bit of buff. I never did get a good look at the vent but got the impression that it was white. The undertail coverts were white or off-white, smudged with pale gray. The feet were all dark.

Through close scrutiny of the bird as it perched on the feeder, I took notes and made

sketches of the wings and tail (Fig. 2 and 3). Frequent reference to these sketches is recommended. The primary flight feathers are referred to as "P" and are numbered in standard fashion from P10, the outermost (longest) primary, through P1, the innermost (shortest) primary. The rectrices are referred to as "R" and are numbered R5, the outermost rectrix, through R3, the innermost.

The primary and secondary flight feathers were pale brown with "clean" edges; the edges were not ragged or split. All primaries were present. The tip of P10 was neatly rounded in an oblong curve and extended just slightly beyond the rounded tip of P9 (Fig. 2). The projection of P9, P8 and P7 beyond the tip of each overlaying primary was nearly equal to the width of each of those feathers. Primaries 10 through 7 were roughly the same width. However, each of those primaries became slightly more attenuated at the tip until the angle along the tip of the inner web of P7 was essentially a straight edge. Primaries 6 through 1 showed a drastic change in shape and reduction in size. This effect was especially noticeable in P6 which had a very pointed shape to the tip. The shaft (rachis) of that feather followed very closely the outer edge of the feather forming a relatively large inner web and a very narrow, almost non-existent outer web. Each tip of P5 through P1 was slightly notched, this effect being most noticeable in P5 and P4.

Approximately seven secondary flight feathers were visible while the bird perched at the feeder. Most were roughly square-ended and all were clean-edged. Two or three alula feathers were visible. The wing coverts were iridescent green.

The tail was atypical in that it was missing R1 and R2 on both sides of the tail. Rectrices 5 and 4 were tipped relatively broadly with white; this area of white was larger on R5 (Fig. 3). There may have been a very slight amount of white on the tip of the inner web of R3 on the left side; I did not get even the slightest suggestion of this effect on R3 on the right side. The tip of R3 (left side) appeared slightly notched which might suggest the loss of a white tip through feather wear. Roughly the middle two-fourths of R5 was black, the basal one-fourth was iridescent green and the distal < one-fourth comprised the white tip. Aside from the white tip, roughly the distal two-thirds of R4 was black, again based with green. The outer three-fourths of R3 was black with a green base. The majority of the dorsal surface of R3, including the black and green inner web of that feather, was visible as the bird perched with its back to me, confirming the absence of R1 and R2 (which would have overlain the inner half of R3). It is unclear whether the innermost rectrices were completely gone or whether regrowth was simply not visible below the edges of the uppertail coverts. I heard no vocalizations and no wing noise (i.e. no trill or "zing" from the wings in flight).

I spent a majority of the time on 5 November observing the bird at its rest perches away from the feeder, while on 7 November I studied the bird as it perched while feeding. Behaviorally, the bird appeared healthy, active and alert. Generally, the bird would fly in from one of two main perches (one in a willow tree and one on a cut-off branch stub in a Red Cedar tree) and land on the lines of a square clothes-drying rack from which the feeder hung at the rear of the house. After a period of time the bird would fly down and land on the foot perch in front of one of four plastic flowers and begin feeding. These feeding visits lasted from about thirty seconds to about two minutes before the bird darted off again. While perched in its normal posture it moved its head from side to side in an alert manner. On several occasions I saw it take flight and dart about, catching very small falling snowflakes in its bill, a behavior that lasted from five to ten seconds.

On 5 November the weather was in the upper 20s with a breeze and a cold windchill. The temperature was slightly warmer on 7 November and winds were calm. Skies were overcast on both days with periods of very light snow flurries. The distances involved were from 15 to 35 feet. I used a Kowa TSN-4 telescope with a 30X wide angle lens almost exclusively during my observations. The bird was not seen after 7 November.

Discussion

Any late October or November hummingbird in Minnesota offers the possibility of a vagrant species. Through my experience with two out-of-season hummingbirds in Minnesota over the past year, the first being

Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 4 November 1992, Dassel, Meeker County. Photo by Anthony Hertzel.

an adult Anna's Hummingbird in Grand Marais, Cook County in late November of 1991 (Hoffman 1991), it seems clear that in-depth research on female and immature hummingbird plumages and intense scrutiny of any such bird is imperative if one is to pin down an identification correctly.

The first step in the process of identifying the Meeker County bird is to try to rule out possible species, coupled with an attempt to sex and age the bird. Aside from the regular Ruby-throated Hummingbird, there are a number of other species that have a reasonable chance of appearing in Minnesota. The most realistic possibilities are Black-chinned, Rufous, Broad-tailed, Anna's and Magnificent Hummingbirds (two of these species, Black-chinned and Broad-tailed, have never been recorded in Minnesota but might arguably be considered overdue here.) From the outward appearance of the Meeker County bird it was possible to safely eliminate both sexes of Magnificent Hummingbird on size alone. The lack of obvious orange or orange-buff in any part of the plumage, especially on the flanks and in the basal tail, allowed me to rule out both sexes of Rufous Hummingbird and female Broad-tailed Hummingbird. Neither female Ruby-throated or female Black-chinned shows iridescent gorget feathers of any kind and can therefore be ruled out. The fact that scarlet or ruby red gorget feathers were present eliminated male Black-chinned Hummingbird, which would show black and/or violet gorget coloration. Because the bird had white tips on at least some of the tail feathers, I could rule out adult male Ruby-throated, adult male Broad-tailed and adult male Anna's Hummingbirds, none of which show white in their tail feathers. This process of elimination quickly reduced the pool of possibilities down to five: immature male Ruby-throated, immature male Broad-tailed, immature male Anna's, immature female Anna's, or adult female Anna's. At this point it became necessary to look beyond the obvious physical characteristics of the bird and begin to focus on more subtle, harder to see physical and structural characteristics.

On several occasions I was able to study well the white tips of the outermost rectrices, especially R5. They were especially easy to see from below as the bird sat on its rest perch. The rachis of R5 was dark, down to the point where the white tips began. At that point the rachis became white as well; the tip of R5 (and R4) was entirely white. According to a paper by William Baltosser (1987) male Anna's Hummingbirds of all ages show a dark rachis bisecting the tips of R5 and R4. This suggests the Meeker County bird was not an immature male Anna's.

Another conclusive piece of evidence had to do with the size and structure of the primary flight feathers. As daunting as the task of studying the shape of the primaries on a hummingbird sounds, with good optics, the ability to get relatively close to the bird and a good amount of patience, it is possible to differentiate the genus *Archilochus* (e.g. Ruby-throated Hummingbird) from the genus *Calypte* (e.g. Anna's Hummingbird) in the field by using this characteristic. Baltosser points out that in *Calypte* the width of the inner primaries (P6 through P1) is equal to or greater than the width of the outer primaries (P7 through P10). This character can be seen well in the photograph of a female Anna's sitting on a nest on page 112 of Tyrell & Tyrell (1985). Close examination of the Meeker County bird's wings determined a marked difference between the width of the inner primaries and that of the outer primaries (Fig. 2). Primary 6 through P1 were roughly half the width of P7 through P9 (P10 being slightly more narrow than the other three outer primaries). This narrowing of primaries corresponds to the description of *Archilochus* given by Baltosser. This character conclusively eliminates both sexes of Anna's Hummingbird. The color of the Meeker County hummingbird's gorget also did not match the unique wine or rose colored gorget of Anna's (a more subjective feature; it should be mentioned that unlike most species of North American hummingbirds, the presence of a gorget does not necessarily rule out female Anna's which can have up to a moderately-sized gorget.)

This critical examination leaves just two candidates to consider: immature male Ruby-throated Hummingbird and immature male Broad-tailed Hummingbird. Lacking the direct comparative field experience with Broad-tailed that would be needed to differentiate them, I relied more upon the differences noted in general references and field guides. One main difference I did examine first-hand had to do with the shape of the

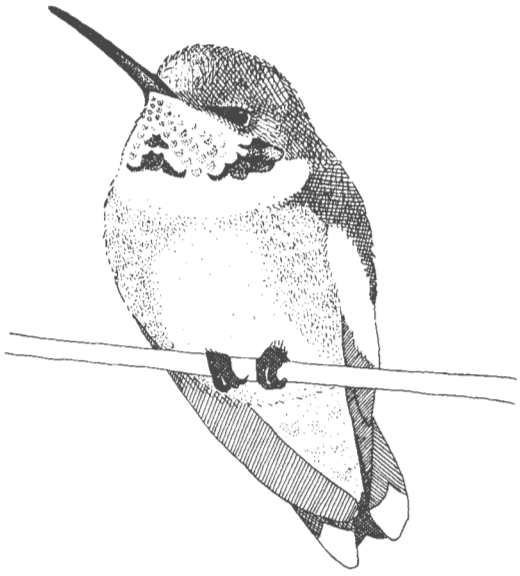

Fig. 1. Sketch of the Meeker County Ruby-throated Hummingbird, showing the extent and pattern of the gorget. The white patch covering the base of the wing was formed by normally hidden, sub-contour ("down") feathers that the bird had "fluffed up".

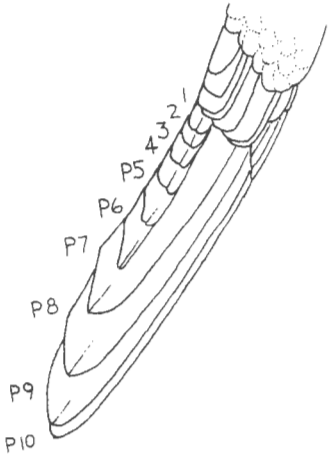

Fig. 2. Dorsal surface of the right wing showing size and shape of the primary (P) flight feathers.

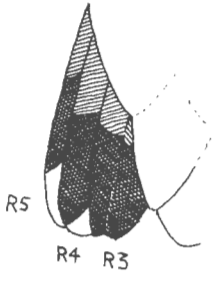

Fig. 3. Dorsal surface of the left side of the tail showing color pattern and shape. Note missing rectrices (R) 1 and 2. All sketches drawn from life.

tip of P10. Except during late-summer molt, the wings of male Broad-tailed Hummingbirds produce a distinctive metallic trill (Farrand 1983). This sound is produced by the split or slotted tip of P10 and is easily heard when in the presence of males of this species in flight. On the Meeker County bird the tip of P10 was cleanly round-tipped (Fig. 2) and I heard no such wing noise despite the bird flying closely by on a number of occasions. Further evidence against Broad-tailed came from a close look at the tail. Immature Broad-taileds show at least some rufous coloration at the base of the outer rectrices, a characteristic that was used to identify Missouri's first record of this species (Peterjohn 1987). The Meeker County bird did not show any rufous in the tail. On a more subjective level, as the name suggests, the tail of the Broad-tailed Hummingbird is relatively wider, appearing larger than the tail of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird. I didn't note the tail being noticeably large or broad but did note that the tail shape was affected by the missing rectrices.

Critical examination of the hummingbird seen in Dassel, Meeker County, Minnesota between 16 October and 7 November 1992, determined with little doubt that the bird was an immature male Ruby-throated Hummingbird. The record is the latest for this species in the state (Janssen 1987). This identification is further bolstered by a reference in Baltosser (1987). He describes the very pointed shape of P6 and the virtual non-existence of an outer web on that feather as both being characters of male Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

Despite feeling confident about the identification, there are several characters on the Meeker County bird that contradict Baltosser about sub-adult Ruby-throated Hummingbird. He states that "at least many" of the inner six primaries of both sexes of sub-adult Ruby-throateds are "deeply notched in the majority" of birds. Although the tips of P5 through P1 were slightly emarginated they did not come close to matching an illustration of "deeply notched" inner primaries in Baltosser's paper. He also states that the white at the tip of R3 "averages between 3.29mm and 4.53mm in sub-adult male Ruby-throateds (although the range included a white tip as small as 0.01mm). As mentioned in my description, the bird I observed did not have detectable white at the tip of R3 (see the description for comments on possible feather wear). Finally, Baltosser states that >95% of sub-adult male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds have "one or two" metallic reddish/gold feathers present on the throat. It is unclear whether this is an average number or a minimum number. The Meeker County bird had considerably more than one or two such gorget feathers present (Fig. 1). It is unclear at what time of year the specimens Baltosser used were collected or from where they were collected. These factors could have affected his description of sub-adult male Ruby-throated Hummingbird throat pattern, depending upon the advancement of molt in the collected specimens in relation to the time of year and the geographic location. The presence of several groups or patches of metallic reddish/gold gorget feathers may be normal for a sub-adult Ruby-throated Hummingbird in November. Because the species should be at or near its wintering grounds in and near Mexico and Central America by November, this plumage may only very rarely be encountered in the United States.

I would like to acknowledge the enthusiasm and cooperation extended by Bill and Michelle Marschall, to who's feeder the Ruby-throated Hummingbird was coming. I would also like to thank Peder Svingen and Bruce Fall for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

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A Record Invasion of Northern Owls
Fall-Winter 1991-1992

Kim R. Eckert

From late Fall 1991 through early Spring 1992, there was an unprecedented influx of three species of northern owls in Minnesota, all of which were reported in record numbers: Great Gray Owl (*Strix nebulosa*), Northern Hawk Owl (*Surnia ulula*), and Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*). These three species were also recorded in unusually high numbers in other states and Canadian provinces at the same time. In addition, two other northern raptors — Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*) and Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*) — appeared in Minnesota during this season in higher than normal numbers.

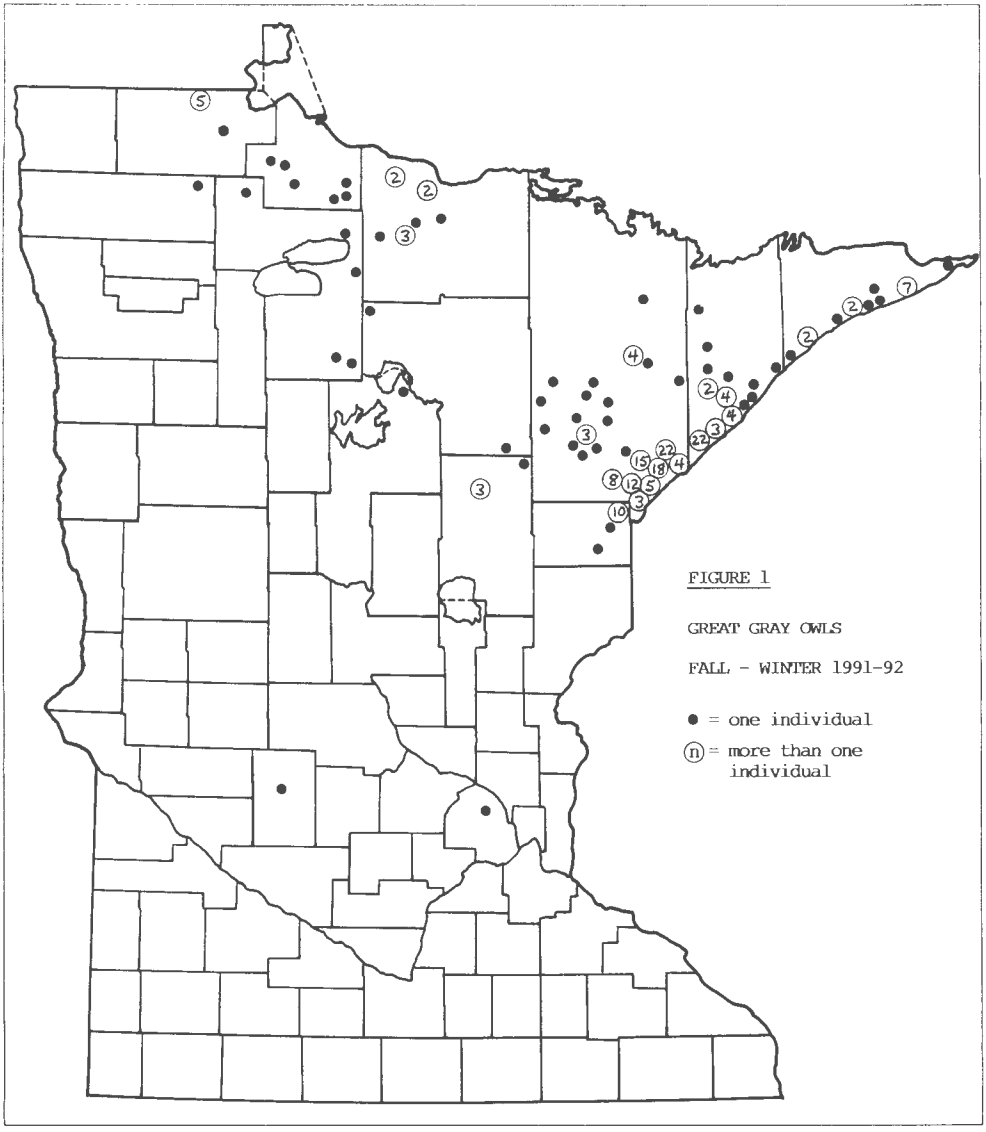
The total numbers of owls figured in this account represent what are considered to be separate individuals, with duplicate sightings of what are believed to be the same individuals not included. While it is possible that some owls were counted twice, this number is negligible when compared to the number of owls undetected or unreported. As with the previous winter raptor invasions I documented (Great Gray and Boreal Owls, 1977–78; Great Gray Owls, 1983–84; Great Gray Owls, 1988–89; and Great Gray and Northern Hawk Owls and Gyrfalcon, 1990–91), subjective decisions were involved in determining the numbers involved. However, since the totals are figured in the same, consistent way in each of these years, these numbers represent a comparable and valid measure of this season's invasion.

I. Great Gray Owl

From early November 1991 through late March 1992, a record number of Great Gray Owls appeared in Minnesota. In all, no fewer than 218 individuals were reported, and these are plotted on the accompanying map (Figure 1). This total, which does not include owls seen March – May in presumed nesting areas, is far higher than the previous high of 134 recorded during the 1990–91 season and documented in ***The Loon*** 63:163–167. There were also considerable movements of Great Grays in the state in 1983–84 (122 individuals; ***The Loon*** 56:143–147), and in 1988–89 (115 individuals; ***The Loon*** 61:115–117). It is curious to note, therefore, that the three largest Great Gray invasions on record have occurred in the past four years.

The first Great Gray considered to be a part of this influx was reported on 8 November near Zim in St. Louis Co. There were two other early November reports, and by the end of that month about 30 individuals had been reported. But the invasion began in earnest during December when about 140 Great Grays were first seen, with reports of owls becoming especially more frequent during the last third of the month. During January and February, about 40 new individuals were recorded, and during these months Great Grays were still being seen consistently in mostly steady numbers, although they were not as common as they had been in December. Around the first of March, however, possibly as the result of warmer than normal weather then, Great Grays suddenly and almost entirely seemed to disappear in the state. Only four individuals were reported in late March, with the last owl recorded as part of this invasion seen on 30 March in Rice Lake Township just north of Duluth.

As shown on the map, Great Grays were concentrated especially in the Duluth – Two Harbors vicinity, in southeastern St. Louis Co. and the adjacent southwestern corner of Lake Co. — about half of all the owls recorded in the state were in this relatively small area. Good numbers were also found farther northeast along the North Shore of Lake Superior, in the Sax-Zim Bog area of St. Louis Co. northwest of Duluth, and in the so-called "Big Bog" country north of the Red Lakes. Curiously, there were relatively few owls found in northern Aitkin Co., an area where Great Grays had been well represented during the three previous



invasion winters and where the species traditionally nests. In spite of the unprecedented numbers involved in this influx, only two Great Grays were reported in southern Minnesota; in late December – early January in Maple Grove, Hennepin Co.; and in late February at Long Lake, Kandiyohi Co. (***The Loon*** 64:126–127).

As previously mentioned, the peak of this season's invasion occurred in late December. The clearest examples of this were on 22 and 24 December when a composite total of 31 separate individuals were seen each day by birders in the Duluth – Two Harbors area. During a three-hour period on the 22nd, I saw 22 of these owls (Jim Lind and Dudley Edmondson saw nine others that I missed), and on the 24th, Mike Hendrickson and I improved on this by finding 23 Great Grays in only two hours (with Dudley seeing eight that we missed).

Only three dead Great Grays were reported, all probably as a result of collisions with vehicles. This is a lower percentage of

the overall total (1.4%) than in previous winter invasions; the 1977–78 influx of 58 owls included 14 dead individuals, 24.1% of the total (***The Loon*** 50:63–68). Since there were no reports of owls found weakened or dead from starvation, it is safe to assume that small mammal populations were high in those areas where Great Grays were concentrated. Conversely, it is possible that prey was scarce in northern Aitkin Co. since so few owls were seen in that heavily birded area. (The absence of Great Grays in other areas of northeastern Minnesota may have been due to the lack of observers rather than the lack of small mammals.) Dave Evans (pers. comm.) reported that the 17 Great Grays he banded last winter were all apparently healthy and of adequate weight.

Except for a period of warmer temperatures in late February – early March which seemed to result in the exodus of many Great Grays from the state, the weather apparently had little effect on this season's invasion. While there was a record-breaking snowfall 31 October – 2 November, this did not signal the influx of Great Grays, which were not reported to any significant extent until December. During most of the winter, temperatures were milder than normal and snowfall was relatively light to moderate, so that owls were generally not stressed by severe cold and not hampered by deep snows while hunting. It is also noteworthy that the record number of owls during the winter apparently did not result in an increase of Great Grays during the spring – summer nesting season. If anything, the species was less common than normal then. Warren Nelson (pers. comm.) knew of few, if any, sightings in traditional nesting areas in Aitkin Co., and Robert Nero of Winnipeg (pers. comm.) reported a similar scarcity in southern Manitoba.

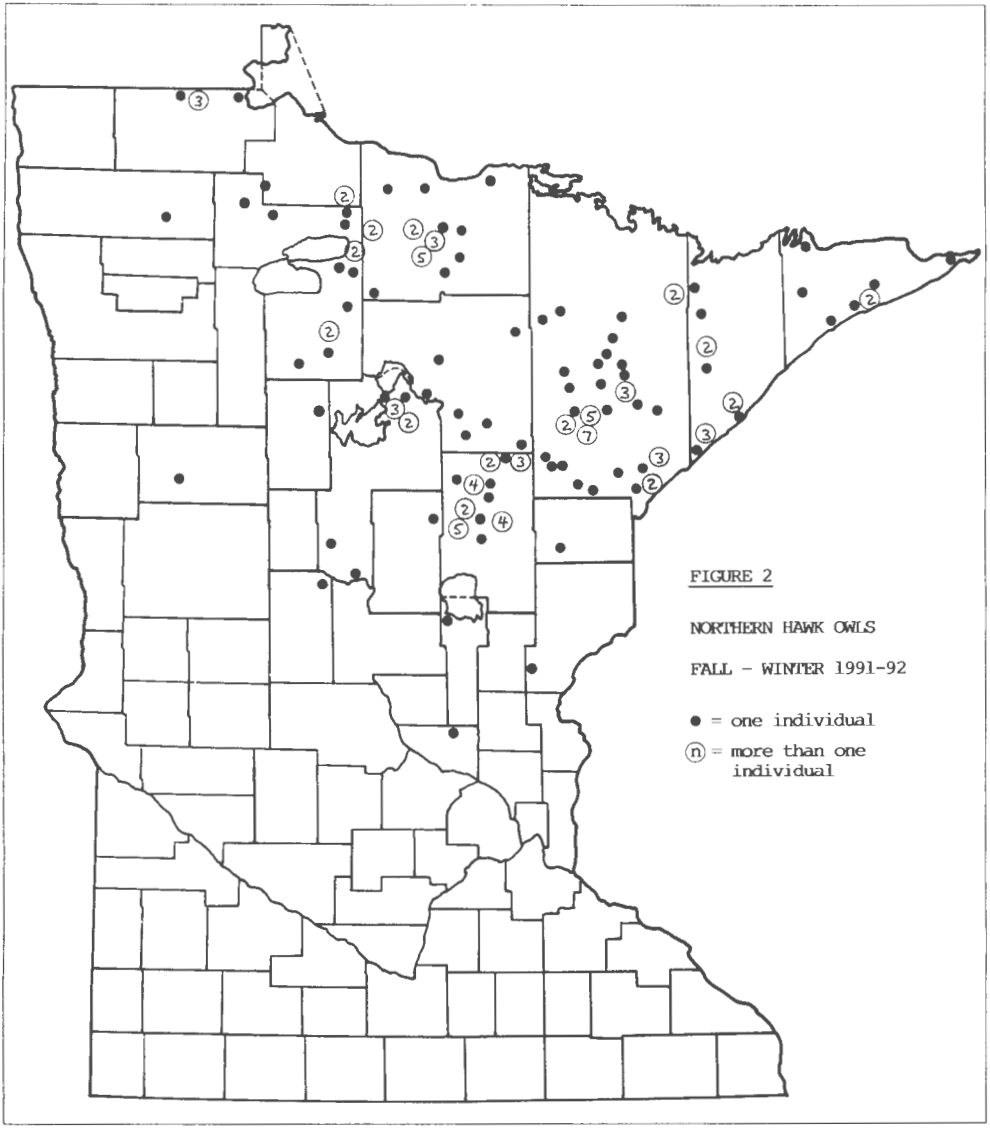
According to the account of the winter 1991–92 season in *American Birds* (Vol. 46, No. 2), Great Gray Owl numbers were also exceptional in Michigan, Ontario, and Quebec. The 55 individuals in Michigan represent a record, with all of these seen in the Sault Ste. Marie area; on 2 February, R. Baetsen (pers. comm.) reported that no fewer than 11 individuals could be seen from one location! The total of 234 individuals in Ontario is surprisingly not a record, since a remarkable 432 had been counted there in 1983–84. The 60 owls reported in Quebec represent one of their best invasions, although this total is far below their record of 300 found in 1983–84. British Columbia also recorded more Great Grays than normal, and the two in New York and one in Pennsylvania were also significant; however, it is surprising that only two were found in Wisconsin, both of these in Douglas Co. in the northwestern corner of the state.

II. Northern Hawk Owl

From mid-October 1991 until mid-May 1992, there was also an unprecedented number of Northern Hawk Owls recorded in Minnesota. As shown on the accompanying map (Figure 2), 159 individuals were reported; additionally, and not included in this total, was a pair which attempted to nest near Embarrass in northern St. Louis Co. The first owl of the season was found on 11 October about 30 miles north of Two Harbors along Lake Co. Rd. 2, and the last was one reported in mid-May near Kettle River in Carlton Co.

After the 11 October record cited above, there were seven hawk owls reported in late October, and by the end of November over 80 individuals, about half the season total, had been reported. Clearly, there was an especially sudden influx of owls in the four-day period, 8–11 November, when at least 40 individuals were discovered. During December, about 30 owls were added to the total, and about the same number were first reported during the following two-month period. Although new owls were not discovered from December through February as often as they had been in November, the species was steadily being reported in good numbers as observers continued to relocate many of the owls previously recorded. By mid-March, the season's invasion was mostly over, with only a few scattered individuals still being seen. Besides the mid-May record in Carlton Co., the latest lingering owls were noted on 24 April at Ely, St. Louis Co., and on 5 May in northern Aitkin Co.

The map of Northern Hawk Owl records shows that this species was more evenly distributed in the northern third of the state than were Great Grays. There were, however, three areas where Hawk Owls were especially common: in the Big Bog country



east of the Red Lakes, especially in Koochiching Co.; in the northern half of Aitkin Co., where Great Grays had been unexpectedly scarce; and in central St. Louis Co., especially in the Sax-Zim Bog area. Only two owls were found in the southern half of Minnesota: in southeastern Pine Co. near Grasston, early December – late January; and unexpectedly early at Sherburne N.W.R. in Sherburne Co., 31 October – 9 November.

There were three noteworthy one-day counts of hawk owls that exemplified the extent of this season's influx. On 10 November, Bill Tefft and Steve Schon saw no fewer than 11 individuals in St. Louis Co., ten of these in the Sax-Zim Bog area, plus one at Ely. Warren Nelson saw nine in northern Aitkin Co. on 16 November, and nine individuals were also recorded 16 December on the Sax-Zim Christmas Bird Count, which probably represents an all-time North American C.B.C. record.

As was the case with Great Gray Owls, mortality among Northern Hawk Owls was

low; only one was found dead and two others were picked up injured, presumably as a result of collisions with vehicles. Like Great Grays, therefore, Northern Hawk Owls seemed to have little difficulties with weather conditions or with finding prey; in addition to small mammals, birds are also preyed upon, making hawk owls less vulnerable than Great Grays when small mammal populations crash and less likely to stage invasions. Of the six individuals banded by Dave Evans (pers. comm.), all were in good physical condition.

There are only two previously documented Northern Hawk Owl invasions in Minnesota, although there are indications of invasion winters occurring in the late 1800s and early 1900s. There was a modest influx involving 16 individuals in 1990–91, documented in ***The Loon*** 63:163–167. This article also summarizes the more significant invasion of 1962–63 when the season total was originally reported as "136 Hawk-Owls, with minimal duplication of records" (*The Flicker* 35:54). However, if one reads the list of records for that season (*The Flicker* 34:116–117, 35:20 and 35:54), a considerable number of duplicate records actually was included in the total, and my reading of these records suggests that perhaps as few as 47 individuals were present, not 136. In *The Birds of Minnesota* (Vol. I, p. 616), Roberts mentions other winters with more Minnesota hawk owl records than normal, with anecdotal evidence from Roseau Co. and the North Shore of Lake Superior, suggesting that the 1926–27 season was the best of these years.

The previously mentioned *American Birds* summary of the winter 1991–92 season notes that Northern Hawk Owls also appeared in record numbers in Manitoba, where a total of 135 were banded, with no fewer than 23 individuals seen on 29 February (the season total of owls seen was not reported). Quebec also had a record year with about 100 individuals; as in Minnesota, most of these were reported by the end of November. Ontario (102 individuals), Michigan (27), Wisconsin (4), North Dakota (3), British Columbia, New York, and Maine also saw significant invasions.

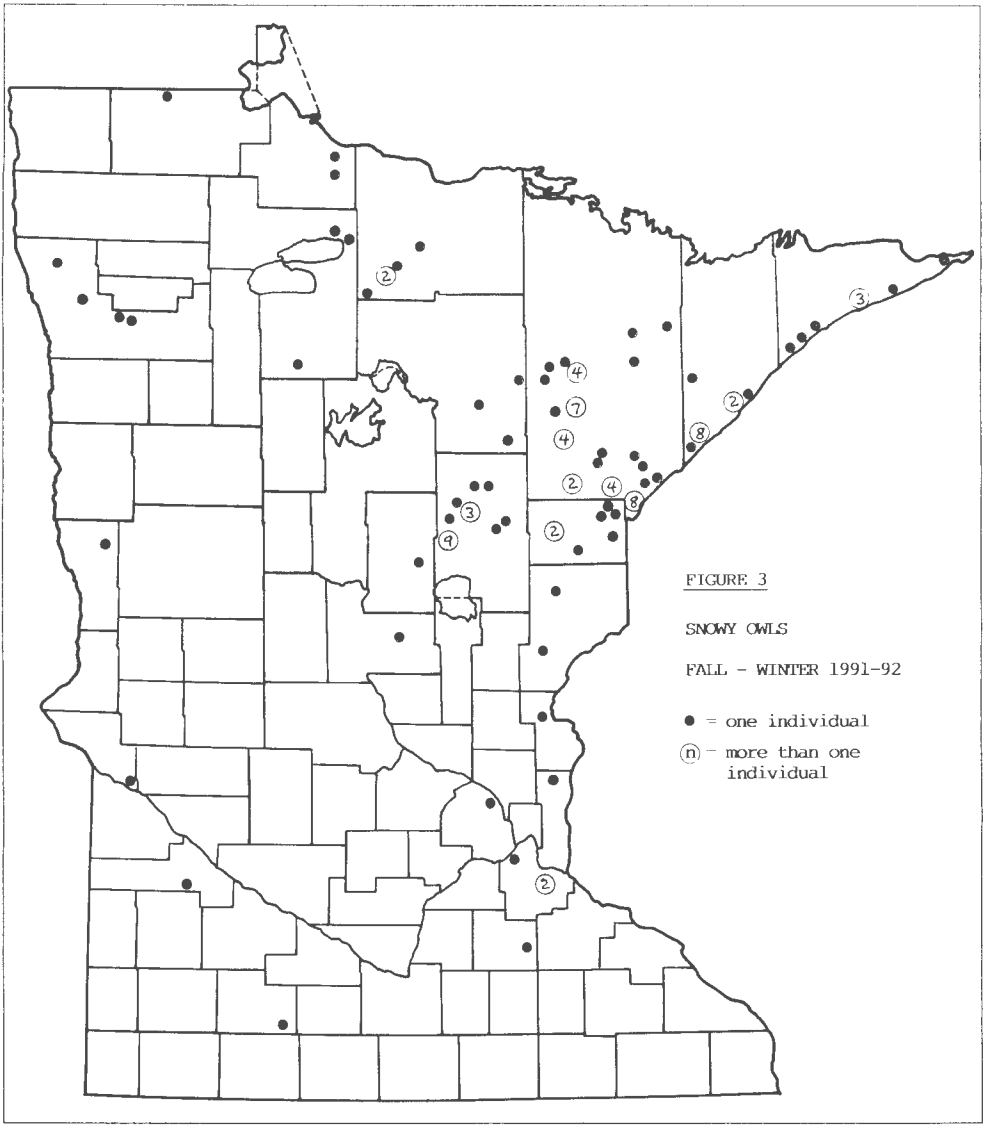
III. Snowy Owl

Beginning in late October 1991 and continuing into mid-June 1992, a record number of Snowy Owls was also reported in the state. A total of 121 individuals was found, and their locations are shown on the accompanying map (Figure 3). The first owl reported was on 24 October near Marcoux in Polk Co., and the last was an adult male photographed on 14 June in Sandnes Township, Yellow Medicine Co. (***The Loon*** 64:172).

Unlike the Great Gray and Northern Hawk Owls, there was no particular period when Snowy Owl reports were especially frequent, nor were there any significant one-day counts from any one area. After the lone October record, there were about 25 Snowys first seen in November, about 45 new individuals reported in December, 20 in January, and ten were first recorded in February. Only a few owls were still being seen by mid-March; in Aitkin Co., where the species was especially common, only one individual was still present as of 8 March. There were four late April reports, and the only May record was of one lingering in the Duluth harbor area until 13 May.

As shown on the map, Snowy Owls were more widely distributed in the state than the other two owls, although their distribution was somewhat similar to that of the Hawk Owl, with similar concentrations in Aitkin Co. and in the Sax-Zim Bog area. Snowys were also especially common in the Duluth – Two Harbors vicinity (Dave Evans banded a record 33 individuals in the Duluth – Superior harbor area, most of these on the Superior side), but unlike the other two species, there were no significant numbers north or east of the Red Lakes. As might be expected, several Snowys turned up in the southern half of Minnesota, where 12 individuals were found, with the most southerly record in southeastern Cottonwood Co. from 1 February until 4 April. Curiously, however, there were relatively few Snowys reported in northwestern and west central Minnesota, although this may only be a result of low observer coverage.

Only three Snowy Owls were found dead, one of these hit by a car, and the other two collided with trains in Two Harbors. Like Great Grays and hawk owls, Snowys presumably had no weather related difficulties, with prey apparently in good supply and easy to find, since, like the other two owls,



many Snowys remained at the same location for several days or weeks. However, in the Duluth – Superior harbor area where a few traditionally winter each year, most of the 33 Snowys banded by Dave Evans (pers. comm.) were only transients that did not establish winter hunting territories.

One of these banded individuals, with wing tag #89T, had an especially interesting and well-documented winter. It was banded in Superior, Wis., on 8 December 1991 and last seen there on 27 December. On 5 January 1992, #89T was seen near Esko, Carlton Co., about 15 miles west of where it was banded, and on 12 January it turned up about five miles farther west at Cloquet. Finally, this individual was relocated on 25 January in McGregor, Aitkin Co., about 60 miles west of Superior, where it was last reported on 1 February.

Although small mammals are an important part of the Snowy Owl's diet, like the Northern Hawk Owl, Snowys frequently prey on larger mammals and birds. There-

fore, they are less likely than Great Grays to "invade" south of the Canadian border in search of prey when population crashes of small mammals, including lemmings, occur on their breeding grounds. Before this season, the only fully documented Snowy Owl invasion in Minnesota occurred November – May 1966–67 (***The Loon*** 40:90–92). A total of 92 individuals was reported, with no fewer than 40 owls in the southern half of the state, far more than the 12 seen in 1991–92. (In all, 345 Snowy Owls were reported by 175 observers in that winter's survey of the "North Central States", i.e. North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa.) It is clear, however, there was also a significant Snowy Owl invasion in Minnesota and elsewhere during the winter of 1926–27, perhaps the largest ever. According to *The Birds of Minnesota* (Vol. I, p. 612), an estimated "five thousand were killed in Canada and the United States" that winter; within Minnesota, Roberts (p. 611) only cites information from one area: "between Oct. 25 and Apr. 9, Mr. Fryklund of Roseau had 68 Snowy Owls brought to him, nearly all having been caught in traps set for fur-bearing animals."

American Birds, in their previously cited report of the 1991–92 winter season, also reports that this Snowy Owl invasion was experienced widely in other states and provinces. Ontario recorded their best season ever, with at least 236 individuals, 224 of these in southern Ontario. Significantly high numbers were also reported from New York (about 100 individuals), New England (especially Massachusetts with 70+ owls), Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Quebec, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Lone Snowys were also found as far south as the District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, southern Illinois, Nebraska, and Kansas. Curiously, farther west, Snowy Owls were less common than usual, especially in Montana, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia.

IV. Other Species

As reported in previous accounts of Great Gray Owl invasions in Minnesota, other predators, especially Boreal and Barred Owls, also have a tendency to appear in higher numbers than normal at the same time. There was no evidence of a Barred Owl influx last winter, but there were eight Boreal Owls reported between October 1991 and March 1992. While eight individuals may not represent a true influx, four of them were found dead or injured, with such a high percentage characteristic of some other past Boreal Owl invasions. It is disappointing that more Borealss were not reported, especially since there was an invasion farther east, with record numbers in both Ontario and Quebec (*American Birds* 46:225).

Two other predators also staged invasions in the state last winter, just as they did during the Great Gray Owl influx of 1990–91. Northern Shrikes were even more common in 1991–92 than they were during the previous winter, with sightings in 56 counties and of 90 individuals on Christmas Bird Counts (***The Loon*** 64:151). More exciting was the record number of Gyrfalcons. In 1990–91, a record total of 14 individuals was documented (***The Loon*** 63:163–167), but that record was short-lived, since 15 Gyrs occurred between 7 November 1991 and 4 April 1992. Four of these were seen in Duluth, and no fewer than five individuals made it as far as southern Minnesota (in Anoka, Dakota, Olmsted, Chippewa, and Martin Counties); the other records were in Kittson, Roseau, Norman, Carlton, St. Louis (Ely) and Cook Counties. There was also a heavy flight of both Northern Shrikes and Gyrfalcons elsewhere last winter (*American Birds* 46:225); as expected, Gyrs received more coverage than the shrikes and especially made news in Newfoundland, New England, southern Quebec (30 individuals), Ontario (22), Michigan, and British Columbia.

I wish to acknowledge the dozens of observers who reported owl records last winter; certainly this account would not have been possible without their cooperation. I especially thank Karl Bardon, Mike Hendrickson, Warren Nelson, Peder Svingen, Bill Tefft, and Steve Wilson, who were especially helpful in providing records. Readers are also invited to send in any owl or Gyrfalcon records from last season not included in this article so that as complete an account as possible exists for this unprecedented invasion. **8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

One Hundred Species in January

Anthony Hertzel

Nineteen ninty-one was a big year for Big Years. That was the year that six somewhat compulsive Minnesota birders each spotted more than 300 species before the end of December. I was one of them. After finishing the year with 315 species, I was not quite ready to give up the fever pace that a Big Year instills. But I also wasn't willing to commit to another Big Year. I decided, instead, that a good way to ease out of the intensity might be to do a "Big Month." Because January was the next available month, and since I knew that it was a challenge to see 100 species in all the winter months combined, I thought that 100 birds before the end of January would be a difficult but attainable goal. That is what I set out to do. Maybe then I could follow up with a "Big Week."

Every New Year's Day, Ann Vogel and I make a trip to one of the northerly parts of the state for a short, winter birding vacation — Aitkin County, Ely or maybe the Gunflint Trail — just to start off the year together. Since this was an invasion year for winter owls, we decided to spend New Year's Day birding Duluth.

In the previous two years, the first bird on our lists had been Great Gray Owl. We were interested in trying for three in a row. So we drove up to Duluth the evening of the 31st, found a place to stay and planned our route for the morning. Great grays had been reported consistently in a variety of places, and there was one area northeast of town that also had a Northern Hawk Owl hanging around. This was where we would begin the day.

On the morning of the 1st, Ann and I were out and birding before daybreak. There is always the "danger" that the first bird of the year might be a House Sparrow or European Starling, so it was important to get out of town before sunrise. When the sky eventually lightened enough for us to actually see and identify something, Ann immediately pointed out an owl. She always does this. No one finds owls like Ann does. This time, however, before she could describe the bird's location, I found a second owl. Both turned out to be Great Grays, and we found eight more by ten o'clock that morning. With our first bird found and noted, we turned and almost immediately made Northern Hawk Owl the second. House Sparrows and European Starlings were now acceptable.

Saint Louis and Lake counties provided us with many of the more common winter birds, including Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, Northern Shrike, an Iceland Gull at Knife River, five Snowy Owls and hundreds of Bohemian Waxwings. We returned home with 22 species by the end of the day. Not a great number, but certainly a good start.

Birding in January is either a cold and dreary adventure or a cold and exciting adventure. It really helps to have a companion along. It's also good to have a reliable car with a good heater, lots of luck and a thermos of coffee. For the rest of the month I, at least, would have the thermos.

I returned to Duluth on the 4th to find a Gyrfalcon in the harbor and lucked into a White-winged Scoter at Stony Point. Mostly, though, I birded around the Twin Cities during the first week, and by the 5th of January I'd seen 51 species. I had added several good birds in the Minneapolis/Saint Paul area, including the Oldsquaw and Great Black-backed Gull that were wintering behind Holman Field. Also along the Mississippi there were four Great Blue Herons, ten additional species of waterfowl and a few Bald Eagles.

The most birds I had seen in any January was 69, so I knew by now I had a realistic chance of, at least, besting my record.

A trip out west on the 11th proved especially lucrative, turning up a Varied Thrush and Harlequin Duck in Fergus Falls, and a Prairie Falcon and a couple of Greater Prairie-Chickens near Rothsay. Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs were not hard to find, and the Peregrine Falcon that flew by on my return was certainly a bonus.

A trip through southeastern Minnesota with Peder Svingen on the 15th rewarded us with, among other species, Wild Turkey

and Tufted Titmouse. I remember this as a particularly cold day, with a sharp wind and no sun. We knew of a Northern Saw-whet Owl near Winona and decided to make that our eventual destination. Although we missed the Red-headed Woodpecker that Peder had seen just a few days before, we did find the owl roosting high in a tree along the edge of a popular ski trail. He was busy sleeping and nothing was going to wake him. Countless people would cruise by and never notice him, and the owl never bothered to notice them, either.

Occasionally, however, a heavily bundled skier would stop to see what we were doing. "What are you looking at?" the question would come. "There's an owl in this tree," we would say. "Where?" "Right there," I would say, pointing right there. "I don't see anything," the skier always responded, squinting to see better. Eventually, after more directions and pointing, the skier would lose interest, as if he hadn't expected this to be work. "Just point out the bird and let me go," he seemed to want to say, "I have lots more skiing to do." Eventually, he would leave, and soon we took one last look ourselves and left as well. The owl continued to sleep.

The remainder of the trip brought no more new birds and I began to wonder if 100 by the end of the month was realistic. I was at 86.

But just two days and two hundred miles later, in the Sax-Zim bog, I added Black-billed Magpie, Boreal Chickadee and a Golden-crowned Kinglet that was clinging to a feeder outside of Kelsey.

This Northern Hawk Owl, seen 1 January 1992 near Duluth, was my second species for the year.

Birding central Minnesota for the next week was fairly uneventful, though I was able to add Long-eared Owl, Cooper's Hawk and White-winged Crossbill.

By the time Ray Glassel and I went birding the morning of the 26th, my list up was to 95. We found three Common Snipe and a Fox Sparrow at the Bass Ponds. As we were heading home early that afternoon, he told me about a Brown-headed Cowbird he had heard about which was visiting a feeder in Vermilion Township. He had no interest in seeing the cowbird, but I still needed it for the month so he gave me directions and I headed southeast later that day. I found the feeder and the bird and, as an added bonus, stumbled upon a Common Grackle there as well. This put my total at 99.

Since I was close to Hastings, I decided to drive over to the duck pond there to see what might be around. Sure enough, I found a Canvasback in among the freezing Mallards.

One hundred birds, and I still had a few days to spare. I poured myself a celebratory cup of coffee.

I finished January with 105 birds, adding, among others, a Spruce Grouse in Lake County and a Hoary Redpoll in Cook County. Not surprisingly, although I continued to bird throughout the winter, I didn't see another new species until February 29th.

It wasn't until much later that I realized how much driving I had actually done. In all, I visited Lake and Cook counties twice, southeastern Minnesota four times, western Minnesota twice, Aitkin County three times, and the Duluth area four times. I made a total of 15 trips outside of the Minneapolis

White-winged Crossbills, 26 January 1992, Anoka County. Finding these birds put my total at 95 for the year.

area, which accounted for 72 of my 105 species.

Although not many people may have the time or inclination to try for 100 species before the end of January, it makes for an interesting goal and is something anyone can do. I've found that having some kind of project helps make winter birding more enjoyable and helps motivate me to go outside in -20° degree weather.

Thinking back over my list, the trips I took and my overall approach to birding the month, I found that there are many things a person can do to make it easier to reach this goal. I have composed a list of ten things I did which sort of define my method for this type of listing, whether Big Day, Big Month or Big Year.

1) Scout out the rarities ahead of time. One thing that made this easier for me, as stated earlier, was that I had just finished a Big Year. I was already aware of several rarities as well as numerous other very local species that were still around from December. Keeping track of these birds through the end of the year made it much easier to pick up birds that might normally be difficult to find. And since many of these had been around for a while, they were no longer being reported on the birding hotlines.

2) Call the birding hotline. I wouldn't have known about the Wood Duck wintering in Anoka if I had not called the Minnesota Rare Bird Alert the day before. And since you never know when these messages will be updated, it's best to call often. Also, the Duluth hotline often reports different sightings than does the state hotline, so I always called them both.

3) Let your birding buddies know. Let everyone else know, too. Bob Janssen, Ray Glassel, Peder Svingen and many others kept me informed on even the most common birds. Ray had a Common Grackle at his feeder (which I missed but found eleswhere), Denny Martin was following a Carolina Wren in Deephaven. Peder and I spent many hours birding southern Minnesota. All con-

tributed substantially to the goal and helped make it much easier.

4) Plan the longer trips to maximize the number of possible species. When a Varied Thrush showed up in Fergus Falls, I planned, after I made the trip out there, to also visit Rothsay to look for Greater Prairie-Chickens. I then drove the roads to the south hoping to find species which are a little easier to find out there. On that trip, instead of just adding the thrush and going home, I added seven species to the month's list.

5) Keep going back. I had to go to Black Dog Lake three times before I finally found the two Snow Geese that were wintering there. On that third trip I also discovered a Northern Pintail which had not previously been reported.

6) Make a list. One of the first things I did was to make a list of all the species I thought I had a reasonable chance of seeing. After finding one and checking it off, I had, near the end of the month, a few birds I could target.

I found this Snowy Owl along with four others in the Sax-Zim bog area on 1 January 1992.

7) Know what to expect. In any winter month, American Robins, for example, can almost always be found at the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge. All the falcons can usually be found in January if you look hard enough. Most of the woodpeckers, owls and hawks can also be found as well.

8) Read past issues of "The Seasonal Report" in ***The Loon***. The Winter Seasonal Report for 1991–92 gives an account of 140 species, which seems to about average for a Minnesota winter. How else can you discover that Common Snipe are often found wintering at the Bass Ponds? This is where that information is. Although specific locations are not always given, counties always are and if you browse through enough reports you begin to get not only a feel for what to look for but where to start looking. You can also discover who has a knack for turning up specific birds. (Every winter Ray Glassel has usually located a Long-eared Owl or two somewhere in the state.)

9) Don't get discouraged. Most of what is out there on January 1st is also out there on the 31st. For example, even though I looked from day one, I didn't add Barred Owl until the 25th, but I knew they had to be around somewhere.

10) Find your own birds. Don't count on the birdlines, Seasonal Reports or other birders to get you through. What made it worth it to me was getting out and exploring Minnesota in winter. And nothing beats finding your own birds.

One more thing. Don't get caught up in the list. The list is secondary. It actually should be little more than the excuse to get out and see some birds. And there really are lots of birds out there during a Minnesota winter. **2509 Talmage Ave. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414.**

Cattle Egret with frog, 9 May 1992, New Germany, Carver Co. Photo by Dennis Martin.

The Spring Season
(1 March to 31 May 1992)

Steve Carlson, Oscar Johnson, Kim Risen and Dick Ruhme
Foreword by Peder Svingen

Although the warmer than normal temperatures experienced over the preceeding winter continued into March and raised expectations for an early spring, its arrival seemed elusive in 1992. Temperatures across the state were 15 to 20 degrees above normal in early March and waterfowl responded with an early migration into the state. It soon became cooler, with temperatures closer to normal for the remainder of March and then colder than usual until the last few days of April. It was officially warmer than nomal throughout the month of May, except for a period of unusual cold over the Memeorial Day Weekend. On Memorial Day, I watched a flock of shorebirds at the Lake Tetonka fish hatchery ponds in Le Sueur County, probe through the accumulating snow to reach the mudflats below!

Precipitation generally remained slightly below normal throughout the period. Most of the precipitation fell during early March and again during the second and third weeks of April. Duluth and northeastern Minnesota received rainfall during the second week of May but this month was drier than normal in most areas of the state, including the Twin Cities where it was the ninth driest May on record. Statisticians and meteorologists continue to sort out confounding effects on our weather by various phenomena, including an overall trend toward global warming, the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines, and the most recent *El Niño* Southern Oscillation. Meanwhile, the rest of us invoke the legends of Minnesota weather.

Among the early waterfowl arrivals, the flock of more than 100 Greater White-fronted Geese in Lincoln County on 1 March tied the earliest arrival date for the state. Ross' Geese were once again well represented in western Minnesota, while one in Duluth was apparently the first for the

Northeast. Another species identified with increasing frequency, Clark's Grebe, was found in Jackson County. Even more outstanding was the Red-throated Loon found by Ray Glassel at Rice Lake State Park in Steele County. Although no ibises were reported, increased numbers of "southern" herons this spring were encouraging, especially if they represented a new trend.

Peregrine Falcons were detected in at least 16 locations statewide, in addition to the usual urban sightings. Observers are encouraged to report all sightings, especially as the species continues to recover. In addition to the immature gray morph that overwintered in the Duluth-Superior harbor, two more Gyrfalcons were sighted this season, bringing the total to approximately 15 individuals for 1991–92. The fall/winter total of 14 in 1990–91 had been considered the largest known invasion into Minnesota (***The Loon*** 63:163–167).

For the second spring in a row, shorebird migration was generally poor, with many species arriving late or in low numbers. Even more so than usual, their spring migration continued well into June. One exception to the poor showing was the total of seven different Ruffs in three locations, which certainly raised a few eyebrows. Two records of Red Knot were noteworthy since none were reported in Minnesota in all of 1991. Only one migrant Piping Plover was seen. The highlight among the gulls this season was the well-documented appearance of an adult Ross' Gull in Pennington County, only the second record for the state (***The Loon*** 64:156–158).

The knowledgeable examination of planted junipers in wildlife management areas of western Minnesota led to increased detection of what are probably usual numbers of Long-eared Owls during their migration period. Only a few Short-eared Owls were reported following last spring's excellent migration. The cool and relatively wet periods of mid-April produced good numbers of kinglets, Brown Creepers, and Winter Wrens, especially in southern and central Minnesota.

For many observers, the most exciting event of the spring was the cooperative Fork-tailed Flycatcher which spent 12 days in early May along the beach in Grand Marais. Local residents first noticed this casual visitor from South America and another Minnesota birding event made the front page of the *Cook County News-Herald*! Much less cooperative was Minnesota's second Lewis' Woodpecker in Cook County but almost as rare was the third state record of Green-tailed Towhee which came to a feeder at Lowry Nature Center in Carver Park Preserve. May was blessed with other rarities, especially among the passerines, but other aspects of migration were just as noteworthy. The migration of *Catharus* thrushes was reported as the best in many years. Good numbers of Northern Mockingbirds and Mountain Bluebirds were reported. Warbler migration was unremarkable except for the unusual numbers of Hooded and Worm-eating Warblers. On the down side, no Henslow's Sparrows were found at O. L. Kipp State Park, their only Minnesota stronghold.

KEY TO SEASONAL REPORTS

1. Species listed in upper case (**PACIFIC LOON**) indicate a Casual or Accidental occurrence in the state.

2. Dates listed in boldface (**10/9**) indicate an occurrence either earlier, later or within the earliest or latest dates on file.

3. Counties listed in boldface (**Aitkin**) indicate either a first county record or an unusual occurrence for that county. City of **Duluth** also boldface when applicable.

4. Counties listed in italics (*Aitkin*) indicate a first county breeding record.

5. Brackets [ ] indicate a species for which there is reasonable doubt as to its origin or wildness.

RED-THROATED LOON
Reported 4/29 Steele RG (***The Loon*** 64:165).

Common Loon
Early south **3/22** Hennepin KR, 3/28 Nobles BSE, KE, 4/1 Carver DM and Goodhue JD; early north 4/8 Otter Tail SDM, 4/9 Kanabec CM, 4/12 Becker BBe and Aitkin WN.

Pied-billed Grebe
Early south **3/2** Dakota DN, 3/13 Rice TB, 3/16 Mower JM; early north 3/24 Kanabec CM, 4/1 Becker BBe, and 4/5 Otter Tail SDM.

Horned Grebe
Early south 3/25 Olmsted JB, 3/29 Hennepin SC, 3/30 Winona CS; early north 4/17 St. Louis TW, 4/19 Otter Tail MO, 4/25 Grant RJ.

Red-necked Grebe
Early south **3/30** Ramsey KB, 4/14 Hennepin SC, 4/15 Olmsted JB, BSE; early north 3/8 Lake DPV (overwintered?), 4/8 Otter Tail SDM, 4/12 Becker BBe.

Eared Grebe
Early south **4/4** Lac Qui Parle KR, 4/16 Hennepin SC, 4/24 **Washington** TEB; early north 5/5 Clay MO, 5/7 Wilkin MCBS, 5/14 Roseau NJ.

Western Grebe
Early south 4/18 Cottonwood ED and Lac Qui Parle DO, 4/20 **Mower** JM; early north **4/19** Otter Tail MO, 4/23 Beltrami PS, 4/25 Grant RJ.

CLARK'S GREBE
Seventh state record. 5/3 Jackson AB (***The Loon*** 64:174).

American White Pelican
Early south **3/28** Nicollet RJ, 4/7 Freeborn RRK, 4/9 Rice TB; early north **4/6** Otter Tail SDM, 4/22 Becker BBe, 4/23 Beltrami PS; also 4/25 **Duluth** KE.

Double-crested Cormorant
Early south 3/1 Dakota JB, RH (overwintered), **3/7** Hennepin DB, 3/24 Rice TB; early north 3/28 Grant SDM, 4/7 Kanabec CM, 4/11 St. Louis TW.

American Bittern
Early south 4/18 Big Stone DO, 4/19 Mower JM, 4/22 Le Sueur EK; early north (4/27 Cook SOL), 5/2 Aitkin WN, 5/3 St. Louis SS.

Least Bittern
Early south 5/16 Anoka RH, 5/19 Cottonwood ED, 5/25 Goodhue TEB; north 5/25 Becker MO.

Great Blue Heron
Early south **3/1** Hennepin HT, TT, **3/2** Dakota DN and Sherburne SNWR; early north **3/18** Grant SDM, 3/21 Becker BBe, 3/22 Itasca TS.

Great Egret
Early south 3/25 Ramsey KB, 3/28 Wabasha KR, 3/29 Washington PC; early north 3/30 Kanabec CM, 4/3 Otter Tail MO, 4/5 Grant SDM.

Snowy Egret
Reported 4/25–26 Lac Qui Parle EL, KR, 5/6 Rice GS, **5/15** Marshall KSS, 5/23 Houston mob.

Little Blue Heron
Reported 5/7 Carver KR, 5/10-17 Goodhue mob, 5/13-19 Olmsted JD, AP, CS.

TRICOLORED HERON
Reported 5/25 Winona PW (***The Loon*** 64:171–172).

Cattle Egret
Early south **4/18** Rock ND, 4/21 Olmsted JB, BSE, 4/22 Houston EMF; north 5/15 Marshall KSS; also reported from six other counties.

Green-backed Heron
Early south 4/21 Rice TB, 4/22 Brown JS and Hennepin SC; early north 5/6 Kanabec CM, 5/8 Beltrami DJ, 5/9 Aitkin WN and Hubbard TS.

Black-crowned Night-Heron
Early south 4/6 Hennepin TT, 4/7 Washington TEB, 4/15 Nobles GS; early north 4/17 Otter Tail SDM, 4/19 Grant GS and Marshall MCBS.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
Reported 4/22 Ramsey DS, 5/3 Hennepin

HH, 5/11 Hennepin SC, 5/15 Houston DJ, 5/23 Brown RJ, 5/25 Aitkin WN.

Tundra Swan
Early south 3/10 Wabasha WDM, 3/13 Nicollet DB, OJ; early north 4/1 Otter Tail SDM, 4/4 Aitkin WN; late south 4/30 Hennepin DC and Stevens GS, **5/28** Houston FL; late north 5/19 Clay LCF, 5/22 Lake of the Woods GS.

[Trumpeter Swan]
Reported 3/9 Otter Tail CS/KC and 3/14–26 Goodhue HH.

Greater White-fronted Goose
Early south **3/1** Lincoln HK, 3/7 Nobles KB; early north 3/28 Otter Tail SDM, 4/12 Becker MO and Kittson MCBS; late south 5/9 Lyon HK, 5/15 Houston KF; late north 5/16 **Duluth** MH, **5/27** Norman PS.

Snow Goose
Early south **3/1** Dakota AB, Lincoln HK, Martin BBo, Rice TB; early north 3/28 Otter Tail SDM, 4/11 Polk BSE; late south 4/29 Lac Qui Parle SC, 5/19 Traverse GS; late north 5/20 Marshall GS, 5/23 Norman MO.

ROSS' GOOSE
Early south **3/22** Goodhue HH, **3/29** Jackson (one), Nobles (13) mob (***The Loon*** 64:121–122), 4/4 Nobles (two) RJ, 4/12 Big Stone DN, 5/12 **Duluth** KE, **5/23** Watonwan RJ.

Canada Goose
Reported from 35 counties south, 18 counties north.

Wood Duck
Early south **3/1** Nicollet MF, Olmsted BSE and Rice OR; early north 3/18 Grant, Otter Tail SDM, 3/21 Wilkin MO.

Green-winged Teal
Early south **3/1** Lincoln HK, 3/7 Cottonwood ED, 3/8 Olmsted BSE; early north **3/28** Clay MO, Kanabec CM and Otter Tail SDM.

American Black Duck
Early south 3/7 Winona DN, 3/17 Hennepin DC, 3/18 Martin BBo; reported north 4/9 Aitkin WN.

Mallard
Reported from 35 counties south, 19 counties north.

Northern Pintail
Early south 3/1 Lincoln HK and Rice OR, 3/2 Cottonwood ED and Winona CS; early north **3/8** Otter Tail and Wilkin SDM, 3/22 Clay MO, 3/28 Polk KSS.

Blue-winged Teal
Early south 3/8 Rice OR, 3/13 Nicollet OJ, 3/22 Houston DN; early north 4/5 Aitkin WN and Grant SDM, 4/6 Otter Tail CS/KC.

Cinnamon Teal
Reported 4/12 Cottonwood fide ED, 4/17 Marshall MCBS, 4/25 Lac Qui Parle mob, 5/10 Kittson MCBS, 5/18 Kittson (two) KB.

Northern Shoveler
Early south **3/2** Rice TB, 3/7 Houston DN, Martin RJ, BBo and Pipestone JP; early north **3/28** Becker MO and Grant SDM, 3/30 Clay MM.

Gadwall
Early south **3/1** Dakota TT, Hennepin HT, Lincoln HK and Rice TB, OR; early north 3/28 Clay MO, 4/9 Kanabec CM and Pennington MCBS.

American Wigeon
Early south 3/1 Rice TB, OR, 3/2 Winona CS, 3/3 Houston FL; early north 3/21 Otter Tail MO, 3/28 Polk KSS, 4/5 Aitkin WN and Kanabec CM.

Canvasback
Early south **3/1** Dakota JD, Lincoln HK and Rice OR; early north 3/28 Clay MO, 3/29 Otter Tail CS/KC, SDM, 4/10 Kanabec CM.

Redhead
Early south **3/1** Dakota mob and Rice TB, 3/3 Winona CS; early north 3/28 Clay MO and Otter Tail SDM, 4/9 Pennington MCBS.

Ring-necked Duck
Early south **3/1** Dakota mob, Lincoln HK, Olmsted JB and Rice TB; early north 3/18 Grant SDM, 3/21 Otter Tail MO, 3/28 Kanabec CM.

Greater Scaup
Early south 3/8 Lyon HK, 3/22 Dakota RB and Houston DN; early north **3/27** Becker BBe and Kanabec CM, 4/10 Beltrami KH.

Lesser Scaup
Early south 3/1, Dakota RH, TT and Rice TB, 3/2 Winona CS; early north **3/8** Otter Tail SDM, 3/29 Clay LCF, 4/3 Roseau NJ.

Oldsquaw
Reported 3/15–5/30 Cook mob; also 3/22, 4/6 Ramsey KB, 4/6 Dakota KB.

Surf Scoter
Reported 4/25–26 Chippewa and Lac Qui Parle mob, 5/11–14 Duluth KE et al.

White-winged Scoter
Reported 5/8 St. Louis DC.

Common Goldeneye
Late south 4/20 Washington DS, 5/26 Hennepin SC, **5/30** Meeker RJ.

Bufflehead
Early south **3/1** Cottonwood ED, **3/2** Rice OR, TB and Winona CS; early north 3/14 St. Louis KE, 3/26 lake DPV, 3/27 Becker BBe; late south 5/6 Ramsey DJe, **5/30** Hennepin SC.

Hooded Merganser
Early south **3/1** Dakota RJ, TT, **3/2** Rice TB, OR, FKS and Winona CS; early north 3/21 Aitkin WN, 3/27 Becker BBe, 3/28 Norman MO.

Common Merganser
Late south 4/27 Olmsted AP, 4/30 Hennepin SC, 5/2 Lincoln SDM.

Red-breasted Merganser
Early south **3/1** Washington DN, 3/8 Dakota TT, Olmsted AP, BSE; early north 4/5 Aitkin WN and Otter Tail SDM, 4/6 Kanabec CM.

Ruddy Duck
Early south **3/4** Winona CS, 3/8 Kandiyohi JR and Olmsted JB; early north **4/5** Otter Tail SDM, 4/12 Becker MO, 5/1 Marshall BK.

Turkey Vulture
Early south 3/10 Houston EMF, 3/16 Nicollet MF, 3/22 Goodhue KB; early north 4/5 Otter Tail CS/KC, 4/6 St. Louis TW, 4/8 Hubbard MCBS.

Osprey
Early south 4/2 Houston FL, 4/7 Olmsted AP, 4/11 Hennepin TT; early north 4/12 Carlton, St. Louis KR, 4/17 Pennington MCBS, 4/18 Cass RJ, Aitkin SC and Otter Tail MO.

Bald Eagle
Reported from 25 counties south, 18 counties north.

Northern Harrier
Early south 3/1 Lyon HK and Rice TB, 3/3 Fillmore GMD; early north 3/2 Aitkin WN, 3/6 Clay MM, 3/8 Wilkin SDM.

Sharp-shinned Hawk
Early south **3/1** Dakota JD, **3/3** Olmsted JB, 3/6 Houston EMF; early north **3/16** Pennington KSS, 3/27 Becker BK, 3/28 Clay MO.

Cooper's Hawk
Early south **3/4** Olmsted JB, 3/7 Rock KB, 3/14 Mower RRK; early north 4/1 Aitkin WN, 4/4 St. Louis TW, 4/8 Becker BBe and Marshall MCBS.

Northern Goshawk
Late south 4/17 Mower RRK, **4/29** Anoka DN, **4/30** Sherburne DO.

Red-shouldered Hawk
Early south **3/4** Olmsted JB, **3/14** Dakota TT and Hennepin DZ; early north 3/14 Aitkin WN, 3/15 Becker BBe and Otter Tail SDM; also 5/30 St. Louis mob.

Broad-winged Hawk
Early south 4/3 Anoka OJ, 4/7 Hennepin SC, 4/17 Washington WL; early north 4/20 St. Louis AE, 4/23 Kanabec CM, 4/25 Hubbard HJF.

Swainson's Hawk
Early south **3/24** Olmsted JB, 4/4 Washington PC, 4/12 Dakota JD and Big Stone DN; early north 5/1 Grant GS, 5/9 Otter Tail SDM, 5/15 Clay LCF and Kittson MCBS.

Red-tailed Hawk
Reported from 34 counties south, 21 coun-

Cooper's Hawk with European Starling, 11 April 1992, Aitkin, Aitkin County. Photo by Warren Nelson.

ties north.

Ferruginous Hawk
Only report 3/29–31 Otter Tail CS/KC.

Rough-legged Hawk
Late south 4/23 Cottonwood ED, 4/25 Lac Qui Parle EL and Lyon HK; late north 5/13 Red Lake RJ and Roseau NJ, 5/31 Aitkin WN.

Golden Eagle
Late south 3/22 Martin BBo, 3/23 Rice TB, 4/26 Goodhue JD.

American Kestrel
Early north 3/3 Clay MM, 3/7 Aitkin WN, 3/8 Wilkin SDM, MO.

Merlin
Early south 3/28 Sherburne SNWR, 4/12 Washington DS, 4/16 Fillmore GMD; early north **3/17** Pennington KSS, **3/22** St. Louis TW, 4/17 Lake DPV.

Prairie Falcon
Reported **3/3** Clay MM, 4/11 Polk mob, 4/19 Clay LCF.

Peregrine Falcon
Early south **3/13** Olmsted JB, 3/25 Sherburne DO, 4/25 Lac Qui Parle DB; early north **3/29** St. Louis BBo, **4/2** Clearwater DJ, 5/14 Becker BBe; reported from 10 additional counties.

Gyrfalcon
Reported **3/27** Martin BBo, 3/1–**4/12** Duluth mob, **4/13** Kittson MCBS.

Gray Partridge
Reported from 17 counties south, 8 coun-

ties north.

Ring-necked Pheasant
Reported from 11 north and 36 south counties.

Spruce Grouse
All reports: 3/5–4/24 Gunflint Trail, Cook County KMH, 3/22 Beltrami DJ, 3/29 Lake SS, 4/12 Lake KR, 4/28 Cook SOL; last sighted along Lake County Road 2 on 3/7 fide KE.

Ruffed Grouse
Reported from 18 north and 14 south counties.

Greater Prairie-Chicken
All reports: 3/8–4/26 Wilkin mob, 3/20–5/17 Clay mob, 3/28 Norman (44) MO, 4/11–12 Polk KE et al and Red Lake MCBS.

Sharp-tailed Grouse
Reported from Aitkin, Kittson, Marshall, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau, St. Louis and **Clay** counties (numbers down KE).

Wild Turkey
Reported from Fillmore, Goodhue, Le Sueur, Nicollet, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha and Winona counties.

Northern Bobwhite
Only report: 5/24 Wilmington Township, Houston County (five) KE et al.

Yellow Rail
All reports: 5/10 Marshall MCBS, 5/15 Pennington MCBS, 5/18 Aitkin (12) WN, 5/19 Morrison MCBS.

Virginia Rail
Early south **4/11** Carver PS (earliest date on record), 4/19 Hennepin DN, 4/22 Mower JM; early north 5/11 Pennington MCBS, 5/17 Otter Tail SDM.

Sora
Early south **4/8** Le Sueur EK, 4/19 Hennepin OJ, 4/25 Carver DM; early north 5/8 Becker BBe, 5/10 Otter Tail MO, 5/11 Pennington MCBS.

Common Moorhen
All reports: 5/17–30 La Crescent, Houston County KE, mob, 5/25 Winona CS.

American Coot
Early south **3/1** Rice TB, 3/2 Winona CS, **3/4** Dakota KB (these early March dates could be of wintering birds); early north **4/8** Becker BBe, **4/9** Pennington MCBS, 4/18 St. Louis AE.

Sandhill Crane
Early south 3/20 SNWR, 3/24 Washington WL, 3/27 Anoka JH and Winona CS; early north 3/25 Norman PS, 3/29 Clay LCF, 3/31 Becker BBe; peak of 3000+ 4/10–11 Polk KE.

Black-bellied Plover
All reports: 5/9 Cottonwood JB, 5/11–30 Pennington MCSB, 5/13 Polk PS, 5/14 Carver mob, 5/15 Nobles GS, 5/23 Hennepin OJ, Goodhue KB and Waseca RJ, 5/24 Itasca AB, 5/25 Hennepin SC, 5/27 St. Louis mob, 5/30 Roseau NJ.

Lesser Golden-Plover
Early south 4/23 Martin BBo, 5/2 Watonwan RJ, 5/3 Cottonwood ED; early north 5/7 St. Louis DPV, 5/8 Roseau MCBS, 5/13 Polk RJ; late south 5/15 Mower RRK, 5/16 Pipestone JP; late north 5/24 Itasca AB, 5/30 Becker BBe, 5/31 St. Louis EL.

Semipalmated Plover
Early south 4/22 Pipestone JP, 4/25 Carver DM, 4/29 Lac Qui Parle SC; early north 5/8 Roseau MCBS, 5/13 Clearwater RJ, 5/18 Kanabec CM; late south 5/26 Rice TB, 5/27 Ramsey KB, 5/30 Hennepin SC; late north 5/24 Itasca AB, 5/30 St. Louis AE, 5/31 Roseau MCBS.

Piping Plover
Only report: 5/21–22 Park Point, Duluth NJ, PS.

Killdeer
Early south 3/1 Rice TB and Washington DN, 3/2 Murray and Rock ND, 3/3 Houston FL; early north **3/1** Otter Tail SDM (earliest date on record), 3/21 Becker BBe, 3/26 St. Louis DE.

American Avocet
All south reports: 4/24 Rock ND, JP, 4/25–5/2 Lac Qui Parle (peak of 20) mob, 5/3

Cottonwood AB; all north reports **4/29**–5/12 St. Louis mob, 5/7 Clay MCBS, 5/9–5/31 Roseau NJ, MCBS, 5/13 Clearwater (two) RJ, 5/16–21 Kittson MCBS, GS, 5/20 Marshall KSS, 5/28 Clearwater PS.

Greater Yellowlegs
Early south 4/6 Chippewa RJ, 4/7 Cottonwood HK, 4/8 Olmsted BSE; early north 4/8 Mahnomen BK and Otter Tail SDM, 4/16 Marshall MCBS, 4/17 Becker BBe; late south 5/13 Carver MB, 5/19 Olmsted BSE, 5/23 Brown RJ; late north 5/16 Pennington KSS, 5/24 Itasca AB.

Lesser Yellowlegs
Early south 4/7 Cottonwood HK and Rice TB, 4/8 Olmsted BSE, 4/9 Mower RRK; early north 4/8 Otter Tail SDM, 4/12 Clay LCF, 4/22 Becker BBe; late south 5/23 Brown RJ, 5/24 Rice TB, 5/30 Hennepin SC and Olmsted AP; late north 5/24 Itasca AB, 5/27 Norman PS.

Solitary Sandpiper
Early south 4/16 Washington WL, 4/18 Cottonwood ED, 4/21 Rice TB; early north 5/11 Cook KMH and St. Louis AE, 5/12 Roseau NJ, 5/14 Kittson RJ; late south 5/18 Le Sueur EK, 5/30 Hennepin SC; late north 5/24 Beltrami DJ, 5/27 Norman PS.

Willet
Early south 4/25 Lac Qui Parle mob, 4/26 Big Stone mob, 5/1 Olmsted and Rock JB, BSE; late south 5/23 Brown RJ; all north reports: **4/21** Aitkin WN, PS, 5/8 Cook KMH, 5/8–13 Roseau MCBS, 5/12 Clearwater.

Spotted Sandpiper
Early south 4/15 Mower JM, 4/17 Winona CS, 4/21 Murray ND; early north 4/24 Lake DPV, 4/26 Becker BBe, 4/29 Clay LCF and St. Louis AE.

Upland Sandpiper
Early south **4/18** Big Stone DO, 5/1 Rock PS, 5/2 Pipestone PS; early north 5/7 Clay MCBS, 5/10 Kittson MCBS, Polk KSS and Wilkin MO, 5/13 Clearwater RJ.

Whimbrel
All reports: **5/17 Otter Tail** (20) SDM, 5/18–30 St. Louis mob, 5/23-25 Lake fide KE, 5/23-30 Cook KMH, DN.

Hudsonian Godwit
Early south 4/25 Lac Qui Parle HK, 5/1 Rock PS, 5/3 Cottonwood ED and Nobles AB; early north 5/7 Grant MCBS, 5/11 Clay LCF, 5/12 St. Louis KE; late south 5/24 Stearns JR, 5/30 Hennepin SC, OJ and Stevens RJ; late north 5/28 Pennington MCBS, 5/31 St. Louis KE.

Marbled Godwit
Early south 4/18 Dakota TT and Swift DO, 4/25 Lac Qui Parle mob, 4/26 Big Stone TEB; early north 4/12 Becker MO and Clay LCF, 4/14 Red Lake MCBS, 4/17 Polk BBe.

Ruddy Turnstone
Early south 5/14 SNWR, 5/15 Goodhue JF, 5/17 Hennepin SC; early north **5/8** Pennington MCBS, 5/14 Kittson RJ and Lake DPV, 5/16 St. Louis DN; late south 5/24 Dakota TT and Yellow Medicine HK, 5/25 Hennepin TT, 5/30 Stevens RJ; late north 5/27 Polk PS, 5/28 Clearwater PS, 5/31 St. Louis EL.

Red Knot
All reports: 5/28 Clearwater (three) PS, 5/30–31 Duluth (two) mob.

Sanderling
Early south 5/10 Olmsted JB; early north 5/8 Pennington MCBS, 5/9 Roseau NJ, 5/11 Clay LCF; late south 5/23 Goodhue KB, 5/24 Stearns JR, 5/26 Hennepin OJ; late north 5/27 Norman PS, 5/31 St. Louis EL.

Semipalmated Sandpiper
Early south 4/11 Lac Qui Parle DN, 4/19 Lyon HK, 5/1 Olmsted JB; early north 5/8 Pennington MCBS, 5/13 Clearwater RJ; late south 5/28 Olmsted AP, 5/30 Stevens RJ, 5/31 Hennepin OJ; late north 5/24 Itasca AB, 5/28 Clearwater PS, 5/31 Marshall MCBS and St. Louis EL.

Least Sandpiper
Early south 4/25 Big Stone TEB and Lyon HK, 4/28 Rice TB, 4/29 Hennepin SC; early north 5/8 Pennington MCBS, 5/10 Wilkin MO, 5/11 Clay LCF and Lake DPV; late south 5/24 Stearns JR, 5/26 Hennepin SC, OJ, 5/27 Sherburne DO; late north 5/27 Beltrami DJ, 5/30 Roseau NJ, 5/31 St. Louis EL.

White-rumped Sandpiper
Early south **4/25** Lyon HK, 4/29 Lac Qui Parle SC, 5/1 Rock PS; early north **5/10** Wilkin MO, 5/14 Kittson RJ and Marshall MCBS; late south 5/24 Stearns JR, 5/26 Hennepin SC, OJ and Rice TB, 5/30 Stevens RJ; late north 5/28 Clearwater PS, 5/31 Marshall MCBS.

Baird's Sandpiper
Early south 4/6 Chippewa RJ, 4/11 Lac Qui Parle DN, 4/23 Cottonwood ED and Martin BBo; early north 4/11 Polk KE, 4/17 Marshall MCBS; late south 5/28 Olmsted AP, 5/30 Stevens RJ; late north 5/24 Itasca AB.

Pectoral Sandpiper
Early south 3/28 Wabasha KR, 4/5 Goodhue TEB, 4/6 Chippewa RJ; early north 4/19 Red Lake KSS, 5/9 Becker BBe and Roseau NJ, 5/10 Wilkin MO; late south 5/27 Ramsey KK, 5/28 Hennepin TT, 5/30 Stevens RJ; late north 5/24 Itasca AB, 5/31 Marshall MCBS and St. Louis EL.

Dunlin
Early south **4/11** Lac Qui Parle DN, 4/23 Martin BBo, 4/25 Big Stone TEB; early north 5/10 Kittson MCBS and Wilkin MO, 5/16 St. Louis DN; late south 5/27 Ramsey KB, 5/30 Stevens RJ, 5/31 Hennepin mob and Lac Qui Parle HK; late north 5/27 Clearwater PS, 5/31 Marshall MCBS and St. Louis EL.

Stilt Sandpiper
All reports: **5/3** Cottonwood AB, 5/8 Pennington MCBS, 5/9 Carver PS, 5/15 Koochiching RJ, 5/16 Cottonwood ED, 5/17 Mower JM, 5/20 Hennepin SC, 5/23 Watonwan RJ, 5/31 Lac Qui Parle HK.

RUFF
All reports: **4/29** Lac Qui Parle SC (***The Loon*** 64:169), 5/9 Carver (photographed) PS, 5/16 New Germany, Carver Co. PN et al (***The Loon*** 64:173–174) and Polk (two) KSS (***The Loon*** 64:167–169).

Short-billed Dowitcher
Early south 5/2 Lac Qui Parle DN, 5/3 Nobles AB, 5/8 Hennepin OJ; early north **5/2** Clay DJ, 5/8 Pennington MCBS, 5/10 Otter Tail MO; late south 5/17 Hennepin SC and Mower JM, 5/20 Washington WL; late north 5/17 Red Lake AB, 5/25 Lake DPV; peak of 110 5/11 St. Louis MH.

Long-billed Dowitcher
All reports: 4/29 Big Stone and Lac Qui Parle SC, 5/1 Olmsted JB, BSE and Rock PS, 5/2 Lac Qui Parle DN, 5/3 Cottonwood AB and Mower RRK.

Common Snipe
Early south 3/4 Hennepin DZ, TT (probably wintering bird), 3/24 Brown MF and Meeker MSc, 4/6 Chippewa RJ and SNWR; early north 3/28 Lake TW, 4/1 Aitkin WN, 4/3 Becker BBe.

American Woodcock
Early south 3/6 Cottonwood ED and Olmsted BSE, 3/7 Martin RJ, 3/14 Houston EMF; early north **3/19** Pine BBe, 3/27 Kanabec CM, 4/5 Aitkin WN.

Wilson's Phalarope
Early south 4/29 Lac Qui Parle SC and Mower RRK, 5/1 Rock PS, 5/2 Hennepin RB; early north 5/8 Pennington MCBS, 5/10 Wilkin MO, 5/11 Clay LCF.

Red-necked Phalarope
Only report: **5/14**–31 Marshall MCBS.

Franklin's Gull
Early south 3/24 Winona CS, 4/4 Lincoln PB, KR, PS, 4/6 Big Stone RJ; early north 4/9 Otter Tail SDM, 4/13 Pennington RJ, 4/14 Marshall MCBS.

Little Gull
Only report: **5/11** Duluth KE.

Bonaparte's Gull
Early south 4/6 Big Stone RJ, 4/11 Martin BBo, 4/12 Carver MB and Hennepin SC; early north **4/5** Otter Tail MO, 4/26 Aitkin WN; peak of 2500 5/14 St. Louis KE.

Ring-billed Gull
Early north **3/22** Grant SDM, 3/25 Mille Lacs BBo, 3/28 Becker, Clay and Norman MO.

CALIFORNIA GULL
One report: **4/7** Breckenridge, Wilkin County (two) RG, RJ (***The Loon*** 64:125).

Herring Gull
Reported from 18 south and 20 north counties.

Thayer's Gull
All reports: 3/1 – 3/9 Knife River, Lake County mob, 3/24 Dakota KB, 4/1 Washington RJ.

ICELAND GULL
All reports: wintering bird at Knife River, Lake County last observed 3/9 KE (***The Loon*** 64:119–120), 4/30 Duluth, St. Louis County KE.

Glaucous Gull
South reports: 4/12 Hennepin (first winter) PS; 4/21 Anoka fide SC; north reports 3/4 – 4/8 St. Louis mob, 4/27 Cook KMH and Lake DPV, 4/30 St. Louis KE.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL
All reports: wintering adult in Dakota County last seen 3/8 TT (***The Loon*** 64:12–15), wintering bird (first winter) at Knife River, Lake County, last seen 3/9 (***The Loon*** 64:119–120).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL
One report: 3/31–4/1 Washington County (first winter bird) RG, et al (***The Loon*** 64:127).

ROSS' GULL
Second Minnesota record; 4/16 Goose Lake, Pennington County SSt (***The Loon*** 64:156–158).

Caspian Tern
Early south **4/20** Wabasha WDM, 5/5 Ramsey EL, 5/13 Hennepin DB, SC; early north 5/10 Aitkin WN, 5/11 Lake DPV and St. Louis TW, 5/12 Itasca RJ.

Common Tern
Early south 4/23 Washington WL, 4/25 Big Stone TEB and Lac Qui Parle mob, 5/3 Lyon HK; early north **4/30** Pennington KSS, 5/11 Lake DPV, 5/12 Itasca RJ.

Forster's Tern
Early south **4/4** Ramsey KB, 4/12 Dakota TT, Hennepin DB, DC and Olmsted AP, 4/13 Rice TB; early north **4/17** Becker BBe, 4/19 Mille Lacs SC, 4/25 Douglas RJ.

Black Tern
Early south **4/4** Rice TB, **4/9** Carver DM, 4/30 Hennepin KB and Steele PS; early north 5/6 Otter Tail CS/KC, 5/8 Pennington MCBS, 5/10 Becker BBe and Clay MO.

Rock Dove
Reported from 30 south and 17 north counties.

Mourning Dove
Early north 3/8 Aitkin (wintering bird?) WN, 3/18 Becker BBe, 3/27 Kanabec CM.

Black-billed Cuckoo
Early south 5/9 Mower JM, 5/10 Wright AB, 5/12 Hennepin TT; early north 5/15 Otter Tail CS/KC, 5/18 Traverse CS, 5/19 Clearwater MCBS.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Early south 5/20 Blue Earth LF, 5/22 Brown JS, Dakota JD and Hennepin DB, 5/23 Kandiyohi JR; one north report: 5/25 Otter Tail SDM.

Eastern Screech-Owl
Reported from Cottonwood, Hennepin, Lyon, Mower, Murray, Nobles (nest with four young) and **Pennington**.

Great Horned Owl
Reported from 30 south and 14 north counties.

Snowy Owl
All reports: 3/1 Carlton KB, 3/2 – 4/21 Aitkin Gs, WN, 4/4 Cottonwood ED, 4/8 Polk PS, 4/21–22 Hennepin OJ, KR, 4/25 Douglas RF, 4/27 Beltrami DJ and Lake DPV, last sighted in Duluth **5/13** mob.

Northern Hawk Owl
All reports: 3/1 Koochiching SDM, 3/8 Aitkin WN, 3/10 Becker fide BBe, 3/11 St. Louis TW, 3/27 Beltrami DJ, **5/5** Aitkin WN.

Burrowing Owl
Two reports: 4/19 Martin, reported in Fairmont Photo Press of 4/22, 4/26 Traverse EL.

Barred Owl
Reported from 18 south and 8 north counties.

Northern Hawk Owl, 5 May 1992, Aitkin County. Photo by Warren Nelson.

Great Gray Owl
All reports: 3/1 Koochiching SDM, 3/28 Lake DPV, 4/3 Cook SOL, 4/4 Koochiching GM and Lake of the Woods KSS, 4/15 Roseau NJ, 5/3–31 Aitkin WN, 5/10 Kittson MCBS, 5/13 Roseau MCBS, 5/25 Lake SS, 5/26–31 St. Louis (three) mob.

Long-eared Owl
Reports up (due to searching isolated pine plantations in western Minnesota in early April); 3/2 Anoka SC, 3/8 Hennepin SC, 4/4 Lake of the Woods KSS, Murray and Pipestone RJ, 4/5 Otter Tail MO, 4/6 Chippewa RJ, 4/7 Norman PS, 4/9 Lyon RJ.

Short-eared Owl
All reports: 4/4 Aitkin WN and Pipestone PS, 4/6 St. Louis MSt, 4/7 Morrison RJ, 4/10 Polk (three) KE, 4/11 Pennington MCBS and Polk (six) KE, 4/25 Lac Qui Parle mob, 4/29 Beltrami DJ, 5/3 Aitkin WN.

Boreal Owl
All reports: early March, Roseau DD, 3/14 Cook SOL, 3/16 Lake DPV, 3/27 Gunflint Trail, Cook Co. KMH, 4/4 Lake of the Woods KSS, 4/13 Gunflint Trail, Cook Co. KMH, 5/10–11 Cook SOL.

Boreal Owl, March 1992, Badger, Roseau County. Photo by Denice DeFrates.

Northern Saw-whet Owl
Reported from Beltrami, Carver, Cook, Jackson, Lake, Otter Tail,Pennington, Roseau, St. Louis and Wright counties.

Common Nighthawk
Early south 5/1 Rice OR, 5/7 Carver KR, 5/10 Hennepin DZ, Lyon HK and Rice TB; early north **4/15** Becker BBe (earliest date on record), 5/10 Aitkin WN, 5/12 Morrison MCBS, 5/19 Clearwater MCBS.

Whip-poor-will
Early south 5/1 Houston EMF, 5/8 Olmsted BSE, 5/10 Washington TEB; early north **4/30** Otter Tail CS/KC, 5/1 Cook SOL, 5/8 Clay LCF.

Chimney Swift
Early south **4/18** Goodhue DZ, 4/20 Hennepin TT, 4/26 Rice TB; early north 4/28 Becker BBe, 5/1 Grant GS, 5/3 Todd KB.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Early south 5/8 Dakota JD, Houston EMF and Nicollet LF, 5/9 Steele DZ, 5/10 Rock ND; early north 5/7 Becker BBe, 5/10 Aitkin WN and Kanabec CM, 5/11 Koochiching GM, 5/30 Houston, female on eggs PS. (For the second consecutive year, an April report (4/18 Olmsted fide AP) demonstrates the need for close observation and documentation since these birds may be non-Ruby-throateds.)

Belted Kingfisher
Early north 3/7 Beltrami DJ (wintering bird?), 4/4 Becker BBe, 4/8 Aitkin WN, 4/12 Clay LCF.

LEWIS' WOODPECKER
Second Minnesota record; 5/10 Grand Marais, Cook County AH (***The Loon*** 64: 160–161).

Red-headed Woodpecker
Reported from Aitkin, Becker, Beltrami, Clay, Clearwater, Cook, Kanabec, Otter Tail, Polk, Roseau and St. Louis counties in the north, and from 28 south counties.

Red-bellied Woodpecker
Reported from Aitkin, Cass, Kanabec, Marshall, Otter Tail, St. Louis and Wilkin counties in the north, and from 32 south

counties.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Early south **3/7** Carver MB, 3/28 Rock KE, 4/1 Lac Qui Parle FE,4/2 Winona AM; early north 4/1 St. Louis DK, 4/7 Beltrami DJ, 4/8 Aitkin WN, Becker BK and Otter Tail SDM.

Downy Woodpecker
Reported from 36 south and 20 north counties.

Hairy Woodpecker
Reported from 35 south and 24 north counties.

Black-backed Woodpecker
All reports: 3/7 Becker (one) MO, 3/8 Hegman Lake, St. Louis Co. (two) SS, 5/9–17 Roseau MCBS, 5/24-25 Hubbard DJ, AB, 5/30 near Bird Lake, St. Louis Co. (nest found) KE, AE; throughout period in Cook KHM, SOL.

Northern Flicker
Early north **3/16** Otter Tail SDM, 3/27 Becker BK, 4/6 Aitkin WN and St. Louis AE.

Pileated Woodpecker
Reported from 20 north and 28 south counties.

Olive-sided Flycatcher
Early south 5/7 Hennepin SC and Winona CS, 5/8 Nicollet LF, EK and Olmsted JB, BSE; early north 5/9 Beltrami DJ, 5/11 Pennington MCBS, 5/13 Mahnomen RJ; late south 5/30 Brown JS, 5/31 Stearns AB.

Eastern Wood-Pewee
Early south 5/8 Rice FKS, 5/10 Goodhue DZ, Hennepin TT and Washington PC, WL; early north **5/5** St. Louis AE, 5/7 Becker BBe, 5/9 Otter Tail CS/KC.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Early south 5/4 Olmsted BSE, 5/11 Hennepin SC; early north 5/11 Clay LCF, 5/14 Becker BK and Kittson RJ, 5/21 Cook KMH; late south 5/26 Ramsey KB, 5/31 Brown JS and Hennepin SC.

Acadian Flycatcher
All reports: **5/16**–31 Houston KE, mob, **5/16 Blue Earth** LF, 5/17–31 Hennepin SC, HT, 5/18 Olmsted JD, AP, 5/23–30 Goodhue AB, KB, 5/25 Scott DN.

Alder Flycatcher
Early south **5/9** Lyon HK, **5/10** Ramsey RH; early north **5/5** Clay LCF, 5/14 Kittson RJ, 5/23 Aitkin WN; late south 5/30 Hennepin SC, 5/31 Stearns AB.

Willow Flycatcher
Early south **5/3** Hennepin OJ, 5/12 Winona CS, 5/13 Houston EMF; early north 5/14 Clay LCF, 5/18 Pennington KSS, 5/30 Marshall MCBS.

Least Flycatcher
Early south **4/11** (earliest date on record) Fillmore GMD, 4/28 Brown JS and Cottonwood ED, 4/30 Hennepin DC; early north 4/28 Becker BBe, 4/30 Kanabec CM, 5/4 Clay LCF.

Eastern Phoebe
Early south 3/27 Houston EMF, 3/28 Winona AM, 3/29 Brown JS, Nobles KE and Rice TB; early north **3/21** (earliest date on record) BBe, 4/5 Otter Tail SDM, 4/8 Beltrami DJ.

Great Crested Flycatcher
Early south 5/2 Goodhue DZ, Nicollet RJ and Olmsted JB, 5/5 Washington WL and Winona AM, 5/6 Le Sueur EK; early north **5/7** Becker BBe, 5/9 Aitkin WN and Pennington KSS, 5/10 Kittson MCBS.

Western Kingbird
Early south 5/7 Sherburne DO, 5/14 Cottonwood ED and Lac Qui Parle FE, 5/23 Wright MS; early north 5/7 Clay LCF, 5/8 Morrison PS, 5/10 Otter Tail MO; also reported 5/30 Sax-Zim Bog, **St. Louis** Co. (one) PB, KR.

Eastern Kingbird
Early south **4/12** Goodhue JD, 4/19 Carver MB, 4/27 Blue Earth LF; early north 4/24 St. Louis AE, 5/9 Wadena DB, 5/10 Aitkin WN, Becker BBe, Kittson MCBS and Otter Tail MO.

FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER
Second state record. 5/3–14 Grand Marais, Cook Co. DE, mob (***The Loon*** 64:118–119).

Horned Lark
Reported from 14 north and 39 south counties.

Purple Martin
Early south 4/2 Cottonwood ED, 4/5 Goodhue KB and Murray ND, 4/16 Brown JS; early north **4/9** Koochiching GM, 4/15 Beltrami DJ and Grant SDM, 4/17 Pennington MCBS and Roseau NJ.

Tree Swallow
Early south **3/7**, (six birds, earliest date on record) Houston DN, 3/24 Winona CS, 4/5 Goodhue TEB; early north 4/8 Aitkin WN, Becker PS and St. Louis TW, 4/9 Kanabec CM, 4/14 Becker BBe and Beltrami DJ.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Early south 4/17 Hennepin SC, 4/18 Goodhue DZ, 4/20 Dakota JD; early north 4/19 Clay LCF, 5/2 Clearwater DJ, 5/7 Beltrami DJ.

Bank Swallow
Early south 4/19 Brown JS and Olmsted BSE, 4/20 Dakota JD and Hennepin SC, 4/21 Winona CS; early north 5/1 Marshall BK, 5/9 Beltrami DJ, 5/14 St. Louis TW.

Cliff Swallow
Early south **4/19** Sherburne SNWR, 4/27 Ramsey AB, 4/29 Olmsted AP; early north 5/1 Aitkin WN, 5/5 Pine RJ and Roseau NJ, 5/6 Pennington KSS.

Barn Swallow
Early south 4/14 Rice TB, 4/15 Houston FL, 4/17 Hennepin SC and Winona CS; early north 4/29 Pennington KSS, 5/1 Beltrami DJ, 5/2 Lake DPV.

Gray Jay
Reported from nine north counties.

Blue Jay
Reported from 22 north and 32 south counties.

Black-billed Magpie
Reported from Aitkin (two nests WN), Beltrami, Clay, Clearwater, Kittson, Koochiching, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau and St. Louis counties.

American Crow
Reported from 21 north and 37 south counties.

Common Raven
Reported from 16 north counties; one south report Anoka (resident) JH. Nest found in *Pine County* on 5/23 DW (***The Loon*** 64:176).

Black-capped Chickadee
Reported from 20 north and 35 south counties.

Boreal Chickadee
Reported from Aitkin, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake and St. Louis counties.

Tufted Titmouse
All reports: 5/16 Anoka RH, 5/30 **Rice** OR; Houston (resident) mob, Olmsted (resident) mob, Winona (no date) fide CS.

Red-breasted Nuthatch
Reported from 11 north and eight south counties.

White-breasted Nuthatch
Reported from 23 north and 33 south counties.

Brown Creeper
Reported from 12 north and 25 south counties.

CAROLINA WREN
4/8–15 Houston EMF, 5/28–31 Dakota (one) JD, RJ.

House Wren
Early south 4/28 Cottonwood ED and Winona CS, 4/29 Rice TB, 4/30 Blue Earth LF, Hennepin DB and Washington TEB; early north 5/2 Roseau NJ, 5/3 Kanabec CM, 5/4 Lake DPV.

Winter Wren
Early south 3/31 Washington DS, 4/2 Olmsted JB; early north 4/12 Lake KR, 4/14 St. Louis SS, 4/18 Cook KMH; late south 4/29 Hennepin DZ, 5/8 Olmsted BSE.

Sedge Wren
Early south 4/29 Lac Qui Parle SC, 5/2 Brown JS and Stearns JR, 5/3 Rice TB; early

north 5/8 Cook DC, 5/9 Becker BBe, 5/10 Roseau MCBS.

Marsh Wren
Early south 4/29 Dakota JD, 4/30 Hennepin JF, 5/2 Big Stone DN and Sherburne SNWR; early north **4/26** Becker BBe, 5/10 Otter Tail MO, Roseau MCBS and Wadena DB.

Golden-crowned Kinglet
Early north 3/29 Clay LCF, 4/4 Pennington KSS, 4/5 Otter Tail MO; late south 4/30 Hennepin KB, SC, 5/3 Ramsey BSE, 5/5 Winona CS.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Early south 3/28 Hennepin TT and Rock KE, 4/5 Martin BBo, Murray ND and Winona CS; early north 4/8 Hubbard MCBS and Otter Tail SDM, 4/12 Becker BBe, MO, 4/18 Cook SOL and Itasca TS; late south 5/17 Anoka EL, 5/24 Hennepin TT.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Early south 4/21 Houston EMF and Winona counties CS, 4/24 Hennepin RCD, 4/30 Olmsted JB; early north 5/9 Becker BBe, 5/11 **Pennington** MCBS, 5/12 Kanabec CM; also reported 5/2 in **Lincoln** and **Pipestone** counties PS.

Eastern Bluebird
Early south **3/1** Blue Earth MF, Goodhue JD, Houston FL, Mower RRK, Rice TB and Washington DN; early north **3/15** Otter Tail SDM, 3/19 Becker BBe, and 3/24 Kanabec County CM.

Gray-cheeked Thrush, 13 May 1992, Aitkin, Aitkin County. Photo by Warren Nelson.

Mountain Bluebird
All reports: 3/28 Polk (two males, one female) KSS, 4/13 Roseau (two males) MCBS, 4/15 Red Lake (two pair) MCBS.

Townsend's Solitaire
One report: 3/1–15 Carver (one) DM et al.

Veery
Early south 5/1 Winona CS, 5/2 Anoka KB, 5/8 Olmsted JB, BSE; early north 5/7 St. Louis AE, 5/10 Aitkin WN and Becker BBe, 5/12 Cass RJ.

Gray-cheeked Thrush
Early south 4/21 Sherburne DO, 4/27 Mower RRK, 5/1 Olmsted JB; early north 5/7 Clay LCF, 5/9 Becker BK, 5/10 Kittson MCBS; late south 5/26 Ramsey KB, 5/28 Hennepin SC.

Swainson's Thrush
Early south 4/18 Swift DO, 4/19 Olmsted JB, 4/24 Lyon HK; early north 4/28 Cook SOL, 5/5 Clay LCF, 5/7 Kanabec CM; late south 5/27 Brown JS, 5/28 Hennepin SC, TT and Lyon HK.

Hermit Thrush
Early south 4/5 Lyon HK, 4/6 Houston EMF and Rice TB, 4/7 Hennepin mob; early north 4/12 Otter Tail SDM, 4/16 Kanabec CM, 4/17 Clay LCF; late south 5/8 Nicollet LF, 5/11 Anoka JH.

Wood Thrush
Early south 5/1 Olmsted AP, 5/3 Hennepin OJ, 5/4 Brown TT; early north 5/10 Otter Tail MO, 5/11 Kanabec CM, 5/15 Pennington KSS.

American Robin
Reported from 22 north and 36 south counties.

Gray Catbird
Early south 5/1 Hennepin KB and Washington TEB, 5/2 Houston EMF, Le Sueur EK and Ramsey AB; early north 5/9 Aitkin WN, Becker BBe and Clay LCF, 5/10 Kanabec CM, Otter Tail CS/KC, Pennington KSS and Roseau MCBS.

Northern Mockingbird
All reports: 5/2 Goodhue DZ, 5/4–8 near downtown Duluth CE, mob, 5/11 Clay LCF, 5/12 Park Point, Duluth TD, 5/14 Sherburne SNWR, 5/22 Grand Portage, Cook Co. TBe, 5/24 Cliff Creek, Cook Co. KMH, 5/31 Marshall KSS et al.

Brown Thrasher
Early south 3/2 (probably overwintered) Fillmore GMD, 4/15 Brown JS, 4/19 Hennepin JF, 4/20 Mower JM; early north 4/30 Kanabec CM, 5/1 Becker BBe, Clay LCF and Grant GS, 5/4 Itasca TS.

American Pipit
Early south 4/25 Big Stone TEB and Lac Qui Parle AB, DB, OJ, 5/1 Olmsted JB and Sibley TT; late south 5/8 Olmsted BSE; all north reports 5/10 Kittson MCBS, 5/11 Cook DPV and Pennington MCBS, 5/14 Marshall MCBS.

Bohemian Waxwing
Reported from only seven north counties. Late north 4/4 Pennington KSS, 4/7 Cook KMH and Mahnomen RJ, 4/19 St. Louis KE.

Cedar Waxwing
Reported from 10 north and 27 south counties.

Northern Shrike
Late south 3/22 Brown JS and Wabasha County AB, 3/28 Anoka GS, 3/30 Hennepin SC; late north 4/12 Norman KE and St. Louis SS, 4/15 Marshall MCBS, **4/27** Lake County DPV.

Loggerhead Shrike
Early south **3/7** Murray HK, 3/12 Lyon (two) HK, 4/5 Wabasha KB, reported from 16 south counties; two north reports 4/19 Clay (three) LCF, 5/27 Clay PS.

European Starling
Reported from 18 north and 32 south counties.

WHITE-EYED VIREO
5/10–23 near Reno, Houston County. (one) FL et al; same location as last year.

Bell's Vireo
All reports: 5/10–25 Winona CS, mob, 5/20–27 Dakota (two) PS, TT, DB, 5/22–30 Wabasha KE, mob, 5/24–27 Ramsey (one) DN, KB.

Solitary Vireo
Early south 4/28 Hennepin SC and Rice TB, 5/1 Mower RRK and Winona CS; early north 5/5 Clay LCF, 5/7 Kanabec CM, 5/8 Cook KMH; late south 5/19 Hennepin DZ, 5/26

Olmsted AP.

Yellow-throated Vireo
Early south 5/2 Le Sueur EK and Washington TT, 5/8 Hennepin SC and Olmsted JB; early north 5/9 Aitkin WN, Becker BBe and Clay LCF, 5/11 Pennington MCBS, 5/12 Cass RJ.

Warbling Vireo
Early south 5/1 Dakota JD, Hennepin DB, KB, DC and Winona CS, 5/2 Goodhue DZ, 5/3 Olmsted AP; early north **5/7** Clay LCF, 5/10 Becker DJ, Kanabec CM, Otter Tail CS/KC, Pennington KSS and Roseau MCBS.

Philadelphia Vireo
Early south 5/9 Goodhue EL, Hennepin SC, Ramsey AB and Scott KR, 5/10 Le Sueur PS; early north 5/10 Clay LCF, 5/15 St. Louis AE, 5/17 Aitkin WN and Kanabec CM; late south 5/23 Houston DN, 5/24 Olmsted AP.

Red-eyed Vireo
Early south 5/8 Olmsted AP, 5/9 Goodhue EL, Hennepin SC, KR, Lyon HK, Mower JM, Ramsey AB, Rice TB, Stearns JR and Steele DZ; early north 5/9 Aitkin WN and Becker BBe, 5/10 Clay MO, 5/12 Cass RJ, Kanabec CM and St. Louis SS.

Blue-winged Warbler
Early south 5/8 Hennepin SC, DZ, Nicollet LF, Olmsted JB, BSE and Winona CS, 5/9 Dakota KR, Goodhue EL, Houston EMF, DN, Ramsey AB and Scott KR; "Brewster's" Warbler 5/9 Goodhue EL, 5/11 Anoka JH.

Golden-winged Warbler
Early south 5/7 Dakota JD, 5/8 Olmsted JB, BSE, Sherburne SNWR and Winona CS; early north 5/9 Becker BBe and Beltrami DJ, 5/11 St. Louis TW, 5/12 Cass RJ.

Tennessee Warbler
Early south 5/1 Olmsted AP and Sherburne DO, 5/2 Pipestone JP and Rice KR; early north **5/5** Beltrami DJ, 5/7 Otter Tail SDM, 5/8 Becker BBe and Roseau MCBS; late south 5/28 Anoka JH, 5/30 Hennepin OJ.

Orange-crowned Warbler
Early south **4/17** Olmsted JB, 4/19 Hennepin TT; early north 4/28 Clay LCF, 4/30 Kanabec CM; late south 5/16 Blue Earth LF, 5/17 Hennepin SC, RCD; late north 5/19 Grant GS, **5/23** Cook PS.

Nashville Warbler
Early south 4/29 Dakota JD, Le Sueur EK and Nicollet LF, 4/30 Dodge RJ, Hennepin SC, TT and Sherburne DO; early north 5/1 Beltrami DJ, 5/2 Aitkin WN, 5/3 Kanabec CM; late south 5/28 Hennepin SC.

Northern Parula
Early south 5/1 Winona CS, 5/4 Ramsey KB, 5/7 Hennepin DN; early north 5/9 Aitkin WN, Becker BBe, Beltrami DJ, Cook KMH and Polk KSS, 5/15 Itasca RJ; late south 5/16 Washington PC, 5/17 Hennepin SC.

Yellow Warbler
Early south 4/30 Hennepin DB and Winona AM, CS, 5/1 Brown JS and Dakota JD; early north **5/2** Lake DPV, **5/3** Cook KMH, 5/7 St. Louis AE.

Chestnut-sided Warbler
Early south 5/7 Hennepin SC and Mower RRK, 5/8 Olmsted JB, BSE and Winona CS; early north 5/9 Aitkin WN, Becker BBe, Beltrami DJ and St. Louis AE, 5/10 Kanabec CM, 5/11 Cook DPV; late south 5/26 Ramsey KB, 5/29 Brown JS.

Magnolia Warbler
Early south **4/29** Pipestone ND, 5/7 Dakota JD and Winona CS, 5/8 Cottonwood ED and Lac Qui Parle FE; early north **5/7** Kanabec CM, 5/8 Beltrami DJ, 5/9 Aitkin WN and Clay LCF; late south 5/26 Ramsey KB, 5/29 Hennepin SC.

Cape May Warbler
Early south 5/9 Hennepin KR, 5/10 Mower JM, 5/12 Anoka JH; early north 5/11 Cook DPV, 5/12 Beltrami DJ, 5/13 Polk KSS; late south 5/17 Anoka EL and Houston FL, 5/18 Hennepin Sc, Olmsted JB and Ramsey counties AB.

Black-throated Blue Warbler
All reports: 5/15 Goodhue JF, 5/16–26 Olmsted (three locations) AP, JB, 5/18–30 Cook (four locations) KMH, DN, 5/28–30 Lake (four) KE, DN.

Yellow-rumped Warbler
Early south **3/28** Rock KE, BSE, **3/29** Nobles KE, 4/5 Murray ND and Ramsey DZ; early north 4/6 St. Louis fide KE, 4/12 Clay MO and Marshall MCBS, 4/16 Kanabec CM; late south 5/27 Hennepin SC, 5/28 Washington DS.

Black-throated Green Warbler
Early south 5/2 Anoka KB, Carver DM, Goodhue EL, Mower RRK, Ramsey DC, Rice DB, KR and Washington TT, 5/4 Jackson GS; early north **5/2** Lake DPV, 5/8 Cook KMH, 5/9 Becker BBe, Beltrami DJ and St. Louis TW; late south 5/25 Chisago DZ, 5/26 Rice TB.

Blackburnian Warbler
Early south 5/2 Washington TT, 5/6 Ramsey DN, 5/7 Dakota JD and Mower RRK; early north 5/7 Kanabec CM, 5/9 Becker BBe, Beltrami DJ and St. Louis AE, 5/10 Aitkin WN; late south 5/26 Ramsey KB, 5/28 Hennepin SC.

Pine Warbler
Early south 4/25 Houston DN, 4/28 Hennepin SC, 5/3 Anoka KB and Dakota TT; early north 5/3 Aitkin WN and Beltrami DJ, 5/4 Becker BBe, 5/9 St. Louis AE.

Yellow-breasted Chat, 12 May 1992, River Bend Nature Center, Fairbault, Rice County. Photo by Charlene Howe.

Palm Warbler
Early south 4/22 Dakota JD, 4/24 Ramsey DJe; early north 5/1 Beltrami DJ, 5/2 Aitkin WN, Becker BBe BK, Lake DPV, 5/3 Cook KMH; late south 5/18 Olmsted AP Winona CS, 5/19 Hennepin AB and Washington DS.

Bay-breasted Warbler
Early south 5/8 Olmsted JB, BSE, 5/9 Ramsey AB and Winona CS; early north 5/13 Kanabec CM, 5/15 Itasca RJ; late south 5/26 Lyon HK, 5/28 Hennepin SC; late north 5/29 Pennington KSS, 5/30 Lake DN.

Blackpoll Warbler
Early south 5/3 Hennepin OJ, TT, 5/7 Mower RRK; early north **5/1** Beltrami DJ, **5/3** Kanabec CM; late south 5/28 Hennepin KB, SC and Mower RRK, 5/29 Murray ND; late north 5/24 Cook KMH, 5/25 Becker MO, Clay LCF and Clearwater AB.

Cerulean Warbler
Early south 5/9 Hennepin TT, Houston DN, 5/10 Goodhue DZ, 5/11 Olmsted JB, Rice TB; one north report **5/17** Otter Tail SDM.

Black-and-white Warbler
Early south 4/25 Houston DN, 4/28 Hennepin SC and Wabasha WDM; early north **4/27** Becker BBe, 5/3 Aitkin WN and St. Louis SS.

American Redstart
Early south 5/2 Winona CS, 5/3 Hennepin TT and Mower JM; early north **5/7** St. Louis AE, 5/9 Becker BBe, Beltrami DJ, Clay LCF and Roseau NJ.

Prothonotary Warbler
Early south **5/2** Hennepin RB, 5/9 Houston DN and **Sherburne** KR (***The Loon*** 64:170).

WORM-EATING WARBLER
All reports: 5/9 Steele KV, 5/11 Hennepin SC (***The Loon*** 64:170–171), 5/12–17 Rice TB (***The Loon*** 64:171), 5/12 Washington EC (***The Loon*** 64:166).

Ovenbird
Early south 5/1 Martin BBo, Olmsted JB; early north **5/3** Aitkin WN, 5/7 St. Louis AE.

Northern Waterthrush
Early dates south: 4/29 LeSueur EK, 4/30

Hennepin SC; early north 5/5 Clay LCF, 5/9 Becker BBe and Cook KMH; late south 5/25 Hennepin TT, **5/30** Chisago MCBS.

Louisiana Waterthrush
Early south **4/17** Washington WL, 4/25 Houston DN.

Kentucky Warbler
Seen 5/10 LeSueur PS, 5/18 Olmsted JD, AP.

Connecticut Warbler
Early south **5/6** Pipestone JP, 5/9 Fillmore GMD; early north **5/9** Becker BBe, 5/21 Clay LCF; late south 5/24 Hennepin TT, 5/26 Ramsey KB.

Mourning Warbler
Early south 5/8 Brown JS and Hennepin SC, DZ, 5/9 Goodhue EL and Steele DZ; early north **5/9** Becker BBe, 5/14 Otter Tail SDM; late south 5/30 Dakota TT, 5/31 Brown JS.

Common Yellowthroat
Early south 5/2 Hennepin TT, Houston EMF, Murray ND, Ramsey AB, EL and Winona CS, 5/3 Dakota JD; early north 5/8 Becker BBe and Roseau MCBS.

Hooded Warbler
Early south 5/2 Pipestone JP, 5/3 Olmsted JB, 5/4 Olmsted BSE, 5/10 Dakota BM (***The Loon*** 64:124), 5/11 Hennepin WJB (***The Loon*** 64:120–121).

Wilson's Warbler
Early south 5/1 Hennepin KB, Olmsted JB and Winona CS, 5/2 Goodhue DZ, Wabasha

Yellow-breasted Chat, 9 May 1992, Owatonna, Steele County. Photo by *Owatonna People's Press.*

WDM and Washington TT; early north **5/7** Kanabec CM, 5/8 Beltrami DJ, Cass PS; late south 5/24 Hennepin TT, 5/28 Washington WL.

Canada Warbler
Early south 5/7 Hennepin TT, 5/8 Hennepin DZ; early north **5/10** Becker BBe, 5/13 Kanabec CM; late south 5/24 Hennepin RCD and Stearns JR, 5/26 Ramsey KB.

Yellow-breasted Chat
All reports: 5/9 Steele TC, 5/12 Rice TC.

Summer Tanager
Early south **5/12** Goodhue DB and Hennepin SC, TT; early north 5/17 **St. Louis** KE, 5/28 **Cook** KMH.

Scarlet Tanager
Early south 5/7 Hennepin DN, 5/9 Goodhue TEB, Hennepin JF and Pipestone ND, JP; early north 5/12 Becker BBe, 5/13 Lake MS.

WESTERN TANAGER
Found injured **5/30** Hennepin DZ (specimen).

Northern Cardinal
Reported from 30 counties south and seven counties north to **Pennington**.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Early south 4/26 Olmsted AP, 4/29 Wabasha WDM; early north 5/5 Kanabec CM, 5/8 Cass PS, Clay LCF, Pennington KSS and St. Louis AE.

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK
Reported **4/16** Beltrami AEM (***The Loon*** 64:231–232).

Blue Grosbeak
Early south 5/22 Murray ND, 5/25 Rock ND.

Indigo Bunting
Early south 5/5 Washington TEB, 5/8 Hennepin DZ; early north **5/11** Kanabec CM, 5/12 Becker BBe.

Dickcissel
Early south 5/10 Lyon HK, 5/12 Murray ND.

GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE
Third state record 5/12–14 Carver mob (***The Loon*** 156–157).

Rufous-sided Towhee
Early south 4/18 Houston EMF, 4/21 Hennepin TT and Rice TB; early north 5/1 Beltrami DJ, 5/9 Duluth DS.

American Tree Sparrow
Late south 4/28 Hennepin SC and Olmsted JB, 4/29 Nicollet LF; late north 5/9 Cook SOL, 5/12 Becker BBe.

Chipping Sparrow
Early south 4/9 Ramsey RH, 4/13 Rice TB; early north 4/19 Otter Tail MO.

Clay-colored Sparrow
Early south 4/24 Olmsted AP, 4/26 Cottonwood ED; early north 4/28 Becker BBe, 4/29 Clay LCF.

Field Sparrow
Early south 4/11 Cottonwood ED and Olmsted AP, 4/12 Mower AB; early north 5/1 Douglas GS, 5/11 Clay LCF.

Vesper Sparrow
Early dates south: 4/6 Brown JS and Rice TB, 5/7 Dakota KB and Olmsted AP; early north 4/10 Otter Tail BSE, 4/11 Red Lake MCBS.

Lark Sparrow
Early south 4/29 Dakota, 5/3 Sherburne GS; early north 5/5 **St. Louis** AE, 5/9 **Becker** BBe and **Wadena** DB.

Savannah Sparrow
Early south 4/6 Brown JS, 4/9 Lyon RJ; early north 4/17 Marshall MCBS, Wilkin DN.

Grasshopper Sparrow
Early south **4/17** Dakota JD, 4/25 Chippewa DB; early north 5/2 Clay DJ, 5/10 Kittson MCBS.

Henslow's Sparrow
Reported 5/14 **Duluth** LE (***The Loon*** 64:121).

LeConte's Sparrow
Early south **4/17** Winona CS; early north 5/6 Cook PS, 5/9 Kittson MCBS.

Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Early north **5/16** Pennington KSS, **5/20** Morrison MCBS.

Fox Sparrow
Early south 3/8 Hennepin HT, TT and LeSueur EK, 3/9 Wabasha WDM; early north **3/21** Otter Tail MO, **3/23** Becker BBe; late south 4/30 Olmsted BSE, 5/5 Washington WL; late north 5/2 Cook KMH and Pennington KSS, **5/26** Roseau NJ.

Song Sparrow
Early north 3/28 Kanabec CM, 3/29 Clay LCF and Lake SS.

Lincoln's Sparrow
Early south 4/19 Hennepin DN; early north 4/28 Clay LCF, 4/29 Roseau NJ; late south 5/18 Cottonwood ED, Hennepin SC, Rice TB.

Swamp Sparrow
Early south **3/15** Houston KB, 3/29 Carver RB; early north 4/15 Roseau NJ, 4/18 Lake DPV.

White-throated Sparrow
Early south 3/1 Hennepin OJ, Olmsted BSE, Washington WL, 3/6 Hennepin SC (early March dates probably overwintered); early north 4/11 St. Louis AE, 4/14 Becker BBe; late south 5/25 Chisago DZ, 5/26 Brown JS.

White-crowned Sparrow
Early south **4/6** Fillmore GMD, 5/1 Cottonwood ED, Dakota JD, Hennepin KB, DC, Martin BBo and Renville TT; early north **4/14** Becker BBe, 5/1 Aitkin WN, Beltrami DJ and Clay LCF; late south 5/15 Winona CS, 5/16 Hennepin SC, OJ; late north 5/18 Koochiching GM, 5/26 Cook SOL.

Harris' Sparrow
Early south **3/7** Martin BBo, 3/23 Rock ND; early north **3/31** Becker BBe, 5/3 St. Louis AE (March dates are probably overwintering birds); late south 5/14 Hennepin SC, EL, 5/17 Olmsted BSE; late north 5/15 Clay LCF, Kanabec CM, 5/18 Koochiching GM.

Dark-eyed Junco
Late south 5/6 Dakota JD, Lac Qui Parle FE and Pipestone JP, 5/17 Cottonwood ED.

Lapland Longspur
Early north 4/16 Clay LCF; late south 4/25 Lac Qui Parle AB, DB, OJ and Stevens RJ, 4/26 Martin BBo; late north 5/12 Cass RJ, 5/23 Cook KMH, PS.

Chestnut-collared Longspur
Early north **4/17** Clay DN, 5/2 Clay DJ.

Snow Bunting
Late south 3/26 Hennepin OJ, 4/4 Hennepin SC; late north 5/10 Kittson MCBS, 5/11 Lake DPV.

Bobolink
Early south 4/26 Houston EMF, 5/3 Jackson AB; early north **5/3** Todd KB, 5/9 Otter Tail CS/KC and Roseau MCBS.

Red-winged Blackbird
Early north 3/7 Aitkin WN and Todd OJ.

Eastern Meadowlark
Early north 3/29 Kanabec CM, 4/1 Aitkin WN.

Western Meadowlark
Early north 3/11 Pennington KSS, 3/18 Clay MM and Otter Tail SDM.

Yellow-headed Blackbird
Early south **3/5** Olmsted BSE (earliest date on record—overwintered?) 4/3 Rock PS; early north 4/5 Otter Tail SDM, 4/8 Pennington MCBS.

Rusty Blackbird
Early south **3/1** Hennepin TT, 3/2 Murray ND; early north 4/10 Otter Tail CS/KC, 4/12 Clay MO; late south 4/26 Wright AB, 5/4 Hennepin SC; late north 5/16 Cook AB.

Brewer's Blackbird
Early south **3/7** Cottonwood HK, **3/8** Olmsted AP; early north 3/20 Becker BBe, 3/25 Otter Tail CS/KC.

Common Grackle
Early north **3/1** Koochiching GM, **3/3** Aitkin WN.

Brown-headed Cowbird
Early south **3/2** Rice OR, **3/6** Martin BBo; early north 4/9 Aitkin WN, 4/16 Otter Tail MO, Pennington KSS and St. Louis TW.

Orchard Oriole
Early south 5/9 Fillmore GMD, Pipestone JP, Winona AP, 5/10 Goodhue EL, LeSueur PS, Lyon HK, Winona CS, Carver MB; early north **5/10** Kittson MCBS and Otter Tail CS/KC.

Northern Oriole
Early south 5/1 Brown JS, Hennepin DB, KB, Martin BBo, Mower RRK, Nicollet LF and Winona counties CS; early north 5/7 Becker BK and Pennington KSS, 5/8 Beltrami DJ, Clay LCF and Wadena counties DB.

Pine Grosbeak
Late north 3/30 Koochiching GM and Lake of the Woods KSS, 4/4 Cook KMH.

Purple Finch
Reported from 18 counties north and 22 counties south.

House Finch
Reported from 15 counties north (to Roseau) and 22 counties south.

White-winged Crossbill
Late south 3/1 Washington DN, 3/7 Brown JS.

Common Redpoll
Late south 3/24 Olmsted BSE, 4/12 Anoka JH; late north 5/10 Koochiching GM, **5/31** Cook SOL.

Hoary Redpoll
Late north 4/12 Marshall MCBS, **4/29** Koochiching GM.

Pine Siskin
Reported from 15 counties north and 16 counties south.

American Goldfinch
Reported from 18 counties north and 31 counties south.

Evening Grosbeak
Reported from 11 counties north.

House Sparrow
Reported from 17 counties north and 27 counties south.

Contributors

Parker Backstrom	PB	Merrill Frydendall	MF	David Neitzel	DN
Karl Bardon	KB	J.S. Futcher	JF	Warren Nelson	WN
Tom & Elizabeth Bell	TEB	Ray Glassel	RG	Peter Neubeck	PN
Betsy Beneke	BBe	Katie Haws	KH	Dan Orr	DO
Tom Bennet	TBe	Mike Hendrickson	MH	Mark Otnes	MO
Tom Boevers	TB	Anthony Hertzel	AH	Johanna Pals	JP.
Brad Bolduan	BBo	Ken & Molly Hoffman	KMH	Anne Marie Plunkett	AP
Al Bolduc	AB	Robert Holtz	RH	Kim Risen	KR
Don Bolduc	DB	Harlan Hostager	HH	Joanie Robinson	JR
Jerry Bonkoski	JB	James Howitz	JH	Orwin Rustad	OR
Richard Brasket	RB	Nancy Jackson	NJ	Mike Schendel	MSc
Walter Breckenridge	WJB	Robert Janssen	RJ	Carol Schmidt and	
Mike Butterfield	MB	Douglas Jenness	DJe	Kim Claypool	CS/KC
Doug Campbell	DC	Douglas Johnson	DJ	Steven Schon	SS
Elizabeth Campbell	EC	Oscar Johnson	OJ	Carol Schumacher	CS
Steve Carlson	SC	Don Kienholz	DK	Sherburne National	
Pat Colon	PC	Byron Kinkade	BK	Wildlife Refuge	SNWR
Tim Cook	TC	Ron & Rose Kneeskern	RRK	Gary Simonson	GS
Gordon & Mary Jo Dathe	GMD	Erlys Krueger	EK	Tom Sobolik	TS
Rowan & Christine DeBold	RCD	Henry Kyllingstad	HK	Dave Sovereign	DS
Denice DeFrates	DD	Fred Lesher	FL	Jack Sprenger	JS
Nelvina De Kam	ND	Edwin Lins	EL	Mark Stensaas	MS
Joanne Dempsey	JD	William Longley	WL	Keith & Shelley Steva	SS
Ed Duerksen	ED	Sandy & Orvis Lunke	SOL	Mark Stock	MSt
Kim Eckert	KE	Wynn & Don Mahle	WDM	Steve Stucker	SSt
Fred Eckhardt	FE	A.E. Mathisen	AEM	Forest & Kirsten Strnad	FKS
Bob & Steve Eckblad	BSE	Dennis Martin	DM	Peder Svingen	PS
Cindy Edwardson	CE	Grace Marquardt	GM	Howard Towle	HT
Dan Ekhof	DE	Craig Menze	CM	Tom Tustison	TT
Laura Erickson	LE	A. Steven Midthune	AM	Ken Vail	KV
Audrey Evers	AE	Steve & Diane Millard	SDM	Dan & Pam Versaw	DPV
Dave Evans	DE	Minnesota County Biological		Don Wanschura	DW
Laurence & Carol Falk	LCF	Survey	MCBS	Paul Whitford	PW
Lawrence Filter	LF	Mark Moore	MM	Terry Wiens	TW
Herbert & Jeanette Fisher	HJF	John Morrison	JM	Dave Zumeta	DZ
Eugene & Marilynn Ford	EMF	Brett Moyer	BM	mob	many observers

Least Terns in Dakota County

Karl Bardon

On 29 August 1992, one adult and one juvenile Least Tern were located on the Spring Lake portion of the Mississippi River in Dakota County. They were originally spotted from a county park off Pine Bend Trail on the south shore, but they were foraging more than a half-mile out on the lake and were visible only as two tiny white dots flitting about over the water. I tentatively identified them as Least Terns, based on their apparent small size and in particular their quick, lively flight, which reminded me of the Least Terns I have seen in Texas.

I waited on shore for around two hours, hoping that the terns would come closer and allow me to confirm their identity, but they stayed out in the same far channel of the river. They would fly up to forage for short periods, and then alight again on the same stumps in the water. Even at this distance, I could see that one individual was making more foraging trips than the other, and that it often flew back to the stumps and appeared to feed the other individual.

Finally, desperate to know if these were really Least Terns, I made the 45 minute drive back home to get a canoe. Unfortunately, by the time I got back to the lake, the trail I had used to get to the south shore was closed off for an archery shoot, so I was forced to put the canoe in at the boat landing two miles to the east. Of course, strong winds had picked up by that time, and I spent the next hour canoeing across the surprisingly shallow lake.

I did not arrive at the location where the terns were sighted until five hours after the original observation, but immediately upon canoeing into the area of fallen trees and stumps, I spotted two very small, white terns sitting on a log in the river, and easily identified them as Least Terns. I beached the canoe up on a log, and proceeded to enjoy watching these two terns through my scope for the next hour.

Once closer to the terns, I confirmed the observation of the adult feeding the juvenile bird, although the juvenile also occasionally made successful fishing forays of its own.

The adult's most striking feature was the black cap extending far down the back of the head, and the contrasting white forehead which extended up above the eye. A black line extended from the black cap through the eye to the base of the bill. The long, thin bill was greenish-yellow at the base and darker at the tip. The underparts were white. A thin, black line on the dorsal surface of the first one or two primaries contrasted sharply with the silver-gray color on the rest of the mantle, and was visible both in flight and while perched. The tail was considerably shorter than the folded wings, and could only be seen well in flight, when it appeared short and moderately forked, with no obvious dark outer or inner edge. The leg color appeared light brownish.

The juvenile bird lacked the complete cap of the adult, and instead had two dark patches behind both eyes which did not meet on the back of the head. The rest of the cap, including the forehead, was smudged with a brownish-gray color, and extended down the back of the head to the same point as on the adult. A blackish area on the forewing was visible even on the perched bird as a stripe extending diagonally downward on the folded wing. The primaries became darker toward the tip on the dorsal surface, but lacked the distinctive thin black leading edge of the adult. The rest of the mantle was a light grayish-brown color with a few dark feather edges on the back and buff feather tips on the wing. The blackish-brown bill did not appear as large as the adult's, and the legs were a nondescript brownish color similar to the adult's.

In flight the adult tern was heard to utter a few short, sharp, high pitched, two syllabled calls, "ki-dee, ki-dee!"

These details and a sketch of each bird were made at the time of observation in a field notebook, and several poor quality pho-

tographs were taken with a 50mm lens through my 40X scope.

The possibility that these Least Terns nested in the vicinity is considered. The observation of an adult bird feeding a juvenile may infer local breeding in some species (i.e. most passerines), but in many tern species, including Least Terns, the adults are known to occasionally accompany and continue feeding the juveniles on migration (*The Wilson Bulletin* 71:313–322). For example, I have seen Caspian Terns, which are not presently known to nest in the state, feeding juvenile birds during their migratory stopover in the Twin Cities. For this reason alone, the present observation cannot be considered reliable evidence of breeding in the state. Also, the juvenile bird's plumage had undergone noticeable change from that of a juvenile in fresh plumage, indicating that it had not fledged recently. The extensive dark feather edges and buff tips on the mantle and scapulars of the typical juvenile Least Tern were mostly lacking in the Spring Lake individual.

Least Terns undergo a complete post-juvenile molt in August and September which, in addition to feather wear, causes the juvenile to look much like a non-breeding adult by October or November (Cramp, S. *Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa*, Vol. 1, 1977). The color of the adult's soft parts had also faded from the typical bright yellow of high breeding plumage. The adult Least Tern and this dependent juvenile could therefore have flown a considerable distance from the actual place of nesting.

Conversely, it is also possible that the Least Terns nested in the vicinity of Spring Lake. Several weeks previous to this sighting, the water level was lower on the river, and exposed sand and gravel bars provided potential nesting habitat for the terns. Least Terns breed locally in South Dakota and Iowa, so more positive evidence of breeding in Minnesota is a possibility.

I visit this area of the river about once a week, but had previously not seen anything resembling a Least Tern. Also, many birders were alerted to this observation and tried to relocate the Least Terns on 30 August and subsequent days, but without success. This represents the 14th record for this accidental (formerly casual) species in the state.

All but two of the previous 13 records have been of single adults or small flocks. The only other sighting of a juvenile was the Cottonwood, Lyon Co., record in 1985 (***The Loon*** 58:48–49). There was also a sighting of an immature or non-breeding adult in Lyon Co. in 1970 (***The Loon*** 43:25). Two other records have occurred since Janssen published a summary in *Minnesota Birds* in 1987. These include an adult in Murray County on 30 July 1988 (***The Loon*** 60:135), and another adult near Hastings in Dakota County on 12 June 1989 (***The Loon*** 61:140–41). **1430 – 100th Ave. NW, #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**

1992 M.O.U. County Big Day

Jerry Bonkoski

Sixteen teams or individuals sent in results from their 1992 MOU County Big Day activity. There were four fewer counties reporting results than were reported last year.

Three new counties were added to the composite county list, which now stands at 38. The new counties added were Carver, Wright and Rock.

In addition, nine other counties established new high counts for a Big Day in 1992.

The overall composite lists for species of birds seen during this year's Big Day counts was 228 species, down 17 from last year.

I did not receive any reports from the northeastern part of Minnesota and several species reported in previous years were not reported this year.

The only non-regular species reported this year was a Ruff in Carver County and House Finch reported from several counties.

The Carver County team of Denny Martin, Bill Marengo, Mike Mulligan and Jim Williams were the top species counting team in 1992. They reported a total of 138 species for May 16th — four more than Peder Svingen and Doug Johnson saw in Roseau County.

Mike Hendrickson and Kim Risen still hold the record for the state when they saw 159 species in 1989, doing their Big Day in St. Louis County.

I challenge more of you to go out in 1993 and do a Big Day count in your favorite county.

All but two of the current Big Day records are from the month of May. You do not have to do your Big Day in May, but you probably want to plan on doing it when you have the possibility of seeing the most birds. This year the group of Peder Svingen and Doug Johnson set the current Big Day record for Roseau County when they found 134 species on August 14th.

Incidentally, a "Birdathon" or Big Day is an excellent way to raise money for your club projects. The Duluth and Rochester groups use their Big Day activities to raise money for their favorite projects and each has raised several thousand dollars for these projects. Participants get pledges from sponsors (usually a few cents per species) for each species seen, and then, after the results are compiled, the participants collect the pledged amount from their sponsors.

It is really very simple to do a Big Day count. All you need to do is see how many species you can find within one county during one calendar day. You can go out by yourself, as a team, or plan a club activity to do a Big Day.

If you would like to get an official entry form and checklists for the Big Day, send a self-addressed stamped envelope (business size) to the address shown below.

When you have completed your Big Day, send a checklist of the birds seen, the date you did your Big Day, which county was birded, and the members of your team if more than just yourself. Send this information no later than 1 November 1993 to:

Jerry Bonkoski
9022 Southridge St. SW
Byron, MN 55920

A special thanks to all of you who have participated in the past Big Days, and have taken the time to send your results to me. I hope you will continue to do a Big Day in your county or other counties within the state.

9022 Southridge St. SW Byron, MN 55920.

The current list of counties with Big Day results:

County	Species	Date	Record	Date	Record Holding Individual or Team
St. Louis			159	5/20/89	Mike Hendrickson and Kim Risen
Polk			156	5/19/90	Dave & Sharon Lambeth and Peder Svingen
Otter Tail			144	5/15/91	Steve & Diane Millard
Aitkin			143	5/26/91	Warren Nelson
Lyon			142	5/14/88	Henry Kyllingstad and Paul Egeland
Carver	138	5/16/92	138	5/16/92	Dennis Martin, Bill Marengo, Mike Mulligan and Jim Williams
Steele	134	5/16/92	134	5/16/92	Ken & Amanda Vail, Nels Thompson, Gary Johnson, Leanne Alt, Terry Dorsey and Darryl Hill
Roseau	134	8/14/92	134	8/14/92	Peder Svingen and Doug Johnson
Le Sueur	131	5/10/92	131	5/20/92	Peder Svingen
Olmsted	117	5/08/92	130	5/09/91	Jerry Bonkoski, Bob Ekblad, Tony Casucci, Jerry Pruett and Dave Squillace
Lincoln			122	5/14/88	Ray Glassel, Bob Janssen, John Schladweiler
Cottonwood	113	5/16/92	118	5/13/89	Henry Schmidt, Walter Harder and Ed Duerksen
Marshall			114	5/18/91	Shelly Steva, Darlene Kelley, Randi Hodny and Linda Welk
Beltrami	104	5/26/92	113	5/19/90	Doug Johnson and Tim Dawson
Wright	112	5/16/92	112	5/16/92	Mike Stensaas and John Hockema
Anoka	111	5/16/92	111	5/16/92	Robert E. Holtz and John Wallner
Wabasha			111	5/21/89	Helen Tucker and Alice Searles
Cook			104	6/04/91	Ken & Molly Hoffman
Carlton			104	5/21/88	Fran & Larry Weber
Freeborn			104	5/23/90	Anne Marie Plunkett
Houston			104	5/18/90	Anne Marie Plunkett
Rice	100	5/30/92	100	5/30/92	Rice County Bird Club
Dodge			100	5/14/88	Bob & Steve Ekblad and Jerry Bonkoski
Murray	99	5/15/92	99	5/15/92	Nelvina De Kam and Johanna Pals
Fillmore			97	5/13/89	Fillmore County Birders Club
Lake			96	5/21/91	Renner Anderson, Chuck Neil, Bill Tefft, Steve Wilson and Suzanne Winkler
Hubbard			96	5/11/91	Ralph & Jean Leckner and Cory & Terry Olson
Washington	85	5/28/92	95	5/11/91	Robert Holtz and four students
Wadena			94	5/21/91	Jerome and Karol Gresser
Dakota			93	5/21/91	Karol Gresser and Joanne Dempsey
Nobles			91	5/21/90	Nelvina De Kam
Clay			90	5/18/91	Terry & Cory Olson and Jean Leckner
Rock	87	5/12/92	87	5/12/92	Nelvina De Kam
Pipestone			77	5/14/88	Nelvina De Kam and Johanna Pals
Goodhue	76	5/15/92	76	5/15/92	Harlan Hostager
Douglas	75	5/16/92	75	5/16/92	Kristi Stramer and Kyle Wicklund
Sherburne			68	5/23/90	Barb Kull and Alice Schroeder
Isanti	49	5/18/92	49	5/18/92	Daphne & Meyers Peterson

The M.O.U. 300 Club and 200 County Club

Anthony Hertzel

In the Fall 1973 issue of ***The Loon***, Bob Janssen wrote an editorial suggesting that there were, in his judgment, "possibly over 100 people" keeping a Minnesota Life List. He proposed "...a 300 Club be formed to give these people recognition." He went on to suggest, "Once per year at the M.O.U. paper session new members to the club could be recognized" and "Once per year an article could be carried in ***The Loon*** giving highlights of members' observations and other interesting news about the club."

Thus the Minnesota 300 Club came into being. The first publication of its members came in the Spring 1975 issue. The list at that time showed ten names:

330 Ron Huber
329 Harding Huber
328 Ray Glassel, Bill Pieper
326 Bob Janssen
317 Janet Green
314 Elizabeth Campbell, Kim Eckert
309 Paul Egeland
303 Dick Ruhme

Today that list has grown to include 86 members.

Following the suggestions of a couple of readers, ***The Loon*** listed a 200 County Club several years later in the Fall 1978 issue. Requiring less than one quarter of a page, it had ten people and just 14 of Minnesota's 87 counties were represented.

This was not actually a true and complete 200 County Club listing, however. It can be more accurately described as a sampling of a few of ***The Loon***'s authors, editors and contributors who were around at the time. Preceding that first listing was a request for readers to send in their lists. And in the next issue, Winter 1978, what can be called the first official listing was published.

A total of 22 counties were represented on that list, with the highest total for any single county being Jan Green's 280 in Saint Louis. Ray Glassel, who now has seen more than 200 species in every county, was listed then in just seven.

It was not until the Winter 1981 issue that the official rules governing the 300 Club and the 200 County Club were first published:

- Birds which are only heard and not seen may not be placed on one's Minnesota list. Heard birds are, however, permitted on county lists.
- Any record of a bird which has been found unacceptable by the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee (MORC) may not be placed on Minnesota or county lists.
- Birds found dead and banded birds seen before they are released are permitted on county lists. Such birds may not be placed on one's Minnesota list, however.
- Birds which probably escaped or were released from captivity and which are not fully established in the wild may not be placed on Minnesota or county lists.

I have calculated each county's species total as a percentage of the state's current total of 411. The resulting numbers were then ordered highest to lowest (Table 1). Saint Louis County had the greatest percentage of the state list seen within its borders with 84.67% (348 species). Red Lake County had the least with only 55.71% (229 species).

The two maps (Figures 1 and 2) indicate the birding contrast from county to county. Figure 1 is a pictorial representation of the data from Table 1. Each county is shaded according to its grouping (Column 4 from Table 1). The more species seen within a county, the lower its group number. The lower the group number, the darker its shading.

And because the borders of a county are actually just political ones, I decided to also produce the second map. County lines are not really useful when looking at the distribution of the state's natural resources, since they only occasionally fall along naturally occurring boundaries.

Figure 2 depicts a gradation between the

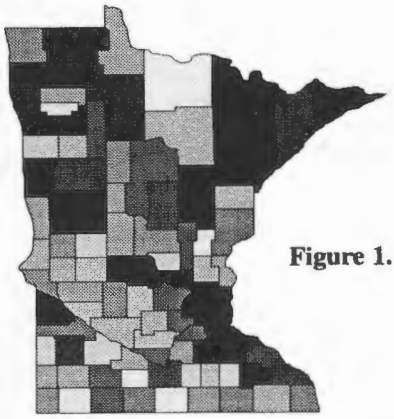


Figure 1.

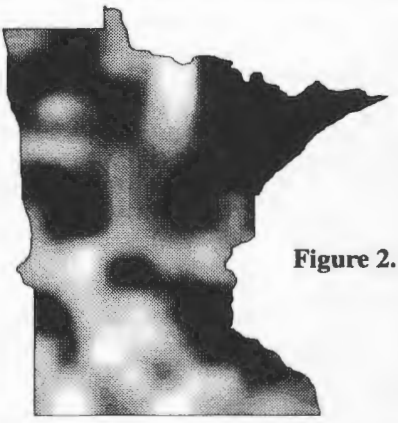


Figure 2.

County	Num	Pcnt	Group
Saint Louis	348	84.67%	1
Hennepin	333	81.02%	
Lac Qui Parle	301	73.23%	
Dakota	299	72.75%	2
Cook	298	72.50%	
Otter Tail	298	72.50%	
Anoka	297	72.26%	
Ramsey	297	72.26%	
Marshall	296	72.01%	
Washington	295	71.77%	3
Aitkin	294	71.53%	
Clay	293	71.28%	
Stearns	292	71.04%	
Goodhue	290	70.55%	4
Olmsted	290	70.55%	
Lyon	282	68.61%	5
Rice	280	68.12%	
Sherburne	280	68.12%	
Lake	279	67.88%	6
Winona	279	67.88%	
Polk	278	67.63%	
Beltrami	277	67.39%	
Roseau	276	67.15%	
Becker	275	66.91%	7
Crow Wing	274	66.66%	
Wabasha	274	66.66%	
Blue Earth	273	66.42%	
Scott	271	65.93%	8
Carver	270	65.69%	
Clearwater	270	65.69%	
Jackson	270	65.69%	
Nicollet	270	65.69%	
Cottonwood	269	65.45%	
Mille Lacs	269	65.45%	
Cass	268	65.20%	
Wright	268	65.20%	
Mower	266	64.72%	9
Houston	265	64.47%	
Pine	265	64.47%	
Martin	264	64.23%	
Yellow Medicine	264	64.23%	
Big Stone	263	63.99%	10
Freeborn	263	63.99%	
Hubbard	263	63.99%	
Le Sueur	263	63.99%	
Grant	261	63.50%	
Kandiyohi	261	63.50%	
Rock	260	63.26%	
Kittson	259	63.01%	
Morrison	259	63.01%	
Brown	258	62.77%	11
Fillmore	258	62.77%	
Lake of the Woods	258	62.77%	
Pipestone	258	62.77%	
Todd	258	62.77%	
Chisago	257	62.53%	
Murray	257	62.53%	
Pennington	257	62.53%	
Wadena	256	62.28%	
Swift	255	62.04%	
Wilkin	255	62.04%	
Isanti	254	61.80%	12
Itasca	254	61.80%	
Renville	254	61.80%	
Steele	254	61.80%	
Carlton	253	61.55%	
McLeod	253	61.55%	
Traverse	252	61.31%	
Stevens	251	61.07%	
Sibley	250	60.82%	13
Mahnomen	249	60.58%	
Pope	249	60.58%	
Chippewa	248	60.34%	
Meeker	247	60.09%	
Dodge	246	59.85%	14
Norman	246	59.85%	
Redwood	246	59.85%	
Benton	245	59.61%	
Lincoln	244	59.36%	
Douglas	243	59.12%	
Waseca	243	59.12%	
Nobles	242	58.88%	15
Faribault	241	58.63%	
Watonwan	240	58.39%	
Kanabec	238	57.90%	
Koochiching	238	57.90%	
Red Lake	229	55.71%	16

Table 1. Counties ordered and grouped by their percentage of Minnesota total.

counties, blurring the boundaries to give an impression of transitional zones rather than the straight borders shown in Figure 1. The resulting image has a less cluttered look to it and gives a better overall view of where in the state a greater variety of species has been found. Again, the darker areas are those regions in which more species have been discovered.

What can we learn from this? Are the counties with lower species counts really geographical areas with little bird life, or are they just under birded? And are the counties that have more species in fact just areas with more birders? How do migration routes affect the maps?

Probably the answer involves a little bit of everything. Many of the counties with fewer species are probably best described as cultivated monocultures with little overall diversity of habitat. Obviously those counties with a markedly greater human population will tend to have higher counts since there are more birders there. And, it would seem, counties with a greater quantity of lakes and shorelines generally have higher counts as well. Even roads seem to have an impact on bird finding. Notice the counties through which Interstate 94 passes.

Admittedly, this is all rather unscientific, and what actual conclusions we might be able to draw from all this is probably skewed by the fact that some counties are unquestionably more extensively birded by people hoping to add to their lists. In any case, it can be said that many new birds and new birding places have been discovered as a direct result of these birders.

Certainly with the introduction of the 300 Club and the 200 County Club much of the state's more neglected areas have now been more heavily birded.

Here is the 1992 Minnesota 300 Club list followed by the 1992 Minnesota 200 County Club list. **2509 Talmage Ave. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414.**

1992 M.O.U. 300 Club

384 Raymond Glassel
382 Robert B. Janssen
378 Kim Eckert
376 Dick Ruhme
374 Don Bolduc
371 Jo Blanich
Terry Savaloja
369 Bill Litkey
362 Liz Campbell
Warren Nelson
360 Bill Pieper[a]
359 Karol Gresser
358 Steve Millard
357 Al Bolduc
Paul Egeland[a]
355 Ann McKenzie
Jon Peterson
Kim Risen
353 Parker Backstrom
Oscar Johnson
352 Jerry Gresser
351 Hap Huber
350 Gary Swanson[a]
Gloria Wachtler
349 Dick Wachtler
348 Peder Svingen
346 Don Kienholz[a]
Mike Mulligan
345 Anne Marie Plunkett
344 Leata A. Pearson
341 Anthony Hertzel
339 Doug Campbell
Ron Huber[a]
Dick Sandve
338 Bonnie Mulligan
337 Bob Ekblad
Elaine McKenzie
Diane Millard
334 Jerry Bonkoski
Keith Camburn[a]
333 Dave Sovereign
332 Ruth Andberg
330 Steve Ekblad
329 Doug Johnson
Jim Williams
328 Mary Enley[a]
327 Bruce Baer
Tammy Field[a]
326 Phyllis Basford
324 Dennis Martin
323 Ken LaFond
322 Byron Bratlie[a]
Joanne Dempsey
321 Jay Hamernick
320 Mike Hendrickson[a]
Henry Kyllingstad
Helen Tucker
319 Peter Neubeck
Jeris Pike
318 Ilene Haner
Barbara Martin
Judith Sparrow[a]
317 Bill Penning[a]
Don Wanschura
314 Alice Hennessey
313 Roger Field[a]
Jerry Pruett
Bill Stjern
312 Karl Bardon
Dave Benson
Nestor Hiemenz
Tom Tustison
310 Fred Lesher[a]
309 Kathy Heidel
Joan Fowler[a]
308 William Marengo[a]
307 William Bronn
Micki Buer[a]
Bill George
Joan Johnson
Mark Stenssas[a]
306 Gene Sylvestre[a]
304 Gary Simonson
303 Torry Davidson[a]
Burnett Hojnacki
Edwin Lins

[a]Denotes 1991 Numbers

1992 M.O.U. 200 County Club

Aitkin
266 Warren Nelson
263 Jo Blanich
240 Raymond Glassel
231 Robert B. Janssen
229 Ken LaFond
229 Kim Risen

Anoka
282 Ken LaFond
250 Raymond Glassel
241 Steve Carlson
232 Robert B. Janssen
231 Ruth Andberg
214 Karl Bardon
211 Dick Rengstorf
211 Kim Risen

Becker
226 Betsy Beneke
224 Raymond Glassel
221 Mark Otnes
216 Robert B. Janssen
208 Ken LaFond

Beltrami
231 Jeffrey Palmer
226 Raymond Glassel
222 Ken LaFond
222 Doug Johnson
210 Al Bolduc
208 Robert B. Janssen

Benton
219 Raymond Glassel
214 Ken LaFond
212 Robert B. Janssen

Big Stone
222 Raymond Glassel
208 Robert B. Janssen
206 Ken LaFond

Blue Earth
227 Raymond Glassel
209 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Brown
233 Raymond Glassel
218 Robert B. Janssen
201 Ken LaFond

Carlton
230 Ken LaFond
212 Raymond Glassel
208 Robert B. Janssen

Carver
246 Kathy Heidel
243 Raymond Glassel
226 Dennis Martin
223 Robert B. Janssen
216 Mike Mulligan
204 Ken LaFond
201 Jim Williams

Cass
217 Raymond Glassel
207 Ken LaFond
200 Robert B. Janssen

Chippewa
219 Raymond Glassel
212 Robert B. Janssen
204 Ken LaFond

Chisago
233 Raymond Glassel
226 Ken LaFond
212 Robert B. Janssen

Clay
250 Laurence Falk
247 Carol Falk
230 Raymond Glassel
224 Mark Otnes
219 Robert B. Janssen
212 Ken LaFond

Clearwater
247 Al Bolduc
222 Raymond Glassel
213 Ken LaFond
210 Robert B. Janssen

Cook
272 Ken Hoffman
272 Molly Hoffman
239 Kim Eckert
226 Raymond Glassel
226 Robert B. Janssen
221 Walter Popp
207 Helen Tucker
205 Kim Risen
203 Ken LaFond
202 Jim Williams
200 Peder Svingen

Cottonwood
239 Buddy Feil
225 Raymond Glassel
215 Robert B. Janssen
214 Jerry Bonkoski
202 Ken LaFond

Crow Wing
245 Jo Blanich
226 Raymond Glassel
219 Warren Nelson
217 Robert B. Janssen
215 Ken LaFond
210 Kim Risen

Dakota
277 Raymond Glassel
273 Joanne Dempsey
259 Tom Tustison
254 Karol Gresser
254 Robert B. Janssen
236 Al Bolduc
230 Anne Marie Plunkett
227 Kim Risen
226 Bruce Baer
225 Ken LaFond
225 Bill Litkey
215 Dick Rengstorf
203 Elaine McKenzie

Dodge
228 Anne Marie Plunkett
224 Raymond Glassel
210 Jerry Bonkoski
206 Robert B. Janssen
201 Bob Ekblad
200 Ken LaFond

Douglas
218 Raymond Glassel
214 Robert B. Janssen
206 Ken LaFond

Faribault
214 Raymond Glassel
207 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Fillmore
241 Anne Marie Plunkett
222 Raymond Glassel
207 Robert B. Janssen
204 Ken LaFond

Freeborn
231 Raymond Glassel
214 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond
202 Anne Marie Plunkett

Goodhue
253 Raymond Glassel
253 Bill Litkey
242 Robert B. Janssen
231 Anne Marie Plunkett
227 Joanne Dempsey
214 Al Bolduc
214 Kim Risen
201 Bill Stjern
200 Ken LaFond

Grant
224 Raymond Glassel
219 Kim Eckert
218 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Hennepin
303 Oscar Johnson
301 Robert B. Janssen
300 Raymond Glassel
295 Steve Carlson
280 Al Bolduc
258 Kim Risen
249 Karol Gresser
236 Kathy Heidel
230 Bill Litkey
229 Ken LaFond
228 Karl Bardon
226 Tom Soulen
224 Dick Rengstorf
221 Peder Svingen
214 Warren Woessner
211 Gary Simonson
206 Ruth Andberg
202 Elaine McKenzie
201 Dennis Martin
200 Jim Williams

Houston
230 Raymond Glassel
224 Anne Marie Plunkett
212 Robert B. Janssen
210 Ken LaFond
207 Kim Risen

Hubbard
222 Raymond Glassel
208 Ken LaFond
206 Robert B. Janssen

Isanti
229 Ken LaFond
223 Raymond Glassel
204 Robert B. Janssen

Itasca
212 Timothy Lamey
210 Raymond Glassel
207 Ken LaFond
205 Al Bolduc
204 Robert B. Janssen

Jackson
223 Raymond Glassel
217 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Kanabec
226 Ken LaFond
221 Raymond Glassel
202 Robert B. Janssen

Kandiyohi
229 Raymond Glassel
214 Robert B. Janssen
211 Ken LaFond

Kittson
217 Raymond Glassel
213 Ken LaFond
209 Robert B. Janssen

Koochiching
227 Ken LaFond
205 Raymond Glassel
200 Robert B. Janssen

Lac Qui Parle
233 Raymond Glassel
231 Robert B. Janssen
226 Bill Litkey
222 Al Bolduc
211 Ken LaFond
202 Henry Kyllingstad

Lake
227 Dan Versaw
217 Raymond Glassel
210 Ken LaFond
204 Kim Risen
203 Robert B. Janssen

Lake of the Woods
216 Raymond Glassel
212 Robert B. Janssen
210 Kim Eckert
207 Keith Steva
206 Shelley Steva
205 Ken LaFond

Le Sueur
245 Raymond Glassel
214 Robert B. Janssen
204 Ken LaFond

Lincoln
216 Raymond Glassel
208 Robert B. Janssen
201 Ken LaFond

Lyon
263 Henry Kyllingstad
228 Raymond Glassel
219 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Mahnomen
215 Raymond Glassel
215 Robert B. Janssen
201 Ken LaFond

Marshall
238 Shelley Steva
228 Raymond Glassel
225 Keith Steva
219 Kim Eckert
216 Karl Bardon

1992 M.O.U. 200 County Club

216 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Martin
219 Raymond Glassel
206 Robert B. Janssen
201 Ken LaFond

McLeod
220 Raymond Glassel
207 Robert B. Janssen
203 Ken LaFond

Meeker
224 Raymond Glassel
215 Robert B. Janssen
209 Ken LaFond

Mille Lacs
233 Ken LaFond
225 Raymond Glassel
214 Robert B. Janssen

Morrison
224 Raymond Glassel
219 Ken LaFond
206 Robert B. Janssen

Mower
229 John Morrison
228 Richard Smaby
221 Raymond Glassel
217 Anne Marie Plunkett
206 Robert B. Janssen
201 Ken LaFond

Murray
223 Nelvina De Kam
216 Raymond Glassel
204 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Nicollet
242 Raymond Glassel
222 Robert B. Janssen
204 Ken LaFond

Nobles
214 Raymond Glassel
203 Robert B. Janssen
200 Nelvina De Kam
200 Ken LaFond

Norman
217 Raymond Glassel
211 Robert B. Janssen
201 Ken LaFond

Olmsted
276 Anne Marie Plunkett
271 Jerry Bonkoski
263 Bob Ekblad
254 Steve Ekblad
246 Jerry Pruett
234 Raymond Glassel
227 Vince Herring
222 Helen Tucker
215 Robert B. Janssen
205 Ken LaFond

Otter Tail
269 Steve Millard
249 Mark Otnes
221 Raymond Glassel
215 Ken LaFond
214 Robert B. Janssen

Pennington
238 Shelley Steva
217 Raymond Glassel
220 Keith Steva
209 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Pine
236 Ken LaFond
232 Raymond Glassel
215 Robert B. Janssen

Pipestone
211 Raymond Glassel
203 Ken LaFond
202 Kim Eckert

Polk
250 David Lambeth
233 Sharon Lambeth
228 Raymond Glassel
228 Peder Svingen
227 Al Bolduc
225 Robert B. Janssen
219 Shelley Steva
205 Ken LaFond

Pope
223 Raymond Glassel
220 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Ramsey
270 Raymond Glassel
262 Bill Litkey
257 Liz Campbell
247 Robert B. Janssen
246 Karl Bardon
244 Tom Soulen
229 Ken LaFond
228 Dick Rengstorf
227 Elaine McKenzie
219 Robert Holtz
208 Al Bolduc
205 Frank Berdan

Red Lake
209 Raymond Glassel
206 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Redwood
224 Raymond Glassel
218 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Renville
232 Raymond Glassel
219 Robert B. Janssen
208 Ken LaFond

Rice
247 Raymond Glassel
247 Orwin Rustad
226 Kirk Jeffrey
225 Tom Boevers
221 Forest Strnad
215 Robert B. Janssen
212 Anne Marie Plunkett
204 Ken LaFond

Rock
242 Kim Eckert
221 Raymond Glassel
210 Nelvina De Kam
203 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Roseau
231 Karl Bardon
231 Raymond Glassel
220 Robert B. Janssen
207 Ken LaFond
207 Peder Svingen
203 Shelley Steva
202 Mark Otnes

Saint Louis
315 Kim Eckert
284 Burnett Hojnacki
281 Leata Pearson
277 Parker Backstrom
276 Robert B. Janssen
276 Doug Johnson
272 Dave Benson
272 Raymond Glassel
259 Kim Risen
258 Peder Svingen
255 Bill Litkey
253 Ken LaFond
241 Al Bolduc
239 Arnold Knutson
231 Steven Schon
224 Dennis Martin
218 Anne Marie Plunkett

Scott
217 Bob Ekblad
215 Steve Ekblad
214 Dick Sandve
213 Dick Wachtler
213 Gloria Wachtler
211 Henry Kyllingstad
209 Oscar Johnson
204 Karl Bardon
202 Jim Williams
201 Jerry Bonkoski
254 Raymond Glassel
226 Robert B. Janssen
210 Karol Gresser
204 Ken LaFond
203 Al Bolduc
202 Kathy Heidel

Sherburne
239 Raymond Glassel
234 Ken LaFond
227 Robert B. Janssen
221 Jay Hamernick

Sibley
238 Raymond Glassel
225 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Stearns
274 Nestor M. Hiemenz
239 Kim Eckert
232 Raymond Glassel
226 Ken LaFond
219 Robert B. Janssen

Steele
237 Raymond Glassel
214 Robert B. Janssen
209 Anne Marie Plunkett
200 Ken LaFond

Stevens
222 Raymond Glassel
210 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Swift
219 Raymond Glassel
211 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Todd
236 Ken LaFond
219 Raymond Glassel
204 Robert B. Janssen

Traverse
226 Raymond Glassel
213 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Wabasha
246 Raymond Glassel
239 Kim Risen
239 Helen Tucker
228 Anne Marie Plunkett
222 Robert B. Janssen
218 Bill Litkey
209 Ken LaFond

Wadena
213 Raymond Glassel
205 Ken LaFond
204 Robert B. Janssen

Waseca
227 Raymond Glassel
212 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Washington
272 Raymond Glassel
266 Bill Litkey
240 Dave Sovereign
238 Robert B. Janssen
238 Dick Rengstorf
237 Joanne Dempsey
228 Liz Campbell
227 Ken LaFond
224 Tom Bell

Watonwan
218 Raymond Glassel
215 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

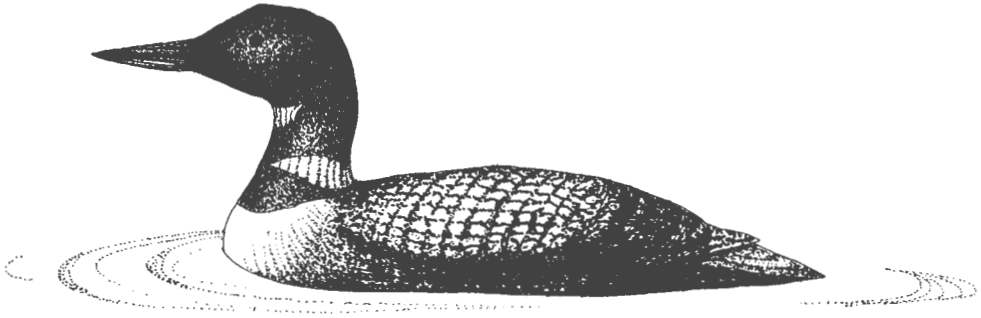
Wilkin
221 Raymond Glassel
213 Robert B. Janssen
204 Mark Otnes
203 Ken LaFond

Winona
247 Anne Marie Plunkett
244 Raymond Glassel
233 Carol Schumacher
219 Robert B. Janssen
209 Kim Risen
202 Ken LaFond

Wright
244 Raymond Glassel
226 Ken LaFond
222 Robert B. Janssen
200 Al Bolduc

Yellow Medicine
230 Raymond Glassel
217 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

All numbers are as of
1 December, 1992



NOTES OF INTEREST

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT IN CLAY COUNTY — On 22 August 1992 Sue Barton and I flushed two Sprague's Pipits from a section of prairie located three miles east and just over one mile south of Felton in Clay County. The birds were identified primarily by their call, a distinctive, squeaky "skwit" or "skwint" which was given in flight after they were flushed. The call was given two times in succession the first time they were flushed, then given as a single call on two additional occasions. We were familiar with this call from multiple observations of Sprague's Pipits in both Texas and Arizona in recent years, during the winter. It was a very windy day, so the two birds flew only short distances before dropping back into the grass from an altitude of two to three feet above the vegetation. We had two brief opportunities to view one of the birds when it landed on a wheel track, before it walked into the grass. We briefly viewed its underparts through the scope; it was pale brown to buffy tan and finely streaked across the breast. Otherwise, our views were restricted by vegetation from the "shoulders" down. It looked drab and light brown overall, without distinctive markings. The face was plain, buffy tan, without the dark auricular spot of the Vesper Sparrow. It also did not have a sparrow bill; the bill was thin, longer than a sparrow bill, and possibly gray in color. A thin, white eye ring was noted. The rest of the tail did not look dark (blackish) brown as in Horned Lark, but seemed similar in shade to the rest of the upper parts in flight. Its body was slim rather than chunky. We did not see any tail wagging but our opportunities to observe this behavior were limited. We subsequently observed both Vesper Sparrows and juvenile Horned Larks in nearby areas, species which may be confused with Sprague's Pipits. The sparrows had a chunkier body shape, thicker streaking on the underparts which extended along the flanks, a dark brown auricular spot, and a sparrow bill. The Horned Larks were surprisingly similar, but seemed more gray on the head and back, as well as showing a blackish tail with white outer tail feathers. We never saw the leg color or back pattern of these two birds and we had to base our identification on call rather than plumage characteristics. **Peder Svingen, 151 Bedford St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414.**

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK AT BEMIDJI — A male Black-headed Grosbeak flew to my small hanging sunflower filled feeder twice in about 15 minutes, on 15 April 1992 at our home in Bemidji, Beltrami County. I had just time to get my eastern and western Peterson field guides and flip them open to the grosbeak plates when the bird reappeared so I had an excellent second look. The striking rusty breast caught my eye immediately

and I observed the rather large white wing bars (on the black wings) and the pinkish *fringillid*-type bill contrasting against the dark black head. There was no question in my mind as to what it was. There appeared to be a migration wave passing through the yard at the time the grosbeak was seen. It was not seen again. **Mrs. John Mathisen, 1001 Miles, Bemidji, MN 56601.**
Editor's Note: This is the earliest spring date for the Black-headed Grosbeak in Minnesota. The previous early date was one of a bird seen 19 April 1972 in Dakota County (***The Loon*** 44:121–122).

A LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL ON LAKE MINNETONKA — While birding with Anthony X. Hertzel on 21 November 1992 I found an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) in basic plumage on Lake Minnetonka in western Hennepin County. The bird was first spotted sitting on the water amidst a mixed group of Common Goldeneyes, Hooded Mergansers and Ring-billed Gulls. The Lesser Black-backed was slightly larger than adjacent Ring-billeds. The dark slate gray mantle and wings stood out clearly and were the first thing to catch my eye. The shade of gray was considerably darker than that of the adult Ring-billed Gulls nearby. The head and neck were moderately to heavily streaked with grayish-brown, heaviest on the crown and back of the head and on the hindneck. The streaking became more like smudging on the sides of the neck toward the breast. The face was "dusky" with heavy and dark smudging in front of, above and behind the eye. The crown was neatly rounded. The rest of the body was clean white. The wingtips were black with two to three small white triangles visible against the black. The dark gray wings were separated from the black wingtips by the white edge of the folded secondary flight feathers. The extension of the wingtips well beyond the end of the tail gave the bird a slim, long-winged look. The bill was deep yellow with a bright red spot on the gonys; the size and shape was similar to that of Ring-billed Gull. The eyes were light. On several occasions we saw the bird in flight. The upper surface of the wings was clear dark slate gray. The wingtips were black with a white, sub-apical, oval-shaped "mirror" on the outermost primary flight feather and small white tips to several other primaries. The trailing edge of the inner primaries and the secondaries was white. It appeared that the innermost primaries or the outermost secondaries had not yet completed their molt as the "clean" rear edge of the wing was broken by a notch at this juncture. The tail was unmarked white. The legs and feet were bright yellow. On a couple of occasions the Lesser Black-backed Gull pursued a Ring-billed Gull on the wing. When it did it looked longer-winged and slightly bulkier in the body. When it was resting upon the water it would often move quickly toward Common Goldeneyes that surfaced after diving as though ready to pirate away any food item obtained by the ducks. We watched the bird for 20–30 minutes before we left. The Lesser Black-backed Gull was seen at Lake Minnetonka sporatically until 27 November. What was likely the same bird was seen on Lake Calhoun in Minneapolis on 4 and 5 December. **Parker Backstrom, 3409 Emerson Ave. S. #4, Minneapolis, MN 55408.**

A FALL RECORD OF LITTLE GULL IN POLK COUNTY — An adult Little Gull (*Larus minutus*) in definitive basic plumage was discovered by myself at 6:00 P.M. on 8 October 1992, at Lake Cameron near Erskine, Polk County. Over the next 45 minutes, I intermittently watched it, both in flight and resting on the water, with about 100 Bonaparte's Gulls and a lone Franklin's Gull for comparison. Its dark bill was smaller, its silvery-gray mantle was slightly paler, and its overall size was consistently less, in direct comparison to Bonaparte's Gulls. Its wings were rounded in shape, not pointed like the Bonaparte's Gulls, and its white tail was slightly rounded in shape. A broad, white, trailing edge could easily be seen on both the upper and under surfaces of the wings. Most distinctive was the blackish underwing (except for the trailing edge) which gave dramatic contrast with each wingbeat, as it foraged daintily over the surface of the lake, occasionally dipping down onto the surface. The head and body plumage were white except for a dark ear spot, a dusky wash on the hindcrown, and a pale gray wash on the sides of the upper breast. The

legs and feet were red. Doug Johnson relocated the bird on 10 October, as did David and Sharon Lambeth. The Little Gull is listed by Janssen (*Birds in Minnesota*, 1987) as accidental in fall throughout the state, with six fall records cited. Two additional fall records in 1987 (***The Loon*** 60:79) bring the fall total to nine, including this Polk County record. An interesting review of this species' status in nearby regions points out that the majority of records for migrants are in fall, in both Saskatchewan and Manitoba (*The Blue Jay* 49:76–80). Similarly, North Dakota's second record was also in fall, in Grand Forks County (*American Birds* 46:112) on 20–22 September 1991, following a first state record at Garrison Dam in late November and December of 1988. These emerging regional trends suggest that some Little Gulls may be overlooked in Minnesota during fall migration. **Peder Svingen, 151 Bedford St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414.**

ANOTHER CLARK'S GREBE SEEN IN WESTERN MINNESOTA — On 21 August 1992, Leata Pearson and I were scouting out some locations in Yellow Medicine County in preparation for the Minnesota Birding Weekend trip starting the next day. At Lone Tree Lake in Sioux Agency Township, we noted three Western-type grebes swimming about 150–200 yards away, and when I examined them through my 40X Kowa TSN–4 scope, it appeared one of them was a Clark's Grebe (*Aechmophorus clarkii*). For the next 15 minutes or so, we studied this grebe in direct comparison with the two Western Grebes present; it was about 5:00 P.M., we were looking west, but the sun was not a problem since it was totally obscured by heavy overcast, and I took field notes at the time of observation. We could easily see on both sides of the head the diagnostic pattern of the eyes completely surrounded by white, and in direct comparison with the two adjacent Westerns, we noted that the back and flanks were clearly paler, the hindneck stripe was noticeably narrower, and the overall size of the bird was slightly but obviously smaller. Unfortunately, at the time we were unable to clearly determine the bill color of any of the three grebes because of the low light conditions and the distance involved; in spite of this, however, I was convinced this was indeed a Clark's Grebe because of the other four field marks noted. The next morning, 22 August, we returned with the entire Minnesota Birding Weekend group, so that there were now 28 of us (including co-leaders Paul Egeland and Kim Risen), and the light was better with a clear sky and the sun at our backs. The same three grebes were still present about the same distance away, and again the features of the face pattern, flanks and back, hindneck stripe, and overall size were all clearly visible to everyone, and finally with careful examination, we could see the bill of the Clark's Grebe was slightly brighter and oranger than the Westerns' duller greenish-yellow bills. The bill color difference was not as pronounced as on other Clark's Grebes I have seen, presumably because of the distance involved, but it was visible and, in combination with the other four field marks noted, identified it as a Clark's Grebe. For more information about this species, see "Identification and Status of Clark's Grebe in Minnesota" (***The Loon*** 61:99–108). This 1989 article speculated that "this species may actually be rare but Regular in Minnesota", and this present record and others in the past couple years would seem to support that statement. **Kim Eckert, 8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

ROBIN MIGRATION — Yesterday, 22 October 1992, was the warmest day on record for that date. While watching a cross-country meet on the golf course at St. Charles, Wynn and I observed a most interesting migration. We didn't pay much attention to the birds flying over us, thinking they were blackbirds; suddenly, I realized they were not blackbirds, but American Robins. The wind was from the south at 15 to 20 mph and the birds flew in a southwesterly direction. There was a constant flight from about 5:00 P.M. until dark, about 6:30. It was impossible to count the numbers, but we figured conservatively that we could see at least 100 birds at any one time. It took them about 15 seconds to come into view and disappear over our heads, so we figured we were seeing about 400 birds per minute. Larger numbers of birds were seen at one time to the south, then to the north, then directly overhead; but were was a constant stream of birds. We figured there had to be at least 36,000 birds flying directly over us in 90 minutes. They were still coming at dusk, though

in diminished numbers. How far to the south and north of us this flight continued, we do not know. We know that migrations like this occur along the north shore of Lake Superior, but wonder if others have experienced such a phenomenon elsewhere. **Don and Wynn Mahle, 9 Robinson Dr., Wabasha, MN 55981.**

MISSISSIPPI KITE IN WABASHA COUNTY — On 11 September 1992 at 4:00 P.M., I was standing at the edge of the excavation for our new house, talking to a neighbor. The sun was at our backs as we faced directly east and the sky was partly cloudy. There was a mild breeze from the southeast. A raptor soared up over us from the north, coming over the cornfields uphill from us and flying up into the wind. It then quickly flapped across the valley below us and continued south out of sight. My nonbirder neighbor called it a falcon without prompting. I saw a slim falcon-like bird, about the size of a crow. There was a distinct bend in the anterior wrists and the wings tapered to a point. The wings were narrow. The belly of the bird was shadowed, appeared dark gray and uniform. I noted a distinctly rounded, silver-gray head (the color of the cement at my feet) bending down, uniform in color, with a distinct black eye and small black bill, and pointed it out to my friend. There were clearly no other markings on the head. The tail was slim and long without flare and the distal portion black, again without markings. There was no striping of the tail. The overall color of the wings was a darker gray than the head and the distal tips of the wings appeared black or dark, similar to our terns. Overall we viewed the bird for about a minute, from as close as about 75 feet with the sun on it. We had no binoculars but had a good look. Even a construction worker noted the coloring, particularly the head, as I hollered out. My first impression, based on previous experience in the southern United States, was that this was a Mississippi Kite. I have seen and photographed Mississippi Kites a number of times in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Florida, and Pennsylvania. With the lack of any markings on the head other than the eye and no barring on the belly or tail, the bird could not be a falcon such as a Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, or an American Kestrel, and could not be an accipiter. The distinctly uniform silver-gray head and lack of black on the back half of the wings ruled out Swainson's Hawk. In fact, the bent and narrow wings, noted both when the bird was soaring and when it was flapping, ruled out buteos and accipiters. Harriers and other kites have distinct white on the underparts and some black markings (in the bend of the wings or posterior half) that were clearly absent. The white rump of harriers was also absent. Other similar birds I have been seeing at our new home in the past two weeks have included Sharp-shinned Hawks, Bald Eagles, Turkey Vultures, Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks, Rock Doves, American Crows, and American Kestrels. After my excitement and attempt to explain to my new neighbor why I act this way, I showed him the possible raptors in the National Geographic field guide. He felt that the Mississippi Kite was the likeliest bird. **Ann McKenzie, P.O. Box 266, Wabasha, MN 55981.**

EARLY GOLDEN EAGLE IN STEVENS COUNTY — On 14 September 1991, while checking a shorebird spot in Stevens County, I observed an immature Golden Eagle. I was watching the dozens of Stilt Sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitchers, and other shorebirds on the mudflats when I noted a reaction among some of the other birds present that indicated a large raptor was flying overhead. The flock of Ring-billed Gulls resting on the mudflat flew up suddenly and began circling around, and the Canada Geese present began honking and running across the field in preparation to take off. I looked up to see an eagle sailing in overhead, but was surprised to see that it was an immature Golden Eagle, rather than the expected Bald Eagle. The underside of this eagle was entirely dark except for two bold white patches at the base of the flight feathers on each wing. These white wing patches were relatively smaller on the upper surface. No white was visible at the base of the tail as it flew overhead, but when it was banking in the distance, the broad white band on the base of the tail showed up very dramatically. The eagle continued south and was not seen again. This record is a month earlier than the previous record early date for the south region, with 12, 13, and 14 October cited by Janssen in *Birds in Minnesota* (1987). The

early dates cited for northern Minnesota are 13, 15, and 16 September. **Karl Bardon, 1430 - 100th Ave. NW, #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD IN RICE COUNTY — On a bright, sunny afternoon, 23 August 1992, about 1:00 P.M., I received a call from Mrs. Bruce (Karyl) Plante, who lives on the east shore of Lake Mazaska, Rice County, saying they had a Rufous Hummingbird at their feeder. Kirsten and I drove out immediately and were there by 1:30 P.M. When we got out of the car, we were facing west and we saw the bird fly from a bare branch about 75 feet away. We went to the deck on the south side of the house, where we met Karyl. We were there for not more than two minutes when the Rufous Hummingbird came back and sat on a bare branch about 16 feet away from us to the east. I set up my 35mm camera and took some 24 exposures of the bird. We then left, went home, and notified Tom Boevers that he ought to go see the bird. At 3:30 P.M., I picked up Tom and with more film, returned to the Plante home. I again took pictures of the bird, which this time faced us and we saw the golden glow of his throat in full sunlight. We saw the Rufous Hummingbird chase a Ruby-throated Hummingbird from the feeder, which was located on the house. Its manner seemed to be very aggressive. Later, I called the M.O.U. hotline to report it. I also notified Orwin Rustad about our find and he went out to see the bird that evening. **Forest Strnad, 1400 Autumn Dr., #212, Faribault, MN 55021.**

Rufous Hummingbird, 24 August 1992, Rice County. Photo by Anthony Hertzel.

Index to Volume 64

This index contains the common names of birds and the authors' names used in the 1992 issues of *The Loon*.

Correction: The Green-tailed Towhee pictured in ***The Loon*** 64:157 should have been placed in Carver County rather than Hennepin County.

PURPOSE OF THE MOU

The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union is an organization of both professionals and amateurs interested in birds. We foster the study of birds; we aim to create and increase public interest in birds; and to promote the preservation of birdlife and its natural habitat.

We carry out these aims: through the publishing of a magazine, ***The Loon***; sponsoring and encouraging the preservation of natural areas; conducting field trips; and holding seminars where research reports, unusual observations and conservation discussions are presented. We are supported by dues from individual members and affiliated clubs and by special gifts. The MOU officers wish to point out to those interested in bird conservation that any or all phases of the MOU program could be expanded significantly with gifts, memorials or bequests willed to the organization.

SUGGESTIONS TO AUTHORS

The editors of *The Loon* invite you to submit articles, shorter "Notes of Interest," and color or black/white photos. Photos should be preferably 5x7 in size. Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced and on one side of sheet with generous margins. Notes of Interest should be generally less than two typewritten pages double-spaced. Whenever possible, include a copy of your manuscript on a 3½ inch MS/DOS or Macintosh disk saved in text (ASCII) file format. If reprints are desired, the author should so specify indicating the number required. A price quotation on reprints will be sent upon receipt of information.

Club information and other announcements of general interest should be sent to the Newsletter editor. See inside front cover. Bird-sighting reports for "The Season" should be sent promptly at the end of February, May, July and November to Peder Svingen. See inside front cover.

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